

5-2012

A Broken Butterfly: Playing the Role of Daisy in Elmer Rice's The Adding Machine

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A Broken Butterfly: Playing the Role of Daisy in Elmer Rice's The Adding Machine

A Broken Butterfly: Playing the Role of Daisy in Elmer Rice's The Adding Machine

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Drama

By

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Missouri Southern State University
Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, 2009

May 2012
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ABSTRACT

This thesis will examine the process of acting the role of Daisy in Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine*. Rehearsals for this production began September 21 continued through November 20, 2011. The production was directed by third year M F A candidate Esteban Arevalo Ibanez and produced at the Kernodle Theatre by the University of Arkansas. The body of this thesis is constructed with a text and character analysis integrated into daily rehearsal journals, documenting the process of this production from auditions to the final performance. Through reflection and description of process, I hope to show the creation the actor goes through to develop a performance role.

This thesis is approved for recommendation
to the Graduate Council.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the many teachers who taught me the skills that made this thesis possible including: Shelly Wilson, Barbara Bohm, Mavourneen Dwyer, Glenda Arner, Dr. Jay Fields, Micheal Landman, Ann Lile, Amy Herzberg, and Jim Lile. Without your encouragement and challenges I would not have been able to capture this dream today.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father who has been in every audience I have ever had for quietly encouraging me and always supporting my dreams. To my grandparents who have driven to see every show no matter the content and always have a hug and a smile waiting for me in the lobby. And to my fella who helped me realize dreams I never thought possible.

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I. Introduction

This thesis will document my acting process and the events that took place for my portrayal of Daisy in *The Adding Machine*. It is made up of my journals and analysis work that break down the process by describing Daisy in third person, referring to her experiences and thoughts and only using “I” when acting goals or personal responses occurred. The analysis work is incorporated in the journals as they applied to the process, discussing character objectives that are driving the character through the piece and what it is that she needs and how she goes about getting it. It will be examining the themes of the play and applying them to Expressionism in order to incorporate them into my acting. Researching and defining the meaning of objects and places that are referenced within the play and what they mean to the character. This is just as much about my becoming a well-rounded actor as it is about the role itself. The journals are documenting my struggles and joys through the rehearsal process and what discoveries came out of it. This was a great learning experience and here is my attempt to put it in writing.

II. Auditions And Callbacks

8/21/2011 Auditions

I came into auditions having spent the summer perfecting my pieces in order to get the best thesis role possible. I met with Amy Herzberg, the head of acting at the University of Arkansas, and my mentor, twice before the audition. I had previously done a scene from Act One, Scene Two of *The Adding Machine* with Jared Hanlin in Michael Landman's Viewpoints class. It was the scene where the audience hears both Daisy and Zero's thoughts while they are at work. Amy had been informed that my portrayal of Daisy was great and really stood out in the class. Because of these comments she suggested that I piece together a monologue from that particular scene for auditions. I did and we set to work tackling the conflict of making an inner dialogue be active on stage and be focused on a partner. She also suggested I work on a couple of my acting habits, in particular focusing on leaving myself alone and not forcing a physical and emotional reaction. She wanted me to not allow for tension in my mouth, what she called energizing the mouth, but to let the emotion fill my body.

I auditioned at 1:00pm, the first slot of auditions for the day. I performed my three pieces and felt that I had done well. I was later informed by Amy that I had the best intro of the day. With *The Adding Machine* monologue I felt connected to my inner life, and it was my best performance. I settled into my environment and was on partner.

8/23/2011 Callbacks For *The Adding Machine*

I was called back to read for Daisy and Mrs. Zero. I rehearsed the reading beforehand with a partner to be prepared. I found that it was difficult to cold read scenes for this show. I had

recently learned a new technique in our Capstone class taught by Amy Herzberg. The class is meant to prepare us for all types of audition settings. The new technique was all about keeping your head out of the script and on your partner, reacting as much as possible. I discovered while reading Scene Two that Daisy's sadness runs deep in her psyche and is something that has plagued her for most of her life. The happiness she felt in Scene Seven, the afterlife scene, is a reverse from reality and is like a fairy tale for her, something she never could have dreamed of.

I took the moment work I had done at home by working with a partner and brought it to the stage, again feeling the ease of being Daisy or Mrs. Zero. I felt great about both of the cold readings. I always want to leave the stage feeling I did my best and that's just what I did. I made a choice with the opening monologue that Mrs. Zero is annoyed by life and her husband so I took my shoes off and used them as a tool to physically demonstrate my inner turmoil and it got a chuckle from the auditors.

My partner was Jared Hanlin for the jail scene between Mrs. Zero and Zero. I felt it was my best reading of her. The scene felt comfortable, staying on partner seemed easier, and actions were more specific. I wanted him to be filled with guilt and embarrassment. There is always comfort brought by personally knowing your scene partner. I read Scene Two; it is the inner dialogue work scene, as Daisy with Bob Hart. It proved difficult trying to keep my head up out of the script and to be on partner at the same time. When my head was up I had the added problem of where to look since I am supposed to be in my thoughts and not looking at an actual partner.

I am staying positive and learning from all of the scene work in callbacks. Overall, I felt I did well in the readings. I enjoyed exploring specific action choices, leaving myself alone to just be in the moment with what my partner gives me. I really pushed myself to do my best, and stay on my toes. I set goals for myself: staying on partner the whole time, leaving myself alone, and being in the moment. I wished to do my best in every reading and make it difficult for the director to choose other actors over me.

8/26/2011 Second Round Of Callbacks

The list for callbacks had thinned out. I was not called for Mrs. Zero. However, I was called back for Daisy and Lt. Charles. I was pushing for Daisy. I read Scene Seven with Maury Reed and had fun playing with the awkwardness of Daisy's new found joy and love. The phrase Esteban used to describe the scene was "broken butterfly", meaning that she isn't good at being happy, and, really, neither is he. This phrase really expanded my idea of her and allowed me to make strong physical choices with internal actions that sometimes contradicted one another: being elated but having trouble physically showing it, telling someone I love them but physically being as far away as possible.

Reading for Lt. Charles was awkward because I didn't connect to him. I portrayed him as a person who was just going through the day-to-day routine of their job that he always had something else better to do. Esteban made a comment afterward that he hadn't thought about the character the way I presented him. That was exciting to hear, but I wanted the role of Daisy.

8/31/2011 Reading For Justin Walker's Callback

Justin Walker had been out of town for auditions and callbacks and I was asked to read Daisy with him in Scene Seven. I enjoyed the experience because the more I read her the more layers I found in her inner life. The back and forth battle she is having in her head: "Here's my chance. It's finally here. What am I going to do? Can I do it?" Though she has a chance at being a new version of herself, she still hasn't lost all of her old personality of being short and hostile with him from when she was alive. In the afterlife, Zero reveals that he thought Daisy was sore, meaning mad at him, for sitting close to her in the delivery wagon one time because she moved away when he moved in. Daisy lashes back with, "Sore. What do you mean sore? I wasn't sore" (Rice; 101). She snaps back into that old Daisy anger. I will continue to find more layers of her psyche and how she lives in my body. I feel I am moving too much and that not all my movements are connected to what I am feeling or how I want my partner to feel in the moment.

III. The Rehearsal Process

9/21/2011 First Read Through Of *The Adding Machine*

I was informed that I received the role of Daisy. The cast met in Kimpel Studio 404 and were all asked by our director Esteban Arevalo, to write down things that stayed in our minds and questions that came up as we experienced our first read through of *The Adding Machine*.

1) Mrs. Zero and the wives around her live through the films they see, the fantasies they want.

What is lacking from their lives that would cause this to happen?

a) The first monologue shows the disdain Mrs. Zero has towards her current situation and her life. The only form of entertainment and exposure to the world outside seems to be films.

2) Daisy escapes into *The Devil's Alibi*. Why that film?

a) It was the last film she had seen and the most recent connection to what she wants. This film showcases the romance that she craves but will never have.

3) Is death the only true way out for Daisy in her opinion? Is there no other option for survival?

a) She seems to have an inability to change her circumstances or is lacking the tools to do so.

4) How old was too old for marriage in those days (1920's)?

a) It still seems to be a relevant possibility when it is brought up in the afterlife. It is something she still wants and something he feels is needed. She realizes she is too old to have kids but still remains hopeful for marriage, "I wonder—if you don't want kids—whether—if there's any way—"(Rice; 19).

5) What does it mean in this neo-1920's society for Daisy to be a working girl?

a) In the world Esteban was attempting to create, there are women working in the office. Daisy does state that if she was married to Zero she could quit working. She has a desire to not work and doesn't see work as her career. A clue from their current society suggests that if you are a married woman, you do not work but unmarried women do. According to *The Journal of American History*, "Long before the depression of the 1930's, married women left their homes to work in the factories and fields, in the homes of other women, and, increasingly during the twentieth century, in clerical and service occupations" (60).

6) How common were suicides?

a) Daisy mentions that she saw Pauline Frederick commit suicide in a movie so it is a relevant and open topic of the time. Daisy has no religious reservations about committing suicide but rather is concerned about how it will make her feel while she is doing it. In the Western world, males die much more often by means of suicide than do females, although females attempt suicide more often. Some medical professionals believe this stems from the fact that males are more likely to end their lives through effective violent means, while women primarily use less severe methods such as overdosing on medications. (Geddes; 170)

7) What does "taking a carbolic" mean?

a) Ingesting carbolic acid. "It is a corrosive poisonous crystalline acidic compound C_6H_5OH present in the tars of coal and wood that in dilute solution is used as a disinfectant" (Merriam-Webster).

