

## THE RADICALISATION OF BRADLEY MANNING

TIM PRICE

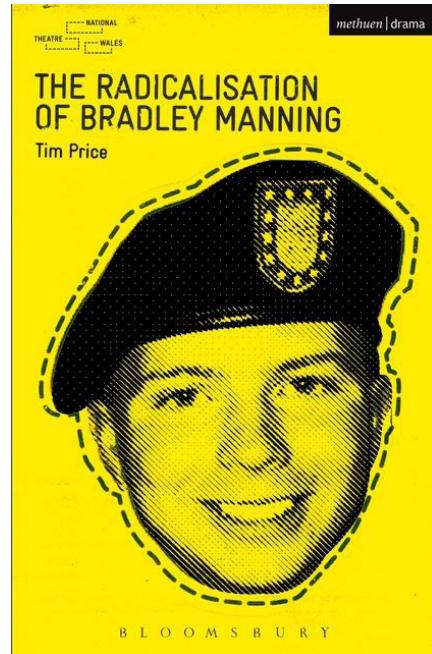


You will be expected to explore the play from the perspective of a:

- **Performer**
- **Designer**
- **Director**

This resource is designed to help you focus on these three areas.

**This is such an exciting piece of theatre – enjoy!**



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What is RADICALISATION?

Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

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## INTRODUCTION

In April 2012 National Theatre Wales presented *The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning* (TROBM), a new play by Tim Price, in three schools across Wales.

The original production was site-specific and opened at Tasker Milward School, Haverfordwest, where Bradley Manning completed his secondary education. It then toured to Cardiff High School and Connah's Quay High School in Flintshire.

The six performers, all around Bradley's age, played a number of characters each, including all playing the part of Bradley Manning himself at different points in the piece.

The show was also streamed live online alongside a chat function and links to further information about the themes and events mentioned in the play.

The play was then revived and was performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2013. This production kept the importance of the site-specific setting and was performed in a school.

*'A viscerally exciting piece of theatre.'*

The Guardian

## NATIONAL THEATRE WALES

*TROBM* is the eighteenth play produced by National Theatre Wales (NTW) - NTW18.

What is NTW?

From the NTW website: [www.nationaltheatrewales.org](http://www.nationaltheatrewales.org):

We are:

- *Wales' English-language national theatre, and the UK's youngest national theatre*
- *Non-building based (making work across Wales and beyond...)*

*We make work:*

- *that is site-located (e.g. on beaches, in forests, in village halls, on mountains and across whole towns, but sometimes in theatres too!)*
- *that is digitally innovative, including live-streaming and gaming, and alongside an online community of more than 5,700 members*
- *with internationally-renowned artists and companies (e.g. Michael Sheen, Gruff Rhys, Frantic Assembly)*
- *and always with – not just for - communities (especially through TEAM, our 600-strong network of individuals with a passion for the arts)*

*The nation of Wales is our stage:*

*From forests to beaches, from aircraft hangars to post-industrial towns, village halls to nightclubs.*

*We bring together storytelling poets, visual visionaries and inventors of ideas. We collaborate with artists, audiences, communities and companies to create theatre in the English language, rooted in Wales, with an international reach.*

*You'll find us around the corner, across the mountain and in your digital backyard.*

Questions:

- How does TROBM fit into the type of work that NTW want to do?
- What elements of the play are perfect for NTW?

Below is a very informative Vimeo that documents the first production. Take a look!

Vimeo – Tim Price & NTW - TROBM:

<https://vimeo.com/97905788>

Twitter feed following the play's development: #ntw18

<https://storify.com/ntw/ntw18-the-radicalisation-of-bradley-manning>

Audience Reactions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1yOoHCNbqE>

## THE PLAY

The TROBM is the 18<sup>th</sup> play to be produced by National Theatre Wales.

It tells the story of **Bradley Manning**, the 24 year old US soldier accused of releasing secrets from the Iraq and Afghan wars to **WikiLeaks**. After nearly two years in prison without charge, Manning was finally put on trial and eventually sentenced to 35 years imprisonment. The action in this play follows Bradley up to his isolation. The trial began after this play was written.

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**WikiLeaks** is a non-profit international organization that publishes secret information.

Their slogan is: '**We open governments**'.

According to the WikiLeaks website, its goal is:

**"to bring important news and information to the public... One of our most important activities is to publish original source material alongside our news stories so readers and historians alike can see evidence of the truth."**

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Written for an ensemble cast - six actors (4 males, 2 females) in the original production.

The play jumps through mainly THREE time periods:

- Manning's school days at Tasker Milward,
- his departure from Britain until the WikiLeaks action
- his time held prisoner in a tiny cell in the Quantico Brig, where he was kept in isolation and stripped of his clothing at night

There is a FOURTH time period of Present Day in scene two.

