

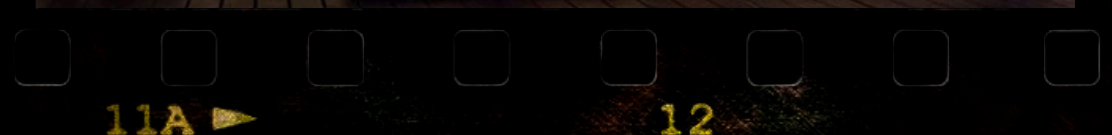
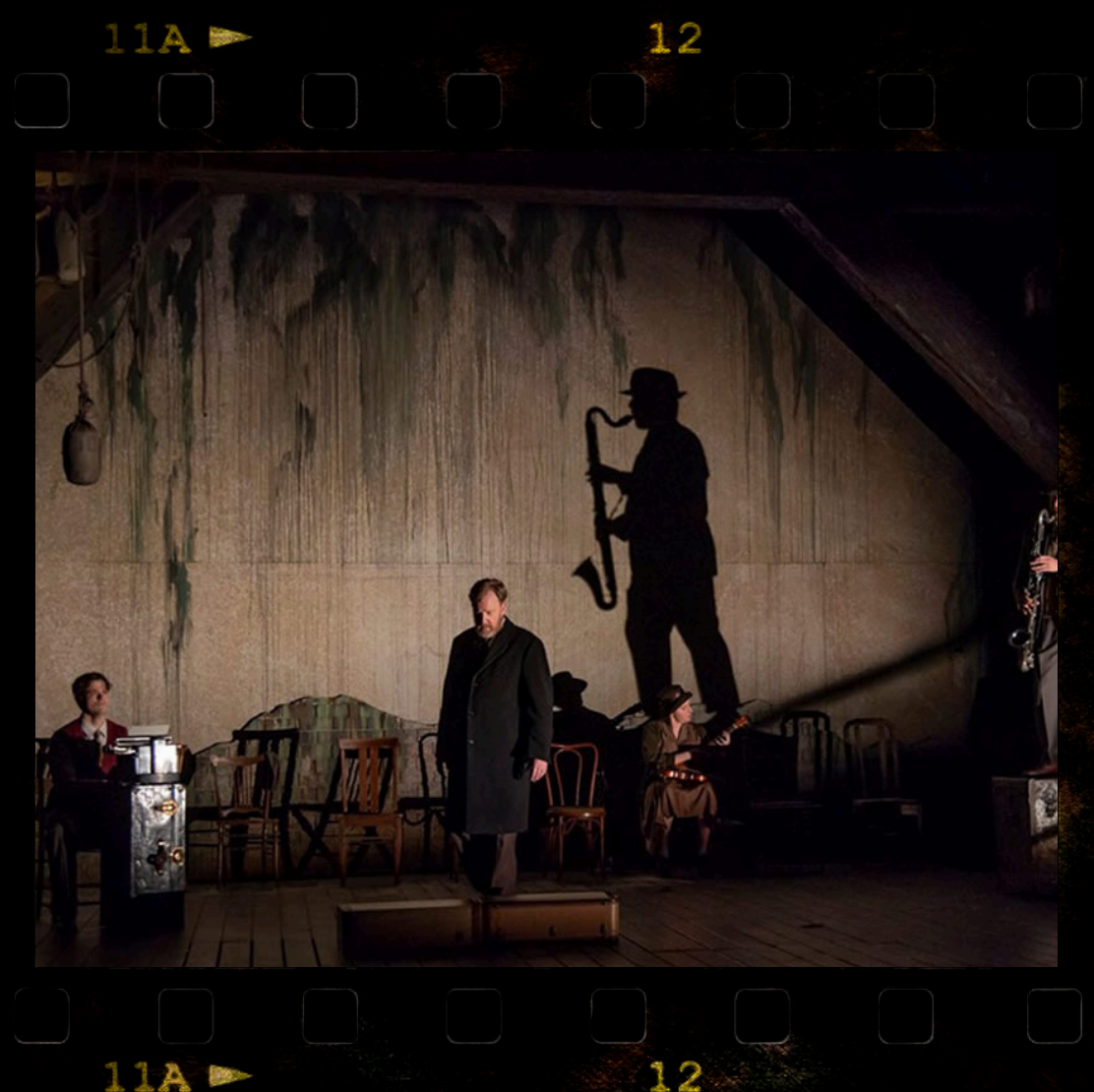
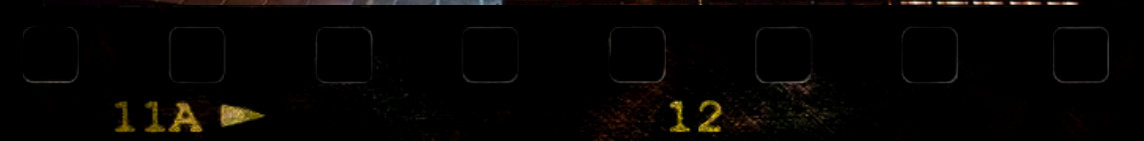
BY SIMON QUINTERO-SALLEE

