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Theater 23

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## **SCRIPT ANALYSIS QUESTIONS**

***NOTE: You must answer all of the questions.***

***Why is the Script Analysis VITAL to the collaborative process?***

- **The Script Analysis leads the production team to an agreed upon and unified Concept Statement or Artistic Point of View.**

***What is a “Concept Statement” or “Artistic Point of View”\*:***

**\* I use “Concept Statement” or “Artistic Point of View” interchangeably.**

- **A Concept Statement / Artistic Point of View is an intellectually defensible plan of action for the production that is explained and defended by information from the script and your individual and collaborative analysis of the play.**

**\* IN THE QUESTIONS BELOW, IF A QUESTION HAS A SUB-DASH, THEN THE SUB-DASH IS ANSWERED ALONG WITH THE MAIN QUESTION IN THE SAME RESPONSE.**

### **1) The Background of the Play:**

A. When was the play written?

— What were the theatrical/production trends of that time?

**The play was written in 1955, and it was intended for the post-World War Two time period it was written for. The 1950s was known for plays revolving around American social issues (for example, *The Crucible*) and day-to-day life (for example, *The Rose Tattoo*), and *Bus Stop* fits into these trends by touching on gender roles and focusing on the dreams and personal experiences of the characters. The characters are designed to be relatable to the**

audience as the characters represent ordinary people, and the play itself is set in March 1955 in a diner, a type of small restaurant that people in the 1950s may frequent.

B. What is the play's written form?

***Bus Stop* is a play with 3 acts. The play is not a tragedy nor a full comedy, but it primarily has romantic and comedic elements mixed with some dramatic elements. There is a small musical portion in the play as well as Virgil plays his guitar in Act II.**

C. What is the play's written style?

***Bus Stop* is written realistically as the characters represent ordinary American people with issues or situations that other people in the 1950s may experience. For example, Grace owns a small business (a diner) and is lonely, both of which a common person could relate to. The story unfolds linearly in the play over a night and a morning.**

D. What is the story being told?

**The story in *Bus Stop* revolves around a group of stuck travelers at a bus stop who seek shelter in nearby Grace's diner due to the harsh blizzard. The travelers, over their night at the diner, confront their own personal vulnerabilities and uncover insights — lessons that the audience can take in as well — into who they are and who they should be. For example, Bo ends up learning to respect Cherie's autonomy, and toward the end of the play, he asks permission from Cherie before making an advancement on her.**

E. Where does the action begin in relationship to the story being told?

**The action in the play begins near the middle of the characters' personal physical journeys at a diner near a bus stop at 1:00 a.m. It does not start before the bus ride or during the beginning of the bus ride before the bus reaches Grace's diner.**

F. Who is telling the story?

***Bus Stop* does not have a single narrator who guides the audience through the story. The story in *Bus Stop* is told by each of the characters in the play through their interactions and conversations with one another.**

G. From whose point of view do we learn the story?

— Does she/he know the whole story?

— Does she/he know the “ending”?

**We learn the story in *Bus Stop* from the point of view of each of the individual characters through their conversations with each other. The characters do not know the ending of the play, and in fact, at the beginning are unsure as to how long they will be stuck in the diner due to the snowstorm. They also do not know the whole story of the play, since the characters develop as people significantly throughout the night and morning. For example, Will teaches Bo by the end of the play about humility. He specifically says that “A man don’t deserve the things he loves, unless he kin be a little humble about getting’ ‘em” (Inge 54), and goes on to share his personal experience stealing horses to show Bo that humility is a necessary trait for him to have.**

H. Is this a character play or a situation play?

**This play is both a character and a situation play. The characters are in the diner because of their situation: there is a snowstorm outside and the bus cannot continue due to the weather. At the end of the play, they leave the diner because of their situation: the storm clears. However, most of the play is character-driven, and the play focuses on the individual interactions, engagements, and flings between the characters. As such, *Bus Stop* is both a character and situation play.**

I. What is the play’s theme(s), i.e. universal statement?

— What is the playwright’s comment on the theme(s)?

