LIFE OF PI

LIFE OF PI

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

GSA

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THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

Photo by Johan Persson

Resilience

Pi spends eight months at sea and is determined to survive. He is also determined to challenge the preconceptions and assumptions made by Mr Okamoto in the hospital room in Mexico.

Mamaji prays that "may these challenging times make us stronger". As he starts to experience visions, Pi sees Mrs Biology Kumar who tells him, "Use logic and maths, Pi, use everything you have and defy the odds". Although he is no longer surrounded by his family, Pi uses what they have taught him in his bid to survive.

Mr Okamoto closes the play with the words, "This is an astounding story of courage and endurance in the face of unimaginable difficulty…"

Family

In order for us to understand the weight of Pi's grief, we need to see the family interact before the Tsimtsum sinks. Amma is very strongly associated with home, as Pi's father tells him "Amma is making home away from home" when they board the Tsimtsum, and she also brings a Tiffin tin of food to help sustain them. Pi has a typically fractious relationship with his sister but the love and loyalty between them is very clear.

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Grief

When we first meet Pi in the hospital room, he is clearly deeply traumatised by the loss of his family. It is difficult to reconcile Mr Okamoto's constant questioning with Pi's need to recover from the trauma he has experienced. We might also consider the pairings between the animals and the humans in the story One interpretation is that Pi uses the animals in order to process what has happened – as a method of understanding the extreme circumstances in which he and his family found themselves.

The human survival instinct

Father tells Pi, "Don't think any animal is harmless. Life will defend itself no matter how small it is. This world is dangerous. It's a mistake to be complacent." Mamaji is teaching Pi to swim, and this becomes a metaphor for his ability to survive. Shortly before they leave for Canada, Mamaji tells Pi, "not too much thinking, just keep moving forward" and that Pi must "conquer open water". We might assume that this is foreshadows Pi's need to cling to life, and deal with the trauma and loss that he endures along the way.

Reality vs. fantasy

Towards the end of the play, Mr Okamoto expresses disbelief at Pi's ability to survive in a lifeboat with a tiger. Pi tells him, "Life is hard to believe. God is hard to believe…I applied reason and logic at every moment. But be excessively reasonable and you risk throwing out the universe with the bath water." Here the two characters are struggling to understand each other's perspectives.

It is up to the audience to consider what they believe in, and what they believe truly happened during Pi's time at sea. Yann Martel and Lolita Chakrabati both wish us to consider our relationship with truth and with fantasy. When Mr Okamoto tells Pi, "A story has an element of invention. We don't want invention. We want facts" Pi responds, "You want a story that confirms what you already know. You want dry, yeast-less factuality. A story without animals." However, the audience is never told which version to believe.

Individuality

Pi is only 17 years old, and yet is self-assured when he interacts with Mr Okamoto. Pi tells him, "We're all children, Mr Okamoto". When Mr Okamoto becomes frustrated that Pi will not, or cannot, provide the information he requires, Pi retorts, "If these are not the answers you want Mr Okamoto, then you must ask different questions". Pi is keen to assert his own beliefs, despite his vulnerability and trauma.

Morality

There are two parallel stories in Life of Pi, one with animals, and one without. Although Yann Martel and Lolita Chakrabati are keen for the audience to create their own interpretations, the concept of who gets to take the life of another being (animal or otherwise) is key to the story. One interpretation is that Richard Parker is a parallel character to Pi, who must take drastic action to survive and to avenge the murder of his loved ones (Orangutan representing his mother, for example).

Civilisation

When he is forced to eat the turtle, Pi is conflicted. Commander Grant Jones tells him, "Never forget above all you are a gentleman. Civilisation is the only thing that separates man from beast. Remember the definition of a gentleman is he who uses a butter knife even when dining alone."

Throughout the story, Pi is forced to make decisions that would be considered uncivilised, or even morally wrong, and one interpretation of the story is that Pi must invent the animals to distance himself from those actions that he finds abhorrent, despite the fact that he had no option if he were to survive.

Faith & Religion

Religion is mentioned very early on in the play. Pi challenges Mr Okamoto by saying, "I will tell you everything…because my story will make you believe in God". He mentions later, "Many of us lose God along life's way"

Mr Okamoto and Pi have a number of exchanges about religion. Mr Okamoto tells Pi, "I didn't lose God. I have never been a believer. Religion is a habit rather than a truth. A crutch in time of need." Pi also exchanges views with several religious leaders when they meet in Pondicherry Market and compete for Pi's loyalty. He eventually tells them, "You're just asking me to choose the better story".

Pi also tells Mr Okamoto, "choosing doubt as a philosophy of life is like choosing immobility as a mode of transport".

Migration

Pi and his family board the Tsimtsum in order to travel to Canada. They are leaving India because of the political tensions which make it dangerous and unpredictable to live there any longer.

IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Page numbers relate to the 2018 Canongate Books edition of Life of Pi.

Creative Writing

"The ship sank"

Yann Martel highlights that in his novel, the sinking of the Tsimtsum is communicated in just three words: "The ship sank". Although there is a brief description of the immediate aftermath, the narrative swiftly moves on to Pi. (This moment can be found on p.97)

In the film and theatre version, the storytelling requires the sinking of the ship to be presented in a visual way. Martel comments that the film version of Life of Pi depicts the sinking in a richly visual, extended and very dramatic scene.

TASK: In exactly 100 words, re-write a prose description of the ship that could easily be turned into a film or theatre scene. Focus on using strong visual imagery in your writing, and aim to use at least three of the following techniques:

- Alliteration

- Parallelism

- Simile or metaphor

- Personification

- Onomatopoeia

- Anaphora

- Epistrophe

- Focus on the five senses

Describing Richard Parker

"I wish I could describe what happened next, not as I saw it…but as I felt it" (p. 151)

In this paragraph, Pi describes Richard Parker in great detail. Yann Martel considered this an easy passage of description to write, because most people are familiar with the basic appearance of a tiger and therefore he did not have to "work too hard" to create a convincing description of the tiger. Tigers all have unique faces, and Martel compares their appearance to the beautiful make up worn in traditional Chinese theatre.

Discussion task:

• Why do you think this description is so successful? What are your favourite words and phrases in this paragraph?

• How does Martel combine a sense of awe and wonder at Richard Parker's appearance, and the sense of fear that Pi feels at his presence?

Writing task:

Choose an animal and describe it using some of the same methods that you have discussed regarding Richard Parker. This could be a domestic animal, or it could be an exotic or rare animal. You may need to do some research in order to be as accurate as possible. Remember that Yann Martel did a huge amount of zoological research for the novel.

Dictionary and vocabulary tasks:

"They speak a funny English in India. They like words like bamboozle"

In the Author's Note, the (fictional) author of the book discusses the richness of the language and its sound. During his research, Yann Martel spent time in India and listened carefully to the way in which English is spoken there.

• Compile a list of your class's favourite words. Make sure you find out why they are people's favourite. It can be the way that they sound, how they are spelt, the word might remind us of a particular person or place, for example. Do you notice a pattern? Are the words generally nouns, or verbs, for example?

• Now compile a list of your class's least favourite words. Again, find out why. Do you notice any patterns to why people like or dislike certain words? (Make sure you remain polite and respectful when having this discussion!)

• Is it possible to make a complete story from all of the class's favourite words?

Adapting Texts

There has been a strong demand for adaptations of novels into plays for several centuries. Adaptations of Charles Dickens's works were often already being staged even before he had finished publishing the serialisations!

Research task:

Look at local, regional and national theatre programmes for the next six months. How many of the productions on offer are adaptations? Is there a pattern to the choice of text, for example, a particular author or genre? Does there seem to be an interest in a particular time period in which the original novels were written? Can you see any patterns in terms of stylistic choices being made in performance (for example, the use of puppets, ensemble and multi-roling)? Is there a connection between the texts that are studied at GCSE and A level, and the adaptations that are available in theatres?

Written or Spoken Task:

Choose a novel that you have enjoyed reading. Write a persuasive letter or speech to a theatre producer (see Pack One for information on the producer's role in our interview with Simon Friend) proposing an adaptation of your chosen novel.

You should include:

• Why you think it's a successful novel, and which elements you think would translate well to theatre performance.

• Why it is relevant to 21st century theatre goers.

• Include suggestions for two or three key scenes that could be adapted (you could include a short script for one of those scenes, too)

• If the author of your chosen novel has written a number of novels, why do you think this novel should be prioritised for adaptation?

• Anticipate any challenges that the story holds (for example, is there a strong fantasy element that would be difficult to stage in front of a live audience?) and how you might deal with those challenges.

Using words carefully

"Stream your sea anchor…"

Life of Pi has been translated into 55 different languages. Translation poses particular problems when specific words don't have a direct equivalent. One particular word that caused difficulty was 'anchor': Yann Martel had to work hard to ensure one of the translators could easily imagine what an anchor is, and how to explain it in their own language.

Work in pairs. Person A should think of an object that is not necessarily an everyday, easily identifiable object. They then have two minutes to describe that object, but without naming it. Instead they should focus on shape, size, what it's made of, colour, function/use etc. Person B has 3 guesses to identify that object.

The pair can then swap over and Person B describes an unusual object.

Extension: To make this job harder, teachers can prohibit the use of certain words or phrases!

Research task:

"The shipping clerk mixed up the hunter's name with the tiger's name"

Pi's full name is Piscine Molitor Patel. Piscine is French for swimming pool and Pi is named after "the finest swimming pool in Paris". He shortens his name to Pi, which is also a word with mathematical connotations.

What does your name mean, and why were you given that name? Does it have cultural significance, for example, or is it a name that is passed down through your family? How have nicknames been created for you or members of your family? Why do you think names are important?

Writing to argue

"A story has an element of invention. We don't want invention, we want facts".

In Life of Pi Father says, *"Man is the most dangerous animal in the zoo".*

Write an article for a newspaper which argues that man is more dangerous than any animal.

You should pay close attention to form, audience and purpose, and ensure that you plan your answer before you start writing. Marks are awarded for content and technical accuracy.

You might like to think about:

• Humans and their impact on the environment (the planet and/or endangered species)

• Humans and their ability to commit crime

• Whether our obsession with progress and technology is doing more harm than good

IN THE DRAMA STUDIO

Page numbers relate to the 2018 Canongate Books edition of Life of Pi.

Creating the Animals

In the early days of the Research and Development (R&D) process it wasn't always a given that the animals would be represented by puppets.

Max Webster says, "anything is stageable. I think it would be incredibly exciting to explore different ways to create those characters on stage"

Physicalising the animals task:

Choose one of the key animals that are important to Life of Pi. It could be:

- The goat

- The hyena

- Richard Parker (tiger)

- The giraffe

- The orangutan

- The zebra

It's now important to research those animals: their appearance, their physicality and the vocalisations that they use. You can create that research by:

- Watching wildlife videos (including in slow motion so that you can notice walking patterns and rhythms, where their centre of gravity lies, how they move from sitting to standing etc)

- Listening to recordings of their natural habitat

- Looking carefully at photographs

Now you can work individually, or with a partner who can observe and give feedback, to create the movements for that animal, using your own body. Once you have had the opportunity to work individually and become confident with what you have discovered and created, you can now create a series of sequences just as Max, Finn and the team worked on sequences with the puppets in this production. Initially this will be improvised, but then refined. Max describes it as 'writing the scene'. Although no physical writing takes place, you might wish to narrate the key moments of the interaction. For example;

- The goat enters the enclosure and explores

- The tiger sees the goat

- The tiger follows the goat with its eyes and begins to stalk it

- The tiger prepares to pounce

- The tigers pounces

- The tiger pins the goat to the floor

- The goat struggles

Inhabiting the character.
It may feel a little uncomfortable trying to simply imitate an animal. Instead, it may help to consider how you communicate the essence of the character. For example, a tiger is elegant, stealthy, strong and lithe. How can you use your own body (and facial expression?) to communicate these qualities? Remember that these are not harmless cartoon animals – we do no need to stay loyal to their roles in the story and the behaviours that they demonstrate!

However you choose to depict the character, Max's advice is, "be BOLD! Commit to communicating it in an exciting way. It's your imagination and the audience's, that carries it"

Vocalising the character
Part of your research was to discover the ways in which animals use sound to communicate. In the play, Pi's father tells him,

"Tigers make many sounds Piscine. A full-throated aaah-ooh during the mating season. A threatening growl when they charge. Prusten is the quietest of calls, a puff through the nose expressing friendliness and harmless intentions."

In a show where the experiences of the animals are just as important as the humans', it's important that the performers can convey feelings to the audience without using spoken language. A great deal of time was spent in rehearsals finding and using those vocalisations.

