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The Shape of Things: One Director's Journey from Script to Final Dress

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The Shape of Things:

One Director's Journey from Script to Final Dress

The Shape of Things:
One Director's Journey from Script to Final Dress

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

By

Lyndsay Somers Hicks, B.A.
Lindenwood University, 2002

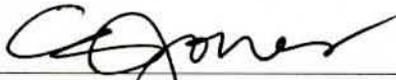
December, 2012
Lindenwood University

II. Abstract

The purpose of this written thesis is to document my journey, as the director, from script to final dress rehearsal; after that the performance belongs to the actors and technical crew. During this journey I collaborated with a team of designers, artists and a mentor. I opened my mind and my experience to their expertise, leadership and artistic license. In this documentation is my concept, my vision, my heart, and my process step-by-step resulting in the performance that I humbly present as my interpretation of Neil LaBute's *The Shape of Things*.

The Thesis is Approved
for Recommendation to
Graduate Council

Thesis Committee:



Emily Jones, Committee Chair



Larry Quiggins, Committee Member



Donna Northcott, Committee Member

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere thanks are due to Mrs. Emily Jones who mentored every footstep of this process, Mr. Larry Quiggins who saw me as a diamond in the rough, Ms. Donna Northcott who demonstrated her passion for the arts and above all Mr. Aaron Hicks, who has always held my feet to the ground.

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Chapter One: Initial Goals and Vision

The Production

The Shape of Things was performed Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, September 20-22, 2012 at 7:30pm and Sunday, September 23, 2012 at 2pm in the Emerson Black Box Theatre on the campus of Lindenwood University in St. Charles, MO. Rehearsals began Monday, August 20, 2012. The cast included Kelsey Amann as Evelyn, Cassie Ballard as Jenny, Josh Wolk as Philip and Billy Walkenhorst as Adam. The production team was as follows: Courtney McDaniel, Stage Manager; Lindsey Conklin, Assistant Stage Manager; Tim Poertner, Lighting Director and Designer; Shiori Yamamoto, Assistant Lighting Designer; Pippin McGowan, Scenic Designer; Danny Mauk, Sound Designer; Donna Northcott, Costume Designer; Louise Hermann, Costume Shop Manager; Jim Koehnle, Technical Director; Krista Tettaton, Props Designer; Drew Matney, Sound Crew Head; Dustin Massie, Shop/Rigging Crew Head; Taylor Palmer, Lighting Board Operator; Jacob Van Tuyl, Sound Board Operator; Michelle Wolken, Projection Operator; Bre Johnson, Sam Rudoff, Deck Crew; Sierra Henderson and Saki Ogushi, Wardrobe.

The Script

The script was written by Neil LaBute in 2001. The story centers around Adam, an awkward young college, who meets an attractive graduate art student named Evelyn. The two begin to date and in doing so, Adam begins to make changes in his physical appearance as well as his behavior and personality. The story concerns their relationship

as it evolves and the effects it has on their lives and the lives of Adam's two closest friends. Some of the themes addressed in the script are art censorship, society's obsession with appearances, artistic responsibility (for the creation), self-love and acceptance, morality in cosmetic surgery, deception in the name of art, love vs. friendship, unfaithfulness, freedom of expression (at the cost to another person), and the first Biblical couple, Adam and Eve.

There are four characters in this script, the principle one being Evelyn. Evelyn is a graduate art student who defines herself entirely by her identity as an artist. She is very secretive and dedicated to her thesis project. Evelyn uses manipulation and fear to get what she wants. Evelyn is in a relationship with Adam, an awkward English Literature major who works two jobs to pay for school as a security guard at the local art museum and as an employee of the local video store. Adam doesn't usually "get the girl" and is surprised when Evelyn shows interest in him. He becomes very dedicated to her and is willing to do whatever it takes to keep her, despite the protests of his closest friends, Philip and Jenny. Adam is so consumed with Evelyn that he goes to great lengths-and endures great loss-to keep her. Then there is Adam's best friend and former roommate, Philip. Philip thinks women want him and men want to be him. He is a legend in his own mind and is not afraid to share that opinion with anyone who will listen. Adam and Philip have been friends for a very long time and were also once roommates. Philip is now engaged to Jenny, a girl that Adam met first and had feelings for but lacked the courage to act on them. Lastly there is Philip's fiancée, Jenny. Jenny met Adam in a college class. There was mutual interest but neither ever acted on their feelings. Jenny then met Philip. Philip immediately asked Jenny on a date which eventually lead to their

current engagement. The audience sees glimpses of Jenny's attraction to Adam, especially as he begins to change his outward appearance. Jenny is a soft-spoken, laid back woman who is often mistaken for being weak, but when backed into a corner, that demeanor disappears and she is a fighter.

Goals and Vision

I was introduced to the play by my leading actress, Kelsey Amann, who would go on to play the character of Evelyn. To be completely honest, when I read the play the first time I was not immediately drawn to it; in fact it was just the opposite. I strongly disliked Evelyn and I thought there was nothing redeeming about her at all. I thought the character of Adam was pathetic. After all he goes through for Evelyn, giving up everything only to have her publicly destroy him; I thought not only the situation but the relationships were completely unbelievable. In my mind Philip was not the type of guy who Adam would be friends with, much less roommates. Kind, sweet, naive Jenny would never marry a man like Philip, nor would she be the type of girl to cheat on Philip with Adam. Then to top it all off, the ending was awful, or so I thought, in the beginning. Because of these things the script was just not believable to me. But as any director would, I read it again; mainly because I thought I had to have missed something. People whose thoughts and opinions I respect told me they loved this show, so I must have read it wrong the first time. After the second read, I hated it less. So I read it a third time, and after the third time I loved that the ending was not a happy one.

The more I read the script, the more I began to envision what these characters looked like and what their back stories were. How did they become intertwined into each

other's lives? Instead of thinking that this was an unbelievable script, it became my goal to make this script believable. How do I convince an audience that the gawky, awkward college kid gets the attractive, edgy art student? What is there about Philip that causes Adam to want to be his best friend and Jenny to marry him? Is he truly that charismatic, or are they merely desperate for acceptance? I wanted to explore these complex themes while also developing three dimensional believable, even likable characters.

After a discussion with my scenic designer, Pippin McGowan, we decided we wanted to propose this as our thesis project. My general vision was the contrast of a sophisticated script against the backdrop of a simple, yet clever, scenic design. I wanted the performance to be in-the-round or possibly a thrust stage so the action would be intimate: personal and "in your face". Having as some of our themes art censorship, morality in art, and deception in the name of art, our overall vision became art but with an underlying commanding image. That image was DiVinci's *Vitruvian Man* (Appendix I, #17). I chose this powerful image because DiVinci drew the *Vitruvian Man* based on the ideal human proportions. As far as DiVinci was concerned, this was the perfect male form, something that Adam was so desperately trying to achieve at the risk of everything and everyone important to him.

Focusing on the idea of simplicity, I didn't want a traditional set with traditional furniture pieces; I preferred a minimalistic, fragmented style as I felt the script called for a non-traditional look with jagged, fragmented staging. This was something scenic designer, Pippin McGowan and I had discussed early on. We had established that her design would include slide projections of actual art pieces, on gigantic screens as scenery. The lighting design would give the audience a feeling of being in a painting both during

scenes and blackouts. Art was all around us and we wanted the audience to feel it.

Pippin's idea and our second specific vision came when we discussed the theme of Adam and Eve, the first Biblical couple. Eve(lyn) tempting Adam, Jenny being the forbidden fruit, Evelyn's initials spelling EAT. We wanted to somehow incorporate the idea of the Tree of Good and Evil (Appendix I, #21-24) from Genesis Chapter 2, that's when Pippin suggested the tree projections on the sides of the center projection. Their purpose was two-fold, first to show the passage of time with the leaves falling and then blooming, and second (and more subtle) to be our Tree of Good and Evil.

Chapter Two: Research and Character Analysis

Playwright Research and Other Works

Neil LaBute was born in Detroit, Michigan, on Tuesday, March 19, 1963, to parents, Marian, a hospital receptionist, and Richard, an over-the-road truck driver. Richard was often gone more than he was present and this would later play a role in LaBute's development as a filmmaker. Shortly after his birth the LaBute family, which included older brother, Richard, Jr., uprooted and moved to Liberty Lake, Washington, just 15 miles outside Spokane. It was there that LaBute grew up and attended Central Valley High School and it was there that his love for theatre began (Wood, ed *xii*). In a YouTube interview with FILMAKA, LaBute says that he never had the family Super 8 camera and was not immediately drawn to film, but gained all of his experience through theatre in high school and his community (FILMAKA). Against his father's wishes, LaBute worked for a year after high school at a local movie theatre to earn money for college. His father believed in physical labor and wanted LaBute to work on the family farm, whereas his mother was very supportive of her son's dreams. This was a source of tension throughout their marriage and added pressure to an already stressful relationship. LaBute's parents divorced in the mid-90's, something for which LaBute always felt responsible. As a result, difficult relationships have been an ongoing theme in his scripts (Welch).

After high school LaBute enrolled at Brigham Young University, being awarded an academic scholarship for non-Latter-day Saints. He had been encouraged to enroll

after his Latter-day Saint high school guidance counselor exposed him to their film school. In 1981, LaBute joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His Mormonism has been a subject of curiosity by critics and audience members throughout his career as much of LaBute's work directly contradicts his Mormon beliefs. While at BYU, LaBute met wife, Lisa Gore, and fellow student and promising young actor, Aaron Eckhart. It was during this period that LaBute wrote and staged some of his earlier works, with Eckhart playing the lead. The BYU administration deemed these works unacceptable due to their controversial subject matter and tried to have them banned. A few were shut down shortly after their premieres, but despite this, he was still awarded "most promising undergraduate playwright" (Wood, ed xii).

LaBute went on to receive his MA from the University of Kansas where he met actor Paul Rudd who, like Eckhart, would go on to play many leading roles in both LaBute's film and stage works. He later pursued a MFA in Dramatic Writing at NYU. While at NYU, he studied writing and drama at the Royal Court Theatre in London (Wood, ed xiii).

In Robert K. Elder's book, *The Film That Changed My Life: 30 Directors on Their Epiphanies in the Dark*, LaBute attributes *The Soft Skin* directed by Francois Truffaut in 1964, as the film that changed his life and one of his biggest influences (246). As LaBute explained:

It exposed me, probably in the earliest way, to 'Hey, I could do that.' I've never been one to love the camera or even to be as drawn to it as I am to the human aspect of it, and I think it was a film that speaks in a very simple way of here's a way that you can tell a story on film in human

terms. It was the kind of film that made me go, 'I could do this; I want to tell stories that are like this and told in this way. And so it was altering for me in that way, in its simplicity or deceptive simplicity. (248)

Elder goes on to say that the film was done in what is called a "Hitchcock cycle" as Truffaut was interviewing Hitchcock at the time for a book he would go on to write. As Truffaut's work was influenced by Hitchcock, so in turn LaBute's work was influenced by Hitchcock as well. LaBute replied, "I think the [Hitchcock] influences are kind of obvious... There's the use of unexpected humor, that distinctive second act, where it's almost farcical." (249).

In the book, *Neil LaBute: A Casebook*, Mary English compares LaBute to a "modern Euripides" saying that they both are/were "controversial and cutting-edge playwrights" (23). English goes on to say that LaBute, like Euripides, likes to provoke his audiences, challenging their belief systems as well as their ethical judgments and values. After being told of this comparison, LaBute addresses it in an interview with John Istel saying that there is a "Euripides-esque" influence to his work but he goes on to clarify the distinction between provoking an audience and "agitating their minds, which is more difficult and more gratifying" (24). In 1999 LaBute wrote *bash: latter-day plays*, a trilogy of monologues, which takes the characters of Greek tragedy and recreates them into modern iteration for the American audience. LaBute weaves connotations to Euripides' stories throughout his script only to admit later, after the script was written, he was in a Euripides phase (24). In a 2005 interview with Rosalynde Welch in *Times and Seasons*, Welch asks if *bash* is a "three-part modern adaptation of . . . Aeschylus' Oresteia trilogy?" LaBute agrees saying it is a mixture of *Iphigenia in Orem* and *Medea*

Redux, but again, did not realize it until he was finished writing (Welch). In the same interview he attributed Mormonism as a major influence on his writing, saying that he had been a Mormon longer than he had not, so how could it not be an influence. LaBute credited his varying levels of devotion to the church a major influence in and of itself (Welch).

Many of LaBute's works can be placed in the category of "important," but it's the reasoning behind them that makes the works distinct. *Filthy Talk for Troubled Times* was his first commercial play produced. *In the Company of Men*, his first play to be made into a film, won the Association for Mormon Letters Award for Drama. In 1997, LaBute made the film for \$25,000 and it won the Filmmakers Trophy at the Sundance Film Festival, nominations and major awards at the Deauville Film Festival, the Independent Spirit Awards, the Thessaloniki Film Festival, the Society of Texas Film Critics Awards and the New York Film Critics Circle (Wood, ed xiii). This play also sparked the idea for a later work, *The Shape of Things*. In an interview, LaBute was asked if *Company* could be done with two female leads instead of male. LaBute did not believe that it would work unless it was two men and a woman with the woman as the manipulator of the men; that sparked the initial idea for *Shape* (Williams).

Shape went on to become a film, and since then, six more LaBute plays have been turned into films. *Reasons to Be Pretty* was LaBute's first play to be staged on Broadway and nominated for several Tony and Drama Desk Awards. Generally, a theatre is classified as a Broadway Theatre if it is geographically between 41st Street and 54th Street and between Sixth and Eighth Ave, and has a minimum of 499 seats, however, there are always exceptions to the rule. Broadway Theatres are also mainly

commercial theatres. Off-Broadway Theatres have less than 499 seats and more than 99 seats and/or are outside the geographical Broadway area. An Off-Off-Broadway Theatre generally has less than 100 seats. Most Off-Broadway Theatres are also non-profit (www.newyorktheatreguide.com). His play *bash: latter-day plays* grabbed the attention of the Mormon Church and he was asked to stop writing Mormon characters. LaBute complied, but was still disfellowed from the Mormon Church as a result. *Mercy Seat* was his first semi-political play and was written in response to the attacks of 9/11. In 2004 *Seconds of Pleasure* was published. It is the first published collection of LaBute's short stories.

Neil LaBute is considered a controversial and "edgy" playwright who has built a successful career based on this avant-garde style. This is evident in *bash: latter-day plays*, which concerns his experience with the Mormon Church and its members. LaBute is not easily unsettled. In an interview with *The Independent*, he recalls a time when *In the Company of Men* was being performed and a main character was delivering a homophobic monologue. An audience member stood up and shouted, "Kill the playwright!" LaBute's response was that he was thrilled that someone was paying attention and even more that it moved them enough to cause an outward display (Romney). He is not one to take himself too seriously or to be bothered with fame. Nev Pierce from BBC.com asked if he sits back and thinks, "I'm Neil LaBute." LaBute's response was "No. I say, 'I'm Neil LaBute,' but I think of it with very little import. I constantly feel the need to, not to prove myself, but just to keep working... I'm just happy to be doing what I always wanted to do" (Pierce).

After watching several interviews, listening to podcasts and even viewing a lecture series from Neil LaBute I see him as an anomaly. He has no desire to draw attention to himself, but only to continue to create reputable work. LaBute is unshaken by the situations of his life taking a troubled childhood and early adult life and turning them into masterpieces, highlighting complicated adult relationships. The world is his mentor, from church influences to Greek playwrights and even David Mamet (Wood, ed 66). LaBute has produced very provocative work and makes no apologies for it. As a result, his audiences and critics invite him to lecture, guide and instruct others to do the same.

LaBute's films include *In the Company of Men* (1997), *Your Friends & Neighbors* (1998), *Tumble* (Sundance short - narrated by Neil LaBute - 2000), *Nurse Betty* (2000), *bash: latter-day plays* (2001) (TV), *Possession* (2002), *The Shape of Things* (2003), *The Wicker Man* (2006), *Lakeview Terrace* (2008), *Death at a Funeral* (2010), *Sexting* (2010 short), *Seconds of Pleasure* (pre-production). His plays include *Filthy Talk For Troubled Times* (1989), *In the Company of Men* (1992), *bash: latter-day plays* (1999), *The Shape of Things* (2001), *The Distance From Here* (2002), *The Mercy Seat* (2002), *Autobahn* (2003), *Fat Pig* (2004), *This Is How It Goes* (2005), *Some Girl(s)* (2005), *Wrecks* (2005), *In A Dark Dark House* (2007), *reasons to be pretty* (2008), *Helter Skelter/Land of the Dead* (2008), *The Break of Noon* (2009), *The New Testament* (2009), *Some White Chick* (2009), *The Purple Marmoset* (2009), *The Furies* (2009), and *In a Forest, Dark and Deep* (2011) (www.wikipedia.org).

Production History

The Shape of Things premiered at Almeida at King's Cross, London, England opening May 30, 2001 and ran through June 23, 2001. The cast included Gretchen Mol (Jenny), Paul Rudd (Adam), Rachel Weisz (Evelyn), and Frederick Weller (Philip). The production was directed by Neil LaBute himself and the designers were as follows: Set Design: Giles Cadle; Costume Design: Lynette Meyer; Sound Design: Fergus O'Hare; Lighting Design: Mark Henderson. LaBute was nominated for the 2001 London Evening Standard Theatre Award for Best Play.

The first Off-Broadway production was performed at Promenade Theatre , 2162 Broadway (at 76th Street) New York, New York, a 398 seat theatre, opening October 10, 2001 and ran through January 6, 2002. The cast included Gretchen Mol (Jenny), Paul Rudd (Adam), Rachel Weisz (Evelyn), and Frederick Weller (Philip). Again, Neil LaBute directed and the designers were as follows: Set Designer: Giles Cadle; Costume Design: Lynette Meyer; Sound Design: Fergus O'Hare; Lighting Design: James Vermeulen. Frederick Weller received an Outstanding Featured Actor nomination from *The Lortels*, 2002; Gretchen Mol received an Outstanding Featured Actress nomination from *The Lortels*, 2002 and a Theatre World Award winner in 2002 for her performance; Neil LaBute received a Drama Desk Award nomination in 2001 for Outstanding Play.

World of the Play

The world of this play takes place in a conservative, sleepy college town just outside of Omaha, NE. The town is full of God-fearing people that are offended by brazen artwork. They are people of action, however, and after a town petition, the

artwork is censored. Clarkson College is located in this town and has a progressive art department that has attracted Evelyn Thompson. Evelyn is edgier than the townspeople are accustomed to in their daily lives. This script takes place over eighteen weeks, beginning in January and running through May. Having the world of this play take place outside of Omaha, both the Winter and Spring seasons are experienced throughout the show.

Analysis and Perceptions of the Script

Evelyn refers to her attendance at Clarkson College, which is located on the outskirts of Omaha (*Shape* 117). The characters all describe the town as a “small town” or “a little college town” (33, 34, 58, 118). The town is conservative, evidence by the naked statue being covered with a pastie (9). The town is also run democratically, hence the townspeople circulating a petition to have the statue covered. The idea of religion is existent from Evelyn’s comment, “it’s suppose to be a ‘god,’ you know...that’s what really pissed ‘em off” (9). Jenny states that every time she and Philip want to see a new movie they have to drive to town (91). This statement further supports that the play takes place in a small town.

Adam and Philip are former roommates (28). Jenny met Adam in a class and now Jenny is Philip’s fiancée (25, 29). Evelyn met Adam while trying to deface a naked statue at the museum where he works and Adam introduced Evelyn to Philip and Jenny (1-5, 25).

Adam works two jobs: the museum and a video store (1-2, 4). It is evident he is middle-to-lower class, due to his need for two jobs student loans to go to school (11).

However, by the end of the play he is able to purchase an engagement ring for Evelyn (117). Adam is seldom noticed by members of the opposite sex and until Evelyn's changes to him he was rarely noticed by anyone (39, 128). Evelyn is an art student (10). Her art work is exceptional enough that the university has granted her a full scholarship (34). Evelyn feels no remorse or guilt for any of her choices regarding Adam and is at a complete loss as to why he is so angry and hurt (122, 126). Philip is an undergrad student that makes enough money to go to school and live on his own (30, 36). He is having second thoughts about his marriage to Jenny and thus is relieved when the engagement falls apart (114). Philip is not someone to be perceived as 'sweet,' even Jenny doesn't think so (48). Philip has a history of infidelity with Jenny (48-49). Jenny is a student (29). She stays with Philip even though she knows of his infidelities (48-49). Jenny has feelings for and kisses Adam despite her engagement to Philip (56-57).

Adam is in love with Evelyn (110). Adam and Philip are friends and former roommates but Adam thinks that Philip is an idiot and annoying at times (28, 73-75). Adam thinks Jenny is amazing and too good for Philip (50-51). Evelyn thinks of Adam as her creation, her art (120). She thinks Philip is obnoxious and a prick (34, 37). Evelyn is threatened by Jenny and her relationship with Adam (100-105). Philip thinks Adam has turned into Evelyn's lap dog (37). He also starts out thinking Evelyn is a bitch, but later tells Jenny that Adam could do worse (37, 52). Philip thinks Jenny is a good kisser but that they are too young to get married (79, 81). Jenny has had a crush on Adam for three years (57). She is in awe of the positive changes that Evelyn has brought to Adam's life (55). Jenny says she loves Philip (48-49). Adam is the protagonist. Evelyn is the antagonist.

Adam sees himself as a “nobody,” but has always been content with that notion (23,124). Evelyn sees herself as an artist and only that (122). Philip thinks that his good-looks make up for his multitude of personality flaws and that he’s quite the “ladies man” (29, 75). Jenny sees herself as just an average girl. She doesn’t think she is exceptionally smart, or artsy or cool, just average, and for her that is fine (106).

The play begins January 9th, the fifth day of winter semester (119). Scene 1: January 9th, the fifth day of winter semester (119). Scene 2: Adam and Evelyn allude to the fact it has been a few weeks. Adam has been on his exercise routine and Evelyn, Phil and Jenny are all noticing a change. Furthermore, Evelyn comments that Adam’s hair is longer (16, 25). Scene 3: Philip mentions that he, Jenny, Evelyn and Adam have all been on a few double dates and by this time, it is a week or two after scene two (35). Scene 6: It’s 10:15am on a Wednesday (59). Scene 7: Philip tells Adam he saw Evelyn the week before and she explained that Adam had recently had a “procedure” done; his rhinoplasty takes place in the previous scene (76). Scene 8: Evelyn says her art showing is in a couple of weeks, but she just saw Philip a few days ago, referencing the same meeting that Philip mentioned in scene seven, concluding that scene eight is just about a day after scene seven (90, 101). Scene 9: Evelyn states in her presentation that it has been eighteen weeks since she first began her human sculpture (118). Evelyn references the television show *Kung Fu* which ran from 1972-75, thus the play takes place after this time period (13). Philip and Jenny both reference their wedding plans. This supports the idea that this is a modern time that recognizes marriage both socially and politically (26, 27). Adam casually uses the term ‘gay’ as slang, thus the world of this play is in a modern time where the slang term “gay” is customary and homosexuality is commonplace (51). The

term 'god' is used as slang throughout the script showing more evidence that this play is taking place in a more modern time period that is liberal in the obscenities. Adam gets a rhinoplasty; cosmetic surgery is common enough in this town that it has its own plastic surgeon (59). Philip calls Evelyn the "artist formerly known as Evelyn," a reference to the artist, Prince, who changed his name to a symbol in 1993. Thus, the setting is post 1993.

The meaning of the title, *The Shape of Things*, comes from a line in the script. Evelyn is presenting her thesis project, Adam, in scene nine of the play. She explains that Adam's transformation from geek to chic is a "living, breathing example of our [society's] obsession with the surface of things, the shape of them" (121). Both of LaBute's works, *Company of Men* and *Shape* tell the story of an individual who uses seduction and flattery to build a false relationship with an unsuspecting victim. In the end, both victims are devastated by the truth, while the predator shows no remorse. These works both support the philosophical theme of *Shape*. The theme being that we are all victims or slaves at some point in our lives. Adam is obviously a victim (slave) to Evelyn, Jenny a victim (slave) to her feelings for Adam, Philip a victim (slave) to his insecurities and Evelyn a victim (slave) to her art and the lengths she will go for it.

Symbolism played a large part in my analysis and interpretation of the script. It also became the foundation of the direction I decided to take. The following have been the most influential examples of symbolism: Adam: for Evelyn, Adam is symbolic of the perfect sculpture or art project. She took a lump of clay (Adam) and molded it into a work of art with her words and actions. Evelyn states during her thesis presentation, "Now, my work will fade, to be sure. Like chipping marble or crazing paint...but for this

one glorious moment, it is perfect. As perfect as I made it..." Adam and Evelyn: Adam and Evelyn are symbolic of the Biblical first couple, Adam and Eve, and like Adam and Eve, the woman deceives the man. Eve is the first to eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, much like Evelyn is the first to cross the rope in the museum to deface the sculpture. Jenny: Jenny is symbolic of the forbidden fruit. Not only did Adam miss his chance with Jenny when they first met, but she is now engaged to his best friend.

