The Mind Of A Sadomasocist: a Theatrical Role Analysis Of Orin Scrivello D.D.S

2005

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THE MIND OF A SADOMASOCIST:
A THEATRICAL ROLE ANALYSIS OF ORIN SCRIVELLO D.D.S

by

MARK CATLETT
BA Speech Communication/ Secondary Education. Augustana College, 2002

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters of Fine Arts
in the Department of Musical Theatre
in the College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term
2005
ABSTRACT

Mark Catlett will portray the role of Orin Scrivello D.D.S., as well as various other “cameo” roles, at Seaside Music Theater in Daytona Beach, Florida from January 13- February 13 2005.

The role of Orin Scrivello will provide me with several acting challenges as well as multiple subjects and themes to research. The most challenging aspect of creating, developing and embodying the character of Orin will be his sadomasochistic nature and his blatant abuse towards Audrey. Sadomasochism is defined as “the deriving of sexual gratification, from being physically or emotionally abused”. It is also defined as “a willingness or tendency to subject oneself to unpleasant or trying experiences”. The psychology of sadomasochism is completely foreign to my life experience and will have to be deeply explored to fully realize the inner workings of Orin’s behavior.

To supplement the exploration of the psychology of sadomasochism, research will be completed on the following topics:

- Sadomasochism in regards to the lead characters of Little Shop of Horrors.

Portrayal of Orin Scrivello D.D.S. also demands the creation of several other characters in the second act of the show. This will require me to develop several different characters ranging from the sadomasochistic dentist, to an ambitious entrepreneur, to even dressing in drag to portray a female florist customer. This will give me an opportunity to show versatility as well as research several different character
personalities and dramatic structures. These characters come in and out of the florist shop very quickly, so the challenge will be to both perform a quick change of costume and also be able to completely switch characterizations within minutes. These characters should be different enough that the audience does not immediately realize it is the same actor playing all of these roles.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

When an actor is first cast in a role, it is important to closely examine the character and determine the similarities and differences between that character and the actor. It is crucial that the actor be able to tap into the emotions and life experiences of the character being portrayed. Some aspects of the character will be familiar and others completely foreign. It is through detailed research and analysis that character development is truly solidified.

The character of Orin Scrivello D.D.S in the musical comedy Little Shop of Horrors is a complex character fully immersed in the world of sadomasochism. His thought processes and impulses stem from his sadomasochistic desires, and an understanding of these desires must be acquired by the actor portraying this character. This thesis examines the psychology of sadomasochism as it directly pertains to the character of Orin Scrivello D.D.S. A detailed analysis of the character and his relationship with his partner, Audrey, are examined against the ideals of the sadomasochistic lifestyle.

The script for Little Shop of Horrors demands that the actor playing Orin Scrivello also portray four other characters that must have a full range of physical and vocal attributes. This thesis contains a template, created in this study, to assist actors in creating multiple characters in a short period of time. A detailed analysis of these four characters is highlighted in the last section to fully illustrate the benefits of complete and detailed character analysis.

Overall, this thesis provides a look into the sadomasochistic life of Orin Scrivello D.D.S, as well as a detailed show and character analysis of the musical comedy Little
Shop of Horrors. The only way for an actor to fully immerse himself in the mental and physical life of another character is through detailed research and analysis. After all, it is with knowledge that the actor gains the power to truthfully embody the inner and outer workings of another character.
CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

The Psychology of Sadomasochism

What is Sadomasochism?

When examining the world of sadomasochism there is a great deal of confusion as to what actions actually define a sadomasochistic relationship. In order to clear up these misconceptions, let’s first look at what sadomasochism is not. Sadomasochism is NOT: “abusive, rape, beatings, violence, cruelty, power-over, force, coercion, non-consensual, unimportant, a choice made lightly, growth blocking, boring” (Moser 21). Oftentimes people confuse abusive relationships as those of a sadomasochistic nature. Abuse is not a part of a sadomasochistic relationship, and the details of this will be explained later in this chapter.

Realizing that sadomasochism does not include abuse or cruelty, what does it include? Sadomasochism is passionate, erotic, consensual, sometimes fearful, exorcism, reclamation, joyful, intense, boundary-breaking, trust building, loving, sexual, creative, spiritual, integrating, a development of inner power as strength (Moser 21). The key word in describing a true sadomasochistic relationship is consensual. Abuse and rape by definition are not consensual and, therefore, not part of this complex relationship. The details of a sadomasochistic relationship will be discussed later in the chapter, but first it is important to define the three key terms regarding this subject: sadomasochism, sadist, and masochist.
Definitions

What is the definition of sadomasochism? Sadomasochism is defined as “obtaining sexual arousal through receiving or giving physical or mental pain” (Gebhard 41). Sadomasochism requires two or more people. One who assumes the role of the sadist, and one who assumes the role of a masochist. A sadist, as defined by Webster’s Dictionary, is “a sexual perversion in which gratification is obtained by the infliction of physical or mental pain on others (as on a love object)”. The opposite player in this relationship is then the masochist. A masochist, as defined by Webster’s Dictionary, is “a sexual perversion characterized by pleasure in being subjected to pain or humiliation especially by a love object”. These two opposite dynamics together form the sadomasochistic relationship.

History of Sadomasochism

The term “sadist” was first coined by psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing referring to the writings of the Marquis de Sade. In 1740, the Marquis de Sade was born to a noble French family and later became one of the world’s first sexologists. His writings were controversial for their explicit sexual content. He wrote of many different sexual characters and scenarios but dealt heavily with sexual violence. Sadomasochistic behavior dates back to the Ancient Hindu culture and the writings of the Kama Sutra. At this time, sexuality and “erotic arts were not only deemed worthy of respect but were thought to be divinely revealed” (Moser 34). Western religion has also emphasized sadomasochistic themes throughout its history. Christianity often times illustrates suffering as a purifying force. Throughout the bible there are hundreds of examples of dominant/submissive relationships. The martyred saints of Christianity are
praised throughout several different sources of biblical literature and art. We are given examples of these forms of human relationships at a young age and often taught to look up to them. In fact, these relationships are seen throughout history through dynamics such as God/man, King/subjects, and (biblical) husband/wife. “Sadomasochism is embedded in our culture since our culture operates on the basis of dominance-submission relationships, and aggression is socially valued. Even our gender relationships have been formulated in a framework conductive to sadomasochism: the male is supposed to be dominating and aggressive sexually and the female reluctant or submissive. Violence and sex are commingled to make a profitable package to sell through the mass media. This is no innovation- for centuries the masochistic damsel in distress has been victimized by the evil sadist who is finally defeated by the hero through violent means” (Gebhard 36).

**Profile of a Sadomasochist**

An individual who is attracted into a sadomasochistic relationship generally has a history of some sort of abuse. These individuals have often times been abused as a child and, therefore, associate the feelings of the abuse and the power struggle with their childhood. Sometimes it is an issue of comfort because that is what they grew up experiencing, or sometimes it is an issue of rebellion. The sadist often times is rebelling against the fact they were abused and is fighting to reverse the power struggle they felt as a child. The masochist is often times associating the feeling of pain with that of the comfort of being a child.

As with any profile, not every single person fits into this exact mold; however, most people fall into at least one of these eight characteristics, if not all of them.
Table 1: Eight Characteristics of a Sadomasochist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eight Characteristics of a Sadomasochist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Adapted from The Sadomasochism of Everyday Life by John Munder Ross PH.D</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. History of lowgrade or mild child abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. As a result of abuse, they have created unconscious sadomasochistic and specifically sexual fantasies, which have much in common with actual perverse practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The victim’s pleasure in being hurt, their hostile feelings and impulses and their more acceptable desires simply to succeed and find happiness in life make them feel guilty. This is an irrational guilt that leads to discomfort with contentment, denial of their own desires and a need to be punished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Behind their sleepy or abject facades, masochist simmers with unconscious rage and the desire for revenge. For a variety of reasons, they disown this rage and project their vindictiveness onto the sadist who abuses them and whose vindictiveness is obvious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A profound fear of loss leads them to cling to the people who hurt them while also provoking these people to reject them in the end. Thus masochists repeat and reenact the initial and feared traumas of their early life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Their poor self-esteem allows them to feel that they do not deserve better treatment anyway, whatever they say to the contrary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Masochists have a fairly fragile sense of identity. This makes for uncertain personal boundaries and facilitates a less obvious blurring of the sadistic and masochistic roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lacking a sense of themselves, they also lack self-awareness. This deficiency, along with their differences, make it seem that bad things keep happening to them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Sadomasochistic Way of Life

One of the largest misconceptions regarding sadomasochism is that only evil or mentally damaged people participate in sadomasochistic relations. This statement is completely false. “We are people of all ages, all races, all religions, all political views and both sexes. We can be found in every area of the earth at every socioeconomic level and in just about every occupation. We are tall and short, thin and fat, attractive and homely, intelligent and not-so” (Moser 38). Sadomasochists are not a certain “breed” of people. They are a diverse group of people of all races and religions with similar desires and fetishes.

Knowing this, what are the odds of standing next to a sadomasochist in line at the grocery store? “The Institute for Sex Research found that about one in eight females and one in five males were aroused by sadomasochistic stories, and roughly half of both sexes were aroused by being beaten” (Gebhard 44). As may be expected, Masochists are easier to find than Sadists. This imbalance is commonly attributed to the fact that in our culture violence is considered wrong and evil. “To strike is sin; to be struck is guiltless or even virtuous in a martyrdom sense” (Gebhard 43). A martyr is looked at as something holy, where the abuser is that of the devil. Sadomasochists do not wear scarlet letter “S’s”; therefore, you must know where to look. There are underground communities that exist for people to find a match to their fetishes. With the online community growing, it is easier to locate those who share your common desires.

Understanding the sadomasochistic way of life is often times extremely difficult for those not at all involved in the lifestyle. “Outsiders and beginners often see SM as bizarre and destructive. Some think that sadists do whatever they want to masochists and
that masochists somehow enjoy suffering. But real-masochists are choosy about their ordeals, and sadists always have to think about the masochist’s post party affections” (Moser 29).

Dr. Charles Moser interviewed many practicing sadists and masochists for his book, Bound To Be Free, in order to understand what it is about sadomasochistic ritual that draws so many practitioners. The following four anonymous testimonies provide a glimpse into the mind of an active sadomasochist:

- “It’s like a drug high without the drugs. I don’t care if it’s endorphins or whatever. I come out of playing stronger and more secure than I went in” (Moser 78).

- “We spend so much time immersed in a society (whether business or otherwise) where we are controlled by forces beyond our control, where we must behave in a prescribed manner for a prescribed time. How wonderful to go into SM play, giving ourselves the opportunity, whenever we want, to act out the emotions and desires and fantasies that we are constrained from even considering “out there” (Moser 78).

- “SM is accepting the dark side, accepting totally who I am as a complete human being. I am not a wonderful person all the time…things go wrong and I ache to take out my frustrations on someone…Not in anger- never in anger- but with a graceful understanding that my lovers appreciate even these dark parts of me” (Moser 95).

- “We are so conditioned to lovey-dovey type relations that we can’t see any enjoyment in more active, exhilarating activities. We’re so conditioned to all pain and pain experience as being abusive and involuntary that we can’t conceive of it as a form of love” (Moser 147).
What Constitutes a Sadomasochistic Relationship?

Another common misconception is that a sadomasochistic relationship revolves around pain. It is important to realize that severe pain is not the goal in a sadomasochistic relationship. “Accidental pain is not perceived as pleasurable or sexual. The average sadomasochistic session is usually scripted: the masochist must allegedly have done something meriting punishment, there must be threats and suspense before punishment is meted out” (Gebhard 43). The role play of the submissive/dominant relationship is what the entire experience is based upon. The pain is a tactic to achieve this dynamic but not the foundation.

So many people then wonder why sadomasochists use pain at all? It is often hard to understand how pain could be considered a good thing. We are conditioned at a very young age that pain is bad and should not be part of a healthy relationship. However, for sadomasochists pain provides arousal. The key is making sure it never goes too far. A sadomasochist’s goal is to stay on the “edge between pain and pleasure where the sensations are so intense one cannot tell if what they are feeling hurts or feels good-or both” (Moser 147). The sadist gives the pain and enjoys the fact that the masochist not only enjoys receiving the pain but wants to please the masochist by showing obedience. Once again the most important thing to realize about this exchange of “pain” is that it is one hundred percent consensual.

It is also important to realize that pain is not the only tactic used to establish the dominant/submissive relationship. Psychological pain is also a large part of a sadomasochistic relationship. In fact, sometimes physical pain may be completely absent
from the relationship. Psychological pain can, at times, be much more powerful than physical pain. This kind of pain includes feelings such as “uncertainty, apprehension, shame, embarrassment, humiliation, powerlessness and fear” (Moser 155). Psychological pain gives the dominant player a great deal of power over the submissive, which is the entire goal of the relationship.

As you can see, the entire sadomasochistic relationship is based on a hierarchal structure of power. “Inequality becomes a pretext for demonstrating superiority over the masochist who in contrast must be relatively inferiorized” (Chancer 46). For a sadomasochistic relationship to exist there must be an imbalance of power. The sadist has a need to constantly insult or belittle the masochist in order to feel superior. If the masochist resists, the sadist must shame and humiliate the masochist further. Once again, pain or humiliation is a common way for the sadist to achieve his hierarchal position. It is a way to make sure that the masochist knows they have been bad, and they will be punished if any attempt is made to break the established power roles.
In the end, a sadomasochistic relationship contains five distinct parts:

Table 2: Five Components of SM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Components of SM: (Moser 30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>The appearance of Dominance and Submission</em>: The dominant partner is often referred to as the Sadist. The Submissive partner is usually referred to as the Masochist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>Role Playing</em>: The exaggeration of roles and situations is key to the excitement of the relationship. Roles range from master/slave to teacher/student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>Consensuality</em>: Both parties must be in agreement to partake in the dominant/submissive relationship. This relationship can not be considered abusive because it is consensual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <em>Sexual Context</em>: Though SM does not have to culminate with sexual relations, SM is based on a sexual tension and desire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <em>Mutual Definitions</em>: The couple must be in complete agreement of the rules and boundaries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sadomasochism in Regards to Little Shop of Horrors

In *Little Shop of Horrors*, we are given a small and abbreviated look into the sadomasochistic relationship of Orin and Audrey. Orin, a practicing sadist, is a “professional” dentist who not only has a nitrous oxide addiction but also finds pleasure in overpowering Audrey through all aspects of their relationship. Audrey assumes the role of the masochist who allows Orin to dominate her, mostly due to her low self-image.