8) What is the type of language Daisy uses with regard to the rhythm of reciting the numbers?

a) Elmer Rice has written Daisy with a dialect of the metropolitan working class, New York or Chicago style. She cuts out the use of dollars whenever possible. For example, "Aw,

don't be givin' me so many orders. Sixty cents. Twenty-four cents. Seventy-five cents. A dollar fifty. Two fifty. One fifty. One fifty. Two fifty. I don't have to take it from you and what's more I won't" (Rice; 10).

9) How long has Daisy been working next to Zero?

a) Fifteen years or so. Long enough for their working relationship to have evolved beyond the "honeymoon phase". Their relationship consists mainly of bickering now with the minimal exchange of words needed to do their work. "We used to be so nice and friendly together when I first came here. You used to talk to me then" (Rice; 17).

10) Was Daisy next to be fired after Mr. Zero since they worked together?

a) She isn't a high school girl so more than likely she would be next to be fired or even perhaps take a significant drop in pay.

11) Zero states that Daisy has begun to look yellow in the face.

a) People who have yellow skin normally are showing signs of having jaundice. There is nothing to indicate that Daisy was a drinker but possibly Zero was saying she had dull skin. He could be stating that she is in poor health and lacking youthfulness about her. And perhaps he's just being mean because he is unhappy in his own life.

12) What is Daisy's definition of the word "refined"?

a) Keeping herself as ladylike as possible in her mind which has made her shy and bitter rather than outgoing and sweet. Being forward would mean a person was easy and Daisy doesn't want that. She isn't bold and that's what men want. She also is waiting for the perfect man and wants to be perfect for him. Zero is the only fella for her but he's taken so she remains simple and refined. According to the Journal of Social History online, "Women remained unmarried not

because of individual shortcomings, but because they didn't find the one 'who could be all things to the heart'" (Berend).

13) What are the physical effects of ingesting Mercury?

a) According to Clarkson TW, and Magos L in a critical review, "When Mercury is ingested, it is dependent on the acidity of the Mercury and the acidity in a person's stomach that affects the outcome. Mercury is such a highly reactive toxic agent that it is difficult to identify its specific mechanism of damage, and much remains unknown about the mechanism. It damages the central nervous system, endocrine system, kidneys, and other organs, and adversely affects the mouth, gums, and teeth. Exposure over long periods of time or heavy exposure to mercury vapor can result in brain damage and ultimately death" (609).

14) What does the work whistle sound like?

a) The sound of a long hard day and her cue for years to begin and end her day.

15) Does Daisy wear a corset?

a) A girdle to keep everything in place allowing nothing on the body to move that shouldn't.

16) What do girls look like without a corset?

a) The twenties in America rang in the age of the flapper girls and the freedom they were expressing by wanting to wear more relaxed fitting garments and clothes, or what had previously been thought of as unladylike.

17) Does Daisy need to wear a girdle?

a) Daisy is an older woman of the time, being in her early to mid-thirties and because of lack of exercise and gravity over time; she may wear one to look like a trim lady.

18) Daisy has a line, "I seen Pauline Frederick do it once" (Rice; 15) in reference to suicide.

a) Pauline Frederick was a film actress at that time.

19) What causes Daisy to day dream while she is working?

a) Daisy has been at this job long enough that she can go on autopilot and still be working. It is what gets her through her day.

20) When Daisy reminisces of the company picnic, sitting under a tree with Zero, what does she envision the environment to be?

a) A romantic setting out of some film where there is just a slight breeze and it's not too hot or too cold.

21) What is the big delivery wagon for?

a) If they do accounts for big department stores like a Macy's or Sears Roebuck, then it would be the delivery wagon for their goods.

22) What does Daisy mean when she says, "Men—dirty pigs! They want the bold ones" (Rice; 22).

a) The opposite of the way Daisy perceives herself. Women who go after what they want and have no boundaries when it comes to sex.

23) Has Daisy ever been kissed? Had Sex?

a) Apparently not because she obsesses constantly about being kissed and being liked. In the afterlife sexual relations doesn't come up in conversation but that Daisy just wants to be kissed like in the movies.

24) Is *The Devil's Alibi* a real movie?

a) I am unable to find any information about such a film.

25) What does Daisy do after work?

a) It would unfortunately seem that she is always alone and contemplating what she doesn't have, while plotting or attempting ways out of her life.

26) Does Daisy have any friends?

a) She does not speak of anyone other than films and Zero.

27) Was Daisy at Zero's trial?

a) There are no direct lines referring to Daisy being at the trial. I feel she followed the case very closely and if she was there, she sat in the back unbeknownst to anyone else, just to hear and see him one last time. Facts: The store was closed for three days after the boss died. Zero died around 6 months later. Daisy killed herself two or three days after Zero's death.

28) What about the "country" appeals to Daisy?

a) Being in the metropolitan area, I doubt she has seen much of any sort of country setting. Again, she probably saw it on the big screen. Her name being Daisy, which is a flower a person could see in the wild, contributes to the idea of her not belonging where she is.

29) What type of music does Daisy hear in the fields?

a) Romantic French music. A sexy and fun accordion playing while they dance.

30) Daisy states that she has never been kissed on the mouth. "Not like that. I don't mean like that. I mean really kiss me. On the mouth. I ain't never been kissed like that" (Rice; 106).

a) A refined girl like her only allowed kisses on the cheek and forehead. Possibly only kisses from her parents.

31) How long does it take to die from gas and what does it do to your body?

a) The length of time depends on the concentration of gas. The symptoms build up from headache, to dizziness, to nausea, to convulsions, to respiratory arrest, which then leads to death. (Goldstein; 34)

32) Why does the sight of Shrdlu scare Daisy when she first sees him?

a) Seeing the way Shrdlu sits and wallows in his grief is a disturbing sight. He is rocking back and forth mumbling to himself. Daisy has never been around a crazy person like this.

33) Why does Daisy still call him Mr. Zero in the afterlife?

a) After so many years of calling a person a certain thing, it proves a hard habit for her to break.

34) Is Daisy happy or scared to learn Shrdlu is the infamous mother killer?

a) She is somewhat awestruck because she had read about him in the papers. He is a famous person in the afterlife and amongst other killers. She doesn't seem to be fearful of him after she learns his identity. Nothing else can happen to her now.

35) Daisy followed Zero for days in the afterlife. How long would that be in real time?

a) With no concept of time there seems to be nothing to go on to answer this.

36) In the world of *The Adding Machine* do people have free will or is everything predetermined?

a) In the play, there seem to be life cycles and people can keep repeating the same pattern but there are instances where one breaks from the cycle and creates a new path. The new path doesn't always end up the way a person may have hoped. I feel Daisy has stepped out of her cycle, but because of Zero, she is thrust back into it. There is little mention of a "God" and no mention of any form of religion. It seems each individual is best at creating their own idea of afterlife punishment. Daisy, however, never seemed to be fearful of the afterlife and we learn that in fact she was hopeful about the afterlife when she killed herself. She died hoping she would meet up with Zero and when she arrived in the afterlife she began her search for him. She had no reservations about suicide, a possible result of lack of religious values. Rather love is her

religion and driving force in life and death. Pursuing it could be considered a curse as evidenced in the end of the afterlife scene by her saying “I might as well be alive” (Rice; 119).

37) What makes up their “cycles of life”? Is there a connection to the existentialist thought with the myth of Sisyphus and the idea of the “cog”?

a) All of these philosophies came to the minds of the cast and line up with the ideas in the 1920's. Franz Kafka lived 1883-1924 (Franz Kafka Biography) and it seems he and other existentialists influenced Rice. It is clear he is making a statement about the then-current change in society. Rice was building a world warning of potential wars based on the then current political movements: Nazism and Fascism and, examining the current morale of society after the First World War.

After the reading, Esteban led a discussion about the play and asked what our thoughts were. We made a lot of character discoveries within the play while we read. The play is layered, voicing several opinions on the values of life. Throughout it are several Greek references such as the Elysian Fields, tragic life choices, thunderbolts from angered gods, and the cycling of souls. Lots of questions and curiosity about Daisy came up for me. This play deals with so many topics that it allows for a full bodied character to develop and complete a whole character arc, such as having Daisy's life changed from one stasis to another. The play reminded me of some of *The Twilight Zone* episodes in certain respects, i.e. the bizarre ideas and relationships, and the way people treat and look at each other. Esteban informed us that he is giving the play an expressionistic spin, placing it in the neo-twenties, grabbing onto the idea that the play is of another time. This role is a stretch for me in terms of style. I am aware that expressionist acting methods are different from those used in contemporary acting. The style is both internal and external but what sets Expressionism apart is that the external becomes a literal physical

expression of the internal. Esteban had a lot of ideas and thoughts on the world but was also very open to questions and other peoples' thoughts. He made me feel excited to get started on rehearsals.

Questions for us to continue to think about: what is the overall idea or theme of the play? Why is the universe and world against Zero? What did Daisy do after Zero left her in the fields?

