

5-20-2005

Fed to the Teeth: The Creation of the Title Role in Brecht's Baal

Michael Aaron Santos
University of New Orleans

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td>

Recommended Citation

Santos, Michael Aaron, "Fed to the Teeth: The Creation of the Title Role in Brecht's Baal" (2005). *University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations*. 230.
<https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td/230>

This Thesis is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by ScholarWorks@UNO with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Thesis in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Thesis has been accepted for inclusion in University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uno.edu.

FED TO THE TEETH:
THE CREATION OF THE TITLE ROLE IN BRECHT'S BAAL

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
in
Drama and Communications

by

Michael Santos

B.A. Texas A&M University, 2002

May 2005

Copyright 2005, Michael Santos

“Invent nothing, deny nothing, speak up, stand up, stay out of school.”

- David Mamet, *True and False*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I would like to thank my fellow cast members who, from first read-through to strike, helped create a truly ensemble piece of theater. In addition I would like to extend a deep debt of gratitude to Jesse Tyson, for the guitar lessons and the incredible job stage-managing a very difficult show. The entire cast and crew was so talented and professional and it was an honor to work with all of them.

I am beholden to Phillip Karnell who, in his enduring wisdom, taught me what not to do, as clearly as he helped teach me what to do. My skill and knowledge as an actor would not be the same without his efforts. I am also indebted to David Hoover who, with his expertise and intelligence, has aided so much in my professional aspirations. I would literally not be here without him. Thank you to all the DRCM faculty, staff and fellow graduate students for making my tenure here so memorable.

I would of course like to thank Ashley, Mark, and Deri, who have loved and encouraged my dreams with unbridled support. Finally, I want to thank my parents, Allan and Rebecca, whose contributions to my life and career remain immeasurable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

ABSTRACT.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
RESEARCH	2
Brecht	2
Alienation Effect.....	5
<i>Gestus</i>	8
Seeds of Epic Theater in <i>Baal</i>	12
CHARACTER ANALYSIS.....	17
REHEARSAL LOG.....	33
PROJECT EVALUATION.....	71
WORKS CITED/CONSULTED.....	83
APPENDIX SCORED SCRIPT	
VITA.....	153

ABSTRACT:

This thesis is an endeavor to accurately document and define my creative process as an actor through the title role in Bertolt Brecht's *Baal*. My aim is to meet and overcome the challenges that are inherent in creating any role, let alone one with the magnitude and complexity that *Baal* provides an actor. The following chapters contain a record of the development of my acting process in this production, including research, character analysis, a rehearsal log that provides a daily track of my progress, and an evaluation of my performance and the project.

INTRODUCTION:

This project began in April of 2004 when it was decided that the title role in *Baal* would serve as my M.F.A. thesis project. Over the course of the next few months I had the opportunity to read the script thoroughly, each time finding deeper meaning and insight into the work. During the course of my undergraduate studies, I was fortunate enough to build a strong academic foundation into Brecht and his theater, so I quickly formed a distinct fondness for the play. Furthermore, since the first rehearsal would not begin until the end of September 2004, I had ample amount of time to intimately study the text. This research and development stage proved vital to any success achieved in this project, as I would not have had the time to adequately perform this role had I only the normal (at least by most collegiate standards) five-week allotted rehearsal period.

I knew *Baal*, just as any of Brecht's work, would present numerous challenges, both for the actor and the audience. Those challenges would manifest most clearly for me in the enormity and obscurity of the role coupled with the peculiar and abstract nature of the work. It was like nothing I had ever done. Soon other challenges arose, such as deciding on the music, learning to play the guitar, and (perhaps most difficult) attempting to adhere to a Brechtian philosophy of theater, while still employing the skills and tools I have learned in studying Sanford Meisner and Constantine Stanislavsky.

The focus of this project is to define and document in detail my process in creating this role, and then evaluate that process upon the conclusion of the performances. Never before had I been asked to undertake such an immense endeavor. All of the knowledge and skills I had accumulated during the course of my graduate studies, and all my prior acting experience for that matter, would be put to the test.

RESEARCH:

On occasion, perhaps foremost within the realm of contemporary drama, an actor can create his or her role with little or no previous knowledge regarding the author of the work. The same however, cannot hold true for this project. In fact, the argument could be made that it would be impossible to effectively perform a 'Brechtian' character without possessing, at the very least, a minimal understanding of the man and his body of work. As such, I felt it was paramount that this thesis should include a short background of the man himself, his impact on the theater, and the development of *Baal*.

Brecht:

Born in Augsburg, Bavaria, Brecht began his career at a young age. By age sixteen he was working for a local newspaper in Augsburg and had written a short play, *The Bible*, accompanied with a few poems. Two years later, he was almost expelled from school for disagreeing on whether it was necessary to defend his country in time of war. Two years later, During World War I, he was released from his duties as an orderly in an emergency hospital due to his open expression of his lack of conviction for the war. (Hayman vi-vii) The spirit of the rebel, it seemed, was apparent even in the early stages of his life.

In March of 1918, a twenty-year old Brecht saw Hanns Johst's, *The Lonely One*, a dramatization of the life of romantic playwright Christian Dietrich Grabbe, which idolized the poet as a misunderstood genius. "In the end Johst has him die – in verse – with his hands folded in childlike humanity, well rid of a world in which there is no room for souls like his." (Speirs 18) This event was profoundly significant, for it was then that

Brecht vowed to write the antithesis to Johst's work. Having squandered most of his own youth singing, drinking and making love, Brecht refuted the idea that poets were soulful and self-sacrificial. "Baal is the anti-type to Johst's Grabbe, dedicated to satisfying his physical appetites, where Grabbe agonizes, orates, strikes spiritual poses." (Hayman 2) And fueled with purpose and conviction, long before the days of Marxism and social obligation, in 1920 Brecht completed his first major play, *Baal*.

For the next decade, he began making a name for himself with plays like, *Drums in the Night*, *In the Cities' Jungle*, *Edward II*, and *Man is Man*. He had huge success with *Three Penny Opera*, which he wrote in collaboration with Kurt Weill in 1928; a revival of John Gay's *The Beggars Opera* written nearly two hundred years earlier. By this time Brecht had been introduced to Marxism, and it was in that creed that Brecht found hope in the possibility of improving socioeconomic conditions and changing human nature. This led to more overtly political plays: *The Exception and the Rule*, *The Measures Taken*, *St. Joan of the Stockyards*, and *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich*.

But Brecht would not enjoy his achievements in Germany for long. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Brecht took his family and escaped, moving to several locations throughout Europe and eventually ending up in California. In 1935, in Moscow, while on the run from Nazi Germany, he saw the performances of a few Chinese actors that would impact his writing and help solidify his theatrical theories. For it was there that he witnessed the Chinese Alienation Effect, and it soon became one of the most widely identifiable aspects regarding Brecht's *Epic Theater*.

His most successful plays, *Mother Courage*, *Galileo*, *Good Woman of Setzuan*, and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, seem to combine all his experiences into one approach.

“These later plays are more free flowing and have less direct didactic impact: Marxism and romanticism, individualism and collectivism, rational skepticism and myth are blended.” (Harrop 291) Soon however, due to his strong views in favor of communism, he wore out his welcome in the United States. In 1947 Brecht fled to Switzerland after appearing before the House Committee for Un-American Activities (HUAC). A Year later he would settle in Berlin with his wife, actress Helene Weigel to form the now world famous, Berliner Ensemble. (Thomson 15-20)

The Ensemble set up shop at Wolfgang Langhoff’s Deutsches Theater and would remain there for the next six years. With the aid of his wife, Brecht began assembling actors, designers, and artists, and accomplishing all this with full support from the communist party, including lodging at the Hotel Adlon (one of Berlin’s finest), where Brecht and Weigel were guest for several months. (Thomson 59-50) Brecht recalled his days at Adlon saying, “Living conditions were not at all bad for artists. Of course we theater people have a good many privileges.” (*Bertolt Brecht Journals* 451)

In 1954, the Ensemble moved to its own home at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, a theater that was home in 1928 to the premiere of Brecht's *Three Penny Opera*. Here Brecht directed his plays *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and, together with Erich Engel, *The Life of Galileo*. After Brecht's death in 1956, Helene Weigel continued as the company's artistic manager. (Thomson 60) Sadly, the Ensemble never found the same success without Brecht and since German reunification in 1990; the company has hit several roadblocks in its process of reform.

However, the impact of Brecht’s teachings still resounds. And although his commercial accomplishments never matched that of other theatrical pioneers such as

Samuel Beckett, Brecht's overriding success was in helping to liberate the theatre from the restrictions of realistic drama. While some dramatists have wholeheartedly accepted individual Brechtian practices, his greatest accomplishment was in promoting new standards in representing the human condition. Artists ranging from Tony Kushner and Robert Bolt to Oliver Stone and Quentin Tarantino use Brecht's techniques, many perhaps not even aware of their legacy. "Both as Playwright and performance theorist, Brecht remains among the most imitated artists of the twentieth century. It is likely that no other single artist has exerted as much influence on the antirealist movement as Brecht." (Greenwald 1122)

Alienation Effect:

As mentioned before, if there is one term that is synonymous with Brecht, it is Alienation. Unfortunately, there have been many misconceptions about Brecht's definition of his alienation effect, what it really includes, and how it should be used. Like many aspects of art, the academic philosophy and the real world application can have a very large discrepancy between them. The important item to highlight is that Brecht wanted to promote change: change in thought, change in attitude and ultimately change in behavior. And in order to manufacture this change, he had to make the audience *think*.

When asked in an interview concerning Brecht's alienation effect as a contribution to the actor, Joseph Chaikin remarked:

The whole notion of the V-effect [alienation] is distorted in America because actors think 'distance' means 'not caring.'

Quite the contrary. Whether or not Mother Courage bargains too long over Swiss Cheese's ransom, whether Grusha will take the infant aristocrat – these are actions with consequences of which the actor, like audience, is aware. The V-effect is a means of presenting these events so that an audience can have an unsentimental view of them. It is anything but indifference. The difficulty is that our actors truly care about so little, and frequently are uninterested in social questions. (Bail 210)

Consequently, since so much of Brecht's works have strong political and social messages, they do not play well in venues that don't have strong political and social turmoil.

“In the theater, alienation prevents empathy by breaking the dramatic illusion that what the audience is witnessing is a form of ‘real’ life.” (Harrop 294) Brecht believed that the theater experience must be, above all, an intellectual pleasure. In order to accomplish this, the audience must be forced to think, not feel. Brecht by no means was advocating that human emotion and entertainment did not have a place in the art of theater. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, his focus remained the prevention of empathy. The goal was to prohibit the audiences' sharing of emotions with the characters and losing the awareness that they are spectators at a theatrical event, and consequently, missing the opportunity to learn something.

Brecht accomplished alienation in several ways. The use of music and song was one. The content of the music, its placement in the play, and the manner in which it is performed all help to remind the audience they are to focus on the process of the play as

well as its outcome. Brecht's technical devices were also well used. He commonly employed the use of projections, slides, and titles in his productions to help break the image that the audience was in "another place". The lights he used were often ungelled and unmasked to the audience. The spaces were large and open, similar to a stage Shakespeare might have enjoyed. Scaffolding was preferred over solid scenery. There was no attempt to actually construct the world of the play. Only if the audience saw the *production*, as well as the story, would they be able to stand back and objectively view the piece.

Brecht's use of episodic structure aids in alienation as well. In linear, plot driven, Aristotelian work, the audience is sucked into the action, on the edge of their seat wanting to know, "what will happen next." Brecht's plays do not have the same effect. Each episode lives in itself, and asks the audience to take the time to reflect on the messages that have just been presented to them, rather than promote waiting anxiously for a climatic end.

Of course, all of these devices are crucial, but none are as important to the application of alienation then as within the performer himself. The actor (as with all theater) is the main ingredient. In his essay *On Chinese Acting*, where he first set down his alienation theory, Brecht writes:

The Chinese performer does not act as if, in addition to the three walls around him there were also a fourth wall. He makes it clear that he knows he is being looked at. Thus, one of the illusions of the European stage is set aside. The audience forfeits

the illusion of being unseen spectators at an event which is really taking place. (*Brecht on Theatre* 62)

It was in preaching and teaching a new acting style that Brecht made his unique mark in theatrical history.

The Dismantling of the fourth wall was one crucial component in achieving alienation (one that I would use often in my performance in *Baal*). The important point is to know *when* to do it. An actor merely giving a direct address to the audience does not constitute alienation; in fact many times it works as an agent of empathy, drawing the audience's emotions out like a needle. The breaking of the fourth wall, in order to have proper effect according to Brecht, must occur at those times when it is least suspected. The idea is to shock the audience back and, in essence, beg the questions, "Did you just see that? What do you think about it?"

This need for accurate timing in applying alienation would form a formidable challenge in my work on *Baal*. I would have to determine when best to pull the audience out of the action in hopes of stimulating their cognitive functions.

...

There remains another vital factor to the actor's ability to achieve alienation. It is to the Epic Theater, what Stanislavsky's *system* is to the Realistic/Naturalistic Theater.

Gestus:

Another term that Brecht coined, which unfortunately has produced much less attention by scholars, and even more importantly, actors, is *gestus*.

Eventually, *Gestus* became to be understood by Brecht, as far as the actor was concerned, as the total process, the ‘ensemble’ of all physical behavior the actor displays when showing us a ‘character’ on stage by way of his/her social interactions. It is an ensemble of the body and its movements and gestures, the face and its mimetic expressions, the voice and its sounds and inflections, speech with its patterns and rhythms, costume, make up, props, and whatever else the actor employs to achieve the complete image of the role he/she is performing. (Bial 43)

In its most simple explanation, *gestus* is a tightly constructed “physical representation of the thematic idea.” (Harrop 297) An actor is asked to form an image of a character, to represent the nature of a human being and *what* he/she is. This pushes the actor to reject the temptation to become emotionally involved with his/her character (typical of the Stanislavsky *System*), which can cause the audience to lose their objectivity.

The meaning of *Gestus* contains these essentials: social behavior; attitudinal perspective; demonstrative enactment. *Gestus* can also be understood as a Brechtian modification of the traditional critical notion of "action"; it describes what the actor in a Brecht performance must show concretely, namely, how the character's stance toward someone or something impels and defines his behavior toward that person or thing. (Ferran 7)

Gestus demands the actor's to gain complete awareness of the character's social status, position, and belief system. In Brecht's world, "what you are", reveals more about a person than "why you are". Given these rather broad definitions one might think the character choices become vague and indefinite. This is not true. They do not lose specificity, but should rather, gain universality. In fact, the more specifically and creatively an actor attempts to find his/her *gestus*, the more the audience has to analyze and evaluate.

To take the example of the dialectical character of Shen Te/Shui Ta in the *Good Person of Setzuan*: a change in body rhythm from the shuffling, compliant walk of the exploited woman to the determined stride of the entrepreneur; a change of vocal intonation; plus the change of *chongsam* dress for a business suit, in very specific yet simple ways, achieve a complete change of character *gestus*. (Harrop 304)

A famous demonstration of Helene Weigel's (Brecht's wife) use of *gestus* was at the end of scene three in *Mother Courage*. Due to her haggling too long over the price of her son's life, she is too late to save him. When she learns of his death, Weigel, in one of the greatest and most powerful moments in the play, symbolizes his death with a silent scream. "This lack of sound accompanied by the powerful emotional release served to be far more effective in affecting the audience." (Harrop 298) The contradiction in a scream with no sound is a classic example of how effective using *gestus* in character development can be.

In the creation of her character Helene Weigel constantly used money as a character *gestus*. Throughout the play every time she was given money she would bite it to make sure it was good. And in the final episode when she is paying peasants to bury her daughter, she took a handful of coins from her purse to give them, then stopped, put one coin carefully back in the purse before handing them over. (Harrop 304)

Here she sums up *gestus* in the contradiction in her character, between mother and businesswoman that destroyed her life. Her gesture is not suggested in the play's stage directions, but Brecht regarded it as a crucial moment, because her penny-pinching behavior destroyed any sympathy the audience might feel for her and therefore allowed them to view her actions dispassionately.

In the final moments of the play, with the words, "I must start up in business again," she harnesses herself to the wagon and like a dumb beast, worn out but still understanding nothing, and starts to pull the wagon in circles around the stage. This last visual image gestically sums up the play: "Endurance is a kind of courage, but it is unthinking. Mother Courage is still going on but getting nowhere, still repeating her mistakes; it is a courage of the wrong kind, that of a dray horse or pack animal that allows itself to be exploited for other's gain." (Harrop 316)

...

Gestus and alienation, explored continually in the next chapters, became key to my own translation of my Stanislavsky/Meisner training into something that would keep within the tradition of Brecht's work. I knew this would prove to be a difficult test, given that Brecht advocated a technique opposite to that which I have studied over the past two years. But armed with a credible understanding of both methods, I felt equipped for the challenge.

Seeds of the Epic Theater in *Baal*:

To eliminate any confusion that might occur when discussing the difference between the Epic Theater and the Dramatic Theater, it seems critical that I first outline a few distinguishing characteristics for each:

<u>Dramatic Theater</u>	<u>Epic Theater</u>
Plot	Narrative
Involves the spectator	Makes the spectator an observer
Provides sensations	Forces decisions
Suggestion	Argument
Spectator shares the experience	Spectator studies the experience
Human being is taken for granted	Human being is subjected to inquiry
He is unalterable	He is able to alter
One scene makes another	Each scene for itself
Linear development	Development in curves
Feeling	Reason

(Bial 2)

The epic theater's purpose was to build a better condition for mankind and thereby a better man. To accomplish this task, Brecht felt that he had to reject the ideas of the forth wall, works which precluded thought, or works that excited emotional

response. As previously pointed out, Brecht's rebellion to the drama that Stanislavsky and his contemporaries promoted was seeded in eliminating emotional empathy. Both realism and the epic theater were a revolt against romanticism, but the epic theater called specifically for *Lehrstücke*, didactic (or teaching) plays, not to merely entertain an audience, but to educate actors and audience alike. "Brecht expected his audience to observe critically, to draw conclusions, and to participate in an intellectual argument with the work at hand." (Jacobus 1029)

Given that *Baal* was Brecht's first play, the clarity in the correspondence to his later, more theatrically significant work, remains a little inexact. The play itself is an enigma, its form remaining in limbo between that of the epic theater and that of realism. However, many of the staples found in epic theater are present in the text, perhaps acting as a prelude of things to come.

Episodic structure

The Episodic structure of *Baal* displays perhaps the most important connection found throughout Brecht's entire canon. Its structure finds little similarity to the cause and effect, linear Aristotelian drama. Unmistakably influenced by the Expressionist movement (Piscator, Buchner, Strindberg, among others) the episodic configuration of Brecht's plays makes each scene its own story, and collectively each episode forms the arc of the play. *Baal* is a loosely knit set of scenes that show the disgust at man's failure to control his own greed and lust.

Brecht would continue to use this episodic form in all his plays, but eventually with a more direct purpose: to enhance the audience's ability to "judge" the work without

being drawn into the story line. “The episodic structure, calculated to break the audience’s emotional continuity and thus its empathy, had a strong dialectical basis.” (Harrop 296) The intention was again, to *alienate* the audience, to compel them to be a critical observer who must make decisions. And regardless of Brecht’s purpose in *Baal*, the episodes that define its composition mark a soon-to-be Brechtian calling card.

Anti-capitalism

Baal also identifies Brecht’s comfort with, and eventual adoption of the Marxist doctrine. Although *Baal* does not by any means possess a clear Marxist element, the play does manage on several occasions to abolish the ideals of capitalism. For instance, in Scene 1: Dining Room, Baal rejects the offer to sell his poetry to the greedy business tycoon, Mech:

BAAL: I’m against monopolies. Go to bed Mech.

MECH: I delight in all the animals on God’s earth, but this is one animal you can’t do business with. (*Baal* 29)

Ironically, the greed in *Baal* is so overwhelming, that it objects to being shared. In fact, in this particular case, Baal’s unrelenting selfishness actually acts as positive agent, at least in the eyes of Brecht, for it denies the chance for the capitalist to seize Baal’s talent and subsequently abuse it.

Virtually the same event, albeit on a smaller economic scale, takes place later in the play (Scene 7) when Baal walks out, in mid-performance, of the Club called “The Night Cloud.” Mjurk, the greedy proprietor who has been shamelessly promoting Baal’s music threatens to call the police if Baal does not abide by his contract, to which Baal

answers by retreating into the safety of the forest. Of course, Baal's motives in refusing to become a part of the corporate machine have nothing to do with promoting communism, for frankly; Baal could easily be hailed as the poster child for greed. The renouncing of capitalism, however, remains a theme that Brecht would cling to well before he found the theories of Karl Marx.

Music and Song

"Brecht uses music and song – which appear in virtually all his plays – for the same two basic principles that underlie the dynamics of the rest of his theatrical form: alienation and *gestus*." (Harrop 300) As previously stated, although *Baal* was written pre-alienation effect, the result was nevertheless, the same. Brecht's songs (and poetry) in *Baal* stop the action of the play in order to emphasize the theme.

Taking for instance perhaps the play's most intensely powerful song, "Death in the Forest", one can't help but notice how the poem reinforces the theme of *moral man vs. his beastly instincts*. Rich with poetry, it foreshadows Baal's inevitable fall, fighting to the last inch before succumbing to the pain of death. Furthermore, the song is almost completely unmelodic, and it forces the audience to sit up and focus on its content, not its tune. "Brecht wanted his music to be much like the play he wrote – unsettling, anti-romantic, and emotionally 'cool' – so that audiences listen to the message rather than the melody." (Greenwald 1122)

Brecht never uses the music merely as a device to create mood either. The Prologue “The Hymn of Baal the Great,” achieves much more than a promotion a specific atmosphere, it underlines the thematic idea:

And when Baal’s dragged down to be the dark womb’s prize
What’s the world to Baal, Baal has been fed. (*Baal* 4)

What does the rest of the world matter to Baal? He has had what he wants, and therefore he doesn’t care about anyone or anything else. The mature Brecht was able to capitalize on his first experiments with music and song, and utilize their inherent didactic value.

...

All these aforementioned elements are visible in *Baal*, and rather by design or by destiny; they help Brecht pave a dramatic path that would become uniquely his.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS:

Every actor has his or her own unique way of creating a character. Just as no two actors are alike, no two acting processes are alike, nor are those individual processes identical for every character that an actor creates. The approach I might apply in taking on the title role Shakespeare's *Henry V* will have many differences to the approach I would use in the role of Biff Loman in Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Several factors, such as the playwright's genre (musical theater vs. naturalism), when the play was written, individual performance demands, and most importantly for my work, the **function** the playwright assigns the character, all have a huge impact in determining the path of creation for an actor.

Character Function:

When I use the phrase *character function* I specifically define it in terms closely corresponding to Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand faces*. Campbell, using ancient character archetypes and myths he found while studying many different human cultures, devised a very useful and very universal map for artists to both write and analyze stories (even though the book was never intended to be used in this specific fashion). Many artists flocked to the theory, which was perhaps most notably used by George Lucas in writing his epic saga *Star Wars*.

As an actor, I employ one particular concept that Campbell lays out: There is one *hero* (central character) and everyone else in the story is a *stop* along that hero's *journey*. My first concern as an actor is always in determining whose story it is. Now this may seem like a vague or even superfluous bit of information to pursue, but in my experience,

the most fundamentally important question an actor can ask himself when first preparing for a role is: Whose journey is it?