**Orin-Sadist**

“*He’s a Professional!*”-Audrey

Orin is not a thug but instead a “professional” who has his own dentist practice. It is a misconception that most sadists are the lowlifes of society. In fact, the opposite is true. White collar professionals make up most of the sadomasochistic community. Analyst Lin Cowan states that her clients are “successful by social standards: professionally, sexually, emotionally, culturally, in marriage or out” (Moser 40).

Orin experienced a great deal of abuse as a child which is detailed in his character analysis; however, it is important to note that he is now obsessed with dominating over other human beings. He not only does this in his day-to-day activities but also in his bedroom. He finds pleasure in controlling others and having other people tell him he’s superior.

It is extremely important to note that Orin is not evil but, instead, a member of society who is not always understood for his desires and needs. Orin does not beat Audrey because he is violent and loses his temper. He hits her to demand his dominance...
and have her accept her submissiveness. “When I am dominant and in control of the scene, I am in control of the pain being inflicted on my submissive. I control how much pain, when and by what means it is inflicted. Unintentional pain or too much pain is “bad” pain, and it means I have failed in my responsibility; my control has been broken” (Moser149). Orin takes great responsibility in his calculated and precise movements.

**Audrey-Masochist**

This is where the sadomasochistic relationship between Audrey and Orin falls apart. In order to be a true masochist, Audrey, too, must get aroused by the submissive/dominant relationship and fully accept and thrive in her masochistic role. However, this is not the reason she is in this relationship. She is in this relationship because of her low self-esteem. “The Appeal of Sadomasochism is in its effects on the mind. It is a powerful means of escape from everyday life, from problems and worries, from who we are most of the time” (Moser 41). Audrey suffers from low self-image and low self-esteem. She does not think highly of herself and does not feel she could bring anything positive to a relationship. Instead, she “escapes” her life and enters the role-playing of sadomasochism.

During the course of the musical, we see Audrey with a black eye and witness one instance of physical abuse on stage. However, verbal pain and humiliation is a much greater part of Audrey and Orin’s relationship than physical pain. Orin continuously humiliates Audrey. According to sadomasochism experts “Being able to handle humiliation is often a sign of strength of character of the submissive who participates in such scenes, for one must be very sure of one’s own personal strengths to come out the
other end of humiliation play with character intact” (Moser 155). Audrey’s problem is that she does not have a strong sense of self-esteem, and, therefore, this dynamic is not a healthy one. Audrey should not be playing the masochistic role, because as we find out in “Somewhere That’s Green”, she has dreams of an alternate life and is only dating Orin because she truly does not think she deserves to be anywhere else.

Verdict

Therefore, with these two profiles examined, this relationship is proven not to be a true sadomasochistic relationship. Because Audrey is not one hundred percent committed to the “lifestyle”, this is a dangerous and abusive relationship; two qualities that sadomasochism is NOT. The audience of Little Shop of Horrors is misled into thinking this is the way a true sadomasochistic relationship operates, and, therefore, views a sadomasochistic relationship as something completely negative. The reality is that in a true one hundred percent sadomasochistic relationship, the actions are consensual and desirable. These people have fetishes that others outside the community have trouble recognizing, but they are personal and not affecting anyone except those in the relationship. Orin needs to find a girl who equally desires his “lifestyle”.
Evolution of “Little Shop of Horrors”

Little Shop of Horrors first debuted in 1960 and quickly became one of the highest grossing cult horror films in movie history. In 1983, the story was transformed into an Off-Broadway Musical, playing over 2000 performances at the Orpheum Theatre, becoming the third-longest running musical in Off-Broadway History. Three years later, in 1986, Warner Brothers bought the rights to the story and assembled an all-star cast, including Rick Moranis and Steve Martin, to star in the movie musical. On August 29, 2003, Little Shop of Horrors made its official Broadway debut at the Virginia Theatre. This version of the show, however, did not enjoy the success of the Off-Broadway version and closed August 22, 2004 after 372 performances. However, as the Broadway show closed its doors in August 2004, the first Equity National Tour launched in Dallas, Texas.

Little Shop of Horror’s Roots in Early Hollywood

Horror B-Movies

Over the past 45 years, The Little Shop of Horrors story has enjoyed success in many different forms of entertainment. In 1959, when Rogar Corman was looking for an idea for a low budget horror film, he turned to screenplay author Charles Griffith, who had created a horror script based on the Faustian pact. Mirroring the story in which Dr. Faustus trades his soul to the devil in exchange for fame and fortune, Griffith’s story involves a flower shop apprentice named Seymour who agrees to begin killing people for a man eating plant, in exchange for fame, fortune, and his one true love, Audrey. In the end, the murders and lies catch up with Seymour and all those involved, and as in the
Faust legend, Seymour meets his demise and is killed by the Plant. Corman loved the screenplay and paid $800 for the rights to the script.

On December 22, 1959, Rogar Corman’s low budget horror film, *The Little Shop of Horrors*, began shooting in Hollywood, California. On December 23, 1959, one day later, the company wrapped shooting after only two days. This movie was never meant to be a box-office hit but instead a challenge to the production team, seeing how fast they could film a feature length movie. The film used an existing movie set that was going to be destroyed later that week and had a complete budget of only $36,000. The film did not use any well-known actors at the time; however, then unknown Jack Nicholson does make his feature film debut in this movie. When Rogar Corman was asked years later about the cult success of the film, he responded, “The original *Little Shop* was a joke. I was trying to break a record for making a movie…yet in the long run, this movie is the one that established me as an underground legend in film circles. It had no budget to speak of, yet it has made me more fans and friends than some of my bigger pictures”. (McCarty 13).

**Original 1982 Off-Broadway Production**

On May 6, 1982, a new musical version of the script was created by librettist/lyricist Howard Ashman and composer Alan Menken. Ancillary rights had been secured from Rogar Corman, although Corman had never copyrighted the film. In the musical adaptation, the cast is severely reduced from eighteen actors to nine. Several smaller characters are eliminated, but the characters of the Plant and the Sadomasochistic Dentist are largely expanded. The Plant becomes a genuine character and is given many
more “human” characteristics. The Faust story is brought out even more by expanding the
role of the Plant and giving him more of the “devil” qualities from the original legend.
The role of the dentist, originally named Dr. Phoebus Farb, is renamed Orin Scivello and
is enlarged to become a much more significant part of the script. In order to utilize the
Doo-wop music of the era, the high school groupies of the original script were turned into
the three street urchins, who also function as the Greek Chorus commenting on the action
of the play.

The show opened on May 6, 1982, and ran for one month at the WPA Theatre
before moving to the Off-Broadway Orpheum Theatre on July 27, 1982 where it would
play over 2000 performances. The show received rave reviews for its combination of the
B Horror movie genre, rock and roll and 1930’s melodrama. The New York Times
declared the show “leaves the audience…feeling just like Audrey II between victims-
avenous for more” (Rich 9 Sep 1982).

1986 Feature Film

The success of the Off-Broadway musical caused Warner Brothers to take notice
and purchase the movie rights to that musical adaptation in 1985 for $500,000. The story
was kept largely the same; however, the only actor to be transferred to the movie project
was Ellen Greene, who played Audrey. In order to please mainstream movie audiences,
Rick Moranis and Steve Martin were hired to play Seymour and Orin. Several other
characters were also added to the movie in order to create several star cameo appearances
that would guarantee audiences to take notice. The Dentist’s Masochistic Patient,
originally played by Jack Nicholson in the 1960’s original, was added back into the script
and was played by Bill Murray. James Belushi, Christopher Guest and John Candy also
appear in the movie version of the film. Frank Oz, of Jim Henson’s Muppets fame, was hired to direct the film and figure out how the plant could be brought to life on the big screen. After the film was finished and brought before test audiences, one major problem occurred. The test audiences were devastated by the end of the film. They were not pleased with the fact their hero and heroine were killed by the plant. They felt the film was too dark and that audiences would be mad that the characters they grew to love throughout the film perished in the end as in the Faustian legend. As a result, the cast was called back to the set to film an alternate ending that involves the demise of the plant and allows Audrey and Seymour to get married and live happily ever after.

The 1986 movie has turned into another cult classic and has enjoyed success all over the world. When the DVD was released in 2003, the original ending was included in the bonus tracks; however, Producer David Geffen, who had plans to re-release the film with the original ending, had the DVD’s recalled and had the track removed. (www.wordiq.com/definition/Little_Shop_of_Horrors).

**2003 Broadway Production**

Though *Little Shop of Horrors* had enjoyed success as a B-Horror movie, Off-Broadway show, and a big budget Hollywood movie, it had technically never been to Broadway. On August 29, 2003, that changed, and *Little Shop of Horrors* made its official Broadway debut at the Virginia Theatre. This version of the show, however, did not enjoy the success of the Off-Broadway version and closed August 22, 2004 after 372 performances. The show stayed extremely loyal to the original Off-Broadway script, but reviews felt it was missing something. Perhaps it was the new cast, or the fact that the larger theatre was not as intimate as the Off-Broadway space. *Life* Magazine stated that
“Unlike Audrey II, who blooms each time he bites into a human vein, the revival of Howard Ashman and Alan Menken’s 1982 off-Broadway musical never rises to the heights of inspired wackiness it reaches for” (Life 8E).

**First Equity National Tour**

Just as the Broadway company played its final performance, the First Equity National Tour launched out of Dallas, Texas in August of 2004. The cast starred Anthony Rapp of *RENT* fame as Seymour and Tari Kelly as Audrey. “This tour of *Little Shop of Horrors* has practically all the bells and whistles seen in the Broadway production, but it's the work of the actors that you will treasure the most. Not only will this *Little Shop* plant laughter in you, but also the macabre musical has warmth and compassion” (http://www.talkinbroadway.com/regional/dallas/dallas101.html).
Challenge of Creating Multiple Characters

Every actor approaches characterization in a different manner. Some people believe there is a right way a wrong way to develop a well-rounded character. Many actors feel you must first tackle the internal characteristics in order to fully develop the external. Others must first physically embody the character in order to figure out the inner workings of the character’s mind. When tackling the role of Orin Scrivello in Little Shop of Horrors, the actor not only has to develop a sadomasochistic dentist but also four other characters, including a woman. This task can be daunting, but creating several complete yet diverse characters is essential.

In order to start developing a character, the actor must first decide his own process of development. Do you first relate with the external or internal characteristics of this character? Does the script provide more physical evidence or more internal evidence of how the character is built? Is the character’s physical presence or verbal presence more significant to the overall plot? It is important to realize that the order, or process, of character development is extremely personal and will change for every actor, and the process for an individual actor is not necessarily the same from role to role. An in-depth analysis is essential for every character; however, the order of exploration and development is not significant.

In the case of Little Shop of Horrors, the physical attributes of each character are extremely significant and exaggerated. Therefore, examining the external characteristics is a good place to begin the exploration process. The following outline for creating multiple characters is just that, an outline. Every actor will use this outline in a different manner for each role, but the questions and developmental areas remain the same. While
researching the internal and external characterizations of character development, two books were particularly helpful. These books are: In Character: An Actor’s Workbook for Character Development by Christopher Vened and The Expressive Body: Physical Characterization for the Actor by David Alberts. Throughout the character building process these books provided the catalyst needed to develop each complete character.

**External Characteristics**

**Examining the Character’s Appearance**

First you must consider the appearance of the character. Imagine what the audience sees when the character first enters the stage. Ask yourself some specific questions regarding this character. The following questions will assist the actor in forming the initial superficial outline of the character.

- What does the audience first notice when the character enters the stage?
- What color hair does the character have? How is it styled?
- What is the character wearing?
- What is the size and stature of the character?
- How does the character relate to other people?
- What does this appearance tell you about the character before they even open their mouth?
Finding the Character’s Physicality

Examining a character’s physical movement is crucial to the overall creation of multiple roles. Each character must have his/her own physical attributes that set them aside from the other characters. Some of these differences will be small, such as a twitch in the eye, to larger, more noticeable differences such as a broken left foot. In order to create a well-rounded and complete character, there are several physical aspects that must be examined: finding the center of the character, finding the character’s specific movement (weight, tempo, space, rhythm, and gesture), finding the character’s walk, finding the character’s temperament, and finding the character’s specific behaviors.

Finding the Characters Center

In order to find the character’s center, you must examine how the character holds himself. Where is his center located and what qualities embody it? Think of the center as a spinning force within each human being. Everyone’s energy is spinning at a different speed and is located in a different location. Find the energy and location that is right for each specific character. Christopher Vened provides several examples that apply to all ranges of characters.