INDECENT: DRAMATURGY + SET DESIGN MODEL

For my dramaturgy packet, I will specifically be doing dramaturgy on the set design of the “A BLINK IN TIME” section of the “1939-1941” scene from Indecent. This scene is the set design that I have recreated for my model.

During this scene, we are in Poland with Lemml, where he stage-manages and organizes his own production of God of Vengeance in what is described in the stage directions as, “a dusty space”.

Stage description: “*The lights grow stronger. The troupe organizes some jumbled benches. They carry on suitcases. They work. In the corner of the attic, they find a horsehair sofa with its guts spilling out.*”



I chose this scene as it is such a profound moment in the play, where we see for the first time **Jewish people persisting** while in a concentration camp.

WHY THIS DESIGN?

- Max and Louie's Theatre Production Company
 - Mid-size non-profit
 - Produced *Indecent* in 2019
 - Based in St. Louis, Missouri



- Really drawn to the dramatic elements of this set
- Can tell that there is a ton of history here!
 - Water leaking through roof
 - Algae/mold on brick wall
 - Handcut wooden beams
 - Suitcases
 - “Dusty”

It's a bit difficult to read while it's small, but to the right is a copy of my initial dramaturgical questions that emerged when first analyzing this set design. Each of these questions then branched into an array of questions, ranging from “What was the climate of Lodz, Poland like in the 1940s?”, to “When was leather dying invented?”

Brechtian elements:

- Sand bags
- Projector
- Eye
- Brick wall

Wooden Beams

- Material?
- ↳ How old is the wood?
- Color, (veneer)
- ↳ Is it rotting? Fading?
- ↳ Mold on back wall
- How used or clean cut?
- ↳ games here are covered

Floor/panels

- ↳ Material? What is accessible land on floor/leather?

Chairs

- ↳ necessary for model recreation if no leather?
- ↳ Can some not be given by only suitcases

Suitcases

- ↳ What?
- ↳ Suitcase low? Or dramatic? has?
- ↳ leather cases?
- ↳ leather dying?
- ↳ Trunks vs Suitcases

Other notes:

- Climate? (to create mood of old concentration camp)
- Mold? (to create mood of old concentration camp)
- Eye? (to create mood of old concentration camp)
- Wall? (to create mood of old concentration camp)
- Suitcases? (to create mood of old concentration camp)
- Trunks? (to create mood of old concentration camp)
- Leather? (to create mood of old concentration camp)
- Dying? (to create mood of old concentration camp)

PROCESS

My dramaturgical process for this design included three main questions:

1. What **happens** in this space?
 - a. What happens in this play?
 - b. What else needs to happen in this space?
2. What **has happened** in this space?
 - a. How can I tell this through set design?
3. What material were the elements of this set crafted with, and how can I best replicate that?



Above is the reference image for my set model.

- Elements considered:

- Beams
- Cyclorama
- Brick wall
- Accessories
 - Suitcases
 - Benches
 - Sandbags

My main focus of dramaturgy was on the Jewish Ghetto of Lodz, Poland, where this scene of my set model takes place.