The play was well received by audiences and theatre critics.

## Key Performances:

- May 2010 Manning arrested in Iraq
- 3rd June 2010 Manning's Trial began
- **April 2012 TROBM is performed - touring Wales**  
**(Bradley Manning's mother is in the audience at Tasker Milward School)**
- **5th, August 2013 TROBM opens at Edinburgh Festival**
- 21st August 2013 Manning sentenced to 35 years imprisonment
- **29th August 2013 TROBM closes at Edinburgh Festival**



As a contemporary piece of theatre, it is fascinating to see that the play was created and performed while Manning's trial was taking place and the company was very much aware of the media attention Manning's case was getting.

The sentencing on 21<sup>st</sup> August actually took place before the Edinburgh production had finished its run!

## Note from NTW

***This play is a fictional account which has been inspired by a true story. The incidents, characters and timelines have been changed for dramatic purposes. In some cases, fictitious characters and incidents have been added to the plot, and the words are those imagined by the author. The play should not be understood as a biography or any other factual account.***

## Live Stream Facts:

From very early in the production process it was obvious to the NTW creative team that the interest in the play and the questions it raises would be much wider than the venues around Wales – at schools in Haverfordwest, Cardiff and Connah’s Quay – and indeed wider than Wales itself.

Therefore as part of the online experience they had some discussions with the director John McGrath and decided that a live stream was needed to cater for this international interest and allow people worldwide to watch and take part.

Unlike some other theatre companies which are within walls, National Theatre Wales’ primary presence has always been digital through its online community. There is an expectation that the digital life of the production will receive attention and care. While this will raise the profile of the production this is not predominantly a marketing channel for the theatre but a genuine way to appreciate the story and the ‘content’.

The live stream was decided upon and the team at NTW were excited about the potential of this element of the production.

*“Live webstream gives an intense slant to a play about the Welsh-American WikiLeaks ‘martyr’” Looking at CCTV footage of a school hall in Cardiff through Adobe Flash Player in the corner of a webpage and listening to the attendant interference, bells, buzzes and bleeps might not sound like the cutting edge of theatre. But by the time National Theatre Wales’ tech*

*wizard Tom Beardshaw closes the live stream of Tim Price's electric new play The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning with the school pupils and soldiers we have been watching taking their bow, this is exactly what the "audience" are convinced we have witnessed.*

Dylan Moore, THE ARTS DESK

April 2012

*NTW are known for their unusual choices of performance venue and this production was no different. The action took place in school halls across Wales including the one that Manning attending during his time in the country. This was not the only performance outlet, in an attempt to create a 'hyper connected' theatre event the live performances were streamed online to a dedicated website for anyone to watch free of charge.... this was a highly innovative and inspired idea that enhanced the impression of constant surveillance...*

Chelsea Gillard

May 2012

## HYPER-CONNECTED

is the term that John McGrath gives to the audience experience when linked to live streaming and other online connections to a production e.g. twitter feeds, facebook and other social network platforms.

## EDINBURGH:

When NTW took their critically-acclaimed show to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival they made improvements to the live stream of the Fringe production. Originally, the live stream was only a desktop experience. For Edinburgh it was also viewable on mobiles and tablets. There was a chat function within the live stream that allowed viewers to comment on and discuss the production. There were also guest 'hosts' on the live stream chat who facilitated

the discussion each night, adding their unique perspective on the show. Alexa O'Brien, the journalist who provided an extensive archive of the only available transcripts of Manning's closed trial, hosted the most popular night. *TROBM*'s writer, Tim Price, joined her on the chat.

They also used the new [livestream.com](#) 'feed' feature as a links system. It worked like a Facebook page in that they were able to post links to background information and source material about Manning's life which the audience could then read and share with their networks as the show was live. From their statistics, NTW could see that this was a popular feature of the experience, with 70% of viewers clicking through to the links.

All three features of the live stream (live feed, chat and links system) were embeddable as a complete package onto other sites, which NTW took advantage of. In order to take the live stream to a potentially wider audience, the entire broadcast was embedded on NTW's Facebook page, their online community and on a separate night, on the Huffington Post website.

### The statistics (Edinburgh):

- Over 6,500 audience members watched the Bradley Manning live stream from 1,269 cities in 103 countries.
- 56% of the audience were based in the UK, while other considerable audience bases could be found in the US, Germany, Japan, Canada, Ireland, Netherlands and Australia.
- When watching the real time statistics, it could be seen that there was an audience member in Portland (US) watching at the same time as someone in Port Talbot (Wales).
- 20% of the audience watched on mobile or tablet devices, on a variety of over 60 devices.
- From feedback on the chat, the NTW team found out that one audience member in Australia was watching via mobile phone while on a bus!

During the three weeks of streaming to [Livestream.com](#), NTW built up a new network of nearly 4,000 followers on the platform (this was the first time they'd used the site).