**The play’s thematic ideas include self-discovery, consent, autonomy, humility, and personal growth. From these ideas, a universal statement about the play could be that when faced with unexpected encounters and challenges, if individuals accept their own flaws and vulnerabilities and work to change and/or acknowledge them, then they have the opportunity to both grow as people and forge genuine connections and friendships. The playwright William Inge does not explicitly state a specific moral of the play, but he does imply the universal statement through lines such as “Bein’ humble ain’t the same thing as bein’ *wretched*” (Inge 54) and “But two people, *really* in love, must give up some thing of**

**themselves” (Inge 39). Inge hints at the idea that sacrifice and humility is necessary in life and that working to change your flaws is key to achieving what you want — such as love, for example — through statements such as those and more.**

J. What is the time frame(s) of the play?

**This play takes place over a single night and morning. Act I starts at 1:00 a.m., and Act II starts “a few minutes later.” Act III starts in the early morning around 5:00 a.m. The play unfolds in real-time throughout while the characters are stuck in the diner due to the snowstorm outside.**

K. What is the period(s) of the action? \*\*

**The play takes place in 1955 during the post-World War Two period. Within the play itself, the action is broken up into three acts, but the entirety of the play unfolds within the brief night and morning period. Act II starts after the characters try to pass the time to the best of their ability, and at the start of Act III, both the characters and the audience can see that the storm has cleared. As such, the action in the play shifts towards the end goal of getting back on the bus (for example, Will forces Bo — as a condition of getting on the bus again — to apologize to Cherie for the commotion he caused).**

L. Where does the play take place?

**The play takes place at Grace’s diner, located on a street corner in a small town about thirty miles west of Kansas City.**

M. What is the locale(s) of the action?

**The locale is a roadside bus stop diner in a small little town. The play does not take place close to a big city, but the bus travelers are taking the Kansas City-Topeka bus.**

N. What is the mood(s) of the action?

**The conversations in *Bus Stop* touch on themes of loneliness and personal autonomy, leading to the mood being serious and/or melancholy in these instances. On the other hand, the characters find comfort in each other’s presence during the storm, so the action in the play carries a warm mood during those instances. By the end of the play, the overarching mood leans toward a hopeful one since the characters, having discovered new insights into**

**themselves, leave with the potential to change their ways and/or new beginnings.**

O. What is the atmosphere of the action?

**There is a large snowstorm outside the diner that hovers over the action in the play. The bus travelers are in the diner in the first place because of the storm, so a cloud of frustration/slight depression (because of the heavy storm) hangs over the action.**

P. What are the characters like in the play?

**Elma Duckworth is a high school girl working at the diner as a waitress. Grace Hoylard — the owner of the diner — is a lonely woman who has a fling with Carl. Will Masters is a town sheriff who stands for order and morality. He teaches Bo near the end of the play about humility — for example — and forces him to apologize to Cherie for Bo's brash behavior. Cherie, an attractive nightclub singer from a rural background in Missouri, wants a better life for herself than what she currently has. She also does not want to be forced to move with Bo to Montana. Former college professor Dr. Gerald Lyman is a charismatic alcoholic who tries to seduce Emma, who is much younger than him. Carl — the bus driver — is a friendly man who has a casual romantic fling with Grace. Ranch hand Virgil Blessing is a calm figure who tries to guide Bo in making the right decisions. Bo Decker — a young rancher and cowboy — is a brash, naïve young man who tries to get his way even if told no, such as by trying to force Cherie to marry him.**

Q. What type of people are they representing?

**Elma represents youth, innocence, and vulnerability as she becomes charmed by Dr. Lyman. Grace represents the loneliness that can overtake a member of society as they become older, especially if they gradually become more isolated from society. Will represents law enforcement's presence in society. Cherie represents women who seek personal autonomy and agency rather than those who submit to the men in their lives, such as by conforming to the traditional 1950s housewife stereotype. Dr. Gerald Lyman represents immorality and darkness within society as he tries to prey on Emma despite Emma being much younger than him. Carl represents an everyday person just carrying on through life, as displayed through his casual — of convenience and loneliness —**

relationship with Grace originating from his regular stops at the diner on his bus route. Virgil Blessing represents wisdom, knowledge, and the older generation as he is like a father figure to Bo. Bo represents youthful masculinity and entitlement and the strong, romantic figure that American cowboys were depicted as at the time.