Listen carefully to recordings of the sounds you have found for your animal. It may help to do this with earphones on. How can you use your breath, your mouth and voice to recreate those sounds, or the essence of them?

Once you have practised and refined a few of those sounds, replay the physical sequence you have created, and try to incorporate those sounds.

What happens if one person creates the physicality of the animal but another creates the sounds? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this shared approach?

Masks

In Pack 2 you were invited to design masks based on Yann Martel's descriptions of the animals in the novel. How can you use those masks to help you create and sustain the performance of these characters?

Rehearsing and Performing a Monologue: A Plan for Teachers

This lesson plan by Guildford School of Acting facilitates the rehearsal of a monologue from the play. The speech is taken from Act Two, when Pi narrates his arrival on the shore of Mexico. The text can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

It is recommended that students in Key Stage 4 or 5 memorise the monologue in order to make the most of the opportunities to develop performance skills, without being inhibited by holding the script

Activity:
Retell the story of the Life of Pi as a story of several units. Explain that the units are not set in stone and can be defined any way the group wishes. It could be defined by the entrance of a new character, by a new location, by a change of emotion, by a change of energy and tempo, etc.

This activity can be completed as a group:
• Create a timeline of the play from one corner of the space to the other. Each student represents a moment through an individual tableau
• In a circle play 'One Word Story' using a ball/bean bag to retell the story

Speaking the Text

Activity:
Scaffold the class to speak the monologue out loud. This can be done by one student, or by sharing the text sentence by sentence amongst the class, or all students can speak the text out loud simultaneously

The Given Circumstances
Discussion: Introduce the concept of the Given Circumstances as the 'who, where, what, why, how and when' of a narrative

Activity:
Establish the given circumstances of the monologue.
Begin this activity as a private reflection with independent bullet point notes being made.
Then place students into pairs or small groups so they can share their reflections and discuss further. You can then develop the exercise to a whole class discussion where thoughts are shared and noted on a whiteboard/ screen.

Rhythm and Tempo – Mining the Text

Discussion:
Consider the rhythmic journey of the text, highlighting the visual clues on the page such as punctuation, lengths of sentences and sentence structure. Point out the following that may require a pause as a new thought:

• New paragraphs

• Pauses

• Full stops

These uses of punctuation may require a momentary pause, but not as much as the above

• Commas

• Dashes, semi colons and colons

Note how the student as actor might approach the following:
• Long sentences with a continued throughline of sustained thought

• Moments of alliteration

• Simile and metaphor

• Short snappy phrases

•Prompt the students to reflect on why the writer has structured the text in this way.

These are all clues to the actor – what do they mean?

Highlighters may be useful for some students as part of this exercise to bring out the punctuation on the page.

To scaffold the approach, you may wish to work through the text as a class first to collectively identify and agree the tempo for each section of the text in response to the clues within the writing. Alternatively, you may allow students to find their own understanding of the rhythms in the text and to determine their own approach.

Activity:
Ask students to speak the text out loud whilst walking around the space. On each of the following, ask them to stop walking and change their direction of travel:

• New paragraphs

• Pauses

• Full stops

Reflect on how this helps to break the text into different thoughts.

Activity:
Ask students to sit on a chair and to begin to speak the text out loud. On each of the following, ask them to move from sitting to standing/standing to sitting:

• New paragraphs

• Pauses

• Full stops

Reflect on how this helps them to further identify the different thoughts within the text.

Range and Feeling – Mining the Text

Activity:
Ask the students to stand in a line down the middle of the room (you may need two well-spaced lines depending on the size of your studio and cohorts). They should all face the same way. Identify one side of the studio as 'warmth' and one as 'cold'.

Instruct students to speak the text out loud. If they feel the section of thought is moving toward warmth, ask them to physically move toward the warm side. If they feel the section of thought is moving toward cold, ask them to physically step back toward the cold side.
Point out that they may respond to the text differently to their classmates so not to follow others and to make their own choices responding to what the text gives them personally.

Uniting the Text

Activity:
Retell the monologue as a story of several units in the students' own words. As with the introductory task, explain that the units are not set in stone and can be defined any way the group wishes. It could be defined by a new sentence, by a new paragraph, by a change of emotion, by a change of energy and tempo, etc.

The teacher should note the agreed units generated by the class visually on a board or screen.

From Published Text to Owning the Text

Activity:
Give each student a piece of paper and ask them to write their name at the top. Then ask them to rewrite the first 'unit' or section of the monologue in their own words. This is a timed activity and students have a limited timeframe to complete this. Once it is done as the students to make a paper aeroplane with the paper and fly it across the room, or to screw it into a ball and for all students to have a snowball fight with them. The students should each rescue a piece of paper and then write the next line of the monologue in their own words, picking up where the last writer finished. Continue until the monologue is completed.

Process Over Product

Discussion:
Divide the class into pairs and ask the students to compare and contrast what they felt was most helpful to them as an actor and a learner in this lesson with their partners

You may wish to pre-prepare a reflective scaffolding worksheet or list of prompt questions to hand out to the students or display to support this discussion. Prompts might include:
- Which activity did I enjoy the most?
- Which activity felt too embarrassing for me to enjoy?
- Which activity pushed me to understand the script?
Which activity made the script make sense?

Pi's Monologue

PI:

          I was so happy I could've stayed there forever. A few nights later, I saw something bobbing in the lake, it looked like a dead shark. It dissolved in the water and I thought I must've dreamt it. And then wonder of wonders I found fruit – fragrant, juicy, ripe fruit, at the top of a tall tree. I clambered up, plucked that fruit and took an enormous bite. It was the best thing I'd ever tasted, dripping down my chin, sticky and sweet, but there was something hard inside it and when I took it out of my mouth, I saw it was a human tooth. I tore open another fruit, there was a molar in it and then another, it was the same. It was almost dark, the air was thick with scent, I was getting drowsy again but I knew I had to get to the boat. I ran. The ground burned my feet and that's when I understood – that island was carnivorous. It lured me in with fresh water by day then deadened my senses at night turning to acid, digesting any flesh it could find.

          That was a shark I'd seen in the water. That's why the meerkats slept in the trees! They were trying to warn me.

Frantic squealing of meerkats.

          I had to leave, I ran for the boat but I could hear Richard Parker howling in pain.

RICHARD PARKER howls.

          I couldn't leave him. He'd saved my life. I blew my whistle, I roared and shouted and finally, he came out of the trees, jumped in the boat and we went back out to sea...

Life of Pi, adapted by Lolita Chakrabati

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Susie Ferguson, for Mousetrap Theatre Projects, 2022

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LIFE OF PI

LIFE OF PI

CREATIVE PRACTICE & CAREERS

LIFE OF PI

PUTTING ON A PRODUCTION

Staging a production is a complex undertaking and involves a large number of production and design roles including, but not limited to:

- Puppetry
- Set and Costume
- Lighting
- Sound and Music
- Video and Projection

In this single moment from Life of Pi below (image by Johan Persson), each of these elements combine to create a clear and cohesive design effect.

Photo by Johan Persson

Reflection point: Looking at this image, consider the following questions:

- Can you see the puppeteers? Do you focus on them or the puppets? Why?
- What elements of the set design can you see? The backdrop? The boat? The revolve?
- What colours are being used in the costume? What effect does this have?
- What colours are being used in the lighting? Where are the lights focused?
- Can you recall the sound effects and/or music being used at this time?
- What does the video projection add to the design concept for this moment in the play?

LIFE OF PI

PUPPETRY AND MOVEMENT

Photo by Johan Persson

In this moment from Life of Pi (image by Johan Persson) the actor playing Pi is carried as though floating in the ocean. Physical theatre is used throughout the play, particularly in moments of transition. In this image below (image by Johan Persson) the three puppeteers bring Richard Parker to life.

The materials used to construct a puppet can greatly affect their use. The designer must consider both the look of the puppet but also whether it is practical to use by the actors. Bringing a puppet to life employs all the physical skills of the actor.

The designer must take the actor's movements into account when creating a puppet. Animating a puppet may involve incredibly dexterous movement on the part of actors, and care must be taken to ensure that an actor is not led to injury through the design of the puppet through its repeated manipulation.

The actor(s) bringing a puppet to life must consider carefully the way the puppet moves, it's weight, rhythms and breath. Where the puppeteers focus their eyeline, so too do the audience. The actor(s) must focus on the puppet as though it is a living thing and not an object they are moving around. By embodying the feelings and emotions of the character, within their own physicality, the actor(s) can manipulate the puppet with the same effect.

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LIFE OF PI

Photo by Johan Persson

Reflection point: Take note of the focus of the eyeline of the actors operating the puppet of Richard Parker. Look at their eyeline. Can you observe their facial expressions? What does this tell the audience about the feelings of the animal at this moment in the play? How did the puppeteers use their own breath to bring the puppet of Richard Parker to life through physical theatre and movement?

Where to study:

You can study puppetry and movement at Higher Education, at university, at drama school and at art and design school. The UCAS website details examples of degree courses that you can do in these areas (www.ucas.com) and the Federation of Drama School's website has really helpful information about drama schools that offer design programmes. www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk/studying-at-an-fds-school/subjects- and-careers

Life of Pi Profile: Nick Barnes – Puppet Designer
Nick studied Drama at Hull University and originally thought he would be an actor, but also enjoyed the design elements of the course. He saw a number of puppetry-based shows at the Edinburgh International Festival and became aware of the huge number of possibilities that they bring to performance. Nick attended the Slade School of Fine Art. He co-founded Blind Summit theatre company in 1997.

Also working on the production is Caroline Bowman, who is Associate Puppet Designer for the show. Caroline studied puppetry at Central School of Speech and Drama after completing an art foundation course. She then did an internship at Blind Summit. As a performer Caroline has worked in shows such as War Horse with the National Theatre.

Nick and Caroline's advice:
"Puppetry appeals to our sense of play, and it's a great contract between audience and puppeteers that you completely engage in the story that is being told. In puppetry, you are constantly problem solving. You can't be too prescriptive."

SET AND COSTUME DESIGN

Photo by Johan Persson

The set in the Life of Pi constantly transforms to represent different places and times, as we see in here as the hospital and the ocean (images by Johan Persson). Set design can be brought to life realistically or represented through items that symbolise or signify an actual thing. Set design defines a space and focusses the audience's attention. A set design process consists of many moving parts and contributing individuals. It is possible to outline this work as falling within four key areas:

1. Creating the design brief

2. Planning and adapting ideas and systems to bring the opportunities to life

3. Presenting the overall concept and evaluating the final design

4. Realising and reflecting on the design in practice from production of materials to technical rehearsals

LIFE OF PI

1. Creating the design brief

The brief outlines the key requirements of the design. This involves clear communication between the key stakeholders in the production to make sure the designer is fully clear on the expectations, budget, possibilities and boundaries of the production.

• The designer must read the script carefully, noting the practical requirements of the text, understanding and outlining the opportunities in the story.

• They will fully research any source material or other background information that can add to the richness of the detail of the world they are trying to create.

• The designer will explore and experiment with different materials, equipment and techniques as part of this process to make sure that their design can actually be brought to life.

• They are responsible for finding and interpreting the many clues in the text as well as hearing and understanding the views of the teams they are working with from a practical point of view.

Reflection point: Using the table below, make a bullet point list of the possibilities and the constraints a designer may face when creating a design brief for a production of the Life of Pi. This may include thoughts on use of space, budget, fixed items, movable items, interactive elements, colour and materials.

Opportunities	Constraints

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2. Planning and adapting ideas and systems to bring the opportunities to life

All design ideas will have parameters. Parameters are guidelines or boundaries for the creative designer to work within, work around and account for in their planning. Sometimes these can be financial and based on budgets, at other times they are logistical and based on the performance space they have, including making entrances and exits to and from the performance space work, and sometimes time can be a factor.

Other parameters can include the director's vision for the integration of set, costume and puppetry, as well as input from the lighting and video designers. Health and safety will feature highly in the realisation of a workable design. A beautiful design concept is no good if it cannot be used in a safe and practical way without endangering the cast or technical teams.

For these reasons, the designer will not do their draft work in isolation but will be continually communicating with the wider team as the design builds in progress. Whilst creatively drawing (by hand or electronically) and creating clear to understand plans are important skills for a designer, the ability to communicate well is an essential aspect of the job role.

Reflection point: What considerations did you think the designer for Life of Pi had to consider when designing the set? This production transferred from Sheffield to London, what parameters needed to be discovered. Take a look at Tim Hatley's interview in section 1 and consider the decisions he had to take when transferring the production to a London theatre.

