

MARIST CLS - THE POWER OF READERS THEATRE, VOL #2
SPRING 2024
CLASS #1

READERS THEATRE – WHAT IS IT?

READERS THEATRE IS A STYLE OF THEATRE IN WHICH ACTORS PRESENT READINGS WITHOUT COSTUMES, PROPS, SCENERY, ETC.

ACTORS USE ONLY SCRIPTS AND VOCAL EXPRESSION TO HELP THE AUDIENCE UNDERSTAND THE STORY.

READERS THEATER IS ALSO KNOWN AS "THEATRE OF THE MIND"



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THE READERS THEATRE FORM IS SIMILAR TO THE RECITATIONS OF EPIC POETRY IN FIFTH-CENTURY GREECE.

DRAMATIC READINGS HAVE BEEN POPULAR SINCE THE EARLY 1800S.

THE FIRST USE OF THE TERM "READERS THEATRE" IS ATTRIBUTED TO EUGENE O'NEILL, JR.

- IN 1945, HE ESTABLISHED A READERS THEATRE GROUP, WHICH PRESENTED *OEDIPUS REX* AT THE MAJESTIC THEATRE ON BROADWAY.



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IN 1949, THE NATIONAL READERS THEATER, THE **FIRST DRAMA QUARTET**—CHARLES LAUGHTON, AGNES MOOREHEAD, CHARLES BOYER, AND CEDRIC HARDWICKE —TOURED TO 35 STATES, PUTTING ON 500 PERFORMANCES OF *DON JUAN IN HELL*, SEEN BY MORE THAN A HALF-MILLION PEOPLE.



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"NO SET, NO PROPS, JUST FOUR ACTORS IN EVENING DRESS SEATED ON STOOLS PLACED BEHIND MUSIC STANDS, READING SHAW'S WORDS OUT LOUD." WALL STREET JOURNAL.
BROOKS ATKINSON IN THE NEW YORK TIMES CALLED IT "A MIGHTY AND MOVING OCCASION, NOT ONLY A PERFORMANCE BUT AN INTELLECTUAL CRUSADE."

THE KEY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL
THEATER AND FORMAL READERS THEATER IS
THAT READERS THEATER IS NOT STAGED OR
ACTED OUT THROUGH PHYSICAL MOVEMENT.

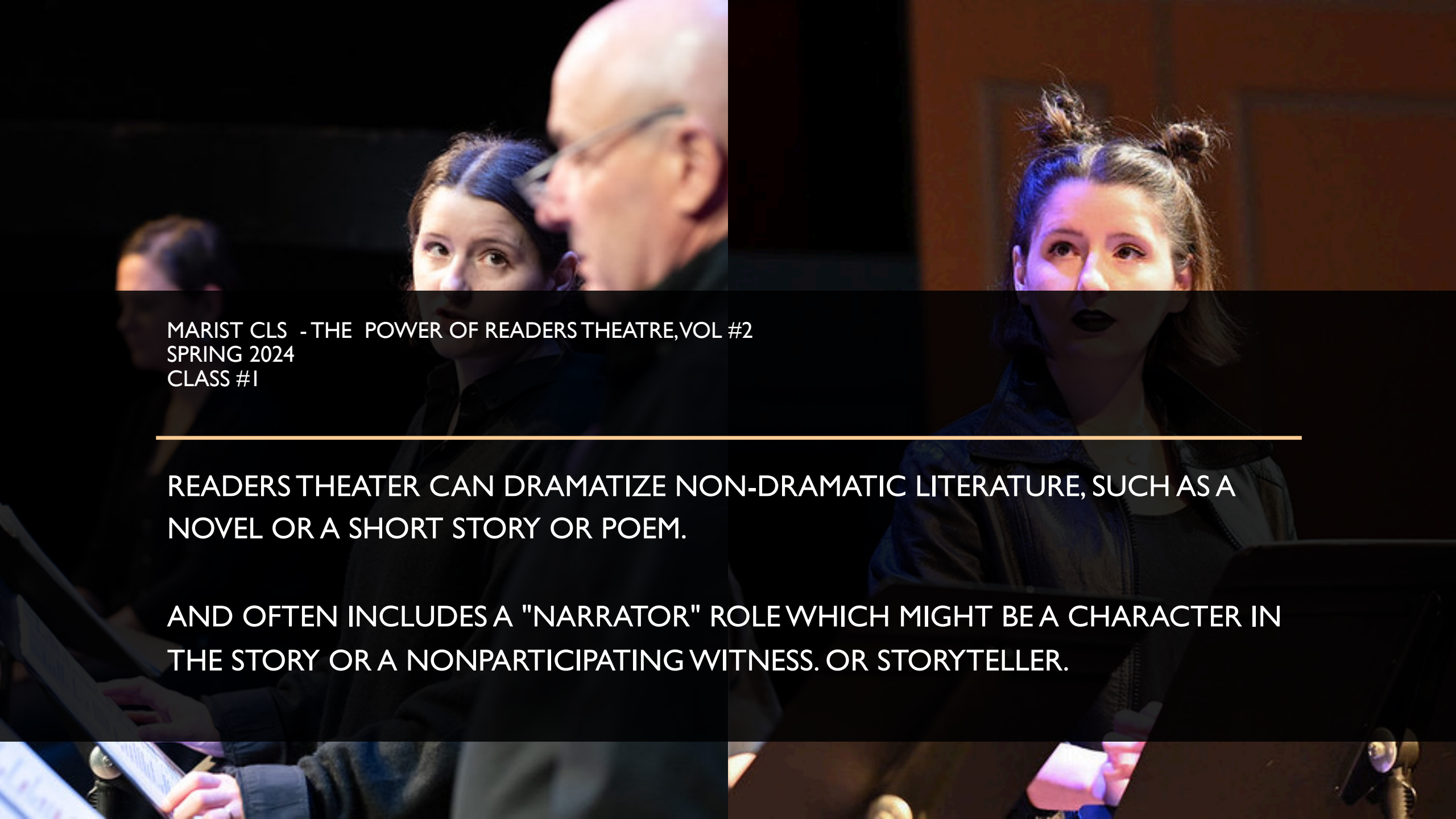
THE INTERPRETATION RELIES ALMOST ENTIRELY
ON THE ACTORS' VOICES & FACES.