## **2) The Action and Environment of the Play:**

A. What is the artistic climate?

In the 1950s, theater in America was focusing more on the day-to-day lives of ordinary people, and *Bus Stop* conforms to that trend as the play showcases a night and morning in the lives of a couple of bus travelers, a bus driver, a sheriff, and a diner waitress and owner. Furthermore, Cherie is a nightclub singer, and she does not want to move with Bo to Montana. Bo is first infatuated with Cherie after seeing her perform at a Kansas City nightclub, so the arts were the spark that started the storyline between Cherie and Bo.

B. What is the religious climate?

Religion does play a role in daily life in the 1950s, but not as overtly as it did in the late 1700s. However, the Kansas-Missouri area would likely have been predominantly Christian during that time period and influenced by Christian and/or conservative moral values. The idea of morality is heavily present in *Bus Stop*. For example, by the end of the play, Bo learns to be humble and ask for consent before making advancement on someone since it is the right (i.e. moral) thing to do. As another example, Dr. Lyman (immorally) tries to seduce the young Elma, but Will disapproves and confronts Dr. Lyman about his actions.

C. What is the political climate?

When the play was published, the Korean War had recently ended, the Cold War was beginning, and the Second Red Scare was underway. Despite this somewhat unstable climate, the play focuses more on the personal issues of the characters rather than big national issues.

D. What is the economic climate?

Post-World War 2 America was economically prosperous. As such, Grace's diner is doing well; there is not much mention of financial hardship in regard to Grace or her diner.

Furthermore, there was a significant "baby boom" in the 1950s, and the idea of suburban life was glamorized in the media. While America was doing well, the characters in the play were middle class, so they were not particularly wealthy; however, they were not particularly poor either. At the same time, some characters, like Cherie, want to improve their situation, and that could involve economic improvement as well.

E. What is the social climate?

In the 1950s, the idea of social gatherings and socializing was very popular. As a result, eating at a diner would seem like an ordinary occurrence to the audiences who saw the play in the 1950s. Furthermore, the play is set in the 1950s when the expectation was that women would usually submit to men and take care of the household. Gender dynamics play an important role in Bo and Cherie's relationship, as at first — at the beginning of the play — Bo tries to coerce Cherie into marrying him and leaving her home to come to Montana with him. By the end of the play, Bo begins to understand consent and move past his original approach of doing whatever satisfies him, as displayed when he asks permission from Cherie to kiss her. At the same time, with the "baby boom" that gave rise to the idea of an ideal lifestyle in the suburbs, feelings of isolation, longing, and dissatisfaction naturally rose as society expanded to less populated areas. In *Bus Stop*, one example where that was represented was with Grace and Carl's relationship, one seemingly occurring out of loneliness. Another example is Cherie, who is seeking a better life and is not satisfied with moving with Bo to rural Montana.

F. What is the atmospheric climate?

There is a heavy snowstorm that caused the bus travelers to have to stop at Grace's diner for the night. The snowstorm plays an important role in the play since it is the reason that brings the travelers together to converse in Grace's diner in the first place, and because it — once it clears — is the reason the travelers leave the diner.

