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Editorial: Radical Imagining

JONATHAN P. JONES
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

At the NYU Forum on Radical Imagining in March 2022, the faculty of the Program in Educational Theatre wanted to provide our community with space to explore concepts of equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and justice through panel presentations, workshops, and structured conversations. We asked the students to consider how historical systems and our current socio-political context informs their choice to craft and submit theatrical work at this time (why now?). Additionally, students were asked to investigate the following questions:

- How does the discipline of theatre hold space for collective visioning and radical imagining?
- Where do you see theater serving as a tool for change, advocacy, and praxis?
- How does your identity intersect with the identities of the folks and communities with whom you collaborate?
- How are we currently defining equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and justice?
- How are we challenging white supremacy culture in our theater making and artistry?

- What patterns and trends in equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and justice research are you noticing and how might these strengthen your storytelling?

Reflecting on this work and what I know of the articles presented in this issue, I have been thinking about what it means to imagine. bell hooks says, “What we cannot imagine cannot come into being” (2000). We have to imagine it for it to become real. We have to see it in our minds. We have to believe in it. And if we want others to join us in our work, they have to believe in it as well. To believe. How can we get others to believe in our work when we are pushing into the unknown–into the radical imagining?

Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric* introduced the Western world to the ideals of persuasive discourse in the form of ethos, logos, and pathos. Of the former—the ethical appeal—a speaker seeks to establish their good character and credibility (2009). Credibility—from the Greek root *cred-*—to believe. Aristotle focused on the speaker establishing their own credibility, but my sense is that there is a desire to attend to teaching credibility in US schools as a key facet of critical thinking and media literacy—that students must be able to ferret out the credibility of a source, determining whether or not it is reliable. By extension, the seeming breakdown in the ability of many to distinguish fact from opinion or the veracity of claims in general is grounded in the failure of the education system to achieve this aim. This bears out in the data, finding that roughly 50% of Americans consistently support at least one conspiracy theory at any given time (Oliver and Wood, 2014). This, of course, is impacted significantly by the inordinate number of charlatans who invent ‘truth’ on a whim. Recall Kellyanne Conway stating that she had “alternative facts” when questioned about Press Secretary Sean Spicer’s exaggeration about the crowd size at Donald Trump’s 2017 inauguration (Rutenberg, 2017). Note when a Fox News host was called to the carpet in a court of law for their alleged defamation, Fox News won the court case “by 'persuasively' arguing that no 'reasonable viewer' takes Tucker Carlson seriously” (Sheth, 2020). When people believe these figures to be credible, trusted sources, who can blame the listener for not knowing what’s true in this ‘post-truth’ era (Steinmetz, 2016)?

In my public speaking classes at City University of New York, we spend a little time on source credibility—but as the class is meant to

get the students to plan and deliver presentations, I push students to follow the Aristotelian model and establish their own credibility as a speaker. Whether informing or persuading, in public speaking, you are the source; as such, I ask the students to consider:

- *Who are you?*
- *Why should we believe you?*
- *Why should we trust you?*
- *Why are you an authority on this topic?*
- *If you're not an authority, why should we listen to you?*
- *How can you establish your reliability?*

Our initial presentations focus on things the students already know and for which their lived experience provides them with credibility—their neighborhood or culture; problems they experience in their daily lives that they think we should solve. From there, we move towards their academics and chosen field of study:

- What are topics within their major/field of study that they can teach us about?
- What are the sources of information that they have come to rely upon as authoritative sources in that space?
- What are the problems in their field that they are seeking to solve?

As emerging scholars in their respective fields, I want them to come away with a sense that they have contributions to make in their area of expertise and the course is providing them with the tools they need to authoritatively express that.

REFRAMING THE NARRATIVE

In a previous editorial, Communing with the Ancestors, I spoke at length about overcoming imposter syndrome, advocating for practitioners to reimagine themselves as knowledge creators (Jones, 2021). Perhaps, reader, you're sensing a theme? This drive to bring others along in this project of reimagining themselves is central to much of my work, asking: *what would it be like if you reframed the*

narrative—or reframed your role in the narrative? I've always been somewhat of a wannabe, wanting desperately to believe. And when given a platform, I've been known to take an authoritative stance, whether earned or not. For instance, when I was eleven years old, the principal of my Catholic elementary school scolded me: "You're going to start a *cult* and I won't have it!" This was her narrative; here's mine.