If the answer to that question is a character other than the one that actor is playing, he must then ask himself: Where do I fit in along that journey? What is my *function*? No matter what course my process takes during the creation of a role, these questions are always answered first. And in my opinion, if more actors were aware of their character's function, and adhered to its parameters, rehearsals would run more smoothly and stories would be told with much more clarity

In the case of this project, the answer to my first question was easy: Baal is going on the journey. He is the central character, and everyone else is a stop along his path. Now I am in no form suggesting that other actors should not pursue their own character's journey. In fact, few things could be more damaging to a production. Biff, Happy, and Linda have every bit as much of a tale to reveal as does Willy Loman, but those journeys are always made within that of the hero's, and as such, cannot supersede the guiding focus of the story, which is of course, the hero's journey.

After clearing stage one in my analysis, defining character function, I made the decision to proceed to my Stanislavsky/Meisner training. Which ultimately meant I had to determine an objective for Baal. *However*, before I could pinpoint my objective I had to first, identify and factor in the **given circumstances** of the play.

Given Circumstances:

Given circumstances are the variables in the equation, the elements that the author gives that will shape every facet of what the character can, and can't do. They can be

environmental, relational, physical, cultural, mental, etc. Anything that tells an actor who the character is, and what kind of world he lives in is a given circumstance. And without clearly defining these elements, it is impossible to accurately define an objective, let alone the motivation and actions for that objective.

I began with circumstances that were obvious, ones that jumped off the page. Several involved Baal's personality. Most noticeable is the inescapable, "rebel without a cause" syndrome that Baal seems to possess. Much like R.P. McMurphy in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, in order for his plot to work, Brecht designed a character that refuses to listen to any authority but that of his own free will. Baal lives as he wants and no one will change him. It is a personality trait that cannot be negated and shaped many of my acting choices.

Another obvious characteristic to Baal is that he is a poet. He is an artist. And as an actor, I know that this circumstance demands acknowledgement in some form. Brecht created a character that can think and express himself in beautiful words, and furthermore, sings and *plays the guitar* to those words. Literally half the scenes in the play have Baal singing or reciting poetry, which would force me to always take those circumstances into consideration. I would find no difference if I were playing a king, or a priest, or a Roman general. Who I am determines what I can do. As such, my choices must take these circumstances into consideration for Baal's character or I would lose credibility. However, this is not to say that I can't play a king that acts like a beggar, a priest that obeys Satan, or a Roman general who fights for the Goths. Baal can certainly be an artist like no other before him, but I must have a starting point, a character home base that I can then modify to suit the needs of my creation of Baal.

Perhaps the most important circumstances I had to take into account are found in Baal's *relationships*. I had to analyze the way people treated Baal, and the way he treated them. There were several ideas that immediately came to mind, but Baal's relationship to women was first on the list.

Baal is a pleasure seeker. He seems to need it just as one needs oxygen to breathe. Ergo, it would only be natural for Baal to seek out one of the finest pleasures known to man: sexual intercourse. And the most pleasurable intercourse for Baal was with virgins.

BAAL: When you embrace her virginal loins, the joy and fear of created man turns you into a god. As the juniper tree's roots are entwined within the Earth, so are your limbs in bed. Blood flows and hearts beat. (*Baal* 10)

Both Johanna and Sophie, women he seemed to care about the most, were virgins before giving their innocence to Baal. This circumstance would be especially important in any scene with those women. I had to ask myself. What is it about these women? Why do I want them? How much do I care about them? How difficult is it to get what I want from them? If and when I get what I want from them, do I need them anymore?

In continuing to examine his female relationships, it became increasingly clear that Baal has an almost primal ability to sense and conquer all women. There are *none* in the script that he cannot seduce. He is a magnet for women and they are powerless to resist him. This would translate to my acting because Baal is certainly aware that he possesses this ability to control women.

BAAL: Do you feel faint?

SOPHIE: I don't know. I feel so weak.

BAAL: I know. It's April. It's growing dark and you smell me.

That's how it is with animals. (*Baal* 23)

As such, one with the knowledge of having a certain power will most likely behave in accordance to that knowledge. In summation, Baal is a sexually magnetic beast and he knows it. Consequently, how I move and speak on stage will find a large influence by my ability to tempt the opposite sex (and the knowledge thereof). I was able to begin to formulate many possible acting choices and I couldn't wait to begin rehearsals to test them out on other actors.

In continuing to examine the given circumstances entwined in Baal's relationships I found that he has a unique connection to Johannes. Johannes looks up to Baal, almost as a mentor and a big brother. Their bond heavily influences the first three scenes of the play. As such, it would be important to take this relationship in consideration in playing those scenes. I have to ask myself, how do I feel about Johannes? Do I enjoy his company? Am I just using him? How do I want him to see me? Do I care? All of which will correlate into acting choices on stage. Many other characters (Mech, Mjurk, Lupu, the Beggar, to name a few) would demand that I ask similar questions. Otherwise my interactions with them would find little substance or value.

By far however, the most important relationship circumstance for Baal is found with *Ekart*. No other character has a greater impact on Baal than him. But what exactly is the relationship between Baal and Ekart and why is it so important to the story? The bond between the two is a peculiar one to say the least. They refer to each other as brother and pursue women together, and yet several overwhelmingly homosexual overtones exist between them. I know Baal loves Ekart, but I had to determine in what way? And why?

First and foremost, I knew that this play is not merely about a man coming out of the closet. This is not Baal's attempt to come to terms with his sexuality. To give it such a pedestrian label cheapens the work in much the same way it would cheapen Tony Kushner's *Angel's in America*. There is simply, more at stake. There is a greater magnitude to the play, and to that relationship. Ekart's involvement in Baal's Journey however, remained a puzzle. Ekart appears in Scene 3: An Inn for a brief but memorable moment, and is not seen again until Scene 8. After which, he remains a pivotal part in almost each subsequent scene until his death in Scene 16. I had to nail down Ekart's function in reference to Baal's journey for this relationship to have proper meaning.

After much study I decided that Ekart is not just a man to Baal, he is a symbol. He is the personification of Baal's inability to capture what he wants. Ekart represents Baal's every attempt to find peace, and his subsequent down fall when Baal realizes that he can't hold on to that peace. He is a beauty that Baal wishes to grasp but can't, and out of primal rage and jealousy Baal destroys that beauty. This is why Baal loves Ekart. It is deeper than any lust or infatuation. Ekart is the greener grass. Ekart is a dream of peace. Baal *needs* Ekart's companionship so much, that when he loses it, Baal dies. This accounts for a massive given circumstance that I must consider each time I will be on stage with Ekart.

There were also many *environmental* circumstances that had a strong impact to my character study. I had to ask myself, where is the world of the play? Brecht gives us the image of a barren wasteland of greed and lust. This is no paradise, this is no Garden of Eden, it's not even a Motel 6: it is the embodiment of rot. The bars and inns Baal visits, even his own basement, are depicted as junkyards filled with vermin and slime.

However, juxtaposed to this picture of carnage, Brecht provides *Baal* with many elements of beauty. Throughout the play the sky and the stars are used as an escape from this cold and dreary world. The river is used as a place of cleansing, which Baal clutches to for his survival:

BAAL: I'm going to the river to wash myself, I can't be bothered
with corpses. (*Baal* 26)

The trees are often used as an image of beauty as well, most vividly when Baal recites his poem, *Death in the Forest*. The image of waste and filth is in sharp contrast to that of a blazing tree, a glowing light in the shadow of death.

These contradictions of environment help fuel the contradictions within Baal himself. Baal is beauty and decay rolled into one. He has the ability to create such magnificent poetry but chooses to drown and destroy it. He has more love in him than a hundred men, but cannot focus it for more than a few moments on any single woman. He is the embodiment of the all the potential good in mankind left squandered, broken and abandoned on the side of the road.

This translates into acting application in a couple of ways. One, I, the actor, have to find the positive opposites to the negative in Baal. He is not an evil man. He is simply *a* man.

He is not taking a high view of Baal but a low view of the rest of us. He is saying that we are ourselves no better than murderers.

We may even be worse than Baal, in that we have missed the romance with the sky and the dream of the little meadow. We may be Baal minus the poetry. (Bentley 9)

I have to find the good in Baal and juxtapose that to his sinister side, and the gloom of the harsh world around him. Baal's fascination with pleasure, although destructive and often violent, is not necessarily impure at the source. We all have our dark sides; Baal just chooses not to mask his.

Furthermore, on an actor-conscious level I know I have the task of creating a character that the audience will care about, at least enough to keep their interest. If the audience saw only evil in Baal, they would not stay for the second act; much less learn anything about the human condition. Much like Mother Courage, Baal demonstrates a classic trait among Brecht's characters – people that can change, perhaps try to change, but in the end just aren't able to change. And although on the surface Baal seems wicked and utterly doomed, I have the arduous chore of peeling back layers and finding deeper levels in his character. Baal has to be as multidimensional as I can possibly make him, for the sake of the production, this project, and my own growth as an actor.

Many *physical* given circumstances would also play a critical part to my choices in the creation of Baal. One enormous circumstance that I must adhere to is Baal's constant state of drunkenness. In almost every scene, Baal is inebriated in some way. Most often his intoxication finds its origin from his favorite drink, gin. It comes as no surprise that gin is Baal's drink of choice, no doubt because of its pure color, representing the clear waters he uses to wash himself with. But Baal does not stop with gin. Wine, champagne, and absinthe are all used to numb his senses. And given that Baal is rarely not under the influence, I will have to work very hard in not only playing that circumstance, but in giving range, or degrees of drunkenness. I must define and play the differences as to when Baal is merely a little tipsy, when he is falling over drunk, or when

he is someplace in between. Executing those degrees will not only be difficult to pull off, but it will have a strong influence on my acting choices (objective, motivation, actions, etc.)

Another very important physical circumstance I must give considerable credence to is that Baal *dies* at the end of this play. Strangely, there is virtually nothing in the play's stage directions or dialogue that specifically informs the actor or audience that Baal is in fact dying. It remains one of the plays weakest features - that almost immediately following Ekart's death, Baal dies with no warning and no sense of build. Nevertheless, if one looks at where Baal ends up (on his death bed), then at some point before that death scene occurs, I, the actor, must take upon myself to demonstrate how those years of debauchery are taking their toll. Otherwise Baal just dies, in an odd and rather sudden fashion. I knew that I had to at some point in the play, show those effects on my body, and help give Baal's death a gradual and believable evolution. I also knew that I would not be able to set exactly *how* I was able to show this progression until we were well into rehearsals, but it was a very important "to-do" item I kept in the back of my head.

There are other aspects to the physical mechanics of this role, but those I felt would best fall under the realm of *gestus*. I've already explained the given circumstances of inebriation and chronic illness, two very strong factors that would shape how I would physically move and speak on stage. They prove pivotal to the execution of my analysis and as such cannot be ignored. However, I knew that on top of those two circumstances must appear a deeper physical representation of the thematic idea. My use of *gestus* in

my creation of Baal would be both simple and complex, a contradiction that fits nicely into the Brechtian philosophy.

The analysis of my use of *gestus*, just as any acting aspect, means very little without the subsequent execution of that analysis on the stage. In short, talk is cheap - it's what one *does* that matters. As such, I knew my implementation of *gestus* would not begin to manifest concretely until we actually began the rehearsal process. However, I knew my *walk* was priority number one. How would Baal's walk help determine "what" I am? (A key question to Brecht)

Thematically, my walk had to find its greatest likeness in that of an animal's. I was then left with the task of pinpointing moments in the play that Baal's physical movement resembled not that of a man, but of a beast. The elephant, ape, swine, and rat are the most widely referenced animals in the script. The difficulty remained in deciphering which animal took precedence and where it happened in the script. Juxtaposed to that animalistic physical *gestus*, I could then splice the "artist" into my performance. No matter how primal Baal behaves, he is also a poet. It is "what" he is, and cannot be ignored. I would have to determine how and when that aspect of my character *gestus* came into play.

In fact, the more I began trying to pinpoint the *gestus* needs, the more I realized how large a task it would evolve into, not to mention why Brecht used it as an acting philosophy. *Gestus* would take shape in my walk, my voice, my gestures, and even my senses (i.e. the sense of smell becoming acute and heightened). It would influence how I treated other characters, how I spoke to them, touched them, even looked at them. Basically, for every moment on stage, I needed to be aware of it.

Unfortunately, the amount of work *gestus* required was almost overwhelming, and was attacked far too late to be effective in my *initial* analysis. I would have to find most of my discoveries as I went. I knew I had my work cut out for me, and had to make up the difference during the rehearsal process.

Objective:

Like *gestus*, I knew other elements and ideas would demand attention once the cast and I began rehearsals, but after identifying these key circumstances, I felt confident to now nail down an **objective**.

What is Baal's critical goal? What does he want/need? This would be my guidepost, my rock that would provide meaning and purpose to my role. It would serve as a ground plan that in some way, shape or form would fuel every action Baal made. Stanislavsky believed every character in a play had a *super objective* that piloted everything that character did on stage. It is the through line of a character, and it will ultimately determine how the character's journey will end. As I have pointed out, Brecht thought Stanislavsky was misguided, too involved in making the audience "feel" as opposed to "think." Regardless of Brecht's opinions however, I knew that for my own sanity, I needed a strong objective that I could cling to for structure and support.

Several weeks and several different "try-outs" came and went before I found one that fit. It was simple and universal enough to use throughout the play, yet challenging enough to serve as a worthy mission in each scene. And it came to me in a word. What Baal wanted most was *peace*. I found that in each scene, peace was what Baal constantly sought, or in his words he was, "Always in search of that land where life is best." (*Baal*

55) Peace was what he longed for and even managed to capture - if only for a moment. This search for peace fueled his poetry, his lust for women (especially virgins), his fascination with the trees, the rivers and the sky, the refuge he found in alcohol, and the ultimate unattainable beauty he sought in Ekart. For Baal the grass was always greener on the other side. And his quest for peace would keep him searching for the most luscious pasture he could find.

Of course, finding *what a character wants* is often simple. More complex is *why that character wants it*. I must know *why* my character wants what he wants or I will have no *investment* to that want. I now needed to pinpoint the **motivation** fueling Baal's search for peace.

Motivation:

My personal analogy stipulates that the character is the *car*, the objective is the *destination*, and the motivation is the *fuel* that gets me there. If I am not running on a full tank, then chances are, I will not complete the journey. Therefore nailing down my motivation is instrumental to the success of my analysis.

Fortunately, finding an objective usually goes hand in hand with determining my motivation for that objective. In this particular case, I had inadvertently discovered my motivation before I even decided on my objective. It was by asking myself "what motivates Baal's hedonistic nature?" that I was able to decipher what he wanted, and subsequently *why* he wanted it.

Why is Baal so lustful, so greedy, and so self-serving? The answer to those questions was the same as the reason to *why* Baal wants to find peace: because Baal will

die if he is not greedy. Likewise, Baal will *die* if he does not find peace. I realized that Brecht created a man who had the unique ability to *truly* see and appreciate God's beauty (Nature, the circle of life, the warmth of the human touch). But because Baal possessed that gift, he was cursed with a constant hunger to experience it. He had tasted a forbidden fruit that most of us are not even aware exists. He must have beauty (the pathway to peace), or he becomes weak and dies. This explains Baal's greed for peace. To Baal, peace is a life or death pursuit. Without it he is a dead man. What stronger motivation is there?

How was I able to formulate this equation? To use David Ball's famous mantra, I did it backwards. Where does Baal end up? Dead. Why? Because he ate and drank his life away. Not good enough. Why did he eat and drink his life away? Perhaps more important, was I superimposing a negative moral judgment when I answer with "he ate and drank his life away"? As an actor, I am always reluctant to project any man I step into the shoes of to be anything more than a man; *meaning*, terms such as good and evil have a minimal impact into my character analysis. Humans are so multifaceted that to put arbitrary and limiting labels on a character is no different then placing those same labels onto a person.

To us, Baal ate, drank and screwed his life away, but for Baal, he was only doing that which would keep him alive. And given the stipulation that if he does not find peace, even if for a moment, he will die, I would argue that very few of us would not act just as self-serving as Baal. He is not bad, he is not good; he is simply man that will go to any stakes to find "the land where life is best."

Obstacle:

The problem for Baal is that every time he makes it to a greener side, the grass is soiled by his mortal touch, rots beneath his feet, and forces him to set out in search of a new plot of land. And it is in this fact where my objective found its greatest enemy (which for an actor is his greatest ally): an **obstacle**. Every objective needs a worthy obstacle. The obstacle(s) must force the actor to *work* for his objective. And there is no law that says a character will achieve his objective. In fact, many plays become immortal because the hero does *not* achieve his objective. Why? Because we (the spectator) want to see the struggle. It is a character fighting to the death for what he wants that makes a story have power and appeal. Drama is conflict. This is why we tell stories – to see opposing forces battle with each other. If an actor's objective for his character is too easy to achieve, then there is no conflict, if there is no conflict there is no drama, and no drama equals no reason for spectators to watch, thus making the need to have an objective with a strong obstacle so vital to the acting process.

I would find many obstacles throughout the play, both from external and internal forces, but Baal's greatest obstacle; his greatest enemy to getting what he wants is himself. He wants peace, but his own animalistic brutality to others and to himself prevents him from obtaining it. He cannot *control* his lust and greed for pleasure. He cannot use moderation. His appetite is unending. Like a vampire, he is cursed with an unquenchable need to feed on other life forms, inevitably making it impossible to hold on to his peace. This particular duality in my objective and obstacle would also provide a greater depth to Baal's character. If something so vile and repulsive wants something so pure and beautiful (perhaps the very same thing that most of us want), then I know that

many more layers would be open for me to play, which will in turn make Baal as human as possible.

Actions:

Armed with a clear objective, the motivation behind it, and the knowledge of having to overcome many obstacles in the way, the next step in my process came in determining *how* I could achieve my objective. How I overcame each obstacle would be revealed by my **actions**. An actor's actions, also known as tactics or intentions, are used to defeat whatever obstacles lie in between him and what his character wants. If my goal for Baal is to find peace, then all my actions must correspond to that goal or to overcoming any obstacles preventing the obtainment of that goal.

Actions are signified by taking an action verb, as in “to punch”, and applying it directly to every *beat*. A beat is a unit of action. There are hundreds of beats in a script, most of which fall within the characters' lines or stage movements. Basically for every new action played, there is a beat change. If I were to “punch” someone with a line from the script and then “retreat” from them (either by using the playwright's words, or movement, or both), then I would be using two actions (to punch and to retreat), signifying a *beat change* in between those actions.

It is a very simple concept to understand once one has had adequate practice. The important item to note here is that actions solidify every moment on stage for the actor; at all times he is either giving or receiving an action. Actions *force* an actor to invest in the scene, because they provide an actor the ability to target an objective. They take the

playwright's words, and give them power and weight. Without actions, most performances are general, surface level, and superficial: an unforgivable sin in the world of acting. I would use hundreds of actions in *Baal*, each one providing my performance with purpose and conviction.

Describing every action I used and why I came to decide on each of those actions would be a horrific task for myself to produce, and furthermore for the reader to sort through. However, a detailed *listing* of all the actions I used is located in Chapter 8: Scored Script.

...

It was at this point that I felt ready to hit the rehearsal floor. Of course, many more discoveries were to be made once I began working with a director and other actors. I might even choose to truncate parts of my initial analysis completely. Nevertheless, I had a blueprint. I now had a character foundation that I could build on. Armed with the above analysis I felt confident and anxious to begin the rehearsal process. I had spent months planning for the chance to hit the stage and work with other actors who would bring their own insight and creativity to the play. The last step I took before rehearsal was to learn my lines, quickly and by rote. The sooner I got off book, the sooner this production would take shape.

REHEARSAL LOG:

The following is an account of my process throughout the five-week rehearsal period for *Baal* and the subsequent run of the show. I feel compelled to reiterate that this log is solely from the perspective of an *actor* - not a designer, not a director, but someone who had to physically live and breathe on a stage every night in front of a live audience. My attempt was to produce a succinct and relatively clear journal that would not only benefit me, but also anyone interested in reading into the day-to-day job of an actor. I tried to focus primarily on what I wanted to accomplish that day, what I needed to improve upon, and what obstacles were in the way of said improvement. That being, this journal does possess some remnants of the natural emotion and often frustration that would accompany an actor's process, and for that matter, any creation of a work of art. It proved to be both an enjoyable and vital element to the successful documentation of this project.

...

9/21/04 & 9/22/04: General auditions

Unfortunately not enough men showed up to the general auditions. As a solution, the director decided to cross-gender a few of the men's roles to make up for the loss, so instead of 9 men and 5 women, we would now have 7 men and 7 women making up the cast. This seemed to be the best solution and perhaps befitted the abstract world that the director wanted.

9/23/04: Call Backs

After five months of reading and working on the play in isolation, I was very excited to finally get the chance to work with other actors. My main goal was to help the other actors as much as I could. I didn't want to be the cause of anyone having a sub par audition. I was surprised at the number of new faces, and glad to see a few familiar ones, and I was very pleased with the ability and effort of each actor who auditioned. Given the unusualness of the script I was impressed with the choices made by all of those who auditioned.

I quickly learned of things I needed to work on. After the first person finished his/her audition the director hit me with a very important piece of information. At the end the Scene 12, A plain. Sky, the director wanted Baal and Ekart to kiss. This information not only will cause me to rethink this scene and how it should be played, but to also continue to examine Baal and Ekart's relationship. I also discovered I would need to sharply detail the level of drunkenness in each scene. This is a major given circumstance that can't be taken lightly. I also came to realize how difficult scene 11 A hut, will be. Further exploration needed. On the positive, it was great to explore the space, even without a set. I have always enjoyed working in the thrust and it should provide a great place to form the world of *Baal*.

Tuesday 9/28/04: Music Rehearsal w/ Jesse Tyson

Music is very important to Brecht, not only in this play, but in all epic theater. My goal in this rehearsal was to pin down the Orge song, which we certainly did. Over the past couple of weeks Tyson had shown me some chords and provided basic knowledge of the guitar for me to practice on my own. In our prior meeting she told me

to come up with how I thought the Orge song should sound. I completed my assignment and presented it to her. I was pleased to see how much she enjoyed it. She immediately gave me chords that would nicely couple the rhythm and meter of the song. There is some very nice juxtaposition to the words of the song, and the chords, which I hope will culminate into not only a fun and entertaining piece for an audience, but also give insight into the walking talking contradiction that is Baal.

9/30/04: 1st read through

My goal was, number one, get a feel for the other actors and what they could bring to the table. I was a bit nervous going in, but I left with a very positive outlook. Although we have a number of young actors, I think the talent is there, it will merely be a matter of pulling it out. And I have every bit of confidence in the director, Phil Karnell, to settle on nothing but our very best.

I was very pleased to finally see a model to the set. I really like the look of it. Dark, distorted, alien, abstract – it will certainly help create the mood of this world. However, I am concerned for actors' safety. The set's centerpiece is a very large metal tree that has been uprooted and is now sprawled along most of the stage. Although aesthetically pleasing – I have a sinking feeling that some one in this production will be receive stitches at some point. I hope this fear does not come to fruition. Costumes and lights were still too underdeveloped to get an understanding of, but as the director put it, “no matter what, it is going to be weird.”

The main focal points in my process thus far are, one: Getting lines down cold. Two: Detailing the relationship between Baal and Ekart. More specifically, what is it

that Baal wants from Ekart, and how is that different from any other being Baal has come in contact with. Three: Find those “human” moments in Baal. Locate the places where he could almost make a change, but doesn’t. Four: Work on Animal Gestus. Elephant, pig, and ape are the three most prevalent animals to take characteristics from. Five: Alienation Effect – decide which lines can best remind the audience that they are in a theater and should be learning as well as being entertained.

