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Maintaining Physical and Mental Stamina in Creating the Role of Miss Margarida in Miss Margarida's Way

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Maintaining Physical and Mental Stamina in Creating the Role of Miss Margarida in *Miss Margarida's Way*

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
Film, Theatre and Communication Arts
Performance: Acting

by

Joyce Deal

B.A. Dillard University, 2005

May 2009

“I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being.”

- Oscar Wilde

Acknowledgements

My overall career as a graduate student was an enjoyable journey filled with triumphs and valuable learning experiences. Creating the role of Miss Margarida was a very rewarding and fulfilling challenge for me as an actor. I worked very hard during the production of *Miss Margarida's Way*, but the show could not have been the success it was without the help of some magnificent and talented people to help me through the process. I also could not have made it to this point in my life and career without the guidance and persistence of some amazing people.

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unwavering love and support. You both have helped to guide me, push me, and challenged me to become the artist and person I am today. I am stronger, wiser, and my abilities are strengthened because you cared enough to take the extra step to help me move forward in my career and in life, for that I truly thank you.

Abstract

This thesis serves as documentation of my personal, intellectual, and physical process as an actor in creating the role of Miss Margarida in *Miss Margarida's Way* by Roberto Athayde. This document includes research, script analysis, character analysis, rehearsal journal, and an assessment of my performance. The University of New Orleans Department of Film, Theatre and Communications Arts in New Orleans, Louisiana produced *Miss Margarida's Way* during the Fall 2008 season. *Miss Margarida's Way* was performed in the Lab Theater of the Performing Arts Center at 7:30 pm December 3 – 6 with a matinee at 2:30pm on Sunday December 7th 2008.

Keywords: Joyce Deal, Miss Margarida's, University of New Orleans, Roberto Athayde

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Introduction

“The actor has to develop his body. The actor has to work on his voice. But the most important thing the actor has to work on is his mind.”

-Stella Adler

My overall objective while working on my thesis was to further develop my capabilities as an actor on an intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional level. I believe it starts with optimum conditioning of the body, voice and mind. Every performer needs an optimal warm-up regimen and technique. A good warm-up technique should be easily accessible, effective for your target areas, and also have variations. I learned quickly during my thesis work, rehearsals, and performances that the mind has to be sharp and focused throughout the whole process because there are outer and inner factors that can deter and distract an actor from reaching that freedom to just be.

My thesis role marked the first time I had ever done a one-woman show. When I was told I would do a one-woman show for my thesis called *Miss Margarida's Way*, I didn't know what to think. I had never read or heard of the play. I wasn't given the opportunity to choose a play and role. However, I didn't know what I would have chosen. I knew I wanted something challenging, a play that forced me to go further as an actress. I wanted a play that would take me on a journey. A play that was fun and entertaining. The complex levels, out of the box antics, and height of characterization work that makes up *Miss Margarida* turned out to be just what I wanted and needed at this point in my career and graduate study. I was eager to face the challenges that were ahead of me. I was delighted to have been given such a huge and varying role to culminate my graduate studies in Performance: Acting at UNO.

Roberto Athayde's play, *Miss Margarida's Way* – a tragicomic monologue for an impetuous woman was produced at the University of New Orleans in the fall of 2008. By completing this process I intended to develop effective memorization skills, and a profound awareness of my physical and mental capabilities as an actor. My challenges were to break down the different facets of Miss Margarida in my character analysis and justify why she was so bitter and nasty. There was also the huge task of memorizing fifty- nine pages of monologue. My goal was to test and hone in on my instinctual acting process, along with other techniques that would effectively serve me throughout my process. In my creation of the role, I utilized such methods as Constantine Stanislavski's "magic if", Sanford Meisner's moment-to-moment reality, Jerzy Grotowski's theory and practice, Richard Boleslavsky's Acting First Six Lessons (especially concentration, characterization and memory of emotion). These methods served me well as my purpose was to create a very complex character with varying levels that change continually, and justify the underlining meaning of them all; while staying truthful in the moment and maintaining physical and mental stamina throughout rehearsal and performances.

This document contains thorough documentation and assessment of my process in creating the role of Miss Margarida – along with a scored script, journal, research, and post-production evaluations. As a result of this process I overcame most of the problems that I faced during this study. I am more aware of the problems I still need to work on as an actor. Overall, the process was successful because my goals were accomplished, lessons were learned, the audiences were entertained and my abilities were strengthened as an actor.

Research

In order to fully understand *Miss Margarida's Way*, I started from the very beginning: which is, research. Before an actor can get to the physical action of creating a character, an intellectual process must take place in order to bring a character to life truthfully under imaginary circumstances. Creating a character not only takes talent, methods, and technique, the play and everything that is involved with its creation must be taken into consideration. I gained a plethora of knowledge to help inform my choices in rehearsal and performance. My research was important to my process because it made me more aware of which direction to take, in terms of preparation, and what I needed to do to create a genuine character true to the playwright's intentions. My focal points in researching *Miss Margarida's Way* was the playwright's background and the cultural significance (climate) that became the muse for the play, the art of solo performance, the themes of *Miss Margarida's Way*, and character research.

The Life of Roberto Athayde

Roberto Athayde was born on November 25, 1949 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He is a filmmaker, playwright, writer, director and poet. Athayde's self image and works were highly influenced by his father's accomplishments. Athayde's father, Austregesilo Athayde (b. September 25, 1898), was a journalist, columnist, essayist, and speaker and was president of the Brazilian Academy of Letters for thirty years. Austregesilo graduated in law and was the national leader of the Associated Newspaper. Austregesilo declared opposition to the revolution of 1930. He wrote against Getulio Vargas, Brazilian president and dictator, and supported the constitutional movement in Sao Paulo in 1932, which led him to prison and exile in Europe and then in Argentina. Austregesilo asked Vargas to come back to Brazil and marry his wife and go

back to Argentina. Vargas gave him license to do so. Athayde's mother was named Maria Jose de Queiroz Austregesilo Athayde better known by her nickname Jujuca. Athayde's father died, September 13, 1993. His mother died in 1983. His sister's name is Laura Constancia. She lives in Rio de Janeiro and writes children's literature. His brother lives in Sao Paulo. He is a television executive and was a Commercial Director of Rede Globo. His grandfather, Jose Joaquim de Queiroz Jr., pioneered the steel industry in Brazil.

Athayde grew up in a home of intellectuals. His father was an excellent speaker and writer in Athayde's eyes. He spoke in an interview with Arlette Kaufmann, author and interviewer of SNCweb, about feeling inferior to his father's abilities – "I always thought I could do better, except when I went with him to the positions where he had to speak, and when he began to speak I felt completely massacred and unable to do the same, even today I do not have his performative way, he had this ability" (Kaufmann 2). His father was good at improvising on the spot when he spoke. Athayde recollected that his family relationship lacked intimacy. His parents did not show much interest in their children's dreams. "They did not show any interest in the privacy of children, freedom of worship throughout the world. Did not worry much of what we were doing, had no dream of the life of the people"(Kaufman 2). His family was different as Athayde protested, "their affection was on another level"(Kaufmann 2). This other level could explain some of the "tough love" in Miss Margarida.

Athayde spoke of being pressured by his father's accomplishment and academia. "My father was enormously egocentric idolaters, he and my mother, He fulfilled all spaces, they were very strong characters and a suffocating presence for me" (Kaufman 3). He wanted to get to a level in his writing like that of his father who was a prolific writer and president of an academy. He began to contemplate: who could be better than his father? His first answer was the founder of

the academy—Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (b. June 21, 1939 d. September 29, 1908 Rio de Janeiro). Machado de Assis was a Brazilian novelist, poet and short story writer and was regarded as the most important writer in Brazilian literature. Athayde further contemplated who could be better than his father and Machado de Assis. He was drawn this time to Luis de Camoes (1524 d. June 10, 1580), dubbed Portugal's greatest poet. His mastery of verse was compared to the works of Shakespeare, Homer, Virgil and Dante. His legacy was a huge volume of lyrical poetry –in Portuguese and Spanish- as well as drama. His most memorable work is his epic *Os Lusíadas*. Athayde became obsessed with Camoes to the point where it became a serious problem. Instead of studying in school, he would recite *the Lusíadas* and the teachers thought he was crazy. At one point, the school forced his mother to send him to seek professional mental health. Athayde was asked to stop attending after two sessions because, instead of revealing facts about himself in order to give the psychiatrist insight into his life, he would just recite Camoes' - *Lusíadas*. Athayde did not do well with discipline as a result he was expelled from three different schools.

At the age of Seventeen, Athayde moved to the United States and had no urge to return home. His first literary language was English. He wrote in English before he wrote in Portuguese because he didn't think he would ever return to Brazil. Athayde lived with a Methodist family in Michigan and attended the University of Michigan in hopes of becoming a composer. He remembers telling his Michigan family, he did not believe in God, and they almost sent him back to Brazil. At the same time, he started singing in a Protestant chorus, where the members worked on convincing him that God did exist. He was in Michigan for six months and then took up a course in French language and literature at the Sorbonne. In May 1968, during the revolution, he lived in University City in Paris. Afterwards, he returned to Michigan to study music and

gravitated back toward literature and writing. In 1969, Athayde left the University and resided in the Bahamas and wrote a novel in English, he then moved to New York. Throughout his travels he went back to Brazil for Christmas.

In 1971, Athayde went back to Brazil and began to write in Portuguese. Brazil had become a dictatorship since 1964 and would remain as such until 1980. By 1971 it had evolved to a military dictatorship. At 21 years of age, Athayde used the oppression he felt from being expelled from school three times, along with the totalitarianism of military and government and channeled it into a piece of work called *Appeared to Margaret* – translated to *Miss Margarida's Way*. Athayde noted in his interview with Kaufman that the play was a release of bitter feelings and functioned as a self-analysis. It also contributed to the huge success in his career as a playwright. He also felt the success of the play helped him to live up to his father's name. "The success of the image released me from my father, I was not only the son of the Austregesilo Athayde" (Kaufman 3).

After *Miss Margarida's Way* was written it was produced in Argentina, as censors in Brazil banned it. One year later, Marilia Pera debuted *Appeared to Margaret* in Brazil. It then went on to a string of successes all over the globe. Annie Girardot starred in *Appeared to Margaret* in France in 1974, Anna Procemer in Italy in 1975, Michael Cacoyannis in Greece in 1975 and Estelle Parsons in the United States in 1977. Parsons won a Tony Award for her portrayal of Miss Margarida on Broadway. *Appeared to Margaret* ran for forty-four productions in German and forty productions in Portuguese.

Athayde felt that the negative ramification of *Miss Margarida's Way* success is that it was too successful, so much so, it shadowed the rest of his works. He has twenty-seven other plays. Kaufman asked Athayde about the life he lives today. He answered that he enjoys the beach,

stretching, and has taken some dance classes. He stresses the importance of physically staying in shape. Athayde's biggest fear is not finishing his works.

Athayde's works

Athayde published books were *The Garden of Fairy Mangana* 1974, *The Man from Lagoa Santa* 1979, *Confessions of the Flight Attendant Vladimir da Braniff* 1989, *The Brazilian in Manhattan* – 1996, *The Carpenter Beast* 1998, *Don Miguel of Portugal* 1998, *Abracadabrante* 2001, *Jonathan's Friend* 2001. His plays included such works as *Crime without Punishment* 1984, *A Godmother's Curse* 1995, *The Cordial man* 1997, *Visitors on High* 1974 (a science fiction story), *Handbook For Survival in the jungle* 1974 (“an attempt to reflect on human existence” -reflection from the hub of four survivors of a plane crash lost in the Amazon rainforest), *Way Back On the Farm* 1976, *The Irrepressible Madame Protein* 1983. His film included *Scared Sands* was written and directed by Athayde, starring Marilia Pera. *Mrs. Bynther* in Brazil is a docudrama, TV miniseries narrated by Estelle Parsons. *Bali, Paradise turned Hell* is a documentary and lastly *Jungle of My Desire*, starring Estelle Parsons and Joao Velho.

Roberto Athayde has some unpublished text: *The Reactionary*, 1971; *A Journey to the East*, 1984; *Queen Carlota*, 1994; *The Architect and the King of Brick*, 1988; *The Four Pillars of Decency*, 1991; *Dorn Miguel, King of Portugal*, 1998; *The Grand Tour*, 2000, an adaptation of *The Mystery of Irma Vap* with Marilia Pera, interpreted by March Nanini Latorraca and Ney, which was also a great success.

The art of a one person show: some practical tips

“Solo plays are, in my mind, the height of theatricality. The actor communicates intimately with the audience – one on one. It can be amazing.”

-Craig Mason

I have developed a fondness for one person shows that I didn't have before my own solo performance. When first mentioned, a one-person show wasn't all that appealing to me. I never had a strong desire to act in a one-woman play - I thought of them as being dull and tiresome for the actors and the audience. To date, I had only seen a single one person show, and I was thoroughly bored. When I was told I was going to do *Miss Margarida's Way* for my thesis project, I politely accepted but the excitement for doing the show didn't come until I read the script over a couple of times and thought of all the things I could do and put into the performance.

Craig Mason, Theaterfolk publisher, suggests that every actor should perform and/or write a long form Monologue (a complete full length or one act play performed by one actor) at least once in their acting career. Having done a long form monologue I strongly agree with his recommendation. Actors can't help but come out of the experience stronger in their abilities because of the amount of discipline, drive, focus, concentration, physical and mental stamina, tenacity, quick wits, and talent it takes to pull off a successful solo performance. These elements are what I relied on to get me through rehearsal and performances of *Miss Margarida's Way*. I thought I accomplished something huge as an undergrad student when I did a ten-minute monologue playing a ninety-year-old ex-slave, but to perform a long form monologue for two hours and have that audience with me was truly an amazing feeling.

Elements of a one-person show

As rewarding as the end result can be, there is a lot of work that goes into crafting a one-person show. I thought it beneficial to delve into the process, techniques, and advantages of doing a long form monologue. I came across some interesting tips and techniques acquired from research and from my own experience. It is a huge and tricky undertaking. The performance can

be two hours of pure joy and engaging entertainment or two hours of boredom and misery. I was fortunate enough to have a wonderful director and crew to help me bring my character to life. However, in the beginning I needed to understand what were the fundamental tools. I had questions. What were the elements that separated the good one person shows from the bad ones? Moreover, how would this play (one woman show) propel me to the next level in my acting abilities?

There are two universal reasons one-person shows are done: First, they are cheap to produce with limited resources. Second, it is a good way for an ambitious actor to promote his/her work without the restrictions of a full production (cast and crew) will inevitably have. The Siegal column explains that a good one-person show should have an innovative and new subject, a solid actor, and an excellent script.

Miss Margarida's Way was written in 1971, the subjects are hardly new, but they are timeless. It has been argued that *Miss Margarida's Way* is outdated but, to the contrary, the issues and subject matter expressed in the play are still relevant and fresh in the audience's mind and in today's society. The play is about human nature and how power over another human being manifest itself. People can identify with injustice and the struggle for freedom. Whether it is the control of government or a possessive boss/boyfriend/girlfriend/parent. The sad reality is someone will always be the oppressor and the other person will be the oppressed as long as there is this thirst for power and control. It happens generation after generation. A sentiment Miss Margarida leaves the audience with at the end of the play, "Miss Margarida will always be like this and Miss Margarida will always be here with you. Today it's you and afterward the children of your children"(Athayde 58) The themes in the play gave me a good foundation that I could relate to in order to evoke the passion, empathy, and vision I needed to bring the character to life.

It was important that I knew my worth as an actress in order to push myself and make the necessary adjustments and maintain the physical and mental stamina needed in my solo performance. Part of achieving anything is the belief that it can be accomplished and having the determination and discipline. Throughout all the apprehension and prior perception of doing a one-person show I always believed I could carry off such a task.

I believe Roberto Athayde wrote a good script. I was intrigued after the first read. The themes and subjects were identifiable. It was bold enough to rebel, mirror truth, and deliberately shock and move the audience to think. It's a script full of acting potential. As an actor, I look for these dynamics in a script. It was easy for me to decipher the clues in the script and interpret them. Most scripts have some flaws that may need to be worked out in rehearsal. I didn't understand the ending at first, but it was flexible enough for the director and myself to bring the intention and concept to fruition. Athayde in his interview explained he made the figure of the dictator a teacher to eliminate the fourth wall, involve the public without them feeling, wronged, humiliated and embarrassed. "I felt I should create roles that become inherent to the public work or do nothing. That respected the passivity of the public if he wanted to be passive. So *Daisy* (later translated to Miss Margarida) was the spark. I discovered that the only way to engage an audience was to give it a role that allows passive and at the same time active" (Kaufmann 2).

Types of Long form monologues

Long form monologues are challenging because it requires a lot of concentration. "Concentration is the quality which permits us to direct all our spiritual and intellectual forces toward one definite object and to continue as long as it pleases us to do so – sometimes for a time much longer than our physical strength can endure"(Boleslavsky 9). Like all one person shows, in *Miss Margarida's Way* I never had the luxury of leaving the stage after a scene or two. I

couldn't afford to get lazy in my acting nor my preparation because it isn't hard to miss a moment being the sole actor on stage.

Solo performing stems from the traditions of storytelling. Storytelling dates back to prehistoric times when people gathered around in a circle and told stories, which was the source of entertainment and expression. It was also a way in which a culture passed along its history. On contemporary stages, It is an intimate experience that literally removes the forth wall. In *Miss Margarida's Way*, I had a bigger connection with the audience because they were my eighth grade students, which made the play interactive. If and when I write my own long form monologue, it will behoove me to write it to fit my abilities as an actor, and write about relevant subjects that I'm passionate about.

During my research, I took notice of the five different types of long form monologues, stated in Craig Mason's article, One Person Shows. The five types are autobiographical, biographical, storyteller, theme, and multi character monologues. I examined them further to get a better understanding of where *Miss Margarida's Way* fit in.

An autobiographical monologue, in which the actor tells a story or event of their life, is good for an actor since one can easily access personal feelings and emotions because the story is a self- portrayal. However, an actor has to be mindful to not over indulge in self pity or emotion or the audience may get bored and lose sympathy, and patience. The audience must care about the character and what he/she has to say.

Biographical monologues (is simply the story of any person's life written by another -it can be the life of a historical figure or pop cultural icon) allow the actor a chance to bring a persona that the world is familiar with to life. An actor/writer of a biographical monologue should maybe shy away from listing events in chronological order from birth to death. Rather, the focus should

be on the character dealings around an important event in the figure's life and be creative in telling the story – in ways the audience wouldn't expect. Surprises can keep an audience engaged. If an actor interprets an important event in a figure's life the way the audience may already be familiar with, the audience gets ahead of the actor and begins to tune the actor out. One of my strong suits in portraying Miss Margarida was keeping the audience guessing about what I was going to do next.

The storyteller monologue (an actor telling a made-up story) gives the actor-writer a specific purpose and direction. There must be dramatic elements interwoven in the script because audiences crave that entertainment value. They want the actor to take them on a journey and back, make them laugh, and move them to tears.

In Theme monologues the actor stresses the themes and issues. An actor can't express the gist of themes and issues fully without having a personal experience or passion for it. Theme monologues can sometimes overshadow the character work of an actor so one has to find that delicate balance.

In multi character/monologue form an actor portrays different characters as he/she moves from one moment to the next. In this form the actor doesn't usually revisit characters. It allows an actor to stretch their physical and vocal range. Multi character- Dialogue form (the actor creates a number of specific characters as he/she is telling a story.

Miss Margarida's Way is a theme and multi character dialogue form monologue. Themes were a big part of the play. The issues were the driving force in the play. My job was to steer them in the right direction and make the ride an enjoyable and enlightening one for the audience. The multi character aspect came about after Mr. Hudson and I started to work on the different themes and find ways to make it more theatrical and entertaining. It helped to keep the play,

fresh, surprising, exciting, engaging and varied. It also helped me to stay engaged in conveying the story.

Script Analysis

Plot/Summary

Miss Margarida's Way is an allegory play about totalitarianism. It illustrates the abuse of power and the psychological ticks of abusive dictators (i.e. physical, mental, and emotional) whether in church, government, military, academic, societal, or family life. The play is broken down into two acts: first class and second-class. The first section is an overview of what she expects of the class. The setting and central metaphor is a Biology classroom cluttered and unkempt. It is a platform for Miss Margarida to control and force her point of view unquestioningly on others. The classroom is the only place where Miss Margarida feels in control. It illustrates the chaotic education system of which she is a part. "This whole goddamn school is a pain in the ass" (Athayde 42). Outside of the classroom, she is in the same position as those eighth graders, powerless to step forward and be counted or go against the grain in fear of being scolded, silenced, censored or made to feel inferior. The central image is the chalkboard, in UNO's production the chalkboard became the walls and floor, which complimented the central metaphor. The chalkboard established the classroom setting. It reiterates what Miss Margarida is trying to say. It reflects her point of view for the class and allows them to always have that visual as a reminder of her power.

Miss Margarida is the teacher and her audience members are her eighth-grade biology students. Miss Margarida starts off teaching seeming plain and calm but her eighth grade students (audience) learn quickly that Miss Margarida is not an ordinary teacher. Miss Margarida immediately jumps into her primary rule: things should go her way. She passionately transitions from one subject to the next spewing harsh life lessons and warns of the tragic

outcome of not heeding her words. She often makes an example out of one suspecting student to show the rest of class what can happen to them when her subjects are interrupted.

Themes

As was previously stated, *Miss Margarida's Way* is a themed long form monologue. She is a teacher on the surface but the themes she expounds are more important than actually teaching biology or any other subject she uses as a pretext. In an interview of Athayde he expressed that *Miss Margarida's Way* was a bit of self-analysis. He released a lot of anger into this aggressive play. It is vital to explore the themes together with my character analysis because it is a one-person show so the themes will give me insight and help shape my character's point of view. The issues she discusses throughout the play are: the importance of education, dictatorship and inferiority, failure, sexuality and loss of innocence, and Biology.

The importance of education is a running theme throughout the play. It ties into the concept and the plot of the play. The fact that she is not a (politically correct by-the-book) teacher implies that she is against the grain. The profanity and threats she spews in the class begged the question, why does she feel she has to use this unorthodox method of teaching? The chaos and clutter of the classroom say a lot about her school system.

Miss Margarida stresses school being a second home. I remember being told as an elementary student that school was a second home. Teachers and parents are supposed to mold a child to grow and be productive citizens in society. School is there to help nurture the child and train him in the path that he should go. Miss Margarida did not feel that nurturing or experience that training as a child. I believe that's why Miss Margarida often digresses from the subject to teach life lessons. She seems to have been never able to really find her way in society, having

authority figures telling her what to do and how she's supposed to do it. It's hard to be an individual and find one's own voice when it's spoken with someone else's words.

Athayde's take on Miss Margarida's rebellious nature of the school system stems from his personal experience with school and the oppression he felt. He was expelled from three schools and did not have a tolerance for rules. He had a hard time opening up to people. Even in therapy his reserve caused him to get expelled. It had to be frustrating to constantly get pushed aside and rejected from what was supposed to be considered a second home. That provided Athayde's vehicle for venting - the classroom. He had enough love/hate (with emphasis on hate) built up that it made sense to him. It's apparent that Miss Margarida rebelled in her time. Miss Margarida rebels even in her class. Clearly, the principal has laid down rules for her to follow yet she doesn't and even makes fun of the system for which she is apart. "The principal forbade me to take off my clothes in front of you, not even my tits I can show you"(Athayde 15).

Parents entrust their kids to an institution of higher learning and teachers who are in certified positions to teach. Miss Margarida convinces her students of where they fit in the scheme of things

The reason why you are all sitting at your desk without having been able to choose... the reason is very simple. It's because school is a *second home*. Did any of you choose to be born? Was any of you consulted about the convenience of being born? No, right? So, that's it, school, being a second home, is the same thing. No one asked your opinion about coming in and now you cannot get out. This is the beautiful truth. You all have to admit that within these walls you have no choice. (Athayde11).

This paragraph illustrates how children are taught at an early age to unquestioningly obey authority figures and all their rules. There are harsh outcomes when that trust is abused. Miss Margarida exemplifies the authority figure that has the intent to gain control over a child and mold him/her to be passive and submissive. However, there is a positive side to Miss Margarida. As much as Miss Margarida rebels and talks against the system, she stresses how important it is to get an education “Getting an education is the most serious responsibility you have at your age. It’s not only for your own future but for the future of your country” (Athayde 28). It is not that she wants to compromise the students’ education. Miss Margarida simply wants to teach *her way*— imparting life lessons along with the standard. She is in conflict with what her boss (principal) wants her to teach so she is forced to rebel against the system.

Athayde touches on the fondness of certain teachers and how they leave students with lasting impressions. Miss Margarida talks about her fondness for one teacher that she remembers who went beyond her lesson plan to teach life lessons and share world -views. She often digressed from her subjects – as Miss Margarida attested in her monologue. Miss Margarida often deviates from her subject matter too. I can remember my favorite teachers, and they often strayed from the subject to teach life lessons. I realized those were the teachers I felt more of a connection too maybe because they took the time to connect instead of going strictly by the book. However, they weren’t as extreme and over-the-top as Miss Margarida. Miss Margarida is admirable in that she’s trying to connect with her students out of a genuine concern for them, even if her lessons are harsh and nearly violent.

Dictatorship and Inferiority - Miss Margarida’s lesson for history is that everyone wants to dominate everyone else. The urge for control over another person stems from greed, and power. “Everyone wants to be Miss Margarida”(Athayde 24). Just about every dictator thinks that

everyone else should be like him or her and do what he or she does. Miss Margarida makes her students feel inferior by telling them they don't know anything, so they can get it in their heads that they need her to think for them. She goes on to pose a division problem. It is a lesson of greed: things should be divided equally but, somehow, in the end, the people who get the most are those who are manipulative or have brute strength. Miss Margarida poses a problem based on that fact telling the class to imagine that there are twelve bananas for thirty-five students in the class. The students must divide the twelve bananas among themselves. She comes to the conclusion that the strongest student will get eight or nine bananas all for himself and the second strongest will get three or four bananas and the thirty-three remaining mouths will be left without bananas. This problem shows how there are small groups of people with all the power and the rest of the people have none. Miss Margarida is determined to make her students understand that she is the boss, and they are learning things her way or else. She begins her lecture by telling them that everything has advantages in the world if you just listen and be obedient. "The deserving ones who are they? They are those who obey" (Athayde 13).

A dictator's mission is to always keep their subordinate in place to keep them controlled. They usually silence any one who speaks against them, which could be one of the reasons *Miss Margarida's Way* was banned in Brazil. When an individual holds a mirror up to a dictator and shows them how they are, they are immediately censored. "A dilemma that so many other playwrights have faced when they try to write under a dictatorship: how to reach the audience with a political message and not be swallowed up by the violence they are denouncing" (Dorfman 28). Miss Margarida represents in person and through her lessons totalitarianism in all its forms; she illuminates how society can brainwash and beat an individual down until he either becomes consumed by grief or perpetuates the abuse. Miss Margarida gives an example of this

notion when she scolds the student for coming up to show her a difference in her lesson of equation. She explains the melting pot and how everyone is equal and no one can tell the difference. She charges the students in the class to come up if they see any difference. Now, clearly even though she asks them to do something or ask them a question she doesn't really want them to respond – only listen and heed her teachings. She breaks this lesson down in her cooperation lesson. She tells them “first, you must not react in any manner to what Miss Margarida says. This second necessary thing in this cooperation program is something Miss Margarida has already told you but is always convenient to point out again. It is that blind obedience to Miss Margarida” (Athayde 43). When a defiant student does get up to show her a difference in her example, she roughs him up and puts him in his place. She rants “It's time you people knew your place, how dare you interrupt Miss Margarida while she is doing equation” (Athayde 22). Miss Margarida further warns that they are just eighth graders, and they'd better have a good equation background before they leave elementary school. Her determined dominance also shows up when she tells the class to be silent even when they are not talking. It is like a parent punishing a child before they do something wrong just to make sure they remain submissive. Miss Margarida tells the student to be silent, just in case they were thinking about talking. She is not above threats to the ones with a thirst to rebel “I'll ram this green board up the ass of the first bastard who opens his mouth!” (Athayde 20)

Failure is frowned upon. “Failure at any of those exams is a disgrace that can mark your lives forever. So in this very last year of elementary school, the student who fails will see all the doors slammed in his face. It is a whole world of knowledge; it is the bulk of human culture and understanding that become suddenly inaccessible to you. And shame like a black cloak falls over the name of your family” (Athadye 16). That American dream that every American wants to

have can be acquired through hard work and diligence, but it must start with a foundation of education. If individuals fail early in life, they run the risk of becoming lost in the system and become a failure to society. In the second class, she brings it back up telling them if they don't put forth the effort they won't make it to ninth grade, and if they don't make it to their senior year, they can't go to college, and they won't get a Masters degree or Ph. d and thus they will never be doctors or lawyers, or business people. She explains how the right path can be tough, hard and long but the end result is much greater. "Many are called but few are chosen" (Athayde 43). After she tells them of this life lesson she warns them that in order to spare themselves of this ignorance and shame they must obey her.

Sexuality and the loss of innocence is a prevalent theme in *Miss Margarida's Way*. Athayde used a woman teacher rather than a man in a dominant role. What is interesting about this is that one is not used to a woman like Miss Margarida. Women by nature are usually gentle, maternal, and nurturing. Miss Margarida still has those instincts but gentlewoman she is not. Throughout her life she has developed calluses on her heart and become a cold and manipulative survivor. Athayde's reason for choosing a woman character, stated in Rebelling Through Poetry written by Andrea Stevens, was: "I wanted my symbol of tyranny to be very seductive. So it came out this way: a mother underneath, a dictator above, and a teacher in between" (Steven 5). One expects a man to be that hard and dominate but for a woman to come out taking no prisoners says a lot about how one can become affected by living under tyranny. She has to endure a lot because she is female in a male dominated society that doesn't respect women. She learned to use her nature to dominate maybe early on in life due to sexual abuse. "You want Miss Margarida to take off her clothes and be naked in front of you that's what you really want"(Athayde 16). I chose to take that route in creating my character because she hints at abuse of a sexual nature and her

frustration with male dominance by calling all men faggots and homosexuals. She further hints at sexual frustration when she asks the students who have never masturbated to step forward and scolds the male student for not masturbating as if to say that he should be. “Why aren’t you playing with your thing”(Athayde 29)? She has this mini tirade about castrating all men and how she needs, and demands respect. She speaks of abuse when she talks about herself as a little girl and how another little girl would fondle her. She also refers to that same story in the second class.