My oldest sister received an Ouija board[1] for Christmas the year before. As she'd gone away to college and left the game at home, I inherited it for a time. Nevermind the fact that the board game was mass-produced by Parker Brothers and the plastic planchette we placed our fingers on to commune with spirits from the other side was no-doubt made in China like all our other toys in those days, I just knew it *had to be real.* The talk at the time was that you must never consult the Ouija on your own as you might become possessed by the spirit with whom you were communicating. Though this possibility terrified me, I couldn't trust anyone else—I believed they would push that planchette across the board intentionally and then deny it. So if I was going to believe that the Ouija was real, I had to summon up my courage, sit down at that board by my lonesome, and see if that planchette would move. And I sat, and sat, and sat. And that planchette never moved.

As luck would have it, Beck, my neighbor from down the street, had other ideas. Beck was visited, she said, by a ghost—and I lit up like a Christmas tree. She was my medium. She had the touch. And so I invited her to the Ouija. I told her I wanted to believe and I watched as she brought that Ouija to life. In spite of the skepticism I mentioned above, I trusted Beck. As a tried-and-true friend, she was credible. Beck's ghost conveyed harrowing tales of the abuse that she had suffered when she was our age. And she had secrets—stories she

[1] The Ouija began as a nineteenth century parlor game. The 'talking board' consists of a "flat board with the letters of the alphabet arrayed in two semi-circles above the numbers 0 through 9; the words 'yes' and 'no' in the uppermost corners, 'goodbye' at the bottom; accompanied by a 'planchette,' a teardrop-shaped device, usually with a small window in the body, used to maneuver about the board" (Rodriguez McRobbie, 2013). Participants place their hands on the planchette and ask the board a question. As if by magic, the planchette will move around the board responding to the question. Theoretically a ghost or spirit is thought to be moving the planchette, but nearly two centuries of scientific study have shown that "automatic muscular movements that take place without the conscious will or volition of the individual" (Rodriguez McRobbie, 2013) are what cause the planchette to move, assuming a user isn't moving it intentionally.

could not reveal. We could only get small chunks of story in any one sitting; one episode per day—and always a cliffhanger.

And it wasn't just the stories—the ghost had procedures that must be followed. The Ouija could only be used when no adults were present. Beck took the planchette home for safe keeping every night, as the ghost directed her. And I was to sleep with the Ouija board under my pillow. This was the only way that the ghost would continue to reveal her truth to us. And I was compliant!

The ghost told us about Blood Mary. Not Bloody Mary Tudor–no. This is the Bloody Mary of middle school bathrooms. Go into the bathroom and turn off the light. Spin around and say Bloody Mary three times and she will appear in the mirror. That Ouija never went to school, but Bloody Mary did. I was only friends with girls in those days, and they were studious. Like a shaman speaking to his flock, they hung on every word as I relayed the lessons that our ghost was teaching us—because to my listeners, I had credibility. On cue, they would scamper into the girls' bathroom during lunch time, turn off the light, and scream with delight in hopes that Bloody Mary would emerge.

She never did, try as we might. But we were nothing if not persistent. Beck came over for our daily séance, the next afternoon I'd report the ghost's tales at the lunch table to my riveted audience of girls, and into the bathroom they trotted in hopes of Bloody Mary's visitation.

We might have grown bored with the routine and it would have just played itself out after those two weeks, but Beck was a theatrical tale-teller. She turned up at the bus stop with painted-on blood marks on her neck. Though pale by nature, she knew just how to make herself ghost-white at the drop of a hat. She was tricky that way. By that time, the ghost was starting to reveal the truth of how she died. She was ready to tell us—but when she did, she would have to get her life back. She would climb through that mirror and take Beck's soul. This was the ghost's plan and we were READY—Beck's feigned blood marks were evidence that the ghost was coming to her at night, clawing for her release. Beck was a tear-filled mess. She couldn't eat. She wouldn't sleep. But she was willing to sacrifice herself to set our ghost free.

And so, on the fateful day, we boarded the school bus—Beck with her stigmata and me, delirious with anticipation. Lunch could not come fast enough!