## WHAT WAS LEAKED?

- The most important video showed an U.S. Army Apache helicopter in Iraq firing on a group of people who turned out to include journalists from Reuters. The video was edited by WikiLeaks and called “Collateral Murder.”
- The second batch of documents provided by Manning that WikiLeaks published were incident reports from Afghanistan and Iraq. WikiLeaks called them the “War Logs” and said they showed there were much larger numbers of civilian casualties than the U.S. had previously reported.
- Manning was also accused of providing WikiLeaks with documents related to the detainees at Guantanamo.
- The largest trove of documents Manning provided to WikiLeaks was hundreds of thousands of State Department cables.



## THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Designed as a site-specific piece, it was set 'in-the-round' in school halls. The audience was not sat around the performance space in the traditional continuous circle of chairs but were scattered at random around the acting area. This meant that some of the audience were sat on single chairs in between parts of the set and were isolated from other audience members. The seats used were school chairs and the audience very much felt part of the action. Many of the scenes in the play take the action back to Manning's school days and his History lessons so the audience felt they were back there with him.

Surrounding the space were functioning monitors that relayed information, images and text for the audience. This reflected immediately the technology which familiarised Manning's story and the access he had to military information. Other elements of technology surrounded the space including sound equipment and camera equipment used to live stream the performances.

Before the audience reached the space they had to make their way to the 'hall', passing classrooms where noises of war and military communications were played. Speakers and monitors had been placed in these empty classrooms to create an appropriate soundscape as the audience pass by. This clever mix of the real space of the school and its classrooms with the sounds of conflict and military atmosphere created a sense that we were experiencing two worlds. One had the audience taken back to school and were reminded of how it feels to walk school corridors again and on the other, the sensory experience of the sound design was introducing the suggestion of what might be waiting for them ahead. Manning had been accused of releasing secret embassy cables and military logs from the Iraq and Afghan wars and the audience were being introduced to the convention of technology before they reached the performance space.

Once inside the 'hall', soldiers in full combat gear equipped with guns met the audience with authority and 'bullied' them to their seats. There was little choice in where they could sit. Audience members were maneuvered with a definite element of control to sit where the 'soldiers' wanted them to. Often groups of friends were separated and sat apart. Immediately the comfortable theatrical tradition of arriving in a cosy theatre space and settling into seats ready to enjoy a performance had been destroyed. The audience were unsure if this was the



cast, an ensemble of extras directed to create a hostile environment or real soldiers.

Already the audience were immersed in the world of Bradley Manning. The interaction with the soldiers was threatening and the surrounding visual and aural activity from the screens and monitors was uncomfortable, yet intriguing.

The playing styles were immediately apparent. The six actors superbly mastered the ensemble approach and the high level of physical style required of them. The performance had attack, a high level of energy and the intention was for the audience to be placed central to the experience.

The costume design used a base of combat trousers, boots and brown tee-shirts. Other elements were added when needed to show a specific character or the costume changed completely. This choice was excellent for the level of movement that was in the production, especially for the *Chorus*. It allowed for complete fluidity of movement and the gender of the

actors became invisible as they were all dressed the same.



The actors multi-roled and they all played Manning at some point. The convention used was wearing Manning's glasses. Whoever wore them was Bradley.

## MAIN CHARACTERS

### CHORUS 1-6

The six characters that make up the chorus are designed to be universal. Scene Two presents them in a typically Greek way. They comment on the central character, offer opinion, give us facts and provide the audience with a snapshot of Bradley. As the play progresses, they all play Bradley at certain points, sometimes more than one at the same time. They adopt roles as the action dictates. The ensemble approach is very important in the play and the chorus is used in a variety of ways to tell the story. They play a wide range of characters from the Welsh school pupils in Bradley's class to US soldiers.

- How do you visualise the chorus?
- How would you stage Scene Two?
- How do you imagine the actors change character so quickly?
- What are the challenges to the actors in this play?
- What costume(s) could you design if you wanted to move away from the combat gear of the original?
- What gender split would you have if you were casting this play? Why?
- Using six actors, map out each scene and decide who would play who.

### BRADLEY MANNING

Bradley is the central character played by the entire cast. He is bipolar, yet intelligent. He is a troubled individual. We see him from the age of fourteen to twenty three. He is bullied at school and this becomes a running theme throughout the play. He grows unhappy with his personal life, struggling with his sexuality and his own identity. He joins the army to 'help people' and soon becomes disillusioned. He has a temper and his moods change suddenly. He has a dislike of injustice and a strong sense of what he thinks is right and wrong. He is horrified by what he has discovered in the information he has hacked into and his decision to leak the files is done in an attempt to expose the military. The play portrays Manning as an emotionally fragile and volatile individual. The episodic structure of the plot and the jumps back and forth in time suggest continual links to Bradley's experiences and his actions.

