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THE PROCESS OF DIRECTING
EDWARD ALBEE'S *THE GOAT OR, WHO IS SYLVIA?*

by
SHELLEY WHITEHEAD

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF FINE ARTS
IN
THEATRE ARTS

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
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ABSTRACT

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This paper will follow director Shelley Whitehead's process of bringing *The Goat or, Who Is Sylvia?* by Edward Albee to production at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Within the paper the director discusses her initial concepts and ideas; a historical look at the playwright and play; journals regarding the rehearsal and performance process; a dissection of that process to ascertain success or failure of the ideas set forth in the first chapter; and a final look at how her years at Minnesota State Mankato shaped her as a director. Included in the paper is an Appendix to supplement the paper's findings.

Within this document the director looks at the Greek influence that Albee infused within the script and how it could be best used to create an intellectual catharsis for the audience. This catharsis is sought to challenge those watching to seriously think about the issues that stood out to them in the play.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

Minnesota State University, Mankato's department of Theater and Dance is producing the play *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia (Notes Toward a Definition of Tragedy)* written by Edward Albee. The production will be performed in the Andreas Theater March 27 through 30, 2013. The director will be Shelley Whitehead with Paul Finocchiaro and John Paul acting as the project's academic advisors. Joshua Helgeson is the Production Stage Manager, William Roberts will serve as the Assistant Stage Manager, Noah Files is designing the set and will act as the Props Master, Naoko Skala is the Lighting Designer, Lauren Nelson is designing the costumes, with Robert Anderson serving as the Technical Director. Director Shelley Whitehead will serve as the sound designer with help from George Grubb as sound technician.

The story of the play begins with a husband and wife getting ready for a television interview about the man's recent professional accomplishments. The man's name is Martin Grey, he has just turned 50 and is at the top of his career. His wife is Stevie, an attractive woman who is confident in herself and her relationship with her husband. It is apparent that Martin is distracted in these first moments of the play but it is also clear that these two have a healthy and affectionate relationship.

It is during this interview that the reason for Martin's distraction is revealed. The interviewer, Ross, has known Martin and Stevie for many years. He is excited to talk

about the recent professional coup that Martin has scored by being the youngest person to win the Pritzker Prize, the architectural equivalent to the Nobel Peace Prize. In addition, Martin has been tapped to design “The World City,” a multi-billion dollar city of the future. It is obvious as the interview progresses that Martin is still very distracted and it eventually comes out that Martin is having an affair.

Ross is shocked that Martin would cheat when it is so very obvious that Martin loves his wife and has always been faithful in his marriage. Martin tries to explain his passion for the person with whom he is having an affair but it isn't until Ross sees a picture of Sylvia that he begins to understand what is happening in Martin's life. Ross insists that Martin must tell Stevie and threatens to tell her himself if Martin does not. Martin pleads for Ross to understand but Ross cannot. He cannot accept that Martin is “FUCKING A GOAT!” (Albee, *The Goat* 23).

In the next scene we see the aftermath of Ross's promise to divulge what he has discovered. He has written a letter to Stevie telling her all he knows. It is painful as Martin tries to explain what has happened and Stevie struggles desperately to force her husband to make sense of what has happened. It is as if these two people are speaking different languages. Because of this inability to connect, frustration increases which Stevie expresses through breaking objects in the room.

It is through this heated discussion that the couple explores their relationship. They have been happy in a way that many couples would have envied and yet there is a weakness or need in Martin's life that makes him open to infidelity. It is not only the affair itself but also the socially unacceptable participant, the goat. This play is a look

into the complexity of life and the fact that social definitions are not able to completely label the dynamism of the human mind and emotion. This is exemplified at the end of the second scene as Stevie can take no more and says “You have brought me down, you goat-fucker; you love of my life!” (Albee, *The Goat* 45). In one phrase she moves from obscenity to tenderness.

The final scene begins with father and son looking at the aftermath of Stevie’s rage. Billy is desperate to know where his mother is, Martin does not know and Billy is at a loss. The world he has known has been set on its head. His relationship with his father has been strained since Billy told his parents he was gay and, earlier in the play, his father called him a “Fucking faggot!” (Albee, *The Goat* 23). While he knew of his father’s disapproval this was the first time he heard the true depth of his father’s disgust at Billy’s coming out.

It is this dichotomy that motivates Billy in the next scene. His father has just proved himself as someone who is living an abhorrent lifestyle, just as he has defined Billy’s life. It is this hypocrisy that perhaps motivates Billy to reach out in his own way to connect with his father by kissing him. Martin pushes him off but not before Ross walks in on this very confusing situation. It reaffirms Ross’s idea that Martin is nothing but a perverse, depraved individual. Martin tries to explain that it is nothing more than a natural expression of love and emotion yet Ross can only see the crass. Ross believes that love can only be expressed in a narrowly socially defined way and Martin sees it as something much more primal and indefinable.

The final moments of the play show the culmination of Stevie's frustration and she is able to express through violence what she could not put into words when she brings in the corpse of the goat Sylvia. Martin is distraught and asked why she would do this when the goat was innocent of any wrongdoing. Stevie uses Martin's own words as an explanation and rationalization of her actions: "She loved you . . . you say. As much as I do" (Albee, *The Goat* 54). The impetus of the goat's death sentence was the same as the destruction of Stevie's life, Martin's love.

The playwright Edward Albee is a very strong proponent of the concept that any production of a playwright's work must be true to the author's original intent. In an interview with Craig Lucas for BOMB Magazine, Lucas mentions that Albee seems to be interested in control when it comes to his plays. Albee replies:

Well, composers don't let musicians play notes other than the ones that they've written, painters don't let galleries hang their paintings upside down, why does it suddenly seem to be the playwrights who should let all sorts fuck around with their work. (52)

When the author has so clearly and concisely expressed how he feels about the production of his play it would be quite amiss to circumvent the author's intention about his work.

In an interview Albee gave a clear indication of what he thinks *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?* is about. He says, "The play is about love, and loss, the limits of our tolerance and who, indeed, we really are" (Albee, Stretching 262). Even with this clear definition, he understands that the audience must also discover what the play is about to them.

In Albee's development of the characters the biggest challenge for each of them is their struggle with connections. Martin discovers he feels a connection to the goat in an indefinable way: "I didn't know *what* it was-what I was feeling . . . There she was, just looking at me, with those *eyes* of hers" (Albee, *The Goat* 21). He does not know what it means, but impulsively acts upon the connection sexually. Billy has lost his fraternal connection with his father at the discovery of Martin's secret and tries to reestablish that connection impulsively with a sensual kiss. Stevie has lost her relational connection with Martin and reacts to this loss through destruction and violence. And finally, the connection that Ross had with Martin professionally is in danger, so he decides to take charge of the situation by writing Stevie. The result, however, is chaos.

The main character of the play is Martin. He is an "every-man" that is extraordinary in his career but could easily be the next-door neighbor. Often times Albee labels his responses as "noncommittal," "helpless" and "bewildered" showing that this is a soft-spoken man who is not normally verbally abusive. He does love words and throughout the play he corrects the other characters' grammar. This is not done with an air of arrogance, but just the facts. He tries desperately to live in the "black and white" world of language and hopes that he can explain to his family the truth, the grey area of his love for Sylvia. It is not something that can be explained in black and white vocabulary and he does end up losing everything by following the simple urge of his heart.

Stevie is smart and funny, but it is clear that there is an undercurrent of self-doubt that has been in her marriage for a long time. After finding out about the goat she talks

about marital expectations. She says: “We prepare for . . . things, for lessenings, even; inevitable lessenings” (Albee, *The Goat* 29). At first it seems she is speaking about the degrading toll that life takes on a person and their relationship, medical issues, “emotional disengagement” (Albee, *The Goat* 29) and loss. But a deeper meaning is discovered in the final moments of the play that we understand it to be the lessening of who she is: “You have brought me down to *nothing!* You have brought me down, and Christ! I’ll bring you down with me” (Albee, *The Goat* 44).

The fear she had from the beginning of their marriage came true. Martin brought Stevie to a place of self-hatred that she always feared could be her fate. She had escaped the harmful thoughts and fears, however with Martin’s indiscretion she is brought to an emotional low and fulfills her own internal prophesy.

Billy has lived an insulated life. He has been loved and grudgingly accepted even in his most difficult years. He has only known safety and comfort, and when his father’s actions have been revealed, his world is toppled. The chaos he has found in the living room is a visual representation of his life and he has no idea what to do next. Everything he has known has been destroyed by the actions of his father and Billy does not know how to move forward. He fears for his mother’s safety and yet he is powerless to help her. It is in this moment of fear and loss that Billy believes it is his best choice to hold onto his father in an instinctual way. He kisses his father, sensually and longingly, with tears coursing down his face. He does this hoping to hold onto something, some part of the love they once had.

Ross is the antagonist, the one who pushes the whole situation to a boiling point that creates this chaos. What is his motivation? Why does he feel the need to tell Stevie? He says that he will tell her if Martin doesn't, but he does not give him the opportunity. The morality of the situation is not the reason, it isn't a moralistic instinct that drives him to tell Stevie, it is fear. He is afraid that Martin will be found out, and the bad press that would follow and eventually lead to Ross.

Ross is afraid of being condemned for supporting a man that society cannot accept. He feels the only way to protect himself is to tell Stevie, making sure that Martin will have to stop his intimacy with the goat. It is an indication that this is how Ross lives his own life. A story is told earlier in the play about Ross getting a couple of prostitutes for Martin and himself when they attend a college reunion. Ross is married at the time and has absolutely no qualms about his indiscretion because it won't be found out. If it had been discovered he would be seen as one more man who couldn't control himself. But bestiality is inexplicable and he cannot be a part of something that could create questions about his own acceptable morality.

As the parenthetical title of the play, "Notes Toward a Definition of Tragedy", indicates *The Goat* is clearly a tragedy. The loss that each character experiences is catastrophic and thorough. There is a loss of status for Martin, a loss of family for Stevie, a loss of security for Billy, a loss of lifelong friendships for Ross and even loss of life after Stevie kills the goat.

The play continues to imply tragic theatre as Albee uses classic Greek elements within the play including the goat itself. In his article "Oedipus in New York, Greek

Tragedy and Edward Albee's *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*," Thomas Falkner says that by using the goat "Albee anchors his approach in the title, which links the play to Dionysus and the mythical origins of the genre" (188). He continues with a quick history of how the goat may have been used in the festival of Dionysus showing a distinct link between Albee's specific use of the goat and the ancient Greek connection in theatre.

It is Albee's use of the classical Greek style that has inspired the production approach for this design. By allowing Grecian elements to be major foundations of the design work, they can enhance the inherently Greek moments within the play. The director would like to see a modern Grecian feel to the designs used for this work. By using a simple set design that has Greek elements, such as pillars, the drama can be enhanced through the costuming. The costuming itself will also have Greek inspiration through draping and simple basic color schemes.

The design elements will mirror the acting styles that the director will want, moving from a naturalistic, internal, modern approach to an overt Greek style of performance that is bold, open and very stylized. It will be the combination of the classic Greek ideas alongside a more modern approach that the director hopes will allow a disconnection to occur that can push the audience to feel the distance often created in an abstract piece. It is this post-play catharsis effect that the director is hoping to achieve that will inspire the audience to think about the issues raised as they make their way home.

