AN ANALYSIS OF SCRIPT, PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE
OF EDNA O'BRIEN'S A PAGAN PLACE

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by
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Approved by

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To E. Jack Fashbaugh

for his support and enthusiasm
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Preface

I first read Edna O'Brien's *A Pagan Place* in the spring of 1981, at the enthusiastic insistence of Pamela Johnson, a friend and fellow graduate student, who was examining the script in a dramaturgy seminar conducted by Dr. Alan Woods. She had chosen this play as an example of an original script with a strong voice, worthy of production but not likely to be performed in the commercial theatre. After reading the play and discussing it with those in the seminar from the viewpoint of theme, dramaturgical concerns, and analysis based on the structural approach of Bernard Beckerman in *The Dynamics of Drama*, I became determined to experience the challenge of producing the work as my thesis production project for the Master of Fine Arts degree the following fall in Ohio State University's Studio Theatre, a "black box" space seating 90. Much of my original work remained quite tentative, however, due to being unsure as to whether the script would be acceptable to the Production Committee and to keeping alive the hope that the play would still be selected for the mainstage season.

On August 25, I was officially notified that the Production Committee was placing *A Pagan Place* on the mainstage bill in Stadium II Theatre, which seated approximately 340 and was being renovated as an arena stage. This play was to be cast alongside a production of Arthur Kopit's *Indians*, which demanded over 30
males. Casting compromises were inevitable. My designers were assigned: Steve Boone was to do the set, Mark Zetterberg the lights, Katrina Jeffries the costumes, and Arthur Williams the sound. Byron Ringland was assigned as my production superviser and Dr. Alan Woods offered to serve as dramaturge.

The particular Irish idioms in the script's dialogue were kept. The only textual change made was in the name of the character, Nigger Wiley. The director and dramaturge agreed that while the name was appropriate as a term of derision for this deformed and sinister appearing man to an Irish audience, American sensitivities rendered the term offensive and inappropriately connotative. The change was made to Tinker Wiley, "tinker" being a common derogatory appellation as well in Ireland.

Rehearsals for this production began on October 5. The play opened on November 10 and ran through November 21, 1981, as the American premiere with the following cast:

Creena-----------------Elizabeth M. Schmelz
Tinker Wiley----------Jonathan Putnam
Con-------------------Hugh M. Murphy
Josie------------------Joy Reilly
Ambie-----------------Shane Blodgett
Miss Davitt-----------Claudia Morris
Della-----------------Peggy Friesen
Father Declan----------Kevin J. Hayes
Mr. Holland-----------Stephen A. Schrum
Men in Pub------------F. Martin Glynn
                      Bob Thomas
Caimin-----------------Derek Bell
Aunt Bride-------------Catherine Ann Nix
Petroseyla-----------Linda Kroeger
Dr. Daly--------------Ralph E. Kerr
Lizzie----------------Janet Hieter
Emma------------------Cynthia S. Stokes
Nun #1----------------Rebecca Kane
Nun #2----------------Mary Illes
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge Mr. Albert Peralion for providing me with faith in myself as an artist and for acquainting me with the concepts of analysis espoused by Bernard Beckerman. I also wish to acknowledgement Dr. Alan Woods for his support throughout the production process as dramaturge and critic and for his encouragement of this work.
Introduction

Through a reflective and critical discussion of the 1981 production of Edna O'Brien's *A Pagan Place* at Ohio State University, this thesis will examine a process for working with script, actors, and designers which this director found to be dynamic and liberating, while still solidly grounded and focused. The foundation for this process is the method of structural analysis outlined by Bernard Beckerman in his book, *The Dynamics of Drama*. While his theory is one of script analysis, the fact of performance is ever-present in its concern with theatre as a presentation of "activity."¹ I find that Beckerman's vertical approach to analysis translates effectively to the rehearsal process, encouraging an inductive directorial approach which allows the analysis to continue and to alter as the energies of the artists involved connect with and contribute to the experience.

While analysis should lead a director to a "concept" for production which provides a frame in which to work, that concept should never be so rigid or overriding that those who are involved artistically are stretched or squeezed into it. As a

director I remain convinced that a heavy-handed deductive approach with a script and with collaborative artists does not create the most honest, interesting, or even imaginatively innovative theatre. I will not in this thesis attempt to prove that contention, but I will demonstrate how this director, from a vertical script analysis, worked inductively, keeping the analysis and the questions working into each new layer of the process. I will examine the original analysis of the script, the preparation and evolution of the design and production concept, the rehearsal process, and the production itself as a result of that process.

The key vocabulary peculiar to Beckerman's segment/activity analysis and structural modes is defined at the end of this introduction. Other terms will be explained as needed in the body of this work.

While I hope that the concept of vertical analysis will become clear in its application to A Pagan Place, I will give here an idea of its focus through an overview of three of its major concerns. This discussion will also serve as an outline to the basic structure of my presentation.

First, the key to vertical analysis lies in seeing "the whole and its parts simultaneously," a skill which insists upon seeing a work as "units of action" being affected by the working methods of the director. It "requires the knack of remembering a flow of changing images and, ultimately, to see form in an art that does everything to mask form" (Ch. II, p. 37). Defending
the necessity for a method of vertical analysis, Beckerman
maintains that:

Drama-studied-as-literature usually ignores
the very artistic basis upon which the work
is constructed. Drama-studied-as-theatrical-
score often fails to examine adequately the
artistic form that the actor and director
seek to project. (Ch. I, p. 5)

In his consideration of theatrical form, Beckerman dis-
tinguishes between formal segmentation (acts, scenes) and
organic segmentation (reflecting the rhythm of presentation
without conventional recognition by the performers.) The central
structural unit is the "action segment," and the rhythm of in-
volve ment and disengagement is the basis for theatrical segmen-
tation. He defines an action segment as "any coherent unit of
theatrical time that nests within a formal dramatic unit" (Ch. II,
p. 44). Script analysis depends upon understanding the nature of
the activity represented by each action segment as well as upon
the relationship between one segment and another and between
each segment and the play's controlling structural mode.

In his insistence that script and performance are insepar-
able, Beckerman's schematic of theatrical analysis includes
activity (what the actor does), imagined act (what the character
does), and inner life (what the imagined act, through activity,
reflects). The relationship between activity and imagined act,
then, is the basis for examining the dynamic between drama and
theatre. It is this relationship which has generated my analysis
structured from questions regarding the explicit and implicit
activity in *A Pagan Place*.

The second focus of this analysis lies in the relationship of the segments to the overall structure of the play. Beckerman refers to the concepts of intensive and extensive modes as the two major modes of presentation. The peculiar dynamic and challenge to production created by the use of both of these modes in *A Pagan Place* will be examined in the analysis of script and process.

I will, in addition to relating an analysis of the preparation and rehearsal process through the play's segmentation, activity, and extensive/intensive modes, examine what Beckerman calls the "figure/ground" relationship. This relationship is critical for making basic dramaturgical and conceptual decisions regarding textual changes, physical space, design, transitions, and controlling production style.

The figure/ground relationship "patterns all visual phenomena into dominant and subordinate parts of a totality" (Ch. IV, p. 137), with the figure being the "emphasized foreground" and the ground being the "contrasting background which throws the figure into relief" (Ch. IV, p. 137-138). The ground includes not only the context of a sequence of action and background of circumstances, but also the audience's "predisposition, or sensibility, which serves as a background for the play as a whole" (Ch. IV, p. 138). The ground is necessarily conventionalized in its artistic form and has a "framing influence which provides the code of behavior to which the action adheres" (Ch. IV, p. 140).
This thesis will begin with a discussion of the play choice and initial perception of its themes, its production values and its general structural peculiarities. This initial chapter will then discuss the early research necessary for an understanding of the ground and will examine the figure/ground relationship and the first conceptual decisions which evolved from this early preparation and from production meetings with the designers.