Table 3: Finding a Character’s Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center: Chin</th>
<th>A center at the tip of your upturned chin may serve you for an arrogant, impudent, audacious, or conceited character type (Vened 37).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center: Solar Plexus</td>
<td>The center of vital energies and powers is located in the solar plexus. It is the most powerful center in the body. You can activate this center instrumentally by tensing the muscles of your solar plexus. You would use it whenever your</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
character’s activity is intensely alive, forceful or impetuous (Vened 37).

| **Center: Neck** | For a hardworking man who endures strenuous effort, who is oppressed by hard labor, or who is overburdened by the weight of duty, imagine a massive center in the nape of your neck that feels as if you were carrying a heavy load on your shoulders (Vened 37). |
| **Center: Eyes** | For a shrewd man with a keenly penetrating mind, you may imagine a sharp, piercing center located a few feet outside your eyes and forehead (Vened 36). |

**Finding the Character’s Movement**

In order to examine the character’s movement you must consider five aspects of physicality: weight, tempo, space, rhythm and gesture. When combined together, these five facets of physical movement create a complete and unique physicality for each individual role. Consider each of the following questions to compile a physical profile:

| **Table 4: Finding a Character’s Movement** |
| **Weight** | What is the weight or force of your character’s movement? Is it heavy or light, strong or weak, firm or gentle, tense or relaxed, fighting or indulgent, resisting or yielding? (Vened 41) |
| **Tempo** | What is the tempo of your character’s movement? Is it quick or slow, sudden or sustained, short or long? (Vened 41) |
| **Space** | What is the shape or direction of your character’s movement in space? Is it straight or wavy, direct or flexible, rigid or pliant? (Vened 41) |
| **Rhythm** | What is the rhythm of your character’s movement? Is it regular or irregular, free or bound, rigorous or spontaneous, steady or unsteady, fluent or erratic, flowing or staccato? (Vened 41) |
| **Gesture** | Are your arm movements expansive and wide? Or do you work tight to the torso? How frequently do you gesture? Are your... |
moves predictable and repetitive? Do you demonstrate your feelings physically? (Barton 73-74)

Creating a Character Walk

The first step in creating a character’s walk is to simply begin experimenting with different styles. Go sit on a bench in the middle of the mall and simply look at how people walk. What does each movement or physical attribute tell you about them? What are they communicating non-verbally through their walk? Christopher Vened offers several examples that provide guidance in creating a character walk. There are infinite combinations to creating a unique walk, but here are some examples:

**Table 5: Finding a Character's Walk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walk Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belligerent</td>
<td>Forceful, sudden, aggressively direct, expressing eagerness to fight, growing in intensity (Vened 43).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaggering</td>
<td>A broadly swaying stride, hardy in manner, expressing a bold, impudent, or arrogant attitude (Vened 44).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flitting</td>
<td>Light, quick, swift, and nimble (Vened 44).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerky</td>
<td>Rigid, abrupt, and hard; heel stomps the ground, body makes sudden turns and sharp motions in a zig-zag-like pattern (Vened 44).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gliding</td>
<td>Elegant, smooth, and slow, with an easy, flowing long stride (Vened 44).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mighty</td>
<td>Strong, heavy, hard (Vened 44).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floating</td>
<td>Gentle, soft, fluently sustained sensual motion in an ebb-and-flow rhythm (Vened 44).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Character Temperament

The next layer in character development is to examine the temperament of the character. The temperament is the way in which the person physically embodies his permanent disposition, energy and mood. Each person emotes his own natural tempo or
energy in different ways. Each individual reacts differently physically to life events and stresses. A character’s temperament is whatever state they are inclined to submit to in daily life. How do they react to day to day activities? Here are some examples suggested by Christopher Vened:

Table 6: Finding a Character's Temperament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperament</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fierce Temperament:</td>
<td>Wild, forceful and aggressive. He lacks self-restraint and control: he’s impulsive, hasty, and violent. He is always agitated and restless, charged by both excess of vitality and intensive dark emotions. He is irritable and angry, often exploding with blind rage (Vened 47).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious Temperament:</td>
<td>Frightful, uncertain, and insecure, apprehending some unidentified but anticipated danger. He is emotionally tense and agitated. He has quick, nervous reactions and is erratic, hyper, or even frantic (Vened 48).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic Temperament:</td>
<td>Highly excitable and energetic. She is positive, hopeful, and optimistic (Vened 47).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecstatic Temperament:</td>
<td>Obsessive and possessive. He finds fulfillment in the state of being overpowered with intensive euphoric emotions, usually delight and bliss (Vened 48).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charming Temperament:</td>
<td>Sweet, lovely and alluring. Her energies and emotions are well balanced. She has a natural rhythm and dynamic life: vital and sensual, spontaneous and idle, content, affectionate, and kind (Vened 48).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jovial Temperament:</td>
<td>Cordial and jolly. She is warm, hearty and robust. She is effusive, obtrusive, and loud in manners: embracing, kissing, and back slapping indiscriminately (Vened 48).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serene Temperament:</td>
<td>Peaceful, tranquil, and calm. He is bright and lucid. He lacks excitement and emotional agitation. She is impersonally kind and friendly (Vened 48).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physical Behaviors

Step five deals with isolating the separate parts of the body and examining how each one moves to create a complete physical inventory. This section is derived from David Alberts’ The Expressive Body: Physical Characterization for the Actor. You must first break down the body’s physical movements and examine each one closely. First, begin with the head. Examine how the head moves. Does it bounce, make full movements from side to side or never glance past the shoulder? How do your face and eyes move? Do you squint? Raise your eyebrows? Blink, flutter, wink, or squint your eyes? Do you smile large or only smirk? Where does your tongue rest? Do you purse or whistle your lips?

You should also examine your hands and arms. Are your arms at your side most of the time? Do you make small or broad movements? Do you rest your arms in a bent or extended position? How are your fingers spaced in a relaxed state? Do you clench your fists or have them loosely cupped?

Next, examine your shoulders and pelvis. Are your shoulders usually tense and raised, or relaxed and low? Do you hunch your shoulders? Are they pushed forward or backwards? Does your pelvis thrust forward or back? Is it tilted to one side or the other?

Now take a look at your legs and feet. How do you stand? Are your feet close together or spread far apart? Do your feet shuffle or stand still? Do you walk or stand with your knees straight or bent? Do you run, skip or walk most places?

It is important to realize these are only guideline questions that should steer you in all directions of characterization. Not every question is relevant to each character, and many questions that are important in certain situations have not been listed. This is
simply a starting block to ignite the exploration process and get your creative juices flowing!

**Vocal Awareness**

Just as you should people watch to begin the process of creating the physical aspects of a character, you should listen closely to others to begin the process of creating different character voices. There is no better research than turning on your radio and analyzing what you hear. Go to the mall and close your eyes and listen to people talk. When you are at a party make sure you note what is unique about the voice of each person with whom you speak. The most important quality of an actor developing a character is to be observant of everything around you.

When you are analyzing other people’s vocal qualities, find out what it is that you hear that gives you information about the person speaking without even opening your eyes. What do you hear in a voice on the radio that allows you to begin developing a mental image of looks and personality? In his book, *Acting: Onstage and Off*, Robert Barton outlines specific questions that act as a great catalyst into vocal exploration. They consist of examining the quality, tempo, rhythm, articulation, pronunciation, pitch and volume of the voice. Each of these areas combined create a solid vocal awareness.
Table 7: Basic Parts of a Vocal Life  
*Adapted from Acting: Onstage and Off, Robert Barton.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>What is the basic tone or texture of your voice?</th>
<th>What adjectives or abstract words best describe the feeling of your voice</th>
<th>Where do you primarily resonate?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tempo</td>
<td>What is your standard rate? Fast, slow medium, or somewhere in between?</td>
<td>How does your vocal tempo connect with your physical movement?</td>
<td>Are you constant or do you use different tempos? When do you change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td>Do you really stress certain words or give all relatively equal value?</td>
<td>What kinds of phrasing patterns do you use to separate parts of your statements? Where do you take pauses?</td>
<td>Is the overall impression smooth or jerky and erratic? How fluid is your speech?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation</td>
<td>How precisely do you shape each sound? Is it crisp? Do you mumble? Or have lazy speech?</td>
<td>Are there particular words and sounds that always give you trouble? Which challenge you most?</td>
<td>Do you drop consonants or syllables? Swallow endings? Which sounds do you tend to omit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>Is your way of pronouncing words standard? If not, how far off?</td>
<td>Is your pronunciation regional or ethnic?</td>
<td>Are you aware of substituting one sound for another? Which ones?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>Is your voice higher or lower than most peoples in the range used in everyday speech? Where is your basic placement?</td>
<td>Do you have a regular melody pattern, so that graphing your pitch would show repetitions?</td>
<td>How close to the top and bottom of your range do you venture? What restrictions do you place on pitch? Are you locked into one half?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>Are you basically loud, soft, or where on the continuum? Do you project?</td>
<td>Does your voice seem to have power or are you aware of needing to push in large spaces?</td>
<td>Under what circumstances is your volume adjusted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbals</td>
<td>How many sounds do you make when you are pondering a question? What kinds?</td>
<td>How likely are you to sigh, groan, growl, moan, chuckle, pop your lips, or yawn audibly?</td>
<td>What is laughter like? Squeals of delight? Guffaws? Snorts? Sudden brief explosions? Little titters?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Internal Characteristics

Examine the Character’s Background

In order to examine the character’s background you must be both creative and resourceful. You should first begin with the script. Examine the text for every reference or clue that may give you information about the character’s past. A good playwright will provide a great deal of information, but it may not all be spelled out in black and white. You may have to make your own decisions when there are holes in your character’s storyline. The important part of developing a background is the actor makes firm and informed decisions and sticks to them. As long as you are true and loyal to your decisions, the character will be interesting and layered.

Developing the background is based on questions the actor asks regarding the character’s life. Where did the character grow up? What kind of family did he come from? How did the character meet the rest of the characters in the play? What kind of education does the character have? Is the character married or single? Where has the character lived? Does the character have a low or high intelligence? What are the character’s current and past professions? How old is the character? How does the character view himself? Does he have low or high self-esteem? What propels the way he thinks about himself?

There are an infinite number of questions that can be asked in order to create a character profile. Every character will have different questions that are more important than others depending on the role and the material.
Examine the Super Objective, Actions and Motivations of the Character

What makes the character tick? This is the best way to look at this section of character development. Any action in life is motivated by another action or impulse. Life is one big chain reaction of decisions and actions, and it is the same on stage. In order to recreate life on stage, you must understand this fundamental characteristic of human action.

When developing a character’s internal qualities you should first establish the super objective. This is the overall aim of action throughout the play. When scoring the script you will find an objective for each beat of action, but the super objective is for the entire length of the play. In other words, why does the character exist and how do they affect the overall action?

Next, you must examine the action of your character. What does your character do? Why are they there, and how do they contribute to the action? What is the motivation of this action? What makes the character do it? Then you must examine the consequence. What are the consequences of this character’s action?

It is important to realize these questions are based on the entire script. When you later score each individual scene and song, these questions get even more specific; however, you must first begin with the larger picture and then put the material under the microscope. These questions are the basic building blocks to creating each separate character and discovering individual actions and motives.
CHAPTER THREE
STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Macro-Analysis of Overall Script

Given Circumstances: 1950’s America

When one thinks of the 1950’s, one often times thinks of the perfect “Leave it to Beaver” family, consisting of Mom, Dad, Brother, Sister and the family dog. Every day Dad goes to work, and Mom stays home to cook and clean as the children go to school. Every night the family sits down for dinner in their serene suburban home and discusses nothing but the joys of life. “The fifties were a time of conservative politics, economic prosperity, and above all, social conformity. From the tidy lawns of spreading split-level suburbs to the tidy minds of board rooms, ‘neat and trim’ were ‘in’. These attitudes may be explained as a result to the unsettling events of the beginning of the decade” (Gordon 285).

In 1950, Americans panicked when Russia announced the development of an Atomic Bomb, and, in response, President Truman revealed American development plans for an even more powerful H-Bomb. The Red Scare was also on the minds of most Americans as Joseph McCarthy accused scientists, writers, actors, academics and many other professionals of being communist traders. It was an uneasy time in American history, and to counteract this fear, society put on a façade of peacefulness, covering up all the underlying insecurities. “In this climate of atomic anxiety, political paranoia, and moral self-doubt, most Americans looked to the time honored virtues of home, church
and community” (Gordon 285). Society seemed to revert back to the traditions of the past. Enrollment of woman in college dropped for the first time since the 1920’s as they returned to “traditional” family values. It was a time of retreating the past, not forging ahead to the future.

Though the upper and middle class citizens were able to cover up their anxiety by hiding away in the American suburbs, not everyone was so fortunate. It is important to realize that many people’s lives did not consist of the white picket fences and perfectly manicured lawns of 1950’s television and magazines. Though the character of Audrey dreams of “Somewhere That’s Green”, her daily life, as well as millions of other people’s realities, contained very little “green” in them at all, and, in fact, this idealistic view of the world was only a daydream for many people living in the slums of the nation’s largest cities.

*Little Shop of Horrors* is set in “Skid Row”, a slum area of New York City. This area is the antithesis of the idealistic image of the 1950’s. The new suburban trend left many of the residential areas of America’s major cities abandoned and desolate. The residents of Skid Row did not have the economic means to distract themselves from the communist scare and the fear of atomic bombs. Their lives were bleak, barren and often times fearful of what was to become of them. They could not hide behind their perfectly trimmed hedges and live the “all American life”, and, therefore, were only left with the daydream of suburban bliss. In a time often referred to as tranquil, *Little Shop of Horrors* ‘Skid Row’ represents the other side of the coin, and its characters the downside of American politics.
### Aristotelian Analysis-Chart

#### Climax
Audrey discovers the Plant can talk, and is bitten.

#### Rising Action
Action continues to rise as Seymour continues to feed the Plant blood. Each time the stakes are higher, and the tension thickens.

#### Denouement
- Audrey Dies.
- Seymour feeds Audrey to the Plant.
- Seymour scarifies himself to the Plant.

#### Conflict
Conflict begins with the Plant biting Seymour, and Seymour agreeing to feed it blood.

#### Resolution
Everyone is Dead. Urchins close the story.

#### Exposition
Prologue- Act One Until “Grow for Me”.

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33
**Aristotelian Analysis-Narrative**

**Exposition**

The *exposition* of the play begins with the prologue and informs the audience that this play takes place in the present time. The Urchins are then introduced as the Greek Chorus of the piece and are used as catalysts to deliver the bulk of the exposition. The exposition continues through Act One, Scene One, as well as the songs *Downtown* and *Da Doo*, all explaining the origin of the main characters and, most importantly, the Plant.

