

Female Representation Matters:

An intersectional study of the confluence of playwrighting, casting practices, and progressive productions as they relate to diversity and inclusion in theatre.

Created for the students of the McLennan College Theatre Department

Kathleen Laundy, Professor of Costume Design

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the friends and colleagues who served as my peer-review committee:

- Andrea Burghart Hinojosa, MA in Dance; Theatre Teacher/Choreographer at Keller ISD, TX.
- Whitney Coulter, Company Member at Jubilee Theatre Ft. Worth, TX.
- Dr. Bronwen Forbay, Professor of Music at McLennan College Waco, TX.
- Shahrzad Haghjoo, Professor of Costume Design at Del Mar College Corpus Christie TX.
- Amy Jimenez-Marques, Alexa Designer for Google, Seattle, WA.
- Debbey Sperberg Lukaszewicz, Temple Beth Abraham Nashua, New Hampshire.
- Barbara Matthews, Retired Professor of Theatre, California State University—Long Beach.
- Dr. Ren Powell, Theatre Teacher at Vagen Drama Norway; Playwright and Poet.
- Juliet Marie Salazar, Theatre Teacher at Santa Fe Public Schools.
- Christie Vela, Theatre Teacher at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts; Associate Artistic Director of Theatre Three Dallas, TX.
- Giselle Vento, Music Teacher at Crestview Elementary Waco, TX.

Why do we need to know this?

American theatre, film, and television have a long and problematic history with systemic racism, misogyny, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, and ableism:

Although women make up 52% of the world's population, men have historically dominated the business of playwrighting, producing, directing, acting, and design. Most plays included very few female characters, and fewer female playwrights. In the top grossing films of 2018 only 31% of the protagonists were female, while only 20% worked behind the scenes, and only 34% were film critics. In TV, women makeup 41% of all speaking roles and only 31% of all behind the scenes staff. Of the top 250 grossing films, Women comprised 18% of all directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and cinematographers. Women comprised 11% of all directors. 88% of the films had no female directors. Of the top 1,100 grossing films from 2007-2017, 95.7% of all directors were male and 4.3% were female. This translates to 22 male directors hired to every 1 female director.

In the 21st Century we should know better and do better. We hope through education and deliberate action toward inclusivity in our productions as well as our classes, to increase the representation of these under-represented groups in both our student population and the plays we produce.

<https://howlround.com/how-liberal-arts-theatre-programs-are-failing-their-students-color>

<https://variety.com/2016/film/news/movie-tv-diversity-study-hollywood-straight-white-male-1201711586/>

http://www.aapacnyc.org/uploads/1/1/9/4/11949532/aapac_2015-2016_10year_report.pdf

<https://allarts.org/2019/03/study-finds-decrease-in-broadway-diversity-following-a-record-breaking-year/>

<https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/research/#:~:text=Behind%20the%20scenes%2C%20women%20accounted,27%25%20in%202017%2D18.>

#Me too.

Tarana J. Burke asserts that 'me too.' is more than just a moment in time. As the founder of this vital and growing movement, and as someone who has been organizing within issues facing Black women and girls for more than three decades, Tarana has a commitment and vision that is bigger than any hashtag or viral moment.



- 1 in 4 women have experienced rape or attempted rape during their lifetimes, according to several national U.S. surveys.
- 1 in 4 women returning from the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan reported that they were sexually assaulted while they were deployed.
- 1 in 8 people “had someone threaten to post and/or post sexually explicit images of them without their consent,” according to a 2017 study by the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI). Women were almost twice as likely to be the targets of nonconsensual pornography (NCP) than men.
- 12% of transgender youth report being sexually assaulted in K-12 settings by peers or educational staff.
- 24% of American Indian transgender students, 18% of multiracial transgender students, 17% of Asian transgender students, and 15% of Black transgender students have experienced sexual assault.
- 1 in 10 youth detained in juvenile facilities experience sexual assault or sexual abuse while in custody.

#Time's Up

- We insist upon a world where everyone is safe and respected at work. A world where women have an equal shot at success and security. A world where no one lives in fear of sexual harassment or assault.
- By helping change culture, companies, and laws, TIME'S UP Now aims to create a society free of gender-based discrimination in the workplace and beyond. We want every person — across race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender identity, and income level — to be safe on the job and have equal opportunity for economic success and security. TIME'S UP Now is an independent, nonpartisan, and not-for-profit 501(c)(4) charitable organization.
- Their three goals are safety—insisting everyone is safe at work, equity—leveling the playing field, and power—disrupting the status quo. Their fighting for change in three key ways: changing culture—so harassment and inequality are no longer tolerated, changing companies—so work is safe and equitable everywhere, changing laws and policies—so our rights are protected and expanded. We're changing policies to improve women's lives: In workplaces across the country and around the world, in state legislatures around the country, and in Congress and across the federal government.
- Text now to stay up to date 306-44.

<https://timesupnow.org/>

5050 by 2020

Who We Are:

5050by2020 is an intersectional initiative of the Time's Up movement incubated at the Center for Cultural Power. We empower artists and storytellers to change the game in Hollywood and beyond.

Some Talking Points

- 5050by2020 is an intersectional power movement in arts and entertainment.
- We want the leadership in our industry to reflect the diversity of America because they decide what movies and television we watch.
- Toxic masculinity is destroying our country. We invite men to radically reimagine their relationship to power. Give us the stories that our society needs now.
- 94% of women in Hollywood have been sexually harassed. Stop glorifying social and sexual dominance in TV and film.
- It's clear that sexual abuse is an epidemic in this country, and we don't think the amount of rape scenes written and directed by men is helping. You can just stop.
- When women, people of color and queer people create our own stories, we lay the groundwork for political change.
- Seeing ourselves as heroes in movies makes us feel like the lead characters in our own lives.
- Black Panther and Wonder Woman have dispelled the myth that women and people of color are not valuable overseas.
- Men have used patriarchy and white supremacy to create a reality that centers their own needs, normalizing our oppression. This must end.
- The devastating Parkland shooting is becoming all too common a story. Our industry must create storylines that interrogate toxic masculinity and build a culture where we all belong.

Female Tropes



- **Madonna/Whore:** Sigmund Freud came up with this idea that men view women through this lens. You're either a good girl like the Virgin Mary or a bad girl like Mary Magdalene. Allison says to Claire in *Breakfast Club*: "Well, if you say you haven't, you're a prude. If you say you have you're a slut. It's a trap. You want to, but you can't, and when you do, you wish you didn't, right?"



- **Mom/Career Woman:** In the first 50 years of Hollywood, moms are played by white women while Black women play their maids who only exist to take care of the white family. Starting in the 60's, white women were beginning to work outside the home on TV, while Black women were beginning to have a family life outside of work. Only in the last 5 years have there been shows with moms that were neither white nor Black. This struggle still exists for all women and is still being used as a TV trope. Moms don't have time for a career, career girls don't have time for a family, and anyone who tries to do both struggles. In addition, women who do work outside the home have tended to be waitresses, secretaries or teachers, and on medical shows nurses rather than doctors. Only recently have women been seen as police officers, lawyers, judges, or government officials. TV both reflects and lags behind real world progress in this area.



- **Cinderella:** This trope is 2,000 years old. Essentially, it is a story of girl overcoming her lower class status by marrying into a higher one. It's the classic make over story where an ugly duckling must be turned into a swan to get the man of her dreams, because she's not good enough the way she currently is. How *Stella Got her Groove Back* is an interesting example of this trope, because her Prince Charming magically fixes her struggle between mom and career woman.



- **Manic Pixie Dream Girl:** This trope is a type of female character often depicted as a whimsical, quirky, sometimes eccentric, fantasy woman who saves the male protagonist from himself. She usually aides in his transformation without ever showing any real agency of her own. She is a vivacious character whose main purpose is to teach the male protagonist that life is worth embracing. Film critic Nathan Rabin writes in his original review of *Elizabethtown* that the MPDG "exists solely in the fevered imaginations of sensitive writer-directors to teach broodingly soulful young men to embrace life and its infinite mysteries and adventures." This trope does not exist outside of whiteness. It is my belief that white writers and directors think that women of color are not submissive enough to only exist for their boyfriend. The closest equivalent is Sassy Black Woman and Fiery Latina. <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/manic-pixie-dream-girl/>





The Wizard of Oz



Breakfast Club

© Alamy Stock Photo



Gilligan's Island

Madonna/Whore



Grease



Black Swan



Mad Men



The Brady Bunch



The Partridge Family



All in the Family



Happy Days

TV Moms



One Day at a Time



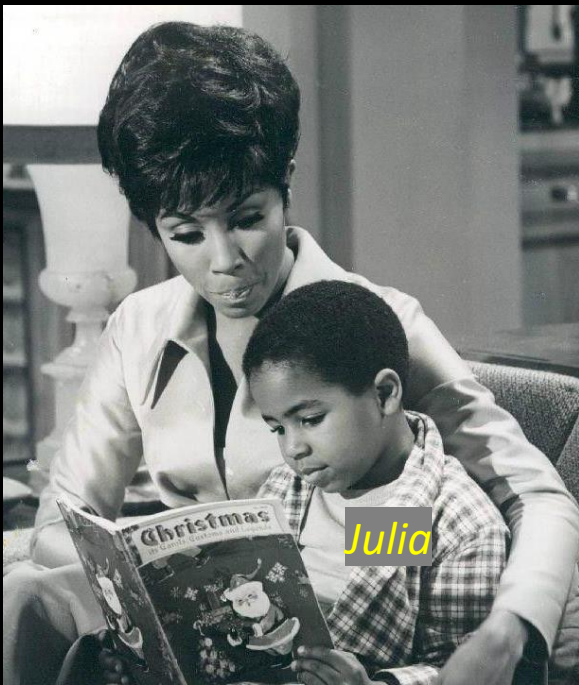
Roseanne



Married with Children



Oh, my God.
I'm m... That 70's Show



Julia



Good Times



The Jefferson



What's Happening!!

TV Moms



The Cosby Show



The Fresh Prince



Family Matters



Everybody Hates Chris



The Big Sick

TV Moms



One Day at a Time



*Penny Dreadful:
City of Angels*



Never Have I Ever



Master of None

“You don’t need to take us out to dinner.
Just call us once a week.”