It is often difficult to know what an audience will walk away with in a production and if they will experience the catharsis as hoped. It depends on so many variables in

their lives as to what will impact them and keep them involved with the story after they have left the building. But there are themes that impact all people. One such concept is that of “what is love?” What is acceptable love and who can define love in someone else’s life? Martin is so strong in his declaration of love for Sylvia, even though he does admit to the social unacceptability of his actions, he never waivers in his love for her. The director hopes that this may be the one issue that the audience can connect with and continue to discuss long after the theatre is dark.

As stated earlier Albee has been called an Absurdist playwright and along with the attempt at defining absurdism, the director hopes to keep in step with the idea that *The Goat* is an absurdist play. In his book of collected articles and interview’s Albee defines the Theatre of the Absurd as:

An absorption-in-art of certain existentialist and postexistentialist philosophical concepts having to do, in the main, with man’s attempts to make sense for himself out of his senseless position in a world which makes no sense—which makes no sense because the moral, religious, political and social structures man has erected to “illusion” himself have collapsed. (Albee, Stretching 8)

Much of this definition is vague and would depend on the artist’s philosophical concepts, but one thing that rings true throughout Albee’s career in regards to this definition is the collapse of illusions. This article was written early in his career (1962) yet decades later he still talks about the use of illusion in his works. He says that individuals should have some type of false illusion, perhaps to endure life, but that they

must be aware of these illusions and that “they have the responsibility to know that they are kidding themselves and then go right on kidding themselves” (Albee, Stretching 98). Yet in some of his plays the illusion is broken. In *Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf* the child is revealed to be fiction, in *The Goat* Martin’s illusion of having the best of both worlds relationally is brutally shattered by Ross.

It is the director’s intent that this production will try and create a feel of the absurdist theater by starting off with a more naturalistic approach, establishing the “rational devices” and then slowly creating an abstract world through the lighting and make-up designs. It will create the feeling of “the absurdity of the human condition” (Brockett 535) that is an integral part of the Theatre of the Absurd. It is through disjointed visual and auditory moments that the audience will be lead to the catharsis of emotions post-play that is the ultimate goal of the production.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Edward F. Albee III was born on March 12, 1928, in Washington D.C. His mother's name was Louise Harvey and his father "deserted and abandoned both the mother and child and had in no way contributed to the support and maintenance of said child" (Gussow 22). Fourteen days later Albee was given up for adoption and at 18 days old the baby was adopted by Reed A. Albee and Frances C. Albee.

The Albee family was a big name in vaudeville and Albee's adoptive grandfather (for whom he was named) was the head of the Keith-Albee vaudeville theater chain. The family itself could trace their roots back to the late seventeenth century in Maine with many of them working as sea captains. But it is the connection with show business for which his family was known. In fact, his adoptive grandfather ran away to join the circus when he was 19, beginning his career and meeting his long time business partner Franklin Keith.

There are many indications that characters in Albee's plays are based on his family. Gussow says that the role of Jane in *A Delicate Balance* was based on Albee's aunt on his mother's side. Gussow points out that the character in that play shows clearly "an affection [for his aunt] that he did not feel for his mother" (25). In a play that was written in Albee's early twenties, two characters are strikingly similar to his parents and show them in an unflattering light. It is in Albee's play *Three Tall Women* that Albee

admittedly describes his mother, though he talks about the complexity of Woman A and her transformation within the script. For Albee it was a type of catharsis, “Having written the play, he understood her a bit better and had a little more admiration for her ‘wrongheaded attitudes’ ”(Gussow 366).

His parent’s biases had a profound effect on Albee and he mentions that he had a great dislike for their “dedicated anti-intellectualism and their profound racial and social prejudices” (Albee, Stretching ix), though he is thankful for the education their wealth could afford him. It is in this education that Albee garnered an appreciation for the arts that would mold his playwriting style. Albee says:

. . . music and drama are so closely aligned . . . they’re both sound and silence; . . . what you write when you write it, you’re hearing duration . . . And I’ve also written endlessly about the ways composers and playwrights should notate . . . the difference between the duration of a comma and a semicolon and a period. And fast and slow, and loud and soft, and all it’s the same as musical notation, because theater . . . one of the wonders of it . . . is it is a spoken, seen and heard, as well as literary form. It’s the only one that has all of them. (Lucas 52)

He continues in the Lucas article to say that he did have aspirations at one time to become a composer, but his lack of skills in reading music and playing the piano thwarted this dream.

It is this love for music that makes it appropriate for Albee to write a Greek inspired play in *The Goat*. Music was a primary part of Greek theatre as it played along

with many of the spoken portions of the play and was “an inseparable part of the choral odes” (Brockett 27). Albee himself has said that to understand theatre there must be a sort of understanding of music and the pauses and rests that create the musical pieces. It is the understanding of the musicality of the rest that allows the playwright to create pauses within the text that are poignant and appropriate (Lucas 55). This can be seen specifically in the dialogue between Stevie and Martin in the play:

MARTIN. (*Quietly.*) Let him go. (*Silence; quietly.*) Well, now; just you and me.

STEVIE. (*Pause.*) Yes.

MARTIN. (*Pause.*) I take it you want to talk about it?

STEVIE. (*Awful chuckle.*) Oh God! (*Afterthought.*) You *take* it? (26)

Within this brief dialogue we see a musical scoring to the words: *pianissimo*, rests, and even a musical retardation with the afterthought. Albee intended this section to have a rhythm to it that would push the production in such a way as to have the dialogue become lyrical. Almost a verbal dance between these two that can be beautiful and haunting. Clearly this is something very important to the playwright and these stage directions would be ignored to the detriment of the production. Such as ignoring the rhythm in a dance would only lead to awkward steps and broken toes.

Albee often proclaims that he does not make specific choices as he is writing, but his subconscious creates the undercurrents and themes that are often very clear once the play is produced. This same method was used when Albee began to work on *The Goat*. He calls it “a kind of unconscious didacticism” (Albee, Stretching 259). He began

writing the play with very different characters and a completely different socially questionable concept. In his original play, the protagonist was a doctor who wanted to understand what his patients were going through so he injected himself with the HIV virus. Albee mentioned this to several confidants and got a viscerally negative reaction. Despite these intriguing comments he was not able to work on the play because of other pressing work.

As life would have it, a short time later another play opened in New York with the exact same premise. This play did not succeed and Albee, in his usual self-confident attitude, said “I quickly decided that it was not the premise that had been at fault, but the execution” (261). Though the specific plot was now not available to him, Albee still hungered to explore the premise of the original work. The idea of exploring the limitations of society’s acceptance of behavior other than their own as well as the inability of most people to imagine themselves in situations that are outside of the comfort of their known world.

In Stretching My Mind Albee says that within a year he had the basic outline of *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia*. This time he gave it to fewer people to read and received similar negative reactions for tackling such a taboo topic. Albee was elated:

“Clearly, I was on to something!—either the collapse of my mind or a set of propositions perplexing enough to demand examination. And I went on” (Albee, Stretching 261).

After he finished the work, the play would open on Broadway the spring of 2002. The play received a wide and varied reaction from those who attended, which could

easily have been Albee's intent. He wanted to create a thought process that would continue long after the theatergoer left the building.

The show was produced on Broadway by Elizabeth Ireland McCann, Daryl Roth, Carole Shorenstein Hays, Terry Allen Kramer, Scott Rudin, Bob Boyett, Scott Nederlander and ZPI Sine at the John Golden Theatre. This extensive partnership would eventually become a success as the show did win the 2002 Tony Award for Best Play (Playbill 7-9). Directed by David Esbjornson the cast included Tony award winner Mercedes Ruehl as Stevie, Jeffrey Carlson as Billy, Stephen Rowe as Ross and Bill Pullman playing Martin.

Ben Bratley of The New York Times reviewed the original Broadway production in which he says that Bill Pullman's performance has a "grave abstracted sweetness" that helped create the "double-edged moments of awkwardness and misinterpretation." He goes on to say that the play "is about a profoundly unsettling subject." The reviewer himself could not come to grips with the humor laced dialogue and the socially unacceptable subject matter.

The producers and public relations team appeared to want to create this feeling of uncertainty even before the audience stepped into the theatre. According to J. Ellen Gainor in an essay regarding Albee's *The Goat* a synopsis of the advertising campaign of the production is spoken of as a "publicity tease" (200) that not only showed the well-known actors in the play, but the goat as well. Even in Albee's own published remarks about the show he is quoted to have said that the play has "four human beings and one goat . . . and it involves interrelationships" (Gainor 200).

While the goat does play a predominate part in this play, it is not the concept of bestiality that Albee wants to explore. In fact he says that while bestiality is discussed in the play, as are other actions such as flower arranging, he sees it as an opportunity to create a conversation about what society is willing to accept.

Even with this clear statement by the playwright himself many people will assume the play is about the acceptance of homosexuality. In her article Gainor compares Albee's work to the comedienne Ellen DeGeneres and her coming out on the sitcom *Ellen*. During the specific episode where her character comes out she does make light of those who would say gay marriage would be tantamount to allowing the legal union between a human and an animal. Gainor sees this as a clear *zeitgeist* that allowed for the conversation to begin in this play regarding the "sexuality in contemporary American culture" (200). Yet Albee had created his concept for this play around a completely different social pariah, proving that the play has a deeper, more complex meaning.

Some find other themes within the play. Albee is gay and he does touch upon gay themes in this play, but no more than the other subjects he explores. To pull out this one concept and create a theme for the entire play is to look beyond the rest and to miss, as it is said "the forest for the trees." He wants this play to be an exploration and a touchstone to the limits of tolerance, not just the acceptance of gay marriage (Albee, *Stretching* 262).

Another attempt to define what *The Goat* is about is the emphasis on the sex with a goat. In a review of the original production, Richard Medoff sees the attempt and tackling of such a taboo topic as a way to create unease in the Broadway audience. He writes, "The Broadway audience seemed uncomfortable . . . Such discomfort, which

usually asks an audience to work a bit harder to grapple with a specific production than it may be used to” (166) and Medoff suggests that the wrestling with such issues may have been Albee’s intention.

In order to consider this as a possible major theme it is important to understand what is bestiality and what are the social stigmas that surround the practice. In his paper *The Unjustifiable Prohibition Against Bestiality* Michael Roberts, a lawyer with Roberts & Teeter in New Jersey, gives a basic definition: “Bestiality is sexual contact between human and non-human animals for the purpose of human sexual gratification” (180).

Yet Roberts argues that even this definition can be vague in the court of law, specifically within the concept of sexual assault. An example of this is when a farmer stimulates an animal to obtain semen for artificial insemination. This practice is seen as a socially acceptable act because there is no assault and “has been used for the preservation of numerous species” (180).

The concept of bestiality becomes more complicated the more the definition is refined. In his paper, Roberts gives a list of 10 acts and asks the reader to decide what is and what is not bestiality. The above mentioned insemination technique is listed as the fourth act and the latter descriptions have some sort of sexual contact between a human and an animal or insect. It is in these latter descriptions that Roberts shows a wide variety of opinions as to the impropriety of the acts.

Roberts does give a brief historical perspective of the condemnation of bestiality. He says that, like many laws, this prohibition began in the church. But as time moved forward civil law deviated from the vague and harsh limitations of church law and sought

to create a clear description of bestiality. Yet through it all the one thing that is debated and used for or against its acceptance is the idea of whether the animal is enjoying the act as well and as Roberts points out “which is usually impossible to accurately determine” (184).