Paralleling Beckerman's concern that an analytical and a working method see both the whole and the parts together and that the script and the presentation exist as two inseparable elements of a process, I will in the second and third chapters provide an action segment analysis which combines original questions and choices regarding the activity implicated with the evolution of that analysis during the rehearsal process. Each segment will be analyzed as it stands as a separate unit of action and as it links causally to, is juxtaposed with, or resonates into other segments and the play's essentially extensive structure.

The final chapter will be a summary and a critique of the working process and of the production.
Definition of Terms

Accretion: the growing together of separate parts into a single whole. We absorb the rhythmic pattern kinesthetically.

Action: sequence, or path of the theatrical tension; the flow which creates the illusion of inner life.

Action segment: any coherent unit of theatrical time that nests within a formal dramatic unit, such as an act or scene.

Active segment: one which promises confrontation which usually arises from tension between project and resistance.

Causation: an organic temporal connection between one thing and another.

Closure: that which happens when the mind completes an imminent form; when our mind reconciles the conflicting elements.

Crux: the point where the rhythm of action within a segment reaches maximum intensification.

Decresence: that which embraces a wide range of adjustments to the accumulated pressures of the segment.

Extensive mode: dramatic structure in which causation is less perceptible and parts are linked loosely, often abbreviating causes. In this mode there are many formally defined segments which are largely reactive, diverse. This mode relies upon distinct breaks in time and space which isolate each part, making it easier to
juxtapose one to another imaginatively and presentationally. The rhythm is dispersed, not sustained as is that of the intensive mode.

**Intensive mode**: dramatic structure in which the pursuit of the future (projective nature) is the action of the play. This mode is basically architectonic, linear, melodic, temporal, and the segmental linkage is essentially causal.

**Juxtaposition**: an ordering of segments so relationships are evident but not connected organically.

**Oblique tension**: potential for confrontation that never occurs. It is characterized by implied conflict between characters.

**Opaque**: a quality of presentational space and internal segmental form. It offers the sensuousness of line, color, mass, sound, proportion. It induces wonder and enlarges life.

**Perceptibility**: segmentation where causation tends to be specific and tight.

**Precipitating context**: all the relevant factors that govern the segment and set a framework for the future.

**Project**: translation of the conditions of the precipitating context through activity toward a future object. It is a means for channeling a character's energies. It is the project that the performers enact.

**Reactive segment**: one in which the vector points not toward a confrontation but toward some sort of sustained emotional release. The resistance is internalized.
The character must bring his total being into accord with the precipitating context.

Resistance: any impedance in the pursuit of a project. The resistance will manifest itself in activity or in spatial mass if inanimate.

Resonance: the continued reverberation of the segment's action in the imagination of the audience.

Tension: closing the gap between present and future; allied to expectation. Tension operates on two variables—\( a \) intensity or changes in the form of resistance or \( b \) velocity, or spatial tension, in action or in anticipation.

Transparent: a quality of representational space and internal segmental form. It suggests realms, stirs memories, deepens life.

Vector: sense of where all the contrasting elements in a segment are pointing.
Chapter One

First Impressions and Generalizations

On first reading *A Pagan Place*, I was impressed by the story O’Brien told; her unique handling of point of view; the characters created through the use of spare, often cryptic detail; the rich texturing of the Irish milieu with the economic and suggestive exploration of universal themes; the essentially extensive structure of juxtaposition, of echoing images and repeating motifs; and the often ambiguous nature of the many short scenes. The script read fluidly, but with the cool distancing of a memory play. It appeared to demand imaginative connection from the director and actors as well as from the audience for its completion, yet to always defy full explanation. While at the play’s center are universal themes and experiences which at times come precariously close to stereotypic situations and characterizations, the mystery of journeying through another’s very specific and fragmented memory remains. A production would need to keep this tension in balance.

*A Pagan Place*, set in western Ireland during the 1940’s, plays rhythmically with fragments of the experience of a young girl on the brink of puberty and awareness of the desperation of those suffering about her in a cruelly suppressive environment. These experiences climax to cause her to leave before her
spirit, too, is broken. The desperation is located in the
control by guilt of a timeless, relentless Catholicism still
rooted in its pagan past; in the poverty of a land which never
did recover from the potato famine and which can no longer hold
onto its youth with the promise of a future; in provincial atti-
tudes toward sex; and in sex role imprisonment.

The children inherit a trinity of guilts
(a Shamrock): the guilt for Christ's
passion, the guilt for the plundered land,
and the furtive guilt for the mother fre-
quently defiled by the insatiable father.¹

Research on the culture of rural Ireland suggests over and
over the discrepancy between the harsh, breathtaking beauty of
the country, the romance of its history, the heritage of myth
and literature, and the isolation, poverty, and provincialism
of its daily life.

There is a hopelessness that a glut of natural
beauty can create when there is a cultural
and intellectual morass.²

The majority of youth leave home after school for the city
and never return to live. Depopulation is a serious concern.
What drives the youth away? "Loneliness, the Roman Catholic
Church, or the family tie that is more umbilical than among any
other race on earth?"³

¹ Edna O'Brien, Mother Ireland (London: Weidenfeld and
² O'Brien, p. 32-33.
³ O'Brien, p. 32.
The play presents us with Creena, a young girl, innocent, but intuitively aware of the cultural patterns surrounding her and fascinated by the reminders of her ancient past. As the play opens she is among Druid ruins playing at pagan ritual with a child's fascination. In her integrated perception, ritual and shards of culture offer opportunities for play, rather than a coherent pattern of value. She invests these rituals with her own control, imagination and vitality. When she begins to understand the control those rituals and cultural patterns will exercise over her (religious and societal demands), denying her the very individuality through which she was observing her world, she has to escape. But, in O'Brien's vision, that path of escape is ironic. The townland of Coose is but a microcosm.

The above paragraph expresses what I found and still find to be the central plot and thematic cord in the piece. It is the play's peculiar structure of spare detailing which, while a challenge to analysis and production, creates that cord with texture and dynamism. The structure is not built of scenes of causal intensification but of short, episodic scenes which dissolve into resonant images to echo at least once again during the course of the play. It demands that the audience engage its imagination frequently to effect a scene's closure, as many details of character and action are omitted or only obliquely indicated. This skillful technique of deliberate ambiguity and the use of repeating motifs will be two elements of the analysis undertaken in the following chapters.
After electing to direct this play, and prior to proceeding with my own script preparation, I researched reviews of the 1972 production directed by Ronald Eyre at the Royal Court Theatre, curious to see if they could supply me with a clue as to the effect of this structural style in production. While none of the three reviews I located gave any particularly helpful insight into the play's art or the more important aspects of theme and voice, they did at least provide clues as to just what the script's production challenge was to be.

One of the three reviewers reacted favorably to the Royal Court's production. Irving Wardle of the London Times found the play to be a "delicate piece of impressionism." In his opinion the short scenes and the extensive mode had a conceptual, purposeful shape housing a sensitive portrait of a particular world:

In retrospect it is easy to boil down A Pagan Place to a plot, in which an Irish country girl observes the spoiled lives around her....

In performance, however, the play emerges like a series of old snapshots, which gradually take shape in a composit picture of internal ironies and cross-references. In that case it is fair to describe it as Chekhovian.

Wardle then discusses his reaction to the play's characterizations and the specific world depicted:


5 Wardle, p. 11 b.
Together they compose a society so small as to be blind to its own littleness, and certain to cramp and warp anyone who remains within it.