Adam's Corduroy Jacket: Adam's jacket is symbolic of Adam's life before Evelyn, mainly his friendship with Philip. For this reason, Philip gets very upset when the jacket is tossed aside without a thought. Philip is part of Adam's old life and fears he too will be thoughtlessly tossed aside in the same way.

Within my scene work, I found that dissecting the action of the play into four separate events helped me to understand the action better. Every minor action in this show is a direct result of one of the following four events: the Initial Event, the Inciting Incident, the Central Event, and the Main Event. The initial event, or beginning action, is Evelyn, an art student, on the brink of defacing a statue in a local museum when Adam, the security guard, intervenes resulting in their meeting and Adam asking Evelyn out. The inciting incident, or the beginning conflict, is Evelyn's altercation with Philip, Adam's best friend, resulting in tension and distance between Adam and Philip. The central event is Evelyn's thesis presentation, during which she reveals that her relationship with Adam has been a facade. She admits she never had feelings for him but instead used him as her thesis project. Finally the main event, or last action of the production, is Adam's realization that he has sacrificed everything for a relationship that never existed in reality.

I found that dividing the script by scenes and then assigning a tempo to the action of the individual scene, gave it character. The tempo also acted as a method of accountability to the actors and me. We all knew exactly what pace we needed to achieve. Furthermore, the scene tempo acted as a guide for the actors' individual tempos. Every tempo is a direct result of one of the four separate events. This further allowed me to understand the action and find its motivation. Within that context, I also assigned each character a tempo which served two purposes: the first is that the tempo was something each actor could identify with. For example, Philip is a high-strung individual who continually runs at a tempo of seven. Josh, the actor playing Philip, could visualize what that seven would look like and connect that with Philip. As a result, it was a helpful tool to both my actors and me with developing their character analyses and their objectives. Later, during the rehearsal process, I discovered my second reasoning for the tempos, if an actor did not understand the motivation behind a specific emotion or action I could just say for example that in this scene Philip would be feeling a two and ask Josh for the motivation behind the drastic difference from his normal tempo.

Scene Tempos

Scene 1: Museum; this scene starts at a five, even keeled, as Adam and Evelyn are meeting for the first time. It then bumps to a six when Adam realizes Evelyn is going to deface the statue and she is not backing down. The scene finishes off at a six when Evelyn spray paints her phone number on Adam's jacket.

Scene 2: Restaurant Lobby; this scene starts at a five; Adam and Evelyn are just chatting as they await Philip and Jenny. It then bumps to a six by Philip and Jenny's

arrival as they all introduce themselves and finishes off at a six with Philip and Jenny noticing the changes in Adam.

Scene 3: Philip's Living Room; this scene starts at a seven as Philip is explaining the underwater wedding to Adam and Evelyn, but slows to a five when it's said that Philip took Jenny from Adam. From that point, the tempo slowly rises to a seven as Evelyn and Philip begin to argue, then to an eight/nine as the argument continues and the scene stops abruptly.

Scene 4: Bedroom; this scene is a slow and steady four as it takes place with Adam and Evelyn in bed, but spikes to a quick six when Adam brings up Evelyn and Philip's prior argument, then returns to a four.

Scene 5: Park; this scene is again starting at a five, but slows to a four when Jenny brings up Philip's possible infidelity. It picks up to a six/seven as Adam begins to "come clean" to Jenny as she tells Adam how much he's changed for the better. It stays at a six for Adam and Jenny's kiss and decreases to a five as they go off together.

Scene 6: Doctor's Lounge; this scene alternates from a five to a seven throughout as Adam goes from being calm to slightly nervous about the surgery and Evelyn uses different tactics to sooth him, including sex in the men's room, which ends the scene at a six.

Scene 7: Lawn/ Park; this scene begins at a six when Adam and Philip meet and Philip is grilling Adam about the bandage on his nose. It bumps to a seven as Philip tells Adam he ran into Evelyn and she told him about a "procedure" that Adam had had done. It continues at a seven when Philip tells Adam he knows about his kiss with Jenny

and heightens to an eight as Philip talks about all of Adam's changes including his unbitten nails and jacket. The scene ends abruptly at an eight.

Scene 8: Coffee Shop; this scene stays at a very controlled five until, towards the end, Jenny comes back to the table to apologize to Evelyn, then it jumps to a seven. It stays at seven until Evelyn's speech about what she deserves to know. Then it drops back to a controlled five and it slows to a three as Evelyn asks Adam to give up his friends and he agrees.

Scene 9: Auditorium; this scene starts at a four as Philip and Adam see each other for the first time in a few weeks and Philip confronts him about Adam avoiding him. It continues at a four until Evelyn starts her presentation and it jumps to a controlled six where it stays until the last paragraph of Evelyn's monologue where the tempo slows to a four as Evelyn says she has no remorse for what she has done.

Scene 10: Exhibition Gallery; the scene starts at a four with Adam and Evelyn trying to talk without being awkward. Then it jumps to a quick six in the middle of page 124 when Adam starts to get angry. As the conversation continues, the tempo grows to an eight and drops to a five when Evelyn offers to return all of Adam's things after she is graded. With Adam's speech on art, it jumps to a quick seven and then drops to a five for the duration of the scene until the end.

Character Tempos

Adam: Adam's inner tempo is almost a mirror of Jenny. He is consistently at a five, but under the stress of confrontation his tempo will increase to a six or seven, for example, when he kisses Jenny and Evelyn finds out. His tempo also changes under the

influence of Evelyn. When Evelyn confronts Jenny at the coffee shop, she (Evelyn) is able to keep the tempo at a very controlled five, which Adam follows. Then when Adam is in bed with Evelyn, his tempo falls to a four at her lead.

Evelyn: Evelyn's inner tempo runs at a median five. It will increase to a six or seven in conflict, such as the confrontation with Jenny or Philip, but it is always a very controlled increase. Evelyn's tempo is very controlled whether increasing, or decreasing to a four, such as the bedroom scene with Adam.

Philip: Philip's inner tempo bounces between a six and a seven. A few times, like when he is interrogating Adam about his nose job and his kiss with Jenny, it runs more at a seven. He even gets up to an eight when he has his confrontation with Evelyn and the defacing of the statue.

Jenny: Jenny's inner tempo is almost consistently a five. She is very even-keeled and level-headed, which is in contrast to her counterpart, Philip. Jenny's tempo increases to a six when she kisses Adam and then later to a seven when Evelyn finds out about the kiss and confronts her at the coffee shop.

Scene Moods

In scene one the mood is vast, empty, hushed, reserved, and suffocating. Scene two becomes anxious, apprehensive, rigid, prickly and shallow. Scene three is bustling, quirky, awkward, hostile and exposed. Scene four is warm, protected, secure, orange and green. Scene five is pink, enthusiastic, twitter-pated, flattered and soft. Scene six is white, bland, stark, sterile, suggestive and titillating. While scene seven is sarcastic, yellow, reckless, smug, deceptive and reconciled. Scene eight is bitter, stingy,

sweet, accusatory, hollow and blue. Scene nine is abandoned, alone, detached, depleted and lavender. Finally, scene ten is angry, abandoned, carefree, bewildered and red.

Dialogue

Dialogue played a large part in my analysis and perception into the world of this script. It played a major role in the development of the personality of the script and its characters. The dialogue in this script is realistic throughout. LaBute makes use of slang as well as profanity for all four characters; it's peppered throughout the dialogue. The sound is both short and choppy for arguments, and long and fluid for conversation. In the final scene, Evelyn has a five- page monologue that alternates between a rant and a confession.

The sentence structure of this script has two distinct styles. The first is longer, flowing back and forth in a comfortable, conversational style. LaBute uses it for conversations between Adam and Jenny, Adam and Philip and Philip and Jenny. It is apparent, from this style throughout the script, that these three characters have been friends for a few years and are comfortable interacting with each other. Evelyn also uses this style in the presentation scene when she delivers her final monologue. The second structure style consists of short, choppy sentences. LaBute uses this style to single out Evelyn as an outsider. She is the new addition to this group of friends. Her dialogue with each of the other characters is short, choppy and aggressive with the exception of the presentation scene and her bedroom scene with Adam, when her sentences are long, flowing and conversational. Adam, Philip and Jenny all use the short, choppy style as well, but only when arguing with each other or Evelyn.

This script is a combination of rhythmic lines that flow back and forth in conversational style due to the close friendship of Adam, Philip and Jenny. This conversational style shows the comfort level of the group. In contrast, there are the short, choppy and aggressive lines delivered by Evelyn. I believe LaBute writes her this way for two reasons; first, to separate her from the group, showing her as an outsider. The second is to highlight her blatant honesty towards the group. Evelyn is very direct and forthright in her responses to Philip and Jenny, which is literary irony at its best in the face of the finale. She does not mince words; she speaks her mind, as does Philip. Adam, Philip and Jenny all use these short, choppy lines as well, but only when arguing with Evelyn or amongst each other. Evelyn's sentence structure does change into a flowing conversational style twice within the script. The first change happens in scene four, the bedroom, when Evelyn and Adam are in bed together and a second time occurs when she and Adam are in the plastic surgeon's office. In both occurrences Evelyn uses this structure to manipulate Adam while persuading him that her ideas are his. She later uses the same flowing sentence structure during her revelation in the finale presentation. At this time, she uses the fluid style to justify her actions through a five-page monologue.

In this script, LaBute does not use capitalization. Every line is written with lower case lettering and he uses the ellipsis often. Many of his lines end in ellipses, but also he uses it frequently in his longer paragraphs in place of a pause. In some of the short, choppy sentences, LaBute will substitute a slash (/) in place of a comma or a period. Moreover, in the author's notes at the beginning of the play, it is said that LaBute often uses the slash in specific lines to denote characters interrupting or overlapping each other.

The example of verbiage is as follows; all definitions were found at
www.dictionary.com:

1. **Picture of Dorian Gray:** The Picture of Dorian Gray is the only published novel by Oscar Wilde, appearing as the lead story in Lippincott's Monthly Magazine on 20 June 1890, printed as the July 1890 issue of this magazine.
2. **Cabaret:** *Cabaret* is a 1972 musical film directed by Bob Fosse and starring Liza Minnelli, Michael York and Joel Grey.
3. **Dirty Dancing:** Dirty Dancing is a 1987 American romance film, written by Eleanor Bergstein and directed by Emile Ardolino, the film features Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey, daughter of Joel Grey.
4. **Aesthetic:** pertaining to a sense of the beautiful
5. **Fornecelli:** an artist LaBute created as the creator of the sculpture Evelyn is preparing to deface in the opening scene.
6. **Kung Fu:** (1972–1975) is an American television series that starred David Carradine.
7. **Henry Higgins:** the main character in both George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* and Alan Jay Lerner's *My Fair Lady*.
8. **Take Back the Night Rally:** (also known as **Reclaim the Night**) is an internationally held march and rally intended as a protest and direct action against rape and other forms of sexual violence.
9. **Gallant:** (of a person or their behavior) brave; heroic.
10. **Acronym:** a word formed from the initial letters or groups of letters of words in a set phrase or series of words

11. **Sadist:** is the derivation of pleasure as a result of inflicting pain or watching pain inflicted on others.
12. **Quadrophenia:** is a 1979 British film, loosely based around the 1973 rock opera of the same name by The Who.
13. **Charles Dickens:** Charles John Huffam Dickens was an English writer and social critic who is generally regarded as the greatest novelist of the Victorian period and the creator of some of the world's most memorable fictional characters.
14. **Metamorphosis:** is a short story by Franz Kafka, first published in 1915.
15. **Frankenstein:** or, The Modern Prometheus is a novel written by Mary Shelley about a creature produced by an unorthodox scientific experiment.
16. **Little House on the Prairie:** is an American Western drama television series about a family living on a farm in Walnut Grove, Minnesota, in the 1870s and 1880s.
17. **Apropos:** (1) fitting; at the right time; to the purpose; opportunely. (2) Obsolete. By the way.
18. **Ambiguity:** (1) doubtfulness or uncertainty of meaning or intention: to speak with *ambiguity*; an *ambiguity* of manner (2) an unclear, indefinite, or equivocal word
19. **Gregor Samsa:** the main character of Franz Kafka's short story *The Metamorphosis*.

20. **Picasso:** Pablo Ruiz y Picasso, known as Pablo Picasso, was a Spanish painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist, and stage designer who spent most of his adult life in France.
21. **Ritalin:** is a psychostimulant drug approved for treatment of ADHD or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.
22. **Conjugal Visit:** is a scheduled period in which an inmate of a prison is permitted to spend several hours or days in private with a visitor, usually their legal spouse.
23. **Query:** a question; an inquiry
24. **Manifesto:** a written public declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of the issuer, be it an individual, group, political party or government
25. **Anarchy:** used to refer to a society without a publicly enforced government or violently enforced political authority

The choice of words LaBute uses is a character in and of itself. The difference between Adam's literary references versus Evelyn's television references speaks to their upbringing, their ages, and their interests. Jenny's use of the word "acronym" shows some level of education; whereas Philip's continual use of slang and profanity shows a more limited vocabulary. Not only does LaBute develop his characters through their dialogue but he uses the dialogue to express and define them as well.

Chapter Three: Directorial Ideas and Methods

Directorial Methods

In my experience, understanding and analyzing the action of a scene is every bit as important as any other part of the process. I break the scene down and analyze the tempo of the scene, and of the actors in the scene, and then the mood. Once I understand these key characteristics, I can better communicate with my actors what I am looking for and I can more clearly direct them.

As the director, I see my role in two very different ways; each role is defined by where I am in my rehearsal and collaboration process. The principle role of the director is one who guides. In rehearsals, I strive for the process to be as natural and organic as possible. If I am dictating every move my actor makes at every specific line, in my experience, it comes across as forced and robotic. It looks predetermined and doesn't resemble real life doesn't happen that way. Other directors may disagree with me, but I do not pre-block. I like to walk into rehearsal with an idea of where I am going, but retaining an open mind as to what my actors are bringing to the table and their interpretations. I like to allow my actors to run a scene first with them deciding on which movements feel most natural based on their character's objective, their analysis work, and what feels organic to them in that moment. I always tell my actors that I am there to guide the action and character choices they bring and I am open to their suggestions and interpretations.

I take a similar approach with my designers and production team. I have ideas going into the process, but I am always open to their input; if they know how to do something more efficiently or have a better design idea, I welcome their suggestions.

More often than not, my design team has much more experience than I do and they are specialists in their field. I will take advice from a specialist any day; in no way do I believe I know everything or that my way is the best way.

On the other hand, however, my second role as director is the decision maker. This role comes into play about half way through the rehearsal process, once the actors have had the opportunity to experiment with different motivations, tactics and interpretations. As mentioned before, I am always open to collaboration with my designers and actors. I have a very laidback, open-minded directing style while still in the development process, but once that has taken place and “crunch time” begins, I make the final decisions.

Directorial Ideas

My greatest desire for this production is that the audience leaves the theatre with a feeling of betrayal. The audience has bought into the story, the relationships and the characters; they identified with some or all of the performance and can bring it into their own lives. To allow this reaction to happen, the action must be the main focus of the performance and all others aspects need to support and point to that main focus.

Due to the complexity of the multiple settings and the nature of the play, I saw a minimal setting with a bit of flair. The set, props, and sound are all minimalist in style so that the projections and lighting will add the flair. To further support this, I imagine this production being performed in the round. I loved the idea of the freedom that comes with performing in the round and the intimacy with the audience. I had imagined that with the demands of this production, the vignette-style scenes and the small cast it would

transition nicely. However, after some careful consideration and thought as how to stage climatic scenes, such as the finale, in the round, it was suggested to me to try a thrust stage instead. After considering the logistics, the script fit much better in this configuration. We would retain the intimate feel and freedom while allowing for a backstage that made the technical aspects much more fluid.

My vision is to focus on the various contrasting relationships and their development throughout the script; the genuine warmth of Adam and Jenny's relationship (Appendix I, #5-8) versus the coerced, imitation warmth of Adam's relationship with Evelyn and Jenny's relationship with Philip (Appendix I, #1-4). I would like the feeling of loneliness that Evelyn and Adam share (Appendix I, #18-20) to mirror the relationship between Philip and Jenny. Philip and Adam share feelings of anger and distrust towards each other (Appendix I, #1-4). To do this, I would like to use the lighting, possibly spotlights, but also staging, character development and possibly light music. Most importantly the transitions need to be subtle; the audience will only notice them subconsciously.

I'd like rich, warm lighting for the scenes that are between Adam and Jenny (Appendix I, #5-8); colder, stark tones for interactions between the other characters (Appendix I, #1-4). I do want the moods to be very different, however, I would like them to be subtle, just enough for an unconscious shift but not enough to be a distraction. Adam's relationship with Evelyn should start with warm lighting tones (Appendix I, #5-8) and slowly get cooler (Appendix I, #1-4), and just the opposite with Adam and Jenny's relationship. I would like Adam/Jenny's lighting tones to start cool (Appendix I, #1-4) and get warmer (Appendix I, #5-8). Their relationship starts colder, masking any notion

that they are any more than friends. But then as the play proceeds, the audience sees and feels the warmer lights, having that feeling of safety and warmth that ironically started with Adam and Evelyn. With Adam and Evelyn's relationship the mood starts warm (Appendix I, #5-8) with a feeling of safety but as the script progresses, I would like the lighting to gradually get cooler, giving the audience a subconscious uncomfortable feeling (Appendix I, #1-4). I want the audience to grasp that not everything about their relationship is right but not be able to pin point it specifically. I would also like to use gobos when necessary to give definition to the setting of a scene; e.g., a window gobo for the interior of an apartment (Appendix I, #25, 26).

Sound requirements should also be minimal and subtle, used only to further define the setting of a scene; e.g., birds chirping in the park. I am hoping that the fluidity of the scene changes will be quick enough that music is not required. However, if that is not the case, the use of opera music for scene changes could be a possibility.

I would like for the costumes to follow in the same minimalistic style. With the scene changes being done so quickly and the desire to continue the built momentum, the actors will not have time to make a full costume change. A possible solution to this is that each character have a base costume that will be worn during the entire show, e.g., jeans and a white T-shirt. Then as the scenes change, a costume piece could be added or subtracted. In terms of stage make up I would like for it to continue the minimal style and be natural for the females. Evelyn is an artist and I would like her to be viewed as dark, edgy (Appendix I, #9, 10); these are a basis for her overall feel and mood not a literal makeup image. Evelyn could have edgier make up than Jenny, but they both would be realistic versus fantastical. The males may need a light powder to protect their

faces against the shine of the lights; anything more than that I feel will be distracting to the audience in such an intimate space.

Thematic Influences

Art and Religion were the two most dominate themes that continually resurfaced in our design meetings: DiVinci's *Vitruvian Man*, art censorship, artistic responsibility, deception in the name of art and then The Tree of Good and Evil (Appendix I, #21-24) Adam and Eve, and the Forbidden Fruit (Appendix I, #27). DiVinci's *Vitruvian Man* (Appendix I, #17) played the central role in the set design, whereas, The Tree of Good and Evil, Adam and Eve (Appendix I, #21-24), and the Forbidden Fruit (Appendix I, #27) influenced the lighting design choices.

My character choices have stayed consistent. I want Adam and Jenny to be mirrors of each other just in different genders, which is what attracts them to each other. Both Adam and Jenny are submissive in their individual relationships, and because of this, they are victimized. The relationship between Adam and Evelyn has a feeling of coercion. In the case of Philip and Jenny, it's a feeling of obligation. They are getting married because it is the logical next step. Evelyn and Philip are the same way, mirrors of each other in different genders. They are each the dominate partner in their relationships, the predator. It is because of their similarities that these two characters repel each other.

I am anticipating that working on a thrust stage will be both freeing in movement and expression, but limiting for the same reasons. I want to make sure that at any one time every section of my audience can see at least one actor's face while they are

performing. This is where the staging could be limited. But I am also planning on using those limitations to my advantage in a different way. I want to section off the thrust stage into different playing areas, some bigger than others. I would like to use the smaller playing areas to cause my audience to empathize with the characters during conflict onstage; I want the audience to feel the same entrapment and panic. For example, scene three takes place in Philip's living room. I envision staging this scene in a smaller playing area, giving the audience a tight, constricted feeling. I would like the audience to feel uncomfortable, much like Adam and Jenny, as the evening begins pleasantly and becomes awkward when the argument begins to climax. I plan on taking the same approach for scene seven, where Philip and Adam are having lunch. Philip begins questioning Adam about Adam's meeting with Jenny where the two of them kiss. The tempo increases and becomes more intense as Philip interrogates Adam about his new jacket and Jenny. As the characters argue, I want the audience to feel Adam's trepidation.

This script takes place in a small town near a college campus in the Midwest. With the geographical given circumstances supporting this, I will have my actors use a Midwestern accent, which for all four of them came naturally.

I envisioned the scenes to be minimalistic in set and scenery; there is just enough for the audience to understand the location but not so excessive that it is distracting. In keeping with the minimalistic style, I want the scenes to provide an idea of the location, allowing the audience to fill in the gaps with their imagination. The main focus of each scene should be the action, not the location. With the scenery and setting being minimalistic, it will guide the audience's attention towards the main action.

As for props and costumes, I want both to be a contrast to the vague, minimalistic stage and furniture set pieces. The props need to be realistic and functional, not excessive. I would like the minimal number of props as necessary. In my mind there is a fine line between props and set dressing. Although functional, I want both props and set dressing to be just enough to define the scene, yet not distracting from it. If the props are too simplistic I am afraid the audience will be focused on trying to decipher what the prop is and that may distract from the action taking place. I would like for the costumes to follow a similar style; the costumes are the set dressing for the actors, nothing extravagant, simply part of the character's development.

Chapter Four: The Process

The auditions for this production were difficult. The available acting pool was small and limited. A great deal of our more experienced actors could not audition because they had been previously cast in other shows or they were graduating, and students were unaware of the auditions. Evelyn was already cast; the role was being filled by fellow graduate student, Kelsey Amann, to fulfill her acting thesis requirement. The role of Adam was tricky because it required a male actor who looked young, but also awkward while having the potential to get better-looking as the script progressed. Philip needed to be about the same age as Adam and Jenny, charismatic and good-looking, but not so good-looking that it wasn't believable that Evelyn would go for Adam over Philip. Most importantly, Adam and Philip needed to be believable as longtime friends. Then there was Jenny, who needed to look sweet, naive and innocent. She needed to be cute in contrast to Evelyn's edgy sexiness. She also needed to be believable as Philip's fiancée and someone who Adam would be interested in as well as reciprocating his interest.

After the initial auditions, it became easier at callbacks having a much smaller group of men and women to focus on. Billy was visually exactly what I was looking for; I knew he was an inexperienced actor and that he would require a bit more coaching, but Billy was naturally tall and lanky, which would not be that far of a jump to awkward and slightly dorky. Cassie was a natural as Jenny. She immediately connected with the character and understood her. She and Billy visually complimented each other and at the same time Cassie's brunette Jenny was a direct visual contrast to Kelsey's blond Evelyn. Originally Brent Nowack was cast as Philip, but due to complications beyond my control,

he was removed from the role. Josh Wolk, a transfer student, connected with Philip on a basic level, and with some guidance, could successfully play the role. He was attractive but not too attractive. He was believable as Jenny's fiancée and they visually complimented each other. Most importantly, he was believable as Adam's buddy, and yet provided a physical contrast. When all four actors were together on stage they were a colorful mosaic. Josh, like Billy, was a greener actor, but I had the support of Cassie and Kelsey who were more experienced.

Our design meetings went smoothly. I came in with my initial vision and design concept of the world of the play. I shared my ideas of overall simplicity, minimalism and black box style. After our second design meeting, Tim Poertner, Lighting Designer, and I sat down so I could expand on my thoughts and concepts with the lighting. I explained my vision for a definite separation between the warmth and acceptance of Jenny's genuine feelings for Adam (Appendix I, #5-8) and the manipulative, coerced, colder relationship with Evelyn (Appendix I, #1-4). I wanted the audience to connect the feelings of loneliness that Evelyn and Adam shared to the relationship between Phillip and Jenny (Appendix I, #1-4). I wanted an overall feeling of anger and distrust between Phillip and Adam (Appendix I, #18-20) after scene five when Jenny and Adam kiss for the first time. We discussed the use of spotlights to isolate any one of the characters when needed. Tim used the theme of art as his main focus in designing the lighting both onstage and during the scene changes. He developed a color palette for each character and relationship, using cooler lights with Evelyn and warmer lights with Jenny. Tim had three sub style categories; mosaic, pastel and hue. The mosaic and pastel categories were used interchangeably throughout the ten scenes of the performance, giving the stage the

look and feel of an art painting. The hue style is what he used for the majority of the scene changes, with exception to the scene change right before the finale in which Tim used the mosaic style along with the hue. He isolated all four characters in scene nine with a soft spotlight and then later used Evelyn's spotlight to portray a quick passage of time from scene nine to scene ten.

