

Hamilton Dramaturgy's E-Newsletter

ScriptForward!

September, 2011
Volume 6, Number 25
Our 25th Issue

"Advance Your Professional Scriptwriting Career Now"



OUR TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY YEAR!

Greetings!

Welcome to the September issue of **ScriptForward!**, a specialty E-newsletter prepared for professional and aspiring scriptwriters by Hamilton Dramaturgy. With twenty years of experience in New York, across the nation, and internationally, I offer this newsletter as a means of support and information to the worldwide scriptwriting community.

My lead articles celebrate the lessons I've learned in my twenty years as a dramaturg. And the guest feature by Walter Byongsok Chon reveals his process in translating a contemporary Korean play into English for a recent New York City production.

Please look over the **Recent Successes** section to see all the exciting events which are taking place, especially the launch of Hamilton Dramaturgy Press, which publishes plays, poetry and children's literature.

Finally, the **Burning [An]swer** section features information on how an MFA candidate can prepare for a successful career as a dramaturg.

I hope that this issue of **ScriptForward!** will be useful to you and I welcome your feedback.

-Anne Hamilton

Hamilton Dramaturgy List of Services:

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Musicals
Screenplays
TV Scripts
Production Dramaturgy
Workshops
Historical and Literary Research

Program Notes
Career Development Coaching
Production Histories
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Post-Graduate Career Coaching
Self-Publishing Consultations
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Hamilton Dramaturgy's **ScriptForward!**

An international consultancy based in New York City

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Why I Do What I Do

By Anne Hamilton

I seize upon inspiration because I believe that it pushes my life forward and affects other people in a positive way.

Whether it's writing a poem or play, or applying all my skills and knowledge to dramaturging someone's new work, I honor my muse, pushing forward in acquiring new skills and experiences and enjoying the fruits of my labor.

If I can imagine it, I want to do it. I want my imagination to come to life in real time. My goal is to bring as many of my thoughts and musing and stories to life as possible. And they do come to life. I want to develop each thought and project as far as it can go.

This way of life is very rich – in motivation, experience, personal growth, and the exercise of my ambition.

It is self-directed and energizing. I take full responsibility for my actions. The exercise of free will in my artistic life is a microcosm of the exercise of the will in my life at large. Its beauty is that the more I refine and strengthen my artistic process, the better my interior and overall life becomes. A bold choice in my artistic life can change the parameters of my overall life and my enjoyment of my life.

So I invite you to make bold choices, to judiciously pursue every creative endeavor you can imagine, and to apply every bit of stamina you have to developing your own body of work.

Works of art are priceless. That's because each one is something new that no-one has done before. You have ideas and skills that no-one else has.

Take a moment and write down an artistic idea that you've had but haven't paid enough attention to. Write it down and commit to develop it. You'll feel good to get it off your chest. And you'll feel glad you did. It can change your life.

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<http://theatrenew.wordpress.com>

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Testimonial

"Talk about the right person at the right time! Anne Hamilton provided me with line-by-line insights into my new play, FRONTING THE ORDER, which helped me bring added life to my characters and soundness to the plot. What at first seemed perfect to me was diagnosed by Anne as in need of immediate surgery, which I performed to the betterment of the piece. To her credit, she's like the soothing voice on your GPS: she never scolds you for making a wrong turn, but puts you on the right route with grace and charm."

Warren Bodow – NYC and Tucson, Arizona, USA. Warren's play RACE MUSIC played on Theatre Row in NYC and received great reviews from The New York Times. He is the author of TWICE BLESSED, MFA, OVERMAN ON HIS WAY OUT and is the retired President of New York Times

TheatreNow!, - Season Two

Kamilah Forbes

Laura Maria Censabella

Paule Constable

Fran Tarr

Jennifer Tipton

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What I've Learned From My Clients

By Anne Hamilton

During twenty years as a dramaturg, I have learned many lessons.