The play is an offering of two antithetical statements: that it was right for the girl to get out, but also that the people were well worth knowing and no fit subject for patronage or contempt. The production vibrates between these two themes and its effect is very close to music.6

While the statements of Wardle are too simplistic to adequately express a structural through-line or thematic core to the work, they do indicate a clarity of ground and direct one to consider the weave of point and counterpoint operating in the script which I will be exploring in detail. I was encouraged also by his finding the structure to be purposeful and aesthetically effective and a unifying production style possible. It was not until working in production with my own script analysis that I saw clearly the direction and dynamic of the play's motifs, internal ironies and cross-references. The physical space of Ronald Eyre's production was different from that in which I would be working and, judging from the reviews, the values which emerged were other than those which I initially saw or which emerged in my analytical process.

The reviews did teach me that I was working with a difficult script. Given the cursory nature of the critical reviews, the fact that I hadn't seen the production and had no further pro-

6 Wardle, p. 11 b.
duction history to study, I had no way of assessing to what degree the problems mentioned were a fault of the script, the production, or the sensibilities of the particular reviewers.

The criticism was aimed almost exclusively at the fragmented form. Another reviewer, Simon Trussler, called the play a "desultory drift through a 13-year-old girl's formative experiences." He found the production "lacks conviction and, not surprisingly, doesn't find a unifying dramatic style." 7

Similarly, Michael Billington of the Manchester Guardian complained about the play's "short, snippity scenes," calling it a "whispy fragment starved of circumstantial detail, lively characterization, and any sense of personal pressure." 8 He felt that the audience never got a sense of the impact the events and characters were having on Creena's mind. "All we see is a random succession of events crying out for the author's distinctive tone of voice." 9 Billington also faulted the play for failing to create a distinct "sense of place" and for containing "clumsy transitions from scene to scene in which actors constantly seem to be humping blocks of wood about." 10

I read these reviews only after doing a preliminary segment

8 Michael Billington, "A Pagan Place at the Royal Court," Manchester Guardian, p. 10.
9 Billington, p. 10.
10 Billington, p. 10.
analysis and having come to a reasonably certain conception of what I believed to be the play's vision and its thematic line, and a faith that its form is inseparable from its content and point of view. I knew I could not avoid the issues of place and detail nor the need to discover fluid and significant transitions. I would also need to come to terms in production with the script's occasionally ambiguous point of view, due in part to its being located in a central character who lacks a project.

The key to approaching a production concept is two-pronged: 1) to decide upon the play's ground, against which the characters, motifs, and central theme are set in relief, and 2) to pinpoint just what the structural peculiarity is, how all action segments work within it, and what relationship it asserts between the ground and the figure in it. This first prong leads to basic conceptual decisions and early production meetings with the designers. The second leads to a thorough script analysis. The process is then begun.

The Ground

The ground of A Pagan Place is that of a civilization still linked to its pagan past. A production must encompass that timelessness, that essential truth that man's nature hasn't significantly changed with the turn of generations nor with the force of Christianity. There is always a central irony at work: coming to terms with reality means losing the self. The pagan place is as Creena perceives it. As long as she can invest it with mysticism and her creative and romantic spirit, and her innocence, she
is a child. As the game takes on a reality, it is actually less real, for the self disappears. The ground extends beyond Ireland: the world is a pagan place. While cultures establish new forms, new rules, new rituals, the pattern of control continues.

Elements specific to western Ireland are indicated in the script: idiomatic dialogue and rhythms of speech, activities, expounding of myth and legends and local color stories, references to horse-breeding, wakes, Dublin, tinkers, etc. Audience expectation, always part of the ground, demands dialect, particular behavior from recognizable types (i.e. the strict, hard-drinking, hot-tempered Irish father), and consistency of place and socially influenced personal relationships. The production must be "Irish" or lose all credibility on the experiential level. Creena is observing and experiencing a particular world. Internally, each scene is transparent, realistic. Externally, the play is structured opaquely in a form which underscores an essential neutrality of playing space. This space and presentational nature form another expectation and aspect of the play's ground.

The audience is to be watching, through the distance of a memory, the enactment of a coming of age. On this level the action is universal and archetypal. A sense of this enactment as ritual needs to frame the whole, as culturally linked rituals frame each segment. This balancing of the opaque and the transparent must be maintained and kept in tension throughout the production. Ideally, an audience would be kinesthetically and intuitively aware of this framing juxtaposition.
It was with this concern for both a ritualistic enactment and an experiential presentation specific in place and time, that I approached the set designer. After two meetings a clear visual concept had been formed and a preliminary ground plan established. All ideas shared to this end were based on the concept of the experiential/archetypal and the thematic line previously discussed. A number of visual source books were consulted on Ireland and Celtic civilization. All designers specifically read *Mother Ireland* and Edna O'Brien's novel, *A Pagan Place*.

The random flood of conceptual and thematic visual clues I took to the initial meetings included: harshness, loneliness, decayed romanticism, Christianity as a function of man's pagan side, death and decay, suppressed sexuality, sexual threat, Irish sunlight and haze, isolation. I knew I wanted a set composed of organic material hewn by hand, a large central playing area in the arena with, perhaps, an outer rim for outdoor walks and eavesdropping positions. The set needed to suggest the ancient heritage wedded with the barreness of the west in the 1940's. My original desire was to see the stage itself become, as needed, set pieces and props, thus determining the shape of each scene's space. Hand props could be carried on by actors and, whenever possible, be discovered as needed under or next to units of stage. However performed, transitions must be simple, fluid, and integral to the action, helping to frame scenes, supporting resonance of activities, themes and images,
and establishing a formalization of the experience. It was the approach to these transitions which changed most markedly and frequently, affected by and affecting the development of the analysis through rehearsal.

Lighting design should aid in resonance. It would also provide a great aid to maintaining the tension between the formality of ritual and the transparency of the experiential. The designer from the first worked toward essentially realistic lighting within scenes, with particular attention to atmosphere of place, using motivated sources whenever possible, and a more expressionistic freedom when framing closing images and causing the sense of "dissolves" at the edge of each scene. Much abrupt and harsh contrast would be used from scene to scene.

I anticipated integrating music into all transitions and natural sounds under certain scenes (wind, waves). The music would be selected from Celtic and Irish folk music—cool, lovely, thin, essentially feminine in sound, produced by simple instruments or sung in Gaelic. All sound and visual effects were to be evocative, suggestive, to engage the audience's imagination and to effect closure between the fragments presented and the unexplained. Costumes alone would be realistic and complete in detail and, with make-up, capture Irish local color and the period of the 1940's. The selection of the pieces and the palette chosen were influenced by a number of picture books on Ireland. Details of all design evolved and changed far into the rehearsals, again affecting and affected by the process.
While the preliminary set design changed in detail as regards the transitional use of set props and a constant reduction of bulk and extraneous pieces, the basic ground plan of the functional yet evocative playing space remained the same. The design was suggestive of an early Christian cross, with a central playing area, an outer rim, and four ramps extending from the edge of each theatre entrance aisle to the edge of the center space, with one ramp a foot longer than the other three. The stage and ramps were planked with boards which were made to appear weathered, and were patterned in the center area after an old Celtic design. Outside the outer rim on each side of all ramps, were placed low mounds of smooth white rocks. The use of this space will be discussed scene by scene in the following chapters. A groundplan for each arrangement is included.

Structural Uniqueness

A sense of structural inconsistency can be observed on the first reading of A Pagan Place. It was not until I had completed a second script analysis segment by segment that I realized what the difficulty was. Once I had pinpointed it I was more confident in making choices in rehearsal and trying to discover in what way this peculiarity of form could be employed as a strength in production.