Adolescence is a tough time for most kids. It’s the time when children are finding their identity among peer pressure. If the nurturing and educational aspect is blurred it can be the time when kids begin to rebel, go off track, and lead down the road of self-destruction. Drugs, promiscuity, and crime are such vices kids turn to when they are on a self-destructive path. In the first class Miss Margarida points out that during the peak of adolescence, “the boys start giving a little more of themselves and the girls start getting wronged. And after that you’ll never be the same boys and girls that you are here. From then on you’ll only be concerned with fucking and getting fucked for the rest of your lives” (Athayde 19). This passage implies that once that innocence is lost it is gone and one cannot get it back. It also points out maybe Miss Margarida’s personal sign of sexual abuse when she was in the eighth grade. She rants that the students want to call her a cunt more than once. Her obsession of the male anatomy good or bad shows as she draws a giant penis on the board. When one person dominates and abuses another person sexually they tend to become obsessed by it. Barabara E. Bogorad Ph, d states in her article on *Sexual Abuse: Surviving the pain* that adult incest survivors may demonstrate some of the following symptoms:

Addictions, compulsive behavior, obsessions
Startle response
Difficulties with anger/rage
Issues with trust, intimacy, relationships
Issues with boundaries, control, abandonment
Feeling crazy, different, marked
Denial, flashbacks
Sexual issues and extremes
Multiple personalities
Signs of posttraumatic stress disorder

Most of the symptoms listed stand out in Miss Margarida's character. She clearly has had a past that was not too kind to her. She survived, but based on the things she says one can tell she is scorned from the effect of her life dominated by others.

Another prevalent theme throughout the play was the central subject, Biology. Miss Margarida elaborates throughout the script on Biology as the study of life, the certainty of death, and the choices we think we have. Biology is the basis of life. Miss Margarida goes from one subject to the next and always reverts back to biology and the fact that we are all going to die. It shows how everything we do in life is determined by the fact and certainty of being born and dying. Her take on biology is that we really have no choice in life; we may think we do, but we don't. "Did any of you choose to be born was any of you consulted about the convenience of being born. No, right?" (Athayde 11) Miss Margarida feels that their choices aren't their own, and if they did have a choice she was going to tell them what that choice was. She goes into the three great principles of biology. The first principle is that everyone is born, without choice. The second principle is the middle—people living their lives happily or miserably. The third principle is death. She speaks on all the choices we make in society and how we still can't control rather we live or die. Miss Margarida further presses the subject of birth and death by speaking on our fascination for how our bodies look dead (illustrating on a skeleton) which is how the **'bony**

science' was created. She goes through conception, birth, death and how in the end the body is totally useless. One section that stood out to me was Miss Margarida's handle on microbes and viruses. How one can't see things that are right in front of their face. She tells the students that microbe and Viruses are small animals that kill us and nobody can see them. She talks about how humans know that the virus is there, but they choose to shut their eyes to that fact. How often have we shoved the AIDS epidemic under the rug until it numbered in the billions? She points out how people turn their backs to the truth out of fear of backlash, shame, or exclusion.

"Evolution is nothing and revolution is two times evolution two times nothing" (Athayde 27). Miss Margarida illustrates in this statement how history repeats itself and how we are doomed to be a part of the cycle. The more things change the more they stay the same. Therefore, inevitably nothing really changes. One rebels, and in that revolution creates a new order, which lasts until someone, or a group of people revolts again. It's a cyclical thing that she feels has amounted to nothing -it's useless.

Miss Margarida has a lot of patterns throughout the play, which aid in her controlling nature of her students. Dictators often repeat themselves to get their point across or to subliminally drill their ways into an individual's head. I noticed that most of her repeated patterns were as a result of exerting her control over the students.

The deserving ones who are they? They are those who obey.
Everyone wants to be Miss Margarida.
All of you will die.
You won't get sex education till you are in high school.
I know you want me to teach you the facts of life.
Let us sing let us pray in Miss Margarida's way.
Is there anyone here named messiah, and Jesus, no and Holy Ghost is there a Holy Ghost in this class?
You must obey Miss Margarida.
You must be silent.
The constant belittling

You know nothing at all.
Repeated 'little girl story.'
Miss Margarida is a cunt.
Don't you think because there is a bell that's going to ring that I have let you go.
Dealings with the principal
Miss Margarida molds you.
Miss Margarida loves, likes you.
You like your teacher, you love Miss Margarida.
You have no choice.
Profanity

When studying biology, we study the world and everything in and around it. Her teachings in biology show how important it is to be knowledgeable and aware of the world around oneself, "in order to have a sound mind"(Athayde 40). The knowledge one gains in the study of life and how the world works enables individuals to counter and change things. Miss Margarida is the example of how hard life can be, but with knowledge one can survive even with some battle scars. "Miss Margarida is not perfect, you have to accept Miss Margarida the way she is" (Athayde 59). The world is a mysterious, dangerous, and a magnificent thing. It is not perfect, neither are the people in it, but it can be beautiful. As I contemplate that idea, I begin to understand that this is also how I see Miss Margarida's character.

Character Analysis

Miss Margarida's Way is a view into a shattered soul. With all the craziness, monstrous tirades, and baggage, there is a genuine, and passionate human being. That is what I intended to share with the audience under all the themes and objectives, whether the audience likes the character or not. I wanted them to see that she was still just a human being. Analyzing a scene according to *The Practical Handbook* for the Actor boils down to three things: 1. What is the character literally doing? 2. What is the essential action of the character in this scene? 3. What is that action like to me? It's as if...(Ball 19). Miss Margarida is literally a teacher in a classroom teaching biology to her eighth grade students. *Miss Margarida's Way* happens in the 'now.' In other words, the inciting incident happens as soon as Miss Margarida steps on the stage to teach. She initiates the action and holds it until the end of the show, providing someone in the audience doesn't interrupt that action. Then her energy shifts to act on the intruder of action. *Backwards and forwards* notes this as being "Dramatic stasis (when things go on forever), Dramatic intrusion (the thing that comes along and happens, setting free the irresistible forces that run a play from that point), and the battle for new stasis initiated by intrusion" (Ball 23). My *as if* was, as if I was really in the presence of a bunch of eighth graders and how I reacted in the context of my character. I have taught eighth graders before so there was also a bit of sensory and emotional memory I could utilize. Miss Margarida's character is multidimensional. She represents power in all its forms. Her through line is to teach and dominate. She stresses and teaches the notion of power and control in every way a person can be controlled. Miss Margarida is controlling, crazy, and outrageous. She dictates, taunts, threatens, seduces, teaches, convinces, cajoles and enlightens as she preaches her point of view on life under the pretense of a biology

class. She is an example of how society can beat one down so much so that they become consumed by it or programmed to the point they become the dictator they once despised.

Methods

“The education of an actor consists of three parts. The first is the education of his body, the whole physical apparatus, of every muscle and sinew. The second part of the education is intellectual cultural. The third kind of education is the education and training of the soul – the actor must have a soul capable of living through any situation demanded by the author.”

-Richard Boleslavsky

After gaining the basic foundation of creating the character it came time to actually start layering on the dynamics of characterization. I needed a more in-depth analysis of characterization, as it was imperative that I gave Miss Margarida a back-story that agreed with the intent of the playwright and director. At the same time, it needed to be a background for which I could relate. My background information helped me to delve into the script and come close to the emotional feeling of the issues I’m expressing. I knew my background so well, I was able to think of things my character would actually do while I waited for the show to start, and it made my intentions more accessible without over intellectualizing it. It also enabled me to find my way back when I digressed from the script to improv. Throughout my process of creating my character, I focused on the point of view (objective, action, motivation), instinctual acting, Improvisation, physical and vocal training, pacing and emotional arc. I had an added challenge - which is usually not a challenge - and that is learning fifty-nine pages of dialogue spoken to the audience. I needed to mentally focus and keep my mind sharp enough to carry out such a large task. I examined some new tips on memorizing long form monologues. Mr. Hudson and I came up with other personas (i.e. special education student, ventriloquist, seductress, preacher, and cheerleader) to keep the work varied, engaging and entertaining. The personas were in keeping

with Miss Margarida's intention and the message she was trying to convey. "Audience suspension of disbelief is severely tested when the character is not deeply motivated to speak and when that motivation is not vital and clear" (Catron 100). I made sure my character motivation was clear, concise and strong.

Point of View

"It is necessary to have a point of view about the world which surrounds you, the society in which you live; a point of view as to how your art can reflect your judgment."

-Uta Hagen

My character had to be compelled to speak. However, what was the need to do so and where did it come from? I needed to start from the beginning but on a larger scale. Power of one gives a list of questions to establish the character's objective such as:

What does my character intently want?
Why? What motivational forces drive my character to seek that objective? What emotions move my character?
What is my character's stake in the outcome? What will my character lose if he or she doesn't achieve that objective?
At what specific points in the play is my character actively working to achieve the objective?
What contrary –minded forces stop my character from succeeding?
How does my character react to those counterforces?
What actions does my character take to overcome these obstacles?
Does my character ultimately succeed or fail?

(Catron 131)

These questions helped me to better understand where Miss Margarida was heading in her ideas, and what she was trying to accomplish throughout the play. I had to focus on my character's intention at all times even when there were moments when I had to improv I needed to stick with my overall goal of what I needed to achieve. The stakes of getting my objective had to be high enough to sustain the energy and urgency for the two hours I was on stage trying to teach eighth grade students (audience) what I felt they needed to know. On the surface the play is an allegory

to mirror a dictator but in terms of objectives, Miss Margarida needed to teach these kids not only the basic subjects but to prepare these kids for the harsh realities they will inevitably face in life. She needed to get it through their heads in the two hours because the next minute is not promised but death is certain as she bluntly put it “All of you are going to die”(Athayde 16). Miss Margarida’s point of view was interchangeable between third person and first person. I was able to identify her opinion and passion about each subject, she addresses. Pinpointing her point of view helped me to break the long form monologue down into sub – monologues. As a result, it was easy for me to localize my sub-objective from my overall objective and my action became clearer and concise. It also made my transition from one beat to the next smoother and more precise.

One of the actor’s greatest challenges is what to do when you are on stage alone. The two questions become, where do you put your attention? How do you gauge the success or failure of your action? There are two possible answers. Place the test of the action in the audience. Use your imagination and try to succeed with the person you are using in your as-if. During one of my performances the audience wasn’t very responsive. My as-if was to imagine that I was actually talking to a bunch of eighth graders that were bored, antsy, and ready to go home. I became more frustrated but I knew I needed to get through to these kids (audiences). My urgency and tactics changed, and I looked to see if they comprehended what I was teaching them. Before, I assumed they would get it. I placed my concentration on the students, and what I wanted them to get from my teachings. As a result I didn’t have time to be self-conscious about all the people watching me on stage by myself, or flubbing a line, or what my next action was, and they came around.

Given Circumstances/Motivation

Even though I realized I needed a point of view to help me understand my intention from moment to moment it took me asking myself some questions to fully commit to my characters' points of view. In Louis Catron's book *Power of One*, he present questions of given circumstances and motivation, which connect directly to what I needed to adapt to my character's opinion. Catron divides the questions into two categories and notes that the actors put themselves into character when examining the question by responding with "I". The questions are:

I: My outer circumstances

Who am I? Think of a complete biography. How old am I? What is my history: education, employment, travel, physical aspects (height, Weight, color hair, etc), clothing preferences, and marital, economic, social status? What are my inner aspects such as emotional qualities, self-image? What are my private fantasies and dreams, and how do I respond to the success or failure of those dreams?

Where am I? How do those environmental conditions influence my behavior? Do I own or rent this place? Did I decorate it? What do I see when I look around? What is my response to what I see? Do I enter the room confidently or shy? What do I find when I leave this environment and go into the (offstage) world? How am I influenced by those surroundings?

When is it? What year, season, month, time of day? How does the time influence me?

What objects do I use (such as a cane, an imaginary billiard cue, my vest or suspenders, etc)?

Who are the people who influence me? What are those influences? How do I feel about each of them?

II. My Driving Motivations

What Do I want? What do I need, must have at all costs? What is my general, abstract goal (such as to be happy)? What is my specific, concrete goal (i.e. I must marry Juliet immediately)?

When do I want that goal?

Why do I want it? Why is it important? How do I feel about what I want? What is my emotional investment?

What obstacles prevent me from getting what I want? What are my intellectual and emotional responses to those obstacles?

What am I going to do to achieve my goal?

What are specific mannerisms? What is my characteristic gesture (also called Psychologic gesture)? What animal image applies to me? How do I use my body (quick movements or slow, graceful, still, awkward, etc.)?

Who is the person most directly involved in what I want? What are my emotional and intellectual attitudes toward that person?

(Catron 143 – 144)

Power of One's two-part question enabled me to delve deeper into my character and find those details that I would have otherwise missed. My motivation for what I had to say throughout the play was stronger and my response to the issues and what happened in the classroom were more passionate and real in the moment. Once I answered the questions according to the playwright's intention, it freed me up to just "be." "Use the author's words and if your choice was right, they will always sound fresh, always alive! You won't need to play them. You'll hardly need to form them, they will come naturally" (Boleslavsky 37).

Acting on Instincts

Instinctual acting is important in *Miss Margarida's Way* because of the nature of this show (sole actor). I needed to concentrate more on the truth of the moment. Sanford Meisner says "That which hinders you is your task" (Bruder 40). In a classroom of encouraged unruly students a lot of spontaneous things can happen during my performance and did. I broke a prop that I wasn't supposed to break, a student walked in late for the second class after intermission, a student got up in the middle of the performance and walked in front of the stage, a couple was

kissing in the back, and students were throwing paper airplanes around the class. If I ignored such things as a teacher I would not have been acting truthfully in the moment. *Practical Handbook* articulates “ don’t censor or judge your impulses: do whatever occurs to you and don’t worry about whether it is appropriate for the scene” (Bruder 41). I took this notion to heed during rehearsal. It was imperative for me to practice spontaneity because Improv was inevitable in an audience related show. One may never know what will happen, but one must be ready. This play helped me learn how to effectively act on my impulses. I knew my objective was to teach by any means. My different actions and methods in which I taught my lesson stems from what and how I, as the character, was actually trying to say and how the students (audience) encoded my message. Meisner pronounces, “ You must act before you think – your instincts are more honest than your thoughts.”

Physical /Vocal preparation

“Doing this play (or any one person show) is like running a marathon you must get in shape.”

-Rodney Hudson

This show requires a lot of physicality and vocal variety and strength. I can feel the difference in the effectiveness and quality of my voice when I am warmed- up thoroughly. It is a step-by-step process of warming up the voice, which serves to get the oxygen and energy flowing. Aside from breathing the vocal folds need to be warmed-up. The facial articulators need to be warmed-up. Massaging the face helps to get the blood flowing. Stretching the facial muscles help to warm up the face. One must massage the face, neck, head, around the nose (nasal passages), eyes, back of the ears and neck. Humming gets the vocal cords ready to work. When humming, the mouth is closed and the jaw is dropped. The humming should get the vibrations going in the different resonators (chest, nose, head, larynx, pharynx, oral cavity, nasal

cavity, and sinuses). Once the vocal cords are ready sound and phonation happens. Going through vowels and consonants while over emphasizing your articulators help to warm –up the articulators and voice. An example is A, E, I, O, U – may, mee, mi, mo, mou and so on. An effective way to combine the breath, vocals, and articulators is the “pant” (take the above example) and inhale and exhale on short breaths while stretching your stomach out and back to your spine. Tongue twisters are effective in getting your articulators ready, and they are fun to do.

There are different kinds of physical exercises an individual can choose from like; Linklater (finding the Alexander string to work on posture of an actor – something I’ve known a lot of actors in my acting class to take for granted). I usually do a whole body stretch from head to toe. I find that it is most effective for an individual to work out the whole body to be ready for anything. One can start with a massage to loosen up the muscles and relieve the tension and kinks. One exercise that was a good stress reliever for me was a simple backstretch where I slowly roll down vertebrae by vertebrae and then back up slowly. Then, the head rotation gets the neck warmed –up. The shoulder (a place where most people hold tension) rolls get the tension out and keep the joints loose. The body shake releases the body. Isolations are a good way to warm up the body sections at a time and help to make the body more flexible. Some exercises I utilized in rehearsals and before performances were stretching the intercostal muscles and side muscles, air boxing, jogging, jumping rope, and jumping jacks. They were effective in building breath control, and physical endurance. I also found that doing those exercises while reciting the lines helped with memorization and getting the script embedded and invested into my whole body. Other helpful physical exercises included Suzuki, Yoga, and Pilates. All three exercises work on strength, flexibility, stamina, and core training. Again, it depends on

individual needs, individual body type, and the type of physical endurance needed for the show. I used most of the exercises to vary my workout and concentrate on what I needed to work on at different times of rehearsal and performance.

Memorization

Nothing is scarier for most actors than being on stage by oneself and the mind goes blank. I almost experienced this during the run through on my preview night for *Miss Margarida's Way*. It was the day before opening night. I was running the show, and I was about twenty minutes in and suddenly my mind went blank, and it was only for a minute, but it felt like an eternity. I had another hour and a half to be out there. Running off the stage wasn't an option, so I relaxed, focused on my intent, took some deep breaths, examined my physical space to figure out where I was in the script, and it came to me. I wouldn't have been able to remedy my mental block had I not been focused, aware of my blocking, and knew the script, backwards and forward. All these things help with memorizing a long form monologue and letting it stick when other unforeseen factors throw off an actor. Speed through before rehearsal and performances helped to engrain the lines in the mind. Exercising helps to invest the whole body and free the body to just let the words come. Other tips I found effective were learning the script by rote, reciting it in the morning, before rehearsal and at night. I also recorded the script on a voice recorder and listened to it in the morning and before bed. In addition, if one has the time to spare, handwriting or typing the script out is a good way to memorize.

Rhythm/ Emotional Arc

Craig Mason, Theaterfolk publisher, says there are two important factors in a solo performance - the pacing and emotional arc. During the first read through of *Miss Margarida's Way*, one of the first things we concentrated on was the pacing of the piece. It was important to

find the rhythm in the script because it showed the urgency and heightened the emotion of intent. The pacing and emotions of the play should be varied to prevent coming off artificial and monotonous. It also helps with the dramatic tension of the piece. Mr. Hudson talked a lot in rehearsal about the 'set up.' He pressed me to not expound my energy in one bit or before the peak of an emotion. I realized what he was saying during the run through in rehearsals. If I didn't get the tempo of a section right the intention fell flat. Vocally, I needed to figure out when to push, pull back, and when to transition from my high register to my low register. It made a big difference in how I invested in the story. The emotion arc is just as important because no one wants to see a character upset for five minutes straight, so it becomes more vital when an actor is on stage for two hours. Just like there are highs and lows in pacing, there are highs and lows of emotion. Miss Margarida goes through scores of emotions. She is dominant, harsh, and raunchy, but she is also sad, loving, and venerable. When she chooses to reveal these different emotions it is what makes up the emotional peak of my character.

Rehearsal Journal

September 4th Reading the script for the first time

I'm the only one in the cast, so I figured I get a head start on creating the role of Miss Margarida. It still seems so strange doing a play by myself. But the unknown and the road not traveled before is always a little scary and strange. At the same time, I'm excited about taking on a role that will stretch my abilities as an actor. My first thought after reading Roberto Athayde's play – *Miss Margarida's Way* -was Wow! This lady has issues. The length of this one-woman show is a bit overwhelming, fifty-nine pages! My goodness! Miss Margarida has so many levels, twists and turns! I know it is going to be a lot of work, but I'm excited about the journey and the process it will take to bring this character to life. It is a dream role for me.

I have so many questions swirling around in my head. What does she want to ultimately teach these kids? Is she determined to expose her students to a world that is not all roses? Is she preparing them for the harsh lessons they will inevitably face? She makes a point of it when she says, “none of you really knows what hardship is, some of you think the worst has past you, but you are always mistaken. The worst is always in the future. The worst is always what comes after”(Athayde p18). There are parts of this play that are so unconventional and wacky, I had to laugh. Then there are parts of the play where I questioned, would she really say this to an eighth-grade class? Alternatively, was the language a device so the audience wouldn't get bored, or was it there for shock value to deliberately make the audience uneasy about the subject matter?

At first I felt, how easy would it be to just be nasty, mean, dirty and derogatory just for the sake of it when playing such an over the top character. But obviously, I need to look deeper behind the words and what drives a person to a point where they are so blunt, and throw political correctness out the door.

I'm beginning to understand the frustration, the loneliness, the vulnerability, misguided hope, and the loss of innocence, that this lady possesses. Miss Margarida is a survivalist. Even though she is mentally bruised she has, for the most part, coped with a life of being controlled most of her life. I've come to the conclusion that Miss Margarida was never truly free to be what she wanted to be. The only place where she feels like she is in control is in her eighth grade class.

I'm contemplating her nature because she flips out every so often throughout the play. Some of the things in her lesson are logical and some things are just totally out of the box. She throws tantrums one minute and starts smiling out of nowhere the next second. Is she crazy? Does she have multiple personalities? On the other hand, is she just that calculating and manipulative? Then the stroke happens in the end, which is really confusing because it comes out of nowhere. She comes out of her stroke because the awkward student massages her chest. Okay! What does that mean, Really? The whole ending is very confusing to me. I guess it will become clearer after I have read the script couple dozen times to figure it out. After the final monologue, she leaves the purse on stage filled with candy and a gun. I assume the gun is for protection but a purse full of candy throws me off. Conversely, maybe the candy is there to bribe the kids. Is she going off stage to die? Could it be that she is blunt, and straightforward in her lessons because she knows she is about to die? Or is this her last ditch effort to make an impact and get through to her kids before she dies? I have my work cut out for me.

I can't wait to see what Rodney Hudson, the guest director of *Miss Margarida's Way*, will do with the ending. My first priority is to start memorizing. I would like to be off book by the time I start rehearsing. I have a busy semester, but I feel I can pull it off. While memorizing, I'll start scoring my script so that I go into rehearsal with several choices to make the necessary adjustment and explore beyond what is on the surface of my character.

October 8th First Meeting with Rodney Hudson

Rodney Hudson, the director of *Miss Margarida's Way*, walks into my office as I am learning my lines during my office hours and asks, "When do you want to meet" and I said "Well, we can meet now if you have the time." Consequently, he walks in the office and takes a seat. He proceeded to ask how far along in the script I was. I told him that I memorized the first fifteen pages -proud of myself, right? He says, "That's not enough." I thought I was on a roll considering all the work and projects I had to do this semester at the same time teaching Acting I and Oral communication. But actually, he is right. I have to set the bar high, so I don't get caught up and have to cram. Opening night is going to come up before I know it. My lines need to be engrained in my mind before I can even begin to actually work on my character. Mr. Hudson gave me a list of things to consider during my process of creating the role of Miss Margarida and memorizing.

Watch stand up comedy – note their aggression because she (Miss Margarida) is aggressive and she will have to do improv. Also note how comedians relate to and handle the audience.

There are three stages to her: public, private, and secret. Make an outline of when that happens in the script and when she switches in and out of each one.

Figure out which sections should be cut.

Write down everything you didn't like about your teachers in the past.

Play up her mean, nasty and bitter nature and why she is that way.

She is an experienced woman but good and worn out.

You must transform yourself.

She has to be in my bones.

Develop a stare.

Develop a bit of a Spanish accent her voice needs to change.

Run while reciting the lines.

There will be improv moments and we will write some scenarios into the script.

Mr. Hudson further informed me of the work I have ahead of me. He told me that a one-woman show is like running a marathon, and I may breakdown and hit a wall before it's over. I thought to myself, I really don't think it is that serious. I know it's going to be hard work. However, I'm no stranger to hard work, I can do this. Well, he must have been reading my face at that time because he smiled and said, "you think you won't, but you have no idea. It has nothing to do with how in shape you think you are, or how much muscle you have, you must have the acting chops – vocally, mentally as well as physically." I think he's trying to warn me how serious a role this is. I know it's going to be tough, but I can handle it. I'm ready for the task. I'm nervous about it but it doesn't stop that excitement I have for this process. I live for this.

After he left the office I had about thirty minutes before my Oral Communication class. I didn't get any more memorizing done today because after class, I had rehearsal for another local play called *Origins of Life*. Nevertheless, in the thirty minutes before class I looked over the list Mr. Hudson gave me to consider. Some of the things on his list I've already thought of, but it gives me a lot more range and ideas to work with. The three stages of her life actually helps me to score and break my script down even more because I was having trouble coming up with a varying list of intentions, and actions.

October 16th Second meeting with Rodney

Mr. Hudson and I met again today, and he had some more ideas for me to consider. We talked about her personality and what makes her tick, and drives her to act the way she does in

her class— which is where I am in my character analysis. I'm trying to understand and justify her motives to find the truth and detail of my intentions as the character.

Other things to consider and questions to think about:

She has a chip on her shoulder.

Who does she blame?

Make a history of her life.

She treats women different from men. Why?

When is she happy, sad, most angry, and most vulnerable?

Develop her walk.

The men she has been with are not decent.

Mr. Hudson urged me to talk to Marshall and Patrick about how he conducts his rehearsals. Concurrently, he is directing an original play by Whitney Buss, A Graduate playwrighting student at UNO, called *The Dark End of Day* and *The Chairs* by Eugene Ionesco. Patrick Payne is an actor in the play and Marshall Carby is assistant director. So, I talked to them, and they really didn't have much to say except that he was very detailed and works on certain sections over and over which will be fine with me. I love working on the details, to me that's where the truth of creating a character lies. You get to see the little things that make a character unique like, for example, the way Miss Margarida may turn her head in spite or anger or the way she may hold her glass when she is playful. In my Acting I class it's usually the details that actors forget, and they lose the essence of the character.

We sat up our first read through which will be on November 5th. I'm almost off book for Act I. I have twenty-four pages committed to memory so I'm doing well. It's funny! I run into people that know I'm doing this play and the first thing they ask is, how much have I memorized yet, then I get the "good luck with that" line as they give out a sigh of relief to not be in my shoes right now. However, I'm not freaking out yet so I just have to see how it goes from here. I

hope to finish up Act I before my first day because I have no idea what to expect from Mr. Hudson in rehearsal.

November 4: First read through

The cast and crew are as follow:

Joyce Deal – Miss Margarida
Louis Saubat – Student
Rodney Hudson - Director
Beau Bratcher – Assistant Director
Caroline Langlois - Stage Manager
Jennie Freeman – Costume Designer
Kevin Griffith - Set Design
Shannon Miller - Lighting designer
Rebecca Laborde – Assistant Stage manager
Katie Todaro – Properties

The first read through was today. It was a day of anticipation for two reasons. First, I didn't know what to expect going into the first read and was eager to start the rehearsal process.

Secondly, It also happens to be the day of the 2008 Presidential election. I voted early in the morning, so I wouldn't have to wait in a long line and be late for class due to the overwhelming voter turnout.

I expected to be off book for Act I today, but I'm not. I have three more pages left, but I do have Act I of my script scored, so far so good. I tried something different in my scoring process. Working with a script that is fifty-nine pages of monologue forced me to handle it differently. The magnitude of lines is overwhelming when it comes to scoring. I didn't know how I was going to achieve this effectively until we talked about 'scoring your script' in acting class. I have the pleasure of having Mr. Hudson as my instructor in acting class this semester. We were discussing in class how to effectively analysis a script. One of the many things that stood out for me in his lecture was when he talked about "point of view", or core sentence. The core sentence

reveals what a character is trying to convey in a scene or monologue. It forces the actor to make a choice on what side of the fence the character is on at any point in the monologue and play. By incorporating this method into my process of scoring *Miss Margarida's Way*, it enabled me to break the play down into beats by its core sentence. Then I was able to break those beats down further into what my intentions were and the different action it would take to accomplish my objective. I found this method easier to work with and not as overwhelming and exhausting. Otherwise, I would just have a bunch of arbitrary action verbs that don't really come from any real place. When I can frame the subject matter that Miss Margarida teaches at each peak with a point of view that evokes some personal passion it puts me in the emotional ballpark of the character, and I'm more able to find the truth of character.

At the first read through, I walked towards the theater, and I see Mr. Hudson walking towards the front door. Puzzled. I asked him, "Aren't we having rehearsal today?" And he says, "yes." Still puzzled. I asked, "Is there something going on in the theater?" He decided that he was tired of being in the theater for today and suggested we both get some fresh air. Therefore, we decided to sit outside on the patio in the forefront of the University Center on campus. On our walk to the University Center Mr. Hudson asked me what did I like about Miss Margarida. I had actually given that question some thought before today. What I liked about her was how she was so multifaceted. I admire her fight, her drive. In my opinion, she is a woman scarred and tarnished because of the cards she was dealt in her lifetime. She is a survivor. She is not all bad, there's something genuine there. His next question was, what do I hate about her? I realized it was almost some of the same things I like about her! She is so harsh and negative, but I understand that it stems from the hardships in her life. I hate the odds that were stacked against Miss Margarida early in life by her parents, and society. I hate that all she had to hold on to was

her dream of something better but because of the powers that be she just couldn't get a leg up. Her dreams were shattered early on. Her back was up against the wall more than once. As a result, she is void of innocence, bitter, and fed up with the world. She is powerless outside of the classroom.

After our brief question and answer period, we made our way to the chairs and sat down. I started looking around. I saw some students sitting and eating. There were cars passing and students walking up and down the sidewalk. And at first I'm thinking, this could be very awkward and distracting. I mean I am used to a more by the book approach when it comes to the first reading. The actors in a play arrive in the theater and sit around a table with the director and maybe the set designer explaining the set and concept then the actors read the script all the way through. However, I've learned and am still learning that this process is going to be different. So as I settled into this new approach, it was fine. The change of atmosphere turned out to be just what I needed and wasn't at all awkward or distracting.

I read through the script, and we took note of the rhythms and patterns that were written into the script i.e. the repetition and the tempo. Tempo is an important part of the script because it provides urgency and depth to what Miss Margarida has to say. I also discovered things while reading through the script today that I didn't notice during my thesis work on the script.

The read through was good and productive. I walked away wondering about the rest of the rehearsal process and where Mr. Hudson will go in his direction. I haven't worked with Mr. Hudson outside of acting class. He is an intense instructor and pushes his students to always be better than good or average, which is a good thing, in my opinion. It reminds me to never get comfortable in my craft. Sometimes I need that extra push. However, I must admit if you're not used to his personality or can't get use to a 'tell it like it is' instructor, he can be intimidating and

off-putting. Even so, I can appreciate what he is trying to accomplish with me. We stopped at the end of Act I. The next rehearsal will be on November 6th.

I went home and tried to memorize more of my script, but I kept getting distracted by the returns on the election. I couldn't turn off the television. I was anxious to know who would be our 44th president of the United States. It was either John McCain or Barrack Obama. So, I called it a day on my script and around ten thirty at night, I'm watching tensely as the news reporter announces that Barrack Obama has made history by becoming the first African American president. There was this wave of emotion that came over me. Wow. Oh... My goodness! There were feelings of disbelief and elation. Obama becoming president assures me that I can dream big and no one can stop it but me.

November 6th Read through of Act II

Today we read through Act II. We concentrated on finding Miss Margarida's voice. It was 'stop and go' as we went over certain sections more than once to find and feel the rhythms and patterns. We discussed briefly some of the themes as we crossed them in the script during the read through. We concluded the rehearsal at the end of Act II.

We finished reading the play all the way through. Now, it was time to get it on its feet. We are going to start blocking tomorrow. I need to brush up my lines on the first ten pages to be ready for tomorrow. I am off book for Act I and starting on the first four pages of Act II.

November 7th Blocking 9-15

Today in rehearsal Mr. Hudson and I talked about the set. It will obviously be a classroom setting but not your average classroom. Apparently, the class will be badly maintained with trash all over the floor, desk, and even in the audience. I love the idea. It gives me another level to

play. Miss Margarida's life is in shambles and to walk in a dilapidated classroom to teach adds to her stress, irritation, and frustration.