10/1/04: 2nd Read through

My main goal today was to play more, to make some different choices, and to have fun. Now the opening day jitters are behind us, and we can really start the work. The director hit the actor playing Ekart and myself with something new to think a bout. He said to play around with the idea that Baal and Ekart are tripping on acid in Scene 8: Green Fields. Blue Plum Trees. He said that he was hesitant to add a vice other than alcohol, but the lines in this scene make so much more sense if we were high out of our minds. At first I was unsure about the idea, but the more I analyze the scene the more it seems helpful. But now I don’t want it to be the only scene we bring that given circumstance into. Hopefully we can find more room.

10/2/04: Blocking Rehearsal

Our goal was to get through 5 scenes; we made it to about 2 and a quarter. But the work was good. My process hangs its hat on the ability to make every moment on stage purposeful. The director and I are in agreement on this issue. This is why it took so long to block about four pages.

Scene 2: Baal's Basement was a good way to begin. The actor playing Johannes is young but very eager, which I think will make a good quality in the character. The scene played pretty much as I suspected. Baal is a mentor to Johannes, capturing the awe and wonder of the boy. But the director added another important aspect to their relationship; they are friends. Johannes laughs at Baal where others shun him. This is important because it will mean so much more when Baal betrays Johannes in the upcoming scenes. The most important note I gave myself for this scene was to get off book by Tuesday. Not only will it help map out the beats, but I have to play the guitar in this scene and I can't be encumbered by having a script in my hand.

Scene 4i: Baal's Basement. surprisingly shaped up nicely as well. I love the immediate relationship disclosed as Johanna cries and Baal laughs. Evident as well is how self-serving Baal can be. He has had his meal of Johanna and now he throws her away the way one might discard chicken bones. I decided that having a virgin was like eating Thanksgiving dinner for Baal. He is so full that he can afford to dump her, which at this point in the process, is my objective. And I believe Baal has a lot of fun doing it too.

Eventually we will have to slow the scene down. One thing I've learned over the past two years is that if it is "filled", a pause can last as long as you dare. There are moments of silence in this scene that will mean volumes more than any word can equal. I'm sure we will find them specifically upon further rehearsal.

Scene 4iii: Baal's Basement, Evening won't come to full fruition until 4i is tighter. Nevertheless, we were able to answer some key questions. We are going to alienate the audience in that first monologue, as well as use it as a transition. We also

gave the Sophie/Baal relationship a good start. There must be a reason why Baal keeps her around so long before he throws her away. We spent the first few beats setting that up. We weren't able to get too far into the scene. But I like the violent and unpredictable start that Johannes and Baal share. I will look to capitalize with the principle of "less is more" in the moment of guilt that comes from the news of Johanna's disappearance.

10/5/04: Scene 4iii, 5, and 6

4iii was a monster of a scene. The director and I are in agreement that the Sophie/Baal relationship is different than Baal's previous relationships, and therefore their first meeting should reflect that unique value. However, the director took it in a direction that I really didn't expect. He really wanted to bring out the seductive quality of the scene. More than half the scene is kissing and dancing and very *romantic*. I worry that it is too much for too long and that we are missing a few beats of animal instinct. It remains to be seen as far as how it fits in with the rest of the production. It's still too early to see if the scene will work or not.

Scene 5 was far more clear. Michael Harkins came in with some good choices as the Tramp, and he's always fun to work with. My goal in the scene was to play with the objective – to steal the tramp's gin. The director disagreed with this choice and wanted me to focus on the trees as an objective. I reviewed the scene some more and I'm still convinced (based on other scenes in the play where Baal tricks different characters into stealing their alcohol) that focusing on the gin will be a much stronger and clearer goal. But even looking at it on a deeper level I believe that alcohol represents more than just a drink to Baal (especially gin). It is a purifying ritual, much like his constant bathing in

the river. He needs it to keep up his strength. Here Baal is doing more of the same. It's a habit, and Baal is victim to it.

I also don't think the audience has to know what my objective is until after I've accomplished it. I think the director was being too overt on this scene. I think the scene pays off more if we are one step in front of the audience. And furthermore, I think the objective makes perfect sense textually. At the end of the scene, Baal walks off saying, "I'm going to the river to wash myself. I can't be bothered with corpses". He doesn't care about the trees, and even if he does, it does not supercede the quest for gin.

We also found that Baal's last line is another good place to alienate the audience. This scene does not worry me at all. It's short and sweet and Harkins seems to have a good hold of what he's doing.

Scene 6 I like as well. It's the most human side of Baal we see. We kept it simple. Sophie and Baal have just made love, protected from the rain and are now getting drunk and reveling in joy of love. I still want to show Baal's teeth however. I don't think Baal is ever "nice" – there is always something he wants. It's just a matter of finding it. Further work needed.

10/6/04: Scene 3.

A long, but important night. This was the first time we had more than three people in a rehearsal. The scene played out pretty much how I expected to. My objective is to bag Johanna, which comes to fruition in the next scene. I was allowed to play with the drunkenness and given license to take stage as often as I wanted. There were a few discoveries made that I really liked. Something that I didn't think about was the need for

the audience to like Emilie. The lines come across with a certain amount of venom, but the director made what I believe to be a wise choice and that was to play against what the text suggests. If Emilie is sweet and pathetic, that makes Baal into even more of a monster when he destroys her. Something too we found was a use for the trap door. It became the doorway to the bar and makes a great entrance for Ekart. Not only that, it plays so well into the abstract world we are creating. The director was fine with most of my choices, so I'm not worried. It's one of the clearest scenes in the play. It should disgust and alienate the audience in some very important parts – which is a good thing.

10/10/04: Scene 8, 1, & Prologue

Scene 8, Green Fields. Blue Plum Trees is one of the most important scenes in the play. From this scene forward, Ekart becomes a pivotal part to the story. Brecht does not supply me with very much information concerning the history of Ekart and Baal's relationship, let alone how what I believe to be love between them came to be. Nevertheless, I have the task of applying a value to the relationship that will coincide with the rest of the play – and in this scene I had to solidify how Baal felt about Ekart.

My objective is to tell Ekart that I love him. I gave myself that I almost do it with the line, "Only Words. But... it doesn't matter." The ellipsis isn't in the script, but I needed more to ground this scene – other than two men on drugs lounging around talking about the sky. The play is forever different after this scene – it becomes Baal's effort to control Ekart, and the seeds of that need to be planted in that moment. Another moment that is pinnacle in this scene is the line "Since the sky turned green and pregnant."

Pregnant must be given value – the value of disgust. This will become so important when Baal leaves Sophie in act two.

The prologue was to say the least, a little disappointing. I didn't know how exactly the director would approach it, and so I didn't really analyze it the same as the other scenes. I didn't even know how much I would be included, if at all. I pleased to see that it is more of a, as the director put it, a hello to the audience. More precisely, we are treating it as a chance to greet the audience with a message of, "we are actors, here's our play, and this is what you can expect." However, it is the execution thus far that I am not impressed with. The director told us that he didn't want to choreograph the prologue with too much movement. But right now he has us coming out, standing in our places, and performing an occasional march in place or pivot. There is a military feel to what he has us doing that I don't really find in the text. Just because the piece is German, doesn't make it military. I don't know what the prologue will evolve into, but hopefully it will take shape within the guidelines of the rest of the world we create.

Scene 1 presented a whole new challenge to us. Not only does it begin the plot of story, but it establishes my character, but also it sets the tone, the pace, and gives the audience and idea of the world they will be observing. And for myself, it sets up the essence of my character. I like most of what we did. It plays mostly the same way I had it in my head. But towards the end of the scene where the director had other actors do some really stylized work. He has Piller and Mech turning, and purposefully not giving their lines to the people the text suggests they should be giving them to. I understand the desire to break from the convention and establish to the audience that this play is far from normal, but I worry that this is weird for weird sake. Now if this was an alienation

device, or some other choice supported by Brecht's teachings then I would not think twice about it, but if it was, it certainly was not articulated to us by the director. And although I am in the scene, I am not physically doing the odd turning, and as such it really isn't my place to ask for motivation from the director for the choice. It is up to the other actors to voice their concerns, assuming they even have any. But I hold firm to the belief that the moments we do choose to stylize should still fit within something that Brecht would do. Of course, it is still early and who knows what may come of this scene. But my objective "to bag Emilie" seems to fit fine with what we were doing. I look forward to being able to work on the scene again.

Tuesday 10/12/04:

Today was a tough day. I find that the more people in the scene the much more stress is involved in blocking that scene. The first scene, Scene 7: A Club Called 'The Night Cloud' went about as I expected it to. It was tough because half of the actors have lines offstage, and as such, keeping focus becomes a problem. But we got through it and I think laid some good groundwork. A huge discovery I made was in trying to solve a technical problem in what to do with my guitar as I leave for the lavatory. Because the door way has become the trap, it was too cumbersome to try and get the guitar and me through there. However, we were able to use Savetka's line, "taking your guitar to the lavatory?" as motivation to leave the guitar. So she says that line, and I lay the guitar at my feet, symbolizing my abandonment of this "commercial" life, and the choice to go live in the woods with Ekart. The next time I pick up the guitar is in the scene where I kill Ekart, which provides a much greater value to the guitar and what it means in this

play. My objective is to “gain my freedom.” I’ve sucked these people dry and now I must move on to a new project. And laying down the guitar fits nicely into that objective.

I also played with the given circumstance that I am completely “shit-faced”. I use the terminology “shit-faced”, as opposed to drunk, or intoxicated, because for me (the actor) it conjures up a much stronger and more *specific* image to play with. And I will argue to the grave that specificity is never a bad thing for an actor to seek. At times being “shit-faced” is an obstacle, particularly in mobility and coordination, but at times it also is an aid. Drunken people are like crazy people; they can get away with anything, which helps to fuel and shape my action in this scene.

We also worked on the last scene in the play, Scene 21: Hut in the Forest. This is Baal’s death scene. This was the first time we worked with the chopped up tire on stage and lucky for me, today I got really close and personal with that rubber. The director decided to make Baal’s death bed the downstage sloping ramp on upstage right. Which I thought was a very good move. Its angle provides a good line of sight for the audience. At this point, I knew that Baal was dying. For my own motivational purposes I gave myself that my guts were literally rotting out. This should give me a vivid enough image to create the circumstance of having to die.

We really didn’t get into too much detail and depth. Just plotted out a basic blocking map. But I found some moments that I know will need further work. One was Baal’s need for keeping the men there. He doesn’t want to be alone. He can’t or he’ll die. And subsequently he does, because he is alone. He has no one to feed off of.

Another big moment is when Baal says “thanks.” It is the only time in the script he says it, and I think the value of that moment must be realized. Another crucial moment is the last, “dear god.” I’ve chosen the action – to pray. Baal is literally on his knees praying for peace, which conveniently enough happens to be my super objective and my objective for this scene. After years of searching on his own for “that place where life is best,” he finally turns to God, whom he has disowned from the beginning and asks for mercy. Needless to say, it’s a pretty big moment and I know I have more work to do in order to get to that place.

Wednesday, 10/13/04: Scene 13

The director was ill today. We were supposed to get through scene 15 as well but that we will block on Sunday. Scene 13, Brown Wooden Bar is one of my favorites. We didn’t begin however on a very good note. We’ve been unable to get a hold of one of the cast members, and as such had to, “release him from the production.” In a way I’m a little relieved, because now his roles will be divided up among other cast members, which will add to their level of involvement and will hopefully add to their desire to make a good show.

After overcoming that small hiccup, we began to tackle the scene. I gave my self the objective to “suck the locals dry.” At this point in the play, I’ve made a decision to go with Ekart and to try to gain his love. But I can’t feed off him like I do others. He’s too strong. I can’t control him, which causes me to try even harder. And as such, it makes me weak, and furthermore – sick. At this point in the script Baal has to begin to show signs of wear. I need to feed off others for strength; I’m not getting that, so I try to

steal it from the occupants of this bar. The problem is, these people are just as, if not more insane, eccentric, unstable. etc. than I am, and as such my tricks don't have the same effect on them. That is my main obstacle, and ultimately I don't accomplish my objective "to suck the locals dry," and have to retreat into the forest with the line, "You swine, you don't know what's human anymore."

Now for Baal to call someone inhuman is a pretty big deal. So we have to solve the mystery as to why Baal fears these people so much. One answer I know comes from Gougou's line, "you learn to abandon all your habits." This connects to a scene that got cut in which Baal tells Teddy (a dead man crushed by a fallen tree) that "You were just a victim of your own habits." I know that those two moments are connected, and it prompts Baal to panic and rail against the Gougou and the others in the bar. But there is more to mine.

I like this scene too because it is well divided. It gives the ensemble a real chance to take stage. It's the first time Baal really feels fear from another character. The Beggar's story and Gougou's aria when ready will be two very strong moments. And they fuel so much of what I do in this scene. (See Scored Script for text)

The evolution of the Baal/ Ekart relationship is very important here too. Unfortunately, blocking takes its toll, and the ability to play and find moments becomes very difficult. One thing I love is the entrance to the bar. In this abstract world, to enter the bar, you have to climb under the large ramp upstage right. It's not only unusual; it's entertaining and provides a great physical obstacle for Baal and Ekart to overcome.

Thursday, 10/14/04: Scene 17 and 18

My main goal for this rehearsal was to work the moment when Baal kills Ekart. I know that it is the Beast in Baal that attacks. I have to instantly evolve into an animal, which will be a great place to use gestus. The attack should be quick and raw. I think it should work well, because the director has us on the top stage right ramp. I liked the use of space in this scene. It's spread out and gives me the opportunity to take stage during the song. Again, I have to work on still playing with slowly getting sicker and sicker so that the last scene doesn't come out of the blue.

The light became a little of a set problem. There are several references to a lamp that Baal knocks over. Once it is relit he sees Ekart with the waitress and snaps. I look forward to seeing how the technical staff is going to handle it all.

Scene 17 is one of my favorites. The scene is 75 percent of Baal telling the Death in the Forest story. I don't know what planet I was on, but I felt pretty stupid when the director had to point out to me that I neglected to use the giant tree that fills the middle of the stage. I think once I have the lines down solid, the scene should work well. I still need an objective however. I was hoping that I would have a better idea after blocking, but I'm still confused. I know it's to do with Ekart, but I haven't laid my hands on yet. This scene, although a favorite, is still a mystery. It needs a lot more work, because there is something going on sub-textually. If Baal kills Ekart in the next scene, my instinct is that this moment must help set that murder up.

Friday, 10/15/04: 20, 11, 12, and 15

Tonight was very productive. We got through four scenes with time to spare. 20 was simple for me, I basically hide in the back of the stage and follow the police through

the forest. I do like the choice to give the line “Now things are getting interesting,” directly to the audience. It should work as an alienating moment. My dying needs to be pretty evident, which will be hard to couple with following the cops as if I were hunting them. We’ll see.

11 starts the act with a bang. The director is having the ensemble enter with a reprise of the prologue and then sit on the stage and watch the scene. They will then make the transition to 12 as Baal, Ekart, and Sophie run through the forest. My goal was to try out the objective that I was trying to figure out what I was going to do with Sophie. I need to know because I need a new food source. The light bulb comes on with the line “I’m too heavy.” It then becomes my decision to dump Sophie and feed off of Ekart. It is here that I make the leap to abandon the quest for peace from a woman. As the next scene points out, I discover that “there is more than the closeness of women.”

And 12 was where we put most of the work tonight. The kiss is going to be a challenge. Not only because I’ve never kissed a man before, but also because we are fighting like animals right before it is supposed to happen. When everyone is secure on lines, this should be one of the best scenes in the play. It’s one of the cleanest written. The use of space is good. Again I like anything that helps me use an animal like gestus. I think much more will shape up when we can work the scene off book.

We were supposed to work Scene 15 last Tuesday, but we were able to get it done today. It is short and sweet, and like scene 17, its centerpiece is a poem. This one however, I decided to sing. I wanted to have a lullaby feel to the piece. I thought it would bring a nice juxtaposition to horrible decaying of Johanna’s body, which the poem describes. The director seemed to like it, so it should be a winner.

I made myself a note to make sure I've planted the seeds of jealousy in this scene that will help motivate Baal's killing Ekart a couple of scenes later. I also liked the idea the director had to pull us as close to the audience as possible. The scene has a soft intimate feel, and taking that down left corner of the stage should provide a nice change of pace for the audience.

Sunday, 10/17/04: Work Epilogue, End of Act one, Beginning of Act III, 1, 3

Today was more or less a catch up day. We worked mostly ensemble transitions between the acts and the end of the play. We worked on getting the timing and blocking down to these transitions. No one was off book on the prologue, including myself, which didn't allow for much real work to be done.

We used the rest of rehearsal to help solidify scene 1, and 3's blocking. We had a new ensemble member playing the roles of Pschierer and Horgauer, and it was good to let him get used to the blocking. Because the set has changed a little, we had to adjust our previous blocking, especially in scene 3. Ekart's entrance is strait out to the audience. I think it makes for a better moment. I began adjusting my action a little, trying a couple new tactics, but unfortunately it being a Sunday, most of the cast was not ready to really commit to really making some new discoveries. I hope Tuesday will be the day when rehearsal will really take off.

Tuesday, 10/19/04: Scenes 2, 4i-7

Scene 7 was a little tough to work. Most of the cast is backstage, and it was difficult at times for us all to focus. The most important goal, in not only this scene but

also the entire rehearsal was to revisit these scenes, if nothing else to go through the blocking again. It had been two weeks since we had worked some of them, so it was very important to take another look at them before tomorrow's run. But 7 is a pretty simple scene for me. I played more with the given circumstance of being absurdly drunk, and tried to listen to what the other actors on stage were giving me. Although I speak very little in this scene, I have to still play actions, only without words. The fact is I prefer not speaking, and being forced to think of how many different actions I can come up with to give my fellow actors something to play off of.

Scene 2 was the first scene we ever blocked and surprisingly enough it was still very much intact. Jai, the actor playing Johannes and I had a chance before rehearsal to run lines and think back to the blocking. I was very impressed and also proud of Jai (As one of my former students). He had his lines down cold and had made some really strong choices. I had been working on the scene for most of the day because Baal plays the guitar in sequence to the lesson of love he gives Johannes. But we both played with the scene and had fun. There are still things in the relationship to be extracted. For myself I need to define how exactly I feel about the boy – do I really care for his company? I think I do, which makes for a stronger conflict when I betray him. If that is the case – I need to have a moment in 4i that shows a slight glimpse of guilt. But we must establish a deeper, more genuine relationship in this scene. It will also give Jia the license he will need for scene 18. But overall the director really liked what we did and we moved on.

Scene 4i, although a little rusty, was still in decent shape. We more or less worked a few moments when we blocked it, so now it was really a chance to start getting into the meat of the scene. We reexamined Johanna's exit and found that she needed to

play much stronger actions with her last lines in order to justify Baal's throwing her out and telling her to go spew gall at Johannes. We worked on it some and it's beginning to take shape. We also really came to grips with what we'd be wearing, which will only be underwear to begin with. I'm sure it will be a little scary at first, but it will certainly benefit the scene. I made a new discovery with my line "I'm feed to the teeth!" Before I was giving it as an immediate response to Johanna's question, "do you still love me?" Today I found that I can begin to say, "I love you" with elongating the "I" and then quickly adding the "'m" and the "feed to the teeth!" Here I hoped to have Baal almost say the words, almost give Johanna what she wants, almost defeat my habits, but I fail. It's a seemingly small discovery, but one that I think holds a lot of weight to what Baal does throughout the play. I also give the line to the audience, so it worked as an alienation device as well.

4iii took most of the night. This scene happens four days after Johanna leaving and the director made, what I think was a really cool decision to have Johannes stay on stage the entire time as I give my monologue. Not only that but he slams the gin bottle on the bed, which I use as a start to the scene. It should have a really eerie effect. Because the tree was not there when we initially blocked the scene we had to rework the throwing out of Johannes. I like it much better, it's cleaner, and we added a choke that relates back to scene 3. The beats with Sophie – the dance and the romance – worked a lot better than I thought. I remember not thinking they would work well, but it adds a lot of value to the relationship, and gives my character more levels. Baal is a contradiction walking, and there is something to be said with the way he romantically courts Sophie. I've decided to keep the alienation with the line "For a while". It appears at one of the

most emotionally poignant moments, therein it is a great moment to play it to the audience. It takes them out when they are most connected. Why? Because it will remind the audience that they are in a theater, which is a fundamental teaching tool Brecht believed in.

Scene 5, was pretty cut and dry. The director liked what myself and Mike (the actor playing the tramp) did when we first blocked it and had very little to say about it this time. He did however, inform us that Raela, our musical ensemble member, might be playing bells in the beginning of the scene, and therein I could deliver the line “Not to mention the ringing of bells when plants die,” directly to her.

Scene 6, has a whole new look. Like the other scenes we worked tonight, we blocked it before we had the tree. The director was insistent that we be in the roots. Unfortunately, some of the ends of the metal bars are jagged and unsafe. So the actress playing Sophie was a little preoccupied with staying free of the metal. The director did give, what I think will be a very good suggestion. I was using my own line, “after thirty years had passed, and she was half rotted by then,” to alienate. But the director suggested I do it on Sophie’s line, “she’ll think I drowned myself,” and then stay with the audience until the rest of her line is finished. Not only does it alienate at that moment, but it also connects to Johanna, and gives me a chance to show another level to Baal.

Wednesday, 10/20/04: Run Through

I’m writing this the morning after because I wanted to be as constructive as possible. I thought that if I tried to do this last night I might not be as objective as I

should. Needless to say, we are not ready to open. Lucky for us we have a couple of weeks. That being said, we have several things to work on.

Our design staff was there, and I think and hope that they can see the problems with some of the set. It seemed that everyday our blocking had to change based on a new set of metal roots that was added. I hope now we can shape the roots more around our blocking, rather our blocking around the growing roots. I fear however that there might be a serious breakdown in communication between performers and technical staff. And I have tried to speak my piece on the need for a safe set to the two venues that are available to me as an actor: my stage manager and my director. It is not acceptable (at least not in this production) to actually voice my concern directly to the technical staff. Nor would it be acceptable for the technical staff to give me actor notes. Nevertheless, some how we all must get on the same page. I do not want myself, or any other cast member to visit the emergency room.

Lines are always an issue. I know the places I need to work on; hopefully everyone else knows where they need to work. Enough said.

The run was a great tool for exposing what major issues I need to work on. Pace will be a big issue. I think we have most of the beats, now we have to adjust the pace. I'm not worried about it, if anything it might fix itself just by continuing to run. I have to clean up the times when I'm drunk, buzzed, sober, etc. If it's too general, it will look like I'm just crazy. I have to work on the moments in act II when I'm dying. There must be a slow progression to my deathbed. Other than that, the group scenes need most of the work. I would say most of the two-person scenes were not bad at all. But the group

scenes made up for it. Again, we have a couple of weeks to work, and I trust everything will come together.

Thursday 10/21/04 – Afternoon: Scenes 13, 18

There were still no changes to the set. I realize this will take time, but the set is really beginning to lose its luster. The danger of the jagged metal and copper wires, the problems with unstable and out of place tables, beds and chairs, and the filth that the shredded tires create, begins to make the navigation of our set cumbersome and sometimes harmful. I don't like that. It is very difficult for an actor to really commit to his/her responsibility to the production when the fear of injury becomes overwhelming.

As far as scene 13, I knew that it would still be rough, if for no other reason one of the actors has only worked the scene once, and that was during the run through. However, cues and lines were much better. My objective is still the same – to swindle the bar's inhabitants out of whatever I could. But, when it becomes clear that Baal's magic has no effect, the only choice we have is to leave for the forest. We added an embrace between Baal and Ekart that I think will fit nicely. I was able to add a few moments of sickness.

