

Tom Robson, Ph.D.

Curriculum Vitae, Updated July 3, 2021

Education

Ph.D.: Theatre History, Theory, and Literature – Indiana University, 2011

M.A.: Theatre History, Theory, and Literature – Indiana University, 2006

B.A.: Theatre – Grinnell College, 2002

Additional Certifications: Anti-Racism Training (Diversity and Resiliency Institute of El Paso); Online Teaching and Learning Certification (Millikin University).

Teaching Experience

MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY: August 2017-Present, Associate Professor of Theatre & Dance, **August 2011-July 2017**, Assistant Professor of Theatre & Dance

Courses Taught: History of Theatre & Drama 1, History of Theatre & Drama 2, Play Analysis, Advanced Play Analysis, Directing, Playwriting, African American Theatre & Drama, European Nonrealism 1870-Present, Feminist Theatre & Drama, Postcolonial Drama & Film, BA Theatre Capstone, “The Prologue and the Promise”: Walt Disney’s Construction of American Past and Future.

BUTLER UNIVERSITY: January 2011-May 2011, Adjunct Instructor

Courses Taught: American Theatre.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY: August 2007-December 2010, Associate Instructor (Instructor of Record)

Courses Taught: Introduction to Theatre, Script Analysis, Theatre History 1, Theatre History 2, Development of Dramatic Art 3, “Singing and Dancing America”: American Society through Musical Theatre & Film.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY: January 2006-May 2007, Teaching Assistant

Courses Taught: Introduction to Theatre, Theatre History 1.

Scholarship

Books

Performance and the Disney Theme Park Experience: The Tourist as Actor. Edited collection co-edited with Jennifer A. Kokai. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Chapters & Articles

“Haunted Waters: The Elimination of Liveness in Disney’s *Rivers of Light*,” *Disney Fan Phenomena*, ed. Sabrina Mittermeier, Intellect Books. (Under Contract)

“Competing Interiorities in the Disney Theme Park Space,” co-written with Jennifer A. Kokai, *Virtual Interiorities*, Dave Gottwald, Gregory Turner-Rahman, and Vahid Vahdat, eds., Carnegie Mellon ETC Press. (Under Contract)

“The Future Is Truly in the Past: The Regressive Nostalgia of Tomorrowland.” *Performance and the Disney Theme Park Experience: The Tourist as Actor*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

“The New Stagecraft’s Nuts and Bolts.” *Theatre Design and Technology* 53.2 (Spring 2017).

“Advertising and the Commercial Spirit: Cataloging Nineteenth-Century Scenic Studio Practices.” *Working in the Wings: New Perspectives on Theatre History and Labor*. Christine Woodworth and Elizabeth Osborne, editors. Southern Illinois University Press, 2015.

“A More Aggressive Plantation Play: Henrietta Vinton Davis and John Edward Bruce Collaborate on *Our Old Kentucky Home*.” *Theatre History Studies* 32 (2012).

“*The Rockae*: An Adaptation of Euripides’s *The Bacchae*.” *Ecumenica: A Journal of Theatre and Performance* 3.1 (Spring 2010).

“Field of American Dreams: Individualist Ideology in the American Baseball Movie.” *JUMP CUT: A Review of Contemporary Media* 52 (Summer 2010).

Reviews

“Book Review: *Showing Up, Showing Off: Studies of Hype, Heightened Performance, and Cultural Power*.” *Theatre Journal* (forthcoming).

“Performance Review: *Violet*.” *Ecumenica: A Journal of Theatre and Performance* 8.1 (Spring 2015).

“Book Review: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin on the American Stage and Screen*.” *Theatre Journal* 66.1 (March 2014).

Public Scholarship (Non-Peer-Reviewed)

“In this Together.” Contributor to special section, “Where the Year Went: A Look Back, and Forward,” *American Theatre Magazine*, March 2021.

“Going Back in Time to Find Common Ground.” Co-written with Paul J. Brunner. *Sightlines: The Monthly Newsletter for U.S.I.T.T. Members* LI.10 (October 2011).

Conference Presentations (Scholarship)

“#VoicesFromHome: Disney Fans, Labor, and Pandemic Pleasure,” Fan Studies Network North America Conference, The Practice and Politics of Theme Park Fandoms Salon, 2020 (Virtual Conference).