THE SETTING

LODZ, POLAND

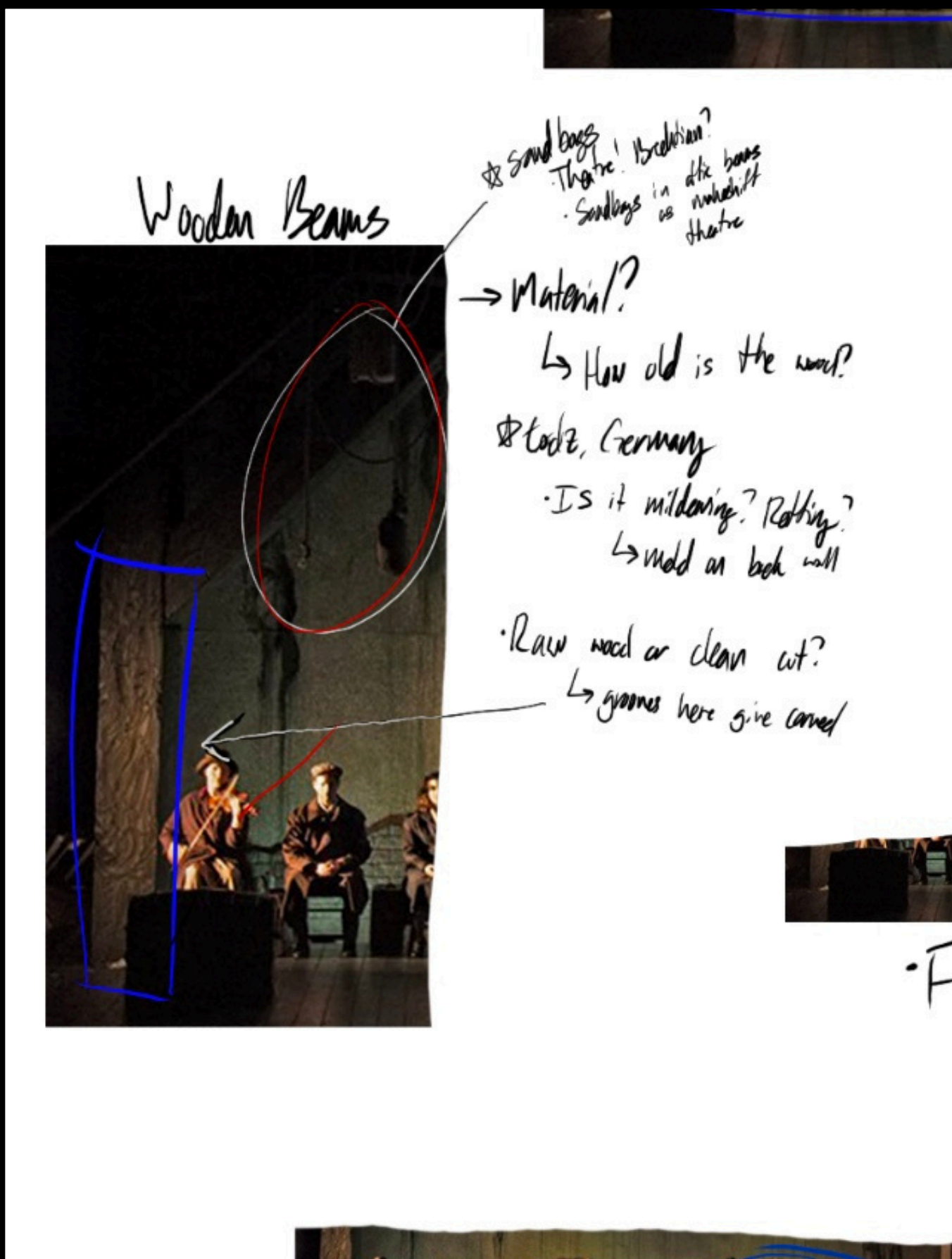
- German troops occupied Lodz on September 8, 1939
- 60,000 Jews were forced into Lodz Ghetto
- Ghetto was sealed on April 30, 1940
- Internal order was reliant upon Jewish Ghetto police, as Ghetto had been sanctioned off
- Most of the Ghetto had no running water or sewer system
- More than 20% of victims in the Ghetto died of poor living conditions
- Many more minorities were deported to the Ghetto (210,000 people in total)
 - 40,000 Jews
 - 20,000 from Germany, Austria, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and Luxembourg,
 - 20,000 from the smaller provincial towns in the Warthegau.
 - 5,000 Roma
 - By Jan 1942, Germans began deporting Jews from the Ghetto to the “Chelmno killing camp”, where Jews were gassed in the trucks on the way there, or shot in a line up once arrived