**Conflict**

The main *conflict* begins when Seymour is pricked by the plant and he makes the initial decision to feed the plant his own blood.

**Rising Action**

The action continues to rise throughout Act One, Scene Two, and the songs *Ya Never Know* and *Somewhere That’s Green*. In these songs, we learn of the overnight success of the flower shop, and Audrey’s hope that this success might take her out of Skid Row and land her in the idealistic suburbs. As the action rises in Act One, Scene Three, we meet the sadomasochistic Dentist, and see for the first time his abuse toward Audrey. This abuse drives Seymour further down the road of obsession in creating a life in which he can provide for Audrey. He sees the plant as his ticket to success. The plant soon grows too big for Seymour’s blood and requires a full body. In Act One, Scene Four, Seymour visits the Dentist with the intention of killing him but is pleasantly surprised when the Dentist suffocates himself in his gas mask. The action continues to rise as Seymour feeds the Dentist to the Plant in the final scene of Act One. The continued success of the flower shop is demonstrated in the opening of Act Two. As the
act progresses, the guilt and pressure of success begin to consume Seymour and things begin to spin out of control.

Climax

When Seymour leaves the flower shop to get the Plant some meat, Audrey enters the shop and speaks with the plant for the first time. The plant manipulates Audrey into coming close to him with the water pot, and he begins to attack Audrey. Seymour enters and saves her from being completely eaten. This is the Climax of the show, for everything up until this point has been done for Audrey. When Audrey is terminally hurt, there is no longer any reason for Seymour to long for the success the plant can offer, and the action begins to fall.

Denouement

The action begins to fall as Audrey professes her true love for Seymour and dies in his arms. Seymour mourns the loss of Audrey and no longer has any desire to live. He makes the decision to sacrifice himself to the plant and join Audrey inside.

Resolution

The Urchins, or Greek Chorus, resolve the story and warn the audience of the power of the plant and kindly warn the audience “Don’t Feed the Plants”.
**Structure of Script and Score**

*Little Shop of Horrors* follows the traditional form of a book musical. The show begins with a musical prologue and then launches into a book scene. Following this first dialogue scene, another musical number is introduced. This alternating pattern continues throughout the show flowing smoothly in and out of spoken dialogue and musical text. When the character’s emotions become too big for the spoken word, he expresses emotions through music. After he reaches his musical climax, he returns to the spoken word to further the plot. This sequence and pattern is detailed below in the breakdown of the structure of the entire libretto and score.

**Table 8: Relationship of Script and Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act-Scene</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Song</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prologue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Little Shop of Horrors</em>: Introduces the audience to the Urchins and the mood of the play; this establishes the Urchins role as the Greek Chorus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act One - Scene One</strong></td>
<td>Audience is introduced to Mushnik, Seymour and Audrey. We learn Mushnik is the owner of the shop on Skid Row, Seymour is his clumsy assistant, and Audrey is his flighty clerk.</td>
<td><em>Downtown (Skid Row)</em>: Sets the mood and environment of the play. The desperation of the characters is told, and the troubled times are highlighted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seymour’s experimental plant is revealed, and the attraction of the plant to customers is discovered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act One - Scene Two</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Da Doo:</em> The origin of the mysterious plant is revealed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fact this plant could bring in money is established. Mushnik, Audrey and Seymour see dollar signs for the first time in many years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Grow For Me:</em> The Plant has stopped growing so Seymour pleads with it to produce. Seymour accidentally pricks his finger on a rose, and the plant perks up. Seymour feeds him a few drops. The feeding cycle begins.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour is a guest on a radio talk show, illustrating his celebrity status.</td>
<td><em>Ya Never Know:</em> The overnight success of the shop is illustrated through the excitement of Mushnik and Seymour. Their dreams appear to be coming true.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey is late for the radio broadcast, and it is discovered she was being abused by her sadomasochistic boy friend. The Urchins urge her to leave the relationship, but she resists, saying that she cannot get a better guy.</td>
<td><em>Somewhere That’s Green:</em> Audrey shares her dreams of having a stereotypical suburban life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Act One - Scene Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Closed for Renovation:</strong></th>
<th>The success of the shop allows the company to renovate. This is the audience’s first view of the human sized plant.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audrey and Seymour have their first intimate conversation where Seymour asks Audrey on a date. However, Audrey has a preplanned date with her sadomasochistic boyfriend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orin Scrivello D.D.S is introduced to the audience through a short interaction with the Urchins.</td>
<td><strong>Dentist:</strong> The sadomasochistic tendencies of Orin Scrivello are exposed through the story of his life. His attraction to pain and suffering from an early age is discovered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour meets Orin for the first time and does not know how to deal with him. Orin is aggressive and abusive toward Seymour. His violence and temper toward Audrey is also revealed and seen first hand. His role as a villain is established.</td>
<td><strong>Mushnik and Son:</strong> Mushnik discovers he would be nothing without Seymour and his plant and asks Seymour to be his surrogate son, to repay him for all the years of hard work. It is simply a ploy to get Seymour and, more importantly, the plant to stay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The plant speaks for the first time saying “Feed Me”.</td>
<td><strong>Feed Me:</strong> This song illustrates the true motives of the plant. We see for the first time this plant is a fully functioning creature and has plans bigger than being a show piece.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orin abuses Audrey verbally, and slaps her on the face for forgetting her jacket.</td>
<td><strong>Feed Me Continued</strong> Seymour decides that Orin is “plant food”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Act One - Scene Four**

| Seymour enters the Dentist’s office with a gun. Orin is fearless and thinks Seymour is simply afraid of seeing a Dentist. The true sadomasochistic Dentist is revealed through the dental torture of Seymour. His Nitrous Oxide addiction is also revealed. | **Now (It’s Just the Gas):** Orin appears in a Nitrous Oxide bubble. The bubble gets stuck, and Seymour has to make the decision to help him or let him die. Orin suffocates and falls down dead. |

**Act One - Coda**

<p>| Seymour is seen feeding body parts to Audrey II. | <strong>INTERMISSION</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act Two - Scene One</th>
<th>The Urchins help heckle customers into the shop. The shop is redecorated and it is apparent that the business is booming.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Call Back in the Morning:</em> The enormous success and prestige of the shop is illustrated through a series of high profile phone calls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour reveals a leather jacket he bought with his new wealth, and Audrey has an attack. Seymour explains he is just looking for her approval.</td>
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<td><em>Suddenly Seymour:</em> Their true love for each other is shown in full blossom as they pledge to take care of each other. They kiss for the first time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Through a series of off stage events Mushnik has discovered that Seymour fed Orin to the Plant. He threatens to go to the police.</td>
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<td><em>Suppertime:</em> The Plant convinces Seymour to lure Mushnik into the plant. The plant then eats Mushnik.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Two - Scene Two</td>
<td><em>The Meek Shall Inherit:</em> The celebrity of Seymour is revealed as well as the temptations that go along with it. Seymour is tempted with contracts and money, but they all mean continuing to feed the plant. He is afraid Audrey will not love him if he is poor, so in the end, he agrees and signs the contracts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act Two – Scene Three</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seymour has a mental breakdown regarding the demands of the Plant. The plant needs another human body and Seymour refuses to provide. He agrees only to sirloin.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Sominex/ Suppertime:</em> Audrey is lured into the shop while Seymour is away. She hears the plant talk for the first time. The plant convinces Audrey to get him some water, but it is a ploy to get her close enough to entangle in the vines. She is trapped and falls into the mouth of the plant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour enters just as Audrey is being put in the Plant’s mouth. He wrestles her out of the mouth but she is hurt.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Somewhere That’s Green:</em> Reprise: Optimistic Audrey asks Seymour to feed her to the plant so she can finally be somewhere that’s green, and she reminds him that this way he can still take care of her.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour feeds Audrey to the plant and breaks down. The final philanthropist, Patrick Martin, offers Seymour a deal to breed small Audrey II’s. Seymour confronts the plant and begins to cut up the plant. The plant resists, and Seymour eventually jumps in to be with Mushnik, Orin and Audrey.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Finale:**
The Urchins, or Greek Chorus, sum up the story and warn the audience of their future fate. “Don’t Feed the Plants”.

<p>| | |</p>
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|        | **Finale:**
The Urchins, or Greek Chorus, sum up the story and warn the audience of their future fate. “Don’t Feed the Plants”.
|        |        |
Micro-Analysis of Scenes and Songs

Act One, Scene Three

Super Objective: To overpower those around me and seduce them into my power

Narrative

In Act One, Scene Three, Orin makes his first appearance on the stage. In this scene there are 11 individual beats. Orin’s super objective for the overall scene is “To overpower those around him and seduce them with his dominance”. The first beat contains lines 1-18, and the objective is to lure/bait. He enters the stage and immediately strikes an Elvis pose. Throughout the scene he exudes sexuality and lures those around him into his game. Beat 2 contains lines 19-36. The objective switches to yield. The girls get defensive, and Orin must yield them temporarily. Beat 3, lines 37-49, Orin regains control and the objective is to entice both the Urchins and the audience with hip rolls and pelvis thrusts. In Beat 4, lines 50-62, the objective switches to shock. Orin raises his game and wants to shock the audience with his motions and behavior. Beat 5, lines 63-79, is to electrify all those around him and give them chills of desire. Beat 6, lines 80-90, switches to a reflective beat, where he prays to his deceased mother. In beat 7, lines 91-109, the objective is to probe Seymour for information regarding the plant. This is done through physical and mental games. Beat 8, lines 110-123, brings out the more violent side of Orin, and his objective is to scold Audrey. His sadistic side enjoys being in control over her at all times, and he uses both words and physical strength to teach her a lesson. In beat 9, lines 124-133, the objective is to bully Seymour and tease him with brut
force. Beat 10, lines 134-136, the objective is to scold Audrey further when she doesn’t say the right thing. In Beat 11, lines 137-150, the objective is to intimidate Seymour one last time and make it clear who is the stronger person.
**Dentist- Song Analysis**

The narrative below is to supplement the graph provided breaking down the musical super text of the song, *Dentist*. In this narrative, as well as subsequent song analysis narrative, the following abbreviations for musical dynamics will be utilized: *pp* (Pianissimo-very soft), *p* (Piano-soft), *mp* (Mezzo piano- moderately soft), *mf* (Mezzo forte- moderately loud), *f* (Forte- loud), and *ff* (Fortissimo- very loud).

This piece is written in the key of F and has a meter of 4/4, common time. The first section has been entitled “intro” and consists of measures 1-2. These first two measures are a vamp that is labeled “tame” and consists of only percussion. It sets the feeling and rhythm for the entire piece. Measure 3 starts when the dialogue is finished, and Orin steps center to begin.

The first section, A, begins with the guitar’s entrance in the pick-ups to measure three and contains measures 3-20. This is a fairly simple section musically, with a consistent eighth note rhythm to keep the tempo for most of the piece. The only musical variation lies in the three note pick up to each phrase played by the guitar. This acts as a catalyst for the character to go on with the thought process after finishing each sentence. The character can think of these notes as a voice interjecting speaking the line, “Oh really, tell me more”. This continues through most of section one; however, in measure 11 the eighth note rhythm is pitched on an A, which is a new tone from the monotony of the F, G alteration. This implies that the piece is gaining momentum, and the singer should as well. This change from F to G to A to F to B and then all the way up to C acts as the catalyst sending the song into Section B. The melody line consists of two sections. Pattern One is measures 3-12 and section 2 is measures 13-19. These rhythm patterns will return later in the song.
Section B consists of measures 21-35. This section has a very distinctive pattern. The accompaniment is a four-measure pattern consisting of three measures of a dotted quarter note/eighth note/ quarter note/ quarter note with the fourth measure ending with a quarter note followed by a quarter and half rest. The melody line also has a distinct pattern. It consists of a four-bar pattern. Melody line three is used in measures 20-23 and 24-27 and has a chord structure of F, Dm, Gm, C7. Then a new number four melody line is presented in measures 28-31 (Gm/C/Am/D7) before number three returns in a shorter two bar version. These patterns are important to recognize so the actor is aware of the musical phrasing and can build on each of these sections.

Measures 36-46 return to a variation of section A, A1. The difference in this section from that of A is there is a larger build in the last two measures that has a “gliss” marked in the bass line. This gliss should provide the actor with the motivation to explode into the next section. This gradual “gliss” should be physicalized by the actor in turns of growing into the explosion.

This momentum of this “explosion” lands the song in a completely different key by the time we reach measure 47. Measures 47- 60 are labeled B1. This section returns to the form of section B but the new key of G. This section is similar to section B, but the higher key should imply an increase in energy and importance. The actor must treat this key as a change to elaborate on section B. The only significant change comes in measure 58 when, instead of ending the section with ½ of section 3 as in the original section B, it cuts the section short and launches into section C. This cutting short of the established pattern draws attention to the audience. It is jarring, because we are expecting to return to the original pattern. The actor must be aware the audience is expecting something else.
than what he is about to provide. This gives the actor a great deal of power in this section and must be executed with determination and purpose.

Section C consists of measures 61-67. It is a short, six-bar section that breaks the pattern of 4 that the entire song is built on. This section standing alone creates the effect of an “aside” from the rest of the piece. This can be valuable information for the actor. It is the section in which Orin prays to his mother, which makes perfect sense when analyzing the super text of the score. The score completely supports this moment that appears to come out of nowhere.

