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Though this is my first time participating in a new play workshop, this is not my first theater class at MIT. I have previously taken a couple of analysis classes on theater, as well as the intro-level screenwriting and playwriting workshop classes that function similarly to the first half of this class, but this is the first time I have had the opportunity to see professional actors work with a professional director to perform a reading of a script.

During the workshop process, I observed a lot of collaboration and many stops and starts as the actors and director dug into the characters, tracking their emotions and arcs through scenes and the play overall. Though Professor Urban, the playwright, was present and provided insight into the work and his intentions with it, much of the dissection of each scene and line came from the director and actors, who attempted to reason things out on their own. This was surprising, but I liked how it allowed for the performers to create their own interpretations of the material, which the director then made sure added up to one cohesive whole while the director provided technical details and updates on rewrites and other changes or adjustments. The amount of questions asked about college students and professors (the subjects of the play) was also surprising, and since my play takes place during a historical event, I now know I will really have to do my research before rehearsals!

During the rehearsal, I observed the group read through two scenes, working through balancing dramatic and comedic moments, and working through some crucial turning points in the relationships of the main characters. The scenes included some rewritten portions, so some of the actors were reading the dialogue out loud for the very first time. It was exciting to see the actors slightly alter their takes every time they read the scene to try and dig deeper into the meaning behind the words, and how their performances could translate that meaning. Despite the work-in-progress nature of the rehearsal, I found myself interested in what was going to happen next, and I am excited to see the performance later this semester.

Seeing this rehearsal was not only exciting because I was seeing a play in the process of being made, but it also excited me about the future of my own play. I learned that as the playwright, I need to know both the characters and their world inside and out, and I must be prepared to know the answer to any and all questions, while at the same time allowing the director and actors space to interpret the material themselves. I'm excited to also have extended rehearsal time for other people to read and dissect my play, and I'm hopeful that the workshop process will allow me to gain a deeper understanding of the story I am trying to tell.