9/22/2011 Watching *Metropolis*

Esteban had us watch the 1927 film *Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang with a screenplay by Thea Von Harbuto, to draw parallels between it and *The Adding Machine*. (Internet Movie Database)

“The mediator between hands and head must be heart.” The film began with this statement. The major question of the film was what separates man from machine? This is also the major theme of *The Adding Machine* though it is not as literal as the film. Every person in the world of *Metropolis* was watching the clock. All the clocks in the film counted down. It's like everyone was waiting for the next thing when it's just the same thing every day. This mundane lifestyle has affected them physically. Their movements were meticulous from head to toe, like a machine. Their feet have a particular style of movement, a constant shuffle step, while their heads are always hanging down and no one looks up. Why should anyone look up when nothing changes? They make sharp, exact, and efficient movements. They are all part of the machine in the same way Zero, Daisy, and the whole world in *The Adding Machine* are all just living the same thing day in and day out: a cycle. *Metropolis* hits upon the workers being slaves and being slaves “to the machine,” so the parallels are obvious.

In *Metropolis*, the Greek ideas of strength and youth being upheld in society were major themes from the beginning. To be a slave is a willingness to go in the pit and give in to the machine of life. The possibility for a change in the cycle came first when the assistant was fired and then immediately his body and movements morphed into that of a worker. Unlike *The Adding Machine*, religion was discussed and shown. It was used as a vehicle for the representation of freedom. The main character, Freder, is searching for religion, freedom, and escaping the “Tower of Babel” his father created. He then became the people's savior. Workers left messages saying “Wait for him he will come.”

This was “the” Expressionistic film of its time warning society that humanity is becoming alienated from itself. *The Adding Machine* is more specific, focusing on units of people and tracking a few lives out of many; ultimately using them to represent the big picture. The play also shows what can happen once a cycle is broken and free will is made available.

After viewing *Metropolis*, we were asked by Esteban: who were we rooting for and who was the protagonist? It seemed obvious at first that the film is asking what is for the greater good of man. After the “protagonist” stepped into the world of the workers, everything they knew came apart. In the film, the current world was completely industrial. Everyone was working for speed and efficiency with no motivation for a greater good. The boss would always be the boss and the workers would always be the workers. When religion was introduced, the idea of a higher being and another reason for living, the workers began to see that there could be more to their lives. The son of the big boss fell in love with the woman who was leading this religious idea. In the end the workers succumbed to their desires and quit working. By doing so their world fell apart. At the same time those above ground, where the bosses live, succumbed to their

desires of greed and debauchery. The boss' son and the woman came above ground with the workers. All people of the world were then challenged to live in harmony and with free will. It's clear that at the time this film was made, many questions were beginning to be asked, and through the vehicle of Expressionism they were voiced. The film and script both contained allusions to Greek mythology, as well as religion and business. The movements they used gave me a lot of ideas for the office scene, Scene Two, using the direction that efficiency is key and that there are no wasted movements when working. Feeling that in their world, there is no escape from the trappings of the job, that no one can step over their designated duties, and that their lives had been handed down to them. There are similar mentalities found in cults: group members that have no individual identity. The script asks the question, how does a person begin to break from those chains to be inspired for change? Is Zero a victim or does Zero have a choice to change?

9/23/2011 Set, Costumes, And Lights Shown

Today the designers for the show Ashley Harmon, scenic design; Kelly Henry, costume design; and Diana Kaiser, lighting design presented us with their renderings and models. This really helped to shed light on what was to come and what was implied by the look of the show. Set and costumes always affect movement and a good actor always knows where their light is. I was very excited to see the completed picture. My costume in the office scene is a long, drab, wool, blue dress with a matching, equally drab coat. The afterlife dress is very pretty. Esteban used the phrase that I become Zero's "ray of light" in the afterlife. Kelly, the costume designer, has me in this beautiful, simple, purple and pink dress with no sleeves that is made of light satin. I am excited about the costumes. My character's afterlife dress is very angelic and inspiring.

There are white squares repeated all over the unit set. It reminded me of the inside of a morgue, the many metal cabinets with dead bodies inside. This imagery is very fitting, I feel, since many characters in this show are dead inside. Cast members change out set pieces like the desks and the bed when needed. The character of Lt. Charles is the supervisor for all scene shifts and ensemble members and workers move the pieces. All set pieces and ensemble members will be in shades of white, black, and gray. The afterlife is the only time color will appear onstage and even then it is just the brown of the tree trunk. Ashley and Esteban want certain moments to be like seeing the story through Zero's eyes. Their idea is that the city makes for a crowded world and the afterlife is “soul laundry.”

We then asked about dialects since it is obvious Rice has written it in some form or slight variation of a big city accent, with words missing final letters or abbreviated, showing a class difference. The boss does not speak like Zero, Daisy, and the Numbers couples. When I first read the play I felt Daisy had a New York accent of some sort and many of the cast members felt the same. This dialect will be explored in varying degrees, depending on the character. I like the idea of a dialect choice indicating a working class level in society. It is not off base to choose a so-called “New York” dialect because several landmarks are referenced in the script.

9/23/2011 Potato-Through

Allow me to explain: Potato-Through is just moving in the space however the person feels motivated with no restrictions of any sort. Potato-Through was a great way to feel the space during scenes and explore moments. Many Viewpoints methods were also explored such as Architecture and Spatial Relationships. These exercises allowed for many acting discoveries.

Discoveries of Scene One: Mrs. Zero wants love from Zero and there are qualities of sweetness and innocence inside her. Mrs. Zero also brings up the word “refined” and her definition stems more from money. Scene Two: I explored varying the moments when Daisy looks at Zero and when she makes an effort not to. How close does she allow herself to get to Zero? I discovered physical gestures that can be repeated with her mantra of “I wish I was dead”? Maury, who is playing the role of Zero, and I played with Space Relationships and were on opposite sides of the room and then close together but not looking at each other. Scene Four: Zero makes some racist comments while the jury moved all about the space and began to alienate him. Scene Seven: Daisy asks where they are, not are they in Heaven or in Hell. She must not be concerned with those places or those concepts aren't a part of her thinking. The kiss had been built up so much in her mind that no matter how he kissed her on the lips, it would be magical and would reveal her womanhood. What was it like to catch up to him? Searching for Zero in the room proved frustrating and exciting because the struggle was worth it when Daisy finally got to see him. It's what gives her the boldness to confess everything to Zero. She put her mind to something and she succeeded again and again. When he began to change his mind, Daisy feels completely lost and has no idea what to do with herself. Zero is fulfilling the role of the tragic hero. His identity is tied to how he is viewed. He can't get past what others might think if they saw him and Daisy gallivanting around. He uses the term “refined” to make her do what he wants. He tells her to pull her skirt down because she wouldn't want others thinking she wasn't refined.

Questions to think about: would Zero have married Daisy if his wife died? And what would she have done with the scrapbook? Are Zero and Daisy products of their environment?

Having become more familiar with the director's concepts, I began my script analysis of the play. Again, the play is set in a metropolitan area with smog and mobs of people rushing around. We stuck with the decision to keep it in the neo-twenties, meaning an altered version of the historic 1920's, not a literal historical depiction of the era. Going off of dates and circumstantial evidence in the script, Daisy killed herself in the winter. Being an urban environment, everyone shown is working class or married to working class. Even Shrdlu had a middle class job and Lt. Charles and the Fixer both see their jobs as just a way to pass the time. Since the setting is placed in an imaginary version of the past, the political climate is not historically accurate. There are many religious overtones but with little mention of a God or gods. There is an idea that capitalism has taken people over, having a need to get the most for one's money, doing whatever is the most profitable endeavor. These concepts are proven when the Boss comes in and fires Zero because it would be cheaper and more efficient.

Daisy is a working class woman amongst men. There are other female workers but it is obvious in the play, and historically, that women were paid significantly less than men. The homemaker idea is still current stereotype for women. Mrs. Zero and the other Mrs. Numbers never speak of themselves as working implying that when a woman is married she no longer works. Daisy dreams of the possibility of marrying Zero so that she could quit working. Despite the belief that hard work will get a person far, this doesn't happen for Zero. Both he and Daisy had been doing the same job for years and neither ever climbed to a higher position.

With little mention of a higher being or an afterlife, many of the characters do not think of the lasting consequences of their actions. What If Daisy killed herself and never was able to catch up to Zero? What if Zero was never informed that he hadn't changed and his violent action

was to be expected from a soul who was getting worse? Would they have still done what they did? The world isn't driven by worth based on religion but more on how society views a person and how they are compared to others.

The meaning of the title is obvious; Zero is an adding machine and only serves one function. He can't seem to evolve into something more. However, the world around him is also part of a larger adding machine of time. Life choices affect you even in the next life, making the main theme of the play the choice to be a slave or to be free, to better your own life or be a slave to circumstance. The playwright is making the spine, the overall theme of the show, ask the question: can one learn from the past or are we all doomed to repeat the same mistakes? Daisy takes a risk and steps out of her cycle by revealing her love for Zero and will have to accept the consequences, no matter what they are. The play runs in an order that showcases all events that affect Zero and help to shift his life for better or worse. The scenes highlight the moments that affected his outcome and, in turn, inspired Daisy to take a chance and sacrifice herself for happiness. She leapt out of the cycle to change her life's course. She made a sacrifice that Zero was not willing to make.