### 3) Script Information

**Note: References in the Script VERSES the Actual Needs of the Play:**

A. What is the plot?

At the very beginning, Grace and Elma are in the diner when Will arrives and says that the highway is blocked due to the storm and that the Kansas City-Topeka bus travelers would need to stay the night in the diner. The travelers then arrive, and Cherie requests Will for protection from Bo. Carl and Grace begin to casually flirt, and Will, Grace, Elma, Cherie, and Dr. Lyman engage in conversation. Virgil and Bo enter a short bit after falling asleep on the bus, and Bo and Will argue about closing the door. Bo soon makes advances toward Cherie, especially after seeing Cherie perform, and forcibly embraces her, and Will steps in soon after to confront Bo. In addition, Dr. Lyman engages Elma in conversation and tries to court her while Virgil is playing a melancholy cowboy ballad on his guitar. Cherie and Elma converse, and Cherie begins to wonder if she should marry Bo since she may have a better life with him, but she does not want to marry him. Bo and Cherie argue more, and Dr. Lyman and Elma try to perform the balcony scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, but Dr. Lyman is drunk. Bo tries to carry Cherie to the door, but Will steps in to stop Bo. Bo and Will fight outside, but Will bests Bo and handcuffs him. Virgil convinces Cherie not to press charges. After the snowstorm clears up, Will teaches Bo a lesson about humility and forces Bo to apologize for his actions in order to get back on the bus. Dr. Lyman and Carl get ready to leave Elma and Grace respectively, and Bo apologizes to Grace for the commotion and to Cherie for his forced advancements. Bo offers money so that she can return to Kansas City, but Cherie ends up deciding to follow Bo to Montana, but Virgil stays behind without shelter or a set path forward. Grace closes the diner.

B. What is the cast size for the overall show, as well as individual scenes/moments?

The cast size is 8 for the overall show since there are 8 characters: Elma, Grace, Will, Cherie, Dr. Lyman, Carl, Virgil, and Bo. During the place, there are usually a lot of the characters onstage, and some are onstage almost the entire time. The play centers around a series of conversations between individual characters, but there are usually characters in the background since all the travelers are stuck in the same diner.

C. What are the blocking needs for both general and specific moments?



**In each act, the actors need to be able to navigate through the 1950s diner, which would have a few tables, a counter, stools, chairs, and a door to the outside. There needs to be a way for actors to view the outside snowstorm and enter and/or exit the diner. The beginning of the play is slow-paced, and Grace and Elma are cleaning the diner (e.g. washing, drying, putting bowls in their place, etc.). As the bus passengers begin to arrive, the pace picks up. Bo needs to be able to find a path to Cherie since he frequently makes advancements on her throughout the play. As each pair of characters converse (e.g. Bo and Cherie, Dr. Lyman and Elma, Carl and Grace), they would need to be blocked in an area of the stage where they would be the focus, even if other actions (e.g. Virgil playing guitar) are happening in the background. The play becomes fast-paced during Cheryl and Bo's argument near the end of Act II and Will and Bo's eventual confrontation (and Will and Bo need to be able to go outside), but afterward, the play slows down as the characters begin to learn either lessons about themselves or life lessons (i.e. Bo learns humility). At the end of the play, the characters need to be able to exit.**

D. Does the action take place in interior or exterior spaces?

**The action takes place in an interior space: Grace's diner. The diner shelters the travelers from the snowstorm outside.**

E. Does the action take place in public or private spaces?

**The action takes place in Grace's diner, which is a public location. However, there are some private moments, such as when Dr. Lyman recites Shakespeare to Elma and when Virgil offers advice to Bo on how to deal with Cherie's rejection of him.**

F. What does the set require in terms of scenic elements - doors (entrances & exits), windows, stairs, furniture, dressing, etc.?

**The playwright describes the diner as "dingy" but with certain "modern improvements" (Inge 5) that include scenic calendars and posters of pretty girls on the weary walls. There are 2 light bulbs and several dangling cords on the ceiling, and there are a lot of quartet tables with chairs. On the far left, there is a counter with six stools, and behind the counter are restaurant items (e.g. cups, plates, refrigerator, etc.). There are doughnuts and sweet rolls under glass clovers and there are three sugar bowls and a couple of dishes. On the far**

**right, near an outside door, there is a magazine stand and a rack of shelves with books. On the back center, there is an old-fashioned Franklin Stove, and on the back right is a large window showing the scenery outside. Under the window are two benches, and on the back left is the rear door. Above this door, a sign that says “Rest Rooms in the Rear” (Inge 5) is placed, and there is a closet below the door.**