Ramy

Blue Collar Career



Lavern and Shirley



What's Happening!!



Alice



Big Bang Theory



Two Broke Girls



Secretaries



Private Secretary



The Beverly Hillbillies



The Bob Newhart Show



WKRP in Cincinnati



Teachers



The Bionic Woman



Isis



The Simpsons



Buffy the Vampire Slayer



Journalists



My Girl Friday



Superman



The Mary Tyler Moore Show



Murphy Brown



Scream



Supergirl



M*A*S*H*



Nurses



X Files



ER

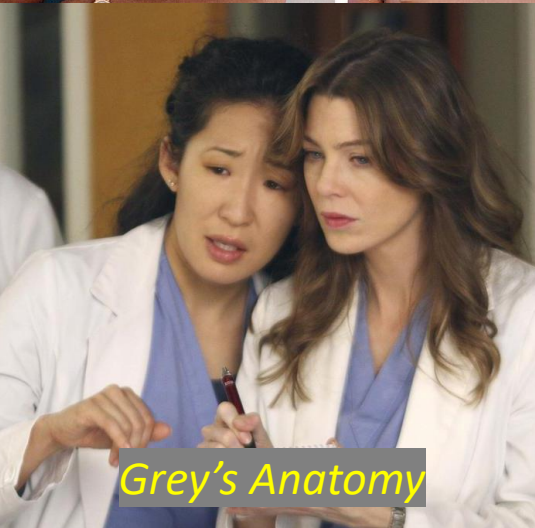


City of Angels

Medical Careers



Bones



Grey's Anatomy



Big Bang Theory



NURSE JACKIE



Lucifer



The Mindy Project



Police Woman



CHIPS



Cagney and Lacey



Hill Street Blues



Night Court

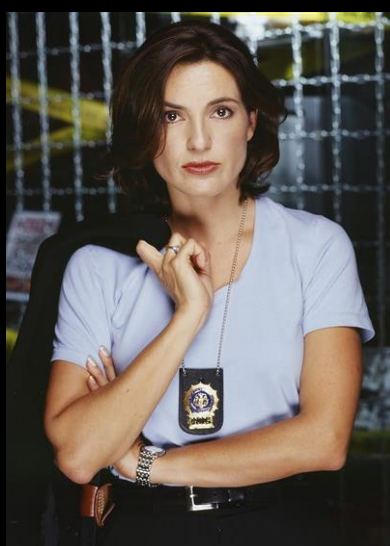


Fargo

Policewomen



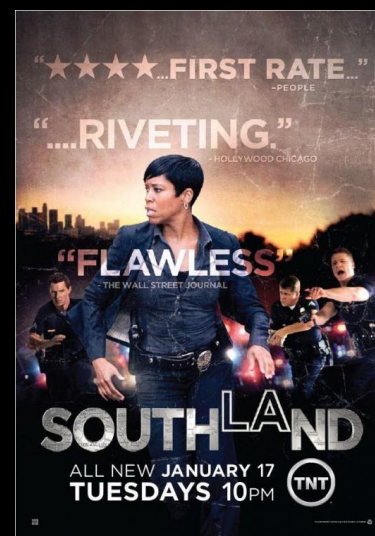
Law & Order



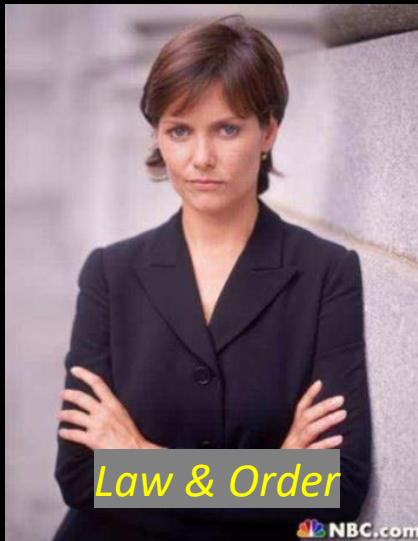
Law & Order SVU



Castle



Legal Careers



Political Careers



Parks and Rec



The West Wing



Political Animals



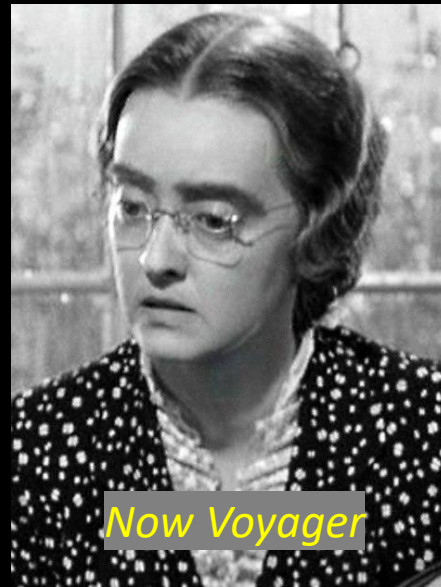
Madam Secretary



The buck stops **VEEP** here near here.



My Fair Lady



Now Voyager



Grease

Cinderella Trope



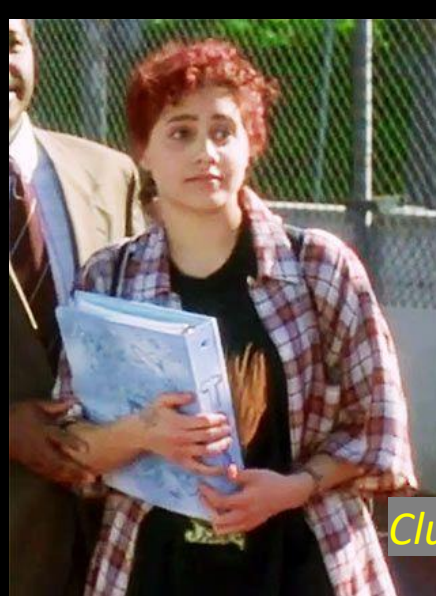
Breakfast Club



She's All That



Pretty Woman



Clueless



The Princess Diaries



Cinderella Trope



Miss Congeniality



My Big Fat Greek Wedding



The Devil Wears Prada





Fight Club



Almost Famous

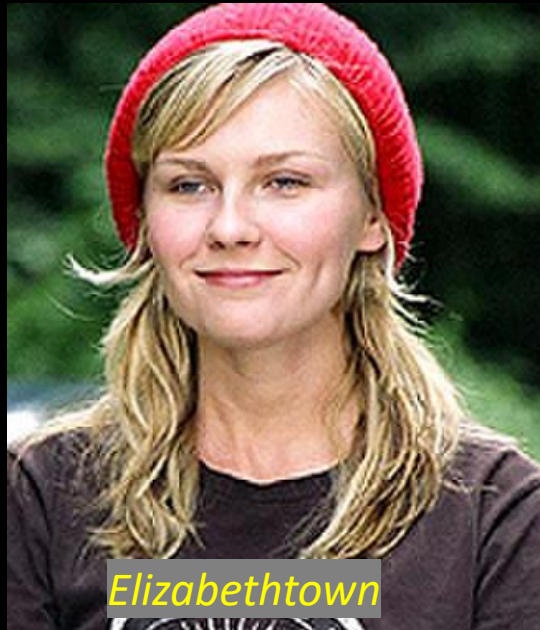


Garden State



Scott Pilgrim

Manic Pixie Dream Girl



Elizabethtown



Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium



Forgetting Sarah Marshall

What now?

Without bringing attention to the mistreatment of Female characters, it makes it difficult for writers to change how they write these characters. By learning about stereotypes, we grow to appreciate quality storytelling. We always have to ask ourselves certain questions: Are these stereotypes damaging? How should show-runners and writers improve their storytelling when it comes to Female characters? Can we like certain pieces of media while simultaneously recognizing their mistreatment of Female characters?

Shakespeare: Feminist Playwright

This Tumblr thread authored by [penfairy](#), shines light on the inner workings of Shakespeare's comedies. The deeper point of the thread would seem to suggest that when equality is achieved, the rest of the world flourishes. I have transcribed it in its entirety for you here.

“Women have more power and agency in Shakespeare’s comedies than in his tragedies, and usually there are more of them with more speaking time, so I’m pretty sure what Shakespeare is saying is “men ruin everything” because everyone fucking dies when men are in charge but when women are in charge you get married and live happily ever after.”

To which a man replied to mansplain to her that she didn’t know what she was talking about by saying “I think you’re reading too far into things, kiddo. Take a break from your women’s studies major and get some fresh air.”

To which she replied, “Right. Well, I’m a historian, so allow me to elaborate.”

“One of the most important aspects of the Puritan/Protestant revolution (in the 1590’s in particular) was the foregrounding of marriage as the most appropriate way of life. It often comes as a surprise when people learn this, but Puritans took an absolutely positive view of sexuality within the context of marriage. Clergy were encouraged to lead by example and marry and have children as opposed to Catholic clergy who prized virginity above all else. Through his comedies, Shakespeare was promoting this new way of life which had never been promoted before. The dogma, thanks to the church, had always been “durr hurr women are evil, sex is bad, celibacy is your ticket to salvation”. All that changed in Shakespeare’s time, and thanks to him we get a view of the world where marriage, women, and sexuality are in fact the key to salvation.”

The difference between the structure of a comedy and a tragedy is that the former is cyclical, and the latter a downward curve. Comedies weren't stupid fun about the lighter side of life. The definition of a comedy was not a funny play. They were plays that began in turmoil and ended in reconciliation and renewal. They showed the audience the path to salvation, with the comic ending of a happy marriage leaving the promise of societal regeneration intact. Meanwhile, in the tragedies, there is no such promise of regeneration or salvation. The characters destroy themselves. The world in which they live is not sustainable. It leads to a dead end, with no promise of new life.

And so, in comedies, the women are the moves and shakers. They get things done. They move the machinery of the plot along. In tragedies, though women have an important part to play, they are often morally bankrupt as compared to the women of comedies, or if they are morally sound, they are disenfranchised and ignored, and refused the chance to contribute to the society in which they live. Let's look at some examples.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the play ends in tragedy because *no-one listens to Juliet*. Her father and Paris both insist they know what's right for her, and they refuse to listen to her pleas for clemency. Juliet begs them—screams, cries, manipulates, tells them outright *I cannot marry, just wait a week before you make me marry Paris, just a week, please*, and they ignore her, and force her into increasingly desperate straits, until at last the two young lovers kill themselves. The message? This violent, hate-filled patriarchal world is unsustainable. The promise of regeneration is cut down with the deaths of these children.