Because of the historical abhorrence, yet vague understanding, of bestiality, Albee allowed the vaguely titillating concept of a relationship with a goat to become a major marketing ploy. *The Goat* ran for a total of 322 performances including twenty-three previews and went on to receive the Tony award for the Best Play of the 2002-03 season. Yet the critics of the play had mixed feelings regarding this production. This is a reaction with which Albee is not unfamiliar. Elysa Gardner of USA Today called the production a “self-indulgent mess” (Gainor 203) while one of the critics Albee does respect, Clive Barnes, commented that the play was “one of the wittiest and funniest plays Albee has ever written” (Gainor 203-204). And of course the newspapers had a field day with the headlines accompanying these reviews. The New York Post led off with “Well Albee Darned-What’s Dad Doing in the Field? It Isn’t Kid Stuff” while the Toronto Star led the review with “*Baa*, Humbug” (Gainor 204).

Despite the jokes and misunderstanding of the true intention of the play the resulting publicity did perhaps achieve what Albee was looking for, an initial dialogue about the acceptance of what seems different, perhaps even unconscionable. Gainor observes:

These jokes and others like them that shaped many reviewers' responses may reflect discomfort or even hostility toward the play's narrative, demonstrating how effectively Albee created a dramatic world whose actions and concerns could be neither easily avoided nor dismissed. (205)

It is the effectiveness of Albee's handling of the subject matter, creating a world of not just sex but what Martin perceives as actual love, that pushes the action of the play along. When talking about the help group Martin tried attending he explains: "I didn't understand why they were there—why they were all so . . . unhappy; what was wrong with . . . with . . . being in love . . . like that" (Albee, *The Goat* 34). If Albee had written a play about bestiality and tried to convince the audience they should accept the act, the play would not have been as successful. Instead he blurred the lines and developed a deeper and more complicated world about what is love.

Along with bestiality some critics picked up on other themes in the play that have caught the attention of the director of this production. That is the Greek influence in the play. As discussed earlier, Albee himself wanted to try and help define tragedy through this production, and does so through not only the text but through the characters. And while not the major theme it is intriguing to follow this course of thought.

To begin to prepare the production it is important to understand the characters and the role they play in creating a Modern Greek Tragedy. Gainor sees the character of Ross as the voice of the people establishing the societal mores (211). He is used as the catalyst that creates the drama that will unfold. There is some character development as the two

men discuss their relationship but his real role is to say what everyone in the audience is really thinking.

Martin can be seen as the tragic hero of Greek tragedy. His recent accomplishment in the architectural field shows him as successful and well respected. The fact that Ross has made time to do this interview within a week of the announcement of the Pritzker Prize reinforces his prominence. An important addition is that he has the traditional Greek *hamartia* or tragic flaw, his love of Sylvia the goat. He is further shown to be tragic since he claims to be a victim of “tragic isolation” (Falkner 195) when Martin exclaims to Billy and Ross that he is all alone and no one can understand him or his situation.

In the essay “Oedipus in New York,” Thomas Falkner goes on to explain other similarities between Martin and the Greek tragic character Oedipus in that Martin’s “. . . shameful secret is brought to light . . . brings his household to destruction” (192). This is very close to the revelation that Oedipus has killed his father and married his mother.

Stevie can be compared as a reconstruction of the tragic heroine. In many Greek plays the women are portrayed as strong and violently emotional. For example, in the tragedy *The Trojan Women*, Andromache chooses to commit suicide rather than live without her child, husband and homeland. We also see in *Medea* a woman who has suffered so much that she reacts in violence and kills her own children in revenge. Antigone is willing to sacrifice her life so that she can bring justice for her brother. But she also tries to push others to this same conclusion as she bullies her sister to join her.

This heightened need to create a violent end to a tragic situation has its roots firmly planted in Greek tragedy.

This is mirrored as Stevie enters at the end of the play when she comes in as the vengeful tragic heroine doing what she felt was right to correct the unfathomable mess her life has become. After Martin sees the dead goat and demands an explanation Stevie says, “Why are you surprised? What did you expect me to do?” (Albee, *The Goat* 54). It was the natural conclusion to an unnatural situation.

In addition to the similar characters there are many plot and theatrical devices used in Greek tragedy. The most obvious being the fact that the animal Martin loves is a goat and this has a clear connection to the festival of Dionysus and with the prize of the festival being a goat. Another mirrored moment of Greek connection is when Stevie drags in the dead corpse of Sylvia. This mimics the staging used in many Greek tragedies including *Agamemnon*, *Medea*, *Antigone* and *Hippolytus*. The Greeks would often use an *ekkyklema*, a wheeled device that was used to bring on scenery and actors onto the stage, and while the goat is dragged on stage and not rolled, the feel of Stevie entering center stage dragging in this carcass creates the epic moment (Brockett 34).

Another similarity is that much of the violence in Greek plays takes place off stage. In modern plays the violence happens right on stage, yet Albee chooses to follow the same ancient tradition and have the savage killing take place somewhere else. This is not purely because of the difficulty of the technical aspects of killing a goat onstage, much harder action has been done, but homage to the Greek style of handling this type of violence.

The text itself mentions and alludes to Greek culture. Martin references the Eumenides in scene one, while in scene two he tells Stevie to “. . . shut your tragic mouth” (Albee 39) with Stevie replying a few lines later to a question about what she is doing with “Being tragic” (40).

Using the influence of the Greek design, the director would like to create an absurdist feel within the production. As pointed out in the first chapter, Albee has been described as an absurdist and has developed his own definition of the Theatre of the Absurd, but it is important for the actual production to understand the traditional definition to create a clear Absurdist performance. The best place to begin is with the originator of the term, Martin Esslin. In his book The Theatre of the Absurd, Esslin says: “. . . the Theatre of the Absurd strives to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought” (24). Yet many have argued that Albee is not an absurdist based on this definition.

Charles Samuels writes that one of the main reasons that Albee is considered an absurdist is because his *Zoo Story* was originally produced with Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*. He goes on to say that the primary descriptor of the absurdist movement is the handling of metaphysical topics which Samuels says is not a correct labeling of Albee. He chooses to define Albee's work as “social gothic” (188) a piece about social criticism.

In a differing opinion Normand Berlin acknowledges the opposing topics but sees Albee aligned with the European absurdist movement by creating a piece that moves “his audiences to face reality in all its senselessness and to accept that reality without

illusions” (770). It is this journey that needs to be highlighted throughout the play, breaking down the illusions piece by piece until the harsh reality stands alone at the end allowing the audience to walk away considering their own lives.

CHAPTER III

JOURNAL

January 18, 2013

We had the second production meeting today. During the first meeting, held before the winter break, I spoke to the team about designing the show with a Greek foundation but injecting a modern feel. Costume Designer, Lauren Nelson was unable to attend the first meeting so I gave her a quick overview at this time. We then began to discuss the schedule and I soon realized that we would have to overcome some major obstacles to bring this play to the stage.

The first problem was that next week several members of the design team would be attending the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival for Region 5. Because of their absence we decided to cancel next week's meeting. Set Designer Noah Files was to have his preliminary sketches to me by that week but, because he would be gone, we decided to get together the week he got back before the production meeting on Friday.

The second problem is that Minnesota State Mankato would be hosting the American College Dance Festival during the school's spring break. The festival would be using the Andreas Theatre and marley flooring was to be installed. As a result the set build would have to take place in the shop and after the festival was over Technical Director Robert Anderson would bring the pieces into the theatre and assemble them

there. This is something that has been done before at the University for other productions with much larger sets and would not be impossible, just a challenge.

The final scheduling problem was that during the week of March 21, our tech week, production advisor John Paul would be at the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) National Conference. While my designers will be here for the week, many students would be gone and there may be little help in putting the final touches on the set. This could be a challenge but as long as the work is done as planned everything should be fine, we shall see.

January 30, 2013

And another challenge has been addressed. The one team member that we had not gotten yet was the Sound Designer. Today I spoke with George Grubb and because *The Goat's* tech week is over the USITT he was unable to find someone who was willing to stay in Mankato and design sound. During this discussion we decided that I would build the sound design and Grubb would implement the designs.

This was an interesting opportunity and immediately I thought of a CD that Paul J. Hustoles played for the Acting Styles class. It was a reproduction of music that was played in ancient Greece, and I decided to use this work and have Grubb make it more modern through the use of auto tune. This is a technique that creates an electronic sound to the music and is very popular in modern pop music. These pieces would be used to underscore specific important moments similar to the technique used in movies.

In addition to this I was hoping to also add some sound effects that include sounds that are found in nature that can break, e.g., tree branches, ice, rocks. By using these sounds and adjusting them so that they can sound abstract my hope is that it will enhance the abstract moments that will also be accented by the lighting design.

February 4, 2013

Tonight was the audition process for *The Goat* and we saw a lot of talent. I had a clear idea of the type of person I wanted to play the part of Martin. I wanted him to be an “everyman” character, someone who lived next door and was very normal. Without a doubt Mark Deel’s audition embodied exactly what I was looking for in this character. The soft spoken emotionally available performance showed he would be capable of reaching the heights of feeling necessary for the audience to believe that Martin truly loves the goat.

The character of Stevie was equally easy to cast when I saw the poise and maturity that Kendra Verhage brought to the audition. She was my first choice and I was pleased that I was able to cast her without having to fight for her with the other directors casting their shows.

Billy was also a pretty easy choice. I did consider some of the other, more experienced actors for the call back for this part, but I was limited by the choices I was given. Even if I had held call backs I do believe I would have still chosen Charlie Libra for this character because he had the attitude and sensitivity needed for this role in his audition.

The one character that I struggled casting was that of Ross. I had hoped to have two specific actors for the call back process, but Hustoles needed both of them for his production of *Legally Blonde*. I was then thinking I could work with Jacob Gomez, yet he did not seem to fit the character as completely as I had hoped, he was a little soft on his delivery and not giving the hard edge needed for the television personality. At this time another directing graduate student, Matt Caron, was casting his show *Plague of Angels* and he was considering Andy Rotchadl for one of his roles, but he was unsure if Rotchadl fit the role he needed filled. After a moment I realized that I should consider Rotchadl for the part of Martin and suggested that Matt and I switch the actors. This was done and our casts were set.

I am very excited about the dynamism that the actors will bring to the production. I was also glad that Deel and Libra have similar coloring, and while not the reason for my decision, it will be a great addition to creating a believable relationship between them.

February 15, 2013

Tonight was our first rehearsal. Verhage was unable to attend because she is in her opening week of *And Then There Were None*. I did not find out until after we cast her that her production schedule conflicted with ours so our first week's calendar had to be rearranged.

It was in this read through that I was confident in my casting choices. Each of the actors did a great job of infusing their lines with emotion and this was just the read

through. It showed that they had done work before tonight's rehearsal and were ready for the blocking that was to happen in the next few days.

After the read through I took time to ask the actors questions about their characters. Some of this was motivated by a questionable interpretation of their characters, other questions were things that occurred to me and I really wanted to understand what their character thought or felt at that moment.

These questions included: Does Billy really fear for his mother's safety? How long did Ross wait to write the letter? Why did he not give Martin a chance to tell Stevie himself? How does the baby story at the end of the play relate to what just happened between Martin and Billy? The actors were able to answer these questions thoughtfully and intelligently.