Scene 18 was much cleaner. Everyone was off book and ready to work. The most important thing we did, at least in my eyes, was to dismiss the exclamation mark off the last line in the scene, "Ekart!" I can do a lot more with it now, and the melodrama of it all is greatly lessened. I also added a tumble to my entrance, for a couple of reasons. One, it helps to show that my health is fading, two, it is a hell of a beat starter and it helps give a bit of variety to an otherwise surreal and utter melancholy scene, and third, it

should be funny, which at this point in the play, is a precious commodity. The song is coming along fine. The death is much better now that we made the leap to Ekart shorter. For Sunday, I want to concentrate on the animal gestus that comes to life when Baal sees Ekart with the waitress. A sharper and more specific use of Gestus is a goal I want to apply to many other scenes as well.

Evening: 11, 12, 15, 17, and 6

The director decided to alter the beginning of scene 11. He has us both lying down. I chose a fetal position for thematic reasons. It shows the child in Baal. I've been using an Arnold Schwarzenegger voice for "What are you lolling about for, you lazy bag of bones," which the director seems to be okay with. I like the choice because I think it can help connect to a contemporary audience, and still have justification in the scene. We ran the scene once. The director, "liked our choices", so we moved on.

We also changed the way we began scene 12. Maybe not changed, but solidified. The director had us running to begin the scene. I was leading the run and in my mind I had pictured the comical and animated runs that one would find in a *Scooby-Doo* cartoon. The director liked it and wanted to solidify that as a choice because there will be music to underscore that mood or atmosphere. It should show a nice contradiction to the end of this scene. We felt the need to add more tension in the beginning of the scene, which will refocus my actions - especially in the lines "because you loved them! Twice I defiled corpses to keep you clean!" I have to go on the attack, defending my actions to Ekart. It should not be a problem because my initial instincts, dating all the way back to callbacks, were to use those lines and that moment to lash back at Ekart. When the Director

informed us that he wanted a kiss later in that scene, he told us to scale back those venom-fueled choices. Now I am going back to my instincts and it should help to better shape the scene.

Scene 15 has become more important because the director has chosen to use the tune I've made with "the drowned girl," and apply it thematically throughout the play. I look forward to seeing what he and Raelea (our music genius) can come up with. We only played the scene once, as the director didn't have much to work. But I found that when I leap of the stage right ramp, I need to give a slight wince in pain to show Baal's ailing health. We also worked the last moment of the scene. Now I am to face Ekart with the line "Is she more beautiful than me?" And he will laugh in my face and walk off. I think this is a powerful choice and helps to motivate my actions even more. Not only can I not control Ekart, he flaunts my jealousy in my face. I'm getting exactly what I've done to others. That laugh adds so much to the relationship and helps give motive to Baal's killing of Ekart.

It also sets up the transition into Scene 17. As Ekart walks off to end the scene, he then stops and he and I make a circle in a face off, which will be underscored by music. It should have a great effect and starts us off in position for Scene 17. I know I have to add more sickness moments in this scene. There must be a greater progression. It's difficult because of the poem, which requires an energetic performance. But I think I can use that as I come out of the poem if I give myself that it takes the wind out of me and I have to drop and regain my strength. I think it can be motivated. I'm going to try it in the run on Sunday.

Scene 6 really bothered me. Not because of the scene, in fact it's quickly becoming one of my favorites because it contradicts so many other scenes in the play. But, apparently, there is a big miscommunication occurring between the tech staff and the director, because chairs continue to be placed in that space. But Sophie and I have to lie there and I fear our comfort and safety are not a number one priority. I hope I am wrong.

The scene went really well. I tried to add a more playful tone to it but have more fun with the tickling and laughing and letting Baal genially enjoy the moment with Sophie. This scene, as with most of the two-person scenes is right where it should be at this point. The group scenes are our major problem. I think if we can get the group scenes cleaned and *off book*, we'll be in much better shape.

Friday 10/22/04: Prologue, Epilogue, 21.

I don't know what to say about the prologue. I'm still not convinced it works. The director said he wanted to pay homage to German precision. But I just don't see the desire to have that military aspect. I will admit that, with everyone off book we were able to clean things up and the prologue is much tighter. I just don't know what to make of it yet.

Scene 21 was impossible to work. No one was off book (except for Mike Harkins) and no one knew his or her cues.

Sunday 10/23/04: Run Through.

Number one note at the end of the day was pace. It's too slow, the cues are slow and everyone, including myself is too indulgent. We will kill an audience if we don't

trim some time off – about thirty minutes. I think the big problem is that everyone else on stage is being sucked into my rhythm. We have about two weeks, so I think we can fix that problem.

Today was a pretty good run given the fact it was a Sunday afternoon. Through my limited years of experience, I have found that rehearsals on weekends are usually sub par. I don't think it would be much different for any occupation: butcher, banker, or candlestick maker. Most people on a Sunday would rather be fishing than working. But, this is the nature of the beast and, pleasant surprisingly, most of the cast had their lines much firmer and had a greater feel for what they are doing. I feel considerably more optimistic looking at the schedule. We have one more chance to work each scene and then we are in to runs. If we can get the transitions sharp and in order, we'll be fine.

I was able to plug in a few things today that I've failed to execute before. One of the biggest was the circumstance of dying slowly. Once Baal makes the decision to kill his unborn child, no matter if he believes it will turn out rotten, he cannot make that decision. The child, like Maja's, is innocent and as such is property of a higher power. When Baal assumes to possess that power, he seals his fate. In summation, that misguided use of power, combined with his inability to feed on Ekart, is what ultimately leads to Baal's death.

I was also able to try out the new "Ekart" at the end of scene 18, after Ekart's death. The result of playing against the exclamation mark makes all the difference in the world and in my opinion is probably a choice that an older Brecht would have wanted. It reminds me of Mother Courage's silent scream; here the actress has to make the most

blood-curdling scream, without making a sound. In any event I'm much more comfortable with the choice.

The kiss between Ekart and Baal seems to be working as well. At first Joe, the actor playing Ekart, and I were a little uneasy, but it does add so much to the scene. It becomes a very powerful moment when Baal literally seals his fate with a kiss. The execution of the kiss is aided by the fact that it derives out of such a hostile and tense moment.

The group scenes are still the weakest point of the production. Cues and lines are the least sharp there and hopefully we can fix and polish those problems this week.

Tuesday, 10/24/04: Scene 1, 2, 4i, 4iii, 5, 6, and 7

Unfortunately, I believe the set was as dangerous as ever. And again, this is an issue that I don't think actors should constantly fear. As we entered the theater we noticed an eight-foot high copper wire extension of the tree right in the middle of the exact place where Joe (Ekart) and I have been blocked to leap from one side of the stage to the other. That extension was complete with, as always, jagged edges and exposed screws. Obviously, there has been another miscommunication between the tech staff and the director.

Also, none of the chairs fit securely in the braces. The stage left ramp, on which I tumble down in scene 18, which used to be covered in carpet, is now covered with what basically amounts to a huge sheet of sandpaper. And to top it all off, the bed, which was apparently made with Luann, cracks loudly when someone moves on it. At this point, it is becoming really frustrating for the cast to constantly endure these miscommunications.

I realize this may come across as harsh, but after last year's thesis project almost ending up in flames, and my own trip to the hospital resulting in five stitches at the bridge of my nose after I fell off a stage (a four foot high, poorly lit, no glow tape having stage), my faith in the UNO DRCM technical staff is not very high. I realize that the staff needs time to process, but because I am literally scarred from a production in this very theater, I feel I have the right to voice the concern that I fear that someone may get hurt. I believe this will a good lesson for me to learn in patience and endurance.

Scene 1 was ten times better tonight than on Sunday. The pace and cues were picked up which made a huge difference. The director made some good suggestions, one being to play off the quick turns that the others were doing, using the line "I'm against Monopolies. We worked on transitions tonight as well. They will probably be the defining factor to the show. The swift and clean execution of those transitions is key.

Scene 2 has been rocking and rolling from the beginning. I don't have much to say on it. It's in good shape. The only thing the director told me was to make sure the initial plucking of the strings is committed and purposeful.

Scene 4i is still missing something. It's still muddy, especially when Johanna is first trying to get off the bed. I don't know how it looks, but it still feels off.

Scene 4iii still feels off, especially tonight. I skipped a paragraph and things just didn't gel. I feel like the kissing is a little gratuitous and mechanical. I know that I skipped those lines because I'm too worried about when I should kiss and when I shouldn't. It's awkward to say the least.

Scene 5 and 6 were fine and we were able to polish 7 up pretty well. We cleaned up the shirt bit. Now Mjurk never gets to me, he just says his line as we both exit. There

were some other blocking corrections with some of the other actors that were made, and all in all, the scene went pretty smooth. There is always a big difference when actors know their lines.

Wednesday 10/27/04: Prologue, 3, 13, 20, and 21

A substance that the set designer calls “pigs poop” meant to add texture to the set was spattered in a few places on the stage. Unfortunately the substance was still wet. So much so that one of our cast members slipped and fell because of it. Luckily, he was not seriously hurt, but again I fear it may only be a matter of time.

The prologue was much sharper today. It’s all in the attitude I find. The director gave us a very vivid image to work off of. The prologue should be delivered as if we were going to a fight, and the more we snarl, bite, and rip the more powerful and stronger it is. I’m still not quite sure on the concept of the prologue, but I feel much more confident that it will impress the audience – and if it makes them think – then it will help to give homage to Brecht.

Scene 3 was the best we’ve ever done. Everyone was engaged in the scene and on top of his or her cues. The Orge is still a work in progress. It helps that I am completely drunk, but I need to practice much more. The director gave me a really good note to make sure I drop the drunkenness when I address the audience, especially with “Could you feel it... Beast into the sun!” In order for the alienation to really work, that moment must come out of the blue and take the audience completely by surprise. If I’m still piss drunk, it’s not enough of a shock.

Scene 13 went much better tonight as well. I made a new choice to move to the beggar sooner and play a little game with him and the bottle. I made the choice so I didn't have to cover so much ground to cross to Ekart. The director liked the choice because it added more to the relationship between the beggar and Ekart. I like it better because Baal needs to slowly lose in this scene, versus lose from the very beginning. Beforehand, the beggar seemed to have the upper hand from the very beginning. This didn't give me as much of a journey in the scene – and for my money, Baal needs to slowly lose control in this scene.

Scene 20 is fine.

Scene 21 is getting better too. We made what I think was a very good choice which was to cut The Man's last line, "A quarter past eleven." Instead The Man just leaves. I always hated the way we played that scene before because The Man was still in the room after he answered me. It's obvious that I am asking him questions to keep him in the room, and if he were not completely gone, I would think I would keep asking him questions. This way, I don't have that problem. We also changed the line from, "you still got knees," to "you still got feet." Knees seem to be a reference to Baal crawling, and I'm not crawling so it makes more sense with feet.

Thursday 10/28/04: Transition Rehearsal

We Ran and set all our transitions tonight. It was slightly tedious, but I believe well worth it in the long run. It will make our cue-cue and our run rehearsals next week flow much smoother.

Monday 11/1/04: Run Through

After a three-day rest from any kind of rehearsal, my expectations for a quality run-through tonight were pretty low. I was very surprised however to see how good a shape we were in. Energy was up, there were very few mistakes, and we cut about seven to ten minutes off of our last run. The muddiest part of the night was the transitions. This can be expected as we haven't had the material, nor rehearsed those changes nearly as much as the rest of the play.

My main goal for the evening was to keep the energy up and moving the best I can. I tend to get lethargic in my state of drunkenness sometimes and I wanted to shy away from that. My "drunken Baal" and my "sick Baal" have to be clearly distinguishable, otherwise the audience won't buy that I'm dying. It gives me more hills and valleys too if I can up the energy, even when I'm drunk.

I also wanted to work more on my Gestus - The animal in Baal. I felt it pretty well in scene 18 and scene 4iii, but those are both very violent moments where showing that gestus is easier. I want to find a few more places to plug the animal into my movements that aren't so obvious. I think my alienation is, for the most part, pretty good. It's not too much, in fact, I could use a couple more places in act two to break to the audience and alienate them.

Tuesday 11/2/04: Run through

We cut four minutes off the show, which was very good. The pace is getting much sharper. Transitions went rather smoothly as well. I'm of course, still finding things. It's especially fun to iron out the details – such as my evolution of sickness. I'm

finding more and more places to add, even the subtlest indications that my health is fading. It means also that in Act one, I have to have even more life, to make the fall more significant.

My animal Gestus is another big item on the list. I've added a new moment in scene 12 when I'm talking to Sophie. I'm also trying to give a literal license for Ekart to say the line, "You behave like an animal." I'm also continuing to try to iron out my drunkenness. Each scene must stand on its own.

The most important thing is to not get set in anything. We can't settle or get bored. In order to prevent that I must concentrate on listening – always reacting to what I'm given by others on stage. As soon as we stop listening, the play will sound like a group of lines, instead of words that these characters have never said before.

Wednesday 11/3/04: Run through

Act two much tighter tonight – at least in comparison to act one. Especially slow was Scene three. It seemed as though the truck drivers fell asleep tonight. Cues were all but nonexistent and there was more energy in most retirement homes than in that scene today. I'm sure it will be better tomorrow.

I was most excited today about a new discovery I found. For a long time now I've wrestled with deciding whether Baal was a typical Brechtian character (in the sense of never changing; never having the Aristotelian recognition), or if he in fact did change, if he did recognize his tragic flaw. Then it hit me: I was limiting my search for that one all encompassing Brechtian element through the lines in the script. Why did I need the

playwright's words to do it? The answer was, I didn't. Helen Weisel made her alienation choices in *Mother Courage*, not through her words, but through her *actions*.

And the place where it would cement the Brechtian essence I found in my dying words. In scene 21, when I'm dying, I had always been playing my last moment as if I actually prayed to God and asked forgiveness. But I was missing the golden opportunity to pay the ultimate tribute to Brecht and embody the Epic Theater with the perfect cap to Baal's life. Instead of actually praying to God, come to the tip of the iceberg of praying and then in a dying act of defiance, shoot God the bird. This, to me helps to sum up *what* Baal is, which is most important in Epic acting. He is self absorbed, self indulgent, uncaring beast that perhaps typifies every other human being on the planet. Given every chance by God to make a change, and spits every chance back in Gods face. He is the prodigal son, who never returns.

Thursday 11/4/04: Run through

Boy, are we in need of a night off. Lines were dropped, cues were slow, and none of us were in the scene. It was a very poor rehearsal. The foundation is there though, so we should be in good shape after tech does their stuff tomorrow. Saturday and Sunday will be the difference maker.

Saturday 11/6/04: Cue-to-Cue

Today went much better than I ever expected. In fact we were given the night off because of the thorough and expeditious effort. We had a good foundation to begin with, and the fact that we had live music for the last week, it was mostly the light cues we

focused on. The lights were nice. Most striking was the Moment Ekart first appears from the trap. The light helps him shoot from the ground like a body shooting from the grave.

It was also the first time we were in full costume. The change between scene 3 and 4i will be quite fast. The costume designer suggested I wear briefs under the underwear he gave me, in order to keep this production's rating held to R. It was hard to make many new discoveries because of the start and stop nature of a cue to cue; hopefully tomorrow (1st dress rehearsal) will bring about even more ideas.

Sunday 11/7/04: Dress Rehearsal

Before we began, the director told us that he was cutting the lamp out of scene 18. Why he waited until first dress to make this decision I don't know, I guess it finally hit him that the lamp was not going to be able to be manipulated by the actors. My costumes were dirtied, meaning they were purposefully made to look dirty and worn. I much prefer the way they look now, as opposed to the spotless white from before.

Of course I knew it would happen, and I should be grateful that it was not that bad, but the set got me today. Before the run started I was picking up tire pieces that had wire sticking out from them when I backed into some of the copper tubing and cut my side. The cut was about four inches long, not that deep, but enough to bleed for about ten minutes and make a scar for the run of the show. Hopefully this will be the worst injury that anyone in the cast will suffer.

Of course, it being a Sunday, not everyone in the cast was on top of their game. The run was flat. The tech side was pretty good; given it was the first full run with tech. It should be even sharper tomorrow.

Monday 11/8/04: Final Dress

Well, it is said a bad final dress, good opening night. Well, this was certainly not the worst final dress I've been in, but hopefully tomorrow will run much smoother. There were some cue and tech problems. Not enough to make me worry, but there was a weirdness about tonight. I think it's that the actors, more than anything are ready for an audience. We are ready for some kind of feedback other than the directors. It's not going to get any better at this point.

I did, however, find something new that I was excited about. I took the "You can tell Johannes I took you home last night," at the end of scene 4i, and changed it to "You can tell Johann-ASS." It's a small change, seemingly insignificant, but I think the more humor the better, and it helps me a greater value to the line. Hopefully, even in performances, we can continue to find small things like this - anything to help the spontaneity of the moment.

Tuesday 11/9/04: Opening night

The audience was great tonight. It helps tremendously when friends and family are there to support you. There were, as I suspected places where there would be laughter where we didn't expect it. The reaction to the kiss was especially surprising. In fact, I don't know what to make of it. What does it say about our culture when there is more of

an uproar when two men kiss than when Baal tells Sophie to go bury her child? Maybe we have more in common with Baal than we like to think.

4iii went really well tonight. I should say it was received well. I thought it would put the audience to sleep, but they seemed really engaged, and the scene had a nice payoff.

We had a few leave at intermission, which although, not too surprising, is still very disappointing. I hope that it is not a pattern that will continue.

Wednesday 11/10/04: Performance two

They hated it. In every place we heard laughter and reaction last night we heard crickets chirping tonight. At least a dozen audience members left at intermission.

What's ironic is that it was a great show for the performers. It was our best run. The energy was great, we listened well, but I fear that Tuesday night will be the exception. I fear that most of our audiences will typify that of tonight.

Thursday 11/11/04: Performance three

The Audience was better tonight, but still not that of Tuesday. However, the cast as a whole was not on their best game. I certainly felt flat and lacking in energy. I could feel myself constantly having to re focus and try to get back on track.

Friday 11/12/04: Performance four

I literally fell flat on my face tonight. This was the first time I was thankful we had a ton of shredded tire on the stage; it prevented me from getting hurt. The show was

much better tonight. Still not the caliber as opening night – but better than the last two nights. We lost more people at intermission; it's becoming a theme. Of course, there have been a few that haven't even waited until intermission, which I feel demonstrates a serious deficiency in theater etiquette.

Saturday 11/13/04: Performance five

The Audience was better tonight. There were some more familiar faces so that helped. I must admit however that, as a whole, the response was less than pleasing. Most people I have contact with left the theater confused and unsatisfied. The biggest complaint I have heard was that they don't understand it. I can't blame them when the only note the director gave in the program was the beggar's line in scene 13 "If one understands a story, it's just that it's been told badly." Unfortunately this explanation of the play is just not holding up for our audiences. Perhaps if there were a little effort to give an explanation of what the audience was going to see, they would have made more of a connection to the work – and subsequently learned something.

Then I realized that: I think that I am the *only* student (cast or crew) involved in this production who is going to walk away from this experience having learned anything. I don't believe anyone will understand alienation, gestus (especially in terms of acting style) or anything else Brecht was trying to do with his epic theater. In my opinion, this is tragic because this is a man who accomplished more than Shakespeare. Not only was Brecht a prolific writer, director, composer, teacher, theater owner, and company leader, he was a theatrical revolutionary. He pioneered a system of theater never imagined before and one that still echoes today in everything from *The Simpsons*, to *Fight Club*, to

the work of Anna Deavere Smith, to the newest form of drama to hit the stage, Hip-Hop Theater.

But I fear that our audience is not even remotely aware of this. I fear that they just got that Brecht is “weird” – which, I argue, is the last thing they should be walking away with. There is one sentence in the show’s program that mentions alienation effect and epic theater, but the terms are left *undefined*, and as such remain a complete mystery to any average audience member. The most disappointing aspect is that this is an academic setting, where learning should be paramount. I firmly believe that we failed with this production because we failed to teach. Our audience didn’t learn anything, which was priority number one for Brecht.

Sunday 11/14/04: Final show

The audience was solid and it was a good show to close out on. However, waiting in the wings before the show, I couldn’t help but I think about the prologue I was about to perform. I believe the Prologue and Epilogue were very poorly calculated. The prologue was designed in some kind of phony militaristic manner and became alienated (in a bad way) from the rest of the production. I started to laugh as I thought about our audience watching us stomp our feet, snap our fingers, and sound like stuttering sheep (Ba, Ba, Ba), all while trying to understand what the story they were going to see was about. It is so far out in left field from the rest of the play, that I believe it throws our audience out of whack for at least half of the first act. This I believe is a very difficult obstacle for the other actors and myself to overcome, and I fear may have contributed to our lack luster response to the production.

And the fact that there even is an Epilogue to begin with bothers me. Why? Because *Brecht didn't write one*. Our conclusion is the revival of an already problematic prologue, making the audience even more ready to get in their cars and go home (which unfortunately has become a theme with this show.) Brecht's conclusion was far simpler and in my opinion, thought provoking: the sound of wind, which I believe to be the perfect ironic ending to a story about an enormous man so hungry for life that it consumed him. Baal was full of sound and fury, but signified nothing. However, rather than use Brecht's idea, the audience is left with, for lack of a better term, a closing number, a grand send off of Baal to the afterworld, which although perhaps (a big perhaps) aesthetically pleasing to the masses, I argue is utterly antithetical to the end that Brecht had designed.

PROJECT EVALUATION:

The following is an attempt to summarize what I learned about my creative process throughout the course of this project. It contains obstacles I had to battle, failures that I made, breakthroughs that I achieved, and how I can grow and hone my craft for future artistic endeavors.

...

I am pleased to note that I do believe I had many successes in this project. First of all, I had the opportunity to practice being the hero of a play and being the driving force behind the plot. As such, I think I will have greater success in future plays because I have an enhanced perspective on how the hero, as well as the supporting characters, can augment their influence on the dramatic action of a play to help convey a clearer and more insightful story. Whether I play Henry V, or “the third spear carrier on the right”, I believe I will have a keener outlook on how to provide focus and gravity to any play.

I was also able to utilize my instrument (body and voice) in a way that many other roles would have not enabled me to. I was free to explore much more physically and vocally in this project than I ever would in a play by Mamet, or Ibsen or Pinter. My body was not restricted or limited, but rather begged to symbolize the animal that exists in all mankind. By the same token I was also challenged to optimize the full use of my body and voice through music, gestus, poetry, and by the sheer magnitude of the piece itself. As a result I believe I will have better control and manipulation of my instrument for any projects to come.

I also believe that there was a large success for me as an artist to attempt a theater project so bold and so utterly noncommercial. The world of theater is for lack of a better

term, wishy-washy, constantly spring-boarding from the classical, to the novel, to the commercial, and everywhere in between. I found it very helpful to me as an actor to dive into a piece that really took a lot of effort for an American audience to find value in. *Baal* is not an easy play to comprehend, nor is it an easy play to enjoy. It has no real American entertainment values (in the sense of slapstick humor, or big budget special effects). It is not a linear, plot driven, climatic story, nor is there any romantic outlook or sentimental ideals of the power of love or hope, all of which American audiences thrive upon. This made our task of producing this show so much more difficult. And no matter the result, I am very proud we attempted something so far out of the scope of safety and normalcy. We pushed an envelope, and as an artist, I believe that is one of my duties. I will forever use this production as a reminder of that duty and apply it as often as I can in my art.

