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Digesting Modern Acting Theory for Young Performers

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DIGESTING MODERN ACTING THEORY
FOR YOUNG PERFORMERS

by

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B.F.A. University of Florida, 2010

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
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in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
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ABSTRACT

An actor seeking to improve his craft can find numerous sources containing countless tips and techniques on the art of acting. However, the majority of these books target the adult actor often leaving young performers struggling to understand complex acting theory. With the goals of creating a nurturing learning environment and quality performance work within a compact rehearsal schedule, this thesis project created and evaluated a new synthesis of modern acting theory for directors to use when working with young performers. This technique adapted and coalesced several perspectives on foundational acting theory—specifically looking at the use of a character’s wants and actions as described by Bruder et al., Caldarone & Lloyd-Williams, Cohen, Jory, Mamet, and Stanislavski. I tested the developed technique using an independent production of *The Cat Who Ran* by Naoko Kudo performed by a group of seventh through tenth grade actors.

This thesis shares the process of creating this rehearsal tool with its readers. This process included researching and synthesizing the technique, documenting my process as director and acting coach for *The Cat Who Ran*, testing the technique throughout the production of *The Cat Who Ran*, evaluating the effectiveness of the technique through qualitative observation from production team and audience members, and theorizing the potential effectiveness for other scripts. The documentation of the project includes surveys, worksheets, text analysis, and production photos.

To all of my students who teach me just as much as I teach them

To all my mentors and teachers who remind me to work hard and think clearly

To all my peers and colleagues who allow me to have a laugh every now and then

To Krissy for her understanding and support during all those long nights of editing

“The actor’s intention is the only thing that counts. Everything else is just talk.”

– William H. Macy (Cohen 23)

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I have been fortunate enough to direct young and learning performers in many environments: schools, youth theatres, independent projects, and private lessons. Regardless of the format, I strive for a nurturing learning environment and quality performance work within a compact rehearsal schedule. Through my experience, I have grown to believe these three goals create the best theatre experience for young and learning performers. A nurturing learning environment ensures the actors learn the skills needed to succeed. A quality performance inspires the audience and actors to continue this work. A compact rehearsal schedule, often mandated by the budget limitations of youth theatre, allows young performers with school and other commitments to participate. However, these three goals have difficulty existing with each other. The following diagram demonstrates this tension.



Figure 1: My Goals
Source: Figure by author

Reaching the “balanced utopia” is challenging. Creating a nurturing environment and quality performance takes time. Creating a quality performance in a compact rehearsal schedule leaves little time for teaching, learning, and nurturing. A compact rehearsal schedule and a nurturing environment leaves little time to focus on the quality of the show. In order to get as close as possible to this utopia, I have developed and continue to improve many rehearsal techniques to achieve this balance. The most elusive rehearsal technique to develop has been effective acting technique. As a director, I have struggled to understand the most effective way to coach the acting choices of young and learning actors under these three goals.

A few years ago, I witnessed a rehearsal where confusion over acting technique led to a tense situation. It started with a surprisingly heated discussion between the director, actors, and members of the creative team during a rehearsal. I was on crew and was not in a place to be part of the discussion, nor was I about to make the situation any tougher. After a particularly unproductive rehearsal run, the director, clearly flustered, demanded the actors share “what their character wants” in the play. The actors, very nervous and clearly not understanding what the director meant, mostly gave answers amounting to “I have to go home and think about it some more.” A few gave general answers: “I want the other character to like me” or “I want to be free of my problems.” However, the director simply gave them a disapproving glare. The director accused them of being “irresponsible” and “downright lazy” for not answering this “basic acting question.” The rehearsal ended with that awkward discussion. After the shaken actors had left rehearsal to gather their thoughts and try to figure out “what their character wants,” the director continued to steam to the rest of the team: “These actors aren’t doing

their homework. They don't know what they want. They're unprofessional." The other members of the crew and creative team agreed with the director and praised the director's firmness: "Actors these days! They just aren't coming to rehearsal with their characters analyzed. They don't know what they want." The next day, ironically, everyone seemed to forget the conversation. If the actors managed to come up with some answers, they never revealed them to the director during rehearsal. The director never asked the same question again, and everyone went along with the rest of the production surprisingly content. The production went on to be a successful, if only average quality, show. This was a few years ago, and I am, of course, paraphrasing a bit. However, I will never forget the tension in the room: the rage from a director who was always very collected and supportive combined with the confused stares of the actors. This was clearly a charged and confusing issue. Everyone was relieved to let it go. Surprisingly, this was not a team of inexperienced child actors, but a room full of adult actors dedicated to studying this craft. This may explain the director's surprise and frustration. Regardless, the team handled the situation unproductively. The confusion over this essential acting question hampered the nurturing environment that was present until this day. The confusion could have led to an edifying discussion; however, after the tense discussion, everyone simply let it go.

This confusion over a character's wants and needs has appeared numerous times throughout my experience in youth theatre compromising the nurturing environment, lowering the performance quality, and even wasting valuable rehearsal time. Trained actors become capable of doing this work at home; however, learning performers should be able to

experiment with this work in the safe environment of educational theatre. If the young actors do not get that chance, they may grow up without this important skill. Inevitably, those actors will suffer a similar fate as those in the above story when working at the professional level. As a director, I am making it my duty to utilize these acting techniques to strengthen, not hamper, the learning atmosphere.

As the story indicates, one of the keys to acting technique lies in this important question: “what does your character want?” With a combination of research and practical experimentation, I have dissected this question in order to improve the environment of my rehearsals and the quality of my performances without lengthening the compact rehearsal schedule. This thesis will research the origin and evolution of this question and synthesize a definitive technique for young performers to tackle this question. I will apply and evaluate this technique practically with a production of *The Cat Who Ran* featuring young performers, as well as theoretically using scenes from three other common productions that schools and youth theatres often tackle. Creating this technique will help me achieve the balance I am looking for in my rehearsals and may inspire others to do the same.

CHAPTER TWO: DEVELOPING THE TECHNIQUE

Acting texts offer numerous theories, tips, and tricks indicating what an actor can do to make his performance more entertaining for the audience. A central question separates many of these theories: **When acting, what is within our control?** We know that, with the exception of instinctual responses, we can choose whether to walk stage right or stage left and whether to say something or keep quiet. We know that we can influence but certainly not directly control our scene partners, the audience, and the technicians. Likewise, when on stage, we cannot control the lighting, the scenery, or the leaky ceiling. However, we begin to disagree in how much control we have over our emotions.

If we can willingly control our own feelings, the possibilities for performance are endless. If we cannot control our emotions, then how do we cry over the death of our loved ones in a tragedy? Dr. Jeremy Sherman's article in *Psychology Today* explains how under Total Control Theory, we can control our emotions through cognitive therapy. Sherman also explains how under No Control Theory, we cannot control our emotions; our emotions are just how we feel. Sherman argues that the answer lies somewhere in between: "we're neither omnipotent nor impotent" when it comes to controlling our feelings. In addition, the Total Control Theory indicates that with time and therapy, we have some control over our emotions. On stage, an actor faces the challenge of jumping in and out of a situation as he enters and exits the stage. Highly experienced actors may be able to find the control described in Total Control Theory. However, we cannot expect young and inexperienced actors to have the same level of control.

The acting texts that agree with this conclusion indicate that we do have control over our actions. Next to how we move and what we say, we have the most control over our actions within a scene. If we can realistically play actions similar to what our character would be playing within our scene, we can begin to connect emotionally to the fictional characters. Then, the audience will be able to suspend their disbelief more easily. They will be more likely to accept our performance as authentic. This dramatically increases the chances of creating a more entertaining experience for the audience. However, these acting texts give us many different ways to analyze the actions of a character.

Dissonance

The acting texts differ in their use of terminology. Last year, I was teaching a young group of actors to consider what a character wants within a scene, and how articulating and applying this concept can make your acting direct, specific, believable, and simply interesting to watch. Suddenly, I watched their brows wrinkle in confusion. Until I stopped them to question the sudden change of expression, I did not realize that I started the lecture using the term “objective” and then switched—subconsciously—to the term “intention” to describe this important concept. For me, these terms were synonymous. For them, it was as if I started a completely new topic mid-lecture. The use of interchangeable terms is almost commonplace with experienced actors; however, it was clearly causing confusion for the young performers.

Popular acting theorists describe what any particular character wants, along with what he does to get what he wants, a number of ways. They use several terms interchangeably including “**objective**” (Hapgood trans., 128), “**task**” (Benedetti trans., 135), “**action**” (Bruder et al 8; Jory 4), “**actioning**” (Caldarone xiii), “**tactics**” (Jory 8), “**tools**” (Bruder et al 18), and “**goal ... victory ... intention ... purpose ... or want**” (Cohen 22). This blast of synonyms and citations demonstrates how convoluted our understanding of these simple terms and ideas has become. A young performer will need some assistance digesting the terminology.

Terminology

The confusion over the initial question “what does your character want?” lies in the way an actor interprets the question. The most common answer I hear from students involves the state of being of the character, e.g., “I want to eat right now.” It could also refer to what your character wants to do or say to the other character(s), e.g., “I want to attack the other character.” It could also refer to what your character wants the other character(s) on stage to say or do and why the other characters(s) on stage are not doing that (I want to get my friend to admit I am right but he is too stubborn to realize). By asking an actor this one question, a director is asking them at least three questions, and all three questions are important to acting.

This misunderstanding seems to have started with a translation issue. Most theatre artists give credit to Constantin Stanislavski for first documenting a term to describe, “What does your character want?” However, different translations of Stanislavski’s Russian text

translate the term, *zadača*, differently. If an actor reads Hapgood's original translation of Stanislavski, he will read about the desires of a character as "inner, active **objectives**" (128). However, if the same actor reads Benedetti's updated translation, he will read about "inner, active **tasks**" (144). This small disagreement may have spawned the numerous terms in our theories. A young actor would struggle to understand this fluid terminology.

Contemporary acting texts also disagree on which vocabulary terms we should use. Bruder et al in *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* preferred the term "action" or "essential action" when speaking about the "the physical process of trying to obtain a specific goal" (8). Jory in *Tips: Ideas for Actors* also used the term "action" describing it as "what you want the other person onstage to do, to feel, or to understand" (4). Cohen's popular *Acting One/Acting Two* text preferred the term "goal" describing it simply as "what you—your character—wants" (23). Cohen describes the same disparity of terms I am bringing attention to: "Sometimes this goal is called the *objective*. Often...it is also called the *victory*. Some other teachers use the word *intention*, or *purpose*, or *want*" (23). When I first begin working with a young actor, I have always found it best to start with the full question when first discussing this idea: "What does your character want from the other character at this moment?" After we have had that discussion, I say that I will call your answer to the question "your objective" from here forward. We now have a bit of acting language that can help us discuss the play more efficiently thus helping maintain the compact rehearsal schedule. I will also mention that this is the term for our rehearsals only and other directors may use terms that are more comfortable to them. "Objective" is the term I have heard most during my practice, and it is the original translation of

Stanislavski so it is the most comfortable term for me to use. I will give this same speech when introducing any new term. If possible, I would post any new term to a word wall for reference. If there is still any confusion, I will remind everyone of Cohen's advice: "It doesn't really matter what it is called, as long as you pursue it" (23).

There is also terminology to describe what a character does to get what he wants. Stanislavski stated, "Every objective must carry in itself the germs of action." (Hapgood trans., 134). Bruder et al used the term "tools" which they defined as "ways to go about executing [the] action" (18). Jon Jory used the term "tactics" which he described as "how you get the other to do [what your character wants]" (8). Cohen preferred the term "tactic" as well (34). *The Actor's Thesaurus*, one of the most useful places to locate the action verbs that are often used as tactics, preferred the term "action" defining them as "the actions are what you do to obtain what you want; they are the tactics you employ." For efficiency, I am going to use the word tactic in this technique.

There is a third term, obstacle. This often compliments objectives and tactics. Surprisingly, there is no disagreement over this term. Jory states: "In the theatre, every action has an obstacle or else the action is undramatic" (6). Cohen states: "You are working against an obstacle: your own physical limitations" (24). Bruder et al do not discuss "obstacles," but the authors discuss the importance of working in reaction to one's scene partner, which implies an obstacle. Stanislavsky also does not give a specific term, but, as with *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*, working with another character implies a present obstacle. Thankfully, it is easy to decide that my technique will use the term obstacle.

Acting texts often include another term beside the above terms. This term is far more recognized and argued about far less: Stanislavski's "Magic If." The musical *Fame* immortalized this term. Stanislavski stated its practical application: "[The actor] asks himself: 'But if this were real, how would I react? What would I do?'" (Stanislavski 94). Bruder et al describe the term as "a simple mnemonic device, a suggestion by means of which you remind yourself of what the action means to you in personal terms" (28). This connection between the objective and the actor makes the scene real for the performer. My technique will refer to this term simply as the "as if."

Finally, throughout my experiences, I have heard acting coaches and actors state the objective in a way the character might say it. If the objective is "To get a loved one to take a big chance," the character might say "Come on honey, take a chance!" This idea does not appear in my researched texts but has been integral to my performance work. For my technique, I will refer to this as a character's "activating phrase."

These five terms—objective, tactic, obstacle, as-if, and activating phrase—form the basis for the following technique. I have found that these terms function within a nurturing environment and help produce quality performance work. However, their implementation needs to vary based on how compact the rehearsal schedule is.

The Technique

There are different ways to use this technique based on how much rehearsal time is available to do analysis, the experience level of the actors, and how much work the actors are doing at home. In an ideal world, the actors would be using this technique at home and the director could then evaluate their choices within rehearsal. However, this simply will not happen with young, inexperienced actors. What follows are three variations of the same technique. The first variation, which I have called **complete analysis**, gives the actor the most to work with, but takes a significant amount of time. The third variation, which I have called **spot analysis**, is a short hand version that works in the shortest of rehearsal processes. The second variation, which I have called **walk through analysis**, balances the two variations. Directors can use these variations to adapt to the particular time constraints of the production.

Complete Analysis

There are complex and climatic moments within any play that require significant attention such as *Romeo and Juliet's* famous balcony scene or *Disney's The Little Mermaid's* "Part of Your World." Complete analysis will help an actor delve fully into these types of moments. However, because of the heavy time commitment it can be difficult to apply complete analysis to an entire play within limited rehearsal periods. I mostly apply this technique within the classroom and private lessons where time is far more abundant and production quality is less of a concern. The first handout will guide any actor through the

process without getting them caught up in the terminology. Note that this handout keeps the questions in first person. I have found that articulating the questions in the first person help bring an actor into the moment easier. The acting texts discussed in this thesis often switch between first and third person articulation which can create confusion for learning performers. The most difficult question on the handout is the one this thesis centers around: “What do you want from the other?” The two supplemental handouts help the actor answer this question. It is important to choose a very playable objective. The two supplemental handouts summarize the guide in *A Practical Handout for the Actor* that helps with this issue.

Analyzing a Monologue or Scene for Performance

Handout by Brandon Yagel. Reproduction permitted for educational purposes only.

Title of piece and/or page number _____
 Play/Source piece is from _____
 Author _____

Answer the following from the point of view of your character . . .

Who are you? _____
 Your name and any other important information about you

Who are you talking to? _____
 If audience, do you consider them a friend/stranger/other?

Where are you? _____
 If not specified, make a choice.

What day and time is it? _____
 If not specified, make a choice.

What are you literally doing? _____
 A single, precise sentence. Be literal. Do not embellish.
 ex. I am telling my friend what happened yesterday.
 ex. I am asking a loved one over for lunch.
 ex. I am having a heart-to-heart with my brother.

What do you want from the other? _____
 Known as your *objective*, intention, essential action, or goal.
 ex. I want to get this stranger to take a big chance.
 ex. I want to extract a crucial answer from my friend.
 ex. I want to clear up a misunderstanding.

What would you say to express this? _____
 Known as your *activating phrase*.
 ex. Take a big chance!
 ex. Tell me the answer!

What is it like to me (actor)? _____
 Known as your *as-if*.
 ex. It is as if I lost my Mom's favorite necklace.
 ex. It is as if my best friend just found out I lied to him/her.

What is holding you back? _____
 Known as your *obstacle*.
 ex. My friend's attitude is holding me back.
 ex. My pride is holding me back.

What are you going to do to get what you want?
 Known as your *tactics*, tools, or minor actions. Use action verbs in the infinitive form (to "___"). I am going...

to _____	to _____	to _____
to _____	to _____	to _____
to _____	to _____	to _____
to _____	to _____	to _____

Figure 2: "Analyzing a Monologue or Scene for Performance" Handout
 Source: Figure by author

Common Objective List

Handout by Brandon Yagel. Reproduction permitted for educational purposes only.

When determining an objective for a monologue/scene/song, consider the following list. These objectives occur very often in most plays. However, there are many more objectives beyond this list. Add your own!

Always start your objective with *I want to*, followed by a verb. This makes it personal and active.