*I have been following Bradley's case since his arrest in May 2010. His story*

*had a heady mix of espionage, geo-politics and cyber-frontierism, but it wasn't until I learned of Bradley's teenage years in Wales that my curiosity turned into obsession.*

*This young soldier – who has attempted to call the president of the US as a defence witness – knows bus timetables around Haverfordwest. He knows the trials of schoolboy rugby, and speaks rudimentary Welsh. Once I realised this, Bradley became more than a news story.*

*We had things in common. So reading accounts of his torture in the Quantico Brig haunted me.*

*While his treatment shocked me, his alleged actions thrilled me. If Bradley is guilty of uploading the information to WikiLeaks then he has courageously reminded us that not only are finance, religion, media, manufacturing and politics transnational, but so is our morality.*

Tim Price

Bradley is a very complex character. His struggle with both his sexuality and his identity is present in many scenes. His psychological struggles are very clear and the military turn this against him in the last scenes of the play. The fact that all the chorus play Bradley at least once, reinforces this multi-faceted aspect to his personality. With each new actor we potentially see a different side to Bradley. The only physical similarity is that the actors wear his glasses when they become him.

## FURTHER RESEARCH....

When you start researching the facts of the play you will find that today Bradley Manning is now Chelsea Manning. Chelsea is a trans-woman who was diagnosed with gender identity disorder whilst in prison. The day after Manning's sentencing, Manning's attorney issued a press statement announcing that his client was a female. Manning's statement included the following:

*As I transition into this next phase of my life, I want everyone to know the real me. I am Chelsea Manning. I am a female. Given the way that I feel, and have felt since childhood, I want to begin hormone therapy as soon as possible. I hope that you will support me in this transition. I also request that, starting today, you refer to me by my new name and use the feminine pronoun (except in official mail to the confinement facility). I look forward to receiving letters from supporters and having the opportunity to write back.*

## MRS STOKES

Mrs Stokes is in her fifties. She is Bradley's History teacher and we are told from the cast list that she is 'inspirational'. She uses inventive techniques to try and make history more relevant to her pupils. At times she struggles with the discipline in Bradley's class but she always seems to regain control. She is the kind of teacher that pupils will remember. She identifies that Bradley has potential and doesn't want Bradley to leave and return to the US to join the army. The relevance of Mrs. Stokes being a History Teacher is very important in the play. She teaches about the Norman invasion of Wales, the Rebecca Riots and the Merthyr risings which, within the fabric of the play, seem to influence Bradley.

## THE CLASS

The pupils in the class are Bradley's teenage peers at the Tasker Milward V C School. They are slightly stereotyped inasmuch as Price describes them in this way:

Mark Pritchard	class charmer
Gavin Hope	class thug

Lisa Williams	class beauty queen
Anthony Edwards	class whipping boy

- In what way does Price's description of the class give you an image of each individual?
- How would you costume each of them? If all in school uniform, how would you differentiate between the characters?
- How would you direct a group of actors to bring out specific qualities of each character?

## TYLER WATKINS

Tyler is twenty and a student. He is Bradley's first love and it is through the scenes with Tyler that we get an opportunity to see Bradley as himself. In Scene Fourteen we see Bradley's bruises and the evidence of the physical abuse he experiences. Being with Tyler allows Bradley to lower his guard and expose his feelings. Tyler breaks up with Bradley towards the end of the play and this causes Bradley to react emotionally.

## OTHER CHARACTERS

are given a brief explanation in the cast list. Price does that work for us and tells us who they are and how they relate to Bradley.

They appear briefly as the action speeds along. Each of them play a vital part in Bradley's story and, although short scenes, they contain enough detail to give the characters three-dimension.

There is a **Brechtian** approach to some of the characters. The Chorus often play universal 'nameless' characters such as Waitress, Recruits, Marines, Soldiers which illustrates the depersonalisation of these groups. When the characters are named e.g. Kyle, Alison, Shazia, Sergeant Miles, there is a little more personalisation and the interaction between them and Bradley seems more relevant - although they may not be positive interactions.

- **What are the challenges for the actors when playing these smaller roles?**
- **What is the function of each of the smaller roles?**
- **Which of the smaller characters have impact on both Bradley and the audience?**

## KEY THEMES

There are several key themes that can be found within the play. Some of these are universal but others relate specifically to this text.

### TECHNOLOGY

**'Computers can change your life for the better'**

(David, Scene Sixteen)

This is one of the driving themes of the play. The design of the original production surrounded the acting area with monitors that presented a steady stream of images for the audience. Some of these were practical and used as part of the action but many were used to support the action. They gave the audience a clear reading of the themes and sub-themes. Bradley's actions result in him hacking computers and leaking information he finds in them to WikiLeaks. Without this action, Bradley would not be as famous. It was his actions that resulted in his arrest and these provide a central theme throughout.

