

INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



VIETGONE

VIETGONE SUMMARY

It's 1975. Saigon has fallen. Quang and Tong, two young Vietnamese immigrants, are independently fleeing their war-torn country for the United States. They both end up at Fort Chaffee, a refugee camp in Arkansas, where they start a romance. Borrowing elements from the world of '70s popular culture to recreate his parent's first meeting, playwright Qui Nguyen, also a character in the play, tries to understand where he came from. This is not a story about a foreign war. It's a story about falling in love in the land of Harleys, hot dogs and "howdy!"



DENVER CENTER FOR
THE
PERFORMING ARTS
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INSIDE OUT

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VIETGONE

BY **QUI NGUYEN**

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY **SHANE RETTIG**

DIRECTED BY **SEEMA SUEKO**

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RICKETSON THEATRE

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Qui Nguyen is a playwright, TV/film writer, and Co-Founder of the OBIE Award-winning Vampire Cowboys of NYC. His work, known for its innovative use of pop-culture, stage violence, puppetry, and multimedia, has been lauded as “culturally savvy comedy” by *The New York Times*, “tour de force theatre” by *Time Out New York*, and “infectious fun” by *Variety*.

Scripts include *Vietgone* (2016 Steinberg Award, 2016 LADCC Ted Schmidt New Play Award, 2016 Kennedy Prize Finalist); *She Kills Monsters* (2013 AATE Distinguished Play Award, 2012 GLAAD Media Award nom); *War is F**king Awesome* (Frederick Loewe Award); *Soul Samurai* (2009 GLAAD Media Award nom); *Begets: Fall of a High School Ronin*; *Krunk Fu Battle Battle*; *Bike Wreck*; *Aliens vs Cheerleaders*; and the critically acclaimed Vampire Cowboys productions of *The Inexplicable Redemption of Agent G*, *Six Rounds of Vengeance*,

Alice in Slasherland, *Fight Girl Battle World*, *Men of Steel*, and *Living Dead in Denmark*.

For television/film, Qui has written for AMC, Netflix, SYFY, PBS, and Marvel Studios, where he is an alumni of the Marvel Studios Writers Program.

Notable honors include a 2016 Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing in a Preschool Animated Program (*Peg+Cat*), a 2015 NY Community Trust Helen Merrill Playwriting Award, and a 2014 Sundance Institute/Time Warner Fellowship. He’s currently working on new plays for South Coast Rep/Manhattan Theatre Club (*The Vietgone Saga*), The Atlantic, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival (*Kieu*).

His company, Vampire Cowboys, often credited for being the pioneer of “geek theatre”, holds the unique distinction of being the first and currently only professional theatre organization to be officially sponsored by NY Comic Con.

THE VIETNAM WAR (1945-75)

The Vietnam War was rooted in centuries of imperial and colonial domination—first by China, which ruled ancient Vietnam, and then France, which took control of Vietnam in the late 1800s, establishing French Indochina. In the early 1900s, nationalist movements began in Vietnam demanding more self-rule. The most prominent of these movements was led by Communist leader Ho Chi Minh, who founded a militant nationalist organization called the Viet Minh.

When France was occupied by Nazi Germany during World War II, it lost its hold over Vietnam and Japan took control of the country. The Viet Minh resisted the Japanese forces and extended its power base through Vietnam. When Japan surrendered in 1945 at the end of the war, Ho Chi Minh’s forces took the capital of Hanoi and declared Vietnam to be an independent country, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

But France refused to recognize Ho Chi Minh’s declaration and returned to Vietnam, driving Ho’s forces into the north. Fighting between Ho’s forces and the French continued in this First Indochina War until 1954, when France was defeated and sought a peace settlement.

As part of the Geneva Accords of 1954, Vietnam was officially divided into North (under Communist rule) and South Vietnam (ruled by a French-backed emperor). The division was supposed to be temporary and free elections were scheduled for 1956.

At this point, the United States Cold War foreign policy began to play a major role in Vietnam. U.S. policy was dominated by the domino theory, which posited that the fall of North Vietnam to Communism might trigger a chain reaction causing all of Southeast Asia to fall. With the help of the U.S., the anti-Communist politician Ngo Dinh Diem

took control of the South Vietnamese government in 1955, declaring the Republic of Vietnam and cancelling the elections of 1956. Although Diem’s regime proved corrupt and unpopular, the United States continued to prop it up. Ho Chi Minh’s National Liberation front, known as the Viet Cong, resisted Diem’s regime.