Today we blocked what is to be Miss Margarida's beginning ritual. Mr. Hudson came up with some stage business of me coming into class getting comfortable, prepping my desk and calling roll. It's all very meticulous. It reveals a lot about the personality of my character without saying a word. The moment before is important because it reveals a small amount of back-story, and character. To see the moment before happen on stage is an interesting dynamic. Very clever, I probably would not have thought of that. The beginning ritual is not in the script, but it makes sense, adds more depth, and truth to my performance. It sets up the scene very nicely. And Personally, it takes the edge off when I can come in and literally prepare myself to begin instead of coming in and just starting. The beginning ritual takes about three to five minutes.

After the ritual took shape, we went on blocking the first seven pages of the script. We established 'bits' for my character that heightens and lifts the monologue as well as my intention and action. It helps to establish my character and keep the work engaging. A monologue that is fifty-nine pages long needs some added layers and spice. From what we've discussed the 'bits' will be very amusing.

I'm excited about the work we did today. I got to experience the detailed work Mr. Hudson employs in his direction. I really like the way he works, probably because it agrees with my process and intention of the play. I too, work on a scrupulous level when it comes to developing a character; I look for the clues in the script to find the subtleties that speak volumes. I look for those unique ticks of my character that the playwright has given me, and add my own personal interpretation of it. I work from an instinctual level and note how it comes out physically and

emotionally. That is, acting and reacting truthfully in the moment. It makes my work more organic. Acting on instinct helps me to personalize my emotions and intentions. It also frees me up to add on a layer that the director will naturally add to bring the whole play together. I found that it serves me well with this play because it gives way for impulse. I must have a point of view and understand what drives me to say the things I say in this play. I believe impulse drives our thoughts naturally. It stems from what we want at any given time and why we need it at that moment. And as Meisner suggests, “one should know his lines well in order to find the heart of his instincts and thus react truthfully in the moment.” And in order to drive the beats in this play there has to be a sudden urge of tension and emotion to go through all the different levels and emotion that Robert Athayde has set forth in this play. It will also free me up for my improv moments. The subject matters that I speak about in this play have to be taken personally. Otherwise, I would be doing a disservice to the playwright’s intention because there will be no struggle or personal gain and thus there will be no connection from me to the audience. In other words “please the character and the audience will come to you” (Hudson).

The connection to the audience is much more important in this play because it is audience related; they become my acting partner(s). They have to be able to decode my intentions in order to feel what I’m trying to convey and why I’m saying it in the first place. I’m getting a good handle on Miss Margarida’s point of view but there are still some moments in the play that I need clarification on. I assume it will become clearer during the rest of the rehearsal process.

I’m actually excited about this whole process. Taking on a one-woman show is so new to me. I feel like if I can get through this without freaking out, or losing my sanity – I can take on just about any role as an actor. I know one thing. However the end result turns out, I will learn a lot about myself personally and as an actor because this play demands so much of me.

I'm going to keep an open mind, continue to shape up my body, my vocals, and breath capacity. I want to be as flexible in my abilities as possible to be ready to explore and push myself beyond what is comfortable and safe. I also need to be ready for what Mr. Hudson has in store, because he obviously has some tricks and techniques up his sleeve, judging from what he has told me today and the work we did today. This will be a huge learning experience for me. It's a great opportunity for me to stretch far and wide in my process of creating this role. In this kind of role, I can't help but grow as an actor and come out with a new found sense of self, capabilities and strength.

November 8th blocking pgs 15 – 22

Today we blocked the next seven pages. I'm getting a good grip on those rhythms Mr. Hudson and I talked about earlier on. I'm beginning to understand how it serves the intention. There are certain moments when I have to drive to the point for my intention to have its effect. There are moments when I speed up in tempo, or rise in urgency and fall in a split second. Then I get back into my natural rhythm of teaching. I am starting to find the humor in her also.

Mr. Hudson is laying the basic foundation of blocking with different established 'bits'. My job is to add the layers to what he has laid out. I appreciate him giving me the room to create and explore his direction. That is very important for me to be able to take direction and interpret it for myself instead of being given everything to do like a robot. David Hoover, Chair of the FTCA department and head of the Performance acting program, advised me during my year-end evaluation at UNO my first year here, that I took good direction, but I needed to be more inventive in creating my characters outside of rehearsal. Subsequently, I have been diligent in my own creative process ever since. Over the two years I've been here, I have come into my own creatively. I appreciate the end result more when I know I had a hand in it.

I have been instructed to get off book as soon as possible today. I'm working on it. Although I have to admit I'm not memorizing Act II as fast as I picked up Act I. However, there is still time, so I won't panic. Yet.

November 9th Blocked 22 – 26

Today we reviewed what we blocked up to page twenty-two. Then we blocked pages 22 – 27. Mr. Hudson feels that I'm doing good work. I agree. Although we are making some nice progress I have my own little frustrations. I've memorized all of Act I. However, once I added the blocking and different 'bits', I realized I didn't know the lines, as well as I thought I did. Usually it's the opposite. In past plays when I got the blocking it helped me to learn my lines faster. But that's not the case with this play. It means I don't have it down well enough in my body and mind. It also means THIS PLAY HAS A LOT OF LINES! My, my, my!

I don't have the luxury of sharing the work with an acting partner while he/she gives me a cue line to react and respond to. So here is where it starts to get challenging. I need to work my beats section by section and work on the transitions that lead into each one. I need to take note of the impulses that gets me from one section to the next, which will connect the dots for me and give me my own cue lines sort to speak. I should have started memorizing earlier, but it's okay. I can do this.

November 11th Review and work Act I

Today Caroline Langlois, stage manager and Beau Bratcher, assistant director, came to rehearsal for the first time, since we started. We did a review of the blocking up to page twenty six so Caroline could record the blocking and Beau could get a sense of Mr. Hudson's style and the direction he's going in. Beau will direct the first four pages of Act II.

Rehearsals are going well. It's a very interesting thing being a sole actor in a play- in a good way, though. I appreciate the extra time I'm given to devote on creating a character in rehearsal. When there is a full cast of characters someone may not get as much time to work. However, since I'm the sole player it makes it easier to flush out my character, so when I find something that needs more work I can work it out that evening.

November 12th reviewed blocking

Today we did a run through of the blocking from the beginning ritual to page twenty-seven. We started blocking the last eight pages but didn't finish we should finish Act I tomorrow. It's going well. I am getting use to blocking and the setting. I like the fact that I'm going to be writing on the walls and floors of the theater. It fits perfectly with the concept of the play. Miss Margarida can easily get lost in her own world where nothing is by the book, so writing on the walls becomes a normal occurrence. Mr. Hudson and I had talked earlier on in rehearsal about using chalkboards, but it became apparent that the space easily leads itself to just writing on everything. When she keeps the verses and drawings up everywhere it serves as a constant reminder of her lesson. Also, visually it will add to the chaotic and wrecked space that is there. The whole concept is coming together nicely.

November 13th blocked 26- 33

Today we worked through the last pages of Act I. I was feeling a little sluggish today I had a busy day, and I was almost late for rehearsal so in an attempt to be on time, I neglected to warm up. I guess the body doesn't lie because Mr. Hudson sensed that I wasn't warmed- up and politely yet sternly suggested I go run around the building a couple of times. I wasn't in the mood, but I did it anyway and it gave me the energy I needed to rehearse today. I realized something today. I can't afford to have a off day. It is imperative that I get in a good warm- up

before rehearsal and performances, so I can free my body and mind up to work. I can't fall off especially with this play. It's only me and if I don't show up and show off, the show suffers and the work that is being pumped into this show can be all for nothing.

Once I got my second wind during rehearsal, I started to have fun. I will be able to bring in some improv at the end when I'm getting the audience to sing my anthem. That should be interesting and fun, I'm looking forward to it. Now that Act I is blocked, I need to get it in my mind and body. It's about time I start running while reciting my lines, so I don't have to worry about what I'm supposed to say.

Tomorrow will be my first run through of Act I. I'm a little nervous but anxious to see what I do and get out of this run. I have been working on my character and came up with some good ideas. I'm just going to explore and have fun. I want to find out what works and what doesn't. Mr. Hudson's guidance and ideas have been really good so far. He says I'm doing good work. I enjoy working with everyone in the crew.

November 14th First run through of Act I

Notes

She is not politically correct.
Lift the teaching idea.
Dominate – take no prisoners.
Don't lose your volume.
Bring in the breath with a new idea.
There is no subtlety to her.
She is twice as large as life.
Diction/ I can't understand some of your words.

1. Pederast
2. Get
3. Docile
4. Accord
5. Forget
6. Wronged
7. Melt

Conduct the audience to sing along at the end.

Get the melody of the song right.
Your hair should be pulled back in a tight bun.
Don't cheat your acting moments – take the time, let them land.
Don't go fast for fast sake, work from your intentions.
Pay attention to the moments when she is vulnerable and when she is dominate.
Good overall.

Today we ran Act I. Not bad actually! Mr. Hudson thought it was good for my first run through. I dropped some lines but I made a mental note of those sections. I made some huge strides on characterization work tonight so I'm happy. I had some nice moments and discoveries. This run through assures me that I am capable of doing this show physically and mentally. However, I have a ways to go.

Tomorrow Beau will direct the first four pages of Act II. I need to go over those pages. I've made a little more progress as far as memorizing Act II. I'm up to pages forty- four. I need to catch up in scoring my script for Act II. I am still trying out different warm-ups to see what is most effective for me to be in optimum condition to perform for two hours, night after night. Exercising while reciting my lines proves to be effective for me. I usually run in place, air box, jump rope, and do sit-ups all while reciting the whole play. I find my stamina is getting better. And I feel more connected to the words, especially for Act I.

November 15th blocking the first four pages of Act II

Today we worked and blocked the first four pages of Act II. Then we did a run through of them. I love the physicality of the play. I'm a very physical person and the physicality will keep me as well as the audience involved and invested for the two hours I'm on stage. We started Act II off with the beginning ritual like I did before Act I. We added some extra bits that are fun and makes the ritual fresh; it heightens the humor in the nature of my character and are very logical choices for Miss Margarida. The chemistry is awesome. We are all working well together. I get

exactly where Mr. Hudson and Beau want me to go and vice versa. The ‘bits’ make so much sense and complement my intentions so well, it almost to good to be true. I guess on a subconscious level I imagined this process to be long and miserable for everyone involved. But on the contrary, everything is clicking on all levels.

November 16th blocking 40 - 47

Today I reviewed the first four pages of blocking for Mr. Hudson. Afterwards Mr. Hudson did some tweaking. Then we proceeded to block pages forty to forty-seven. We are in the staging process, so I’m concentrating more on exploring the different levels of intent and action. I’m trying to see what sticks and what falls flat. Some of Miss Margarida’s ideas and ideals are outlandish but in order to keep her grounded those same ideas and ideals have to come from some place real. I’m working on finding that balance of when she’s joshing with the student and when she is stone serious in what she believes in.

With a character like Miss Margarida it’s hard to tell or decide when she is joking and when she is for real. For example, she draws a penis on the board and tells the class it’s the Cape of Good Hope. There’s a section in the play where Miss Margarida tells the student to come up if they see a difference in the melting pot idea and when the student does she tells him that no one told him to come up and scolds him. It can be easy for me to over exaggerate Miss Margarida. But I want to keep her more natural. Most dictators that want everyone else to believe they know it all and everything should go their way or else, actually don’t believe that they are the ones with the problem. Miss Margarida believes in everything that she is telling her student directly and indirectly.

I must say some of the things she says take me back a bit. I have to remind myself not to judge her. There are sections where she blatantly makes fun of people that are a bit much i.e.

making fun of mentally challenged people and calling all men homosexuals and faggots. But I have to believe in her views – all her views, whether I agree with them or not. I can understand why this play can shock, intimidate, scare and offend some people. She is very harsh and malicious a lot of the time in the play but no character is one extreme so finding as much time to have tender moments and times when she smiles and laughs is a must. So that's what I've been working on tonight and will continue to work in the days to come. I want to do some more improv work with the skeleton bit. I'm going to work on it on my own time. I love it but it needs to be fleshed out some more.

I have a lot more work to do, but I have come a long way from where I started. The levels of Miss Margarida are wide and varied but hitting those marks are so rewarding. Mr. Hudson has given me a really good foundation to stand on. I need to continue adding the substance and detail to the work. I feel good about the work I've done so far. Mr. Hudson, Beau, and Caroline are doing awesome jobs, they are making this process as a whole a very productive and beautiful one. Kudos guys!

I still need to catch up as far as memorizing the last fifteen pages of the script. I'm having trouble with memorizing pages forty-four to forty seven. That is the section where Miss Margarida lectures about drugs. I went over those pages again and again, but they won't stick in my head. It's a little frustrating. I have even tried moving on to the next section to see if it will fall into place. It's weird but I picked up the next section, and I'm still having problems with the lecture on drugs section. I guess it's my trouble section for now. I'll need to continue to drill and work at that section more until it comes to me as fluently as the previous sections.

November 18th Run through and review

Notes

- Work on the different bits. Flesh them out more.
- Don't lose the English accent it helps you with your diction.
- Drill your lines with Caroline a half hour earlier before each rehearsal.
- Don't assume that people already know what you are talking about.
- Continue to jog and recite the script.

Today we ran through Act I and reviewed the blocking in Act II up to pages forty-five. We started the rehearsal listening to the soundtrack for the show. The soundtrack to the show is funny. I like the notions of playing the opposites. The music is light, hopeful, and bubbly and Miss Margarida is anything but that.

During the run, I dropped some lines in Act I, however I stayed in the moment. I can't afford to beat myself up for every little mishap because it will just make it worse. I have a lot of lines contained in my head, if I dwell on every word or line I miss in the midst of a run through, I'll freak out about it, and thus it will become a domino effect of me tearing myself down and then I lose focus on the intention of my character. With that said, I don't know the lines well enough. It is imperative that I do a line through before every run through and performance. I need to know my lines backwards and forwards so that if I were to have a mental block or go off the script due to improv I can easily gather myself and get back on track effortlessly.

November 19th reviewed Act II and blocked up to 54

Today we review what was blocked of Act II. Afterwards, we blocked and worked on the scenes where I interact with the UNO Student (Louis). Louis doesn't have any lines. To me, he is basically there for Miss Margarida to make an example of. However, we found some good natural and logical levels out of our interaction with each other rather than Louis being nothing but a rag doll. After we finish working the scenes with Louis, we blocked up to page fifty-four.

When Mr. Hudson says that a one-person show is like running a marathon he was not kidding. Whew! I am all over the stage in Act II. But it is a lot of fun! Opening night is in fourteen days. I still have a lot of work to do. My diction needs work. I need to find more varied levels while fine-tuning the character work I already have. I also need to do more detailed work with my character. We have four more pages to block out. We should be done by tomorrow.

November 20th Blocking

Today we ran the scenes I have with Louis. Then we finished blocking Act II. That's, that! The show is all blocked out. It's time to start running the whole show. I still have about six pages to commit to memory; I'll get there. We tweaked the skeleton bit some more today, it's coming along nicely. Mr. Hudson came up with this wonderful image of me giving birth to the skeleton and cradling it like the pieta (Christian art depicting the Virgin Mary cradling the dead body of Jesus). It is a powerful image to depict. When I did it today I got emotional. From time to time, there are certain things in my portrayal of a character that give me chills because the emotion that flows from me becomes effortless. And the feeling is so strong it takes a couple of seconds to let go once I step off the stage. That was one of those times. It was weird but in a good way. It's a pleasure going to that level of truth under imaginary circumstances.

November 21st Drawing Day

Today was a Drawing Day. I'm writing on the floor and just about every wall in the Lab Theater so Mr. Hudson thought it would be a good idea to devote some time to sketching and writing everything out. It was a very good idea because I was able to get the writing and drawing out of my system before the run through of the whole show. I also realized I can't draw to save my life. The drawing day gave me the time to practice my handwriting on the wall, and visually connect to where everything goes, and locks down the correct spelling of everything. It

was a very funny rehearsal at my expense, but I was laughing at my work too so it was quite all right. Once I was done drawing everything on the board I got a chance to sit in the audience and see what the audience will see. I looked at the verses and drawings and was in awe. It's strange, interesting, and uncomfortable all at the same time. On one side of the wall, there is a giant penis and under it states 'evolution is two times revolution two times nothing.' On the other wall, there is a giant cannabis cigarette and under it is the statement "the deserving ones who are they? They are those who obey." And on the back wall is an outline of the cross with the words 'know how' and 'Asshole' on either side. And I won't even mention what is all on the floor. The set looks good and it compliments the script and intent very well. It feels like a really run down class. It is easy to have bad attitude when I walk into a room full of crap.

November 22nd Bad Day

Today was not a good day. I don't know what happened, I guess it was one of those days. Beau and I started rehearsal off with a line-through. I was getting diction notes and 'called out' on my mispronounced words in past rehearsal. However, today it seems like every word I uttered Beau was correcting me. And I started to get frustrated with myself because I have been working hard on my diction. I have more lines so it takes more diligence to be understood. I was mentally beating myself up every time I mispronounced a word. As a result, I started to lose all focus and started to forget whole sections of the play. Maybe I went into rehearsal today with a lack of focus. Therefore, I was having trouble remembering lines I had already learned. And in walks Mr. Hudson. He sits in the chair and shakes his head as he witnesses my obvious frustration and lack of focus. Mr. Hudson stops rehearsal and says, "We can't run this if you are not ready. Your diction is bad. You need to work at it more diligently because the script demands it. She is a teacher." He goes on to tell me that it's not about removing regionalism all together

but knowing when to remove it and fall back into it when you need it as an actor. I know exactly what he is saying but my speech has become a habit, and I am working on it but it is not happening over night with me. It will take time but I will get it to the point where I'm more articulate. Mr. Hudson further suggested that I go through the script find those moments when she must be articulate and understood and those moments when she falls back into her regionalism. When she is teaching and is making a point the language needs to be lifted. When she is angry that's usually when the regionalism resurfaces.

Mr. Hudson asked me what more could they do. I told him it is on me, I just need to get it together. He told me about a show he was in. He said he had trouble getting into his character. So, after the rehearsal was over, he stayed in the theater and worked until he had a break through. And he advised that I stay in the theater today, work by myself, and do what I needed to do because it has to come from me. He said, " Beau and I will leave you to work. Understand that we are not abandoning you, but you have to find it for yourself." And they left. I sat there wondering what was going on with me. Everything was going well up to this point. Was this the wall I was told I'd come across? Am I capable of this? Am I strong enough to deal with all the negativity life hands me and still go to rehearsal and make myself emotionally available for my character? I must have sat in that chair for about twenty minutes trying to shake my frustration, regroup, and muster up some energy to work on my character. I started to run through the script, and I was not feeling up to it at all. I didn't see the need to force something when it wasn't going to be productive I was wasting my time. I was in a really negative mood today. However, I wasn't going to leave this theater until I shook off what was troubling me and work out my diction setbacks. I don't like taking steps back especially when we've been driving forward all this time.

I sat at the desk on the stage and went through the whole script with different color highlighters. I highlighted the section when Miss Margarida's language was American Standard English, when she was another persona (i.e. the little girl, and the preacher), and when she fell back into her regionalism. This gives me a better grip on how to use language to my advantage instead of allowing it to limit me. After I finished, I felt like the day wasn't a total waste, so I went home. I couldn't call it a night because I didn't feel like I made much progress. Consequently, I made a list of words that I was having trouble with to work on during my daily warm-ups before each rehearsal and performance. I also decided to jog, and jump rope as I recited the whole script (the way I highlighted it) because it invests my whole body and forces me to forget the outside factors or distraction. It also helped to relieve the stress and tension I was feeling today.

November 23rd First run through of the whole show

Notes

What ever you did last night keep doing it. It was better tonight.
Throw and kick the books if they're in your way.
Open the locker all the way.
Take "I'm going to write it so that you remember it" out to the audience then go to the board.
I like the smiling and winking do more of it. Find moments to laugh and smile throughout.
Clap when you say, "Slammed in his face".
See the girl.
Face the audience on "All go to hell." Don't turn too soon.
"Capital B" lift it more.
Let them repeat after you " All of you are going to die."
Bigger subtext on "No two funerals alike."
Hide behind the chair.
Go all the way off and let us hear the door open and shut.
Don't take that time before "Miss Margarida doesn't want to be hard on you. " You want to transition into the next beat but you don't need it. It's already there in the turn of emotion."
Leave the drink on the desk.
Keep your eyes on trouble (Louis).

Give the 'little girl bit' a point of focus instead of talking to the whole audience. Let us take the journey with you.
Sit on the book during the vulnerable moment.
On the tremble with joy moment - laugh and enjoy it more.
During the 'crying bit' look out the corner of your eye to see if the audience is buying it.
You started too now go for it.
Knock down the mannequin during your mini tirade. Find the moment when you do that.
Just throw the banana peel on the side of the stage.
Laugh at the cripple boy story.
Good on Miss Margarida third person section.
Make a big deal of Miss Margarida original teaching methods.
Get the tune of the song right.
Push tempo like crazy especially at the top of Act II, move everything till you get to the 'skeleton bit.'
Reestablish dominance at the top of Act II.
Get them back in the groove.
The second time you do the ritual make it faster.
Don't call more than four names.
When you draw the outline of your body draw your fingers too.
Sit up straight at all times in the chair.
Don't kill the poor skeleton he has to last the whole run.
Say the yoga poses out to the audience.
Drink out of the bottle the third time.
Threaten them on "there are a few students Miss Margarida has already sent to the principal".
Work more vocally on the seductress bit – more breathy.
It has to be faster (she is a whirlwind).
Diction is better but keep at it.

Diction /Words to watch:

Holy Ghost
Ask
Maintenance
Amongst
Currently
Forced
Important
Children
Just

I ran through the whole show for the first time, and I feel like half of the weight has been lifted off my shoulders. Now I can confidently say I am capable of doing a one-woman show

with a running time of two hours. The other half of the weight will be lifted after Opening night. That is going to be the real test of my abilities as far as this role is concerned. I got through the whole show, and I must say it was fairly average. The overall run was good. I'm in a good place. I was worried that I would not be completely off book in time to get more than one run through of the show before we go into tech week. So I am relieved. Now is the time to go for the gusto and sharpen up on what works. I still have some kinks in my character work that need more clarity. I need to look at the second little girl beat because it is not clear enough why it happens a second time. My line issues weren't that bad actually for fifty-nine pages of this script in my head. There is one section towards the end of the play that I need to take a look at. The section when Miss Margarida is explaining the importance of 'Know How'. I usually make a mental note of the lines I miss or leave out even though Caroline does a good job at catching them for me. I'm thrilled about the work I'm doing and have done up to this point. I had some good moments tonight.

November 25th Run through

Notes

Noticed that the room is disgusting more.
Security Guard.
Circle "Obey."
Good on the black cloak line.
Prepare for the show of organs.
When you turn to look in the mirror use it to watch the students (audience).
The eyewink was good - use it more.
Good on the crying bit.
Make the German teaching method bigger - movie premiere.
Smell the class for the bad smell first then turn to the hall.
Throw the announcement paper at a student.
More disgust at the jock strap boy.
Don't move your lips when you're doing the ventriloquism with the skeleton.
"Never come back" plant yourself on that line.
Good when you are writing and looking back at the students.
"Biology is the science of life" - bigger.

Make up a cheerleader bit on the verb section.
Keep volume up.
The bell ring will start the show.
Come out on "Someday my prince will come".

Diction/ Words to watch:

Urchin
Must
Without
Truth
Hard
Harder
Thee over
Assimilate
Asks
Still
Just
Realizes
Talking
Our
Erudition
And
End
Hedonist
Still

Beau's Notes

Go back to the cross.
"Goddamn school is a pain in the ass" throw that line to the principal.
The new line is "Suppose to get up to begin with".

We ran through the show tonight. Mr. Hudson, Beau, and Caroline decided that they were going to test me to see if I can handle unruly audience members. After I realized they were testing my improv skills I thought, okay, bring it on! Now I must admit at first they succeeded in throwing me off, but once I got a handle on what I needed to do, I was focused and ready. Whatever they threw at me, I threw it right back. Sometimes they weren't ready for my comebacks, but it was fun, and freeing. The rehearsed improv will help me to step out of line and get back to the script effortlessly. It showed me that I couldn't lose focus. I had to deal with

the student(s) truthfully in the moment and go back to my intention and lesson. I like to improvise and go off book every now and then. So I will be ready for the audience if they were to dare act unruly in my presence. I wasn't in the best of moods tonight so I put some extra venom in all the part where Miss Margarida snaps, is angry, and was scolding the audience. It just shows me how one can truly be in the emotional ballpark of a character (as Mr. Hudson has repeatedly stated in acting class).

November 26th Run through of show

Notes

- Quicker with attendance.
- Good with humming bring it in more.
- Could not understand the Queer bit – articulate.
- Work the dress more.
- Throw a book in the direction of the principal.
- Good on banana bit.
- Develop a bit just in case someone's cell phone goes off during the show.
- Don't get any bigger on the 'preacher bit'.
- More urgency on the 'drug bit.'
- Don't pause.
- Draw the line on the locker.

Diction/ Words to watch:

- Children
- Pretend
- Forced
- Test
- Last
- Best
- Has
- Just
- Cigarette
- Warned
- Coral
- Worst
- spoil
- Already
- Would
- Is the same

Till thee end
On thee board
Pigsties
Ruthless
There's still much
Girls start getting wronged
Without knowing
The punishment Miss Margarida sometimes has to give you

We ran the show again today. It felt a little slow for me tonight but still a decent run. I need to push the tempo and stay ahead of the audience. I don't want them to get bored and check out on me. And that can happen if I don't stay ahead of them, hit my moments, and keep up my urgency. The more we run the show, the more I get comfortable and settle into my character. I'm getting a good grip on the rhythm of the language, and what makes her tick. Miss Margarida is becoming clearer to me. So much so, that my movement around the stage is more natural. I feel at home as the character in her environment. I had some really nice moments with the skeleton. The bits are coming along nicely. I can't wait to have an audience. I am having a ball playing this character.

November 28th Run through of show

Notes

- Better at pushing tempo.
- Know where your jokes are.
- Hum more during the ritual.
- "That's what biology is all about" - present it on the board (Vanna white).
- Bigger sense of "don't you judge me".
- Cross up to the principal on "you are going to treat me very well".
- Play up the few students that were sent to the principal.
- Make fun of smoking the cannabis take the world's longest puff then pass it.
- Say dorm room instead of room
- Play the whole house.

The tempo was better today than it has been since I started running it. I know I have to stay ahead of the audience, or I'm finished. It is hard work trying to get an audience back with you

after you have lost them. Mr. Hudson, Caroline and Beau decided to play again and act as the unruly students. They threw me off again. I completely went off and skipped whole sections of the play. We had to stop and go back to the part I missed. But I mentally told myself I would not let them throw me off again. They continue to act unruly, and I continued to let them have it. I need to be more aware of my transition and more mindful of what comes after what.

November 29th run-through

Notes

Practice the drawing of the Cape of Good Hope.
No neck acting.
That was your best delivery of “that’s why you are here” tonight.
Don’t get soft on “the hardships of life” section.
Put the letters MP in the middle of the melting pot.
Articulate more on “queers all over the place”.
Take a beat to tremble with joy, see them looking and then “don’t judge me” happens.
Slow down the banana bit that’s a good one that we can watch all day.
Make the stems on the plant.
Lift “brother animals”.
The Gospel dance is too long.
Good when you leaned on the wall after you wrote “Life Is A Pain In The Ass”, keep it.
Heroin bit – bigger.
Temper-tantrum is good but shorten it.
“You’ll never be doctor” section is to yourself.

Diction/words to watch:

Comprehension

Must

Last

End

Anthem

Sterile

School

Bumming

Hard

Difficult

Ideal thing

Truth

Sucks the bull

Beau's notes

I didn't see as many discoveries tonight and that has never been your problem so don't lose them.
Keep up the tempo.
She is determined to teach.
Goodbye is not a question mark.
When those doors open see what it is and recognize it.

Today was one of the better runs. It's becoming more and more natural. I feel like I'm ready for an audience now so I'm in a good place. I'm having a lot of fun with this character, with all her problems and craziness. I've developed a curiosity as to what goes through a dictator's mind. How can they say and do the things they do and keep a straight face like its normal. I am starting to understand that psyche more because of this character. It makes my intention clearer. There are still some flubs and kinks that I need to work out, but I feel good. I'm going into tech in good shape.

November 30 Costume parade and Cue to Cue

Today was the costume parade. I like my costume it just adds the extra layer to her style, and character. Mr. Hudson and Jennie, costume designer, did a good job. When I put on the costume it physically changes how I move and walked as Miss Margarida. We also did a Cue to Cue. So for me, the day was more relaxed because it was 'stop and go' while Caroline and Shannon recorded the cues.

December 1st First full run-Through

Notes

Enter with your briefcase and purse.
Rebecca will cue you when to come out.
Slam the door on the principal line.
Keep your eyes on the children through the compact mirror.
Take a beat after tremble with joy.

Good on banana bit.
Use handkerchief.
On sterile line – bigger laughter.
Put the stick on the wall.
Check the skeleton before the show
Play the whole house.
Temper tantrum – one or two lest throws with the books.
Don't forget to peek from behind the wall.
Use another color when you get to the number 8.
Your beauty spot needs to be a little darker.

Beau's Notes

The line is "The reason you are seating...."
Your "thee's" are better.
Don't forget to get the cannabis back.

Diction /Words to watch:

Talking
Bumming
With
Falls
Slurred speech
With what right
World
Corner
Sensitivity
Whether
Molds
Melting

Today we had a full run through with costume and tech. It was a good run with some fixable mishaps. Tech has some things to work on. I had some line issues, diction notes, and blocking issues, but it can all be corrected. I have evolved my warm- up process two hours before Caroline calls "places." I start of doing my facial and vocal warm-ups. After that I move on to stretching, jogging in place, jumping jacks, sit ups, Suzuki set ups, air kicks and punches all while reciting the whole script. I usually have about thirty minutes to finish getting into costume and mentally ready. I mentally prepare by leaving every thought that has nothing to do with Miss

Margarida at the front door. I began to focus on my intentions and my character back-story.

When I react to the crew in character before the show it freaks them out. It's funny!

December 2nd Second full Run through

Notes

Play with the hole in your stocking.
More vocal warm- ups
Present the capital B.
Don't forget the sweater.
Leave the glass in the globe.
Ecology delivery was good.
Seductress bit was good.
Don't forget slurred speech.
Discover need to be more present.
Bring in more breath.
Don't step on your laughs.
Press tempo more.
Drive it both Acts.
Skeleton turn works well.
Drive to the student and the cannabis bit.
The eight possibilities journey needs to be clearer.
Crack yourself up on the Bull and sparrow joke the more you laugh the more the audience will.
Go over ad lib bits.
Good work.

Today was another full run through. It went well. Kevin and Shannon decided to join in as the unruly students. So once again my improv skills were being tested. I had to think on my feet and this ended up being the best one, as far as my ability to improv and go back to the script. I was able to make my point, put them in their place and go right back to the subject matter. However, Mr. Hudson made me realize that I don't need to respond to every unruly student because it can be a bit much and make the show longer than it is already.