“The whole ghetto was designed, actually, to starve the people out.”

-Leo Schneiderman (Lodz Ghetto survivor)

BEAMS



Questions

On the left:

Wooden Beams

- Sandbags
 - Theatre! Brechtian?
 - Sandbags in attic doubles as makeshift theatre?
- Material?
 - How old is the wood?
- Lodz, Germany
 - Is the wood mildewing? Rotting?
 - Mold on back wall
- Raw wood or clean cut?
 - Grooves here give 'hand carved'

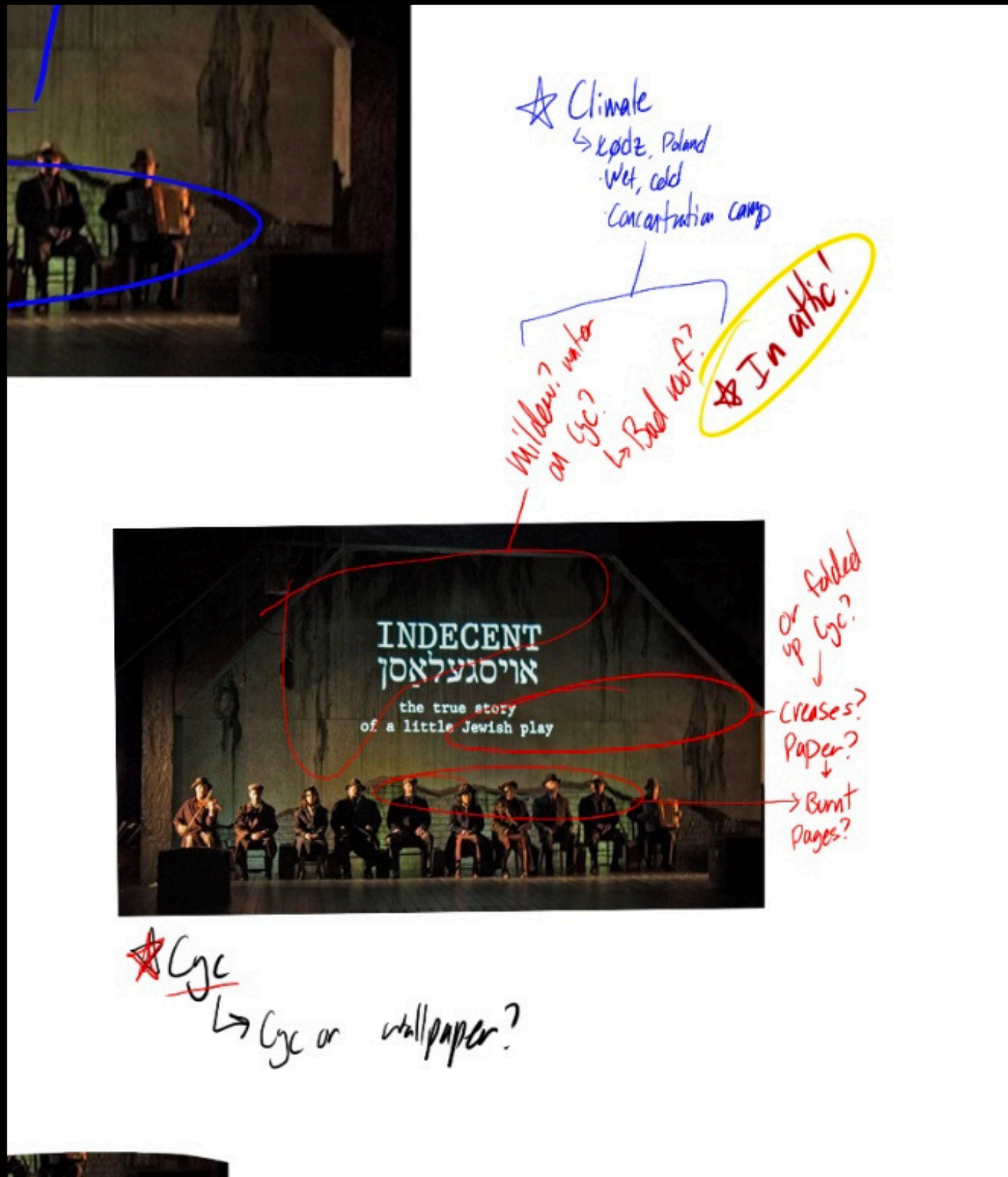
Post-Dramaturgy Answers

- Sandbags are used in a fly system
 - First counterweight fly system created in Austria in 1888
 - If pin rail fly system, why aren't the sandbags rigged up? Why drooping freely?
 - Brechtian display
- Material: Larch!
 - At first, thought pine (Pine is the most native and readily accessible tree in Poland)
 - But Pine looks too light!
 - Larch looks darker when aged/wet
 - Environment is wet!
 - Old house? How old?



CYCLORAMA

Questions



On the left:

Cyclorama

- Climate
 - Lodz, Poland
 - Wet, cold
 - Concentration camp
 - Mildew? Water on cyc?
 - Bad roof?
 - IN ATTIC
 - Creases in cyc
 - Cyc was folded up for a long time?
 - Creases? PAPER?
 - Burnt pages?

Post-Dramaturgy Answers

- Climate of Lodz, Poland
 - Today, at least half of every month has rain
 - Humid continental climate
 - During years 1939 and 1941, average of 134 days per year with rain
- Bad roof?
 - Lodz, Poland Jewish Ghetto
 - SEE PAGE 4 FOR DRAMATURGY HERE
- Creases in cyc
 - Cyc is meant to represent pages/paper of a book, burned/singed to represent book burning of the Holocaust
 - Also potentially meant to represent the fire of the burning of bodies? “Ashes to ashes”
 - Didn’t finish burning though, was put out before it could fully burn
 - Represents persistence!

