

# The Wasp

A nail-biting psychological thriller by Morgan Lloyd Malcom



6th September – 22nd September 2024  
Matinee: 20.09.2024 at 11:00

**Notice:** this play deals with triggering topics such as bullying, cyberbullying, harrasment and sexual abuse. We recommend that you take time preparing your students before they see the show to introduce them to these topics. The material in this Education pack should help you to do so. Please read the extensive synopsis of the play to be aware of these topics.

This Education pack includes background information as well as tasks and topics to be discussed in the classroom. The tasks do not necessarily build on each other. Cut and paste as you please, and please consult the official program for additional information.

## Introduction

# THE PLAY

## Characters

**Heather** – a woman in her early thirties. She is married to Simon and has had difficulties to get pregnant. The couple is **well-off** and lives in a beautiful house. She is a deeply traumatised character who decides to face her past once and for all.

**Carla** – a woman in her early thirties. She smokes, is pregnant with her fifth child and is in a relationship with a 60-year-old man. She works at **Morrisons** and struggles to **make ends meet**. She hasn't seen Heather since her school years – twenty years ago. She is also a deeply traumatised character, who has both witnessed, suffered from and committed abuse.

**Simon** – a young man, described as having random passions. Heather hints at the fact that he is abusive and might be violent. He has cheated on his wife several times.

## Synopsis

**Act I** - Two old acquaintances meet again for the first time in twenty years. The two women, Carla and Heather, went to school together, became estranged over the years and now lead different lives. Quite quickly, we understand that if Heather and Carla were once friends, the latter went on **bullying** Heather at school. Carla, pregnant with her fifth child, doesn't seem to regret it and 'teenagehood' is blamed for it.

Heather came with a purpose: at first, and because she mentions her difficulties to get pregnant, Carla believes that she wants a baby from her. She agrees to be a **surrogate mother**, in exchange for money. However, it turns out that Heather has other plans in head: she discovered that her husband, Simon, is cheating on her – via an online **subterfuge** – and wants revenge. She asks Carla to kill him for her.

### Can you describe *The Wasp* in a nutshell?

A thriller about two humans with a history that is as yet unresolved...



[A cup of tea with...The Wasp](#)  
[Writer Morgan Llyod Malcom,](#)  
[Hampstead Theatre London, 2015](#)

## Introduction

### THE PLAY

Memories are resurfacing: Heather knows that Carla is capable of it and that she needs the money. The more they talk about it, the more Carla softens to the idea. They agree to meet again and discuss terms.

**Act II** - At Heather's house they discuss how the murder could be committed and finally agree on a scenario. They talk about Simon too, and his weird passions, such as his fascination for the Tarantula Hawk (a wasp species). It is revealed that he has hurt Heather repeatedly by cheating on her with several women.

The tension rises between the two women. Heather keeps asserting that they come from and live in different worlds. She confronts Carla for having denied their friendship and bullied her for several years.

Class violence seems to be at the root of Carla's behaviour: she felt that there was no reason for someone to live a happy life while she was facing domestic abuse and destitution at home. However, Carla still doesn't fully understand or remembers why Heather **holds** such a **grudge** against her.

They keep preparing for the murder and Carla eventually asks for a picture of the victim, Simon. She recognises him instantly: Carla has been working as a sex worker and Simon was one of her clients. Heather, who knew and had been **pulling the strings** from the start, drugged Carla's tea. She loses consciousness.

**Act III** – Carla wakes up being tied up to her chair. Heather starts a long series of monologues setting us back in their teenagehood. She relates the rape she suffered at the hands of Carla and her friends. Heather goes on and explains the consequences this trauma has had on her life, and the role it played in her failed attempt to have a child.

Heather removes Carla's **gag** and gives her the opportunity to speak. After apologising, Carla reveals that the child she is expecting is Simon's. Both women are victims of the same man: Heather for being in a toxic relationship with him, Carla for having believed that he would save her by giving her money.

“

Problem with school is that you think that's everything and then you leave and you realise it's basically nothing [...] — Carla

## **Introduction**

### **THE PLAY**

Heather implies that she might already have killed her husband. She takes a knife out and goes on describing all the terrible things she could do to Carla and her baby. Heather explains her deeply disillusioned vision of the world, in which life is a circle of violence. Claiming that she wants to break that circle, she sets up a final experiment: she unties Carla and put the knife on the ground between them. A question rises while they talk about human nature: are we mere animals? “Is it to be kindness or violence?”.