3. Presenting the overall concept and evaluating the final design

For all of the reasons outlined above, it is essential that the designer develop draft and final design ideas and concepts in collaboration with the wider creative production team. The white card meeting is an opportunity for the designer to come together with the show's director and the rest of the production creatives to present their vision and design concept through the presentation of either a physical scaled 3D model or electronic rendering of a 3D model.

This meeting is chaired, or led, by the show's producer. This is the moment for everyone to explore the design proposal from their own professional perspectives and to present their feedback professionally. Once this stage is completed, at a later meeting, the fine details are agreed, often including signing off on agreed colour schemes, materials and finance allocation. Clear presentation skills and excellent listening skills are essential attributes for a good designer.

Reflection point: Draw an overhead plan of the stage set for the Life of Pi. Remember to leave space for clear and detailed labels to explain each aspect of your diagram, including notes of colour palette and textures.

4. Realising and reflecting on the design in practice from production of materials to technical rehearsals

The finished designs may include, but may not be limited to clearly presented floorplans, drawings, diagrams, images, a model box, scaled models, mock up versions of items, instructions and notations. All of this work will help the design become a reality that accurately reflects the designer's intended vision and that, importantly, can cope with the demands and rigours of a production throughout its rehearsals and performances.

Some designers will include props and costume design as part of this, other productions will have props designers and costume designers that work independently of but collaborate with the set designer throughout the process.

What was the process?

The writer adapted the existing novel into a playscript. A dramaturg provides the cast and crew with contextual research and information, representing the playwright through the rehearsal process.

A series of meetings are held bringing together the creative design team so they can discuss, agree and adjust their ideas as needed. They will need to think about and incorporate the opportunities as well as the constraints.

The costume supervisor oversees the realisation of the design concept. Wardrobe manage and maintain the costumes throughout the production. Dressers assist the performers with quick changes during the show.

The lighting design will be constructed via the rig and plotted and programmed into the lighting desk. A lighting technician (an LX Op) will operate the desk, following clear and precisely timed instructions from the Deputy Stage Manager.

Who made this moment?

Wardrobe will create, fit and maintain the costumes throughout a run of the show. Hair and wigs design the look of hairstyles.

The writer, the playwriter, dramaturg, director, movement director and more have all brought the story to the actor.

The set designer will have collaborated with the creative team to provide a design that when realised establishes a practical and workable set for the production, it's cast and crew and the venue.

The lighting designer will work closely with the rest of the design team to use a palette and intensity that establishes a clear sense of time, place, mood and atmosphere.

What can I see?

Actors performing a scene.

Making a Moment

The lighting highlights Pi, but has a warm tone to it, washing the orangutan and puppeteers in orange.

The lighting is operated by skilled technicians.

Pi's costume is all white.

The set and costume designer will work together to create a cohesive design concept, built by a scenic and construction design team.

The actor playing Pi is on the back of the boat (standing on the hospital bed).

The orangutan reaches out to Pi, animated by actor puppeteers.

The actors work collaboratively within the choreography of the moment to breathe life into the puppet.

The director will work alongside a movement director and puppetry director on a production that involves elements of movement and puppetry. They will work collaboratively to bring together these elements of the production seamlessly.

The set is automated and operated by skilled technicians under the close and timed control of the stage management team.

The audience are seated watching the performance.

There are clouds projected on to the set.

The sea is projected onto the floor.

During the run of a production, the Head of Automation will oversee the operation of the set items that move such as the revolve and the boat within the revolve and the trap doors. Assistant Stage Managers support the production stage manager.

A collaborative team brings an audience to a performance. These include producers, casting directors, marketing, box office and front of house hospitality teams.

The video designer will work closely with the set designers to ensure a unified design realisation.

The projection is operated by skilled technicians using software that maps the images onto the complex faceted surfaces of the set.

Putting on a production requires a large collaborative effort beyond the performance onstage. Producers will finance a production, casting directors will hold auditions and cast the performers, marketing will promote the show, box office will sell and manage the show and the front of house hospitality team will look after the patrons before, during and after the performance. Venue staff may be employed by the venue, rather than attached to the production.

The video design will be carefully planned and agreed in liaison with the director, the video designer, the set designer and the lighting designer to make sure the effect and execution are both practical and impactful. A technician will operate the video projection, following clear and precisely timed instructions from the Deputy Stage Manager.

LIFE OF PI

COSTUME DESIGN

Photo by Johan Persson

Costume can lend a sense of time and place to a production, but it can also affect the way an audience feels about a scene, situation or person. Colour can send strong messages to us. We can associate them with feelings, with times of the year. Cold, grey colours can make us feel detached, whereas warm and rich tones can draw us in toward the wearer.

Colour psychology can be utilised to understand how we use colour to communicate atmosphere and feeling. Red is known to signal danger or warmth. Autumnal colours can make us think of the natural world, white makes us think of innocence and grey tones can make things feel otherworldly, lacking emotion, remote or ghostly. Similarly, the texture of the fabric used can give signals and signs to the audience about the character. Clothes can tell us a lot about a person's age, status, wealth, job, cultural, location and time in history. Costume design must align with the overall vision for the design concept.

Reflection point: As an example, look to the image of the market scene below (image by Johan Persson) and observe the colour scheme and the fabrics used. What colour is Pi wearing? Is this in contrast to the other characters in the scene? What atmosphere does the overall colour palette create? How does this add to the set design concept for this moment in the play?

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Where can you study:

You can study set and costume design at Higher Education, at university, at drama school and at art and design school. The UCAS website details examples of degree courses that you can do in these areas (www.ucas.com) and the Federation of Drama School's website (www. federationofdramaschools.co.uk) has really helpful information about drama schools that offer design programmes.
www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk/studying-at-an-fds-school/subjects- and-careers

Life of Pi Profile: Tim Hatley – Set and Costume Designer

From the age of 7, Tim had wanted to work in theatre, and was endlessly making things, inspired by programmes like Blue Peter. Up until the age of 15, Tim wanted to be an actor, but then he saw Richard Eyre's production of Guys and Dolls at the National Theatre. He noticed the role and importance of lighting designers. He eventually studied Theatre Design at Central St Martins. He went on to assist designers such as Bob Crowley, Alison Chitty and Jocelyn Herbert before working on productions as designer for institutions such as the National Theatre, Opera North and Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC).

Tim's advice:
"Help from school is very important: I was very lucky to have a very supportive art teacher. If you aspire to be a designer, allow that passion to come to the fore. Doing an art foundation course is an important opportunity to learn about yourself as an artist. You also learn a lot by simply looking. Working as a designer demands total commitment. It's important to find the right course, and work with the right people."

LIGHTING DESIGN

Photo by Johan Persson

Just as a set can transport us to different places and times, and costume can give symbolise or signify meaning and feeling, lighting design can build the world of the story through colour, intensity and texture. Light and darkness can signal the time of day and the time of year. Lighting design can create mood and atmosphere and it can focus the audience's attention. A design will seek to light the performers, but also the set design, giving depth and dimension to the performance space. The design may also include or darken the audience space.

Lighting for performances can be very complicated and involve hundreds or even thousands of cues and states. There has been a lot of technological advances in lighting design and health and safety is a key element in the build and design of a lighting rig and design. Light can be filtered and focussed so it is more or less intense and we can adjust the brightness. The 'angle at which we place the light to the object it is focused on can change how the light and the subsequent shadows it creates is seen.

Lights, or lanterns can be rigged to hang overhead on lighting bars, to the side of the action on booms, in front of the action from the auditorium, or on floor level. Different types of lanterns are used for each of these jobs and they each create different effects. Lanterns used to create specific effects beyond contributing to the general lighting effect are called specials. We can change the colour of lights through presets on the lighting system, or with film called gels. We can also shape the beam of light with shutters and barn doors so there is no unnecessary light spill, as well as making shapes using gobos. Moving lights can create incredible effects.

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Fade times can be adjusted and you can fade lights up from or down to a blackout or from one lighting state to another with a crossfade. An immediate change in lighting is called a snap. Slower fades and crossfades can be timed to last from a fraction of a second to hours! A lighting design is plotted or programmed onto the lighting board and then operated by a technician.

Reflection point: The lighting design in the Life of Pi creates a clear sense of place, time and atmosphere. As an example, look to the image of the zoo scene below (image by Johan Persson) and observe the colours, the tones, the intensity and the shapes used. What lighting effects can you see being used here? What atmosphere does the overall colour palette create? How does this add to the set design concept for this moment in the play?

Where can you study:

You can study lighting and lighting design at Higher Education, at university and at drama school. The UCAS website details examples of degree courses that you can do in these areas (www.ucas.com) and the Federation of Drama School's website (www. federationofdramaschools.co.uk) has really helpful information about drama schools that offer lighting and lighting design programmes.
www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk/studying-at-an-fds-school/subjects- and-careers

Life of Pi Profile: Tim Lutkin – Lighting Designer
Tim was involved in school productions where he operated the lighting desk. At the age of 16 he got a job at Hull New Theatre, operating the follow spot. He went on to study at Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, and then assisted Hugh Vanstone, another high-profile lighting designer, before becoming a lighting designer working on an international scale.

Tim's advice:
"See as many shows as possible and try to decipher what systems they are using. Remember what you liked and let that guide you in your own ideas and designs."

SOUND AND MUSIC DESIGN

Photo by Johan Persson

Sound design forms a crucial part of creating the world of a play. As with set, costume and lighting design, sound and music, or audio can develop an audience's understanding of time and location, can establish a sense of the cultural world of the setting and can create mood and atmosphere, enhancing the action of the play's narrative. Sound, music, and not to forget purposeful moments of silence, can also develop a story beyond the action seen onstage.

Just like film scores, theatrical scores, soundscapes and incidental music can define moments, amplify the drama, elevate the tension or establish a sense of love, loss or relief. With both sound design and music scores, live or digitally recorded moments can be utilised to great effect, using naturally occurring sounds, voices, lyrics or electronically created sounds.

Acoustics is the way sound behaves and acoustics can be affected by the size of the space, the hard or absorbent materials in the space. Clarity of sound is understood by its volume, echo, reverberance (reverb), range, silence or tone. Sound can be acoustic (not amplified) or amplified through an electronic sound system using microphones and speakers (amps). Microphones can be worn by a performer, handheld, or placed along the front of the stage known as float mics.

Foldback speakers are speakers directed to the performers, so they can hear the sound clearly rather than relying on the auditorium sound system, which is directed toward the audience. An immediate change in sound lighting is called a snap. Slower fades and crossfades can be timed to last from a fraction of a second to hours!
Sound needs to be balanced. As with a lighting design, a sound design is programmed onto the sound desk and then operated by an engineer. Along with live sounds, these are live mixed at the desk by the sound operator to make sure the correct microphones are muted or muted and that the sound faders are appropriately adjusted to achieve the highest quality of sound mix.

In the Life of Pi, the musical score and sound design combine to create an emotional and narrative journey through the play and Pi's story, as well as to establish time and place. Music and sound in the Life of Pi help to build the dramatic tension toward a climactic moment on the boat between Pi and Richard Parker, shown in the image below (image by Johan Persson).

Reflection point: You can explore this moment in your own drama studio or at home. Can you find several different pieces of music, each contrasting in mood? What happens when you look to this image, or a physical recreation of this image whilst playing the different pieces of music? Does the difference in music evoke different feelings and responses from the viewer/audience?

Where can you study:

You can study sound design and music and composition at Higher Education, at university, at drama school and at music school or college. The UCAS website details examples of degree courses that you can do in these areas (www.ucas.com) as does CUKAS (https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires) and the Federation of Drama School's website has really helpful information about drama schools that offer design programmes.
www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk/studying-at-an-fds-school/subjects- and-careers

Life of Pi Profile: Andrew T. Mackay – Composer
Andrew began playing the piano aged 12, citing his teachers for inspiring him. He also had a band during his school days. He then attended the Royal College of Music, taught by Dr Lloyd Webber and John McCabe. He focussed on piano, clarinet and composition and knew that he did not want to explore any other career. Andrew composes for both live orchestras and using technology – both of which are important in his work as a composer. Life of Pi is his first composition for theatre but has previously worked in short films and feature films. He is particularly interested in how music aids storytelling, which isn't necessarily explicitly taught at music school.

Andrew's advice:
"For this type of work, you have to be 100% committed. Nothing less will do! You need a vision, and today's technology can help you make your own music. Technology, and what we have learnt in the pandemic, means that the world of making music has become even smaller and easier to navigate, so go for it!

VIDEO AND PROJECTION DESIGN

Photo by Johan Persson

Projection and video design can play a major role in creating a defined sense of space, location and atmosphere. This area of theatrical design is certainly not new but has grown in use significantly in recent years.