Entering into our first production meeting, I had envisioned this production being performed in-the-round. However, after carefully considering the staging required for key scenes, a thrust stage seemed to be the better fit. That being said, Pippin and I talked at length on how to take a thrust stage and make it unique to this show. I shared with Pippin that I would like multiple playing areas. With the way the script is written I wanted to use one small section of the stage at a time for each vignette scenes. I also wanted to be able to use the actual stage itself; instead of an actor sitting in a chair they could sit on the stage. I really felt that this would support my minimalistic theme. Tim Poertner had suggested the use of a projection screen in place of a backdrop or back wall. With these ideas as influence, Pippin took both the theme of DiVinci's *Vitruvian Man* (Appendix I, #17) and his image and created a circular stage. She took the arms and legs of the image and broke them into a multi-leveled circular performance area (Appendix F, #1). This provided multiple playing areas and allowed those areas to double as other set pieces, e.g., the step to another playing area doubling as the headboard to a bed in a later scene (Appendix H, #7). Pippin then replaced the typical theatre backdrop with three hanging projection screens (Appendix F, #2). Using the general art theme as her foundation she chose actual painting reprints to portray the scene's setting in the center backdrop projection (Appendix H, #1). For her coup de grâce, she used the Tree of Good

and Evil (Appendix #21-24) theme as a basis for the ever-changing trees on the outer projection screens. These trees served two purposes: first, the trees support the underlying theme of personal growth and change, and second, they show the passage of time and the seasons (Appendix H, #1,17). Pippin and Tim then brought the theme of the *Vitruvian Man* full circle by projecting the image on the floor for Evelyn's thesis presentation.

Pippin supported the minimal style with her furniture design (Appendix H, #4,5). I did not want to use realistic furniture in this production and I felt that there was not any one particular furniture piece that was specifically needed. This opened up the possibility that one furniture piece could have multiple uses, limiting the amount of furniture being stored backstage and minimizing scene change time (Appendix H, #3,6). Again, with this in mind, Pippin used multiple sized black box boxes as furniture pieces (Appendix H, #4,5); this was the solution to all the furniture needs. She painted the boxes the same color as the stage to allow them to serve a purpose and not distract from the action taking place (Appendix H, #6,16).

Continuing with the design concept, I wanted the props to contrast the minimalist set style and be realistic but nondescript. If the prop is a coffee mug I would like a functional coffee mug (Appendix H, #17). If the prop is nondescript then the same items could be used in multiple scenes to both cut down on the amount of props stored backstage and to keep the set dressing very basic; again, just enough to identify the location. Krista Tettaton, Props Designer, did just that. The props were all functional and nondescript so that they were usable in multiple scenes. The minimalism of the props supported the minimalism style of the set and furniture pieces.

I had left the costume design completely in the hands of Donna Northcott, Costume Designer. In a production meeting Donna and I decided that 2004 was our setting year. The script was written in 2001, so 2004 seemed logical to support current clothing trends such as Tommy Hilfiger (Appendix H, #15). Donna was aware of the quick scene changes for Evelyn and Adam and as a result had them layer their clothing during specific scenes (Appendix H, #5). Donna also took into account the time of year, January through May, and used that to her advantage as well, having the actors wear coats as a means to a quick change (Appendix H, #3, 4).

Donna also designed the costumes as a reflection of the character's personality. Evelyn was an edgy artist, wearing mainly black and red (Appendix H, #4,5,17). Philip was very taken with himself and wore more expensive clothing that was tailored to fit him (Appendix H #14,19). Jenny was sweet and conservative, wearing pinks and sweater set (Appendix H, #10,11,17). Adam was self conscious college student that wore oversized hand-me-down clothing (Appendix H, #5,6). However, as the script continued and he became more confident, his clothing became tailored and more expensive (Appendix H, #21,22).

Though my actors had been given the script three months prior, I found it necessary for a table read; it's nice for everyone to be able to hear the script aloud with other voices. So at, our second meeting, we jumped right in. Our rehearsal process was very organic. I like to allow the actors to run through the scene the first time and move as they feel it natural. Then as a cast they run through it a second time and we make any necessary adjustments. However, with a less experienced cast, I found this didn't work as well as with veteran actors. I found that the majority of the blocking developed in the

second run through. But again, I am not a stringent blocker; I tell my actors approximately when I'd like for them to move, and where and at about what point in the script that I need them to arrive. Again, this allows the actors to move when it feels most natural. In this particular case, Billy talked back and gave excuses after almost every note given. I also had to remind him more often than not to take out paper and pencil and write down his notes. This became apparent early in the rehearsal process.

Due to her concurrent rehearsal schedule, the first time Emily was able to attend one of my rehearsals was for the tech crew run through, which was also the cast's first run through. Emily was observing as my thesis mentor and professor, looking specifically for things I may have overlooked or that didn't make sense, as well as performance and technical errors. After the run through, she had five pages of notes for me, concerning lack of projection, questioning objectives, Evelyn playing the end too soon, chemistry (or lack thereof) between characters, awkward staging (the fishing pole idea that ended up getting cut), odd vocal inflection when using profanity, inconsistency with furniture, lack of reaction to the big finale, etc. The day after the run through, Emily and I met and went over every single note; some were things I had noticed and others hadn't occurred to me. She offered tactics and exercises to help the actors. After receiving all of her constructive criticism, she said overall she was very pleased with the work I had accomplished with my actors. She said from having worked with some of them before, she saw independent, personal growth and a side of them as actors she had not seen before; and that I should be very proud of my show.

During our technical rehearsals, my actors knew those rehearsals were for the tech crews, so then, when a technical person asked them to do something, they did it without

question. Our tech rehearsals (Appendix G, #1) ran as smoothly as our design and production meetings and there was always open communication. I told everyone that if they knew how to do something in a more efficient way, then by all means let me know. It was at this time Jim Koehnle, Technical Director, came up with a useful suggestion. During the scene change from scene eight to scene nine-the thesis presentation scene-the run crew had been struggling to set up all of Evelyn's research data on presentation boxes. The set up was taking too long and the data was not visible so it looked sloppy and misplaced. Jim suggested pre-gluing all the research data to box tops that are painted the same color as the presentation boxes. Then for the final scene change, the run crew simply had to place the box tops on the boxes and the props are in place.

Lindsey Conklin, Assistant Stage Manager, was able to choreograph the run crew so that scene changes were fluid and efficient. I had originally wanted to perform the entire show without scene changes, but that was impossible. Lindsey made sure to always have the run crew moving forward in straight lines to give the audience the subconscious idea of the action and story moving forward at all times.

Every night my cast and I thanked the tech crew for the hard work they put in; and every night we let them know that without them there would be no show at all.

As far as performances went, I told Courtney McDaniel, Stage Manager, that once opening night came, the show was hers. I was there to warm-up with my actors and to wish them luck but that was the extent of my role. That being said, she and Lindsey both knew I was there every night in case I was needed. Every night there was an issue with the main projector and every night our projection operator, Michelle Wolken, fixed it. I had complete faith in my support technical crew and every night they came through.

Chapter Five: Evaluation

Personal Evaluation

My personal evaluation of this process has changed, not unexpectedly. This script has so much symbolism, so many themes and metaphors; I wanted them all to come to life. In a perfect world, the actors would have picked up on those immediately and in turn the production would have had symbolism, themes and metaphors everywhere. That did not happen. The lead actor who played Adam didn't understand his character, the complexity of him or relate to him. I blame that on the actor's inexperience and my inability to help him connect. It was the same situation with the actor who played Philip, he *played* Philip but the character was never completely a three-dimensional character. The actress who played Evelyn *portrayed* Evelyn but never quite got to the point where Evelyn was a part of her and resonated within her. With Evelyn, that was lack of work put into the character. I know because she told me; her summer was much busier than anticipated and she was unable to put the work that she wanted into Evelyn.

With these three actors I was frustrated from the beginning. With myself for not being able to help reach the level I wanted, and with them for not putting the work into the characters, even if they were inexperienced. After awhile, I realized that Josh (Philip) just didn't have the experience; he was missing some fundamental training and unfortunately I wasn't didn't have the luxury of time to teach him. For this specific show, because of the inexperience of my male actors, my role directorial decision maker came sooner than normal. After allowing the actors to run a scene organically with their input I found that I needed to make blocking and characterization decisions right away. This

was less of an issue with my female actors, who are more experienced. However once decisions are made I do expect the cast members to take notes after every rehearsal and to incorporate my feedback.

This presented a departure for me. It was a wonderful learning experience as I was having to play dual roles, as a guide and the final decision maker. Then there was the added element of not wanting the male actors to feel resentful because I am giving the females more leeway with their development and interpretation. Then there was one more complicating factor as, Billy, my leading male, lacked acting fundamentals. He not only needed blocking and characterization decisions, but he needed these things to be spoon-fed to him, so-to-speak. Even then, sometimes he lacked the ability to build upon these decisions himself or remember them from the rehearsal before. Billy required many one-on-one sessions, individual coaching, and imagery work. This again was a wonderful learning opportunity for me, yet frustrating at times.

In my interactions with Billy, he very much needed me, as the director, to tell him exactly what to do over giving him space to make his own decisions and discoveries. The majority of the time he was awaiting instruction without any of his own character interpretation. But on the occasion where he did bring his character and scenic interpretation, he was needing both: guidance that he was headed the right direction and a direct decision that yes this was exactly what we would be going with. It was an exhaustive process, but again, one in which I was able to take away with me and be all the more experienced.

My salvation in this situation was Jenny. Cassie understood Jenny; Jenny was a part of her and emerged as a full-fledged three-dimensional character. That gave me

hope that the other actors would be challenged by her choices and her understanding and would learn from her.

As the process progressed, I became more frustrated. I took time out of rehearsal to do character exercises, warm-ups, and to define the character objectives of each scene. I could equip my actors with the tools, I just couldn't force them to make a connection or put the effort into it. By the time we had reached tech week, I was disappointed, disappointed that the deeper meanings of the production were not going to be seen and that the deep, intertwining of the characters' emotions were not present. We had just begun to scratch the surface of the play; we had hardly touched upon the many deeper themes and controversial topics. There was so much more to play with that we didn't have time to even touch due to the inexperience of the majority of my actors. Looking back at that now, even with more time I still don't believe we could have gotten there; it would have just required a more experienced cast or a more experienced director.

However, after opening night of the production, my point of view changed. I was still very frustrated and disappointed in the process, but I was overcome by pride in what the actors had accomplished. From where we had started on day one of rehearsal, to the place where we ended on closing night, each character (including Jenny) had grown by leaps and bounds. I witnessed characters developing nightly. My actors had grown in their ability and most importantly they trusted each other, which had been a struggle throughout the entire process.

Faculty and Mentor Feedback

Our new Adjunct Professor, Debbie Philips, came to see the show and I had the opportunity to finally meet her. Donnell Walsh also came. They both came during Tuesday night run though, two nights before opening. Both were very complimentary about the show which was very kind. Debbie made a point to say she knew the show, but had not seen it before. She thought it was a very strong choice for me to have as my thesis project and thought it was very well done. She told me that she was glad I did not shy away from the show because of its provocative nature and that I had directed it very tastefully. She then proceeded to tell me she thought I was very talented. It was very gracious of her to say since she does not know me from Adam (pun intended).

Donnell was also very complimentary of the overall show. He said that he saw characterization, objectives and that he bought into the whole story. He believed the characters and went on a journey with them and enjoyed the whole thing. Donnell also pointed out a few minor things to me that I hadn't seen because I was working so closely with the production. He pointed out things such as Kelsey wearing her purse throughout scene two which made him as an audience member anxious thinking she would be leaving at any moment. Or that Kelsey wore a tank top in scene three while everyone else wore sweaters and coats; these were continuity issues more than anything. Both Donnell and Debbie commented on the difficulty of the blocking with a thrust stage and were very complimentary on my staging, commenting that they both thought even though there were times when an actor had their back to the audience it didn't bother them because another actor would be facing their direction. I really appreciated their comments; the blocking was a huge challenge for me in this particular space especially

for this production where each scene has a specific purpose and is building towards the ending climax.

Emily Jones came to see the show twice, first at the first run through and again at the Saturday night performance. After coming to see the show a second time on Saturday night Emily reiterated that I should be very proud of the work I had done and just in the week and half since she had seen it before my actors had greatly improved.

Larry Quiggins came to see the show on Sunday afternoon. He felt there could have been more characterization and stronger character choices. He also felt that the actors' objectives did get muddled in the scenes. I agreed with Larry in his comments of more characterization and stronger choices, however, if he'd seen where we started he may have felt a little differently about the situation. Larry also commented that he would have staged the show differently using a thrust stage. Staging is an area where Larry and I never seem to see exactly eye-to-eye, but I do respect his opinion. As I had stated in Chapter Three, my main reasoning behind my staging is that the production was being performed on a thrust stage. Anytime one actor had their back to a section of the audience another actor would be facing or profiling that same section. I took care to make sure never at anytime was a section of the audience left without an actor facing them in a scene.

Peer/Student Feedback

All of my peer/student feedback was very positive. Overall, I had very strong technical feedback that had nothing to do with me, but everything to do with my technical team. The set was very highly praised as being inventive and unique. I received many compliments on the use of a thrust stage. The lighting design was also praised for being

warm, mosaic-like and tying everything together. I had several people ask who orchestrated the music. They wanted to know if it was band or a synthesized YouTube arrangement. The costumes were complimented for being the perfect touches for each individual character.

I received compliments on the script selection, the characterization, the blocking and the overall vision. One audience member, who I didn't even know, approached me and told me she thought I was very talented and asked when my next show was being performed. And of course, I met my actors' parents who thought it was amazing, like all parents do; parents are always a great ego boost.

APPENDIX A

Rehearsal Journal

Monday, May 7, 2012:

Today was my very first Thesis Design Meeting (drum roll please). Honestly, I was nervous. Oddly enough, a formal design meeting is not something I have done before. But I feel like it went well. I brought my design concept in and we went over everything; the story, the characters, the intent, all of the historical references. My overall concept is that I want this done in a minimalistic style. Originally I had really wanted to perform this in Jelkyl but when I was given the opportunity to have the first slot of the season with full budget and support I jumped at it. I had envisioned it in Jelkyl for the very reason that it is just a bare, black stage and perfect for this script. I would like to use lighting to convey the actor's emotions, not cheesy lighting but something subtle. However, the black box will work better because of the grid all around the interior walls we can hang lights wherever we want. I have also been toying with doing this show in the round and that idea would have never worked if it was performed in Jelkyl. So the black box is so much better. But speaking of lighting during the meeting Tim was asking exactly what I was thinking pertaining to showing emotion through the lighting. So I showed him my visuals. He said we can do things with gobos and texture too if I want. That is awesome. I feel good about the meeting. I was able to convey my concept I think; and like I have mentioned I mainly talked with Tim about the lighting. I am going with a somewhat modern time period, 2004 so Donna said we will get most of the costumes from the actors' closets, but she will most likely need to buy a Tommy

Hilfiger style jacket. I also had discussed a prosthetic nose for Billy since his character gets a nose job but she said it would look to fake in that intimate of a setting; same with Kelsey's wrist scars. We would have to make them so dark and fake looking to have them visible to the audience. That is fine with me it will go along with my minimalistic style.

Tuesday, May 22, 2012

Today's second design meeting went well. Pippin, Tim and I discussed more lighting ideas. I think I am so accustomed to working in older spaces that do not have the capabilities we do, that I am thinking too small. But Tim is reading my mind and it is great. Pippin is already toying with set design ideas. I had mentioned in the last meeting that I wanted to do this production in the round, but both Donna and Emily brought up some very good points of why it may not work. Donna and I had very briefly talked about the quick changes that will happen and having the show in the round will make those more difficult. This is also a show where every little detail is important and that may not transition to the round very well, especially the finale scene with the big reveal. I'm not sure which one mentioned it but one of the ladies brought up a three sided thrust stage. After thinking about it more I think it will actually work better, and Pippin's ideas are awesome. We are kicking around a few right now. Tim brought up the use of a projector because I had mentioned wanting to use it for the finale scene. He said it was doable and that since we were going to hang it for the finale scene if I wanted to use it for anything else I could. I might as well since it will already be hanging there. Pippin said it would go great with an idea she had, but she needs to figure out the logistics.

I talked to Krista a little about our props and that we did want to use realistic props and liquids, etc. I also said I was completely okay with actors bringing their personal props on and off. Donna said as we get closer to rehearsals we'll look into my actor's closets but she will start looking for the Hilfiger jacket and the corduroy jacket.

Monday, June 4, 2012

Today's meeting was fast and simple. It was mainly just Pippin showing me her set ideas, which I love; and then both of us talking with Tim. We did decide that since we are going with the minimalistic, black box idea for the set, that I did want very colorful, textured lights. I think that will be a nice contrast and against the black box the colors will pop. Again we talked about using the projector; possibly projecting DiVinci's *Vitruvian Man* on the floor of the stage at some point. The *Vitruvian Man* is one of my main images. I'm not sure how I want to work him in, but I do in some capacity.

Pippin suggested along with our minimalistic black box (I think the use of "theme" in this instance doesn't work... "approach" or something similar is more appropriate) that we use the black box boxes (unit set) for our furniture. She said that one of her set ideas is multi-levels so we could possibly use some of the steps and lips of the stage as furniture too, e.g., a seat, table or ottoman.

Monday, August 20, 2012:

Today in rehearsal we started off with introductions. Josh Wolk, playing Philip, is new to the university as well as the cast so I wanted to make him feel welcome. Afterwards, I did a little housekeeping, making sure that Courtney (SM) had everyone's current information as well as go over the rehearsal schedule for the week. The cast then discussed their individual character analysis as a group and the relationships between the

characters. I found that after discussing the individual character analysis as a group I was changing my thinking for *my* character analysis as well as picking up on symbolism I missed before. We concluded our rehearsal with a read through of the script.

Tuesday, August 21, 2012:

Since having all four actors today I blocked scenes three and nine. Both Kelsey and Cassie have very natural instincts for character interaction as well as movement. Josh and Billy are a bit more hesitant. I am hoping the girls will both challenge them in this as well as encourage them to be bolder in their decisions. Both days so far, Courtney has been a dream, acting both as Stage Manager and personal assistant taking notes for me on future reminders.

Wednesday, August 22, 2012:

Kelsey has the day off so that I can focus on blocking the scenes between Jenny and Adam and Philip and Adam. Today I have called Billy and Cassie at 11am so I can block the Adam/Jenny scene. Blocking goes quickly and again Cassie is picking up on Jenny's instincts very nicely. I already see that Billy instinctually is following her lead. This scene has great natural chemistry and I believe it will be one of the stronger scenes. Josh is called at noon so we can run through the very end of scene two with all four characters, Courtney standing in for Evelyn as she only has two lines. After this I block the scene between Philip and Adam. This is a bit more difficult, because the boys seem to not act on their instincts without prodding. But after a little time and sweat the scene is blocked and I think it will be a good one. Billy has a habit of gasping and breathing heavy between each line. He likes to touch his face when he is unsure of the next line, I'm hoping this will not happen after scripts are out of hands; however, I may just have to

break him of it. Josh has beginner level instincts, he just is a little one-dimensional right now. That being said, it's just a blocking rehearsal not characterization rehearsal.

Thursday, August 23, 2012 PRODUCTION MEETING:

Today was the first full production meeting with both Joe and Jim. I felt it was run very efficiently and we were very productive. The number of people for the run crew and dressers were decided. Pip's slides for the projection screens were approved and Pippin, Donna and Tim were given a seasonal breakdown for costume and lighting purposes. The lobby display was decided on and the program information was sent to Peter. A meeting time was planned for Donna, the actors and I to decide on costume pieces that the actors might already own. We are still in need of a sound designer but this show has very little sound so I am not too concerned about it. I am told we should have one by next week when all of the students are back on campus.

Thursday, August 23, 2012:

Due to the production meeting and a few separate meetings with Pippin, Peter and Tim, I was late to rehearsal. Courtney, however, had the actors run lines for scenes four and eight, which were on the schedule to be blocked. Scene four is the bedroom scene that takes place completely in bed, due to time constraints we started with scene eight, the coffee shop. Blocking went very smooth and may need to be tweaked once we are on the stage. With our stage being round I am trying to always keep in mind that one part of the audience will see actor's backs, but hopefully not for an extended period of time. The actors are doing well with lines. At some points they rely on their script, but not many. Billy has a habit of not keeping eye contact with the other actors onstage and it is distracting. He also mumbles and does not project well, things that will need to be

addressed, especially when we are in the black box space. Scene four was not blocked today because of time. However, I'm not concerned. I have purposely built in extra days later in the calendar if it's needed.

Monday, August 27, 2012:

Today is our first day in the black box on the actual stage. Josh and Cassie are given the day off and we are blocking scenes six and ten with Kelsey and Billy. I have broken our circular stage into four sections for the sake of communicating with the actors. The section upstage is one and as I go around clockwise the subsequent spaces are two, three and four. Today we begin with scene ten being that it is the big reveal. I have assigned this scene to be played in section one, but after the first run through I notice that my actors looked trapped. So instead the scene will be taking place using the entire stage area. Already after the first blocking it looks so much better and the scene is more powerful. I'm really pleased. We spent the entire time tweaking that scene, so scene six will be visited tomorrow. I did address the eye contact and projection with Billy. He did make an effort with both. Billy is going to need a little one-on-one work. He also touches his face all the time as a nervous impulse and is a heavy mouth breather onstage. These things will need to be addresses also; they are distractions for the audience.

Tuesday, August 28, 2012:

Tonight we were productive. Scenes one, two and six were all blocked. I was afraid at first that my plan to have the smaller vignettes in sections two and four would be a problem. The space is at a tilted angle and I have to be very careful not to have the actors' backs facing the audience for too long. So it has been a challenge, but has forced

me to think outside the box and become a bit more creative with my blocking. I am also adding to my list of props, most props are just to further define the location that my scene takes place. Now that the show is blocked, I can focus more on characterization. Billy and Josh will need the most focus. Billy may be a challenge. I did address the mouth breathing and face touching. He does a great job focusing on not doing them, but only for a small amount of time, and then he reverts back. I'm just going to really have to stay on him. Hopefully these things will disappear when he develops his characterization.

Wednesday, August 29, 2012 PRODUCTION MEETING

Today's meeting, again like last week; I felt went smoothly and was quite productive. I'm very pleased with the rate of speed in getting things accomplished and getting questions answered. Pippin has found the rest of the images that will be used as projections and they look fabulous. We now have a sound designer, which was never a worry for me, but it's reassuring to have one at this point in the rehearsal process. I am told that I will know who that person is by tomorrow. I have been talking over some sound things with Drew, such as having a door slam sound cue downstage right, but Drew says it may still sound canned so I need to think of other options. Friday my actors will be meeting with Donna to look at costume options and what the actors have already. Next Wednesday Luis will be coming to rehearsal to take headshots of the actors for the lobby display. Tim and I are able to finalize the location of each scene. After getting into the rehearsal space I had to switch around some of the playing areas. After the meeting I feel that we are in a good place with the technical side of things. Jim is finalizing our tech schedule and should have it to me this weekend. Paper tech has been scheduled for

the 12th of September. The crews are going to watch the show on the 11th of September and the production will be filmed the 19th.

Wednesday, August 29, 2012

Tonight we began with running scene two. I forewarned my actors that once we were done blocking and began running the scenes we would jump head first into kissing. Billy has a kiss with both Kelsey and Cassie; it is imperative that the kissing with them both look natural and relaxed. Billy was a little hesitant, but willing to take it slow. After a few runs of “peck” kissing Kelsey got tired of it and grabbed Billy planting a big kiss on his lips. Not only was it perfect timing but Billy got over his inhibitions after a few protests. After the initial kiss Kelsey and Billy ran it, the kiss and the scene a few more times. Billy is slowly becoming more comfortable, but he will need a little more coaching. I am noticing that I am lacking in Billy the professionalism that the other actors are giving me. He seems to be constantly full of excuses and explanations when I attempt to give him direction. At first I thought it was just lack of training and now I am not sure. We continue with scene three. This is a tricky one. I had originally blocked the scene in section two but it’s not going to work. It’s too tight of a space for all four actors to be able to move and cross the stage so I relocated the scene to section one. I have a slight concern that the actors are too far from the audience by being in section one, but this way we have plenty of room. This is going to be my mountain, scene three. After shifting the blocking to accommodate the new space I’m not sure I like it. I’ve made notes to work this one a few different ways, I’m just going to have to see it. Finally tonight we run through scene one. I tweak some of the blocking because I was just getting too much back from Kelsey. I originally blocked this with the statue in the

audience so they play to the audience; but Kelsey is turning her back to face and talk to Billy. The audience is going to lose the dialogue, thus the reason for the tweaks. After it looks much better. I need this first scene to grab the audience otherwise if I lose them it's all over.

Thursday, August 30, 2012

Tonight we began with scene five. It's the scene that takes place between Jenny and Adam. Originally, I had wanted this scene to take place on a pair of swings, but was told that it can't happen due to reasons I understand, but I am still bummed about it. So I am trying to come up with something different. My actors suggested fishing, which to be totally honest, I didn't think would work at all, but they seemed adamant on trying it. We did, and to my surprise, I really liked it. I wanted something for the characters to do that was their "thing". Jenny and Adam fish together, it's just what they do in their spare time together, so it would make sense if Jenny needs to talk to Adam, it is while they are fishing. It might be a stretch, but I am going for it. Scene seven is next. My biggest issue with scene seven is that I hate where I have placed it. Now that we are in the performance space, I am having the opposite problem with seven as I did with three, the actors look lost in a space that big when the scene is supposed to be quiet and intimate, so I move the scene to section two. After running it, it reads so much better. Now my issue is with Josh. Everything is SO big and cartoony. His background is musical theatre so everything is very showy; I will have to bring it down and really work with him on his realism. But at least he's giving me something to work with. It's like pulling teeth to get Billy to make a choice about his character. This scene is supposed to be two best friends and they have no connection. But it is only the second time we've run it, there is hope.