December 3rd Opening Night!

I was so anxious tonight. I did my two-hour warm- up and line through. I was ready and pumped up. I didn't know how tonight was going to turn out so it took a lot of assiduousness to

concentrate on my objectives and character. Throughout the day I couldn't get the performance off my mind. As it got closer to show time I became more focused. My warm-ups helped me to concentrate. It could have been so easy to panic and think about all the things that could have gone wrong or what lines I'll miss. But I stayed positive and focused. My stomach was full of butterflies. I was standing back stage waiting very quiet and in my zone. Mr. Hudson walked up to me to see if I was ready or freaking out. He asked if I was ready, and I said yes. He said "you've worked really hard, you can do this".

Then it was time to enter the stage. I took some deep breaths and went out on that stage and hit the ground running. I went out there with my intentions clear in my mind. So far, so good! Then I brushed the debris off my desk and broke the chalk bowl. For a split second I thought, that wasn't supposed to happen, but I kept it together, stayed in it, and used it to my advantage. It actually turned out to be a funny bit, a happy accident. And from then on I knew nothing was going to deter me this evening.

I had a ball out on that stage tonight. The audience was really good and responsive. I stayed ahead of them, and they were right there with me. As an actor there is no better feeling than to go out on stage, work hard, give my all to a sold out audience and receive a standing ovation at the end. I walked back to that dressing room full of emotion and glee. This was a huge accomplishment for me tonight. After I caught my breath from all the overwhelming emotion and the two-hour workout, I went out to greet the audience. The first thing I noticed is the biggest smiles on my parents' faces. I walked up to them, and before I could ask them how they liked the show. My dad says, "you did good Joyce, You did very good." By now my jaws are tired from smiling so much and thanking the audience for their kind words and coming out to see the show. Beau then tells me it's time to hear from the adjudicators that will give me, and the

production team feedback of the show and decide whether the show will be held for consideration for the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. So we all ushered into the lab theater. The respondents, Jim Winter (*a* UNO grad) and Chad Winters sat on the stage, introduce themselves and went on to explain why they were there and that their comments are their opinions of what they saw tonight. They were commenting back and forth so I don't have what each person said word for word, but I will attempt to be as accurate as possible as I jotted down what they said. Their notes are as follows:

Joyce (Miss Margarida)

First Impression of Miss Margarida "Tough broad" "She is not to be messed with."

Jim Winter's comment "Nice surprises and discoveries there were points where I stop taking notes because I didn't want to miss what you did next."

Very engaging.

Well-executed choices.

Jim Winter -" This is being picky I would say if you are going to have the ending of Miss Margarida falling asleep, you should expound more energy right before it happens so there is an even bigger payoff."

Chad Winter's comment "Funny. Actively engaging. I had a great time watching you. I have seen your work at festival and your scene was one of my favorites then."

Jim Winter " I seen a lot of shows and a lot of actors but there is some things you can't teach in school or an acting class and that is a sense of fearlessness on stage. You are fearless. You go for broke. I'm not going to make you wait I want to hold the show for consideration for invitation to Kennedy Center American College Theater festival."

Production feedback

Kevin Griffith (Set designer)

The Set is cool.

The trash and debris is engaging and complimentary to the whirlwind of Miss Margarida.

The dead flowers all over are cool.

Rodney Hudson (Director)

Great concept.

Awesome choices and levels.

Jennie Freeman (Costume)

Cool.

I like how the flowers tie into the flower theme of the set.

The belt is a nice touch it like a signature piece like wonder woman.
The boobs work, they help to age her.
I've seen Joyce in other things and with the make –up she looked aged but not in an artificial or over the top way.

Shannon (lighting Designer)

Good gel fluorescents above the desk that was cool. A very nice touch.
The delicate lights worked well.

So what a night this has turned out to be. I am still so full of emotion and very tired. Tonight was amazing. I took on a huge task, and it feels good to know that I not only accomplished it but also was also good at it. After all the excitement and hard work, the perfectionist in me knows that tonight's show wasn't perfect. As an actor I strive for the perfect performance but there will always be something I feel I could have done differently or done more or less of. But I hit my marks with conviction and purpose and had some really nice moments. I had a great time and so did the audience. It may not have been a perfect performance in my self-critical eyes, but it was as close to a perfect opening night as I could have gotten. I have four more performances left, but tonight I just want to rest.

December 4th Second Performance

Mr. Hudson had some notes for me from opening night.

Notes

Relax.
Hum more.
Breath.
Cut the dance down some.
Cut the song down some.
Establish the relationship with principal /Rub the closet.
Melting pot bit – play it fully.
Tantrum - go for it - give a murderous look.
On the cunt line - shock them.
Illustrate the bull and the sparrow.
Push tempo in Act II.
Cocaine / more jittery.

My performance tonight was good but that electrifying energy from opening night wasn't there. I performed to another sold out house. However, the audience wasn't as responsive as the opening night crowd. I know the crowd reaction is going to change night after night. I know the audience enjoyed my performance, but I expected them to react more. Every audience is different. In this play the audience is kind of like my acting partner. If I'm throwing all these good intentions and choices and get a small reaction in return, I feel like I have to work harder. It can drain my energy when an audience does not respond in kind to what I'm giving them. But I can't afford to let my energy die in a one-woman show or any show, for that matter, but definitely not this one. It's as if I'm teaching an actual eighth grade class when they don't respond to what I'm doing and could not care less, I still have to teach and get them interested in what I have to say. I refused to give up and let my urgency drop, so I kept my composure and purpose and plowed through, and it turned out to be another good show.

December 5 Third Performance

Tonight was another good one. My energy was up. The audience was more responsive than last night. I am flattered to be playing to another sold out audience. However, I'm a little upset that we still don't have posters for the show. I was hoping we would have them for opening night, and it's my third performance and not one poster in sight but the big one that's on display in the lobby. But I digress- the performance is becoming so natural to me. I feel at home in Miss Margarida's shoes. It's a good thing for my loved ones and friends that I can let her go when I'm not on stage because she is scary. There are still some things I have noticed that I need to tweak a bit. I need to go over the lines in Act II. I had some issues with the "Know How section". My moment-to-

moment work is solid. The bits are funny and free. The audiences enjoy the different bits the most because I have so much fun with them. My improv was good tonight. I don't get to do much because the audiences are well behaved. Either that, or they fear what will happen if they were to act up.

December 6 Fourth Performance

I had another good show today. The audience was nice and receptive. The audience was sold out again in spite of not having posters. I understand we have all been working hard this semester. I have Beau to thank for printing flyers and posting them around campus. I don't understand what the delay is. Since I have been here the posters were ready before or at the latest opening night. It's the day before we close and still no posters. I know it's too late to put them up, but I would like one or two for keepsake, I mean it is my thesis and the biggest role I've done to date. But anyway, I can't complain this has been a good run so far, and I'm grateful to all the people that help me pull this off. It was another engaging, insightful, entertaining evening of theater and that's what matters in the end.

December 7th Final Performance

The final performance was a good one. The crowd was with me tonight. But my most memorable performance to date was opening night. The strange thing about this play is I get to look directly into the audiences' faces. That can be a good thing or an uneasy thing for an actress and definitely a learning experience. I thought it would be weird to address the audience the whole time, but it wasn't. I could tell when the audience was taking the journey with me. There was never a moment where I felt like I failed them by not

reaching them, so I'm proud of that. I've had some good moments night after night and selling out every night is a wonderful thing.

Reflecting back on the whole run I can confidently say I have done some good work in creating the character of Miss Margarida. There are some things I feel could have been better or fleshed out more. My diction has improved a bunch but still needs more work. My vocal variety and power have gotten much stronger. I have built up more physical stamina. I need to make sure to take proper care of my voice and body and not take it for granted. I was very lackadaisical about the maintenance of my body until I had to whip myself into shape for this show.

Final performances are always bittersweet for me. With this show, I'm happy to finally take a breather and rest. I'm happy to move on to something else. However, part of me would love to run it another week or so. I liked doing the show, and I'm going to miss it and the people I've worked with for the past month. But all good things must come to an end. I truly enjoyed working with Mr. Hudson, Louis, Beau, Caroline, Rebecca, Katie, Shannon, and Kevin. They made this experience a memorable and enjoyable one. I learned a lot about my personal self and as an actor. Even though it was a lot of hard work doing this one-woman show was a very rewarding experience.

Project Evaluation

I was in a unique position during the run of *Miss Margarida's way*. I could gauge whether or not the audience was enjoying my work or not because I was talking directly to them. I was able to see their honest reactions to what was going on at all times. If things are not going well, this can be discouraging. Fortunately for me, it was a pleasing process. For the most part, the students (audience) were right there with me. However, there was the occasional audience member that started to doze off in which case I had to react in kind, seeing that it was an interactive classroom setting- with some improv. There were also one or two persons who decided to not return after intermission for whatever the reason. I wondered if it was my acting, or if it was the language and content of the play. In either case you can't please everyone. But to have ninety - five percent of an audience with me as the sole performer was truly a rewarding experience.

I was flattered and moved by the many comments from the audience after each show but the comments that stood out for me was how much energy I had, how engaging my character was, the vocal power and variety, and how articulate and clear, I was. These are things I worked hardest on so it was gratifying to know that it showed in my performances.

I read the student reviews and the Ambush review by Brain Sands and was in awe at the feedback I received because it was so positive. This was the first play where literally every review I read was positive and favorable. So much so, that I started to look more for the negative comments to let me know what I needed to work on. The students' reviews said my choices were well executed, and that they loved the comedic bits and my tirades. They abundantly enjoyed my work and the play as a whole. They also spoke well

of the set, the costume, and lighting. I was impressed with how well they articulated their assessment of me as an actress.

Brain Sands criticism was that he felt I needed a “tad more variety in the first Act.” But also noted that the second Act “allowed a greater chance for me to show off my wide-ranging talent.” The audience feedback is important to me because it is one of the ways I judge whether the end result was successful or not. When the audiences are moved by the truthfulness of the moments I create for my character, I have done my job as an actor. My acting professor David Hoover also noted that I improved overall from my first year at UNO, particularly as far my vocal power, articulation, and the investment in my acting process.

Directors Assessment

I had my last meeting with Mr. Hudson to assess my overall process and end result. He always spoke from a place to make me better so when he said something was good, or not so good, I could take it to heart. What was unique about our last meeting is that he didn’t speak as if the show was done. He encouraged me to do the show outside of school. He told me to “find a place to do *Miss Margarida’s Way* in the city and go from there. Don’t let it die. Get it out there. You are going to grow into this role” (Hudson). He further gave me notes on what I need to work on as an actor, what could have made the show better, and what I need to work on if I were to do the show again. I put his assessment in note form because as the sole performer there were a lot of comments for me. I found it beneficial to document it as it was given to me:

Speech is your tragic flaw. It is improving. Work on your speech more don’t be defined by it.
Precision is the key.

Work more on how to work a house comically. Don't step on your laughs. Play your set – ups better. Punch the set – up and coast on the punch line. Teach the audience how and when to laugh. Give them the responsibility of laughing. Keep working on your 'acting chops'. It's good that you are in shape.

Good charisma on stage.

You could have gotten off book sooner.

Be careful of your transitions - you don't need to take the moment it's already there.

Work on breath more for us to hear everything.

Give yourself into your choices and don't step on your moments.

Always work toward the perfect show.

It was good that you stayed ahead of the audience.

We (actors) have a lot more freedom than we take credit for.

When things happen in three's it has to be bigger and it should not be the same.

Be inventive. Be creative. Don't do the same old thing others have done since 1902!

Make choices.

Keep the age – she has to stay older.

You had nice acting moments.

You had good shows you should be pleased. What you did was not easy. Good job!

Self – Assessment

I went in this process with an open mind and enthusiasm for the character I was going to create. Miss Margarida was the most exciting, challenging, and rewarding character to date. I am grateful to have had such a phenomenal role to culminate my graduate studies at UNO.

As rewarding as the experience was I walked away from the last show thinking I didn't have a perfect performance. Although the shows were good, and I achieved my goals night after night, I always felt there were moments I could have pulled back or went further to let the actions land. For example, there were nights where I felt I nailed the 'Miss Margarida third person bit', and other nights, I felt like I didn't catch the rhythm as effectively. Now, the audience may not have noticed the difference, but I did. Each night there was a different thing or a 'bit' that I felt I needed to tweak to make the overall

performance better. I also agree with what Mr. Hudson said about waiting for the laughs: for the first two nights in my haste to stay ahead of the audience I didn't hold for the laughs like I should have throughout those performances.

I'm proud to say my diction has improved over the course of the run. I realized I had a real problem with articulation my first year at UNO. During my past shows at UNO, my most frequent note was my articulation. To know I improved on my biggest weakness of all made this process a success for me. I still have a way to go in improving my diction, but I feel I'm a long way from where I started. My vocal power and breath support has also improved. I feel my moment-to-moment work was good and solid. I always had good projection but my problem was supporting that power and resonance for the duration of a show – that too has improved.

I feel my thesis project was a success because it served its purpose. It challenged me as an actor and pushed me beyond what was merely comfortable and safe. *Miss Margarida's Way* was demanding physically, mentally and vocally. There were times when I surprised myself with what I achieved and accomplished. As a result of the run, I walked away with a heightened awareness of my strengths and weaknesses. During this performance and over the last three years I learned a lot about myself personally, and as an actor. It has not been easy: I worked really hard to get to this level in my craft. From the beginning of this process, I hoped to serve and do the play justice while maintaining physical and mental stamina in keeping with the playwright and the director's intentions. I feel I maintained the mental and physical stamina it took to bring the character of Miss Margarida to life. The audiences enjoyed the production and felt the passion, energy, and

intention of my character. I used and tried new techniques. Some worked well, some not so much, but I developed new tools to work with as an actor.

Miss Margarida's Way

*TRAGICOMIC MONOLOGUE FOR AN
IMPETUOUS WOMAN*

by

Roberto Athayde

SAMUEL FRENCH

Miss Margarida's Way

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New York Hollywood London Toronto
SAMUELFRENCH.COM

CHARACTERS

MISS MARGARIDA, the lady schoolteacher
One of her students, an actor
The rest of her students, the audience

SET

A teacher's desk
A teacher's chair
And a *green* blackboard

First Class

BEAT 1, ACT 1

Objective: I want to introduce myself to them.

Actions:

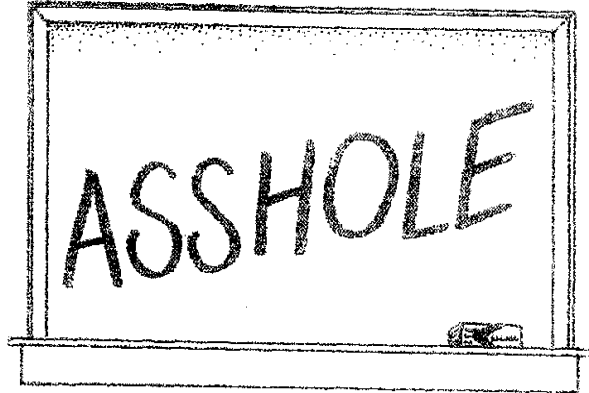
1. To announce
2. To draw
3. To befriend
4. To test
5. To assure
6. To appease
7. To declare
8. To ease
9. To involve
10. To pinpoint
11. To establish
12. To wake them up
13. To set them up
14. To ignite

① Good evening to all of you. As you must already know, I am your new teacher. My name is Miss Margarida. I am going to write it on the blackboard so that you can memorize it. *(Writes on board: Miss Margarida.)* Now, before we get started I would like to get a little bit acquainted with you. Then I will say a few words about



P.O.V – Point of View - There is no good teacher without a good class.

the importance of education.³ *(Pause.)* Is anyone here named Messiah? And Jesus? No? And Holy Ghost, is there anyone named Holy Ghost in this class? No? Are you sure?⁴ *(Pause.)* Good.⁵ The Principal had already told me that you were a nice class.⁶ There is no good teacher without a good class. Er... I'm just thinking, this blackboard is a little too far.⁷ Can you see it well enough?⁸ You in the back?⁹ It's very important that everyone sees the greenboard.¹⁰ Miss Margarida is going to write a little word on it to see if you can really see.¹¹ *(Writes in big letters: asshole.)* Can you see it?¹² Asshole.¹³



The blackboard is actually very important to learn reading.¹⁴ And history. And mathematics. And geography.¹⁵ *(Goes back to the board and awkwardly sketches a penis.)* Can you see that?¹⁶ Well, that's a cape.¹⁷ Let us say, the Cape of Good Hope.¹⁸ That is geography.¹⁹

- ② But, as I was saying,²⁰ it is necessary to point out and show to you the importance of my function,²¹ that is, the importance of education.²² Because, ah... let's face it,²³ none of you is here of his own accord.²⁴ You are here

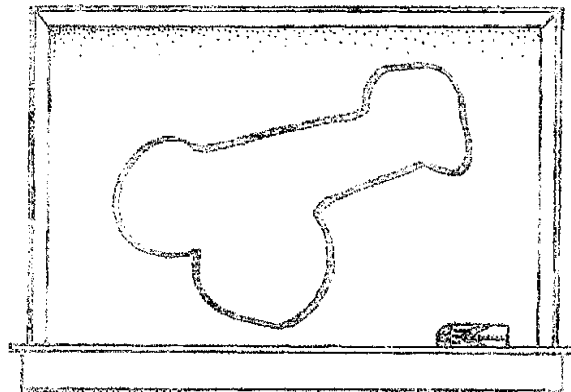
BEAT 2, ACT I

Objective: I want to obliterate any feelings of inkling of decent.

Actions:

1. To Change subjects
2. To dig
3. To reveal
4. To load
5. To analyze
6. To elicit
7. To expose
8. To horn in on
9. To hook
10. To reel
11. To exert
12. To expound
13. To emphasize
14. To egg on
15. To enrich
16. To enlighten
17. To echo
18. To establish
19. To enforce
20. To infect
21. To impart knowledge
22. To rub it in
23. To incorporate
24. To project
25. To proclaim
26. To reiterate
27. To reconstruct
28. To rationalize

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY



2 cont.

because your parents made you. Every one of you with no exception, right?/You were all forced to come here willy-nilly./Well, there must be a *good reason* for that./It is a very simple reason./Miss Margarida will explain it to you right away./You have already noticed that that's the way Miss Margarida works: she will explain everything to you right from the beginning./But . . . the reason I was saying¹² ./. yes, the reason why you are all sitting at your desks without having been able to choose¹³ ./. the reason is very simple./It's because school is a *second home*./Did any of you choose to be born? Was any of you consulted about the convenience of your being born? No, right? So, that's it, school, being a second home, is the same thing./No one asked your opinion about coming in and now you cannot get out./This is a beautiful truth./You all have to admit that within these walls you have no choice./It is as if you didn't exist./Of course you have to pay, *ça va sans dire*.²¹/. This is *French*./Miss Margarida is going to write it on the blackboard so that you can learn it./

P.O.V

P.O.V – Point of View – You all have to admit that within these walls you have no choice.

BEAT 3, ACT I

Objective: I want to lay down the laws in *my* classroom.

Actions:

1. To persist
2. To pinpoint
3. To protest
4. To rear in
5. To polish
6. To radiate
7. To whitewash
8. To pursue
9. To raise awareness
10. To press
11. To persuade
12. To penetrate

P.O.V – Point of View – And, as you arrive here, you have to do what is determined by the principal and what I happen to tell you to do.

12

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

2

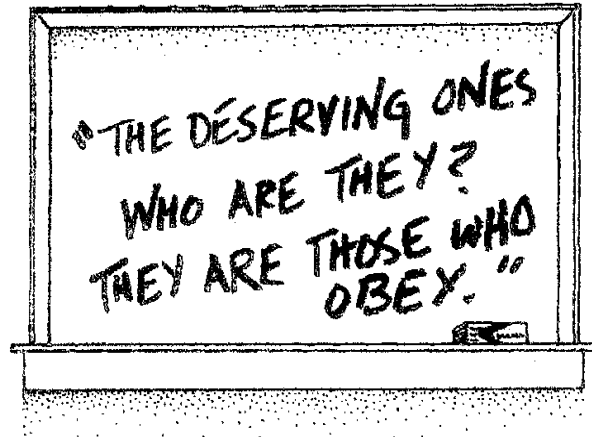
(Writes: ÇA VA SANS DIRE.) That's it. *Ça va sans dire*.²⁴ That means in French that it is such an obvious truth that you don't even have to mention it.²⁵ Before to-



day's class is finished I want all of you to say together, "*Ça va sans dire*." Well . . . what was I talking about? What is so obvious that you don't need to say? Oh yes, you all must *pay* for this second home which is school. Every citizen of the country contributes his share for the maintenance of education.²⁶ In addition to that, in order to be able to get into this class, every one of you was forced to show his ID card to the doorman. Each one of you, just a few minutes ago, had his ID card in hand so that you could prove that you are really allowed to be here. And, as you arrive here, you have to do what was determined by the Principal and what I happen to tell you to do.²⁷ So, in a way, you were forced in and now you may not get out. Unless Miss Margarida tells you to do so. (Pause.) I don't want to be hard on you. To Miss Margarida, the best class is the class where there is an at-

P.O.V. 1

mosphere of comprehension, of harmony between the students and the teacher. That same atmosphere of solidarity and tenderness that each one of you finds at home among your dear ones. / It is a gift of nature. / Everything has its advantages in the world. And to deserve all that, to be grateful for all these things, what should you do? What virtue must you cultivate? / *Obedience.* / It is the greatest of all qualities. / There is a very nice nursery rhyme that goes: ["The deserving ones, who are they? / They are those who obey."] I am going to write it on the greenboard so that you memorize it. / *(Writes on board: The deserving ones, who are they? They are*



BEAT 4, ACT I

Objective: To warn my students of the repercussion of not heeding my rules.

Actions:

1. To gain trust
2. To nuzzle
3. To bait
4. To launch
5. To boost
6. To buffer
7. To implore
8. To ingrain wisdom

those who obey.) I want to take advantage of this first class, which is rather an introductory class, to get to know you a little better / for, as you must know, my desire is to know each one of you as if he were my own child. / It is to that individual and intensive knowledge of each one of you that Miss Margarida wants to dedicate

P.O.V - Point of view - It there is one thing Miss Margarida does not tolerate, that is disobedience.

BEAT 5, ACT I

Objective: To instill in them (students) the importance of education.

Actions:

1. To impress upon
2. To warn
3. To maul over the idea
4. To pronounce
5. To magnetize
6. To mount
7. To muck up
8. To mortify
9. To load
10. To motivate
11. To petrify
12. To rebuild
13. To reach out

P.O.V – Point of View - So, in this very last year of elementary school, the student who *fails* will see all the doors slammed in his face.

BEAT 6, ACT I

Objective: To throw my weight around.

Actions:

1. To proclaim
2. To protest
3. To prod
4. To attack
5. To prompt
6. To point out
7. To question
8. To demand
9. To pick on
10. To pinch
11. To refute
12. To recoil
13. To recreate
14. To give up
15. To lambaste

P.O.V – Point of View - You must obey Miss Margarida.

14

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

4 cont.

this first class. I want to take advantage of these verses on the greenboard to tell you something of great importance. Listen carefully: if there is one thing Miss Margarida does not tolerate, that is disobedience. I don't want to have to interrupt a class because of disciplinary problems. I will not hear of one single case of bad behavior till the end of this term. Without discipline there is no progress, no improvement. At the

⑤ end of each term there is something called finals. Exams. Test. (Tragic.) I pity he who spends his year bumbling around without listening to my advice, without trembling before the responsibility that hangs over his head. You are currently starting your eighth grade. Remember this is not anymore fifth grade, nor sixth grade, nor seventh grade. This is eighth grade. You must, then, realize that the examinations that await you throughout this period are therefore the most difficult you have ever been confronted with. They will comprise not only the subject matter we will be studying this year, but literally all the information you have been given since you entered school. Failure at any of those exams is a disgrace that can mark your lives forever. So, in this very last year of elementary school, the student who fails will see all the doors slammed in his face. It is a whole world of knowledge, it is the bulk of human culture and understanding that becomes suddenly inaccessible to you. And shame, like a black cloak, falls over the name of your family. What can you do in order to spare yourselves such shame? That's what Miss Margarida is here for. You must obey Miss Margarida. You must be silent to start with. (Irritated.) I want to hear a pin drop in this classroom! (More irritated.) You must be silent! (Getting infuriated, banging ruler on desk.) SILENCE! You must also have a good posture!

(*Eyeing severely the public.*) Without good posture you can't do anything! You there in the fifteenth row! Where do you think you are? Sit up! What do you take this for? A brothel? (*Pointing at someone.*) You are sitting like a prostitute! Did you hear me? (*Pause.*) Is there anybody named Messiah in this classroom? No? What about Jesus? No, Jesus either? And Holy Ghost? Any Holy Ghosts in class? None, right? Fuck you, then! You can go to hell! Oh yes, the Principal told me what a

⑦ nice class you are. It is good to teach a *docile* class. I talk, you obey. It's right there on the greenboard: the deserving ones, who are they? They are those who obey. You are all here to *learn*. You are paying to *learn*. That means there are things you don't know. There are many things you don't know. In fact, you hardly could say that you know anything at all. That's why you are here. (*Sits*

⑧ *at her desk. Gets a fresh start.*) Today's class is biology. Don't you children think it is going to be sex education. Don't you children suppose Miss Margarida is going to teach you the facts of life? (*Evil.*) I got news for you. The facts of life are only taught in your senior year of high school. And you are just eighth graders. You better forget about sex education till you are old enough. These things take *maturity*. If you think Miss Margarida is about to teach you how to kiss, how to *fornicate*, you are totally mistaken. Nothing of the sort! I appreciate the fact that you don't know how to do those things. You couldn't possibly. Go learn it in the streets. Don't you kids suppose that Miss Margarida is going to show you her *organs*? The Principal forbade me to take my clothes off in front of you. Not even my tits I can show you. What Miss Margarida is going to teach you is much simpler than that, much more *primary*. The right things for children like you. I'm going to teach you biology with a

⑨

BEAT 7, ACT I

Objective: To make them realized how much they need me.

Actions:

1. To demean
2. To addle
3. To reiterate
4. To unveil
5. To downgrade
6. To flank

P.O.V-Point of View - There are so many things you don't know.

BEAT 8, ACT I

Objective: To censor the students

Actions:

1. To introduce
2. To stifle
3. To liquidate
4. To burst their bubble
5. To maim
6. To monopolize
7. To ostracize
8. To outmaneuver
9. To enforce
10. To neutralize
11. To mock
12. To reveal
13. To organize

P.O.V- Point of View - You better forget about sex education till you are old enough.

BEAT 9, ACT I

Objective: To teach them the vital nature of life and death.

Actions:

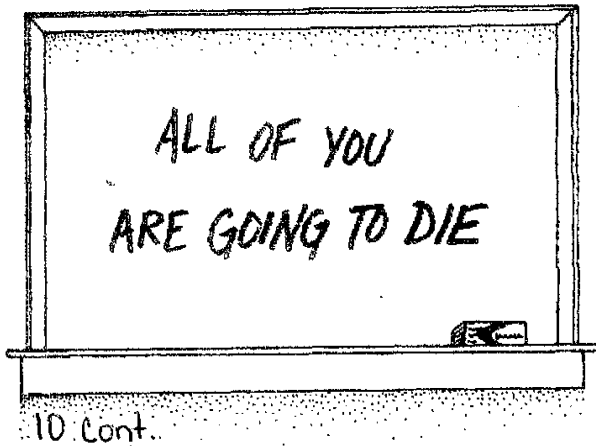
1. To delve in
2. To inform
3. To state facts
4. To nip
5. To notify
6. To open
7. To mash
8. To knead
9. To judge
10. To mend
11. To transition
12. To measure
13. To observe
14. To appeal
15. To lighten
16. To speak frankly
17. To rally
18. To set them up
19. To pierce
20. To press

P.O.V – Point of View - It's that each one of you is going to die.

16

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

⑨ capital B. *(Erases the board.)* There are three great principles in biology. *(There is one great beginning, a middle that varies in size, and a great end.)* All of you were born. And, which is worse, you were born without choice. *(You were forced into life.)* You don't even know how you were born. And you know even less why you were born. You know nothing at all. *(Irritated.)* And still you want to have sex education. You think of nothing but fucking around. *(Cooling.)* This is the great beginning principle of biology. The second principle is the middle. That's what you are living right now. It's your teacher, Miss Margarida. It's everything. It's your finals, too. It's high school we all love. It's the diploma you will get if you only do as I tell you. It's everything that is good and beautiful in the world. The third principle is the most important. It is the whole purpose of biology. Miss Margarida must tell you something that you, as children, haven't quite realized yet. But you must know it. It's that each one of you is going to die. *(P.O.V 1)* Every one of you. Miss Margarida is going to write it on the blackboard so that you remember it. *(Writes on board: ALL OF YOU ARE GOING TO DIE.)* Miss Margarida wants you, for English class, to do a creative paper describing your own funeral in your own words. But remember, it has to be creative. Miss Margarida does not want two single funerals alike in this entire class. Do you understand me? That has a lot to do with biology. You don't really know anything about biology. Then how can you pretend to know other things that are still more difficult? You didn't even know you were all going to die. Now you know it. You people really want to know a lot. I know you want to get to the facts of life before the senior year. You wanted Miss Margarida to take off her clothes and be naked in front of you, that's what you really wanted, me, Miss Margarida, stark na-



ked in front of her pupils.⁹ What wouldn't the Principal say? There's no way you can hide anything from Miss Margarida. Miss Margarida knows what she is talking about. (Pause.) However, Miss Margarida doesn't want to be hard on you.¹⁰ Miss Margarida doesn't want you to think that she doesn't love you.¹¹ All Miss Margarida wants is that each one of you come out of her classes just a little bit better than before.¹² Each time you come out of this classroom you will know something that you didn't know before.¹³ That's what Miss Margarida really wants.¹⁴ That makes you better prepared to face every obstacle that may be in your way.¹⁵ For there will be obstacles in your way, my dear students.¹⁶ Please don't let yourselves be too impressed by the three great principles of biology.¹⁷ There are things much worse than that.¹⁸ History, for example. Do you know what is the great principle of History?¹⁹ Everyone wants to dominate everyone else.²⁰ Exactly like Miss Margarida dominates you.²¹ In this classroom you have no choice: you do what Miss

BEAT 10, ACT I

Objective: To enlighten her students.

Actions:

1. To probe
2. To possess
3. To assure
4. To promote
5. To put down
6. To poke fun
7. To prompt
8. To observe
9. To purge
10. To expose
11. To project
12. To pull back
13. To butter up
14. To besiege
15. To brag
16. To confess
17. To bind
18. To caution

P.O.V – Point of View - All Miss Margarida wants is that each one of you come out her classes just a little bit better than before.

BEAT 11, ACT I

Objective: To expose the nature of dominance.

Actions:

1. To call attention to
2. To reveal
3. To query
4. To oust
5. To make an example
6. To administer
7. To govern
8. To ingrain
9. To embed
10. To stop
11. To scold
12. To abdicate
13. To mislead
14. To chide
15. To punish
16. To bully

P.O.V – Point of View -

Everyone wants to dominate everyone else.

BEAT 12, ACT I

Objective: To instill harsh realities.