February 19, 2013

Tonight we blocked the final moments of scene three without Verhage and then moved back to block the Billy and Martin scene. I was impressed by this cast. Each moment we came to Stevie's entrance, Deel shed real tears, staining his script. Deel's willingness to be so open with his emotions will allow the audience to connect with the character of Martin and like him despite his terrible actions.

We then moved onto working with Libra and Deel on their scene. Libra has such an understanding of this character and plays him with a funny sarcastic feel that makes him extremely likable. His journey to confusion with his relationship with Martin is equally believable and works right up to the kiss.

The first time we ran through the scene we skipped the kiss and just finished blocking the scene. The second time through I stopped them and talked about the kiss. We talked about how it had to seem like impulse, like he didn't know what he was doing and that there had to be some tension in his body. This is Libra's first stage kiss and he was very nervous. Right now the kiss is not believable, is very brief and is not quite where it needs to be, but I think we may want to work up to this, for Libra's sake.

Libra does have some habituals I am concerned about, specifically when he sits down. They could fit his character but I'm wondering if they would be distracting to the audience. I think I will wait until we get the actual furniture we are using before I correct anything. It could be a completely different story with an actual couch instead of blocks.

February 21, 2013

Tonight we ran through the scenes we had already blocked. After we finished with his scenes, Rotchadl mentioned that he had an epiphany regarding his character. Originally Ross seemed like an average T.V. personality who was a bit bigger than life but not much under the surface. After last night's rehearsal Rotchadl shared that perhaps Ross is struggling with his career. He does not have a crew with him as he did in the past and he gets quite defensive when Martin challenges him about being friends with the crew. Rotchadl said that this will allow him to have more stake in what is happening not only with the interview, but also with his own career should Martin's behavior become public knowledge. This should make the character much more interesting not only for the audience but also for Rotchadl.

February 23, 2013

We finally have Verhage! She showed up with curlers in her hair for her evening performance of *And Then There Were None* and she was exhibiting signs of a cold, but she was ready for this ride! My directing style in this production is asking a lot of questions of the actors. If during a scene I can tell that the delivery of a line seems off or too superficial I will pause the action of the play to ask the actor what they think the line means. I did this right away with Verhage and I think I threw her off. Deel had to act as my interpreter and she was able to answer the question and we moved on.

Honestly there wasn't a lot of stopping for this scene because both actors seemed to have a very good handle on the mood and intent behind this script. Verhage is giving me a lot of dynamism already and may be intensified once she is off book.

Specifically we are going to have to work on building the intensity of the destruction of the room. From the first vase that is broken up to knocking everything off of the table, each act of violence has to have intent and build. Verhage was very excited about this build up and once off book, and when the props are on the stage, this will be much easier. It was interesting trying to block her scene knowing certain things had to be specific places because we had already blocked following scenes earlier in the week.

February 26, 2013

Perhaps the biggest direction the actors needed for this rehearsal was the note to really ask the questions. It is a matter of course during the memorization process for the

actors to give stilted or robotic performances as they may be distracted by their script, remembering what they have memorized so far and their blocking. But when lines are repeated the same way several rehearsals in a row it is a matter of the actor understanding what they are saying rather than distraction. Both Deel and Verhage were asking questions without really wanting to know the answers. There are of course times when this is reality, e.g., “How are you?” We Americans really don’t want to know the answer to that question but when many of the questions are delivered in a similar manner much of the subtext is lost.

February 27, 2013

I walked into the rehearsal tonight to find Naoko Skala, my lighting designer, with our floor plans (Appendix H). She showed me that we had taped the floor the opposite of the plans that Files had given her. I had Josh Helgeson, my PSM look at his plans and he had taped them according to the plan he was given, so obviously the file had somehow got flipped in translation. We discussed our options which included re-blocking the entire show or keeping it the way we had it and check with Files to make sure it was okay. Helgeson called Files and Files said that he would be willing to stop by the rehearsal that evening. Half way through the first run he stopped by and we showed him what happened and he said it would be fine to keep it the way we have it, but the entire set was taped about two and a half feet off center. So, during our second run through I had the actors do a line through while Helgeson, Skala and the ASM William Roberts re-taped the set so that Skala could focus her lights to the correct sections of the

stage. While annoying, it was much better to discover this now rather than when they began to build the set.

February 28, 2013

Tonight we ran the final scene several times. I was astounded with how poorly the actors did the first time. I suppose I have been spoiled with talented, engaged actors and so when they are not present in the scene it is painfully obvious. This is the climax of the play and the actors were way too relaxed and small. There wasn't passion behind their line delivery and as we gathered to give notes I said: "Well guys . . . let's talk" and they knew they were in trouble. We discussed their lack of energy and the second run through was much better.

Another interesting dilemma is turning Deel from a young football player into an aging architect. I have directed him to drop his tessitura, or normal speaking voice, and that is definitely helping age him. Though even with this change his stance belies his strength and youth. We did play a little with his stance to try and soften his silhouette as well as those moments when he is physical to make sure he weakens his stance and his strength. I do think that I will need an outside opinion as we move forward because I feel like I may be getting used to his physical stance.

March 1, 2103

I walked into rehearsal tonight and the cast was already there running their lines. This happens almost every night. I am so proud of the dedication and spirit that they

have brought to this production. Libra is no exception. He is young and inexperienced, but he is so willing to listen, grow and try to go where I ask him to emotionally. One of the moments I could tell he did not understand is in scene three when he is talking to his dad about his life and the changes that were happening right at that moment. During the break between running the scenes, I sat down with him and helped him outline the thoughts behind the speech. We talked about how it's structured, looked at the way it grew emotionally from happy, to irritation to anger infused with sadness. It made a world of difference in how he delivered this section from there on out.

March 3, 2013

Verhage is an amazing actress, yet for some reason she is speaking in scene two so slowly and methodically that there is no emotion behind what she is saying. There are some appropriate moments for her to be subdued and staid as she is trying to figure out what is going on in her life, but to speak in this steady tempo throughout the scene will not connect with the audience. We have talked about trying to create quiet moments she is actually reading the letter and when she is responding to Martin's comments. She did not make this change and she just seemed cold-hearted. It is important for the audience to like her so that when she enters at the end they are startled by her killing the goat.

March 4, 2013

Deel is such an emotionally connected actor and there are amazingly beautiful moments that I saw in his audition for this show. The one problem I am having with him

is that those moments are few and far between. He is not connecting with the majority of the text and his performance is flat and one note at this point. When I was giving notes I challenged him to start finding an emotional through line for everything he does. Then we talked about the different Psychological Centers that an actor can have. I quickly described the stomach center, the mind center, the heart center and the groin center then we talked about what centers many of the other characters had and then I challenged him to decide what kind of center Martin had.

We decided that Billy has a heart center feeling everything so vividly, Ross is stomach centered causing the havoc seen in the play simply to protect himself and Verhage said she felt that Stevie had a mind center, as she struggled to understand Martin's motivation. Based on this it would make sense that Martin had a genital center, but that is something that Deel will have to decide for himself.

March 5, 2013

At the beginning of this rehearsal process Deel had a hard time keeping his focus on the playing space. He would glance up into the audience at me and other people who were sitting in the seats. After a few notes from me he has now turned his focus to the playing space and he no longer looks at the audience. Tonight I caught Libra doing the same thing, even keeping eye contact with me for a second or two. During notes I told him to stop looking at me or next time I would wave at him. His first remark that was that he was unaware of what he was doing and the second thing he said was "I'll probably wave back." I do love Libra's personality and his love for life.

March 6, 2013

I am so fortunate to have this opportunity to work with Verhage. Several times tonight I saw her begin to do something interesting and she didn't quite follow through. She hesitated instead of boldly making the choice. Some of it was in the line delivery but one moment when she was standing next to Deel in a very intimate moment she almost reached out and touched him. I encouraged her to follow up on those instincts, to trust herself. Once she does this it will take her acting to a whole new level making her even more of a delight to direct.

March 18, 2013

We are back from Spring Break and have a basic set now. It will be much easier to see how the moments we have created will look on the stairs. It also will relieve some concern about the safety of the actors on the boxes we were using. The actors have done a good job of keeping up their memorization through the break and the notes I gave tonight centered on the intent and thoughts behind what they were saying. Lots of questions were asked as well as specific direction for specific moments. One such direction was about when Stevie accuses Martin of raping the goat. Kendra didn't have the specific anger and intensity behind her words to show the real reason what Martin was doing is wrong. So I gave her the image of Heather Hamilton, a professor at the University, who does have strong feelings about animal abuse. This image gave her sufficient motivation and from this moment on her true disgust was apparent.

March 19, 2013

Tonight we began the perilous journey of making scene three much more Greek. This is something I intended to do from the beginning in an attempt to try and fulfill Albee's desire to help define tragedy. By creating a Greek world at the end, everything is heightened and if done well it could bring the drama and impact of the loss to all new levels. This would have to be done with a gradual transition otherwise this scene would look like it came from another play.

Because most of my actors have not had any experience with Greek style acting we took this scene slowly. Before we began I talked to them about the Greek stance, and the big fullness that they would have to achieve in their speech as well. We spoke of what Paul J. Hustoles refers to as "watermelon armpits" or arms that are held out away from the body. Also gestures are an imperative part of the Greek style so it was discussed how they could start smaller, but should be slower than normal, then gradually get bigger and more fluid. We worked on specific moments at the beginning of the scene where slower speech and more open tones could be used. These moments were very selective, emphasizing important thoughts. Then towards the end in one of Ross's monologues there would be a moment that every actor should be full-on Greek.

As we slowly moved forward the actors struggled with different things. Deel had an easy time understanding the gestures but his speech was too slow too soon. It was clear he was having a hard time getting a handle on how to move forward. On the other hand, Rotchadl easily connected to the slower flow of the language but was completely baffled about what to do with his hands. Libra was just a sponge and was able to easily

adjust to the direction he was given. Verhage has had experience with Greek style theatre, so her entrance was very strong and easily full Greek.

It felt a little like torture but I noticed immediately a more effective character specifically in Deel. Once he made the adjustment he felt older, and when interacting with his son there was a clear father/son dynamic with Deel creating a feel of the protective, authoritative parent.

On the design side of the production I have had some interesting moments with my designers. Earlier in the day the scenic designer Files told me he didn't care what was on the set when it came to decoration. This was an odd situation for me because I feel as if I am working with two completely opposite designers. Files, who gives of a feeling of unconcern about some design choices and on the flip side is lighting designer Skala who sometimes cares a little too much about not only her responsibilities but others as well. Files is unorganized and does not listen in production meetings when I tell him that certain furniture needs to be sat on and Skala ask questions about the other designer's work and if they have gotten it done. It really is quite a dichotomy and I do think that I would choose to work with the latter than the former.

March 20, 2013

Tonight Verhage started making bold, interesting choices that were so dynamic and amazing that at one point I wrote in my notes: "GAH! Great play w/ the ring finger-Gah!" She has moved past the struggle of memorization and is beginning to play. This is so perfect and amazing. It is just as it should be about a week before we open. She is

now able to start creating her own moments that will draw in the audience and make them like her character. It is great to be working with such a smart actor.