Mrs. Rizzo, my homeroom teacher, and Sister Judy, the principal, could barely wait to rain on my parade. Before we made it to the lunchroom that day, I was summoned to the main office.

"A cult. That's what you're doing, Jones, and I won't have it!" Sister Judy exclaimed.

"I think…I think we need to bring this Ouija board to school," Mrs. Rizzo opined. "I mean, you just can't be trusted to have this at home anymore."

It seemed that one of my classmates was losing some sleep herself and her worried parents deployed tactics from the inquisition to get the truth out of her. Her eleven-year-old worry that dear Beck was going to lose her soul in the lunchroom was a bridge too far for the parents—all of it, perhaps, ***in***credible. So they kept their young one home the next day and gave an alarming call to the school.

Beck never spoke of the ghost again. Bloody Mary never turned up. And try as I might, I never saw that planchette move again. And in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I adjusted to the reality that Beck was not as credible as I thought. I didn't intend to facilitate traumatizing my classmates. I just wanted to believe.

TEACHING & LEARNING CREDIBILITY

As I grew older, I continued to navigate credibility—the desire to believe and be believed. During the 2006/2007 school year, I took to watching the talk show *The View* every day when I got home from teaching. Rosie O'Donnell joined the panel as a co-host that year, and ever a fan, this was appointment-television for me. One afternoon, Broadway-star Christine Ebersole appeared on the show. I'm not sure what she was there to promote, but her general chit-chat caught my attention. She relayed to the co-hosts that she'd been spending a lot of time watching videos on the then-new YouTube platform. Among her favorite vlog hosts was William Sledd, a young guy from Paducah, Kentucky whose "Ask a Gay Man" series gave humorous fashion advice and cultural critique with a Southern flair. I spent many an hour watching those videos after Ebersole's recommendation—and she even made her way to Paducah to appear on that very program a short while later. However, it was her other recommendations that were far more worrying and impactful. She noted that late at night, she'd go down a rabbit hole with some really 'out there' political ideologues.

"There's a couple of political ones. The latest one I found, oh my God, I'm so crazy about this guy, it's called 'theresistancemanifesto.com'" (Ebersole, as quoted in Finkelstein, 2007).

> Rosie weighed in helpfully: "Yes, this is the guy, John Conner."
>
> Ebersole: "John Conner. It's so amazing. He's so . . . the thing that is so great about him is, people will look at him and say 'he's a nutcase.' But see, I don't think so. I don't think so. He's a non-conformist."
>
> Rosie agreed: "He's a non-conformist."
>
> And just what kind of non-conformist is he? Rosie explained: "He goes around the country with a bullhorn, to UCLA or wherever he wants, and he says, '9-11 was an inside job! 9-11 was an inside job!' And within five or ten minutes, the police show up, and his friends videotape him getting arrested by the police. And boy, does it annoy people. I can tell you that much." (Finkelstein, 2007)

I cannot tell you the thrill that this gave me—not that I found Conner credible, but the spectacle of it all was addictive (such was the way in those early days of online video content).

But the thing is, when you hear something again and again, it can have its desired impact. '9-11 was an inside job! 9-11 was an inside job!' And given my predisposition to suggestion—my desperation to believe, it wasn't long before I was ingesting Alex Jones' Info Wars. Looking back, in Bush-era America, these were the conspiracies of the Bildergerg Group, illuminati, and the Bohemian Grove—tales of the so-called 'new world order' that was threatening our liberal democracy. Child's play by today's standards, albeit subversively anti-Semitic—but it quickly escalated to 9-11-truthers and the 'documentary' *Loose Change*, a conspiracy theorist's take on the events of 9-11–suggesting strongly that evidence had been suppressed and that 9-11 was indeed an inside job.

With rabbit holes everywhere you turn, who among us hasn't found ourselves down one or two? The scientific method implores us to 'question everything,' but so too did the television show *The X-Files.* You tell me what's real.

I taught a unit in my tenth grade English class that year on persuasive writing and we spoke at length about credibility. And in the scope of the unit, we talked about propaganda and looked at excerpts from *Loose Change.* “Mr. Jones,” a student asked, “Are you saying that 9-11 was an inside job?” “Not at all,” I responded. “I’m asking you to determine whether or not the argument in this film is persuasive. What evidence do they provide in support of their claim?”