Note: All of these objectives consider the person your character is talking to a friend. They could be a stranger, enemy, brother, parent, and so forth.

I want to build up my friend's confidence.

I want to put my friend in their place.

I want to get my friend to take a big chance.

I want to stop my friend from making a big mistake.

I want to get my friend to admit I am right.

I want to get my friend to admit he/she is wrong.

I want to convince my friend to help me.

I want to force my friend to do my bidding.

I want to open my friend's eyes to the importance of the situation.

I want to force my friend to face facts.

I want to clear up a misunderstanding with my friend.

I want to get my friend's forgiveness.

I want to talk my friend into spilling the beans.

I want to extract a crucial answer from my friend.

I want to get my friend pumped up for a big event.

I want to get my friend to trust me.

I want to _____.

I want to _____.

I want to _____.

I want to _____.

I want to _____.

I want to _____.

Figure 3: "Common Objective List" Handout
Source: Figure by author

What am I “doing” on stage?

Handout by Brandon Yagel. Reproduction permitted for educational purposes only.

To act means to do, so you must always have something you are doing on stage or you are not acting.

As an actor, you must define your character's action in each scene or “beat.”

An action (or “objective”) is the physical pursuit of a specific goal/need.

An action must...

- 1) **be physically capable of being done.**
At any moment, you should be able to begin doing it.
 - ☒ Taking over the world
 - ☒ Putting my underlings in their place
- 2) **be fun/engaging to do.**
Your action should be something that excites you (because you will be doing it over and over).
 - ☒ Getting someone to give me information
 - ☒ Talking a friend into spilling the beans
- 3) **be specific.**
If your action is general, everything you do onstage will be general (and not very interesting).
 - ☒ Finding out something
 - ☒ Extracting a crucial answer
- 4) **have its test in the other person.**
By looking at your scene partner, you should be able to tell if you are having an effect.
 - ☒ Becoming ruler of the playground
 - ☒ Forcing a friend to do my bidding
- 5) **not be an errand.**
Errands are too easily accomplished and have no interaction with the other.
 - ☒ Delivering a message
 - ☒ Making someone understand the importance of the situation.
- 6) **not presuppose any physical or emotional state**
You cannot artificially generate an emotion, attitude, or physical state (hunger, anger, sorrow, etc).
 - ☒ Calming down an excited friend
 - ☒ Building up a friend's confidence
- 7) **not be manipulative**
Your action cannot be chosen to produce a desired effect on your partner.
 - ☒ Making someone cry
 - ☒ Forcing a friend to face facts
- 8) **have a “cap.”**
Your action must have something to look for to know when the action is completed.
 - ☒ Maintaining someone's interest
 - ☒ To get someone pumped up for the big game
- 9) **be in line with the intentions of the playwright.**

Tip

After finding your action, make an **activating phrase** your character might say. Remind yourself of this during performance: “You know your place!”, “Spill it!”, “Give me the answer!”, “Do it!”, “You’ve got to understand!”, “You can do it!”, “Face facts!”, “Get excited!”, “Respect me!”, etc.

Moving Forward

Determine an **“as if”** for the scene. Find a time in your life that you were pursuing a similar action (the situation can be totally different). While acting, pursue your action as if you were pursuing it in your real life situation.

*Bruder, Melissa, Lee Michael Cohn, Madeleine Olnek, Nataniel Pollack, Robert Previto, and Scott Zigler.
A Practical Handbook for the Actor. New York: Vintage Books, 1986. Print.*

Figure 4: “What am I ‘doing’ on stage?” Handout
Source: Figure by author

Walk Through Analysis

For a play where there is enough time to give analysis some focus but not enough time for complete analysis, answer the key questions in the previous handouts for each scene verbally. The team can do this verbal analysis at any point in the process and allow the thoughts to evolve and change if needed. Actors can write these discoveries at the top of each scene. When working with inexperienced actors, it will be necessary to answer who/where/what questions on the handout before identifying objectives. However, verbal analysis tends to happen much more quickly than working with the handouts. As the actors get more comfortable, it will not be necessary to discuss who/where/what questions. For the more intense scenes or monologues, return to complete analysis.

Spot Analysis

If the show has numerous characters, many small scenes, very inexperienced actors, or simply a very tight rehearsal schedule, spot analysis will help balance the rehearsal environment, show quality, and rehearsal schedule. Jon Jory suggests this type of analysis: “Because large roles are made up of hundreds of actions, very few performers will do all that homework. Admit you are lazy and use them for spot work. This moment isn’t working—what’s the action? This beat seems unclear—what’s the action? I feel self-conscious here—what’s the action?” (4). Defining what the objective, activating phrase, and/or as-if might be in only the key moments creates a very efficient rehearsal process.

Initial Perceptions

With the exclusion of classroom and private lesson work, the majority of my past projects have operated under tight time constraints. I consistently utilize spot analysis to maintain the rehearsal environment and performance quality. This technique is by far the quickest, and I have used it moments before a show opened. However, this variation is in tension with the learning environment. This variation can undermine the feeling of accomplishment for the actors, and at worst, results in analysis that only makes sense to the director. It seems like every time I have said, “you have to get the other person to take a big chance” in rehearsal, they never embrace it fully because they lack ownership. Walk through analysis provides a stronger learning environment in exchange for more time. In exchange for even more time, complete analysis teaches the actors fully. However, I have yet to have enough time to apply complete analysis to an entire production.

Notes

The techniques of complete analysis, walk through analysis, and spot analysis all deal with how an actor talks to himself in the moment of performance. Before an actor starts a key moment, he should remind himself of what he wants within a scene, usually thinking his activating phrase. This “self-talk” helps to activate the moment and bring the analysis to the stage. As a director, I can coach this self-talk to the actor in the moment: “Get her to take a big chance!” There are often other, separate external concerns as well. Bruder et al. describe

externals as “a physical adjustment made by the actor that either aids in the telling of the story or illustrates an imaginary circumstance of the play” (48). For example, if an actor’s character is asking for food in a scene, the actor must practice embodying the physicality of hunger.

However, the actor should remain focused on his objective, which might be getting the other character to wake up to the problems he is facing instead of simply showing the audience how hungry he is. As a director, I can help an actor distinguish external action from internal action.

Some of the young actors I have worked with love to generate elaborate backstories for their characters. These actors use any discussion about their objectives to bring up their story. David Mamet offers some advice on this matter: “So our ‘technique’ becomes more and more devoted to the development of a kind of catatonia...The creation of auxiliary ‘stories’ which are just as difficult to ‘perform’ as the script but lack the merit of being about anything other than ourselves” (6). Mamet’s words may be a little tough in the nurturing environment. Instead, I remind the actors that our character stories simply help us determine which action to play in any given scene. Our focus should be on our objective and not on our personal histories. Characters are rarely concerned with revealing their history to the audience.

When using this technique, there is an issue when a character recites a monologue alone on stage. The author did not write a scene partner to react to. Bruder et al. offers two recommendations for this situation: use the audience as an “objective observer” to play against or to imagine playing to the person in the as-if (46). Bruder et al. describe using an imagined person as “rehearsing in the bathroom mirror before asking someone out on a date.” I once had a young actress refuse to use either of these options. Instead, she insisted that she was

talking directly to herself in her monologue. This idea of speaking to, as Michael Jackson put it, the “women in the mirror” was effective for her. I now refer to this “man/women in the mirror” type of objective as an “internal objective,” a want from yourself. Although these scenes tend to be the most difficult to analyze using this technique, with a little imagination, this technique can bring a lot to these moments.

With any of these techniques, I have seen actors get lost in their analysis. The actors end up going on stage to contemplate the strength of their analysis instead of trying out their actions free of judgment. Viola Spolin offers a smart sidecoaching phrase to help actors facing this challenge: “Out of the head and into the space!” (67). I kept these concerns in my mind as I assessed these variations of the technique practically and theoretically.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CAT WHO RAN ANALYSIS

The following section presents a page-by-page analysis of *The Cat Who Ran*. Our rehearsal process was rather compact so we used a combination of walk-through and spot analysis. Key moments on the page are identified, and an objective (indicated in bold) for each of these key moments is articulated. This analysis is not exhaustive; instead, it represents the pieces we discussed in rehearsal. I describe how we arrived at each objective's articulation. Some objectives were determined through discussion with the cast, the actors acted some naturally, and some, unfortunately, were not realized until post-production. I also note if the objective held up for the performance or changed completely.

This analysis only identifies the objectives the actors attempted to play. The later chapters will describe how effectively and how honestly the actors pursued the objectives. Note that I articulate objectives in the third person for readability (ex. The Fish is getting Ran to take a big chance). The actors personalized the objectives in the first person and removed the character names to make it more relatable ("I am getting a friend to take a big chance" instead of "Ran is getting The Fish to take a big chance"). Also, note that actresses playing male characters would use feminine pronouns for the same reasons. The following analysis is by no means exhaustive, but it will walk the reader through the core of this production's technique.

A Poem Play
The Cat Who Ran

By Naoko Kudo
Adapted by Toyoko Nishida
Translated by Yuriko Kobayashi
Edited by Michael FitzGerald, AM

With permission from authors, lines have been reassigned to accommodate seven actors.
Original script featured three actors.

Cast:

Narrator AH
Narrator BH
Narrator IC
Narrator JC
Narrator LE
Narrator MC
Narrator MD

Characters (in order of appearance):

Ran, the Cat Who Ran (AH)
The Earth (BH)
The Cabbage Moth (JC)
Ran's Mother (BH)
The Mother of a Hare (LE)
The Ant (MC)
The Fish (IC)
The Zelkova Elm Tree (MD)
The Frog (LE)
The Wind (JC)
The Sunflower (MC)
The Turtledove (BH)
The Sun (MD)
The Honeybee (MC)
The Waterweed in the Pool (JC)
The Cricket (LE)
The Japanese Pampas Grass (BH, JC, LE, MC, MD)
The Weasel (JC)
The Pool (MC)
The Field Mouse (MD)

Synopsis of Scenes:

Scene 1: The Birth of Ran
Scene 2: Ran Drops Out
Scene 3: Ran Meets The Fish
Scene 4: Friends
Scene 5: The Contest to Catch the Fish: Part I
Scene 6: The Fish Decides
Scene 7: The Contest to Catch the Fish: Part II
Scene 8: The Black Spiral

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The title page has been included for reference and copyright purposes.

NOTE:

In this analysis, the narrators and characters play many objectives towards the “audience.” Playing with the audience’s unrehearsed reactions was a difficult issue throughout the process.

We took the advice of Bruder et al. and came up with a group as-if for this situation. The actors pretended as if a group of young kids had gathered to hear their story. When narrating, the actors imagined the audience as this group of innocent objective observers and played their objectives in reaction to them.

The characters also speak with the “audience.” When embodying a character, they imagined the audience as simple objective observers. For example, the Mother of Hare played to a group of young mothers. The actors had to imagine the character they were talking to.

We established this idea early on and used the word “audience” in rehearsal to refer to these objective observers.

The audience was not considered the literal parents and friends of the actors. They were characters in the story with the actors.

Figure 5: *The Cat Who Ran* by Naoko Kudo, Title Page

Scene 1: The Birth of Ran

Narrator AH,BH,IC: *(A little formally)* Today we present...

Narrator JC,LE: Today we present....

Narrator MC,MD: Today we present...

Narrator BH: *(Pointing at the book)* This, The Cap Who Ran

Narrator JC: No! The Cab Which Ran

Narrator MD: *(Disgustedly)* The Cat Who Ran!

Narrator MC: We will present today....

Narrator AH,BH,IC: A Poem Play, The Cat Who Ran by Naoko Kudo

Narrator JC,LE: A Poem Play, The Cat Who Ran by Naoko Kudo

Narrator MC,MD: A Poem Play, The Cat Who Ran by Naoko Kudo

Narrator LE: *(To the audience)* Shall we read it?

Narrator MC,MD: Ran

Narrator JC,LE: Ran

Narrator AH,BH,IC: Ran

Narrator MD: was born this year and...

Narrator MC: A very small kitten

Narrator LE: A very small kitten

Narrator JC: A very small kitten

Narrator IC: In the snowy country

Narrator BH: In the snowy country

Narrator AH: In the snowy country

Narrator MD: A small village surrounded by mountains

Narrator MC: A small village surrounded by mountains

Narrator LE: A small village surrounded by mountains

Narrator JC: Soft and fluffy

Narrator IC: Soft and fluffy

Narrator BH: Soft and fluffy

Narrator AH: Black fur shining

Narrator MD: Shining

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Figure 6: *The Cat Who Ran* by Naoko Kudo, P. 2

The play begins with the narrators announcing the presentation of the story.

The narrators are proving themselves to the other narrators and the audience.

When asked early in the process, the actors determined this objective. We determined that a fun activating phrase would simply be “Look what I can do!” This objective carries throughout the majority of moments in the play when the actors are narrating. There were several discussions over who the audience was. The majority agreed that they were friends who had stopped to enjoy their show.

The objective definitely stood during the performance. However, there appeared to be some shift in a few of the actors to **waking the audience up**. This shift increased the energy, but weakened the personal stake the characters had in the story.

Narrator MC: Shining

Narrator LE: Carefree

Narrator IC,JC: Carefree

Narrator AH,BH: Carefree

Narrators ALL: Ran played and grew

(The narrators close their books).

Narrator JC: *(Formally)* The Earth tells the story of the birth of Ran

The Earth (BH): Zun, Dadada, dadada *(the sound of snow sliding down the mountainside)* On a day when the snow was sliding down the faraway mountain side Ran was born

Ran (AH): Miaow!

The Earth (BH): I embraced Ran and his brothers and sisters as his mother nursed them on my soft heart all night long. His mother licked his wet, black fur. Ran truly enjoyed his first sleep in this world.

Narrator IC: Toku toku toku ...toku toku toku...toku toku toku... *(The sound of Ran's small heart beating)*

The Earth (BH): While Ran was sleeping, his small heart in his small body kept beating, toku toku toku, like a small drum, like an acorn.

Narrators JC,LE: Toku toku toku....toku toku toku... *(The sound of Ran's small heart beating)*

The Earth (BH): I am Spring and always sleepy. Many small lives have just been born on my body. In a while they are running all over me. Soon Ran too began to run around my body. His small paws stepped lightly on me, they were soft and cold and ticklish. Whenever he did this, I laughed.

Narrators MC,MD: Toku toku toku....toku toku.... *(The sound of Ran's small heart beating).*

Narrator LE: When Ran was born

Narrators LE,MC: It was cold all around

Narrator MC: There was snow

Narrators LE,MC: Here and there, there and here

Narrator LE: After one month

Narrators LE,MC: In this snowy village

Narrators ALL: Spring really came

(Narrator whistles the sound of a bird singing.)

Narrator LE: Pa ppa ppa ppa Pa *(The sound of the opening bud of a Zuki flower. NB. The Zuki flower is the first flower of spring. It is white and grows in the mountains through the snow. It is a kind of chrysanthemum).*

Narrator MC: The tightly closed bud of a Zuki flower burst into blossom and became a round, ball shaped flower.

Narrator LE: Po ppo ppo ppo ... *(The sound of steam coming up from the warmed soil)*

The narrators continue the announcement until The Earth enters to describe the birth of Ran.

The Earth wants to get respect from the audience.

We discovered this objective through discussion.

From my perspective, this intention fell away in favor of the narrators' original objective. This still worked, but it may have weakened The Earth, making her seem like a normal narrator.

Narrator MC: The black soil in the field was warmed by the sun and began to steam. “Po ppo”. *(The sound of steam coming up from the warmed soil).*

Narrator LE: Sara sara sara sara...*(the sound of a stream running)*

Narrator MC: The sound of a running stream echoed around. The wind blew through the grass and the branches. The color of green was growing and growing.

Narrator LE: “Pappa!” *(The sound of the Zuki flower opening)*

Narrator MC: “Sara sara...” *(The sound of the stream running)*

Narrator LE: “Gnnnnn gunnnn...” *(The sound of the wind blowing through the grass and the trees)*

(Narrators continue the sounds which overlap each other and increase in volume).

Narrator MD: The landscape suddenly became alive

Narrator BH: The kittens became more and more energetic

Narrator MD: Except one kitten, the very small black kitten, Ran.

Narrator BH: Ran became unhappy and sad at this time

Narrator MD: The Cabbage Moth continues the story of Ran.

The Cabbage Moth (JC): He was like my younger brother. It was fun to tease him. When I fluttered about him, Ran also fluttered his eyes and ears. Then he became dizzy. I wasn’t scared of him at all. Ran tried to touch my wings but he couldn’t, not even their tips. He was so funny. He waved his paws at me as if they were saying “Come here! Come here!” But then he became unhappy and sad. When I tried to tease him, he didn’t respond. He lay on his stomach, crossed his paws and put his chin on them. He lay like this for a long time.