### BULLYING/VICTIMISATION

There are many incidents of bullying throughout *TROBM*. Through the scenes in school, Price shows us the bullying that Bradley experienced as a teenager. His parents' divorce and his relocation to Wales resulted in him being an outsider. He had a different accent to the other pupils and differences in culture make him a target. The school bullying is then echoed in the way Bradley gets treated in other scenes of the play, especially at the hands of the military.

### HISTORY AND WELSH RADICALS

As the story unfolds it gradually jumps back and forth between Bradley's schooldays in

Haverfordwest and his torture in the Quantico Brig. Historical – and moral – importance are illustrated by the examples of Welsh radicalism we are given through Bradley's history lessons. Price draws parallels between the Chartist march on Newport and the Rebecca Riots of the 1830s with what went on in Baghdad last decade; a whole litany of figures who were thrust into “pivotal moments in history and had no choice but to act” are reeled off. Clearly, the writer sees Manning as a modern-day Dic Penderyn, the martyr of the 1831 Merthyr Rising in south Wales hanged for supposedly stabbing a soldier in the leg. His story is recounted here alongside Bradley's: “As a government you can't punish an idea, so you punish a man who subscribes to those ideas.”

The examples used by Mrs Stokes prepare us for the modern happenings of war that we see later. The importance of the individual fighting against authority is outlined clearly and the conflict imagery echoes throughout.

Mrs. Stokes' History lessons include:

- The Norman Invasion of Wales
- The Merthyr Risings
- The Rebecca Riots

Bradley's own story is fact. He is a real person and his actions are also fact. When an audience watches the play, they are watching a character of modern history connected to the real conflicts of Iraq and Afghanistan. The narrative in the play is under-pinned by the more distant Welsh history. So there is a rich theatrical tapestry woven connecting these moments of history through the plot. Price also uses other historic events throughout to reinforce these themes e.g. September 11th and the destruction of the Twin Towers.

## REJECTION OF AUTHORITY

In Scene Six, Mrs Stokes highlights Bradley's apparent issues with authority:

**Mrs Stokes**      *I like all my pupils, Bradley, it's just you seem to have a problem with authority. Do you have a problem with authority?*

This is a recurring element throughout TROBM. When we see Bradley clash with the **Major** and the **Commander**, we remember the scenes in school and the character seems to have a deep rooted sense that authority must not abuse its position.

Bradley's rejection of authority is motivated by a strong sense of what is right and wrong. His refusal to help Mrs Stokes by writing the student's names on the board in Scene Twenty-five shows us that he has a strong sense of fairness even as a young student.

**Bradley**                   *We don't have to help you punish us. (He sits down)*

This rejection of authority is prompted in Bradley only when he feels there is an injustice. He joins the army to help people. At first he follows the rules and regulations but as he grows aware of the situations and the lack of humanity often demonstrated by the military he becomes radicalised and this results in the leaking of information.

## FAIRNESS & JUSTICE

This could be said to be one of the main motivations for Bradley's actions. His fight for fairness and justice is a characteristic that follows him throughout the play and many examples are shown as we move through the time jumps.

When we see him protect **Mark** in Scene Three, we are given an introduction to how Bradley defends the victim. When he is caught by Mrs Stokes he tells her that he 'doesn't lie', we are given another characteristic that is echoed in further scenes.

When we see him at the protest march in Scene Twelve, we are given more details on how strongly Bradley feels about injustice.

**Bradley**                   *I'm here to protest against Proposition 8. I'm currently serving in the military awaiting deployment to Iraq. I was kicked out of home and lost my job because I'm gay. The world is not moving fast enough for us at home, work or battlefield.*

## CONFLICT AND WAR

The play is set in an environment that suggests the military and conflict immediately. In the original production, the interaction between the Chorus as US soldiers and the audience introduced this element as the soldiers ordered the audience to their seats.

The combat gear of the costume design also leaves an audience with no doubt that conflict and war are key themes throughout. The plot follows Bradley through his military training and experience.

## SEXUALITY

Being gay is one of the descriptors spoken by Chorus 4 in Scene Two. It is an important part of his character.

Bradley's homosexuality is key in the development of both plot and character. In many scenes he becomes defined by his sexuality as he searches to find out 'who he is'. He feels the oppression of not being permitted to be gay, especially with his desire to join the army. In Scene Nine we see Bradley's clash with his father. When the 'fifth Brian' physically leans on Bradley, we see the symbolic pressure put on Bradley to conform.

**Bradley**           *I'm gay. (Beat)*  
**Brian**           *Life's about compromises. D'you want to be a man and join the army, or do you want to be gay and work in Starbucks?*

Bradley is a victim of abuse due to him being gay. In Scene Fourteen we learn that his sexuality could also be the reason he is being kicked out.