In 1962, U.S. President John F. Kennedy sent American “military advisors” to Vietnam to help train the South Vietnamese army, but quickly realized that Diem’s regime couldn’t be salvaged. Therefore, in 1963, the U.S. backed a coup that overthrew Diem and installed a new leader, who proved just as corrupt and ineffective as Diem.

Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, pledged to honor Kennedy’s commitments but hoped to keep U.S. involvement minimal. However, after North Vietnamese forces allegedly attacked U.S. Navy ships in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964, Johnson began to send American troops to Vietnam. Bombing campaigns followed, and the conflict escalated. By the end of 1966, there were nearly 400,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam.

As the United States became increasingly mired in Vietnam, the Viet Cong’s guerilla tactics frustrated and demoralized U.S. troops. In guerilla warfare, small units fight limited battles against an enemy force, set up ambushes, make surprise attacks, and then retreat back into the countryside or blend into the local population. It also includes making it difficult for the enemy to operate by engaging in sabotage and harassing the enemy with lethal means such as land mines and booby traps.

The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong were also supplied by a vast network of hidden trails, known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which thwarted many attempts by the U.S. to bomb and destroy it. Supplies and soldiers from North Vietnam were sent through Laos

and Cambodia to Communist forces in the South.

In 1968, the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong launched a massive campaign called the Tet Offensive, attacking nearly 30 U.S. targets and dozens of other cities in South Vietnam at once. Although both sides suffered large losses and both claimed victory, American media coverage characterized the conflict as a defeat, and U.S. public support for the war plummeted.

The antiwar movement in the United States gained momentum as it became clear that there would be no easy victory in Vietnam. Student protestors, hippies and even mainstream Americans denounced the war. Protests against the war and the draft became increasingly violent, resulting in clashes with police outside the Democratic National Convention in 1968 and the deaths of four students at Kent State University in 1970 when Ohio National Guardsmen fired on a crowd. Nonetheless, Johnson's successor, Richard M. Nixon, declared that a "silent majority" of Americans still supported the war.

Nixon promoted a policy of "Vietnamization" of the war, promising to withdraw U.S. troops and gradually hand over management of the war to the South Vietnamese. While pursuing this policy, Nixon also illegally expanded the geographic scope of the war by authorizing the bombing of Viet Cong sites in the neutral countries of Cambodia and Laos

without knowledge or consent of the U.S. Congress. The revelation of these illegal activities caused an enormous scandal in the United States and forced Nixon to push for a peace settlement.

In 1972, Nixon engaged in diplomatic maneuvering with China and the U.S.S.R., as well as increasing bombing in the north, to pressure the North Vietnamese into a settlement. A cease-fire was finally signed in January, 1973, and the last U.S. military personnel left Vietnam in March of that year.

As President Nixon became embroiled in the Watergate scandal that led to his resignation in August 1974, North Vietnamese forces stepped up their attacks on the South and finally launched an all-out offensive in the spring of 1975. On April 30, 1975, the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese, who reunited the country under Communist rule as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, finally ending the war.

The number of casualties in the Vietnam War were enormous. As estimated by Guenter Lewy, the U.S. military deaths totaled approximately 58,000. The death toll of the South Vietnamese army was estimated at 254,000. The number of deaths of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese army totaled 444,000, while civilian deaths ran as high as 627,000, bringing the total number of deaths to 1,353,000.

THE FALL OF SAIGON

Before daybreak on April 29, 1975, the main airport in Saigon was hit by rockets and heavy artillery. General Homer D. Smith, the U.S. defense attaché in Saigon, advised U.S. Ambassador Martin that the runways were unfit for use and that the emergency evacuation of Saigon would need to be completed by helicopter. Reports came in from the outskirts of the city that the North Vietnamese army was closing in. At 10:48 a.m., Martin relayed the order to begin the "Frequent Wind" evacuation plan. The American Radio station began regular play of Irving Berlin's "White Christmas", which was the signal for American personnel to move immediately to evacuation points.

Under this plan, American military helicopters were used to evacuate Americans and friendly Vietnamese to ships, including the Seventh Fleet in the South China Sea. The main evacuation point was an American compound at the airport. By the evening 395 Americans and more than 4,000 Vietnamese had been evacuated. The original evacuation plans had not called for large-scale helicopter operation at the United States Embassy. However, in the course of the evacuation it turned out that a few thousand people were stranded at the Embassy, including many Vietnamese. Additional Vietnamese civilians gathered outside the Embassy and scaled the walls, hoping to claim refugee status. Thunderstorms

increased the difficulty of the operations. Nevertheless, the evacuation from the Embassy continued more or less unbroken throughout the evening and night.