The next section is a quick return to the first three bars of the B section. However, after three bars, we jump into the Coda. The Coda is measures 70-79 and contains no bass line. It is simply a tambourine line of a quarter rest/eighth note/eighth note/quarter rest/quarter note. This simplicity emphasizes the idea the song is slowing down and finding some resolution. The stinger in measure 79 gives the number the final punch and acts as if the book is being pounded shut. This intense sense of closure should be echoed in the physicality of the characters.
Dentist- Song Analysis Chart

*Key of F

*4/4, Common Time

Overall Form: Intro/A/B/A1/B/C/B2/Coda

Intro Vamp
Measures (1-2)

Section A
Measures (3-20)

Phrase #1
Measures 3-12

Phrase #2
Measures 13-20

Section B
Measures (21-35)

Phrase #3
Measures 21-27

F/Dm/6m/C7
Phrase #4

Measures 28-31

Gm/C/Am/D7

#3 Variation

Measures 32-35

Section A1 (36-46)

#1 Variation

Measures 36-46

Section B1 (47-60)

Phrase #3

Measures 47-54

New Key: G

Phrase #4

Measures 55-60

Section Cut Short in regards to "B".
Figure 1: Dentist Song Analysis Chart
Dentist- Lyric Analysis

Howard Ashman is not known for his witty lyrics, or complex linguistics, but instead for the simplicity and accessibility of his language. One of the reasons he made such a great lyricist for animated films was his ability to use words to paint a picture for his audience without getting lost in the language. Little Shop of Horrors is no exception.

The Dentist piece has several rhyme schemes. In section A the rhyme scheme is AA/BB/CC/DDD. This starts the piece with a very distinctive feeling of rhyme. Rhyming every line exposes the rhyme scheme right away and usually implies a lesser intelligence for the character than that of a complex rhyming scheme. This can be directly applied to Orin. Though he is an educated “professional”, he is a “simple” man. His language is not complex. This rhyme scheme illustrates this from the beginning. There is also a great deal of alliteration in this first section. The “b” and “p” explosive sounds are used a great deal and imply a sense of aggression.

Section B has an AA/BB rhyme scheme; however, the pace is different. The words are placed on lines 1, 3, 5 and 7 instead of every line. The lines not containing rhyme repetition are used to emphasize the fact this character is now a professional “dentist”. Repetition is effective to emphasize the comedic element of this Elvis worshiping, sadomasochist getting his Dentist’s license. This repetition must be emphasized to achieve the full comedic effect.

In the second section B, the rhyme pattern is broken. For the first time an alternating rhyme scheme is used, which could imply an increase in wit and humor. The character is now playing with the audience and knows it. The rhyme scheme is A/B/A/B/C/C/. This is a bizarre pattern because it is not completely alternating. He is
switching it up just enough to keep them on the edge of their seats. Just as you are expecting an alternating rhyme, he closes the section with a consecutive rhyme.

The Final section has a “sandwich” rhyme scheme. Only consisting of four lines, the pattern is A/BB/A. This final section once again teases the listener into thinking the rhyme scheme is going in one direction, but then stops, makes a U-turn, and drives in the opposite direction. The repetition of both sections B and C, between Orin and the girls is an echo loyal to the doo-wop groups of the 50’s. This back and forth dialogue creates a cheering team feeling between the girls and Orin.
“Dentist”
Little Shop of Horrors
Ashman/Menken

Figure 2: Dentist Lyrics Chart
Act One- Scene Four

Super Objective: To achieve climax through dental torture.

Narrative

In Act One, Scene Four, Seymour visits Orin in his Office. The super objective for the scene is to achieve climax through dental torture. The sadomasochist in Orin loves to see his patients anxious and in pain. From the moment Seymour walks in the door, the goal is to make him enjoy the pain of the dentist’s chair. The first objective in beat 1, lines 1-8, is to dissect Seymour for information and find out why he is there. In beat two, lines 9-26, the objective switches to torment. Orin wants to torment Seymour with the idea of the pain he is going to endure. In beat 3, lines 27-50, the purpose is to electrify Seymour with excitement and assurance of the procedure. Orin is so excited in beat 4, lines 51-69, that he wants to seduce all around him, even the drill. In beat 5, lines 70-103, the only objective is to climax over the elation the gas provides him. He is high as a kite and feeling great. Every movement and gesture is affected by this “high”. The laughter in this scene is such a crucial element to the plot that each laugh must be defined and must be specific. In beat 5, there are four laughs that must be defined. The first laugh’s objective is to electrify and is voiced on a “HeHe”. The second laugh’s objective is to probe and uses the “o” sound, HoHo. The third laugh is voiced with an “ah” HaHa, and the objective is to stimulate. The final laugh’s objective is to burst and has a Paaa delivery. Beat six, lines 104-122, has an overall objective to cultivate. The three laughs
objectives are to cajole, to massage and to explode, and are voiced HoHo, HaHa, HeHe respectively. The variety of these laughs is crucial to the overall development of the scene, because if there is no variety, the comedic value of the scene is lost. By providing an objective you can create contrast, and it is the variety and unexpected delivery that makes the scene successful. In beat 7, lines 123-144, the objective is to plead. Orin must plead for his life. In beat 8, lines 145-154, Orin resorts to brow beating Seymour. He gives up on being saved, and his sole objective is to brow beat. He then drops dead.
Now (It’s Just the Gas) - Song Analysis

This piece is written in the key of B flat and has a meter of 4/4. The first section is the “intro” and consists of the first two measures 1-2. The dynamic marking is \( f \) right at the beginning, which creates a powerful entrance. This is appropriate because it is the moment in which Seymour contemplates killing Orin. These measures can be looked at as Seymour’s inner dialogue breaking out with a vengeance.

The first section, A, consists of measures 2-16. This section has a wide variety of dynamic markings: \( Mp/ff/mp/p/ff/f \). These drastic variations imply the uncertain and spastic nature of the character. He cannot make up his mind and neither can the dynamics. This section has two distinct melody patterns. The first is labeled 1 and is used twice in four measure blocks. (4-7 & 8-11). The section time is a variation because it is one measure shorter. This change in the pattern draws attention to the entrance of melody section #2 in measure 12. This section is a build into the defeat of his own will. His determination builds upon each phrase only in the end to give up in measure 25. This is emphasized in the \( ff \) crescendo into measure 25.

Section B consists of measures 17-24 and is simply a musical interlude that prepares for Orin’s entrance in the gas mask. This section contains no melody line but a fast-paced underscoring that acts as a catalyst into the discovery of the gas mask being stuck.

Section C consists of measures 25-35 and is made up primarily of eighth and sixteenth notes. It is a spastic, faced-paced section. The fact that Orin is beginning to suffocate and his breathing is becoming irregular is completely outlined in the musical
score. Through this ten-bar section the tempos and rhythms change. The section begins in 4/4 time, then in measure 29 switches to ¾, then to 4/4 in measure 30, ending in 2/4 in measure 33. At the end of measure 32, railroad tracks (///) stop the tempo completely. This irregular tempo directly echoes the fact his breathing is not regular, and the actor can use this musical knowledge to supplement his breathing choices.

Section D returns to 4/4 time and the faster tempo of section A and is marked “Tempo I”. This entire section is marked mp. There is an underscoring of a variation of section C in measures 40-43.

In measure 44 the piece returns to a variation of section C. Section C1 contains measures 44-56. Once again there are a lot of tempo changes that echo Orin’s failure to receive oxygen. The meter begins in 4/4 and switches to ¾ in measure 48. Measures 50 and 51 contain a ritard, and measure 54 is pp and marked “poco a poco”. The piece then ends with a chilling fff stinger. The tempo changes and the lack of “stability” give the actor a great deal of knowledge regarding the breathing techniques and placement of the character’s downfall and deterioration. The musical super text is what gives the actor the blue print for this deterioration. It is all there in the dynamic changes and the meter fluctuation.
Now (It's Just the Gas) - Song Analysis Chart

*Key of B Flat
*4/4, Common Time
Overall Form: Intro/A/B/C/D/C1

Intro
Measures (1-2)

Section A
Measures (2-16)

Phrase #1
Measures 4-7

#1 Variation
Measures 8-11

Phrase #2
Measures 12-16
Figure 3: Gas Song Analysis Chart
Now (It’s Just the Gas)- Lyric Analysis

This song relies much less on rhyme and more on patter. It is a patter song, and the amount of words spouted out within the given meter is the gimmick. The song begins with long phrases. Ashman alternates syllable combinations, but each line has 12-14 syllables of dialogue. Compared to the average 6 or 7, this is a mouth full of words. When Orin is speaking, the song becomes less patter and more about the rhymes, which is appropriate considering the man is suffocating to death. To have him spout out 14 syllables a line would not make much sense. His pattern is 6/7/4/4/8/7/8/8/11/11 for both verses. In the end, Orin’s phrases are extremely short: 3/5/3/5/1/1/1/1/1/1. This decrease in the meter directly correlates with his decrease in breath. The meter gives the actor what is needed to make this dialogue believable.

Though Seymour does not rhyme, Orin has several sections of rhyme. In this piece the pattern of rhyme is close together. AA/BB/CC is used in the first verse, and in the second verse, A/B/A/B/C/C/DD is used. These patterns go along with the fact that the character is dying. His breath is short and so is the distance between the rhymes. His brain is dying and he does not have the mental ability for complex rhymes. There are some randomly placed internal rhymes that add wit, such as “sappy, happy dope”, but they are not abundant.
A great deal of explosive sounds such as “p” and “b” are also used to emphasize every word and create a sense of panic. In order to create a picture, there are a great deal of analogies made such as “Chuckle like hyenas in a zoo” or “giggle like a sappy, happy, dope”. Repetition is also used a great deal to emphasize the title of the song, “Now”. This is an urgent situation, and repetition is a great device to illustrate the fact everything must happen “Now”.
"Now (It's Just the Gas)"
_Little Shop of Horrors_
Ashman/Menken

**SEYMOUR:**

```
NOW DO IT NOW!
13 WHILE HE'S GASSING HIMSELF TO A PALPABLE STUPOR.
12 THE TIMING'S IDEAL AND THE MOMENT IS SUPER.
14 TO READY AND FIRE AND BLOW THE SICK BASTARD AWAY!
```

```
NOW DO IT NOW!
13 JUST A FLICKER OF PRESSURE RIGHT HERE ON THE TRIGGER
6 AND AUDREY WON'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH THAT PIG FOR ANOTHER DAY.
```

```
NOW FOR THE GIRL
NOW FOR THE PLANT?
NOW YES, I WILL!
BUT I CAN'T
```

**ORIN:**

```
DON'T...
BE...
6 FOOLED IF I SHOULD GIGGLE
7 LIKE A SAPPY HAPPY DOPE.
4 IT'S JUST THE GAS
4 IT'S GOT ME HIGH
8 BUT DON'T LET THAT FACT DECIEVE YOU
7 ANY MOMENT I COULD DIE!
8 THO' I GIGGLE AND I CHORTLE
8 BEAR IN MIND I'M NOT IMMORTAL
11 WHY THIS WHOLE THING STRIKES ME FUNNY
5 I DON'T KNOW
(laughs)
```

```
11 'CAUSE IT REALLY IS A ROTTEN WAY TO GO.
```
Figure 4: Gas Lyrics Chart
**Act Two- Scene Two**

**Super Objective:** To massage Seymour and peddle him into signing a contract.

**Narrative**

In Act Two, Scene Two, three separate and distinct characters visit Seymour and offer him money for promoting the Audrey II. These characters are Bernstein, Mrs. Luce, and Skip Snip. These characters are all played by the same actor. The super objective for the scene is to massage Seymour and peddle him into signing a contract. Though each character has the same super objective, they all go about their task in a slightly different manner. In beat 1, lines 1-30, Bernstein’s objective is to *coerce or coax* Seymour into accepting the contract. In beat 2, lines 31-70 Mrs. Luce’s objective is to *fawn over* Seymour. She coddles and kisses Seymour to win his affection. In beat 3, lines 71-85, Skip Snip’s objective is to *grease or butter up* Seymour into signing the contract. Beat 4, lines 86-119, is Seymour’s self-reflective verse in which he contemplates the consequences of his actions. In beat 5, lines 120-128, the objective for Skip Snip is to *gloat/revel* in the success of landing the deal.
Meek Shall Inherit- Song Analysis

This piece is written in the key of C and is done in cut time. Though this is a long piece, the form is one of the most simple in the score. The key of C is appropriate for its simplicity. The piece is broken down into eight sections but only three variations. The overall form is: A/B/A1/B/A2/Bridge/B2/B3.

The first section, A, consists of a melody line of three parts. Measures 14-23 make up melody line #1. Measures 24-31 comprise melody line #2, and measures 32-38 compile a #2 variation adding an additional measure to finish the phrase. This pattern is seen for each of the three characters of the piece. The gimmick is that all of these characters are the same actor, and the musical phrasing accompanies this idea of equivalence.

Section B consists of measures 40-55. This section is the trio section in which the girls sing in two-part harmony in the first three section B’s. This adds a nice variety to the sound but not a complex sound. This section is divided into four bar phrases: 40-43, 44-47, 48-51, and 52-55. Once again, the simplicity and easy going nature of the piece is emphasized through the key signature and the lack of dynamic or tempo changes.

Section A returns in measures 68-92, and Section B returns in measures 94-109. Section A returns for the third time in measures 118-142; however, the pattern is broken in measure 143 when the section B chorus does not begin but instead the Bridge is inserted. The Bridge represents Seymour’s self-reflective time. The dynamic changes for the first time in measure 160 and is marked mf. As Seymour’s aggression increases, so does the tempo. In measure 176 a ff dynamic is marked, and the tempo continues to gradually increase. In measure 192, there are railroad tracks (//) and a drastic dynamic
change of pp. When the song resumes in measure 194, the section is marked “Ad lib” and “lyrical”. The aggression of the piece has stopped with a thought of Audrey. The key changes for the first time to that of A. The music specifically outlines the boundaries of this moment for the actor. The light that Audrey represents and the completely different man he is when he thinks of her. This key change emphasizes this discovery. With the last word in measure 204, the character has found peace with his decision and the music echoes this returning “A Tempo”.

