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'Killing Time' explores physician-assisted suicide

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Just as there's more than one way to read its title, there's multiple interpretations of the award-winning play "Killing Time," which has its world premiere at OU's **Meadow Brook Theatre** on February 14.

Authored by playwright-in-residence Karim Alrawi, "Killing Time" is based upon ethical issues raised during the controversial career of Michigan's Dr. Jack Kevorkian, a leading proponent of physician-assisted suicide.

In the play, a woman with a degenerative illness summons a physician to end her pain, but whether or not this actually happens isn't made clear. Accompanying this uncertainty are different paths down which the audience is led.

"The play deals with political, social and ethical issues, but without pointing the audience to a conclusion," Platt said. "The play may seem to have reached a defined closure several times, but it never does. It's a fascinating thing to see and watch and hear unfold. And the playwright does manipulate the audience a bit, which also makes it interesting.

"You have to piece together what's real and what's not. The title itself can mean several things. It's one of several little games that Alrawi plays that lead you to think one thing, but then the play takes you somewhere else."

Despite its unsettling aspects, Platt said the play still contains a light element.

"Obviously the play deals with issues, but it's not bleak," he said. "The kind of passions involved are so strong, I think response will depend upon how an individual audience member feels about the issues. And the doctor in the play has all the best jokes. There's definitely a comic element."

The play's overall purpose, Platt said, is to present a less-heated, entertaining forum in which to examine physician-assisted suicide.

"What the play does is remind people of the quality of life and how and when people die. Those questions and issues aren't going away," said Platt.

"Killing Time" won the 1999 Canadian Theatre National Playwriting Award and the International 2000 Playwriting Competition. Alrawi has served as the playwright-in-residence of **Meadow Brook Theatre** for the past three seasons.

Every performance of "Killing Time" will be followed by a talkback session - the first offered in Meadow Brook Theatre's 35 years - where audience members will be invited to discuss the issues and emotions raised by the drama. Additional educational outreach activities, in conjunction with OU's **Honors College**, include a series of panel discussions that address the legal issues and ethical implications of physician-assisted suicide.

Performances of "Killing Time" run through March 11. For tickets, call (248) 377-3300. Group discount tickets are available at (248) 370-3316.

SUMMARY

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