



Your world. Our stage.

Contact: Anne Fliotsos, Ph.D.  
Tel: 765.494.3075  
Email: Fliotsos@purdue.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MOVE OVER ARISTOTLE; MAKE ROOM FOR BUDDAH  
Professor Asks Student Artists To Contemplate before Analyzing

When she began meditating with a church group five years ago, Dr. Anne Fliotsos never imagined that she would be using what she learned to help students understand plays. After all, what does breathing and focusing the mind have to do with script analysis? Fliotsos, Associate Professor of Theatre at Purdue University, finds that holistic and intuitive reflection is essential before dissecting a script and examining its parts—the more traditional academic approach. She argues for a multi-faceted approach to script interpretation in her new book, *Interpreting the Play Script: Contemplation and Analysis*.

Asking a theatre artist to approach a script like a scientist can be a mistake," says Fliotsos. "Aristotle's genius at indentifying and classifying parts of the plot is undeniable, but first an artist needs to respond intuitively, and to reflect upon that response, remembering that art expresses something essential about the human condition. I tell students: Don't just ask 'How do I work on the script,' but 'How does the script work on me?'"

In 2006 Fliotsos took part in a three-week seminar called *Infusing Asian Theatre into the Curriculum*, sponsored by the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. "The seminar was not about theatre in particular, but about introducing Asian culture and subject matter into our classes. It helped me contemplate Buddhist philosophies further, and I questioned how I could help students understand a different perspective about life, art—so many things. I had already been practicing meditation, and I also teach yoga, giving me a strong belief in the body-mind working as one. In the book, these ideas are presented in both theory and practice, as exercises to help students interpret not just verbally, but with the body, with images, and with associations."

Because post-modern and other non-traditional plays do not follow a linear progression, students are often baffled at how to approach the play text. Shelley Orr, a dramaturg and professor at San Diego State University, agrees that this book presents an important new balance of approaches, invoking several lenses of interpretation. "I have long been looking for just such a text to use in my courses—one that helps to rigorously develop the artist's response to a script," she states.

Cognitive studies reveal that the theories and experiments from the 1960s and '70s about "right-brain" and "left-brain" thinking are now dated, and that the mind-body relationship is complex. Fliotsos hopes this book will help emerging artists explore what it means to interpret and create a work of theatre, not just with the analytical mind, but with the whole self.

###

If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with Anne Fliotsos, please call her at 765.532.4013 or e-mail her at Fliotsos@purdue.edu.