Carla **stabbs** Heather and hears in the background Simon coming home.

And I found out  
what it is to hate.  
And now I know why  
so many people do  
the things that they  
do. I hope you'll  
undersand. There  
are choices we  
must all make  
based on instinct,  
experience and  
knowledge.

—Heather





© Ella Phoebe Padilla

## Introduction


### THE PLAY

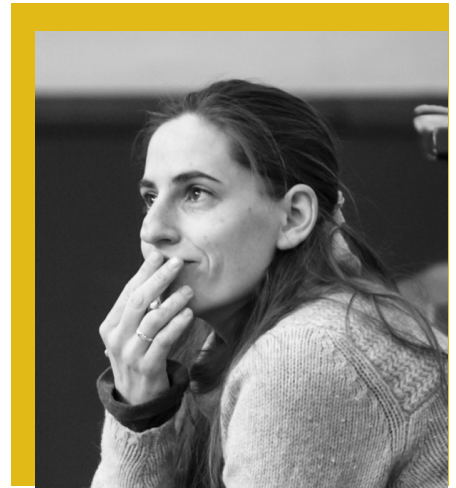
#### The Playwright – Morgan Llyod Malcom

Morgan is a playwright and screenwriter. She was commissioned by **The Globe** to write *Emilia* which became a hit show in summer 2018 before transferring to the **West End** in 2019, winning three **Olivier awards**. She is currently adapting *Emilia* for film. Her feature adaptation of her play *The Wasp* was filmed in 2022, starring Naomie Harris and Natalie Dormer and directed by Guillem Morales.

Her stage credits include *Belongings* and *The Wasp* (Hampstead Theatre & Trafalgar Studios). More recently Morgan wrote *Typical Girls*, set in a women's prison and featuring the music of The Slits, (Sheffield Crucible, 2021); *Mum* (Plymouth Theatre Royal and Soho Theatre, 2021); and *When the Long Trick's Over* (produced by High Tide for New Wolsey Theatre and UK tour, 2022). She also co-wrote the book for new musical *Cake*, which opened for a short West End run in September 2023 following a tour. Morgan runs a theatre company called Terrifying Women with Abi Zakarian, Sampira and Amanda Castro which produces new horror plays written by women.

Morgan is currently working on a number of screen projects and previously adapted *Damage* by Josephine Hart for Moonage, Gaumont and Netflix (produced as *Obsession* in April 2023 by Netflix).

 [The Haworth Agency – Morgan Llyod Malcom](#)  
Terrifying Women: @terrifyingwomen (Instagram)



## Introduction

### CREATIVES

#### The Director – Psyche Stott

Psyche is a freelance Theatre Director. Her work has taken her to Rome, Australia, Europe and throughout the UK. She is thrilled to be back opening the 2024/25 season for the English Theatre Frankfurt with *The Wasp* by the brilliant Morgan Lloyd Malcolm at Volksbühne Theatre.



[www.psychestott.co.uk](http://www.psychestott.co.uk)

Previous productions for the ETF include *The Two Popes* by Anthony McCarten. The German Premieres of *The Children* by Lucy Kirkwood and *Girl on a Train* adapted by Rachel Wagstaff.

In what seems like a lifetime ago, she won the Channel 4 Regional Directors Award (now the Regional Theatre Young Director Award) enabling her to take up the role of Director in Residence, at Northern Stage. Continuing as Associate Director for their UK tour of *Our Friends in the North*. Training also includes the National Theatre Studio. She is a regular guest Director for the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and LAMDA. She is also on the audition panel for RADA. Productions for RADA include *Against* by Christopher Shinn. *Suddenly Last Summer* and *Something Unspoken*, *Kindertransport*, *The Five Wives of Maurice Pinder*, *Women of Twilight*. Productions for LAMDA: *Boudica*, *Duchess of Malfi*, *The White Devil*. And scenes from Shakespeare.