Josh and Cassie are both dismissed so I can work scenes six and four with Kelsey and Billy. Scene six is the doctor's scene; I have that placed in section two as well. It works really nicely there. I had Kelsey and Billy in chairs side-by-side, but her face was consistently blocking his and visa versa. So to solve that, I reconfigured the chairs at angles and I think it will work much better. Kelsey hangs all over the chair so it we get plenty of her face, and after some tweaks, all three sides of the audience should get Billy's as well. I have decided to make a visible tattoo in Billy's stomach for the ending of this scene. Right now the way it is playing, it reads like Billy had his pubes manscaped into Evelyn's initials, instead of the tattoo that Evelyn mentions later in her exhibition speech. Before making this decision I tried to block it a few different ways and it's just not coming across, so we are adding a makeup tattoo to Billy's stomach to ensure that the audience will get a glimpse of it and clarify any misgivings that may confuse them. Finally we run scene four. This scene is easy because the whole thing takes place in bed. This scene is difficult because the whole thing takes place in bed! Projection is definitely going to be a concern because it is such an intimate scene. I requested a body pillow or support pillow of some type because the actors are having a hard time supporting themselves as sitting up in bed on the hard floor. I also played with where I would like to have the video camera in this scene, as to not block the actors. We ran it quickly because I wanted to release the actors on time but this will be one we will need to run often. Like the kissing scenes, this bedroom scene needs to look natural and Billy looks incredibly uncomfortable. I am trying to get him to relax and get physical with Kelsey, but he looks like he's in bed with his grandma. That is going to be a problem.

Tuesday, September 4, 2012

Tonight our plan was to run scenes eight, nine, and ten. The last time we visited scene eight was in the choir room so some adjustments needed to be made now that we are in the performance space. When we ran the scene the first time it took forever mainly because we were trying to add adjustments and to re-block small sections that didn't translate to the new space. My actors are still calling line. Tomorrow is no line call day and they know it, but I also think it's going to be a rude awakening when they get stuck. After struggling through it the first time the next time was much smoother; the lines are still a bit shaky, but better. Billy's exit out the downstage left aisle is a little awkward; I may need to rework the exit. I'm still not getting the exact character from Kelsey in this scene. I want Evelyn curt but not so much that the audience prematurely hates her. I am planning on working this with Kelsey next Monday on our scene touch-up day. After scene eight, we had a quick break and moved onto scene nine. Scene nine, just like scene eight, needed some tweaking due to the new performance space. However, to her credit, tonight Kelsey made a very insightful observation about scene nine. I have had Billy and Josh portray the action of the scene on the stage, when in this scene we are using the stage and theatre house as an actual stage and theater house so it made no sense that Billy and Josh would portray the action onstage, they would do it on the floor of the theatre like real theatre goes. The whole action is the two of them running into each other and finding seats in the theatre. When Kelsey pointed this out to me, it was so obvious that it was ridiculous that I hadn't seen this before. So I shifted the action to the floor.

Kelsey's monologue is not memorized yet, but I still had her go through it and we worked on inflection and pacing. We were also able to work out the correct placement

for both of Cassie and Josh's exits as well as their and Billy's reaction to the monologue. We did have a breakthrough with scene ten tonight. Both Josh and Cassie were excused so I could work scene ten with Kelsey and Billy. We started the run of scene ten and Billy was giving nothing. He was playing Billy onstage with the mouth breathing that was incredibly distracting. So we stopped and Kelsey and I both sat down with him and talked about the scene and what had happened prior. I tried to make the situation applicable to his life and to get him to set the stakes high. Billy has got to understand the gravity of this scene and he's not connecting the words to anything. But after talking it through with him, we ran it again and Billy brought so much more to the scene. He was angry and yelling and being direct with his blocking and action. It gave Kelsey so much more to work with and to play off. Both Kelsey and I were very encouraging with Billy letting him know that he was on the right track and that the next time we visit the scene we are going to try to add levels to his anger. That is my biggest fear is that the anger and emotion will just stay at the one level.

Wednesday, September 5, 2012 PRODUCTION MEETING

The production meeting was productive and smooth like the others have been so far. Danny Mauck is locked in as our sound designer; he will be at rehearsal tonight to watch. He told me that having the receptionist's sound cue to come from stage left will not be a problem, but we nixed the door slam cue, it sounds too fake. The rest of the set will be finished this week. I'm super excited to see everything completed and come together, especially with the projections. It will just add so much. Pippin is adding some escape stairs to each side of the back of the set. Now that those will be there, I can alter two of Billy's exits to have him use those stairs and it will be so much more fluid. Donna

has all the costumes for Josh and is finishing the other actors. Luis is taking head shots tonight of my actors for the lobby display. I am hoping to grab Billy tomorrow to get a before and after photo for the final projection. I don't think it should be an issue. I'm really enjoying this new production process; I am really feeling that things are being communicated and being done on time. It's awesome.

Wednesday, September 5, 2012

The plan for tonight is to run scene one through five, we'll see if it happens. We start with scene one and it looks better than it has before. I have encouraged Billy to be more authoritative with his role as security guard, but his interpretation is to use an accent that is making him difficult to understand. I try to encourage him to make another choice; he did, and it was better, but again the choice was something funny with his mouth that is just making him difficult to understand. We'll work on that later. I like that he is making a choice, it's just not a feasible one. I am also trying to encourage Kelsey to find middle ground between an artsy-interesting Evelyn and just being bitchy. I continue to tell both actors if the audience doesn't like them then we won't hook them. After a few runs it is starting to round out and they both are a bit more likable. Billy even threw in a dorky blushing smile that looked really nice and I made sure he knew it. Scene two is still awkward, but less so than before. I have Billy and Kelsey touch and kiss all the time so he becomes more comfortable. They both are good with the lines on this scene. The one struggle with this scene is that the blocking gets a little jumbled and if it does too much than we get Kelsey's back the entire time. Josh and Billy are a bit cartoony at the end. I have them do a bro-hug and it is the clumsiest thing I've ever seen. It's almost clumsier than Billy is with Kelsey or Cassie during the kisses, but we will get

this!! I have them run the bro-hug multiple times and it's just going to have to be something that comes with time. We move onto scene three and after the first two pages it's a hot mess. None of the actors are engaged in this scene, no one knows their lines completely and there's no line call anymore so they are just stuck. With advice from Courtney and Lindsey, we stop the scene. It's so mixed up and lost we need to refocus. Instead for moving forward with scene work, we do character work. We first discuss what each character wants from the scene, their objective and their tactics in achieving that objective. I have the actors start by walking around the stage as themselves, just taking a deep breath and relaxing. Then after a few moments they began to walk around as their character would, then they added a character movement, and finally, a character sound. After some time I have the actors repeat the exercise, this time encouraging them to make different and stronger choices. After the second time I transition them into scene three and we run the scene. It's stronger, but Billy and Josh's objectives are still a bit muddled. Before running the scene again, we reiterate the objectives and I ask them to once again make clearer, stronger choices. The second time was improved and greatly improved from the first attempted run earlier this evening. We concluded for the night. After rehearsal Cassie and Kelsey both approached me. Cassie was crying out of frustration and Kelsey was echoing the same frustration. They both expressed they were afraid we were going to run out of rehearsal time if we needed to stop every rehearsal to do character exercises because the scene wasn't coming together. I assured them that would not happen but encouraged them to challenge the boys and to help them along as much as possible. I also told them starting tomorrow we will be doing group warm ups before rehearsal.

Thursday, September 6, 2012

Tonight's original plan was to run scenes six through ten, but after last night it's more important to me that we get the foundation of the scene correct before moving on and expanding on said scene. The first thirty minutes of tonight's rehearsal started with warm ups then proceeded into character exercises much like the ones we did last night. For the last character exercise, I had the actors perform scene three. Instead of using the written lines, I had them improv the scene. Billy looked completely lost the entire time. Even in improving the scene he wanders around aimlessly, like a confused homeless man. I pulled him aside and asked if he had any questions or concerns. He told me no and asked why, so I was honest and told him he looked completely lost and not engaged in the scene whatsoever, to the point it was distracting and he was pulling from the action taking place. We run scene three two more times. I don't know why this scene causes me so much trouble but it is the rotting core of my soul. I need to walk away from it. Josh's lines bounce back and forth between realistic and cartoon, there's no consistency. Billy still looks like a lost homeless man that wandered onstage. I'm at a loss of how to communicate to him that wandering around the stage does not translate into a character choice of defensiveness. I have asked him multiple times to make a different choice. I have even given him other choices and yet he does nothing! Next we run scene seven.

I had the opportunity to work on this scene before rehearsal with Josh and Billy. During our session we talked about their relationship and the back history of it. We discussed the symbolism of Adam's corduroy jacket versus the symbolism of Adam's new Tommy Hilfiger jacket. We also talked about the objectives and tactics of each character. Having had this time with them, I was really interested to see if they put all

our one-on-one time into play or not (I'm not trying to be pessimistic, but it's happened before). To my pleasant surprise, they took our hard work and brought it into the scene. Josh was very realistic and Billy was engaged in the scene, listening and responding. Both of them were focused and their objectives were coming through. After running scene seven, Josh, Billy and Cassie all had a short break so that I could run Evelyn's monologue with Kelsey. Even though the monologue is still not yet memorized, I want her to get used to being up onstage: the pacing of the piece and the pronunciation of some of the words. The parts she has memorized have no meaning behind them. It's very obvious at this point she is just reciting words. After Kelsey's monologue the full cast came back and we ran scene seven just one more time to solidify it (the last time we ran it we changed the direction Billy was sitting so more of the audience could see his face). Scene seven was still looking just as strong as when we had left it an hour before. We finish the evening with running scene three, which is still shaky. I am still giving the same notes to Billy: be engaged, stop wandering around the stage, stick to the blocking I gave and move with purpose. Josh stop posing when you speak and bring it down, not so cartoonish.

Monday, September 10, 2012

Today was supposed to be the day that Kelsey and I worked on her monologue, but it is still not yet memorized, so Kelsey doesn't want to work on it. I had her read it out loud at least just so she will become accustomed to projecting, other characters reactions, etc. After this the other actors joined us. Today is cleanup day. We are tweaking any scenes that may need it, however, right now I feel like every scene needs it. We run the lawn scene first with Josh and Billy. Josh has remembered most of the work

we did on this scene last Thursday, but is getting a little cartoony. Billy, however, is reverting to awkward Billy onstage and now he is making up his own blocking which Josh was trying to follow and it was a hot mess. I stopped the scene and Courtney adjusted the blocking with the actors. I talked with both boys to refresh them on all the work we did Thursday and we ran it again. I may need to rework the exits, but for now we are moving on. Next we run the coffee shop scene. This scene bounces between being strong and weak. I don't remember whose idea it was but we did change Billy's entrance and Cassie's exit. They are now entering and exiting on the stage left back staircase. That one change helped the scene immensely. I can't even begin to describe it; it just opened the scene up so much. My big hang up with the scene is that I lost Cassie's face during her big exit monologue and now that problem has been fixed. I just need to get Billy to not be so awkward in this scene and for Kelsey to be a bit more aggressive. I want the audience to be uncomfortable and that is not happening right now. After the coffee shop scene, we run the lawn scene again and fix the exit issues. It looks better, but as many times as we have run it, there is no consistency in Josh's lines. One time he is cartoony and the next he is realistic. His anger builds way too fast as well. It goes from Philip joking with Adam to Philip screaming at Adam with no build. This scene could be so much more, but it's not going to be. At this point, I just want us to be able to get through it knowing the lines and blocking.

The actors got a five minute break and then we jumped into scene three, the living room scene, my Everest! The great thing about my actors is that for the most part they are willing to try anything. The girls come up with some really great ideas which are wonderful because with this scene we've worked on it so much that my brain is mush.

The blocking is what gets to me most. Cassie ends up in a corner and the audience misses her facial expressions through the rest of the scene. Then there is Billy who just wanders aimlessly around the stage. Tonight when we reworked it, I told him just to sit. DO NOT MOVE, sit and watch the action. He doesn't understand that being still is so much more powerful. Not only does he not understand, he argues with me. This is a continual pattern, he argues all the time and it wastes rehearsal time. It took an hour and half to rework a few small changes in this scene and it was because Billy started arguing with me. Even the other actors were telling him to stop and just be quiet! The changes I am making are to pull Cassie out of the corner so the audience could see her; it has nothing to do with Billy's blocking. We haven't even gotten to do a run through yet and the crew is coming to watch tomorrow night!

Tuesday, September 11, 2012

Tonight was run through night!!!! Oh my goodness, I can't even believe what a train wreck it was, holy cow. AHHHH! But first, let's start from the top. I met with Billy and Kelsey at 5:30pm so that we could mainly run through scene four, the bedroom scene. Billy just needs so much coaxing and run through to get this scene to not look like he is completely uncomfortable and in bed with his grandma. So we go over this scene. My biggest obstacle with Billy is that he is in his head when he should just be acting but at the same time he isn't connecting his words with anything so they just come out flat. I've tried everything I know to do with Billy. I've done one-on-one rehearsals, coaching sessions; we did imagery work together, I consistently remind him of his moment before and his objective but it all falls out of his brain the moment the scene begins. I'm perplexed, so I've just started and continued directing the actors around him; that very

much includes the bedroom scene. I've just coached Kelsey to be excessively amorous and affectionate with Billy (I even have had Kelsey sit on Billy's lap during notes so he will get more comfortable with her touching him).

From 6:30 to 7:30pm I work scene five, the park scene with Cassie and Billy. It's so interesting to me that Billy is still uncomfortable with the kissing scene with Cassie but not in the same way he is with Kelsey. I think it's really difficult for Billy to separate real life and stage life (I gather this because Billy tells me all the time in rehearsal that he is a nice guy and wouldn't do whatever Adam, his character, is doing. I remind him Adam is a character and not Billy). I say this because I think Billy is a little intimidated by Kelsey as a person but not by Cassie as a person. Because of this, scene five, the park scene, is coming together much easier than scene four, the bedroom scene. My struggle with scene five is that the majority of the scene takes place seated with very little movement until the end. I think it's powerful. There is power in stillness; I just hope it translates.

Now let's discuss the run through. What a hot mess! For starters tonight was the very first time we had all of our props. In the interest of time (not wanting to waste anyone's time who was coming to watch the first run through) Lindsey and I thought we would use all of the props tomorrow night and just stick with the ones we had been using thus far for tonight. Instead we were asked to delay the start of the show and proceed with all of the props so that everyone watching would have a better understanding of what was happening onstage. We were happy to oblige and proceeded to set up the props table. Once that was done we were able to begin.

Everything, everything we worked on just went down the tubes and with all the actors not just one specifically. Enunciation was gone, they all mumbled through the entire show. The blocking at some points looked lost, the characterization and objectives were muddled and unclear. Josh and Billy are both preempting reactions and Cassie is putting her hands in front of her face and I can't hear a word. Kelsey and Billy's characters both lacked any type of arc. After the run through I shared with them all of my notes and my frustrations, with both trying to be tactful. I was well tempered, but I did share with them everything I saw and the lack of work we've done for the past three weeks. As usual, Billy had a comeback and excuse for every note I gave him so much so that I had to tell him to stop talking back and to just say "ok". "Ok" was the only phrase he was allowed the rest of the night and this comes after I notice he is not writing down any of his notes. So we stopped and waited for him to take out paper and pencil to write down the same notes I have given him for weeks. The rest of the cast wrote down every word I gave them. Some of the notes are brand new, problems that have never arrived before and some were things we had overcome but they are reverting back as soon as there was an audience. Emily, I have a meeting with you tomorrow to go over your notes and maybe at that time I can get some feedback on how to approach this more productively.

Wednesday, September 12, 2012 PRODUCTION MEETING

Our production meeting today was very quick. Everyone is finishing up last minute things for the show. Tim and Jim are trying to brainstorm ideas of how to quiet the projector in the black box. It is so noisy and the actors are having a difficult time speaking over it. Jim also came up with the brilliant idea of gluing down all of the

“supportive data” on pieces of board that are painted to look just like the tops of the boxes in the final scene. This way all of the “supportive data” can be seen clearly and it will cut our scene change time in half. What a simple and very effective idea!

Wednesday, September 12, 2012

Earlier today I was able to meet with Emily and get her notes from the first run through last night and discuss them with her at length. Many of her notes were the same as mine, but yet she also had noted things that I had missed just from working so closely on the show. I was also able to express my concerns and frustrations and not only get an outside opinion, but get suggestions on different approaches to the show and my actors. I was told as well that the majority of the language in the show needed to be cut out. All of these things will need to be addressed at rehearsal tonight. I am feeling more optimistic going into rehearsal tonight than I was last night after the run through.

So tonight I started with informing the cast that much of the language in the show needed to be removed. My view on language is the same as with nudity, if it's necessary to the progression of the story, I'm okay with it. If it's purely the playwright trying for shock value then I think it's needless. However, I am also strongly against changing the dialogue of a script; but in an educational theatre situation I completely understand. My actors were all the same way; they didn't want to at first but understood why with exception to Billy who wouldn't use curse words until I forced him to explaining that it was the way the dialogue was written. If he didn't start saying them right away then when he did they would sound foreign.

After the dialogue discussion, we immediately jumped into rehearsal running scene one. It was just as disastrous as last night. Both actors are at fault, Billy and

Kelsey. Kelsey is using the excuse that Billy is giving her nothing to play off of and Billy has completely dropped his character and is Billy onstage. Their blocking has become jumbled and they were lost. So we stop and go back to square one. I pulled Kelsey aside while Courtney refreshed Billy's blocking to him. I reminded Kelsey she is the more experienced actor and needs to be guiding Billy, who has lost his way, in the scene. I encouraged her that this is what actors do; they act even if they feel that they are getting nothing in return. We started the scene again and continued from there. By ten o'clock we had only made it to scene five. At this point, if I continue and keep my actors until the end of the show, we will be here until the wee hours of the morning. So we stop and take five minutes and then we proceeded to go over all of my notes for those five scenes. I told them that at this point I was uncertain what to do; we will be starting tech on Friday and I feel our show is a disaster. I shared with them that every time we fix something we come right back the next day and they are bringing nothing. I just simply said it was their choice on how hard they wanted to work on this show and whether we pull this off or not. Then we adjourned for the night. Emily stopped by after the actors had left and was horrified to learn that we didn't make it through a full run. I explained that I understood her immediate concerns, but scenes one through five were a nightmare. Courtney and Lindsey both backed me up on that issue saying that I was NOT nitpicking at frivolous things, but at serious lack of character and blocking. At this point I was feeling defeated and disappointed. This show has so many over and undertones, so many themes and symbols that we haven't even began to scratch the surface on because our basics are missing. I feel very solid with Cassie's Jenny; we may have been able to dig deeper with Jenny if we had more time and if I hadn't spent so much time going over the

same notes and correcting blocking and lines. But I do take full responsibility; this is my show, my cast, my directing. It is only my fault that we are in the place we are in.

Thursday, September 13, 2012

Tonight was run through no matter what. We started the evening off going over Emily's notes from the run through on Tuesday. The actors had really wanted to work on our trouble scenes yesterday so we waited to incorporate her notes until right now. Even though many of her notes were my notes too and there were things mentioned that I have been aware of since day one it was great to have it reiterated through someone else. After notes we took five and then started the run through. I told the actors if there were any major issues we'd re-run them after the run through. The run through was rocky but we made it. There are still a lot of the same notes for Billy and Kelsey but there was also improvement, hooray. Again, I think it helped to have the notes echoed by Emily, so they know it's not just me telling them these things. After talking with Emily I decided to nix the fishing poles in scene five. They are distracting, mainly because they just seem out of place. I was nervous about this scene anyway because of very little movement now the actors are just sitting by a lake talking to each other. Their challenge will be to make the scene interesting with their words and reactions; there is no blocking to hide behind. Because of this change, we did run this scene after the full run through. It looks nice. Cassie is definitely challenging Billy in this scene. It's up to him to keep up with her and he is rising to the occasion, so far. Billy's biggest struggle, as I have said before, is to remember and incorporate everything we work on in each rehearsal and to build upon it. I consistently have the same amount of notes every night, six pages; in these six pages are the same notes over and over but now that we are at run through time I feel as if

notes might be sinking through a little bit more. In those six pages of notes are encouraging notes as well. When Billy, Kelsey or Josh remembers something I have told them several times, I make a point of it. I encourage them so it will happen again. Cassie incorporates the first time, every time.

Friday, September 14, 2012 CUE-TO-CUE

Tonight was the most productive cue-to-cue I've ever done. That probably has a great deal to do with only a dozen sound cues and twenty-five lights cues, but it went well. The costumes look fabulous and really added to the whole persona. As with any show I really saw more of a connection from the actors with their characters in the short snippets that we ran. The sound cues were a little tricky just because we were having issue with the sound board and transferring the cues through the board. Danny didn't seem too concerned and said he thinks it will be fixed by tomorrow, but the ones we heard sounded great after level adjustments and setting. Unfortunately we will most likely have to reset levels once we get the projector back in the theatre. The lights looks amazing. Tim really captured the symbolism/realism meets paintings theme we talked about. He was very patient to try everything I wanted to try and in the end he was right 85% of the time, okay probably more like 95% of the time. But he still let me try things. He was also very helpful in small suggestion that I really felt added a lot to the atmosphere. The run crew was great. I was very hesitant about having scene changes; I didn't want them at all. After looking at our spaces and where each scene takes place and the usage of boxes for multiple scenes there was no way around it. Lindsey has done a wonderful job of making the changes quick and quiet. I have requested that scene changes take place in a linear fashion as to keep the momentum and she has made that

happen. Danny suggested some great scene change music that just fits perfectly, so the changes seem less of an interruption. As long as I continue to surround myself with people that are more experienced and smarter than me, this may just all come together!

Saturday, September 15, 2012 CUE-TO-CUE RUN THRU/ RUN THROUGH

Having gotten through our cue-to-cue last night, this afternoon we ran through the show stopping to only fix technical issues. Then this evening we were able to run the show with lights, sound and run crew. Donna and wardrobe were unable to be there so the actors stayed in their first scene costumes. The first run through was a little rough with the run crew because we were missing a member due to Neil Sedaka, but all in all it was still done well and quickly. The crew does stomp like elephants, but that will be addressed with no problem. Danny was having technical issues again with the sound. Apparently when transferring from his computer to the board we are losing part of the music, but between him, Jacob and Courtney, they all seem very confident that it will not be an issue. I also cut my Barry White song from the bedroom scene. As much as I love Barry, it was too much and a bit cheesy. *Next time Barry, next time.* The lights looked great. Tim said he does need to add a few lights for specials, other than that it looks perfect. Cassie and Josh have really done a nice job with their characters. I believe Cassie and Josh have come a long way. He has taken direction very well and brought his cartoonishness down to a realistic level. Kelsey and Billy, however, are frustration to no end. Billy because he just does not take direction. As you (Emily) and I have discussed at length, he is undirectable. However, I continue to give him the same notes over and over, hoping it will click one of these times. I am optimistic, at least a tiny bit, that he did incorporate some of my notes from the first run through to the second run through. But

they are tiny things like a tweak in blocking, never anything character oriented.

However, after the second run through I did want to kill him. He looked more awkward than **ever** in the bedroom scene tonight. We've run that scene so many times and tonight he froze up. He did the same at the end of scene eight in the coffee shop when he is supposed to be begging Evelyn for forgiveness, he reverted back to Billy onstage. When I asked him about it, he shrugged telling me he did a good job and didn't know what I meant. This of course after the cast as a whole has forced him, once more, to take notes! Then there is Kelsey who wants to blame everyone else for her lack of work on this character. She has put work into Evelyn but not nearly the amount needed. I do understand that it is difficult acting with someone that is not giving much of anything, but isn't that what actors do, ACT! *So ACT like he is giving you something, Kelsey! And stop telling me that your character is suffering because of Billy, Evelyn is suffering just as much from you too!* Friday afternoon Kelsey and I worked on her monologue, the first time we've really gotten to because she was not off book until Thursday. The same thing happened when working on her monologue, she tried to tell me that it wasn't ready and looked flat because I have not given her adequate rehearsal time. To which I quickly reminded her that when I tried to schedule monologue rehearsals multiple times, she didn't want to because she was not off book. She didn't get off book until Thursday. This is after having the script since April! I understand that for some it is easier to memorize with blocking but I reminded Kelsey in the professional settings that I have worked, the actors show up memorized. I feel like this is a big deal to Kelsey, but not a priority and that is incredibly frustrating, because for Pippin and me, it's our number one priority!

After the rehearsal tonight, when all was said and done and everyone had gone home but me, Pippin and Jim, I was discussing technicalities with Jim. After some talking (and he hearing my notes to my actors) he inquired if I was feeling frustrated and why. I simply said I was frustrated with some of my actors and left it at that. Without hesitation, he knew I was frustrated with Billy and Kelsey. He did proceed to tell me that the show was night and day better than the run through he had watched on Tuesday night. That was encouraging.

