

# Charlotte dunnico

[Politics](#), [Marxism](#)



Charlotte Dunnico Unit 1: From Page to Stage Working Record Stage 1 Our stimulus for Unit 1, From Page to Stage: is 'Our Day Out' by playwright Willy Russell. We are using the straight version published in 1987 for our stimulus. In the play 'Our Day Out' I will be playing Mrs Kay and David will be playing Mr Briggs. We have kept Mrs Kay and Mr Briggs the same gender as Russell intended because Russell's states that the reason Mrs Kay seems liberal is partly due to her gender — this then contrasts to Briggs' stern male figure. We have Henry multi-rolling as the driver and Colin, Olivia multi rolling as Headmistress and Carol, Alana multi-rolling as Andrews and Karen and Max take on all the Kid lines as Maurice. In the play Mrs Kay's character hasn't been developed in a way that implies I have to play her in a certain way, so this gives me the opportunity to develop the character. I did that in a variety of different ways. One of them being the 'hot seat' activity. This activity allowed me to connect with the character in a way that meant I could round her, give her some history and meaning to her friendly and understanding attitude towards the children. This then gave me the opportunity to write a character profile for her, explaining in depth why she is like she is. We also completed an exercise in which we devised a scene of Mrs Kay in her childhood and showed the way it links to her current life now. Our group made a piece highlighting the fact that Mrs Kay is continually told she will never become anything when she is older, causing her to prioritise fun over learning, causing her to have low attainment and lack of belief in the children. This supports Russell's intentions stated near the end of the play. 'Most of them were rejects the day they were born'. The socio-economic context of the play is a crucial thing to highlight as Willy Russell's intentions

of the play were to show the contrasting social classes and how the young people in the 1980's aspirations are affected by their lack of opportunities in Liverpool. Also the political context of the play is important to consider as Liverpool was under Thatchers government. In order to fully understand this aspect, I researched the political history and studied newspaper articles to get to grips with how Thatchers rise to power affected the children lives. Also in class we studied the London riots and wrote a monologue from the perspective of a young person involved in the riots. We discussed the media's portrayal of young people and then compared it to how the kids in the play are viewed. All this helped me understand the context of the play, which came in very handy when devising and writing the script for the play, aiding me to accurately follow Russell's intentions. ' Our Day Out' is one and a half hours long and the piece we will create will be 10 minutes long. To cut the play whilst still keeping Russell's intentions, we have decided to take on the main scenes like carol's end scene on the cliff and Mrs Kay's argument because these are the characters key scenes and also the main climax's of the play. Russell created these scenes to represent how Carol becomes aware of the fact that she is trapped into her social situation by virtue of her background and to represent the different teaching styles of Mrs Kay and Mr Briggs, therefore including these scenes fits to Russell's intentions. We have also made the piece more abstract and stylised by using physical theatre and techniques such as montages and tableaux, because this shows the audience the character thoughts and emotions in a non naturalistic way. We have shaved away lots of sections that are not relevant to the characters and replaced them with montages like the zoo scene. This doesn't show any

of the characters key moments but it communicates Russell's intention of the kids stealing animals, which is highlighting their social deprivation and lack of education. We have also incorporated this in our piece by showing Carols dreams and her lack of self belief, also the way Mr Briggs treats the children shows the different social classes. We represent the kids in the play as poor, working class and streetwise just as Russell intended. We structure the play chronologically, just how Russell intended, with a few exceptions. We will have moved the headmistress scene to towards the end of the play as a flashback from Mr Briggs' argument with Mrs Kay because we feel it's a good technique as then the audience don't know that Mr Briggs has been sent by the headmistress till the end of the play. This scene is effective at working with Russell's intentions as it reveals that Briggs has been 'sent' by headmistress, without this scene the audience would think that Briggs volunteered to go, this is not Russell's intentions. We have decided to use Mrs Kay's monologue at the beginning of the play but as a montage. We will have a chorus of working class children in the background taking on some of Mrs Kay's lines and making them stylised by Singing them and saying them in different tempos and tones. This technique makes it seem as if the children already know exactly what she's going to say. This represents the strong connection between the children and Mrs Kay, supporting Russell's intentions. This scene also represents the fact that " she simply recognises the children's needs" - Willy Russell. Most of the tension is based in Carol's cliff scene, we find this scene the most vital scene to the plot, so we are going to use that at the end as the climax of the play and use the denouement as carols line ' Sir, sir, y' know if you'd been my old feller, I