It seems as if Deel is stuck. So much so that he challenged some of my choices while I was giving notes. This sounds so authoritarian, and I am not that kind of director. I do want the actors to ask questions if they are not connecting to something. If they do it just because I said, it will look flat and unmotivated, so they **MUST** know why they are doing something. So it wasn't the fact that he questioned me, it was the fact that he **KEPT** pushing the issue.

His issue was with the Greek feel of act three. He just didn't "get it." He said he didn't feel an emotional connection to anything he was doing and that this role was challenging enough for him and this just made it harder. I listened to each argument, spoke to it and then there was another "but . . .", and another and another. I do feel that I failed the rest of the cast and crew in that moment because I should have asked Deel to talk to me about this issue later instead of wasting their time. It was an emotionally exhausting situation as I felt I was fighting to get this actor to understand that there was an emotional reason for the choice, when in reality that really is his job to discover that link. An actor often has to fill a situation with his own feeling. Whether it is a cross or active listening the actor must find an emotional connection to what they are doing so that it has a sense of verisimilitude or the appearance of being rooted in reality.

In the sound design world Grubb has yet to get me the sound files. He says that he did set up a dropbox, but I have not gotten the link yet. I was hoping to have this on Monday so I could allow get the actors familiar with the music and let it become another

character in the show. Part of the struggle, and the reason I'm doing the design at all, is that Grubb and most of the technicians are at the USITT conference this week, so there is little he can do from Wisconsin to fix the situation. Tonight was supposed to be our first sound/light tech and while Skala's design was up and working I felt a little frustrated at the lack of support in this area.

March 21, 2013

My struggle with Deel continues. Tonight I was giving him a note that he had to keep his focus on Verhage during a specific moment. He said that he was looking at her. I told him that he wasn't and that it was important to register that she was doing something out of the ordinary. He said that he was looking at her. I told him no, that I was watching him the entire time and that he was not looking at her but had looked away. He argued again saying he was. I slowly walked through the action that had taken place, giving specific details as to what had happened and then he said "Oh, you mean when she moves to the ground!" which is exactly the moment I had described when I gave him the note. For two minutes he wasted everyone's time as he argued with what I had seen. This was again so frustrating and emotionally exhausting. He had not been listening to what I was saying and when I asked him about it he said that he rarely got all of the notes I gave him because I gave them too fast. I then suggested that he should have told me sooner so that I could slow down and he said "You wouldn't have." I do believe that the last comment was spoken in jest but this is behavior that should not take place. I am struggling with whether I should speak to Deel about this or not. I am going

to talk to Finocchiaro tomorrow after our production meeting to get some insight.

So, I did find Grubb's email with the link to the Dropbox at 6:00 tonight. It had gone to my spam folder so I was unable to have the sound completely ready to play over the system. I will work with Robert Anderson to put the music in the system and do some editing to create the sound design I want. I am so glad that he is willing to help with this as well as build the set.

March 23, 2013

Tonight I took Deel aside after rehearsal. There was no real emotional commitment in the first act and it felt as if nothing was at stake for the character of Martin. This is not the first time that I had mentioned to him that he did not feel connected in these first moments of the play and I felt it was important to take time to really talk to him about what was going on.

The first question I asked was "How do you feel tonight went?" He said he knew he did not do well and that he was not connecting to the first scene. We then talked about how this was not an issue in the other acts and I asked him why he thought this was happening.

What he shared with me revealed what was the root of his disconnection. He said that he was unsure what to do or what he appeared to be doing. I asked him if he worried about this in the other scenes and he said no.

So what it came down to was that he was too worried about what he was doing and gave no thought as to how he *felt* about what was happening to Martin. I then asked

him if he took time before the rehearsal to focus and prepare himself. I explained that it was something that I had to do if I wanted to be fully present the moment the lights went up. He did indicate that this was something he had done in the past, but he had forgotten about it and was ready to try it again. Hopefully if he does this he will be able to connect better to the text and emotion of scene one. I look forward to the possibilities because of his strong work in the other scenes.

During our talk he did bring up again the fact that he was struggling with the Greek style of acting. He said he was just not connecting to it. I then asked him if he hoped to get work as an actor. He said yes and so I asked him if he only wanted to work in modern plays and his answer to that question was no. So I told him he had to conquer this discomfort so that he could be a flexible actor and be able to get steady and varied work. This seemed to stop him and make him think. Perhaps he now has what he needs to make this connection himself instead of looking to me to do it for him.

It was a very good conversation and I am excited to see him grow and become the actor I know he can be. Per a conversation I had with Finocchiaro earlier in the week, I did not address his disrespectful attitude during notes. Finocchiaro suggested I wait until the play is over so that his performances are not affected.

March 24, 2013

I had a conversation with Files yesterday and he gave me a list of things that he had hoped to get done for tonight's rehearsal. When I walked into the space I was dismayed to see that very little from that list was accomplished. Often there are times

when work on a show is not done until the last minute, but from our earlier conversation I had thought more would be done.

Files had started painting the floors but the fabric for the walls was missing, which greatly impacted the lighting design. The under facing of the arch was done, but one piece had been installed incorrectly and none of it was painted. A more egregious situation was that there was a one inch gap between the niche and the wall. I was shocked at the condition of my set when we were to open in three days and the fact that Files and Anderson were supposed to be working on the set all day.

When I questioned Files he said that he did not get the help he needed to get more work done and when I asked Anderson he just seemed confused. I asked him why I had a hole in my wall and he said that he didn't know how to fix it. I asked him if he had asked for help and he said no, and then said that he had forgotten about the hole. I was blown away. How could he forget about a one inch gap around a light source?

I then directed him to fix the gap, the arch and paint the tape that he would be using. Before they left I suggested that both Files and Anderson consider writing down the changes and adjustments needed so that they are no longer forgotten. This was a very frustrating moment for me and I was very stern with both men for their lack of focus on this project. Files did approach me later and apologized, which I accepted and greatly appreciated.

Tonight was our first dress rehearsal and despite a VERY long break between scene one and two, things are looking good. We have decided that instead of a costume and make up change for Deel between scene one and two we would wait to do the make

up between two and three. This should help in bringing our time down and tonight it was one hour and fifty-three minutes with the terminally long break.

March 26, 2013

Tonight is my last night to give notes as it is the final dress and major's preview. Most of the set is finished and we are ready for an audience. The one thing that did not come to fruition for my vision of this production is some kind of indication that blood is being dragged along with the goat. Initially I had suggested that we use fabric to help heighten the absurdist feel of the moment but Files had decided that he would try and use stage blood. During yesterday's rehearsal he tried a recipe for the blood that costume professor David McCarl had given him, but it did not work. He said that he was going to try some other recipes tonight, but when I texted him during the scene change to see what we had, he said he did not have any blood for me.

Once the show was over I asked Skala if she thought it was doable to ask Files to try and find some fabric to create the initial look I had asked for. She said it would not hurt to ask and that she would be willing to help him look for fabric in the soft goods section of the props storage. When I called Files and asked him if he would be willing to look into creating this effect before we opened tomorrow he said he would try. I hope that we can still achieve some kind of illusion to show the carnage of what Stevie had done.

The one major note that I gave to the actors is that they HAVE to pick up their lines. We were still running over one hour and fifty minutes and it had to be less than

that. I know there are quite a few places that they can do this and it will make the performance even better.

March 27, 2013

It is opening night and I am so excited for the actors to finally be in front of an audience. The major's preview the night before was a little distracting for them as some of the audience members were very vocal about their feelings towards Verhage's character. This was not a true indication of how the paying audiences would really react and with this understanding the actors were ready to start the run.

I was so pleased when they did just as I had asked the night before and picked up their lines to the point the final run time was one hour and forty-five minutes. Almost ten minutes off from two nights ago. This was also due to the simplification of Deel's make-up and a crewmember that had more experience with make-up did the application.

Perhaps the most engaging moment for me as the director was to watch the reaction of the audience. By far the most visceral reaction was when Billy kissed his father. As I watched the audience, some members made vocalizations and others quickly sat back in their seats. It made such an impact on those that watched that at the end of the play two audience members went onto the stage and one actually touched the bag that the goat was in. This was not appropriate and I did let the House Manager know that she would need to set an usher on the stage to make sure it didn't happen again. Yet, it showed the depth to which they were connected to the story and the fact that they needed to know the answer to their questions. This was what I was hoping for since these people

will no doubt continue to think about the images they saw during the play, fulfilling the intent of an intellectual catharsis.

March 30, 2013

It is such an interesting phenomenon to be a director of a show and watch each night knowing that the actors are not doing what you asked of them in the rehearsal process. For the most part these are small things, like saying a line differently or if they stood in a different place it would have more impact. But these things need to be let go of and the actors are now creating their own production. This was most clear in Deel's increasing habit of upstaging himself. Tonight it was the worst it had ever been, and though I had given many notes to him during the rehearsal process I had to let it go. My job was done.

Tonight we had our largest audience due to the fact that the cast and crew of *Legally Blonde* and *A Plague of Angels* were finally able to attend a performance. For the most part they were fully engaged, and because many of the students had read the play and knew the script, they were obviously delighted to see it come to life.

After curtain call I was delighted when several audience members approached me and thanked me for the production. They included comments such as "thank you for being so relentless" from a student and a faculty member that praised not only the production's design elements but also the acting abilities of several of the actors. What a thrill to have been able to do make a positive impact on my actors as well as the audience.

Once the theatre cleared we began the process of strike and it was during this time I was able to take time to talk to Deel about the situation when he argued with me during the note giving process. It was a good conversation and I do believe as he gains more confidence in his abilities he will not be as defensive when a director approaches him with changes.

CHAPTER IV

POST-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

Much of the information discussed in Chapter I continued to hold true throughout the rehearsal process and even helped create a through line for the characters. Specifically the concept of the fear of losing relationships for the characters was something that the director challenged the actors to find and hold onto. It was imperative that the actors found moments that helped the audience see that they did indeed like one another. The playwright gave many opportunities for this even in the most intense moments. One example of this is when Martin and Stevie tell their son Billy that he must leave the room. As he does he makes a dramatic word choice and the couple compliments Billy on his use of “in twain.” The actors took a moment to look at each other, smile and then tell him “very good” (Albee, *The Goat* 26). It was obvious that they loved this boy and were amused and proud of his word play.

One error that the director may have made is in the initial psychological description of Stevie. Originally it was thought that Stevie had a foreshadowing of the tragedy that she was experiencing. After the rehearsal and production process it is now apparent that Stevie had no previous indication that she would be brought this low. She is a realist, as pointed out when she talks about the lessenings that naturally happen in life. She was so sure of herself and her relationship to Martin that she did feel she would

have lived a good life without the terror that now engulfs her. This is seen as she verbally assaults Martin:

We're both too bright for most of the shit. We see the deep awful humor of things go over the heads of most people . . . we have both the joys and sorrows of all that. We have a straight line through life, right all the way to dying, but that's OK because it's a good line . . . so long as we don't screw up. (43)

She has seen this partnership as something that enables her to be strong and fully expected it to continue in this fashion. She had no fear of this awful situation that would shatter her life. She was secure, until it all came apart.

In analyzing the first chapter of this paper the director does feel that she correctly and effectively created a combination of naturalistic and Greek theatre that did eventually lead to the absurdist feel in this production. This was seen in each area of design as follows: the set was kept minimal and somewhat bare, costumes were centered around Greek designs, the use of strong lighting elements that emphasized the destruction effectively, the use of ancient Greek music to underscore moments in a modern cinematic way and, finally, pushing the actors to move from a natural acting style to a full Greek style attack.