This field of design looks to the creation of digital graphics, animations, film and live feeds and integrates it with live action onstage through projection, LED walls and monitors. The video designer will work very closely with the set, lighting and sound designers to co-create a cohesive design concept.

In the moment above (image by Johan Persson) on board the boat when a storm rages, video and projection are used to tremendous effect to create the atmosphere and visual image of the ocean and the rain.

Reflection point: What would the audience response to this moment onstage have been if there were no video or projection? Do you think it would have been as effective? How would the effect have been different?

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Where can you study:

You can study projection and digital video and media design at Higher Education, at university and at drama school, at film school and art college. The UCAS website details examples of degree courses that you can do in these areas (www.ucas.com) and the Federation of Drama School's website has really helpful information about drama schools that offer design programmes.
www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk/studying-at-an-fds-school/subjects- and-careers

Life of Pi Profile: Andrzej Goulding – Video and Projection Designer
At primary school, Andrzej was interested in a variety of subjects such as maths, science and history, and he kept up that interest at secondary school. As well as developing his art skills, he remained very interested in physics in particular, and still listens to the Royal Institution lectures every year! He studied Art, and Design Technology at A level, and then studied at Central St Martins, first completing a foundation course and then a degree in Theatre Design.

He then applied to work with Rob Howell on the Lord of the Rings musical, originally working for a week to assist with model making. However, he actually worked with Rob between 2004 and 2010, learning a lot about both set and video design. In 2008, Andrzej was asked to make a short video sequence for a Christmas show. It worked so well that Andrzej inserted five more sequences and composed the music! Having assisted other designers such as Bill Dudley and John Driscoll, Andrzej then began to work independently as a designer, taking on a range of projects.

Andrezej's advice:
"There is no easy way up in this industry. You need to make sure that you can forge relationships with people. Remember that in design, there is no right or wrong: if there was there wouldn't be so many different productions of Shakespeare plays, for example! Be willing to experiment with ideas and make sure you're having fun. If the process isn't fun, it will show on stage. And remember: never be late and always be reliable!"

FURTHER INFORMATION ON CAREERS IN THEATRE

Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre
CDMT offers quality assurance and membership services to institutions delivering training, education and assessment in the performing arts.
www.cdmt.org.uk

Creative Access
Creative Access enables people from communities under-represented in the creative industries to access careers, progress and reach leadership.
www.creativeaccess.org.uk

Federation of Drama Schools
The Federation of Drama Schools partners are institutions that provide conservatoire vocational training for those who want to be professional performers, theatre makers and technical theatre practitioners.
www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk

Get Into Theatre
Get Into Theatre is the essential website to help you find all the information and opportunities you need to pursue a successful career in theatre in the UK. From backstage to performing, training to apprenticeships, you will find up-to-date theatre jobs information and advice.
www.getintotheatre.org

Mousetrap Theatre Projects
Based in the heart of the West End, we're a theatre education charity dedicated to enriching the lives of young people. We believe all young people should have the opportunity to enjoy, learn and benefit from seeing live theatre, irrespective of their cultural, social or economic background.
www.mousetrap.org.uk

UCAS
UCAS connects people to University, post Uni studies including teacher training, apprenticeships and internships.
www.ucas.com

Discover! Creative Careers
Bringing together careers information and opportunities from creative organisations in one explorable directory.
www.discovercreative.careers

TheatreCraft
A monthly newsletter and social media site provides up to date opps and insights.
www.theatrecraft.org

Inspiring Future Theatre
Teachers can sign up to Inspiring the Future for free and request a volunteers from the theatre industry to attend a school event to talk about their career.
www.inspiringthefuture.org/schools-and-colleges

Creative & Cultural Skills
We support the UK cultural sector by shaping skills, education and employment best practice.
www.ccskills.org.uk

LIFE OF PI

MEET THE TEAM

LIFE OF PI

MEET THE TEAM

This pack includes interviews with members of the creative team.
Students and teachers can use these interviews to prepare for,
and respond to, their visit to the production.
(Please note reference is made to key scenes in the plot.)

LIFE of **PI**

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YANN MARTEL
AUTHOR

Yann spoke to us from his home in Canada
and explained his process of writing the novel.

Q Can you start by telling us about the novel?

Life of Pi is a literary novel which means that it follows fewer rules than genre-based fiction.
With romances, murder mysteries, thrillers etc, there are rules and conventions. However,
with literary fiction the lack of rules means that it's more personal, but it can make the work
harder to read. Literary novels plumb the depths of life. I'd say that *Life of Pi* has elements
of adventure and is also highly philosophical. It has religious elements, and it's set in an
xotic settings. The novel is an exploration of particular questions, and each of my novels
has explored one particular question I was interested in. Here it's religious faith.

Q What was the writing process for Life of Pi?

In my 30s I travelled through India, and for the first time was puzzled by religion: in an age of
science and technology and the triumph of these, I was intrigued that something as obscure
as religion would endure. I realised that art and religion operate in similar ways. Stories are
important in both literature and religious belief.

The novel took 4 ½ years to write in total and the first 2½ were taken up with research.
That ranged from looking at animal behaviour, biology, reading castaway stories, and finding
information about survival at sea. I explored a whole range of subjects. I wrote copious notes,
jotted down quotations, and also travelled extensively in India. I did on the ground research,
studying Indian English and really getting India under my skin. I also spent a lot
of time in the library at McGill University whilst I was living in Montreal doing more
theoretical research.

Susie Ferguson, for Mousetrap Theatre Projects, 2022
With thanks to Yann Martel, Lolita Chakrabati, Max Webster and Simon Friend

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There are three broad strands of research – zoology, religion and survival at sea - and I realised it was way too much to fit all of it into the novel. In the actual chapters, I would only use a fraction of that research but I gained a huge amount of knowledge and could definitely impersonate a zookeeper in my mind!

The process generated about 700 pages of notes on a Word document, which also consisted of ideas for scenes, dialogue, observations and ideas. Once I had all of that information, printed on paper, I then used scissors to cut up all the research and put it in different envelopes, depending on where they belong in the novel. The first envelope was called 'Author's Note', the second envelope was the first chapter when Pi is in Canada. What was in the envelopes was the backbone of each chapter and then I'd flesh out that chapter.

The novel has a feel of gritty realism, so I needed a really thorough knowledge of the topics.

You have to do your research. Then you reach a point where you can close your eyes and imagine yourself in the skin of the character.

Q What are the themes of the novel?

Life of Pi explores the idea that life is an interpretation. It's not just about facts, but how you interpret those facts. You can have one set of facts that can generate two entirely different stories.

This is key in *Life of Pi*. At the heart of *Life of Pi* is this notion that a ship sinks and after 227 days a boy arrives on the coast of Mexico in a life boat. These facts are incontrovertible, but what happens in between is not. One is a story with animals, one is a story without.

In the theatrical adaptation, both stories are told equally and the audience is free to choose between those two stories. Do you want to live a life that cleaves most to reason and facts, or one that takes greater leaps of the imagination? It's the latter version where art and religion become important notions.

When I wrote the book, I didn't concern myself with what the book might mean to people. I had a notion of two stories based on the same set of facts and the same number of characters.

When it was unexpectedly successful, I was often asked about the meaning of Richard Parker. Initially I drew a blank! Then all these perceptive readers were giving me answers which I then started feeding to my next group of readers! Broadly speaking there are two stories told in parallel and the characters are paired off. The zebra is the Taiwanese sailor, the orangutan is paired off with Pi's mother, the hyena is the French cook, and then the pair we have left is Richard Parker and Pi. They symbolically echo each other. Both share a dogged desire to live, and keep living, and both do what needs doing to achieve that.

Q What interpretations have people offered about the meaning of the novel?

Some interpretations would say that the tiger is a figment of Pi's imagination and symbolises his determination to survive. In this version, he can't accept what he did – that he killed the cook who killed his mother. He survived, but at what cost? Perhaps it is all a big lie he told himself to make an ugly truth acceptable. Some people say the tiger could be God - at one point Pi says he couldn't have survived without the tiger; it gave him a reason to live. Many people would say that about the Divine – it's something that keeps Pi alive. The Old Testament talks of the fear of God, so Pi is both in love with and frightened of Richard Parker. One person even said the relationship between Richard Parker and Pi is a metaphor for marriage! The most obvious interpretation is that it's a parallel – Richard Parker is a parallel creature to Pi.

Q The description of Richard Parker is detailed. Was it difficult to write?

I don't remember it being difficult to write. There were other sections that were much more difficult. Words are not good at descriptions, particularly if things are unfamiliar. My Chinese translator didn't know what a sea anchor is – I spent a lot of time trying to explain. Most people know tigers, they can visualise one and you just fill in the outline.

What's interesting about writing is that the things you'd expect to be difficult, aren't, but the utterly mundane is very difficult. I remember in the Author's Note at the very end when he thanks various people including the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Japanese Embassy was really hard. I remember really struggling even though it's completely unimportant whilst the crucial stuff seemed to come quite easily. The tiger description is vaguely theatrical. Tiger stripes are like our fingerprints, they're totally unique – no two faces are identical, very much like Chinese theatrical make up.

A good example of the difference between writing in a novel and creating that story for the stage is the sinking of the Tsimtsum. To me, that was a way of Pi getting to the lifeboat with the tiger. So I simply wrote, "The ship sank" and described a "monstrous metallic burp" but then it quickly moves on to how that feels for Pi, and his emotional reaction.

For a film maker this moment is a God send! It's quite a beautiful scene in the film and those three words become an entire scene that's forcefully told. However Pi's dialogue to Richard Parker just vanishes. What is strong in one medium is not in another. All the mental rumination about religion is lost in the film and sometimes in the play because of the visual component of both of those two forms. They are inherently visual media.

Q What are the challenges of adapting a novel for stage or screen?

Writing a book involves writing and rewriting, and then your editor tells you to rewrite even more! Books take a long time to write but they tend to be a successful form of storytelling. The challenge for the adaption of any novel is that you necessarily lose something moving from one to another. Each medium has its own strengths and weaknesses and you write for that specific medium.

Adaptation is difficult. You gain a lot though – the immediacy of the actors, for example. You gain the fact that the audience has already agreed to suspend their disbelief (whereas cinema needs lots of special effects to achieve the same effect). People who've read the book will recognise novel in the play or movie. They'll fill in any holes that might be in the adaptation. Adaptation just tells a story in a different way. Some people are natural readers, who enjoy the quiet of reading, and when you read a book you're sort of creating a little movie in your mind. That's very empowering, you are the director, the designer etc. Others prefer visual and aural storytelling, and the play or cinema provides the social experience too. I don't need to be possessive!

Q How were you involved in creating the adaptation?

I assisted at one week of workshopping, but I stepped back very quickly because I immediately recognised this was not my language. I can understand the language of prose and novel writing, but the language of theatre is a different instrument.

Adaptation within the rehearsal room is very collaborative, whereas I'm used to writing in the quiet of my mind. What works on the page doesn't necessarily work on the stage, and vice versa. Therefore you have to let go, and trust the artists who are adapting the story because they know what they're doing and it's their artistic risk.

I had a lunchtime conversation with Lolita Chakrabarti (playwright) – we discussed the novel in detail and I told her what the novel is about for me. Of course, everyone has their own interpretation and Lolita has done a great job. She periodically showed me drafts, but I would only guide with small things such as 'this doesn't sound like something Pi would say' but nothing much more than that.

I remember giving the odd little perspective. For example, there were discussions about the other people who would arrive when Pi reaches Mexico. But those people can't see the tiger – the only person who can witness Richard Parker is Pi.

If someone is adapting one's work, we must trust the risk taking of the adapters – the more freedom they have, the better the adaptation will be.

Life of Pi is a tricky story to adapt because the mistake most people make is that they have to get to the boy in the lifeboat in the Pacific as quickly as possible. In fact, not much happens once he's on the boat– it's a domestic drama and there's a guy and his big cat, he periodically feeds his big cat, and he loses weight. The real tension comes at the end in the hospital in Mexico when you realise there are two stories being told.

Q What advice can you give to anyone who's adapting a novel into a play?

Well, what I'd say is when adapting a novel or a story, you need to look where its heart lies. What is the actual moving force?

That's the same with any book – you need to ask what it's really about. Some people get caught up in what's loudest and flashiest which isn't necessarily where the story is at. Go deeper and see what's really driving the story.

LOLITA CHAKRABARTI
PLAYWRIGHT

Lolita explained the process of adapting
Life of Pi for the stage.

Q When did you first read the novel and how did you get involved with the production?

I read the book in 2002 when it first came out and I loved it. Of course, I had no idea that I would eventually be asked to adapt it! Before I was commissioned for this project, I had adapted a film into a radio play but I hadn't really adapted much before!

Q It must have been a daunting process! What was your starting point?