I am certain I could probably list a few more examples of the successes I achieved in this project. However, as a student of this art and craft, concentrating on those victories doesn't provide me the same opportunity for growth as does the listing and examination of my *failures* in this project. At this point in my life and career my process hinges on what I can *improve* upon so I can learn to make myself better. As such, there were several lessons I learned through *not* achieving success.

The first of which, and perhaps the most important lesson I walked away with, was that I was reminded that the Theatre is a collaborative art form and unless you trust and communicate with the artists around you, the chances of success are very slim. The communication between the director and myself was, in all honesty, not the best that I have ever experienced, and I believed it showed in the final product. But I believe the

fault lies with both parties. I needed to ask more questions and clue the director in on the goals of my process (i.e. the use of *gestus* and alienation). I let personal conflicts cloud my artistic discernment and as a result, I learned that for future projects, communication is paramount.

One of the primary goals in this project that I wanted to succeed at was in blending Brecht and Meisner into one cohesive approach. I wanted to splice both techniques into my rehearsal process and my subsequent performance. My overall victory in achieving this challenge was average at best. Some might argue that this idea was destined to fail; however, I do not believe so. I will admit it was compounded with the fact that I think I was the only one in the production using this acting approach. Most importantly, the director and I were not on the same page, which again, was a mistake on both our parts. I should have gone to the director from the very beginning and asked him to specifically watch for my choices, to see if I was blending the two methodologies together, and subsequently getting advice on how I might mold better choices.

I tried to do it on my own, and because of that, I did a great disservice to my performance. I often felt my use of *gestus* would weave in and out, and consequently muddy up what I was trying to accomplish. In turn, when I concentrated too hard on using *gestus*, I would find myself not listening to other actors, not working within the realm of the relationship circumstances that were established and many times losing focus and forgetting lines. Many scenes were awkward for me, and never really took the proper shape. I would often lose my concentration and remained unable to commit to my role. Perhaps, I tried to do too much. For many actors, sometimes we push harder when we should pull back. But I know that for at least half of the play my performance lacked

focus and purpose because I was unable to properly execute the fusion of those two acting methods. And I learned that if I ever try to accomplish such an enormous task, I should make others aware, namely the director, of what kind of challenges I am imposing on myself.

Another roadblock I found in my creative pathway was that neither I, nor any other cast member was ever given a definition or concept statement for the production. I didn't know what our production was theatrically and thematically trying to accomplish via this play. In some works, specifically in the contemporary realistic realm of theater, a play can possibly be so clear-cut that a concept statement (which I am defining basically as the center enigmatic aspect of the human condition being scrutinized) might be unnecessary. However, I feel this show was desperate for one, if for no other reason than the fact that we had so many young and inexperienced actors working on such an abstract and difficult to understand dramatic piece. Unfortunately, the only statement that the audience or we the cast were ever provided with was "If one understands a story it's just that it's been told badly." This vague and in my opinion, dramatically weak proclamation was left to serve as our show's backbone, our spine that would hold us up. I know it did not help me and I believe it did not prove sufficient for the remainder of the cast, and I would argue that it only contributed in creating an insubstantial and unfocused production.

It was only after weeks of contemplation and reflection on the production that I later recognized the poetic irony in the use of the above quote. That very statement - "If one understands a story it's just that it's been told badly" in fact, is the embodiment of Brecht's entire dramatic theory. Brecht insisted on making his audiences think – and as

such refused to hand audiences any easy messages. He abolished the notion of wrapping his plays in nice neat little bows and then sending the audience away with warm and cozy feelings. To Brecht, that would be an example of stories told badly. Brecht felt that it was only when an audience did not completely understand everything in a story (more specifically - why the characters made the decisions they made) that then they would be forced to think about what they did not understand and subsequently formulate opinions and ideas, and in doing so become more socially responsible human beings.

Regardless however of my discovery, I still believe that our audience (comprised chiefly of uninformed college students) was given a solitary and confusing quote which did not result in any substantial intellectual process of examination and reflection. There was no explanation of the quote. Frankly, not even an ounce of academic assistance was provided, and as a result, we did exactly what we apparently set out to do, present a story that no one understood.

In this assessment of what I believe to be a significant mistake (by myself in not seeking clarification concerning the concept) I learned to never assume that an audience would care about a work of art or the message that an artist is trying to convey. I now believe that an artist must always *include* his/her audience in the creation of the work and modify the art in order to maximize the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual connection between the art and the audience. In short, an artist must know his/her audience. And had I the chance to do this project over again I would have reexamined my choices and geared them to an audience made up of a majority of the young, and theatrically inexperienced (college students).

Another problem I faced, perhaps most noticeable to the common spectator, was my utterly poor guitar playing skill. I dreaded having to pick up that guitar each performance because I knew something would go wrong. I was taught my first chord in early September and even after two months of practice I was still never comfortable with playing, and it showed. Baal should have been as good of a guitar player as he was a poet. It is an extension of the beauty in Baal's art. His guitar playing should not correlate to the vile and grotesque side of him. Rather, it should juxtapose the ugliness, and represent the beauty that at times exudes from Baal. I performed a great disfavor to my character's credibility by not displaying a higher musical proficiency. I should have begun working on the guitar the moment I knew I would have to play it, which was at least six months before opening night.

Another disappointing result in my creation of Baal was a serious lack of character levels. I was able to capture the drunk, the womanizer, and the poet aspects to Baal passing well, but there were many levels to Baal that I never really brought to the forefront. More specifically, I was unable to consistently present the philosopher, the victim, the animal, the guilty man, the murderer, the nature lover, the friend, and the dreamer: all of which were dimensions to Baal's character present in the text. Consequently, my ability to command the audience's attention was often weak and ineffective. An actor playing Baal, much like Hamlet, Oedipus, or Cyrano, must be able to formulate an immensely complex human. I did not gain a sufficient level of complexity, and therefore, my portrayal of Baal was mediocre and second-rate.

I would argue however, that I could have been better aided by the script, or perhaps the scaled down version that we performed. The director cut seven scenes from

the Peter Tegel translation that we used, and in my opinion, the cutting we performed contained a few holes that significantly damaged my chances of success in achieving certain dimensions in Baal. The runtime of the show was only about an hour and fifty minutes, which is not terribly long for a full-length play. I think if we would have added just three more *key* scenes I think that we could have presented a stronger arc for my character and to the story.

The first scene that was cut that I could have used was Brecht's Scene 4ii: Baal's Basement – noon. Brecht splices this scene in between the time when Johanna is kicked out of Baal's bed (4i), and when Baal makes the decision to abandon his cave and go hunt down a woman (4iii). In Brecht's 4ii, two young sisters come to Baal's habitation to make love to him, and it is clear in the text that this is not the first time they have sought him out. However, before any sexual act can take place, one of the women reveals to Baal that Johanna threw herself into the river. Baal begs more information about the suicide before telling them both to leave, "I'm too lazy today. You can go home."

In our production's script, this scene was cut and the lines the sisters have telling of Johanna's death are given to *Johannes* at the top of Scene 4iii. However, *none* of Baal's questions to their story of Johanna's death are included. And although the much-needed information concerning Johanna's death is still given to the audience, there is virtually no dimension of *guilt* for Baal. With the addition of 4ii, and just those few lines that Baal has, "Into the river? Does anyone know why? Didn't she go home in the morning?" I could have added a brief but vital moment of guilt and remorse that I believe would have spoken volumes for the rest of the play.

I would definitely argue that it would have made Scene 12: Country Road. Willows (almost all of which is devoted to Baal anguishing over the memory of Johanna) much clearer to the story and to my character's journey. Furthermore, adding scene 4ii provides the tiniest glimpse of hope that Baal will learn from his mistakes and change his ways. He doesn't of course, but the *possibility* must always be there. Otherwise, there is no conflict and drama *is* conflict. What was missing from this show and my character was this specific Brechtian moment when a character struggles to do the right thing, but ultimately does not, leaving the audience with the task of thinking and examining *why* Baal is what he is.

Another short, but very important scene that was dismissed in our cutting was Scene 16: Young Hazel Shrubs. In this scene Baal lures Ekart's young redheaded lover to a grove in the forest. Out of jealousy, he assaults her and drags her off into the wood, which I believe is to her death. This scene, although a page in length, is vital to Baal's journey because it adds dimensions to his character found nowhere else in the script. The only murder (Ekart's) in the cut script we performed was out of passion and rage – it was not premeditated. But this scene shows Baal in his most beastlike state, a predator, not merely metaphorically seeking out his prey, but literally hunting down and killing this woman. He is vicious and unrelenting, taking psychotic pleasure in the murder, "Is that your throat? Do you know how they put down pigeons, or wild ducks in the wood?"

In my opinion this is a level to Baal's psyche that should not have been ignored and would have greatly helped me in my process of creation, not only in showing Baal's brutish and bestial nature, but also in providing more credibility to the love that he has for Ekart. It helps validate Baal's murder of Ekart later in the story. It is only after Baal has

done everything he can to win Ekart's love (including premeditated murder of a rival) that he can truly justify taking Ekart's life. Not only do I believe that the addition of this scene would have better facilitated my individual character arc, but it is a scene full of dark and dangerous conflict, which I believe would have greatly helped connect our audience to the story. I really didn't have the opportunity to show this side of Baal anywhere else in the script, hence why I think it was a loss to my creation of this role.

I consider the cut most damaging to my portrayal of Baal's journey however, to be the deleting of Brecht's Scene 10: Trees in the Evening. It is not only one of the most entertaining scenes in the play (in my opinion, an element seriously lacking in this production) but it embodies a significant weight to Baal's journey. Baal, in one breath, sums up the very essence of this play when he tells the corpse of Teddy (a lumberjack) that, "You were just the victim of your own habits." I would argue that there is no more vital utterance that Baal makes. Why? Because it sums up Baal's very life. Time after time, *habit* is the very thing that stands in Baal's way from achieving "recognition". It is the tragic flaw that plagues all of Brecht's major characters, from Mother Courage, to Shen Te, to Arturo Uri. Baal wanted to change, he needed to change, but habit completely enabled him from making change. I believe that the audience needed to hear Baal say those words; I needed to say those words in order to show how my character would never grow into his potential. Which should hopefully strike fear and intrigue into the minds of our spectators in watching someone like Baal (capable of seeing and achieving so much beauty) who not only destroys his life, but also destroys the lives of everyone around him. This is what the audience needed to learn and apply to their own lives, and it was never even heard.

It is my belief that the addition of these scenes to the script would have not only aided in telling a clearer story and helping the development of my character, but it would have only added about twenty minutes to the show (which I argue would have been well worth the time for our audience). The lesson I learned here is to never let the fear of time (especially a few minutes) become such a huge factor that it causes one to stifle his/her art, sacrificing meaning and clarity, which I propose prevents an audiences' connection to the art. Would it really have burdened our audience so much so that they would have got up and left the theater if we had added those twenty minutes? I do not believe so. I hypothesize, albeit, months later, that by not telling a clearer story, we put a *greater* burden on our audience by forcing them to make justified conclusions and insights on what I am deeming as an incomplete dramatic presentation. In short, I think we robbed our spectators of their chance to have full involvement in the art form itself. And I believe, as a theater artist, I will grow from this experience better suited to properly serve my audience and their needs by making their time, short or long, well spent.

...

I realize that some will read this evaluation and perhaps estimate that this project was a failure. Well, to put it very candidly, it was. However, it is my whole-hearted belief that the recognition of this failure is by no stretch of the imagination something to fear or admonish. In all honestly, I am thrilled that I consider this endeavor as such a huge disappointment. In fact, it would *frighten* me if I thought a twenty-five year old actor could pull off this complex and arduous role successfully. I believe the cards (style, level of experience, money, etc.) were stacked so far against the production and myself

that I am amazed we got as far as we did. I also believe that therein stands a mystery for all theater artists and myself. What is success? What do we use to measure it?

For my own progression as an artist I simplify the question. Could I have done better? The answer is an overwhelming, yes. I must face the fact that according to the standards that I, as an artist, hold to be good and true that I did not live up to my end of the creative bargain. I did not satisfactorily blend the theories of Meisner and Brecht. I did not create a *multi*-dimensional character that embodied the juxtaposition of all the beauty and decay in humanity. I did not sufficiently learn to play the guitar. I did not practice adequate communication techniques with my fellow artists. I did not properly use *gestus* and alienation, nor did I achieve any real dialectical impact upon my audience. And if anyone were to postulate that I did in fact accomplish these tasks then I would vehemently argue that their standards of measurement are too low.

These were all goals that I had from the very beginning that I believe never fully came to fruition. And though there may be several *reasons* why I failed in these categories, I refuse to accept any *excuses*. Did I truly expose myself to the work? No. Did I leave everything I had on the stage every night (rehearsals and performances)? No. Did I work hard enough? No. Did I make mistakes? Yes. Fine. But I must not fear those mistakes; I must *embrace* them, learn from them, and try not to make the same ones in future roles. Therein lies my greatest success in this project, a greater self-awareness of where I am in my ability and ways I can improve my acting skill.

The documentation of my acting process that this Thesis has provided me with has been a very useful guide in helping me to gauge where I am in my craft. And I have found one quote to serve as the cornerstone in my quest for improvement, and that is

from Derek Jeter of the New York Yankees replying to a reporter, “Unless you are batting a thousand with no errors, you have something to work on.” I have not only used this idea as the foundation to the approach of my craft, but to my daily life as well. The truth is, this production could have been a complete critical success and I could have met every single one of my goals, and I know that I still would have made mistakes, and subsequently, would still have lessons to learn. This philosophy may sound overly perfectionist to some, but I believe “you are only as good as you think you can be.” And I feel if one truly tries for perfection, and only gets half way, .500 isn’t that bad. Next time, I’ll try harder.

WORKS CITED/CONSULTED:

- Bail, Henry and Martin, Carol. *Brecht Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Ball, David. *Backwards & Forwards*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983.
- Brecht, Bertolt and Bentley, Eric (ed.) *Baal, A Man's a Man, & The Elephant Calf: Three Plays by Bertolt Brecht*. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964.
- and Willett, John (ed.). *Bertolt Brecht Journals*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- . *Brecht on Theatre; The Development of an Aesthetic*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964.
- Bruder, Melissa. *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*. New York: Random House, 1986.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero's Journey: The World of Joseph Campbell*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.
- Ferran, Peter W. "The Threepenny Songs: Cabaret and the Lyrical Gestus." *Theater*: Volume 3, Issue 3 2000 5-21.
- Greenwald, Schultz, Pomo. *The Longman Anthology of Drama and Theater*. New York: Addison-Wesley, 2001.
- Hagan, Uta. *Respect for Acting*. New York: Macmillan, 1973.
- Harrop, John and Epstein, Sabin. *Acting with Style*. London: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.
- Hayman, Ronald. *Brecht: The Plays*. London: Heinemann, 1984.
- Jacobus, Lees A. *The Bedford Introduction to Drama*, fifth ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005.
- Meisner, Sanford and Pollack, Sydney. *Sanford Meisner on Acting*. New York: Random House, 1987.
- Speirs, Ronald. *Brecht's Early Plays*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1982.
- Thomson, Peter. *Brecht: Mother Courage and Her Children*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Weideli, Walter. *The Art of Bertolt Brecht*. New York: New York University Press, 1963.

APPENDIX: SCORED SCRIPT

BAAL ACT I

Prologue

¹Baal grew up within the whiteness of the womb
With the sky already large and pale and calm
Naked, young, endlessly marvelous
As Baal loved it when he came to us.

And that sky remained with him through joy and care
Even when Baal slept, blissful and unaware.
Nights meant violet sky and drunken Baal
Dawns, Baal good, sky apricottish-pale.

So through hospital, cathedral, bar
Baal trots coolly on, and learns to let them go.
When Baal's tried, boys, Baal will not fall far:
Baal will drag his whole sky down below.

²Where the sinners heard in shame together
Baal lies naked, soaking up the calm.
Just the sky, but sky to last for *ever*
Hides his nakedness with its strong arm.

³And that lusty girl, the world, who laughs when yielding
To the man who'll stand the pressure of her thighs
Gives him instants of a sweet ecstatic feeling.
Baal survives it; he just looks and sees.

Objective for Play:

To find the land where life is best.

Objective for Prologue:

To snatch the audience from their seats.

Actions:

1. To shock
2. To snarl
3. To sicken

¹And when Baal sees corpses all around
Then a double pleasure comes to him.
Lot's of space says Baal; they're not enough to count.
Lots of space inside this woman's womb.

Once a woman, Baal says, gives her all
She'll have nothing more, so let her go!
Other men would represent no risk at all.
Even Baal is scared of babies, though.

²Vice, says Baal is bound to help a bit
And so are the men who practice it.
Vices leave their mark on all they touch.
Stick to two, for one will be too much.

Slackness, softness – that's what you should shun.
Nothing's tougher than pursuing fun.
Powerful limbs are needed, and experience too
Swollen bellies may discourage you.

³Baal watches the vultures in the star-shot sky
Hovering patiently to see when Baal will die.
Sometimes Baal shams dead. The vultures swoop.
Baal, without a word, will dine on vulture soup.

⁴Under mournful stars in our sad vale of trouble
Munching, Baal can graze broad pastures down to stubble.
When they're cropped, into the forest deep
Baal trots, singing, to enjoy his sleep.

⁵And when Baal's dragged down to be the dark womb's prize

Actions:

1. To jolt
2. To scare
3. To mesmerize
4. To quake
5. To cast off

What's the world to Baal? Baal has been fed.
Sky enough still lurks behind Baal's eyes
To make just enough sky when he's dead.

¹Baal decayed within the darkness of the womb
With the sky once more as large and pale and calm
Naked, young, endlessly marvelous
As Baal loved it when he came to us.

Scene 1: A Dining Room

MECH: Would you like some wine mister Baal? ¹Do you like crab? That's a dead eel.²

PILLER: I'm very glad that the immortal poems of Mr. Baal, which I had the honour of reading to you, have earned your approval. You must publish your poetry. Mr. Mech pays like a real patron of the arts. You'll be able to leave basement.³

EMILIE: You live in a basement.

BAAL: ⁴Klauckestrasse.

MECH: I'm really too fat for poetry. But you have the same shaped head as a man in the Malayan Archipelago, who used to have himself driven to work with a whip. ⁵If he wasn't grinding his teeth he couldn't work. ⁶

PSCHIERER: Ladies and Gentlemen. I admit it frankly: I was

Actions:

1. To decay

Objective for Scene 1:

To conquer my prey (Emilie).

Actions:

1. To drain
2. To disgust
3. To dismiss
4. To entice
5. To recompose
6. To let slide

shattered to find a man like him in such modest circumstances. As you know I discovered our dear poet in my garage, a simple mechanic. I have no hesitation in calling it a disgrace to our city that personalities of his caliber should be allowed to work for a daily wage. May I congratulate you, Mr. Mech! Your salon will be famous as the cradle of this genius's, yes genius's, worldwide reputation. Your health, Mr. Baal!¹

Actions:

1. To reject
2. To mock
3. To ignore
4. To eye
5. To redirect

PILLER: I shall write an essay about you. Have you any manuscripts? I have the backing of the press.²

A YOUNG MAN: How, my friend, do you get that accursed naïve effect. It's positively Homeric. I consider Homer one, or rather one of several, highly civilized adapters with a penetrating delight in the naiveté of the original folk sagas.³

A YOUNG LADY: ⁴You remind me more of Walt Whitman. But you're more significant. That's what I think.

ANOTHER MAN: I'd say he had something rather more Verhaeren.

PILLER: Verlaine! Verlaine! Even in Physiognomy. Don't forget our Lombroso.

BAAL: ⁵Some more of the eel, please.

THE YOUNG LADY: But you have the advantage of greater indecency.

JOHANNES: Mr. Baal sings his songs to the truck drivers. In a café down by the river. ¹

THE YOUNG MAN: Good God, none of those poets are even in the same category. My friend, you're streets ahead of any living poet. ²

THE OTHER MAN: At any rate he's promising.

BAAL: ³Some more wine please.

THE YOUNG MAN: I consider you a precursor of the great Messiah of European literature whom we can undoubtedly expect within the very near future.

THE YOUNG LADY: Dear poet, ladies, and gentlemen. ⁴
Permit me to read you a poem from the periodical 'Revolution', which will also be of interest to you. (*She reads.*)

⁵The poet shuns shining harmonies.

He blows trombones, shrilly whips the drum.

⁶He incites the people with chopped sentences.

The new world

Exterminating the world of pain,

Island of rapturous humanity.

Speeches. Manifestos.

⁷Songs from grandstands.

Let there be preached the new,

The holy state, inoculated into the blood of the people,

Blood of their blood.

Actions:

1. To thank
2. To search
3. To command
4. To indulge
5. To hone in (on Emilie)
6. To charm
7. To make wet

¹Paridise sets in.

- Let us spread a stormy climate!
Learn! Prepare! Practice!

(*Applause.*)²

Actions:

1. To orgasm
2. To dare (Emilie)
3. To allow

THE YOUNG LADY: Permit me! I shall turn to another
poem in the same issue. (*She reads*)³

Sun had made him shrivel
And wind had blown him dry.
By every tree rejected
He simply fell away.

Only a single rowan
With berries on every limb,
Red as flaming tongues, would
Receive and shelter him.

So there he hung suspended,
His feet lay on the grass.
The blood-red sunset splashed him
As through his ribs it passed.

It moved across the landscape
And struck all the olive groves.
God in his cloud-white raiment
Was manifest above.

Within the flowering forest
There sang a thousand snakes

While necks of purest silver
With slender murmurs shook.

And they were seized with trembling
All over that leafy domain
Obeying the hands of their Father
So light in their delicate veins.

*(Applause.)*¹

CRIES OF: Brilliant! Extreme but in good taste. Simply heavenly.

THE YOUNG LADY: In my opinion it comes closest to the Baalian conception of the world.²

MECH: You should travel! The Abyssinian mountains. That's something for you.

BAAL: ³They won't come to me, though.

PILLER: Why? With your zest for life! Your poems had an enormous effect on me.

BAAL: ⁴The truck-drivers pay if they like them.

MECH: I'll publish your poems. I'll let the cinnamon logs float away, or do both.

EMILIE: You shouldn't drink so much.

Actions:

1. To scoff
2. To laugh at
3. To deny
4. To better

BAAL: ¹I haven't got any shirts. ²I could use some white shirts.

MECH: You're not interested in the publishing deal?

BAAL: ³But they'd have to be soft.

PILLER: Oh, and what can I do for you? ⁴

EMILIE: You write such wonderful poems, Mr. Baal. So sensitive. ⁵

BAAL: ⁶Won't you play something on the recorder?

MECH: I like eating to the recorder.

EMILIE: Please don't drink so much, Mr. Baal.

BAAL: ⁸Do you have forests of cinnamon floating for you, Mech? ⁹Butchered forests?

EMILIE: You can drink as much as you like. I was only asking a favour. ¹⁰

PILLER: Even your drinking shows promise.

BAAL: ¹¹Play higher up! ¹²You've got lovely arms.

PILLER: Apparently you don't care for the music itself.

BAAL: ¹³I can't hear the music. ¹⁴You're talking too much.

Actions:

1. To Target (Emilie)
2. To flirt
3. To seduce
4. To disregard
5. To thank
6. To tease
7. To concede
8. To lash at
9. To chop
10. To zoom in
11. To demand
12. To tantalize
13. To correct
14. To skewer

PILLER: You're a queer fish, Baal. I gather you don't want to get published.

BAAL: ¹Don't you trade in animals too, Mech?

MECH: Do you object?

BAAL: ²What's my poetry to you?

MECH: I wanted to do you a favor. Couldn't you be peeling some more apples, Emilie?