Actions:

1. To console
2. To express regret
3. To express concern
4. To dispute
5. To jolt
6. To press
7. To be adamant

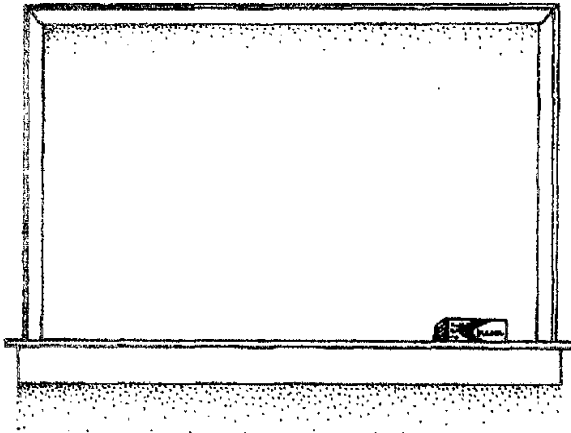
P.O.V – Point of View - The worst is always in future. The Worst is always what comes after.

Margarida tells you to do and only when Miss Margarida tells you. / And you pay for that! / In history it's the same thing. Every country wants to have that kind of relationship with all the others. Conclusion: *everyone wants to be Miss Margarida.* / I am going to write it on the greenboard so that you can remember it. / That's it! / I'm your teacher, and you better believe it. / And don't you imagine that you can complain to the Principal. ¹² / I want every one of you to know that the Principal is on Miss Margarida's side! Miss Margarida here represents the Principal. In a way Miss Margarida is the Principal. / (*Irritated.*) You don't make any decisions in this classroom. Don't you think that just because there is a bell that's going to ring that I have to let you go. You are very much mistaken. / I can have the whole class here overtime. The entire class locked up in this classroom copying lines! Five thousand times! That sentence: Everyone wants to be Miss Margarida! / You can stay here all night writing! / (*Pause.*) Miss Margarida does not want want to be hard on you. / (*Pause.*) The ¹³ punishments Miss Margarida sometimes has to give you are really meant as incentive. It's for your own good. / You must get acquainted with the hardships of life while you are still young. / None of you really knows what hardship is. Sometimes you may think that the worst has passed but you are always mistaken. / The worst is always in the future. The worst is always what comes after. / That is actually the final principle of biology: all of you will end up buried in the cemetery or else reduced to ashes. / This is a very simple truth that Miss Margarida is determined to make you assimilate in this eighth-grade year. You won't be learning that when you are seniors. / In the senior year things start changing a little. / ¹³ It's the peak of adolescence! / The boys start giving a little

13 cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 19

more of themselves and the girls start getting wronged.² P.O.V
And after that you will never be the same boys and girls that you are here. From then on you'll be only concerned with *fucking and getting fucked* for the rest of your lives. But it's not in *my* classroom that this is going to happen. I want *respect* in this classroom. I want *discipline*. I want *decorum*. You good-for-nothings! Do you know what microbe is? Of course you wouldn't. It's biology, too! They are small animals that kill us and nobody sees them. There are millions of them, they kill thousands of people every day. Everyone knows that but nobody sees anything. Miss Margarida is going to draw a microbe on the blackboard for you. *(Draws a nearly invisible microbe.)* See? You can't see it. And virus? Do

14



you know what a virus is? It's the same thing as a microbe, only still smaller. Miss Margarida's going to draw you a virus on the blackboard. *(Draws an invisible*

BEAT 13, ACT I

Objective: To call out the true adolescent nature of middle school students.

Actions:

1. To publicize
2. To smear
3. To shame
4. To slam
5. To solidify
6. To Smack

P.O.V – Point of View - The boys start giving a little more of themselves and the girls start getting wrong.

virus.) That's what biology is all about. Things just P.O.V

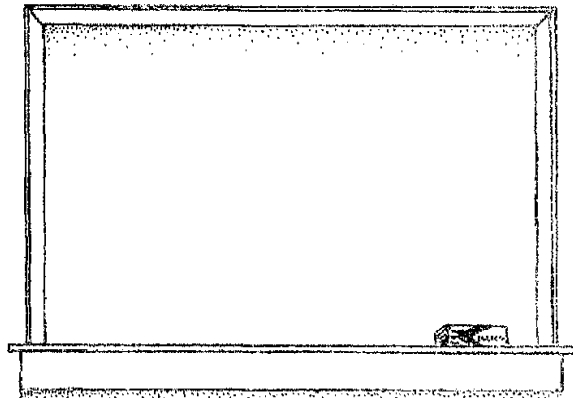
BEAT 14, ACT I

Objective: To zero in on complacency.

Actions:

1. To question
2. To Belittle
3. To inform
4. To notify
5. To press the issue
6. To convince
7. To grill
8. To beat them over the head
9. To display
10. To enlighten
11. To make an example of them
12. To berate
13. To browbeat
14. To chide
15. To threaten
16. To chastise
17. To set them straight
18. To be frank

P.O.V – Point of View – Things just can't be seen that easily.



10
can't be seen that easily. Almost nothing can be seen.
 Take you people, for example. You can't really see very much. If you could, you wouldn't be paying a fortune to be here in this classroom doing what I want. (*Irritated.*) Like a bunch of imbeciles. You don't participate in anything in this class. Not one goddamn thing. I talk and you believe whatever I happen to say. I am the fucking teacher here. (*Infuriated.*) Silence! SILENCE! I need silence to work. I'll ram this greenboard up the ass of the first bastard who opens his mouth! You don't understand anything. Must I repeat everything like a goddamn parrot? If you think I am here at your disposal like a tape recorder, you are very much mistaken. Education is a serious business! You are here to learn.
 15 Do you know what *mathematics* is? Of course not! In the eighth grade, and you don't know a thing about mathematics! I'm going to teach you a few instances. Division. Now, to divide means that each one of you P.O.V

BEAT 15, ACT I

Objective: I want to teach a lesson of greed.

Actions:

1. To advise
2. To inquire
3. To jab
4. To elaborate
5. To announce
6. To seek understanding
7. To illustrate
8. To set up the problem
9. To state the problem
10. To stop
11. To add
12. To spread a message
13. To correlate
14. To recommend

P.O.V. – Point of View – Now, to divide means that each one of you wants to get more than the other.

BEAT 16, ACT I

Objective: I want to tackle the issue of equality.

Actions:

1. To declare
2. To press the issue
3. To tear down
4. To cosset
5. To get back to the issue
6. To teach
7. To declare
8. To maul over
9. To demonstrate
10. To mock
11. To deride
12. To oust

15 cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY ²¹
⁵wants to get more than the others. ⁶Do you understand?
⁷I am going to teach you on the blackboard to make it
⁸perfectly clear. ⁹Let us suppose the following problem.
¹⁰In this classroom, there are only twelve bananas for
¹¹thirty-five students. ¹²Now, pay attention, please. ¹³These
¹⁴thirty-five mouths wanting bananas must, therefore
¹⁵divide the twelve bananas among themselves. ¹⁶What is
¹⁷going to happen? Well, the strongest student will get
¹⁸eight or nine bananas all for himself. The second
¹⁹strongest will get three of four bananas. And the thirty-
²⁰three remaining mouths will be left perfectly without
²¹bananas. ²²That is division. Mathematics is the basis of all
²³the other disciplines. Division is applied in all levels of
²⁴society. ²⁵You must learn well your division before you
²⁶leave elementary school. ²⁷Now, equation. ²⁸Miss Margar-
²⁹ida asks you: what is equation? ³⁰Obviously you don't
³¹know. Miss Margarida realizes that there is not much
³²you do know. In fact, you hardly know anything at all.
³³That's what Miss Margarida is here for. To teach you.
³⁴Well, equation. ³⁵Equation is when one thing is equal to P.O.V
³⁶another. ³⁷For instance, in our country all men are equal.
³⁸How can Miss Margarida explain that to you? ³⁹Well, let's
⁴⁰see it on the greenboard. ⁴¹(Draws a large pot.) This is
⁴²our melting pot. That's where our equation takes place.
⁴³Suppose there is a red man. Then a white man comes. In
⁴⁴this country red and white are equal. As soon as they
⁴⁵come together they melt. ⁴⁶There we have our first equa-
⁴⁷tion. ⁴⁸Then come the black men and they melt together
⁴⁹as soon as they arrive. That is because they are equal
⁵⁰and nobody can tell any difference. ⁵¹So, there is red,
⁵²there is white, and there is black but, as they are equal,
⁵³nobody can tell the difference. That is so because there
⁵⁴is no difference. ⁵⁵Miss Margarida cannot see any dif-
⁵⁶ference. ⁵⁷Is any of you capable of seeing a difference? If
⁵⁸any of you notices a difference, please come up to the

BEAT 16, ACT I (Cont.)

13. To scuff
14. To kindle
15. To justify
16. To challenge

P.O.V. – Point of View –
Equation is when one thing is
equal to the other.

BEAT 17, ACT I

Objective: I want to show them
whose boss.

Actions:

1. To scold
2. To jolt
3. To grab hold
4. To manhandle
5. To oppress
6. To ostracize
7. To lecture
8. To urge

P.O.V. – Point of View – It's
time you people knew your place.

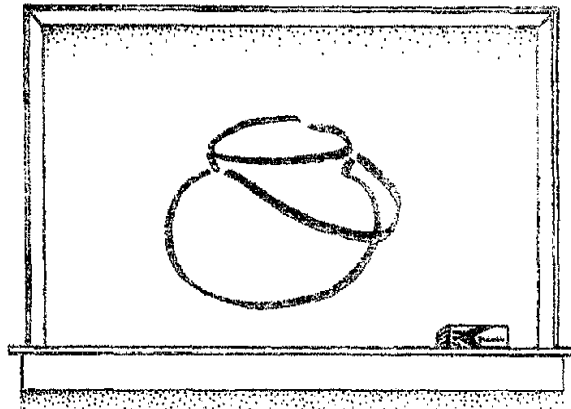
BEAT 18, ACT I

Objective: I want to preserve
their innocence.

Actions:

1. To proclaim
2. To point out
3. To prosecute
4. To patch up
5. To support
6. To lighten
7. To perk up
8. To magnetize

P.O.V. – Point of View – It the most dangerous age because it's the age when boys and girls run the risk of rebelling against their teachers.



¹⁵
blackboard. *(An actor who was sitting with the audience now comes onstage. He is extremely awkward. As he approaches he is rudely stopped by Miss Margarida.)* Who told you to come here? What do you think you are doing here? You think you saw any difference on the blackboard, right? You want to spoil Miss Margarida's equation, right? *(Furious, loud.)* Go immediately back to your desk! Get your ass out of here! *(The student goes back to his seat.)* Arrogant bastard! It's time you people knew your place. *(P.O.V.)* How dare you interrupt Miss Margarida when she is teaching equation? You absolutely must learn equation before you are out of grammar school. You are only eighth graders. You better have a good equation background before your freshman year. *(P.O.V.)* Adolescence is coming. In a couple of years each one of you will be an adolescent. It's the age of doubt. *(P.O.V.)* It is the most dangerous age because it's the age when boys and girls run the risk of rebelling against their teachers. *(P.O.V.)* They rebel against their second home.

BEAT 19, ACT I

Objective: I want to purge myself of an awful event during my eight-grade year.

Actions:

1. To relate to
2. To crow
3. To prepare
4. To tell
5. To reveal
6. To flush out
7. To unload
8. To expose
9. To testify
10. To strike out at the students
11. To slam
12. To chastise

P.O.V. –Point of View – And guess what Miss Margarida did to be punished? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! That was an injustice.

18 cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 23

which is school. Some go as far as rebelling against their own parents. It's to prevent that that Miss Margarida is here. To *help* you! Miss Margarida wants each one of you to be a happy and well-adjusted human being so that you can make your way on to college. Will you ever understand that? Sometimes you may think that Miss Margarida is against you. You may think that Miss Margarida is out to blow your minds or something. It's not true! Miss Margarida wants each one of you to be a freshman next year. And then a sophomore the following year. That's what Miss Margarida really wants. But for that you must cooperate with Miss Margarida. It's necessary that Miss Margarida feels in you an intense desire to learn. That's all Miss Margarida wants from you! I myself was a student like you are today. Miss

19

Margarida was a model student. Miss Margarida was never punished by her schoolteacher. That is, except once. Miss Margarida will tell you about that so it serves as an example. Miss Margarida was about eight or nine. Miss Margarida was a model student. And guess what Miss Margarida did to be punished? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! That was an *injustice*. I'm telling you that Miss Margarida hadn't done a thing! It was this bitchy girl friend of Miss Margarida's who did it and Miss Margarida got the blame in her place. And that little slut was also named Margarida. (*Hateful, scornful.*) Margarida . . . That silly little bitch did it, and Miss Margarida got screwed. You hear me? That was an injustice. (*Excited.*) It was assembly time. The entire school was lined up outdoors. I didn't do a thing! Nothing at all! It was all her fault, that miserable piece of shit. You know what she did? She was standing behind Miss Margarida and she kept rubbing herself against Miss Margarida's back till the teacher saw it P.O.V.

BEAT 20, ACT I

Objective: I want to throw daggers.

Actions:

1. To attack
2. To combat
3. To erase
4. To deface
5. To ridicule
6. To proclaim
7. To corrupt
8. To bear down on

P.O.V. – Point of View – There are only two kinds of men: *the homosexuals and the faggots*.

BEAT 21, ACT I

Objective: I want to recover from my outburst.

Actions:

1. To pull back
2. To back peddle
3. To contrast
4. To soften
5. To flatter
6. To praise
7. To badger
8. To set straight
9. To exert authority

P.O.V. – Point of View – Miss Margarida teaches you the poetry of the world.

24

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

19 cont.

and she caught Miss Margarida instead of that whore Margarida! She punished Miss Margarida, who hadn't done a thing. Nothing, do you hear me? And don't you imagine that could happen in my classroom! Miss Margarida hates injustice. (Screaming.) Miss Margarida hates injustice! I'll kill anybody who says I can do injustice. Do you understand? I'll keep the entire class here after school just to let you know who you are dealing with! I'll have you WRITE A HUNDRED THOUSAND TIMES "Everyone wants to be Miss Margarida."

(20)

You don't know me! You don't know me at all! You don't know what my habits are! And it's not going to be you who will change my habits! (Frantic.) I adore my habits! Do you hear me? I adore my habits! You don't mean anything to me. I don't care what you think of me! I don't give a shit! You are a bunch of fairies! This classroom is filled up with queers! Help, queers all over the place! The whole world's full of queers! (Pause; didactic.) There are only two kinds of men: the homosexuals and the faggots! I'm going to write it on the greenboard so that you memorize it! (Writes: There are only two kinds of men: the homosexuals and the faggots.) But Miss Margarida doesn't want to be hard

P.O.V

(21)

on you. The same way Miss Margarida teaches you the rough things of life Miss Margarida also teaches you the simple and beautiful things. Miss Margarida teaches you the poetry of the world. Things that you also must learn early in life! In spite of everything, my dear students, you do love Miss Margarida. You like your teacher. And Miss Margarida also loves you. She cares for each one of you. Even though sometimes Miss Margarida has to tell you things that you don't like. This is poetry. And this, with everything else, makes up the pleasure of teaching. The satisfaction of having a docile

P.O.V

BEAT 22, ACT I

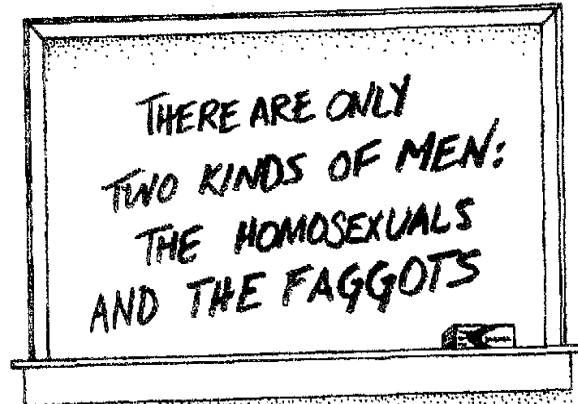
Objective: I want to lecture them on gratitude.

Actions:

1. To commend
2. To speak fondly of
3. To dignify
4. To shed light
5. To make plan
6. To clarify
7. To signal
8. To point out

P.O.V. – Point of View –

Gratitude is the greatest of all qualities.



21 cont.

and obedient class like you.⁵/I knew the Principal was right when he said you were a nice class. That makes Miss Margarida happy. That makes Miss Margarida tremble with joy.⁶/Now you tell Miss Margarida in all sincerity: is there anybody here named *Messiah*? And Jesus? Are you sure? Not one single Jesus? What about Holy Ghosts? No Holy Ghosts either?⁷/(Pause.) Good.⁸/That's the way I like it.⁹/An entire school made up of classes all like you would be perfect.¹⁰/That represents effort and work of your teachers.¹¹/The least you can do to deserve that is to be grateful. Gratitude is the greatest of all qualities.¹²/You also must be grateful to your parents. You wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them.¹³/But it is not for gratitude that Miss Margarida is a teacher. Miss Margarida's activities are totally disinterested.¹⁴/This is something I want to make perfectly clear.¹⁵/One day, when you are all adults, you will understand the words of Miss Margarida.¹⁶/Then you will be sorry for all the

BEAT 23, ACT I

Objective: I want respect.

Actions:

1. To test
2. To question
3. To interrogate
4. To degrade
5. To belittle
6. To allow in
7. To challenge
8. To scrutinize
9. To permit
10. To sort
11. To pounce
12. To tear
13. To castrate
14. To steamroll
15. To trample
16. To squelch
17. To expose
18. To whack
19. To uncover
20. To torment
21. To overpower

P.O.V. – Point of View – You're going to treat me very well! You're gonna respect me as I respect you!

26

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

bad thoughts you had about Miss Margarida. You won't deny that you *do* have bad thoughts about Miss Margarida, will you? WILL YOU? Miss Margarida wants to know *who* of you has the courage to say what he or she thinks about Miss Margarida. (Irritated.) You are afraid to talk! You won't say a goddamn thing! (Infuriated.) A bunch of cowards, that's what you are! Go ahead, say it right to my face! You are all full of shit! Who's gonna be first to step forward and say something? You faggots! You morons! I'll kick your stinking balls in! Who's gonna come up here? You're gonna say Miss Margarida is a ballbuster, aren't you? (Quite beside herself, screaming.) I am a fucking ballbuster! And you are all pederasts and bums! You want to say Miss Margarida is a crazy cunt, I know it! Then, fuck you! (Ripping hysterically about the stage.) I'm a desperate cunt! I'm gonna castrate all of you. I'll cut off your balls and throw them in the river! What do you take me for? A good-for-nothing? A fucked-up whore? A shit-head that everyone pushes around? (Crying.) You're gonna treat me very well! You're gonna respect me as I respect you! (Cooling.) You want to make me lose my temper! That's what you are trying to do! You want me to scream! (Screaming.) I don't need to yell to make myself heard! If you can't hear me, fuck you! You want to make me spend the whole time yelling at you! So that way I teach you less. It won't do any good. I stop this class when I want. Don't you imagine that just because there is a bell that's gonna ring that I have to let you go? I'm gonna teach you *all of it* even if I have to keep you here all night! You must come out of here knowing something about biology. Do you know what *evolution* is? Of course you don't. You don't know anything! So, evolution is *nothing*. It does not exist. It's always the same thing. Nothing changes! That's what

BEAT 24, ACT I

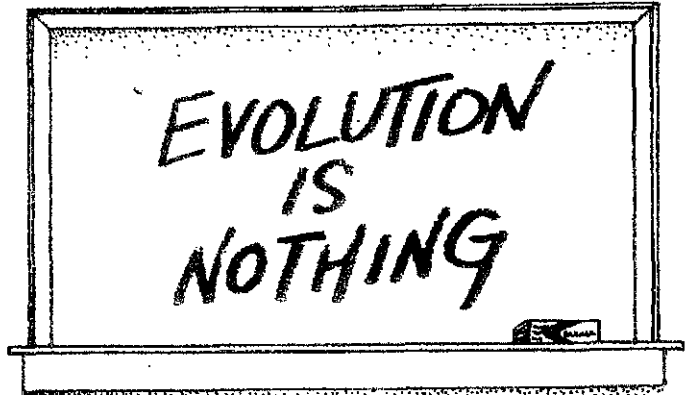
Objective: I want to mock the so-called importance of evolution and revolution.

Actions:

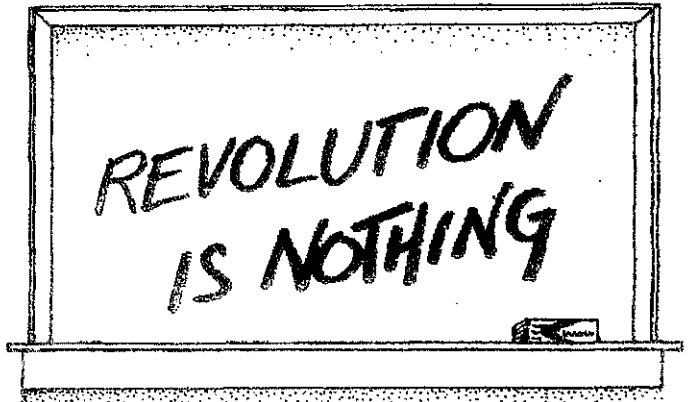
1. To caution
2. To question
3. To tear down
4. To minimize
5. To demonstrate
6. To quiz
7. To dispel
8. To be negative
9. To overwhelm
10. To nab
11. To provoke

P.O.V. – Point of View – Nothing Changes.

24 cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 27
evolution is: NOTHING! Everything is always the same
crap. I'm going to write it on the greenboard so that you
remember it. (Writes; Evolution is nothing.) And



revolution, do you know what it is? Of course not. It's
two times evolution. Two times nothing, nothing! It's
nothing at all! (Writes on board: Revolution is
nothing.) See? All that is nothing. There is just nothing



BEAT 25, ACT I

Objective: I want to enforce the severity in getting an education.

Actions:

1. To put down
2. To Mock
3. To throw it out there
4. To get serious
5. To encourage
6. To enlighten
7. To preach
8. To fill with hope
9. To sweet talk
10. To stimulate
11. To back peddle
12. To wink
13. To elicit a response

P.O.V. – Point of View – You must take your education seriously. That's what you are going to live on. That's what your children one day are going to feed on.

28

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

24

to it! Nothing at all! ⁹(Obsessed by negatives.) Not this, not that, not anything! There's nothing to anything. You people can't do anything in this classroom. All I'll let you do is *nothing*. You are nothing but children. A bunch of morons! You do what Miss Margarida tells you to do.

(25) A bunch of silly little fairies, that's what you are! ¹⁰(Grimaces and apes the audience like a mentally retarded child.) Morons! In eighth grade and you think you are already seniors! Ha! I could beat the shit out of any of you. ¹¹(Pause.) Miss Margarida doesn't like fooling around. ¹²Getting an education is the most serious responsibility you have at your age. It is not only for your own future but for the future of your country! You people are very lucky; in this classroom every one of you is at least semiliterate. With just a little more effort any of you can reach full literacy level. Why not make that effort? Everything is in your hands! He who can read is much better off in life than he who cannot read. You must take your education seriously. That's what you are going to live on. ¹³That's what your children one day are going to feed on. ¹⁴Just think for one minute, my dear students, the progress that we could make in this classroom if only all of you could read fluently? Miss Margarida doesn't mean to say that you cannot read. Miss Margarida knows that you can read. ¹⁵(Stimulating.) But why not read even better? Fluently! Isn't that a good reason for us to make an effort? ¹⁶(Coy.) All of us! Together! Cooperation is the secret! ¹⁷(Pause.) Well, I think we have already talked enough. ¹⁸We have lots of things to learn. This dialogue between pupils and the teacher is necessary, no doubt about that, but some *theory* is also needed. ¹⁹Practice alone is useless. What really puts things together is theory. ²⁰Now that we are a little better acquainted, in spite of some disciplinary problems, since I've succeeded

P.O.V

P.O.V

BEAT 26, ACT I

Objective: To lecture about theory.

Actions:

1. To state plainly
2. To take a moment
3. To stall
4. To examine
5. To begin anew
6. To restate
7. To teach
8. To frame
9. To drill
10. To insist
11. To revert back to the subject
12. To jar
13. To test
14. To weed out
15. To distract
16. To identify
17. To question
18. To stop
19. To shame
20. To humor
21. To embarrass
22. To embark a lesson learned
23. To make blush
24. To change the subject

26 cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

29

in imparting some basic notions of biology to you, let's go into biology itself. ⁵Anyway, what is biology? Biology is the science of life. Of other people's lives. The science of our own life is called *medicine*. I've already taught you the three great principles of biology. You've already forgotten all of it. They are the beginning, the middle, and the end. We cannot go any further into the beginning because it involves the facts of life. ⁶You will only learn the facts of life when you are *seniors*. Now, the middle. The middle of biology is life itself. Which of you never indulged in *masturbation*? ⁷The ones who never masturbated come up to the greenboard, immediately. The others, the masturbators, remain seated at your desks. Don't be ashamed. Don't be bashful. Don't blush. *(Once more the awkward student comes onstage.)* Hey you. ⁸What do you think you are doing there? Nobody was supposed to come up here now. You look like an idiot. ⁹You mean you never played with your thing? And why didn't you? You can tell Miss Margarida. Miss Margarida thinks you haven't got a thing. ¹⁰You can go right back to your desk. It was all a mistake; you weren't supposed to come up here to begin with. *(The student moves back to his desk.)* Cute, isn't he? *(Pause.)* Well, well, well, what was I lecturing you about? ¹¹You can bet your ass it wasn't the facts of life. You might as well forget about that. ¹²Miss Margarida has a responsibility toward our program. Miss Margarida is not like some teachers who wander off the subject, tell stories, reminiscences, things that have nothing to do with the subject matter. ¹³I myself had a teacher like that. She couldn't get through a class without telling some sort of romantic story. She knew everything about everyone's life. She was a good teacher, though, in spite of being so dispersive. ¹⁴She was an intelligent woman, that Miss

(21)

P.O.V

P.O.V. – Point of View – What really out things together is theory.

BEAT 27, ACT I

Objective: To make them realize how important I am to their education and future.

Actions:

1. To smack
2. To electrify
3. To enlist
4. To remember
5. To wander of the subject
6. To reminisce
7. To dote
8. To make an observation
9. To compare
10. To admit
11. To share
12. To acknowledge
13. To clarify
14. To retract
15. To satisfy
16. To entertain
17. To muse over
18. To speak highly of
19. To unfold
20. To imitate
21. To defend
22. To boast
23. To impress
24. To make an example of myself
25. To transform

P.O.V. – Point of View – Miss Margarida has a responsibility towards our program.

30 MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 27 cont.

Margarida. ⁷/Yes, she was also named Margarida. She had a clear preference for Miss Margarida. You know, some teachers always have a pet student. She used to call Miss Margarida "alter ego." ⁸/She had a very strong temper, that Miss Margarida. Once, in phys. ed. class, she hit a kid in the wrong place and he got crippled for life. He became sterile. ⁹/And what a sense of humor that Miss Margarida had! ¹⁰/She had this amazing joke she used to tell us at religious class. It was something about a bull in a corral that got visited by a sparrow. It had some zoomorphic subtlety to it. ¹¹/ . You don't know what zoomorphic means, of course. ¹²/ Well, ¹³/forget it! ¹⁴/it's Latin! ¹⁵/ But what was the joke? Oh yes, the bull. . . . the sparrow . . . I can't remember it. . . . All I can remember is the punch line: the sparrow sucks the bull . . . and the bull sucks the sparrow. ¹⁶/ . Oh, what an extraordinary woman was that Miss Margarida! ¹⁷/She only had that one shortcoming, which was really quite unforgivable. ¹⁸/She couldn't give a lecture without interrupting with hearsay, blablabla and what not. ¹⁹/She would say that in her own time children had more respect for their teachers. There was more sense of obedience. ²⁰/ Actually, Miss Margarida had a perfect class. ²¹/Miss Margarida is not saying this just because she belonged to the class of Miss Margarida ²²/but let's face it, Miss Margarida was among the best students of Miss Margarida's. ²³/ Miss Margarida always made very complimentary comments about Miss Margarida and Miss Margarida always lived up to Miss Margarida's expectations. ²⁴/Miss Margarida only wishes that Miss Margarida could have a class like that of Miss Margarida's with all students like Miss Margarida! ²⁵/ (Pause.) Everything changed from Miss Margarida's time to now. ²⁶/There is not respect for teachers now. ²⁷/Well, at least the teaching methods

28

BEAT 28, ACT I

Objective: To divert from the subject.

Actions:

1. To take time to reflect
2. To small talk
3. To converse plainly
4. To uphold
5. To express
6. To showcase
7. To simplify
8. To explain further
9. To spread
10. To sell
11. To amuse
12. To present
13. To entertain
14. To probe
15. To pursue
16. To persist
17. To engage
18. To insult
19. To insist
20. To demand
21. To guide
22. To point out
23. To twist their arms
24. To enforce
25. To lead
26. To unleash rage
27. To strike
28. To give up

P.O.V. – Point of View –Miss Margarida’s method is based on the idea that one should learn for the sake of teaching and teach for the sake of learning.

28 cont.

MISS MARGARIDA’S WAY

31

seem to have improved a little bit. Things are more direct. What teacher nowadays could indulge in digression? Or even a slight change in the sequence of events? Everything has to be taught straight from the textbook. But don’t imagine that just because of that I’m forced to stop the class when the bell rings. I’m the boss in this classroom. *(Pause.)* Well. *(Pause.)* Miss Margarida is actually responsible for most of the progress in teaching methods over the past decades. Miss Margarida created her own original teaching method. It’s called “Hamburger-Sudamerikanische Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft.” This is German. That means, in English, Margaridian Method for Instant Erudition. Miss Margarida’s method is based on the idea that one should learn for the sake of teaching and teach for the sake of learning. Miss Margarida’s method is especially meant for mass education. Miss Margarida gives private tutoring in this method for only twenty bucks an hour. It’s the ideal thing for the postindustrial society. Miss Margarida has herself composed a little anthem that stands for the ideals of Miss Margarida’s method. Let’s hear Miss Margarida’s composition. *(Sings the following words with a simple and ridiculous melody.)* “Let us sing, let us pray/Miss Margarida’s way!”/What’s the matter? It looks like you didn’t appreciate Miss Margarida’s work. You didn’t like Miss Margarida’s anthem, isn’t that so? You are not very sensitive to music, are you?/Do you realize what you just heard?/That was a masterpiece of our hymnary. It can stand side by side with the very best pages in its genre. You don’t know what *genre* means, of course not!/I got news for you. No one will leave this room without knowing Miss Margarida’s song by heart. Now, *sing it all together. (Trying to conduct the audience.)* Sing it: one, two three. *(Singing.)* Let us sing,

BEAT 29, ACT I

Objective: To bring the class back to order.

Actions:

1. To concur
2. To unhinge
3. To trample
4. To recover
5. To withdraw
6. To affirm
7. To startle
8. To implore
9. To get back on track

P.O.V. – Point of View – Miss Margarida has always said the only way to intellectual betterment: that is an atmosphere of comprehension, cooperation, and understanding.