Compare to *Othello*. This is the most horrifying and intimate tragedy of all, with the climax taking place in a bedroom as a husband smothers his young wife. The tragedy here could easily have been averted if Othello had listened to Desdemona and Emilia instead of Iago. The message? This society built on racism and misogyny and martial masculine honour, is unsustainable, and cannot regenerate itself. The very horror of it lies in the murder of two wives.

How about *Hamlet*? Ophelia is a disempowered character, but if Hamlet had listened to her, and not mistreated her, and if her father hadn't controlled every aspect of her life, then perhaps she wouldn't have committed suicide. The final scene of carnage is prompted by Laertes and Hamlet furiously grappling over her corpse. When Ophelia dies, any chance of reconciliation dies with her. The world collapses in on itself. This society is unsustainable.

King Lear—we all know that this is prompted by Cordelia's silence, her unwillingness to bend the knee and flatter in the face of tyranny. It is Lear's disproportionate response to this that sets off the tragedy, and we get a play that is about entropy, aging, and the destruction of the social order.

There are exceptions to the rule. I'm sure a lot of you are crying out "but Lady Macbeth!" and it's a good point. However in terms of raw power, neither Lady Macbeth nor the witches are as powerful as they appear. The only power they possess is the ability to influence Macbeth; but ultimately it is Macbeth's own ambition that prompts him to murder Duncan, and it is he who escalates the situation while Lady Macbeth suffers a breakdown. In this case you have women who are allowed to influence the play, but do so for the worse; they fail to be the good moral compasses needed. Goneril, Regan, and Gertrude are similarly comparable; they possess a measure of power, but do not use it for good, and again society cannot renew itself.

Now we come to the comedies, where women do have the most control over the plot. The most powerful example is Rosalind in *As you Like it*. She pulls the strings in every avenue of the plot, and it is thanks to her control that reconciliation is achieved at the end, and all end up happily married.

Much Ado About Nothing pivots around a woman's anger over the abuse of her innocent cousin. If the men were left in charge in this play, no-one would be married at the end, and it would certainly end in tragedy. But Beatrice stand up and rails against men for their cruel conduct towards women and says that famous, spine-tingling line-- '*Oh God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the marketplace.*'

And Benedict, her suitor, *listens to her*. He realizes that his misogynistic view of the world is wrong and he takes steps to change it. He challenges his male friends for their conduct, parts company with the prince, and by doing this he wins his lady's hand. The entire happy ending is dependent on the men realizing that they must trust, love, and respect women. Now it is a society that is worthy of being perpetuated. Regeneration and salvation lies in equality between the sexes and the love husbands and wives cherish for each other.

The Merry Wives of Windsor—here we have men learning to trust and respect their wives, Falstaff learning his lesson for trying to seduce married women, and a daughter tricking everyone so she can marry the man she truly loves.

A Midsummer Night's Dream? The turmoil begins because three men are trying to force Hermia to marry someone she does not love and, Helena has been cruelly mistreated. At the end, happiness and harmony comes when the women are allowed to marry the men of their choosing, and it is these marriages that are blessed by the fairies.

What of the romances? In *the Tempest*, Prospero holds the power, but it is Miranda who is the key to salvation and a happy ending. Without his daughter, it is likely Prospero would have turned into a murderous revenger. *The Winter's Tale* sees Leontes destroy himself through his own jealousy. The king becomes a vicious tyrant because he is cruel to his own wife and children, and this breach of faith in suspecting his wife of adultery almost brings ruin to his entire kingdom. Only by obeying the sensible Emilia does Leontes have a chance of achieving redemption, and the pure trust and love that exists between Perdita and Florizel redeems the mistakes of the old generation and leads to a happy ending. *Cymbeline*? Imogen is wronged, and it is through her love and forgiveness that redemption is achieved at the end. In all of these plays, without the influence of the women there is no happy ending.

The message is clear. Without a woman's consent and co-operation in living together and bringing up a family, there is turmoil. Equality between the sexes and trust between husbands and wives alone will bring happiness and harmony, not only to the family unit, but to society as a whole.

The Taming of the Shrew rears its ugly head as a counter example, for here a happy ending is dependent on a woman's absolute subservience and obedience even in the face of abuse. But this is one of Shakespeare's early plays (and a rip-off of an older comedy called *The Taming of a Shrew*) and it is interesting to look at how the reception of this play changed as values evolved in this society.

As early as 1611 *The Shrew* was adapted by the writer John Fletcher in a play called *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*. It is both a sequel and an imitation, and it chronicles Petruchio's search for a second wife after his disastrous marriage with Katherine (whose taming had been temporary) ended with her death. In Fletcher's version, the men are outfoxed by the women and Petruchio is "tamed" by his new wife. It ends with a rather uplifting epilogue that claims the play aimed: "*To teach both sexes due equality and as they stand bound, to love mutually.*"

The Taming of the Shrew and *The Tamer Tamed* were staged back to back in 1633, and it was recorded that although Shakespeare's *Shrew* was "liked", Fletcher's *Tamer Tamed* was "very well liked". You heard it here, folks; as early as 1633 audiences found Shakespeare's message of total female submission uncomfortable, and they preferred John Fletcher's interpretation and his message of equality between the sexes.

So yes, the message we can take away from Shakespeare is that a world in which women are powerless and cannot or do not contribute positively to society and family is unsustainable. Men, given the power and left to their own devices, will destroy themselves. But if men and women can work together and live in harmony, then the whole community has a chance at salvation renewal and happiness."

The First French Female Actors



Marie Vernier

In France prior to the 15th C, women were barred from attending the theatre on moral grounds and if women were on stage it was an exception rather than the rule. For example in Medieval pageant plays, women portrayed Eve, a sinner, or the Virgin Mary, a saint. There was no in-between. Between the 16th and 17th Centuries Women's attendance at the theatre accompanied the rise of female led literary salons, which in turn, led to women being allowed on stage, almost 60 years before English women.



Madeleine Bejart

Marie Vernier performed in Paris between 1594 and 1609. She was the leading lady and co-director of Valleran-Lecomte's theatre company. She was first and foremost a tragedian and was Paris' first actress to be known by name.

Madeleine Bejart made her debut at Theatre du Marais in the 1630's. Co-founded the Illustre Theatre with Moliere. Her specialty was playing coquettish maids or frivolous young women. She originated the roles of Marotte in *The Precious Ladies*, Lisette in *The School for Husbands*, and Dorine in *Tartuffe*.



Armande Bejart

Armande Bejart, Madeleine's daughter and Moliere's wife. Made her debut in 1663. She originated the roles of Celimene in *The Miser*, Angelique in *The Imaginary Invalid*, Elmire in *Tartuffe*, and Lucile in *The Bourgeois Gentlemen*.



Margaret Hughes, 1670



Nell Gwynn, 1670



Anne Bracegirdle, 1671

The First English Female Actors

Women were first allowed onstage in England in 1660. As literary critic Fiona Ritchie has written of this era, “from the first entrance of the first woman on the public stage in England, the actress is set up as a sexual object to be viewed, enjoyed, and appropriated by the spectator.” In fact, many actresses of this time had a second source of income by being pimped out to theatre patrons.

The orange sellers (who were also women) would act as go-betweens taking offers from the patrons backstage to the actresses.

Margaret Hughes was the first woman to perform on an English stage playing Desdemona in *Othello* when she was 15. She later became the mistress of the Duke of Cumberland.

Nell Gwynn performed in comedy parts by Dryden, had many lovers, and most famously became the mistress of King Charles II, bearing him two sons. Jessica Swale wrote a play about her life that premiered at The Globe in 2015.

Anne Bracegirdle was a tragedian and played Desdemona, Ophelia, and *Richard III's* Anne. She was a celebrated virgin and was the intended victim of a failed kidnapping plot by two rival wannabe lovers who ended up killing another actor, her supposed lover, in the process.

The First Mexican Female Playwright

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz was a self-educated child savant. At this time women were forbidden to read or study. She lived with her grandfather who owned a magnificent library and from the time she was three, she would sneak books out and go read them in the chapel on his hacienda. She became fluent in Latin and Nahuatl (a Native Aztec language) by the time she was eight. At sixteen she moved to Mexico City with the intention of disguising herself as a man in order to go to University. Her mother didn't give her permission, so instead she became a lady in waiting at the Viceroy court, where she was tutored by the Viceroy's wife, who invited intellectuals from all fields to come and test her abilities. She wowed everyone she met and received several marriage proposals that she turned down.

At nineteen, she took her holy vows at the San Jeronimo Convent in 1667 and began writing music, poetry, philosophy, plays, and prose on topics like love, gender, sex, feminism, misogyny, and challenging patriarchy in religion. She wrote many epistles on a woman's right to an education. Her outspoken opinions led to her being called The Phoenix of Mexico for being "the flame that rose from the ashes of religious authoritarianism". She died from ministering to her holy sisters who were infected with the plague in 1695. Her writings inspired modern feminist movements and advocacy.

<https://www.dartmouth.edu/~sorjuana/>

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/curricula/sor-juana-ines-de-la-cruz-first-great-latin-american-poet>

<https://poets.org/poet/sor-juana-ines-de-la-cruz>



Peter Pan, 1904 London, UK

In the original production of *Peter Pan*, Peter is a “breeches role” traditionally played by a young woman, rather than a man. This was done for several reasons. First, it was illegal for actors under 14 to perform after 9pm. Second, Peter has to fly and young women weigh less than grown men. Third, although Wendy has a romantic attachment to Peter, he only sees her as his mother; an adult male in the role would make that creepy. Most importantly, JM Barrie requested that they cast a woman. Nina Boucicault, daughter of Dion Boucicault, originated the role. The only advice Barrie gave her was “Peter is a bird and he is one day old”.