Section B2 (208-221) consists of the traditional two-part harmony B section, with a new added layer of dialogue from Seymour and Skip Snip. This section ends short and a B section is repeated in measure 222. At this time, three-part harmony is heard for the first time. The entire song the composer has denied the audience the fulfillment of the three part chords, but, in the end, to highlight the resolution of the situation, the harmony is granted. This musical moment is powerful and must be highlighted by the actors. It is a moment of discovery and conclusion.

Overall, this piece depends on the similarity of each section to highlight the comedic element of the same actor playing each role. The actor must create separate characterizations, but the musical super text remains the same. It is not until the conclusion when all three characters triumph over Seymour that the music reaches its complete complex potential.
Meek Shall Inherit - Song Analysis Chart

*Key of C Major

*Cut time

Overall Form: A/B/A1/B/A2/Bridge/B2/B3

Intro Vamp
Measures (1-13)

Section A
Measures (14-39)

Phrase #1
Measures 14-23

Phrase #2
Measures 24-31

#2 Variation
Measures 32-39
Section B
Measures (40-55)

Phrase #3
Measures 40-43

#3 Variation
Measures 44-47

#3 Variation 2
Measures 48-51

Phrase #4
Measures 52-55

Dialogue Vamp (56-67)

Section A1 (68-93) Reference above

Section B (94-108) Reference above
Figure 5: Meek Song Analysis Chart
Meek Shall Inherit- Lyric Analysis

As with the musical super text, this piece is about simplicity and conformity. This number is based on the comedic principle of the same actor playing several roles with characters all wanting the same thing. The lyrics follow this principle by following a specific pattern.

The rhyme scheme for every character, including the Urchins’ Chorus section, is A/B/A/B/CC. This pattern creates a sense of conformity and only adds to the comedic effect when the same actor comes out in a different costume to deliver the same lyric pattern. The language is extremely simple: fine-mine, do-too, guy-by, lover-cover. The intelligence of these characters is not in the rhyme word choice but, instead, in the fact the rhymes are alternated and spread out. It is much harder to create alternating rhymes than consecutive rhymes. These characters are witty and carefully creating their sentence structure.

The meter is true throughout the piece. The verses consist of an 8/7/8/7/8/7/8/8 pattern and the chorus of an 8/10/8/10/8/10/9/10 pattern. The 9 meter sentence adds just enough variety to the established meter that attention is drawn at the end of the phrase.

This piece does not use explosive sounds but instead a lot of soft consonant alliteration such as “send someone” and “college campus”. Repetition is abundant in the use of the word “Meek”. This word is used four times in the chorus. The idea that Seymour will be eaten alive for his meek qualities is inescapable in this piece.
“THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT”
Little Shop of Horrors
Ashman/Menken

BERNSTEIN:

8 HEY, SEYMOUR KRELBORN, YOUR PRINCE YOU
5 MY NAME IS BERNSTEIN
5 I'M WITH NBC
8 I CAME DOWN HERE TO CONVINCE YOU
10 TO DO A WEEKLY T.V. SHOW FOR ME
8 "SEYMOUR KRELBORN'S GARDENING TIPS"
10 FOR HALF AN HOUR, ON SUNDAY'S, AT FOUR
9 T.V.'S FIRST HOME GARDENING PROGRAM
10 YOU'LL MAKE A MINT AND OUR RATING WILL SOAR!

GIRLS:

8 THEY SAY THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT
7 YOU KNOW THE BOOK DOESN'T LIE
8 IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF MERIT
7 IT'S NOT DEMAND AND SUPPLY
8 THEY SAY THE MEEK GONNA GET IT
7 AND YOU'RE A MEEK LITTLE GUY
8 YOU KNOW THE MEEK ARE GONNA GET
8 WHAT'S COMIN' TO 'EM
BY ANYWAY

MRS. LUCE:

8 I'D LIKE A WORD WITH YOU, LOVER
10 I'M SURE YOU KNOW ME...
8 THE EDITOR'S WIFE
8 WE WANT YOUR FACE ON THE COVER
10 OF THE DECEMBER THIRD ISSUE OF LIFE
8 YES, THE FRONT OF LIFE MAGAZINE
10 NOW THAT'S AN HONOR WE SELDOM DO GRANT
8 WE'LL SEND SOMEONE DOWN,
10 LET'S SAY THURSDAY
10 FOR SHOTS OF YOU AND YOUR BEAUTIFUL PLANT.

GIRLS:

8 THEY SAY THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT
7 YOU KNOW THE BOOK DOESN'T LIE
8 IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF MERIT
IT'S NOT DEMAND AND SUPPLY
THEY SAY THE MEEK GONNA GET IT
AND YOU'RE A MEEK LITTLE GUY
YOU KNOW THE MEEK ARE GONNA GET WHAT'S COMIN' TO 'EM
BY AND BY.

SNIP:

FORGET THE CABLE WE SENT YOU
IT'S NICE TO MEET ME.
THE PLEASURE IS YOURS.
NOW LET MY FIRM REPRESENT YOU.
WE WANT TO BOOK YOU ON LECTURING TOURS.
COLLEGE CAMPUS, ROTARY CLUB.
THE KINDA BOOKINGS MY OFFICE CAN DO.
SHOW THE PLANT, THEN TALK, ANSWER QUESTIONS.
IT'S EDUCATIONAL, LUCRATIVE TOO.

SEYMOUR:

MY FUTURE'S STARTING
I'VE GOT TO LET IT
STICK WITH THE PLANET AND GEE.
MY BANK ACCOUNT WILL THRIVE.
WHAT AM I SAYING?
NO WAY, FORGET IT!
IT'S MUCH TOO DANGEROUS TO KEEP THAT PLANT ALIVE!

I TAKE THESE OFFERS.
THAT MEANS MORE KILLING.
WHO KNEW SUCCESS WOULD COME WITH MESSY, NASTY STRINGS?

I SIGN THESE CONTRACTS.
THAT MEANS I'M WILLING.
TO KEEP ON DOING BLOODY, AWFUL THINGS!
NO! NO!
THERE'S ONLY SO FAR I CAN BEND!
NO! NO!
THIS NIGHTMARE MUST COME TO AN END!
NO! NO!
YOU'VE GOT NO ALTERNATIVE,
SEYMOUR OLD BOY.
THOUGH IT MEANS YOU'LL BE BROKE AGAIN.
AND UNEMPLOYED,
IT'S THE ONLY SOLUTION,
IT CAN'T BE AVOIDED!
THE VEGETABLE MUST BE DESTROYED!

BUT THEN...
THERE'S AUDREY,
LOVELY AUDREY,
IF LIFE WERE TAWDRY AND IMPOVERISHED AS BEFORE
SHE MIGHT NOT LIKE ME
SHE MIGHT NOT WANT ME
WITHOUT MY PLANT,
SHE MIGHT NOT LOVE ME ANYMORE!

GIRLS:
THEY SAY THE MECK SHALL INHERIT

SEYMOUR:
WHERE DO I SIGN?

GIRLS:
YOU KNOW THE BOOK DOESN'T LIE

SNIP:
RIGHT ON THE LINE

GIRLS:
IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF MERIT

SNIP:
THAT'LL DO FINE

GIRLS:
IT'S NOT DEMAND AND SUPPLY

SNIP:
THIS COPY'S MINE

GIRLS:
YOU'LL MAKE A FORTUNE,
WE SWEAR IT

SNIP:
COULDN'T GO WRONG

GIRLS:

Section B2
Figure 6: Meek Song Lyrics Chart
CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS OF ROLE

Character Analysis- Orin Scivello D.D.S.

External Characteristics

Appearance

Orin’s appearance is that of an Elvis impersonator. He is dressed in a biker’s leather jacket and wears tight black jeans. His black hair is done in a pompadour style with “Vitalis” greased back hair. If a snapshot is taken of Orin, it should seem as though he could be appearing on a Las Vegas stage singing *Hound Dog* and *Jailhouse Rock*. Once he takes off his leather jacket, it is revealed he is a Dentist; however, the white smock is the only thing that implies that this man is a professional Dentist. He still appears to look like a 50’s rocker playing dress up.

Movement

Though Orin’s appearance is right out of an Elvis biography, his movement is less of an impersonation. Orin certainly has Elvis tendencies and has embodied specific Elvis movements such as the pelvic thrust and the hip sway; however, it is important to realize he is not simply an Elvis impersonator but instead a completely unique and separate character with layers of Elvis tendencies. In other words, simply watching Elvis movies or concerts is not enough to create the character of Orin.
Finding the Center

The first step to creating the movement of the character is to find the character’s center. Christopher Vened suggests that you must first establish the main disposition of the character. In Orin’s case, his main disposition is that of arrogance, self-importance, and power. Vened suggests a list of possibilities for a character’s center, but the one that best fits Orin is that which places the center in the solar plexus. “The center of vital energies and powers is located in the solar plexus. It is the most powerful center in the body. You can activate this center instrumentally by tensing the muscles of your solar plexus. You would use it whenever your character’s activity is intensely alive, forceful or impetuous….to assume the carriage of a vain person, exalted and lofty in expression, curve your chest upward, pumped up by the air of self-admiration and self-importance. Your posture is extensively extended, and you have the sensation of both tension and lightness of the body” (Vened 37-39). This sensation of both “tension and lightness of body” works perfectly for Orin. He is rigid and tense but also moves around with a smooth arrogance. Placing his center in the solar plexus illustrates his proud and arrogant nature.

Character Movement- Weight, Tempo Space, Rhythm, Gesture

Step Two in creating the movement of the character is to establish the weight, tempo, space and rhythm of the character as described earlier in this document in table 4 of the section “Challenge of Creating Multiple Characters”. These guiding questions were used to create the specific qualities pertaining to Orin’s movement.

Orin’s weight is heavy, strong, firm, tense, indulgent and resistant. He moves with a sense of pride and uses his weight to fully ground himself. His tempo is quick, sudden
and short. His tempo is so fast and jarring that it often scares people and makes him very uneasy to be around. His space is straight, direct and rigid. He has a purpose and goes for it. His rhythm is irregular, always causing people to second guess his movement. He is both rigorous and spontaneous, unsteady, erratic and staccato. Everything he does has a sharp punctuation which both surprises and scares the people he is around. Orin’s gestures are extremely expressive. His movements are wide and frantic. His moves are fast and unpredictable. His aggressive and unstable emotions are demonstrated through his quick and unpredictable gestures.

**Character Walk**

Step Three is to establish a specific character walk. Vened suggests several walks, two of which Orin embodies: “belligerent walk” and “swaggering walk”. A belligerent walk is “forceful, sudden, aggressively direct, expressing eagerness to fight, growing in intensity”. A swaggering walk is “a broadly swaying stride, hardy in manner, expressing a bold, impudent, or arrogant attitude” (Vened 43-44). Orin embodies a combination of these two walks. He is both forceful and aggressive, while still having an arrogant swagger.
Character Temperament

Step four in creating the overall movement is to determine the temperament of the character. Vened suggests asking yourself the question: “What is the habitual emotional response or reaction of my character” (Vened 47). Vened presents many suggestions, two of which fit Orin Scrivello:

- “Fierce Temperament: wild, forceful and aggressive. He lacks self-restraint and control: he’s impulsive, hasty, and violent. He is always agitated and restless, charged by both excess of vitality and intensive dark emotions. He is irritable and angry, often exploding with blind rage” (Vened 47).

- “Anxious Temperament: frightful, uncertain, and insecure, apprehending some unidentified but anticipated danger. He is emotionally tense and agitated. He has quick, nervous reactions and is erratic, hyper, or even frantic” (Vened 48).

Orin contains a combination of both of these temperaments. He is impulsive and restless while he is also quick, hyper and frantic. He has sharp and sudden temperament changes. When he is upset by Audrey, he can switch attitudes completely and snap at her with rage. His temperament is both fierce and anxious, which can be an interesting, but frightening combination because of its unpredictability. Orin’s temperament swings back and forth like a pendulum, and you never know where it will stop.
Physical Behaviors

Step five is derived from David Alberts’ The Expressive Body: Physical Characterization for the Actor. This step consists of creating a list of physical behaviors for each isolated part of the body. Orin’s head movements are sharp. When he “pans” from person to person or object to object, it is quick and sharp. His face often contains wide eyes, an “Elvis” lip quiver, very little smiling, a slightly clenched jaw, and a bob of the head from side to side. His hands are rigid and have the two middle fingers curled while the other three fingers are extended. The arms are bent but rigid. The lower part of the arm is horizontal and stiff. They are bent in toward and across the body most of the time. He carries a great deal of tension in his shoulders keeping them raised most of the time. His pelvis both thrusts forward and bumps sideways to accentuate his dialogue. A circular motion of the pelvis is also used frequently to express sexuality. His legs tend to be spread apart creating a fairly wide stance. His knees often buckle in to create the Elvis “loose knees” stance.

Vocal Quality

The vocal qualities for all of the characters have been examined using Robert Barton’s “Basic Parts of a Vocal Life”, which can be found in table 7 of Chapter III, Orin’s vocal quality is harsh, full and breathy. It is an aggressive, rough sound. It resonates in the front nasal cavity and has a forward placement. The tempo is medium paced, increasing with emotion or aggression. The vocal tempo directly relates to the pace and rigidity of the movement. Orin’s vocal quality is slower and warmer when he is relaxed and much faster paced and harsh when he is upset. His tempos swing like a pendulum depending on his mood. The rhythm of the speech is very choppy. He does not
give each word equal emphasis. In “Elvis” fashion, he draws out several syllables, just to create a special sound, not to emphasize the particular word or its meaning. He pauses at the end of each phrase drawing it out and adding an “ah” aspirate sound. The overall rhythm is jerky and erratic, not smooth or predictable. Orin’s articulation is lazy. He runs each word into the next. It is a lazy, or, in his mind, a “suave” or “cool” way to speak. He draws out each ending and emphasizes the “ah” sound. The pitch of the speech is lower than most people’s everyday speaking voice. He inflects up at the end of each line, and as his blood pressure raises, so does the pitch of his speech. The volume also varies depending on his mood. When he is calm and collected and trying to be “suave”, he talks a lot softer than when he loses his temper and wants to be exceptionally intimidating. Volume is not a problem when he wants to be loud. His voice resonates firmly from the diaphragm, and his projection intimidates all those around him. His nonverbals include a lot of grunting and laughter. He uses laughter both for his own enjoyment and to mock others. He also uses an “ohhhhh” sound to intimidate and belittle people before speaking to them.