Zero being born in this current life cycle is the initial event of the play and affects Daisy because she represents his "hope," the being that keeps him going. She may have been Lt. Charles' bargaining chip last time Zero was in the afterlife to get him to cross over to be reborn. The moment Zero made the choice to kill the boss, the Inciting Incident; this action spurred the opportunity for all people to make a new choice. They could decide to either choose their life's status quo or to truly say what is in their hearts and take action. Zero took a risk and it gave Daisy the courage that she could, too. He gave her hope that a change could happen. The Central

Event comes when he is given the choice to stay in the Elysian Fields with Daisy and dismiss what others may or may not say about them. This choice means everything to Daisy. She gave her life up for this opportunity and all he had to do was let go of his old self. For Daisy the Main Event happens when he leaves her in the fields because he is unwilling to let go of the old Zero. For the play, the Main Event is when Zero chases after “hope” yet again and goes on to be reborn. Daisy was his hope this last life cycle and he let her slip through his fingers. It won't be Daisy in his next life.

9/26/2011 Scene Two Work

Esteban began the rehearsal process doing table work with the scene and breaking it down with the cast. Maury and I discussed things we had thought about and decisions we had made regarding our characters.

Daisy repeats the line, “*I don't have to take it from you and what's more I won't*” (Rice; 10). The first time is out loud and the second is in her head. I can connect to the character reliving the fight in her head and saying the things she wished she had said. Zero and Daisy sit next to each other but neither of them is really present. They are both off in their minds going over things they should have done and things for which they can only wish. Esteban the director, Maury and I are playing with the idea of still saying the numbers while the other is day-dreaming and looking at the tickets for the numbers to be called out. The desks will be staggered. Three desks total will be arranged with one couple at each. A question was brought up: how long have they been working when the scene begins? The action seems to be in the middle of a long, ten hour day and they are at the point of day-dreaming and not needing to focus on their work. We

can use the tempo used to do the work to show emotional struggle or just frustration with the work day.

It is obvious to the three of us that the characters are working class. Both are fighting to make something of themselves in life, a very masculine quality. They have been working together for quite a while. Zero has been working there for twenty-five years and Daisy around fifteen to eighteen years. Daisy really believes in love and has put it so high on a pedestal that she can't ever reach it. She has huge expectations that have only caused her to be a wilted flower of disappointments. For Daisy, her refined attitude has caused her to be old fashioned and undesirable, to Zero and other men. This led to the idea that Daisy's objective is to feel or be worth something to someone. She is crying out for help but no one is listening.

With these thoughts in mind we came up with some blocking possibilities. The inner dialogue whisks the characters away and causes them to treat their environment as if they have been transported to another time and place. Moments where reality is broken, when Zero and Daisy are standing and sitting on the office table. Esteban wants to create a world with two versions of the characters: the people they are and the people they dream of being.

9/28/2011 Continued Work On Scene Two

Esteban began explaining our environment and allowing Maury and I to explore within it. Daisy will have a stack of tickets that she is reading numbers aloud from, and Zero will be recording them in a giant ledger. There will be the same layout for the other two desks. There will be a man and woman at each desk. Even though Daisy has worked there for years, women still have to hold their own against the men. I feel this is partly why Daisy can be so hostile towards Zero. She has to rise to the occasion and fight! We discussed the rhythm of the tickets and the mechanics of the motion. We have been miming the activity and it may prove difficult

once we have the props, but currently it's working very well. We are having fun exploring the variety of ways of speaking the numbers, putting the papers on the bill file, and how it can be used to play actions in the scene. Sometimes she just wants to annoy Zero because he is complaining to her. He could ask nicely but he is so abrasive towards her that she has to give it right back to him. There is an attraction and sexual frustration between them expressed through their bickering. Superiority-wise it would seem that Zero is the head honcho.

She keeps discussing death and all the ways she wishes she would die. I want to play with the idea of crying out for help; that she doesn't really want to die but rather wants someone to save her. The moment when Zero coughs and Daisy is hopeful that he is starting a conversation with her, is all that she hopes for every day. He dismisses it saying, "I didn't say nothin" (Rice; 14). She responds with "I thought you did" (Rice; 14). I am using that line to play with the action of hope and letting it show how Daisy is feeling internally.

10/2/2011 Scene Two Work

Esteban, the director, wants to make sure that we justify all movement when the characters are day dreaming and that the separation between reality and dream are consistent and distinct. As Daisy, I am using Zero sitting in his chair as a focal point and really looking at him when day dreaming. In actual reality she doesn't look at him, creating a physical contrast between reality and dreaming. We also wanted to play with the patterns and repeating gestures when in the day dreams. The option is left open to interact with the ensemble on stage. It is important to react when the moment of being pulled out of the day dream happens, showing it

physically as if actually being pulled back into our seats like a bungee cord. We are playing with the concept that it is the character's soul being pulled back into reality.

The director explained that the inner dialogue is a stream of consciousness that is only interrupted textually, but in reality the thoughts are never ending. It is up to us to find the thread that links all the thoughts together. What is the trigger to thinking about the next topic? He also wants me to continue looking out to the fourth wall reflecting Daisy's imagery when she is talking in her day dream, when she is connecting to the love scene, and when she is discussing death. We will continue exploring her physicality further, using Viewpoints during the office scene to find even more specificity in all movements.

We are gradually getting connected to moments and are excited to be working on the stage. I continue to work on Daisy's actions and what is driving her. The action of being pulled back from the dream world and into reality felt funny to me, but it can be explored more with Viewpoints techniques. I need to drop in for Daisy and try out different actions for lines that repeat, playing with levels, and remembering when to count aloud and when not to.

10/5/2011 Scene Seven Thoughts/Scene Two Silent Througths

I took a deeper look into the afterlife scene. Something to think about for Daisy is how long she has actually been running, and where on stage will she be entering, and meeting Zero for the first time? I want to go with the idea that Daisy could always see him as she chased him but could never seem to gain any footing. He doesn't see Daisy till he wants to see Daisy. And once she is there with Zero, she never wants to leave this paradise. I want to do an improv of the actual moment of Daisy committing suicide, up to the point of stuffing the cracks of her home,

turning on the gas and thinking that she may see Zero on the other side. I want to drop in her desperation and the sense of having nothing to live for, no purpose. She is the first to hear the music in the fields. When reading the play I imagined she heard French accordion music that a person would hear on the streets of Paris. Dancing in the fields just feels right. Zero and Daisy may be bad at dancing, but they are bad together. They experience such happiness just moving together as a unit. But it's the last line that kills Daisy, taking in the tremendous weight it carries. I really want to sell, "Without him I might as well be alive" (Rice; 119). It is so layered with irony. I love it!

We attempted to work Scene Two but I have lost my voice and cannot even make the sound of a whisper, so we were forced to go about rehearsal in a different way. While doing the scene I just focused on the motions and physical actions, to establish the day dream conventions. When I had my head down, Maury took the cue that he could then say his inner dialogue. Without focusing on my lines, I was able to explore further the physicality of Daisy's actions. I ended her inner dialogue standing on the desk, really hitting the height of Daisy's imagination and desire. Esteban wants me to keep some of the strong physical gestures I discovered.

10/7/2011 Scene Seven Rehearsal

Esteban described the environment for us to begin. There will be fabric tree trunks hanging down to invoke the feeling of a forest or field of tall trees. Daisy has been weaving and climbing her way through these trees to get to Zero. Therefore, she never has a full view of him, but only images clipped by the trees. A Greek overtone in the scene is from the story of Orpheus and Eurydice: she was continually calling his name but he doesn't see or hear her. Unlike

Eurydice, when Zero finally turns around and sees her, she does not fall into hell. This terrain is the opposite of the office world. It consists of open space and is full of wonderful opportunities for love. It's like the Garden of Eden and Zero is Adam and Daisy is Eve.

It is confirmed by Daisy in this scene that she did eventually lose her job and that she also kept up with Zero's trial. She knew when he died and then made the decision to kill herself a few days later. Would there even be a possibility to meet up with Zero in the afterlife? Would she have a second chance at a relationship with him? The afterlife that we see is a place that tests a person's soul and challenges them to see if they have changed, or can, before they go to their final location. Daisy never worries about being judged for killing herself. She is given this second chance and runs full force into it only to find that because of Zero, she fell hard on her face and feels that she could kill herself all over again because of the despair.

With the settings down and a blocking rehearsal for each scene complete, I began to do a character analysis knowing where we are headed with the show.

Elmer Rice named my character Daisy Diana Dorothea Devore and describes her as a plain, middle-aged woman. Having four D names seems regal, though she is anything but. The daisy is a white, wild flower that has a sunny center. Diana hits upon a mythological tone because she was considered to be the Roman virgin goddess, something I feel the character of Daisy really connects with.

The line by Zero, "Your hair's getting' gray. You don't wear them shirt waists any more with the low collars. When you'd bend down to pick somethin' up--" (Rice; 15). Daisy isn't young anymore and has been working alongside Zero for quite some time. These physical

reasons may be why he doesn't talk to her as he did when they first met. Daisy later has the line, "Anyhow, why ain't I got a right to live? I'm as good as anybody else. I'm too refined, I guess. That's the whole trouble" (Rice; 16). She keeps toying with the idea of suicide, even breaking down the pros and cons of different ways of doing it. But really she is worried about how it will affect Zero, not the fact that she will be dead.