I believe the uniqueness lies in the nature and inconsistency of O'Brien's use of the extensive mode. In the first act there are no causal links between scenes, but there are names, images, motifs, and activities carrying resonance. No clear project
sustains throughout the scenes. Cree is observing, as are we. The point of view is thus established through Cree. But, because the scenes are fragments and disconnected, and because much detailing is omitted, we know that the point of view is one filtered through memory. With this technique and with the script's suggestion that actors are silhouetted against the stage and interact with Cree as they change the setting, we know the form is opaque.

In the second act the mode appears to change. The first four scenes are causally linked and are sustained by a project. It is Emma's, however, not Cree's. Lifted out of the rest of the play, this group of scenes appears autonomous. To use traditional terminology, it has exposition, inciting incident, complication, reversal, climax, and resolution. The form is transparent, except where the transitions intervene. In this mode, Cree's focus as observer and vehicle for point of view is obscured. After Emma's departure, the point of view and focus are again with Cree. The mode is much looser now and the ambiguity of scenes is greater, but the form is still essentially intensive and causal and certainly linear, although the amount of time between scenes is unclear. Cree, in these last four segments, has a project. She is now the agent of action, not the observer.

With this structural concern, and with a basic production concept in mind, the following chapters are rooted in my initial script analysis and show the development of a production of A Pagan Place. As they affect the analysis or are affected by
the analysis, matters of casting, rehearsal techniques, actor choices, technical difficulties, blocking, or textual changes, will all be considered in this segment by segment look at the production process.
Chapter Two

An Analysis of Act One

The published text of A Pagan Place suggests that the play open with a tableau of men silhouetted along the back of the stage. It holds throughout the opening segment. The men then move in to shift the scene. While the script occasionally refers to these men again at particular moments where they are to observe fragments of action, their integration into the structural design and thematic motifs of the play, even their number and particular identification became decisions for the director. These men must establish a framing context for the play as a whole. They provide no exposition nor any causal connection with the scene to follow. This framing does, however, set a superstructure of formal segmentation and opaque form, and should evoke a sense of ritualistic enactment.

Because the precipitating context for the initial confrontation with Tinker Wiley is Creena's perpetration of a ritual game, a link is made at once between the opaque super-structure and this transparent activity in the segment itself. Through the structural and contextual motif of game and ritual, the motifs of male dominance and sexual threat are introduced. While they are obliquely suggested through this framing technique, they are directly evident through the performance of the segment's explicit activity.
That opening must be simple, evocative, and supportive of the play's themes. In the arena I could not silhouette the men, and to keep them on stage in a sculptural configuration or surrounding the action would be a confusing convention, calling attention to itself and detracting from the scene's experiential level. Instead, these men must present a single resonant image of an adult male and Irish ground in the midst of which Creena engages in imaginative play. I wanted this opening moment to connect with the past, with ritual, and to establish a vaguely threatening tone. The moment just prior to her game must support the play's rhythmic structure and evocative nature.

This choice resulted in having four men (later introduced as Mr. Holland, Caimin, and Men in the Pub) enter in blackout, one to the end of each ramp, while we hear a female voice singing a repetitive Gaelic refrain. Pools of light come up on each, their vision blankly focused center, then fade out as we hear Creena's rhythmic pounding on the ground around her. As the light identifying the "pagan place" comes up on Creena, the men have disappeared. The first segment begins.

This segment summarizes easily: Creena plays at intoning with stones amid druid ruins. Her game is interrupted by the disfigured Tinker Wiley who threatens to "do poopy" in her. She tries to run from him. He chases her and catches one end of her schoolbag. Creena drops the other end and runs off. Wiley then drops the bag, curses her, and walks away. Creena returns to the spot, retrieves her bag, declares victory over Wiley, and starts for home.
The vector of the segment is the threat of rape. That particular referent for the action, however, is supplied through the audience's expectation. "Pooly" is slang for urination and the segment's crux, to be discussed later, indicates that Wiley's project is simply to frighten her, establish contact, and get a reaction. Creena's project, prior to Wiley's appearance, has been to invest this impersonal and mysterious place with her imagination and control. Her energy is in the game and she is genuinely trying to connect with a supernatural force. In this effort she employs an incantation mixed of Latin, Gaelic, and nonsense syllables, lined in a child-like meter:

Riddle-me-raddle-me-ro
Spitule and pookah, fo from yon kiln,
A blat na ndle omra, nobis vobiscum,
Riddle-me-raddle-me ro.¹

It is essential that we sense a causal connection between this chant and Wiley's entrance. Creena's game is predicated upon an innocent but feverish fear of the possible power of her own imaginative energy. Creena is not only startled by the sudden appearance of a grotesque and frightening figure she knows to go about scaring little girls, but is disoriented through a child's blurred distinction between imagination and reality. Did she, in the spell of her private connection with this magic place, cause this figure to appear? Playing this moment with such a suggestion

¹ Edna O'Brien, A Pagan Place: A Play (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p. 9. All further references to this work appear in the text.
charges it with more resonance into the second act when the sexual presence of Father Declan appears at this precise moment in Creena's chant. This interpretation also helps support the scene's juxtaposition with the penultimate segment when Creena actively seeks Wiley out to say goodbye. This significance will be elaborated upon in the analysis of that segment and the change which must be evident in Creena herself by that point in the play.

From this precipitating context, questions necessary to explore in shaping this scene and clearly defining its crux were: Does Wiley intend to hurt her? Does she believe he will hurt her? Are we, the audience, to think he will rape her? Does Creena herself consciously connect Wiley with her game? Is she traumatized? Has this happened before? The answers decided upon by both director and actors would have a direct bearing not only upon motivation, intent, and resonance, but upon the physical shape and rhythm of the scene as well.

In rehearsal several approaches were tried, exploring different intentions for Wiley as well as varying degrees of breadth with which the character of Wiley should be played. One of the most influential factors governing my approach to this scene was an audition improvisation between Elizabeth Schnelz and Jonathan Putnam, who were later cast in the roles. Their improvisation suggested an alternative, more appropriate staging for my vision of this segment's impact than the script's stage directions of "chasing" and "running around the stage screaming" (p. 9). Playing those suggestions literally resulted in a generalized
scene of pursuit and escape and an easily identified threat, lacking depth and evocative interest. The connection with the precipitating moment of Creena's ritual was lost.

In the improvisation, Wiley's pursuit was slow and circular. It threatened aggression, but was oddly hesitant, changing direction with a dual sense of pull and repulsion between them. Their focus was riveted on each other. The performance was honest and provoked empathic response. I knew I must use this circular pattern to control the pursuit. Jonathan was too short and slight to carry a threat of sheer physical force. The threat had to be rooted more in the grotesqueness of his form and the deranged desperation of his presence, exercising a mesmerizing force over her. The activity of this scene, then, was not that of a chase, but of a control game. Wiley appears to win by frightening and paralyzing Creena. The tension, then, promises a direct confrontation. This expectation is aborted at the crux, being, as we staged it, when Wiley springs across the center gulf between them, grabs one end of the schoolbag, and Creena, still staring at him, drops the other end and runs. Wiley does not pursue her further. This fact is significant and our next few glimpses of Wiley in the play are consistent with it.

Both the physical staging indicated and the answers to the questions expressed depended upon a larger, controlling question, the answer to which helped determine the production concept, particularly as it would control the extensive mode of Act One: How are we establishing point of view? Because of the shifts in mode in this play and suggested shifts in style from scene to
scene and even within scenes as they progress to the next
transition, point of view needs to be reasserted often. As
indicated earlier, point of view here is not through the eyes
of one character experiencing, assessing, and making judgement.
The play's structure alienates us from that orientation over and
over again. We are outside all characters, viewing even Creena
through the distance and the ordered selectivity of memory. The
play's story is a recalling of experience. The art of its plot
is an impressionistic assemblage and linking of fragments, and
accretion of motif. We are not in Creena's mind. We are watching
her watch. I did not settle on this at once and, in moments,
as will be specified later, never did quite refine this notion
fully and consistently.