And what evidence did they present in the film? A few grainy video files. Government officials who refused to answer their questions. Little else. And though I was still susceptible to entertaining such a thought, I’d learned a thing or two about the important role evidence plays in establishing credibility. So as entertaining as it was to witness the conspiracist’s folly, and no matter how much I might have liked to believe any of it, there was no there there. In fact, there was no there there in any of the content I’d been consuming in those post-Ebersole YouTube viewings. It was not credible and I stopped watching. Progress.

ON BELIEF & FAITH

For some, when they think about ‘believing’, their attention goes to religion and spirituality. I mentioned that I attended Catholic elementary school–but you should also know that we were a weekly church-going family. And when I came of age, I was proud to volunteer to be an altar boy (there were still only boys in those days). Church was a full theatrical affair—roles to play, lines to learn, choreography and blocking, costumes, lighting, set dressing, and microphones. In fact, our Saturday evening mass was held in the parish auditorium rather than the actual church building in order to accommodate the number of parishioners who attended that particular service—and the clergy were on a literal stage above us. Needless to say, I was hooked.

Behind the façade of vestments, I was, as always, desperate to believe. My maternal grandmother was deeply religious. Her sister, my Grand-Aunt Joyce, had been a nun for a time in the 1960s and was often my mother’s confidant and spiritual advisor. I was in a long line of faithful believers, but I had questions. I remember one particular funeral that I served at when I was about ten years old. An older parishioner had passed away and I sat at the altar looking at her mourning family in the front pews as they recited the prayers and

listened to the priest's words. He spoke about life-everlasting and the resurrection—all the things the Catholics are meant to invest in and believe—and I looked to the mourners who hung on his every word, just as those lunchroom girls would hang on my every word. And I could see it in their eyes. I could feel the depth of their faith, and I distinctly recall wishing with all my heart that I too could believe as intensely as they did. But lacking any tangible evidence, I questioned the credibility of it all.

They had a youth group at our parish that met every Friday night. Some members were folks I knew from school but others were new acquaintances. We sat in a circle, said the prayers, sang the songs, and at one point, we each took a turn 'sharing'—telling each other where we had seen Jesus in the preceding week. I never saw Jesus. In fact, I had never heard someone say they had seen Jesus until I attended those meetings, but I played along. "I saw Jesus here, there, and everywhere." I still have 'Stop Abortion' bumper stickers and pins that they distributed at some of those meetings. I recall someone sharing at one meeting that they saw Jesus when they read in the paper that pro-life activists chained themselves to the doors of an abortion clinic. They hailed these activists as heroes, but I felt otherwise. I was going to those meetings in March of 1993 when one such activist murdered Dr. David Gunn as he approached the women's health clinic where he worked (Rohter, 1993) and I don't recall anyone condemning that. Where was Jesus that day, I wondered. I had many questions.

Years later at an intimate promotional concert in 2003, pop-singer Madonna was in between songs and commenting on the juxtaposition of religious and romantic themes in some of her music, when an audience member shouted at her, "Religion is love." To this, Madonna responded:

> Religion is love? No. Love has nothing to do with religion. No. Religion is an idea that someone pushes on you. Religion is judgment. Religion is suffering. Religion is conforming. Religion is establishment. Fuck all that. Love has nothing to do with religion. Love does not divide. (as stated in De la V., 2018)

Here, here. And what makes Madonna a credible source in this context? The singer has notoriously been confronted with pushback

from the Vatican over her use of Catholic iconography in her music videos and stage performances, with a Cardinal even calling for her excommunication from the Church after one such performance (Smith, 2006) and multiple attempts to have her concerts in Italy cancelled (UPI, 1990; Smith, 2006).