woulda been all right, wouldn't I?'. Our intention with this is to show the audience how Mr Briggs is really viewed by the students and leave the audience feeling empathy towards Carol. Following Russell's intentions of showing Briggs' change of alignment and how he see's Carol as more of an individual instead of just someone from the progress class. This is represented through Russell's playwright by Briggs' finding her on the cliff and saying 'ill give you five seconds!' (This is him treating her as a silly child) But he then goes on to see her as an individual and starts to help her with her problems. This scene is a major turning point for the two characters. Therefore a vital scene in representing Russell's intentions. The target audience for our piece is young people from 12- 20 because they are the ones that can connect with the characters. The suitability of the play is for younger people and maybe some older people who remember what times were like in them days and can also connect with the characters. For our 10 minute extract the performance space we desire to show off Willy Russell's intentions successfully would be the proscenium arch stage which is situated in the Gropius Hall. Then we can use the apron to get close to the audience in some of the fun scenes, like the zoo and make them feel a part of the play. Though it seems like a good idea to use the balcony on the Gropius hall stage as the cliff we have decided to use the apron as the cliff because it brings the action closer to the audience. We are planning on using the upstage wings for the ensemble to create a physical theatre based performance to represent Carol's emotions and dreams. Russell intended the audience to feel pity for Carol and nervous for her safety. This is shown in the playwright in Russell's stage directions as he keeps saying 'she moved

closer to the edge'. So having Carol on the far side of the apron will cause the audience to feel cautious for her safety as they can see every little move she makes. For some of the intimate scenes like Mrs Kay's argument, though the only two characters on stage will be placed in the centre, we can use lighting to make all the empty space invisible and make the scene tenser and tighter. We have considered the proxemics like this because Russell intends this scene to be intimate so you can draw the audience in.

Improvisation is a very important concept in 'Our Day Out' because it explores the themes of the play e. g. social class and young people discovering themselves and also builds character. We have done numerous improvisation exercises around our characters personalities and to connect with them internally. One of these exercises is using Stanislavski Emotional Recall ' where you recall a time in your life when you've felt the emotion which the character is feeling at a point in the play'. We also participated in an exercise called ' What happened next' in which we made an extra scene for the play showing the next day. This was particularly useful because we had to connect with our characters individually to know what would happen. In our 10 extract we will be using a technique by Jacques Le Coq in which each character from the play will become an animal that symbolises their characteristics e. g. Reilly would be a tiger because of the danger and independence a tiger holds. In our performance we are using a variety of conventions to make the performance more believable and communicate Russell's intentions. One convention we are using is the use of flashback. In the middle of Mr Briggs and Mrs Kay's argument Briggs says " You may have organised this visit, but I'm the one who's been sent by The Headmistress to

supervise", after that line we are having a flashback to the Headmistress scene, to reveal to the audience why Mr Briggs is there. This will make the audience much clearer on Mr Briggs' character by showing the audience he's only there because the headmistress sent him, not because he wanted to help the children. This will support Russell's intentions on the audience's opinion of him as an opposing character to Mrs Kay. " The play really presents two opposed educational ideologies" - Willy Russell. Another convention we are using is a three-way split focus on the bus. When one pair of actors are performing (Reilly and Kid) the other two pairs are frozen in an interesting tableaux that give away details about the characters relationships (Mrs Kay linking arms with Carol). This then represents Mrs Kay's motherly approach to the children. Russell makes this an intention by using the line 'My remedial kids', said by Mrs Kay. This shows that Mrs Kay sees the children as her own by using the word 'My'. Using this technique also makes the scene more captivating and prevents empty spaces on the stage. To establish the genre in our ten minute piece we are using a variety of dramatic devices and clothing/set designs that capture the senses of a morality play. One of these techniques we are planning on using is tableaux. In the scene where Andrews reveals his home life with his parents, the rest of the cast will create tableaux in the background of Andrews' fearful family life making the audience feel pity. This is how Russell intended the audience to feel in this scene. In Mrs Kay's monologue we are planning on using quite over the top, stylised acting because Russell intends for this monologue to be exaggerated as Mrs Kay's intention in this monologue is to make the driver feel sorry for the children. In rehearsal we have decided the most