Monday, September 17, 2012

Tonight things were a bit chaotic at first. We had a miscommunication with our call time. Courtney sent out an email that half the actors did not get and then Kelsey just ignored it (I know that because she told me so). Courtney was stressed and the unknowing actors were stressed. But after some communication, it was fine. I had gotten the last few costume pieces from Donna and added props from Krista. Lindsey organized the props table, Court got lights and sound in place and we all briefed Saki (quick change girl) on what a quick change was and how to execute it. With everything in place we began on time. The run was fairly successful. The technical side definitely needed the rehearsal for scene changes, quick changes, correcting cues, but all in all they did a terrific job. Anything that might have been a mistake, they were already aware and fixing it before I brought it up. Some of the lighting things that need to be adjusted Tim said will be handled tomorrow. The lights, sound and costumes just added so much to the show.

The actors over all did well. Josh was a bit cartoony tonight and I don't know if that is because we had a night off or what and Billy reverted back to some of his Billy-

isms. But Cassie was consistent and Kelsey was too, for the most part. I just need to get her to stop her Kelsey-isms and to loosen up during her monologue, which I know is difficult because of the length and I want her to be stoic, it just gets long in some points. Billy, however, did ask me to work on scene ten (yah!) with him this afternoon which we did and I could see a considerable difference. I just need him to remember that through the rest of the run. Overall though, we are in a **much** better place than this time last week, much better. On a side note, originally the exhibit displays for the end of scene ten were a hot mess and Kelsey was having a really difficult time getting her lines and blocking out while also trying to put together the "display boxes". During a production meeting, Jim came up with a brilliant idea of gluing everything down and having her just place a few items. He totally saved the day with that notion and it looked fabulous tonight.

Tuesday, September 18, 2012

Everything preshow-wise tonight went very smoothly. The run crew, et al have their pre-show routine down pat. Rebecca Berin came by to do a quick pre-show interview for the *Legacy*, that was fun. Oh and walking into the theatre today I was surprised to be greeted by not only the actor's smiling faces, but my own as well in the lobby display case. I'm not thrilled about that. I told Peter I **did not** want my picture up there, but it is a small thing and not even worth mentioning to him. However, it might have not been his call to begin with. He has enough going on. But I was caught off guard. I only agreed to the picture because Luis talked me into it saying if I ask the actors to do it I should too, which I agreed with...the picture, not the display. Anyways, all the little small technical things that needed to be fixed were. I did have a bit of an

issue with Serena, the other props girl. I told her the colored water used for wine was staining the actor's teeth. She responded with telling me to tell the actors not to drink it. Not okay Serena. It wouldn't be a big deal if this was the first time, but she has done this before. I ask for something (nothing outrageous) and she acts like I'm being ridiculous or that it's an inconvenience for her. I don't like that. If I ask for grape juice, just say okay unless you have a different plan or I'm just being insanely outlandish. So as a result, Pippin offered to bring Kool-Aid and I'm bringing iced tea for the whisky, something she was supposed to do and did not. At this point in the rehearsal process I was picking my battles and this was not one that was worth making a big deal over.

Our new Adjunct Professor, Debbie Philips, came to see the show and I had the opportunity to finally meet her. Donnell Walsh also came. Both were very complimentary about the show which was very kind. Debbie made a point to say she knew the show but had not seen it before. She thought it was very strong choice for me to have as my thesis project and thought it was very well done. She told me that she was glad I did not shy away from the show because of its provocative nature and that I had directed it very tastefully. She then proceeded to tell me she thought I was very talented. It was very kind of her to say since she does not know me from Adam (pun intended). Donnell did point out a few minor things to me that I hadn't been seeing because I was working so closely with the production; which Emily, you and I had talked about at length. He pointed out things such as Kelsey wearing her purse throughout scene two which made him as an audience member anxious thinking she would be leaving at any moment. Or that Kelsey wore a tank top in scene three while everyone else wore sweaters and coats; so they were just continuity issues more than anything. Both Donnell

and Debbie commented on the difficulty of the blocking with a thrust stage and were very complimentary on my execution of the blocking. I really appreciated their words; the blocking was a huge challenge for me in this particular space especially for this production where every scene has a specific purpose and is building towards the ending climax.

Wednesday, September 19, 2012

Tonight was our final dress rehearsal. Initially we had invited local high schools to come for preview night, but none of them responded. I'm afraid it was due to the controversial material and the adult content that we advertised as being in the show. I hope this does not foretell what our audiences will be like for the weekend. I decided not to give notes after this performance unless of course something insane happens that has never happened before. I've been repeating the same notes for the past week so either my actors are going to implement the notes or they are not. It's up to them. Speaking of which, they did implement some. For what we started with verses where we ended I am pleased. Billy still drove me crazy with his two dimensional portrayal and his Billyisms, Josh with his preemptive facial expressions and Kelsey with her flat final monologue but again these are all notes given during the entire rehearsal process and I don't know what more to do. But I do feel that we are at the place of needing an audience. I think they will excel with an audience.

Thursday, September 20, 2012 PERFORMANCE #1

At this point in the process my cast just needs an audience. They have peaked, fortunately for us it was opening night. The audience was very responsive, which is both beneficial and can be hurtful at the same time. However, for tonight it was just the boost

of confidence that the cast needed. The audience laughed with them, gasped with them and bought into the journey and the story as a whole. It really felt like it all came together. They received a standing ovation! I overheard the compliments that the audience was giving each one of them after the show. Cassie, as an actress, was an audience favorite (or at least that was what the audience shared with me) and Evelyn, as a character, stirred some strong negative emotions. It was just the reactions that I had hoped for, the audience left with strong emotions whether pro or con towards Evelyn. I only hope tomorrow night's audience is the same way. That is the negative side to an amazing opening night audience, you just hope that the other audiences are the same way.

Friday, September 21, 2012 PERFORMANCE #2

Tonight's audience was not the same way, they were not as vocally responsive. They were much more introverted. This audience took longer to laugh and they were more of chucklers than bursters. It threw the cast at first, but once they started hearing the delayed laughter I think it reassured them. However, the audience did gasp at the Jenny-Adam kiss in scene five. So far, these past two night that is how I have gauged if the audience is with us or not - do they gasp at the kiss? Both last night and tonight I was able to sit among the audience. Tonight there was more whispering between scenes than last night and it made me wonder if the audience was starting to figure out the story before the end. However, just like last night the audience was very complimentary to the actors after the performance and I overheard many of them say they did not see the end coming and that could not believe that someone would do something like that. I'm going to take that as a win!

Saturday, September 22, 2012 PERFORMANCE #3

Well my heart skipped a beat when I first arrived at the theatre tonight, our projector was having some issues, but thanks to Michelle, the projector operator, we had things up and running before the house opened. Tonight's audience was a mix of both Thursday's and Friday's. They weren't bursting out loud like Thursday but they were laughing faster than Friday and catching onto the action much faster. Tonight's performance I watched from the booth. I love the perspective up there, I couldn't hear everything that was happening but I could watch the people and their body language. The majority of the audience didn't move. That was a concern of mine. The show runs close to two hours long and I did not want to have an intermission. My concern was that people would get fidgety and stir in their chairs, interrupting audience members around them. However, that did not seem to happen. Everyone watched pretty intently. This audience was slower, though, on the applause. I don't know if they were still taking it all in or wandering if it was over, but the actors were mid bow before the applause started. But once again, the audiences post show greetings to the cast members were very complimentary. Again, I received strong feedback of Cassie being a natural onstage, but I also received strong praise about Billy and his stage presence. I had a few students ask me about Josh and who he was and, as always, I had strong reactions to Evelyn. I was happy to hear all of these things because tonight being in the booth I was unable to hear if the audience gasped at the kiss.

Sunday, September 23, 2012 PERFORMANCE #4

Today's performance is bitter-sweet. I am exhausted, and I know my cast is as well, and 49% of me is ready for this experience to come to an end. BUT, it's my thesis.

It's what I have been working towards for two and half years, and really focused on for the past six months. It has been what I eat, sleep, and dream about and in a matter of hours, it's over. Before the show started I made it a point to talk to my actors and tell them what a journey this had been for me and I couldn't imagine going through this with another group of actors. Even after all the frustration that I had with Billy, I learned so much about myself and my abilities that I would have not learned the same way without him. The same with Kelsey, she is my dear friend but she drove me a little nuts (as I'm sure I did her). I had to learn how to deal with that and still conduct myself in the most professional way possible, well as professional as I conduct myself:)

Sunday's audience was a good way to end. They were neither our largest nor smallest audience, but they were vocal and on our side. Much like Friday's audience, this audience caught on to the jokes and had fun. Again I watched the show from the booth, observing the body language. There was a little more movement than Saturday but not much; and in the end we received our second standing ovation of the run!

APPENDIX B

Script Analysis

I. Given Circumstances

A. Environmental Facts

i. Geographical

1. The world of this play takes place in a small town outside Omaha, NE.

Evelyn refers to the fact she attends Clarkson College, which is located in Omaha (117).

2. The characters all describe the town as a small town or a little college town (33, 34, 58, 118).

3. The town is conservative, which is evident by the naked statue being covered with a pasty (9). The town is also run democratically, hence the townspeople making a petition to have the statue covered. The idea of a religion is existent from Evelyn's comment, "it's suppose to be a 'god,' you know...that's what really pissed 'em off." (9). Jenny states that every time she and Philip want to see a new movie they have to drive to town (91). This statement further supports this play takes place in a small town.

ii. Date and Time

1. The play begins January 9th, the fifth day of winter semester (119).

2. Scene 1: January 9th, the fifth day of winter semester (119).

Scene 2: Adam and Evelyn allude to the fact it's been a few weeks.

Adam has been on his exercise routine and Evelyn, Phil and Jenny are all noticing a change. Furthermore Evelyn comments that Adam's hair

is longer (16, 25).

Scene 3: Philip mentions that he, Jenny, Evelyn and Adam have all been on a few double dates by this time, it is a week or two after scene two (35)

Scene 6: It's 10:15am on a Wednesday (59).

Scene 7: Philip tells Adam he saw Evelyn the week before and she said Adam had just had a procedure done; his rhinoplasty is in the previous scene (76).

Scene 8: Evelyn says that her art showing is in a couple of weeks, but that she just saw Philip a few days ago, referencing the same meeting that Philip was mentioning in scene seven. Concluding that scene eight is just about a day after scene seven (90, 101)

Scene 9: Evelyn states in her presentation that it has been eighteen weeks since she first began her human sculpture (118)

3. Evelyn references the television show *Kung Fu* (13) which ran from 1972-75, thus the play takes place after this time period. Philip and Jenny both reference their wedding plans which is evident that this is a modern time that recognizes marriage both socially and politically (26, 27). Adam casually uses the term 'gay' as slang, the world of this play is in a modern time where the slang term gay is used and homosexuality is common place (51). The term 'god' is used as slang throughout the script showing more evidence this play is taking place in a more modern time period that is liberal in the obscenities. Adam gets a rhinoplasty, cosmetic surgery is acceptable and common enough in this town that it has

it's own plastic surgeon (59). Philip calls Evelyn the "artist formerly known as Evelyn" a reference to the artist Prince who changed his name to a symbol in 1993. This world takes place after 1993.

B. Previous Action **the order is learned from the script, not chronological **

Adam and Evelyn met before the museum meeting, when Evelyn was at Adam's other job, the video store, and he assisted her when she was unable to find a movie. Seven or eight years ago the townspeople wrote a petition to have the naked statue's genitals covered with a pastie. Jenny and Adam met previously in college class where they sat next to each other. For four months Jenny was borrowing Adam's pencil to get him to notice her but he never asked her out. Instead Jenny met Philip through Adam and he asked her out immediately, they've been dating ever since which lead to their engagement. Evelyn does deface the naked statue with spray paint. When Philip and Jenny first started going out Philip was seeing another girl named Jenny too. After Philip and Evelyn's big fight, Philip said to Jenny that Adam could do worse than Evelyn. Adam has a scar on his back from a kid throwing a stick at him in the first grade; it makes him self-conscious to wear tank tops. Evelyn used to cut her wrists when she was a teenager to get attention. Philip ran into Evelyn downtown and she told him that Adam was recovering from a procedure. Philip told Evelyn Jenny had kissed Adam in the park. Evelyn already knew because she had sneaked a peek into Adam's journal. To get even with Adam and Jenny, Evelyn kissed Philip. Jenny confessed to Philip that she had met Adam in the park and after talking with him she kissed him. During freshman year Philip would

constantly ask Adam to throw out his corduroy jacket because it lost them dates constantly. Before Evelyn Adam hadn't had a date in two years. One night at dinner Adam was very chatty with a waitress and left her an extra three dollar tip, Evelyn was upset at the supposed flirting. Jenny ended her engagement to Philip after seeing Adam and Evelyn together. Two days before Evelyn's big reveal Adam proposed and gave her an engagement ring. Five months before the museum meeting, Evelyn was given a challenge by her advisor to change the world. This challenge is what sparked her idea for a human sculpture, instead of changing the world she would change one life. During the past eighteen weeks while working on her "thesis" Evelyn made sure to be very visible around town with Adam. For their first date Adam and Evelyn went to Pizza Hut and Adam had his first vegetarian meal of a spinach and mushroom calzone with a salad. Evelyn had planned on using someone else for her "base material" when she spotted Adam, a more perfect specimen. In order to meet Adam Evelyn came up with the plan of defacing the naked statue at Adam's work so their meeting would seem coincidental. Adam tattooed Evelyn's initials on his body. Evelyn skipped third grade.

I. Dialogue

A. The dialogue in this script is realistic, throughout. LaBute makes use of slang as well as profanity for all four characters. The sound is both short and choppy for arguments and long, flowing in conversation. In the finale scene Evelyn has a five page monologue that at times sounds like a rant.

B. Choices of Words

1. **Picture of Dorian Gray:** The Picture of Dorian Gray is the only published novel by Oscar Wilde, appearing as the lead story in Lippincott's Monthly Magazine on 20 June 1890, printed as the July 1890 issue of this magazine.
2. **Cabaret:** *Cabaret* is a 1972 musical film directed by Bob Fosse and starring Liza Minnelli, Michael York and Joel Grey.
3. **Dirty Dancing:** Dirty Dancing is a 1987 American romance film, written by Eleanor Bergstein and directed by Emile Ardolino, the film features Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey, daughter of Joel Grey.
4. **Aesthetic:** pertaining to a sense of the beautiful
5. **Fornecelli:** an artist LaBute created as the creator of the sculpture Evelyn is preparing to deface in the opening scene.
6. **Kung Fu:** (1972–1975) is an American television series that starred David Carradine.
7. **Henry Higgins:** the main character in both George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* and Alan Jay Lerner's *My Fair Lady*.
8. **Take Back the Night Rally:** (also known as **Reclaim the Night**) is an internationally held march and rally intended as a protest and direct action against rape and other forms of sexual violence.
9. **Gallant:** (of a person or their behavior) Brave; heroic.
10. **Acronym:** a word formed from the initial letters or groups of letters of words in a set phrase or series of words

11. **Sadist:** is the derivation of pleasure as a result of inflicting pain or watching pain inflicted on others.
12. **Quadrophenia:** is a 1979 British film, loosely based around the 1973 rock opera of the same name by The Who.
13. **Charles Dickens:** Charles John Huffam Dickens was an English writer and social critic who are generally regarded as the greatest novelist of the Victorian period and the creator of some of the world's most memorable fictional characters.
14. **Metamorphosis:** is a short story by Franz Kafka, first published in 1915.
15. **Frankenstein:** or, The Modern Prometheus is a novel written by Mary Shelley about a creature produced by an unorthodox scientific experiment.
16. **Little House on the Prairie:** is an American Western drama television series about a family living on a farm in Walnut Grove, Minnesota, in the 1870s and 1880s.
17. **Apropos:** (1) fitting; at the right time; to the purpose; opportunely. (2) Obsolete. By the way.
18. **Ambiguity:** (1) doubtfulness or uncertainty of meaning or intention: to speak with *ambiguity*; an *ambiguity* of manner (2) an unclear, indefinite, or equivocal word
19. **Gregor Samsa:** the main character of Franz Kafka's short story *The Metamorphosis*.

20. **Picasso:** Pablo Ruiz y Picasso, known as Pablo Picasso, was a Spanish painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist, and stage designer who spent most of his adult life in France.
21. **Ritalin:** is a psychostimulant drug approved for treatment of ADHD or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.
22. **Conjugal Visit:** is a scheduled period in which an inmate of a prison is permitted to spend several hours or days in private with a visitor, usually their legal spouse.
23. **Query:** a question; an inquiry
24. **Manifesto:** a written public declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of the issuer, be it an individual, group, political party or government
25. **Anarchy:** used to refer to a society without a publicly enforced government or violently enforced political authority

Choices of Phrases and Sentence Structure

The sentence structure of this script has two distinct styles. The first style is a longer sentence structure that flows back and forth in a comfortable, conversational style. LaBute uses it for conversations between Adam and Jenny, Adam and Philip and Philip and Jenny. It is apparent, from this style throughout the script, that these three characters have been friends for a few years and are comfortable interacting with each other. Evelyn also uses this style in the presentation scene when she delivers her five-page monologue.

The second sentence structure style is short, choppy sentences. LaBute uses this style to single out Evelyn as an outsider. She is the new addition to this group of friends. Her sentences with each of the other characters are short, choppy and aggressive with exception to the presentation scene and her bedroom scene with Adam, when her sentences are long, flowing and conversational. Adam, Philip and Jenny all use the short, choppy style as well but only when arguing with each other or Evelyn.

There are no common, repeated phrases in this script.

This script is written in unelevated prose throughout.

C. Choice of Images

1. Pg. 26-27 Philip and Jenny have decided to have an underwater wedding in an aquarium. The audience envisions the minister, Philip and Jenny all in wetsuits and scuba gear swimming in a gigantic glass aquarium. Jenny wears a veil; Philip wears a bow tie as they recite their vows to one another. The audience should feel the same absurdity towards this image as they feel at the notion of Philip and Jenny getting married.
2. Pg. 30-36 Evelyn spray painted a penis on the naked statue in the art museum. The audience envisions Evelyn in the museum with her can of spray paint stepping over the velvet rope and spray painting a penis on the pastie and upper thigh that covers the naked statue's genitals. The audience should take from this an image of rebellion and of complete neglect and respect for the piece of art, much like the complete neglect and respect for Adam, *her* piece of art.

3. Pg. 88 Adam tells Philip that he took his old corduroy jacket to Goodwill.

The audience envisions Adam admiring himself in a mirror wearing his new coat. Then he looks over at the corduroy coat clumped in a pile on the floor, picks it up and starts to throw it away but feels guilty and takes it to Goodwill instead. The audience feels the slight sadness that is on Adam's face as he looks at his old coat but they also feel the immediate excitement of a new coat.

4. Pg. 100 Evelyn tell Adam and Jenny that she read about their drive in Adam's journal. The audience envisions Adam and Jenny in a convertible v-dub, both wearing sunglasses, Jenny wearing a scarf that blows in the wind. They are driving down a long winding road laughing and smiling. The audience is feeling complete freedom and joy in the midst of the argument that is currently being had amongst the three.

D. Choice of Peculiar Characteristics

This script has no real distinctive characteristics. It does take place at Clarkson College and there are references throughout the script that the characters are in a small, college town in the Midwest. According to Google.com, Clarkson College is located in Omaha, NE, so a Midwestern accent and rhythm would be appropriate.

E. Structure of Lines and Speeches

This script is a combination of rhythmic lines that flow back and forth in conversational style due to the close friendship of Adam, Philip and Jenny. This conversational style shows the comfort of the group. In contrast, there are the

short, choppy and aggressive lines delivered by Evelyn. I believe LaBute writes her this way to separate her as an outsider to the group. Adam, Philip and Jenny all use these short, choppy lines as well but only when arguing with Evelyn or amongst each other. Evelyn's sentence structure does change to the flowing conversational lines twice, once when she is in bed with Adam. She uses this structure to manipulate him, later she uses it during her big reveal in the presentation scene, where she delivers her five page monologue. At this time she uses the conversational style to justify her actions to the audience.

In this script, LaBute does not use capitalization. Every line is written with lower case lettering and he uses the ellipsis quite often. Many of his lines end in the ellipsis, but also he uses it frequently in his longer paragraph style lines in place of a pause. In some of the short, choppy sentences LaBute will substitute a slash (/) in place of a comma or a period. Moreover in the author's notes at the beginning of the play it is said that LaBute often uses the slash in specific lines to denote characters interrupting or overlapping each other.

III. Characters

- A. Adam and Philip are former roommates (28). Jenny met Adam through class (29) and now Jenny is Philip's fiancée (25). Evelyn met Adam while trying to deface a naked statue at the museum where he works and Adam introduced Evelyn to Philip and Jenny (1-5, 25).
- B. Adam works two jobs; the museum and a video store (1,2, 4). He is middle to lower class due to his need for two jobs and still requires student loans to go to school (11). However, in the end of the play he is able to purchase an

engagement ring for Evelyn (117). Adam is not noticed often by the opposite sex and until Evelyn's changes to him; he was not noticed by anyone (39, 128). Evelyn is an art student (10). Her art work is exceptional enough that the university has granted her a full scholarship (34). Evelyn feels no remorse or guilt for any of her choices regarding Adam and is at a complete loss of why he is so angry and hurt (122, 126). Philip is an undergrad student that makes enough money to go to school and live on his own (30, 36). He is having second thoughts about his marriage to Jenny and is relieved when the engagement falls apart (114). Philip is not someone to be perceived as 'sweet,' even Jenny doesn't think so (48). Philip has a history of infidelity with Jenny (48-49). Jenny is a student (29). She stays with Philip even though she knows of his infidelities (48-49). Jenny has feelings for and kisses Adam despite her engagement to Philip (56-57).

- C. Adam is in love with Evelyn (110). Adam and Philip are friends and former roommates but Adam does think that Philip is an idiot and annoying at times (28, 73-75). Adam thinks Jenny is amazing and too good for Philip (50-51). Evelyn thinks of Adam as her creation, her art thesis (120). She thinks Philip is obnoxious and a prick (34, 37). Evelyn is threatened by Jenny and her relationship with Adam (100-105). Philip thinks Adam has turned into Evelyn's lap dog (37). He also starts out thinking Evelyn is a bitch, but later tells Jenny Adam could do worse (37, 52). Philip thinks Jenny is a good kisser (Pg. 79) but that they are too young to get married (81). Jenny has had a crush on Adam for three years (57). She is in awe of the positive changes

that Evelyn has brought to Adam's life (55). Jenny says she loves Philip (48-49).

i. Adam is the protagonist.

ii. Evelyn is the antagonist.

D. Adam sees himself as a nobody, but was always content with that notion (23, 124). Evelyn sees herself as an artist and only that (122). Philip thinks that his good-looks make up for a multitude of his personality flaws (75) and that he quite the lady's man (29). Jenny sees herself as just an average girl. She doesn't think she is super smart, or artsy or cool, just average and that in fine (106).

E. Polar Attitudes

In this script I found that both Adam and Evelyn had Polar Attitudes.

Adam (to Evelyn): "i am so sure. i love you..." (110). After spending time dating Evelyn and getting to know her Adam has fallen in love with Evelyn.

Adam (to Evelyn): " yeah, well, tell me how 'cute' this one is, then...up yours, you heartless cunt." (127). After Evelyn reveals to Adam that their relationship was a facade and he was her art thesis, Adam is broken and hurt and has fallen out of love with Evelyn.

Adam (to Evelyn): "was any of it true?" Evelyn (to Adam): "...no, not really." (134).

Evelyn reveals to Adam that none of their relationship was real for her and that the whole thing was a facade.

Evelyn (to Adam): "in your bed, one night, when you leaned over and whispered in my ear...remember?...and I whispered back to you, I said...I meant that. I did." (137). Despite Evelyn's ability to compartmentalize her feelings and her insistence of the relationship being false, in the end she did speak one truth to Adam.

F. Adam's super objective is to keep Evelyn as his girlfriend at any cost (40, 110-111).

Evelyn's super objective is getting results from her human sculpture (120).

Philip's super objective is to regain the role of alpha-male in his friendship with Adam (37, 89, 113).

Jenny's super objective is Adam. She has had feelings for him for three years and now she wants him as her boyfriend (57).

Each of the character's super objectives is the foundation for their personal scene objective throughout the production. For example, in scene two Evelyn has already staked out Adam as her human sculpture and made contact. At this point in the play she has made subtle suggestions of life changes that he has taken and acted on, her scene objective is to reinforce the positive changes so she can continue to get her ending results. Adam accepts the compliments and reassures her that he is doing these life changes for her, supporting his desire to do anything to keep Evelyn as his girlfriend. Philip and Jenny are the same way. In scene five, Jenny works up the nerve to kiss Adam even though she is engaged. She then tells Adam she has wanted to do that for three years. Jenny's scene objective is the same as her desire, to do whatever is necessary to get Adam to be

her boyfriend. In scene seven, Philip mocks Adam for his new jacket and says that he hopes the next time he sees Adam he will recognize him due to all of Evelyn's influence. Philip's scene objective is to use mockery to show Adam how much Evelyn is influencing him into becoming a different person. Philip hopes that Adam won't like it, stop the changes, break up with Evelyn and go back to being Philip's beta male.