In spite of the judgment Madonna or I might make about religion, religious belief can be about having faith in that which has no evidence—or perhaps 'seeing' evidence in the good or evil all around you. Though I wanted to believe as a young person, I didn't then and I don't now. I questioned the credibility and the Catholic church had neither the answers nor the evidence—so it wasn't for me. Having said that, I still appreciate the core of what I learned in that environment—largely grounded in the Sermon on the Mount:

> Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
> Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
> Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
> Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
> Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
> Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
> Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
> Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2022, Matthew. 5:3-10)

If you take the first phrase of each line—the morality of being a kind, empathic person—I believe in that. The golden rule: love thy neighbor as thyself? I'm with that—but not because of God or promises of heaven and the like—just because having what Aristotle called "good moral character" is the right thing to do. The ethical thing to do. The credible thing to do. I remain skeptical of those who call themselves Christian when their behavior suggests otherwise. Earlier this year, Michigan state Senator Mallory McMorrow achieved national attention when she similarly called out a political rival and others who claimed to be Christian. Of them, McMorrow said:

> My mom taught me at a very young age that Christianity and faith

> was about being part of a community—about recognizing our privilege and blessings and doing what we can to be of service to others, especially people who are marginalized, targeted, and who had less—often unfairly. I learned that service was far more important than performative nonsense like being seen in the same pew every Sunday, or writing 'Christian' in your Twitter bio, and using that as a shield to target and marginalize already marginalized people. (McMorrow, 2022)

I believe in all of that too—that these are also markers of people with good moral character. And of the credibility of religion, religious leaders who profess otherwise, and those who follow in their misguided teachings—as Sister Aloysius proclaims at the end of John Patrick Shanley's play, "I have doubts! I have such doubts!" (2005, p. 52).

CONCLUSION

So, what of radical imagining in educational theatre? Are there doubts? It requires a leap of faith. It requires credibility on the part of facilitators and teachers, and trust on the part of participants and students. It requires accountability—acknowledging when we get it wrong and doing right by those whom we might have wronged in the process. In the pages that follow, drama practitioners share their innovative works. And we invite questions, skepticism, and doubt. Returning to bell hooks, we must imagine—we must bring it into being. We document, we reflect, and we push further on into the unknown. And it is on you, the reader, to evaluate our credibility. Join us.

IN THIS ISSUE

In this issue on radical imagining, our contributors document and reflect on their educational theatre practices. In the UK, **Dermot Daly** and **Shane Kinghorn** each chronicle the development of new works. Daly leverages decolonization and aims for social justice and equality as he provides students with the advocacy and critical tools needed for change. Kinghorn employs verbatim theatre to confront and explore radical shifts in the ways we consider gender, subjectivity, and language. **Kourtney King** synthesizes principles of heart-intelligence

and drama pedagogy with students in Atlanta, Georgia. **Lauren Gorelov** responds to questionable teaching practices by developing and deploying culturally responsive professional development workshops for teachers in the New York City metropolitan area. Finally, **Lindsay Kujawa** and **Ryan Howland** investigate how this work manifests in rural America. Kujawa examines the polarizing impact of equity, diversity, and inclusion in a non-metropolitan county in Wisconsin. Howland grapples with rural consciousness, outlining the process of creating a verbatim documentary theatre script, interrogating how theatre classrooms in culturally, hegemonically white rural communities can teach in more intentionally anti-racist and culturally inclusive ways.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our next issue (Volume 10, Issue 1) looks to engage members of the global Educational Theatre community in dialogue around current research and practice. We invite members of the Educational Theatre field to submit works that will share ideas, vocabularies, strategies, and techniques, centering on varying definitions and practices. That issue will publish in mid-2023. Thereafter, look to the Verbatim Performance Lab for outreach and innovation from the NYU Steinhardt Program in Educational Theatre.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan P. Jones, PhD is a graduate from the Program in Educational Theatre at New York University, where he earned both an M.A. and a Ph.D. He conducted his doctoral field research in fall 2013 and in spring of 2014 he completed his dissertation, *Drama Integration: Training Teachers to Use Process Drama in English Language Arts, Social Studies, and World Languages*. He received an additional M.A. in English at National University and his B.A. in Liberal Arts from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. Jonathan is certified to teach English 6-12 in the state of California, where he taught Theatre and English for five years at North Hollywood High School and was honored with The Inspirational Educator Award by Universal Studios in 2006. Currently, Jonathan is an administrator, faculty member,

coordinator of doctoral studies, and student-teaching supervisor at NYU Steinhardt. He serves on the editorial board for *Applied Theatre Research* and *Youth Theatre Journal,* on the board of directors as well as chair of Research and Scholarship for the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE).