In the first half of the 20th C, Peter was a role famously coveted by lesbians and bi-sexual actors. Maude Adams played Peter on Broadway for four years. Pauline Chase took over for Boucicault and was a favorite of Barrie. Betty Bronson starred in the 1924 silent film and was personally chosen by Barrie. Jean Arthur revived the role on Broadway in 1950, Veronica Lake replaced her for the national tour. Mary Martin was perhaps the most famous American to play him, doing a filmed and taped musical version.

Sandy Duncan was the longest running Peter in the Broadway musical for seven years from 1966-69 and again from 1979-81. Cathy Rigby, American gymnast, started playing the role on the West Coast in 1973 and was still doing it in 2014. Allison Williams did the Live TV movie in 2014.

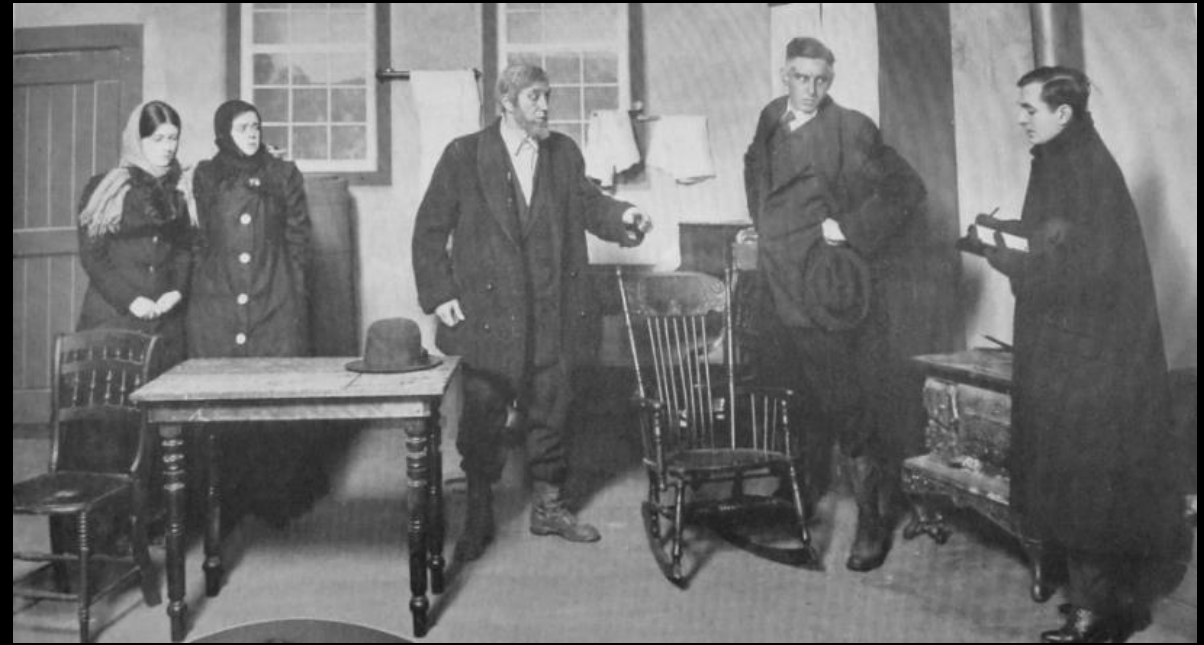
<https://www.autostraddle.com/15-ladies-who-played-peter-pan-from-nina-boucicault-to-alison-williams-253416/>



Nina Boucicault as Peter

Trifles, 1916

Provincetown Players, Mass.



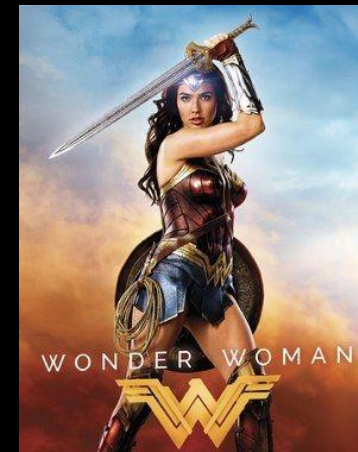
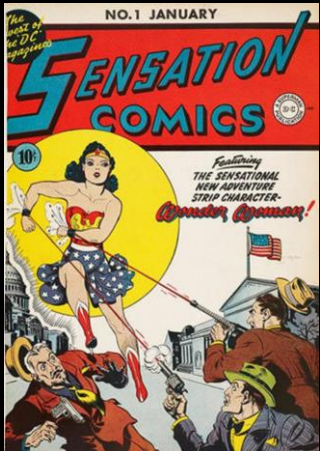
Susan Glaspell was writing during the first wave of feminism. The play was based on a real life murder trial of John Hossack, whose wife Margaret was accused of killing him. At this time, women still could not vote or serve on a jury, much less be a lawyer or a judge. Glaspell was a journalist covering the trial when a research trip to the Hossack farm changed her opinion on Margaret's guilt and inspired her to write the play. Names were changed to protect the innocent.

The play tells the story of the trifles left in the Wright farmhouse that the male investigators completely overlook. Their wives however, recognize these things as important clues and discover why Mrs. Wright killed her husband, but choose to hide the evidence to protect her. It starred Marjorie Vonnegut as Mrs. Peters and Elinor Cox as Mrs. Hale. Mrs. Wright is a character in the play who never appears. We must judge her based solely on the "trifles" she has left behind.

<https://writecsu.wordpress.com/2016/07/11/the-crime-of-self-preservation-exemplified-by-trifles/>

Wonder Woman, 1941

In 2016 noted feminist Gloria Steinem, writing for Reuters, stated, "Wonder Woman symbolizes many of the values of women's culture that feminists are now trying to introduce into the mainstream: strength and self-reliance for women; sisterhood and mutual support among women; peacefulness and esteem for human life; a diminishment both of 'masculine' aggression and of the belief that violence is the only way of solving conflicts." Wonder Woman has appeared in a variety of media. Her first appearance was in comic books in 1941. She was then on the animated TV show: *Superfriends* from 1973-1986. Lynda Carter played her on the TV show that ran for 3 seasons from 1975-79. She was in two Lego movies, the first in 2014 followed by *Lego Batman* in 2017. Gal Gadot has recently taken over the Golden Lasso. She played Wonder Woman first in a bit role in *Batman V. Superman* in 2016. Then Gadot starred in Wonder Woman's first ever stand-alone movie in 2017, which was followed quickly by *The Justice League* later that year. The pandemic delayed the next installment of her stand-alone films, *WW 84*, which will come out on October 2nd, 2020...hopefully.



Judith Malina 1926-2015

She was born in 1926 into a Jewish family in Germany. Her mother was an actress, her father a Rabbi. Due to anti-semitism, the family immigrated to New York when she was three years old. She studied Agitprop theatre under Erwin Piscator at the New School for Social Research, but Malina took it further, committing to both pacifism and anarchy.

In 1947, she co-founded The Living Theatre with her husband Julian Beck, an abstract expressionist painter. The Living Theatre was a radical political theatre troupe that rose to prominence in NY and Paris during the 1950's-1960's, despite being closed down time and time again by the government. She continued pursuing avant-garde theatrical approaches taking their shows on the road, once their theatre spaces were shut down.

Throughout the 1970's she and Beck were continually arrested and jailed for performing incendiary street theatre all over the world. She came back to New York in the 1980's and housed her company in a 14th Street Loft in NY. She taught at NYU and Columbia. The Living Theatre has since produced over 100 plays. She has 34 film and TV credits over a 65 year career. She died in 2015 at 88 years of age.

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/malina-judith> <https://www.livingtheatre.org/>



Lucille Ball and Desilu 1950-1968

Desilu was the largest independent television production company in the US. It was founded in 1950 and co-owned by husband and wife Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball. The company is best known for shows such as *I Love Lucy*, *The Untouchables* and *Star Trek*. Ball and Arnaz jointly owned the majority stake of Desilu from its inception until 1962 when Ball bought out Arnaz and ran the company herself. They had divorced in 1960, which is what prompted the buy out.

When Arnaz stepped down as President of Desilu, Ball became CEO and President which made her the first woman to head a major studio and the most powerful woman in Hollywood. When she got pregnant with her second child, she wrote her pregnancy into the *I Love Lucy* show. She fought with CBS and won the right to be shown pregnant on air. She had a scheduled C-section on Jan. 9, 1953 which was the same day that the episode in which her character gave birth aired on TV.

She sold Desilu to Paramount in 1968 for \$17 million.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desilu_Productions



La Casa de Bernarda Alba

Teatro Goya, Spain 1964

La Casa de Bernarda Alba was the last play that Spanish playwright and anti-fascist Federico Garcia Lorca wrote before his assassination in 1936 on the brink of the Spanish Civil War. Due to his murder, the play wasn't performed until 1964 in Spain, during Franco's dictatorship. It was directed by Juan Antonio Bardem, uncle of Javier Bardem best known for his performance in *No Country for Old Men*.

Lorca had profound sympathy for the genuine repression and hardships suffered by the women in rural Spain. Bernarda's daughters are both victims and prisoners who's struggle against their mother's tyrannical oppression reflects Spain's struggle against fascism.

Classicism plays a major part in the play's conflict. Bernarda as a rich widow exerts her power over her maid Poncia, who exerts her power over the kitchen maid, who in turn exerts her power over a beggar woman. Bernarda values order and reputation; chaos and sexual impropriety are a threat to society and punishable by death. There are no male roles in *Bernarda Alba*. FYI Lorca was gay.

<https://bernarda-alba.weebly.com/protocol-essay.html>



Margarita Xirgu Subira as Bernarda

The House of Bilquis Bibi, 2010

Tamasha Theatre Company, UK

Sudha Bhuchar was born in Tanzania to Indian parents. When she was 11, they immigrated to the UK. After realizing there were very few opportunities for Asian actors in London, in 1989 she co-founded the Tamasha Theatre Company whose mission is “popularizing Asian art into the British mainstream culture, diversifying narratives, and encouraging developing artists from ethnic minorities.”

She adapted *House of Bernarda Alba* to be set in modern day Pakistan where women still have subordinate status and the practice of “purdah”—keeping women in seclusion—is still observed, as well as arranged marriages and honor killings—if the family patriarch feels that a wife or daughter has disgraced the family, he may kill her. It’s the same story, but in 2010 the daughters have glossy fashion magazines, smartphones, and online shopping to show them the world they are missing out on.