32 MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 28

let us pray ²¹. *(Furious.)* Nobody is singing ²²/A bunch of morons, that's what you are! ²³/Start singing immediately! One, two, three! *(Singing.)* Let us sing, let us pray ²⁴. Sing, you bastards! I want everybody singing in the fucking classroom! ²⁵/A bunch of irresponsible stops, that's what you are! ²⁶/I'm wasting my time with you! ²⁷/I know you want me to teach the facts of life. I shall never teach you the facts of life! Never never never never! ²⁸/Don't you motherfuckers suppose I'm going to undress in front of you. ²⁹/You are here to learn, not to have fun. There is nothing funny in what I am saying. ³⁰*(Long pause.)* I've already said I don't want to be hard on you. Miss Margarida doesn't like to be tough. ³¹/Miss Margarida has always said there is only one way to intellectual betterment: that is an atmosphere of comprehension, cooperation, and understanding. ³²/And that is also the only way you can get into high school. ³³/There has to be understanding in this classroom. ³⁴*(Stops and sniffs something in the air.)* Anyway, what is understanding? It is the essential element of progress. Without understanding there can be no progress. This is something Miss Margarida wants to make perfectly clear. ³⁵*(Stops again and sniffs more. A stink bomb has been set by a rebellious pupil and its terrible smell pervades the entire classroom.)* ³⁶/No! It is not possible. ³⁷/Someone has blown a stink bomb in this classroom! ³⁸/Who did it! I'll kill, I'll strangle whoever did that! I swear. I'll murder the son of a bitch! You can't beat Miss Margarida! Don't imagine you can beat Miss Margarida! ³⁹*(Choking.)* You bastards! You're evil! You are no good. You'll be damned to the last bastard! ⁴⁰*(The bell rings loudly for recess.)* RECESS, YOU MOTHERFUCKERS! Everyone out of the fucking classroom! ⁴¹*(Lights on for intermission.)* Everyone out of here! ⁴²/You have twenty

P.O.V

BEAT 30, ACT I

Objective: To regain control.

Actions:

1. To launch
2. To accuse
3. To prosecute
4. To threaten
5. To unleash
6. To kick out
7. To enforce
8. To administer
9. To warn
10. To push out
11. To affront
12. To measure
13. To threaten

P.O.V. – Point of View – You can't beat Miss Margarida don't imagine you can beat Miss Margarida.

30 cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 33
minutes to examine your conscience. I want the guilty
one at the greenboard after recess. /He will never forget
the way he will be punished. /Out, every stinking brat! /
(Exit Miss Margarida always yelling and mumbling.)
Burns! /That's all I needed! A stink bomb right in the
middle of biology! /Things are not gonna stay like this! I
swear to God I'll get you back for that.

Second Class

BEAT 1, ACT II

Objective: I want to outsmart my students.

Actions:

1. To introduce a new subject
2. To engage
3. To withdraw
4. To outmaneuver
5. To threaten
6. To overrun
7. To exude power
8. To maintain
9. To blame
10. To snap back to reality
11. To mop up
12. To yield
13. To nudge

(Miss Margarida enters and goes toward her desk. Looks back dramatically to the greenboard to see if there are any confessions to the stink bomb. Sees nobody and visibly forgets all about it and addresses the classroom in a very serious manner, almost contrite.)

- ① Miss Margarida had prepared *catechism* for this second class. Such a class would approach a theme of general interest which is, so to speak, the backbone of our religious faith. As you must already know, there was a great *passion* in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, it's no use going into it since we can't go very far. . . . The sad truth is that because of your insubordination you learned absolutely nothing in the last class. This class therefore will be once more a *biology class*. *(Threatening.)* And you better like it. You are going to have as much biology as it takes to make you learn. If necessary, all classes will be biology classes till the end of the year! Miss Margarida won't have her subject interrupted. What is

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P.O.V – Point of View – What is started must be taken through to the bitter end.

BEAT 2, ACT II

Objective: To make them confess the truth.

Actions:

1. To be frank
2. To oust
3. To manipulate
4. To fault
5. To demand
6. To persist
7. To let go of the matter
8. To change subjects

P.O.V – Point of View – You have to learn to confess when you do something as serious as this. You must all examine your conscience.

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MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 1 cont.

started must be taken to the bitter end.⁸ / I bet you ^{P.O.V} thought you were gonna have sex education for catechism. You were hoping there would be the *facts of life* in Jesus Christ's passion. / You are very much mistaken. In Jesus' time there was no pornography. Things happened by miracle. / It wasn't this mess you see nowadays. / And as for the facts of life, it's no use insisting on it. You'll get that only in the senior year.¹² / And by the way, I want to tell you something very serious.

② Very, very serious. I've noticed that nobody has confessed his guilt about the stink bomb affair. / Don't imagine I have forgotten that. / While you were eating your lunch Miss Margarida got sick in the Principal's office. Miss Margarida coughed and choked and vomited right in front of the Principal. / Miss Margarida almost died because of the misbehavior of one single student. You must all examine your conscience. / I want the guilty one to come spontaneously over the the greenboard and confess. / You have to learn how to confess when you do something as serious as this. You must all examine your conscience. ^{P.O.V} (Pause.) Well, Miss Margarida doesn't want to insist. Miss Margarida will leave that to your own discretion. / Let's go back to our subject matter. / *Opens a shutter that hides a human skeleton natural size.* / Here is our skeleton! One day in the future each one of you ^{P.O.V 1} will look exactly like this. / But nobody will be able to see you because you will be buried. / It is because of this impossibility of seeing our friends as skeletons that the *bony science* was created. / To begin with, what is a bone? Bones are the *hard* parts of the human body. / Which does not mean that anything hard or likely to become so is a bone. / One must always bear in mind that in medicine all rules are confirmed by countless exceptions. For instance: in the beginning all bones were soft. /

③

BEAT 3, ACT II

Objective: To touch on the importance of the human body.

Actions:

1. To present
2. To entertain
3. To amuse
4. To elicit student participation
5. To point out
6. To declare
7. To demonstrate
8. To illustrate
9. To recreate
10. To reach
11. To gain response
12. To persist
13. To shun
14. To monopolize
15. To throw away
16. To pick on
17. To poke fun
18. To smear
19. To prick
20. To surmount
21. To separate
22. To tinker
23. To get on their level

3 Cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

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The fetus is basically a soft thing.⁷ *(Makes a repulsed face.)* As it gets a little bigger it starts getting a little harder. It gets harder and harder as time passes. This notion of hardness is one of the most important things in biology.⁸ Now, pay attention to Miss Margarida's words. Now Miss Margarida asks you: Which one would be the most important part?⁹ The head?¹⁰ But just think that a head could never live on its own.¹¹ Would it be the trunk? Or the limbs?¹² You are a bunch of dummies, aren't you?¹³ Considering the whole of the human creature, neither the head nor the trunk nor the limbs have the slightest importance. *(Suddenly, mad.)* All three are totally useless! Totally worthless!¹⁴ Do you think Miss Margarida is here to exalt the human body? You're very much mistaken.¹⁵ You probably think Miss Margarida is one of those *hedonists*.¹⁶ Do you know what a hedonist is? Of course not! You don't know anything whatsoever!¹⁷ Hedonist is *Greek*. It means "the sensual woman".¹⁸ *(Infuriated.)* Miss Margarida doesn't give a damn, do you understand? Miss Margarida *does not give a shit*.¹⁹ That skeleton is *your* skeleton: Miss Margarida hasn't got a skeleton! Miss Margarida *has never been hard*.²⁰ *(Pointing to the skeleton.)* Don't imagine that Miss Margarida mingles with that kind of people.²¹ *(Feeling her own arms.)* You see? Miss Margarida has no skeleton! Miss Margarida's arms are absolutely flexible! *(Doing a weird belly dance to demonstrate her flexibility.)* Flexible! Miss Margarida hasn't a single bone.²² And before I forget: Miss Margarida does yoga. Miss Margarida knows yoga. And Miss Margarida *levitates*, too. One of these days Miss Margarida will lecture you on levitation. Miss Margarida *rises*. Miss Margarida can rise any moment she wants to.²³ You folks think Miss Margarida is just theory.

(4)

P.O.V – Point of View – Here is our skeleton one day in the future each one of you will look exactly like this.

BEAT 4, ACT II

Objective: To encourage them to respect nature and everything in it.

Actions:

1. To link
2. To brag
3. To astound
4. To bond
5. To belabor
6. To embody

P.O.V – Point of View – One must reach to the world around oneself in order to have a sound mind.

BEAT 5, ACT II

Objective: To elaborate on respecting nature.

Actions:

1. To pinpoint
2. To appeal
3. To beam
4. To broaden
5. To extol

P.O.V – Point of View – Each species has a particular way of life that must be respected and understood.

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MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 4 Cont.

You are badly mistaken. Miss Margarida practices. Miss Margarida understands the vibrations of the body just as well as the vibrations of the mind. Miss Margarida always did sensitivity training on her students long before anybody thought of that. Miss Margarida doesn't need to think: Miss Margarida feels. Miss Margarida participates. Miss Margarida is constantly reaching out to the world. One must reach out to the world around oneself in order to have a sound mind. Miss Margarida also reaches out to the world of trees and plants. They also have a language of their own. And Miss Margarida understands that language. And the same thing happens with the mineral world. Rocks also have a language of their own. And Miss Margarida understands that language. Miss Margarida can feel the rocks breathing in nature. This is ecology. Miss Margarida won't lecture you on ecology: Miss Margarida is ecology. Miss Margarida also understands the animal world. Miss Margarida understands the language animals talk. Each species has a particular way of life that must be respected and understood. Miss Margarida is the pioneer of a new movement that will change the destiny of mankind. Miss Margarida is going to expose a new kind of social injustice that has existed unsuspected to this very day. It is the most shameful of all social injustices: it is the nefarious injustice that is carried out against our brother animals. With what right do we women consider ourselves superior to the other species? There is no scientific proof that a woman is basically superior to a bull. With what right therefore do we ill-treat and devour the bull? Miss Margarida is with the bull. Each one of you must consider this problem. There can be no justice in the world as long as there is no equality among the species. A pig has the same right to life as each one

BEAT 6, ACT II

Objective: To convince them that all species are equal and must be respected.

Actions:

1. To lead
2. To expose
3. To bash
4. To confront
5. To prosecute
6. To rise above
7. To Command
8. To empower
9. To establish
10. To shame

P.O.V – Point of View – There can be no justice in the world as long as there is no equality among the species.

BEAT 7, ACT II

Objective: To bring home the idea of equality.

Actions:

1. To persuade
2. To convince
3. To preach
4. To motivate
5. To enlighten
6. To ignite
7. To egg on
8. To make an observation
9. To dismiss
10. To reinforce

6 Cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 41

of you! Taking the freedom of pigs and confining them in pigsties is a *crime* of which you must be ashamed.

⑦ Miss Margarida is a vegetarian. Miss Margarida wants each one of you to become a vegetarian from now on. That will be our effort to do justice. The animals want no charity, they want *justice*. And justice is equality in power and in pride. Miss Margarida rejects the theory that some animals are more equal than others. A cheese worm that feeds exclusively on cheese and actually lives inside the cheese has obviously much more right to that cheese than a housewife. Miss Margarida wants you to think about that. Whenever you find a cockroach or any bugs floating in your soup do not feel uneasy about your roach or your bugs: *share* your soup with those animals. Miss Margarida has fought all her life for these ideals. Difficulties are great and many. There is a great deal of incomprehension. There are those who claim that animals are inferior by nature and are incapable of following our civilization. It is not true. Science proves that all species are *essentially equal*. And that is the basis of Miss Margarida's animal liberation. The differences are due to external circumstances. They are due to the *climate*. They are due to the centuries of oppression and exploitation that animals have suffered from mankind. The difference is always due to something that can be changed. And that is the great ambition of

⑧ Miss Margarida's: to change. To change everything! Change the mind of each one of you. What would be the good of Miss Margarida's authority over you if she couldn't modify your minds? Miss Margarida molds you. When Miss Margarida says you must do something it means that you just *have to do it*. You must obey willy-nilly. Whether you like it or not. (Irritated.) In this classroom you do exactly as I say. No more, no less.

11. To fizzle
12. To wrap up
13. To land

P.O.V – Point of View – Science proves that all species are essentially equal.

BEAT 8, ACT II

Objective: To exercise my control over my students.

Actions:

1. To enrich
2. To enlist
3. To embed
4. To exude control
5. To misuse
6. To bluff
7. To scare
8. To scold
9. To offend
10. To lash out
11. To roast
12. To penetrate

P.O.V – Point of View- Miss Margarida molds you. When Miss Margarida says you must do something it means that you have to do it.

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MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 8 cont.

Miss Margarida can send any of you to the Principal's office. There are very few students Miss Margarida has already sent to the principal's office: *none of them has ever come back.* Miss Margarida does not know what happened to them, but Miss Margarida can guarantee you that nothing good happened to them. You are here to obey. You are here to learn. That means you don't know anything. Nothing at all. *(Getting progressively infuriated.)* I won't tolerate any disciplinary problems in this classroom. What kind of an education you think you've got? You are incapable of comprehending the effort and the dedication of a teacher. You are a bunch of street urchins! Ignoramuses! Bums! In eighth grade you know *nothing at all!* You don't know the first thing about biology. You don't recognize your own skeleton. *(Starts dismantling the skeleton, revealing some violence. Rips an arm off. Hesitates. Shows an almost erotic interest for the arm. Gives the impression she is going to start lecturing furiously but says nothing. Places the arm on the floor and goes back to the skeleton. Handles the skeleton absent-mindedly and ad lib and eventually attacks the skeleton, reducing it to a heap of bones on the floor. Goes back to her desk. Restarts calm but severe.)* Now, since we were talking about classroom behavior, is there anybody named Messiah in this classroom? No? And Jesus? No Jesus either? Are you sure? And Holy Ghosts? Is there anyone named Holy Ghost? No? *(Sadistic.)* Fuck you, then. *(Pause.)* Miss Margarida is fed up with you. I know, you are gonna say that you too are fed up with Miss Margarida. That's it. It's because biology is a pain in the ass, this goddamn school is a pain in the ass. LIFE IS A PAIN IN THE ASS! I'm going to write it down so that you won't forget it. *(Writes on board: Life is a pain*

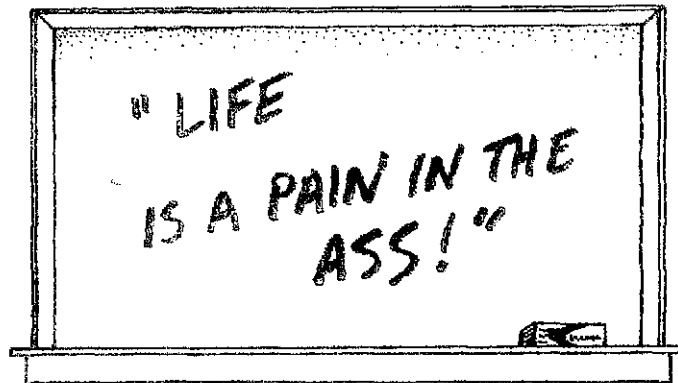
P.O.V

BEAT 9, ACT II

Objective: To release my frustrations.

Actions:

1. To press
2. To hurt
3. To irk
4. To spark
5. To blast
6. To grind
7. To recoil
8. To lay down ground rules
9. To commend
10. To praise
11. To flatter
12. To press on ground rules
13. To tighten
14. To mislead
15. To bribe
16. To wink
17. To seduce
18. To arouse
19. To flirt
20. To lock
21. To assure
22. To stimulate
23. To protest
24. To rekindle



9 cont.

in the ass!) All Miss Margarida wants is to make these classes as painless as possible. But you must cooperate for that. That cooperation consists mainly in two things. The first one is that you do not react in any manner to what Miss Margarida says. This condition you boys and girls have fulfilled perfectly well. So far you have been perfectly passive, nothing pointing to the idea that you might be able to produce one single thought. The Principal had told Miss Margarida you were a pretty good class. This makes Miss Margarida happy. It really satisfies Miss Margarida. The second necessary thing in this cooperation program is something Miss Margarida has already told you but which is always convenient to point out again: that is a blind obedience to Miss Margarida. You children here within these walls have no right to anything. You are actually entitled to nothing at all. You are just students of Miss Margarida's. You must understand what you are so that you can behave accordingly. Good behavior is essential to a growing boy or girl. Just think all you could get from

P.O.V – Point of View – Life is a pain in ass.

your parents if you just behaved well.¹⁹ And even from Miss Margarida. Who knows if Miss Margarida wouldn't give you a little sex education class if just you improved your manners? Think about that! Miss Margarida could perhaps open up her blouse just a little bit and show her tits to you. Just think about that! Miss Margarida could pull her skirt up just a tiny bit for you. (Giggles with pathos.) But all that is only if you work hard. There is no prize without dedication and sacrifice. Miss Margarida would like to reward you. It all depends on you.²⁰ Who knows if one day Miss Margarida wouldn't strip and be in the nude in front of you? But for that you must study. You must work hard. There is much to learn and very little time. You are many, Miss Margarida is one. Miss Margarida is unique. There is no way Miss Margarida can pass on to you everything she knows.²¹

(10)

Science of life. It comprehends everything that exists. Miss Margarida believes everything is alive. That is the real gist of Miss Margarida's biology. To prepare you for life. Miss Margarida will now enter a subject the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. You all talk a lot about it but there is very little that you actually know about it. Miss Margarida is talking about *narcotics*. *Drugs*. They are the greatest threat that hangs over the head of each one of you. It's the greatest threat that hangs over the heads of all young people all over the world. (Pause.) What is a drug? A drug, my dear students, is something that kills. Something that destroys. It is the tragedy of being destroyed by one's own actions, slowly but steadily. It is suicide. In today's world, drugs are the utmost preoccupation of all parents. And also of all teachers and educators. Miss Margarida wants to lecture you about that. To illuminate you. To guide you toward knowledge and courage to face the danger. The danger, my dear students, is literally everywhere. Just about on

P.O.V

BEAT 10, ACT II

Objective: To lecture about the affects and consequences of using drugs.

Actions:

1. To set up my next lesson
2. To introduce
3. To pinpoint
4. To warn against
5. To pose a question
6. To answer
7. To shed light
8. To teach
9. To notify
10. To pin down
11. To enlighten
12. To preach
13. To load
14. To urge
15. To illustrate
16. To demonstrate
17. To observe
18. To call attention to
19. To ambush
20. To judge
21. To bruise
22. To clamp down
23. To dig
24. To belabor
25. To shame
26. To bring home
27. To advocate
28. To press further
29. To further illustrate

ID cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

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every street corner.⁹ Among all deadly drugs the deadliest is the *Cannabis sativa*. It is vulgarly known as marijuana. Therefore, if ever one of you sees a *Cannabis sativa*, do turn away from that *Cannabis sativa*.¹⁰ It is the most dangerous of all drugs because it leads directly to the use of other drugs and throws its victims in the bottomless abyss of promiscuity and crime.¹¹ To let the *Cannabis sativa* into the respiratory channels is the greatest disgrace that can happen to a person. And when Miss Margarida says drugs, it's not only the *Cannabis sativa*. There are countless of these evil substances that will seduce the adolescent and throw him down the pit of vice.¹² They are the awful cortege of drugs that follow the *Cannabis sativa*. There's heroin. There's morphine. All those poisons that God created in order to test our obedience.¹³ And you children are even more exposed than adults to the dangers of vice.¹⁴ Miss Margarida brought you today a slide documentary that shows the effects of addiction in the life of a student. There will be no doubts left after seeing the slides Miss Margarida brought for you. You'll have a clear picture of the tragedy right on the screen. Miss Margarida wants to make a point of answering every question that you can possibly conceive relating to the problem of narcotics. Do not hesitate to interrupt Miss Margarida. Miss Margarida will answer *all the questions* regardless of how stupid they are.¹⁵ (She prepares the machine, the screen, and gets ready to start.) Here we are. This series of slides aims at showing the progression of *Cannabis sativa* addiction in the life of an adolescent student.¹⁶ (Turns the first slide on. It shows an all-American boy, blond and incredibly healthy.) Here you see a healthy young man in the prime of his adolescence.¹⁷ This young man, up to the day this photo was taken, had lived a wholesome and happy life full of joy, studying and

- 30. To overwhelm
- 31. To compare
- 32. To mortify
- 33. To recap

P.O.V – Point of View – A drug, my dear students, is something that kills. Something that destroys. It is the tragedy of being destroyed by one's own actions slowly but steadily. It is suicide.

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MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 1D cont.

playing among his companions. A virtuous life, sober, with moderate masturbation. Till one day, out of curiosity, just not to be different from the others, ¹⁸our young man smoked a cigarette of *Cannabis sativa*. ¹⁹*(Changes slides; the same young man appears well dressed, at a party, holding a glass of scotch with some sophistication.)* That was the beginning of the end. ²⁰At first the cannabis had no effect. A few days later, still at the insistence of his friends, our unexperienced hero smoked a second cigarette of *Cannabis sativa*. ²¹*(Changes slides, and there appears the same young man holding a bottle of scotch at a bar's counter in a scene of mild drunkenness.)* This time he got his effect all right. ²²The harm was done. ²³Next time it wasn't at a party or even in the street that he smoked the *Cannabis sativa*. ²⁴*(Changes slides to scenes of severe alcoholic intoxication and many bottles of whiskey.)* It was in the solitude of his own room that he now smoked the *Cannabis sativa*. ²⁵Alone with the drug that caused his damnation. ²⁶That, my dear students, is the awful fate of those who will let themselves be dragged down the road of drug addiction. It's an unfathomable abyss that leads rapidly to weakness and death. ²⁷*(Changes slides to same character lying on the floor surrounded by countless empty bottles of scotch.)* Miss Margarida wants each one of you to promise her you won't be chained down to any such vice. You must be forever warned; ²⁸the illness of the *Cannabis sativa* starts from within. ²⁹It starts in the lungs. Miss Margarida is going to show you what a healthy lung should look like. ³⁰*(Changes slides to a close-up of a normal lung.)* Look at the beauty of that lung! Clear! Translucent! Who wouldn't want to have such a nice lung? ³¹Now Miss Margarida is going to show you what the *Cannabis sativa* can do to an adolescent lung. Look

BEAT 11, ACT II

Objective: To instill in my students how important I am in their life.

Actions:

1. To assume responsibility
2. To dispel any before notion
3. To state
4. To diminish
5. To praise
6. To lambaste
7. To reveal
8. To relate
9. To disclose
10. To express fear
11. To divulge
12. To recount
13. To quiz
14. To release
15. To purge
16. To educate
17. To engrain

P.O.V – Point of View – Nowadays it is part of a teacher's job to provide for the morality of the students just as well as their intellects.

10 cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 47

at this other lung totally affected by the drug²¹ (*Changes slides to the very same normal lung.*) Look at the terrible condition of this lung! See the difference? Look at the holes! Just look at those holes! (*Laughing with gusto.*) Look at the poisoned spots, the parts already degenerated! Did you see the difference? Let's take another look at the healthy lung ²² (*Changes to same lung.*) . . . and now again the lung rotting with *Cannabis sativa* (*Changes to same lung.*) Miss Margarida wants all of you to be aware of the risks you take. That's what school is made for. That's what Miss Margarida is made for. To alert you. To show you the reality of things and force you to act in the right manner. But this commitment of teachers to organize their students' private lives is a pretty recent thing. Don't imagine it was like this in the old times. How things really have changed! This fabulous progress! In Miss Margarida's time, teachers were purely theoretical. They thought they could transmit knowledge and experience by words. Thank God all that has changed. At those times teachers didn't even know how to give their students psychological assistance when they needed it most. Miss Margarida herself was to an extent a victim of this lack of orientation. Miss Margarida is also human. Miss Margarida can make mistakes too. Miss Margarida was also an eighth grader like each of you. Miss Margarida had all the problems you have today. Miss Margarida will never forget a great problem in Miss Margarida's life. A great phase. Miss Margarida had a little girl friend in elementary school. She was a dyke. One fine day she started eyeing Miss Margarida. Miss Margarida got very worried. Miss Margarida was very, very perturbed. This Margarida girl stood right behind Miss Margarida when the whole school used to sing the national anthem out in

BEAT 12, ACT II

Objective: To make certain they obey me.

Actions:

1. To explain
2. To analyze
3. To appeal
4. To push for
5. To address
6. To bully
7. To dictate
8. To enforce
9. To clamp down
10. To burn
11. To badger
12. To pounce
13. To slap
14. To annihilate
15. To attack sharply
16. To maim

P.O.V – Point of View – You must understand that here you have no active.

48 MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY II cont.

the patio.¹¹ She kept touching Miss Margarida. She actually liked Miss Margarida.¹² Do you understand?¹³ She would start feeling up Miss Margarida. Miss Margarida got very, very worried. Very, very perturbed.¹⁴ Nowadays nothing of the sort could possibly happen. Nowadays it is part of a teacher's job to provide for the morality of his students just as well as for their¹⁵ intellects. That's what Miss Margarida is for. To illuminate. To prepare. To provide for. To mold each one of you.¹⁶ Your personality is like a shapeless piece of soft clay. It can take any form in the hands of Miss Margarida. You still have no definite personality. You are going to improve little by little. It goes slowly. Little by little. If you make a strong effort, everyone will pass the examinations. Next year you will be all in junior high! Your horizons will get larger and larger. But for that you must follow the instructions of Miss Margarida. You must follow them blindly. That's what you are here for. You pay for that. You don't want to waste your time. What would your dad and mom think if Miss Margarida didn't make you obey? Always remember the stanza: "The deserving ones, who are they? They are those who obey." You must understand that here you have no active voice. You are in the hands of Miss Margarida. You will not be heard about anything at all. It is as if you didn't exist. But of course you have to pay for it. You have no choice. All of you must present your ID cards to the doorman. (Getting irritated.) You don't make any decisions here. Miss Margarida gives no permission that anything is done without special permission. Miss Margarida won't let you do anything. Not this, not that, nothing at all! Miss Margarida will not feel sorry for you. Miss Margarida has no pity for rebels. Miss Margarida knows when she must be ruthless with you.

(12)

P.O.V

P.O.V

BEAT 13, ACT II

Objective: To apologize.

Actions:

1. To rant
2. To recoil
3. To coddle
4. To comfort
5. To soothe
6. To pacify
7. To addle
8. To frame
9. To justify
10. To exude remorse
11. To cradle
12. To convince
13. To inform

P.O.V – Point of View - You must not get discourage when Miss Margarida scolds you. That's the only way you can absorb the true essence of Miss Margarida's teachings.

12 cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 49

(*Getting infuriated.*) Where do you think you are? In a fucking whorehouse?/You are very mistaken./I want a lot of *respect* in this classroom!/¹You are a bunch of parasites. Don't imagine you can ²push me around. I am the boss in the goddamn classroom!/³You're gonna learn biology even if I have to beat the shit out of you. You think you're gonna get sex education, right? You wanna see Miss Margarida's *cunt*, that's what you really want!/⁴Fuck you, licentious bastards! I'll shove that skeleton up your ass! Silence! I WANT SILENCE! Fuck the biology class! To hell with the goddamn school! Fuck ⁵you!/
(*Great pause; after pause quite unexpectedly.*)

⑬ In California it's the same shit!/(*Pause.*) Miss Margarida doesn't want to be hard on you. Miss Margarida doesn't want to humiliate you. Miss Margarida is here to help you. All Miss Margarida wants is your happiness./Miss Margarida likes you. (*Coy.*) And you do like Miss Margarida./Miss Margarida knows there are many things you would like to say but that you don't because you are just too passive. (*With coy tenderness.*) You are perhaps a little impotent, too./Miss Margarida knows that. Miss Margarida understands that./(*Motherly.*) Miss Margarida wants to help you not to say anything. Miss Margarida wants to adjust you so that you don't even have anything you'd like to say.⁶/That's the way Miss Margarida prepares you for ⁷life./Because in life nobody really has anything to say./You must not be discouraged when Miss Margarida scolds you. That's P.O.V
the only way you can absorb the true essence of Miss Margarida's teachings./Miss Margarida's harshness hurts Miss Margarida herself more than it hurts you.⁸/Miss Margarida is like a second mother to you./(*Can-*
dor.) Miss Margarida wants to help you to be impotent.⁹/You know, like, Miss Margarida is your second mama.¹⁰/

BEAT 14, ACT II

Objective: To persuade them to stay in school.

Actions:

1. To urge
2. To warn
3. To convince
4. To influence
5. To be frank
6. To affirm
7. To educate
8. To enlighten
9. To encourage
10. To protect
11. To snap
12. To back up
13. To stop
14. To invite
15. To mislead
16. To pulverize

P.O.V – Point of View – Many are called but few are chosen.

50

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 13 cont.

But you must cooperate with Miss Margarida. That's the only way we can keep up with our school's standards. Miss Margarida helps you. And you help Miss Margarida. You must give a little more thought to the importance of your exams. ⁽¹⁴⁾ It's your admission to ninth grade that is at stake. And remember: if you don't make it to ninth grade you may as well forget about tenth grade. And if you don't enter tenth grade there's no way you could aspire to entering eleventh grade. And if you don't reach your junior year you *do not* reach your senior year. And if you don't finish your senior year that means you didn't even go through high school. And if you couldn't go through high school you may as well forget about college. And if you forget about college you couldn't possibly dream of a master's degree. And you'll never be graduate students and you'll never get a Ph.D. And without your Ph.D., my dear students?/... that means you'll never be doctors. *(Sad to have come to progression's end.)* This is the sad reality. And you children must learn that reality. Many are called but few are chosen. ^{P.O.V} Miss Margarida wants to see you all on the right path. It is a tough path. It is a path full of hardships and traps. It is a path full of pitfalls. It is, however, a path that leads to a doctor's degree. *(Sadtastic.)* Miss Margarida longs to see you as doctors and lawyers and business people. And you will also get married one day. Miss Margarida rejoices when she thinks about that. It makes Miss Margarida tremble with joy. ¹⁰ *(There comes onstage the same awkward student of the previous times.)* Who do you think you are? Nobody told you to come here. You can go right back to your desk, you hear me? It was all a mistake: go right back to your desk. ⁷ *(The student numbly starts back to his desk.)* Just a minute, son. Come back here. Miss Margarida has got something to show you. ¹⁵ *As he gets*

BEAT 15, ACT II

Objective: To teach them the power of know – how.

Actions:

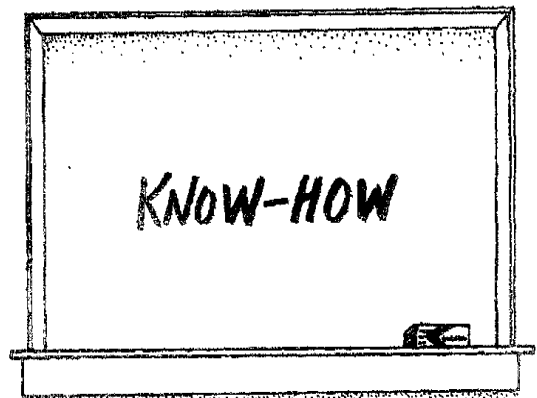
1. To tackle
2. To teach
3. To boast
4. To inform
5. To educate
6. To assure
7. To instruct
8. To represent
9. To illustrate
10. To display
11. To recap
12. To banter
13. To move on
14. To multiply
15. To solve

P.O.V – Point of View – Each one of our acts requires a fair amount of knowledge so that they can be carried out.