G. What does the lighting require in terms of season, time of day, type of day, practical(s), effects, etc.?

**There is a night (1 a.m.) snowstorm outside that can be seen through the window, so the lighting should reflect that. In Act III, the snowstorm should clear up and the lighting should showcase the dawn outside. Otherwise, since the play takes place indoors in Grace’s diner, the primary lighting needed is the two “badly shaded light bulbs” (Inge 5) that, per the script, provide most of the lighting. The scene is described as “warm and cozy” (Inge 5), so the lighting should create that effect.**

H. What does the costuming require in terms of event(s), season, how are they used, changes, accessories, etc.?

**The play is set in winter, since there is a snowstorm, so most of the bus travelers should be wearing warm clothes/coats. Cherie should be wearing no hat, a skimpy jacket of metal cloth with fur, a sequin dress, lots of makeup and lipstick, and gilded sandals. Elma and Grace should be wearing diner uniforms. Will should be wearing a sheriff’s uniform, and Carl should be wearing a bus driver’s uniform with a coat. Dr. Lyman is dressed in a nice, old tweed suit underneath a Burberry. His clothes are somewhat mussed, and he does not have a hat. Bo is wearing tight faded jeans, boots, a worn Stetson hat, a faded denim shirt, a shiny horsehide jacket, and a bandana around his neck. Virgil is dressed similarly to Bo, except for the fact that Bo is unkept, but Vigil is slightly neater.**

I. What hand props are called for?

**Hand props in the play include dinner items (e.g. mugs, bowls, drink glasses, food etc.), a guitar for Virgil, Cherie’s suitcase, Dr. Lyman’s alcohol, and handcuffs (that Will uses to cuff Bo).**

J. What is the social class and sense of “style” of these people and places?

**The characters are working-class, middle-class, or upper-middle-class. Cherie, as a working-class nightclub singer, wears stylish clothes. Bo is a young, upper-middle-class rancher. Virgil is similar to Bo, except he is much older. Both Bo and Virgil are dressed as cowboys, so they have more “style” than characters like Carl, Emma, Grace, and Will — who all wear uniforms rather than their personal clothes. Carl and Emma are working-class folk. Grace owns the small diner, and she is middle class. Will, being the sheriff, is likely upper-middle-class. The town itself that the play is set in is a small rural town, so the people there are likely working-class or middle class.**

K. What are the key moments in telling the story or in understanding the characters?

**The key moments are as follows.**

- **The passengers get off the bus and into the diner.**
- **Cherie requests protection from Bo, showing that Bo has so little regard for Cherie’s wants that Cherie has to look for a hiding place in the diner.**
- **Bo tries to forcibly embrace Cherie, but he is stopped by Will.**
- **Dr. Lyman tries to get close to Elma and seduce her, showing that his intentions with her are not pure.**
- **Dr. Lyman and Elma recite Shakespeare together and plan to elope in Topeka. When Dr. Lyman performs the balcony scene, he falls down drunk.**
- **Bo tries to pick up Cherie and drag her out of the room, but he is stopped by Will. Bo challenges Will to a fight, and Bo loses. This showed that Bo believed his will supersedes anyone else’s, including that of legal authority. However, at the start of Act III, he hangs his head down in shame, showing that he is changing his selfish ways to be more considerate of others.**
- **Bo apologizes to Grace for the commotion and Cherie for his unwanted advancements. He offers money to Cherie to return to Kansas City, which touches Cherie.**
- **Cherie agrees to go with Bo to Montana, signifying that Cherie is more trusting of Bo and that Bo has learned a lesson in humility. The travelers then get back on the**

**bus.**

- **Virgil chooses to stay behind, signifying that Virgil is looking to find belonging and develop into more than just a father figure for Bo.**
- **Grace closes the diner, which ends the play.**

L. What are the key images in telling the story or in understanding the characters?

**The image of Bo lifting Cherie up and trying to forcibly carry her off despite her protests is powerful since it conveys that Bo has little care for anyone else but himself. Furthermore, the image of Virgil staying behind alone is an effective end to the play since it encapsulates the thematic ideas of loneliness and self-discovery. While others continue their journeys, Virgil's choice to stay behind speaks to his desire for stability and a sense of home.**