A strictly realistic portrayal of this Creena and Wiley
segment would lose the opportunity to focus upon the resonating
power of its form, its rhythm, and its image. A strictly ex-
pressionistic staging which projected Wiley through Creena's fear
and imagination, would be confusing if this style were not used
consistently throughout the play and much too imposing for the
delicate fabric of the script if it were. The scenes must evoke
response and suggestion to the imagination, but not manipulate
it. Setting the play strictly inside Creena's vision would in-
crease the difficulty in Act Two when the mode becomes intensive
and the impelling agent Emma. Still, Creena as the figure in
relief against the ground must never be lost for long.

The movement pattern of this scene was contrived to suggest
a connection, perhaps a bond between Creena and Wiley. His threat
was real and felt. He himself was harmless; the world which produced him wasn't. Creena, internally, knows this. Her fear is real, but rooted deeper than in his presence. This idea, of course, doesn't carry intellectually from the activity to the consciousness of an audience. If it carries, it does so kines-theetically through the rhythm of action. After rehearsing the scene from the original conceptualization and the choices discussed, this completed analysis evolved from the process.

In the segment's decrescence, Wiley walks off alone, un-aggressive, impotent, and pathetic. I chose the longest cross possible for him (NW to SE) so that this image would be effective-ly counterpointed with Creena's later encounter with Wiley. Creena returns to the space alone. The moment has passed. She is now seen as a normal child asserting herself over this "creepy" adult with an easy idiomatic brush-off which ends the scene: "I wouldn't stoop so low to pick up so little" (p. 10). The line between game and reality blurrs.

This blurring is supported by the silly song written for the transition into the scene's second formal segment, sung by the men as they reappear on the ramps with set props and the lights change without the interruption of a blackout:

The Tinker loves a lassie
The daughter to boss Tracy
But she's left him high and dry
'Cos she loves a city boy.

The Tinker loved a lassie
The daughter to boss Tracy
And she made him buy a buggy
For to ride on. (p. 10)
And we're in the farmhouse kitchen with Josie and Con, as Creena rounds the outer rim toward the "door," focused generally on the inner space.

This simple verse allows the "pagan place" to become the kitchen while keeping a sense of ritualistic presentation. At the same time, through the melody and the men's Irish appearance and dialect, we establish the experiential ground. Josie, with mixing bowl, and Con with shoes to put on, enter with the men and begin their exchange as the song ends and the men disappear. The men acknowledge Creena as they exit.

The men become an ambiguous presence. I did not want to create the general idea of "the actors help change the set." This carries no focus, no structural or evocative function. These chosen four who appear on the ramps framing the end of almost every scene should be the orchestrators of the enactment, but at the same time are mindless, oblivious to any import it may carry. These four become actual personages later, but even then they symbolically embody types representative of place. Their activity bridges the formal and the transparent aspects of the production.

The explicit activity governing the movement and pace of this second action segment is the preparation of late afternoon tea. Con, the father, is in from the horses; Creena comes home from school. The routine argumentative banter between mother and father, father and daughter, and the tension and weave of resentments running obliquely under their activity, charge the scene
with a rhythm of conversation and silence and domestic sounds recognizable to anyone who has lived in a family unit. What becomes particular to the scene is the strength and focus of those currents. Within the confines of an open set and only spare furniture and props, the scene depends upon naturalistic performance detail.

Con is the impelling agent of the scene. Josie and Creena adjust their behavior and conversation to avoid direct conflict with him, to keep peace, and to keep the tension within its usual bounds. Each character intention results in conditioned activities aimed at accommodating Con's manner and temper so as to keep him home and out of the pub. This is Josie's project. The resistance is Con's easily sparked temper, his resentment of Creena, and his petulant, childish demands for attention. The vector points to an all too possible confrontation and the scene's energies focus on the methods both women use to avoid it. In executing the project, both women compromise their own natures and identities to their roles. To Josie, this sense of wifely duty and resignation is second nature, fought only through a safe level of aggressive argument over household details, Con's horses, and money. Con's petulant insults try to split her focus, but she can comfortably control the tea and still argue effectively with Con. It is habit. The domestic routine never stops for a confrontation. A fine balance had to be found to establish their general lack of warmth and capacity to irritate, and their ease with this banter. Creena, however, has not the defense of
habit, and feels the pangs of denying her needs and spirit in placating her father. The explicit activity of putting on Con's hat with the intention to amuse and to please him, and succeeding only in irritating him is important here. Each such effort results in her submitting to his presence through silence. She fights the tense silence at the table through bursts of poetry or the mock ritual of communion, again taking fragments of cultural pattern for play, and again being silenced.

The segment's tension is oblique but visible. Possibility for confrontation charges the atmosphere, but is aborted as the women adjust and Con's temper loses its target. The scene establishes a bond between mother and daughter and daughter's fear and image of the father as another threatening male figure. It also suggests Creeña's deep-seated insecurity in seeing her mother, whom she loves, as ultimately weak and trapped in her role as wife and, by extension, as mother. The conditions of this insecurity are further defined when, during a moment of love and warmth between the women which excludes Con, Con verbally lashes out at Creeña, disrupting their moment. When Josie gently defends Creeña with "She means well. Leave her alone" (p. 13), Con sharply changes the subject and crudely seduces Josie away from Creeña, out of the room, and into bed. This activity provides the segment's crux, the final adjustment to Con's temperament. Josie puts up a weak and doomed protest which Con ignores. Josie, by submitting to Con, succeeds in placating him and keeping him home. The action is complete. Creeña has been closed out and sits alone at the table.
This exit after Con's clumsy demand, "When the urge takes one, fire away, the gun is your own" (p. 14), implies an activity is needed to connect Josie's submission with Creena's observation, thereby throwing focus back to Creena watching mother. In rehearsal we chose to look for an activity which communicated Josie's vulnerability through an attempted, though weak, apology to Creena which reflected a hint of self-awareness. The actress first chose to hold a moment, stalling Con and removing her apron as she looked at Creena, as though asking for her understanding. We tried this with Creena looking back and then away. This act registered too much conscious recognition. The moment could not be that expressive. Josie could not endure that implied strain. We simplified the moment, only suggesting the tension. The final choice had Josie, as Con stood on the ramp beckoning her offstage, hesitate for a moment to begin to untie her apron, then, glancing briefly at Creena, rush offstage, urging Con to get out of sight fast with one hand and removing her apron with the other. The scene, handled lightly, had the right comic value, with girlishness showing in Josie which rendered her attitude ambiguous. Creena did not look at Josie during this exit.

This moment, then, of aborted apology and subordination to Con carries resonance into Act Two, Scene Six, when Josie defends Con's treatment of Creena after her own sexual encounter and weakly tries to regain Creena's faith and love. Only then Creena's silence is not a passive withdrawal as in Act One, but an active
rejection of her mother. This moment must also connote a sense of mechanical regularity to Con and Josie's behavior. We must believe that Creena has observed this almost ritualistic behavior many times.

The decrease is Creena's held silence after their departure, a moment, ideally, for disengagement and reflection by the audience, interrupted by Ambie who, immediately upon seeing Creena, knows what has happened. He has seen this all before: "Was there functions?" (p. 74). Creena, obedient to the female role, starts to mechanically fix his supper, but he stops her and, in brotherly fashion, proceeds to comfort her with simple, child promises and visions of far-away places. Creena's trust and love for Ambie here must resonate into the second act.