The first is that inspiration never dies. Many dramatic writers with whom I have worked have consistently produced new scripts, new stories, new universes, and new successes.

The second is that writing plays is a lifestyle. As an emerging playwright, I find that I walk around musing about my characters and ideas, and soaking up all the stimuli around me. Then when the time is right, a play pops out. There are universes inside my head which others don't know about. I imagine that it is the same for other playwrights.

The third is that playwrights are strong individuals. Despite many obstacles, we persist. Nothing stops us from practicing our craft to its fullest. That is encouraging.

Last, our numbers are growing. Many, many people are writing plays these days. It is an appealing craft, and there are tremendous opportunities for expressing it in full form – readings, workshops, and production. Younger people are arriving daily in New York to make a life in the theatre, and older ones are turning to playwrighting as a second career.

I appreciate all the playwrights I've learned from and am looking forward to the next twenty years with great expectation.

Quote of the Month

Q: Do you need a great playwright to write a good musical?

A: Watch out with the word "great." A good playwright, yes. You need somebody who knows how to write concisely, and knows how to tell a story – and also, with any luck, has a gift for dialogue and character. I mean, you need exactly what a playwright needs. Any good playwright could write the book of a musical if he has any sense of how music can operate to help the play.

-Stephen Sondheim, interviewed by Rob Weiner-Kendt in *AMERICAN THEATRE* (April 2011)

Featured Books of the Month

Hamilton Dramaturgy Press is pleased to announce the publication of

THREE SHORT PLAYS ABOUT LOVE
By Warren G. Bodow

Available now in paperback and eBook through
www.lulu.com.

Want to See Work by Women?

Join **Works by Women**: <http://www.meetup.com/WorksbyWomen/>

Advocate through **50/50 in 2020**: <http://www.facebook.com/5050in2020?ref=ts>

Follow **Plays by Women** at: <http://nytheatre.com/nytheatre/bywomen.php>

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Translating INCHING TOWARDS YEOLHA: A Contemporary Korean Play Meets A New York Audience

By Walter Byongsok Chon

In October 2010, Columbia University saw the staging of WALKABOUT YEOLHA, an adaptation of a Korean play by Sam-Shik Pai. This production, an M.F.A. thesis project for Korean director Kon Yi ('11), marked an encounter that, in my opinion, has yet to become more frequent: an exposure to contemporary Korean playwriting for a New York audience. It was with great pleasure and prestige that I became part of this project as translator of the original play by Pai.

It was in the summer of 2010 that the director Yi contacted me about this play, which, in Korea, premiered at Towol Theater in Seoul Arts Center, directed by Jin-Taek Sohn, in March 2007. A literal translation of the original title would be INCHING TOWARDS YEOLHA, Yeolha being the destination of Jiwon Park (a.k.a. Yeon-Ahm), an 18th-century Korean philosopher who traveled to China in pursuit of practical ideas to modernize Korean society. Based on Yeon-Ahm's travelogue, *The Jehol Diary*, Pai created an allegorical satire, exploring the questions of tradition and innovation. Pai introduces us to a nearly-fossilized, fictive village in a desert, and guides us through the turbulence the village undergoes at its first encounter with what the villagers call the "exotic." Yeon-Ahm, the narrator of the play, is a "four-legged beast" and, as she tells the villagers of the world outside the village, provides the initial conflict of the play. Her talking eventually makes her the scapegoat to save the village from being "erased."

In the American theatre scene, contemporary Korean playwrights are only to be found by avid researchers aiming to find them. Part of the reason is that Korea's theatre development suffered a disconnect in the early twentieth century while it was under the dominance of Japan. Only after 1950 could Korean theatre emerge

again. In the director's note, Yi mentions he found only three Korean playwrights whose works had been translated into English – Taesuk Oh, Yun-taek Lee and Kang-baek Lee – which gave him a strong incentive to bring YEOLHA to life in New York. Though the three aforementioned playwrights are some of the most recognized playwrights in Korea, hardly any of their work has received a professional production in America. In theatre history education, the significance of Korean theatre is mostly allotted to the ritual tradition of *Kut* and mask dance called *Talchum*.