PILLER: He's afraid of being sucked dry. Haven't you found a use for me yet?

BAAL: ³Do you always wear wide sleeves, Emilie? ⁴

PILLER: But now you really must stop drinking.

PSCHIERER: Perhaps you ought to go easy on the alcohol.
Full many a genius –

MECH: Would you like to have a bath? Shall I have a bed made up for you? Have you forgotten anything?

PILLER: Your shirts are floating away, Baal. Your poetry has floated off already.

BAAL: ⁵I'm against monopolies. ⁶Go to bed, Mech.

MECH: I delight in all the animals on God's earth, but this is

Actions:

1. To bait
2. To barter
3. To fondle (Emilie)
4. To spell bind (Emilie)
5. To mock
6. To spit on

one animal you can't do business with. Come, Emilie!
Shall we go, ladies and gentlemen? ¹

CRIES OF: (*As they exit*) Sir! Astounding! That's the...!

PSCHIERER: I am shattered, Mr. Mech...

PILLER: Your poetry has a malicious streak.

BAAL: ²What is the gentleman's name?

JOHANNES: Piller.

BAAL: ³Well, Piller, ⁴you can send me some old newspapers.

PILLER: You mean nothing to me. You mean nothing to
literature. (*Exits.*) ⁵

Scene 2: Baal's Basement

BAAL: ¹When you lie stretched out on the grass at night you
can feel in your bones that the earth is round and that
we're flying, ²and that there are beasts on this star that
devour its plants. ³It's one of the smaller stars. ⁴

JOHANNES: Do you know anything about astronomy?

BAAL: ⁵No.

Actions:

1. To release
2. To query
3. To halt
4. To degrade
5. To snub

Objective for Scene 2:

To construct a protégé

Actions:

1. To amaze
2. To warn
3. To ease
4. To gaze
5. To amuse

JOHANNES: I'm in love with a girl. ¹She's the most innocent creature alive², but I saw her once in a dream being made love to by a juniper tree. That is to say, her white body lay stretched out on the juniper tree and the gnarled branches twisted about her. I haven't been able to sleep since.³

BAAL: ⁴Have you ever seen her white body?

JOHANNES: No. She's innocent. Even her knees...⁵ there are degrees of innocence, don't you think? And yet, there are times when I hold her, just for a second, at night, and she trembles like a leaf, but only at night. But I haven't the strength to do it.⁷ She's seventeen.

BAAL: ⁸In your dream, ⁹did she like love?

JOHANNES: Yes.

BAAL: ¹⁰She wears clean linen, ¹¹a snow-white petticoat between her knees? ¹²Bed her and she may turn into a heap of flesh without a face.

JOHANNES: You're saying what I always felt. I thought I was a coward. I can see now that you also think intercourse is unclean.

Actions:

1. To encourage (to continue)
2. To approve
3. To debate (as in best course of action)
4. To fish
5. To celebrate (internally)
6. To agree
7. To delight in
8. To preface
9. To probe
10. To excite
11. To hook
12. To terrify

BAAL: ¹That's the grunting of the swine who are no good at it. ²When you embrace her virginal loins, the joy and fear of created man turns you into a god. ³As the junipers tree's many roots are entwined within the earth, so are your limbs in bed. ⁴Blood flows and hearts beat.

JOHANNES: But it's punishable by law, and by one's parents.

BAAL: ⁵Your parents – ⁶they're a thing of the past. ⁷How dare they open their mouths, filled with rotten teeth, to speak against love, ⁸which anybody may die of? If you can't take love, there's nothing left but vomit.

JOHANNES: Do you mean if I make her pregnant?

BAAL: ⁹When the pale mild summer ebbs and they're swollen with love like sponges, ¹⁰they turn back into beasts, evil and childish, ¹¹shapeless with their fat stomachs and hanging breasts, their damp arms like slimy tentacles, they collapse and grow heavy unto death. ¹²And with hideous shrieks as if they were bringing a new world into being, they yield a small fruit. ¹³They spew out with pain what they once sucked in with pleasure. ¹⁴You have to have teeth for it, then love is like biting into an orange, ¹⁵with the juice squirting into your teeth.

JOHANNES: Your teeth are like an animal's, they're yellow and large, sinister.

BAAL: ¹⁶And love is like putting your naked arm into a pond

Actions:

1. To rebuke (as a joke)
2. To preach
3. To lecture
4. To illustrate
5. To inhale sharply (almost to gasp)
6. To excrete
7. To challenge
8. To sing
9. To level with (almost to warn)
10. To clarify
11. To snarl
12. To gross out
13. To disgust
14. To induce vomit
15. To mentor
16. To delight in

and letting it float with the weeds between your fingers,
¹like the pain in which the drunken tree groans and
sings as the wild wind rides it, ²like drowning in
wine on a hot day, ³her body surging like a cool wine
into every crease of your skin, ⁴limbs soft as plants in
the wind, ⁵and the weight of the collision to which you
yield is like flying against a storm, and her body
tumbles over you like cool pebbles. ⁶But love is also
like a coconut, good while it is fresh but when the juice
is gone and only the bitter flesh remains you have to
spit it out. ⁷I'm sick of this hymn.

JOHANNES: Then you think it's something I ought to do, if
it's so wonderful?

BAAL: ⁸I think it's something for *you* to avoid, Johannes.

Scene 3: An Inn

BAAL: ¹He threw me out of his nice clean room, because I
threw up his wine. ²But, his wife ran after me, and in
the evening we celebrated. I'm lumbered with her and
sick of it.

DRIVERS: She needs a good hiding... They're randy as cats
but stupider. Tell her to go and eat figs! ... I always
beat mine before I give her what she wants.

JOHANNES: This is Johanna.³

Actions:

1. To picture
2. To conjure
3. To revel in
4. To soak
5. To die and go to heaven
6. To reexamine
7. To quit
8. To forewarn

Objective for scene 3:

To bag Johanna

Actions:

1. To entertain
2. To boast
3. To inspect

BAAL: I'll give you a song later.

JOHANNA: Johannes read me some of your poems.

BAAL: ¹Ah. ²How old are you?

JOHANNES: She was seventeen in June.

JOHANNA: I'm jealous. He does nothing but talk about you.³

BAAL: ⁴You're in love with your Johannes. ⁵It's spring. I'm waiting for Emilie... ⁶Better to love than to make love.

JOHANNES: I can understand your winning a man's love, but how can you have any success with women?⁷

(EMILIE *enters*.)

BAAL: ⁸Here she comes. ⁹And how are you Emilie?
¹⁰Johannes is here with his fiancée. ¹¹Sit down!

EMILIE: How could you ask me to come here! A cheap bar, only fit for drunken louts! Typical of your taste.¹²

BAAL: ¹³Luise, ¹⁴a gin for the lady.

EMILIE: Do you want to make a laughing stock of me?

BAAL: ¹⁵No. ¹⁶You'll drink. ¹⁷We're all human.

EMILIE: But you're not.

Actions:

1. To fain interest
2. To mesmerize
3. To release
4. To awe
5. To frolic
6. To "wink-wink" (as if an inside joke)
7. To bite my tongue
8. To rejoice
9. To adore
10. To redirect
11. To invite (almost to command)
12. To ignore
13. To gain attention
14. To order (with charm)
15. To shut up
16. To instruct
17. To lighten (the mood, make everything okay)

BAAL: ¹How do you know? ²(To LOUISE) ³⁴Don't be so mean, Luise. ⁵You're devilishly soft today, like a plum.

EMILIE: How ill-bred you are!⁶

BAAL: ⁷Tell the world darling.

JOHANNES: It's interesting here, I must say. Ordinary people. Drinking and amusing themselves. ⁸ And then, those clouds in the window!⁹¹⁰

EMILIE: He dragged you here too, I expect. For a view of the clouds.

JOHANNA: Wouldn't it be nicer to go for a walk¹¹ in the meadows by the river, Johannes.

BAAL: ¹²Nothing doing! ¹³Stay here! ¹⁴The sky is purple, ¹⁵particularly if you happen to be drunk. ¹⁶Beds on the other hand are white. ¹⁷To begin with. ¹⁸That's where love is, between Heaven and Earth. ¹⁹Why are you such cowards? ²⁰The sky's free, ²¹you feeble shadows! ²²Full of bodies! ²³Pale with love!

EMILIE: You've had too much again and now you're babbling. And with that bloody wonderful babble he drags you to his sty.

BAAL: ²⁴Sometimes the sky is yellow, ²⁵full of vultures. ²⁶Let's all get drunk.

Actions:

1. To snap (as if I were a cornered cobra)
2. To notice (as if it were a surprise)
3. To grope
4. To subside (as if to appease a pouting child)
5. To come in for the kill
6. To laugh at
7. To cheer
8. To agree
9. To discover
10. To float (towards the window)
11. To come back to earth
12. To remove as an option (almost to forbid)
13. To plead (almost as if a puppy dog)
14. To Picasso (as in to paint a work of art)
15. To joke
16. To formulate (as if working out a math equation)
17. To cancel
18. To recall (as if it were a forgotten dream)
19. To Moses (as in to make tremble)
20. To worship
21. To bite
22. To lose myself
23. To crawl back into the womb
24. To flit
25. To devour
26. To ring in (as if a mayor cutting a ribbon)

EMILIE: I don't know what's wrong with you today. Perhaps
I shouldn't have come here after all.

BAAL: ¹Have you just noticed? ²You might as well stay now.

JOHANNA: Don't say things like that, Mr. Baal. ³

BAAL: ⁴You've got a good heart Johanna. ⁵You'll never be
unfaithful, will you?

DRIVER: Ace, you bastards! – Trumped! ⁷

SECOND DRIVER: Keep going, the tart said, the worst's
over. Tell her to go and eat figs.

THIRD DRIVER: How could you betray me, as the lady said
to the butler when she found him in bed with the maid.

JOHANNES: Because of Johanna. She's a child. ⁷

JOHANNA: Will you come with me? We can go together?

EMILIE: I feel so ashamed now.

JOHANNA: I understand; it doesn't matter.

EMILIE: Don't look at me like that. You're still so young.
You don't know anything yet.

BAAL: ⁸Comedy, entitled Sisters in Hades. (*Goes to guitar.*) ⁹

Actions:

1. To test (or to seek a definite answer)
2. To piss on (as in to add insult to injury)
3. To sense (as in to smell my prey)
4. To acknowledge
5. To dare
6. To free
7. To write off
8. To billboard
9. To center (as in to prepare for a performance)

JOHANNA: He's been drinking. He'll regret it tomorrow.

EMILIE: If only you knew. He's always like this. And I love him.

BAAL: ¹Orge told me that: (*He sings*) ²

In all the world the place he liked the best
Was not the grass mound where his love ones rest

Was not the altar, nor some harlot's room
Nor yet the warm white comfort of the womb.

Orge thought the best place known to man
In this world was the lavatory pan.

That was the place to set the cheeks aglow
With stars above and excrement below.

A place of refuge where you had a right
To sit in private on your wedding night.

A place of wisdom, where the gut turns out
To gird itself up for another bout.

Where you're always doing good by stealth
Exerting tactful pressure for your health.

And that you realize how far you've gone:
Using the lavatory – to eat on. ³

Actions:

1. To grab
2. To entertain
3. To bow to/accept praise

DRIVERS: Bravo!... A good song! Give the gentleman a cherry brandy, if you'll accept the offer, sir! He made it all up on his own ... What a man!

LUISE: You're a one, Mr. Baal!

DRIVER: If you had a real job, you'd do all right for yourself. You could even end up running a transport business.

SECOND DRIVER: Wish I had brains like that!

BAAL: ¹That's nothing. You have to have a backside and the rest. ²Your very good health, Luise. ³And yours, Emmi. ⁴Come on, drink up. ⁵Even if you can't do anything else. ⁶Drink I said. (*She drinks*) ⁷That's better. ⁸There'll be some life in you yet.

EKART: (*As he enters*) Baal!⁹ Brother! Come with me! ¹⁰Give it up! Out to the hard dusty highroad: at night the air grows purple. To bars full of drunks: let the women you've stuffed fall into the black rivers. To cathedrals with small, pale ladies: you ask, dare a man breathe here? To cowsheds where you bed down with the beasts. It's dark there and the cows moo. And into the forests where axes ring out above and you forget the light of day: ¹¹God has forgotten you. Do you still remember what the sky looks like? A fine tenor you've turned into! Come brother! To dance, to sing, to drink! Rain to drench us! Sun to scorch us! Darkness and light! Dogs and women! Are you that degenerate? ¹²

Actions:

1. To impress
2. To think
3. To rekindle
4. To pressure (as if to pressure a teen to smoke)
5. To Leno (as in to crack a joke)
6. To threaten
7. To pat on the back
8. To fuel
9. To freeze
10. To deny
11. To remember
12. To drift to Neverland

BAAL: ¹Emmi! An anchor! ²Don't let me go with him.
³Help me everyone.

JOHANNES: Don't let him lead you astray!

BAAL: ⁴My dear boy.

JOHANNES: Think of your mother, remember your art!
Resist! ⁵You ought to be ashamed. You're evil.

EKART: Come brother! We'll fly in the open sky as blissful
as two white doves. Rivers in the morning light!
Graveyards swept by the wind and the smell of endless
unmown fields. ⁶

JOHANNA: Be strong, Mr. Baal. ⁷

EMILIE: I won't allow it! Do you hear? You can't throw
yourself away!

BAAL: ⁸Not yet, Ekart! ⁹There's still another way. ¹⁰They
won't play brother.

EKART: Then go to the devil, you with your soft, fat,
sentimental heart! (*Exits.*) ¹¹

DRIVERS: Out with a ten... Damn it! Add up ... Let's pack
it in.

JOHANNA: You've won this time, Mr. Baal.

Actions:

1. To hold on for dear life
2. To beg
3. To plead
4. To latch
5. To anchor
6. To give in
7. To reemerge
8. To hurl
9. To comfort
10. To let in on (as if a secret)
11. To regroup

BAAL: ¹I'm sweating all over. ²Got any time today, Luise?

EMILIE: Don't talk like that, Mr. Baal! ³You don't know what you do to me when you talk like that.

LUISE: Stop upsetting the lady, Mr. Baal. ⁴A child could see she's not herself.

BAAL: ⁵Don't worry Luise! ⁶Horgauer!

DRIVER: What do you want?

BAAL: ⁷There's a lady being badly treated here, ⁸she wants love. ⁹Give her a kiss, Horgauer.

JOHANNES: Baal!¹⁰

DRIVERS: Press on, Andreas ... have a go ... high class, blow your nose first ... you're a bastard, Mr. Baal.

BAAL: ¹¹Are you frigid, Emilie? ¹²Do you love me? ¹³He's shy Emmi, give him a kiss. ¹⁴If you make a fool of me in front of these people, it's the finish. ¹⁵One, two...

(DRIVER *kisses her vigorously*.) ¹⁶¹⁷

JOHANNES: That was evil, Baal. Drink brings out the evil in him, and then he feels good. He's too strong.

DRIVERS: Well done! What's she come to a place like this

Actions:

1. To wonder at
2. To resurrect
3. To hone in
4. To Edison (as in to turn the light bulb on)
5. To soothe
6. To full throttle
7. To protest
8. To sprinkle
9. To invite
10. To silence
11. To tease
12. To test
13. To cajole
14. To warn
15. To threaten
16. To beckon (Johanna)
17. To celebrate

for?... That's the way to treat them ... her kind break up families! ... Serves her right! Tell her to go and eat figs!

JOHANNA: How disgusting! You ought to be ashamed!

BAAL: ¹Why are your knees shaking, Johanna?

JOHANNES: What do you want with her?

BAAL: ²(*Grabbing JOHANNES*) ³Must you also write poetry? ⁴While life's do decent? ⁵

(BAAL *moves to the window*, JOHANNES *and* JOHANNA *exit*.)

BAAL: ⁶When you shoot down a racing stream on you back, naked under an orange sky, ⁷and you see nothing except the sky turning purple, ⁸then black like a hole ... ⁹when you trample your enemy underfoot ... ¹⁰or burst with joy at a funeral ... ¹¹or sobbing with love you eat an apple ... ¹²or bend a woman across a bed. ¹³(*Pause*) ¹⁴It's all a bloody circus. ¹⁵Did you feel it? ¹⁶Did it get under your skin? ¹⁷You have to lure the beast from its cage! ¹⁸Get the beast into the sun! ¹⁹My bill! ²⁰Let love see the light of day! Naked in the sunshine! Under a clear sky!²¹

DRIVERS: ²²Be seeing you, Mr. Baal! ... For my part I always did say Mr. Baal had a screw loose. But one thing's certain, his hearts in the right place! You have

Actions:

1. To caress
2. To attack
3. To pound
4. To drill
5. To release
6. To jolt
7. To magnify
8. To climax
9. To kick
10. To lash
11. To mourn
12. To fantasize
13. To inhale (as in a narcotic)
14. To amuse
15. To snap into a trance (the audience)
16. To moisten
17. To instruct (with pleasure)
18. To "let there be light" (as in to proclaim)
19. To restart
20. To lark (sing like a bird)
21. To plop
22. To toast

to treat women the way they deserve. Well, somebody exposed their precious white bottom here today. Good-bye, Mr. Circus. (*They exit.*)

BAAL: ¹And good-bye to you, my friends! ²Emmi! ³You can clam down now. The worst is over. ⁴Just forget it.

(*He throws himself on her and kisses her violently.*)

Scene 4i: Baal's Basement

JOHANNA: ¹Oh, what have I done! I'm wicked.

BAAL: ²Wash yourself instead.

JOHANNA: I still don't know what happened.³

BAAL: ⁴Johannes ⁵is to blame for everything. ⁶Drags you up here and behaves like a clown ⁷when he sees why your knees are shaking.

JOHANNA: When he comes back...

BAAL: ⁸Time for a bit of literature. ⁹First light over Mount Ararat.

JOHANNA: Shall I get up?

BAAL: ¹⁰After the flood. ¹¹Stay in bed.

JOHANNA: Won't you open the window?

Actions:

1. To thank
2. To rediscover (Emilie)
3. To soften
4. To plunge

Objective for Scene 4i:

To dump Johanna

Actions:

1. To enjoy the moment
2. To redirect
3. To calculate
4. To spear
5. To condemn
6. To reprimand
7. To flabbergast
8. To forget
9. To delight in
10. To joke
11. To order

BAAL: ¹I like the smell. ²What about another helping?
³What's gone's gone. ⁴

JOHANNA: How can you be so vile? ⁵

BAAL: ⁶White and washed clean by the flood, Baal lets his
thoughts fly like doves over the dark waters. ⁷

JOHANNA: Where's my dress? ⁸I can't ... like this ... ⁹

BAAL: ¹⁰What can't you ... like this, darling?

JOHANNA: Go home. ¹¹

BAAL: ¹²God, what a girl! ¹³I can feel every bone in my
body. ¹⁴Give me a kiss!

(JOHANNA *begins to exit.*) ¹⁵

JOHANNA: Say Something! Do you still love me? Say it.
Can't you say it?

BAAL: ¹⁶I... ¹⁷I'm feed to the teeth. (*He dresses.*)

JOHANNA: Then what was last night? And before?

BAAL: ¹⁸Johannes could make things awkward. ¹⁹And
Emilie's staggering around like a rammed schooner. ²⁰I
could die of starvation here! ²¹None of you would lift a
finger for me. ²²There's only one thing you're out for.

Actions:

1. To oppose (but with charm)
2. To propose
3. To justify
4. To manhandle
5. To taunt
6. To break (Johanna)
7. To close the book (on the situation)
8. To locate
9. To embarrass
10. To patronize
11. To torture
12. To savor
13. To turn on
14. To beg (as a lover might)
15. To shun
16. To string
17. To shatter
18. To excuse
19. To denounce
20. To horrify
21. To chastise
22. To accuse

JOHANNA: And you – didn't you ever feel differently about me?

BAAL: ¹Have you washed? ²Not an ounce of sense. ³Did you get nothing out of it? ⁴Go home! ⁵You can tell Johann-ass I took you home last night ⁶and spew gall at him.

JOHANNA: Johannes? (*She exits.*)

BAAL: (*Going to the window*) ⁷It's been raining! ⁸Johanna. ⁹Johanna! ¹⁰There she goes. ¹¹There she goes. (*He collapses on the bed.*)

Scene 4iii: Baal's Basement, four days later

BAAL: (*On bed*) ¹I've covered the paper with red summer for four days now: ²wild, pale, greedy; ³and fought the bottle. ⁴There have been defeats, ⁵but the bodies on the wall are beginning to retreat into the dark, ⁶into the Egyptian night. ⁷I nailed them to the wall, ⁸but I must stop drinking. ⁹This white liquor is my rod and staff. ¹⁰It reflects my paper ¹¹and has remained untouched since the snow began to drip from the gutter. ¹²But now my hands are shaking. ¹³As if the bodies were still in them. ¹⁴My hearts pounding like a horse's hoof. ¹⁵Oh Johanna, one more night in your aquarium, and I would have rotted among the fish. ¹⁶But now I smell the warm may nights. ¹⁷I'm a lover with no one to

Actions:

1. To investigate
2. To disapprove
3. To hope
4. To destroy
5. To vomit
6. To discard
7. To ogle
8. To call
9. To search
10. To sigh
11. To plant

Objective for Scene 4iii

To tame the beast within

Actions:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. To awaken | 13. To grip |
| 2. To search | 14. To scare |
| 3. To grieve | 15. To arise |
| 4. To confess | 16. To discover |
| 5. To grab hope | 17. To morn |
| 6. To cast out | |
| 7. To boast | |
| 8. To admit | |
| 9. To struggle | |
| 10. To graze | |
| 11. To justify | |
| 12. To examine | |

love. ¹I give in. ²I must move. ³First I'll get myself a woman. ⁴To move out alone is sad. ⁵No matter who. ⁶One with a face like a woman.

(He exits. JOHANNES is left alone on stage.)

BAAL: *(While entering)* ⁷Be nice to me darling. ⁸This is my room. *(Seeing JOHANNES)* ⁹What are you doing here?

JOHANNES: I only wanted to... Johanna didn't come home last night. ¹⁰There are rumors... people talk. She went off one afternoon and stayed out all night. Then she threw herself into the river. ¹¹I only wanted to... They haven't found her yet. ¹²I wanted to ... I only wanted to...

BAAL: ¹³So ¹⁴you wanted to? ¹⁵What are you standing there for? ¹⁶A tombstone for my Johanna, who's been washed away? ¹⁷The ghost of Johannes from another world, ¹⁸is that it? ¹⁹I'll throw you out! ²⁰Leave this room at once! ²¹It's an impertinence! ²²I'll knock you down. ²³It's spring, anyway. ²⁴Get out!

(JOHANNES exits.)

SOPHIE: What did that poor boy do to you? ²⁵

²⁶*(BAAL moves to her and they begin to dance.)* ²⁷

SOPHIE: Let me go! ²⁸

Actions:

1. To capitulate
2. To understand
3. To declare
4. To clarify
5. To catch the sent
6. To track
7. To lure
8. To impress
9. To inspect
10. To yawn
11. To deliberate
12. To brood
13. To silence
14. To imitate
15. To petrify
16. To yank
17. To mock
18. To pulverize
19. To shatter
20. To growl
21. To swallow
22. To terrify
23. To cry
24. To destroy
25. To zip
26. To evolve
27. To spin my web
28. To hush

(Voices are heard off stage.)

BAAL: ¹When you get to the first floor, turn to the right!

SOPHIE: They followed us after you picked me up in the front of the door. They'll find me.

BAAL: ²No one will find you here.

³*(BAAL takes her again and they dance. ⁴After a moment he kisses her.)*

SOPHIE: I don't even know you. ⁵What do you want from me?