My first port of call is always the personal connection to material. I didn't understand *Life of Pi* but that was what was so mysterious: I loved the way that Yann kept us in that space that even at the end you're wondering what happened. I didn't feel cheated by the book at all, even with this ambiguity.

When I started the adaptation process I took a highlighter and I highlighted all the bits I thought were interesting within the story. This included the dialogue and the dramatic moments for example. It's a very personal relationship between you and the piece and so it can seem a little random and chaotic at that stage.

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By chance I found an online pdf of the book so I cut and pasted all the different sections under headlines: God, family, zoo, loss, Richard Parker and so on. The basic story is obvious. In the book there's a whole section involving a journalist, but that didn't interest me at all. I particularly loved the Japanese shipping people and I knew Mr Okamoto and his junior served the same dramatic purpose. I wanted to put more women in the play so I took the essence of the Japanese shipping merchants and used their essence, and teamed Mr Okamoto with Lulu Chen.

I like to be left alone with the first draft, I don't want anyone to interfere! Your relationship with the material is so delicate at the beginning that any other voices or input will get in the way!

Q Is this a linear process, or does it take place over different periods of time?

An important part of writing is when you leave it alone, you let it filter like sand and it starts to settle. It starts to land in places you wouldn't expect.

There was an eight month period between the commission and writing the play. I did do some research, but it wasn't a research heavy script. I looked at animal behaviour, zoos and the political situation in India at the time the story is set as I didn't previously understand it, but that was about it.

Religion is a very difficult thing to write about: I spent a lot of time looking at it and thinking about it. Interestingly I was in a production of Hamlet and I started writing *Life of Pi* during that time. I was surrounded by amazing language and two intriguing protagonists in Hamlet and Pi. Pi isn't depressed at all, but he is trying to survive. That was an interesting opposition to consider.

Q Is there one way of interpreting the story?

I spoke to Yann when I was commissioned to adapt his novel. I met him in London and my first question to him was "*what really happened?"* He said, *"if you lose the story of the people that's fine, the real story is the animals."* There is no single answer to what it's about! We all come out thinking what we think…I have my version of what I think, but I haven't put it into the play. In Yann's mind there is no definitive answer of what it's about.

Q What are the key challenges of adapting Life of Pi?

One of the main ones is how we stay honourable and give answers in the play, but still allow the mystical element of religion and of life to live within it, when the audience leaves the theatre. As an individual, I definitely have my view, but it is very individual.

You're an actor as well as a playwright. How does this inform your approach?
For a new piece of work, I'm there from the first moment in rehearsals. I rewrote hugely during the rehearsal process for *Life of Pi*.

I'm really conscious of the actors when I'm writing and I really listen to them in rehearsal. If their instinct is saying that there's something not feeling right then we need to tackle it. The thought between the lines is the most important thing. You need to know what the thought is from one line to the next. If the thought isn't right, you have to shift the line.

A script is never a perfectly formed thing when it arrives in the rehearsal room – there are edits and changes. The actors were incredible in adapting to them, even though some of them were happening late in the rehearsal process as we approached previews. That's the stressful part because until you get it in front of the audience, you don't know what it is! It's a fear that's part of the excitement though – if each individual person is sure of what they're doing, when it gets put together it becomes something new and exciting.

I did some rewrites after Sheffield, but then we were delayed because of the pandemic. That later version was used in rehearsals for London, but I did do a few more small rewrites. The staging was different so the language needed to fit the staging, such as the length of entrances and exits and how much dialogue could be delivered, for example.

Q What are the other considerations when adapting a novel for stage or screen?

Theatrical interpretation is a very different form to a book. A book is a very personal relationship between you and what you're writing. Yann says, *"Pi sits at a table"*, and whoever is reading will fill in the detail about a table. In film, everyone asks a LOT of questions about what it looks like, it's meaning – it needs to have a purpose. In theatre, the table doesn't even need to be there! The way in which we use our imagination is different.

There are some books that I wouldn't know where to start on. With those I do adapt, I have a flavour of character of what they want, what they need and where they're going. It can be relationship to environment, animals, and people: that is the key. If the relationships in the book are rich, that's what grabs me.

This show tells the story in a new way, and brings out things in a new way that you won't necessarily have seen in the book. In the book, the chronology is all over the place and you don't really question it. Your mind leaps, but in the theatre that's quite difficult to do so it becomes a different language.

Q Were there any particularly difficult scenes to write?

You have to be playful in rehearsal. When I first wrote a draft of when the Tsimstum sank, it was all going on. The scene was far too busy! There were basically various mini scenes going on at the same time. The actors did what I had written, they used tissue boxes, coat hangers, a costume rail, etc. to bring it alive, and there were some bits that were magical. Finn orchestrated some movement, too. Although there was a lot about the scene that didn't work, we found the intention – that's key. We took elements of it, I rewrote it until we get the sinking of the ship that you see in the show.

The scene at the zoo at the beginning was also a big challenge. I wrote and wrote, and it took a long time to get right. None of us could tell why. It's near the opening of the play – it's where the magic and wonder start and the different elements start to combine. It's the high point before we go to sea. All of the important characters were being introduced, but then Pi

is shortly going to lose them so it was difficult to achieve in a short amount of stage time! The arrival on the island is also an important moment and we had to make some quite significant changes to our original plans. Pi is hallucinating because he's so hungry and traumatised. My original ideas didn't work and so it's become a monologue now. Pi explains it and the audience has to imagine it for themselves. Perhaps that makes it even more effective: sometimes less can be more!

Q Can you tell us about the theme of religion in the play?

I loved the religion in the book, because it made me chuckle. In these times it's quite dangerous to laugh at religion but the book is a gentle, affectionate look at what religion does and what it means to people.

I grew up in a Hindu environment. It made complete sense to me as a child that the stories I was told demonstrated good behaviour and explored different elements of ourselves.

Q Do you have a favourite character in the play?

What I really like is the way in which we've made women more prominent in the play. I've taken characters from the novel who are men, or who are in the background, and made them more prominent female characters. I love the representations of lots of different kinds of people in the play. I can't pick a favourite character though!

Q What do you want the audience to think and feel when they're watching the play?

You follow your own feeling when writing. I have to make sense of my feelings as I follow the story. If I am wanting to create fear, then I explore the fear and ask how the character carries on, how do they carry on? I'm following the emotions in the story. Nobody's response is irrelevant: it's very personal. You're sitting in a room with people, but it's about your response.

I want us all to feel loss when Pi loses his family. Everyone has felt that in some form. By the age of seven we have experienced the full range of human emotions, and as we age they simply become more complex. Anyone seeing the show will have felt those feelings before. That's why stories that are universal and are so relevant to all of us.

MAX WEBSTER
DIRECTOR

Q Can you tell us about transferring the show to London?

The show was first performed at the Sheffield Crucible, which is an incredibly exciting space. We used the thrust configuration, with all of the audience looking down onto the stage. This made the use of the floor a really key part of the production and provided some incredibly exciting opportunities. Bringing it to the West End, we've reconfigured it to an end on staging, but the seats in the auditorium have been lifted so that this audience still get that same experience. We've also built the stage out into the auditorium, too.

The end on configuration has presented a few challenges, so we have made some changes to the blocking in London, as you would expect. I think the most technically challenging part of the play is the tiger training scene when all of the performance and design elements all work together to create that sense of peril and drama. It includes sound effects, trap doors, puppets, lighting, video projection, revolve cues – everything is working full blast!

Q What are the staging challenges of Life of Pi?

Life of Pi is a challenging novel to adapt because of the interpolation of the scenes at sea, with the more conversational scenes in the hospital. We have to ensure that we don't lose momentum and tension in those scenes – that we sustain the audience's engagement and interest.

Yann's novel is an image which is expanded – a boy and a tiger in a boat! The first third is about the family, the epilogue is the second story with the two investigators who talk to Pi, and then the middle is an extended journalistic and scientific description about how Pi survives. It doesn't have the same arc as a theatrical piece, so the challenge is to give the time at sea that vital shape.

My role as a director includes ensuring that the fundamental information and story is clear:

•   Where we are – whether that's a zoo, a hospital room, the market, the sea etc.
    There are a lot of different locations in the story.

•   The circumstances of the scene – why we're there, what's happened before
    the weather, and temperature, the atmosphere and so on.

•   The physical and verbal language – what the characters are doing,
    and what they are saying, which run parallel to each other.

Q What was your approach to rehearsing the show?

The first time we made the show, we'd done a lot of Research and Development (R&D) and workshopping. On our first day we did a read through, which I usually do at the beginning of the rehearsal period. Read throughs are good to do both as an ice-breaker, but also a way into discussion, talking about the play and what it means, and the key themes that we think are important. We also did a movement session. We did an introduction to puppetry and talked about the practicalities of working together. We had some principles about how we'd be with each other – including equality, diversity and inclusion.

Working with Finn there was a lot of practical and technical direction as well as the artistic process of telling the story. Each time the puppet does something, it has to be physically 'written': not physically written down, but it needs working out and creating with precision. Everything is collaborative.

Q How did your own training inform your work on this production?

Part of my training was at the Jacques Lecoq School in Paris. That training was great in its focused thinking about what one does with one's body. For *Life of Pi* that focus is about what you would do on a beach in Mexico, in contrast to how you would use your body in a zoo. Whilst you are being assisted with the projections in the show, the story is held in the bodies of the actors and everything around them is supporting that.

Q What do you want the audience to experience as they watch Life of Pi?

Theatre is something that happens between the actors and the audience in a triangulation with the play we're performing. When I'm directing, I constantly consider the relationship with the audience and I don't think it's a one way interaction: it's a shared act of imagination. I've been struck by the different thoughts people have had when they come away from the show and I really like the way they resonate with the story. Some people are very interested in the theology of the play, whilst others see it as an epic story of survival. Art is not didactic. The play means different things to different people.

Yann gets asked a lot about which of the stories is 'real', but Yann has said that he wanted to write a very democratic novel – that people have a choice. We want the play to be an emotionally effective story – but again there are various different emotions that you might feel when watching it.

SIMON FRIEND
PRODUCER

Q What was the initial process of bringing Life of Pi to the stage?

I bought the rights for *Life of Pi* in 2016. Lolita Chakrabarti had a strong vision for the play, and I was already aware of Max Webster's work, particularly The Lorax for the Old Vic, which was another puppet-based show. I brought a group of people together and we workshopped the puppetry and set design, and then our job was to find a venue for the show.

Once a producer has put a team of creative people together and found a venue, they need to let the creative team enter the creative process and my job was then to look at marketing and sustaining strong audience attendance.

The show began its life at The Crucible in Sheffield: it's a cavernous space in which you can create a whole world. In Sheffield, the design used a thrust configuration, so the performers were close to the audience.

A producer has to do a large number of things: as well as commissioning new work, we also need to have a strong understanding of intellectual property law, and be able to create a team of people to create a project.

Q What skills do you need to be a theatre producer?

As a producer, you need to develop an extremely thick skin! You will get rejected a lot! However, that is not a bad thing. If you're making enough suggestions and offering ideas, it means you are purposeful and working hard! The moments where our shows create magic are what makes it worthwhile.

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Q **What was your journey to becoming a producer?**

At school I was heavily involved in productions. As well as the productions created by our teachers, I also put on other productions and gained experience in producing, directing and performing. After the 2004 Tsunami I mounted a charity fundraising concert and enjoyed that experience of bringing people together.

I studied English at University College London (UCL), but was also involved with the drama societies. Whilst I was in my third year, I got an internship with a West End producer which gave me a great foundation, and then did a Stage One producer training scheme. I spent four years at Theatre Royal, Bath, where I worked as a producer, including on Things We Do For Love, and eventually formed my own production company.

I adore reading, and I even used to read the publishing industry's magazine, The Bookseller to find out what books were up and coming, and therefore potential theatre works! I very much enjoy the literary element and then working with the creative team to take it from page to stage.

LIFE OF PI

LIFE OF PI

PUPPETRY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Life of Pi utilises puppets all the way through the production. The information and activities below are designed to help you evaluate what you have seen and to suggest some ideas that you can use in the studio to experiment with your own.

We talked to Finn Caldwell (Puppet & Movement Director, and Puppet Designer), Nick Barnes (Puppet Designer), Scarlett Wilderink (Richard Parker – Tiger Heart) and Fred Wild (Tiger Head) to give us an insight into the use of puppetry in the show.

STARTING THE PROCESS

Photo by Johan Persson

Finn explains, "When we start looking at a show that will use puppets Nick and I will work out what the puppet will need to do in the show. and crucially, how it contributes to the narrative. The puppet must have a strong sense of character"

With Richard Parker, Finn and Nick needed to identify all the different movements that the puppet would need to do to convey the character of a tiger. This includes jumping, swimming, existing within the boat, attacking the goat and climbing.