“...In YEOLHA, my first challenge was to make explicit and active what is innately Korean...”

However, these modern and contemporary playwrights are hardly covered compared to well-recognized Asian playwrights such as Gao Xingjian (China, THE BUS STOP, THE OTHER SHORE) or Yukio Mishima (Japan, THE LADY AOI). While Korean-related themes are depicted by playwrights such as Young-Jean Lee (SONGS OF THE DRAGONS FLYING TO HEAVEN) and Lloyd Suh (AMERICAN HWANGAP), it is reasonable to say that these two authors write from a distinctive Korean-American perspective.

The American audience was first exposed to a Korean theatre production with the LaMaMa production of PRINCE HAMYUL, an adaptation of HAMLET, directed by Minsoo Ahn, in 1977. A revival of this piece called HAMYUL/HAMLET played LaMaMa in July 2011, directed by Byungkoo Ahn, the son of Minsoo Ahn. Recently, more Korean troupes have been bringing their acclaimed productions to America. In 2009, Sadari Movement Laboratory performed their adaptation of Georg Büchner's WOYZECK, directed by Do-Wan Lim, at the Public Theater as part of the Under the Radar Festival. Seoul Factory for the Performing Arts (SFPA) put on their adaptation of Euripides' MEDEA, called MEDEA AND ITS

DOUBLE, at LaMaMa in January 2010. These companies imaginatively fused western classics with traditional Korean performance elements and created original works crossing over both cultural traditions.

For our WALKABOUT production, the guarantee of performance, combined with the significance of representing a new Korean play to the New York audience, was certainly a big advantage as I entered into the translation. Picturing the performance venue, I imagined how the words of Pai could be delivered to the audience. My primary objective was to enable fluent communication between the two cultures: making what is Korean in Pai's text *present* and relevant for the American audience. As is frequently touched upon, translation entails "cultural interpretation" and, therefore, requires not only proficiency in both languages but also a complete embracing of both cultures.

In YEOLHA, my first challenge was to make explicit and active what is innately Korean. The village in the play takes after a traditional Korean village that operates on a hierarchy based on patriarchy and gerontocracy. What is unique in terms of language among people who have become so familiar with each other is that they often use insinuating and provocative remarks in place of straightforward statements. For example, to a prodigal son who returned home after a long absence, a Korean mother would reservedly say, "You're back already? Are you sure you had enough fun out there?" instead of bursting into tears and showing her joy at the reunion. In the play, the villagers by now have absorbed this kind of language pattern, which reflects the intimacy among them. The language among the villagers also reflects the hierarchy. For example, a village senior could throw a denigrating comment to a village woman or boy without being considered the least bit insulting. Showing respect for elders is, after all, deep in the Korean cultural genes, and elders, if not receiving the proper respect, actively demand it. While the play clearly provides the appropriate context for the tone of each word, it was my venture, when it came to the underlying Korean sentiments, to find the right expressions to convey the subtle nuance.

More broadly, delivering the right tone was of utmost importance for the allegory and satire in this play. The idea which prevails in the story – tradition being threatened by innovation – establishes this play as an allegory about the danger of complacency, while the chaos the villagers go through in the struggle brings out comic and satiric elements. Conflict occurs more often between groups or between individual and group than between individuals, so each character needed not only to breathe as an individual, but also to be characterized as a type, that is, as a member of a certain group. For example, the men, in general, give straightforward addresses, while the women speak more in a scrupulous manner. The seniors, to show their authority, use formal and commanding vocabulary, while the boys talk in fragments and colloquial idioms. The main characters are given their own particular ways of speaking: Yeon-Ahm, the narrator, speaks articulately and objectively, just like the Stage Manager in OUR TOWN; and the Inspector, to emphasize that he belongs to a completely different world, uses bombastic phrases and terms.