I even tried to get close to his nose, so close that I could almost perch on it. I could see the reflection of my fluttering in his eyes but Ran did not see me at all. He seemed to look into himself. Why was he so unhappy and sad?

The Cabbage Moth closes the scene by telling the audience about his interactions with Ran.

The Cabbage Moth wants to get Ran’s goat.

The actor came up with this version of “I want to put the other in their place” with a built in as-if. My assistant director encouraged him to use an as-if along the lines of “as-if my sister was bugging me for attention.”

This objective also seemed to slip by the performance in favor of the original narrator objective.

With the words of the last two monologue directed at the audience, both The Earth and The Cabbage Moth had a tricky time living the moments with Ran. For our production, this split focus between narrator and character was the most difficult part of acting this piece.

Scene 2: Ran Drops Out

Narrator BH: Ran was a shy kitten.

Narrator AH: Shy?

Narrator JC: His movements were slow.

Narrator AH: Slow?

Narrator MD: Whatever he did, he came last.

Narrator AH: Last?

ALL except Ran (AH): *(You are the very....) Last! (They introduce Ran to the audience. Ran is surprised like "Me?")*

Ran (AH): Miaow!

Narrator JC: While you can teach a kitten many things, a kitten can also learn by itself as well.

Narrator MD: Such as playing with other kittens.

Narrator JC: Pretending to sharpen one's claws.

Narrator MD: But Ran didn't learn anything at all.

Narrator JC: When Ran was very young, his mother thought

Ran's Mother (BH): Ran is not like the other kittens. He is a strange kitten.

Narrator MD: She laughed. And didn't take it seriously.

Narrator JC: But once the real training to be a cat started

Narrator MD: The difference between Ran and the other kittens became

Narrator JC: Clearer and clearer

Narrator MD: In the beginning his mother said

Ran's Mother (BH): "Take your time!"

Narrator JC: She cheered him up

Narrator MD: Or she asked,

Ran's Mother (BH): "Hey, what are you doing!"

Narrator JC: She scolded him

Narrator MD: She gave him instructions like

Ran's Mother (BH): "Walk softly! Hide yourself, don't be found!"

Narrator JC: And

Ran's Mother (BH): "Make a somersault in midair!"

Narrator MD: At first, she tried to teach him such things.

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At the top of scene two, Ran's Mother is training Ran to be like the other kittens.

Ran's Mother wants to get Ran to shape up.

Ran wants to get his Mom to support and believe in him.

These objectives were determined through discussion. Ran's Mother used "Get with the program!" as an activating phrase.

Both these objectives tended to stick for the performance. However, Ran's focus ended up being more on the tricks than the interactions with the Mother.

The narrators continue presenting this story to audience, but the tone is beginning to shift.

The Narrators are opening the audience's eyes to the importance of the situation.

We did not identify this gradual shift, but the new intention was clear in the performance.

Figure 9: *The Cat Who Ran* by Naoko Kudo, P. 5

Narrator JC: Now she only sighed.

Ran's Mother (BH): "Just for once, I'd like to see you jump up into the air like a streak of lightning...If only you could!"

Narrator MD: That became his mother's often repeated phrase.

The Mother of a Hare (LE): *(Narrator shouts encouragement to Narrators)* One, two, one two!

(Narrators run to The Mother of a Hare and stand in a line.)

Narrator JC: The Mother of a Hare talks in confidence

(Narrators put their hands on their heads like the ears of a Hare)

The Mother of a Hare (LE): Oh, my, how hard it is to be a Mother!

ALL except The Mother of a Hare (LE): I'm hungry!

The Mother of a Hare (LE): I must raise my children well....Open your mouth wide. Ahh. *(She gives food to Narrators.)* I must pay attention to my children all the time. I must always be on the look out to keep them from danger. *(She looks at them and says)* "Stop that!" And, then, I must lick them until their fur is clean and shining...And much more, I have to teach them the old customs so that they can be independent in the future. These have been handed down from generation to generation. How busy I am! Though, it is a great pleasure, as a Mother, to do this for them. What old customs? Well, for example, I start by teaching them "The art of straining ears!" *(To her children)* "Go!" "The art of hiding in the grass!" *(To her children)* "Go!" I teach them one by one. When they grow older, I introduce a really difficult one, "The art of beating a drum with the hind legs".

I am so pleased when they do well.

I knew what Ran's mother was doing because I saw them from a distance. She worked so hard to teach Ran their old customs but he couldn't learn them, he didn't improve.

He was very small; he worked so hard....but nothing helped.

Finally his mother gave up teaching him...but she dearly loved him even if he was small and slow. Sometimes, she just hugged him without saying a word. She looked at him lovingly with her beautiful, deep eyes.

(To her children) Let's go! "One, two, one, two!" *(They leave the stage with her encouraging them.)*

Narrator IC: That is why Ran was unhappy and sad

Narrator BH: When Ran was with the other kittens in the special field where they learned the old customs near the Hachiman Shrine

Narrator IC: He was a bother to them

Narrator BH: He did not get any better in anything at all.

Ran (AH): Am I a stupid? I should learn these things by myself so as not to worry them, shouldn't I?

I've got it! I'll practice by myself from today on! I can't get any better if I don't try

Well, well....I shall just work harder.

The Mother of Hare enters and describes how to raise a child.

The Mother of Hare is putting her kids in their place and teaching the audience a lesson.

With the scene blocked so that the other actors were playing young rabbits, we decided to play the objective towards the audience.

We discovered these objectives through discussion. My assistant director pointed out the stakes of the situation when he noted that this helps the kids survive in the dangerous life of a rabbit. For the interactions with the audience, we came up with the activating phrase "you got nothing on me."

Both of these were still clear during the performance.

Narrator IC: Well then, today Ran has come

Narrator BH: On his own to the special field where they learned the old customs

Narrator IC: It was in the shade of the big Zelkova Elm tree

Narrator BH: There was white clover all around

Narrator IC: It was a pleasant field

Narrator BH: The other kittens were comfortably taking a nap, burying their faces on their mother's tummy.

Narrator IC: Deep silence reigned over the field. The leaves in the tree trembled in the wind.

Ran (AH): Yo! Ha! Here! Ah! *(The sounds of Ran practicing)*

ALL except Ran (AH): Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

Narrator BH: Ran tried to make a somersault in midair.

Ran (AH): Ready, set, go! Whip! Whisk! Uh-oh! *(The sounds of Ran trying to make a somersault)*

ALL except Ran (AH): Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

Narrator IC: Ran did not do well.

ALL except Ran (AH): Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

Narrator BH: He made a big noise when he fell on his back.

Ran (AH): Yo! There! Ooh! Whoops! *(The sounds of Ran practicing)*

ALL except Ran (AH): Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

Narrator IC: He was perspiring heavily because he tried over and over again.

(Narrator BH says, "Clump!" Narrator turns to Ant and say "Clump!" Ant is surprised and runs away saying, "Eek!")

Narrator MD: The Report of the Ant who watched Ran at practice

The Ant (MC): At that time I was taking a nap. It was the middle of my work but it felt so good in the forest of white clover. The breeze with its sweet fragrance was blowing through it.

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): *(Rustling) Sawa sawa sawa..... (The sound of the breeze)*

The Ant (MC): Well, I leaned against a leaf and then fell asleep. Suddenly....

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

The Ant (MC): I jumped up in surprise and ran up the edge of a petal. What? What? What happened?

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH) (ad-lib): What? What? What happened?

The Ant (MC): Something had happened, but what?

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): Clump! Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

The Ant (MC): Ran had fallen down. He seemed so serious but he looked so funny. I was sorry for him but I couldn't help laughing. Yuck-yuck, yuck-yuck, yuck-yuck....

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Figure 11: *The Cat Who Ran* by Naoko Kudo, P. 7

The Ant comes on and describes Ran's predicament.

The Ant wants to get the audience to feel for Ran.

This objective was also determined through discussion. The actress used the activating phrase of "Don't you feel for this guy?!" In hindsight, this objective is manipulative, as she tries to get an emotional rise out of the audience. Perhaps a better objective would be **to get the audience to help ran.**

This moment felt a bit disconnected in performance likely because we did not identify a proper objective. Again, this resulted in the actress playing the original narrator intention, which is not quite specific enough for this moment.

(Narrators look at The Ant a little critically).

The objective continues from the previous page.

The Ant (MC): I'm sorry! But he did not stop practicing. Nobody knew how many times he fell down.

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

The Ant (MC): He fell down so much that all over his body...

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): Ouch! Ouch!

The Ant (MC): It was so painful. Yet he kept trying over and over again.

He set his mouth, gave a quick look at the sky, lowered his legs, and called out, "Yo!"

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

The Ant (MC): Many, many, many times

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): Many, many, many times.

The Ant (MC): I kept watching him. I completely forgot to take a nap and do my work. It was so strange. He wasn't any good at all but he kept trying and trying. I was so sorry for him.

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): Really?

The Ant (MC): That's true. My work? I took a day off

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

The Ant (MC): Because of Ran. I watched him until he finally went to the pool.

ALL except Ant (MC) and Ran (AH): Clump! *(The sound of Ran falling down)*

The Ant (MC): Eek! *(Ran almost falls on him)*

(The Ant runs off stage. Narrator turns round and looks at Ran)

Scene 3: Ran Meets The Fish

Ran (AH): I'm thirsty.

Narrator JC: Ran decided to take a break at the place where the cats went to drink. This place was surrounded by Silverberry trees and azaleas. The spring water had formed a puddle which slowly became a small pool.

Ran (AH): It looks cold and refreshing

Narrator JC: Ran went to drink the water.....

The Fish (IC): *(Unseen)* Hey you! What do you think you're doing?

Narrator JC: Ran heard a voice coming out of the water. It was very upset.

Ran (AH): Y...yes! Who's there?

Narrator JC: He jumped back in surprise and looked around for the voice. He could see something under the dead leaves at the bottom of the pool. *(Notices fish)* A small fish was looking inquisitively from the bottom of the pool

The Fish (IC): *(Angry with Ran)* You cats are so rude! This pool is my place! But you come here to drink and make a noise without asking me. I can't stand it anymore! Listen! Don't you dare drink without asking first! O.K?

Ran (AH): Oh...yes. I'm terribly sorry.

Narrator JC: Ran was ashamed and bowed to the fish.

The Fish (IC): I knew Ran was small and slow and had trouble learning things

Narrator JC: But today Ran was on his own

The Fish (IC): So I was bold and shouted at him

Narrator JC: If the other cats had been there

The Fish (IC): I would never do so

Narrator JC: Because once they found him

The Fish (IC): They would eat me up

Narrator JC: But this isn't what happened today

The Fish (IC): Ran apologized so much. He even bowed to me, too. Such an unusual cat!

Narrator JC: The Fish decided to come up to the surface of the water to look closely at Ran.

Ran (AH): I sat quietly and stared at The Fish with my eyes wide open.

Narrator JC: He didn't look like an ordinary cat but a most exceptional one.

The Fish (IC): Oh, my! He has such beautiful eyes and seems such a nice fellow. *(To himself)* Did I say too much a while ago? *(To Ran)* Well, I'm the one who said a short while ago to ask first before you drink.

Ran and The Fish feud over the pool of drinking water at the top of scene three.

The Fish is putting Ran in his place and getting the audience on his side.

Ran is stopping the fish from making a big mistake (attacking him).

We came up with the intentions between Ran and The Fish during discussion, but neglected to articulate what The Fish wanted from the audience.

The objectives we articulated were played during performance, but with a missing objective, the interactions with the audience were a bit disconnected.

Narrator JC: The Fish spoke to Ran a little more kindly.

Ran (AH): Yes, I wasn't paying attention. I'm very sorry for not noticing you!

Narrator JC: Ran politely bowed to The Fish again!

The Fish (IC): Well...then...that's all right. If you ask me nicely, you may have a drink.

Narrator JC: The Fish moved his fins in a firm manner.

Ran (AH): Eh? You're right. I'm not really very polite. I'm terribly sorry for giving you so much trouble.

Narrator JC: Ran formally bowed to him once again.

The Fish (IC): Well then.....so.....oh well.....All right then.

You're thirsty, aren't you? Please, have a drink.

Ran (AH): Um.... I'm really sorry that I didn't know it is your.... Huh? Did you say, "Have a drink"?

The Fish (IC): Yes, I did. Please go ahead.

Ran (AH): Huh, thank you, thank you very much!

Narrator JC: The Fish watched Ran as he drank the water with such enjoyment. Somehow, this pleased him.

The Fish (IC): Well, I could like this cat.

Narrator (JC): The Fish said this in his heart.

Narrator (MC): The landscape that the Zelkova Elm Tree overlooks.

The Zelkova Elm Tree (MD): Each morning comes, each morning comes, each morning comes, the new mornings come again....There are countless mornings going on slowly around me. I observe the stories around me. I absorb the happenings of the day through my finger-tips in the sprays of my flowers. I enjoy every little story that appears and disappears in this field each day. I have lived for a very long time that seems to have neither beginning nor end.

On this particular day, I watched Ran and The Fish meet each other. At the same time I could see Ran's brothers taking a nap under the shade of the tree over there. It was quiet in the early afternoon. I could hear the sound of a faint wind.

Ran's mother sometimes stretched her neck and looked around. She seemed to look for Ran. I don't think she knew how much Ran had been practicing here by himself.

The refreshing wind. The slow moving clouds. Ran was here in the sunny field, his mother was over there. I looked down on them and thought to myself. At first I wondered if I should let her know where Ran was. But instead, I decided just to keep an eye on them.

Why? Because the lonely cat and the lonely fish were becoming friends at the poolside. I knew this through the tips of my fingers. That is why I decided to leave them as they were. I have experienced so many mornings without end, I have stood in this field for such a long time, I know these things.

Scene 3 ends with the Zelkova Elm Tree describing the new friendship.

The Zelkova Elm Tree is showing the audience who is boss.

Playing up the fact that this tree has seen it all, the actor made a creative and exciting choice for this monologue. He used the activating phrase "Deal with it!"

This objective made for some exciting rehearsals, but ultimately failed to show up in the performance, perhaps because it is a bit out of line with the intentions of the playwright, particularly in the second half of the monologue. Maybe **"Getting the audience to open their eyes"** would have fit more without losing the creativity.

Scene 4: Friends

Narrator BH: As the Fish hoped

Ran (AH) & The Fish (IC): We became best friends

Narrator BH: Ran?

Ran (AH): I stopped learning the old customs

The Fish (IC): Because....

Ran (AH): It was much more fun playing with The Fish

Narrator BH: Ran only came to the pool when nobody else was there.

Ran (AH): Miaow!

The Fish (IC): Pocchyan! (*The sound of The Fish appearing from the water*)

Ran (AH): I played with The Fish and talked to him.

Narrator BH: The Fish could hardly wait for Ran

The Fish (IC): I jumped out of the water.

Narrator BH: And looked around for Ran.

The Fish (IC): I wished Ran would visit me....

Narrator BH: More often

Ran (AH): Spring..

Narrator BH: Summer...

The Fish (IC): Autumn...

Narrator BH: Every time they met....

Ran (AH): Ran

The Fish (IC): and The Fish

Narrator BH: They were like two sides of the same paper. Their hearts were close together.

Ran (AH): Between Ran

The Fish (IC): And The Fish

Narrator BH: They shared their experiences; they had their memories, one after another.

The Fish (IC): For example, one day...

Narrator BH: When Tutuji, the Azalea Tree burst into pink flower, "Po!" (*The sound of the flower bursting into bloom*) The Fish said to Ran,

The Fish and Ran play and grow their friendship throughout scene four.

Both Ran and The Fish are making a friend, which includes getting the friend's goat. The two are also getting the audience on their side.

We had no need to discuss these objectives as the actors were playing them immediately.

These intentions did show up in performance.

The Fish (IC): To tell the truth, I don't know what kind of fish I am. I could be a small fish... or something else...

Narrator BH: And then he dropped his head and sighed. At that, Ran immediately said to him....

Ran (AH): In that case, you could be any kind of fish, right? What kind of fish would you like to be?

The Fish (IC): Well.... I'd like to be a carp.

Ran (AH): Then you are a carp from now on. You are a magnificent young carp.

The Fish (IC): A magnificent young carp.... If that were so, then I would be brave enough to travel all over the world covered in my golden scales....That would be great.

Narrator BH: The Fish said

The Fish (IC): "Ufu u ufu...." *(The sound of his smiling imagining his future as a golden carp.)*

Narrator BH: He smiled. Whenever he smiled, the bubbles came out of his mouth.

The Fish (IC): Poko poko...*(The sound of the bubbles coming out his mouth.)*

(Someone makes the sound "Gero gero" which is the sound of the frog. The Frog jumps up.)

Narrator BH: The Frog said to The Fish....

The Frog (LE): Hey!

Narrator BH: The Frog croaked loudly

The Frog (LE): The Fish and I have been friends since I was a tadpole. At first he was like my elder brother.

But when I became a frog, he and I were equal. I became as tall as he.