**Internal Characteristics**

**Character Background**

Orin comes from an extremely proud Catholic, Italian family. His mother was a true Italian mother, and he was her prize child who could do no wrong. He has rebelled his entire life and never fit into any specific social circle. He idolizes Elvis for his popularity and, more specifically, his ability to control and mesmerize women. He perceives this a power over the opposite sex. Having been subservient his entire life,
never having power over anyone, he thrives on the idea of controlling another human being.

Sometime in his early childhood Orin was abused by his father. His father was a loose canon who often times brought out his aggression on Orin. His mother and father had gotten married at 18 and never had a strong marriage. In the Catholic/Italian culture, lovers married young and according to their parents’ recommendations. They were not betrothed but married after pressure from their parents. The marriage quickly dissolved, but divorce was not an initial option due to their strong religious ties. Instead, the aggression and misery of the marriage was taken out on Orin. His mother never laid a hand on him, but his father often abused him and told him he was worthless. By age 10, Orin’s father walked out of the house and never came back, but it was too late for Orin. The abuse had done its damage. The years of abuse and mental degradation caused Orin to rebel and in turn desire a power of his own. The sadomasochistic tendencies began to show when he was in his teens and would torture small animals. Abuse tends to begin with animals and later in life move onto human beings. Orin would “shoot puppies with a bb gun”, “poison guppies” and “find a pussy cat and bash in its head” (Ashman 41). He would abuse these animals to feel better about himself and give himself the sense of power he always lacked. His mother was beside herself and encouraged him to be a dentist, because she wanted to channel this desire for causing people pain. She had no idea he would enjoy the torture so greatly.

As Orin became an adult, he found relationships that would satisfy this hunger for power. He looked for women who would play the subservient card and would ask for the pain and suffering he was dying to hand out. The years of child abuse gave him an
unconscious rage and desire for revenge. In essence, he is re-enacting the traumas of early childhood through role reversal. Now he is the one with the power and control.

**Examine the Super Objective, Actions and Motivations of the Character**

The above description of Orin’s background of abuse is really the entire foundation of the character. The day his father first laid a hand on him his life was changed forever. His super objective is to overpower others in order to, in turn, empower himself and feel superiority over another human being. His actions are those of abuse and ridicule. His actions are not meant to hurt the other person but instead to create the feeling of power he lacked in his childhood. He is now physically able to overpower others, and find pleasure through this power. His motivations lie in his history of child abuse, and he will forever thrive in the game of power play, due to his deep emotional traumas. He wants to create the feelings of shame, humiliation and embarrassment in others that he felt at such a young age. It is all about the hierarchy of power. He was once on the bottom and now thrives to be on the top.
Character Analysis- Bernstein

External Characteristics

Appearance

Bernstein’s appearance is that of a used car salesman. He always has a cigar in his mouth regardless of whether or not he is smoking it. It serves as a habitual oral fixation. He wears a hat and a colorful business suit. His personality is shown through his hideous outfit and his “mop-like” unkempt hair.

Movement

Finding the Center

Bernstein’s center is without question in his pelvis. Everything leads with his pelvis, creating a bend back, with the pelvis in front of both the feet and the head. The body forms a “C” shape. A secondary center is his chin. “A center at the tip of your upturned chin may serve you for an arrogant, impudent, audacious, or conceited character type” (Vened 36). He is an arrogant, sleazy used car salesman type, and he keeps himself close to the ground. His center being so low in the body makes him slouch and bend. He very rarely ever stands up straight.
Character Movement- Weight, Tempo Space, Rhythm, Gesture

Bernstein’s weight is heavy strong, firm, tense, indulgent and long. He commands the scene by his weight and presence. He is firm and indulges in his words and attitude. He is a swindler, and his entire being radiates his profession. His tempo is quick and spastic. He moves all around the stage without any apparent motive. He is spastic and unpredictable. His movement in space is wavy and rigid. He zigzags around topics and movement. He is a showman who can trick people with his quick way with words. His rhythm is irregular, free, spontaneous, and erratic. He is as fast with his mouth as he is with his movement. His rhythm is steady at a fast pace. He moves back and forth like a pendulum. His gestures are wide, expressive, and all over the place. No one should stand too close to him for fear of being hit or punched with his expressive flaring arms.

Character Walk

Bernstein’s walk is best described by Vened’s “Jerky Walk”. It is “rigid, abrupt, and hard; heel stomps the ground, body makes sudden turns and sharp motions in a zigzag like pattern” (Vened 44). This walk is accentuated by the pelvis being the center, creating a rigid and abrupt “C” shaped walk. The pelvis being front and center creates a wide spread stance and a long stride. He is a sleazy salesman who appears to have just gotten off a long ride on the saddle of his favorite horse.
Character Temperament

Bernstein has similarities in temperament to that of Orin. They both share the fierce temperament; however, the major difference is that Bernstein also possesses the enthusiastic temperament. He is much more positive and happy than Orin. He is a salesman who loves himself and everybody else. He is not frightening or menacing in the least. He is a well-balanced combination of the following temperaments

- “Fierce Temperament: wild, forceful and aggressive. He lacks self-restraint and control: he’s impulsive, hasty, and violent. He is always agitated and restless, charged by both excess of vitality and intensive dark emotions. He is irritable and angry, often exploding with blind rage” (Vened 47).
- “Enthusiastic Temperament: highly excitable and energetic. She is positive, hopeful, and optimistic” (Vened 47).

Physical Behaviors

Bernstein’s head movements are swift and sharp. They jerk around a lot, and swoop in an up and down, side-to-side manner, never knowing where he will turn next. His face has a clinched jaw, holding an always present cigar in place. His eyes are squinted and shift from side to side quickly. He has a right sneer to the cigar and a tense mouth. His chin protrudes forward, and he never smiles. His hands are always flaring around, and his fingers are always bent but not closed. His arms are open and out, always moving with expression. When the cigar is placed in his hands, it is held between the left middle and index finger. And that hand then becomes dominate with expression. His
shoulders are hunched backward and tense. His pelvis is thrust forward at all times, and his legs are bent at the knees.

**Vocal Quality**

The basic vocal quality used for Bernstein is heavy, rough and deep. He has an extremely harsh tone and most of the power comes from the throat. He constantly has a cigar in his mouth, and the tone reflects the fact he has smoked for years. The tempo is of varying speed. When he wants to emphasize a point, it is slow and labored; but when he is just spouting pleasantries, it is extremely fast. His vocal tempo is directly reflected in his movement. His rhythm is extremely irregular. Different words have different emphasis, and sometimes the emphasis does not make sense with the language. The overall rhythm is jerky and erratic. He also takes unnecessary pauses in odd places. His articulation is bad because most of the time he has a cigar stuck in his mouth. This creates a closed or clenched jaw sound in his vocal pattern. His pronunciation is reminiscent of a Midwestern car salesman. He does not have an ethnic specific accent, but his accent is unique. He speaks this way to sound “exotic”, only it doesn’t work. Instead, he is presented as an overbearing fool. His pitch is high and not pleasant. He is hard on the ears. His volume is also hard to listen to because it is so loud. He is a loud mouthed “barker”. Everything is shouted. His nonverbals are loud, guttural “Ahhhh’s” and “Ehhhhhh’s”.
Internal Characteristics

Character Background

Mr. (Samuel) Bernstein is approximately 48 years old and started his career as a used car salesman. He did not go to college but instead graduated high school and began selling cars at a lot his uncle owned. He rose in the ranks very quickly because of his fast talking wit. He had clients signing the dotted line before they knew what hit them. He then needed a change of pace, so he applied for an entry level job at NBC New York as a talent scout. He was really good at locating talent and convincing them to sign the dotted line for a low price. He has been doing this for twenty years, but he still carries the “used car salesman” mentality with him. He has one brother, and both his parents are still alive. He is extremely intelligent when it comes to the business, but, in other areas, he lacks knowledge. He views himself highly and has very high self-esteem. He bases his self-worth on success in the business. He does not have a wife or children. He works 80 hours a week.

Super Objective, Actions, and Motivations

Bernstein’s super objective is to overpower his customers and convince them to accept the deal without hesitation. He is a man who knows what he wants and how to get it. Every action he takes is highly persuasive and strong. His motivation is to get the sale. He does not care about his clients, he only cares about securing the sale. The consequence of his actions is that he does not have a family to share his life with because his career has always come first.
Character Analysis- Mrs. Luce

External Characteristics

Appearance

Mrs. (Gloria) Luce is a classic example of high society. Complete with a white pearl necklace, she wears a “Chanel” suit and carries wads of money in her purse. She is dressed as a socialite and has bright red hair that she wears in a bob. A matching hat with a small black veil covers her head.

Movement

Finding the Center

Mrs. Luce’s center is in her breasts. She is a well-endowed woman and wants people to notice. The pearl necklace draped across her chest draws attention to her center. She leads with her chest as she walks and most movements and expression originate in this area.

Character Movement- Weight, Tempo Space, Rhythm, Gesture

The weight or force of Mrs. Luce’s movement is light, weak, gentle, relaxed, indulgent and yielding. She is not at all an intimidating force. Her tempo is quick but sustained. She is quick to the point but knows how to linger in order to flirt properly. Her movement in space is straight, direct and pliant. Her rhythm is irregular, free, spontaneous, fluent and flowing. She is good with words and knows how to flirt with the best of society. She is lovey-dovey with everyone and loves herself very much. Her gestures are grand but close to the torso. She gestures frequently and her movements are
repetitive and predictable. She is proper and civilized. Her gestures directly reflect her loving nature.

**Character Walk**

Mrs. Luce has a combination of a “flitting walk” and a “floating walk”. A “flitting walk” is “light, quick, swift, and nimble”. A “floating walk” is “gentle, soft, fluently sustained sensual motion in an ebb-and-flow rhythm” (Vened 44). She is dressed in heels, which make a difference, and as she flits and floats across stage, she always leads with her breasts.

**Character Temperament**

Mrs. Luce is a cross between of an older high society country club flirt, and Robin William’s famous character, Mrs. Doubtfire. She is high class and was a vixen in her time, but she is also maternal and loving and ready to pinch your checks at any moment. Her temperament is a combination of a “jovial temperament” and a “charming temperament”.

- “Jovial Temperament: cordial and jolly. She is warm, hearty and robust. She is effusive, obtrusive, and loud in manners: embracing, kissing, and back slapping indiscriminately” (Vened 48).
- “Charming Temperament: sweet, lovely and alluring. Her energies and emotions are well balanced. She has a natural rhythm and dynamic life: vital and sensual, spontaneous and idle, content, affectionate, and kind” (Vened 48).
**Physical Behaviors**

Mrs. Luce’s physical behaviors are very flirtatious. Her head is either bouncing at various speeds or lying on the shoulder of the object of her affection. Her eyes are always blinking flirtatiously. She winks her right eye and wrinkles her nose. She is usually smiling large, showing all of her teeth. Her hands are usually in a closed fist position, except when she has her fingers extended to touch a nose or pinch a cheek. Her arms are bent and hugging her torso. Her shoulders are tight but are not raised. Everything in that area is very compact. Her pelvis moves from side to side as she walks. Her left leg bevels inward when she is standing still. Her left foot is often raised off the ground and her knee is rubbing against her upper thigh.

**Vocal Quality**

Mrs. Luce is proper and well-bred. Her vocal quality is light, thin, and a bit strident. It resonates from the upper sinus cavity. Her tempo is slow and smooth. Her vocal tempo matches her physicality in its easy, flowing nature. The rhythm of her speech is fluid and light. Her rhythm is not constant. She emphasizes specific words in each phrase. She enjoys the language and uses each word to flirt and be sensual. Her articulation is spotless. You can understand every word she speaks. Everything about her articulation and pronunciation is well-bred. She has a very slight, upper class, British accent. Her pitch is extremely high. She is constantly changing and varying her pitch, but it never goes below a medium pitch level. Her volume is medium and full of power. She projects from her diaphragm with great breath support. Her non-verbals are high-pitched laughs and giggles. She cackles like a school girl and flirts with each laugh. She also does a varied pitch “Ohhhhhhhhh” to draw attention and be flirtatious.
Internal Characteristics

Character Background

Mrs. Luce is a wealthy woman. She is the wife of the editor of *Life* Magazine. She not only married into money but was raised in an extremely affluent household. She is a “country club” wife dressed in a designer suit with pearls always draped around her neck. She grew up in a very large home in suburbia. She had a brother and a sister. She was raised by the servants instead of her parents. Her parents were always away on vacations, and when they were home, they paid little attention to the children. She was well educated but did not attend college. She was married at 18 and has been a socialite housewife most of her life. She spends her days at luncheons and shopping. She is a smart woman and donates a lot of time and money to charity. She does not do the hard labor; she is the social figure of the organizations. She has high self-esteem and prides herself on her high fashion and etiquette. She is a flirt with men. Though she was married at 18, her husband does not give her the attention she needs, so she looks elsewhere. It is innocent attention, but attention nonetheless. She is so high in society she is used to getting what she wants and does not take “no” for an answer. She may seem like a “dumb blonde” at times, but it is all a game. She always knows exactly what she is doing.