G. Adam's motivation is that he thinks he is in love with Evelyn. By his own admission he had not had much experience with women and it amazed that Evelyn is interested in him (23, 39). Adam's will is very strong, at Evelyn's request he has a rhinoplasty and stops associating with his only friends (64, 111-112).

Evelyn's motivation is a successful art thesis so she can graduate (10, 131).

Evelyn's will is very strong. For eighteen weeks she kept up the facade of both physical and an emotional relationship without getting emotionally involved herself (118, 120).

Philip's motivation is that he is afraid to be alone; in Adam's case he was Philip's best friend and beta male. Adam's role as companion was replaced by Jenny when she and Philip started dating. Now Philip thinks he is too young to get married but if he breaks up with Jenny he will be alone (80). Philip's will is semi-strong, he continues to date Jenny even though he doesn't feel right about the marriage and she kisses Adam (57, 114). However, in the end they do break up and Philip is alone (114).

Jenny's motivation is that Philip is second best. She has always had feelings for Adam but Philip is the one who made the move to ask her out (28-29, 57). She says she loves Philip but never says she is *in* love with Philip (49). Jenny's will is strong, in the end *she* is the one to break off the engagement (114).

H. Adam: Adam's moral stance is high but questionable. He did kiss Jenny while he was in a relationship and she was engaged; however, Jenny then confessed her indiscretion to Philip and Adam's relationship ended up being a facade. Adam never did anything morally wrong throughout the script, but had the story continued further, without Evelyn's reveal, it is plausible that he would have done something morally wrong had Evelyn asked.

Evelyn: Evelyn has a low moral stance with relation to moral responsibility. She placed her objectives and desires above the emotional well-being of Adam (120).

Philip: Philip's moral stance is medium to high. He did make Adam aware of Evelyn's influence over him and that he didn't agree with it but never did anything vindictive to break them up. He did the same for his relationship with Jenny. Philip made it apparent to Adam that he thought they were too young (to marry) but he had full intention of marrying Jenny (80). Jenny was the one to break off the engagement (114).

Jenny: Jenny's moral stance is high. She did kiss Adam while she was engaged to Philip, but then immediately confessed to Philip her indiscretion (79). When she realized she was unhappy with Philip instead of going through with the marriage she broke it off (114).

V. Idea

A. Meaning of the Title

The meaning of the title, *The Shape of Things*, comes from a line in the script. Evelyn is presenting her thesis project, Adam, in the final scene of the play. She explains that Adam's transformation from geek to chic is a "living, breathing example of our obsession with the surface of things, the shape of them" (121).

B. Philosophical Statement of the Play

During an interview LaBute was asked his motivation behind writing *The Shape of Things*. He explained that a woman once asked if *In the Company of Men* could be done in role reversal, two women preying on one man. At the time LaBute replied 'no' but explained that this tiny spark was his inspiration for *Shape*. Both *Company* and *Shape* tell the story of an individual that uses seduction and flattery to build a false relationship with an unsuspecting victim. In the end both victims are devastated by the truth, while the predator shows no remorse. These works both support the philosophical theme of *Shape*. The theme being that we are all victims or slaves at some point in our lives. Adam obviously a victim (slave) to Evelyn, Jenny a victim (slave) to her feelings for Adam, Philip a victim (slave) to his insecurities and Evelyn a victim (slave) to her art and the lengths she will go for it.

C. Symbolism

1. Adam: for Evelyn Adam is symbolic of the perfect sculpture or art project. She took a lump of clay, Adam, and molded it into a work

of art with her words and actions. Evelyn states during her thesis presentation, “Now, my work will fade, to be sure. Like chipping marble or crazing paint...but for this one glorious moment, it is perfect. As perfect as I made it...”

2. Adam and Evelyn: Adam and Evelyn are symbolic of the Biblical first couple, Adam and Eve. Like Adam and Eve, the woman deceives the man. Eve is the first to eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden much like Evelyn is the first to cross the rope in the museum to deface the sculpture.
3. Jenny: Jenny is symbolic of the forbidden fruit. Not only did Adam miss his chance with Jenny when they first met but she is now engaged to his best friend.
4. Adam's Corduroy Jacket: Adam's jacket is symbolic of Adam's life before Evelyn. For this reason Philip gets very upset when the jacket is tossed aside without a thought. Philip is part of Adam's old life and fears he too will be thoughtlessly tossed aside in the same way.

D. Themes

Art Censorship

Society's obsession with the Surface

Artistic Responsibility (for the creation)

Self-Love and Acceptance

Morality in Cosmetic Surgery

Deception in the name of Art

Love vs. Friendship

Unfaithfulness

Freedom of Expression (at the cost to another person)

VI. Events

- A. Initial Event: Evelyn, an art student, is on the brink of defacing a statue in a local museum when Adam, the security guard, intervenes resulting in their meeting and Adam asking Evelyn out.
- B. Inciting Incident: The inciting incident is that Evelyn has a very vocal conflict with Philip, Adam's best friend, resulting in tension and distance between Adam and Philip.
- C. Central Event: Evelyn's thesis presentation, during which she reveals that her relationship with Adam has been a facade. She admits she never had feelings for him but instead used him as her thesis project.
- D. Main Event: The main event is Adam's realization that he has sacrificed everything for a relationship that never existed in reality.

VII. Tempo

A. Play

Scene 1: Museum: This scene starts at a five, even keeled, as Adam and Evelyn are meeting for the first time. It then bumps to a six when Adam realizes Evelyn is going to deface the statue and she is not backing down. The scene finishes off at a six when Evelyn spray paints her phone number on Adam's jacket.

Scene 2: Restaurant Lobby: This scene starts at a five, Adam and Evelyn are just chatting as they await Philip and Jenny. It then bumps to a six by Philips and Jenny's presence as they all introduce themselves and finishes off at a six with Philip and Jenny noticing the changes in Adam.

Scene 3: Philip's Living Room: This scene starts at a seven as Philip is explaining the underwater wedding to Adam and Evelyn but slows to a five when it's said that Philip took Jenny from Adam. From that point the tempo slowly rises to a seven as Evelyn and Philip begin to argue, then to an eight/nine as the argument continues and the scene stops abruptly.

Scene 4: Bedroom: This scene is a slow and steady four as it takes place with Adam and Evelyn in bed, but does spike to a quick six when Adam brings up Evelyn and Philip's prior argument, then returns to the four.

Scene 5: Park: This scene is again starting at a five but slows to a four when Jenny brings up Philip's possible infidelity. It picks up to a six/seven as Adam begins to "come clean" to Jenny and Jenny tells Adam how much he's changed for the better. It stays at a six for Adam and Jenny's kiss and trails to a five as they go off together.

Scene 6: Doctor's Lounge: This scene alternates from a five to a seven throughout as Adam goes from being calm to slightly nervous about the surgery. Evelyn uses different tactics to soothe him, including sex in the men's room which ends the scene at a six.

Scene 7: Lawn/ Park: This scene begins at a six when Adam and Philip meet and Philip is grilling Adam about his nose bandage. It bumps to a seven as Philip

tells Adam he ran into Evelyn and she told him about a “procedure” that Adam had done. It continues at a seven when Philip tells Adam he knows about his kiss with Jenny and heightens to an eight as Philip talks about all of Adam changes including his new nails and jacket. The scene ends abruptly at an eight.

Scene 8: Coffee Shop: This scene stays at a very controlled five until towards the end when Jenny comes back to the table to apologize to Evelyn then it jumps to a seven. It stays at the seven until Evelyn’s speech about what she deserves to know. Then it drops back to a controlled five where it slows to a three as Evelyn asks Adam to give up his friends and he agrees.

Scene 9: Auditorium: This scene starts at a four as Philip and Adam see each other for the first time in a few weeks and Philip confronts him about Adam avoiding him. It continues at a four until Evelyn starts her presentation and it jumps to a controlled six where it stays until the last paragraph of Evelyn’s monologue where the temp slows to a four as Evelyn says she has no remorse for what she has done.

Scene 10: Exhibition Gallery: The scene starts at a four with Adam and Evelyn trying to talk without being awkward. Then it jumps to a quick six in the middle of page 124 when Adam starts to get angry. As the conversation continues the tempo grows to an eight and drops to a five when Evelyn offers to return all of Adam’s things after she is graded. With Adam’s speech on art it jumps to a quick seven and then drops to a five for the duration of the scene until the end.

B. Characters

Adam: Adam's inner tempo is almost a mirror of Jenny. He is consistently at a five, but under the stress of confrontation his tempo will increase to a six or seven. For example, when he kisses Jenny and then Evelyn finds out. His tempo also changes at the influence of Evelyn. When Evelyn is in a confrontation with Jenny at the coffee shop, she (Evelyn) is able to keep the tempo at a very controlled five which Adam follows. Then on the opposite end when Adam is in bed with Evelyn his tempo falls to a four at her lead.

Evelyn: Evelyn's inner tempo runs at a median five. It will increase to a six or seven in conflict such as the confrontation with Jenny or Philip but it is always a very controlled increase. Evelyn's tempo is very controlled whether increasing, or decreasing to a four such as the bedroom scene with Adam.

Philip: Philip's inner tempo bounces between a six and a seven. A few times like when he is interrogating Adam about his nose job and his kiss with Jenny it run more at a seven. He even gets up to an eight when he has his confrontation with Evelyn and the defacing of the statue.

Jenny: Jenny's inner tempo is almost consistently a five. She is very even-keeled and level-headed which is a contrast to her counter part, Philip. Jenny's tempo does increase to a six when she has the kiss with Adam and then later to a seven when Evelyn find out about the kiss and confronts her at the coffee shop.

VIII. Mood

Scene 1: Museum: vast, empty, hushed, reserved, and suffocating

Scene 2: Restaurant Lobby: anxious, apprehensive, rigid, prickly and shallow

Scene 3: Living Room: bustling, quirky, awkward, hostile and exposed

Scene 4: Bedroom: warm, protected, secure, orange and green

Scene 5: Park: pink, enthusiastic, twitter-pated, flattered and soft

Scene 6: Doctor's Lounge: white, bland, stark, sterile, suggestive and titillating

Scene 7: Lawn: sarcastic, yellow, reckless, smug, deceptive and reconciled

Scene 8: Coffee Shop: bitter, stingy, sweet, accusatory, hollow and blue

Scene 9: Auditorium: abandoned, alone, detached, depleted and lavender

Scene 10: Exhibition Gallery: angry, abandoned, carefree, bewildered, red

APPENDIX C

Production Research

Production Proposal

Title: *The Shape of Things*

Playwright: Neil LaBute

Rights/Royalties Est. Cost: \$520

Rights/Royalties Company: Broadway Play Publishing, Inc

Director/Designer: Lyndsay Somers Hicks/Barbara "Pippin" McGowan

Production Level Requested: Level III

Category: Contemporary Drama

Casting Requirements: 1 male lead; 1 female lead; 1 male supporting; 1 female supporting

Total: 2 males; 2 females

Special Casting Considerations: Evelyn needs to be a very natural looking woman, no cosmetic surgery, colored hair, fake nails, fake tan, etc.

Production Requirements:

Historic/Time Period: Fall, 2001

My approach: Fall, 2004

Pertaining to the set and props requirements, I am taking a minimalistic, but not simplistic, approach. The set will be multilevel with a thrust stage. I

envision giving my actors multiple playing areas as well as doubling those playing areas for set pieces, e.g., the step to another playing area doubling as the headboard to a bed in a later scene. I would like the stage to be painted black so that any color will (a) be from a costume or set piece and (b) pop. Props will be just the same, very minimal. Ideally I'd like to double up on props as much as possible and keep set dressing very basic, just enough to identify where the scene is taking place, e.g., swings for the park scene.

Costumes are going to follow in the same minimalistic style. Each character will have a "foundation costume," a base costume that will be worn during the entire show, e.g., jeans and a white T-shirt; and as scenes change a costume piece will be added or subtracted depending on said scene. Make up will be simple and natural for the females. The males may have powder just to protect their faces against the shine of the lights; anything more than this will be distracting to the audience in such an intimate space.

For the lighting requirements, I am going with a two tone scenario. I'd like rich, warm lighting tones for the scenes that are between Adam and Jenny; colder, stark tones for interactions between the other characters. I do want the tones to be very different, however, I would like them to be subtle, just enough for an unconscious shift but not to be an audience distraction. Adam's relationship with Evelyn will start in the warm lighting tones and slowly get cooler, but just the opposite with Adam and Jenny's relationship. I would like Adam/Jenny's lighting tones to start cool and get warmer. I would also like the usage of gobos

when necessary to give definition to the setting of a scene, e.g., a window gobo for the interior of an apartment.

Sound requirements will also be minimalistic and subtle, used only to further define the setting of a scene, e.g., birds chirping in the park. I am hoping that the fluidity of the scene changes will be so that music is not required. However, if that is not the case the use of opera music for scene changes could be a possibility.

Other Considerations:

Other considerations for this production are projections. In place of a backdrop or back wall I would like to have three giant hanging projection screens. The centered screen will be displaying projections throughout the production that further define the scene setting, e.g., a large exhibit room for the opening museum scene. The projection screens on either side are going to display trees. Throughout the production the trees are going to grow and bloom, this reasoning is two fold. First the trees are supporting the underlying theme of personal growth and change and second to show the passage of time and seasons.

My design concept for this show is minimalism with a bit of flair. The set, props, and sound are all minimalistic so that the projections and lighting will be the flair. My vision for this production is focused on the various contrasting relationships and their development throughout the script; the warmth of Adam and Jenny's relationship versus the faux warmth of Adam's relationship with Evelyn and Jenny's relationship with Philip. To do this I will be using lighting

but also staging, character development and possibly light music. Most importantly the transitions need to be subtle, the audience will only notice subconsciously.

4 Rehearsal Weeks Requested; Placement: Fall

Research Plan

GOALS

The goal of this research project is to better understand the subject matter involved in the script that I am proposing to direct. I am proposing Neil LaBute's *The Shape of Things*, which has multiple, complex themes throughout the script, but also holds an opportunity to develop three dimensional characters and simplistic but astute design ideas.

The required length of my project is undetermined. It will be as long as needed to exhaustively research my subject matter and to fully grasp the understanding needed to produce an excellent performance.

The content of my research will include, but not limited to, the themes that are both fundamental and secondary throughout the script; themes such as art censorship, artistic responsibility, religion in art, female manipulation, sexual experimentation, the morality (or lack thereof) of cosmetic surgery, isolation and age old heartbreak. It will address the religious connotations and the playwright's influences that are apparent throughout the script. My research will also probe into the biographical information of Neil LaBute. His childhood and the break up of his family influenced the development of the two main characters, Adam and

Evelyn. His years in the Mormon Church influenced his (forced) decision to stop writing Mormon characters and to focus his writings in a different direction.

SOURCES

The subject matter that I am researching has been comprehensively researched before by other writers, artists, actors and even directors. I was able to find an extensive amount of research on Neil LaBute the man, his works, and the thematic symbolism in his other plays and including *Shape*.

I have not yet come across any holes that my research could fill but instead my subject matter is open to interpretation. So many of the themes are opinion based, for example, is an artist responsible for their creation and then the after effect on said creation or the influences it causes around it. I can research how others feel or find unbiased information from all points of view but in the end my performance will display my feels and opinions on the subject.

As a visual learner I am finding that YouTube has been very beneficial. I have researched several interviews with Neil LaBute, watched a lecture on the development of his works and characters and even was able to witness a rhinoplasty. However, on the topics of art censorship, religion in art, and the morality (or lack thereof) of cosmetic surgery I have found a multitude of information both virtually and in hard copy. Much of the basic laws and rulings have been in hard copy but case files and more current, relevant information have been found online through podcasts or web articles.

OUTLINE ORGANIZATION

For my research I needed a university library which not only gave me access to the books within but to the online databases; I also needed a computer for podcasts, online articles, YouTube access and virtual stickers and bookmarks. Since I am also a hands-on learner I needed highlighters, Post-its (in six different colors), markers, a pen and a pencil (to use on the books I need to return).

My research will be completed when I have sufficient information from all points of view for all crucial themes as well as the background information of LaBute.

My sources are all amalgamated. I am using the bulk of my hard copies for the art and religion themes; I find these themes are intermixed in the majority of the research. Whereas the podcasts, online interviews and lectures are mainly LaBute's background.; the YouTube rhinoplasty procedure was very informative and naturally important research relating to the cosmetic surgery that happens within the script.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

I anticipate my research and project coming together quite nicely. The only difficulties I foresee is streamlining the information and choosing the most important facts and figures. Once I expanded my thematic search the information was endless. It's just a matter of taking the time to sift through all information and choose what is pertinent and what can be organized as secondary information. The plan is to set aside daily time to search through the abundance of information,

this way I won't get burnt out or frustrated. I will allow plenty of time beforehand so that I, as the researcher, will approach the information in an organized manor with fresh thought and ideas.

Annotated Bibliography for Works Cited

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- Bigsby, Christopher W. E. *Neil LaBute: Stage and Cinema*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 2007. Print. This book has a chapter specifically about *Shape*. LaBute goes into detail on how he came up with the idea for Evelyn, her religious connotations and the parts of himself that are written into her. This reference allows a better understanding of Evelyn and LaBute as a playwright.
- Blum, Virginia L. *Flesh Wounds: The Culture of Cosmetic Surgery*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2005. Print. Blum addresses personal experience with cosmetic surgery and the effects on her life. She explores cosmetic surgery, celebrities and the effects on our society. Blum interviews surgeons, many offering to reveal the true inner self by altering the outer. Relevance, it's a strong reference guide to cosmetic surgery and society.
- Childs, Elizabeth C. *Suspended License: Censorship and the Visual Arts*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1997. Print. Childs discusses censorship within visual arts over centuries and countries, including "cultural contexts" pertaining to political, social and artistic situations. She addresses censorship in relationship to pornography, blasphemy and profanity. This is a reference to define censorship and cites examples throughout history relating to visual art and their masters, a major theme.
- Collins, Owen. "Neil LaBute on 'The Shape of Things'" Video blog post. *Total Theatre Podcast*. Total Theatre Podcast, 11 Feb. 2009. Web. 26 July 2012. <<http://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/ttp-006-neil-labute-on-shape/id264783195?i=50078785&mt=2>>. LaBute gives a talk on *Shape*, addressing the different themes throughout the play and that he, as the playwright, deliberately wrote it to appear one way but in the end is something completely different. He discusses his decision to address art and morality. This is a background reference to *Shape*.

Dubin, Steven C. *Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print. Dubin's book sites a different point of view. They are (a) the human body as an artistic spectacle, (b) the government's role in censorship, and (c) the role of the NEA in censorship. Importance: human body as a spectacle (addressed in the production) and Dubin's alternative view point.

Elder, Robert K. *The Film That Changed My Life: 30 Directors on Their Epiphanies in the Dark*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review, 2011. Print. LaBute is interviewed. The interview gives insight into LaBute as an artist and a director; it examines the film that changed his life and influenced him to a life of directing. This text offers LaBute's background and insight into him as the playwright of *The Shape of Things*.

FILMAKA. "Filmaka Interview: Neil LaBute." *YouTube*. YouTube, 09 June 2009. Web. 25 July 2012.
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK3cJCvSISc>>. This is a one on one interview that addresses LaBute's childhood and support of his mother. LaBute talks about his experiences in theatre over film and touches on his start in the industry by turning *Company* into a film for \$25,000. Importance: it's a first person account.

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"Frankenstein Plot Summary." BookRags. BookRags, 2000-2009. Web. 01 Aug. 2012. <<http://www.bookrags.com/notes/frk/>>. Unable to find Frankenstein in print or online, these are the online cliff notes. This is the classic Mary Shelly tale. Frankenstein is another reference Adam makes about himself during his transformation in the script. This is a Frankenstein reference guide to the story.

Houchin, John H. *Censorship of the American Theatre in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2003. Print. Houchin explores censorship in American Theatre throughout the twentieth century starting in 1901 all the way to modern times (2003) with *Angels in America*. This text is another censorship reference but focusing on theatre as a visual art not just solely paintings and sculpture.

- Jones, Chris. "A Visit with Writer/Director Neil LaBute." *YouTube*. YouTube, 23 Nov. 2007. Web. 25 July 2012.
 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t358A048EBE>>. Jones interviews LaBute on his start in Chicago and struggles as a young playwright. LaBute discusses what he believes to be "good theatre" and how he writes his plays based on that idea. This gives reference to another of LaBute's playwrighting influences.
- Kafka, Franz, and Stanley Corngold. *The Metamorphosis*. Toronto: Bantam, 1972. Print. This is the famed story of Gregor Samsa. The story of Gregor Samsa and *The Metamorphosis* are underlying themes throughout the script as well as a paralleled story. Adam references the story and the character, Gregor Samsa, a few times in the script.
- LaBute, Neil. "Changing Course: The Serpentine Road to Success." Omnibus Lecture Series. Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne. 25 Mar. 2010. Lecture. LaBute addresses how to be successful no matter what you do and gives background to his start in the playwrighting industry and his transformation to film and television. He addresses several of his works, one being *Shape*. This is a reference background to his writing process and his biography.
- Ludmer, Joyce Pellerano, and Kenneth Clark. *Carlo Pedretti: A Bibliography of His Work on Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance (1944-1984)*. Berkeley: Regents of the University of California, 1987. Print. This text gives background into da Vinci's life as an artist, his work and images. The book includes pictures of the Vitruvian Man and well as other works from the Renaissance Period. This is used as reference for any further da Vinci drawings that may be used in the production.
- Maiorino, Giancarlo. *Leonardo da Vinci: The Daedalian Mythmaker*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1992. Print. Maiorino writes a chapter in the book entitled, *The Vitruvian Man: At the Navel of Life's Compass*. This chapter explains the meaning behind the drawing, its relevance to da Vinci and his development as an artist. The books relevant pertains to the drawing which plays a large role in the production.
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- Nassif, Paul. "Nasal Hump Removal - Closed Rhinoplasty Procedure Information Video." YouTube. YouTube, 07 June 2009. Web. 01 Aug. 2012. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0UTyjMzP6A>>. This is an informational video of a rhinoplasty procedure. It displays exactly what happens in the procedure as well as before and after photos of the patient. This is a medical reference to the specific procedure that takes place in the world of the play.
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- Pierce, Nev. "Neil LaBute: The Shape Of Things." *BBC News*. BBC, Dec. 2003. Web. 25 July 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/2003/11/28_neil_labute_the_shape_of_things_interview.shtml>. During this interview piece LaBute addresses the superficial themes of *Shape* including art and morality and his Mormonism influences, being labeled a misogynist after *Company* and the painful themes of *Friends and Neighbors*. This gives insight into LaBute and from a first person point of view.
- Romney, Jonathan. "Neil LaBute: A Darker Shade of Male." *The Independent*. Independent Digital News and Media, 29 Oct. 2004. Web. 25 July 2012. This is a strong interview article. It give humanity to Neil LaBute the esteemed playwright. It cites several times that LaBute is someone who is happy to work and not seeking fame. This is a strong biography reference and gives evidence to LaBute's character.
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- Shaw, Bernard. *Pygmalion: A Romance in Five Acts*. London: Penguin, 2003. Print. This is the classic Shaw tale. *Pygmalion* is an underlying theme throughout the production as well as a somewhat paralleling story. Adam makes references to the script and story throughout the production.
- Shaw, Bernard. *Shaw on Theatre*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1958. Print. Shaw writes about England's stage censorship and USA's film censorship. A chapter called "Rules for Directors" gives advice to both new and seasoned directors; and "Mr. Shaw on Mr. Shaw" discusses theories on his work and other playwrights' work. Importance: Shaw and his *Pygmalion* are underlying themes throughout the production.

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 <<http://timesandseasons.org/index.php/2005/01/an-interview-with-neil-labute/>>. This is a Mormon paper with a Mormon journalist. This interview article delves into LaBute's Mormon background, it's influence on his writings along with the Greek influence, citing a few specific examples of his work. This also addresses the consequences LaBute suffered as a result of writing Mormon characters.
- Williams, Tom. "Neil LaBute- Interview." Audio blog post. *Theatre in Chicago*. Theatre in Chicago, 7 May 2012. Web. 24 July 2012. In this interview LaBute discusses how he came up with the idea of *Shape*. He talks of his character development process. He cites his new show, *In the Forest Dark and Deep* drawing parallels between these characters and *Shape's* characters.
- Wood, Gerald C. *Neil LaBute: A Casebook*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print. This text explores and observes the writings of production playwright Neil LaBute. Tom Wilhelmus writes a chapter, *Morality and Metaphor in the Works of Neil LaBute*. It delves into the thought process of LaBute as he interweaves metaphors throughout the script and causes his audiences to question their own morality.
- Yancey, Philip, and Tim Stafford. *The Student Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Bible, 1986. Print. This text acts as an authority reference for all spiritual themes and symbols throughout the script. This text is a necessity for the Religious Given Circumstances required in the script analysis.