Some directing highlights include: *Jekyll & Hyde*, a new adaptation (Story House, Chester); Lucy Kirkwood's *NSFW* (Platform Theatre London); The 20th anniversary production of David Farr's *Elton John's Glasses* (Watford Palace Theatre); *The Fighting Bradfords*, new commission (Gala Theatre, Durham); *Blue Remembered Hills* (Northern Stage & UK Tour); *Skylight* (Teatro Dell'Orologio, Rome); The Australian premiere of the Award winning British hit comedy *Calendar Girls* (for Gordon Frost Organisation, Lyric Theatre, QPAC Brisbane, Theatre Royal Sydney and Comedy Theatre Melbourne); *Calendar Girls* (Chichester Festival Theatre and New UK Tour); *Pub Quiz* (New Writing North and Northeast Theatre Consortium Regional Tour). Directing for BBC Radio: Brian Friel's *Hedda Gabler* (produced by Sparklab for BBC Radio 4).

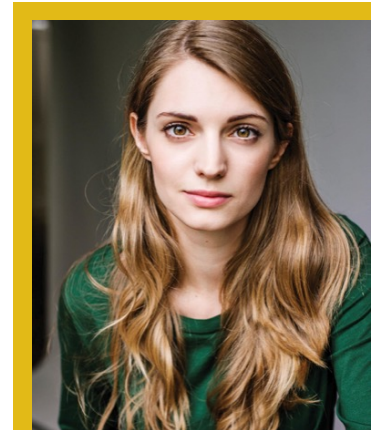


## Introduction

### CREATIVES

#### Heather - Lucy Walker-Evans

Lucy trained at Drama Centre London. Theatre credits include: *Moment of Grace* (Seven Dials Playhouse); *Market Boy* (Union Theatre); *Dinner is Coming* (The Vaults); *Conquest* (Bunker Theatre); *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (Seven Dials Playhouse); *NewsRevue* (Canal Café Theatre); *Time and the Conways* (Platform Theatre); *The Rivals* (Upstairs at the Gatehouse). Television includes: *Humans* (Channel 4/AMC).



#### Carla – Jocasta King

Jocasta trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts where she was awarded the Laurence Olivier Bursary Award for drama school students across the UK.

Since graduating, credits include Miss Casewell in Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* (West End), Understudy Mollie and Miss Casewell in Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* (UK Tour), Emma in *Shoot, I Didn't Mean That* and Ensemble in the first British translation and production of Krauss' *The Last Days of Mankind* (both at the Tristan Bates Theatre).



Have a look at all the creatives who worked on *The Wasp*:  
[Cast & Creatives – The Wasp](#)

## Context

# BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING

## Definitions

### What is bullying?

One can usually identify bullying through the following three characteristics: **intent, repetition, and power**. A person who bullies intends to cause pain, either through physical harm or hurtful words or behaviour, and does so repeatedly.

Bullying is a **pattern of behaviour**, rather than an isolated incident. Children who bully usually come from a perceived higher social status or position of power.

The most vulnerable children face a higher risk of being bullied, such as children from communities that are marginalized. Bullying can happen both in person or online.

### What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying with the use of **digital technologies**. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behaviour, aimed at **scaring, angering or shaming** those who are targeted. Examples include:

- spreading lies about or posting embarrassing photos or videos of someone on social media
- sending hurtful, abusive or threatening messages, images or videos via messaging platforms
- impersonating someone and sending mean messages to others on their behalf or through fake accounts.

Face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying can often happen alongside each other. But cyberbullying leaves a digital footprint – a record that can prove useful and provide evidence to help stop the abuse.

## RESOURCES

[UNICEF, Bullying: what it is and how to stop it](#)

[UNICEF, Cyberbullying: what it is and how to stop it](#)

[Anti-bullying alliance: all about bullying](#)

To watch in class:

[Anti-bullying alliance definition of bullying](#)

> See activities in the next section to talk about it in class.