Richard Parker needs to be scary. In Western performance, puppets don't tend to be scary, but this puppet needs to communicate a tiger's strength, weight and power. He needs to be frightening both for Pi, and for the audience. There are moments where he is relaxed, and there are moments when he is tense and powerful.

There were two periods of research and design (R&D) in which a small team used simple cut out wooden shapes, and experimented with how many people would be needed to operate them, how they should be constructed and what their scale should be. Designs are created on CAD (Computer Aided Design) and CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing) software. Puppets are created using a CVC milling machine, a 3D printer and through laser cutting.

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CONSTRUCTION

Photo by Johan Persson

"The novel gave us a lot of information, including what people felt and thought about the tiger. That was our starting point."

Nick Barnes explains, "We used Plastozote to construct the puppets. Richard Parker is made to look weather beaten and like driftwood, but the audience will consistently see the form of the tiger. The armatures are made from aluminium, so they're lightweight, and the joints have bungees which provides resistance and pull the limb back to its starting point after a movement. The puppets are made of laminates of layered plywood and aluminium: they need to be hard wearing, but lightweight."

The orangutan is more like a traditional Japanese Bunraku puppet with a flexible nylon rod creating its rib cage. It's a complicated structure so it needs strength and support. The puppet is operated by three people. The hyena has two people inside it to operate it, whilst the giraffe only needs one operator. The operation of the giraffe is more like object puppetry, whilst Richard Parker and the orangutan are operated by three people and are the most complex puppets in the show.

The other puppets in the production are:
• The goat
• The zebra
• The sea turtle

Both Finn and Nick have backgrounds in performance as well as design. Therefore, they are aware of the many challenges that the puppeteers will face when using the puppets to bring the characters to life.

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THE RULES OF PUPPETRY

Finn says, "The most important thing to remember is that the audience needs to believe the puppet is alive. If that doesn't happen, everything else is lost. Puppets appeal to the audience's sense of play, and there is a silent contract between the audience and the puppeteers to suspend all disbelief. It's the same as two children agreeing to play with a toy. There's an unspoken agreement that the object is alive."

There are seven rules for animating a puppet, but the three most important ones are:

•**Breath:** Being able to see and hear a puppet breathing allows the audience to believe the animal is taking oxygen. We need to see their lungs inflating and deflating. Breath also tells us about emotions: fast breathing communicates tension or fear, whilst slow breathing tells us the character is relaxed and comfortable.

• **Focus:** It needs to be clear what the puppet is looking at – where its eye line is. It needs to be as precise as the way humans observe and focus on things. The audience stops believing in intention and thoughts if the eyeline is not clear. When it's successful, we start to believe in the puppet's thoughts, desires and intentions.

• **Weight:** The body of the puppet is just as important as the spirit and the mind of the puppet character. We need to convince the audience that this constructed object is actually a tiger, for example. The puppeteers must convey muscularity, weight, and gravity.

A specific example of this would be when Richard Parker jumps. The puppeteers could just lift and throw it! However, to help the audience to believe in it we have to include the preparation for the movement (bending or squatting down, for example) before releasing into the air. When an animal lands on a hard surface, the muscles will compensate by bending. Our puppets need to do that too. Its preparation and recovery, as well as the action of being in the air that's important.

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STUDIO ACTIVITIES

Photo by Johan Persson

Puppetry is the process of animating an inanimate object. You can therefore create fantastic effects with everyday objects such as books, shoes, toys, pieces of clothing and even pieces of paper. **The most important thing is to commit to making the object live.**

Object puppetry – flocks of birds

Find a mixture of books – hardback, paper back, notebooks, various different colours and sizes etc. Open a book near its centre point and try to simulate the flapping of bird wings through manipulating the book. Your audience will know that it is not really a bird, but audiences enjoy the abstraction of using one object to represent something else. Working individually, experiment with creating a 'flight path' for your bird. Consider what type of bird you are trying to create. Is it a delicate one, or a strong and intimidating bird of prey?

Once you have done this, find some videos showing bird murmuration – where the fly in large groups and create a shapes in the sky. It can be a very beautiful sight. Once you have noted the movement patterns, and chosen one you wish to try and create through puppetry, work in a group of up to 10 people to create a murmuration with your book puppets. Who leads? Do they lead all the time? How will you use levels? When and how will you change direction? Remember that you will also need to work closely with your ensemble to agree where the eye gaze should go, and what vocalisations might be needed.

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Hoodie puppets

Find a normal hooded jumper. You are going to create a puppet of a child using this piece of clothing. The arms are already formed: you could knot the cuffs to create 'hands'. The hood can be scrunched or folded to create a head that matches the scale of the puppet you want to create To create the legs, hold the two outer corners of the bottom of the hoodie. Twist both corners away from each other so that they start to create 'legs'. Keep twisting until the bottom half of the hoodie forms legs that are in proportion to the arms and head you have created.

Depending on the size of the hoodie, you will need from three to five people to operate the puppet. Using the three principles outlined earlier, can you:

• **Make the puppet breathe?** Where does the tension and movement need to be? Do you need sound to make it more convincing?

• **Make the puppet walk?** Watch one of your group members walk across the room, and note how opposition works (we swing our right arm forward as we walk on our left leg, for example). Note how feet make contact with the ground. How should the ensemble member's co-ordinate their movements so that the audience focus is on the puppet at all times? Make sure your puppet doesn't start floating, rather than walking!

• **Create a short sequence of action?** For example, introduce a ball in to the sequence (either a real one, such as a tennis ball, or a scrunched up piece of paper).

• **Create an interaction between two puppets.** What happens if you add a second hoodie figure? How do you need to collaborate to ensure that the puppets are equally convincing, and which one we need to look at, at any given moment during their interaction?

Remember that in Life of Pi rehearsals, puppeteers work together for significant lengths of time. They learn to anticipate each other's movements. It will take time for you to develop those skills so rehearse with purpose and use the three main principles to keep you focussed as you refine your work.

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Shadow puppetry

Research Indonesian shadow puppetry. You will find beautiful puppet designs and performances which are created using screens, and well-defined, jointed figures on rods.

Create your puppets by finding clear outlines of the animals in Life of Pi. Cut them out on stiff cardboard. You will see that the ornate Indonesian puppets are very intricate – this might come later as you learn the basic skills of shadow puppetry.

Your puppets should have jointed limbs – these can be created using split pins – and need to be mounted on rods (you can use kebab skewers, pencils, chopsticks or other thin rods).

Use a sheet or thick gauze, and light it from behind with theatre lights, desk lamps or torches. **Be careful that your sheet does not touch the lamps. Your teacher may also provide you with a special spray which helps fire-proof fabrics and other materials.**

Once you have created your different shadow puppets, storyboard the images that you wish your audience to see. Remember that in shadow puppetry it is easy to overcrowd your 'screen' so be clear about the key moment in each scene.

Once you've choreographed your puppetry, you can experiment with sound effects, soundscapes and music to create mood, atmosphere and emotion for your performance.

Designing Puppets or Masks for *Life of Pi.*

The following extracts from the novel can guide you in your initial ideas for puppetry designs. You could also create masks for actors to wear – either full or half masks. There are acting exercises in Pack 3 that can be supported by mask designs.

Remember that Yann Martel and Nick Barnes both say that the audience don't necessarily need every piece of information spelling out for them: they are capable of filling in any gaps. Less is often more.

Using the 2018 Canongate edition of Life of Pi, look closely at the way in which the animals are described on the following pages:

The zebra and the hyena: p. 109. The hyena is described further on p.115-116.
Orange-Juice, the orangutan is described between pages 129-131.
Richard Parker is described on p.151.
Other animals that populate the zoo are briefly mentioned on pages 36-37.

THE PUPPETEER

Photo by Johan Persson

The majority of the performers in this production operate at least one puppet during the performance. When you are watching the production, consider the following points:

• In the same way that an actor uses their body, a puppeteer does too. Not only do they move the puppet, but they also amplify what the puppet is doing.

• Puppeteers need strong vocal and breath skills. Each animal in Life of Pi has its own set of vocalisations, which have been created in rehearsal and based on considerable research. Without breath, the puppet cannot be animated and will not encourage the audience to suspend their disbelief. Where there is more than one operator for each puppet, they all need to co-ordinate with each other in their breath and sound.

• Successful puppeteering requires a performer to have a responsive body, which is strong and flexible. The performer must use their physical ability to communicate character and story – it is not simply about manipulating an inanimate object.

• It can be helpful for puppeteers to have a background in physicality, whether through acrobatics, dance training or even martial arts – it all helps them understand the precision that's needed.

All of the jobs in the show are physically difficult – head, heart and hind. 6 puppeteers in the show cover all the puppets. Pretty much every actor in the show does some kind of puppetry.

PERFORMING WITH PUPPETS

Photo by Johan Persson

Fred Wild says, "We all had to do quite intense weight, endurance and stamina training in order to be able to puppeteer the Tiger effectively. We achieved this with thorough physical warm-ups, wearing ankle, wrist or chest weights while rehearsing, and by just using the puppets for as long as we could bear to in each rehearsal session. It was essential to build the required muscle as early on as possible so as to reduce the chance of injury and to facilitate us to be able to rehearse the show and not have to stop for a rest because of fatigue."

Scarlett Wilderink continues, "We also have a physiotherapist as part of the production team who works with us, focussing on prevention – stopping injuries before they happen. Our physio also works with a nutritionist so it really is a holistic approach to us keeping well and safe."

Developing Your Skills
Finn is joint Artistic Director of Gyre and Gimble. You can find more about their work here:
www.gyreandgimble.com

The Curious School of Puppetry also run short, and often online, courses.
www.curiouspuppetry.com/events

Little Angel Theatre run a variety of accessible courses:
www.littleangeltheatre.com/take-part

MAKING PUPPETS

Photo by Johan Persson

If you're working with a class or a club to make puppets,
consider investing in the following items:

- Masking tape
- Newspaper
- Brown paper – you can buy it in rolls which is often cheaper than smaller packets
- Googly eyes
- Split Pins to help create joints
- Pipe cleaners
- Glue, for example PVA which dries quite quickly
- String
- Wire

You can also collect:

- Cereal boxes and other pieces of cardboard
- Kebab skewers, chopsticks or thin cane
- Clean milk cartons of different sizes
- Yoghurt pots
- Clean soft toys
- Jumpers, hooded ones are particularly good!

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Susie Ferguson, for Mousetrap Theatre Projects, 2022
With thanks to Finn Caldwell, Nick Barnes, Caroline Bowman, Scarlett Wilderink and Fred Davis

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PUPPETRY 'TOOLKIT'
A SHOPPING/RESOURCE LIST FOR BUDDING PUPPET MAKERS IN THE DESIGN STUDIO OR WORKSHOP, BY NICK BARNES

DESIGNING PUPPETS

Choice of Materials
The choice of materials you use for your puppets will be the result of three factors: the size of the puppet, the look of the puppet and your budget.

From these three considerations a list of factors becomes important: weight, movement, robustness, aesthetics, durability, cost.

Think of a traditional stringed marionette puppet. Most likely it will have been carved from wood. If the puppet is small then the weight of the wood will not be an issue for the puppeteer, it will more probably aid in its operation, as a marionette relies on gravity for its movement. The size will likely mean that the cost of materials will be less. If you are building a large walkabout puppet supported on a backpack, wood will almost certainly be too heavy to carve body parts, and for reasons of weight and cost you may want to use bamboo, withies and tissue paper – less expensive materials for the size of the puppet. If you have a bigger budget, you might consider using plastazote.

Remember also that natural materials can be a more environmentally friendly way to go. Check that wood has come from a responsible source and that it is FSC stamped. (FSC certified wood comes from forests managed in an environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable way).

As a designer part of your role is to be conscious and thoughtful, about both aesthetics and process. It is also important to think about what happens once the puppet has fulfilled its role- will it be stored complete or dismantled, or will it be recycled or scrapped?

Puppet Design
Puppets are performance objects, whether for theatre, film, TV, events, or any other prupose and there are puppet traditions in most cultures around the world. How a puppet looks varies from hyper-realism to highly abstracted depending on the project.

Puppets for theatre usually benefit from some level of abstraction. A theatre audience enjoys being asked to use their imagination and to fill in the gaps when a puppet is not completely realistic to look at. They are often at their best if the way they look adds to the story or themes of a production and the overall design of the show. We don't mind seeing the puppeteers or the mechanics of the puppet if the direction and design support this.