One of the most challenging aspects of this production for the director was the frustration of actor Mark Deel. Because of his struggle with connecting to the text in the first scene and the Greek style that was going to take place in the third scene, the director had to use several different tactics in trying to alleviate his confusion. These tactics

included asking him leading questions, working with psychological centers, frank conversations regarding how he prepares for each rehearsal, a Stanislavsky emotional memory approach and even encouraging him to trust me as a director and actor. In the end Deel seemed able to understand the concepts but struggled to make them come to fruition in this production.

During the first scene he had an increasingly bad habit of facing upstage when he was talking to other actors. Several times he had been given the note to turn towards the audience, yet as the public performances progressed he kept upstaging himself in new situations as well as the ones he had received the previous notes about. The director feels that if she had used a more physical approach with Deel and actually showed him the difference between what he was doing and what she wanted it would have been a more effective directing choice.

Also, as indicated in the journal entries, the director learned a valuable lesson to be more aware of time usage in the note giving process. Because one actor is having difficulty grasping a concept it is better to take time after the rehearsal for a one-on-one conversation instead of wasting the entire cast's time. This proved a better approach when trying to discuss the discomfort Deel had towards the Greek style as well.

While many different coaching styles were needed for Deel, Kendra Verhage was able to take the notes given, absorb them and make the changes on her own. While Deel was fearful and conscious of feeling awkward, Verhage took chances. She and Deel are approximately the same age, but it is apparent that she has had much more experience acting onstage. She is comfortable with her skills and is willing to take chances that

make the director's job much easier. An example of this is the work she did when sitting next to Deel on the stairs. She said the line: "Being tragic" (Albee, *The Goat* 40) and it was important that it was motivated. During the rehearsals she was willing to try things with her hands and facial gestures that another actor may feel would make them look odd and uncomfortable. It was this fearlessness that allowed her to create a character that was dynamic in emotion and vocal quality.

Another seasoned performer is Andy Rotchadl who played the lead in Minnesota State Mankato's production of *Cactus Flower*. His experience also gave him a willingness to try things that made him feel uncomfortable at first. Because his acting is based on an external style, it may have been easier for him to take chances than Deel. Deel's internal development of characters could make each action personal and if an actor does not want to look foolish he may hesitate to try something new. Whereas an external actor can try on different actions and acting styles and not worry how it affects him.

An example of this was the different attacks Rotchadl took on line delivery as he was sitting on the couch with Deel. It was during this moment that the playfulness in his character is seen and the distinct differences in their personalities. He tried saying the line: "Ficky-fack! Humpty-doodle!" (Albee, *The Goat* 17) several different ways adding different gestures to help illustrate his true intentions. It was also this playfulness that helped Deel genuinely laugh and enjoy the moment. It is this openness that would also draw in the audience, creating a feeling of camaraderie.

The final actor of this group is Libra and this was his debut on the University's stage. The first time the director saw Libra was for his audition for the children's touring production of *Shine*. In this audition he was so nervous he could not keep his body from shaking. Perhaps it was his year of classes that made an impact on him because his audition for *The Goat* was calm, fun and indicated that he was ready for this role.

In the rehearsal process he continued to allow himself to be open and relaxed. Even though he may have struggled with some lines and how to deliver them, he did not give up and continued to work with the director to create a believable, likeable and pitiable character. This was most evident on the delivery of the small but important word: "Hunh?" (Albee, *The Goat* 45). He had been saying it like he had not heard his father, when it was more important to convey he did not understand the meaning behind the words. It was important because it would become indicative of the continued disconnection between Martin and Billy.

This cast was very dedicated to the process and allowed the director to create an interesting and vivid production. She also feels that a good relationship was established with the cast and she encouraged them to find deeper meanings not only to the text but also in their character development. There were moments in the note giving process when the director would ask Verhage why Stevie said a certain question or comment and in their discussion, Verhage would see a connection and comment, "Oh yes, that is better." This is one of the many reasons the director enjoyed this process, those moments of epiphany from the actors that would create more interesting and dynamic characters.

When the time came for the director to start implementing the Greek style with the actors, there was a certain amount of trepidation on her part. She felt that she was taking a big chance with this creative choice and after consideration of the final product saw only one piece that did not really fit in the rest of the production, that being the makeup changes. The makeup was added two rehearsals before the play opened and the director was worried that Deel's changes were not only taking up too much time in the scene changes but may also have been distracting.

The timing of Deel's makeup change was fixed so it was no longer an issue. But as the director watched the performances she came to see that the cosmetic additions were not supporting the initial concept. In retrospect the director sees that there were options she could have taken to make the abstract designs work.

The first was to have started using the makeup designs much earlier in the rehearsal process. This is unusual for this department to do so, but they were so abstract that it would have helped to start sooner to make sure the concepts were working. In Appendix F of this paper there is a sample of Stevie's makeup design and it is striking and could have helped create the absurdist feel. Costume designer Lauren Nelson chose to use makeup as a catalyst for the abstract design creating an almost mask like appearance for the cast by the end of the play. But because the design was not implemented sooner, the final designs did not have the desired effect.

The second design element that was originally implemented to help create the abstract feel was the lighting design. Throughout the play Naoko Skala amplified the design from naturalistic to strongly abstract. The director now feels that the design at the

beginning of scene two was too naturalistic and did not match the abstract changes made in the actor's makeup. If the makeup designs had been used earlier in the rehearsal process it would have allowed the lighting design time to implement lighting changes that would support the abstract feel. Because the lighting was very similar to scene one the addition of the heightened makeup seemed out of place. In retrospect the director could have asked the lighting designer to alter the lighting in scene three to soften and support these changes. It is now apparent that when working with designs that may be more unusual it is better to use them earlier in the process than for more traditional designs.

In addition to costuming and lights, another important design element used to create an absurdist feel was the set design. This design by Noah Files was perhaps the most subtle attempt, but the absence of knick knacks and other furnishings that would be typically in a normal home were left out to help create essentially a blank canvas. While beautifully constructed, the simplicity of the set design allowed the acting to be the centerpiece of the production. Also the oversized walls and odd angles of the flooring gave an off balanced feel to the room creating a distancing effect the moment the audience entered the performance area.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for a set designer that works on a studio show at this University is the fact that they are usually the properties master. They are not only responsible for the set decoration but all of the items that the actors use within the play. While in this production the set decoration and prop items overlapped as Stevie broke most of the decorative items on the stage, there were still many items used that would be specifically considered props. Most likely the strangest of these was the goat. Files's

choice to create a simplistic goat frame within the bag and have only its feet show was quite appropriate. He made sure that the bag had weight and volume to it so that there would be no question to the audience that there was indeed a goat in the bag. As indicated earlier it was so well done that one audience member wanted to touch the bag to see if there was a real goat inside.

While the goat itself was a success the director was disappointed that there was no solution to her desire to have blood streaked across the floor as Stevie dragged the carcass onto the stage. Had this been achieved it could have helped create feelings of disgust and alarm in the audience that would have supported the abstract feeling desired. Again, this may have been something that should have been tried earlier in the rehearsal process to achieve the desired results, but because of circumstances the experimentation with the blood had to wait until the floor had been painted and sealed. This did not leave the time needed for successful attempts. It was disappointing to the director that Files did not let her know that the blood would not work, but that she had to track him down to discover the results. This indicates that a better communication system was needed between the director and her designer.

This lack of communication was also apparent when the director failed to notice that the initial taping of the ground plot was inverted. After the floor had been taped she did feel that somehow the living room and dining area had been switched. When she asked about it the Stage Manager showed her the ground plot that he had and she decided she must have been mistaken. It was at this time that it would have been prudent for the director to contact the scenic designer and verify the ground plot. Because this was not

done, time was wasted by the lighting designer who did discover the error and could not focus her lights until it was fixed, by the PSM and ASM who had to re-tape the floor, by the scenic designer who had to come in to help fix the mistake and by the actors who could not use the space as it was being re-taped.

The final design that was used to support the absurdist feel was the sound design. The director felt that overall the design was successful but did not have this design as soon as she would have liked in the rehearsal process. This was another error in the communication system between director and production staff. This absence was due to the fact that she did not follow up with George Grubb as needed to get the sound files on time. This was complicated by the fact that Grubb is a professor at the University and the director felt she could not be importunate with her requests, though there certainly could have been more reminders that the sound files were needed.

While the need for communication with the production team was lacking the director feels that with the actors she had much more success. Perhaps one of the most important roles a director has is to be able to effectively communicate with their cast. This process is an interesting one in that there must be a level of respect and camaraderie for productive communication. In analyzing the struggles with Deel they may have a root in a more casual working relationship that existed instead of the director fostering a professional partnership. Deel's comments may have been directed more at a peer than the individual who is in authority at that moment. This director feels that it is imperative to create an atmosphere in which the actors feel that they can ask questions, but when that crosses the line to arguments and disrespect boundaries need to be reestablished.

The director did take time during the strike of the show to speak with Deel about these behaviors and he was quite amenable to her suggestions about being more respectful when speaking to a director in the rehearsal process. This was a valuable learning experience for both individuals and can only make them more effective communicators.

Overall the director feels that the design team and actors were able to establish the goals discussed in Chapter I of this paper. Their hard work and ability to make the director's vision become a reality created a world that would engage the audience and encourage them to think about the play after they have left the theatre building.

CHAPTER V

PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

The effective director should have a basic understanding of all the elements of a theatrical production. By doing so they are able ask their design team or actors to accomplish things that are feasible and within their limits. The classes taken within the Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Directing gives the student just such an experience so she will be able to excel not only in the academic setting, but in the professional world as well.

The basic courses that have been taken so far that build such knowledge are the scenic, costume, sound and lighting design classes. The course Scenic Design I is integral to the art of directing. The design of the set can influence lighting design, the costume design, sound design and blocking as well. In this course John Paul pushed the candidate to think in three-dimensional aspects so as to consider not only what the audience sees, but also what the designer wants to hide from the audience. Though the candidate may not need to design her own set as a director, she can think through the sketches and models that are presented in a more technical way to make sure they will best serve the play.

It is the lighting design that is the most complimentary to the scenic design. A good lighting designer can enhance or corrupt the scenic designer's concepts. In the Lighting Design I class, Steve Smith taught that the designer has to consider not only the

set, but must think about creating the atmosphere for the entire space. There were several projects required that asked the student to write a Point of View paper describing the main through line from the lighting designer's perspective. This is creating a certain atmosphere and how it can be achieved through the design of the lights. The most important idea from this class is not the technical concepts that were taught, but the idea of cohesive ideas that run from beginning to end and how they can be achieved through the lighting instruments.

Something that is influenced greatly by the lighting design is the costumes that are put onstage. In the class Costume Design I, David McCarl discussed the importance of lighting and how it can affect the color and texture of a garment. Another vital aspect of costume design is the understanding of continuity throughout the design so that the garments would look like they were in the same play. To support this McCarl did a very thorough job of showing the importance of historical research and understanding which garments belonged to which period.