Due to the transparency of the conversational activity of this segment and clearly established relationships, motivation, and intentions, the original analysis held and found specific activity as the characterizations and my visualization grew into the basic understanding. With, as mentioned before, the hot-tempered, small-minded nature of Con having the control of the scene's shape, small particular moments grew into elements of the domestic ritual supporting this view of Con. For instance, Con crossed and seated himself at the table and had his bowl held out to Josie for service before she and Creena had even finished the sign of the cross. Such detailing, without clutter and the ritualizing of domestic routine even through such recognizable rhythms as spoon sounds on plates, passing, reaching,
salting, the silence and absorption in quotidian detail, took on primary significance in this segment.

The third action segment, still in Scene One, brings an abrupt change in form and function, a stylistic break from the transparency of the preceding segment. It was not until far into the rehearsal process that I clearly recognized it as a separate segment. Its expository function in the play had always been clear to me, but its form had not.

Con and Josie re-enter "hand-in-hand" (p. 14) from the bedroom as Ambie is comforting Creena. The stage direction has them sit on a bench and, in the second person, as though addressing Creena, retell her, in eight sentences, the story of their marital history and the circumstances of Creena's birth. Creena, still in the second person, concludes with the crux sentence: "The midwife stitched your mother but made a botch of it" (p. 14).

Con and Josie exit. In the decresence, Ambie matter-of-factly lists his woes. Creena sympathizes and Ambie expresses, through the Irish idiom, a "That's life." With that little piece of philosophy summarizing everything, this segment and Scene One ends.

The segmentation between two and three is organic; there is no formal shift or division. However, played realistically or transparently, as the re-emergence of Con and Josie from the bedroom, too little time elapses, even with the convention of stage time. The moment with Creena and Ambie lasts under one minute. Further, I could not find a full, logical, empirical explanation for their returning to the kitchen after sex and, in
the warmth of afterglow, telling Cree na something she clearly already knew. Certainly O'Brien had distanced this moment from the transparency of domestic activity and used the rhetorical technique to refocus on Cree na. The segment is strictly reactive to the precipitating context created by the previous segment. By then lifting the scene out of the dramatic to the narrative mode (the second person lines are directly from the novel, where they are not spoken by the characters at all) an "alienation effect" occurs.

After an attempt to play this scene realistically, resulting in impossible ambiguity of relationships and motivation, I chose to support the break in style by a break in form, which my analysis then found to be implicit in the script. The break should be sharply defined for the audience, thereby eliminating vague confusion. This break in form also helps us perceive Cree na's inner life, reminding us directly that she sees, hears, and understands the guilt her parents have placed on her.

The choice made, as a result of structural analysis and actor input and objectives, went counter to the printed stage direction. Con and Josie entered on separate ramps (NE and NW), ignoring that scene's convention of door placement. They looked across at Cree na, who stood by the buffet turned away, mouthing the words they uttered. Then, turning, she spoke the final line directly to them. They exited, and, as Cree na crossed back to her school books, we were back to the scene's transparent form. The lighting design helped to support this shift. That moment
had its own peculiar convention and, I believe, worked effectively while opening up the production concept to better embrace the whole script's form.

Scene Two

To keep alive the awareness of Creena as observer we held, with a special light, the final image of Creena sitting rigidly on the bench holding onto her schoolbag through the change into the next action segment. The men appeared at once on Ambie's last line and began to remove or reset the props as the lights dissolved the kitchen. Miss Davitt (Claudia Morris) appeared at the same time and held, briefly, with her map of Ireland, on the northeast ramp. Then, as soon as the little table was cleared and the men began their exit, she slammed the map onto the table and marched into Creena's pool of light, demanding, "Who was the bane of Queen Elizabeth's life?" (p. 15) and the lights expanded from the image of wild Miss Davitt leaning over Creena to the full center space, now the schoolroom. A sense of place was suggested merely through the rhetorical activity of Miss Davitt, allusions to the "other children" in the room, Creena's bookbag, and a large map of Ireland. This spareness of physical detail paralleled the spareness of the story and the evocative nature of selected character detail. While the review quoted in Chapter One found the play to be "starved of circumstantial detail," I held that this and other scenes must carry circumstantial suggestion and all elements of production must unite to that end.
This spare staging in an open playing space and the extensive mode with the frequent conventions established peculiar to each scene, permit the ravings of Miss Davitt to communicate more easily not only on the level of particular characterization, but also of ground. Miss Davitt, in the condition we see her, is not just a figure in relief against a ground, but a figure consumed by it, and therefore representative of it. Perhaps more than any other segment, this scene roots the play in an Irish perspective. O'Brien speaks specifically of and from the Irish experience. The following passage and explicit activity climaxes a hopelessly confused history and geography "lesson" plummet ridiculous Miss Davitt into madness, and Irish history, mythology, and legend into ridiculous confusion:

(She leaps around the room and starts darting the cane in various directions. She points at random to a place on the wall map.)

That's where Bally James Duff was before it went bust. (She is laughing now.) Forgive me if I seem bonkers. Ah, bold Robert Emmet, till my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then and not till then shall my epitaph be written, Fight the foe, Hail light sweetness and hope, to thee do we cry, poor banished children of Lir, Heaven Hell and shingles, Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connaught, asses and gennets, when the cat is out the mouse can play and the Red Branch Knights doffing their pants in a quiet watered land. (Turning her back to the classroom, Miss Davitt proceeds to undress herself...) (p. 17)

The heroes, the slogans, the poetic phrases, and the romantic fabric of a cultural heritage of myth, legend, and history, as embodied in this neurotic spinster history teacher, show them-
selves to be as absurd, insubstantial, and out of tune with the reality of this provincial western life as is Miss Davitt herself.

This segment is reactive. The impelling agent is fighting to keep her last hold on sanity as her identity slips finally from her. The project, thus, is confused and lacks directionality. The pain and confusion within herself inflicts itself upon the students in the form of verbal abuse, especially upon Creena, who, as in Scene One, passively accepts and adjusts to avoid conflict or punishment. This is difficult, as one moment her intelligence saves her by answering questions correctly, and at others jeopardizes her safe position to Miss Davitt's irrational resentment. Creena is watching the breakdown of a severely repressed, deluded, but passionate woman and, as we find out two segments later, empathically embracing Miss Davitt's spiritual release into madness. The focus is on Miss Davitt, but the fact of Creena observing needed to be solidly placed in the scene as well. The script's direction of "fearful and rigid" (p. 15) prevailed, but we did allow outlet for Creena's tension through smart and smug looks back at the "others" as she satisfied Miss Davitt with the right answers. Playing the others as though they were there and seated on the outer rim, with only Creena visible, helped by allowing correct focus, the dual function of Miss Davitt's character through consistent connection with the presentational form.

The vector is Miss Davitt's breakdown. Project and resistance fight for control within Miss Davitt, but adjust to the inevitable within the scene. The crux has Miss Davitt, who has
now lost all awareness of others in the room, laughing inappropriately as she removes a stocking. Father Declan's appearance initiates the decrecence by intruding upon her private moment. His entrance abruptly refocuses Creena's attention and should evoke in us at least a vague awareness of Creena's romantic reaction to this black-caped priest. He has rescued Miss Davitt and brought the moment under control. A strong romantic connection is made with both women by Miss Davitt's aggressively flirtatious behavior upon seeing him and Father Declan's curiously interested "What's your name?" (p. 17) to Creena. A sexual energy exists between him and both women, though Creena, of course, has not yet identified it. This question, to which Creena simply responds "Creena," is framed by the men who have by now appeared on the ramps and "do not miss this silent encounter" (p. 17). The importance, the resonating force of this exchange, has been increased by the play's shift from transparent to opaque structure. I staged the men to appear on Miss Davitt's "Scram!" as she wielded her cane at Creena. The suggestion here, though oblique, was sexual jealousy, a motivation of Miss Davitt supported by the flood of sexual imagery and inappropriate allusions in her mad ravings. This theme echoes later through the juxtaposition of naive and conditioned dramatic play with the embittered pain of real life consequences. That moment, ironically, is Declan's cue to notice Creena.