powerful convention to use is “ hot seating" in role. We will try and do this regularly because it really rounds a character, using the groups creativity in questioning really makes you think on the spot and realize things about your character you never realized before. We have decided that for the costume we will have the actors who play the kids wearing uniform with a jacket that represents their characters personality and the actors playing the teachers will wear complete costume. This represents the teacher’s freedom of choice compared to the kids. For the semiotics of our piece we have decided that it would be a good idea to use a chalkboard, that we will place at the back of the stage, and fill it with pictures of famous musicians in the 80’s, children's work with ‘ F’ on them, pictures of the Liverpool football team in the 80’s and pictures of Margaret Thatcher that the kids have graffitied on saying things like ‘ Margaret Thatcher the milk Snatcher’ because this fits in with the social context of the play. We will also scatter the back of the stage and the steps at the front with used coke cans, sweet wrappers and rubbish that is suggesting the bad social environment that the children are brought up in and their lack of respect toward the environment, that is highlighted in the line ‘ until the kids chopped them all down and burnt them all’, making it obvious that Russell's intentions are show the audience these working class conditions. Unit 1; From Page to Stage Working Records Stage 2 In class we completed a number of exercises that have been beneficial during our rehearsal process. One of the exercises we used was Memory storming. In Memory storming, the whole class contributed in giving information about Liverpool in the 1980’s like The Hillsborough Disaster and the lack of care for education. This was beneficial because it gave us crucial information about



the time and for us to understand the context clearly. When taking on the role of designer, it helped me think about the semiotics of the stage and understand the working class conditions that the kids had to live in. Bearing in mind the fact that 'Our Day Out' is a morality play, to represent this I have used lots of scrunched up paper, empty cans and broken pencils that suggest the children not caring about their education and throwing their work away and getting angry and snapping school pencils. When exploring the play we did another exercise called 'Status' by Keith Johnston. This exercise consisted of studying the social status within the actors of the group. By doing this we realised what it takes to have a high status, like Reilly and to have a low status like Andrews. This inspired me to take individual traits from the highest status person in the group that Reilly would use to maintain his status and then enforce these traits on the actor. Willy Russell has of course been our biggest influence whilst directing our piece but other practitioners have greatly influenced decisions we have made. One of these practitioners is Stanislavski; we have used some of his naturalism techniques to influence some of our scenes. For example, the bus scene with the children, to create a more believable characterisation. We have also used some very abstract styles from practitioners like Jacques Le Coq. We used his idea of creating animals for the zoo scene which highlighted the characters personalities. The historical, cultural and social context has had a huge influence on our piece. The play was written by Willy Russell based on his own experiences. One thing Russell mentions about one of his experiences is "You know what adults are like when they're all together, talking; they think a small child isn't taking it in. But I think I did". We show

this in our play because Mrs Kay thinks the things she tells them they will not take in and won't remember but we highlight in the play that Carol takes in all the things she's been told and that's why she ends up on the cliff. This fits in with the social context of the play. In Liverpool in 1977 the dockyards and manufacturing industries went into sharp decline. To show this in our piece, I used the line " Most of them were born factory fodder, but the factories have closed down" this keeps the piece in its right historical context. We used a cigarette as a prop because it fits in with the cultural context. In the 70's and 80's Liverpool, smoking was a big thing that most people did and it wasn't frowned upon as much as it is today. In my role as designer I have contributed ideas towards set design, getting props, costume designs and composing relevant music. When Carol is looking out the window she comments on her surroundings by saying " Isn't it horrible". This inspired me to fill the stage with objects that make it look 'horrible', by having lots of rubbish, broken pencils, empty cans and screwed up paper. When getting props I decided to keep it to a bare minimum because Russell states that he intends for a simplistic set. We used one prop in our piece which was a cigarette, it was crucial we used this because smoking is used to represent the social class of the children in the play. When considering costumes I decided to have the students wearing uniform with jackets on that represent their personalities and the teacher wearing full costume. As Mrs Kay, I wore a long skirt to portray my age and the era Mrs Kay's fashion is stuck in, the 1970's. When taking on the role of composer I created a short piece on the piano to play during the ending monologue. The piece was quite eerie and sad and fitted the mood of what the actors were creating on stage. I will play