BAAL: ⁶If you mean that, you may as well go. ⁷

SOPHIE: You rushed up to me in the street. I thought it was an orangutan.

BAAL: ⁸It's spring, isn't it? ⁹I need something white in this damned hole, a cloud.

(Voices off stage.)

BAAL: ¹⁰Those idiots, they've lost their way. ^{11, 12}

SOPHIE: I'll get thrown out if I come home late.

BAAL: ¹³Especially –

Actions:

1. To fool
2. To pacify
3. To zero in
4. To go in for the kill
5. To tighten hold
6. To dare
7. To entangle
8. To moisten
9. To buckle
10. To bitch
11. To spy (on voices)
12. To clear the coast
13. To send (as in the song)

SOPHIE: Especially what?

BAAL: The way a woman looks when I've made love to her.

SOPHIE: I don't know why I'm still here.

BAAL: ¹I can give you the information.

SOPHIE: You needn't think the worst of me, please!

BAAL: ²Why not? ³You're a woman like any other. ⁴The faces vary, the knees are always weak.

SOPHIE: (*Putting her hand to his mouth*) Good-bye!⁵

BAAL: ⁶Do you feel faint?

SOPHIE: I don't know. I feel so weak.

BAAL: ⁷I know. ⁸It's April. It's growing dark, and you smell me. That's how it is with animals. ⁹Now you belong to the wind, white cloud. ¹⁰

SOPHIE: Let me go!

BAAL: ¹¹My name's Baal.

SOPHIE: Let me go!

BAAL: ¹²You must console me. ¹³The winter left me weak.
¹⁴And you look like a woman.

Actions:

1. To tempt
2. To laugh at
3. To pose
4. To snare
5. To melt
6. To cook
7. To soften
8. To counsel
9. To take (or to claim)
10. To ravish
11. To weaken
12. To drain
13. To plead
14. To desire

SOPHIE: Your name's Baal?

BAAL: ¹That makes you want to say?

SOPHIE: You're so ugly, so ugly, it's frightening – but then...

BAAL: ²Mm?

SOPHIE: Then it doesn't matter.

BAAL: ³Are your knees steady, mm?

SOPHIE: You don't even know my name. I'm Sophie Barger.

BAAL: ⁴Forget your name. (*He reaches under her dress.*)

SOPHIE: Don't – don't – it's the first time anybody's ever...

BAAL: ⁵Untouched? ⁶Come! (*He leads her to the bed.*) ⁷You see! Bodies have poured through this room like water. ⁸But now I want a face. ⁹We'll go out tonight. ¹⁰We'll lie down in the fields. ¹¹You're a woman. ¹²I've become unclean. ¹³You must love me, ¹⁴for a while.

SOPHIE: Is that what you like? ... I love you.

BAAL: ¹⁵Now the sky's above us, and we're alone.

SOPHIE: But you must lie still.

BAAL: ¹⁶Like a child.

Actions:

1. To test
2. To suffocate
3. To test
4. To squash
5. To beg clarification
6. To celebrate
7. To teach
8. To share (a dream)
9. To gladden
10. To excite
11. To plead
12. To hide
13. To order
14. To crack the door (for the audience)
15. To play (as a five year old)
16. To obey

SOPHIE: My mother's at home. I have to go home.

BAAL: ¹Is she old?

SOPHIE: She's seventy.

BAAL: ²Then she's used to wickedness.

SOPHIE: What if the earth swallowed me up?
What if I'm carried off at night and never return?

BAAL: ³Never? ³Have you any brothers or sisters?

SOPHIE: Yes, they need me.

BAAL: ⁴The air here is like milk. ⁶The willows down by the
river are soaking wet, and unkempt from the rain.
⁷Your thighs must be pale.

Scene 5: Whitewashed Houses with Brown Tree Trunks

BAAL: ^{1,2}Who nailed the tree corpses to the wall?

TRAMP: (*Drinking from a gin bottle*) The pale ivory wind
around the trees. Corpus Christi.

BAAL: ³Not to mention ringing the bells when plants die!

TRAMP: Bells give me a moral uplift.

Actions:

1. To stop
2. To joke
3. To investigate
4. To examine
5. To deny
6. To salivate
7. To rape

Objective for Scene 5:

To steal the tramp's gin

Actions:

1. To spy
2. To surprise
3. To berate

BAAL: ¹Don't the trees depress you?

TRAMP: Pff! Tree carcasses!

BAAL: ²Women's bodies aren't any better!

TRAMP: What have women's bodies to do with a religious procession?

BAAL: ³They're both obscene. ⁴There's no love in you.

TRAMP: (*Handing BAAL the gin bottle*) There's love in me for the white body of Jesus. ⁵

BAAL: ⁶I wrote songs down on paper. ⁷They get hung up in lavatories these days.

TRAMP: To serve the Lord Jesus! ⁸I see the white body of Jesus. Jesus loves sinners.

BAAL: ⁹Like me.

TRAMP: Do you know the story about him and the dead dog? ¹⁰They all said it's a stinking mess. Fetch the police! It's unbearable! But, he said, it has nice white teeth.

BAAL: ¹¹Perhaps I'll turn Catholic.

TRAMP: (*Taking the bottle*) He didn't. ¹²

Actions:

1. To plead
2. To correct
3. To rim shot
4. To abandon
5. To accept
6. To connect
7. To admit
8. To soak in
9. To tease
10. To answer
11. To mock
12. To reformulate

BAAL: ¹³But the women's bodies he nails to the wall. ¹⁴I wouldn't do that.

TRAMP: Nailed to the wall! They never floated down the river. They were slaughtered for him, for the white body of Jesus.

BAAL: ¹There's too much religion or too much gin in your blood. ²*(Takes bottle and begins to exit.)* ³

TRAMP: So you won't defend your ideals, sir! You won't join the procession? You love plants and won't do anything for them?

BAAL: ⁴I'm going to the river to wash myself. ⁵I can't be bothered with corpses. *(Exits.)*

TRAMP: But I'm full of drink, I can't bear it. I can't bear the damned plants. If I had some more gin in me, perhaps I could bear it.

Scene 6: Spring Night Beneath Trees

BAAL: ¹It's stopped raining. ²The grass must still be wet ... ³it never came through the leaves of our tree. ⁴The young leaves are dripping wet, but here among the roots it's dry! ⁵Why can't a man fuck a tree!

SOPHIE: Listen.

Actions:

1. To shotgun
2. To declare
3. To bait
4. To fool
5. To get while the getting 's good
6. To shut up
7. To squash

Objective for Scene 6:

Drain Sophie's Life force

Actions:

1. To excite
2. To inspect
3. To double tack
4. To amaze
5. To pout

BAAL: ¹The wild roaring of the wind through the damp, black foliage. ²Can you hear the rain drip from the leaves?

SOPHIE: No. But I can feel a drop on my neck. ³(BAAL *begins to tickle her*) Oh, stop it. Stop it.

BAAL: ⁴Love rips the clothes from a man like a whirlpool and buries hi naked among the corpses of leaves after he's seen the sky.

SOPHIE: I should like to hide in you, Baal, because I'm naked.

BAAL: ⁵I'm drunk and you're staggering. ⁶The sky is black and we're on a swing with love in our bodies and the sky is black. ⁷I love you.

SOPHIE: Oh, Baal, my mother'll be weeping over my dead body, she'll think I drowned myself. ⁸How many weeks is it now? It wasn't even May then. It must be nearly three weeks.

BAAL: ⁹It must be nearly three weeks, ¹⁰said the beloved among the roots of the tree, ¹¹after thirty years had passed and she was half rotted by then.

SOPHIE: It's good to lie here like a captive, with the sky above, and never be alone again.

BAAL: ¹²I'm going to take your dress off again.

Actions:

1. To quite
2. To scare (as in a scary story)
3. To tickle
4. To swallow
5. To jester
6. To woo
7. To capitulate
8. To chew
9. To imitate
10. To narrate
11. To enrapture
12. To command (as Count Dracula would)

Scene 7: A Club Called 'The Night Cloud'

LUPU: The lamp has been knocked down again.

BAAL: ¹Only pigs come here. ²Where's my gin ration?

LUPU: You've drunk it all.

BAAL: ³Watch your step!

LUPU: Mjurk said something about a sponge.

BAAL: ⁴Does that mean I don't get a drink?

LUPU: No more gin for you until you've done your number,
Mjurk said. I'm sorry for you. ⁵

MJURK: (*Entering*) Make yourself scarce, Lupu!

BAAL: ⁶No drink, no song.

MJURK: You shouldn't drink so much, or one of these days
you won't be able to sing at all.

BAAL: ⁷Why else do I sing?

MJURK: Next to Savettka, you're the 'Night Cloud's' most
brilliant attraction. You're my personal discovery.
⁸Was there ever such a delicate talent in such a fat
lump? The fat lump makes the success, not the songs.
You're drinking will ruin me.

Objective for Scene 7:

To break the bonds holding me to this commercial life

Actions:

1. To "I told you so"
2. To search
3. To warn
4. To guilt
5. To mourn
6. To put my foot down
7. To rim shot
8. To dismiss

BAAL: ¹I'm sick of haggling every night for gin that's my contractual right. ²I'm clearing out.

MJURK: I've got police backing. You should try sleeping one of these nights, you crawl around as if you'd be hamstrung. Tell your sweetheart to go to hell! You're on now anyway.

BAAL: ³I'm fed to the teeth.

SAVETTKA: (*Entering with PIANIST*) That's my lot. I'm off now. ⁴

MJURK: You don't go half naked on to the stage in my club.

BAAL: ⁵Moron! (*Exits followed by MJURK.*)

SAVETTKA: He only works for that woman he's living with. He's a genius. Lupu imitates him shamelessly. He has taken his tone as well as his girl.

PIANIST: His songs are divine but he's been haggling with Lupu for his drink for the last ten days.

SAVETTKA: Life's hell!

BAAL: ⁶(*Singing off stage*) Small am I, pure am I, a jolly little boy am I.

⁷Through the room the wild wind comes

Actions:

1. To growl
2. To boot
3. To announce
4. To complete my mission
5. To strike
6. To entice
7. To fatten

What's the child been eating? Plums.
Soft and white its body lay
Helping pass the time away. ¹

PIANIST: My God, he's packing up. Call a
doctor! Now Mjurk's talking, they'll tear him to
pieces. No one censored that!

²(BAAL *enters followed by* MJURK.)

MJURK: You bastard! I'll have the hide off you! You are
going to sing! As stated in the contract! Or I'll get the
police. (*Exits back to crowd*)

³(BAAL *grabs his crotch and begins to exit to the
lavatory.*)

PIANIST: You'll ruin us Baal. ⁴ Where are you off to?

SAVETTKA: Taking your guitar to the lavatory? ⁵ Lovely.

⁶(BAAL *exits. The crowd noise grows loud off stage.*)

MJURK: I spoke like a Salvation Army general. We can rely
of the police. But they're shouting for him again.
Where is he? He'll have to goon.

PIANIST: The main attraction's sitting on the lavatory.

MJURK: (*Moving towards the lavatory door*) Baal! Answer

Actions:

1. To rid myself
2. To forget
3. To disgrace
4. To flip off
5. To oblige
6. To disappear

me! Damn it, I forbid you to lock yourself in! While
I'm paying you! I've got it in writing. You swindler!

LUPU: (*Entering*) The lavatory window's open. The bird has
flown. No drink, no song!

MJURK: Empty! Gone? Out through the lavatory? The
cutthroat! Police! I want the police! Baal!

Scene 8: Green Fields. Blue Plum Trees

BAAL: ¹Since the sky turned green ²and pregnant,
³summertime, wind, ⁴no shirt in my trousers. ⁵They rub
my backside, ⁶my skull's blown up with the wind, ⁷and
the smell of the fields hangs in the hair of my armpits.
⁸The air trembles as if it were drunk.

EKART: Why are you running away from the plum trees like
an elephant?

BAAL: ⁹Put your hand on my head. ¹⁰It swells with every
pulse beat and goes down like a balloon. ¹¹Can't you
feel it?

EKART: No.

BAAL: ¹²You don't understand my soul.

EKART: Let's go and lie in the river.

Objective for Scene 8:

To tell Ekart I'm ready to love him.

Actions:

1. To relax
2. To grate
3. To return
4. To rebel
5. To enjoy
6. To arise
7. To take in
8. To caution
9. To order
10. To marvel
11. To hasten
12. To shame

BAAL: ¹My soul, brother, ²is the groaning of the cornfields as they bend in the wind, and the gleam in the eye of two insects who want to devour each other.

EKART: A mad summer boy with immortal intestines, that's what you are! A dumpling, who'll leave a grease spot on the sky.

BAAL: ³Only words. ⁴But... ⁵It doesn't matter.

EKART: My body's light as a little plum in the wind.

BAAL: ⁶That's because of the pale summer sky, brother.
⁷Shall we soak up the warm waters of a blue pond?
⁸Otherwise the white roads that lead across the land will draw us like angels' ropes up to heaven.

ACT II

Scene 9: A Plain Sky

BAAL: ¹This is the winter sleep of white bodies in the black mud.

EKART: You still haven't been to fetch the meat?

BAAL: ²You're working on your mass, I suppose?

EKART: Why worry about my mass? Worry about your

Actions:

1. To keep subject
2. To enlighten
3. To dismiss
4. To dare
5. To chicken out
6. To confirm
7. To invite
8. To counsel

Objective for Scene 9:

To formulate a plan

Actions:

1. To dampen
2. To patronize

woman! Where have you driven her to this time, in the rain?

BAAL: ¹She runs after us like a mad woman and hangs around my neck.

EKART: You're sinking lower and lower.

BAAL: ²I'm too heavy.

EKART: You're not reckoning to peg out, I suppose?

BAAL: ³I'll fight to the last ditch. ⁴I'll live without a skin. ⁵I'll retreat into my toes. ⁶I'll fall like a bull. ⁷On the grass, where it's softest. ⁸I'll swallow death and know nothing.

EKART: You've got fatter while we've been lying here.

BAAL: ⁹My shirt has gotten bigger. ¹⁰The dirtier it gets the bigger it gets. ¹¹There's room for someone else, ¹²but no one fat. ¹³What are you lolling about for, you lazy bag of bones?

EKART: There's a kind of sky in my head, very green and vast, where my thoughts drift like featherweight clouds in the wind. They're completely undecided in their course. All that's inside me.

BAAL: ¹⁴It's delirium. ¹⁵You're an alcoholic. ¹⁶You see, it gets you in the end.

Actions:

1. To protest
2. To discover
3. To deny
4. To impress
5. To stir
6. To electrify
7. To clarify
8. To astonish
9. To correct
10. To teach
11. To formulate
12. To dagger
13. To energize
14. To pull the rug out
15. To tease
16. To button

EKART: When I'm delirious I can feel it by my face.

BAAL: ¹Your face has room for the four winds. ²Concave.
³You haven't a face. ⁴You're nothing. ⁵You're transparent.

EKART: I'm growing more and more mathematical.

BAAL: ⁶Nobody knows your history. ⁷Why don't you ever talk about yourself?

EKART: I shan't ever have one. Who's that?

BAAL: ⁸You've got a good ear! ⁹There's something in you that you hide. ⁹You're a bad man, like me, a devil.
¹⁰But one day you'll see rats. ¹¹Then you'll be a good man again.

EKART: Is that you Sophie?

BAAL: ¹²What do you want this time?

Scene 10: A Plain. Sky

SOPHIE: My knees are giving way. Why are you running like a mad man?

BAAL: ¹Because you're hanging around my neck like a millstone.

Actions:

1. To ridicule
2. To exaggerate
3. To study
4. To grieve
5. To lament
6. To smack
7. To beg
8. To suspect
9. To scare
10. To foretell
11. To gladden
12. To disgrace

Objective to Scene 10:

To dump Sophie

Actions:

1. To bitch slap

EKART: How can you treat her like this? You made her pregnant.

SOPHIE: I wanted it, Ekart.

BAAL: ¹She wanted it, ²and now she's hanging round my neck.

EKART: You behave like an animal!

SOPHIE: Let him come.

EKART: Get up Sophie! If you throw her out I'll stay with her.

BAAL: ³She won't stay with you. ⁴But you'd desert me!
⁵Because of her? ⁶That's like you.

EKART: Twice you took my place in bed. You didn't want my women. They left you cold, but you stole them from me although I loved them.

BAAL: ⁷Because you loved them. ⁸Twice I defiled corpses to keep you clean. I need that. ⁹God knows it gave me no pleasure.

EKART: Are you still in love with this depraved animal?

SOPHIE: I can't help it, Ekart. I'd love his corpse. I even love his fists. I can't help it, Ekart.

BAAL: ¹⁰Don't ever tell me what you were up to while I was

Actions:

1. To stamp
2. To rip apart
3. To examine
4. To scorn
5. To sicken
6. To swallow
7. To rectify
8. To guilt
9. To defuse
10. To snarl

inside!

SOPHIE: We stood together in front of the white prison wall
and looked up at your window.

BAAL: ¹You were together.

SOPHIE: Beat me for it.

EKART: Didn't you throw her at me?

BAAL: ²You might have been stolen from me.

EKART: I haven't got your elephant's hide.

BAAL: ³I love you for it.

EKART: Keep your damned mouth shut about it while she's
still with us!

BAAL: ⁴Tell her to get lost! ⁵She's turning into a bitch!
⁶She's washing her dirty laundry in your tears. ⁷Can
you still not see that's she's running naked between us?
⁸I have the patience of a lamb, but I can't change my
skin.

EKART: Go home to your mother.

SOPHIE: I can't.

BAAL: ⁹She can't, Ekart.

Actions:

1. To crush
2. To assuage
3. To kiss
4. To sunder
5. To spit at
6. To level with
7. To pierce
8. To smooth
9. To ring

SOPHIE: Beat me if you want, Baal. I won't ask you to walk slowly again. I didn't mean to. Let me keep up with you, as long as I can. ¹Then I'll lie down in the bushes and you needn't look. Don't drive me away, Baal.

BAAL: ²Throw your fat body into the river. ³I'm sick of you, and it's your own doing.

SOPHIE: Do you want to leave me here or don't you? You're still uncertain, Baal. You're like a child, to talk like that.

BAAL: ⁴I'm feed to the teeth with you.

SOPHIE: But not at night, Baal, not at night! I'm afraid alone. I'm afraid of the dark. I'm frightened of it.

BAAL: ⁵In your condition? ⁶No one will touch you.

SOPHIE: But tonight! Just wait both of you tonight.

BAAL: ⁷Go to the bargemen! ⁸It's a midsummer night. They'll be drunk.

SOPHIE: A few minutes!

BAAL: ⁹Come on, Ekart!

SOPHIE: Where shall I go?

BAAL: ¹⁰To Heaven, darling!

Actions:

1. To endure
2. To ripe apart
3. To place the cherry
4. To bazooka
5. To object
6. To comfort
7. To light bulb
8. To discard
9. To bid
10. To end

SOPHIE: With my child?

BAAL: ¹Bury it.

SOPHIE: I pray that you'll never have cause to remember
what you've just said to me, under this beautiful sky
you love. I pray for it on my knees.

EKART: I'll stay with you. And then I'll take you to your
mother, if you say you'll stop loving this swine.

BAAL: ²She loves me.

SOPHIE: I love him.

EKART: Are you still on your feet, you swine! Haven't you
got knees? ³Are you besotted with drink or poetry?
Depraved swine! Depraved swine!

BAAL: ⁴Simpleton.

EKART: (*Wrestling with BAAL*) It's getting dark now.
Depraved animal! Depraved animal! ⁵

BAAL: ⁶Now you're close to me. ⁷Can you smell me? ⁸Now
I'm holding you. ⁹(*He kisses him*) There's more than
the closeness of women. ¹⁰Look, you can see the stars
above the trees now, Ekart.

EKART: I can't strike this thing.

Actions:

1. To bury
2. To whip
3. To beckon
4. To slice
5. To overpower
6. To suspend
7. To connect
8. To suck in
9. To melt
10. To uncover

BAAL: ¹It's getting dark. ²We must find a place for the night.
³There are hollows in the wood where the wind never
penetrates. ⁴Come, I'll tell you about the animals.

(They exit.)

SOPHIE: *(Screaming)* Baal!

Scene 11: Brown Wooden Bar

BOLLEBOLL: I've no more money. Let's play for our souls.

THE BEGGAR: Brother wind wants to come in. But we don't
know our cold brother wind.

MAJA: Listen! Something's prowling round the house. Pray
God it's no wild beast!

BOLLEBOLL: Why? Are you feeling randy again?

MAJA: Listen! I won't open.

THE BEGGAR: You will open.

MAJA: No, no, Mother of God, no!

MAJA: Who's there?

BAAL: ¹*(Entering with EKART)* Is this where they look after
the sick?

Actions:

1. To notice
2. To quarterback
3. To invite
4. To lure

Objective for Scene 11:

Find and feed on souls

Actions:

1. To fanfare

MAJA: Yes, But there's no bed free. And I'm ill.

BAAL: ¹We've brought champagne.

BOLLEBOLL: Come here! The man who knows what
champagne is, is good enough for us.

THE BEGGAR: There's high society here today, my boy!

BAAL: ²Mmm?

THE BEGGAR: That's fishy.

BOLLEBOLL: I know where you got that champagne. ³But I
won't give you away.

BAAL: ⁴Here, Ekart! ⁵Any glasses?

MAJA: Cups, kind gentlemen. Cups.

GOUGOU: I need a cup of my own. ⁶

BAAL: ⁷Are you allowed to drink champagne?

GOUGOU: Please!

BAAL: ⁸What's wrong with you?

GOUGOU: Bronchitis. Nothing bad. A little inflammation.
Nothing serious.

Actions:

1. To dangle the carrot (To convince)
2. To show off
3. To wait
4. To invite
5. To impose
6. To notice
7. To examine
8. To connect

BAAL: ¹And you?

BOLLEBOLL: Stomach ulcers. Won't kill me!

BAAL: ²There's something wrong with you too, I trust?

THE BEGGAR: I'm mad.

BAAL: ³Here's to you! ⁴We understand each other. ⁵I'm healthy.

THE BEGGAR: I knew a man who said he was healthy too. He believed it. ⁶He came from the forest and one day he went back there as there was something he had to think over. He found the forest very strange and no longer familiar, he walked for many days. Always deeper into the forest, because he wanted to see how independent he was and how much endurance there was left in him. But there wasn't much.

BAAL: ⁷What a wind. ⁸We have to move on tonight, Ekart.

THE BEGGAR: Yes, the wind. One evening, at sunset, when he was no longer alone, he went through the great stillness between the trees and stood beneath one of the highest.

BOLLEBOLL: That was the ape in him.

THE BEGGAR: Yes, perhaps it was the ape. He leant against

Actions:

1. To toss
2. To poke fun at
3. To party
4. To lock
5. To flop
6. To allow
7. To sense
8. To advise

it, very closely, and felt the life in it, or thought so.
²And he said, you are higher than I am and stand firm
and you know the earth beneath you, and it holds you. I
can run and move better, but I do not stand firm and I
do not reach into the depths of the earth and nothing
holds me up. Nor do I know the quiet of the endless
sky above the still treetops.

Actions:

1. To picture
2. To snap
3. To stand firm
4. To yield
5. To enjoy

GOUGOU: What did the tree say?

THE BEGGAR: Yes. And the wind blew. A shudder ran
through the tree. And the man felt it. He threw himself
down on the ground and he clutched the wild, hard
roots and cried bitterly. But he did it to many trees.

EKART: Did it cure him? ²

THE BEGGAR: No. He had an easier death, though.