Daisy reveals later that she has never been kissed, "I wonder what it feels like to be really kissed. Men-dirty pigs! They want the bold ones" (Rice; 22). Her idea of love is so big that there is no way she can reach it and she isn't currently willing to change to get it. This is seen in Rice's note: "Then each produces from behind the desk a hat; Daisy, a frowsy straw. Daisy puts on her hat and turns toward Zero as though she were bout to speak to him. But he is busy cleaning his pen and pays no attention to her. She sighs and goes toward the door" (Rice; 24).

In Scene Five of the Hill and Wang addition, Mrs. Zero asks why he didn't just marry Ms. Devore Zero said "I would if I'd of met her first" (Rice; 32). We find out later that he will never marry Daisy because he can't get past his own hang ups. But he did reveal to Daisy that he does have feelings for her and did when they worked together. In the afterlife, Daisy finally asks about a moment when they were alive, whether his knee touched hers by accident. He answers, "Sure it was accidental. Accidental on purpose" (Rice; 100). Gaining courage Daisy reveals that she wanted Zero to kiss her at the company picnic. She exclaims, "I wanted you to! I wanted you to! Oh, why didn't you—why didn't you? I would 'a' let you all you wanted to. I wouldn't 'a' cared. I know it would 'a' been wrong but I wouldn't 'a' cared. I wasn't thinkin' about right an' wrong at all. I didn't care—see? I just wanted you to kiss me" (Rice; 102). After he confessed he had wanted to do the same, she then comes forth and tells him what it has always been about for her,

“I never cared nothin' about nobody else.” Revealing to him why she killed herself, she declares: “The real reason is on account o' you” (Rice; 104).

After Daisy has opened up, she becomes bold and asks for the one thing she has always dreamed of, “(In a low voice): I want you to kiss me” (Rice; 106). But to pull her out of the clouds Zero warns her of her behavior in front of company and makes her feel guilty of her new actions by saying, “Well, you oughta care. You don't want him to think you ain't a refined girl, do you? He's an awful moral bird, he is” (Rice; 113). Zero couldn't get past caring what other people may or may not think and leaves, making Daisy see that the decision to kill herself was pointless. Her final, pitiful words are, “I won't ever see him again. It don't make no difference now. Without him I might as well be alive” (Rice; 119).

Daisy serves as a vehicle for choice in *The Adding Machine*. Daisy made a choice to change her current stasis and leaped out of her monotonous life cycle to take a chance on love. She was the biggest and most likely motivator for making Zero change his ways.

Daisy loves love and the idea of being someone's everything. Loving Zero from a distance is safe and something she can handle. He may be the only man she has much contact with but he is her one and only. It's the time of day that she can be near him and fantasize a life with him. Movies allow her escape, give her the freedom and will to not be herself for a moment and relax. She adores the type of films that portrayed love stories where the leading man whisks the women off their feet. Daisy hates youthful girls who don't need to wear corsets and are too bold for their own good: women that she could and never will be. She hates the smell of gas because every time she thinks that this is it, the time she finally will kill herself, she can't

because she becomes nauseous. It makes her feel inadequate that she can never go through with it.

Daisy clearly liked passing the time at work by fantasizing about a life where Mrs. Zero dies and Zero marries her and she could quit her job. While also thinking of all the different ways she can kill herself when she brings it back down to the reality of her unhappiness. But she doesn't like being bossed around at work and interacting with the young girls that seem promiscuous in her opinion. These values shaped how much joy she finds in her inner dialogue during the work scene. Films were her only true escape from the day and show how much she truly valued the prospect of love.

When Daisy dreamed, she used more descriptors in her speech, all in a legato tempo. When in the real world she was more staccato and straight to the point, short phrases and clipped words. She was open and released in her day dreams. We see this come out in the afterlife. Daisy was free to speak her mind and she didn't hold back. It was like she was purging all of her regrets and the things she never could bring herself to say.

10/9/2011 Wilson Park Scene Seven

Esteban asked Maury and I to rehearse in the nearby park to help endow our environment in Scene Seven. It's really exciting being able to visualize the fields in person. I made discoveries with distance and proximity to trees and Zero, playing with the idea of just seeing him on the horizon but never quite reaching him but then finally being able to confront him. How exhilarating it felt to finally see him, to realize that Daisy put her mind to something and saw it through! She just wanted to hug him but instead had an awkward moment of what to do when he

didn't reciprocate the notion. They are the same people but also aren't, being just souls of their old selves.

Having a tree trunk really made my character, Daisy, feel safer to confront things because she could be shielded by it or go around it deflecting him. I found climbing the hill to get to Zero and the tree proved difficult and tiring. Yelling for him and the sound traveling nowhere was really frustrating. Being able to play with the grass and sticks on the ground, helping to physicalize my actions was fabulous. It allowed for expansion upon the body language we already had created when feeling brave or scared. Having the setting of these huge trees and people in the distance gave our character's actions a flair of voyeurism that was titillating! Having things to look at was also wonderful to help fill the awkward gaps in the conversations. Daisy felt so much joy when she took the time to let the arrows land on Zero; giving him the information she had always wanted to say and letting him take it in.

The outdoor experience allowed for a lot of discoveries of body language: The way she organizes her legs while wearing a dress, the discovery of Shrdlu, how awkward it was to see him and talking to Zero about personal things with Shrdlu sitting nearby. We explored the spatial relationship to Zero, Shrdlu and the tree, starting far apart from each other and ending up together with Zero lying on Daisy's lap.

For the ending blow to Daisy, we tried different ideas. First, we tried showing she's okay but feeling sad. Second, we transitioned into showing both. And, third we experimented with just showing the hurt. The experience in the park allowed for moments to be explored and stage pictures to be worked.

10/10/2011 Scene Two Work With Ensemble

Maury and I had been rehearsing so long alone together that it was odd to have new people in the work space. We transferred that uncomfortable feeling to our work. The sounds from the other tables, though, proved distracting. Hearing all of the papers being punched and movement made it hard to focus on what Daisy was doing. It became a very aural scene with all the noise, lines, and physical life taking place. I played with Daisy's fantasy world more and made grander physical choices sooner to set up the contrast between the worlds early on, a concept I want to continue to work on.

It was fun to play with the cross over to the file cabinet having timed it out so it matched up with Zero's line and sexual response. The body position when Daisy is sitting has to be a particular way with her legs folded under due to the shortness of the dress and her not wanting to show the audience her undergarments. I need to find the character motivation for taking a moment at the end of the scene to cross to Zero to say something, but instead stopping and exiting. Esteban wants to explore it more as well.

I am not totally clear on Daisy's continuous thoughts of "I wish I was dead" (Rice; 13) and the different ways of dying. The problem is that the lines are not addressed to a partner and I have to motivate a reason to say them out loud which is proving difficult. I haven't felt fully connected to this scene's situation and Daisy's values yet.

10/14/2011 Scene Seven, Finishing Blocking and Stumble Through Of Show

We worked Scene Seven for the second time before we did a stumble through to continue exploring blocking choices. What we discovered during this time was that the design element of

fabric acting as a tree on a bare stage requires both strategy and imagination work. It will then be important for us to use “impel”, “compel”, and “repel” to make him stay, come closer, and go away when moving about the space to physically show our action choices. During those moments when Zero and Daisy are sitting on the ground, we need to continue working on the connection to the action of what we are physically doing, and how are we going to get what we want.

Esteban, our director, wants me to heighten the moments when Daisy treats Zero like she did when she was alive, full of anger and annoyance. The way Daisy hits Zero physically and how defensive she gets when he calls her sore. I need to do all of these actions while still remembering the “Broken Butterfly” concept. I felt extremely energized with Daisy's inner life and connected to her need at the top of the scene. I need to look at internal cue pickup and find her thought process. There is an argument going on in her head about whether she should or shouldn't say how she feels about Zero in life.

Esteban staged a really cute kiss, showcasing the awkwardness of Daisy's first kiss and Zero's wooing skills. The kiss then leads into a dance but we have not set the blocking for this moment yet. There is still room to explore moments in the scene: the fun, the intent, and never having danced before with Zero. We also need to work on feeling a sense of release after Daisy confesses her true feelings for Zero.

We then began a run through. I felt disconnected from Scene Two, possibly because we did Scene Seven beforehand. Much sharper, physical energy is needed for the office scene. We are continuing to play with the tempo with which Daisy does her job. I need to explore to find

out if her work movements are ever affected by her thoughts of marrying Zero or shooting herself in the head? The set is large but in this scene, the layout gives it a very closed-in feeling.

I want to continue working on Daisy, developing the thought that her exterior is a hard worn shell like battered work leather but there is a delicate fragile flower underneath. She searches inside herself, looking for some reason to exist, to find that she is worthy of love and that without love she has no reason to live.

A possible character objective for Scene Two could be Daisy desires a jolt of love to rid herself of the endless search for a partner.

