

Research Methods

For the topic of my final research project in THET 489P, History of Shakespeare in Modern Performance, taught by professor Hildy, I was assigned the life and theatrical work of Yukio Ninagawa. I began my research by searching Research Port and the University of Maryland catalogue and copying the links or library numbers of all the resources that looked useful. When I found a title that looked especially promising in the catalogue, I looked at the tags attached to it and searched using one or more of them to find related material.

I talked with Leahkim Gannett, the librarian at the Library for the Performing Arts who specialized in theatre research. She gave me suggestions of Research Port databases I should try and helpful search terms that I had not considered. Her help made my research more fruitful and less time consuming and frustrating.

During my research, I encountered several obstacles. Many of the books I found in the catalogue were not on the shelf, so I had to request the most useful ones from interlibrary loan. One newspaper article was only available in microfiche, so several hours of my time were spent learning the organization of the spools from a librarian and using the computerized machines to email PDFs of the pages to myself. I had heard of microfiche from my parents, both of who received graduate degrees from The University of Maryland, but I had never had to use it until this project. The librarian was very helpful and willing to walk me through the process one step at a time. Learning to navigate the complex library systems has made my subsequent research projects, even those at the Metropolitan University of London, much less difficult.

The first step of my assignment was compiling a library list, which I then organized into an annotated bibliography of 12 sources required by professor Hildy. These sources included websites, journals online and in print, books from the University of Maryland's library catalogue and interlibrary loan, and online newspapers accessed through Jstor. This preliminary step ensured that all the sources I had collected actually contained useful information. I looked for sources both on Ninagawa generally and his two productions of Macbeth specifically.

Online sources required much more thorough investigation into their validity than other kinds of information. Books in print and scholarly journal articles are far more trustworthy than websites claiming to represent a particular theatres or people. The Wikipedia article for Ninagawa had a fairly complete and accurate list of his theatrical credits. However, I did not use Wikipedia as a direct source for any of the information in my paper. I used Wikipedia to find useful search terms such as the names of Japanese translations of Shakespearian scripts directed by Ninagawa. I then used these terms to find relevant news or academic articles.

My final draft lists 15 sources and seven images. The paper is eight-pages long without pictures. The bibliography is an additional two pages. I received an A- in the class and an A on the assignment. It was the most extensive research project I have ever completed.