MAJA: I don't understand that.

THE BEGGAR: Nothing is understood. But some things are
felt. If one understands a story it's just that it's been
told badly.

BOLLEBOLL: Do you believe in God?

BAAL: ³I've always believed in myself. ⁴But a man could
turn atheist. ⁵

BOLLEBOLL: Now I feel happy. God! Champagne! Love!

Wind and rain! ¹

MAJA: Leave me alone. Your breath stinks.

BOLLEBOLL: And I suppose you haven't got the pox?

THE BEGGAR: Watch it! I'm getting drunker and drunker. If
I get completely drunk you can't go out in the rain
tonight. ²

GOUGOU: He used to be better looking, that's how he got
her.

EKART: What about your intellectual superiority? Your
psychic ascendancy?

GOUGOU: She wasn't like that. She was completely innocent.

EKART: And what did you do?

GOUGOU: I was ashamed.

BOLLEBOLL: Listen! ³The wind. It's asking God for
peace. ⁴

MAJA: (*Singing*)

Lullaby baby, away from the storm
Here we are sheltered and drunken and warm.

BAAL: ⁵Whose child is that?

Actions:

1. To contemplate
2. To prowl
3. To listen
4. To shrink
5. To charge

MAJA: My daughter, sir. ¹

THE BEGGAR: A virgo dolorosa.

BAAL: ²That's how it used to be, Ekart. ³And it was all right too.

EKART: What?

BOLLEBOLL: He's forgotten what!

BAAL: ⁴Used to be! That's a strange phrase!

GOUGOU: The best of all is nothingness. ⁵

BOLLEBOLL: Pst! We're going to have Gougou's aria. A song from the old bag of worms.

GOUGOU: It's as if the air was quivering on a summer evening. Sunshine. But it isn't quivering. Nothing. Nothing at all. You just stop. The wind blows, and you don't feel cold. It rains, and you don't get wet. Funny things happen, and you don't laugh with the others. You rot, and you don't need to wait. General Strike.

THE BEGGAR: That's Hell's Paradise.

GOUGOU: Yes, that's paradise. No wish unfulfilled. You have none left. You learn to abandon all your habits. ⁶ Even wishing. That's how you become free.

Actions:

1. To cuddle
2. To enthuse
3. To accept
4. To ponder
5. To cower
6. To tremble

MAJA: What happened in the end?

GOUGOU: Nothing. Nothing at all. There is no end.
Nothingness lasts forever.

BOLLEBOLL: Amen.

BAAL: ¹Ekart, get up. ²We've fallen among murderers. ³The
vermin multiply. ⁴The rot sets in. ⁵The maggots sing
and show off.

EKART: It's the second time that's happened to you. I
wonder if it's just the drink.

BAAL: ⁶My guts are hanging out ... ⁷this is no mud bath.

EKART: Sit down. Get drunk. Warm yourself. ⁸

MAJA: (*Singing*)

Summer and winter and snowstorms and rain
If we aren't sober we won't feel the pain.

BOLLEBOLL: Your aria tickles me, little Gougou. Itsiwitsi,
little Maja.

BAAL: ⁹Your name's bag of worms. ¹⁰Are you a candidate
for a mortuary? ¹¹Your health!

THE BEGGAR: Watch out, Bolleboll! Champagne doesn't
agree with me.

Actions:

1. To command
2. To horror
3. To hiss
4. To dirty
5. To cry
6. To beg
7. To exacerbate
8. To fortify
9. To reveal
10. To query
11. To toast

MAJA: (*Singing*)

Seeing is suffering, keep your eyes shut
All go to sleep now, and nothing will hurt.

BAAL: (*Singing*)

¹Float down the river with rats in your hair
Everything's lovely, the sky is still there.

(*Speaks*) ²The Sky is black! ³Did that scare you? ⁴You have to
stand the roundabout. It's wonderful. ⁵I want to be an
elephant in a circus and pee when things go wrong ...
⁶Dance with the wind poor corpse! Sleep with a cloud,
you degenerate God!

EKART: I'm not going with you any farther, ⁷I've got a soul
too. You corrupted my soul. You corrupt everything.
And then I shall start on my Mass again.

BAAL: ⁸Your health! ⁹I love you.

EKART: But I'm not going with you any farther.

THE BEGGAR: Hands off, you pig!

MAJA: What's it got to do with you?

THE BEGGAR: Shut up, you poor thing!

Actions:

1. To fume
2. To terrify
3. To apologize
4. To entertain
5. To dumbfound
6. To tornado
7. To cease
8. To congratulate
9. To goad

MAJA: You're raving! ¹

BOLLEBOLL: He's a fraud. There's nothing wrong with him. That's right. It's all a fraud.

THE BEGGAR: And you've got cancer.

BOLLEBOLL: I've got cancer?

THE BEGGAR: I didn't say anything. Leave her alone!

BAAL: ²Why's it stirring?

THE BEGGAR: What do you want?

BAAL: ³What's wrong? Have you never seen them at it before? Or does it hurt every time?

THE BEGGAR: Leave it alone you!

MAJA: You pig!

BOLLEBOLL: He's only having a peep under her skirt!

BAAL: ⁴Oh you swine! ⁵You don't know what's human any more. ⁶Come on, Ekart! ⁷We'll wash ourselves in the river.

Actions:

1. To hone in (the baby)
2. To focus
3. To ooh ah
4. To condemn
5. To degrade
6. To summon
7. To ease

Scene 12: Country Road. Willows

Objective for Scene 12:

To gain control over Ekart

BAAL: ¹Ekart! ²Ekart! ³I've got it! ⁴Wake up!

EKART: What's the matter? Are you talking in your sleep again?

BAAL: This (*Sings*) ⁵

When she had drowned and started her slow decent
Down the streams where the rivers broaden
The opal sky shone most magnificent
As if it had to be her bodies guardian.

Seaweeds cling to her as she swims
Slowly their burden adds to her weight.
Fishes play about her limbs
And encumber her in her final state.

In the evening the sky grew dark as smoke
And the stars kept the light still soaring
But soon it cleared as dawn again broke
To preserve another morning.

As her pale body decayed in the water there
It happened very slowly that God forgot it
First her face then her hands, and right at the last her
hair. And then she rotted in the rivers, where much else
there rotted.

EKART: Has the ghost risen? ⁶ It's not as wicked as you.

Actions:

1. To search
2. To locate
3. To enliven
4. To jolt
5. To close the book
6. To confirm

Now sleep's gone to the devil and the wind is groaning in the willows like an organ. Nothing left but the white breast of philosophy, darkness, cold, and rain right up to our blessed end, and even for old women nothing left but their second sight.

BAAL: ¹You don't need gin to be drunk in this wind. ²I see the world in a soft light: ³It is the excrement of the Almighty.

EKART: The Almighty, who made himself known once and for all through the association of the urinary passage with the sexual organ.

BAAL: ⁴It's all so beautiful.

EKART: The willows are like rotten teeth in the black mouth of the sky. I shall start work on my Mass soon.

BAAL: ⁵Is the quartet finished?

EKART: When did I have the time?

BAAL: ⁶It's that redhead, the pale one, that you drag everywhere.

EKART: She has a soft white body, and at noon she brings it with her under the willows. They're drooping branches like hair, behind which we fuck like squirrels.

BAAL: ⁷Is she more beautiful than me?

Actions:

1. To connect
2. To relax (Ekart)
3. To awe
4. To gaze
5. To kid
6. To grind
7. To test

(EKART *laughs*.)

Scene 13: Maple Trees in the Wind

BAAL: ¹Drink's needed, Ekart. ²Any money left?

EKART: No. Look at the maple in the wind!

BAAL: ³It's trembling.

EKART: Where's that girl you used to go around the bars with?

BAAL: ⁴Turn into a fish and look for her.

EKART: You overeat, Baal. You'll burst.

BAAL: ⁵I'd like to hear the bang.

EKART: Do you ever look into the water when it's black and deep and got no fish in it? Don't ever fall in. Watch out for yourself. You're so very heavy, Baal.

BAAL: ⁶I'll watch out for somebody else. ⁷I've written a song. ⁸Do you want to hear it?

EKART: Read it, then I'll know you.

BAAL: ⁹It's called Death in the Forest:

Objective for Scene 13:

To gain Ekart's sympathy (in order to control him)

Actions:

1. To declare
2. To hope
3. To love
4. To jest
5. To stand
6. To calm
7. To give joy
8. To hurry
9. To billboard

¹And a man died deep in the primeval woods
While the storm blew in torrents around him
Died like an animal scrabbling for roots
As the wind skimmed the woods
And the roar of the thunderclap drowned him.

Several of them stood to watch him go
And they strove to make his passage smoother
Telling him: We'll take you home now, brother.
But he forced them from him with a blow
Spat and cried: and where's my home, d'you know?
That was home, and he had got no other.

Is your mouth choking with puss?
How's the rest of you: can you still tell?
Must you die so slowly and with so much fuss?
We've just had your horse chopped into steaks for us.
Hurry up! They're waiting down in hell.

Then the forest roared above their head
And they watched him clasp a tree and stagger
And they heard his screams and what he said.
Each man felt an overwhelming dread
Clenched his fist or trembling, drew his dagger:
So like them, and yet so nearly dead!
You're foul, useless, mad, you mangy bear!
You're a sore, a chancre, filthy creature!
Selfish beast, you're breathing up our air!
So they said. And he, the cancer there:
Let me live! You're sun was never sweeter!
Ride off in the light without a care!

Actions:

1. To move (Ekart)

That's what none of them could understand:
How the horror numbed and made them shiver.
There's the earth holding his naked hand.
In the breeze from sea to sea lies land:
Here I lie in solitude forever.

Yes, mere life, with its abundant weight
Pinned him so that even half decayed
He pressed his body ever deeper.
At dawn he fell dead in the grassy shade.
Numb with shock, they buried him, and cold with hate
Covered him up with undergrowth and creeper.

Then they rode in silence from that place
Turning round to see the tree again
Under which his body once had lain
Who felt dying was too sharp a pain:
The tree stood in the sun ablaze.
Each made the mark of the cross on his face
And rode swiftly over the plain.¹

EKART: Well, well! I suppose it's come to that now.²

BAAL: ³When I can't sleep at night I look up at the stars. ⁴It's
just as good.

EKART: Is it?

BAAL: ⁵But I don't do it often. ⁶It makes you weak.

EKART: You've made up a lot of poetry recently. You

Actions:

1. To collapse
2. To regroup
3. To share
4. To thank
5. To shred
6. To spit

haven't had a woman for a long time, have you?

BAAL: ¹Why?

EKART: I was thinking. Say no. ²

Actions:

1. To hide
2. To cheer

Scene 14: Inn

Objective for Scene 14:

To save Ekart

EKART: It's been eight years.

JOHANNES: They say life only begins at twenty-five. That's when they get broader and have children.

WATZMANN: His mother died yesterday. So he runs around trying to borrow money for the funeral. When he gets it he comes here. Then we can pay for the drinks. The landlord's a good man. He gives credit on a corpse which was a mother.

JOHANNES: Baal! There's no wind left in his sails.

WATZMANN: You must have to put up with a lot from him?

EKART: One can't spit in his face. The man's done for.

WATZMANN: Does it distress you? Do you think about it?

JOHANNES: It's a waste of a man, I tell you.

WATZMANN: He's getting more and more disgusting.

EKART: Don't say that. I don't want to hear it. I love him. I don't resent him, because I love him. He's a child.

WATZMANN: He only does what he has to. Because he's so lazy.

EKART: It's a mild night. The wind's warm. Like milk. I love all this. One should never drink. Or not so much. It's a mild night. Now and for another three weeks into the autumn a man can live on the road all right.

WATZMANN: Do you want to leave tonight? You'd like to get rid of him, I suppose? He's a burden.

JOHANNES: You'd better be careful.

(BAAL *tumbles into the bar.*)¹

WATZMANN: Is that you, Baal?

EKART: What do you want now?

BAAL: ²What a miserable hole this place has turned into!

WATZMANN: Nothing's changed here. Only you, it would appear, have got more refined.

BAAL: (*To THE WAITRESS*) ³Is that still you, Luise?

JOHANNES: Yes it's agreeable here. I have to drink, you see, drink a lot. It makes one strong. ⁴Even then one makes

Actions:

1. To recover
2. To reject
3. To scrutinize
4. To resign

one's way to hell along a path of razors. But not in the same way. As if your legs were giving way under you, yielding, you know. So that you don't feel the razors at all. With springy lose joints. Besides, I never used to have ideas of this sort, really particular ones. Now while everything went well, when I lived a good bourgeois life. But now I have ideas, now that I've turned into a genius. ¹

EKART: I'd like to be back in the forest, at dawn! The light between the trees is the colour of lemons! I want to go back up into the forest. ²

JOHANNES: That's something I don't understand, you must buy me another drink, Baal. ³It's really agreeable here.

BAAL: ⁴A gin for...

JOHANNES: No names! We know each other. ⁵I have such fearful dreams at night, you know, now and then. But only now and then. It really is agreeable here.

WATZMANN: (*Playing a guitar and singing*)

The trees come in avalanches ⁶
Each very conveniently made.
You can hang yourself from their braches
Or loll underneath in their shade.

BAAL: ⁷Where was it like that? ⁸It was like that once.

Actions:

1. To investigate
2. To approve
3. To notice
4. To order
5. To decipher
6. To concentrate
7. To implore
8. To remember

JOHANNES: She's still afloat, you see. Nobody's found her. But sometimes I get a feeling she's being washed down my throat with all the drink, a very small corpse, half rotted. And she was already seventeen. ¹Now there are rats and weed in her hair, rather becoming ... a little swollen and whitish, and filled with the stinking ooze from the river, completely black. She was always so clean. That's why she went to the river and began to stink. ²

Actions:

1. To realize
2. To sink
3. To end
4. To please
5. To apologize

WATZMANN: What is flesh? It decays just like the spirit. Gentlemen, I am completely drunk. Twice two is four. Therefore I am not drunk. But I have intimations of a higher world. Bow! ... be hup! ... humble! Put the old Adam aside! I've not reached rock bottom yet, not while I have my intimations, not while I can add up properly that twice two ... What is this thing called two? Two – oo, curious word! Two! ³

BAAL: (*Grabbing the Guitar*) Now, I'll sing: ⁴

Sick from the sun, and eaten raw by the weather
A looted wreath crowning his tangled head
He called back the dreams of a childhood he lost
Altogether
Forgot the roof, but never the sky overhead.

(*Speaks*) ⁵My voice is not entirely clear as a bell.

EKART: Go on singing, Baal.

BAAL: (*Sings*)^{1, 2}

O you whose life it has been always to suffer
You murderers they threw out from heaven and hell
Why did you not stay in the arms of your mother
Where it was quiet, and you slept, and all was well?

(*Speaks*)³The Guitar's not in tune either.

WATZMANN: A good song. Very apt in my case. Romantic.

BAAL: (*Sings*)⁴

Still he explores and scans the absinthe-green ocean
Though his mother give him up for lost
Grinning and cursing, or weeping with contrition
Always in search of that land where life is best.

(*Speaks*)⁵Champagne in the blood and homesickness without
memory.⁶Are you my friend Ekart?

EKART: Yes, but sing!

(*Unbeknown to BAAL, THE WAITRESS climbs up to
EKART.*)

BAAL: (*Sings*)⁷

Loafing through hells and flogged through paradises
Calm and grinning, with expressionless stare

Actions:

1. To oblige
2. To serenade
3. To excuse
4. To squash
5. To wish
6. To hope
7. To remorse

Sometimes he dreams of a small field he recognizes
With blue-sky overhead and nothing more.

JOHANNES: I'll stay with you. You could take me with you.
I hardly ever eat.

(BAAL *sees* EKART *with* THE WAITRESS.) ¹

EKART: What's the matter?² This is nothing.³ It's ridiculous.

⁴(BAAL *grabs a knife on the table and begins to stalk*
EKART.)

EKART: You're not jealous of her? ⁵Why shouldn't I have
women? Am I love your lover?

⁶(BAAL *runs and leaps on* EKART, *stabbing him*.)

WATZMANN: He's got a knife.

THE WAITRESS: He's killing him. Oh God!

A MAN: God Almighty!

BAAL: ⁷(*Turning to the heavens*) ⁸Ekart.

Scene 15: A Country Road

FIRST POLICEMAN: The black rain and this wailing wind!
The bloody tramp!

Actions:

1. To die
2. To swell
3. To storm
4. To thunder
5. To stalk
6. To destroy
7. To stay
8. To regret

Objective for Scene 15:

To escape

SECOND POLICEMAN: ¹It seems to me he keeps moving northwards towards the forests. It'll be impossible to find him there.

FIRST POLICEMAN: What is he?

SECOND POLICEMAN: Above all, a murderer. Before that, revue actor and poet. Then roundabout proprietor, woodsman, lover of a millionairess, convict and pimp. When he did the murder they caught him, but he's got the strength of an elephant. It was because of a waitress, a registered whore. He knifed his best and oldest friend because of her.

FIRST POLICEMAN: A man like that has no soul. He belongs to the beasts.

SECOND POLICEMAN: And he's childish too. He carries wood for old women, and nearly gets caught. He never had anything. Except for the waitress. That must have been why he killed his friend, another dubious character.

FIRST POLICEMAN: If only we could get some gin somewhere or a woman! Let's go. It's eerie. And there's something moving over there.

BAAL: (*Appearing from the dark*) ²So he's dead? ³Poor little animal. ⁴Getting in my way. ⁵Now things are getting interesting.

Actions:

1. To hide
2. To emerge
3. To mock
4. To growl
5. To hunt

Scene 16: Hut in the Forest

(BAAL *lies on an old bed.*)¹

A MAN: (*To BAAL*) What do you want? You're at your last gasp. A child could see that. And who's going to look after you? Have you got anyone? ²That's it! That's it! Grit your teeth! Got any teeth left? ³Now and then it even gets the ones that could go on enjoying themselves, millionaires! But you don't have any papers. Don't be afraid, the world'll keep rolling, round as a ball, tomorrow morning the wind'll whistle. See the situation in a more reasonable light. Tell yourself it's a rat that's on the way out. ⁴That's it! Don't move. You've no teeth left. ⁵

THE MEN: Is it still pissing? We'll have to spend the night with a corpse. Shut your mouth! Trumped! Got any breath left fatty? Sing us a Song! 'Baal grew up within the ...'

A MAN: Let him be!

THE MEN: He'll be a cold man before the black rain's stopped. On with the game! He drank like a sieve but there's something about that pale hunk that makes you think about yourself. That's something he didn't have crooned over his cradle. Ten of clubs! Keep your cards up, please! That's no way to play; if you're not going to be serious, you can't get a good game going.

Objective for Scene 16:

To find Peace

Actions:

1. To quiver
2. To grit
3. To subside
4. To snap
5. To suffer

BAAL: ¹What's the time?

ONE OF THE MEN: Eleven. Are you going?

BAAL: ²Soon. ³Are the roads bad?

THE MAN: Rain.

THE MEN: It's stopped raining. ⁴Time to go. Everything'll be soaking wet. Another excuse for him to do nothing.

A MAN: Good night and good-bye. (*He spits on BAAL*) ⁵
Have you had it? (*Exits.*)

ANOTHER MAN: Are you on the way out? Incognito? ⁶

A THIRD MAN: Arrange your smelly periods better tomorrow, if you don't mind. We'll be working till twelve and then we want to eat.

BAAL: ⁷Can't you stay a little longer?

ALL: Do you want us to play mother? Do you want to sing us your swan song? Do you want to confess, you old soak? Can't you throw up on your own?

BAAL: ⁸If you could stay half an hour.

A THIRD MAN: You know what? Snuff out on your own. ⁹
Let's get moving. The wind's died down. (*Exits.*)

Actions:

1. To appeal
2. To laugh
3. To pose
4. To sigh (in pleasure)
5. To endure
6. To let slide
7. To invite
8. To beseech
9. To ingest

ANOTHER MAN: (*To THE MAN*) What's the matter?

THE MAN: I'll follow.

BAAL: ¹It can't last much longer gentlemen. ²You won't like
dying own you own gentlemen.

ANOTHER MAN: Old woman! Here's a souvenir! (*He spits
on BAAL'S face and exits.*)

BAAL: ³Twenty minutes?

THE MAN: Stars.

BAAL: ⁴Wipe the spit away!

THE MAN: Where?

BAAL: ⁵On my forehead.

(*THE MAN wipes the spit with his sleeve and BAAL
begins to laugh.*) ⁶

THE MAN: What are you laughing at?

BAAL: ⁷I like the taste.

THE MAN: You're done for.

BAAL: ⁸Thanks.

Actions:

1. To face
2. To warn
3. To negotiate
4. To mandate
5. To "uh duh"
6. To enjoy
7. To admit
8. To halt

THE MAN: Is there anything else ... I have to go to work.
Jesus Corpses!

BAAL: ¹You! ²Come Closer! ³It was very beautiful ...

THE MAN: What was?

BAAL: ⁴Everything.

THE MAN: Asshole! (*He kicks BAAL in his side and begins to exit.*)

BAAL: ⁵You! ⁶You there!

THE MAN: What?

BAAL: ⁷Are you going?

THE MAN: To work.

BAAL: ⁸Where?

THE MAN: What's that got to do with you? (*Exits.*)

BAAL: ⁹What's the time? (*Pause*) ¹⁰He's gone. (*Pause*)
¹¹Ekart! ¹²Go away Ekart! ¹³The sky's do damn near to
you can touch it. ¹⁴Everything's soaking wet again.
¹⁵Sleep. ¹⁶One, two, three, four ... ¹⁷It's suffocating in
here. ¹⁸It must be light outside. ¹⁹Dear god. ²⁰I'm not
a rat. ²¹I want to go out. ²²I will go out (*Coming to his feet*) ²³Dear God. ²⁴You can get to the door.

Actions:

1. To stop
2. To call
3. To confess
4. To love
5. To grab
6. To keep
7. To beg
8. To plead
9. To pray
10. To bow to
11. To sense
12. To send
13. To adore
14. To envy
15. To reside
16. To try
17. To vent
18. To calculate
19. To ache
20. To bite
21. To decide
22. To will
23. To wince
24. To motivate

¹You still have legs. ²It's better at the door. (*He falls*)
³Damn it! ⁴(*Pause, he turns to the heavens*) ⁵Dear God
... ⁶(He shoots his middle finger to the sky). ⁷Stars. (*He
crawls to the tree and dies.*) ⁸

Epilogue

¹And when Baal's dragged down to be the dark womb's
prize.

What's the world to Baal? Baal has been fed.
Sky enough still lurks behind Baal's eyes
To make just enough sky when he's dead.

²Baal decayed within the darkness of the womb
With the sky once more as large and pale and calm
Naked, young, endlessly marvelous
As Baal loved it when he came to us.

End of Play

Actions:

1. To push
2. To force
3. To curse
4. To re-gather
5. To pray
6. To refuse
7. To envision
8. To search

Objective for the Epilogue:

To conclude the story

Actions:

1. To teach
2. To chill

VITA:

Born on August 24, 1979 in Houston, Texas, Michael grew up in the rural pine tree hills of Woodville, Texas. Upon graduating Woodville High School in 1997, he left to attend college at Texas A&M University, in College Station, Texas, where he earned his B.A. in Speech Communication and Theater Arts, graduating Cum Laude with a double major. He was a committed participant in the theater program at A&M while still remaining a very active member in the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets. In the fall of 2002 Michael moved to New Orleans, Louisiana where he began graduate studies to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree in performance from the University of New Orleans. Michael plans to pursue a career in professional acting, directing, playwriting and teaching.