“Unwanted Authorship: When Disney Tourists Seize the Stage,” American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) Conference, Arlington, VA, 2019.

“Changing the Scene to Only Scenery: The Elimination of Liveness in Disney’s *Rivers of Light*,” Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference, Orlando, FL, 2019.

“Inventing the American Past: The Music of Disney’s Main Street,” Mid-America Theatre Conference (MATC), Cleveland, OH, 2019.

“The Future Is Truly in the Past: The Regressive Nostalgia of Tomorrowland,” ASTR, Atlanta, GA, 2017.

“All Dramatics is Local: Localization in the Federal Theatre’s *It Can’t Happen Here*.” ATHE Conference, Scottsdale, AZ, 2014.

“Playing and Pageantry: Du Bois’s *The Star of Ethiopia* and McCoo’s *Ethiopia at the Bar of Justice*.” ATHE Conference, Orlando, FL, 2013.

“Constructing Identity Myth by Myth: The 20th Century Pageant Craze and *The Star of Ethiopia*.” MATC, St. Louis, MO, 2013.

“A Very Dangerous Agitator: Actress Henrietta Vinton Davis and the Universal Negro Improvement Association.” ATHE Conference, Washington, DC, 2012.

“De-Centering ‘Work’: The Life of the 19th Century Regional Theatre Technician.” MATC, Chicago, IL, 2012.

“Don’t Forget the Nuts and Bolts: The Economics of Stage Design and the Emergence of the New Stagecraft.” ATHE Conference, Chicago, IL, 2011.

“Revising the Plantation Story: Henrietta Vinton Davis and *Our Old Kentucky Home*.” MATC, Minneapolis, MN, 2011.

“The Most Talented Woman on the American Stage: Henrietta Vinton Davis and the Rise of the Black Press.” ATHE Conference, Los Angeles, CA, 2010.

“‘Unsexed Woman’: The Sexual Duality of Actress Henrietta Vinton Davis in William Edgar Easton’s *Christophe*.” Comparative Drama Conference (CDC), Los Angeles, CA, 2010.

“The Demon with the Angelic Face: The Evolution of the Sympathetic Vampire.” CDC, Los Angeles, CA, 2009.

“‘Keep It Gay’: Insult, the Comic Other, and Mel Brooks’s *The Producers*.” ATHE Conference, Denver, CO, 2008.

“The Mercury Cradle: Orson Welles’s Forgotten Staging of *The Cradle Will Rock*.” ATHE Conference, Denver, CO, 2008.

Conference Presentations (Pedagogy and Administration)

“Marketing Yourself for the Market: Strategies for Job Search Success.” ATHE, 2021 (under consideration).

“Career Capstone Courses: Preparing our Students for Today’s Creative Workforce.” Roundtable Panel. ATHE, 2020 (Virtual Conference due to Covid-19).

“The Drive for New Voices: Directing and Developing New Works in the Academy.” Roundtable Panel. ATHE, 2020 (Virtual Conference due to Covid-19).

“Transitions in Theatre History Pedagogy: Practice, Compression, and Method.” Roundtable Panel. ATHE, Orlando, FL, 2019.

“Inclusivity and Gender Non-Binary Students on College Campuses.” Co-Presentation with Sarah Crockarell. East Central & West Central District Meeting for the Illinois Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers, Decatur, IL, 2019.

“Reinventing the Greeks: Current Politics in/around/of Teaching Traditional Texts.” Co-Presentation with Victoria Petterson Lantz. MATC, Cleveland, OH, 2019.

“Spinning Straw into Gold in the BA Capstone Classroom, or Creating a One-Size-Fits-All Destination for Twenty Different Journeys.” MATC, Milwaukee, WI, 2018.

“Graduate Student Teaching Demo and Feedback” Respondent. ATHE, Las Vegas, 2017.

“Build Your Best Case: Suggestions for Preparing Tenure & Promotion Documents.” Roundtable Table. THE, Las Vegas, 2017.

“Crafting Inclusive Syllabi.” Millikin Academic Interdisciplinary Conference, Decatur, IL, 2017. Co-presenter with Molly Berry and Kimberly Mungaray.