Equally there can often be practical or economic factors you must work around when designing. Perhaps you only have one puppeteer for an animal which has four legs and needs to bound realistically around the stage. Maybe your budget is too small for the number of puppets in the production. These factors need not result in a negative impact on the design. Often the more restricted you are, the more creative and interesting the result. If you can make a bird only using spoons, it's going to take some figuring out, but the result will be something that looks both like a bird and like a bunch of spoons, which excites our imagination.

First Steps

Begin your design with a concept drawing of the puppet which captures its character and aesthetic. From this create a profile drawing of the puppet (ideally 1:1 scale) and a side view drawing. This will enable you to work out the internal structure (armature) and body shapes.

Remember though, design is not all done on paper, much of your puppet will be figured out by trying ideas in 3D, so test ideas by making prototypes. Keep handling these, and where possible ask a puppeteer to test what you have made. Use feedback to make the puppet work better and be prepared to cut bits away, shorten or lengthen parts, make changes to shapes or mechanisms. You may make something which looks beautiful, but if it can't fulfil its role in the show for which it is designed it is not going to be a good puppet!

Designing with CAD

Learning how to use a computer to help with design is potentially a worthwhile endeavour and as you get more proficient and move on to bigger projects it can help speed up making, is more precise for mechanical applications, and can make repeatable tasks and future modification easier. Used in conjunction with CNC milling machines, 3D printers and laser cutters, it offers many creative possibilities. There is free software available for most CAD applications, and some paid-for packages will offer free student versions. Fusion 360 from Autodesk is an excellent product design software package which has a free version for students and lends itself well to puppet design.

Movement

No matter how good your puppet looks, if it doesn't move well it will struggle to fulfil its purpose. In almost every case movement trumps aesthetics. If it moves well it is going to live in the minds of you audience far more than if it simply looks good but moves awkwardly. Always consider the puppeteer(s) as part of your tool kit and give them as much responsibility to bring your creation to life as you give your materials. If you use them well, they will take your inanimate object, and make it incredible. Consider how they will move their human bodies, and how they will take up space. The interface between puppet and puppeteers is usually handles. Design these to be comfortable and to help the puppeteer be in control without being too bulky or pronounced. Handles should be built strongly and connect soundly with the parts of the puppet they control.

PUPPET MAKING MATERIALS AND HARDWARE

Here are some materials and some of their applications in relation to puppet construction. Note- each material has its own set of qualities. Play to its strengths rather than trying to force it to work in a way which it is not naturally able to.

Large Scale Puppets

Bamboo

Used around the world as an alternative to metal scaffolding, bamboo grows fast and is incredibly strong and straight. Useful for making light-weight frames, for example you could extend upwards from a backpack which could form the basis of a large-scale figure. Note: when cutting use a hack saw or junior hack saw and put masking tape around the area to cut. Cut slowly, as it is prone to splitting, making the piece unusable.

Wicker Withies

These are bought in bundles. Used very effectively to make mid to large-scale, light-weight puppets, as well as other outdoor parade props like lanterns. The withies should be soaked, overnight preferably, to make them supple. They can then be bent into shape and left to dry. They can be joined with cord or twine (if you can get hold of a waxed cord this will allow the cord to do a lot of the work of holding the knots tight without using glue). A great a renewable resource, like bamboo it grows fast. It can be used to make wonderful organic shapes and can be used on smaller or larger scale projects. You may support the wickies on a more rigid bamboo frame or you could use wood or even aluminium depending on the how the puppet will be used.

Wet Strength Tissue Paper

This is a material that can be used with wicker to make light weight large forms. It will dry to a translucent finish, so a light source can be placed inside the form. You will need to build up several layers for strength.

PVA Adhesive

Useful for many things. Mix in equal parts with water to make it go further. Use with tissue paper to attach to withies (completely coat each side to make sure it laminates well). Also good for papier-mâché.

Plumbing waste pipe (rigid/various diameters)

A good way to build large scale forms. Unlike bamboo it is a uniform size, it doesn't taper. Can be drilled through, easy to cut (hack saw), and is readily available. Available in white, black or grey, you will need to prime the surface to help the paint adhere if you wish to paint it a different colour.

Barrier pipe (flexible)

Bought as a continuous reel, larger quantities are cheaper. It can be used in a similar way to withies except it doesn't need soaking and because it is on a roll it may need less joints. Being rolled does mean it has a natural curl, which can take some wrangling if trying to use it on larger forms, you may have difficulty getting it completely straight, which can lead to it kinking. Barrier pipe can be drilled and held together with machine screws or cable ties.

Chicken Wire

A quick way to make self-supporting forms. It comes on a roll but can be bent into shapes and then covered. We never use it as it is heavier than other materials. You will need to wear gloves as the ends of the wire can scratch. Cut with side cutters. Quick, easy to get hold of and relatively cheap.

Single wall corrugated cardboard sheets

These are very useful! One of the basics of any design process is working out the size of the puppet you are making. Draw onto cardboard, cut it out, and check the scale. Also useful for making prototypes or even finished puppets. Cut with a scalpel on a cutting mat and use a hot glue gun to join pieces together. Great for multi-faceted forms.

Timber

Source from a hardware shop. A variety of lengths available and often referred to by their imperial dimensions (i.e. 2 by 1 - two inches by 1 inch). Like bamboo (although more expensive) it can be used to quickly make frames but is more uniform to work with. Also useful for making joints and handles and other parts of mechanisms and armatures.

Gaffa tape

Very strong tape useful for a quick fix for prototypes or mock-ups. Won't last forever and can leave sticky residue on materials over time.

Small Scale Puppets

Papier-Mâché/Brown Kraft Paper

A great way to make a light-weight head. Sculpt a head in clay, and then cover with layers of papier-mâché. Lastly remove the clay from the inside and tidy up any edges. Papier-mâché technique: tear (don't cut) the paper into small pieces. This is so the fibres are exposed and to avoid straight edges in your finish. Pieces should be relative in size to the area that is to be covered i.e. small pieces for detailed areas such as eyes and noses, larger pieces for simple areas without much detail. The aim is to get a nice smooth layer - try and avoid creases or bumps. Have a bowl of PVA and water in a 50:50 mix. Start with a neat (not watered down) layer of PVA and allow this to dry before adding layers. Scrunch up your paper to soften the fibres, brush one side with the adhesive and smooth the paper onto the head with more glue using a paintbrush so there are no air bubbles. Continue covering the head, overlapping the pieces of paper a little, allowing the torn edges to mesh with the paper beneath. Cover with three layers minimum. For larger heads or a stronger form use more layers but beware you may lose some detail from your sculpt.

Polystyrene

Polystyrene is a very lightweight rigid expanded foam. It can be easily sawn, carved or cut with a hot-wire, and is useful for large forms.

Styrofoam

Styrofoam is a lightweight insulation foam. When carved it has a fine texture and so can allow for far greater detail than polystyrene, although it is heavier, and so better for smaller forms. Never use contact adhesive with styrofoam or polystyrene as it will eat into the surface. Use Polyurethane expanding foam from a DIY store, epoxy adhesive or extra strong carpet tape. when carving stryofoam you can use a serrated knife, a rasp, and sandpaper. If carving a head, it is advisable to stick two pieces together with the seam running down the centre of the face. This will give a helpful guide when trying to make the head more or less symmetrical. Styrofoam creates a lot of dust, so always wear a mask. You might want to wear overalls and it is advisable to work somewhere without a carpet! A cheap and good alternative to buying blocks from art or model shops is to use off cuts of similar materials from a building site - it might have silver foil laminated on one side and be a different colour, but it is more or less the same thing and potentially free!

Plastazote

This is a fine textured flexible foam sold in sheets of different thicknesses, and available in different densities. Puppet makers tend to use LD33 (33 kg/m3). It is usually black or white, but it is available in certain colours. You can either carve it like styrofoam, or you can make a pattern, cut the pieces out and assemble them into a lightweight hollow form. For detailed shapes cut thinner sheets with a sharp scalpel or craft knife. For sculpting larger blocks (which you may need to glue together yourself) use a kitchen knife, rasp and sandpaper. Plastazote is glued together using contact adhesive, or a hot glue gun. Plastazote has some excellent qualities for puppet making: it is very light, waterproof, and easy to carve and manipulate. It can be heated and shaped and can be painted (add a flexible PVA medium to your paint). To add strength to a patterned form, scrim it using muslin or power mesh and a mix of pva and water; allow this to dry completely before painting.

Upholstery foam

The foam used in furniture. This is easy to carve and cut with scissors or a knife. It's soft and holds a shape well but not pleasing when painted. It is heavier than plastazote or styfofoam, and not waterproof. It usually covered and can be used for 'muppet' style puppets, which often use patterned heads on top of a carved foam body.

Fabric and wadding/pillow or cushion filler

Use to stuff puppets made from fabric. You can make simple cheap puppet bodies from calico fabric and use this to bulk them out.

Bungee

Also known as shock cord. Comes in various thicknesses, always melt the ends as soon as you cut it and use a dab of superglue to hold knots. Good for looser, flexible joints. For puppets that are used for long periods it might need replacing, so always consider how a puppet maintenance person will be able to easily remove the old bungee and insert the new.

Webbing

Various widths available, either in polyester or cotton. Non-stretchy and useful for making strong joints and connections.

Milliput

Very robust two-part plumbing material which hardens when mixed together and can be shaped and sculpted into forms, like small hands, feet, beaks, etc. Can be drilled and carved when fully hardened.

Susie Ferguson, for Mousetrap Theatre Projects, 2022
With thanks to Finn Caldwell, Nick Barnes, Caroline Bowman, Scarlett Wilderink and Fred Davis

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Nuts and bolts

We tend to use 3mm and 4mm machine screws of varying lengths. Use with washers and locknuts, or normal nuts with super glue.

Tools

Some useful tools are listed here. You may be able to borrow these. If you are trying to build up a tool kit try to buy the best within your budget, good tools are invaluable!

• Keep your tools clean.
• Don't let glue get all over the outside of the container.
• Wash brushes straight away.
• Have a sharps jar for old blades (any glass jar will do, once full dispose of safely).
• Put tools away after use, keep your work area as clear as possible for clear thinking.

Scissors - (one pair for general use, 1 pair for fabric)

Scalpel & Blades - (Swann Morton, we use a number 3 handle with No.10A blades, and a number 4 handle with No. 26 blades). Make sure your scalpel blade is sharp, it should cut rather than rip. Good for cutting paper, card, plastazote.

Glue gun - we like the Bosch one as it has a good nozzle

Cutting mat - Keep clean. Store flat and out of sunlight and don't put hot drinks on it!

Needle nosed pliers - very useful for delicate work

General purpose pliers - for general purpose making!

Screwdriver (Philips and cross head)

Side cutters - for snipping

Mechanical pencil - always sharp!

Metal ruler - 30cm and possibly 1 metre

Tape measure

Kitchen knife (with serrated edge) - A cheap kitchen knife for carving

Super glue - Useful for gluing nuts and bungee knots

Cigarette lighter - For melting the ends of things like bungee or webbing.

Contact adhesive - Great for all sorts of materials

Glue bottle - A small plastic bottle with a nozzle- buy a larger tin of contact adhesive and decant into this and it will be so much easier to use, last longer, and is less wasteful.

Junior hacksaw - this is a small hack saw

Files (various shapes) - for taking burs off edges

Surform/rasp – for smoothing and shaping

Sculpting tools – for working with clay

It is also useful to have:

Power drill (& driver)

Socket set

Bench vice

LIFE OF PI

WRITING ABOUT LIVE PRODUCTIONS

**"Nature can put on a thrilling show. The stage is vast,
the lighting is dramatic, the extras are innumerable,
and the budget for special effects is absolutely unlimited…
I was a spectator safely ensconced in his seat"** [1]

This pack is intended for students and teachers when preparing to write
about live productions at GCSE and A Level. It should be used in conjunction
with Pack 1 (Interviews), Pack 2 (Spotlight on Puppetry),
Pack 3 (Classroom Activities) and Pack 4 (Careers).

1. *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel, (London: Canongate Books, 2018) p. 102

LIFE OF PI

Writing about live productions can be challenging because there is so much detail that needs to be included. This pack explores:

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PERFORMANCE

Photo by Johan Persson

Reflection point:

Note the use of levels and use of space in this scene. In this scene, Pi is explaining what happened to Mr Okamoto and Lulu Chen. How does each performer communicate their sense of status and emotion in this scene? How does the actor playing Pi communicate the trauma and unease that he is experiencing? Why has the director chosen to have Lulu and Mr Okamoto standing either side of the bed? How has the director ensured that Pi is the key focus for the audience in this scene?