## **Context**

### **BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING**

#### **A few first steps when facing bullying – for teachers ([Kidscape](#))**

1. Reassure them: let the child know that you believe them, that this is not their fault, and that together you will sort the situation out.
2. Record what is happening: good record-keeping is vital for keeping a track on repeated incidents and evidencing that you have taken appropriate action.
3. Ask the child what they need from you: ask them how it is making them feel, and any practical steps you can take to help stop the bullying. For example, are there teachers, other adults in the school or particular pupils that can make themselves available to support and mentor the target of bullying? It's important that the child feels in control of the situation. They may be very fearful of the impact of telling you (e.g. being called a snitch), so work out the best action together.
4. Then act quickly: your focus should be on making sure the bullying stops. Follow up with all children involved, explore what has taken place and implement the action needed to stop it from happening again. The other child or children may deny what has taken place or may share that it has been in retaliation – and will very often have an alternative story. The important message is that you will not tolerate bullying of any kind, that someone has been hurt and that something needs to change. Agree with all children what the next steps will be and a time when you will check in.
5. Make sure the child is safe: if they have been harmed in any way, or are at risk of harm, do not send them into a situation where they are not safe. If they have been assaulted or threatened with harm you should follow the school safeguarding policy.

## **Context**

### **BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING**

#### **A few first steps when facing bullying – for teachers ([Kidscape](#))**

6. Give further support: what other strategies can you put in place to support all children involved longer term? If you have concerns about the impact on the child's physical or mental health, follow up with the appropriate services. Does the child or children displaying bullying behaviour need a longer-term intervention?

7. Learn from each incident: consider actions you need to take as a school to stop this happening again. For example, if bullying keeps happening in the same place you may need to increase levels of supervision. If the behaviour is repeatedly targeted at a certain demographic of the pupil population then you will need to work on your wider culture of inclusion. If much of the behaviour is online at the weekend or on weeknights, you may need to work with the whole school community including parents and pupils to reinforce the impact of cyberbullying and steps you can all take to stop it.

#### **Projects & resources at school to talk about bullying**

- A school in Ohio, US, raised awareness about bullying by mapping the spaces in their school where bullying takes place. Watch the movie they made about this project: [Bully Zones](#).
- BBC Teach proposes a series of films that bust body image myths and investigate the commercialisation of body image ideals, promoting debate in the classroom: [Your Body, your Image](#).
- Distinguishing bullying and banter: free activities to lead in the classroom by Twinkl and Anti-Bullying Alliance: [Anti-Bullying Week Resources](#)

## Context

# VIOLENCE ON STAGE

## A short history

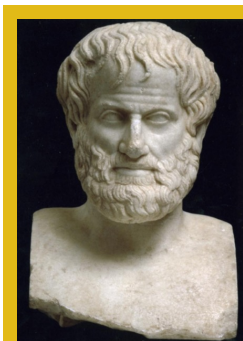
People do enjoy violent fiction, whether on stage, on screen or in a book. Where does that pleasure come from? Why do we enjoy watching things that would terrify us in real life?

Let us go back in time and talk about a process that the Greeks, and more specifically Aristotle, conceptualised: **the catharsis**.

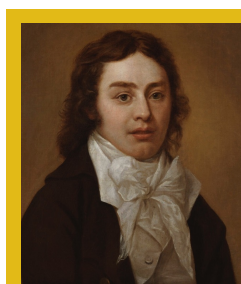
The Greek philosopher explains in his *Poetics* that tragedy, by staging the very passions and feelings that we feel daily without acting on them, enables us to purge them. The spectator, by identifying themselves with a character feeling hatred, gets to **vicariously** express a passion they might themselves feel and leave the theatre purified. That moral reading of theatre's purpose also entails pleasure: the spectator feels lighter, has enjoyed seeing their inner passions come true on stage.

How can one achieve such a goal, and identify oneself to such extent to a character? Through **the willing suspension of disbelief**, also named "poetic faith" by the poet William Coleridge. One way to achieve it, still according to Aristotle, is to present an action that is believable. The audience needs to feel like a real witness of evil, of a terrible action that is properly happening for the purgation to be effective and to create "pity and fear".

However, this rather moral reading of theatre's purpose doesn't explain why we are feeling pleasure by watching violence committed on stage. Indeed, if we think it to be true, what pleasure is there to be witnessing it?