“Teaching Diversity: Creating Difficult Dialogues.” Roundtable Panel. ATHE, Chicago, IL, 2016.

“Recruiting and Retaining Students of Color.” Roundtable Panel. ATHE, Chicago, IL, 2016.

“The Truth About Higher Ed: Full-Time, Part-Time, and Everything in Between.” Roundtable Panel. ATHE, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 2015.

“Sharing the Burden: Exploring Colorful Neighborhoods in Predominantly White University Theatre Departments,” Dreaming Lorraine: Meditations on New Landscapes in African American Theatre & Performance Panel. ATHE, Scottsdale, AZ, 2014.

“Herding Cats Through a Maze.” Playing with Assessment: Tools and Trips Swap Meet. ATHE, Orlando, FL, 2013.

“Theatre History Anthology Roundtable.” ATHE, Orlando, FL, 2013.

“Script Analysis Textbook Roundtable.” ATHE, Washington, DC, 2012.

“Introduction to Theatre Textbook Roundtable.” ATHE, Chicago, IL, 2011.

Teaching/Scholarship/Service Hybrid

“Theatre Endures” Zoom Lecture – Theatre history presentation given during Covid-19 in multiple formats to multiple groups, including high school students, college students, and professional theatre companies.

Conference New Play Development

MATC – 8 plays as Director, 2010-2018

MATC – 8 plays as Actor, 2011-2018

ATHE – 2 plays as Director, 2007-2008

Conference Workshops

Pitch Your Book Workshop, MATC, Chicago, 2020.

Articles-in-Progress Workshop, MATC, Chicago, 2012.

Guest Lectureships

“*Rough Magic* from Concept to Production.” The College of Charleston. October, 2018.

“Sparkle Dust, Bugle Beads, Ostrich Plumes’: Representations of Queerness in American Musical Theatre.” The University of Utah. THEA 3792: Queer Theatre. November, 2011.

“Working with Directors.” The University of Utah. THEA 4490: Lighting Design II. November, 2011.

Dissertation Title: “*The Greatest Living Genius of the Race*”: *Henrietta Vinton Davis – Elocutionist, Actress, Activist*

Between her debut as a public elocutionist in 1883, introduced by the abolitionist Frederick Douglass, and her retirement from the stage in 1919 to join the leadership of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, Henrietta Vinton Davis was considered the leading black dramatic actress in the United States. Despite this, however, she has almost entirely disappeared from most theatre history books, even those focusing on black theatre. This project seeks to recover Davis as an historical figure and also, through analysis of her evolving dramatic and political choices, establish the ideological reason for her erasure.

Research Interests

- Tourism & Performance
- African American Theatre & Drama
- American Theatre & Drama
- Musical Theatre
- 19th-20th Century Historical Stage Technology
- Inclusive Theatre Pedagogy

Service & Administration

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THEATRE RESEARCH (ASTR)

- Co-Chair, 2022 Conference, New Orleans (with Jennifer A. Kokai and Sam O’Connell)
[Originally accepted as co-chairs for conference 2021 in San Diego, rescheduled due to Covid-19.]

ASSOCIATION FOR THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION (ATHE)

- Chair, Pedagogy Subcommittee, (2015-17)
- Conference Planning Committee, 2017 Conference (Las Vegas)
- Spectacular Scholarship All Conference Plenary Coordinator, 2017 Conference (Las Vegas)
- *It Can’t Happen Here* Public Reading Coordinator, 2017 Conference (Las Vegas)
- Theatre History Focus Group, multiple leadership positions – Focus Group Representative (2013-15), Pre-Conference Co-Coordinator (2012), Focus Group Representative-Elect (2012-13), Treasurer (2011-12), Graduate Student Representative (2010-11), Nominating Committee (2010-11, 2019-20)
- Member-At-Large, Theory & Criticism Focus Group (2020-21)
- Mentor, American Theatre & Drama Society (2017)
- Professional Development Committee (2014-17)
- Membership and Marketing Committee (2015-16)

MID-AMERICA THEATRE CONFERENCE (MATC)

- Co-Chair, Playwriting Symposium (2013-15)
- Mentor, Undergraduate Emerging Scholars Panel (2014)
- Mentor, Graduate Emerging Scholars Panel (2016)