this during the cliff scene to follow Russell's intentions of representing Carol's low attainment and dreams that are affected by her lack of opportunities. To represent the character changes, the actors will change their jacket to symbolise their personality, age and class. E. g.: Emily is playing Reilly at the beginning of the play and she will be wearing a pink, ripped leather jacket to represent Reilly's fieriness and Social class, also highlighting the context of the 80's by representing the colourful, stand out fashion that the 80's is all about. But then towards the end of the play Emily takes on the role of Linda and to represent this she will wear a much more revealing jacket that emphasises her body to represent Linda's lack of self respect and need to be noticed. Russell makes this an obvious intention for Linda by mentioning ' she is dressed in the prevailing pop outfit of the day' in the stage directions. We spent a lot of time deciding what we want Carol to be doing on the cliff before Briggs enters, until Olivia suggested that Carol could be singing the song Mercy Street by Peter Gabriel released in 1986. This was a great contribution as the song fitted in with the cultural context of the piece and the lyrics were relevant to the emotions felt by Carol at that moment. This helped further the process and gave this scene another dimension. During the process we made lots of changes to our piece, whilst still keeping with Russell's intentions. One thing which we changed which made a big difference to our piece was that, at the beginning of the process we were focusing on the two biggest climactic scenes and not concentrating on transitions or on having scenes where we could include lots of energy, to show the children's excitement to the trip. So we changed a lot of our scenes and brought the energy up to follow his intentions. We also changed our idea of

the semiotics. We started off with the idea of having loads of posters of 80s events that fit the cultural context. But then we thought that the stage would look too pretty and that's not the intention. So we focused on finding lines from the script that would inspire our idea for semiotics. Another thing we struggled with was proxemics. In the Kay and Briggs argument, me and David kept getting too close and not using the performance space fully. So after a lot of hard work we managed to change the scene so there was much more movement, energy and anger. The movement was crucial as our performance space is on a proscenium arch theatre so we can't stand static the whole time and leave bits of stage empty. Another thing we changed was, instead of having a whole Zoo scene we used a fast forward zoo transition. This was a convention which almost has a 'film like' quality because it uses the idea of showing a scene in fast forward; this helps the plot to progress. At the beginning we are setting the scene with a monologue which highlights the conditions the children live in, but slightly exaggerated. We did this because we want the audience to feel sorry for the children, but the couple of scenes after that are quite happy and light-hearted but still highlighting their social deprivation. When we get to the scene of Mrs Kay and Briggs's argument we want them to realise how fiery Mrs Kay is and create a tension within the audience. After that scene we have a comic relief scene that splits up the two most climatic scenes in the piece, the Argument and the Cliff scenes. On the last scene, on the cliff, we want to leave the audience feeling quite sad. This follows Russell's intentions because we take a humorous approach to most scenes but they then build to a climax that shows the audience the serious side of these children's lives and how they

really feel when they are not hiding behind the humour. One production I have seen this year which influenced me was ' Beautiful Burnout' by Frantic Assembly. It was a very inspirational play that used lots of different theatre techniques. One of these was multi-media theatre; they used videos in the background of the scenes to set the scene and create more of an atmosphere. This inspired us to use multi- media in our piece. We decided that in Carol's cliff scene we could use a video of Carol on a cliff in the background of the live performance to highlight the fact she is on a cliff and show the audience a close up on her face to convey how she is feeling. It isn't Russell's intention to use multi-media but we thought it would make a big impact on the audience and highlight Carol's social deprivation which is Russell's intention. It may not of been an intention to use Multi-media because it was rare to do so in 1987. Unit 1; From Page to Stage Working Records Stage 3 I feel our performance was very successful in communicating Russell's intentions to the audience. Our piece had a good pace, high energy levels and was humorous in some scenes and I feel the audience connected with that. Russell intended the play to be quite light hearted at points. So we communicated it throughout our piece and got quite a lot of laughs from the audience. We also communicated his intentions through having a strong sense of the conditions in society and contrast between the different social classes in the piece. For example, the Castle scene really made the audience realise the different social classes between all the characters. From Briggs to headmaster and Mrs Kay to the children. This scene really showed off the different social classes with a variety of performance styles, including Physical theatre and Naturalism. The audience