At 3:45 a.m., President Gerald Ford ordered Martin to evacuate only Americans from that point forward. Reluctantly, Martin announced that only Americans were to be flown out. By the end of the embassy evacuation, 978 Americans and about 1,100 Vietnamese had been flown out.

The Americans and the refugees they flew out were generally allowed to leave without intervention from either the North or South Vietnamese. North Vietnamese leadership, assuming that the completion of the evacuation would lessen the risk of American intervention, had instructed its commanders not to target the airlift itself.

Although this was the end of the American military operation, Vietnamese continued to leave the country by boat and aircraft. South Vietnamese Air Force pilots who had access to helicopters flew them offshore to the American fleet, where they were able to land. Many of those helicopters were dumped into the ocean to make room on the decks for more aircraft. Many Vietnamese nationals who were evacuated were allowed to enter the United States under the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act.

VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND AMERICAN IMMIGRATION POLICY

In 1975, in the closing days of the Vietnam War, about 13,000 Vietnamese who were generally high-skilled and well-educated, and who feared reprisals for their close ties to Americans, were airlifted by the United States government to bases in the Philippines, Wake Island, and Guam. They were later transferred to refugee centers in California, Arkansas, Florida and Pennsylvania for up to six months of education and cultural training to facilitate their assimilation into their new society. Although initially not welcomed by Americans (only 36 percent in a national poll favored Vietnamese immigration), President Gerald Ford signed the Indochina Migration and Refugee Act of 1975, which granted the refugees special status to enter the country and established a domestic resettlement program. In order to prevent “ghettoism” (concentrating resettled Vietnamese in one geographic area), refugees were initially dispersed across the country. This deliberate scattering of the first wave of refugees did not last, however, as most eventually moved to California or Texas.

This first influx of refugees was followed by a second major exodus that began in 1978 and lasted into the mid-1980s, totaling almost 2 million people

(3 million if Laotians and Cambodians are included) who fled communist re-education camps and the 1979 Chinese invasion of Vietnam. This group of refugees swamped the neighboring Southeast Asian countries of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Hong Kong. Thousands of these desperate asylum seekers fled Vietnam in rickety wooden boats and would become known as “Boat People.” Overwhelmed first-asylum countries resorted to expelling the Boat People. President Jimmy Carter responded by ordering the 7th Fleet to seek out vessels in distress in the South China Sea. His Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, told Congress in July 1979 that:

We are a nation of refugees. Most of us can trace our presence here to the turmoil or oppression of another time and another place. Our nation has been immeasurably enriched by this continuing process. We will not turn our backs on our traditions. We must meet the commitments we have made to other nations and to those who are suffering. In doing so, we will also be renewing our commitments to our ideals.

From 1975 to 2002, a total of 759,482 Vietnamese arrived in the United States as refugees.

VIETNAMESE FAMILY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Traditionally, respect for parents and ancestors is a key virtue in Vietnam. Children learn at a very early age that they owe everything to their parents and their ancestors. Doing well in school and working hard brings honor to one’s parents and the family name. The oldest male in the family is the head of the family. His oldest son is the second leader of the family. The parents choose marriage partners for their daughters and sons. The woman of the house is referred to as “General of the Interior.” She looks after her in-laws as well as her parents, husband and children. Vietnamese women live by the “four virtues”: hard work, beauty, refined speech

and excellent conduct. All of these traditions are particularly strong in the countryside.

In the cities, however, Western patterns of social behavior became increasingly common, especially among the educated and wealth Vietnamese who attended French schools, read French books, replaced traditional attire with Western-style clothing, and drank French wines instead of the traditional rice wine. Teenagers began to resist the tradition of arranged marriages, and women chafed under social mores that demanded obedience to their fathers, husbands and brothers.

FORT CHAFFEE, ARKANSAS

Fort Chaffee Maneuver Training Center is an Army National Guard installation in western Arkansas, adjacent to the city of Fort Smith. Fort Chaffee has served as a United States Army base, training camp, prisoner-of-war camp and refugee camp.

As a refugee camp, the fort played a major role during the Vietnam and Cambodia wars, hosting around 51,000 refugees from 1975 to 1976. The

resettlement process was known by the U.S. Military as “Operation New Life.” It was brought about when Congress enacted the Indochina Migration and Assistance Act of 1975

Fort Chaffee was among four domestic military bases to take in refugees from the Vietnam War. The others were Camp Pendleton in California, Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and Fort Indiantown Gap in

Pennsylvania. Fort Chaffee took in the largest share of the nearly 100,000 Indochinese political refugees who came to the United States in 1975.