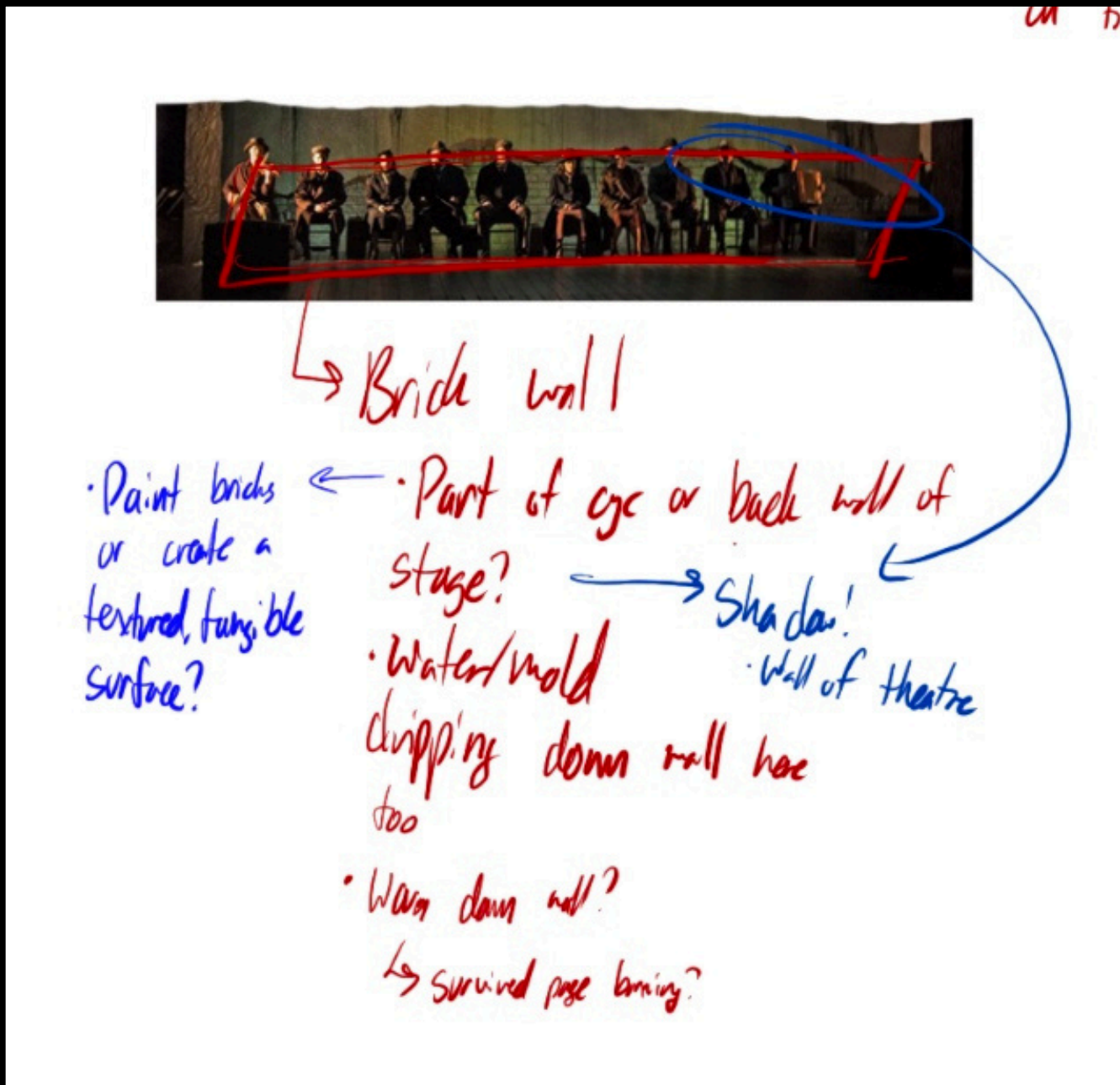
BRICK WALL

Questions

On the left:

Brick wall

- Part of cyc or back wall of stage?
 - Painted on?
 - Paint bricks onto model or create a textured, tangible surface?
 - Water/mold dripping down wall here too
 - Worn down wall?
 - Survived page burning of cyc?



Post-Dramaturgy Answers

- Brick wall is separate part of stage
 - Can tell by shadow the cyc creates on the wall
- Wall also has water running down it, more proof of climate and quality of housing/attic/roofing
- Wall looks worn, cracked
 - More representation of persistence/surviving the unsurvivable (fire, burning, ashes)
 - Putting on God of Vengeance in attic in Lodz, Germany is a TRUE act of resistance
 - Here ties the persistence of almost-burnt cyc, wall breaking/cracking but not crumbling even if foundation isn't well constructed due to factors outside of their control