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Consulting editor, *Theatre/Practice* Journal, Volume 3 (2014)
- Peer Reviewer, Routledge, multiple titles
- Tenure Portfolio Reviewer, multiple universities

MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY

- Coordinator of Academic Programs, School of Theatre & Dance (2016-)
 - Assessment (includes design of a new model for program assessment)
 - Primary author of ~50-page departmental self-study for program review
 - Collaborate with School Director on creating the course schedule every semester
 - Curriculum proposals
 - Creation of a departmental policy handbook
- Co-Chair, President's Commission on Inclusive Excellence (2016-2019)
 - Leading a 16-person group comprised of faculty, staff, and students to study the campus culture and suggest changes to better foster inclusion/diversity at Millikin.
 - Achievements: rewritten university inclusivity policy language, creation of inclusivity language for syllabi, introduction of guidelines for running more inclusive faculty/staff searches.
- Coordinator, University Studies Creative Arts Requirement (2012-16)
 - Primary responsibilities included approving courses to satisfy the university's core Creative Arts Requirement and annual assessment
- Program Oversight, Bachelor of Arts in Theatre & Performance Studies Degree (2012-)
 - Wrote, proposed, and had approved a significant curriculum revision transforming a BA in Theatre into one in Theatre & Performance Studies, without requiring additional faculty lines.
- Faculty Convener (2021-22)
 - Coordinate and lead university faculty meetings.
- Search Committees
 - Served on 9 total search committees since 2011
 - Chaired 7 of those committees
 - 2 acting
 - 1 voice
 - 3 theatre history/directing
 - 1 department chair
- Advisory Committee on Promotion & Tenure (2021-)
- Council on Students and Academic Standards
 - Served from 2015-2019
 - Served as Vice Chair from 2016-2018
- Season Selection Committee
 - Served six times since 2011
 - Chaired twice (2015, 2020)
- Co-Leader, Advising Workshop [with Travis Wilcoxon, RJ Podeschi, and Jason Wickline] (2018)
- Nyberg Project Team on Performance Learning and the Character of Millikin (2014)
- Department Strategic Planning Committee (2013)
- Department Diversity Committee (2014-15)

- BA Theatre Scholarship Program Coordinator (2013-)
- Gender Studies Minor Faculty Committee (2015-17)
- African American Studies Minor Faculty Committee (2016-)
- Supervisor/Mentor/Coordinator of Student Dramaturgs (2011-15, 2020-)
- Advisory Board, Pipe Dreams Studio Theatre (2011-2013)
- Speaker, New Faculty Orientation Session (2015)
- Script Library Faculty Advisor (2011-13)
- Advisor to multiple James Millikin Society Honors Projects (2012-)
- Guest Speaker, Brothers Moving Forward student organization: “Allies in Diversity” (2013)
- Panelist, Queers & Allies “Out in the Workplace” discussion (2011, 2012)
- UNITY Social Justice Advocates Cesar Chavez Awards Committee (2013)

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

- Faculty Search Committee, Assistant Professor of Theatre History
- Season Selection Committee

Grants, Awards, and Honors

- Millikin University Research Sabbatical, Fall 2019
- Millikin University Ralph A. Czerwinski Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership Award
- Millikin University Academic Diversity and Inclusion Grant
- Millikin University Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Grant
- Millikin University UNITY Social Justice Advocates Cesar Chavez Award for Faculty
- Hubert C. Hefner Award, Indiana University Department of Theatre & Drama
- Richard L. Scammon Award, Indiana University Department of Theatre & Drama
- Faculty Memorial Award, Indiana University Department of Theatre & Drama
- Graduate Research Grant, Indiana University Department of Theatre & Drama
- Debut Panel Award, ATHE Music Theatre/Dance Focus Group

Selected Production History

DIRECTING (* denotes world premiere)

Production Photos: <http://tomrobson.foliohd.com>

VIOLET, Millikin University, Decatur, IL (Spring 2022)

PETE(HER) PAN, Millikin University, Decatur, IL (rehearsed and performed outdoors, distanced, and masked during Covid-19)

*WHY ARE YOU LIKE THIS? (THE AUDIENCE SERVICES PLAY** (reading), Millikin University, Decatur, IL (rehearsed and performed via Zoom during Covid-19)