After completing the premiere of the adaptation of INCHING TOWARDS YEOLHA, I am still seeking to make the original translation more compact and active for the stage. It is my hope that this play can generate more curiosity about Korean theatre and initiate more opportunities for contemporary Korean plays to be introduced.

WALTER BYONGSOK CHON recently received his MFA in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from Yale School of Drama and is continuing his study at YSD as a DFA candidate in residence, teaching theatre history. He may be reached at Byongsok.chon@yale.edu

Coming Soon on **TheatreNow!**

An interview with **Jennifer Tipton**
Lighting Designer and
MacArthur Fellow

Testimonial

“Anne Hamilton dramaturged my play in such an exact and precise way that I was able to access her notes and complete my rewrite effortlessly. She highlighted the core of her concerns and communicated them to me so as not to destroy inspiration, but instead encourage me to do my best work; to say what I wanted to say without being told what I should say. Together we were able to build scenes and find character truths, motivations and clarity and fully develop them accordingly. Anne is probably one the best dramaturgs working in America and I could not recommend her highly enough.”

--Tina Andrews

NYC Playwright of the upcoming drama CHARLOTTE SOPHIA, screenwriter of the Warner Bros. film, WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE, and winner of the Writers Guild of America award, and the NAACP Image award for the CBS miniseries "Sally Hemings, An American Scandal".

Hamilton Dramaturgy's Recent Successes

Current Projects (Autumn 2011)

I am currently involved in many exciting projects, including:

Seeking production opportunities for Warren G. Bodow's [THREE SHORT PLAYS ABOUT LOVE](#); rewriting my full-length play THE RAINBOW CLOUD; reading scripts for the Great Plains Theatre Conference; seeking an option to write an adaptation of a popular memoir; finishing up Season Two of [TheatreNow!](#) by completing interviews and podcasts of guests Paule Constable, Jennier Tipton and Fran Tarr; dramaturging new scripts by Tom Cavanaugh; reviewing productions at Gettysburg College; and completing my series of children's stories entitled VIOLET VIEW.

(Spring/Summer 2011)

Playwrighting

I have written several short plays and monologues for my 2011 anthology, including FUSE, THE FAMILY BUSINESS, REGROWING, OFEM, and SPA DAY. They are joined by several poems and children's stories.

Dramaturgy

I dramaturged several new works, including: Warren G. Bodow's HARRY THE HUNK ON HIS WAY OUT, George Marcy's new cabaret act LEGEND OF A SONG AND DANCE MAN, Tom Cavanaugh's LOUIE LOU AND TITO and SEMPER FI, Andrew Barrett and Ira Antelis' musical FROM TIME TO TIMBUKTU, Graciela Berger Wegsman's THE DREAM OF CLAUDIA JADE, and Walter Byongsok Chon's English

translation of SERPENT AT MY THIGH by the Koren playwright Kwang-Hwa Cho. I also consulted on: a career development non-fiction book by a prominent New York City arts administrator; and plays by a physician and an attorney seeking to share insights about the realities of working in their respective professions. I posted the short article, "Dramaturgical Change in the Past Twenty Years" on my blog at <http://hamiltondramaturgy.wordpress.com>.

Anne on the Web

Continuing Season Two of [TheatreNow!](http://theatrenow.com), I posted a podcast with playwright Laura Maria Censabella, and an interview with Paule Constable, who won a 2011 Tony (R) Award for Best Lighting Design for a Play for WAR HORSE. The Constable podcast is in post-production. Our next guests include lighting designer and MacArthur Fellow Jennifer Tipton, and playwright and educator Fran Tarr. All of the podcasts are available on my new blog at <http://theatrenow.wordpress.com>.