The refugee population was a very heterogeneous one, consisting of Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, and Hmong. Though many educators and social service providers entered the camp to assist the refugees on humanitarian grounds, refugees were largely isolated from the surrounding communities of northwest Arkansas at the time.

Shortly after the refugees' arrival, a Vietnamese newspaper, *Tan Dan*, began publishing and a radio station broadcasting in English and Vietnamese began to operate.

In 1980, Fort Chaffee was the home of 23,000 Cuban refugees, after the Cuban government allowed the American boats to pick up the refugees from a local port. In 2005, Fort Chaffee Arkansas played a similar role housing displaced persons after Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana.

VIETNAM ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

The movement against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War began small – among peace activists and leftist intellectuals on college campuses – but gained national prominence in 1965, after the United States began bombing North Vietnam in earnest. Anti-war marches and other protests attracted a widening base of support over the next three years, peaking in early 1968 after the Tet Offensive by North Vietnamese troops proved that war's end was nowhere in sight.

In August 1964, North Vietnamese torpedo boats allegedly attacked two U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin, and President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered the retaliatory bombing of military targets in North Vietnam. And by the time U.S. planes began regular bombings of North Vietnam in February 1965, some critics had already begun to question the government's assertion that it was fighting a democratic war to liberate the South Vietnamese people from Communist aggression.

The anti-war movement began mostly on college campuses as members of the leftist organization Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) began organizing "teach-ins" to express their opposition to the way in which it was being conducted. Though the vast majority of the American population still supported the administration's policy in Vietnam, a small but outspoken minority was making its voice heard by the end of 1965. This minority included many students as well as prominent artists and intellectuals and members of the hippie movement.

By November 1967, American troop strength in Vietnam was approaching 500,000 and U.S. casualties had reached 15,058 killed and 109,527 wounded. The Vietnam War was costing the U.S. some \$25 billion per year, and disillusionment was beginning to reach greater sections of the taxpaying public. More casualties were reported in Vietnam every day, even as U.S. commanders demanded more troops. Under the draft system, as many as 40,000 young men were called into service each month, adding fuel to the fire of the anti-war movement.

On October 21, 1967, one of the most prominent anti-war demonstrations took place, as some 100,000 protesters gathered at the Lincoln Memorial;

around 30,000 of them continued in a march on the Pentagon later that night. After a brutal confrontation with the soldiers and U.S. Marshals protecting the building, hundreds of demonstrators were arrested. Also in 1967, the anti-war movement got a big boost when the civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. went public with his opposition to the war on moral grounds, condemning the war's diversion of federal funds from domestic programs as well as the disproportionate number of African-American casualties.

The launch of the Tet Offensive by North Vietnamese communist troops in January 1968, and its toll on U.S. and South Vietnamese troops, sent waves of shock and discontent across the home front and sparked the most intense period of anti-war protests to date. By early February 1968, a Gallup poll showed only 35 percent of the population approved of Johnson's handling of the war and a full 50 percent disapproved (the rest had no opinion). Joining the anti-war demonstrations by this time were members of the organization Vietnam Veterans Against the War, many of whom were in wheelchairs and on crutches. The sight of these men on television throwing away the medals they had won during the war did much to win people over to the anti-war cause.

After many New Hampshire primary voters rallied behind the anti-war Democrat Eugene McCarthy, Johnson announced that he would not seek reelection. Vice President Hubert Humphrey accepted the Democratic nomination in August in Chicago, and 10,000 anti-war demonstrators showed up outside the convention building, clashing with security forces assembled by Mayor Richard Daley. Humphrey lost the 1968 presidential election to Richard M. Nixon, who promised in his campaign to restore "law and order" – a reference to quelling anti-war protests as well as the rioting that followed King's assassination in 1968.

The following year, Nixon claimed in a famous speech that anti-war protesters constituted a small – albeit vocal – minority that should not be allowed to drown out the "silent majority" of Americans. Nixon's war policies divided the nation still further, however: In December 1969, the government

instituted the first U.S. draft lottery since World War II, inciting a vast amount of controversy and causing many young men to flee to Canada to avoid conscription. Tensions ran higher than ever, spurred on by mass demonstrations and incidents of official violence such those at Kent State in May 1970, when National Guard troops shot into a group of protesters demonstrating against the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, killing four students.