**Bradley**           *I'm beat up every day, I'm called faggot, and runt and chapter fifteen, people spit on me –*

Chapter fifteen is the term that was used to discharge soldiers for being gay.

## Chapter 15: *Discharge for Homosexual Conduct*

"Don't ask, don't tell" was the official United States policy on service by gays, bisexuals, and lesbians in the military instituted by the Clinton Administration on February 28, 1994. The policy prohibited military personnel from discriminating against or harassing closeted homosexual or bisexual service members or applicants, while barring openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual persons from military service. This relaxation of legal restrictions on service by gays and lesbians in the armed forces was mandated by United States federal law and was signed November 30, 1993. The policy prohibited people who "demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts" from serving in the armed forces of the United States, because their presence "would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability".

You could serve in the military if you kept quiet about your sexuality. The military did not ask because if they were informed of a person's homosexuality, they would be discharged.

Chapter fifteen was implemented to discharge an openly gay soldier.

In December 2010, President Obama signed into law an Act that repealed the military's "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy. This repeal went into effect on September 20, 2011

Bradley is bullied and beaten because he is gay and he does not fit into the usual masculine stereotypes associated with the US military.

His victimisation, although not the cause, is clearly a contributing factor in his behaviour and his actions. When he witnesses the mindless killing of civilians on the videos he can identify with the victims on many levels. They have done nothing wrong and his need to out the truth strongly motivates him.

## THEATRICAL CONVENTIONS

There are many different theatrical styles used in *TROBM*. As a contemporary play there are many conventions utilised throughout. We could say that the play has a non-naturalistic framework with elements of naturalism in some of the scenes.

It is an exciting mix of theatrical styles and this added to its success.

Its structure also makes it an exciting play to design.

So what are some of the conventions used?

### THE NON-LINEAR TIMELINE:

Let's start with the non-linear timeline.

The play spans from 2001 to Present day – but the action of Bradley's narrative is from 2001-2011 only. Scene Two is set in the *Present Day* with its choral interlude.

The plot, however, does not flow in a straight line. Therefore, it is non-linear and jumps back and forth between this ten year period. You will see below how the action is set out;

We can see that the two holding locations are Tasker Milward V C School and Quantico Brig. These two locations are where Bradley's story starts and ends. A third set of locations follow the rest of Bradley's journey and a fourth is the present day.

Although the overall plot is non-linear the action that takes through the three main areas does follow in a logical time frame. Scene One acts as a 'prologue'. We see Bradley in confinement and after Scene Two, the play flashes back to start Bradley's story back in 2011

# THE RADICALISATION OF BRADLEY MANNING

Scene	Date	Location
1	May 2011	Quantico Brig
2	Present Day	Present Day
3	Oct 2001	Tasker Milward V C School
4	Aug 2010	Quantico Brig
5	Dec 2005	Zoto – Software Company, Oklahoma City
6	Oct 2001	Tasker Milward V C School
7	Apr 2006	McJob, Tulsa, Oklahoma (McJob – a low paid job with few prospects) Coffee Shop
8	Sept 2010	Quantico Brig
9	Aug 2007	An American Diner
10	Sept 2002	Tasker Milward V C School
11	Oct 2007	Basic Training at Fort Leavenworth
12	Sept 2008	A street protest against Proposition 8
13	Jan 2011	Quantico Brig
14	Sept 2009	Tyler's student house
15	Jan 2003	Tasker Milward V C School
16	Nov 2008	Boston University Hacker Space
16	2003	Tasker Milward V C School
17	Jan 2011	Quantico Brig
18	Nov 2003	Tasker Milward V C School computer room
18	2009	US Army Discharge Unit
19	Dec 2003	Tasker Milward V C School
20	Sept 2009	US Army Discharge Unit
21	Nov 2009	Forward Operations Base Hammer, Eastern Baghdad
22	Apr 2004	Tasker Milward V C School
23	Feb 2010	Iraqi Police jail / Forward Operations Base Hammer
24	Apr 2010	Tyler's student house
25	May 2004	Tasker Milward V C School
26	May 2011	Forward Operations Base Hammer
27	Feb 2011	Quantico Brig
28	May 2010	Forward Operations Base Hammer
29	May 2010	Forward Operations Base Hammer
30	March 2011	Quantico Brig
31	May 2004	Tasker Milward V C School

Quantico Brig	Tasker Milward V C School	Other Locations	(Present Day) Scene Two
Linear	Linear	Linear	non-Linear

- What are your first impressions of the number of scenes and how they jump back and forth in time?
- Why are there 31 scenes?
- What are the challenges when rehearsing the play for performance?
- Why are scenes 16 & 18 split scenes? What is the intention behind them?
- What impact does it have to start in 2011, which is at the end of Bradley's story?
- What effect does revisiting Bradley in school have throughout the play?
- What challenges does this present to:
  - The actors?
  - The director?
  - The designers?