Aristotle  
The Acropolis  
Museum



Samuel Taylor  
Coleridge  
Peter Vandyke, 1795  
National Portrait  
Gallery London

## Context

# VIOLENCE ON STAGE

## A short history

To remain a pleasure, the audience must be reminded of the play's **theatricality**. That double movement of suspending one's disbelief together with the knowledge that one is in theatre creates pleasure:



There always remains in the back of your mind some idea of the falseness of what you see. This idea [...] is enough to reduce the pain of seeing someone you love suffer, and to reduce this pain to the degree where it begins to turn into pleasure. We weep for the misfortunes of a hero [...], and at the same time we console ourselves, because we know that it is a fiction; and it is precisely from this mixture of feelings that pleasant pain and delightful tears are created.

— Fontenelle, *Réflexions sur la poétique*

The spectator has the power – and enjoys such power – to stop their suspension of disbelief and just for a few moments reassure themselves. This pact of credulity is increasingly difficult to suspend with an art form such as cinema, which aims at erasing all external signs of fiction's artificiality.

### TO GO FURTHER

– against cathartic theatre

[The \*Verfremdungseffekt\* or distancing effect](#)

[Epic Theatre and Berthold Brecht – Why is Brecht so important?](#)

- BBC Teach



'Violence et Tragique', Seminar delivered by Georges Forestier, Sorbonne-Université, 2017-2018.

Fontenelle, *Réflexions sur la poétique*, Œuvres complètes, Corpus des Œuvres de philosophie en langue française, Paris, Fayard, 1989, [1ère édition en 1742], p.133.

[Theory of Tragedy](#), Britannica.

## Context

# VIOLENCE ON STAGE

## Horror in theatre

Horror, or more largely thrillers, are not very often brought to the stage. Even though it is an incredibly popular genre in cinema, it seems that our perception of violence, and what we think can be showed live, has prevented it to access bigger stages.

Morgan Llyod Malcom, *The Wasp's* playwright, together with two other playwrights, has founded the theatre company **Terrifying Women** to bring female-led horror narratives to the stage.

They underline how the genre is **pervading theatre history** and classics, without ever being called 'horror':

“ There's a through-line of horror all the way across the classics but they call it 'tragedy'. Even when theatres stage stories like *Dracula* or *Frankenstein* they call it 'gothic' rather than horror.

— Sampira


In most horror narratives, or thrillers for that matter, women are often bound to die or to be the object of violence. *Terrifying Women* also wishes to subvert that trope and explore the nature of evil and sexual violence enacted on women's bodies.

The playwrights linger on the cathartic quality of the genre: exploring what is usually repressed in society is necessary to give a community the space to think violence and its role in women lives especially.

Llyod Malcom considers that the genre really becomes fascinating when it questions the reason and source of violence. Why are people evil? What is the source or the cause of violence? A question certainly raised in *The Wasp*.

I think that's what good horror is and it's what good theatre is – you want to look away but you can't. ”

— Sampira

 [Terrifying Women: the trio of 'horror fiends' embracing stage fright](#) – The Guardian, Arifa Akbar, 2021

Terrifying Women: @terrifyingwomen (Instagram)

## Activities

### BEFORE THE PLAY

#### Association task - title

- The Wasp – what theme do you think a play with such a title could tackle?
- What could a wasp symbolise?

On the left, write down three feelings this insect generate. On the right, three things or concepts it could symbolise.



- Discuss **after the play**: did your prediction turn out to be right? Do you find it a fitting title and why?
- Pair/Share: Define what you find to be the main ‘take-away’ from this play. Discuss it with your partner. Try to find a new title that would convey it.

#### EXPLORING LITERARY SYMBOLISM – TO GO FURTHER

- Ferber M, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*. 3rd ed. Cambridge University Press; 2017.
- King Stephen, Part 3: ‘The Wasps’ Nest’, *The Shining*; 1977.
- Aristophanes, *The Wasps*, 422 BCE.

## **Activities**

### **BEFORE THE PLAY**

#### **Dice game – social media in our lives**

In a group of 4, discuss the role of social media in your life by using a (e-)dice and answering the following questions:

1. Do you use social media and how often every day?
2. What are the benefits of social media?
3. At the moment, access to social media requires a minimum age of 13. Do you think it should be changed? Why?
4. What are the cons of social media?
5. Does social media contribute to bullying? How?
6. Does social media affect our privacy?