### **Some General Questions To Consider:**

**Note: These are for ALL Design Areas.**

**— Remember: From who's point of view is the story being told?**

A. In who's space(s) does this take place in?

**The play takes place in Grace's diner in the town that Will is the sheriff of.**

B. Who is in control of this situation and environment?

**Grace owns the diner, so she controls the diner. However, throughout the play, Will is the primary controlling force since he steps in and breaks up fights (such as between Bo and Cherie). Grace and Elma respect him, as shown when Will is beating Bo in a fight. In that situation, Grace says, "I'll put my money on Will Masters *any time*" (Inge 49) and Elma says, "Will'll give him first aid. He always does" (Inge 49), showing that Grace and Elma both trust Will to protect them and make moral decisions (e.g. taking care of those he arrests and ensuring that the diner does not devolve into chaos). Bo thinks he is in control and that he can marry Cherie if he wants, but he learns by the end of the play to respect Cherie's autonomy.**

C. What are the tastes, interests, etc. of the characters in this play?

**Cherie is really interested in nightclub singing, but she also wants a better life for herself, as displayed when she confesses to Elma that she was thinking of just going with Bo to Montana because he may be able to provide a better life for her. Bo is a young cowboy/rancher who is in love with Cherie. He is also interested in rodeo. Virgil, the older cowboy/rancher, likes playing the guitar. Elma, and Dr. Lyman — a former college professor — are both interested in Shakespeare, and they share a taste for Shakespeare. Grace and Carl are both in a casual relationship with each other and seem to enjoy that. Grace is interested in running her diner well, and Carl is interested in the routine stops that fall along his route. Will, the sheriff, is interested in upholding morality in the community, as shown when he teaches Bo a lesson in humility from personal experience.**

D. What relationship do the characters have to each other and the environment?

— Physical and emotional?

— Are they all in the same “world”?

**The characters in *Bus Stop* are all brought together in the diner by the storm, and they are searching for connection, belonging, or a better life. Physically, some are young (e.g. Cherie, Bo), some are older (Virgil, Grace, Will, Carl), some are much older (Dr. Lyman), and one is much younger (Elma). Dr. Lyman is no longer in the world of work as he is a former professor. Bo and Virgil are ranchers, and Grace, Carl, Will, and Elma work uniformed jobs.**

E. What is/has influenced this environment and these characters?

**The diner is located in a small rural town, and this combined with the snowstorm creates a very isolated environment. As a result, the characters’ stories and emotions are the forefront of the play. Furthermore, Bo’s cowboy lifestyle influences his free, brash nature. Similarly, Will’s role as the sheriff influences his desire to protect those (like Cherie) in harm’s way. Dr. Lyman is influenced by his former academic career, and he likely was a professor of literature or philosophy, as shown by his tendency to quote Shakespeare verses. Cherie’s goal has been to be a nightclub singer, but she also wants to improve her quality of life.**

F. How long has this situation(s) been going on?

**The diner has existed for a considerable amount of time, as shown by Will and Carl's familiarity with Grace and Elma. Bo and Cherie met at the Blue Dragon nightclub a short time ago and made out, but then Bo forced Cherie to come with him because he wanted to marry her. Virgil and Bo have known each other for a long time, as displayed by Virgil acting as a father figure to Bo during the play, such as when he gave Bo advice on how to interact with others more respectfully after Bo tried to forcibly advance on Cherie.**

G. How long have they been in this environment?

**At the start of the play, the travelers traveled 30 miles away in a bus from their starting location, Kansas City. The travelers have never been in the environment — Grace's diner — of the play before, but Carl, Will, Grace, and Elma have. They have known each other for a substantial amount of time, as displayed by their comfortability in communicating with one another during the play. Grace and Elma are at the diner almost every day since they work there, and Will and Carl frequently stop by.**

H. What has happened in this environment before the action began?

— Both short and long term?