Hiran Abeysekera, who plays Pi, says, "I'd like the audience to engage with Pi to the point that they think as him. He is curious, he never stops asking questions, and so they should approach with that curiosity. Answers are cool, but they stop you asking questions!"

In the hospital scenes, it is challenging for the performers to maintain a pace that has been created by the dramatic scenes at sea. They must create a different dynamic of mood and atmosphere in scenes that are much more dialogue based, in contrast to the puppetry and physical theatre that takes place at sea.

Payal Mistry, who plays Rani, tells us, "It was challenging to create the sibling dynamic between Rani and Pi. There is a loving relationship there, and it's important to highlight that before the tragedy on the Tsimtsum." Early in the play the actors playing Pi's family, and the local religious leaders, must work hard to create a strong sense of the world that Pi's family are leaving behind. Use of physical, vocal and facial expressions are vital in doing this effectively. Remember that a number of the cast also multi-role and so must develop very clear gestures and mannerisms to delineate between their different roles.

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PUPPETRY

Photo by Johan Persson

Reflection point:

Take note of the focus of the eyeline of the actors operating the puppet of Richard Parker. Look at their eyeline. Can you observe their facial expressions? What does this tell the audience about the feelings of the animal at this moment in the play? How did the puppeteers use their own breath to bring the puppet of Richard Parker to life through physical theatre and movement? How did the puppeteers make the movements convincing in the moments leading up to the movement (for example, before Richard Parker jumped)?

Use Pack 2 to help you understand more about the way in which the puppets were designed and operated.

Key moments you may wish to discuss are:

· The first scene in the zoo, when the animals are introduced
· Richard Parker and the goat
· The interaction between Pi and Orange-Juice (the orangutan)
· The zebra, including the scene in which he breaks his leg
· The interaction between Pi and Richard Parker at the beginning of their journey, in the tiger taming scene, when Richard Parker speaks, and the final time that Pi sees him.
· The use of object puppetry and the 'fish ballet'.

LIGHTING

Photo by Johan Persson

Reflection point:

The lighting design in the Life of Pi creates a clear sense of place, time and atmosphere. As an example, look to the image of the zoo scene below and observe the colours, the tones, the intensity and the shapes used. What lighting effects can you see being used here? What atmosphere does the overall colour palette create? How does this add to the set design concept for this moment in the play?

Tim Lutkin explains, "The creation of the hospital location takes place even before the play begins. The house lights are on and the pre-set evokes the stark, cold environment in which Pi finds himself. It's not luxurious, it's not somewhere that's pleasant to be. When the Nurse arrives with the chair, the houselights go out and we use cold, white specials and follow spots. The white tones highlight the cleanliness and sterility of the location. This is a stark contrast to the zoo and the market scenes, which are much warmer and more welcoming. The bed is backlit – it's the only piece of furniture in the hospital scene.

As the market scene opens the people are in silhouette to evoke a sense of a new location, movement and time passing. There's no front light on anyone at that point. We're gently pulling back the different layers of where we are.   Once the scene is established we use the backlight – we use a heavy sculpted back light (called the key light) and we draw the energy of that scene from that state, and here it's a deep orangey amber. This is an unusual colour to choose – usually we would use a lighter straw colour for the daytime setting but this is a nod to the fantasy element of the story.

The most down stage lighting bar has moving lights which have a textured gobo which is a broken hessian texture. They're softly focussed – the texture encourages your eyes to move around and look at different things rather than fixing on one thing.

The creation of the storm is a complete collaboration between lighting and video. On the back wall is a projection of rain that runs at about 30° angle on the back wall. We always angle 'rain' – vertical strips don't look realistic. The projection suggests the direction in which the rain is coming. On the floor is the projection of the sea, which gets increasingly choppy and violent. It's supported with smoke and haze, Pi is lit with a follow spot, and the lighting also creates the lightning flashes.   The collaboration between lighting and projection is vital – if you were to just use projection it doesn't feel real."

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SOUND

Photo by Johan Persson

Reflection point:

You can explore this moment in your own drama studio or at home. Can you find several different pieces of music, each contrasting in mood? What happens when you look to this image, or a physical recreation of this image whilst playing the different pieces of music? Does the difference in music evoke different feelings and responses from the viewer/ audience?

Carolyn Downing, the production's Sound Designer, says, "The massive challenge was the storm. It needs to sound dangerous and very real. The entire company is mic'd, and there is a very rich soundtrack so it is a full collaboration between me and Andrew (T. Mackay, composer). When I was designing the sound for the production, I found a lot of different water sounds – it's not enough to just use one throughout the show. I had to research different types of waves and different sounds of water lapping a surface. We also use recorded bird calls, and the company create the vocalisations for the puppets. It's a rich and diverse sound palette.

It is vital that we are economical with sound – it needs to be varied. We had to find the moments where sound would build, and those moments where the characters are jolted in the boat, and that's where we'd place emphasis in the sound. The score is actually cinematic in its scale at times (Andrew composes a lot of film scores). These moments have to be integrated with the video and lighting too – all of those elements are working together."

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There are more than 80 speakers in this production, some of which are located on stage and some which are located in the auditorium. There are a number of tiny speakers under the floor of the stage that help locate some of the sounds in a fairly naturalistic way – the sound comes from the place where an action happens, for example dropping something in the water.

Andrew T Mackay's soundtrack also supports the mood, atmosphere and setting of the play. His composition includes instruments such as the Indian flute and the table, as well as instruments that you may be more familiar with such as brass, percussion and string instruments. The tiger taming scene needed to communicate the fear and the challenge within the lifeboat as Pi tries to overcome the tiger and become dominant.   The soundtrack was composed for orchestra and recorded.

Andrew tells us, "listen carefully for three moments that use soundtrack for dramatic effect. The first is the tiger taming scene, the next is the scene with the turtle which turns a joyous moment into a sad one and where the music is gentle, melodic and dreamlike. The third moment is Pi's arrival in Mexico, where we use the Indian flute to create a beautifully poignant moment."

PROJECTION

Photo by Johan Persson

Reflection point:

What would the audience response to this moment onstage have been if there were no video or projection? Do you think it would have been as effective? How would the effect have been different?

Andrzej Goulding tells us, "The boat is lit by a projector from above, and Tim (Lutkin – Lighting Designer) had control over the intensity and colour of that light. The lighting always tracks with the boat. We also mix in a follow spot to ensure that Pi, and other inhabitants of the boat, can be seen."

Projection is also used in the hospital scene, but it is used to subtly that it's easy to miss it. The grey tiled floor is created by video, and you'll perhaps notice that at times water starts to appear on those tiles. This is something that helps with the transitions between the scenes in the hospital and those in the boat.

In the original production at the Sheffield Crucible, the fact that the audience looks down on to the stage meant that the floor became an integral part of the design concept. For the London transfer, the floor of the auditorium was raised to allow the audience a similar experience.

SET DESIGN

Photo by Johan Persson

Reflection point:

As an example, look at the image of the market scene above and observe the colour scheme and the fabrics used. What colour is Pi wearing? Is this in contrast to the other characters in the scene? What atmosphere does the overall colour palette create? How does this add to the set design concept for this moment in the play?

Tim Hatley explains,

"This scene follows a scene in the hospital, and we had to achieve an entirely different look. You'll notice the use of different levels, and the lighting is a rich amber wash which is completely different to the tones of the hospital. We've layered as much colour on the staged as possible, using different textures of fabric, an array of colour and paraphernalia on every surface possible. There are no puppets in this scene, but we've populated the market with performers to get a sense of busy-ness.

The transition from the hospital to this market scene needed to be fast and to retain a fluidity and beauty. The transition included the use of automation – the back wall moved – it's like the opening of a book.

Costume also allows us to give information about setting. Rugs and moveable pieces of set such as the cart and the crates allow us to fill and shape the space"

In this photograph you can also see some of the details in the stage such as the revolve and areas that will facilitate the appearance and disappearance of the boat. You will also notice that the front of the stage is built out into the auditorium slightly.

You can create a clear contrast between the market scene which is bright and colourful, and the hospital room which is grey and bare. It is designed to suggest a hot climate, there are large windows with shutters, which suggest that for example. The back wall of the hospital opens out to become the market which aids a rapid transition – the story must not break its pace so set design is integral to successfully maintaining that rapid pace so that the audience fully engages with the story. The fact that the pre-set allows the audience to see the hospital before the performance starts makes us feel that we have entered the hospital too and are waiting for Pi's story to begin.

The creation of the boat is a complex operation! The stage floor is one metre deep and inside is a revolve, which also involves a lift and trapdoors which allow the boat to appear and then retract back under the stage. The stage was constructed by specialist set builders and is a combination of woodwork and automation (which involves computer systems being able to communicate between set, lighting and sound). There are also two trapdoors (one downstage left and one downstage right which appear solid for the majority of the performance). The revolve allows the boat to point in different directions – we see the boat in profile which also allows the puppetry to be more varied and unpredictable.

There are also other elements such as the life buoy that is operated by two performers with ropes. They stand at either sides of the stage, whilst Pi sits in it, and create the impression that he is moving on the waves. The inclusion of more simple storytelling techniques encourage the audience to engage even more in the fantasy of the story, and prevent it simply being a predictable spectacle which is always a risk when a lot of technology is involved.

Tim Hatley designed both set and costumes for Life of Pi. Notice that most of the colourful costumes are used in the market scene before Pi's family leave for Canada. There is a vibrancy and beauty in the colours used which then contrast sharply to the white of Pi's simple costume of white undershirt and wide legged trousers that he wears for most of the performance. The men in the market scene wear an achkan or Nehru jacket which has a mandarin-style collar, or waistcoats over tunics. The women wear saris in various different colours. Notice that Rani's sari is made up of complementary pastel colours, whereas her Mother and Mrs Biology Kumar's are much deeper colours that we would associate with older females.

For each statement, identify your confidence in each of the skills.
Green = completely confident
Amber = with support I can do this
Red = I cannot do this

For those skills that you identify as red or amber, what next steps do you need to take to move towards green?

Production Element	"I can" statements	Green	Amber	Red
ACTING				
I can...	Explain how the character of Pi was created through the use of vocal, facial expression in at least 3 moments in the production			
	Describe how a relationship between Pi and Lulu Chen was created through the use of space, levels and eye contact			
	Evaluate how the actor playing Pi interacted with performers playing other members of his family			
	Evaluate the way in which a performer delivered his monologue about his arrival on the shore of Mexico towards the end of the play			
	I can explain how physical theatre aided the storytelling in at least one scene in the play			
	Explain how actors used their skills to create various different character (multi-roling)			
PUPPETRY				
I can...	Describe in detail the orangutan puppet, and a key scene in which it was used			
	Describe Richard Parker in detail, and a key scene in which the puppet was used			
	Describe the zebra in detail, and a key scene in which the puppet was used			
	Describe the goat in detail, and a key scene in which the puppet was used			
	Explain how the turtle puppet was used in a key scene			
	Describe how an actor interacted with a puppet to create a convincing relationship			
	Use my knowledge of puppetry skills to analyse their application in *Life of Pi*			

Production Element	"I can" statements	Green	Amber	Red
SET				
I can…	Explain and evaluate the stage configuration for the production			
	Describe and evaluate the set design for the hospital, including the use of projection			
	Describe and evaluate the set design for the zoo, including the use of projection			
	Describe and evaluate the set design for the boat, including the use of projection			
	Explain how the set design used technology and engineering to create key scenes in the play			
	I can evaluate how the set design aided swift transitions between scenes in the play			
COSTUME				
I can…	Describe the costume worn by Pi and how it created a sense of character and narrative			
	Describe Mr Okamoto and Lulu Chen's costumes and evaluate how they communicated their characters			
	Explain and evaluate the costumes worn by Pi's family to give a sense of character **and** a sense of location and culture			
	Explain the costumes worn by the puppeteers and how that aided the audience's suspension of disbelief			
LIGHTING				
	Describe how lighting created a sense of setting, mood and atmosphere at the beginning of the performance			
	Explain and evaluate how lighting was used to create a vibrant setting in the market scene			
	Explain and evaluate how lighting was used in two key moments in the boat, to create mood and atmosphere			

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Production Element	"I can" statements	Green	Amber	Red
PROJECTIONS				
I can...	Describe how projection was used to enhance the set in the hospital scenes			
	Use technical terminology to describe the equipment used to create projections			
	Describe how projections were used to create mood and atmosphere in the storm sequence			
	Explain and evaluate how projections created a sense of mood and atmosphere in one scene in the play			
SOUND				
I can...	Describe and evaluate the use of musical soundtrack in three key scenes in the play			
	Describe how recorded sound was used to create mood and atmosphere in the storm sequence			
	Explain how the actors contributed to the successful use of sound in the play by using their own voices and vocalisations			

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