10/19/2011 Full Run Of Show Off Book

Scene Two has been rather difficult for me to memorize because I am my own partner speaking my thoughts and it is hard to find the cues to make sense of it all. I looked for contextual clues in the script and tricks to trigger the thoughts. Discoveries were made when I added more freedom in Daisy's physical movement and emotional excitement. I want to find more specific actions for each of her many sporadic thoughts that will then provoke more variety in physical actions.

I really connected to Daisy's line "I wish she would die" (Rice; 18), the last bit about the movie, imagining the kiss, the imagery, and having her need fill the room. I did feel motivated to stand on the desk tonight for this event. I loved it when I came around to Zero's side of the desk and sat on it facing him during the line "I just seem to forget everything" (Rice; 24). Again, there still is room for cue pick up and playing with the rhythm of realities versus thoughts and the transition to each while still keeping the momentum going. Tonight, I felt connected to the

feeling of being so overwhelmed with my thoughts that they take over my reality. It felt motivated.

I'm still playing with the first action in Scene Seven and the joy of seeing Zero while being winded and catching my breath, and I am still finding ways to incorporate the park rehearsal into our blocking of the scene on the set. Daisy and Zero are currently in rehearsal sitting on the ground for the majority of the scene and ignoring the tree's existence altogether. We had played with blocking around the tree, but the tree is now so far stage left it makes it hard to maneuver around and not disturb it because it is made of fabric.

The energy in this scene always feels good. The dancing is fun! I enjoy exploring Daisy being awkward; her happiness is like a giddy little girl's. Towards the end of the scene, her actions change. I need to delve into what causes her changes: perhaps the inner fight of shedding old Daisy and becoming a bolder Daisy.

During the blocking and actions of Shrdlu's long monologue about what kind of people reside in the fields; I am not sure what Daisy is really doing on stage. What are her emotional and physical actions? I connected to Daisy having Zero leave and the heartbreaking moment of her realizing it was all for nothing. I cried!

10/20/2011 Working Blocking For Scene, Full Run Tech Watch

Scene Two felt completely off for me. I find that having outsiders watch for the first time always makes me feel disjointed. I had a hard time remembering the lines because I had nothing to trigger the topic of the next line. It seems like random thoughts and I am still struggling to pull them all together so I will know my next line.

The director sent notes last night. He told us to start picking up cues and tempo. He also asked me to continue increasing the contrast between “work Daisy” and “dream Daisy.” I want to play with her actions more in Scene Two. Is it her need for escape or are we seeing how far in despair and delusion she has sunk in her life? Perhaps while working she is saying one thing and meaning another? I’m continuing to work with Daisy's action of needing to get Zero's attention, for him to acknowledge her in any way.

I approached the dream as more Expressionistic by being literal with my movements and line delivery, but I feel it can go farther by playing with the conventions of the scene. I continued to explore the boundaries she had in her work life and then breaking out of them in her dream state. Daisy took the time to speak to Zero in her dream world. She looked at him and said her thoughts even though the moment didn't necessarily involve him. My character goal is to get the work/thought conventions set soon and Esteban agrees.

I have always felt a better connection with Scene Seven even though we have rehearsed it less than Scene Two. We worked half the scene before the full run and set the blocking. Again placement of the tree has really limited blocking around it. I had fun playing with Daisy's physical and vocal awkwardness. How does she shield her vulnerability while she confesses her true feelings to Zero? I played with her need to make him feel that he is the nicest guy around, that nothing she did since his death was a big deal until she confesses all of her obsessive love for him, that he is the only person for her and the only man she has ever loved.

The dance was full of awkward joy! It was not blocked so the dance itself was a little sloppy. Even when Daisy was happy, I am continuing to play with the “broken butterfly” idea.

She isn't good at being happy and it's easy for her to slip into old habits such as moments where she gets upset and hits or pushes Zero. The last moment always breaks my heart. The rest of the scene still needs to be blocked.

Character objective for Scene Seven: Daisy hopes to blind Zero with the happiness she feels and keep him with her forever and ever.

10/21/2011 Finished Blocking Scene Seven

We finished blocking Scene Seven. I felt very connected and found new physical actions to go along with sliding down and really swimming in the love she finally found. It helped to propel her across the stage for the next moment. I am still making more discoveries of actions while talking about stuffing up the cracks of her home before turning on the gas and being more casual and funny about it to take the pressure off the suicide. We are trying to make the kiss less awkward and more romantic while not commenting on it and purposefully making it funny. We played with the dancing and the different dance moves we could do within it. Which dance moves would these two know? Mostly it would be from when they were children more than anything or whatever they saw in movies. They would try and replicate a Fred Astaire move with horrid results and throw in the classic ring-around-the-rosie. But when he fell down tired, Daisy kept flying. There are no lines or playwright notes that indicate Daisy is out of breath like Zero. When Shrdlu ruins their romantic time, I felt Daisy tried to reel Zero back in with her undying love for him to make him stay. She also took a step to be proactive about the situation when she was courageous and stood up for her love and proclaims to Shrdlu, "We were wishin' we could stay here all the time" (Rice; 114). She took a leap and he chose to stay with her but he insisted

upon leaving the fields and her behind. There is nothing she can say or do to change his mind. She has done everything humanly possible and more for him already.

I felt really great about where Daisy and this scene were headed each time we ran it. I found new character moments and actions with each run. Esteban is great about continually letting the actors play with their environment and actions both physical and emotional.

10/23/2011 Working Scene Two

Esteban, the director, Maury, and I were still deciding on the technical elements and mechanics of the working world for Zero and Daisy. Maury and I worked with the visual aspects of the job. We all came to the idea of working like a pump. When Daisy's head is down, Zero's is up and the opposite. Also while sitting at the table Daisy had two different leg and foot positions: to the side and, straight up with ankles crossed. Esteban asked that while day dreaming, Daisy still keep the action of putting papers on the bill file but without the up/down head motion. Then when her expressed inner thought is over she went immediately back into the precious head motion. Esteban would like us to look at the scene as if it was a piece of music and it's all about the tempo. For our next step we want to begin adding in the Expressionism of the world, which is more presentational with actions.

I felt like I was patting my head and rubbing my stomach at the same time while we counted and said lines. It is still proving to be quite difficult to keep focus on her physical work, stay in character, and remember her next line. But Maury and I are going to work the scene on our own to get the muscle memory. The idea is to keep the flow, energy, and need going even though it's broken up with the continuous thought idea.

More objective work: I want to remember her heart and what drives her, the thing that is underlying all that she does.

10/24/2011 Continued Work On Scene Two

Maury and I got together a half hour before rehearsal to just work the physical movements of Scene Two. I am continuing to explore my movements in the space as a worker. I am experimenting with the mechanical robotic feel: entering with others and setting my purse and coat down. Daisy is tired and depressed and she is in a place that demands efficiency. I am looking at the attitude changes of Daisy at work versus when she is away in her mind.

When we begin the dream dialogues, we need to set up conventions so as not to confuse the audience. Daisy is trying not to look at Zero right away, picking the same spot to look at for each thought subject. We are continuing to break down the pump action while we work but not while we are dreaming. The physical action is becoming easier. There is the one moment in reality when she got up to retrieve more tickets. The beginning, end, and this moment are the only times the audience sees the real world Daisy walk. I am playing with Daisy using staccato steps, a slouchy back, and head hung over and out.

The stronger the dream choices are in physical and internal action, the more interesting it is and easier for an audience to gather what is happening.

I need to watch Daisy's vocal energy during the opening of Scene Two. Their office space is very intimate but the character actions and volume need to be projected out. Also, the moment at the end of the scene, when she looked at Zero while in her thoughts needs to go faster so the audience can see what is happening inside of her because of this physical action. We are

still exploring moments where she may quit the physical action of working while she is dreaming. A hurdle in our rhythm is working with the new tickets. The thickness of the receipts and the sharpness of the wooden bill-file affect the ease of doing the job.

I want to explore ideas of what was she going to ask him when she leaves at the end of the scene. I feel I have made my mind up to start idle conversation in hopes that it will turn into something more, perhaps asking if he's seen *The Devil's Alibi* yet, and hoping he'll want to watch it with her.

10/28/2011 Working Scene Seven

Great work today! I felt very excited about the work we did. Now we must do some fine tuning. I need to continue to find the awkwardness in Daisy and how it is expressed and when she is being guided by impulses. Brushing off the "Them was the times I'd think o' blowin' out the gas" (Rice; 105). It's a depressing line but it felt connected on a school girl level. The feeling of a young girl blushing because she told the boy she liked that she would write her name with his last name all day in her notebook.

The problem we've had with the placement of the tree I feel we finally solved by having Daisy set herself up for the kiss by crossing around the tree. It gets her in front of it for the moment to create a film picture the way Daisy has always dreamed it would be. We have to remember to stay open during the kiss, again for the audience to see it happen. I love that she continued to spin around and around while Zero sat catching his breath. It is a true testament to the absolute joy she felt.

When Zero is threatening to leave, Esteban wanted me to be choosy about when I touch him. The idea being that she didn't want to startle him because he reacted harshly towards her. I am taking the line "Don't you hear it" (Rice; 118) to Zero. It is in response to Shrdlu asking if I can hear music but I am trying to lure Zero back into staying.