**A snowstorm occurred that blocked the bus from continuing toward Topeka. The travelers were originally traveling from Kansas City, Missouri. Some of the characters in Grace's diner have some history together. Bo had taken Cherie with him to get married after meeting her in a nightclub a short while ago and making out with her. In the long term, Grace and Elma had opened their diner and Will had become the local sheriff. Dr. Lyman used to be a college professor.**

I. What is the surrounding environment(s) like?

**There is a large snowstorm outside that caused the bus the travelers were riding on to have to stop. It is also night outside. At the start of Act III, the snowstorm subsides, and the night sky gives way to dawn.**

J. What changes, in space, characters, atmosphere, etc., happen in "telling the story"?

— How will these changes, (if any) be dealt with physically and artistically?

— What, if any, are the unknowns?

**The location of the play does not change, but the atmosphere outside changes from a heavy 1 a.m. snowstorm in Act I and Act II to a 5 a.m. dawn with no snowstorm in Act III. During Act III, not only has the snowstorm cleared, but Billy is also beginning to clear away his selfishness, as shown when he asks Cherie for permission to kiss him. The snowstorm clearing represents a change in Bo's character, and the lighting would consequently be lighter (due to the morning light), symbolizing hope for the future. Bop stops hanging his head in shame and actually takes tangible action to remediate his forced advancements (by apologizing and offering money to Cherie to return to Kansas City if she wishes). While we know that Cherie agrees to go to Montana, it is unknown if their relationship lasts after they get on the bus or if they did both end up making it all the way to Montana. It is also unknown what happens to Virgil after the play ends, as he has no place to go as he begins his search to find belonging.**

### **Production/Design Decisions:**

A. What is the artistic team's "concept statement" or "artistic point of view regarding this production?"

— What message, thoughts, feelings, etc. (in relationship to theme and playwright's comment) do you wish the audience to walk away with?

**The artistic team envisions *Bus Stop* as an exploration of human connection and the desire for a sense of belonging to a community close to one's heart. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our contemporary audience has experienced 2 years of isolation. As such, they relate to feelings of isolation and yearning for connection. Through the journey of characters such as Bo, Cherie, Will, and Virgil, the audience is encouraged to self-reflect to check if they as well have been open and understanding in their pursuit of their own relationships and personal growth. Through the experiences of Carl, Grace, Elma, and Dr. Lyman, the audience will resonate with the feeling of a burning desire for companionship and connection.**

**We aim to intimately immerse the audience in the atmosphere of a warm diner, providing a cozy refuge for bus travelers caught amidst a heavy snowstorm. The characters, representative of ordinary American folk in the 1950s, struggle with their own desires and vulnerabilities. We aim for the audience to feel a deep connection with these characters, recognizing the characters' struggles and aspirations as echoes of their own.**

**By the end of the play, we hope that the audience walks away with the message that accepting one's own flaws and vulnerabilities and actively working to acknowledge or change them paves the way for personal growth and genuine, meaningful connections. They too can “get out of their box” if they self-reflect on their personal flaws and aspirations.**

B. What is your central image(s)?





The image above is of a Greyhound Bus station and diner in Los Angeles in 1954. The layout of the diner represents what I would like to create on stage. While the image is in black and white, the darker shades represent dimly lit areas, and the brighter shades are more warmly lit, giving the “cozy and warm” environment that the script specifies. The costumes and furniture are all reflective of the 1950s time period.



The image above of Presto Restaurant represents the color scheme I would like to design the show based on. The reds, browns, and peaches bring out a cozy and warm environment that shelters the travelers from the snowstorm.