And ever since he and Ran became friends, he suddenly became more grown up. The other day, when I jumped up to him he said, "Hey, I want to tell you my secret. I'm really a magnificent young carp." Then he showed off and jumped out of the water.

I could not believe how lively he was. He spread his tail and stretched his fins as wide as he could as if he was shouting 'hurrah'. I laughed out loud.

At this, he became very angry. But he looked so funny. Geko geko! *(The sound of The Frog laughing)*

But although he was so small, he really looked like something special. I felt he might be..... he was a magnificent small carp.

Even though I couldn't stop laughing, I called out to him, "Hey big brother, how about that then?".Gero! *(The sound of The Frog croaking.)*

Ran (AH): Then, one early morning...

Narrator MD: When dawn lifted the night like a fog lifts from the land, Ran began to worry

Ran (AH): I look like a cat, but my mind and body aren't like a cat. I might be something strange. What do you think?

The frog describes the growth of Ran.

The Frog is getting the audience to respect Ran or getting the audience to see Ran in a new light.

We did not discuss these intentions as the actress was naturally playing them.

The objectives held for the performances.

The Fish (IC): I don't think so. But if that's the case, you can be anything you wish. What would you like to be?

Ran (AH): Well...let me think...the clouds...in the sky! I want to become a cloud.

The Fish (IC): Well then, you can be a cloud from now on. You are a fluffy, fleecy cloud.

Ran (AH): Wow! I'm a fleecy cloud. Shining and fluffy.

The Fish (IC): Yes, you're a fleecy cloud racing across the sky.

Narrator MD: Ran closed his eyes, curled himself up and kept still imagining he was a small cloud.

The Wind (JC): Hyu (*the sound of the wind.*)

(Narrator MC sometimes becomes another wind, The Wind's Friend, and says, "Hyu". Ran curls up and sleeps.)

Narrator MC: Hyu (*The sound of the wind*)

Narrator MD: The Story of The Wind looking for Ran and Not Recognizing him.

Narrator MC: Hyu! (*The sound of the wind*)

The Wind (JC): I remember very well a cat who looked like a cloud. Was that Ran?

Narrator MC: Hyu! (*The sound of the wind*)

The Wind (JC): I do lots of jobs for the clouds. One job is 'Looking after the Clouds,' it looks easy but it is quite hard.

One day I was chasing around the sky on the way to take a cluster of clouds from the West to the East....

Narrator MC: Hyu! (*The sound of the wind*)

The Wind (JC): When I looked down on the ground and saw a small cloud which had lost its way in the grass. "Oh, no!", I thought and rushed down from the sky to the field to take it back to the group.

Narrator MC: Hyu! (*The sound of the wind*)

The Wind (JC): Sometimes I play in the trees and stay there for a while

Narrator MC: Hyu! (*The sound of the wind*)

The Wind (JC): But to continue. I rushed down and got close. I saw it was Ran. He was fluffy and curled up and sleeping soundly. Just like a cloud. But he was a cat after all so I decided to go back to the skyBut then I looked at him again as he slept so soundly. I had an idea. I tickled Ran's ears -but just a little.

Narrator MC: Hyu, huy, hyu! (*The sound of the wind*)

The Wind (JC): He was so cute. He half woke up, squeezed his front paws, gave a tiny yawn and rolled over on his other side.

From then on, I looked out for him. Often he would play with the mist and pat it like a ball.

Narrator MC: Hyu! (*The sound of the wind*)

The Fish (IC): And then, on another day...

The Wind describes how Ran pretended to be a cloud so well he believed him.

The Wind might be getting the audience to understand the ridiculousness of the situation.

We were a bit baffled by The Wind character and struggled to define an objective.

In performance, he ended up playing something around what is stated above.

The blocking for this scene has another actress acting out The Wind's interaction with Ran.

The Wind was stopping Ran from making a big mistake and, upon realizing that Ran was not a cloud, The Wind was getting Ran's goat a bit.

We did not discuss these objectives in rehearsal.

In performance, the interaction was very disconnected. Discussing these objectives might have helped this moment.

Ran (AH) & The Fish (IC): Miin min min min! *(The chirp of a cicada)*

Narrator LE: As a newly born cicada was trying shyly to chirp....

The Fish (IC): Non-stop somersaults!

Narrator LE: The Fish performed endless somersaults for Ran who was fascinated.

Ran (AH): I watched and watched until I felt dizzy. *(Beat)* And on another day....

The Fish (IC): Pikka! *(The sound of the thunder)*

Ran (AH) & The Fish (IC): Waaaa! *(The sound of being frightened. Ran and The Fish hide behind a cylindrical box.)*

Narrator LE: After a shower of rain

Ran (AH) & The Fish (IC): It stopped.... *(They find the rainbow.)* O-hooooo! *(The sound of surprise)*

Narrator LE: They saw the rainbow in the clear sky,

Ran (AH) & The Fish (IC): "The Faraway place"

Narrator LE: What is it like?

Ran (AH): We talked about it.

The Fish (IC): For a long, long time.

(The Sunflower appears on stage singing vocal exercises like a opera singer, sings and then speaks).

Narrators BH,MD,JC,LE: What a surprise!

The Sunflower (MC): Was Ran really small and slow with trouble learning things?

I knew Ran. He was the cat who jumped like a ball! *(Clap!)*

I think he grew up without realizing it while playing with The Fish.

I don't remember when...but one day Ran came up to me and sprang so high up in the air that he looked down on me. It was on his way back home after playing with The Fish. Then he smiled and immediately went on his way.

He jumped over me! You know, I'm very tall. Ordinary cats can't do that. That was why I was so surprised. Yes, I could see how much he had grown. *(To Ran and The Fish. The Sunflower applauds. Narrators applaud with the audience)*

The Fish (IC): And on another day....

(The three actors hum "Aka-bonbo, The Red Dragonfly On an Autumn Evening". Ran notices The Fish saying "Good-bye" and waves his hand.)

Ran (AH): Let's play some more!

Ran (AH) & The Fish (IC): Juan ken pon! *(The chant of the game of scissors-paper-rock)*

Narrator LE: A red dragonfly flies in the sky like a bright bubble.

(Two actors play Tag.)

Narrator LE: And on another day, Ran and The Fish were so deeply involved in playing Tag that ...

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Figure 18: *The Cat Who Ran* by Naoko Kudo, P. 14

The Sunflower describes how powerful Ran was.

The Sunflower was correcting a misperception with the audience.

We came up with this objective during notes.

This was certainly played during the performance, but perhaps there was a more exciting articulation. Maybe **"setting the record straight with the audience"** would have been a little clearer.

Ran (AH): Pocchan! *(The sound of Ran slipping into the pool)*

Narrator LE: Ran slipped into the pool...

The Fish (IC): Ku kku kku....*(the sound of laughing)*

Narrator LE: The Fish laughed.

Ran (AH): And on another day....

Narrator LE: One early afternoon, when the wind was gently blowing through the petals of the wild chrysanthemums, Ran crept up to The Fish who was taking a nap....

Ran (AH): Wah! *(The sound of surprising someone)*

Narrator LE: Ran surprised The Fish so much that he was frightened!

The Fish (IC): Zigg zagu! *(The sound of The Fish jumping in surprise)*

Narrator LE: The Fish jumped up in fright. Ran broke out....

Ran (AH): Kukku kukku kukku....*(The sound of laughing)*

Narrator LE: Laughing!

Narrator LE: The Turtledove sings to The Fish.

The Turtledove (BH): It's true to say, Ran grew a lot but the fish changed more than Ran.

Before when he was bored in the pool, the only time he opened his mouth was to yawn and sigh. He would draw his body in as tightly as he could, look blankly around and say, "Fun!" *(The sound of being bored, disappointed and becoming angry.)*

But once he met Ran, he changed so much. He looked about as much as he could, his scales sparkled, he splashed around and opened his mouth wide enough to laugh from the bottom of his heart. He was still small but he swam so confidently that he looked bigger than he was.

Why was this? Because the Fish had a friend and the friend was a cat. Wasn't this so? He played with Ran so much that there was no doubt he swam faster and faster. I believe he could swim better than any other fish.

To tell the truth. I was fond of him. Why, he was even like me. Don't you think my eyes look like his?

So I wrote the words and music for "The Song of The Fish". Well, you know, I do write poetry a little. I sat on a branch of the Azalea tree near the pool and sang my song for him at the top of my voice. "De de poppo!" *(The sound of the Turtledove singing.)*

I sang my song about his glittering scales and his moving fins and every other thing about him, one thing after another. I finished the song like this "Your beautiful eyes, like mine, can see into the far, distant future".

The Fish listened to me attentively. And he quietly said, "Thank you!"

(Narrators say, "De de ppo ppo!" - the sound of Turtledove singing.)

Ran (AH): And on another day.... *(Ran is looking for The Fish.)* Miaow!

Narrator MC: When the Silverberry Tree was laden with berries and moved heavily in the breeze....

The Turtledove is describing how much The Fish changed.

The Turtledove might be setting the record straight with the audience.

My notes indicate that we were struggling to determine an appropriate intention for The Turtledove. However, the energy and clarity carried the actress through the piece.

In performance, it seemed that the actress was playing the above objective.

The Fish (IC): Passya! *(The sound of The Fish splashing in the water)*

Narrator MC: Ran let The Fish touch his whiskers...It was shivery on his nose...

Ran (AH): Kusshon! *(The sound of a sneeze)*

Narrator MC: Ran sneezed.

Ran (AH): And on another day....

(A Narrator scatters some leaves of the Ginkgo Tree)

Narrator MC: When the leaves of the Ginkgo Tree turned golden and fluttered to the ground, Ran softly touched the back fin of the Fish with his tongue. And The Fish shook his back and....

The Fish (IC): Kusshon! *(The sound of a sneeze)*

Narrator MC: The Fish sneezed.

Ran (AH): And on another day....

The Fish (IC): And another day....

Narrator MC: From spring to summer. From summer to autumn.

Ran (AH): Ran was with The Fish

The Fish (IC): They spent each day together, singing and dancing, dancing and singing.

Ran (AH): By this time, I had become a young mature cat with glossy, black fur

(A Narrator says, "Kasya!" the sound of the shutter of a camera. Narrator takes a souvenir picture of Ran and The Fish.)

(Narrator takes some pictures of Ran and The Fish. S/he several times says, "Kassya!" "Kassya", the sound of the shutter of a camera. Ran and The Fish strike several poses at the sound of the shutter, like a series of photos.)

Narrator MC: The picture of the field which The Sun took *("Kasya!" the sound of the shutter of a camera)*

The Sun (MD): I focused the lens on the sunny field and pressed the shutter.

("Kasya!" the sound of the shutter of a camera)

The Sun (MD): Little by little the landscape changed

("Kasya!" the sound of the shutter of a camera)

The Sun (MD): The flowers bloomed and fell

The grasses grew and the leaves fell *("Kasya!" the sound of the shutter of a camera)*

The Sun (MD): They looked the same

But none of them were the same. *("Kasya!" the sound of the shutter of a camera)*

The Sun (MD): In such pictures of the field

Ran and The Fish changed, little by little.

(Narrator presses the shutter to take a last picture of Ran and The Fish.)

The Sun (MD): "Kasya!" *(the sound of the shutter of a camera)*

The Sun is further describing the changes in the pair.

The Sun is also setting the record straight with the audience.

This intention, like the others in scene four, was always a struggle. The entire scene is heavy on the storytelling and low on dialogue. So identifying and perusing an action becomes very difficult. This is where the as-if work could have energized the monologues and moments, and made **setting the record straight** a more specific moment.

In performance, this scene felt disconnected, as the interaction with the audience was unclear.

Scene 5: The Contest to Catch the Fish: Part I

Ran (AH): Spring....Ah, it's spring....

The Fish (IC): Summer...Pashya pashya pashya *(The sound of splashing)*

Ran (AH): Autumn..."Ready, set, go!" *(The beginning of a race)*

(Narrators creates a tense, shock sound. Ran and The Fish are startled by it.)

Narrator JC: These joyful days only lasted until winter

Ran (AH): The Fish was found.

Narrator JC: The other cats finally found The Fish.

Ran (AH): This news was immediately related to the mother.

Narrator JC: And then the mother decided to have

Ran (AH) & The Fish (IC): The Contest to Catch the Fish

Narrator JC: She decided that there would be a fishing contest as a final test for her children.

Ran (AH): *(Ran to protect The Fish.)* Hide!

(The Fish and Ran disappear from the stage. The Honeybee begins to speak.)

Narrator JC: The Story of the Honeybee Passing By

The Honeybee (MC): I was on my way back home after collecting honey, when I passed over the pool and heard a noise. I looked down and there was Ran's mother and her kittens surrounding the pool.

They were shouting with excitement, running around the pool, and putting their paws into the water. Some kittens excitedly told their mother something. She nodded and looked into the pool.

Of course, Ran was there, too. But he was tense and sat apart from them.

His black fur seemed to fade. His whole body looked pale. He looked like a grey stone.

I immediately understood what had happened. I often saw Ran and The Fish playing together on my way back home after collecting honey.

I could not pass by without stopping, so I flew down to Ran and whispered to him. Ran tried to say something to me but he couldn't. I noticed his fur was dull and he was trembling with emotion.

(The Fish appears on the stage.)

The Fish (IC): The Contest to Catch the Fish will be held on the next night with a full moon

Narrator BH: Ran and The Fish continued to meet each other, but couldn't look at each other and scarcely spoke.

The Fish (IC): I've been thinking very hard.

Ran (AH): I don't know what to do.

Narrator BH: Ran felt dizzy and choked with emotion

The action sharply switches in scene five with the announcement of the contest to catch The Fish. The Honeybee describes the reaction to this announcement.

The Honeybee is waking the audience up to the turn of events.

We did not discuss this objective as the actress was naturally playing it.

The objective definitely showed up in performance as the turn of events energized scene five.

(Waterweed in the pool begins to speak. Narrators turn their backs and move like waterweeds.)

Narrator BH: The Days When the Waterweed Watched The Fish *(The title of Waterweed's monologue.)*

Waterweed (JC): At that time, The Fish became a stone.

He became a hard, cold stone.

On the next day, The Fish was still a stone.

Day after day, he was a stone.

Then one day, he opened his mouth and blew, just once.

When the one bubble burst out of the water, his sigh was scattered into the air.

And then, he became a stone again.

But this time, he didn't seem like a hard, cold stone, but a quiet and calm stone.

Narrator BH: Until at last there came...

Narrator LE: The night with the full moon.

Narrator MC: At dusk before that day

Narrator MD: The time when the silver dewdrops trembled on the tips of all the Japanese pampas grasses in the field

Narrator JC: Ran went to The Fish but could not say anything

Narrator BH: He sat near The Fish and remained silent for a long time.

The Fish (IC): I was moving back and forth in the bottom of the pool.

Narrator BH: Finally The Fish swam up to Ran and looked at him.

He began to talk quietly to Ran in a clear voice.

The Fish (IC): Ran

(Ran turns around and looks at The Fish.)

The Fish (IC): I think it is for the best .

I know I'm not a carp.

The Fish (IC): I know I'd like to end my life as a small fish like this.

So, it's all right that tomorrow will be my last day.

Ran (AH): No! It's not all right.

You're a carp. I'm a fleecy cloud.

You told me that!

The Fish (IC): Thank you. I did. You're a fleecy cloud. I'm a carp.

Yes, it could be so. But, Ran....The truth is that I will be eaten tomorrow.

The Waterweed describes The Fish making his decision.

The Waterweed is getting the audience to face facts.

The Waterweed was a monologue that my assistant director took charge of. I observed the actor playing the above intention.

The objective definitely showed up in performance.

The Fish reveals his plan to Ran.

Ran was stopping a friend from making a big mistake and The Fish was getting Ran to take a big chance or getting Ran to trust him.

The scene between Ran and the Fish was one of the most powerful moments in the show. The scene was coached in many ways, but ultimately, these intentions were chosen.

The intentions were clear during the performance.

Narrator BH: The Fish talked more quietly to Ran.

The Fish (IC): Actually, I've come to the decision that I'd like to be eaten with dignity.
I've been thinking and thinking and finally decided this.

Ran (AH): That can't be!

Narrator BH: Ran was choking with tears and unable to speak further
He knew full well that tomorrow The Fish would be eaten by the cats.

(Ran and The Fish carefully listen with their backs turned. The Cricket begins to talk.)

Narrator MD: The Story of the Cricket who Viewed the Back of Ran *(The Cricket's monologue.)*

The Cricket (LE): Dusk on that day was quiet

The light was striking each blade of grass at an angle which threw shadows on each of them. The landscape looked like steel.

I was in the grass near the pool, a little way from Ran.

I began to chirp earlier than usual.

I sensed Ran's back through the grass. It seemed fragile. So I decided to play "A Sonata for the Wind in Autumn".

Ran loved this music. Whenever he heard it, he relaxed and began to lick his tail.