What evolved from the above analysis in production, particularly as the aesthetic, structural and practical demands of the transitions asserted themselves, was the need to dissolve this
scene in the transition to the next upon a lingering and isolated image of Declan and Davitt. As the men began, Declan got Miss Davitt's shawl from the door post, placed it around her. Then, placing one arm around her, he lead her out and around the outer rim. I wanted this pathetic image of Miss Davitt, clinging to Father Declan and still without one shoe, to reverberate into the next scene where the girls exchange:

Miss Davitt is going to the looney bin. Father Declan is taking her.

I'm not surprised. (Pause.) Is it her monopause?

She was ranting when he came to school today. (p. 19)

and into Scene Four, where Caimin's insensitive story of her suicide and the men's crude responses sharply contrast this physical image.

In addition, we establish through this brief introduction, Creena's image of Father Declan as her romantic savior, which she carries with her until the climactic scene in the second act. In the next segment Creena offers Della the hope that, "A priest could save your life. A priest has the power to save three lives but he has to make some terrible sacrifice to do it." In the second act's scene with Declan and Creena we learn that not only could he not save Della ("I loved Della") (p. 55), but that he cannot save himself from his internal torture and must seek out Creena's innocence for that end.
Scene Three

In my early thinking on the transition from the school-room to Della's bedroom, the questions of music integration first became important. Was music to echo a previous scene's atmosphere, to help set the succeeding scene, or to underscore the transition itself, clarifying the ground through local color, or supporting the ritualistic framing of the production? Various possibilities were considered well into the rehearsal process, but the decision was not made until the transition, after much sharing of ideas with and from the lighting designer, had been basically worked out. The edge of each formal segment was to be framed by the appearance of the men and the lights segue into transitional bridges as they dissolved around an image, and then either cutting abruptly into the new scene and atmosphere or isolating an image from the new scene before expanding into the full space. In the instance of Scene Three, we had lights isolating Della as she stood on the bed center stage awaiting Creena, after fading on Father Declan and Miss Davitt rounding the outer rim. As with several other scenes, a clear opening visual image was juxtaposed with the closing image to better effect closure and direct the audience's imaginative response. I found this stylistic device to be implied by the script's expressive nature and repetitive motifs.

Music, I decided, must then cut us off cleanly from the scene's closing image and support the light dissolve and rhythm of the transition itself, underscoring the ritualistic framing and helping to ground the action of the next scene as well. Some
transitions, as will be shown, created immediate connection with the new place and allow no bridge time at all. The music then was chosen to make this same adjustment. The connection with the Irish past as part of the ground was always kept by the choice of music, instruments, and occasional folk and Gaelic lyrics. In general, the music chosen was melodic, vaguely haunting and distant, and feminine, providing a contrast and therefore artistic tension with the action. The simple delicacy of the play's sound can only heighten the depiction of the pagan behavior of the very culture which created and inherited it. The music chosen for the transition after Scene Two had a child-like easy rhythm and a light gentle melody, contrasting with the Declan/Davitt image but supporting Creena's internal rhythm and pace as she re-entered and circled the outer rim, approaching Della's house.

Scene Three begins the fifth action segment. After seeing Creena only as a passive observer, we now see her actively participating in a loving relationship with her best friend. The vector, however, is the fact of Della's imminent death. While we aren't told she is dying until the end of the scene, subtle projections through activity feed this suggestion, such as Creena's wrapping the shroud-like veil around Della, or Della's fainting after performing "Lochinvar." That Della has been ill a long time is communicated if the play activities performed carry the flavor of ritual, of having been performed over and over again. Creena clearly brings news and gossip from school
every day and is at home in Della's room, preparing egg flips and holding Della when she faints. When Della shouts "The game, the game!" (p. 19) Creena knows just what prop to get and what roles they will assume. Both girls play the game with full energy and abandon, finding, in addition to escape, expressive play for their feelings for each other through the game. Della's motivation, though not fully conscious, is to stay vital and a child through Creena, the only one who will treat her as other than a dying girl. Creena's intention is to enjoy Della and to show her love but, because even Creena knows that Della is dying, the tension in the scene is between the vitality of this game and the reality of the precipitating context which surrounds it.

The moment of crux is the kiss after Della "breaks character" and tells Creena simply, "I'm going to die soon" and Creena says "No, you're not" (p. 21) and offers the ironic hope that a priest could save her life. It is the kiss which tells us Creena understands. All the expressive affection between Della and Clark falls away and Creena impulsively kisses Della, intensely and empathically. This is one of the most directly expressive moments in the play and is interrupted rudely by the voice of Della's mother hollering at Creena to leave. We are not told why. Was it the kiss which upset the mother? The decrescence is Creena's escape from the room. The men have appeared on the ramps. The scene dissolves around the image of Della looking sadly where Creena has exited.

This segment embodies several of the play's motifs: romantic association with priests, close female bonds, inevitability of
death and vulnerability of the body, sex role stereotyping and sexual jealousy, enacted through comic play here but to be shown in harsh, real tones later. Delicate ironies texture this scene. Della, whose body is cheating her by an early death, finds solace in imagining herself a "dawn beauty," and plays at little flirtations and cliche feminine wiles. Creena, who does not yet have a fully formed sexual identity, freely clowns as "macho" Clark, rhapsodizing over feminine beauty. When the game reaches its peak of ridiculous exaggeration, Della breaks it with the flat and real admission, "I'm going to die soon." Make-believe had provided their release, much as madness had provided Miss Davitt's. With Miss Davitt, however, the line between reality and illusion had been lost.

The staging of this scene enjoyed the full play of the center space for the game, with Della's bed center stage, centered in the ritual. As the scene dissolves around the image of Della and the lights shift to a general blue glow under transitional music, the men exit, leaving the stage bare and Creena enters the outer rim. As she does so, Father Declan appears from the northwest ramp alone, crossing the full diagonal and out by the southeast. He sees Creena as he passes, but she does not see him. As he exits, the male Irish drinking song, "Three Nights' Drunk" interrupts the gentler strains and Creena runs off as the men, Ambie, and Tinker Wiley bring on the pieces of Mr. Holland's Select Bar and begin their activity.

The decision to bring Father Declan across the stage between these scenes evolved from what I assessed to be a need to create
stronger reasonance for the figure of Declan, more evocative force of his image upon the audience's memory when he is later alluded to. Performed in the cool blue wash of the transition, the idea may have occurred to some observers that we were seeing what Creena was imagining. Committing specifically to this statement would have been inconsistent with the established frame of reference, but the evocative possibility was there. I also hoped that his crossing alone would provoke the question as to where Miss Davitt was, thus better preparing the precipitating context for the next scene.

Scene Four

In Scene Four, the men who had provided the ritual frame to the formal segment transitions, participate as the human fixtures of Holland's Select Bar. Visually, spatially, and audibly the scene worked in sharp contrast with the previous two. Scenes Two and Three featured imaginatively expressive characters, vulnerable women channelling emotional release through fantasy, full use of the inner playing space, and feminine and child-like musical support. Beginning with the drinking song, this scene was male-dominated, weak in amplitude and spatial tension with low-energy, undefined projects, unexpressive language of casual slang, and diverse, sporadic, aimless activity. This contrast is even heightened when Creena's voice outside the bar interrupts our focus on the male activity, reviving the impassioned ravings of Miss Davitt. Our staging worked to frame
this contrast. The bar used less than one-half of the inner space, but employed part of the northwest ramp and the north rim. We had originally used the center space, but the necessity to achieve a fresh attack and renewed visual interest through a change of focus, and to more effectively counterpoint the oppressive mechanical sameness of this adult male world and the uninspired, obligatory wake it produced for Miss Davitt with Creena's spontaneous and expressive eulogy, demanded clear separation of physical space. The arrangement decided upon allowed for a shadowed recess by the bar's southwest doorpost from which Creena peered into the amber haze of the concentrated pub area. Concentration of the men in a small space also aided in visually communicating the ground through a group portrait. The predominant character in this scene was the "group in the bar."