realised the low attainment of the children the most in the last scene were Carol tries to jump of the cliff. The audience felt quite sorry for Carol, which was shown through their reaction and feedback on that scene. We had a lot of technical errors in our piece. One being the two videos we made didn't play, another being the music didn't play in the last scene therefore the tense atmosphere wasn't created as successfully as we hoped and for some of the transitions the strobe and bell wasn't played as we intended. But overall I think our performance was successful. In the final hours of controlled conditions we made some major changes to our piece. One of these changes was that we decided at the beginning of the piece, during Mrs Kay's monologue, we should add Carol singing ' Mercy Street' which is then sung at the end of the play, to make it a motif within the play. The song was very relevant to the monologue and it highlighted Russell's intentions of showing the children's working class lives. It also fitted in with the cultural context of the play. Another thing we changed was our use of the performance space in the Castle scene. We decided that it would be better to have the children wandering around the castle in the background of the scene because without this there was a lot of empty space, making the proxemics look odd. I feel i was very successful in my role of designer in following Russell's intentions as I received lots of positive feedback from the audience regarding the semiotics. They said that we had a good use of semiotics and that the use of rubbish on stage really set the scene. They also said that our use of costume was really effective and that the teachers really looked like teachers from the 80's. They also said that the costumes represented the different social classes between the characters, highlighting

how low in social status the kids were, especially Maurice. As designer, I decided during the last hours of controlled condition that during the zoo scene, where Carol and Andrews look at the animals, there should be a stick as a prop, that Andrews uses to poke the bear in the cage. I thought it would be following Russell's intentions if Carol is talking about something serious whilst Andrews is just ignoring her and poking the animals with a big stick. This shows Andrews' lack of care for the environment and highlights her social deprivation by showing she doesn't really understand how to treat animals and people. It also highlights the fact that no one really listens to Carol, causing her to slowly start understanding her low social status. We received lots of positive feedback from the audience about our performance. They commented on Olivia's well crafted characterisation of Carol and the way she changed her accent to make her sound more working class. We were told that our transitions were good and worked well and the media we made was very effective despite them not playing in our piece. The audience also said that they liked the use of live music and that we all had well crafted characterisations. I was told that my characterisation of Mrs Kay was strong and my costume really put across my character's social class. A couple of audience members commented on the 'argument' between Mrs Kay and Briggs saying that it was very strong and effective and one person mentioned that I was the only actress who realised Mrs Kay's strong will and ability to stand her ground when she is pushed to the limit. They thought that it represented how Mrs Kay has a better understanding of the children's lives compared to Briggs. Russell states " Mrs Kay is not a ' liberal softie'; she is a good, pragmatic teacher who knows instinctively that there is more

to education than a diet of facts and figures". So I performed this way to follow Russell's intentions. I think group 2's performance was a very strong piece because they followed Russell's intentions well and created a strong piece that captivated the audience. The difference between the teachers and the children highlighted the difference in social class. Also, they had a good sense of semiotics in their piece. One thing that worked well was their use of paper birds as a symbol of freedom; this highlighted Carol's desire for freedom. Sometimes there were some awkward silences in the piece which lost the energy they had worked really hard to create. To make it better they could have brought the pace up slightly and tried to avoid the awkward silences. To me, Jodie stood out in the performance because she brought both fun (In the beginning where she played the more naive Carol, in which she kept the pace and energy of the piece up) and tension (at the end where she played the now wiser to her social deprivation Carol, in which she made the audience feel awkward and sorry for her). She created a mixture of moods within the piece as Carol and had developed her character very well. During the piece our main challenges were transitions. We struggled to create transitions which were relevant to the piece that didn't look messy. After a lot of work I feel we managed to create smooth transitions that followed Russell's intentions and became a convention within the piece. To create this we had an 8 second transition from one scene to another that started with us shouting the location, e. g.: ' The Zoo', then we ran around pretending to be zoo animals for 8 seconds with a bell sound effect playing and strobe lighting. We did this for every transition because it showed time progression and it was a good excuse to show how the children act in new



surroundings, without wasting time. Overall, I believe that our piece was very successful in highlighting Russell's intentions as I received lot's of feedback from our audience containing information that summarised Russell's intentions successfully.