Here are some thoughts:

Actor	Director	Designer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-roling – 40 named characters</li> <li>• Jumping back and forth in time</li> <li>• How the characters age vocally / physically?</li> <li>• How does Bradley change through the different time periods?</li> <li>• Accent changes</li> <li>• Disruption of through lines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage configuration</li> <li>• Maintaining an arc for the plot</li> <li>• Directing characters from different cultures, nationality, backgrounds</li> <li>• Contrast the civilian characters with the US characters</li> <li>• Staging of each of the scenes we return to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage configuration</li> <li>• Setting implications e.g. so many locations 31 scenes</li> <li>• Costume implications e.g. 40 named characters only 6 actors</li> <li>• Sound e.g. different music scanning 10 years</li> <li>• Lighting re: different locations and non-natural episodes e.g. split-scenes</li> <li>• Audio/visual challenges</li> </ul>

The play could be re-ordered to run in a linear timescale by putting:

The scenes in school first
The scenes following Bradley's life second
The scenes in the Brig third
Present day last.

- How would this change the style of the play?
- What might be lost from the play?
- What implications would there be for DESIGNERS if this was the structure?



## ENSEMBLE

The use of the ensemble is strong throughout TROBM.

They act almost as a Greek Chorus in Scene Two as they bombard the audience with facts and information about Bradley:

**Chorus 4** Bradley Manning was a witness to war crimes.

**Chorus 5** Bradley Manning went too far

**Chorus 6** Bradley Manning is the WikiLeaks guy, right?

**Chorus 1** Bradley Manning was recycled.

**Chorus 2** Bradley Manning is our Dan Ellsberg

**Chorus 3** Bradley Manning has security clearance.

The ensemble style of playing then continues throughout. Whether it be as real groups of characters e.g. the class, the platoon or used non-naturalistically to play Bradley or Bradley's father played by all together, the ensemble is effective and offers great potential in staging.

On a symbolic level, Bradley standing away from the Chorus reflects the army's rejection of him and his subsequent fate.

## MULTI-ROLING:

This is a convention that drama students are very familiar with and in *TROBM* it can be seen in many ways.

Examples:

- All the CHORUS play Bradley at some point.
- Sometimes he is played by more than one of the chorus at the same time e.g. Scene Twenty-Six
- Bradley's father, Brian is played by the whole Chorus in Scene Nine.

## PHYSICAL STYLE:

There are many physical requirements for the cast in *TROBM*. The play is episodic and jumps from scene to scene very quickly. This suggests that the pace is fast and that character changes and location jumps are shown physically. The actors not only have to develop different physicalisation for the characters they play but there are scenes that require a physical theatre approach.

For example, Scene Eleven. The scene starts with the cast performing fitness training with squats, thrusts and burpees etc. to execute. It then moves into sequence that shows the recruits performing 'bag drill':

*Recruits scramble for their stuff; immediately it's a nightmare of pushing, shoving, arguing and Bradley gets consumed in the melee. He vanishes.*

This high level of energy does much to reinforce the violent world of the US Army and the

underlying theme of conflict and personal struggle.

## SPLIT SCENES:

This is an effective theatrical device used well in *TROBM*. Price effectively places scenes together to juxtapose the action. In doing so the theatricality of the scenes is enhanced.

Scene Sixteen juxtaposes the University hackerspace with the Tasker Milward V C School. Not only do the actors have to switch immediately from university students to the pupils in Bradley's History class, the content of the scenes offer an effective juxtaposition. The students in the hacker space discuss the ethics of hacking including how 'all information should be free' and the Rebecca Riots lesson illustrates how an individual should not feel powerless just because society expects them to follow the rules.

Scene Eighteen juxtaposes the computer room at school with the US Army Discharge Unit. Here we see the play fighting mutate into the physical abuse Bradley experiences at the hands of the soldiers. The scene is highly charged and Bradley's laughter turns to screams of pain as the pupils turn into Soldiers.

In Scene Twenty-four, Bradley talks with Tyler but all around are dead bodies. The image is strong. We are left to wonder if Tyler can see them or are they fragments of Bradley's mind. He has seen the dead Iraqi civilians and now they appear to haunt him.

This multi-layering of actions, locations and character is an excellent example of the playwright playing with time and form.

- What are the effects of such scenes?
- How would you stage them?
- What are the design implications, especially for lighting and sound?