<https://kristinelandonsmith.com/the-house-of-bilquis-bibi>
<https://officiallondontheatre.com/news/the-house-of-bilquis-bibi-111657/>



Mariam Haque as Summayah

For Colored Girls who Have Considered Suicide/ When the Rainbow is Enuf, 1976

- Choreopoem By Ntozake Shange tells the stories of seven women who have suffered oppression in a racist and sexist society through a series of 20 poetic monologues choreographed to music.
- *For Colored Girls* starred Trezana Beverley as Lady in Red, Laurie Carlos as Lady in Blue, Risë Collins as Lady in Purple, Aku Kadogo as Lady in Yellow, Janet League as Lady in Brown, Paula Moss as Lady in Green, and Shange as Lady in Orange.
- Ran for 2 years at the Public Theatre on Broadway, nominated for two Tony awards, including Best Play, won one.
- Adapted for TV in 1982 PBS a part of the American Playhouse series.
- Adapted for a film in 2010 by Tyler Perry.
- Revived in 2019 at the Public Theatre in New York.



Designing Women, 1986



Created by Linda Bloodworth-Thomason for CBS.

The show is about four women who own/run an interior design firm in Atlanta called Sugarbaker & Assoc. Julie is the CEO, Suzanne, her sister, is a former beauty queen who is a silent partner, Mary Jo is a recent divorcee and the lead designer, and Charlene is the office manager. The series was known for tackling political and social issues of the time including sexual harassment, gender and racial inequality, and the AIDS epidemic. Starring Dixie Carter as Julie, Delta Burke as Suzanne, Annie Potts as Mary Jo, and Jean Smart as Charlene. It won a GLAAD award for Best Comedy. Won 16 VQT award out of 28 nominations.

Linda Bloodworth-Thomason wrote a play based on the TV series that was scheduled to premiere in Arkansas in August, 2020 but has been put on hold due to the pandemic.

Murphy Brown, 1988-99

Murphy Brown is an American sitcom television series created by Diane English that premiered in 1988 on CBS starring Candice Bergen. Murphy is a recovering alcoholic who returns to run a fictional news magazine FYI, after a stay at the Betty Ford clinic. She's over 40 and single, a shatterer of glass ceilings. She is surrounded by men and has no problem being their boss. She is portrayed as one of the hardest hitting media personalities.

In the 1991-92 season finale, Murphy's character gets pregnant and since the father doesn't want to be involved, Murphy decided to raise the child as a single mother. This storyline drew criticism from VP Dan Quayle who said that Murphy was "mocking the importance of fathers by bearing a child alone and calling it just another lifestyle choice." The show responded by making the season premiere a special episode of FYI showcasing and celebrating the diversity of the modern American family. The show earned 37 Emmy nominations and 15 wins.

The show was revived in 2018 with Murphy now hosting a cable news show, called "Murphy in the Morning". Everyone from the original series returned to reprise their roles. It only lasted one season.



Steel Magnolias, 1989

1987 play written by Robert Harling. The play is a comedy-drama about the bond among a group of Southern women in northwest Louisiana. *Steel Magnolias* is based on a true story. The screenwriter Robert Harling's sister Susan, died of diabetic complications after giving birth in the 1980s. Written as a tribute to the strength of his sister, his mother, and the coterie of women who supported them, the work broke records at the Lucille Lortel Theatre in Manhattan, where it ran almost three years.

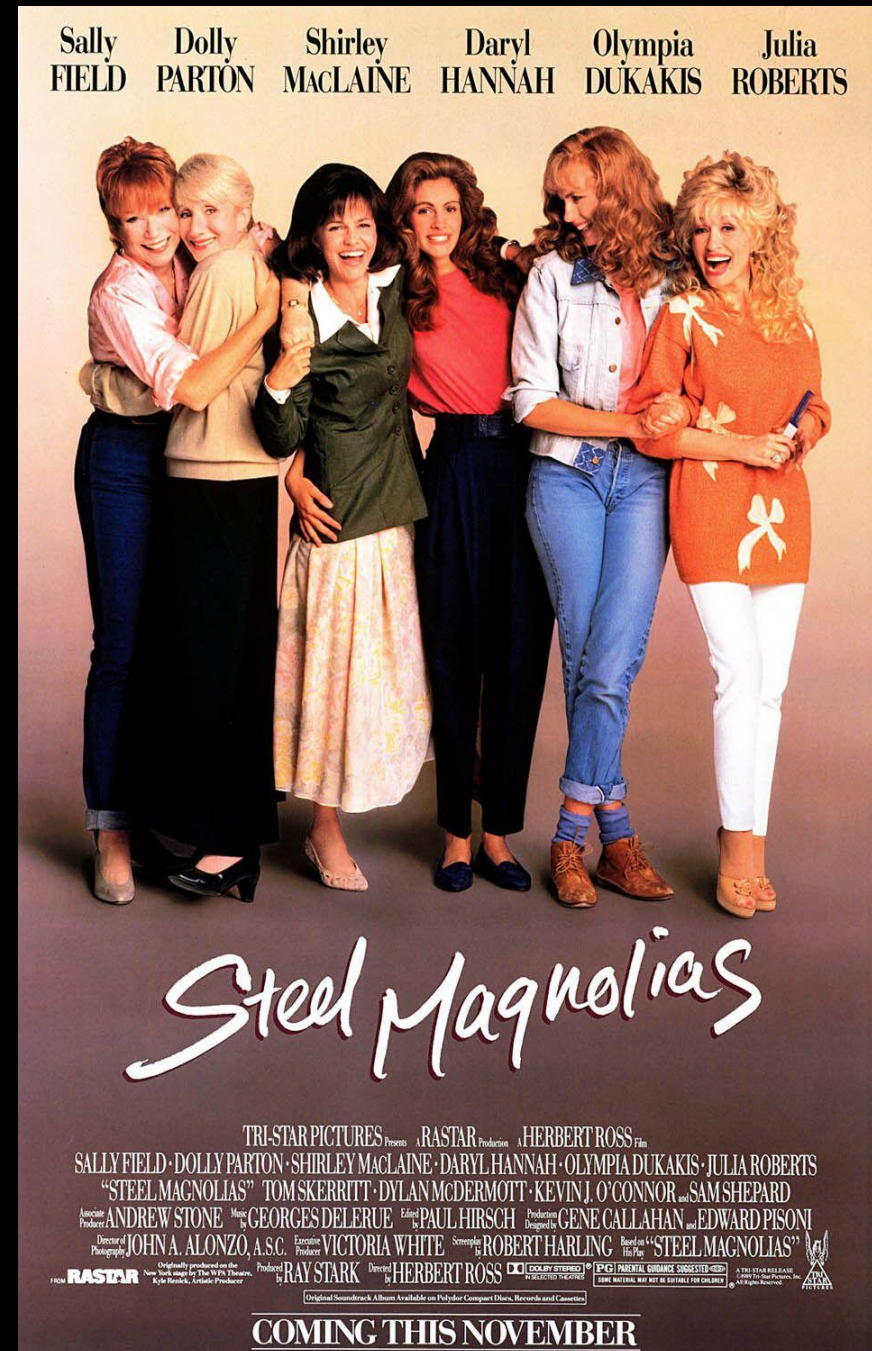
Harling said, "When I was a kid, the mystique of the beauty parlor was that guys were never allowed. You didn't know what went on in there, and they all came back different somehow. After Susan's funeral I thought, this play needs to be somewhere there can be no men, which was, of course, the beauty parlor, and I started putting the characters together... What people don't understand is that it's honest even below what they see as a story. It's honest all the way down. The play really did work miracles, and I don't use that term lightly. It helped us grieve. We were basically grieving with the world."

The 1989 film adaptation starred Julia Roberts, Sally Field, Shirley MacLaine, Olympia Dukakis, Dolly Parton, and Daryl Hannah. It was shot on location in Harling's home-town of Natchitoches, LA.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098384/>

<https://gardenandgun.com/feature/thirty-years-of-steel-magnolias/>

https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2019/07/steel-magnolias-30th-anniversary-diabetic-pregnancy/593815/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwp4j6BRCRARIsAGq4yMG3YJns_PSJT11k8afnXjUimC8i7dQu54-GjUx8s17syy23cLnoAvUaAvC6EALw_wcB



For Colored Girls, 2010

- Written, directed and produced by Tyler Perry. Extended from seven characters to ten, each character deals with a personal conflict—love, abandonment, rape, infidelity, abortion.
- Starring Janet Jackson, Whoopi Goldberg, Phylicia Rashad, Thandie Newton, Loretta Devine, Anika Noni Rose, Tessa Thompson, Kimberly Elise, Kerry Washington, and Macy Gray.
- It features music by Nina Simone.



Golden Thread Productions

San Francisco, CA

Golden Thread Productions is a Middle Eastern female centered theatre in San Francisco. Founded in 1996 by Torange Yeghiazarian. Golden Thread has been a pioneer in the field of Middle Eastern American theatre and has a long track record of producing world premieres and collaboratively developing original plays. “Our programming consists of productions of new full-length plays; the **ReOrient Festival** of short plays; special community outreach events such as **What do the Women Say?**; and the **Fairytale Players**, a dynamic touring ensemble that performs family shows at schools, libraries and festivals. Our programs expose our substantial non-Middle Eastern audience members to the genuine voices and alternative perspectives of the region, while simultaneously serving Middle Eastern audiences who rarely encounter meaningful reflections of their own culture and experience in popular media and the performing arts.”

<https://goldenthread.org/>



Top Girls, 1982

Royal Court Theatre, London



Caryl Churchill's play was written in the era of Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first female Prime Minister and was inspired by American feminists. The play questions whether it is possible for women in society to combine a successful career with a thriving family life.

Characters from history show up at a dinner party and reveal how they have suffered to attain their goals. The historical characters include Pope Joan, explorer Isabella Bird, invader of Hell Dull Gret, Japanese concubine and Buddhist nun Lady Nijo, and Patient Griselda, the obedient Marquis' wife in one of Chaucer's Tales.

A revival appeared on Broadway in 2007-08 The cast was Mary Catherine Garrison, Mary Beth Hurt, Jennifer Ikeda, Elizabeth Marvel, Martha Plimpton, Ana Reeder, and Marisa Tomei. This photo is from that revival.