#### **EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA – TO GO FURTHER**

[Social media is making kids sad – and it's bad news for democracy](#), The Guardian, Van Badham, 2024

[How social media created the ultimate age of envy](#), BBC video, Dan John, 2022

[How social media may benefit teens' mental health](#), Education Week, Adrianna Prothero, 2024



## **Activities**

### **BEFORE THE PLAY**

#### **Bullying & Cyberbullying – Class discussion**

- Ask your students to define bullying. They can start in groups of 2 or 4 and then share with the rest of the class.
- Watch the following video in class: [Anti-bullying alliance definition of bullying](#)
- Ask your students to pay attention to the differences between their understanding of bullying and the definition displayed.
- Ask them to think about the difference between an argument and bullying. They can start in groups of 2 or 4 and then share with the rest of the class.
- How is cyberbullying different from face-to-face bullying? One can build on the previous activity (dice game – social media in our lives) and ask them how they replied to the question “what are the cons of social media”.
- To go further: ask them what could help preventing bullying and cyberbullying.

#### **CELLPHONE BANS – TO GO FURTHER**

Many schools are deciding to ban phones inside schools to prevent students from coming across harmful content and to prevent bullying. What do your students think about that measure?

> Readings to support this discussion:

[Does banning smart phones in schools prevent online bullying, Anti-bullying alliance](#)

[School Cellphone Bans are Trending. Do they work?](#) The New York Times, 2023

[Banning phones in England’s schools will not address online safety, say campaigners](#), The Guardian, Dan Milmo, 2024

## Activities

### WHILE WATCHING

#### Quiz

1/ How do Heather and Carla know each other?

- a. They met at a party
- b. Their parents knew each other
- c. They went to school together

2/ As they talk, we get an idea of the girls they used to be. Link the character to her former self:

- Carla
- Heather
- Shy girl with **plaits** (braids, a hair-do) and glasses, with an accent. New girl at school.
- Fierce teenager with a group of friends, **a bully** (=someone who harms or intimidates people they perceive as vulnerable).

3/ Heather explains that she and her husband...

- a. Are a happy couple
- b. Can't have a baby
- c. Are getting a divorce

4/ Heather recently discovered that...

- a. Her husband is unfaithful
- b. Her husband is a murderer
- c. Her husband has a secret second family

5/ How did Heather discover it?

- a. She created a fake online identity to seduce her husband and see whether he would **take the bait** (=tempting someone with something)
- b. She hacked his email account and discovered an intimate conversation between him and another woman
- c. She **caught him red-handed** (=she saw him being with another woman)

6/ Why did Heather want to meet with Carla again?

- a. To ask Carla to be **a surrogate mother**
- b. To "go down memory lane" and talk about their school years again
- c. To ask her to kill her husband

#### NOTES

*Write your thoughts on the play, pay attention to the props used on stage, the costumes, the music etc.*

## Activities

### WHILE WATCHING

#### Quiz

7/ Why does Heather ask this from Carla? (multiple answers are possible)

- a. Because she knows she is capable of it for having witnessed it herself
- b. Because she knows she needs the money and thinks that Carla will thus be easily convinced
- c. Because she thinks Carla is a criminal

8/ Heather seems to know a lot about Carla's life. How did she discover all this?

- a. She talked to a friend of Carla
- b. She kidnapped one of her kids
- c. She created a fake profile on Facebook and became 'friend' with Carla

9/ How much money does Heather offer Carla?

- a. £ 10 000
- b. £ 30 000
- c. £ 13 000

10/ How did Carla learn all the steps leading to a successful murder? (multiple answers are possible)

- a. By watching television
- b. By having already committed a crime
- c. By doing research on internet

11/ What is so specific about the Tarantula Hawk, the wasp hanged on Heather's wall?

- a. It kills tarantulas by planting an egg in it
- b. It looks like a tarantula
- c. It is deadly to humans

12/ What is their final plan to kill Heather's husband?

- a. A staged burglary, after Simon has been drugged
- b. Poison
- c. Removing his car breaks leading to an accident

#### NOTES

## **Activities**

### **WHILE WATCHING**

#### **Quiz**

13/ Why does Carla recognise Heather's husband?

- a. He used to be her boyfriend
- b. He is her boss
- c. He is one of her clients

14/ Who is the father of the child Carla is expecting?