10/31/2011 Tech Watch Of A Full Run

Maury and I got together thirty minutes ahead of rehearsal to go over lines and gesture work for Scene Two. When we ran the show the scene just felt off. I was disconnected and lost focus. The mechanics kept getting in the way. The struggle of knowing when to do this and that hindered us because it had been a week since we touched the scene and we were confused as to what blocking had been agreed upon. It was rough. We both felt this way and wanted to erase the performance of that scene from our memory. I later got a note on this scene saying the vocal energy should be on partner, not just projecting the intimacy so the audience can hear.

The afterlife, Scene Seven, went better possibly because between the work scene and this scene, this one is the most realistic in relationship. I was still working on lessening Daisy's New York accent in both scenes, and on driving her need of finally being loved home. I am looking at the joy of seeing him as something she went for that actually worked. Love can happen. She's taking a chance on happiness.

The end position of Daisy we are calling the crumpling moment, and it felt very connected. Technically I need to work on vocal energy and keeping my head up while I am beside myself with grief.

11/1/2011 Working Scene Two

I still felt disconnected in this scene, showing or telling how she felt rather than actually feeling it. Maury and I got together before rehearsal again and worked some subtext to find motivation for some of our thoughts. We were trying to discover the trigger for the quick shifts of thoughts in the character's minds. The mechanics of working were helped by having the bill-file attached to the desk which has proven to be a blessing. Esteban, the director, has also decided to throw out the pump action head movement while we worked, just keeping our head down while working and then up with a focal point for the day dreams. This physical change has relieved the pressure of focusing on too many things at once. However, Esteban said that my actions were not strong enough while Zero stands day dreaming. She really needs to build up the need of living in that fantasy world so that it propels her eventually out of her seat while competing for focus against Zero's actions.

I felt that since this scene is Daisy's first appearance on stage, I still need to find her identity and journey to bring with me on the stage.

11/2/2011 Tech Run Of Show

I felt more connected than ever to Scene Two. I really focused on what she wanted in this scene: to be noticed and seen. Just zeroing in on that need has automatically made my action choices stronger. I finally feel ready to get notes on this scene because before I was still in my head about the physical movements. There are still moments that I can continue to work on connection but I am feeling better overall. Mavourneen Dwyer, the speech and dialect professor at the University of Arkansas, watched the first half of the show for speech and dialect notes.

Scene Seven is still the easiest for me to connect to emotionally and capture Daisy's need of wanting love and playing strong actions on Zero. I think it is because in my personal life I am very happy. We did get notes on the kiss being too long and almost making it into a joke. The last moment when Daisy falls to the ground needs to live in my body as an impulse and not a stage direction. If I feel that Daisy isn't connected to it, then she wouldn't fall.

11/3/2011 Working Scene Two

Esteban, Maury, and I worked the scene and really fixed its problems. Mavourneen had a note about Daisy's depression and that she seemed all too happy to kill herself so we are going back and playing with Daisy being sadder. We are continuing to try to show the juxtaposition to Scene Seven, depression now and the flying joy later. Daisy's state of being is sad, depressed and heartbroken so that no one can love her. All of this motivates the "I wish I was dead" lines. It's just realizing the facts and making her accept that there is no hope for change and that there will only ever be a life full of more pain. We had made the inner discussion of all the ways she thinks to kill herself humorous but now we are going back and making it an honest weighing of the pros and cons.

Her movie fantasy felt connected to her inner life. The "it must be grand" (Rice; 24), line is another example of hope she has for her life. She then realizes it is a dream that will never be. Today I played with a sweet idea that Daisy is asking Zero to walk with her to the train but doesn't. Overall, I must never forget to let Zero affect me and penetrate my guard.

We worked problem spots but never went back to run the whole thing from the top with the changes that were made.

11/4/2011 Run Through

Mavourneen watched the second half of the show. After stopping and starting to work on Scene Two the night before, it was difficult to remember all the moments to put it together for this run. We were unable to run what we had worked and I was unclear as to what choices we were keeping.

In Scene Seven I had a note on vocal energy and losing actions. Within the scene, Esteban said two moments looked staged; the dancing was one of them. The question became how do we fix that and still follow the staged direction we were given? In other words, the physical actions we are playing in the afterlife are very presentational in style when in reality we are working on filling and using all areas of a bare stage.

Esteban sent notes that said some moments were “fighty”, a term he created meaning forced. I was given the note with regards to the “I wish I was dead” line. And he had a note overall of being unable to hear some lines. I am not clear on the adjustments that need to be made to certain actions. The changes do not feel natural yet.

But we are headed to a good place. It's just sometimes getting lost in translation at the moment. And I don't want to just do what I think he wants, but rather own it and feel connected to it. We are headed into a darker inner life to juxtapose with the afterlife. To clear up some of the problems of connection and actions, I want to work with Amy before I go down a rabbit hole of bad choices. Esteban agreed to this meeting.

11/6/2011 Working Scene Two With Amy/Cue To Cue And Stop And Go Of Show

I met with Amy because I felt I was not correcting the notes Esteban had given me in current rehearsals regarding Scene Two. He kept using the phrase don't be “fighty”, asking for her not to be generic and have bigger actions. I try and make the adjustment but feel it is not exactly what he wants. I feel I am misinterpreting or even fighting against what he wants because I am confused. I have been playing her one way for so long that a week before we open is proving difficult even though I agree being asked to make big changes is for the best.

I worked with Amy on finding a trigger to connect to Daisy's depression. What in my life could bring me to the point of wanting to kill myself? I went with the circumstance of losing a parent. I sat while she began prompting by asking what the last thing the parent said was. I imagined it was the phrase, “Fuck you.” Then she had me go through what I, Brandi, would do to kill myself. She had me describe each thing in detail. I was crying at this point. She then had me whisper Daisy's line “I wish I was dead” while continuing to live with my circumstances and saying my lines. She then asked me to focus and think where and how the pain lives in me. And how does it feel? For me it is a cold crumbly dark pain that wants to be alleviated. I am continuing to find where that pain lives, the trigger for it, and how it feels living there. I should let it live and not push it to where I am bawling but allow myself to be present.

Amy reminded me of my acting habit of starting my actions with my mouth. I must remember to live and not focus on showing results.

When the actual cue to cue/stop and go happened, I was beginning to feel like I was worrying too much about how I was supposed to look and sound to Esteban, because in previous

rehearsals I felt connected and he didn't. Now I feel super connected and I am second guessing myself. Amy said to just go there and trust that it will happen. I should be going for process and not product in my acting.

11/8/2011 First Dress Rehearsal

During Scene Two I made a discovery, but then drew a blank and skipped four lines, but it worked out. It is nice to know that Maury and I can get out of a moment if lines are dropped and the play will still move forward. I am still working on getting to the suicide trigger and feeling it in my chest. So the connection was not one hundred percent because of the line mess up and then it affected my physical action of working. I have to keep reusing my own receipts and I wonder if it looks odd that they already have holes in them. Then I have to take the ones off the bill-file to continue working. Nothing has been said.

Scene Seven was fun. We are still playing with the area next to the tree but it felt very connected and exciting! The costumes accent Daisy's joy with the twirl of the dress!

11/9/2011 Second Dress Rehearsal

Esteban gave notes on some blocking changes for Scene Seven. I felt much better about actions in Scene Two. I still need to find a deep connection quickly to "*I wish I was dead*" and "Gas. The smell of it makes me sick" (Rice; 14). I also received a note to change the motivation for the way Daisy lists possible ways to commit suicide because it was feeling generic.

Scene Seven went alright but with the change at the top I dropped a line because it had been tied to the previous motivation and blocking. I was also checking to make sure I was doing

what Esteban wanted. The end of the scene felt connected and Daisy felt motivated to fall to the ground. She was teary eyed. Shrdlu takes a long time to say his line at the end so it feels funny sometimes just sitting there crying. I received no notes from this scene before its run. After the show, he gave notes on it. Someone asked if he would send notes for the run tonight rather than giving them while we are getting into makeup and about to go on stage. When approached about the notes situation he said, "It's better than no notes." Some days we weren't getting any notes making character choices confusing.

11/10/2011 Last Dress Rehearsal

I felt good about Scene Two. I was very connected to Daisy's mood. I relaxed into the scene. I just let go of some adjustments so I could connect, but then Zero kept railroading my lines. Overall the cues went faster causing her need and actions to tighten up!

Again the pure joy of seeing him in Scene Seven is always easy to connect to and a scene I look forward to every night. I played with awkwardness and happiness some more. I made the blocking adjustments and hopefully it looked motivated. And I must remember to keep volume up when Daisy and Zero are lying on the ground together.

We were held after the run for notes. Esteban said the first part was working nicely and that I should build to "fighty". He liked the fear she has about committing suicide in reference to the gas line. The death leap worked for him and that same specificity of action adds to the mercury line. Also he reminded me to find my light with my cross to the stage left desk. The line "I got a good mind to ask" (Rice; 20), needs to have more fear and show the vulnerability it would bring if she did leave him at work. He liked the energy that propelled me out of my seat!

For Scene Seven Esteban would like me to keep doing what I'm doing with my voice. To stay with Zero post kiss and realize what has just taken place and take the emotion to him. Also, he wants to keep the fall to the ground at the end.