But on this day Ran didn't move at all. He tensed his back and only looked at The Fish in the pool.

Ran and The Fish talked in snatches. There were long silences between them.

On that day I learned that silence can say much more than words.

(The Cricket finished his monologue. The Fish comes up to Ran and talks to him).

The Cricket describes Ran's reaction to The Fish's decision at the end of the scene.

The Cricket is teaching a gentle lesson to the audience.

The Cricket monologue was another powerful moment my assistant director took charge of. It was clear that this was the intention the actress played. It was evident by the final sentence.

This definitely showed up during the performance.

Scene 6: The Fish Decides

The Fish (IC): After a long silence

I told Ran my decision

I have just one wish. I have a favor to ask you.

If anyone's going to eat me, then I want it to be you.

Ran (AH): No...NO! How can you say such a thing!

Narrator MD: Ran stepped back.

*(The Japanese Pampas Grass A raises white gloves over his head representing Japanese pampas grass.) (*Japanese pampas grass is the symbol of autumn in Japan.)*

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): Zawa! *(The sound of Japanese pampas grass.)*

(The Japanese Pampas Grass B and C make their gloves like Japanese pampas grass. The three Japanese pampas grasses talk urgently to each other.)

Narrator MD: The Japanese pampas grass is moving

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): Zawa! *(The sound of Japanese pampas grass moving.)*

Narrator MD: When the Japanese pampas grass leaned towards the pool, it moved together in unison and whispered "Zawa" *(Narrators make this sound together)*

The Japanese Pampas Grass (BH): Did you hear what The Fish said?

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): Yes! I heard it. I heard it. I heard it.

The Japanese Pampas Grass (JC): What did it mean?

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): What? What? What?

The Japanese Pampas Grass (MD): What did the Fish say to Ran?

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): To Ran? To Ran? To Ran?

The Japanese Pampas Grass (MC): Will Ran eat The Fish?

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): The Fish? The Fish? The Fish?

Narrator MD: All the Japanese pampas grass whispered to each other. The murmur of their voices rose and spread.

The Japanese Pampas Grass (LE): Such a thing!

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): Ah! Ah! Ah! *(The sound of incredible excitement)*

The Japanese Pampas Grass (BH): Such a Thing!

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): Oh! Oh! Oh! *(The sound of hopeless sadness)*

The Japanese Pampas Grass (JC): Why?

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): Why? Why? Why?

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The play twists again as The Pampas Grass gossips on the situation.

The Pampas Grasses are getting a rise out of each other.

We decided to ride the idea of The Pampas Grass being gossiping students. This made for some exciting rehearsals.

However, the energy was weaker in the performance. Perhaps there was an unspoken as-if in rehearsal that fell away during performance.

Figure 24: *The Cat Who Ran* by Naoko Kudo, P. 20

The Japanese Pampas Grass (MC): I don't understand

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): Don't! Don't! Don't!

Narrator MD: Each Japanese pampas grass repeated, "Don't! Don't! Don't!" and shook their heads again and again. They moved like waves in the sea.

The Japanese Pampas Grass (ALL): Zawa! *(The sound of Japanese pampas grass.)*

Ran (AH): No! I will never do that!

The Fish (IC): No! You misunderstand. Listen to me!

You you are my dearest friend

I won't really be EATEN....for I feel we will become ONE.

I want you to eat my head, my fins, my heart, all of me.

In this way, I will become you....yourself....I know it

Ran, close your eyes and know it too

My small mind and body going into your whole mind and body.

Ran (AH): You going into my mind and body...

The Fish (IC): But I won't give in easily

You must fight me as hard as you can.

Narrator MD: Then The Fish moved his fins slowly.

Ran (AH): I'm a little scared.... What about you?

The Fish (IC): I'm scared, too.

But sometimes one has to face such things

That is why I'd like you to do it. Right?

Narrator MD: The Fish looked intently at Ran and then said with a little smile....

The Fish (IC): I don't think it's so bad for me to be such a small fish after all.

(The Fish faintly smiles and leaves the stage.)

(The Weasel enters, wearing a scarf, and begins to speak)

Narrator MC: The Weasel who followed Ran *(the Title of the Weasel's monologue)*

The Weasel (JC): Yes, from my hiding place I witnessed the whole thing between Ran and The Fish. Knowing what had taken place, I quietly followed him. It was night before I knew it. The moon was rising in the eastern sky. Ran slowly walked towards the mountains behind the Hachiman Shrine. He looked strangely calm. He had been nervous. But after he had talked with The Fish, his nervousness disappeared. So that when he came upon the spirits of the universe trembling in the moon light, he peacefully sat in front of them. He gazed at them for a long time. It was as if he saw them for the first time.

The Fish finally convinces Ran of his plan.

Ran is convincing a friend he is wrong and The Fish is getting a friend to understand his point a view.

We determined these objectives through discussion.

These objectives played during the performance. However, the articulation in the previous Fish and Ran scene may have been a bit more active and worth continuing to play.

The Weasel describes Ran's reaction to the decision

The Weasel is getting the audience to help solve a curious mystery (why Ran is acting so strange).

My assistant director coached the Weasel's powerful monologue. I observed him playing the above objective.

He certainly continued to play his objective during the performance.

The Weasel (JC) continued: Then he rubbed his head, his back, his tail, his whole body against the trunk of the Zelkova elm tree. He was deeply moved by its memories.

Slowly he went into the deep mountains. In there was a huge cedar, bigger than all the other trees. From that tree, he could look down on the field.

Ran sat on its root, staring at the pool without moving.

The dazzling moonlight made the pool shine like a mirror. Ran looked like a silver ornament in the shining light. Occasionally he looked up at the moon then returned his gaze to the pool. Nothing else.

I didn't know how long time passed. I was dozing....but suddenly I woke in an instant. At that moment Ran sped like an arrow and disappeared behind the trees. I tried to follow but couldn't, he went so fast.

Where did he go? What for?

(Nobody is on stage. Ran and The Fish appear and face each other.)

The objective continues from the previous page.

Scene 7: The Contest to Catch the Fish: Part II

Narrator LE: Finally night came.

The full moon was rising. It was the sign to start the contest.

Narrator MC: The kittens confronted The Fish wielding a stick as taught to them by their mother.

Narrator MD: Not to be outdone, the Fish fought hard against them. He jumped out of the water and dived back into the pool, he swam right and left....he dodged them with rapid movements.

Narrator BH: First one kitten, then the next one....

Narrator JC: Some kittens went back to their mother because they could fight no more. They were soaked to the skin and panting.

Narrator LE: And The Fish was seriously injured.

Narrator MC: He felt like passing out and almost floated to the surface....

Narrator MD: But...whenever this happened, he said to himself..

Narrator BH: Ran!

Narrator JC: He kept his fighting spirit going.

Narrator LE: The Pool describes the scene of the night of the full moon. *(The Title of Pool's monologue)*

The Pool (MC): Inside me was like a storm.

In my depths the Fish was like lightning.

The surroundings were like flame.

The eyes of the running cats were glittering.

The Fish fought as hard as he could.

The cats fought as hard as they could.

Between them, I, too, fought hard

Narrator MD: And then, finally, it was Ran's turn.

Ran (AH): Until yesterday, I was a cat who didn't know what to do

Narrator BH: He walked firmly with determined steps and stood by the pool. He quietly talked to The Fish.

Ran (AH): I'm here now. I will try to catch you as much as I can, with all my power and love.

Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

It's me.

The Fish (IC): I'm here, lying on the bottom of the pool, smiling, but just a little

Narrator JC: Then The Fish made himself ready to fight valiantly.

The Pool sets the mood for the battle.

The Pool is getting a rise out of the audience.

The actress naturally played this objective.

That definitely played during performance. However, an as-if could have raised the stakes a bit.

Scene 8: The Black Spiral

Ran (AH): I gazed at The Fish and started running around the pool.

Narrator LE: At first he ran slowly...

The Fish (IC): Then gradually he ran faster and faster...

Narrator LE: Finally he ran as fast as he could until he looked like a shining black spiral.

(Narrator spins a black rope faster and faster until it spins as fast as possible.)

The Fish (IC): The other cats were astonished.

Narrator LE: They had never seen such a way to catch a fish.

(Narrator suddenly stops spinning the rope and hides behind the black cylindrical box. The Field Mouse shows his face from there.)

Narrator MD: The Report of the Field Mouse Who Gazed at Ran in Round-Eyed Wonder. *(The Title of Field Mouse's Monologue)*

Field Mouse (MD): I saw it. I witnessed it. Whenever I remember it, my heart beats so fast. Can you feel it?

Ran ran and ran and ran. He kept running. "Guru guru guru guru guru guru guru guru!" *(The sound of running around)*, one hundred times, one thousand times, "Guru guru guru guru guru guru guru guru!" *(The sound of running around)*, ten thousands times, one million times, "Guru guru guru guru guru guru guru guru guru guru guruguru..." *(The sound of running around)* How many times.....it was countless...."Guru guru!"

I saw it. I witnessed it. I kept watching even though I felt dizzy.

I saw the extraordinary force that appeared through this ceaseless running. I saw this astounding thing.

(Ran jumps down from the cylindrical box at the back of the stage.)

(Ran mimes running.)

Ran (AH): I created a black spiral which moved faster and faster, brighter and brighter.

The Fish (IC): The waters of the pool rose higher and higher.

Narrator BH: The Fish carefully kept moving in time with Ran's running, smiling and whispering....

The Fish (IC): Ran, you have found an amazing way, more than any of the other cats.

Ran (AH): Nobody could see me anymore.

The Fish (IC): The black spiral shone brilliantly.

Ran (AH): I was the black spiral which exploded into a shower of sparks. "Pachi pachi!" *(The sound of sparks)*

Narrator BH: Each time they exploded, they became....

The Fish (IC): Silver!

The Field Mouse is also revealing the intensity of the situation.

The Field Mouse is also getting a rise out of the audience.

The actor naturally played this objective. The character indicates the objective when he questions if the audience can feel it.

Despite some stumbling over the dialogue, the intention was played during the performances.

Ran (AH): Purple!

Narrator BH: Sometimes they glittered....

Ran (AH): Blazing orange! The other cats held their breath and watched in fascination.

The Fish (IC): I could only hear Ran's breath, like a wind.

Narrator BH: No! The wind really started blowing.

The Fish (IC): The water of the pool looked like a storm

Ran (AH): The water of the pool billowed. It foamed....

The Fish (IC): Suddenly, in a moment

Narrator BH: The spiral became smaller

Ran (AH): "Jiri jiri!" *(The sound of the spiral becoming small)*

Narrator BH: Ran made the spiral narrow while continuing to run at full speed

Ran (AH): "Jiri jiri!" *(The sound of the spiral becoming small)*

The Fish (IC): The water of the pool

Ran (AH): Spiraled!

The Fish (IC): Twisted!

Ran (AH): Rose up!

Narrator BH: The water of the pool rose higher and higher.

Ran (AH): Now!

Narrator BH: Ran called out urgently. Exerting all his strength, Ran ran as he had never run before.

The Fish (IC): The water rose into the sky like a whirlwind.

Ran (AH): "Paaa!" *(The sound of spray)* It burst into spray.

The Fish (IC): And I was on the top of the spray.

Ran (AH): The Fish sparkled in the bright light.

The Fish (IC): At that very moment....

Ran (AH): I stopped still. I had done it. I did it

(Ran stands still and then jumps slowly into the air. The Fish stretches out his hand toward Ran. Ran slowly takes it.)

Ran (AH): For the Fish

The Fish (IC): For their memories in spring and summer and autumn

Ran (AH): I did what I had to do, as much as I could, as tenderly as I could, with all my love. At last!

Narrator BH: Ran cried in his heart

The Fish (IC): At last!

The narrators begin to describe the intensity of the scene.

The narrators are **also getting a rise out of the audience.**

The actors were naturally playing this intention.

The objective showed up in performance. However, the exhaustion of the dialogue and active blocking sometimes stood in the way.

Narrator BH: The Fish repeated, looking deeply at Ran.

(Ran mimes panting and lands back softly on the ground. The Fish disappears behind Ran.)

Ran (AH): I softly landed back on the ground

Narrator BH: In front of the other cats.

Ran (AH): The cats were speechless

Narrator BH: Ran stared at them with his brilliant eyes.

Ran (AH): And I quickly turned....

Narrator BH: And he ran at once....

Narrator JC: To the end of the world!

Narrator LE: To the end of the world!

Narrator MC: To the end of the world!

Narrator MD: What's Ran doing now?

Narrator BH: What's Ran doing now?

Narrator JC: *(To the audience)* Do you think Ran is still running?

Narrators BH,JC,LE,MC,MD: With The Fish!

(The End)

The play ends with the narrators wondering what happened.

The narrators are **getting the audience's help in solving an important mystery (what happened to Ran and Fish)**.

This was naturally played by the actors.

The intention was clear during performance.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRODUCTION JOURNAL

This chapter documents my recorded thoughts throughout the production process of *The Cat Who Ran*. The journal was originally written after every rehearsal as a long string of bullet points. For readability, it has been edited into narrative form and focuses on the topics addressed in this thesis. In order to fit within the team's schedules, this show was rehearsed in a compact period—only one week of rehearsal. Planning and conceptualizing took place during the month leading up to the rehearsal week. Auditions and casting occurred two weeks before rehearsals. We met for a preliminary read-through and orientation a few days before rehearsals began. Our five rehearsals lasted eight hours each day of the week. The first four days were in a rehearsal room at The University of Central Florida, and the final day was used for technical runs in the performance space at Orlando Repertory Theatre's Black Box Theatre. There were two performances on Saturday and one performance on Sunday. This intensive rehearsal process is often used when working with young performers over the summer. This one-week "summer camp" style process, though challenging and exhausting, was extremely convenient for our team.

Planning Period

This first entry consists of a few meetings between the assistant director, the stage manager, and myself. During these meetings, we determined the concept, the rehearsal schedule, and what preparation work we needed to complete before rehearsal. My biggest

concern at this point is the complexity of the show. The actors' lines are totally scattered. It is going to be a challenge just to get everything memorized, let alone pursuing intentions. With everyone constantly onstage, it will be difficult for a young actor to stay engaged when he does not have any lines in the scene. The balance between narrator and character is also going to be a huge challenge as the actors jump back and forth between each. What does a narrator want from the audience? The blocking and pacing seems very intense and epic. I wish the rehearsal process could be longer, but there was not much choice over the schedule. We must make it work. This is going to be a much different show than what the actors normally do. It certainly is not a contemporary realistic play or musical. I am very curious to see how they react. In the limited period, spot analysis will be a great technique and the only that can work. I just hope there is enough time to actually play with the intentions and do more than simply get the show on its feet. I am excited for the concept of allowing these young actors to be themselves reacting honestly to the story. It will be an exciting realistic contrast to the very poetic, presentational text.

Auditions

Our audition process allowed us to look at each actor individually as the actors read a monologue from *The Cricket* and *The Weasel* as well as a *Ran* and *The Fish* scene using my assistant director as their reader. The show was easy to cast as the actors all gave us solid readings and my assistant director and I can easily see eye to eye on these decisions. It is

starting to become clear what ways of acting support this piece. So much of it is already in the poetry. The actors that kept it simple and let the text do the work were very successful. One of our actors was putting on a character voice without realizing it. When we asked her to speak in her normal voice, the change was astounding. Her focus shifted to living the moment instead of creating character, and it became much more connected. This was the first time I was really trying to coach by primarily identifying intentions instead of my normal, often sporadic, notes. It was interesting how much harder I had to work to form a proper note, but it also made me think more deeply about the story. The actors seemed to react well and my assistant director gave more traditional notes to back me up. I wonder how conscious the objective needs to be. How often should you say it to yourself? Do you need to say it during performance, or is it a simple diving board to greater discovery?

Read-Through

The read-through was very powerful. It will be an exciting process with this group. I have only described the technique at this point. The actors are cautious yet curious about objective driven acting. The actors are absolutely stoked about the story. They are fascinated with the pacing and way of speaking. They are also fascinated with some of the eastern themes like dying with dignity. This show has wonderful value as a piece for young audiences. Some of the actors have really done their homework and some obviously have not. I just hope they realize how soon the performance is. One of our actresses is really “playing emotion.” All I get is a

sense of the drama—she seems very sad here or very happy at this point. There was not a sense of the story in what she was saying. This technique will really benefit her if she can adapt. Another actress got herself so riled up that her words became mumbled. Perhaps the intention chosen was not in line with the playwright's intention. We are really challenging our actors to collaborate and talk with us about what is going through their heads. My assistant director drove home this point when he gently reminded one of our quiet actors: "I like it when you talk." Indeed, no theory will work without open communication with the team. I am very excited about the prospects. There are plenty of dry spots to address, but there was plenty of goose bump moments as well.