The final course taken to support the director in learning about theatrical design is Sound Design I. An important aspect of this class was the skill of listening to the atmosphere around the student and for that student to try and understand how it affects surrounding objects. There were some practical aspects of this class that allowed the director to understand the products used in sound design. The projects allowed the student to play with software that is often used within the sound design world. These skills helped the director gain confidence to create her own sound design in *The Goat* with the help of Robert Anderson as the sound engineer.

On the technical side of theatre, math skills are an important part of the work and this is no less true for the Theatrical Manager. In the class Theatre Management, taught by Paul J. Hustoles, students are asked to not only use their creative skills, but managerial skills when it comes to running a theatre. For a director who may never take on this role, this understanding is still important because it creates a basic knowledge of the hierarchy in a theatre as well as how the budget of a specific play must be accurate and adhered to so that the financial health of the entire theatre is kept intact. It encourages the director to think through a season and how a cohesive selection of plays allows those who are promoting the season an easier task. Budgeting and estimating the investment potential of a theatre are difficult concepts for the candidate, but a better grasp on the way these systems work has been gained.

Understanding the technical aspect of theater is imperative for the director, but no less important are the fundamental and theoretical ideas that are within the theatrical world. The classes that are research or survey based create the foundation that will allow the candidate to have a better and broader knowledge when approaching pieces to direct.

The Theater History survey classes are very informative not only with specific historical information, but give the student a broader perspective about when plays were written and how the political climate of the day may have influenced the actual text. Theater History I was taught by Hustoles and gave a very detailed overview of Greek theatre, which would be vital to the production of *The Goat*. Heather Hamilton taught Theatre History II and because modern theatre has its foundations in Greek theatre, it is

important to understand how those influences impacted Edward Albee when he wrote *The Goat*.

The class Theatre Dramaturgy taught by Hamilton was equally important when considering the text and its context. Though the class delved into the thought process of the author along with their time period similar to the history classes, it taught skills of evaluating a text and researching its history that allows a director to present the play from a knowledgeable point of view.

There are two specific classes that are intensely research based that allow the directing student to garner skills that take her craft to the next level. The class Theatre Theory & Criticism, also taught by Hamilton, created an opportunity for experiencing some of the most well-known ideas in theatre. Many of these ideas can be incorporated into today's theatrical world but it is the questioning of these ideas that creates a thinking director. Someone who is willing to think past what is expected and understand if a concept or idea is right for a particular play can create interesting theatre. This will reduce the use of some *avant garde* ideas just for the sake of using them.

In addition, the class Theatre Research, another Hamilton class, introduced ways to get information regarding plays and what the academic world is saying about them, their authors and theatrical concepts. The candidate did struggle with creating ideas that would fill the gap in theatrical academia but the skills acquired in the class are used continuously for teaching classes as well as preparing for directing future works.

The final section of classes taken in pursuit of the MFA, with an emphasis in directing, are the classes that specialize in performance. These classes are the natural progression from the technical, to the theoretical, finally to the practical.

The most basic of these is the Theatre Speech I class that emphasized the mechanics of the voice and how best to enhance and maintain them. Taught by Paul Finocchiaro this class was most effective for the candidate because it gave her a plethora of activities to use when the time comes for her to teach her own students.

While Theatre Speech I dissects the voice, it is Theatre Speech II that breaks down the sounds of words. The skills used in this class far surpass that of the academic world and will allow the director to make sure words are being spoken correctly so they are not a distraction to the audience in future productions. Taught by Hustoles the International Phonetic Alphabet that was introduced in this class enabled the director to guide the actors in *The Goat* to pronounce specific words correctly.

To be able to apply acting skills and practices is imperative for a director. If they cannot reach the actor through more than one approach the director will become frustrated and the work will suffer. In *Advance Acting Techniques*, Hustoles gave students opportunities to learn about and try different techniques. These tools can be used by directors to get actors to open up and create the emotion or character that a specific scene needs.

The next step in the development of the director/actor is the class *Acting Styles* taught by Hustoles. In this class five different eras are studied. Each era is looked at in detail regarding its social customs, clothing and hierarchal construction. Each one of the

elements defines the era in how people interact with each other and what is considered socially acceptable. This class was extremely helpful as the director would choose to inject the final scene of *The Goat* with a strong Greek attack.

By nature we as humans are creatures that enjoy mimicking. The classes Stage Dialects I and II gives opportunities for the student to hear the differences in dialects as well as a complete understanding of how sounds are made in the mouth. Taught by Hustoles, this class has its foundations in Speech II. These skills can then be transferred to an actor who may be attempting a dialect within a play through the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

One of the most interesting and physically active classes that is offered to the MFA directing candidate is that of Stage Combat. Taught by McCarl, who is a member of The Society of American Fight Directors, this class gave the students an opportunity to experience several types of stage combat and become proficient in its execution through performances. From hand to hand, to the rapier each style has specific choreographed movements that not only look painful but are safe to both the assailant and the attacked. In *The Goat* there were a few moments of aggression that the director used skills from this class to make sure her actors were safe and that the action seemed real.

Perhaps the most important classes for the individual looking to direct are Advanced Directing I and II. The most profitable thing about these two classes are the professors, Heather Hamilton and Paul J. Hustoles. Not only for their differences in directing, but in teaching the class as well. Directing I focuses on the concepts and ideas

behind directing while Directing II concentrates on the technical aspect of directing and both of these are vital for the well-rounded director.

These directing classes were the important stepping-stones to the most practical application of a MFA directing candidate's education, and that is the plays that are directed as part of the studio season. In addition to *The Gingerbread Lady* and the play discussed in this thesis, *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*, the candidate was able to write and direct the Department's Children's Touring production, *Shine*. Through the experience of working on each of these productions much growth was seen as the director worked with different acting skills and personalities.

In addition to the classes that were taken there were opportunities for the director to participate in several different productions as an actor. They include *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Why We Have a Body* and *The Mandrake*. *Woolf* and *Body* were directed by Hamilton and *Mandrake* was directed by Hustoles. These were good opportunities to watch two very different directing styles and learn from each.

The character Martha in *Woolf* was by far the most challenging character from the three productions. It was the director's first production at the University and the learning curve was steep. The first lesson learned was the undeniable importance of memorizing lines completely. It is apparent that there are different levels of memorization and being able to repeat the words when in the car is far different from actually speaking them on stage. This lesson was learned the hard way when Hamilton had to ask Whitehead and another actor to stay until their lines were fully memorized. Now Whitehead uses this experience to teach her students in the Acting for Everyone

class the different levels of memorization and that to be fully prepared means to be fully memorized with the blocking of the scene included.

In *Body* Whitehead played Eleanor and it was a good lesson in how the choices the actor makes can transform a production. Whitehead approached Hamilton with the idea that Eleanor was actually a ghost and could not physically interact with her daughters. This was not the original intent of the director but Hamilton saw opportunities for impact that may have not been available without this back-story. This shows the importance of a director to listen to the different ideas and thoughts of the performers.

Whitehead was cast as Madame Sostrata in Hustoles's production of *The Mandrake* and this was a unique opportunity for her to work with such an experienced director. Often Hustoles directs larger musicals but because of the small cast in *Mandrake*, Whitehead benefited from his careful and minute direction. Because of this detail in direction the character was transformed from Whitehead's original intent of a pompous social climber into a loving mother and hopeful grandmother. This gave an emotional depth to the character and her relationship with her daughter.

All of these experiences, classes and directing opportunities proved quite helpful as Whitehead taught the Acting for Everyone class the final year of her program. The opportunity to teach this class gave her confirmation that she would want to teach in a higher educational system. The class allowed for a good synthesis of all that she learned throughout the three year program.

APPENDIX A

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

The Goat or, Who is Sylvia

Production Schedule

Rehearsals begin at 6:35 Feb 18 – Mar 21

February 18: Read Through, character discussion (without Verhage)
 Feb 19: Block 10-22 – Martin, Ross
 Feb 20: Block 33-54 – Martin, Billy, Ross
 Feb 21: Run Lines without Verhage
 SATURDAY Feb 23: (3:00) Block 26-44 Martin, Stevie
 Feb 25: Block 5-10 - Martin Stevie, 23-26, 33, 40-41 – Martin, Stevie, Billy
 Feb 26: Run Scene I
 Feb 27: Run Scene I off book
 Feb 28: Run Scene III
 Mar 1: Run Scene III off book
 Mar 3: Run Scene II
 Mar 4: Run Scene II off book
 Mar 5: Scene I
 Mar 6: (Start time 7:00) Scene II & III
 Mar 7: Full run
 Mar 8: TBA
 Mar 10-16: Spring Break
 Mar 18: Full Run here on out
 Mar 19: Publicity Photo Call
 Mar 20: Last call for line
 Mar 21: Light/Sound Tech
 Mar 22: (Start time here on out TBA) 1st Tech
 Mar 23: 2nd Tech
 Mar 24: First Dress
 Mar 25: 2nd Dress
 Mar 26: Major's Preview
 Mar 27: Open
 Mar 28: Photo Call
 Mar 29: Performance
 Mar 30: Strike

APPENDIX B

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS



Side view of unfinished set (Photo by Benjamin Johnson).



Kendra Verhage as Stevie, Andy Rotchedl as Ross and Mark Deel as Martin, "Yes; contentment fell" (Photo by Benjamin Johnson).



Kendra Verhage as Stevie (Photo by Benjamin Johnson).



Mark Deel as Martin, Charley Libra as Billy, Kendra Verhage as Stevie, "If I come back and find you've hurt her . . ." (Photo by Mike Laugerquist).



Charley Libra as Billy, "I find my great Mom and my great Dad talking about a letter from great good friend Ross . . ." (Photo by Mike Laugerquist).



Charley Libra as Billy, Mark Deel as Martin, Kendra Verhage as Stevie and Andy Rotchadl as Ross, "I'm Sorry" (Photo by Mike Laugerquist).



Scenic Designer Noah Files, Costume Designer Lauren Nelson, Director Shelley Whitehead, Lighting Designer Naoko Skala, Technical Director Robert Anderson (Photo by Benjamin Johnson).

APPENDIX C

PROGRAM

Theatre & Dance
 MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
**Remaining Shows in
 the 2012-13 Seasons**

Legally Blonde
 April 11-13 & 18-21, 2013
 Book by Heather Hacht, music and lyrics by
 Laurence O'Keefe and Neil Benjamin.
*Sponsored by Community Band Mankato,
 Mankato Ford and Radio Mankato*

Plague of Angels
 7:30 p.m. April 24-27, 2013
 By Mark St. Germain

Spring Dance Concert
 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 3
 & 2 p.m. Saturday, May 4

**Highland Summer
 Theatre 2013**

Find out what we've got cooking for our
 47th annual Highland Summer Theatre
 season by visiting us online at

MSUTheatre.com
 Box Office: 507.389.6661, 4-6 p.m. M-F.
 Follow us on Facebook at
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**Theatre & Dance
 Faculty and Staff**

Paul Finocchio
 Acting and Dance
 George Grubb

Technical Director / Sound Design

Heather E. Hamilton
 Acting and Directing

Paul J. Hustulas
 Chair, Acting and Directing

Julie Kerr-Berry
 Director of Dance

Mike Lagerquist
 Public Relations Director

David McCarl
 Costume Design

John David Paul
 Scene Design

Catherine Schmeel-Swope
 Costumer

Meven Smith
 Lighting Design

Daniel Stark
 Dance Technique & Composition

Nick Wayne
 Musical Director

Beth Weisbecker
 Business and Office Manager

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**THE
 GOAT**
 OR WHO IS STYING?
 BY EDWARD ALBEE

7:30 p.m.
 MARCH 21-30, 2013
 IN ANDREWS THEATRE

MSU THEATRE & DANCE

Theatre & Dance
 MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

The Goat or Who Is Sylvia?