Super Objective, Actions, and Motivations

Mrs. Luce’s super objective is to seduce those she comes in contact with and extract her desired action. She flirts to get her way. She leans on her “victims” and bats her eyes and kisses their cheeks. Her intense femininity puts men under a spell and
charms them into doing exactly what she desires. She does this in order to make her husband happy and make more money. Money drives her lifestyle and she will do anything to keep that going. The results of her actions are that she achieves her desired result of gaining more clients and, in turn, making more money. If she fails, her pride is hurt but nothing else. She is not interested in making friends, just money.
**Character Analysis- Skip Snip**

**External Characteristics**

**Appearance**

Skip Snip is dressed in a trench coat and brown hat and appears a lot more "normal" than the previous characters. He is a fast-talking, but calm, laid back businessman. He wears black rimmed glasses.

**Movement**

**Finding the Center**

Skip Snip’s center is in eyes or forehead. This character is very cerebral and is a fast talker but not an eccentric man like the other characters. “For a shrewd man with a keenly penetrating mind, you may imagine a sharp, piercing center located a few feet outside your eyes and forehead” (Vened 36).

**Character Movement- Weight, Tempo Space, Rhythm, Gesture**

Skip Snip’s weight is light, strong, firm, relaxed, indulgent and yielding. He knows what he is doing, but he is so conceited and sure of himself that he does not have to work very hard at his job. His tempo is slow and sustained. He moves in a straight, direct manner and has a regular, free, steady, and fluent rhythm to his movement. He gestures only to accentuate his points. When he does gesture, it is away from his torso and predictable movements. He does not show emotion on his face or in his movements.
Character Walk

Skip Snip has a slow yet purposeful walk. His walk is best described as “gliding”. A “gliding walk is elegant, smooth and slow, with an easy, flowing, long and sliding stride” (Vened 44). He does not worry with keeping up with anyone else. He walks at his own pace and is not in a hurry. He is sure of himself and has no need to follow anyone else’s lead.

Character Temperament

Skip Snip has a calm and collected temperament. He does not let anyone affect his mood. He is the one who has control over other people and uses his intelligence to accomplish his goals. He best meets the description of a “serene temperament”.

- “Serene Temperament: peaceful, tranquil, and calm. He is bright and lucid. He lacks excitement and emotional agitation. She is impersonally kind and friendly” (Vened 48).

Physical Behaviors

Skip Snip’s movements are very fluid. When he moves his head he does so with a full nod. His head moves up and down, side to side, in one complete motion. His eyes are usually slightly squinted. He has a relaxed, loose jaw. His hands are close and held close to his chest. His arms are bent and inward. He has loose wrists which often go back and forth to illustrate a point. His shoulders are relaxed and move forward and back randomly. His pelvis is often forward and leg straight with his knees slightly bent.
**Vocal Quality**

Skip Snip possesses a much more “standard” vocal quality. This vocal quality is closest to that of my own. He uses a full, but light sound. It resonates from the pharynx. It is a calm, “throat” based sound. It is similar to that of a romantic radio announcer. It is smooth and sly. The tempo is slow and calculated. It is a fairly constant tempo with a regular delivery. The rhythm is fluid, and no words are particularly emphasized. His articulation is good but not overly crisp. It is much more laid back than other characters. There is no specific regional or ethnic dialect. The pitch is medium, never really going too far up or down from the original pitch. His volume is also stable. It stays at a medium roar throughout. He has very few non-verbals. Unlike the other characters, this character is OK with silence!

**Internal Characteristics**

**Character Background**

Skip Snip “William Morris Agency”. His name is not simply “Skip Snip”; it is “Skip Snip- William Morris Agency”. He sold his soul to the company many years ago. Skip Snip is about 40 years old and started working for the company right out of college. In college he majored in business and speech communication. He was at the top of his class and was hand picked by William and Morris to be an intern. He has climbed the corporate ladder and is now one of their top agents. He has recruited all of the agency’s top clients and knows it. He carries himself with a great deal of self-pride and often is perceived as arrogant. He has a wife but no children. He works so much that he very
rarely spends time with his wife. He feels his responsibility as a husband is to provide for his wife financially, and he succeeds in that duty. He is so self-confident that he is extremely calm, collected, and laid back. He believes his wit is all he needs, and when he speaks to people, it is done in a soft, but articulate manner. He has a high intelligence and wants people to know it.

**Super Objective, Actions, and Motivations**

Skip Snip’s super objective is to manipulate his clients with his intelligence and charm and puppeteer them into signing the contract. His actions are calm and collected and highly persuasive. He looks people in the eye and talks very close to them. He has a contract in hand and places it in front of their faces. He is smooth and pulls their strings in just the right direction. His motivation is to get the sale and acquire one more successful client for the corporation. The consequences of his actions are that he does not have a lot of friends. He does not worry about the good of the client but instead only the good of the corporation. Just as his clients are his personal marionettes, the corporation is the master puppeteer. He sold himself to the corporation years ago!
**Character Analysis - Patrick Martin**

**External Characteristics**

**Appearance**

Patrick Martin is the stereotypical geek scientist. He is the head of World Botanical Enterprises and looks like it! He wears a company jacket, wire-rimmed glasses, and has red, shaggy hair. He does not care about his appearance, only his intelligence. He is usually only seen wearing the company uniform.

**Movement**

**Finding the Center**

Patrick’s center is in the top of his shoulders. Not in an upright, proud position, but in a slouched, low position. His center is shooting out of the top of the shoulders, but in order to make that beam go forward, he slouches so that the top of the shoulders are vertical to the ground. His center is very low to the ground; therefore, he slouches. He has been leaning over a lab table for so long, his back has become curved and he leads with his shoulders. This position is slightly reminiscent of a hunchback.
Character Movement- Weight, Tempo Space, Rhythm, Gesture

Patrick’s weight is light, weak, and gentle but still has some tightly-wound tension in there as well. His tempo is quick, sudden and short. He does not move to the beat of anyone else’s drum, only his own. He is a scientist who is used to being in his own solitary world, and he moves in this manner. His special pattern is straight, direct and rigid. His rhythm is regular, bound, rigorous, and staccato. He is very much to the point. His gestures are specific and predictable. He does not express his emotions through his gestures but is more mechanical.

Character Walk

Patrick has a specific and calculated walk. He knows what he wants and is on a mission to get it! It is best described as a “brisk walk” which is “vigorous, quick and sturdy” (Vened 43).

Character Temperament

Patrick’s temperament is one of excitement and purpose. He is determined he will develop the biggest thing ever to hit the botanical world, and he is obsessed with the idea. He is a man on a mission. His temperament is best described as an “ecstatic temperament”.

- “Ecstatic Temperament: obsessive and possessive. He finds fulfillment in the state of being overpowered with intensive euphoric emotions, usually delight and bliss” (Vened 48).
**Physical Behaviors**

Patrick’s head movement is all done from a bent neck. He is so used to looking down at a chemistry set that his neck is permanently bent downward. His eyes are squinty, and he is constantly pushing his glasses up his nose as they fall down. He has pinched nostrils and keeps his lips pressed together and pursed. His fingers are usually spread and cupped in a “C” position. His arms are bent and are kept close to the torso. His shoulders are completely tense and raised. They are practically at his ears at all times. His pelvis is usually slightly forward, and his legs are bent at the knees.

**Vocal Quality**

Patrick’s vocal quality resonates completely from a nasal, forward placement. It is a classic “nerd” voice that is full, strident, large and tight. It is not a pleasant tone. His tempo is fast-paced, and his physical movement does not connect with his words. When he gets excited, the tempo increases. His rhythm is fairly standard, but it too increases and decreases with the amount of passion and excitement Patrick possesses at the time. His articulation is fairly good but not overly specific. His pronunciation is fairly standard, but the intense nasal quality alters many of the vowel sounds. The pitch is high and uncomfortable. It stays high the majority of the time, only varying up and down within a few steps. His volume is loud and obnoxious. He projects well, but it is not a pleasant sound. His nonverbals are loud nasal” ahhhh’s” and snorts.
Internal Characteristics

Character Background

Patrick Martin’s best friend is the chemistry table. He has spent the majority of his life in a laboratory hoping to create the next biggest breakthrough in the science world. He has never had very good social skills and is extremely closed off to the rest of the world. He does not have close friends, though he visits his parents occasionally. These visits usually consist of telling them of his latest experiment. His intelligence has always been off the charts, and, as a result, he was an outcast. He was number one in his high school and college classes. He majored in chemistry and botany. When he discovered Audrey II on the news, he instantly began thinking of ways to mass produce the species.

Super Objective, Actions, and Motivations

Patrick’s super objective is to lure others into his plan of creating the greatest plant in scientific history. His experiments are his children, and he will do anything to make them successful. He does not consider the consequences of his actions; he only thinks of the success of the experiment itself. He has always wanted to be recognized by the scientific community and will do anything to get there.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

An average audience member watching live theatre often times does not realize the
detailed research and analysis that goes into each and every role in order to create a
truthful and interesting character. In each actor’s career, he will play a variety of parts,
some closely related to himself, and some so far off from his own individuality that he
must spend countless hours tapping into the emotions and life experiences of the
character. It is only through detailed research and analysis that character development is
truly solidified.

Overall, this thesis provided a look into the sadomasochistic life of Orin Scrivello
D.D.S, as well as a detailed show and character analysis of the musical comedy Little
Shop of Horrors. However this thesis is not only relevant to the character of Orin
Scrivello, but can also be used as a template for creating any role in any play or musical.
This template can be a guide to creating a diverse and detailed character. The only way
for an actor to fully immerse himself in the mental and physical life of another character
is through detailed research and analysis. After all, it is with knowledge that the actor
gains the power to truthfully embody the inner and outer workings of another character.
This thesis project can be a guide to that knowledge.
APPENDIX
COMMITTEE CHAIR
PERFORMANCE REPORT
MFA Thesis Committee Chair Performance Response

Mark Catlett
“The Dentist”/Assorted Minor Roles in “Little Shop of Horrors”
Seaside Music Theatre
Saturday, January 15, 2005 (First Performance)

Thursday, February 3 (Second Performance)

I attended two performances of “Little Shop of Horrors” to evaluate Mr. Catlett’s work. The first performance was on Saturday, January 15, 2005 (their opening weekend). The second performance was Thursday, February 3, 2005 (their closing weekend). This written evaluation of Mr. Catlett’s work will represent my response for both performances.

In the context of the show’s structure, the actor playing the sadistic dentist, Orin Scrivello, also portrays a multitude of minor characters:

- Homeless Man in the opening number
- Customer in Act One, Scene 1
- Mr. Bernstein, hotshot media maven from NBC in Act 2, Scene 2
- Mrs. Luce, wife of the Editor of “Life” Magazine in Act 2, Scene 2
- An agent from the William Morris Agency in Act 2, Scene 2
- Patrick Martin, representative of the Licensing and Marketing Division of the World Botanical Enterprises in Act 2, Scene 3
Thus, the actor must develop seven characters, even though he has been cast primarily as Orin, the Dentist. This was an excellent opportunity for Mark to test his training and performance skills to bring to life these people within a short rehearsal/performance period. Mark was successful in his demonstration of rehearsal process, performance technique, and intellectual understanding of the genre of the piece and managed to accomplish what he set out to do with this MFA thesis project.

At the first performance, the production was still suffering from technical problems, and these problems had an adverse effect on all the actors’ performances. Mark was hindered dramatically as Orin Scrivello in Act 1, Scene 11 when his gas mask began to fall apart, and he had to adjust his blocking to control the costume piece. Mark prevailed over the problem and never sacrificed the integrity of the scene, even with a major obstacle to overcome. This problem was solved in the second performance I saw.

Mark’s character work in the first performance was still a bit shaky and not grounded. His performance was more “caricature” in nature instead of fully-realized “characters.” With the distraction of technical problems (and a less-than-responsive audience), he overcompensated his performance and pushed out of frame, especially with Orin. Character motivations, obstacles, and tactics were not fully explored.

This was not the case in the second performance – all of Mark’s characters were more fully realized and had focus. Each character had clearly-demonstrated motivations, obstacles, tactics, and objectives. Each character was more physically realized, and I
could see clear differences in the way Mark approached each person’s movements and energy. His rapid transitions from one character to another in Act 2, Scene 2 (including unbelievably fast costume changes) were clear, succinct, and varied with vocal color.

The greatest area of improvement I saw in Mark’s performance was the clarity in his voice and speech work. In the early performance, there wasn’t a big variety of vocal tone. Most of the characters spoke at the same pitch and with the same intensity. As well, much of the articulation was unclear, and I lost a lot of Mark’s dialogue. In the second performance, those problems were corrected, and there was a nice variety of vocal tone, and the articulation was much clearer and exact. This clarity in tone and articulation became key ingredients for more expression in each of the seven characterizations Mark created in the course of the show.

One of Mark’s greatest assets is his ability to be part of the “ensemble” yet knowing when to be a “leading player.” He is a very giving scene partner and brings a fresh, vibrant energy to the stage, which other actors use to accentuate their performances. He has good, active listening skills and is always alive in the moment. During the group numbers, Mark was a solid member of “the team” and never did anything to take focus away from where it should be.

At the same time, Mark knows how to own a stage as a solo performer. He fills the theatre and enjoys his ownership of the time and space. This was most clearly evident when he performed his first solo, “Dentist!” The audience roared with laughter at his antics and was instantly charmed with his persona. There was a similar reaction to Mark
in the second act when he rapidly changed from one character to another at lightning speed. Audience appreciation of Mark’s performance was displayed with wild cheers at the end of the evening as he took his bow.

This was a wonderful opportunity for Mark to play “against type” and test his strengths and weaknesses as an actor. I think it has proven to be a rewarding thesis experience for him, and I look forward to reading his research work and hearing his oral defense on the nature of sadomasochistic behavior, which he used in preparation for his role as Orin.

Respectfully submitted February 4, 2005

Earl D. Weaver
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