First Day of Rehearsal: Experimenting

Today was the experimentation day. We let the actors simply run the piece repeatedly creating their own blocking. It was certainly exciting to see what they came up with, and I am feeling a lot more confident about the blocking days to come. It was fascinating to see how much ownership the actors took when they were allowed to play. The energy was palpable, and the show was very interesting to watch. The challenge will be to bring gently in the direction to the parts that are unclear without losing that dedication. I found myself saying, "I have no answers. There are no answers!" a lot. With youth theatre, I am functioning as a teacher and director. This changes the collaboration. I often feel the actors looking to me for a way forward when that needs to come from the group. We began playing with overall objectives in the

piece, and I see why the texts I am researching sometimes dance around the issue. The discussions can get very complex, but we are starting to figure out what these narrators want from the audience and each other. No one seems to want to write things down. Are pencils scary? We need to get over that. When we dived into a monologue, one of our actors was pushing back against the objective work. He commented that he just wanted to worry about “being me.” I wish it was that easy. This show is extremely complex and I wish we had so much more time to delve into every moment, but we will just have to do what we can with the time we have. Onward to blocking!

Second Day of Rehearsal: Blocking

Today we focused on getting the first half of the show blocked while we continued to discuss intentions and acting technique. The day really flew by. We will have to stop being so delicate to really get through all we need to. The spot work of dropping an intention here and there seems to be effective. At the very least, it is a smart use of time. We were able to slow down and discuss the first few scenes like a walk-through analysis, but just did not have the time for the later scenes where spot analysis will have to suffice. The biggest question with spot analysis is how much will they hang on to. I love letting the actors figure out the blocking, but with a show so heavily dependent on stage picture, that is difficult. There is an odd tension between actor freedom and director guidance. How do you build and redirect the actor’s ideas and not squash them? The discussion is powerful: the actors are taking my assistant director’s

advice from the read-through. Currently, the show is a joy to watch. The active nature keeps my short attention span satisfied. It feels like a musical without the singing. I found some success in using the statement “The audience should be experiencing ____ here.” This allows the actors some freedom of choice and interpretation while keeping the show consistent. We are now playing with an idea of the group of kids discovering a basement with *The Cat Who Ran* book in it as the concept. It seems to be working. How clear does the concept need to be to the audience though? Do they need to be able to identify that it is a basement or can they be allowed to think what they will? I am exhausted but excited for the next day.

Third Day of Rehearsal: Blocking

We finished the rough blocking today. We had an exhausting morning, but came back strong after lunch. I know it is sometimes easy for me to ignore my body’s need for breaks and food, so I should pay better attention to that or let the stage manager pay attention to that. Both my assistant director and I have such an urge to nit-pick everything. We have to allow the actors to take charge of cleaning the little pieces or we will be here all day. The intention work really helps the monologues. It is more difficult and almost less needed when many people have lines. However, in those key moments, when the pacing slows a bit, it is extremely needed. It also seems to be needed when someone does not have lines for a while. Without text to check them in, there needs to be something else. Ultimately, there seems to be no need to address it when the actors already have a grasp on the moment. It should be the actor’s job

to figure out and play intention. My job has to be to identify the challenging bits and offer support to those parts. The more time we have in rehearsal, the more we will be able to work. We still have an actress who wants to play “emotion.” Coaching her to ignore the emotion did not work; however, coaching her to pick up the pace and thus removing the time to stew in the emotion worked really well. It is so easy for me to get down on myself when things do not work immediately. If I can be okay with the time it takes for the process to work, my blood pressure will be a bit lower in rehearsal. We really got a lot accomplished today, but there is much more to do tomorrow.

Fourth Day of Rehearsal: Run-Throughs

Our fourth day was another great day as we polished the show before tech. We asked the actors to warm themselves up this time, and that clearly did not happen. Unless we give a little rehearsal time for warm-ups, it just will not happen. The morning is always more of a struggle than after lunch. Maybe we need some breakfast time too. The lines in the later scenes are an issue and that really shuts everything down. However, line issues are to be expected with such a short rehearsal process. My assistant director’s technique revolves around tactics, which is great as I am big on objectives. Tactics are often easier to grasp than objectives. However, focusing on a character’s tactics first risks losing the focus on the other character’s responses. It is thoughts like these that make so much of this process feel fleeting and random instead of scientific and practical. Moments shift in quality, seemingly without reason. An

awesome discovery can disappear moments later. Either I need to accept the fluidity of art or study some more psychology. We had a run for my thesis advisor that was quite impressive. The added presence helped the actors really get serious and work through any issues creating a nice performance feel for the first time. Nerves definitely crept in, but it is good that they have crept in this early. Perhaps the biggest challenge right now is “checking out,” particularly when it is not your line. I see the actors literally slump in between moments. How do we get them to stay in it, especially when they are exhausted? The spot intention work continues to be effective, especially on the monologue and one-on-one scenes. I wonder how this technique can scale for a very large cast. Anyway, onward to tech!

Fifth Day of Rehearsal: Tech and Dress Rehearsal

Our tech day consisted of a big morning of cue-to-cue followed by two runs. The second run was vastly more interesting to watch than the first. What changed? They just seemed to be living it more and actually communicating the lines instead of just marking through it. There was a sense of intention! They were less nervous and just seemed to be enjoying it more. Perhaps they just need some warm up time. So how do we warm up in a way other than doing a full run through? I am excited and curious to see how the shows go. With two performances of very different quality, it could go either way. I have finished my job, as it is finally performance time.

Performances

We are closing the show very proud. The audience was very engaged by this story and that is all that really matters. Considering how quickly this show went up and its unique challenges, we really rose to the occasion. However, I cannot help leaving with a chip on my shoulder. From my perspective, our “best” showing was the final dress rehearsal on Friday. Saturday night got close, but the other two performances did not even hold a candle to it. There was a clear sense of exhaustion that came and went. Only during Saturday night did the actors really fight against this exhaustion, particularly in the first scene. I postulate that our rehearsal schedule built in a sense of warming up: the actors were only ready for performance after hours of rehearsal. The actors just were not ready to pop in on a moment’s notice. I also suggest that the actors were relying more on the energy than the intention work to bring them into the moment and that energy is ultimately much more fleeting. In addition, there needs to be a deep realization of what is at stake in the situation that makes you want to play any given intention. However, I worry they were just riding the work they did earlier in the day during rehearsal and that work just was not there for the performances. Of course, I am being very critical because I knew the potential, and we did not entirely rise to it. However, where we landed was still exciting. There were moments of connection, moments of intention like when The Fish reveals his decision to Ran that really worked and the audience responded. So the lingering question is how do you catch lightning in a bottle repeatedly? We got there in rehearsal, but were, unfortunately, unable to replicate it in performance.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYZING PRODUCTION FEEDBACK

Audience Feedback

I asked the audience to fill out an anonymous feedback questionnaire after the show. They could choose to fill out a slip of paper in the lobby or an online form. We received submissions from thirty of our audience members. I asked the audience the following questions:

- Which performance did you see?
- What (if anything) surprised you during this performance?
- What (if anything) confused you during this performance?
- What was your favorite moment in the play and why?
- What was The Cat (Ran) looking to gain throughout the play? Why?
- What was The Fish looking to gain throughout the play? Why?
- What do you think happened to The Fish at the end of the play?
- If there are any other thoughts you would like to share, please do so on the back.

The first question was merely to distinguish reactions from performance to performance. The second, third, and fourth questions were to get a critical reaction to the play from the audience. The fifth and sixth questions were meant to see if the audience could sense the intentions being played. The final question gives the audience a chance to answer a question that the playwright deliberately left unanswered. In addition, they were invited to write any other thoughts they might have in the final question.

The audience gave a range of answers to the first three questions. Some looked more at the actors, some at the text, and other(s) at their own emotions during the piece. Some audience members were surprised that we simply pulled it off: “[I was surprised] they remembered their lines.” One audience member was surprised “by how many layers there were to the play: the animals, nature, seasons, and relationships.” Another audience member was surprised “that it drew on nearly all emotions, and the ending is so beautiful and quite unexpected.” Several other audience members were surprised by the ending as well. Perhaps the most powerful response to the first question was the following: “The emotion inside of me that was awakened by the performance and story line—I actually cried when the fish ‘contest’ was described.” It is amazing to hear how emotional some of our audience members got during the piece. The hope is that actors really living in the scene will result in the audience doing the same. There was more consensus on the second question, as many audience members were confused by the quick pace that occasionally caused a line to be missed or flubbed: “some actors needed to slow down and speak clearer” and “at times [I] was not sure who they were.” Looking back at the video, it was clear that some key lines, including those that introduced a character, were tossed off (not playing the intention of a proper narrator) causing moments to be missed. Many members of the audience also agreed that their favorite moment was the interactions between The Fish and Ran: “when The Fish and The Cat were playing together,” “when Ran and The Fish were on the blocks,” “the plea of the fish to Ran before ‘D-Day’.” We spent a lot of time working the interactions between Ran and The Fish, including very clearly defining their intentions, so this reaction made a lot of sense.

The audience was very able to articulate the intentions of Ran and The Fish in the next two questions. They stated Ran was looking for “acceptance,” “understanding,” “authenticity,” and “a friend.” In fact, nearly half of the answers involved acceptance or friendship. This is a very well put super-objective for Ran and it is great to know that the smaller scene objectives the actress played caused the audience to think in this way. The audience stated The Fish was looking for “purpose,” “a friend,” and “honor.” Again, almost half of the answers involved looking for a friend. This is a great super-objective for The Fish and it is again great to know the objectives the actress play led to this discovery. From the audience’s feedback, the actors did an amazing job of communicating the intentions of the story.

The audience had a range of opinions for the final question. Some thought Ran ate The Fish: “He got eaten by the cat and they ran together forever!” Some thought The Fish escaped with Ran: “He went off to have more adventures with fish.” Others thought there was something deeper going on: “I think something mystical happened and the cat did not physically eat the fish but somehow freed it from its bonds.” I am extremely happy to see a range of interpretations and so much thought put into it, as this is what both the playwright and the creative team hoped to inspire.

The audience feedback was wonderfully constructive and revealed the different ways everyone perceived the show. In my opinion, the more thoughts there are the better. It is certainly exciting to see how actors living truthfully in the moment can inspire so much in an audience.

Actor Feedback

The actors also received a questionnaire to fill out during the cast party about their experience and reaction to the technique. They were asked the following questions:

- What did you enjoy most about this production? Why?
- What did you enjoy least about this production? Why?
- What was the most challenging thing about this production? Why?
- What was the most useful note you received during this production? Why?
- What was the most confusing note you received during this production? Why?
- What part of the show did you feel most connected with? Why?
- What part of the show did you feel least connected with? Why?
- Did you find the objective/tactic/activating phrase work useful to your performance?

Why or why not?

- Did you consciously think about objectives/tactics/activating phrases during the performances?
- If so, what intentions were you thinking about? If not, what did you focus on instead?
- If we had more rehearsal time, what would you have liked to work more on?
- Would you be interested in doing another show like this (International Theatre for Young Audiences)?
- Feel free to add any more comments on the back.

The first three questions were intended to get a general critical response. Questions four and five analyzed the effectiveness of the notes received. Questions six and seven addressed their connection to the show. Questions eight, nine, and ten directly addressed the use of the technique. Question eleven addressed if there were any lingering issues, and the final question simply asked if they would like to see more contemporary shows of international origin.

The actors were in consensus on the first three questions. The actors agreed that the ensemble nature of the show was most enjoyable: “I liked that we were always onstage because we were always together,” “We were all onstage the whole time and it was very ensemble coordinated.” For the least enjoyable and most challenging thing, the majority lamented “that we only had a week (sad face),” “having to memorize [everything] in one week,” “if we had one more week, I think that this would have been an even better viewing experience.” One noted the tough language that he does not “normally use in day to day conversation.” I have very similar feelings to the actors. It was a joy to work so collaboratively yet there was not enough time to get as far as we all wanted.

Understandably, all the actors had different notes that were useful or confusing. Many remarked about notes regarding memorization, but a few cited notes that addressed the technique as being particularly useful: “Focus on the tactics” and “there’s a difference between presentational and reality [acting style].” It is great to see the actors start to understand the technique. The notes dealing with emotion confused some actors: “[don’t] be sad” and “don’t be cheesy.” Indeed, my assistant director and I should have focused more on redirection

instead of requesting the actor simply compress the urge to do something. Also the concept of “one-upping” was not an understandable intention for two of our actors. Perhaps there is a way to specify that using tactics. This question was a nice check to see if the actors were able to understand what I am saying in rehearsal.

For the most part, actors answered the connection question by identifying the characters and moments they were most or least connected to. Ironically, one of our actors remarked about how disconnected they were from a character that they seemed to be very connected to. Also ironically, one actor remarked that he felt the ending was “weak.” Ironically, the audience indicated on their surveys that the end was the strongest part. In this case, what we observe from the outside may be quite different from the inside. This is one reason we struggle to communicate so much in theatre.

On the form, every single member of the cast stated that they found the work quite useful. All of the actors indicated that this technique was useful to the performance: “[it] helped me find my character,” “it started me up.” The actors disagreed as to whether or not they used the technique directly in the performance: “I did...it helped to bring a pace to the performance,” “at times I would get involved and forget,” “no, after a while I just stuck to my performance.” Ultimately, the actor is going to choose what is best to think about during the performance, but it is wonderful that they found this technique useful if only to help energize their performance. The technique did not seem to get across to one performer. She remarked that her “focus” was on “the emotional state in that moment” during the performance. This technique encourages focusing on the objective instead of the emotion. In observation of her

acting, I would think the thought was deeper than simply “feel a certain emotion,” which the technique argues against.

In the final questions, everyone remarked that some more time would be great. Two of the actors expressed interest in working more on character analysis. Cultivating that desire fulfills the goal of creating a positive learning environment. Moreover, everyone gave an enthusiastic “YES!” to working on more of this kind of theatre. One actor answered enthusiastically: “YES YES YES YES YES YES.”

The feedback was amazingly useful. Overall, the feedback from both actors and audience indicated the effectiveness of the technique. However, the feedback from the actors indicated that we only got half way there. With more time or better time management, we could have increased the quality of the show and the quality of the learning within rehearsal. Luckily, finding more time to work on this production was a very real possibility.

CHAPTER SIX: REMOUNTING THE PRODUCTION

The story did not end with the mild success of the summer production. During our dress rehearsal day, some of my mentors mentioned the idea of continuing the rehearsal process and performing again in fall. After the show closed, the crew began to discuss the possibilities. As many of the actors noted in their reflection, everyone was excited to give the show the time it needed. Seeking a bigger stage and wider audience for the remount, we decided to take the show to the Florida Theatre Conference, Theatre for Youth Division. We also brought an additional assistant director into the process to give the show some fresh perspective. After a summer break, we set about preparing the show for this new venue.

Evolving the Technique and Analysis

With a strong base to work from and plenty of time to reflect, I was able to enter this process with a lot more clarity. I utilized spot analysis because it was effective during the summer rehearsal process. There was only a few moments where there was a need to break the analysis down any further. The biggest realization and change in the remount was a new focus on the audience. This partly came from our change from an intimate black box to a large proscenium performance space. However, it mostly came from a fresh look at the script. The narrators direct the majority of the script towards the audience. The narrators talk to the audience. The characters talk to the audience. The moments the characters actually talk to each other are rare and powerful. The spot analysis over the summer focused on what the characters

wanted from each other often neglecting what they wanted from the audience. In the text, the characters interact with the audience far more than they do each other. This realization really started to change the way the show unfolded and made the story much clearer. The narrators were suddenly opening the audience's eyes to the difficulties of this story. The characters were correcting misperceptions in the story for the audience. The overarching sense of the narrators proving themselves and the value of this story to the audience continued as well. Suddenly, the applied acting theory was not trying to transform this presentational story into a representational one. Instead, the theory was embracing and heightening the presentational nature of the story in a shockingly honest way. Heightening the presentational moments only highlighted the truly representational moments. This new focus greatly evolved and specified the blocking, which became the biggest task of the rehearsal process. It took us a while, but we finally figured out the style of the show.

Rehearsal Journal Overview

Instead of presenting the lengthy rehearsal journal in its entirety, this section will highlight the key moments in the process and reflect on these moments and turning points. As with most rehearsal processes, particularly those with young actors, rehearsal time is far from ideal. The remount process included nine Friday night rehearsals, two Saturday rehearsals, and an open final dress in addition to the Saturday festival performance.

We started the process by reviewing many of the show recordings that showed the different levels of performance quality and opened up the discussion of commitment. The idea of commitment was huge throughout the rehearsal process. Committing to the intentions and story made the show much more interesting to watch. When the commitment was absent, the story simply dragged. The majority of the early rehearsals focused on adapting the blocking to our new sense of the show with only sporadic talk of theory. As the early rehearsals went on, it became clear there was an urge to please the directing team instead of really learning the theory. It is certainly understandable and flattering, but not very productive. We continued to challenge the actors to really think and question for themselves with nice success.