FORMAL READERS THEATER USES ONLY SCRIPTS,
MUSIC STANDS, AND STOOLS.

THE CHOICE TO READ OR MEMORIZE AND
WHETHER TO REMAIN SEATED OR STAND VARIES
ACCORDING TO THE DESIRES OF THE GROUP
AND THE DEMANDS OF THE SCRIPT.



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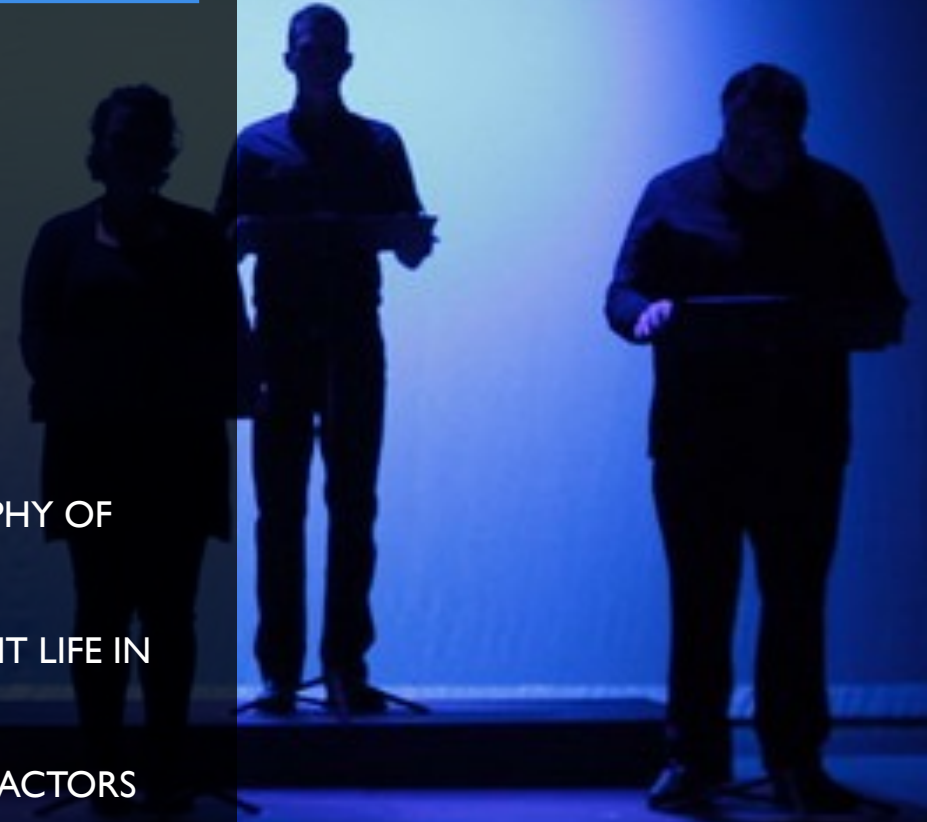
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READERS THEATER CAN DRAMATIZE NON-DRAMATIC LITERATURE, SUCH AS A NOVEL OR A SHORT STORY OR POEM.

AND OFTEN INCLUDES A "NARRATOR" ROLE WHICH MIGHT BE A CHARACTER IN THE STORY OR A NONPARTICIPATING WITNESS. OR STORYTELLER.

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- WEEK #1 – 4/2 – INTRODUCTION – SAMPLE READINGS
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- WEEK #2 – 4/9 – A R GURNEY – THE DINING ROOM
-
- WEEK #3 – 4/16 – NICK PAYNE– CONSTELLATIONS
-
- WEEK #4 – 4/23 – MICHAEL FRAYN – COPENHAGEN
-
- WEEK #5 – 4/30 – MARGARET EDSON – WIT
-
- WEEK #6 – 5/7 – ERIC OVERMEYER– ON THE VERGE OR THE GEOGRAPHY OF YEARNING
-
- WEEK #7 – 5/14 – JANE WAGNER– SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE
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- WEEK #8 – 10/24 – COLD BUFFET / CLASS BRINGS SHORT TEXTS AND ACTORS WILL READ THEM “COLD”





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TODAY'S MENU

- HE SAID, SHE SAID – DAVE BARRY
- THE THINGS THEY CARRIED – TIM O'BRIEN
- SURE THING – DAVID IVES
- THE LANYARD – BILLY COLLINS
- LET EVENING COME – JANE KENYON
- HEARING AID – PETE BARRY
- DEATH BE NOT PROUD – JOHN DONNE
- ONE TENNIS SHOE – SHEL SILVERSTEIN