Play Review Distillation

1. The Shape of Things
2. A. Premiere Production:
 - i. Opened: May 30, 2001, Closed: Jun 23, 2001
 - ii. Almeida at King's Cross, London, England
 - iii. Director: Neil LaBute; Set Design: Giles Cadle; Costume Design: Lynette Meyer; Sound Design: Fergus O'Hare; Lighting Design: Mark Henderson
 - iv. Gretchen Mol (Jenny), Paul Rudd (Adam), Rachel Weisz (Evelyn), Frederick Weller (Philip)
 - v. LaBute was nominated for the 2001 London Evening Standard Theatre Award for Best Play for "The Shape of Things"
- B. Professional Production:
 - i. Opened: May 17, 2004, Closed: June 12, 2004
 - ii. New Ambassadors Theatre, London, England WC2
 - iii. Director: Julian Webber; Set Designer: Simon Highlett; Costume Design: Lynette Meyer; Sound Designer: Richard Price; Lighting Designer: Adam Silverman
 - iv. Alicia Witt (Evelyn), Enzo Cilenti (Adam), Sienna Gillory (Jenny) James Murray (Philip)
 - vi. None

C. Professional Production:

- i. Opened: October 10, 2001, Closed: January 6, 2002
 - ii. Promenade Theatre, 2162 Broadway (at 76th Street) New York,
New York
 - iii. Director: Neil LaBute; Set Designer: Giles Cadle; Costume
Design: Lynette Meyer; Sound Designer: Fergus O'Hare; Lighting
Designer: James Vermeulen
 - iv. Gretchen Mol (Jenny), Paul Rudd (Adam), Rachel Weisz (Evelyn),
Frederick Weller (Philip)
 - vi. The Lortels - 2002 - Outstanding Featured Actor: Frederick Weller

The Lortels - 2002 - Outstanding Featured Actress: Gretchen Mol

Theatre World Awards - 2002 – Performance: Gretchen Mol

Drama Desk Awards - 2001 - Outstanding Play: Neil LaBute
3. Premiere Performance (Almeida Theatre, London):

Michael Billington, The Guardian May 31, 2001

Billington asks the questions, what is art and does creation carry with it any moral responsibilities? Labute addresses these topics in his production *Shape*. Billings goes on say that the twist appears three-fourths of the way through the production which he found to be disconcerting.

Billington compares *Shape* to *Pygmalion*, stating that Shaw weaved his moral overtones throughout the story where LaBute saves it all till the end for a preverbal slap in the face. In the end the audience sees the big picture, as a society we are obsessed with the surface. Billington states that, "too much of LaBute's play feels as if he is vamping till he gets to the climax". Billington enjoyed performances by three of the characters, and thought there could be improvement in Rudd's performance. The scene changes were too long for the simplicity of Cadle's set.

Professional Production (Promenade Theatre, Off Broadway):

Elyse Sommer, *Curtain Up*, October 11, 2001

LaBute's *The Shape of Things* transitioned beautifully from London to New York, with the same actors. All four were amazing with an exceptional performance by Paul Rudd. Weisz's costumes are also quite memorable. Mol and Weller are wonderful support to the main characters as they; too, blur the lines between control and art. Cadle's set worked very well in the Promenade Theatre, however, the Smashing Pumpkins scene change music was loud and overbearing. The plot revolves around Evelyn's thesis as an art student and if you're paying close attention the ending won't come as a surprise but a slow build to climax. Although Sommer does not consider *Shape* to be an "earth-shattering thought provoker" she does go on to say that it is well acted,

staged and finely written. It takes your mind off of the earth-shattering thoughts of the day and allows escape for a few hours.

Professional Production (New Ambassadors Theatre, London)

Philip Fisher, *The British Theatre Guide*

American director Julian Webber has revived LaBute's *Shape* with a new cast and production team. Alicia Witt stars as the college art student, Evelyn, who seduces nerdy Adam played by Enzo Cilenti. James Murray and Sienna Guillory portray Phillip and Jenny, Adam's best friends who in this version are a bit dull, boring and wall-flowerish. Witt's performance as the sweet girl-next-door is to her credit. However, unlike her predecessor, Rachel Weisz, Witt is not as gripping or convincingly nasty in the final lecture scene. Cilenti's Adam is appropriately good looking but his reaction to Evelyn's "reveal" in the final scene is way understated and disappointing. At some points Murray and Guillory seem uncomfortable onstage and even a little bored. Unless you are just itching for a night on the town it may be more pleasing to just stay home and watch the movie.

C. Compare and Contrast

In all three reviews the reviewers credit LaBute as being a talented playwright both with this script and with previous scripts. However, Billington thought this particular script was stalling for time to get to the ending climax. Sommer enjoyed the script but didn't really

think it was anything special or “earth-shattering” as she worded it. Both Billington and Sommer enjoyed the performances by the original cast, but Billington thought Paul Rudd could use some improvement whereas Sommer singled him out as being exceptional. Sommer thought that Evelyn had great costumes but neither Billington nor Fisher comment on them. Billington and Sommer thought the set worked well but the scene changes were unnerving; Billington with the long pauses and Sommer with the loud Smashing Pumpkin’s music. Then there is Philip Fisher who reviewed the revival and was less than impressed by the revival cast. He went on to agree with the other two reviewers that Rachel Weisz was very believable as Evelyn. Fisher also never comments on the set or if the scene changes were excessively long or the music selection. Fisher’s main focus was the performances or lack thereof.

D. Michael Billington of *The Guardian* thought the premiere of *Shape* was too much build up for not much pay off. The set was appropriately simple but the scene changes were drawn out. He enjoyed the actor’s portrayal but thought Rudd needed another lesson or two. Elyse Sommer of *Curtain Up*, an online theatre review, seemed to think Rudd’s performance was exceptional, but again LaBute’s material didn’t blow her away. Sommer agreed with Billington slow build up to climax. In her opinion the scene change music took away from the experience instead of adding to it. Philip Fisher from *The British Theatre Guide*, reviewed the revival claiming that it fell short. The actors looked bored and Alicia Witt

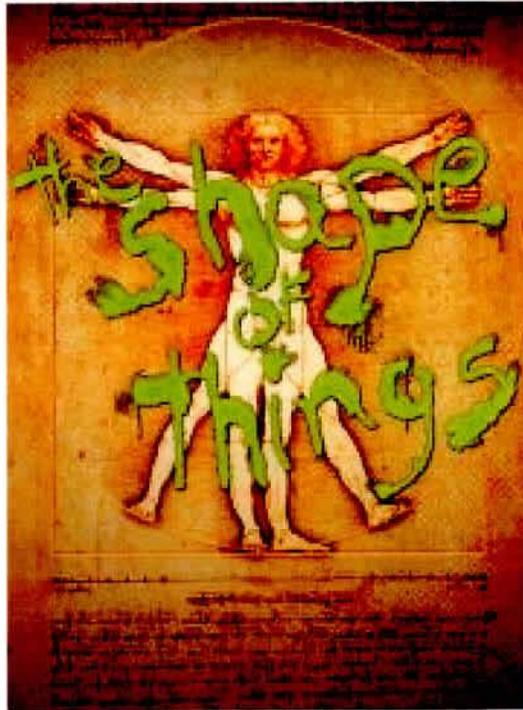
was less than convincing as Evelyn. He even went as far as to suggest renting the movie instead of going to the live revival. Bottom-line, the original cast has large shoes to fill.

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<<http://www.curtainup.com/shapeofthings.html>>.

APPENDIX D

Production Poster and Cast List



D. 1

D. 2

The Shape of Things
Cast List

Kelsey Amann.....	Evelyn
Cassie Ballard.....	Jenny
Josh Wolk.....	Philip
Billy Walkenhorst.....	Adam

KEY:		
X = Onstage	T = Top of Unit	E = Enters
O = Onstage with no Dialogue	M = Middle of Unit	L = Exits
* = Offstage Dialogue	EN = End of Unit	

	Pgs. 1-4	Pgs. 4-5	Pgs. 5-6	Pgs. 6-7	Pg.8	Pg. 8-10	Pg.10-11	Pg.12	Pg.12-15	Pg.16-18	Pg.19-20	Pg.20-23	Pg.23-24	Pg.25	Pg.26-28
Number of Pages	3.5	1	0.5	2	0.9	1.5	2	0.9	2.5	3	1.5	3	1.5	1	2.5
ADAM	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
EVELYN	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	O	x
PHILIP														x ET25	x
JENNY														x ET25	x

The Shape of Things

Revised 15 August 2012

Faber and Faber 2002 Edition

KEY:

X = Onstage

O = Onstage with no Dialogue

***** = Offstage Dialogue

T= Top of Unit

M= Middle of Unit

EN= End of Unit

E= Enters

L=Exits

	Pgs. 28-30	Pg.30-33	Pg.33-34	Pg.34-36	Pg.36-37	Pg.38-39	Pg.40-41	Pg.41-42	Pg.42-44	Pg.44-45	Pg.46-51	Pg.51	Pg.51-53	Pg.53-54	Pg.54-55
Number of Pages	2	3	1	2	1	2	1.1	1.5	2	1	5.5	0.5	1.75	1	1
ADAM	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
EVELYN	x	x	x	x	x LM37	x	x	x	x	x					
PHILIP	x	x	x	x	x										
JENNY	x	x	O	x	x						x	x	x	x	x

KEY:		
X = Onstage	T= Top of Unit	E= Enters
O = Onstage with no Dialogue	M= Middle of Unit	L=Exits
* = Offstage Dialogue	EN= End of Unit	

	Pg.55-58	Pg.59-60	Pg.60-62	Pg.62-64	Pg.64-66	Pg.66-70	Pg.70-71	Pg.72-79	Pg.79-81	Pg.81-83	Pg.83-86	Pg.86-89	Pg.90-92	Pg.92-94	Pg.94-98
Number of Pages	3	1.5	2	2	2	4	1.9	7.2	2	2	3	3	2.5	2	4.5
ADAM	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x ET 94
EVELYN		x	x	x	x	x	x						x	x	x
PHILIP								x	x	x	x	x			
JENNY	x												x	x	x
VOICE							x								

KEY:

X = Onstage

O = Onstage with no Dialogue

***** = Offstage Dialogue

T = Top of Unit

M = Middle of Unit

EN = End of Unit

E = Enters

L = Exits

	Pg.98-101	Pg.101-103	Pg.103-104	Pg.104	Pg.104-107	Pg.107-109	Pg.109-112	Pg.113	Pg.113-115	Pg.115	Pg.116	Pg.116-117	Pg.117
Number of Pages	2.5	2	1	0.5	2.75	2	2.5	1	1.5	0.5	0.75	1	0.5
ADAM	x	x	x	o	x	x	x	x	x	x	x LEN 116	x ET116	x
EVELYN	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						
PHILIP								x	x	x	x LEN 116		
JENNY	x	x	x	x EL104						x ET115 LEN115			

The Shape of Things

Revised 15 August 2012

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KEY:

X = Onstage

O = Onstage with no Dialogue

***** = Offstage Dialogue

T= Top of Unit

M= Middle of Unit

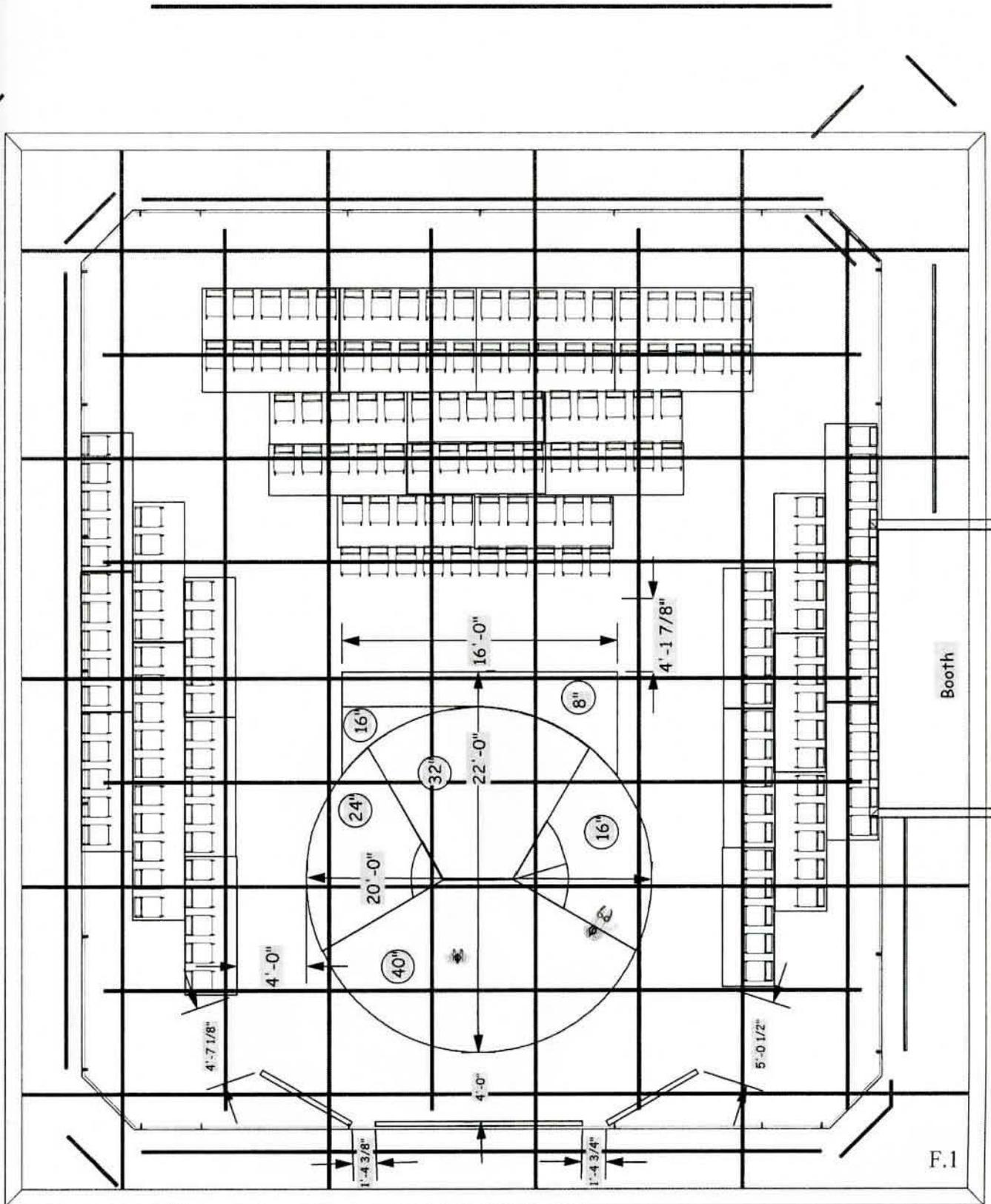
EN= End of Unit

E= Enters

L=Exits

	Pg.117-122	Pg.123	Pg.123-127	Pg.127-130	Pg.130-132	Pg.132-135	Pg.135-136	Pg.137				
Number of Pages	5	0.9	3.5	3.25	1.5	3.5	1.25	1				
ADAM		x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
EVELYN	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x LEN137				
PHILIP												
JENNY												

APPENDIX F
Ground Plans and Sketches/Renderings



1

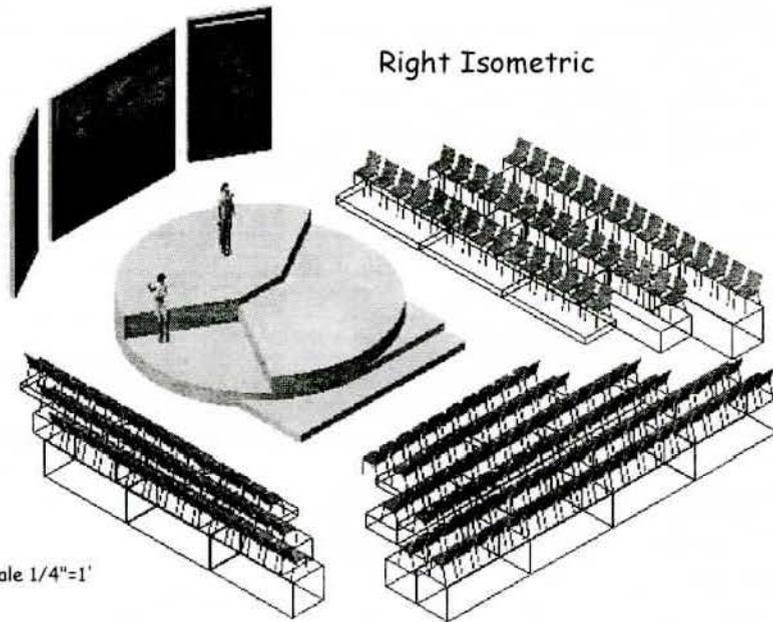
2

3

A

A

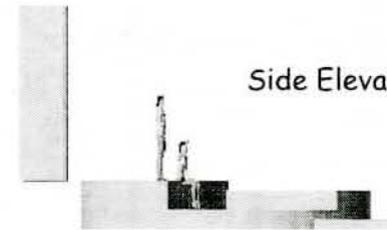
Right Isometric



Scale 1/4"=1'

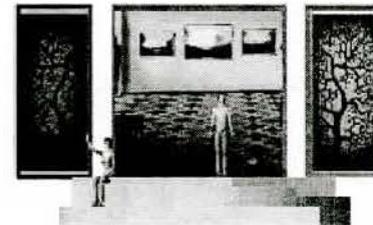
128

Side Elevation



Scale 1/8"=1'

Front Elevation



B

B

F.2

Show Name		drawing #1	
the shape of things			
Reference	Drawn By	Date	
3d elevation	p. mcgowan	6/26/12	
CAD File Name			

1

2

3

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	20	21	22	23	24	25
	R 2:30 - 5 Read thru Character analysis	R 2:30 - 5 Block scn. 3,9	R 11:00 - 1:30 Block scn. 5,7, 2 Phil call @ 12:00 Evelyn OFF	R 2:30 - 5 Work scn. 8,4 Phil OFF		
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
	R 6:30 - 9:30 Block scn. 6,10 NO SCRIPT Jenny, Phillip O	R 6:30 - 9:30 Block scn. 1,2 Jenny, Phillip OFF	R 6:30 - 9:30 Work scn 1-3	R 6:30 - 9:30 Work scn. 4-7		
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Labor Day No class No rehearsal	R 6:30 - 9:30 Work scn. 8-10	R 6:30 - 9:30 Work scn. 1-5 NO LINE CALL (except E's mono)	R 6:30 - 9:30 Work scn. 6-10		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	R 6:30 - 9:30 Scene touch-up	R 6:30 - 9:30 Run thru	R 6:30 - 9:30 Run thru NO MONOLOGUE LINE CALL	R 6:30 - 9:30 Run thru		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
TECH WEEK Time TBA Run thru	Tech Time TBA Run thru	Tech Time TBA Run thru	PREVIEW NIGHT Time TBA	OPENING NIGHT	SHOW	SHOW
23						
SHOW (Matinee)						
STRIKE						

Tech Schedule

Here is the current tech schedule for the production of *The Shape of Things*.

Please distribute this to all members of your department.

Please make sure you adjust your call times to provide for the necessary setting and striking of equipment, sweeping and mopping the stage floor, setting props and costumes, dimmer check, etc.

Friday, September 14	6:30pm	Half Hour Call
	7:00pm	Cue to Cue - GO
	10:00pm	Tech Notes
Saturday, September 15	12:30pm	Half Hour Call
	1:00pm	Finish Cue to Cue - GO
	6:00pm	Dinner Break
	7:00pm	Run of Show - GO
	10:00pm	Tech Notes
Sunday, September 16		OFF
Monday, September 17	6:30pm	Half Hour Call
	7:00pm	First Dress Run - GO
	10:00pm	Notes
Tuesday, September 18	6:30pm	Half Hour Call
	7:00pm	Run of Show - GO (Photo day for Designers)
	10:00pm	Notes
Wednesday, September 19	7:00pm	Half Hour Call
	7:30pm	Invited Dress (Video Taping of Show)
	10:00pm	Notes
Thursday, September 20	7:30pm	Opening Night