C. What is the “arc” of the production?

A snowstorm causes the Kansas City-Topeka bus to stop at Grace’s diner until the storm clears. The travelers take shelter in the diner, but tensions brew as Bo makes forced advancements on Cherie and as Will tries to stop him. At the same time, Dr. Lyman is flirting with the much younger Elma, Virgil is trying to teach Bo to be more respectful to Cherie, and Carl and Grace casually flirt. The climax of the play occurs when Bo tries to forcibly lift Cherie up and take her away but is stopped by the sheriff. Will and Bo fight, and Bo loses and is handcuffed. Meanwhile, Dr. Lyman gets drunk while performing Shakespeare with Elma. Towards the end, Bo learns a lesson in humility and apologizes to

**Cherie for his actions, and Cherie, touched by his offer of money to return to Kansas City, ends up agreeing to go to Montana with him. Dr. Lyman parts ways with Elma, Carl parts with Grace, and the travelers, save Virgil, return to the bus. Virgil stays behind to chart his own path, and Grace closes the diner.**

D. What is your stylistic approach(s) to the production, (staging, acting, scenic, costume, lighting, sound, etc.)

**I would stage the production as a box set with a proscenium arch in order to contain the play in a square space that the audience can focus on for the duration of the performance. I would design the set with the items in place as per the directions at the top of Act I, and I would use a color scale ranging from peaches to reds and browns to create the scenic design with a cozy and warm effect. The diner uniforms would be white with brownish-orange plaid accents, Dr. Lyman would wear a reddish-brown suit coat and tie (but he would have a white shirt), Carl's uniform would be a white shirt and dark brown pants, Bo and Virgil would dress in brown cowboy attire with a checkered red and white bandana, and Will would wear a traditional light brown sheriff's uniform. The costume color should complement the scenic design (SEE 3F FOR SCENIC DESIGN) color. The lighting would also involve shades of reds, browns, and peaches, and there would be more red and brown lighting in the beginning and middle (since it is night and tensions are brewing) and more peach/lighter lighting toward the end (since it is dawn and tensions have cooled). The sound design would be limited — I believe that after the travelers arrive at the diner, this play is driven primarily by the characters. As such, the focus should be on the characters' stories, not on extra sounds or diner music. The guitar section would be done live, with Virgil playing his guitar on stage, in order to add more intimacy toward the audience into the scene. The characters would be blocked on stage together for the most part (since there is a snowstorm, there are not many other places for them to go), but pairs of characters actively in deep conversation which each other would be blocked downstage left and/or right (to again add more intimacy).**

E. How do you plan on using the Elements of Design and Principles of Design and Composition to help you convey your message?

— What are your specific approaches to line, shape/volume, value/contrast, texture, color, scale/proportion, motion, emphasis/focal point, balance, rhythm, space, unity?

**The shapes of the tables/chairs/counter chairs would be squares, especially since a thematic idea of the play is finding a better life for yourself (“getting out of your box”). Regarding line and proportion, the diner’s equipment (chairs, tables, etc.) would be mostly in line and of the same proportion, but the tables and chairs should show some wear. Act III would have more peach lighting in contrast to dim/darker lighting for Acts I and II because the mood of the play is less tense in Act III. Actors in deep conversation would be blocked downstage left and/or right, and I would shine a spotlight on them to highlight their conversation and emphasize those characters’ relationships with each other. The rest of the actors would be balanced around the diner, so that they are still involved in the scene but do not take away the spotlight from the characters whose turn it is to share their story. The same reds, browns, and peaches color scale for scene, costume, and lighting design would unite these three elements together as complements. The contrast between lighter colored light in Act III (in correlation with the morning) as compared to the darker/dimmer light in Act I and Act II (in correlation with the night) will showcase that after the events of the first two acts, each of the characters has learned something about what they want as individuals (they have developed, positively, as characters).**

THEN: Which of the above production decisions need to be re-thought to fit your script analysis answers?

**Our production decisions were made in conjunction with the script analysis!**

### **THE KEY WORD: JUSTIFICATION!!!**

*ALL of your production decisions MUST be made using the following circular checklist:*

**“The WHOLE. The PARTS. The WHOLE.”**

1. Decide your artistic and conceptual approach to the entire (the “WHOLE”) production.

2. Each Designer then makes additional, specific
3. Each of the smaller and more specific artistic decisions **MUST** then be evaluated in terms of it's support of the artistic and conceptual approach to the entire (the "WHOLE") production.

**“The sum of the parts must equal the whole!”**