## STAGING THE PLAY

As with any play, there will be several ways *TROBM* could be staged. Things to consider:

<b>Location:</b>	Multi-locations
<b>Setting:</b>	Various requirements
<b>Social Implication:</b>	Ranges from West Wales 2001 to Afghan War. Many social implications
<b>Number of characters:</b>	Originally six
<b>Themes:</b>	(See above)
<b>Style:</b>	Non-naturalistic with naturalistic episodes
<b>Time of year:</b>	Varies over a ten year period with a scene that takes place in the 'Present Day'.

## STAGE CONFIGURATION:

- **Proscenium Arch** e.g. *to represent the monitors and computer screens that Bradley hacked into...*
- **In-the-round** e.g. *to represent that Bradley is surrounded by technology, the military...*
- **Traverse** e.g. *to suggest that Bradley is 'under trial' for his actions...*
- **Thrust** e.g. *to ensure that the audience is as close to Bradley as possible so they can experience his confinement...*

The themes and content could inspire other interpretations, for example:

- **Symbolic e.g.**  
*I will set the play in a detention cell. Bradley will stay focal to the action with the other characters entering the space when necessary...*

- **Expressionistic e.g.**

*My set will be constructed from USA flags. The stars and stripes will dominate the space. There will be flashes of the Welsh flag too to remind the audience that Bradley spent his school days in Wales and the scenes in the History lessons are important to the plot and to the themes...*

- **Minimalistic e.g.**

*I want my set to look like the desert landscape of Iraq or Afghanistan. It will feel hot and threatening. Apart from military images projected across several screens, my stage will be empty to a) show the vacant feelings inside Bradley's head and b) to allow the physical action to take place...*

The interactive qualities that are suggested in the play open up many avenues of creativity. The opportunities to incorporate audio, visual and video into the design are endless. The structure of TROBM requires a designer to 'think outside of the box'. The contemporary content also means that inspiration can be taken from modern situations e.g. developments in technology and current military conflicts. Designing TROBM offers an exciting challenge to the designers.

Think about the potential for:



- Set design
- Lighting design
- Sound design
- Costume design



## RESPONSES FROM NAOMI EVERSON

Naomi was an actor in the original Edinburgh production.

Here she talks of her experiences during the rehearsals and during the run of the show in Edinburgh.

*'Being a part of this production was an enormous privilege.'*

*'It was vital Bradley's story was told, I was given a chance to be part of history. It felt as though we were standing up for justice, which is always liberating and at times frightening.'*

*'It's been the most physically challenging role I've undertaken, we were fully trained by an ex-army officer, who didn't take any slacking! Also, having to hold a heavy gun and wear a full army uniform stripped away all femininity and vanity.'*

*'Many of our audiences were aware of the Bradley Manning case and came with a very clear idea of what they thought about it, at times we had heckling, people walking out and swearing, of those who stayed the heckles would disappear by the end of the performance and there was always a deafening silence in the room. A realization. And of course, many applauded throughout and shouted encouragement for Bradley/Chelsea throughout the performance. It was a piece of theatre you had to react to.'*

*'Bradley manning was an ensemble piece, we each played at least 5 different characters throughout, it made the piece really fast paced and the energy was extremely high. I remember sometimes literally having seconds to do a full costume change. This was utterly exhausting vocally and physically, and so warm ups and quiet time before each performance were crucial. We each played Bradley throughout the piece. At first it almost felt as though it didn't work, we each had different opinions of Bradley and portrayed him completely differently. John (the director) had confidence that it was working and he was right. As soon as we opened, the audiences loved the fact that Bradley had so many different faces, he was never consistent and always hiding behind a new façade. It made perfect sense.'*

*'Performing the play was moving enough, performing the play whilst the trial was active, however, was a huge responsibility - we felt as though we owed it to Bradley and his family. During the trial he changed his name and appearance to Chelsea, and so we honoured this too. The school we performed in always had such an eerie air about it, we were running around in heavy army gear portraying the life of a boy so misunderstood and mistreated. It felt raw and it felt alive.'*

Naomi Everson July 2016

## UNIT 4 – AT A GLANCE

This is taken for the specification:

Look at each section.

How could you apply what you know about *TROBM*?

What areas do you need to study further?

### **Section A: 55 marks**

A question exploring how the text can be performed in the theatre. Learners will be expected to approach the text as theatre performers, directors and designers.

Learners should consider:

- interpretation of character (e.g. through motivation and interaction)
- vocal and physical performing skills including interaction
- different types of stage
- character positioning and movement/proxemics
- design elements including:
  - sound
  - lighting
  - set and props
  - costume, hair and make-up
- how live theatre, seen as part of the course, influences their decision making and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.

### **Section B: 40 marks**

- An essay question on how the text can be adapted for a contemporary audience.  
Learners should consider:
  - the social, historical and cultural context of the text
  - the influence of contemporary theatre practice
  - how live theatre, seen as part of the course, influences their decision making and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed
  - how the text approaches its theme.

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Scene from the play; Farrows Creative / National Theatre Wales

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