During the middle of the process, panic began to set in as time was quickly running out. We began to focus more narrowly on just getting the show blocked. Unfortunately, this created a ton of negative energy as the joy began to drain out of the show. I have always focused on the blocking in tandem with the analysis work, which creates activated stage movement and exciting rehearsals, but it does often waste time, particularly for a complex show like this one. One successful technique was always making sure the rehearsal ended on a high note. Even if it meant running over a few minutes, which is certainly unprofessional, ending rehearsals on a big discovery helped everyone leave with a nice mindset. We found ourselves constantly giving the note to talk to the audience. The actors had been delivering their narrator lines to some unspecific place between themselves, the audience, and the other actors. The more this changed, the clearer the story got. As we approached the end of the process and everyone became more and more worried about finishing the updated blocking in time, we had one very

powerful rehearsal. We were missing half of the cast at the rehearsal so we finally gave time to work just a few monologues. This was the only time during the process that we used walk through analysis. The effect was powerful. We helped the actors break down the tactics of the monologues, discussed as ifs, and forced them to feel what it was like to really pursue the intentions. It is overwhelming clear that the in depth analysis work is necessary for monologue moments. Without the energy of other actors saying lines, the monologues became rushed and unspecific. The analysis work gave the actors something to bite into during the monologue moments, and that lasted through the performance.

As we entered the final two weeks of rehearsal where we had both a Friday and Saturday rehearsal, panic started to set in. Suddenly, the actors seem to forget everything. Literally, the actors appeared to have forgotten the order of the lines. My assistant director correctly identified that we were having a fit of perfectionism. Our actors continue to get older, and with a performance already under their belt, the pressure was truly on and that was destroying the play and experimentation of the show. In addition, our Friday rehearsals became very weak while our Saturdays became very strong. The “warming up” effect was back. Something was causing the actors to start the week off uncommitted. Simply making the actors aware of these difficulties, which are common in the rehearsal process, made a huge effect. Luckily, our schedule accounted for this. We had a Friday night final dress before the Saturday festival trip. The Friday open dress rehearsal was predictably lacking in commitment: the actors seemed to struggle just to get the words and blocking out. We discussed the fear and confusion on the stage after that run through and the need to get beyond that to find the fun and

intention behind the story. Amazingly, the actors delivered in the biggest way possible on Saturday to rave reviews from the conference attendees.

The performance day could not have been more exciting. From the moment we got there, everyone was on his or her game. The commitment was incredible from the get go. The warm up activities had amazing power as the actors projected their lines across a field outside the dressing room. There was amazing tact as we went through the quick conference tech process. With the energy of the festival guiding them, the actors truly took the notes from the entire process to heart to deliver a shockingly specific, driven performance.

Analyzing Reflection

With the intense festival day schedule, there was not time for the reflection process that took place during the summer. However, as part of the festival, we received verbal feedback and recognition from the festival respondents that proved wonderfully validating. In addition to the respondent feedback, I was able to overhear some of the conversations as the audience left. One patron went on and on about the strength, energy, and ridiculousness of one of the monologues we worked during the monologue rehearsal. It was great to hear that validation. Personally, I was impressed that they were able to adapt on the fly to a space much larger than our rehearsal rooms. They amplified the intentions and connected with each other in a way that was a thrill to watch. They continued to make the connection with the audience

very important, creating a very effective storytelling experience. Amazingly, it was clear that the respondents responded to the show even more than I did.

Our entire team was floored by the two respondents' feedback. We were truly validated when we heard all the buzzwords that we had been discussing in note after note. They mentioned seeing strong "commitment," "ensemble," "individuality," and "play" in addition to applauding particular blocking moments. They had some valid notes of improvement including continuing to work on diction, landing the points of narration, and continuing to work the musicality of the piece. Without a doubt, the best note the group could have ever received was a compliment over their strong intentions throughout the play. Indeed, the work was clear. I simply could not have asked for any more. The show was honored with several awards: outstanding actress, outstanding supporting actor, two all-star cast awards, and, perhaps most importantly for this show, outstanding ensemble. The entire group left the festival absolutely floored by the recognition and feedback. The work paid off in the biggest way possible. We finally ended on the high note we just missed over the summer.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ADAPTING TECHNIQUE FOR OTHER PRODUCTIONS

As this chapter will demonstrate, this technique can serve many types of productions. If anything, it is more easily applied to the types of productions presented in this chapter than the presentational, poetic, storytelling style of *The Cat Who Ran*. Although there are countless styles of plays, this chapter will showcase the technique (both complete and spot analysis) for a sample scene from three very common types of plays for middle and high school performers: contemporary realism, Shakespeare, and contemporary musical.

As the analysis will demonstrate, this technique is effective with contemporary, realistic productions, both comedic and dramatic. The comedic pieces often require some focus on the timing of the lines and negotiating the laughter of the audience. A common production for young actors, particular those in middle school, is *Lockers* by Jeremy Kruse. This collection of mostly comedic scenes, monologues, and short plays allow middle school actors to play their age without worrying about anything other than the intention. This chapter will look at one of the scenes in *Lockers* called “Slice.”

Shakespeare’s presentational, poetic language really presents a challenging external. Almost like learning a dialect, actors will need to take time practicing the rhythm, pronunciation, and meaning of the speech until it is comfortable. Luckily, with Shakespeare’s popularity, there are numerous sources on this topic for all of his popular productions. Once comfortable, the actor will be free to focus on the intention. The danger is focusing on just

getting the words out correctly, and not on the intention. The great thing is, thanks to the verbose nature of his plays, many of Shakespeare's characters have easily identifiable intentions, making his plays easy to analyze. Shakespeare's characters often speak their subtext aloud. This chapter will analyze the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. This is perhaps the most popular scene from the most popular Shakespeare play for young performers.

The contemporary, often presentational musical is the bread-and-butter of many middle school, high school, and youth theatres. When a character bursts into song, the actor suddenly has a lot more externals to think about. Again, the actor must spend time practicing the pitches, rhythm, breath support, and placement until it is second nature. Then he is free to focus on the intention. The danger is focusing only on getting the notes right and not on the intention. However, musicals build energy and even intentions into the rhythms and pitches, often supporting the acting in the piece. Despite its Broadway flop, a very popular show for young performers is *Seussical*, which has several published versions including a shorter version geared towards middle school performers. This chapter will look at a key song in that show, "Alone in The Universe."

Lockers – Slice
By Jeremy Kruse

AT RISE: CHRIS sits watching television. He changes the channel with a remote control. HEATHER enters and sits down. CHRIS changes the channel several times.

HEATHER. Leave it on one channel.

CHRIS. I was here first.

HEATHER. Yeah, yeah. You were here first.

(He flips through the channels.)

Will you stop it?

CHRIS (holds out the remote control). Do you want it?

HEATHER. Yes.

CHRIS. You have to take me out for pizza.

HEATHER. Forget it.

(He changes channels.)

Give it to me.

(She gets up and goes after the remote. CHRIS puts it in his pants.)

You're a brat.

CHRIS. A hungry brat.

(HEATHER gets up and heads toward the door.)

Okay, you can have it.

(She comes back.)

If you take me out for pizza.

HEATHER. I am worn out. I don't feel like going anywhere. Okay? Don't be a pest.

(CHRIS gives her the remote. HEATHER sits.)

CHRIS. I'll go by myself.

HEATHER. You'll get in trouble.

CHRIS. Mom won't know.

HEATHER. I'll tell her.

"Slice" from *Lockers* by Jeremy Kruse Scene Analysis

In this scene, Chris convinces his big sister, Heather, to take him out for pizza.

**Chris is putting his sister in her place.
Heather is getting her brother on her side.**

An actor could interpret this scene numerous ways. From my interpretation, lines like "I was here first" and "Not if you're going to be mean" indicate Chris is putting his sister in her place. Lines like "I don't feel like going anywhere. Okay?" and "You can come if you want to" indicate Heather is getting her brother on her side.

This is a possible complete analysis for Chris...

I am Chris Stevens, a ten-year-old average kid.

I am talking to my sister, Heather.

We are in our living room.

It is the evening.

I am literally convincing my sister to take me out for pizza.

I want to put a loved one in their place.

I might say "Back off!" to express this.

It is as if my best friend is enamored with his new video game system and I am trying to convince him to shut up (or at least let me play with him).

My sister's exhaustion and attitude is standing in my way.

I am going to pound, undermine, tempt, tease, shake, charm, and outwit to get what I want.

Figure 31: "Slice" from *Lockers* by Jeremy Kruse, P. 1

CHRIS. I don't care.
 HEATHER. Why do you ruin everything for me?
 CHRIS. You never take me for pizza anymore!
 HEATHER. I'll take you tomorrow.
 CHRIS. You used to all the time. But, now you'd rather
 talk on the phone with your boyfriends and go out with
 your friends.
 HEATHER. Fine. You want to go for pizza? Let's go for
 pizza.
 CHRIS. Not if you're going to be mean.
 HEATHER. Come on.
 CHRIS. No.
 HEATHER. I'm going to get a piece of pizza. You can
 come if you want to.
 CHRIS. Have fun.

(HEATHER goes to the door. She stops. She goes to
 CHRIS.)

HEATHER. Would you be interested in being my date to-
 night?
 CHRIS. What do you have in mind?
 HEATHER. Pizza.
 CHRIS. It would be my pleasure.

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 (LOCKERS)

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This is a possible complete analysis for Heather...

I am Heather Stevens, a twelve-year-old average tween.
 I am talking to my brother, Chris.
 We are in our living room.
 It is the evening.
 I am literally convincing my brother to stop being a brat.
 I want to get a loved one on my side.
 I might say, "Accept my side of the story!" to express this.
 It is as if I told a guy that my best friend liked him, and I am trying
 to make up for the mistake.
 My brother's attitude is standing in my way.
 I am going to debate, bear, assure, convince, rattle, trick, and
 outwit to get what I want.

Figure 32: "Slice" *Lockers* by Jeremy Kruse, P. 2

Romeo and Juliet – SCENE II. Capulet's orchard
by William Shakespeare
Enter ROMEO

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.
JULIET appears above at a window
But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET

Ay me!

ROMEO

She speaks:
O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;

"Balcony Scene" from *Romeo and Juliet* Scene Analysis

In the opening monologue, Romeo describes Juliet's beauty. Romeo is alone on stage in this monologue. He sees Juliet, but is far away from her. As described in the earlier chapter, Bruder et al. gives us some options for this type of piece. I would try this as if I were talking to my best friend about just seeing the love of my life.

Romeo is getting a rise out of his best friend (imagined scene partner).

From my interpretation, lines like "I am too bold" and "See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!" indicate Romeo's intention.

This is a possible complete analysis for Romeo in the opening monologue...

I am Romeo, a young, love struck teenager

I am talking to my best friend.

I am below Juliet's balcony.

It is night.

I am literally telling my best friend how beautiful Juliet is.

I want to get a rise out of my best friend.

I might say, "This is perfect, isn't it? to express this.

It is as if I am telling my best friend about an awesome girl I just met.

My overwhelming emotions are standing in my way.

I am going to compel, energize, urge, kindle, tempt, beg, and tease to get what I want.

Figure 33: "Balcony Scene" *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, P. 1

Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO

[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

ROMEO

I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET

What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO

By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO

Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

JULIET

How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,

In the main scene, Romeo and Juliet are denouncing their family and declaring their love for each other.

Romeo is extracting a crucial answer from Juliet (How true is her love?).

Juliet is also extracting a crucial answer from Romeo (How true is his love?)

From my interpretation, lines like "O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?" indicate Romeo's intention and "Dost thou love me?" indicate the same intention from Juliet.

This is a possible complete analysis for Romeo in the main scene...

I am Romeo, a young, love struck teenager.

I am talking to Juliet.

It is night.

I am literally professing my love for Juliet.

I want to get a crucial answer from a loved one.

I might say, "Tell me the truth!" to express this.

It is as if I am getting a student to reveal he has been cheating on a test.

My overwhelming emotion is standing in my way.

I am going to lobby, challenge, entice, compel, energize, urge, and tempt to get what I want.

Figure 34: "Balcony Scene" *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, P. 2

And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

JULIET

If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO

Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO

I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And but thou love me, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

JULIET

By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO

By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

JULIET

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke: but farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay,'
And I will take thy word: yet if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries
Then say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully:
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,

This is a possible complete analysis for Juliet in the main scene...

I am Juliet, a young, love struck teenager.

I am talking to Romeo.

It is night.

I am literally professing my love for Romeo.

I want to get a crucial answer from a loved one.

I might say, "Tell me the truth!" to express this.

It is as if I am getting a salesperson to admit he is a crook.

My overwhelming emotion is standing in my way.

I am going to prod, challenge, entice, milk, energize, urge, and
tempt to get what I want.

Figure 35: "Balcony Scene" *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, P. 3

The objectives continue and deepen on this page.

I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light:
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,
My true love's passion: therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

ROMEO

Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops--

JULIET

O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love--

JULIET

Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say 'It lightens.' Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

ROMEO

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

Figure 36: "Balcony Scene" *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, P. 4

JULIET

What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

ROMEO

The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JULIET

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:
And yet I would it were to give again.

ROMEO

Wouldst thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?

JULIET

But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.

Nurse calls within

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!
Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.
Exit, above

ROMEO

O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard.
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.
Re-enter JULIET, above

JULIET

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

Nurse

[Within] Madam!

JULIET

I come, anon.--But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee--

The objectives continue. Time becomes an added obstacle with the Nurse's calling.

Figure 37: "Balcony Scene" *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, P. 5

Nurse
[Within] Madam!

JULIET
By and by, I come!--
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:
To-morrow will I send.

ROMEO
So thrive my soul--

JULIET
A thousand times good night!
Exit, above

ROMEO
A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.
Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from
their books,
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.
Retiring
Re-enter JULIET, above

JULIET
Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine,
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

ROMEO
It is my soul that calls upon my name:
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

JULIET
Romeo!

ROMEO
My dear?

JULIET
At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO
At the hour of nine.

The objective continues, the obstacle worsens, and Juliet exits and re-enters.

Figure 38: "Balcony Scene" *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, P. 6

JULIET

I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

ROMEO

Let me stand here till thou remember it.

JULIET

I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

ROMEO

And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

JULIET

'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone;
And yet no further than a wanton's bird;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROMEO

I would I were thy bird.

JULIET

Sweet, so would I:
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! parting is such
sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.
Exit above

ROMEO

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell.
Exit

The objectives continue and Romeo returns to his original objective at the end of the scene.

Figure 39: "Balcony Scene" *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, P. 7

Seussical – Alone in the Universe

Music & Book by Stephen Flaherty; Lyrics & Book by Lynn Ahrens; Based on the works of Dr. Seuss

HORTON

(spoken) I've been guarding this clover for over a week, getting laughed at for thinking a dust speck can speak. Well, let them all laugh. I'll try not to mind, for I have found something that they'll never find.

(sung) There are secrets on a leaf, in the water, in the air
Hidden planets, tiny worlds, all invisible
Not a person seems to know, not a person seems to care
There is no one who believes a thing I say
Well, I'm fairly certain that at one time or other
Great thinkers all feel this way
I'm alone in the universe
So alone in the universe
I found magic, but they don't see it
They all call me a lunatic, okay, call me a lunatic
If I stand on my own, so be it
Because I have wings, yes I can fly
Around the moon and far beyond the sky
And one day soon I know there you'll be
One small voice in the universe
One true friend in the universe
Who believes in me

JOJO

I'm alone in the universe
So alone in the universe
My own planets and stars are glowing

HORTON

Alone in the universe

JOJO

No one notices anything
Not one person is listening
They don't have any way of knowing

HORTON

Nobody knows that I have wings

JOJO

I have wings

HORTON

And I can fly

"Alone in the Universe" from *Seussical JR.* Analysis

In the first part of this scene, Horton and JoJo mourn their place in the universe.

Horton is proving himself to the audience.

JoJo is also proving himself to the audience.

From my interpretation, lines like "Great thinkers all feel this way" and "If I stand on my own, so be it" indicate Horton's intention. Lines like "My own planets and stars are glowing" indicate the same objective for JoJo. I chose to have them communicating directly to the audience like one would a jury of their peers. This makes it clear that they are defending themselves.

This is a possible complete analysis for Horton in part one...

I am Horton the Elephant, a young, introverted elephant.

I am talking to the audience who I consider a jury of my peers.

I am sitting on a bush in the jungle.

It is late at night.

I am literally telling the audience what I am going through.

I want to prove myself to the audience.

I might say, "I'm a good person!" to express this.

It is as if I am convincing my principal that I did not cheat on a test.

The audience's disapproval is standing in my way.

I am going to beg, debate, convince, astound, charm, pound, and negate to get what I want.

Figure 40: "Alone in the Universe" from *Seussical JR.*, P. 1

JOJO

I can fly

HORTON

Around the moon

BOTH

And far beyond the sky. Well someday soon you will hear my plea.