- a. Her partner
- b. Simon
- c. She doesn't know

15/ What does the experiment that Heather tries with/on Carla primarily tell us?

- a. Kindness is the only way to move forward and by choosing violence Carla condemns herself
- b. Psychological violence & manipulation are much worse than physical violence
- c. The only thing separating us from animals is that we can fight biology and resist instincts, only by doing so can we call ourselves humans

*(Discuss your choice in class after having watched the play)*

#### **NOTES**

## Activities

### AFTER THE PLAY

#### Theatre and realism – written exercise

Morgan Llyod Malcolm, *The Wasp*'s playwright, said that horror is a particularly theatrical genre: with it, “you can step out of realism in a way you can’t do in some other genres, which is great for theatre because stepping out of realism is what we do.”

Do you agree with this statement? Is theatre essentially a form of art that enables both creatives and the audience to “step out of realism”? What value is there in that? Which other art form or genre can enable such an experience?

Do you think it matches *The Wasp*'s genre? Is its aim to make us escape realism?

When questioning the relationship of theatre and realism, compare it to cinema, to thriller and horror movies.



Our demands are simple, normal, and therefore they are difficult to satisfy. All we ask is that an actor on the stage live in accordance with natural laws.

— Konstantin Stanislavski

#### REALISM IN THEATRE – TO GO FURTHER

- [Naturalism and realism](#), BBC Learn
- [Realism in theatre](#), BBC Learn
- [Konstantin Stanislavski](#), BBC Learn

## Activities

### AFTER THE PLAY

#### Representing Motherhood – Class discussion

The Wasp explores different understandings and representations of motherhood. What does it mean for a woman not to be able to have a child? How does a surrogate mother shape family relationships differently? How does having a baby impact a woman's life? Is it possible to love and hate one's child at the same time?

All these questions can be raised and discussed in class after having watched the play.

- Ask your students to write down the first three things they think about when being asked about motherhood. It will be interesting to compare what concepts and realities we link to being a mother (with a range of concepts such as pain, love, motherhood pay gap, patience, adoption etc.).
- Ask you students to think of famous mothers in fiction and how they are portrayed (one can think of Medea, Mrs Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, Helga, Evelyn and Lil in *Kindertransport* – still playing at the ETF! –, Sethe in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, Fantine in *Les Mésirables* by Victor Hugo, Molly Weasley in Harry Potter, Jean Milburn in the series *Sex Education*, Alex in the series *Maid* etc.).
- Show them the three pictures on the next two pages. Ask them to describe them. Which concepts seen before do they associate with each picture?
- To do at home or in groups: how would they depict motherhood? Which artform would they use and why?

#### ON MOTHERHOOD – TO GO FURTHER

[Motherhood penalty 'has driven 250,000 women out of jobs'](#), The Guardian, Zoe Wood, 2023

*Family, Family*, Laurie Frankel, Jan. 2024

[What it's like to raise a child in a new family](#), BBC, Sophie Hardach, 2022.

## Teacher resources

### Education pack



Hannah Cooke, *Ada vs. Emin*, 2018.

[Motherhood and art.](#)  
[Where is the solidarity?](#)  
By Natalie Wichmann.

Georges de La Tour, *le Nouveau-né (the newly-born)*, 1640  
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes.







Vogue Magazine, Oh, Baby! Rihanna's Plus One.  
By Chioma Nnadi  
Photograph by Annie Leibovitz  
Styled by Alex Harrington and Jahleel Weaver  
12 April 2022

## Appendix

### ANSWER SHEET

#### Quiz

1/ How do Heather and Carla know each other?

- a. They met at a party
- b. Their parents knew each other
- c. They went to school together**

2/ As they talk, we get an idea of the girls they used to be. Link the character to her former self:

- **Heather:** Shy girl with **plaits** (braids, a hair-do) and glasses, with an accent. New girl at school.
- **Carla:** Fierce teenager with a group of friends, **a bully** (=someone who harms or intimidates people they perceive as vulnerable).

3/ Heather explains that she and her husband...

- a. Are a happy couple
- b. Can't have a baby**
- c. Are getting a divorce

4/ Heather recently discovered that...

- a. Her husband is unfaithful**
- b. Her husband is a murderer
- c. Her husband has a secret second family

5/ How did Heather discover it?