In mid-1971, the publication of the first Pentagon Papers – which revealed previously confidential details about the war’s conduct – caused more and more Americans to question the accountability of the U.S. government and military establishments. In response to a strong anti-war mandate, Nixon announced the effective end to U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia in January 1973.

1975 HISTORY

January

Volkswagen introduces the Golf, its new front-wheel-drive economy car, in the United States and Canada as the Volkswagen Rabbit.

Watergate scandal: John N. Mitchell, H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman are found guilty of the Watergate cover-up.

Game show *Wheel of Fortune* premieres on NBC.

OPEC agrees to raise crude oil prices by 10%.

Jazz pianist Keith Jarrett plays the solo improvisation ‘The Köln Concert’ at the Cologne Opera, which, recorded live, becomes the best-selling piano recording in history.

The Weather Underground radical student group bombs the United States Department of State main office in Washington, D.C.

February

Margaret Thatcher defeats Edward Heath for the leadership of the opposition UK Conservative Party. Thatcher, 49, is Britain’s first female leader of any political party.

In response to the energy crisis, daylight saving time commences nearly 2 months early in the United States.

March

Charlie Chaplin is knighted by Elizabeth II. Construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System begins.

Vietnam War: North Vietnamese troops attack Ban Mê Thut, South Vietnam, on their way to capturing Saigon.

April

Vietnam War: The first military Operation Babylift flight, C5A 80218, crashes 27 minutes after takeoff, killing 138 on board; 176 survive the crash.

Bill Gates and Paul Allen found Microsoft in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Monty Python and the Holy Grail is released.

Karen Ann Quinlan, 21, faints after consuming Quaaludes at a party. She becomes a controversial subject in the right to die movement after her parents sue to have her comatose body removed from life-support. She lives off a feeding tube until 1985.

The Khmer Republic surrenders, when the Communist Khmer Rouge guerilla forces capture Phnom Penh ending the Cambodian Civil War, with mass evacuation of American troops and Cambodian civilians. The

Khmer Rouge begins prompting a forcible mass evacuation of the city and starting the genocide.

Six Red Army Faction terrorists take over the West German embassy in Stockholm, take 11 hostages and demand the release of the group’s jailed members; shortly after, they are captured by Swedish police.

Vietnam War: Operation Frequent Wind – Americans and their allies are evacuated from South Vietnam by helicopter. The Vietnam War concludes as Communist forces from North Vietnam take Saigon. South Vietnam surrenders unconditionally and is replaced with the temporary Provisional Government.

May

The Cold War between Cambodia and Vietnam begins, which eventually leads to the Cambodian-Vietnamese War.

Mayaguez incident: Khmer Rouge forces in Cambodia seize the United States merchant ship *Mayaguez* in international waters. The ship is rescued by the U.S. Navy and Marines; 38 Americans are killed.

Elton John’s *Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy* becomes the first album to enter the US *Billboard* 200 album chart at Number One.

June

Jaws is released in theaters and becomes a popular summer hit, setting the standard for Hollywood blockbusters for years to come.

July

A manned American Apollo spacecraft and the manned Soviet Soyuz spacecraft for the *Soyuz 19* mission dock in orbit, marking the first such link-up between spacecraft from the two nations.

In Detroit, former Teamsters Union president Jimmy Hoffa is reported missing.

August

The Louisiana Superdome opens in New Orleans. The Banqiao Dam, in China’s Henan Province, fails after Typhoon Nina; over 200,000 people perish.

September

In Sacramento, California, Lynette Fromme, a follower of jailed cult leader Charles Manson, attempts to assassinate U.S. President Gerald Ford, but is thwarted by a Secret Service agent.

The London Hilton Hotel is bombed by the Provisional

Irish Republican Army; 2 people are killed and 63 injured.

Elizabeth Seton is canonized, becoming the first American Roman Catholic saint.

Rembrandt's painting "The Night Watch" is slashed a dozen times at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

Fugitive Patty Hearst is captured in San Francisco.

U.S. President Gerald Ford survives a second assassination attempt, this time by Sara Jane Moore.

October

Muhammad Ali defeats Joe Frazier in a boxing match in Manila, Philippines.

NBC airs the first episode of *Saturday Night Live* (George Carlin is the first host; Billy Preston and Janis Ian are the first musical guests).

Juan Carlos I of Spain becomes acting head of state after dictator Francisco Franco concedes that he is too ill to govern.