The Rez Sisters, 1986

New Native Theatre, Canada

Written by Cree Canadian Tomson Highway, *The Rez Sisters* is about seven women on the Wasaychigan Hill Indian Reservation. Extreme poverty, lack of employment opportunities, prejudice, suicide and alcoholism are endemic. Abusive relationships abound, as does sexual predation.

Journalist Kristy Kirkup, "An RCMP report in 2014 put the tally at 1,181 murdered and missing woman between 1980 and 2012. The force added another 32 deaths and 11 disappearances in a 2015 update." (Canadian Press).

Photo is from the 2014 production at Belfry Theatre in Victoria, BC. Cast includes Tantoo Cardinal, Renelta Arluk, Tiffany Ayalik, Cheri Maracle, Tasha Faye Evans, Lisa C. Ravensbergen, Tracey Nepinak, and two-spirit dancer Waawaate Fobister as Nanabush.



<http://muskratmagazine.com/the-rez-sisters-looking-good-at-28/>

<https://www.timescolonist.com/review-rez-sisters-funny-poignant-and-heartbreaking-1.1381676>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-one-year-after-landmark-report-on-violence-indigenous-womens-group/>

Desdemona: A Play About a Handkerchief

Circle Rep Company, 1993

Influenced by Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Paula Vogel tells the story of *Othello* from the perspective of the three female characters, giving them agency and a voice, as they each suffer from existential identity crises. Desdemona has concluded that Othello is, under that exotic façade, nothing more than a porcelain Venetian. She took a Tuesday night shift at Bianca's bordello and has slept with everyone except Cassio. Emilia is very unhappy in her marriage to Iago, and Bianca is the only one in control of her own fate by owning her own business, yet she seeks marriage to Cassio and a more conventional life.

The women's shifting alliances prove that in an age of sexual oppression, women can achieve power only as wives or prostitutes. "Collectively, the three characters with their socially distinct English accents, form an exploitative sociological triangle that emphasizes how each is a prisoner of her class.



Starring J. Smith-Cameron as Desdemona, Fran Brill as Emilia, and Cherry Jones as Bianca.

The Vagina Monologues, 1996

Off-Broadway Westside Theatre

By Eve Ensler. Written after she conducted interviews with 200 women about their views on sex and relationships. The play explores consensual and nonconsensual sexual experiences, body image, genital mutilation, reproduction, vaginal care, menstrual periods, sex work, and several other topics through the eyes of women of various ages, races, and sexualities. It quickly moved from Off-Off Broadway to Off-Broadway to Madison Square Garden.

Ensler wrote the piece to celebrate the vagina, however, the purpose of the piece changed from a celebration of vaginas and femininity to a movement to stop violence against women. This was the start of the V-Day movement, a global non-profit movement that has raised \$100 million for groups working to end violence against women. Every year a new monologue is added to highlight a current issue affecting women around the world. In 2003, for example, Ensler wrote a new monologue, called *Under the Burqa*, about the plight of women in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

In 2004, Ensler also wrote a monologue called *They Beat the Girl Out of My Boy. . . Or So They Tried* after interviewing a group of women whose gender identity differed from their assigned gender at birth which resulted in the first all Trans Women performance and the creation of the *documentary Beautiful Daughters* in 2006 about the hardships that the transgender cast faced during the production. Every V-Day thousands of local benefit productions are staged to raise funds for local groups, shelters, and crisis centers working to end violence against women.

It has been produced internationally. A TV version aired on HBO in 1998. Eve Ensler was presented with a Tony award in 2011 for her humanitarian efforts . In 2018, *The New York Times* stated "No recent hour of theater has had a greater impact worldwide" <https://www.vday.org/>



Juno, 2007

Juno was written by first time author Diablo Cody, based on her own experiences in high school, and was directed by Jason Reitman. Ellen Page starred as the title character, an independent-minded teenager confronting an unplanned pregnancy and the subsequent events that put pressures of adult life onto her. Ross Douhat writing for The Atlantic said, “*Juno* is a film about hot-button subjects (abortion, teen pregnancy, adoption, etc.) that succeeds artistically precisely because it complicates, rather than over-simplifies, every one of the thorny issues it raises.”

Roger Ebert said, “Has there been a better performance this year than Ellen Page's creation of Juno? I don't think so. If most actors agree that comedy is harder than drama, then harder still is comedy depending on a quick mind, utter self-confidence, and an ability to stop just short of going too far. Page's presence and timing are extraordinary. I have seen her in only two films, she is only 20, and I think she will be one of the great actors of her time.”

Juno also starred Michael Cera, Jennifer Garner, Jason Bateman, Allison Janney, JK Simmons, and Olivia Thirby. It was nominated for four Oscars including Best Picture, Best Actress, and Best Directing and won Best Original Screenplay. It was the highest grossing film of the five nominees for Best Picture.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0467406/>

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/juno-2007>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/personal/archive/2007/12/the-politics-of-em-juno-em/55166/>

<https://slate.com/culture/2008/02/how-the-backlash-against-juno-started.html>



All female Shakespeare trilogy

The Donmar Shakespeare Trilogy Project began in 2012 with an all-female production of *Julius Caesar* directed by Phyllida Lloyd. Set in a women's prison, the production asked the question, 'Who owns Shakespeare?'

Two further productions followed: *Henry IV* in 2014 and *The Tempest* in 2016, all featuring a diverse company of women. The Trilogy enthralled theatre audiences in London and New York and was shared with women and girls in prisons and schools across the UK.



Julius Caesar



Henry IV



The Tempest

<https://allarts.org/2019/03/phyllida-lloyd-set-julius-caesar-in-a-prison-heres-why-it-worked>

https://www.theatermania.com/off-broadway/news/harriet-walter-phyllida-lloyd-henry-iv-interview_75195.html

<https://variety.com/2016/legit/reviews/the-tempest-review-all-female-women-1201925792/>

All female *Othello*, 2015

Harlem Shakespeare Festival

Director, Vanessa Morosco, has this to say:

“This all-female production aims to dismantle the gender-binary division of roles and give professional female practitioners of Shakespeare the rare chance to play some of the juiciest classical roles to which their male counterparts have long had access. While women have always been allowed to play the most famous victim of domestic violence in literary history (Desdemona), I believe they should now be given the chance to play characters who are driven by vicious jealousy (Iago), have a crippling sense of honor and duty (Othello), or take destructive pride in their reputations (Cassio). By dismantling the long-standing gender barriers in the casting tradition of *Othello*, the pervasive themes that appear in this play – loyalty, pride, jealousy, betrayal, sex – can reemerge as not exclusively ‘male’ or ‘female,’ but as eternal human forces. And I trust that our audiences deserve access to the humanness of Shakespeare.”

<https://www.becomingothello.global/afoth-directors-note>



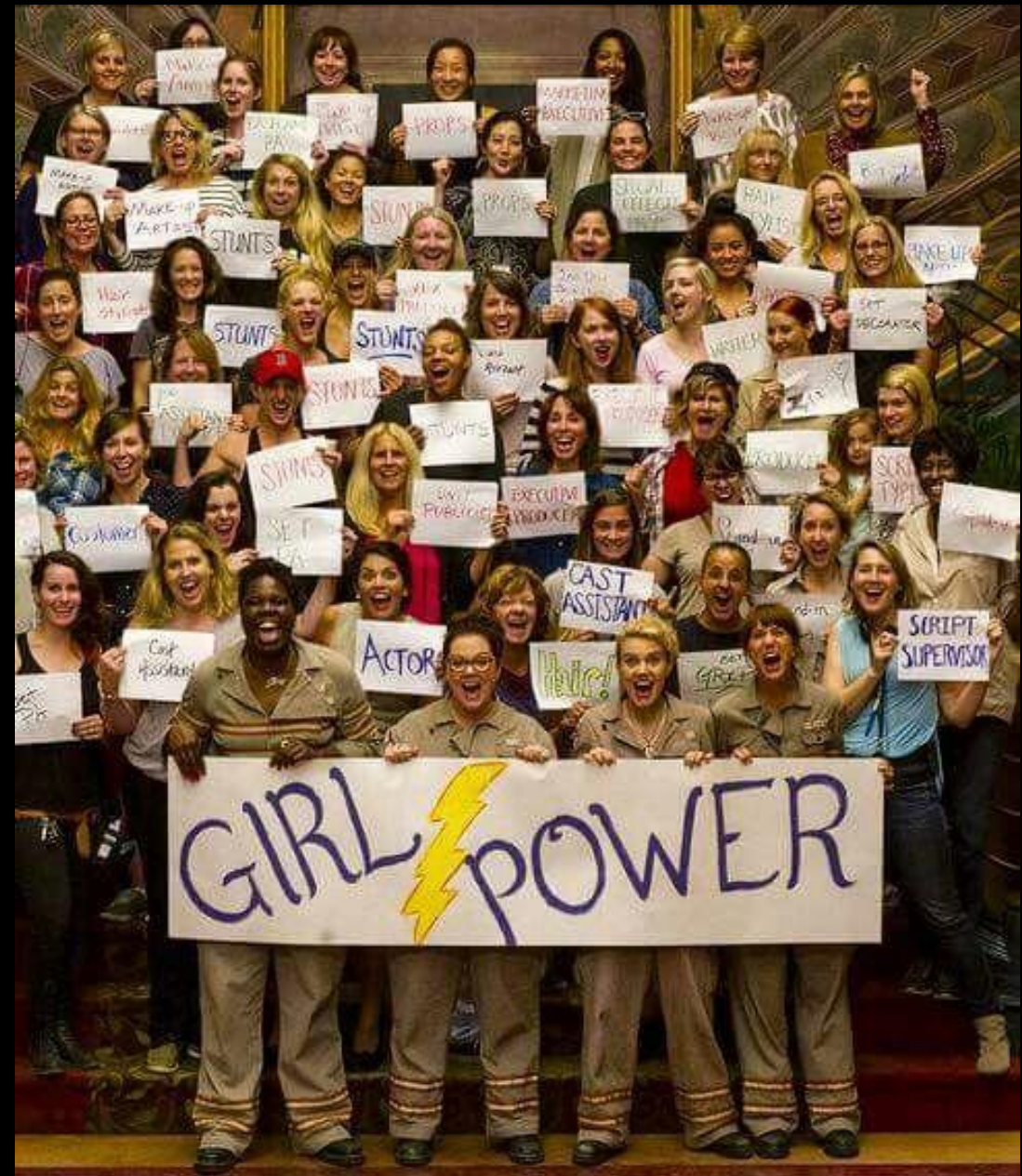
Ella Loudon as Iago, Ryan Jenkins as Roderigo, Debra Ann Byrd as Othello, and Amy Driesler as Cassio.