*MISS ME**, Millikin University, Decatur, IL

9 TO 5: THE MUSICAL, Millikin University, Decatur, IL

BUYER & CELLAR, Millikin University, Decatur, IL

HEATHERS: THE MUSICAL, Millikin University, Decatur, IL

*PASS OVER** (reading), Millikin University, Decatur, IL

ROUGH MAGIC, Millikin University, Decatur IL

THE WHIPPING MAN, Millikin University, Decatur, IL

FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE... (reading), Millikin University, Decatur, IL

UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY (devised piece in collaboration with Student Development), Millikin University, Decatur, IL (Two completely different pieces, one in 2013 and one in 2014)
*CRACKER**, Pipe Dreams Studio Theatre, Decatur, IL
THE LITTLE DOG LAUGHED, Millikin University, Decatur, IL
THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY, Indiana University Independent Student Project, Bloomington, IN
*DIG**, Franklin College, Franklin, IN
*GIRL ON THE WING**, Bloomington Playwrights Project, Bloomington, IN
*SYNTHESIS**, Indiana University Independent Student Project, Bloomington, IN
*PRIVILEGE**, Indiana University Independent Student Project, Bloomington, IN
*BICENTENNIAL BABIES**, Bloomington Playwrights Project, Bloomington, IN
UNCLE VANYA, Indiana University Independent Student Project, Bloomington, IN
THE ROCKAE, Assistant Director (George Pinney, Director), Premiere Musicals: Developing New Musical Theatre at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
DAY BOY, NIGHT GIRL, Assistant Director (George Pinney, Director), Premiere Musicals: Developing New Musical Theatre at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
TWEAKED (reading), Phoenix Theatre, Indianapolis, IN
CRACKER (reading), KCACTF Regional Conference, Milwaukee, WI
PARAGON SPRINGS, Assistant Director (William Brown, Director), Timeline Theatre Company, Chicago, IL
OUR TOWN, Assistant Director (William Brown, Director), Writers' Theatre Company, Glencoe, IL
*CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**, Assistant Director, Writers' Theatre Company, Glencoe, IL
THE UNEXPECTED MAN, Assistant Director (Ross Lehman, Director), Apple Tree Theatre Company, Highland Park, IL
*JOURNEY INTO A DREAM**, Co-Director (Elizabeth Rich, Director), Writers' Theatre Company/New Trier High School, Winnetka, IL

DRAMATURGY

THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT, Millikin University, Dir. Laura Ledford, Decatur, IL
THIS, Phoenix Theatre, Dir. Dale McFadden, Indianapolis, IN
PARAGON SPRINGS, Timeline Theatre Company, Dir. William Brown, Chicago, IL
OUR TOWN, Writers' Theatre Company, Dir. William Brown, Glencoe, IL
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, Writers' Theatre Company, Glencoe, IL
THE UNEXPECTED MAN, Apple Tree Theatre Company, Dir. Ross Lehman, Highland Park, IL
THE SPITFIRE GRILL, Apple Tree Theatre Company, Dir. Eileen Boevers, Highland Park, IL

PLAYWRITING/DEVISING/ADAPTING

I KNOW, Pipe Dreams Studio Theatre All Night Play Festival, Decatur, IL
UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY, Millikin University, Decatur, IL (Two completely different pieces, one in 2013 and one in 2014)
JOURNEY INTO A DREAM, Writers' Theatre Company/New Trier High School, Glencoe, IL
THE COURTER, Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA

Affiliations

- Association for Theatre in Higher Education
- American Society for Theatre Research
- American Theatre & Drama Society
- Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society

References

Contact information available upon request

Mary Black
Interim Provost
Professor of Theatre & Dance
Millikin University

Jana Henry Funderburk
Professor of Theatre & Dance
Millikin University

Alex Miller
Professor of Theatre & Dance
Millikin University

David Grindle
Executive Director
United States Institute of Theatre Technology

Dr. Jennifer A. Kokai
Chair, Department of Performing Arts
Associate Professor of Theatre
Weber State University

Raphaella Prange
Vice President for Student Affairs &
Dean of Student Development
Millikin University

Dr. Chase Bringardner
Chair, Department of Theatre
Professor of Theatre
Auburn University
President-Elect of ATHE