G.2

APPENDIX H

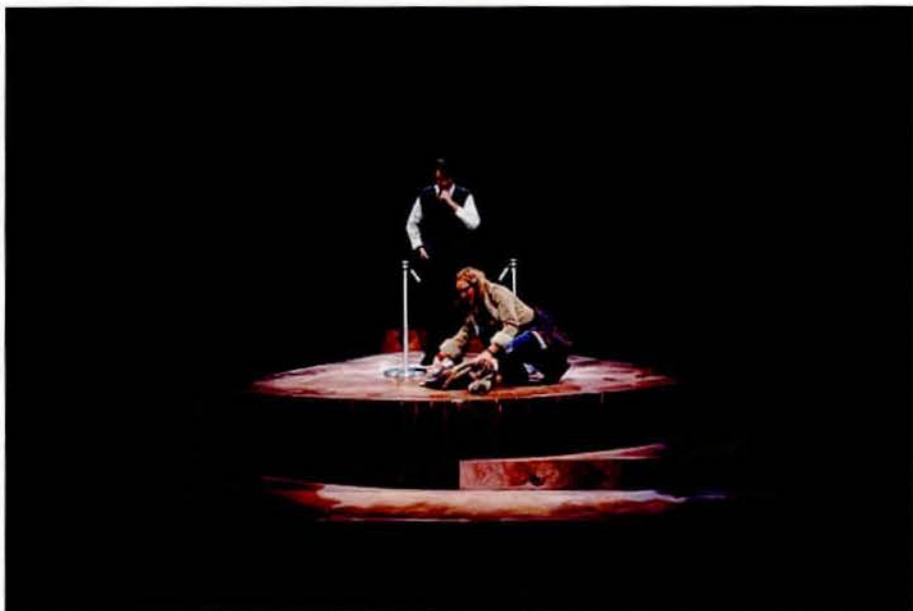
Production Photos

Scene One: Evelyn crossing the ropes in the Art Museum



H.1

Evelyn spray painting Adam's jacket in the Art Museum



H.2

Scene Two: Adam, Evelyn, Jenny and Philip in a Bar Lounge



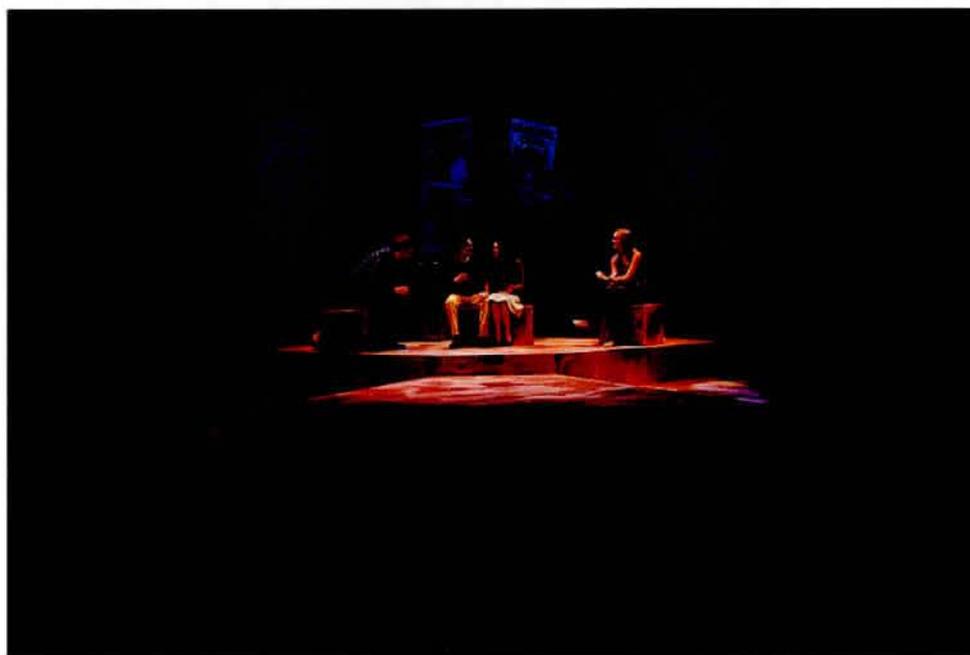
H.3

Adam and Evelyn leaving the Bar Lounge

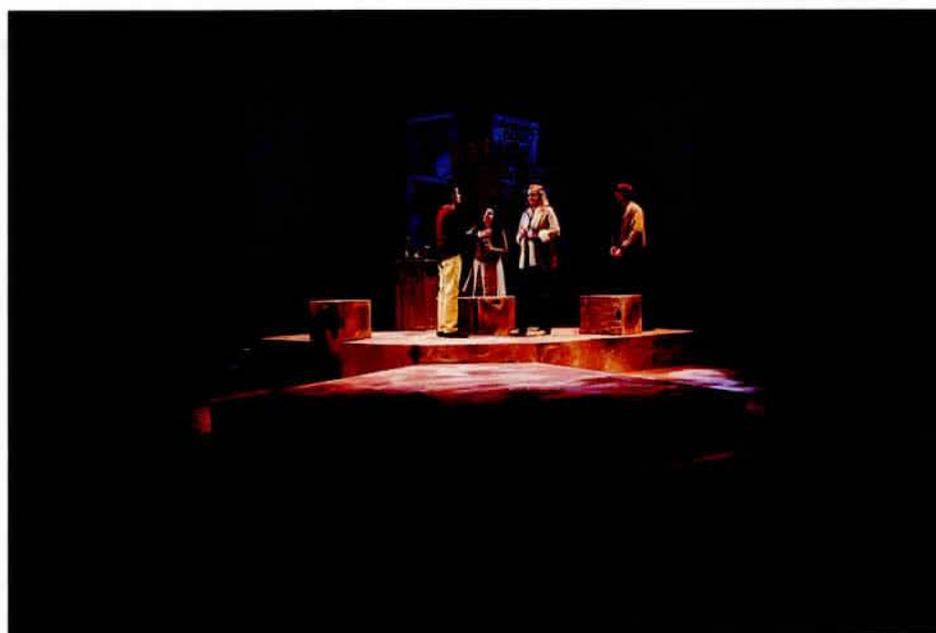


H.4

Scene Three: Adam, Evelyn, Philip and Jenny at Philip's House



H.5



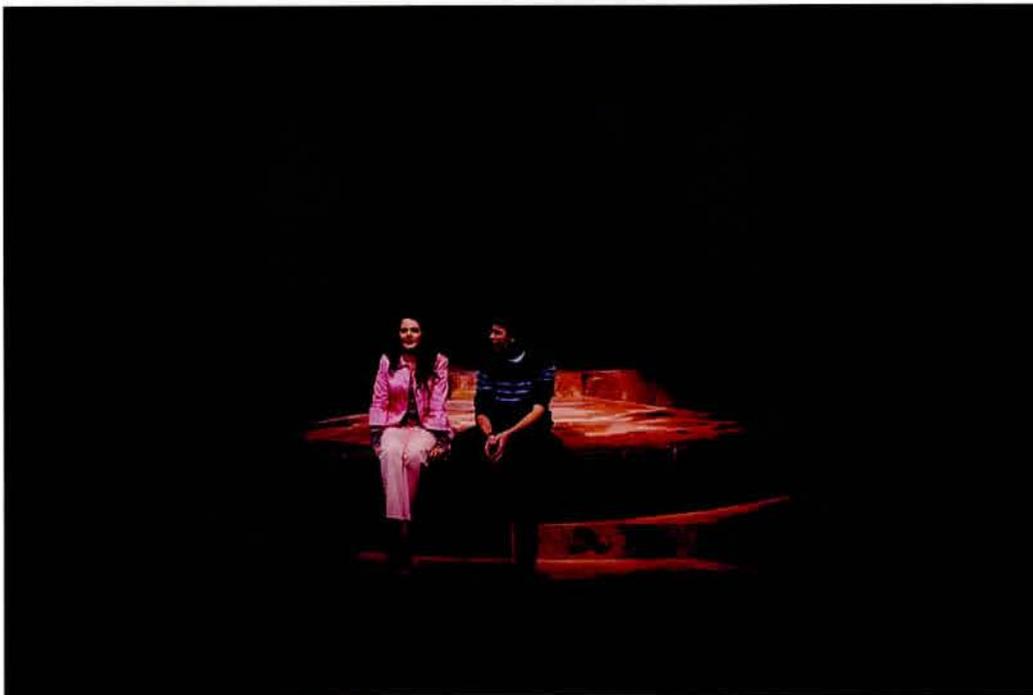
H.6

Scene Four: Adam and Evelyn in Adam's Bedroom



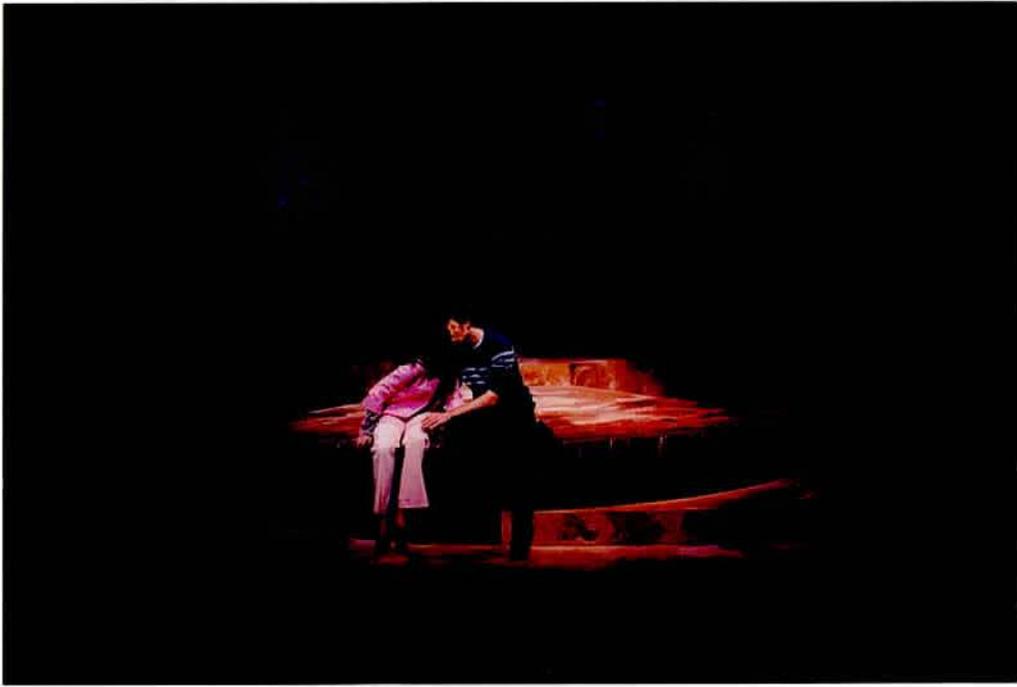
H.7

Scene Five: Adam and Jenny talking by the Pond



H.8

Adam and Jenny kissing at the Pond



H.9

Scene Six: Adam and Evelyn sitting in the Plastic Surgeon's Office



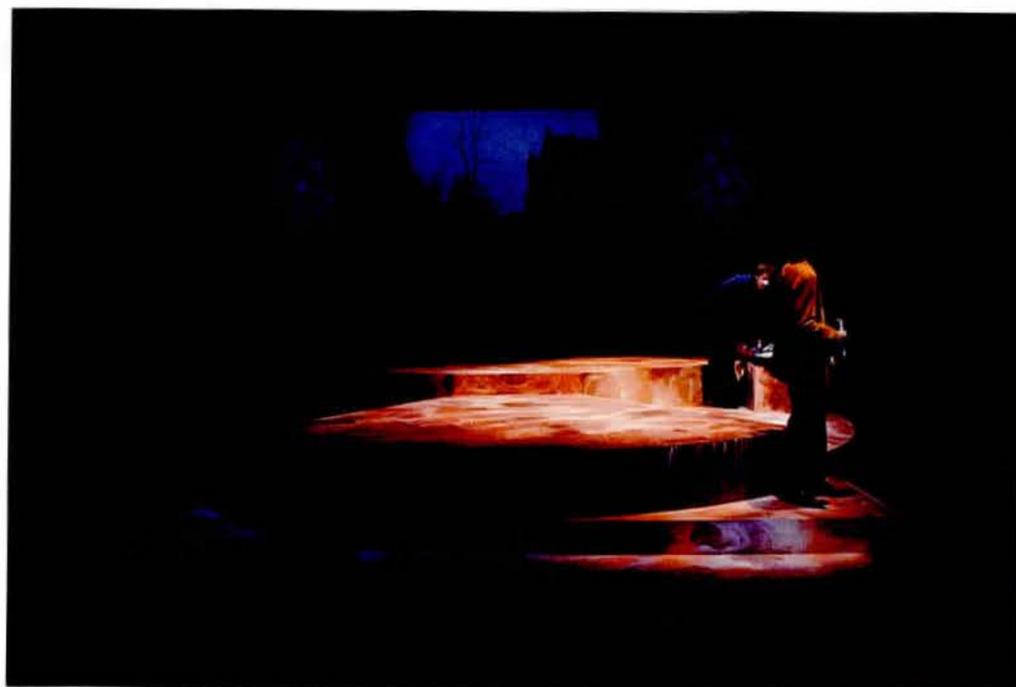
H.10

Adam displaying his "EAT" tattoo for Evelyn



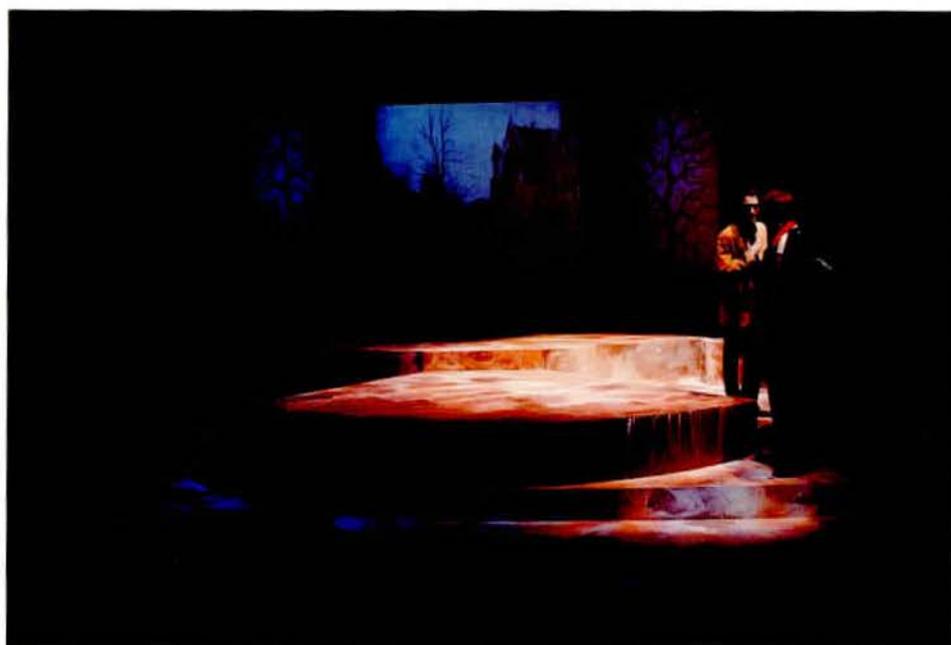
H.11

Scene Seven: Adam and Philip's lunch in the Park after Adam's rhinoplasty



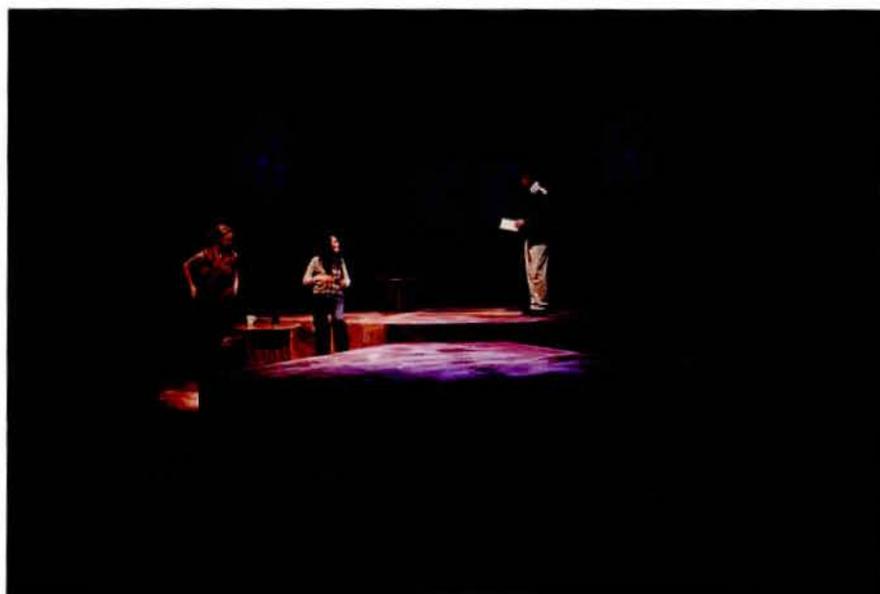
H.12

Philip confronts Adam about his new jacket and life changes



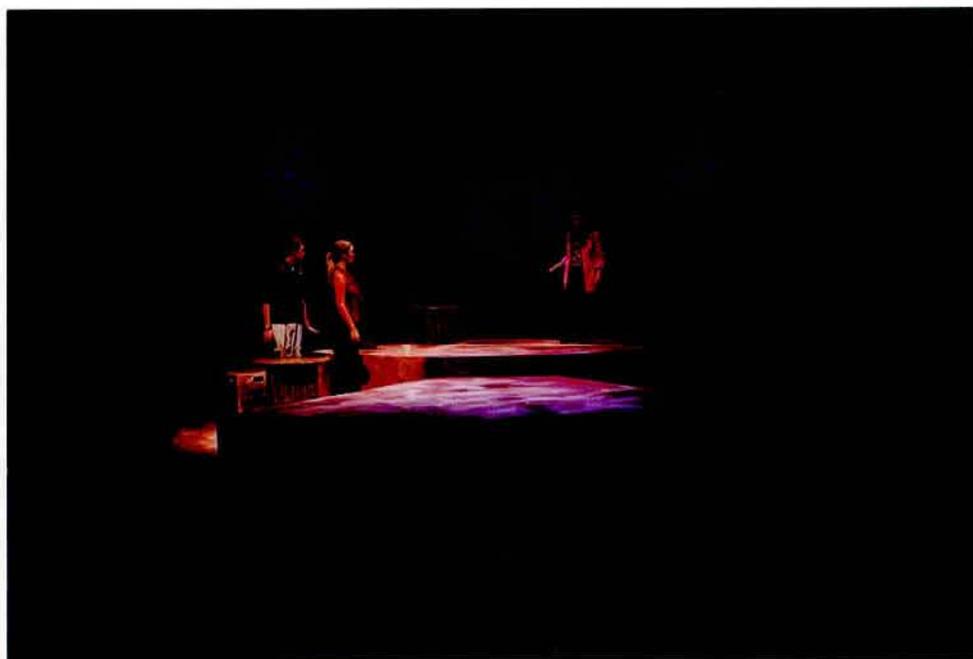
H.13

Scene Eight: Adam walks up on Evelyn and Jenny in the Coffee Shop



H.14

Jenny telling Adam and Evelyn that she is a good person in her monologue



H.15

Scene Nine: Pre- Presentation Stage



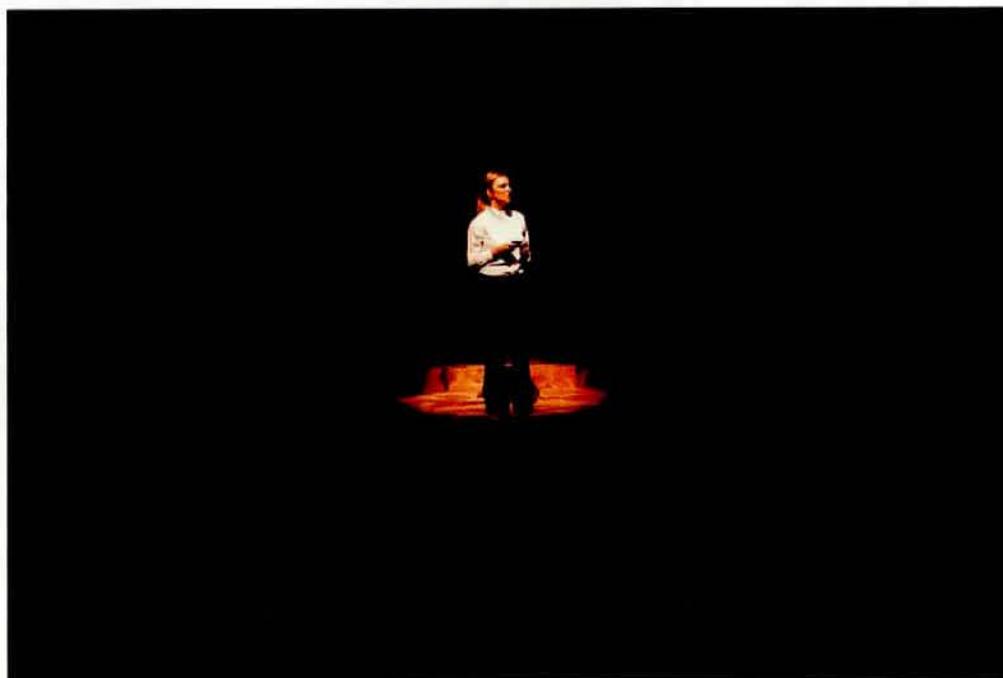
H.16

Adam and Philip's Pre-Presentation Run In



H.17

Evelyn Presenting her Thesis Project

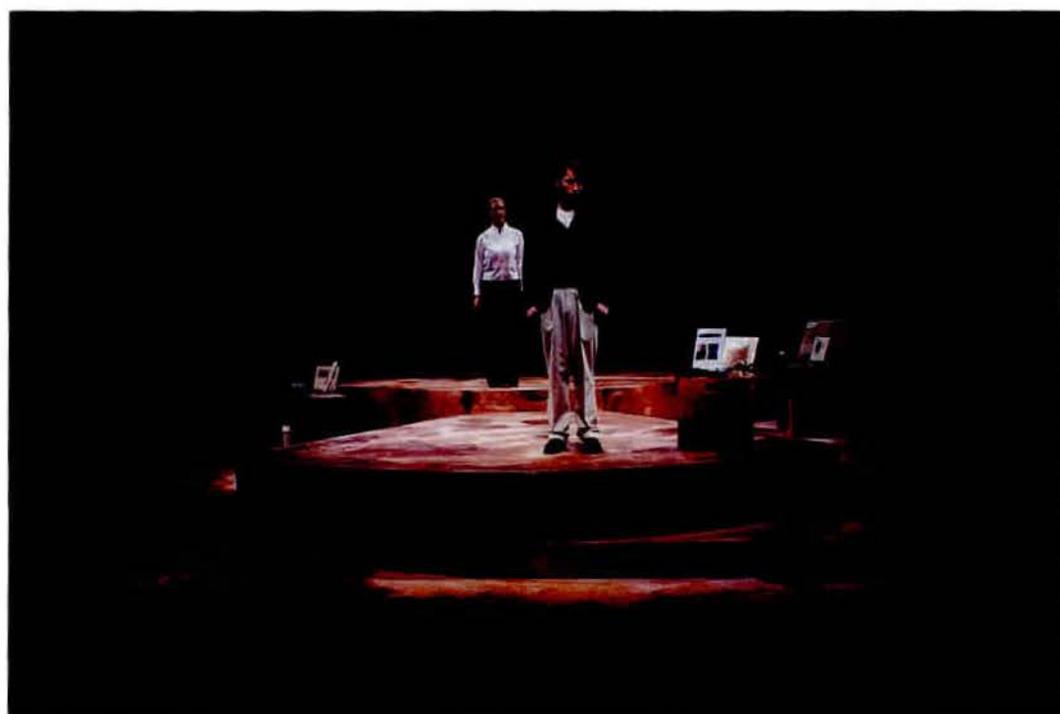


H.18

Scene Ten: Adam confronts Evelyn



H.19



H.20

Adam reflects on his loss



H.21

Post Production Bows

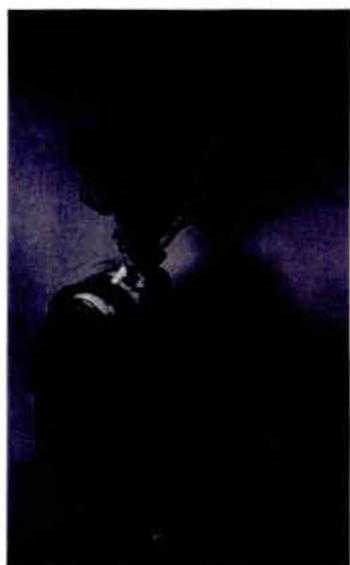


H.22

APPENDIX I

Design Meeting/Research Images

Images of isolation, loneliness, desperation: the relationships between Adam and Evelyn towards the end of the script, Adam and Philip



I.1



I.2



I.3



I.4

Images of warmth, safety, comfort-relationship between Adam and Jenny towards the end of the script



I.5



I.6



I.7



I.8

Artistic Edge: Evelyn Imagery



I.9

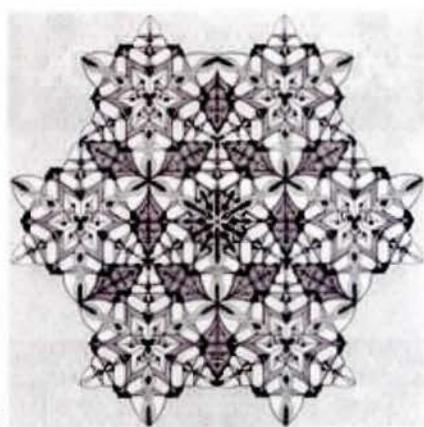


I.10

Examples of flower designs for projections:



I.11



I.12

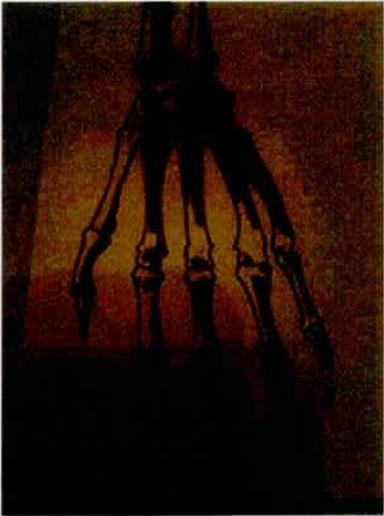


I.13

Various selections of the human form, both whole body and specific body parts:



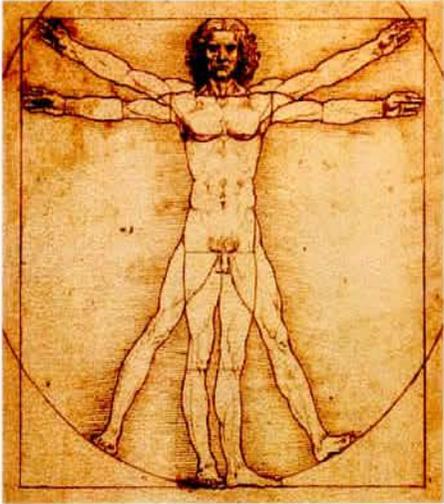
I.14



I.15



I.16

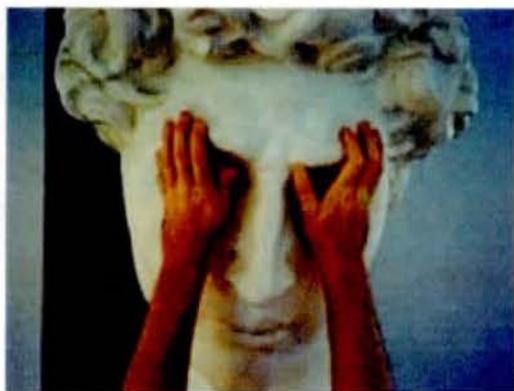


I.17

Images of loss and inapt, Adam's feelings about himself:



I.18

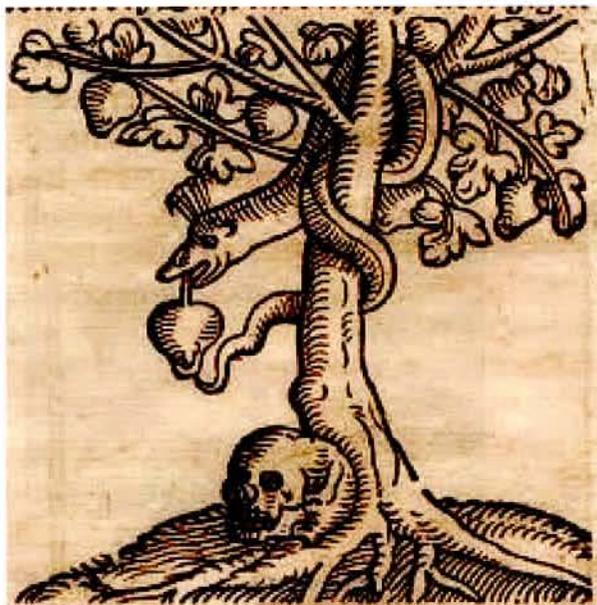


I.19



I.20

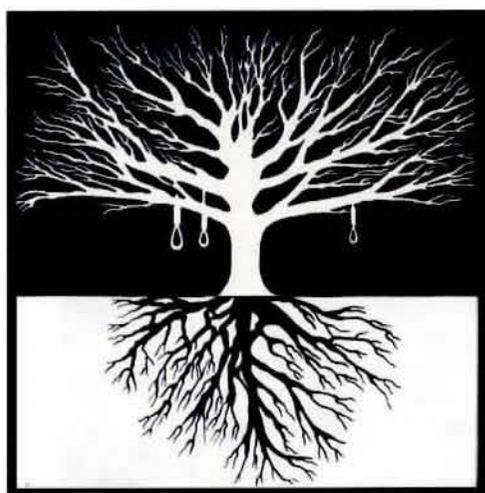
The Tree of Good and Evil or The Tree of Knowledge:



I.21



I.22



I.23



I.24

WORK BY STAN
THE ARTIST 2008

Window Gobo Examples:



I.25



I.26

Adam and Eve with the Forbidden Fruit:



I.27

APPENDIX J
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