Ghostbusters, 2016

Starring Kristen Wiig, Melissa McCarthy, Kate McKinnon, and Leslie Jones. Melissa McCarthy put up this photo on her Instagram in August of 2015 showing all of the women working on the movie. What should have been a Girl Power moment, became a battle of the sexist trolls instead. The *Ghostbusters* remake has faced criticism since it was first reported that the film would feature an all-female cast, and much of the backlash has centered on the belief that men, not women, should be suiting up to fight ghosts.

David Sims, writing for *The Atlantic*, said, “Feig’s *Ghostbusters* isn’t out until July 15, but since the project was announced in 2014 ...a vocal minority of movie fans have come up with specious reasons to criticize it. Hollywood does too many reboots; the sacred legacy of the original film is under threat; the jokes in the trailer aren’t funny enough.”

The *Ghostbusters* trailer is currently the most “disliked” movie preview on YouTube; some 800,000 fans have clicked the thumbs-down button, indicating an organized campaign against the film (for comparison, the *Captain America: Civil War* trailer has only 12,000 dislikes).



<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1289401/>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/05/the-sexist-outcry-against-the-ghostbusters-remake-gets-louder/483270/>



Ghostbusters, 2016

Twitter trolls have singled out Leslie Jones, the only Black star in the movie, for particularly pointed and racist harassment. Jones she'd spent the last several days battling trolls. "All this cause I did a movie. You can hate the movie but the shit I got today...wrong." Since the movie opened on Friday, Jones has received harassing messages on Twitter, "Ok I have been called Apes, sent pics of their asses, even got a pic with semen on my face. I'm tryin' to figure out what human means. I'm out." and later, "I leave Twitter tonight with tears and a very sad heart".



Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey

The situation finally caught the attention of Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, who responded, "Hi Leslie, following, please DM me when you have a moment." Dorsey's response is remarkably tepid, and proves that Twitter's response to targeted harassment campaigns needs to change. Twitter often serves as a platform for large-scale harassment, and yet the company relies on users to report abusive behavior — which leaves victims to manage the deluge alone. Abusers know this and take advantage of it, returning to Twitter again and again to launch large-scale harassment campaigns. Twitter's lackadaisical approach to harassment is especially strange, given the company's prominence in social justice campaigns. The company has been a platform for political organizing in the U.S. and around the world, and has taken pride in being the social media of choice for the Black Lives Matter movement. But Dorsey's hashtag activism falls flat when black women like Jones can't use Twitter without being overwhelmed by harassment. Twitter is at risk of becoming the next Reddit-like swamp of racism, sexism and homophobia. It's time for Twitter to make #staywoke a way of living, not just a cute slogan on a t-shirt.

The Globe's 2018-2019 season: Gender Blind Casting

New Artistic Director **Michelle Terry** pledged to dismantle hierarchies by democratic, gender-blind casting for her first season, promising a 50-50 gender split across the entire season. "If our job is to hold a mirror up to nature then we've got to truly reflect the society in which we live."

The first plays were *Hamlet* and *As You Like It*, performed by a company of 12 actors and running in rep. Michelle Terry played Hamlet herself, Horatio and Ophelia were also played by women, whereas Claudius and Gertrude were both played by men. The relationship between Hamlet and Horatio seemed even more close and trusting through this lens, while pointing up the distrust between Hamlet and Ophelia.

The next cycle was a company of 8 actors performing *Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Twelfth Night* which, after their in rep run, all went on a national tour and the audiences got to pick which play they saw. Lastly, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *A Winter's Tale*, *Othello*, and finally *Love's Labour's Lost*, will follow each other in succession. <https://britishtheatre.com/shakespeares-globe-announces-first-season-under-michelle-terry>



Hamlet



As You Like It

Bao, 2018

The Pixar short *Bao*, written and directed by Domee Shi, was the first to be directed by a woman. Shi based the story on her own experience with her Chinese immigrant parents and the struggle between their desire to keep her safe and her desire to go out on her own.

Bao is about a Chinese Canadian mom experiencing empty nest syndrome. When one of the dumplings comes to life, she takes care of it only to have it grow up and leave the nest as well. There is no dialogue in the film so that it is universally accessible by all audiences. Production designer Rona Liu, who created the squishy dumpling, consulted with Shi's mother who held dumpling making demos for the crew so that they could authentically recreate the way dumplings are made. *Bao* won the Oscar for Best Animated film short.



On the Basis of Sex, 2018

About the life of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, written by her nephew Daniel Stiepleman, the script was edited by Ginsberg and her daughter Jane. The film was directed by Mimi Leder and starred Felicity Jones.

The film follows the career of Ruth Bader Ginsberg as she starts her first year at Harvard Law School, while caring for her infant daughter, and nursing her husband through cancer. We see her fight the system as one of a handful of female law student graduates, get turned down for job after job, and finally accept a position at Rutgers teaching “Sex Discrimination and the Law” to mostly female law students. She is enlisted by the ACLU to help them seek justice for their clients, mostly women who are suffering discrimination in the work place because of their gender, because Ruth’s dream is equal rights for women.

Ginsberg’s husband Marty is a tax attorney, and one evening he brings home a tax case in which a man is being discriminated against because of his gender by the IRS not allowing him to claim a deduction for caring for his elderly mother. He mentions it to Ruth and she has the brilliant idea that if she can get laws that discriminate against men because of their gender struck down, those same laws would set a precedent to strike down laws that discriminate against women on the basis of their gender. The case goes all the way to the Supreme Court and she wins her case unanimously.

RGB went on to found the Women’s Right’s Project at the ACLU which struck down many of the gender-based laws identified earlier, and was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Clinton in 1993 where she still serves.



https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4669788/?ref=ttawd_awd_tt

<https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2018/12/ruth-bader-ginsburg-felicity-jones-armie-hammer-on-the-basis-of-sex-new-york-screening>

Brass Knuckles, 2019

Written by Egyptian American playwright Yussef El Guindi, *Brass Knuckles* is a short play written as a reaction to the horrific attack by a white nationalist against two young Muslim women on a Portland MAX train in 2017 which resulted in the fatal stabbing of two men and the injuring of a third who stepped in to help them. The play explores a Muslim woman's daily routine having to meet each day in the face of xenophobia and Islamophobia.



The Grievance Club, 2019

Written by Iraqi British playwright Rendah Heywood, *The Grievance Club* is a short play written as a vision of female rage in our times. Heywood said, “I was temping at an investment company on Park Avenue between gigs. On the day after the election, I found myself in an elevator with 5 celebratory males and I felt an overwhelming urge to write down their comments” and thus *The Grievance Club* was born. The story revolves around a female investment banker who joins a secret society and gets more than she bargained for.



<https://goldenthread.org/posts/reorient-2019-a-homecoming-for-golden-thread-alumni/>

Captain Marvel, 2019

Written by Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck, it starred Brie Larson as Carol Danvers. *Captain Marvel* was the first Marvel movie with a female director and only the second with female screenwriters in Boden and Geneva Robertson-Dworet. It was the 5th highest grossing film of 2019, earning 1.128 billion world-wide, and had the biggest opening weekend of any female-led film, including DC's *Wonder Woman*.

Mark Hughes writing for *Forbes* said, "*Captain Marvel's* remarkable box office performance has stomped angry fanboy boycotts into the dust, making the attempted boycott and organized fan downvoting on sites like *Rotten Tomatoes* a laughable failure that revealed just how irrelevant and ineffective the toxic segment of fandom truly is. If this sounds harsh, that's because it is -- but it's well-earned harshness, since that little group of resentful fans engaged in rampant misogynist rants and dishonest behavior to try to harm the film simply because it has a female lead or because star Brie Larson had the audacity to suggest white men didn't deserve to always have the largest number of seats during press coverage and interviews."

Jessica Rawden writing for *Cinema Blend* said, "There's already been a lot of the conversation around the movie, specifically about gender and movie criticism. To be honest, however, I'm a female critic and I didn't really love *Captain Marvel*. But what I would really hate would be to be told that I don't deserve to have an opinion on *Creed II* because boxing movies are not really in my wheelhouse. Or that I don't get to feel lukewarm about *Ocean's Eight* because I'm a woman. I think at the end of the day, what we all really want is probably the same thing. Diversity in movie criticism is only going to grow our understanding of what works and doesn't in movies by leaps and bounds. It could even lead to different movies finding success or Hollywood tackling different projects."

<https://www.cinemablend.com/news/2468098/im-a-female-movie-critic-and-to-be-honest-i-didnt-love-captain-marvel>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/markhughes/2019/03/14/why-your-captain-marvel-complaints-are-wrong/#490337435803>



Avenger's End Game, 2019

In the very last movie of the MCU, the female superheros gather for one amazing team up scene of Girl Power: However, it's too little, too late. Inkoo Kang agreed in her article on Slate, "During the final showdown with Thanos for the fate of the universe, Captain Marvel, Valkyrie, Okoye, the Wasp, and several other female characters get in formation, presumably for audiences to rally around Marvel's commitment to gender equality and women's representation. Instead, the scene immediately revealed itself as the apotheosis of the studio's expectation that fans of female superheroes be satisfied with scraps, while courting woke points for its supposed forward thinking. Begeshri Savyasachi, writing for Intersectional Feminism stated, "The representation of women in this film is a show, a very small and patronizing show that came too late. These female characters don't get reasonable screen time or dialogues that tell us what they're thinking." Worse, the scene almost didn't happen, for this team up was done during reshoots. *Avengers: Endgame* screenwriters Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely thought long and hard about the Girl Power scene and even knew people would consider it to be pandering."