Publications

Hamilton Dramaturgy Press has published Warren G. Bodow's [THREE SHORT PLAYS ABOUT LOVE](#). The playwright conceived the trio for theatre companies wishing to determine a timely way to cultivate audiences and donors with a mid-winter evening of theatre, food and drink and have everybody home by nine o'clock.

In addition, I had the honor of interviewing the legendary [Living Theatre](#) Co-Founder Judith Malina for an article to be published in WOMEN IN THEATRE magazine this December. She was joined in the interview by Kamilah Forbes and Maria Striar. The women discussed the rewards and challenges of serving as Artistic Directors of New York City theatres.

In my Bucks County Women's Journal column, I published the articles, "Cultivating Self-Expression", "Playwriting: A Vibrant Profession" and "The Rewards of Living An Artistic Life".

Workshop

I taught an introductory scriptwriting workshop to over thirty participants at the Philadelphia Writer's Conference in June. Read about the workshop, including testimonials from the students, at <http://hamiltondramaturgy.wordpress.com/2011/06/13/anne-taught-screenwritingplaywriting-workshop-at-philadelphia-writers-conference/>.

Welcome

Welcome to Cate Cammarata, the new Program Assistant for TheatreNow! I will use Cate's research on universities with Theatre and Women's Studies departments to try and gain a wider audience for the podcast. She is a second year M.F.A. candidate at SUNY-Stony Brook. Welcome, Cate.

Burning [An]swer

I am now an MFA candidate and am building a career in dramaturgy. What do I need to know to become successful?
- M.M., New York City

Your best preparation is to gain experience putting on shows. Take advantage of all the production and writing opportunities at your university. Pursue all your interests (i.e., directing, acting, literary management, development work, etc.) Use this time to really discover what makes your heart sing, because feeling fulfilled is what will drive your dramaturgy career. Spend more time doing production work than committee work. And see as many shows as you can. Break a leg!



Anne M. Hamilton, M.F.A., has twenty years of experience in New York City, across the nation, and internationally. The Founder of Hamilton Dramaturgy, she has consulted with Lynn Nottage, Andrei Serban, the Joseph Papp Public Theater, the Harold Prince Musical Theatre Institute, Michael Mayer, Classic Stage Company, Jean Cocteau Repertory Theater, Leslie Lee, Andrew Barrett, the New York City Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and the University of Iowa Playwrights' Workshop. She worked for James Lipton (host and producer, **INSIDE THE ACTORS STUDIO**) for three years as the academic advisor to the graduate students and faculty at The Actors Studio Drama School in NYC. The Bogliasco Foundation of New York City and Bogliasco, Italy awarded her a fellowship in recognition of her personal contribution to the American theatre. She studied the philosophy of aesthetics at St. Catherine's College, Oxford University and was a NYSCA auditor. Hamilton is a graduate of Columbia University School of the Arts and holds dual citizenship in the United States and Italy. She is available for consultations in script development, production dramaturgy, and career development, through her website at www.hamiltonlit.com. Anne is a member of The Dramatists Guild of America, Inc. (DGA, www.dramatistsguild.com), Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA, www.lmda.org) and is a past Co-Secretary of the League of Professional Theatre Women (LPTW, www.theatrewomen.org).

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Hamilton Dramaturgy is an international dramaturgical practice located in Bucks County, Pennsylvania on the East Coast of the United States. Also known as "The Genius Belt", this peaceful area filled with farms has been the home and workplace of the composers Oscar Hammerstein II and Stephen Sondheim, and the novelists Pearl S. Buck and James Michener.

ScriptForward! is a free specialty E-newsletter offering easy and informative tips on how to advance your professional scriptwriting career now. It is intended as a helpful informational tool to those actively engaged in the writing arts. If you have colleagues or friends who would benefit from this e-newsletter, please feel free to forward it to them, as long as you pass it along in its entirety, with all accreditations, references and copyrights. Many thanks and All the Best!

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