14 cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 51

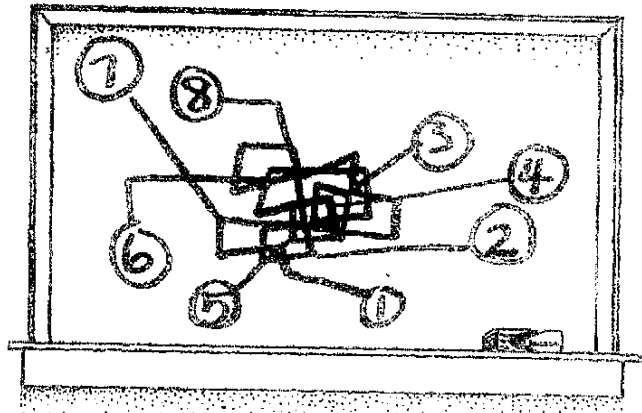
near, Miss Margarida suddenly grabs him and delivers a fantastic ju-jitsu coup that ends with Miss Margarida triumphantly on top of the prostrate victim. He finally manages to escape the teacher and scurries back to his desk.) You better learn your lesson now, you shithead! Don't you get your ass near me! Idiotic bastard! Moron! (Pause. Restarts with a cold, professional air.)

15 Nowadays nothing can be done without technique. Each one of our acts requires a fair amount of knowledge so that they can be carried out. We Americans call that "know-how." Miss Margarida will write this on the blackboard so that you won't forget it. (Writes on board: know-how.) Nothing can be done without a cer-



tain amount of know-how. The reason is very simple. Without it, people wouldn't quite know just how to do what they want to do. There is only one way to face that problem. That is to have a complete knowledge of all the possibilities of action and of all the possibilities that each one of those possibilities has to offer. Miss Mar-

garida, for instance, would never start any action without pondering on every possibility and sub-possibility. Suppose, for example, that Miss Margarida wants to take a walk, starting from Miss Margarida's apartment. Miss Margarida takes her elevator and rides down to the entrance hall. Once in the street Miss Margarida has to make her first decision: Miss Margarida must choose between turning left or turning right. Suppose Miss Margarida made a right turn. Soon Miss Margarida will find the intersection of Miss Margarida's street and the next street to the right, offering therefore three new directions for Miss Margarida's walk. Among many others, Miss Margarida has thus gotten the following possibilities: *(The whole of the walk demonstration should be done on the greenboard.)* 1) Cross the street



and continue in the same direction on the same sidewalk. 2) Make a sharp left. 3) Cross the street to the left and then continue in the same direction perpendicularly to the original direction. 4) Cross the street to the left and then continue in the opposite direction perpen-

dicularly to the original direction. 5) Cross the street to the left and then cross it again to the right and proceed in the original direction on the opposite sidewalk. 6) Cross the street to the left and then make another left and follow the direction opposite to the original direction on the opposite sidewalk. 7) Cross the street straight ahead and then make a left and then another left, finally making a right turn and following to the right perpendicularly to the original direction. 8) The eighth possibility is going right back home and calling it a day. !/ . As you see, we found eight equally valid possibilities for our stroll. No matter which of these possibilities Miss Margarida chooses, it will lead Miss Margarida to another intersection. Possibility number one would take Miss Margarida to the northeastern corner of Miss Margarida's block, where Miss Margarida would find eight more possibilities. Possibility number two, which consists in making a sharp left, would invariably lead to the northeastern corner of the block following Miss Margarida's block to the south. This second possibility alone offers Miss Margarida eight more possibilities for her walk. If Miss Margarida followed that making all left turns, Miss Margarida would end up standing on the corner four blocks away from Miss Margarida's facing toward the left. And if Miss Margarida follows that second possibility making all *right* turns, Miss Margarida would end up standing on a corner four blocks away from Miss Margarida's facing toward the right. In either case that means 128 new possibilities to be considered. Each one of those leading Miss Margarida to eight new possibilities to be considered. So, 128 times 8. Let's multiply it quickly. (*Calculates on greenboard.*) There! We've got 1,024 street corners where Miss Margarida would arrive and which would offer Miss Margarida 8,192 possibilities to

$$\begin{array}{r} 128 \\ \times 8 \\ \hline 1024 \end{array}$$

be considered. ¹⁴Summing up: Miss Margarida found twenty-four billion, seven hundred thirteen million, four hundred thirty-three thousand, five hundred eleven possibilities for her stroll! ¹⁵(Writes on board: 24713433511.) Miss Margarida, before going out of her

(16)

$$24\ 713\ 433\ 511$$

BEAT 16, ACT II

Objective: To further explore the importance of know – how.

Actions:

1. To brag
2. To embody
3. To belabor
4. To drive the point home
5. To inform
6. To sway
7. To prove to
8. To crow
9. To enlighten
10. To urge
11. To educate
12. To question
13. To inform
14. To reveal
15. To drill

P.O.V – Point of View – Method, my dear students, is the only thing that leads to efficiency.

16 Cont. MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY 55

apartment, studies and learns and weighs each one of those possibilities! Miss Margarida knows precisely the mechanism, the structure, the scheme, the content, the gist, the kernel, the core of that stroll. Otherwise Miss Margarida would never venture out her door. Method, my dear students, is the only thing that leads to efficiency. P.O.V
cy Miss Margarida is perfectly aware of the fact that other people have taken and do take walks without any of those precautions. That's their problem. I hope they get lost wandering all over the goddamn city. They will pass each street corner *without knowing* what they are going to do at the next corner or what they could have done at the corner before. To hell with them! Miss Margarida won't set foot outside her apartment without being absolutely sure of each one of her movements! Miss Margarida *chooses*! Miss Margarida *decides*! Miss Margarida *determines*! Miss Margarida can have no surprises, Miss Margarida *foresees*. That is the path, my dear students. One must *know*. Know everything. You understand that? It isn't going to be now in the middle of the twentieth century that man will give up knowledge. Thousands of years of experience! Thousands of years of sacrifice! Thousands of years of culture! Thousands of years of civilization! What for? Many have put this question. The greatest minds in history have asked this question. And Miss Margarida found the answer. The answer is: *just to know*. Just to know what it is all about. All the sacrifices and efforts during thousands of years are just to know what it is all about. P.O.V
(17) And that's what Miss Margarida wants to teach you. What things really are. You want to know what things really are? Things are *adjectives*! Things are big and small, tiny and huge, horrendous, ridiculous, gorgeous, fake and true, new and tough, old and evil and beautiful, red like blood! That's what things really are: *adjectives*.

BEAT 17, ACT II

Objective: To exemplify the power of knowing.

Actions:

1. To inform
2. To reveal
3. To declare
4. To question
5. To animate
6. To dance
7. To entertain
8. To sing
9. To relax
10. To calm down
11. To soften
12. To yawn
13. To dose off
14. To stay awake
15. To keep teaching
16. To snap to
17. To fall asleep

P.O.V – Point of View – All the sacrifices and efforts during thousands of years are just to know what it is all about.

*tives. No problem at all! You hear me? Everything is an adjective! And if you want to know just how things are what they are there is no problem either! Miss Margarida found the answer! The way things are, the manner, the form, all that is *adverb*. You hear me? *Adverb!* Things are calmly, firstly, obviously, specially, increasingly, terribly, brotherly, tastefully, wonderfully, desperately, inevitably, tragically, eternally! Did you hear me? That's the way things really are! Everything has the same way of being; *ADVERB*. Everything is an *adverb!* No problem at all! (*Miss Margarida is more and more excited and talks faster and faster.*) And you wanna know what things do to one another? No problem here either. What things and people do is always *verb*. Nobody ever did anything that wasn't a *verb!* *There* is the explanation. You hear me? Everything that is done is bound to be *verb!* It is the verb to make, the verb to take, the verb to fake, the verb to like, the verb to strike, the verb to laugh, and the verb to cough, the verb to eat and sleep and eat and sleep, the verb to doubt, the verb to play, the verb to stay and obey, the verb to want and the verb to plant and to shit and to bullshit, the verb to love, to lose, to forget, the verb to live! (*Pause. Miss Margarida is nearly hysterical. Restarts slower for crescendo.*) The verb to pass, the verb to last, the verb to cost, the verb to come, the verb to hurt, the verb to heal, the verb to kill, the verb to fill, to dwindle and worsen and prove and improve and postpone, the verb to fear, the verb to die, the verb to dream! (*Miss Margarida is frantic.*) It's all *verb!* You hear me? It's all *verb!* That's what things do. Things *verb* one another! And you know what gets all this *verb?* You know what gets the *adverbs* and the *adjectives?* The *nouns*. The substances! The things! Business! Transactions! Classrooms! Schoolteachers! It's Miss Margarida herself!*

Everything! Miss Margarida is a noun! Everything has a name, there is no problem at all! There is nothing without a name, that's the explanation! Now anybody can see it! The explanation of everything! Nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives! Miss Margarida found the answer! Everything is in Miss Margarida's hands! Miss Margarida is the teacher. Miss Margarida is the boss! Miss Margarida bosses the verbs! Miss Margarida tells the adjectives what to do! Miss Margarida can put them all together and make an entire sentence! A PARAGRAPH! Miss Margarida makes a whole paragraph! It's my paragraph, you hear me! My sentences! All sentences in this classroom are Miss Margarida's! About any subjects! About every subject! History! Geography! Theory, grammar, semantics, pathology, mathematics, biology, anatomy, pedagogy, astronomy, hydrography, geology, psychiatry, religion, calisthenics, mineralogy, linguistics, statistics, geometry! (Like mad, about to burst.) SCIENCE! All science! Everything! Chiromancy, phrenology, chiropractic, surgery! Techno^{logy}. (Miss Margarida collapses in the word "technology"; she has a stroke. The scene must be serious and strongly dramatic. She drags herself on the floor and cries pathetically for help. The bell rings announcing the end of the second class.) Help! Help me! (She faints. the same student of the preceding times goes onstage, more awkward than ever. He feels sorry for Miss Margarida and gives her a fantastic massage on her chest. This massage could have something erotic in it. Slowly, Miss Margarida seems to recuperate. As she gets better, the student stops the massage and becomes progressively afraid of her. Finally Miss Margarida gets up. The student withdraws in fear, always staring at Miss Margarida's movements, and then, at a reasonable distance, he stops as if petrified. Miss Margarida resumes her usual

BEAT 17, ACT II

Objective: To impart my last words of wisdom.

Actions:

1. To apologize
2. To justify
3. To save face
4. To promise
5. To convince
6. To soothe
7. To drill
8. To inform
9. To assure
10. To release
11. To enforce
12. To corral
13. To let go
14. To enlighten
15. To say good – bye

P.O.V – Point of View – And remember the words of Miss Margarida: always do what is good. That's the only way to happiness. Do always what is good.

58

MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

composure, looks around, and finally speaks in a new tone not yet used in the play. It should be sincere, pathetic, and terrible.) (18) *I am sorry. Miss Margarida shouldn't get² excited. It isn't the first time Miss Margarida has had that. It was a theory attack in the coronary vein. Miss Margarida has a condition and she should be very careful. Miss Margarida promises it will never happen again. You must not worry, because Miss Margarida is not going to die. Miss Margarida will always be with you. Miss Margarida will never stop teaching you. Today it's you. Tomorrow it will be your children. And afterward the children of your children. Miss Margarida always will be here. Generation after generation. Miss Margarida is not perfect. We all have our shortcomings, don't we? You have to accept Miss Margarida the way she is. Miss Margarida will be always like this. And Miss Margarida will never leave you. But the bell has already rung. Miss Margarida doesn't want to hold you any longer. Miss Margarida wants you all to go home and think a lot about what you have learned today. In these two classes of Miss Margarida's. Miss Margarida also wants you to rest. You cannot live by work alone. Miss Margarida wants all of you here for the next lesson. Miss Margarida has still many things to teach you. Now go to your homes and to your families. And remember the words of Miss Margarida: always do what is good. That's the only way to happiness. Do always what is good. Good-bye.* (19) *With those words, said absolutely without irony, Miss Margarida exits. On the stage, freed of her magnetic presence, two things should call attention: (1) The student, petrified, staring at the void. (2) Miss Margarida's handbag, large and out of fashion, which was forgotten on the table. Finding himself alone, the student relaxes, and looks about the* P.O.V

stage. Eventually he concentrates on the forgotten handbag. Curiosity wins: he opens the bag and takes out a colorful piece of candy. Then, in a crescendo, he takes out more and more candy of all shapes and colors (chocolate bars, lollipops, chewing gum, whatnot). He then gets to the bottom and takes out a large and frightening gun. Understanding nothing of what he sees, the student places the gun on the table already covered with sweets. He hesitates, clearly afraid that Miss Margarida might reappear. Hesitatingly he chooses a piece of candy. Opens it, bites it, doesn't like it, spits it out, chooses another piece, opens it, bites it, likes it, swallows it. Starts feeling guilty. Hesitates about opening a third piece of candy. Withdraws from table. Without taking a third piece of candy, the student goes back to his desk.)

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MISS MARGARIDA'S WAY

Roberto Athayde

Allegory / 1f, 1m, + extras / Interior

Audiences and critics in over 50 countries have cheered this allegory about totalitarianism which uses as its central metaphor a biology classroom. The teacher is dictator and the audience is the student body. Miss Margarida, an engaging though grotesque monster, often digresses from biology to taunt and harangue. She warns that we could be sent to the principal's office and that sometimes students never come back. She asks how to divide 12 bananas among 35 people and answers that the strongest gets 9 and the second strongest 3. The audience is encouraged to talk back and even to write graffiti on the blackboard during intermission!

"Mordant, funny, sometimes subtle and ultimately moving."

- *N.Y. Times*

"A tour de force for an actress.... Part tirade, part political allegory, part expressionist vaudeville show."

- *N.Y. Daily News*

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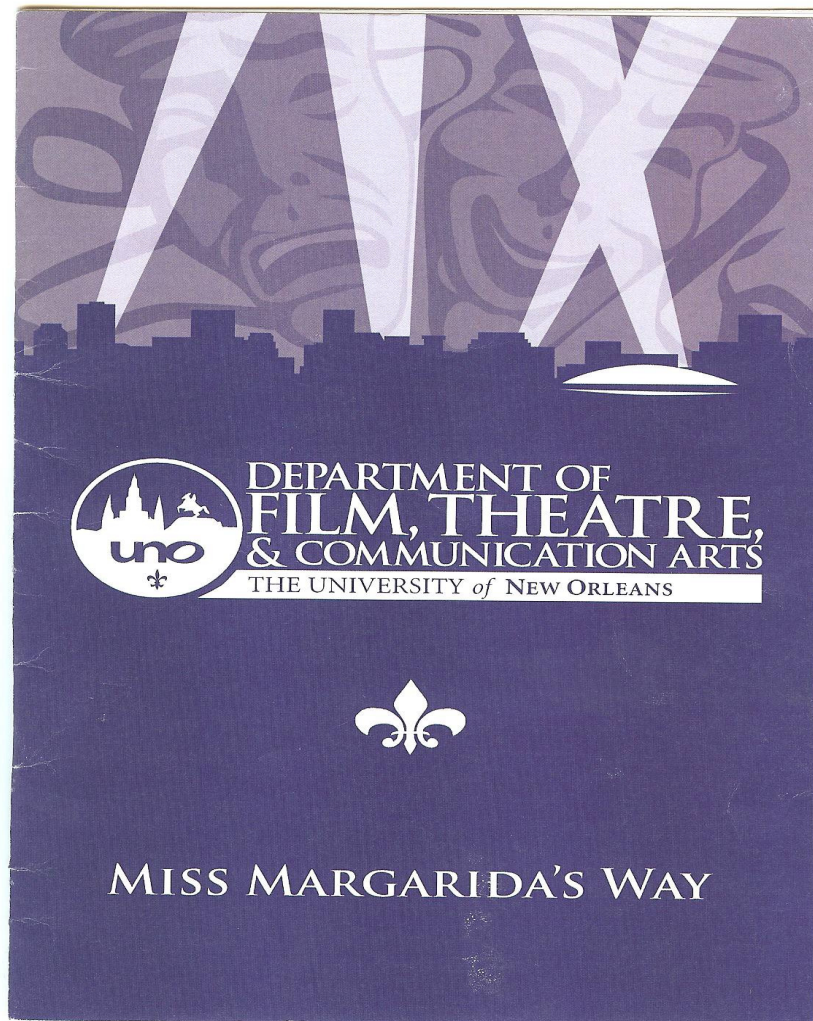
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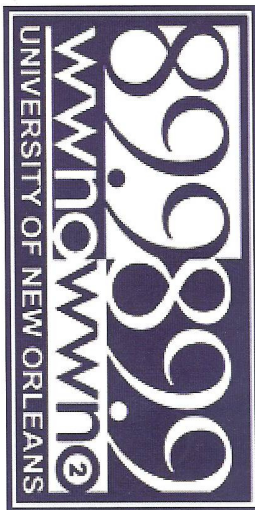
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Appendix A: Poster



Appendix B: Program





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The University of New Orleans
Department of Film, Theatre, & Communication Arts
proudly presents

Miss
Margarida's
Wag
by
Roberto Añorga
Directed by
Rodney S. Hudson

Scene Design
Kevin Griffith

Technical Direction & Lighting Design
Shannon R. Miller

Costume Design
Jeanie Freeman

Stage Management
Caroline Langlois

December 3 - December 7, 2008

ONO Performing Arts Center * Lab Theatre

THE USE OF CAMERAS OR RECORDING DEVICES OF ANY KIND IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

Miss Margarida's Way

CAST

MISS MARGARIDA..... JOYCE DEAL*
 AWKWARD UNO STUDENT..... LOUIS SAUBAT, III**
 THE REST OF HER STUDENTS..... YOU

* This role is partial fulfillment of a Master of Fine Arts Degree.

** This role will be performed by James Yeargain on 12/3.

HERE WILL BE ONE FIFTEEN MINUTE INTERMISSION

Joyce Deal (Miss Margarida) is a third year MFA performance candidate at UNO. She has a BA in Speech and Theater from Dillard University. UNO audiences may remember Joyce from her performances in *Metamorphoses*; *Katrina's Path*, for which she received an Irene Ryan nomination; *Putter*; *The Comedy of Errors*; *The Three Sisters*; and a staged reading of *Fleeing Katrina*. Her most recent performances include: *The Essence Festival*, *Origins Of life*, and *13 Lessons* at Ashe Cultural Arts center. Among her most memorable roles are Henrietta King in *Do Lord Remember Me*, in which David Cuthbert of the Times Picayune called her performance "mesmerizing," and Beneatha in *A Raisin in the Sun* both at Dillard University. Joyce is a 2008 KCACTF Region VI Irene Ryan Acting Competition finalist. Joyce would like to thank her parents, sister, and brothers for their unwavering love and support.

Louis Saubat, III (Awkward UNO Student) is thrilled to return to the UNO stage in *Miss Margarida's Way*. Louis made his stage debut in UNO's production of *The Chairs* earlier this semester. He is a senior Business Administration major with a double minor in Theatre and Management at the University of New Orleans. He is excited to be graduating in May 2009. Louis would like to thank his family and friends for all their love, support, and inspiration!

Miss Margarida's Way PLAYWRIGHT & GUEST DIRECTOR

Roberto Athayde (Playwright) was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1949. While attending school in Brazil, he was expelled from three different schools and came to the United States as an exchange student in 1967. He has attended the Sorbonne in Paris and the University of Michigan, each for a single year. His works include the plays: *The Reactionary*, *Visitors from On High*, *Hand-Book for Survival in the Jungle* and *Way Back in the Farm*. He has been awarded the Moliere Prize. *Miss Margarida's Way* was closed by censors when it was first produced in Brazil. It has since been translated into many languages and has been presented in fifty countries.

Rodney S. Hudson (Director) is pleased to be a part of UNO's fall theatre season. He has been a professional actor, singer and director for over 30 years. He has been a professor in the Theatre Department at Syracuse University for the past 14 years, directing a range of musicals and plays such as *Floyd Collins*, *Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Shakespeare's R&J*, *Belle of Amherst*, *The Threepenny Opera*, and his original script, *The Greek Project*, for the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival. As an actor/singer, he has performed in many productions including the Cheshire Cat and Unicorn in *Alice at the Palace*, starring Meryl Streep, for the stage and for PBS; the Leading Player in *Pippin*; Big Daddy in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* for Theatre Virginia; and Lennie in *Of Mice and Men* directed by UNO faculty member, Philip Karnell. He was a company member of Harvard University's famed American Repertory Theatre, where he performed Nagg in Joanne Akalaitis' infamous staging of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* and *Death in Robert Wilson's Alcestis*. He previously directed UNO's production of *The Dark End of Day & The Chairs*.

Miss Margarida's Way

PRODUCTION TEAM

DIRECTOR.....RODNEY S. HUDSON
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR.....BEAU BRATCHER
STAGE MANAGER.....CAROLINE LANGLOIS
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.....SHANNON R. MILLER
SCENIC DESIGN.....KEVIN GRIFFITH
LIGHTING DESIGN.....SHANNON R. MILLER
COSTUME & MAKEUP DESIGN.....JENNIE FREEMAN
LIGHTBOARD OPERATOR.....
SOUND OPERATOR.....
SET CREW.....FTCA THEATRE PRACTICUM
.....AND TECHNICAL PRODUCTION STUDENTS
COSTUME CREW.....OKSANA K
.....
RUNNING CREW.....JONATHAN DUBRET
.....
PUBLICITY DIRECTOR.....JENNIFER HAYES, THERESA PERRY
BOX OFFICE MANAGER.....DEBRA DANIEL
BOX OFFICE STAFF.....BEAU BRATCHER
HOUSE MANAGER.....BRADLEY TROLL
FRONT OF HOUSE.....ELLA SCOTT
.....
POSTER DESIGN.....LAKEFRONT PLAYERS
.....KEVIN HUGHES

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Miss Margarida's Way

PRODUCTION BROS

Beau Bratcher (Assistant Director) is a second year MFA Directing student at UNO. Last season, he directed *Weird* and Jared Gore's *My Name is Chainsaw*. Prior to UNO, some of Beau's directing credits include *This is Our Youth* at the University of Texas at El Paso, where he earned his MA in Theatre; *The Insanity of Mary Girard* at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, where he earned a BA in Communication; and *The Midnight Caller* at Texas Woman's University, where he earned a BA in Drama. He will next tackle UNO's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* in April.

Jennie Freeman (Costume Designer) is in her first year as an MFA Performance student at UNO. She received her BA in Theatre from Texas A&M - Corpus Christi and her AFA in Musical Theatre from Lon Morris College. Previous design credits include Stage Management for *Vagina Monologues* and Sound Design for *The Laramie Project* and *Moliere in Love*. Miss Margarida's Way marks her first experience designing costumes and she is thrilled to be working on this production.

Kevin Griffith (Scenic Designer) is the most recently tenured professor in the FTCA department. Kevin has a BFA in Theatre with emphasis in Design from Arkansas State University and an MFA in Design and Theatre Technology from the University of Southern Mississippi. He also designed professionally for regional theatre, dance, and opera. Recent work includes scenery for UNO's 2007-2008 KCACTF entry *Katrina's Path*; the 2007 Tennessee Williams One-Act Winner, *Weird*; and last spring's *Metamorphoses*.

Caroline Langlois (Stage Manager) is excited to be a part of Miss Margarida's Way. She is a sophomore FTCA major. Last season, Caroline also served as Stage Manager for *Weird*, for which she was received the Lakefront Players Best Stage Manager award. She also served as Properties Designer and Projection Operator for UNO's *Katrina's Path*. She would like to thank Joyce and Rodney for this great learning experience.

Miss Margarida's Way PRODUCTION BIOS

Shannon R. Miller (Technical Director & Lighting Designer) is in his first year with the FTCA department. Shannon received his BFA in Theatre and Design Technology from Marshall University. He completed his MFA at the University of Southern Mississippi. As a designer and technologist his work has been featured throughout the nation including Southern Arena Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Theatre West Virginia, Mill Mountain Theatre, Huntington Outdoor Theatre, Public Theatre of Kentucky, Kentucky Repertory Theatre, Jefferson Performing Arts Society, and Southern Rep.



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Whitney Buss	Robert Campbell	Marshall Carby
Robert Clay	Joyce Deal	Jennie Freeman
Kevin Hughes	Nicholas Isom	Erik Reuter
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Jon Gunnar Gyftason

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As UNO celebrates its 50th Anniversary, the department of Film, Theatre, and Communication Arts invites you to be one of our "50 for 50" contributors in this special year! We're asking you to make a \$50 contribution to the department representing \$1 for each year that performing arts have been presented on the UNO campus. That's right, live theatre has been a part of our university since day one of its inception and we are proud of that legacy.

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50 Years of Theatre

From the "Workshop Theatre's" first audition in 1959 in the old cafeteria of the Naval Air Station to our recently recognized production of *Katrina's Path* in the newly renovated Robert E. Nims Theatre, theatre has been a vital part of the UNO (LSUNO) landscape. The first theatre on campus was the converted cafeteria of building 21 with no air conditioning, stage, seating, or other amenities. These early theatre pioneers were driven to bring the theatrical arts to the campus. Along the way they brought social change as well. UNO cast, and was prepared to present, the first integrated production in New Orleans when the protests broke out. Though LSUNO, as it was originally called, was founded on a concept of integration, extracurricular clubs and activities had not realized this integration. The theatre production became the catalyst for changing the governing rules regarding clubs and organizations. Though the original production was cancelled, UNO still presented the first integrated play in New Orleans in 1964 with little fanfare having laid the groundwork for integration in the arts.

Theatre at UNO and the arts were always on the priority list for administrators as evidenced in the "new facilities" requests from the state. A theatre building and auditorium were on the "list of needs" contained in the *Report for the Biennium*. Drama became a major in 1964 and the Performing Arts Center as we know it was opened in 1972. We have grown from 14 original Drama majors to over 700 Film, Theatre, Communication Arts Undergraduate and Graduate students!

Whether recognized nationally on stage at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the many Big Easy awards and nominations, or past students currently on Broadway, the theatrical legacy is long and proud at UNO and owing much to those original pioneers of the Workshop Theatre.

Our latest highlight is the new renovation generously provided by Mrs. Jerl Nims. Our new lobby and seating will be complemented by a new exterior façade in the spring of 2009 (When we remove one of the last reminders of Katrina, the temporary electrical pole).

Thank you to the thousands of audience members and Here's to another 50 years of theatrical excellence!

Information provided by **The LSUNO Workshop Theatre: The Little Theatre That Could**, A Thesis by Pamela Graham Tanner



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Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KCACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KCACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2009.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

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The Dark End of Day by Whitney Lee Buss

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October 30 ~ November 9

Miss Margarida's Way
by Roberto Athayade
directed by Rodney S. Hudson
Lab Theatre
December 3 ~ 7

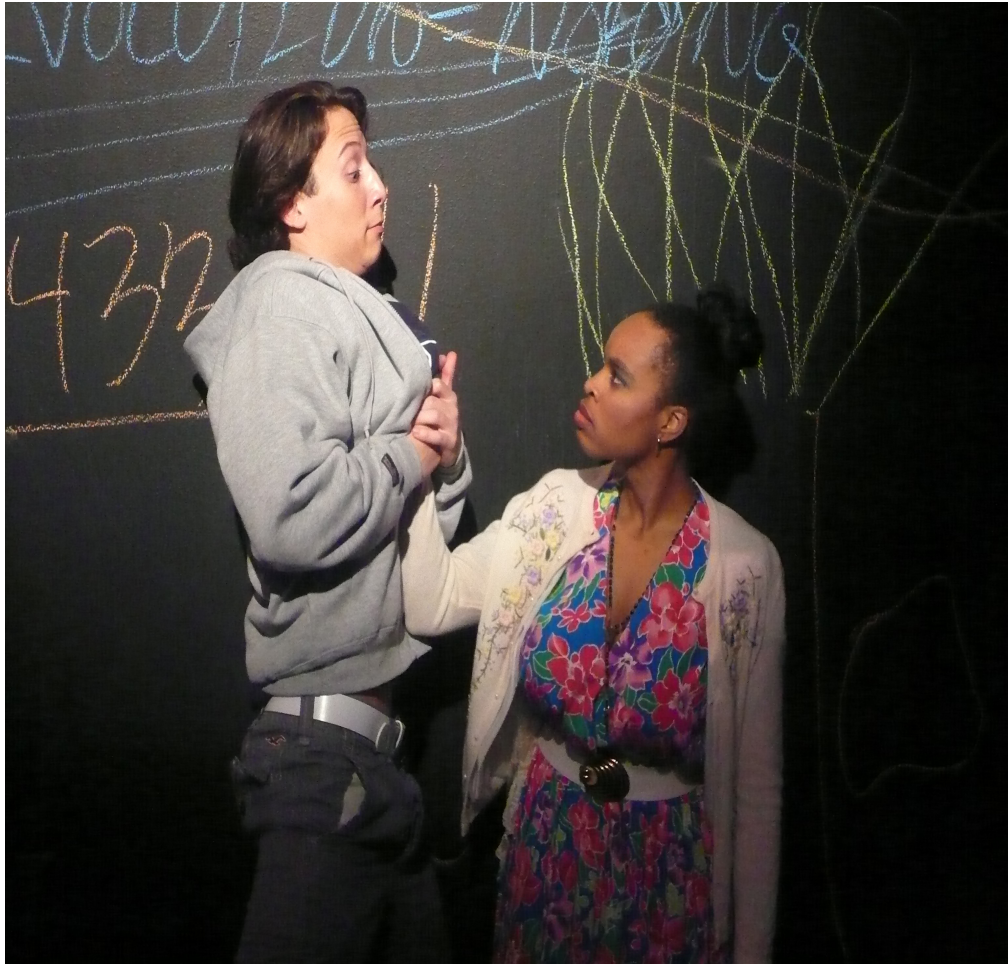
Indifferent Blue
Tennessee Williams One-Act Winner
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directed by Marshall Carby
Lab Theatre
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Much Ado About Nothing
by William Shakespeare
directed by Beau Bratcher
Robert E. Nims Theatre
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Appendix C: Production Photos





















Appendix D: Student Reviews

Student: A

‘Miss Margarida’s Way’ by Roberto Athayde is an example of expressionism; an offshoot of Avant-Garde Theatre where the playwright imposes a concept of the world onto the outside world, i.e. the audience. In the case of ‘Miss Margarida’s Way’, Athayde is said to have intended Miss Margarida to represent power in all forms and to do anything in order to impose her will on her students (the audience), whether this be through charm, intimidation or manipulation with her sexuality. ‘Miss Margarida’s Way’ can be assessed referring to Aristotle’s six elements of theatre highlighted in *The Poetics* – plot, character, thought, diction/language, spectacle and song.