HORTON

One small voice in the universe

JOJO

One true friend in the universe

BOTH

Please believe in me

HORTON

(spoken) Hello? Hello?

JOJO

Hello?

HORTON

Who's there?

JOJO

It's me, JoJo, the mayor's son!

HORTON

Oh, I'm Horton, the elephant.

JOJO

Are you real, or are you a very large think?

HORTON

Oh I'm real all right, I would state that in ink.

JOJO

In my thinks, I imagine a lot of strange things, and I go to strange places, as if I had wings! I love a good think!

HORTON

Well for me that goes double.

JOJO

Sometimes my thinks are what get me in trouble.

This is a possible complete analysis for JoJo in part one...

I am JoJo, a young, introverted Who.

I am talking to the audience, who I consider a jury of my peers.

I am in my bedroom.

It is late at night.

I am literally telling the audience my troubles.

I want to prove myself to the audience.

I might say, "I'm a good person!" to express this.

It is as if I am convincing a police officer that I was not speeding.

The audience's disapproval is standing in my way.

I am going to beg, twist, convince, astound, charm, pound, and negate to get what I want.

In the second part of the scene, Horton and JoJo meet and discover they have a lot in common.

Horton is getting a stranger to trust him.

JoJo is getting a stranger to tell him everything will be okay.

From my interpretation, lines like "I would state that in ink" indicate Horton's intention. Lines like "Sometimes my thinks are what get me trouble" indicate JoJo's objective.

Figure 41: "Alone in the Universe" from *Seussical JR.*, P. 2

HORTON

When you think, do you dream?

JOJO

In bright colors!

HORTON

Oh, me too! And I go to strange places like Solla Sollew!

JOJO

When you think, do you think you can fly with the stars?

HORTON

Oh little friend, no one else can have thinks such as ours! (*sung*) Yes I have wings

JOJO

I have wings

HORTON

And I can fly

JOJO

I can fly

HORTON

Around the moon

BOTH

And far beyond the sky

HORTON

You called my name and you set me free. One small voice in the universe

JOJO

One true friend in the universe

BOTH

Who believes in me

HORTON

(*spoken*) Good night, JoJo.

JOJO

Good night Horton, see you in Solla Sollew...

All inquiries regarding rights should be addressed to Music Theatre International,
Phone: (212) 541-4684. Fax: (212) 397-4684. Email: Licensing@MTishows.com

Figure 42: "Alone in the Universe" from *Seussical JR.*, P. 3

This is a possible complete analysis for Horton in part two...

I am Horton the Elephant, a young, introverted elephant.

I am talking to a tiny stranger on a clover.

I am sitting on a bush in the jungle.

It is late at night.

I am literally getting information about JoJo.

I want to get this stranger to trust me.

I might say, "Trust me!" to express this.

It is as if I am convincing someone I rear-ended that I am not bad.

JoJo's disbelief is standing in my way.

I am going to halt, beg, negate, question, level, excite, and probe to get what I want.

This is a possible complete analysis for JoJo in part two...

I am JoJo, a young, introverted Who.

I am talking to a large stranger in the sky.

I am in my bedroom.

It is late at night.

I am literally figuring out who/what this thing is.

I want to get this stranger to tell me it is okay.

I might say, "Tell me everything will be alright!" to express this.

It is as if I am trying to get my parents to tell me getting a C on a test is okay.

The strangeness of the situation is standing in my way.

I am going to grill, excite, boost, brighten, question, charm, and probe to get what I want.

There is a third part of the scene where the two return to their objectives from part one with new confidence.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Through this process, I have realized that divergent perspectives can complicate my goal of balance within rehearsals. I now have a clear technique to strengthen the nurturing environment, raise the quality of the performance work, and keep rehearsals compact.

I have learned the importance of consistency in rehearsal. Until this project, my notes to actors were very much scattered, with some notes being more effective than other notes. I remember struggling to find the “perfect note” that would “fix” everything. I now have a series of questions that can drill down to the core of most acting challenges: Was the actor pursuing an intention in line with the story? Was that intention playable? Was the actor connected and reacting to the proper scene partner? Was the actor pursuing the intentions of the scene with enough stakes? I have documented my technique in the handouts included in the second chapter, and I can continue to reflect and modify my technique using these handouts as a base.

I now understand that this technique goes beyond powerful words in the margins of the script. The analysis must be mental and physical. Reverting to the original questions yield deeper and deeper responses: asking “what does your character want from the other in this moment?” digs much deeper than “what is your objective?” The terminology is just a quick way to describe something much deeper.

I have also learned that with every note, there is a trap. Every note can be misinterpreted. I have watched an actor think so hard about what his character wants that he no longer was paying attention to what was on stage in front of him. I have watched an actor

become devoid of feeling when asked to avoid playing emotion. I now follow every note with its “anti-note.” Avoid playing emotion here, but let whatever emotions arise, happen. Raise the stakes here, but do not forget to communicate every single thought. Connect with your scene partner, but make sure the audience can connect as well. It is a lot to think about.

It is now clear that I have to adapt to the rehearsal length. Perhaps the more powerful technique in this paper is the spot analysis, not complete analysis. This variation can still be effective under heavy time constraints. Economics often determine the length of the rehearsal period. Ultimately, I need to judge myself based on how I balanced my goals with the given challenges.

This technique can serve as a foundation for many other techniques, particularly vocal or physical techniques. An actor can use the objective to make effective vocal or physical choices. This technique can get us on the same page with each other and help us understand the author’s words, which is the perfect place to build from.

I set out to write a technique geared towards young actors; however, this technique is just as valid for actors, directors, and creative teams at any point in their training. I have yet to meet an artist too young, too old, too inexperienced, or too experienced to understand what is means “to get someone’s goat” or “to get someone to take a big chance” and to contrast that against “getting the audience to feel sad.” Indeed, the same technique I used for the young actors of *The Cat Who Ran* is having plenty of success with the college actors I am teaching this semester. Shockingly, college students are getting just as much value out of the handouts supposedly written for middle and high school actors.

Overall, I am feeling more confident in my ability to maintain a positive learning environment and quality performance work under a compact rehearsal schedule. The simple techniques discussed in this thesis can help me reach my desired balance. The technique is as simple as seven statements:

- I know I am _____ talking to _____.
- We are at _____ and the time of day is about _____.
- For me, _____ is what is literally going on here.
- I can deduce that I want the other to _____. However, a more activating way of saying it might be _____.
- It is clear that _____ is standing in my way.
- I am going to _____ to get what I want.
- It is as-if I am _____.

These simple statements can help me achieve the balanced utopia I am looking for within my rehearsals.

APPENDIX A:
PRODUCTION PHOTOS (ORIGINAL PRODUCTION)



Figure 43: Ran is born.
Source: Photo by author



Figure 44: The fish hides.
Source: Photo by author



Figure 45: The Sun takes a picture.
Source: Photo by author



Figure 46: The Frog poses.
Source: Photo by author



Figure 47: The cats confront The Fish.
Source: Photo by author



Figure 48: The Black Spiral
Source: Photo by author

APPENDIX B:
PRODUCTION PHOTOS (REMOUNT)



Figure 49: Ran plays.
Source: Photo by author



Figure 50: The Fish confronts Ran.
Source: Photo by author



Figure 51: The Zelkova Elm Tree
Source: Photo by author

APPENDIX C:
THE CAT WHO RAN COPYRIGHT PERMISSION EMAIL



Brandon S. Yagel <bsyapril88@gmail.com>

on 'the cat who ran'

TokyoAco <tokyo@acookinawa.com>

Sun, Mar 9, 2014 at 11:31 PM

To: "Kovac, Kim Peter" <PKKovac@kennedy-center.org>

Cc: Toyoko Nishida <nishida@asibina.com>, Asaki Shimoyama <shimoyamaasaki@gmail.com>, "Brandon Yagel (brandonyage1@knights.ucf.edu)" <brandonyage1@knights.ucf.edu>

Dear Kim,

Thank you for your email.

- 1) Please bring the royalty to Warsaw. I will be there for most of the period.
- 2) You can use tokyo@acookinawa.com for the enquiry.
- 3) We agree Brandon uses the full text of the play in his thesis.

Best regards

Hisashi Shimoyama

Kijimuna Festa
-International Theater Festival OKINAWA for Young Audience-

.....
Kijimuna Festa (Tokyo Office)
Tel : +81(0)3 5336 7930
Fax: +81(0)3 6908 7373

Postal address:
Kijimuna Festa, c/o A.C.O. Okinawa
3-82-5-2F Shuri Tera Cho, Naha, Okinawa 903-0806 JAPAN
.....

2014-03-07 3:53 GMT+09:00 Kovac, Kim Peter <PKKovac@kennedy-center.org>:

Dear Friends in Japan,

I'm writing on behalf of Brandon Yagel, the graduate student who had such a wonderful experience producing The Cat Who Ran in Florida. He has three practical questions for you.

- 1) What would be the best method to deliver the \$120 royalty for our performance at the Florida Theatre Conference? Brandon would be happy to make a wire transfer, or, if Shimoyama-san will be at the ASSITEJ Congress in Warsaw, I (Kim) could hand-deliver in US dollars.
- 2) People who read his thesis may become interesting in producing The Cat Who Ran. Is there a contact number or email I could put in the thesis for performance inquiries?
- 3) Finally, Brandon would like to include the text of the play in my thesis so the readers can see my analysis of the play side by side with the text. Please let us know if this would be possible. The university has an official letter to acquire this approval which is included below. I just need a simple email reply from the copyright holder indicating approval.

March 5, 2014

Dear Toyoko Nishida:

This email will confirm our correspondence over the last year. I am completing a master's thesis at the University of Central Florida entitled "Digesting Modern Acting Theory for Young Performers." Part of this thesis includes documenting my production of the play as well as my analysis of the text of the play. I would like your permission to reprint in my thesis the full text of the play A Poem Play: The Cat Who Ran.

Citation:
Kudo, Naoko. A Poem Play: The Cat Who Ran. Adapt. Toyoko Nishida. Trans. Yuriko Kobayashi. Ed. Michael FitzGerald. 2009. PDF file.

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my thesis, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your agreement will also confirm that you own or your company owns the copyright to the above-described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please reply to this email indicating you grant permission for the use requested above. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,
Brandon Yagel
MFA Theatre for Young Audiences Candidate
University of Central Florida
brandonyage1@gmail.com <<mailto:brandonyage1@gmail.com>>

Arigato, Brandon and I thank you very much. And I hope I will see you in Warsaw

Best

Kim

APPENDIX D:
“SLICE” COPYRIGHT PERMISSION LETTER

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Feb. 19, 2014

Brandon Yagel
4313 Center Key Rd.
Apt. 2615
Winter Park, FL 32792

Dear Brandon,

It is agreed between Dramatic Publishing Company ("Grantor") and Brandon Yagel (Publisher) that the Publisher may publish the scene entitled "Slice" from *Lockers* ("Play") by Jeremy Kruse in a thesis for the University of Central Florida. The Grantor hereby grants to the Publisher the nonexclusive right throughout the United States to print the thesis in the English language on a one time only basis which will not be made available for resale. The Grantor warrants, represents and agrees that it is the sole owner of the rights herein granted and that the exercise of the rights granted herein does not infringe upon or violate the copyright or other right of any person, firm or corporation.

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Rep. of Dramatic Publishing

Carrie E. Granatelli


Brandon Yagel

APPENDIX E:
“ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE” COPYRIGHT PERMISSION EMAIL



Brandon S. Yagel <bsyapril88@gmail.com>

Requesting permission to reprint the lyrics of "Alone in the Universe" from Seussical JR. for graduate thesis

Roseanne George <roseanneg@mtishows.com>
To: Brandon Yagel <brandonyagel@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 18, 2014 at 12:26 PM

Hello Brandon,

Permission has been granted by the authors as outlined in your e-mail. See below.

Roseanne George

Amateur Licensing Representative | Music Theatre International
421 West 54th Street | Second Floor | New York, New York 10019
212.541.4684 phone | 212.397.4684 facsimile
RoseanneG@MTIShows.com | www.MTIShows.com

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From: Brian O'Sullivan
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 10:05 AM
To: Roseanne George
Subject: RE: Requesting permission to reprint the lyrics of "Alone in the Universe" from Seussical JR. for graduate thesis

I'm sorry Roseanne...I thought I had replied. I wrote the authors and they are happy to grant permission for this usage by Mr Yagel, as outlined in his email.

Thanks,

Brian

Brian O'Sullivan
Director of Amateur Licensing
Music Theatre International
x421 West 54th Street
New York, New York 10019
(C: 212-541-4684 x121
7: 212-397-4684
-: BrianO@MTIShows.com

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Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: Brandon Yagel [<mailto:brandonyagel@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2014 6:38 PM
To: Roseanne George
Subject: Re: Requesting permission to reprint the lyrics of "Alone in the Universe" from Seussical JR. for graduate thesis

Hello Again Roseanne,

I truly appreciate your help. Were you able to get an answer from your supervisor? If my request is not possible, I understand. I just need to know whether I can move forward using the scene or not.

Thank you so much.

Brandon Yagel
MFA Theatre for Young Audiences Candidate
University of Central Florida
brandonyagel@gmail.com

On Wed, Mar 5, 2014 at 4:26 PM, Roseanne George <roseanneg@mtishows.com> wrote:

Hello Brandon,

No he did not. He is away from his desk at the moment. I will get back to you in the morning.

Roseanne George

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From: Brandon Yagel [<mailto:brandonyagel@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2014 11:30 PM

To: Roseanne George

Subject: Re: Requesting permission to reprint the lyrics of "Alone in the Universe" from Seussical JR. for graduate thesis

Hello Roseanne,

Thank you so much for your help. Were you able to get a response from your supervisor? Let me know if you need any more information from me.

Sincerely,

Brandon Yagel
MFA Theatre for Young Audiences Candidate
University of Central Florida
brandonyagel@gmail.com

On Wed, Feb 26, 2014 at 12:18 PM, Roseanne George <roseanneg@mtishows.com> wrote:

Hello Brandon,

Thanks for forwarding your e-mail. I will get back with you as soon as I get a response from my supervisor.

Roseanne George

Amateur Licensing Representative | Music Theatre International
421 West 54th Street | Second Floor | New York, New York 10019
212.541.4684 phone | 212.397.4684 facsimile

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From: Brandon Yagel [mailto:brandonyagel@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 12:33 PM
To: Roseanne George
Subject: Requesting permission to reprint the lyrics of "Alone in the Universe" from *Seussical JR.* for graduate thesis

Hello Roseanne G,

Thank you for your assistance. I have copied the email I mentioned in our phone conversation below.

2-25-14

Dear Music Theatre International:

I am completing a master's thesis at the University of Central Florida entitled "Digesting Modern Acting Theory for Young Performers." Part of this thesis includes analyzing scenes from modern plays and musicals for young performers like *Seussical JR.* I would like your permission to reprint in my thesis the lyrics of "Alone in the Universe" from *Seussical JR.*

Citation:

Ahrens, Lynn. "Alone in the Universe." *Seussical JR.* Music by Stephen Flaherty. Book by Ahrens and Flaherty. Co-Conceived by Ahrens, Flaherty, and Eric Idle. Based on the works of Dr. Seuss. Music Supervised, Adapted and Produced by Bryan Louiselle. New York: Music Theatre International, 1998. 70-75. Print.

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my thesis, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your agreement will also confirm that you own or your company owns the copyright to the above-described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please reply to this email indicating you grant permission for the use requested above. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Brandon Yagel

MFA Theatre for Young Audiences Candidate

University of Central Florida

brandonyagel@gmail.com

APPENDIX F:
IRB PERMISSION LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
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www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

NOT HUMAN RESEARCH DETERMINATION

From : **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To : **Brandon S. Yagel**

Date : **April 15, 2013**

Dear Researcher:

On 4/15/2013 the IRB determined that the following proposed activity is not human research as defined by DHHS regulations at 45 CFR 46 or FDA regulations at 21 CFR 50/56:

Type of Review:	Not Human Research Determination
Project Title:	Digesting Modern Acting Theory for Young Performers
Investigator:	Brandon S. Yagel
IRB ID:	SBE-13-09340
Funding Agency:	United Arts of Central Florida(UACF)
Grant Title:	Artist Development Grant
Research ID:	N/A

University of Central Florida IRB review and approval is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are to be made and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human subjects, please contact the IRB office to discuss the proposed changes.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 04/15/2013 01:07:03 PM EDT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joanne Muratori'.

IRB Coordinator

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Ahrens, Lynn. "Alone in the Universe." *Seussical JR*. Music by Stephen Flaherty. Book by Ahrens and Flaherty. Co-Conceived by Ahrens, Flaherty, and Eric Idle. Based on the works of Dr. Seuss. Music Supervised, Adapted and Produced by Bryan Louiselle. New York: Music Theatre International, 1998. 70-75. Print.
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