By Edward Albee

The author of *The Goat or Who Is Sylvia?*, Edward Albee, has said that this play is about love and loss. Perhaps two of the greatest themes in every person's life, but what price do we pay for love and can we really afford the cost?

First produced on Broadway in 2002 this Tony Award winning play received mixed reviews, yet it is its controversial themes that got the audience talking. Albee has given this play a subtitle: *Notes towards a definition of tragedy*, a reference to ancient Greece and its influence on today's theatre.

Along with Albee, in this production we will try to create a modern definition of tragedy. Creating an emotional journey for you, the audience, that will hopefully get you talking as well.

I would like to extend a special "Thank you" to Drew and my boys. Your support over these past four years has been my sustenance and I appreciate all you have done and sacrificed for me. Hopefully your love for me has not come at too high a price.

—Shelley Whitehead

Cast

Martin.....Mark Deel
Ross.....Andy Rotchadl
Billy.....Charley Libra
Stevie.....Kendra Verhage

Setting

A living room, present day.

There will be no intermission.

Special Thanks

Tyler Schrandt, ceramicist
Minnesota State Mankato
Department of Music

Faculty Advisors

Paul Finocchiaro
John Paul

About the author

Edward Albee is an American playwright who is known for works such as *The Zoo Story* (1958), *The Sandbox* (1959) and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962). His works are considered well-crafted, often unsynthetic examinations of the modern condition. His early works reflect a mastery and Americanization of the Theatre of the Absurd. Albee continues to experiment in works, such as *The Goat or Who Is Sylvia?* (2002).

The Goat or Who Is Sylvia? is produced through special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016

Production Staff

Director
Shelley Whitehead

Scene Design
Noah J. Files

Costume Design
Lauren Nelson

Lighting Design
Naoko Sasaki

Sound Design
Shelley Whitehead

Production Stage Manager
Josh Helgeson

Technical Director
Robert Anderson

Assistant Stage Manager
William Roberts

Light Board Operator
Margaret Pylthrick

Sound Board Operator
Hailey Ulke

Poster Design
Naoko Sasaki

House Manager
Brittany Helgren

APPENDIX D


POSTER DESIGN

507-389-6661 MSUTheatre.com

THE GOAT

OR WHO IS SYLVIA?

BY EDWARD ALBEE



7:30 P.M.
MARCH 27-30, 2013
IN ANDREAS THEATRE

This show contains mature language and themes

Theatre & Dance
MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

Poster design by Naoko Skala

APPENDIX E

SOUND DESIGN

Sound Designer: Shelley Whitehead

Sound Engineer: Robert Anderson

Cue #	Page	Description	Notes
		Preshow	
		Cell Phone Announcement	
1	9	Doorbell	
2	9	Cue 1	
3	10	Fade Cue 1	
4	22	Cue 4	
5	23	Cue 5 (Stop 4, autofollow)	
5.5	23	Scene Change	
5.6	23	Fade Scene Change	
6	37	Cue 6	
7	37	Cue 7 (stop 6, autofollow)	
8	44	Cue 8	
9	44	Fade cue 8	
9.5	44	Scene Change	
9.6	44	Fade Scene Change	
10	49	Cue 10	
11	50	Cue 11 (Stop 10, autofollow)	
12	53	Cue 12	
13	53	Fade Cue 12	
14	54	Cue 14	
15	54	Fade Cue 14	
		Post Show	

APPENDIX F

COSTUME DESIGN



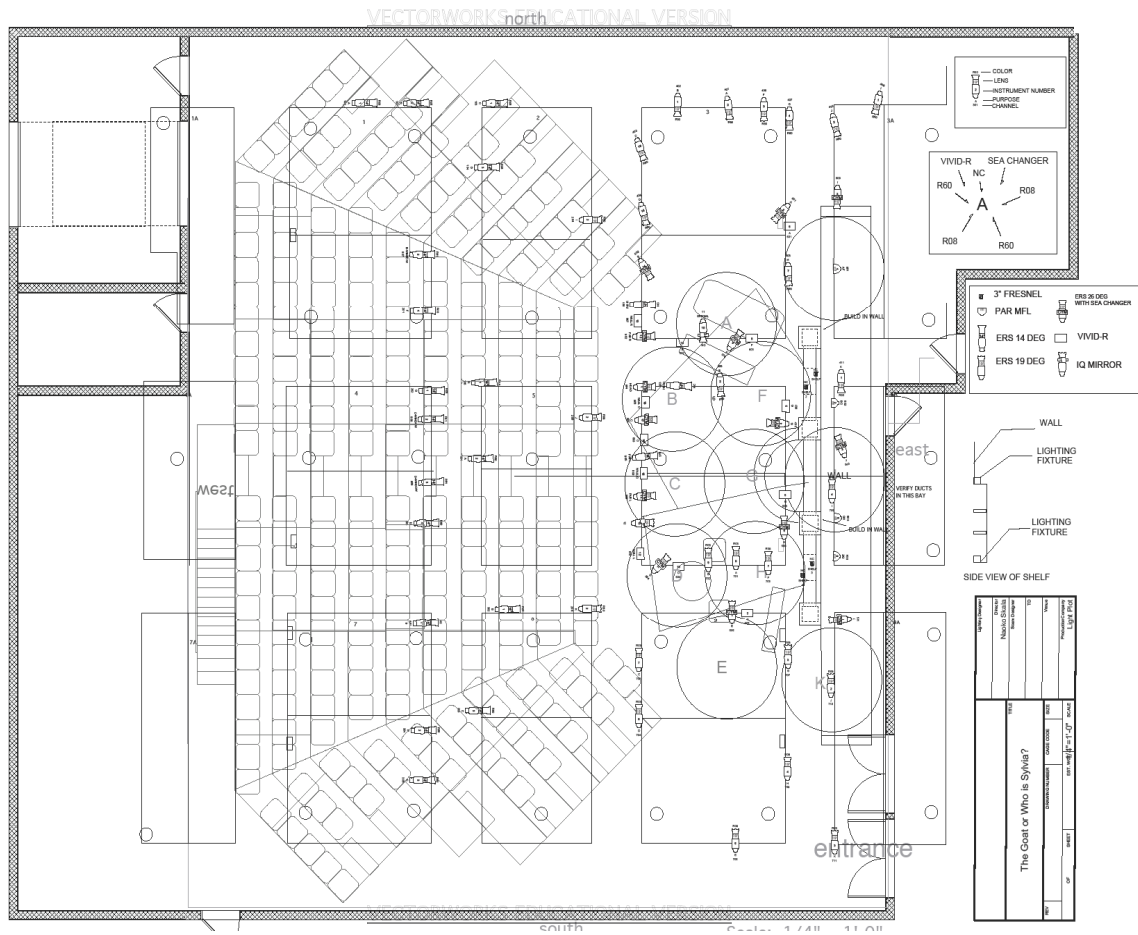
Stevie's first costume design by Lauren Nelson



Stevie's final costume design by Nelson

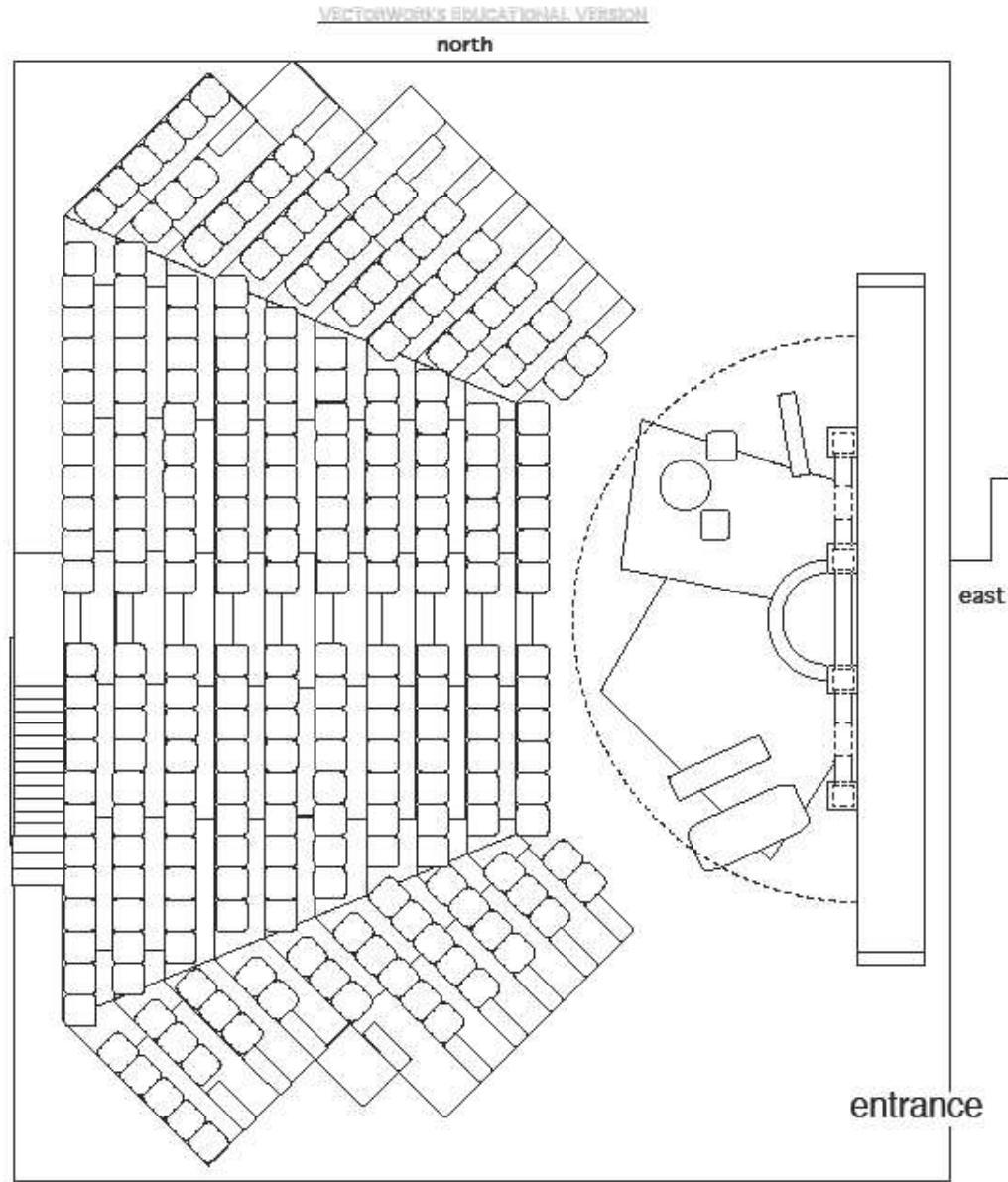
APPENDIX G

LIGHT PLOT



Design by Naoko Skala

APPENDIX H
SCENE DESIGN



247 Seats

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

VECTORWORKS EDUCATIONAL VERSION

Design by Noah Files

WORKS CITED

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