Then there's the ways *Endgame* fails its biggest female character, Black Widow, by not bothering to fully develop her emotional journey. Black Widow's readiness to give up on life is hardly established, and on Planet Vormir, she's on the verge of getting back what she's desired all along—a family—before killing herself. Even more insultingly, the only continuous Avenger who still hasn't gotten her own movie—though one's been promised for years and may yet happen—gets a fraction of the mourning that Tony Stark enjoys. Iron Man gets a funeral, with slow pans across the gathered griever. Black Widow gets a single mention. Her disappearance from the movie couldn't have been more abrupt if Scarlett Johansson had magically vanished from the set midway through shooting.

But the greater affront might be the Marvel movies' ongoing treatment of Nebula, whose tale of grisly, lifelong abuse by her father is seldom given the gravity it deserves. We feel Nebula's physical pain in *Endgame*, as she's pried apart once again by Thanos to serve his own agenda. But the *Guardians of the Galaxy* movies have tended to villainize her for not getting over her brainwashing fast enough, and now *Endgame*, which finds her rehabilitated, dares not acknowledge the full horror of a woman forced to kill a stunted, not-yet-ready-to-heal version of herself to save her sibling. In fact, *Endgame*'s pat appeal to sisterhood, which unites Nebula and Gamora, is symptomatic of its overall treatment of female characters as walking applause lines first and people (or space aliens) second. The fans are ready to clap for their female favorites, but Marvel should try giving them something to cheer for first. <https://movieweb.com/avengers-endgame-female-superheroes-scene-explained/>
<https://feminisminindia.com/2019/05/03/avengers-endgame-feminist-review/> <https://slate.com/culture/2019/04/avengers-endgame-female-representation-black-widow.html>



Captain Marvel (Brie Larson), Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen), Valkyrie (Tessa Thompson), Okoye (Danai Gurira), Mantis (Pom Klementieff), Shuri (Letitia Wright), the Wasp (Evangeline Lilly), Gamora (Zoe Saldana), Nebula (Karen Gillan), and Pepper Potts (Gwyneth Paltrow).

Black Widow, 2020

Marvel has close to 20 films dedicated to its male superheroes; every male Avenger got his own stand-alone film or three (with the exception of Hawkeye) before the first *Avengers* movie was released in 2012. Black Widow, played by Scarlett Johansson, deserved a stand-alone feature film years ago but didn't get it because Marvel didn't think a woman could open a superhero film.

That all changed when Gal Gadot's *Wonder Woman* dropped in 2017. But instead of giving Black Widow the feature film her character had long deserved, the MCU gave us Captain Marvel, instead.

Following the events of *Captain America: Civil War* (2016), Natasha Romanoff finds herself alone and forced to confront a dangerous conspiracy with ties to her past. Pursued by a force that will stop at nothing to bring her down, Romanoff must deal with her history as a spy and the broken relationships left in her wake long before she became an Avenger. Finally on November 6, 2020, Black Widow will be released (hopefully).

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3480822/>

<https://movies.disney.com/black-widow>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Widow_\(2020_film\)#Release](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Widow_(2020_film)#Release)



The Bechdel Group

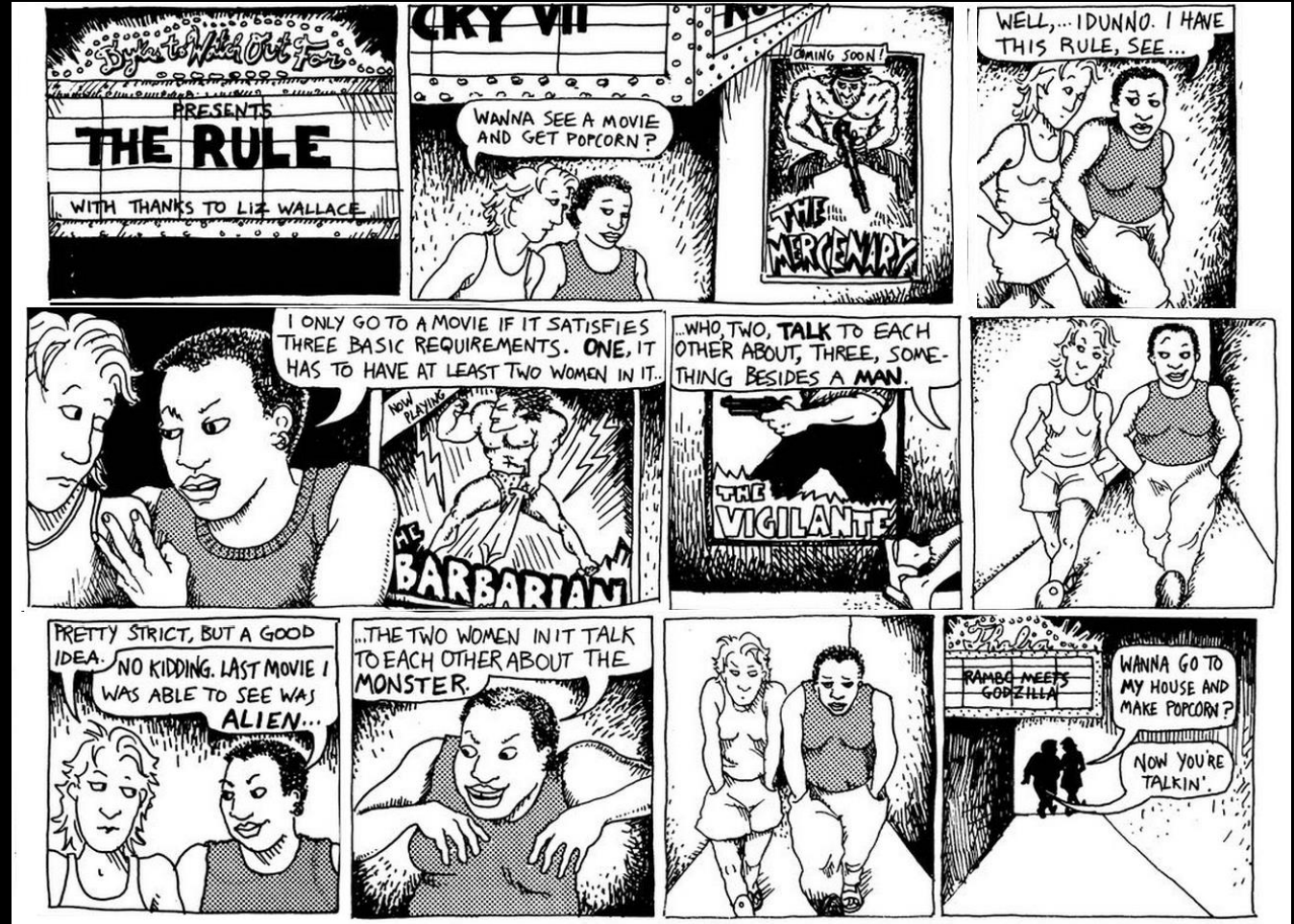
The Bechdel Group, founded in 2014 by Gina L. Grandi, is a New York City based theatre company. "Our purpose is to foster writers writing for women by producing free readings, events, and performances that feature dynamic female roles. We also aim to foster an active and engaged community of actors, playwrights, directors, dramaturgs, and theatre lovers."

Their play selection criteria is based on The Bechdel Test, which was named for Alison Bechdel, a gay cartoonist and creator of the strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*.

The test states that, in order to pass, a movie or play must contain:

1. two women (with names)
2. who speak to each other
3. about something other than their romantic relationships.

<https://www.thebechdelgroup.com/>



Female Directors

- Alice Winocour
- Amma Asante
- Ana Lily Amirpour
- Andrea Arnold
- Angelina Jolie
- Anna Boden
- Anne Fletcher
- Ava Duvernay
- Barbra Streisand
- Catherine Hardwicke
- Debra Granik
- Dee Rees
- Deniz Gamze Erguven
- Elizabeth Banks
- Gail Mancuso
- Gia Coppola
- Gillian Robespierre
- Gina Prince-Bythewood
- Jamie Babbit
- Jane Campion
- Jennifer Getzinger
- Jennifer Kent
- Jennifer Lee
- Jennifer Yuh Nelson
- Jill Soloway
- Jodie Foster
- Julia Leigh
- Julie Delpy
- Julie Taymor
- Karyn Kusama
- Kathryn Bigelow
- Kay Cannon
- Kelly Reichardt
- Kimberly Peirce
- Lana & Lilly Wachowski
- Lena Dunham
- Lesli Linka Glatter
- Leslye Headland
- Lexi Alexander
- Lisa Cholodenko
- Lisa Joy
- Lorene Scafaria
- Lynn Shelton
- Marielle Heller
- Marjane Satrapi
- Mary Harron
- Mia Hansen-Love
- Michelle MacLaren
- Mimi Leder
- Mira Nair
- Miranda July
- Nancy Meyers
- Nicole Holofcener
- Niki Caro
- Patty Jenkins
- Penelope Spheeris
- Phyllida Lloyd
- Reed Morano
- Sam Taylor-Johnson
- Sarah Polley
- So Yong Kim
- Sofia Coppola
- Susanne Bier
- Tamara Jenkins
- Tamra Davis
- Valerie Faris

Female Led Theatre Companies

New York

- The Looking Glass Theatre www.thelookingglasstheatre.homestead.com
- Nora's Playhouse www.norasplayhouse.org
- WOW Theater Café www.wowcafe.org
- Women's Expressive Theater www.wetproductions.org
- Dark Lady Players <http://www.darkladyplayers.com/>

California

- Brava! For Women in the Arts www.brava.org
- Breath of Fire Latina Theatre Ensemble <http://www.breathoffire.org/>
- Jewish Women Theatre <http://www.jewishwomenstheatre.org/>

Chicago

- Artemisia www.artemisiatheatre.org/
- Babes With Blades <http://www.BabesWithBlades.org>
- Stockyards Theatre Project <http://www.stockyardstheatreproject.org/>

Texas Female Led Theatre Companies

Dallas

- Echo Theatre <https://www.echotheatre.org/>
- Lily and Joan Theatre Company <http://www.lilyandjoantheatre.com/>

Austin

- The Weird Sisters Women's Theatre Collective <http://weirdsisterscollective.com/>
- Rude Mechs <https://rudemechs.com/>

Houston

- Mildred's Umbrella Theatre Company <https://mildredsumbrella.com/>