Personally I did not think that there was an obvious plot to ‘Miss Margarida’s Way’. This could have partly been because I found that I was getting absorbed into observing Miss Margarida as a teacher rather than trying to understand her role in the plot and what the play was really about. Having said that, there were some parts of the story that were communicated well, for example Miss Margarida would frequently give her ‘class’ the opportunity to object to what she was saying, but would always oppress the ‘awkward UNO student’ that chose to object. This demonstrated to me that Miss Margarida was not only there to represent power, but perhaps a dictatorial figure too. Another part of the plot that I felt was conveyed very well was the stink bomb incident. This was a prime example of Miss Margarida trying numerous techniques in an attempt to manipulate the class into telling her information about who was responsible, switching from sweetly requesting that someone tell her to pulling numerous of intimidating weapons out of her desk and ultimately to teasing the class with rewards relating to her sexuality.

Joyce Deal’s acting as Miss Margarida was truly outstanding; she was even improvising flawlessly. Deal engrossed the audience with her every movement from

changing her shoes to her trance immediately before her exit. I even found that I was watching even the slightest movement, such as when Miss Margarida adjusted her stockings. Deal's 5-star performance greatly helped one to gain insight into the character of Miss Margarida. For example, the excessive use of swear words, the drinking and the obscenities that she wrote on the 'board' all highlighted how inappropriate Miss Margarida was as a teacher to Eighth Grade students and therefore implied that her role was meant to represent something other than simply an unstable teacher.

With regard to Aristotle's 'thought' element of theatre, I understood the message of the play to be that even in our daily lives we are exposed to powers that we cannot challenge, even though we may attempt to, as demonstrated by the 'Awkward UNO student'. Miss Margarida talks of how we had no choice about being born and links this to consequently having no choice about going to school. Ultimately in society we have limited choice over our actions, whether this is by the laws of the land or by people in positions of authority such as our parents, teachers like Miss Margarida or by oppressive rulers such as experienced by playwright Athayde in Brazil. I wondered if the 'Awkward UNO student' still being in awe of Miss Margarida, despite having just been beaten up, was representative of how society has a tendency to show admiration to dictatorial leaders no matter how oppressive they are.

The language used in 'Miss Margarida's Way' appeared to serve both a comic function and a way of understanding the nature of Miss Margarida's character. For example, Miss Margarida asks several times if there is anyone named Jesus, Messiah or Holy Ghost in the class. Whilst this has comedic value, it also shows that since no-

one has holy status then that means that there can be no-one who will challenge Miss Margarida.

There were several design elements of 'Miss Margarida's Way' that impressed me, my favourite being the set design. The disorderliness of the classroom appeared to mirror Miss Margarida's chaotic personality, as she would constantly flit between being nice to her class, to calling them stupid and even using violence. I particularly liked the use of the walls as a blackboard as this helped to highlight the fact that we were in a classroom. I noticed that that not only did 'Miss Margarida's Way' challenge theatrical conventions by having Miss Margarida directly address the audience, but also by having the house lights on throughout the performance except for when Miss Margarida indulged us in a story about her past. I personally found the experience of watching a play with the house lights on very uncomfortable!

I felt that Aristotle's 'song' element of a play was put to good effect in 'Miss Margarida's Way'. The audience singing Miss Margarida's song was highly entertaining and allowed Joyce Deal the opportunity to improvise. The choice of music at the beginning, interval and end of the play was very appropriate as the songs, such as 'It's a Small World' were in keeping with a childhood environment.

On the whole, although the actual plot of the play was a little unclear I would have absolutely no hesitation in recommending this production. It was both highly entertaining and thought-provoking and Joyce Deal's performance was exceptional, an opinion clearly shared by the rest of the audience, as she received a standing ovation.

10 December 2008

Review of *Miss Margarida's Way*

Everything about the University of New Orleans's production of *Miss Margarida's Way* was spot on – realistic scene decoration, a hilarious script – but none of it would have meant anything had it not been for the absolutely fantastic performance Joyce Deal gave as the title character. From the second she walked on stage, Deal walked with perfect posture, not only showing complete control of her body but also projecting a sense of uppity confidence for her character. She enhanced this perception by standing perfectly straight with her hands joined in front of her at her waist whenever she addressed the “class.” She also showed great mastery of her speech from the moment she spoke, annunciating every letter, again making Miss Margarida seem very pretentious and academic yet cheerful all at the same time. But when Miss Margarida became agitated, her speech became much less technical and more organic, shattering the image of the affable teacher and showing us the real, angry, troubled woman hiding underneath. Most impressive was Deal's ability to shift her tone so suddenly yet fluidly for whatever the script calls for, sometimes going from caring to combative midsentence.

Another aspect of Deal's performance that was astounding was her ability to not laugh throughout the entire play. Half the time, the entire audience was cracking up uncontrollably as Miss Margarida railed on her “students” and mistakenly drew genitalia on the wall; but Deal never cracked a smile unless it was intended. Deal's line delivery was also very key in keeping the audience in stitches, from her sassy attitude when she was annoyed with a student to her proud smile when drawing male organs instead of the Cape of Good Hope.

Another of Deal's impressive talents was her flawless improvisation. Because the play was somewhat audience interactive, Miss Margarida would occasionally communicate with the audience members, her "students." Although one of the audience members was actually another character in the play and was scripted, other students would involuntarily become part of the play as well, and Deal would have to play off of whatever they said or did in response to her actions. Sometimes, people would whisper to another audience member or make noise by shifting in their seat, and Miss Margarida would correct them on the spot even though it was not at all planned. And through it all, Deal did not miss a beat, rolling along with any flub as though it were something she had planned like every other line.

James Yeargain also did a great job as one of Miss Margarida's students, causing the most trouble and definitely making the teacher angry more than anyone else. Whether he was chatting with the person next to him, answering a question wrong, or walking onto the stage even though Miss Margarida clearly wanted no one to, Yeargain played the part of the typical eighth grader, scared and intimidated by his crazy teacher. To show this, he not only showed it in his facial expression but also moved slowly toward her and kept his distance whenever he got close. And when Miss Margarida beat him up after talking back to her, even though Deal could not actually beat Yeargain to a pulp, his expression, movement, and sounds made it seem like he was really in pain.

Although James Yeargain's performance was definitely admirable, it was truly Joyce Deal that made *Miss Margarida's Way* a true joy to experience. With such a great ability to act, Deal makes this play one to be seen again and again.

Student: C

The Most Intriguing Class Ever

The UNO production of *Miss Margarida's Way* was to say the least captivating. The classroom setting, audience participation, and stellar performance by Joyce Deal made the overall experience hilariously enjoyable.

The ability of Joyce Deal to maintain an audience's attention on her own for two hours is definitely a tribute to her skills as a performer. She was funny, charming, and at times frightening when she needed to be the stern teacher. I, personally, loved the way she was able to adapt to the audience when their responses changed. She used her audience to better her performance.

To be perfectly honest, she used all of her environments to make this a well rounded performance. Joyce interacted with the audience to maintain their attention. She wrote on the walls, as well as, the floor to draw their focus where she wanted it. She used her set and props to help her set the mood, even more, of a classroom setting.

Joyce's range of emotions was great. I loved the way she would change from happy to enraged in seconds. She seduced her students, the audience, as well as, scolded them for doing drugs or wanting her to teach them sex education. She was very adamant about refusing to teach them sex education, and she used several different tactics to let them know her aversion to teaching that subject to such young pupils.

I also love the way that Joyce took time when she needed it. For instance, at the beginning of the show she takes her time to unpack her briefcase and makes sure she is ready to "start class" before she actually does. She did this at the beginning of the second act as well. It shows she was comfortable enough in this role to be alone on stage.

I must mention the chalk. Miss Margarida writing on the board, or walls and floor, was one of my favorite parts of this play. She didn't leave any aspect of her set untouched. And the way she would segue into writing her words of wisdom on the board became a humorous transition that the audience joined in on.

This was one of my favorite performances that I have seen this year. I find it difficult to write a paper on such a wonderful performance that only involved one actor. It isn't that there are not enough things to write about because there are. But the performance completely blew me away and I think if I try to write any more I will deflate the splendid memory of this performance.

Student: D

FTCA 1300

Miss Margarida's Way

As someone who ushered for a few of the showings, I can without a doubt say that my favorite aspect of the play was getting to watch the audience's reactions. Each night was different and equally hilarious. It also made me proud to be an UNO student. Not that obscenity automatically is equated with fearlessness, but I definitely think people didn't come to a college show expecting what they got with this play. When I was back at my community college in Northern Virginia, I had some of my photography and artwork involved in shows and publications, and the censorship was awful. I also volunteered in processing the work that went into some of these exhibitions, which were extremely conservative and restricting. A lot of brilliant work was rejected. I've gone completely off topic, but what I've meant to say is that, in comparison, UNO has been a breath of fresh air.

In Miss Margarida's Way, any moment that could have been offensive was so carefully crafted and punctuated a scene so well, that it wasn't. It became comedic. In a way it reminds me of the movie Borat, which could have taken a wrong turn in many of the same veins as Miss Margarida. However, both allowed us the opportunity to laugh at ourselves and at society. I think satire is an incredibly difficult genre to pull off, as performances must be very nuanced. Not everyone will grasp the humor in the words, as they are not outright jokes, and so you run the very high risk of offending everyone if you cannot deliver the lines and subject matter in a certain manner. Joyce delivered. On that note, the production interested me enough to research the background of the play. While I had grasped that the play's overriding theme was power, or the lack thereof, I hadn't realized the scope in which the playwright had meant for it. Miss Maragrida represents the power of government, of the church, etc., and we the powerless masses. I would like to see this play again armed with this insight and hear the dialogue with a different slant and meaning.

Another experience I relished on this production came accidentally. When the seats sold out one night and you let Jenn, Angelina, and I sit upstairs, I was able to watch the switchboard being worked for the lights and sound. While I am primarily interested in working with film, I have become increasingly interested in theater since taking this acting class, and working behind the scenes and dealing with technical aspects would be something I'd be interested in doing if I became involved with the theater. It was very interesting to me to watch when sound effects and lighting changes were cued. From that vantage point, more so than sitting in the audience, I was able to see how crucial the lighting was to many parts of the story, such as when Miss Margarida flashes back to her younger, grade school self and gives her confessions – only to snatch us back out of that world and thrust us back into the present. Most of this is done through Joyce's fervor and change in character, but a good deal is also reliant on the changes in light. We go from a mellow blue spotlight to being jerked back with full force when all the lights are suddenly brought back on as Miss Margarida jumps back to her feet and begins to berate us again.

On the same note as production, I was also incredibly impressed with the set design. For a moment I almost didn't recognize that this was the same room we've had class in for most of the semester. While the lighting did contribute a great deal to the atmosphere, the dozens upon dozens of books scattered haphazardly gave it a great chaotic quality. Also, I wasn't sure, but were the walls painted with

blackboard paint? That was a brilliant touch, also. Even after Miss Margarida had delivered her shocker of a line, the visuals remained and kept people laughing for sometime after.

Perhaps the most ingenious aspect of this play is the audience participation. Some of the most entertaining moments in the show came when Joyce improved in a situation with an audience member. Probably one of the funniest to me was when my script analysis professor, Laszlo Fulop, came in late and she scolded him straight to his seat. Something I also loved was Louis as the UNO student who can't seem to get it right. One of my favorite scenes is when she starts throwing him around and he later reappears, battle-scarred.

Last but not least is Joyce's portrayal of Miss Margarida. For as over the top her character was, she included just as many little nuances that made her believable, such as little quirks and tag traits. This is something I think I lack in my own acting, so watching this play also proved to be very educational. She really threw herself into this role and the passion with which she played the character was very evident. She really inspired me to approach my own roles with a little more abandon. I feel like I've grown a bit this semester in terms of shyness, but I still haven't completely overcome it. Watching Joyce's performance really drove me to strive harder in that aspect. If she could get up onstage and say and do those things (and convincingly!), then I feel like I can eventually overcome the stage fright and do the same. I have to cap this paper with quite possibly the most brilliant moment in the play:

Recess, motherfuckers!

Student: E

FTCA 1000

8 December, 2008

Miss. Margarida's way

After seeing "The Chairs," I was skeptical about seeing "Miss. Margarida's Way." I did not really enjoy seeing "The Chairs" and so I thought I was not going to like the second play. I was very much proven wrong. I thoroughly enjoyed myself at "Miss. Margarida's Way." The play was hilarious. I think Joyce Deal played Miss Margarida superbly. I loved the character. From the beginning I could not get enough. I could not picture anyone else playing Miss Margarida.

I also liked the play because the audience played a part in the play. It keeps my attention more when I feel that the person is talking directly to me, as opposed to just watching someone's life. I like how the other boy was sitting in the audience as well. That was really smart. I also liked the theatre and how the play housed a small audience. It made the play more comfortable. It made the play seem more personal.

I also think the play was good because I feel like the underlying message was about life. The theme was that life is always going to be hard. In the play Miss Margarida says that the three principals of life are that we are born, we die, and we get buried. As harsh as these sounds, this is the true reality of life. We are born, and before you know it we are dead. I think Miss Margarida was trying to teach us, her eighth-grade class that while we are here we need to make a difference. I feel that she was also trying to teach us that we need to stand up for ourselves

because nobody else cares. Even if people say they care, in the end you are still you only person you can rely on.

Miss Margarida teaches us through practicing her method. Like she said in the play she not only teaches but she does as well. I do think that Miss Margarida knows more than what other people know. Maybe something happened in her earlier years that forced her to have this revelation. At first glance one might think that Miss Margarida is mean. I, however, feel that she is showing us what the "real world" will be like. If we can handle Miss Margarida, then we can handle anything.

The ending I also think taught us a lesson. The student got rid of Miss Margarida just so he could get her candy. At first one thinks that he is going to get her money or something expensive, but instead he just wants her candy. What I took from this was that people will do whatever it takes to get what they want. This is how life is. In grade school we are sheltered and people actually care, but outside of our safe-zone people are only aiming to please themselves.

Regardless of the lessons learned I enjoyed seeing "Miss Margarida's Way." I cannot say enough about the actress, Joyce Deal. She was made for that part. Miss Margarida is hard on her students because she wants to teach them, and does not want them to learn life's lessons the hard way. Everything about the play was enjoyable. I would recommend this play to everyone, and I would not mind seeing it again.

Student: F

Miss Margarida's Way

I attended Miss Margarida's Way on Friday, December 5. I found it a very good experience watching the actor who played Miss Margarida, and her character choices and actions. I see that actor around school often, and she seems like a very reserved person (unlike Miss Margarida). Her ability to get into her character was impressive. I imagine that her actions and character choices took a great deal of brainstorming and practice.

I appreciated the way that she let each outburst of hers linger on everyone's mind and faces, before she went on with her actions. She had a great ability to improvise as well. She stayed busy running back and forth around the classroom and wreaking havoc. She stayed in character voice the entire time, which seemed to be the voice of an older woman. She involved the audience like it was her classroom. She even made us feel like children at times, with her glances and condescending tone.

In the beginning scene, she kept everyone's eyes locked onto her in suspense. No one knew what to expect from her actions and silence of the first few minutes. She was also able to climax the mood of the play at the first break by changing her mood and voice, acting and talking faster, and

the unleashing of unexpected weapons from her desk. She kept a straight face through all of her mysterious actions and punchlines. She put us all in the position of a child. She made us feel inferior at times through her tone. She scared us with her unexpected yelling and cursing. She made us nervous with her motions, because we didn't know what she was going to do next. She seemed nice and caring at times, but would quickly change her mood at the slightest miscalculation.

I imagine the task of Miss Margarida was a big one. First of all, keeping an audience interested for two hours with one person on stage must be quite a difficult task. I liked the actor's choices in the script (i.e. where she paused in her lines, where she looked to the audience for responses). She did a good job of keeping the audience suspenseful, before having another "freak-out" attack. Overall, I think the actor did a very effective and professional job.

Student: G

When I first walked into the theatre all I saw was a giant mess. There were papers everywhere. Books lined the stairs on either side of a small cluttered desk. I sat bored. All of a sudden, the bell rang and Miss Margarida walked out. I had no idea what kind of mess I was really getting myself into.

The main character is, of course, Miss Margarida. Actually, there are only two actors in the entire play a student and Miss Margarida. The actress, Joyce Deal, did a great job. She had so much energy. She was improvising many different things. I went to see the production with my boyfriend. In the middle of the play, he kissed me on the cheek. Miss Margarida turned her whole focus to my boyfriend and me. She started yelling saying "do I have to separate you two" and calling us "a bunch of hot asses". I was mortified the entire audience was staring at us. Then after the intermission, a woman came in late and Miss Margarida asked her where she had been. I realized that she was not just embarrassing me but everyone else, too. She treated us just like students. She did a great job connecting with the audience.

Miss Margarida's Way is about individuality. I think Athayde wrote the play to be about how many people conform because someone more powerful than you is telling you to. Athayde was born in Brazil and lived under a dictator. Miss Margarida keeps telling the students about respect and obeying people. She wrote on the black board, "The deserving ones who are they? They are those who obey." However, she never explained who we should obey. She also writes *ca va sans dire* which means it goes without saying. Miss Margarida explained that school is a second home that is *ca va sans dire*. She is using her power to as a schoolteacher to manipulate the children much like a dictator would do. Miss Margarida

continues to refer back to biology. She writes on the board, "You all will die". It makes the class seem worthless because like she put it we will all die at the end. Her division seems to focus on reality. She divides bananas by giving the two strongest men the most. This is true today the most powerful countries get the most of everything while underdeveloped countries such as Africa are left hungry. Miss Margarida says that men are created equal but I became confused when she starts screaming about injustice. It seemed like she was suppressing her own injustices, being an African American woman. At the end, the schoolboy or my classmate emptied Miss Margarida's lollipop filled purse. The boy sat in her chair and sucked on a lollipop. I wonder if the playwright was expressing that people will have their way when no one is around.

The play seems to be very modern although it first performed in 1977. Miss Margarida talks if she were a teacher today, just a little more graphic. However, Miss Margarida's clothing seemed to be older. She wore high waist belts that reflect the 1980s style. I imagine the play was set in that period. On the other hand, maybe she was just an eccentric teacher. The play did not have any music but the song that she had the class sing. The song was about listening to Miss Margarida again making a point about obedience.

After seeing *Miss Margarida's Way*, I had no idea what it was about. I looked the play up online and found clues about the real meaning. After reading the play online, it seemed to make much more sense. This was a great play. I would recommend it to someone older who may immediately notice the injustices and contradictions that Miss Margarida seems to make.

Student: H

The UNO studio production of “Miss Margarida’s Way” was a hilariously satirical comedy alluding to the hypocrisy of totalitarian society. Miss Margarida, excellently portrayed by graduate student Joyce Deal, is a maniacal 8th grade school teacher who basically teaches her own versions of the lessons of life to her students. The audience plays the roll of the students in this interactive play with the exception of one student in the audience who is a cast member. This student “answers back” to Miss Margarida a few times through out the performance and is verbally and physically assaulted each time before finally getting pummeled towards the conclusion.

This play runs through an average lecture in the class of Miss Margarida. Comic mischief ensues as the play progresses and Miss Margarida attempts to lecture on various subjects including biology, history, English and the dreaded sex education. As she moves from subject to subject, she gives her own common-sense explanation for that subject rather than teaching it from any sort of scholastic stand-point. For example, her explanation on biology simply followed that life has a beginning, a middle, and an end. These unorthodox and zany teaching methods of Miss Margarida are what make the play satirical in nature because of how they parody the ambiguity of governments and propaganda.

Miss Margarida is one of the only characters and the most important character of this play. Miss Margarida is a borderline-mad, sexually tense, child-like 8th grade teacher who abuses her students in various ways. Joyce Deal plays this part with striking accuracy. The character of Miss Margarida is very allegorical in nature and alludes to the governments and authority figures that rule the world as we know it. Her attitude and outlook resemble, in many ways, the actions of authorities around the globe. For example, throughout the play Miss Margarida constantly referred to herself as being all knowing and the students being “empty slates” so to speak without

any real knowledge of anything. This sort of “divinizing” of one’s self so as to create the allusion of authority and make others feel inferior and subservient is a common propaganda technique used by many govt.’s throughout history including ancient Egypt, Nazi Germany, China, and the USSR among others. The other official character of the play was a student in the audience. As the play progressed and Miss Margarida lectured, this student would occasionally question or call out Miss Margarida on subjects in which she twisted her facts or misrepresented. As a result, he is comically attacked by Miss Margarida either verbally or physically each time for disrupting her class and disputing her knowledge. This furthers that satirical nature of the play in that the student was an obvious representation of the elements of society which choose to question the norm rather than blindly accept it and that are a pain-in-the-side to the powers that be.

This play was an extremely funny satirical representation of authority and totalitarianism allegorized as a teacher instructing students in a classroom. Throughout the play, Miss Margarida lays out common-sense answers for scholastic subjects and repeatedly contradicts herself as she lectures. The one student in the crowd who calls her out on some of these false-hoods is repeatedly abused by Miss Margarida. This very much so relates to the way in which govt.’s have always been less than truthful in relaying information to its citizens whether through propaganda or some other truth defiler. And also it depicts how these govt.’s usually react to any questioning or criticizing of their knowledge. The fact that this allegory was made to take place in a school classroom lecture is very interesting and important in that it is related to totalitarian governments. This was the authors attempt to reveal the significant lacking of the school systems in general. The idea of the average school system as a representation of the hypocrisy of big government and society vividly depicts the short-comings and warped beliefs of the common school system which molds us all from child-hood. Similar in theme to Pink Floyd’s *The Wall*

album, Athayde illustrates the ridiculousness and intolerance of the common school system as well as that of totalitarianism and all of society as a whole.

This play used interesting diction and spectacles to further the meaning of the production. The language used was simple for the most part as if Miss Margarida was addressing young adolescents in the story but was randomly interspersed with various sexual innuendos and fits of rage and foul language. The reasoning behind these actions is the plays allegory to oppressive society. Miss Margarida's random bouts of anger and occasional sexual reference are parodying certain governments tendencies to act rashly and ruthlessly without much cause or provocation. The plays set design was very interesting. The stage was set up mostly to look just like a normal classroom with a desk and cabinet for the instructor among other props. The main attribute of the set which stood out though was the mess. The entire theatre was covered in loose school paper and trash. The idea behind this was to show the frustration and disorganization that is buried deep beneath Miss Margarida's smile and thus is a direct blow at the undisclosed imperfections of oppressive societies.

This production of "Miss Margarida's Way" was excellently done and I would definitely recommend it to friends and family. It efficiently used comedy and antics to reveal a much more serious theme and was entertaining throughout. Everything from the actors to the set were impressive and fulfilled their purpose to the end. Such effects as the lighting were used very intricately to depict a change in mood or direction of the play. The actors both did extraordinary jobs and played their rolls with the utmost character. Also the theme was very clearly (though allegorically) defined and did not leave much to be misinterpreted. Overall, this production was a hilarious yet interesting and informative look at oppression within society.

Student: I

Miss Margarida's Way was the best play that I have seen all year. It had many elements in a play that I have never seen. I thought the story was about how even people who seem crazy, can still teach us a lesson. The best plot moments of this play is when she would write her "slogans" on the board. This caught the audience's attention and made us want to see what would happen next. Although many of her slogans were a bit crazy, they were often the truth. For example, one said, "All of you are going to die." This would be a frightening statement to tell eighth graders, but they would find out someday. Miss Margarida is only preparing the students for the future, so they will not be in shock when tragedy eventually happens.

The plot of the play caught the audience's attention because of Joyce Deal, the main character who played Miss Margarida. Her character was blunt, serious but goofy at the same time, and had a strong personality. Joyce really portrayed this character well. I thought she was perfect for the part. Throughout the entire play, I was never bored once. The way she spoke made me feel as if she was really a teacher talking to her class. I enjoyed her facial expressions the most. Her face could be exciting and happy and suddenly turn serious without flinching. She made me laugh harder than I expected, which to me was the best parts throughout the play.

Even though this play was funny and had little serious moments, I thought there was a moral lesson behind it. The moral lesson, was that kids usually taught the good things that come in life, but are often not informed by parents and teachers of the experiences they will face. Some include the pressure of drugs, they are bad people in the world, and how it is a struggle to get by in life, depending on your education or race. Another example is that people only care about sex and seeing someone naked. That is

why she keep saying I know you all want me to teach you sex education and for me to strip for you all. Miss Margarida was trying to show her students the “real world”, with her strict and crazy way of teaching. She was showing the class what they might face in the future and encouraging them to not end up as a failure like her. All she wanted was for her students to learn something that she taught and be able to use it in their futures.

The thought the spectacles used in this play helped to get the character’s point across and let the audience know where the play was taking place. I really was impressed with the set design. I loved how there were so many books and trash all over her classroom. This made me think about how crazy life can be. One obstacle after another, or in her case, more trash. Her costume made me think that her clothes were out of date and that she tried to be conservative. However, this was not true, because she always was lifting up her dress or using vulgar words toward her students. I had know idea that the play would of turned out the way it did, because of how she was dressed. The lights were very useful when she would write on her chalkboard. It helped me to focus on what she was writing and the place she was writing.

From the music that was playing at the beginning of the play, I thought she was going to be a sweet teacher with annoying students. Instead, it turned out to be the complete opposite. She turned into a bipolar teacher that went crazy when teaching. The dialogue she spoke to the audience made her seem intelligent, until she starting writing and drawing on the board. From then on, I knew she was going to be a crazy teacher.

In conclusion, this play was unique. I enjoyed how the characters communicated with the audience. She seemed so comfortable with the people in the audience, that it made me feel like I was a student in her class. I would encourage everyone to see this

play because it is not what anyone will expect. I was shocked in many parts of the play,
which is rarely something that happens to me. I usually predict what will happen next in
most plays, but this one had me fooled the entire time.

Student: J

Acting One

Miss Margarida's Way

Let us laugh, let us pray, in Miss Margarida's way. I was fairly enthralled by this play. It is an interesting concept. Breaking the 4th wall has always intrigued me, and I hope to one day accomplish it in my writing, filmmaking or acting. I have to take a hat off to Joyce (if I was wearing one), because she really accomplished what I think the point of this play was, to provide an insight into the teaching foundation and social foundation of this country. Her indifference and berating tone set me off into fits of laughter. It is a very unusual moment to walk into a play and have someone yell at you.

Which seems like it would be a difficult thing to get across as an actor. Embodying the old black teacher who treats you more like her own kids than students, would be quiet an undertaking. I've seen Joyce's acting before, I worked sound on a film that she was in earlier in the semester, and I can definitely see her quality of acting. It is interesting at times, that through repetition you had the concept beaten into you it felt, as she questioned the audience if there was any of the holy trinity present. Her drawings which were overtly sexual, her open and abusive mannerisms. It had a very tight feeling, and Joyce pulled it off wonderfully.

At times I was left wondering if this play was directly influenced from a real life character the writer experienced, because her mannerisms and interactions felt fairly genuine. Not that I would know coming from the north-west how old black southern teachers are, it seemed fairly realistic. Her interactions with the student were genuinely funny, and at times a little over the top, but they showed true grit in her embodiment of the character.

My only remaining question leaving the play was the ridiculous ending. Where was she going? Was she such an enigma that she was actually foreign to this world? The student received abuse from her and still returned to give her a kiss on the forehead as she fell asleep. He returned again to find her missing and have some of the candy from her purse. I would assume that true love of student and teaching teachers are disappearing, if that's the intention, and the student really did appreciate her for who she was.

If all that is true, than I'm really curious to if that could of come across more clearly. All and all, an interesting play, enjoyable through and through.

Appendix E: Ambush Online Magazine Review



TRODDING THE BOARDS

by Brian Sands
E-mail: bsnola2@hotmail.com

Miss Margarida's Way at UNO Lab Theatre

She entered the theater ringing a bell, calling her class to order with a "don't-mess-with-me" look on her face. She proceeded to inform us that she has sent students to the principal's office and "they have never come back." Like one of those new or substitute teachers who seem just a little bit off, she was a little too intense, too opinionated with opinions that were just the teensiest strange.

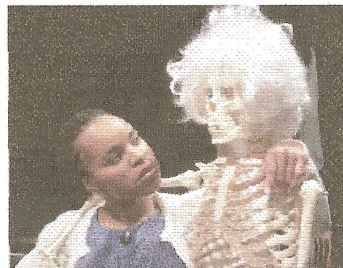
"She" is Miss Margarida, splendidly brought to life by Joyce Deal in Brazilian playwright Roberto Athayde's exploration of power, *Miss Margarida's Way*.

Supposedly a teacher of introductory biology (but also English, math & ecology), Miss Margarida spouts pedagogic mumbo-jumbo with idiosyn-

cratic "uh-huh"'s punctuating her phrases rather than offering any real knowledge to her 8th grade class. Speaking of herself in the 3rd person, she comes off as a paternalistic dictator who, judging by the photos she keeps in her locker, worships Jesus, Che Guevara, Ronald Reagan and Juan Peron.

Continually inquiring if "Jesus, the Messiah or the Holy Ghost is in the classroom," Miss Margarida is subject to mercurial changes in temperament and never tolerates disobedience. Whether a "classroom" ruled by a "teacher" or a nation governed by some despot, Athayde limns how easy it is to succumb to the authority of another no matter how ridiculous the demands are.

On Kevin Griffith's evocative set piled high with books and other academic detritus, Deal started off very



Joyce Deal & friend in *Miss Margarida's Way*

stylized but eased into a more naturalistic, and hence even scarier, mode soon enough. Combative throughout, the more involving second act allowed her a greater chance to show off her wide-ranging talent both in self-contained passages in which a transformed Miss Margarida reviews events of her youth and in an extraordinary section where she stood on a desk and took us to church.

The script allows the audience to interact with Miss Margarida and expects the actress to respond in character. The audience at UNO was relatively tame in this regard but Deal had quick-witted responses to those who would try to leave her classroom to go to the bathroom or even dare to correct her. Were this production to have had a longer run, I suspect word would've gotten out that it's okay to bait Miss M. and I'm sure Deal would've been up to the task of putting hecklers back in their place.

While I wish Director Rodney S. Hudson had guided Deal to give her delivery a tad more variety, his work here was far better than his disastrous double bill of *The Dark End of Day* and *The Chairs* earlier this year. With Deal, he created memorable stage images as when MM goes from dry-humping a skeleton to cradling it à la the Pietà. And if Hudson/Deal could not fully overcome the wordy sections of the script or its repetition that sometimes substitutes for substance, well, neither could the estimable Estelle Parsons who created the role on Broadway 30 years ago.

At one point, Miss Margarida decrees that "the worst is always in the future." That may be true for tyrants who eventually get their comeuppance like Idi Amin or Saddam Hussein. But for Joyce Deal, I think the best is yet to come.

Appendix F: Newspaper Clipping

Miss Margarida's Way Lab Theatre, University of New Orleans Performing Arts Center, UNO Lakefront campus, 280.7469. Rodney Hudson directs Joyce Deal in a portrait of teacher-as-dictator. Opens Wed at 7:30, with performances Thurs, Dec. 5 and 6 at 7:30 and Dec. 7 at 2:30. Tickets \$5.

Vita

Joyce Deal was born on November 19, at Touro Infirmary Medical Center in New Orleans. She has been an active performer in the New Orleans area since the age of seven. She graduated from Warren Easton Senior High School in New Orleans in 1999. In 2005 Joyce graduated cum laude with a B.A. in Drama and Communications from Dillard University in New Orleans. In the fall of 2005 she entered the FTCA performance program at the University of New Orleans to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Acting. Joyce plans to pursue a career in professional acting in both film and theater.