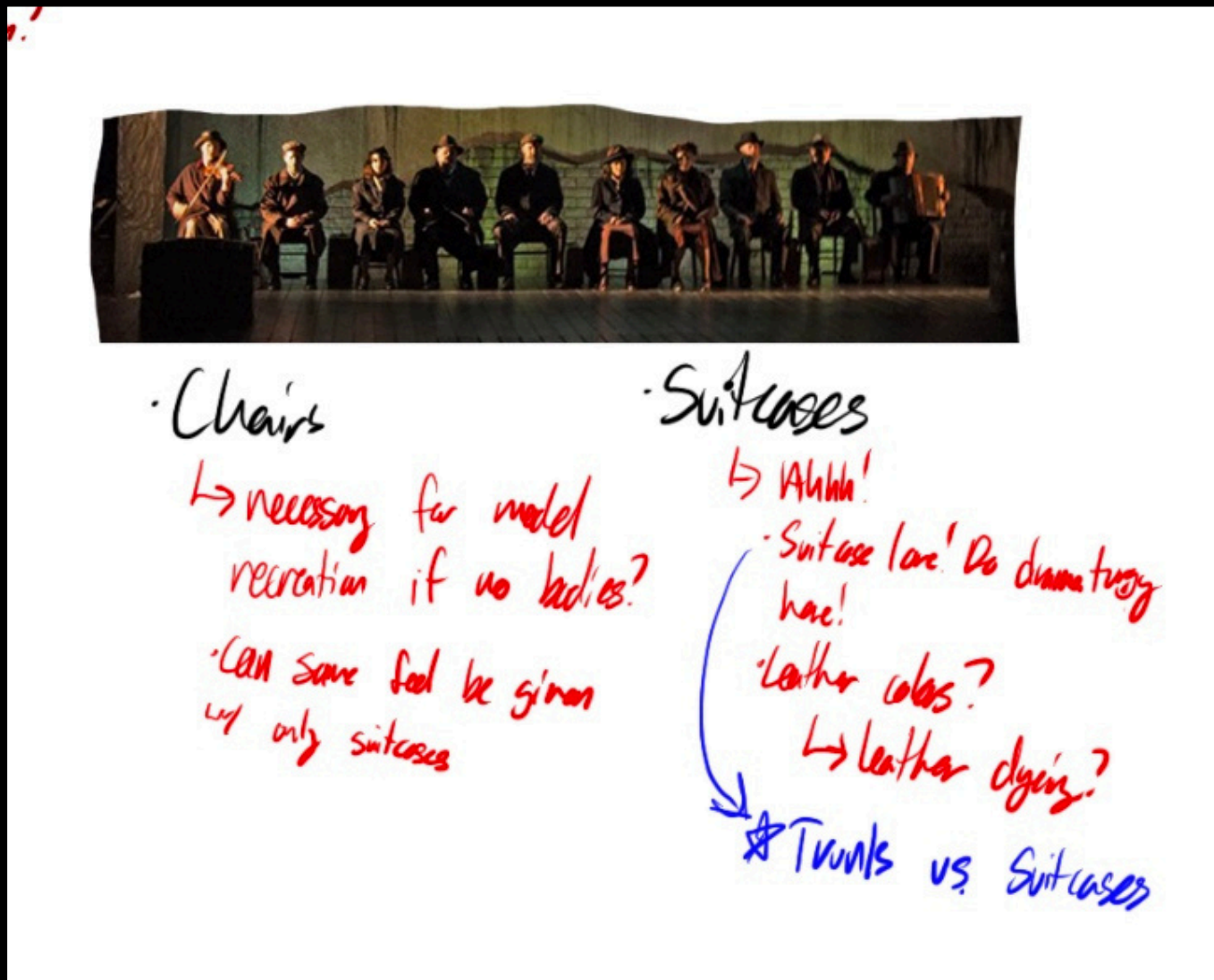
ACCESSORIES

Questions

On the left:

Accessories

- Chairs
 - Necessary for model recreation if no bodies on stage?
 - Can same feel be given with only suitcases?
- Suitcases
 - Ahhh!
 - Suitcase lore! Do dramaturgy here!
 - Leather colors?
 - ↳ leather dying?
 - Trunks vs suitcases



Post-Dramaturgy Answers

- Chairs
 - Unnecessary for specific scene recreation, will create benches in leau (as is described in stage directions)
- Suitcases
 - 19th century Industrial Revolution created mass production of luggage
 - Popularity of 'luggage' began with trunks
 - BUT super unreasonable for travel and heavy/burdensome to carry with you if you had no servants to carry it for you (eat the rich)
 - Early 20th century introduced suitcases
 - Early designs of suitcases were extremely heavy
 - In US in the 1930s, weight limit of 40 pounds was set for travel in/out
 - With heavy weight of suitcase itself, made for less items you could bring with you on your travels

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