The Queen single "Bohemian Rhapsody" is released.

November

The 729-foot (222 m)-long freighter *SS Edmund Fitzgerald* sinks during a storm 17 miles (27 km) from the entrance to Whitefish Bay on Lake Superior, killing all 29 crew members on board (an event

immortalized in song by Gordon Lightfoot).

Former California Governor Ronald Reagan enters the race for the Republican presidential nomination, challenging incumbent President Gerald Ford.

Spanish dictator Francisco Franco dies in Madrid, effectively marking the end of the dictatorship established following the Spanish Civil War and the beginning of Spain's transition to democracy. Juan Carlos is declared King of Spain.

The 1975 cult classic movie *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* is released in the United States.

The name "Micro-soft" (for microcomputer software) is used by Bill Gates in a letter to Paul Allen for the first time (Microsoft becomes a registered trademark on November 26, 1976).

December

In Laos, the communist party of the Pathet Lao takes over Vientiane and defeats the Kingdom of Laos, forcing King Sisavang Vatthana to abdicate and creating the Lao People's Democratic Republic. This ends the Laotian Civil War, with mass evacuation of American troops and Laotian civilians.

New York City is approved for bailout of 2.3 billion each year through to 1978 - 6.9 billion total.

1975 POP CULTURE

Movies: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* won the five top Oscars - Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress and Best Writing. Other successful films include *Jaws*, *Nashville*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, *Barry Lyndon*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Broadway Shows: *The Wiz*, *A Chorus Line*.

Books: *Centennial* by James Michner, *The Choirboys* by Joseph Wambaugh, *The Eagle Has Landed* by Jack Higgins, *The Great Train Robbery* by Michael Crichton, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* by Judith Rossner, *The Moneychangers* by Arthur Hailey, *Oh, The Thinks You Can Think!* by Dr. Seuss, *Ragtime* by E. L. Doctorow, *Shogun* by James Clavell, *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt

TV shows: (ranked by popularity)

1. All in the Family (CBS)
2. Rich Man, Poor Man (ABC)
3. Laverne & Shirley (ABC)
4. Maude (CBS)
5. The Bionic Woman (ABC)
6. Phyllis (CBS)
7. Sanford and Son (NBC)
8. Rhoda (CBS)
9. The Six Million Dollar Man (ABC)
10. Happy Days (ABC)

Billboard Number One Songs: "Angie Baby" - Helen Reddy, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" - Elton John, "Mandy" - Barry Manilow, "Please Mr. Postman" - The Carpenters, "Laughter In The Rain" - Neil Sedaka, "You're No Good" - Linda Ronstadt,

"Best Of My Love" - The Eagles, "Have You Never Been Mellow" - Olivia Newton-John, "Black Water" - The Doobie Brothers, "My Eyes Adored You" - Frankie Valli, "Lady Marmalade" - LaBelle, "Lovin' You" - Minnie Riperton, "Philadelphia Freedom" - Elton John, "(Hey Won't You Play) Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song" - B. J. Thomas, "He Don't Love You (Like I Love You)" - Tony Orlando and Dawn, "Shining Star" - Earth, Wind & Fire, "Thank God I'm A Country Boy" - John Denver, "Sister Golden Hair" - America, "Love Will Keep Us Together" - The Captain & Tennille, "Listen To What The Man Said" - Paul McCartney & Wings, "The Hustle" - Van McCoy/The Soul City Symphony, "One Of These Nights" - The Eagles, "Jive Talkin'" - Bee Gees, "Get Down Tonight" - KC and the Sunshine Band, "Rhinestone Cowboy" - Glen Campbell, "Island Girl" - Elton John, "That's The Way (I Like It)" - KC and the Sunshine Band.

Candy: The Herman Goelitz company introduced the gourmet jelly bean. The original flavors were: Licorice, Lemon, Grape, Root Beer, Cream Soda, Green Apple, Tangerine and Very Cherry. It was rebranded the 'Jelly Belly' in 2001.

Gifts, toys, and fashion:

Mood rings, Pong (home version), Six Million Dollar Man action figures, Playmobil, Pet Rocks, Trac Ball, Rubik's Cubes, Hip-huggers, bellbottoms, leisure suits, Betamax (Beta) video tape and players, 8-Track tapes and players, Disco, PEZ candy, Magic 8-Balls.

GLOSSARY

Bruce Lee: Lee Jun-fan, known professionally as Bruce Lee, was a Hong Kong and American actor, film director, martial artist, martial arts instructor, philosopher, and founder of the martial art Jeet Kune Do, one of the wushu or kungfu styles.

