

NEWS BREAK

Wednesday's News Break selects an article from Tuesday, November 29th, 2016 print replica of The Seattle Times for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions. **Please remember to always preview the content of the article before sharing with your students.**

Article: Asian Ariel for 'Little Mermaid': Why not? (NW Tuesday, B1)

Objective:

Students will read a Seattle Times article and use it as a framework to reflect on the social/societal importance of the theater.

Standards:

WA Arts Learning Standards EALR 4: The student makes connections within and across the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) to other disciplines, life, cultures, and work.

Pre-Reading and Vocabulary

Consider the following quote by playwright Bertolt Brecht:

"Art is not a mirror with which to reflect reality but a hammer with which to shape it"

What do you think the quote means? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Vocabulary: Match the words to the numbered definitions in the chart below.

A. blockbuster	1. reduce or underestimate the worth or importance of
B. blowback	2. having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with women
C. devalue	3. a performance or interpretation, especially of a dramatic role or piece of music
D. feminine	4. amass (money or valued objects) and hide or store away
E. hoards	5. have a strong wish or desire
F. landlubbing	6. viewed or represented as a stereotype - a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing

G. longed	7. of, affecting, or done by all people or things in the world or in a particular group; applicable to all cases
H. rendition	8. the unintended adverse results of a political action or situation
I. stereotyped	9. a person who lives on land and knows little or nothing about the sea
J. universal	10. a thing of great power or size, in particular a movie, book, or other product that is a great commercial success

Comprehension

- 1) 5th Avenue Theatre has been building a reputation for being what when it comes to casting?
- 2) What was the public reaction when the theater announced “The Little Mermaid” cast?
- 3) What is notable about the cast of “Hamilton”?
- 4) What were Huey’s feelings about Mulan?
- 5) What do you think Huey mean by the statement, “I stereotyped myself in my own head”? Why?

Group Discussion Questions or Extension Activity:

- The definition for the word “blowback” specifies the term as the results of a “political” action or situation. Do you think that choosing an Asian woman to play Ariel is a “political” move? Why or why not? Read The Seattle Times article, “**Pence incident at ‘Hamilton’ underscores the theater’s role of speaking truth to power**”, published in the Thursday, November 24th print replica, NW Tuesday, page B1. Do you agree that it is “the artist’s responsibility to challenge our leaders and the world to be a better place”? Can you think of any other examples of this?
- Browse <https://www.aact.org/theatre-quotes>, or similar websites/online to find at least five quotes from famous playwrights or actors that relate society and theater. For example, the following five quotes:
 - The theatre was created to tell people the truth about life and the social situation. - Stella Adler
 - No theater could sanely flourish until there was an umbilical connection between what was happening on the stage and what was happening in the world. - Kenneth Tynan
 - Although the theater is not life, it is composed of fragments or imitations of life, and people on both sides of the footlight have to unite to make the fragments whole and the imitations genuine. – Brooks Atkinson
 - The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance. – Aristotle
 - The stage is not merely the meeting place of all the arts, but is also the return of art to life. – Oscar Wilde

Use the quotes you found, along with cut outs from magazines or the newspaper, to create a collage about the theater.

News Break is posted to the Web on Monday and Wednesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the electronic edition for your class, please [register on-line](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

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Newsbreak Answer Key: November 30, 2016

Vocabulary

- A. 10
- B. 8
- C. 1
- D. 2
- E. 4
- F. 9
- G. 5
- H. 3
- I. 6
- J. 7

Comprehension Answers

- 1) Colorblind
- 2) There was some blowback. One woman wrote on the theater's Facebook page, questioning Huey as Ariel: "Keep it classic." (She later took the post down.)
- 3) Almost all of the actors — save for the King of England — are African American or Latino
- 4) She was excited to see an Asian female lead in "Mulan" but was disappointed that she wasn't feminine enough
- 5) Wig
- 6) Student answers will vary