- a. She created a fake online identity to seduce her husband and see whether he would take the bait (=tempting someone with something)**
- b. She hacked his email account and discovered an intimate conversation between him and another woman
- c. She **caught him red-handed** (=she saw him being with another woman)

6/ Why did Heather want to meet with Carla again?

- a. To ask Carla to be **a surrogate mother**
- b. To "go down memory lane" and talk about their school years again
- c. To ask her to kill her husband**

## **Appendix**

### **ANSWER SHEET**

#### **Quiz**

7/ Why does Heather ask this from Carla? (multiple answers are possible)

- a. Because she knows she is capable of it for having witnessed it herself**
- b. Because she knows she needs the money and will thus be more easily convinced**
- c. Because she thinks Carla is a criminal

8/ Heather seems to know a lot about Carla's life. How did she discover all this?

- a. She talked to a friend of Carla
- b. She kidnapped one of her kids
- c. She created a fake profile on Facebook and became 'friend' with Carla**

9/ How much money does Heather offer Carla?

- a. £ 10 000
- b. £ 30 000**
- c. £ 13 000

10/ How did Carla learn all the steps leading to a successful murder? (multiple answers are possible)

- a. By watching television**
- b. By having already committed a crime
- c. By doing research on internet**

11/ What is so specific about the Tarantula Hawk, the wasp hanged on Heather's wall?

- a. It kills tarantulas by planting an egg in it**
- b. It looks like a tarantula
- c. It is deadly to humans

12/ What is their final plan to kill Heather's husband?

- a. A staged burglary, after Simon has been drugged**
- b. Poison
- c. Removing his car breaks leading to an accident

## **Appendix**

### **ANSWER SHEET**

#### **Quiz**

13/ Why does Carla recognise Heather's husband?

- a. He used to be her boyfriend
- b. He is her boss
- c. He is one of her clients**

14/ Who is the father of the child Carla is expecting?

- a. Her partner
- b. Simon**
- c. She doesn't know

15/ What does the experiment that Heather tries with/on Carla primarily tell us?

- a. Kindness is the only way to move forward and by choosing violence Carla condemns herself**
- b. Psychological violence & manipulation are much worse than physical violence**
- c. The only thing separating us from animals is that we can fight biology and resist instincts, only by doing so can we call ourselves humans**

*(Discuss your choice in class after having watched the play)*

## **Appendix**

### REFERENCES & VOCABULARY

#### References

**Morrisons** is a chain of supermarkets in the UK.

**The London Globe Theatre** is a famous playhouse where many of Shakespeare's plays were first performed over 400 years ago. Its unique design of a round shape and open roof allowed natural light to illuminate the stage and created a special atmosphere for audiences. Today, a modern version of The Globe Theatre stands in London, allowing visitors to experience theatre just like in Shakespeare's time.

**The West End** is an area in central London where one can find many theatres, including the Harold Pinter Theatre, Savoy Theatre and Trafalgar Theatre. Long-running shows are performed there, mostly musicals: the longest running show of the West End is Les Misérables with more than 15000 performances since October 1985!

**Olivier Awards** are the equivalent of the Oscars or the BAFTAS, but for theatre. They are Britain's most prestigious stage honours.

## **Appendix**

### REFERENCES & VOCABULARY

#### Vocabulary

**To be well-off:** to be rich

**To make ends meet:** to earn just enough money to live on

**To bully:** to harm or intimidate someone perceived as vulnerable

**A surrogate mother:** a woman who carries and gives birth to a baby for another person

**A subterfuge:** a trick or dishonest way of achieve something

**To hold a grudge against someone:** to be resentful, to have and maintain a feeling of anger or resentment toward someone for something they did (especially something they did to you)

**To pull the strings:** to be in control of events or other people's actions

**A gag:** something put in or over someone's mouth to prevent them from speaking

**To stab:** to injure someone with a sharp pointed object such as a knife

**Vicariously:** in a vicarious way or experienced through the activities of other people, rather than by doing something yourself

**To take the bait:** knowing that someone might be tempting you and still biting; like a fish presented with a worm at a hook.

**To be caught red-handed:** to be discovered while doing something bad or illegal

**Plaits:** braids, a hair-do