Fist bump: a gesture of greeting or affirmation in which two people lightly tap each other's clenched fist.

Mozzarella sticks: elongated pieces of battered or breaded mozzarella. Mozzarella sticks may be served with tomato ketchup or marinara sauce, as well as plum sauce, jalapeño jelly, barbecue sauce, honey mustard sauce, and ranch dressing.

Tator Tot: pieces of deep-fried, grated potatoes with a compact, cylindrical shape, served as a side dish. "Tater Tots" is a registered trademark of Ore-Ida (a division of the H. J. Heinz Company, L.P.) that is often used as a generic term.

Peeps: slang for friends.

Nutbags: someone who is a little bit crazy, a little bit squirrely.

Word: 1) well said; 2) said as an agreement; 3) can be used as a greeting.

Totally: used as a way to express extreme agreement with someone or something.

Book: to leave quickly.

Doobie: a marijuana cigarette.

Mary Jane: marijuana.

"Tie your ribbons around your old oak trees": "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree" is a song by Tony Orlando and Dawn. It was a worldwide hit for the group in 1973.

"all good in the hood": everything is perfect and going well in your life or current situation (hood=neighborhood)

Badass: noun: A mean-tempered or belligerent person. Adj: Mean; belligerent.

Ninja: a person who excels in a particular skill or activity.

"Mama don't let your baby/Grow up to be cowboy": "Mammas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys" is a country music song first recorded by Ed Bruce, written by him and wife Patsy Bruce.

Mickey Rooney: His performance as Mr. I.Y. Yunioshi in the classic 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, with taped eyelids, buck teeth, sibilant accent and all, has become one of the persistent icons of ethnic stereotype.

Yul Brynner: Russian-born actor who famously played the King of Siam in *The King and I* on stage and in film.

David Carradine: an American actor and martial artist noted for his leading role as peace-loving Shaolin monk, Kwai Chang Caine, in the television series *Kung Fu* (1972-1975).

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STUDY QUESTIONS

Pre-Performance Questions

1. What is your definition of an immigrant? What is your definition of a refugee? Where do the definitions intersect and diverge from each other?
2. What is the difference between a stereotype and an archetype? Do stereotypes only reinforce negative images or are there stereotypes that reinforce positive images?
3. How reliable are our personal memories, our personal stories? Do we alter them over time to fit what we believe or what we wanted to have happened? Do we retell them in a different light to make ourselves the hero or to appear better? Are we selective in what we remember? When your friends or family talk about an event does each have a different memory of what happened? Why?

Post-Performance Questions

1. How do the scenic elements of set design, costuming, lighting, video projections and sound help tell the story? Which are the most effective and why?
2. How are stereotypes and archetypes used in this play? Identify characters in the play and the stereotype they reinforce. What message or lesson about stereotypes do the characters deliver? What do you believe the playwright is commenting about with the use of stereotypes and archetypes?
3. How would you describe the play to someone that has not seen the play? What part of the story would you focus on and what would you keep as a surprise?
4. How would you describe the character, Playwright? What is the character's purpose and how does the character advance the story?
5. How do the characters describe their involvement in the Vietnam War?
6. What brought Quang and Tong to the United States? How do they feel about relocating?
7. Tong must choose who she will take to the United States? Who does she take and why?
8. How would you describe the relationship between Quang and Tong? What obstacles are in their way and are they able to overcome them?
9. What obstacles must be overcome by the characters as they either adapt or rebel to their new culture?
10. How were Quang and Nhan treated by the characters that they met as they crossed the country on a motorcycle?

ACTIVITIES

Personal Narrative – A Love Story

1. Start with students, working individually, to craft a personal definition of the word, “love.” What are the indicators of love and how do we know if and when it exists?
2. Students write about a person (or an object) in their life when they felt love? Include specific examples of what indicators that existed in defining this feeling/experience of love.
3. Students then interview a parent/caregiver or other adult for their definition of love. Students identify and define the similarities and differences between their interviewee’s definitions and their own personal definition within Step 1.
4. Students then ask the subject of the interview to describe how they met their partner. What factors led to their first meeting? What obstacles were in their way? How did they know they were in love? Are there any additional details they would like to add? Students look for the similarities and differences between the adult experience and their experience within Step 2.
5. After the interview, identify key themes and character choices that they will adapt into a monologue or scene of dialogue for the stage.
6. After writing the first draft, have students read the draft aloud.
7. Discuss the differences between theatrical adaptations. What did the playwrights do to convey the characters and love story?
8. Ask the playwright, in what ways did they have to invent, delete, or change anything within the source material for the monologue or dialogue?
9. Raising the bar: Following the first theatrical adaptation, instruct the playwrights to change a point of view. What changes would have to be made to clearly show that the events found in the first draft are now being described from a different character’s perspective?

Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.

Writing PG: Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.

ACTIVITIES

History of Triumph Over Adversity

1. Introduce the activity through the lens of asking students to be in charge of identifying representatives to attend a global conference whose theme is: “Acts of Triumph.” Ask students, working individually, to craft a personal definition of triumph. What are the indicators of triumph and how do we know when it exists?
2. Split the class into three groups. Working from their combined definitions of triumph in Step 1 above, have each group select three people from the past or the present – due to size limitations of the conference’s venue, each group must limit their representatives to three – that best illustrate important triumphs within the history of their specific geographic location as identified below:
 - One group will choose three people to represent the history/events from the state of Colorado.
 - One group will choose three people to represent the history/events of the United States.
 - One group will choose three people to represent the history/events of Earth.

Each group will decide on the criteria for selection of representation and then present their list to the class. Each group is to provide context and reasoning for the representative’s inclusion to answer the following discussion questions:

- What were the criteria developed for selecting the people?
- Were some of the choices similar?
- Why were these people selected?
- Did anyone argue to include someone that had value to them personally but not for the group as a whole?

Civics PG: Research, formulate positions, and engage in appropriate civic participation to address local, state, or national issues or policies.

Geography PG: Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world.

PERSPECTIVES

Make your experience unforgettable when you join us for one of these insightful, educational events:

Creative Team Perspective

Aug 24 | 6pm | The Jones

Get an exclusive insider's perspective before the show when you join us for a free, professionally-moderated discussion with the creative team.

Cast Perspectives

Sep 2 | 1:30pm

Join a fun and engaging discussion with the actors after the performance.

Perspectives: Theatre & Theology

Sep 4 | 6:30pm

Join Pastor Dan Bollman of the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod after the performance to examine each show through a theological lens.

Perspectives: Higher Education Advisory Council

Sep 5 | 6:30pm

Participate in a topical discussion led by members of our academic community after the performance.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Denver Public Library recommends: Read!

Hue 1968 : A turning point of the American War in Vietnam by Mark Bowden.

Using original interviews with American servicemen and Vietnamese soldiers, guerillas, and civilians as well as unprecedented source material from war archives, Bowden chronicles the most gruesome battle of the Vietnam War from multiple viewpoints with character-driven storytelling. The fight for the city of Hue lasted almost a full month, costing 10,000 lives, and forcing Americans to realize the futility of institutional war rhetoric. Compelling narratives and meticulous research encourage reflection on the lessons of Vietnam.

Watch!

Last Days in Vietnam (2015) Dir. Rory Kennedy.

Learn about the fall of Saigon and the ensuing retreat that sets the stage for *Vietgone*. This PBS documentary showcases the chaos as the North Vietnamese army drew close to Saigon, leaving soldiers to evacuate their loved ones and Vietnamese friends. Just like when Quang flew refugees to the USS Midway, *Last Days* shows South Vietnamese pilots flying refugees to small helipads on U.S. warships. They were so small that once passengers disembarked, soldiers were forced to push the helicopters into the sea so another could quickly land.

Listen!

The Refugees by Niet Thanh Nguyen

From the winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for his debut novel *The Sympathizer* comes this incredible sophomore effort. Read by the author, this gem of a collection swings from topic to topic: from grief to loneliness, culture shock to the back and forth loyalties of a refugee. Particular standouts in relation to *Vietgone* are “Black Eyed Woman”, “The War Years” and “The Other Man”.

Download!

Don't Think I've Forgotten: Cambodia's Lost Rock and Roll

is a documentary on the soulful and psychedelic Cambodian youth movement of the 60's and 70's and the music of a generation nearly destroyed by the brutal Khmer Rouge regime. Here you will find the songs of *Drakkar*, *Huoy Meas*, *Liv Tek*, *Pen Ran*, and *Pou Vannary* kept alive in the memories of survivors, salvaged concert footage, and danceable bootleg recordings. It only takes hearing Cambodian rock music once to more fully appreciate the loss that this historic event represents and to feel lucky that some of this culture survived. Watch it on Kanopy, Denver Public Library's newest streaming movie service, free to all Denver resident library cardholders!



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