11/11/2011 Opening Night

Yay, opening night! It's finally here. I tried to incorporate notes from last night but it turned into having to get the director out of my head. I dropped two lines in Scene Two. One was a line he gave me a change on. The rest of the scene felt great and connected. Made it through the scene and the audience responded well.

This being our first true audience, they laughed at things I never would have expected over the entire show. As always, Scene Seven was fun and connected!

The dancing was fun; I kept spinning and spotting off of Zero. I really worked on staying on partner and feeling Daisy's loss when he leaves. When he does leave I fall and then say lines. I cried and said the final line "Without him I might as well be alive" (Rice; 119) and people laughed! I received wonderful responses from the audience.

11/12/2011 Second Night

Tonight Scene Two felt connected fully, no line flubs. I really worked hard to grab hold of my suicide trigger. Again, it is taking longer to get into sad Daisy because of my own reality, but that is fine. I just make sure I have time to get there before the scene. I need to keep hold of process and not product, to not "act" like I am supposed to but to actually feel because of the trigger.

In Scene Seven Maury almost skipped the line that instigates why I killed myself. I felt on partner and connected to moment. Having opening night under our belts has given us freedom and fun. Falling and diving into the joy and the sadness of the scene. How much this actually means to her! My dad saw the show and said it is one of his favorite college productions. One audience member voiced a sigh when Daisy told Zero she had killed herself for him. And still people keep laughing at my end line of “Without him I might as well be alive.” I am discovering that it is easier for me to play comedy but I love the challenge of sadness as an actress.

11/13/2011 Sunday Matinee

It’s nice to feel that we have finally found a groove. It was a fun show with a great audience response. I feel more connected with every run and I am finding more moments. I am connecting to the sadness but also to the kind of depression that brings a person to suicide and using “as if’s to achieve that emotion.

Scene Two is coming along nicely and in Scene Seven it is becoming easier to find the excitement and travel the football field of emotions. It’s become easier to find the joy of love and then really live the loss. Sometimes Scene Two objectives can fizzle out or are hard to focus on because of having no partner for parts of it so I had her pumping up her need! She needs to be loved, noticed, spoken to, touched, kissed, and to have a reason for living. Continuing to love exploring the scenes and enjoying the show!

11/15/2011 Speed Through

Esteban said the cue pick up in Scene Two is what he's looking for. And Scene Seven had a fun flow especially while dancing which was needed. We made it through and had a great time.

11/16/2011 Show

Tonight was the student audience and Scene Two felt disconnected, like being on autopilot. I applied the cue pick up note from the speed through and felt it made me lose some of the process and focus more on the product. The trigger phrase didn't ignite as much in me. I think I need to do more image work, envisioning the suicide and the relief it will bring. This can happen when you run a show a lot. I am finding the cue pick up helps connecting the thoughts we have. I feel physically tired from long rehearsals but that's part of the business. I worried about getting a note from Esteban saying, that "I wish I was dead." was generic and did not connect to the moment. I need to let go of this fear. The receipts are inconsistent. Holes, no holes, small holes, big holes, it's just making it hard to do the work in the efficient mechanical way we staged. I am still enjoying the show and Daisy. I really nailed the end moment when I stand on the desk.

The afterlife scene always has a nice connection for me. But during this show I came out and, right at the top, I kept hearing a camera shutter. It was very distracting and made it difficult to stay connected to the scene.

11/17/2011 Show

I felt much better about tonight's performance. The audience was a nice mix of students and adults. I am feeling better each time we perform Scene Two because the mechanics are in my bones now. I felt very energized and inspired by the Moises Kaufman "Moment Work" workshop today! Moises Kaufman is a Tony Award Winning playwright who specializes in a theatre method he created called "Moment Work." He was at the University of Arkansas giving a

three day workshop over this method. I am thrilled by the fact I get to keep performing this show!

11/18/2011 Show And Moises Kaufman In Attendance

Something occurred that I never thought would happen and I'm so grateful it did. Moises Kaufman, the director and playwright who is best known for *The Laramie Project*, saw the first twenty minutes of the show. He saw the opening scene with Zero and Mrs. Zero and left after Daisy and Zero's working scene. He later said my performance was great, that I had a really nice character. He complimented me two different times. He really got Scene Two and connected to it, which made Maury and me ecstatic. It makes all the work done with it that much more worth it. He really likes the acting we do here.

I love the moment at the end of both my scenes before my final line where the audience is completely silent and then bammo! Really felt connected to the audience tonight and that's what it's all about.

11/19/2011 Show

I felt settled in with this performance. I'm having fun with Zero in the working scene and our lines really flow well together now. It's still easier to get to the emotional point in Scene Seven compared to Scene Two but happiness is always more fun for me to connect with. However I keep going through my triggers and sourcing to keep Scene Two just as honest. Before going on stage for each scene, I do imagination work. I have Daisy placed in situations the moment before the scene began. Before Scene Two, I imagine Daisy has been sitting on a subway train for an hour and a half making her way to work, staring off and not being noticed by

anyone in the cramped train. The same process happens for when she enters the building, slinks over to the elevator, and walks into the office. She does it all while going about unnoticed. I think about her having no family, having no one to talk to at home or in her daily life, even going long periods without any physical contact until someone bumps into her and what that could do to a person.

In Scene Seven Daisy was excited and overwhelmed with joy but I go through the action and imagination work of blowing the gas out, dying, and waking up in the Elysian Fields before I enter the stage I imagine her coming to the decision that now is the time. She stuffs newspapers in the cracks and then blows out the pilot light and sits in front of the oven trying not to give in to the nausea she felt. And during that fight, she realizes suddenly that she could have a chance with Zero, they could be together in the afterlife and that is what keeps her committed to her suicide. She then wakes up and finds herself in this Utopia filled with joy because her dream can become a reality! Zero and Daisy can be together and kiss and love, get married and have children! Right before I go on stage as Daisy, I run with my back to Zero and then turn to see him in the distance and run on when it's my cue. It keeps the energy going and Daisy is winded from chasing him for so long. Honestly, she had a feeling of accomplishment when she had been running around and finally turned and saw him. I discovered that all the work I have put into this has really paid off! Daisy believed that she had him and never wanted him to leave. This lives honestly inside me.

11/20/2011 Closing of Show

Today is the close of the show and I would play this role all the time! I will miss Daisy forever. When Zero left Daisy on the stage tonight, he left her for good. I personally left all thoughts, feelings, and energies on the stage. Daisy is the character that truly changes in the end. The show is about Zero but Zero repeats his life over. Daisy began a woman whom no one had loved or, as it seemed to her, ever would. Every day, she sat next to a man she had been in love with for years, day dreaming of a day they could be together but never giving him any clue to this. Death seemed the only logical thing for her to do. She wasn't worthy of living. Zero leaves this world and it became time for Daisy to take her chance, to seize the opportunity of love. She finally committed suicide since the one person that had kept her alive had passed away. She holds on to the hope of a future with Zero in the afterlife while she inhales the gas fumes. When Daisy succeeds, it changes her soul. When she catches up to Zero, she knows it was all worth it and it finally gives her the courage she's been waiting for. Zero and Daisy create the perfect world in this brief moment in time. They will have dancing and music and a future together, even marriage. But the moment when Zero lets doubt seep in, he can't change his ways or not let other people dictate his life. He leaves the woman he supposedly loves and Daisy is left like a crumpled flower on the ground. She realizes that without Zero she might as well be unhappy and alive, unable to reach him. It would be safer that way.

The audience was a little quieter than others but still laughed at my last line in Scene Seven. There was a very nice feeling of togetherness and this show and its cast will be missed.

IV. Final Thoughts

I learned a lot about myself during *The Adding Machine*, lessons that I will carry with me throughout my future career. The biggest lesson being to look at each line and really dive into why the character feels the need to say it and always continue to explore variety of actions on partner and from there, making a variety of strong choices until the director and I come to an agreement. The director-actor relationship is very important as is having a clear form of communication between us using terms we both comprehend. Having the director and actor be able to have a discussion and disagree with one another in an open forum. I am coming to realize that when my personal life is going well I find it easy to connect to happiness, and difficult to encompass sadness. When my life is going badly, the opposite is true. The challenge will always be how to stay on top of and connect to those opposite living conditions, to hold on to given circumstances and keep them active in my body, with the repetition of rehearsals, finding new motivations to live in the same circumstances. I am a hard worker and won't give up until the end. Striving for perfection and pleasing the director can get in the way of the creative process when my focus should be on exploring and just letting the character live honestly. I begin to worry too much about the product the director wants from the beginning and forget that a process must happen for a product to be its best. I let insecurities get in the way and this is something I will continue to work on. I must focus on finding that balance of caring and not caring so I can get my work done properly. I must embrace the concept of focusing on the process, not the product. If the show was starting up again, that would be the first thing I would work on, letting myself explore without fear. Allowing myself to make wrong choices, to find actions that are strong and not be offended when they are thrown out. To let myself be open to all possibilities

since the show is of a nonrealistic style and anything is possible. And the second would be making sure the director and I share an understanding of the character and communication tools to develop those characters. We both want the show to be great and shouldn't let egos get in the way of criticisms and discussions. If there is a problem or confusion, it should be discussed and taken care of right away and I should have voiced my concerns earlier. We are all on the same team and I should never feel afraid to ask for clarification so I can create the best character for the director and the show.

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