Jonathan has conducted drama workshops in and around New York City, London, and Los Angeles in schools and prisons. As a performer, he has appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, Town Hall, The Green Space, St. Patrick's Cathedral, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, The Southbank Centre in London UK, and the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Jonathan's directing credits include *Hamlet, Twelfth Night, Julius Caesar, Elsewhere in Elsinore, Dorothy Rides the Rainbow, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Bye Bye Birdie, The Laramie Project, Grease, Little Shop of Horrors*, and *West Side Story*. Assistant directing includes *Woyzeck* and *The Crucible*. As a performer, he has appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, Town Hall, The Green Space, St. Patrick's Cathedral, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, The Southbank Centre in London UK, Bord Gáis Energy Theatre in Dublin, and the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Production credits include co-producing a staged-reading of a new musical, *The Throwbacks*, at the New York Musical Theatre Festival and serving as assistant production manager and occasionally as stage director for the New York City Gay Men's Chorus, most recently directing *Quiet No More: A Celebration of Stonewall* at Carnegie Hall for World Pride, 2019.

At NYU, his courses have included Acting: Scene Study, American Musical Theatre: Background and Analysis, Assessment of Student Work in Drama, Development of Theatre and Drama I, Devising Educational Drama Programs and Curricula, Directing Youth Theatre, Drama across the Curriculum and Beyond, Drama in Education I, Drama in Education II, Dramatic Activities in the Secondary Drama Classroom, Methods of Conducting Creative Drama, Theory of Creative Drama, Seminar and Field Experience in Teaching Elementary Drama, Seminar and Field Experience in Teaching Secondary Drama, Shakespeare's Theatre, and World Drama. Early in his placement at NYU, Jonathan served as teaching assistant for American Musical Theatre: Background and Analysis, Seminar in Elementary Student Teaching, Theatre of Brecht and Beckett, and Theatre of Eugene O'Neill and worked as a course tutor and

administrator for the study abroad program in London for three summers. He has supervised over 50 students in their student teaching placements in elementary and secondary schools in the New York City Area. Prior to becoming a teacher, Jonathan was an applicant services representative at NYU in the Graduate School of Arts and Science Enrollment Services Office for five years.

Recent publications include "And So We Write": Reflective Practice in Ethnotheatre and Devised Theatre Projects in *LEARNing Landscapes, 14* (2), 2022, Let Them Speak: Devised Theatre as a Culturally Responsive Methodology for Secondary Students in *Routledge Companion to Theatre and Young People* (edited by Selina Busby, Charlene Rajendran, and Kelly Freebody; 2022), *Paradigms and Possibilities: A Festschrift in Honor of Philip Taylor* (2019), and Education at Roundabout: It's about Turning Classrooms into Theatres and the Theatre into a Classroom (with Jennifer DiBella and Mitch Mattson) in *Education and Theatres: Beyond the Four Walls* (edited by Michael Finneran and Michael Anderson; 2019).

Recent speaking engagements include workshop facilitation for the 2022 AATE National Conference (*Biblioburro*: Children around the World Access Books through Story Drama) and Theatre in Our Schools (Locating Order in the Chaos: Revisiting Assessment in the Drama Classroom--Part 1 and Part 2), featured guest spots on Fluency with Dr. Durell Cooper Podcast, speaking about Origins, Inspirations, and Aspirations, and Conversations in Social Justice Podcast, York St. John University, speaking about Activism and Race within University Teaching and Research (2021); panel moderation for Theatre in Our Schools (Stage to Page: Reimagining the Teacher/Practitioner Role in Scholarship) and the AATE National Conference (Pandemic Positives: What Do We Keep? Looking Backwards to Move Forward); an invited lecture on Performance as Activism at the Research-Based Theater Seminar, Washington, D.C. Citizen Diplomacy Fund Rapid Response COVID-19 Research-Based Theater Project, The COVID Monologues, part of the Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund for US Alumni Rapid Response made possible by the US Department of State and Partners of the Americas (2020); a keynote lecture on Drama and Education: Why and How for the Drama and Education Conference, Shanghai, China (2020); and an invited lecture, On Creativity, for the University of Anbar, Iraq (2020).

In addition to his responsibilities at NYU, Jonathan teaches Fundamentals of Public Speaking, History of Theatre, and Introduction to Theatre at CUNY: Borough of Manhattan Community College.