Scene Four is a reactive messenger segment, the vector being the adjustment of the group to Caimin's telling of Miss Davitt's suicide. The precipitating context into which Caimin explodes with news is the daily routine of loafing about the local pub nursing glasses of porter, engaging in idle activity and gossip, including empty banter about politics, teasing Tinker Wiley, and passing the time. Caimin meets resistance in various forms from these men: disinterest, argumentative attempts to guess, taking away some of Caimin's steam, joking and refusing to take the story seriously, and, later, confusion on the part of the men as to how they should be responding to the news. Caimin keeps trying to tell the story and receive response;
Mr. Holland tries to establish solemn respect for Miss Davitt; Con, for self-aggrandizement, tries to speak well of the dead, claiming to understand her intelligent, sensitive nature; but the rhythms of this conversational activity are unsustained and comically in effectual, especially in light of his earlier assessment that she was "too brainy." In the crux of the segment before the climactic intrusion of the next segment, Mr. Holland rallies their attention to a wake. After all are satisfied with a fresh glass of porter, they commune dutifully but dully in the ritual for the dead.

This scene challenged arena and minimal staging because, while its internal structure and rhythm carried the motif of ritual and it connected directly with the resonance from an earlier scene, much of its function was to further a physicalization of the ground, to which almost anyone would bring at least a generalized notion and expectation of Irish stereotypes and pub atmosphere. Small and specific activities were called for, such as throwing darts, flipping coins, or playing dominoes. Such activity and other barroom patterns were difficult to establish in the absence of scenic reality and detail and difficult to establish within the flow of little tensions. Our task became that of accepting the spare scripting and the apparent indication of inactivity. Such a local color portrait of idle sameness, with the characters drawn as a function and extension of place, demands skill on the part of both the actors and the director.

Contrasting this group portrait, Creena crouches outside the
door alone, listening intently. While the men, ironically, are feebly making the effort to attach to Miss Davitt's suicidal death the dignity which they would not allow her in life, Creena, empathically recalling the afternoon's experience, "has turned herself into a Miss Davitt" (p. 25). Through her clear and innocent perception, she intuit the vitality that fought within the teacher's ridiculous figure. It is this spirit Creena rhapsodically eulogizes by assimilating it into her own imaginative play. Con cannot begin to understand this play as anything other than "mocking the dead" (p. 21) which, ironically, he had himself been doing, but in acceptable idiom.

Con's exit from the pub carried the intention of stopping and punishing Creena, thus initiating this moment as an organic subsegment. It is still part of the segmental whole, as it springs reactively from the original announcement, but the scene has now intensified. The tension is no longer oblique, but confrontive, and the vector is now sharply focused on Con's assault and Creena's vulnerability at this moment. The crux occurs when Creena reaches "utter rhapsody" (p. 26) and Con grabs and curses her with "tinker" and "heathen," wielding his belt and placing it around her neck. Creena keeps resisting and trying to elude him.

While the lights faded low on the pub to direct focus to the confrontation on the southern outer rim, a haze of light remaining on the men provided a strong image juxtaposition of their blank stupor with Creena's rhapsody. To further this physicalization,
and to allow Con to go to Creena once he was aware of her presence, still giving Creena time to play out the whole Miss Davitt speech, I chose to combine the two "wake" activities. This choice responded as well to the actors' concerns over defining the various points at which they too heard Creena, if they did at all, and to develop specific responses through physical shifts and specific gestural work to what they may have heard or thought they heard. They were as a unit, however, directed to keep their focus on their own thoughts and porter, and not to consciously acknowledge Creena. When the men all had a fresh glass and began, "The Lord have mercy./On the dead" (p. 25), Creena then began with "Who was the bane of Queen Elizabeth's life?" (p. 26) This contrasting image, rhythm, content, awareness, and physical tension provided a striking picture of Creena's youth and spontaneity, upon which we see Con's first physical attack. This attack is highly resonant and establishes Con's potential for brutality as part of the precipitating context for and at least an oblique source of tension throughout the remainder of the play.

In the next segment Con is shown in another light, but we cannot trust him after what we've seen, nor can Creena.

Scene Five

The shift out of the fourth scene was immediate upon the light-focussed image of Con dragging off Creena by the neck with his belt, and the contrast was to be jolting. As all the men moved a piece of the pub out in one cross, an Irish jig began
to play loudly and the lights went at once to full and hazy sunshine spilling over the full playing area. Creena runs back on just seconds later to center stage, dips her hands in the "sand" and abandonly stretches in the sunlight. What I did not realize until opening night was the degree to which the physical space of the theatre itself would add dimension to the contrast I was working to achieve. The dim light areas of Creena's eulogy and the close little pub created controlled visual focus. The new scene's light spill revealed faces in the house, seeming to double the enlargement of space. With sculptural dimension of arena blocking and simulation of sunlight, tight, controlled focus was gone. This change supported not only the sense of outdoor space, but also the split-focus confusion accompanying the arrival of the family at the breakwater. First Comes Creena, then a beachball in mid-air, then Ambie. Unlike our last picture of each, they are expressive and joyful. Then follow the rest, laden down with binoculars, blanket, cigarettes, stool, basket, and pillows, with firm resolve to be the same.

This segment, again, is structurally unique. From the standpoint of overriding action it is reactive. The tension is oblique and, until the crux, is not explicitly identifiable at all. All energy of vector and individual projects is aimed toward having a good time, to commune with nature, family, and friends, but their very natures, scripted determination, and tedious trappings of habit prevent their success. This tension is implicit. It exists because the audience sees the pattern, recognizes the symptoms, and probably has old photographs at home
to support their personal identification. The characters' motivations are clear, but they cannot effectively shape their intentions into action without seeming extremely awkward and unnatural. All activities performed in this segment must reflect this state.

To do so, the segment is constructed of smaller units, or "beats" of separate activities, shifting focus from one duet or trio to another character grouping, but with other activity continuing simultaneously. We see them admiring the view through binoculars, laying out the picnic spread, sharing drink, wading, telling stories, and dancing. Each activity was at odds with the Irish landscape surrounding them. Deep breaths of appreciation of the sea air turn to coughs, then to admiration of Petronella's fur coat, talk of fairgrounds, and references to Miss Davitt's suicide. The three women preparing the food, just as they would be doing back home, engage in gossip. Con, on being called to the picnic, tells Creena, "I wouldn't mind being in a nice dining-room now, sitting down to a mixed grill" (p. 30). His story to the women as they ate, which they had heard many times, was crude and out of place in the fresh air among the cool white rocks. Petronella, coming in dressed in high heels, fine fur coat, large hat, binoculars, cane, cigarette holder, and looking remarkably out of place, coughs from the healthy air. Such inconsistencies texture this scene.
In staging the scene I worked to have it play in a rhythmic pattern of bursts of energy and shifts in focus, forming a collective "album" of "fun-at-the-beach" images. A cumulative effect was produced, the tension evident in the forced intensity. The final dance activity became almost a parody of itself and Ambie's vomiting, followed by Aunt Bride's, provided the crux. The decresence was the packing up and walking glumly off to Josie's condemnation, "Jesus and Mary, we couldn't even do this properly," and Con's accurate assessment, "Another fiasco" (p. 33).

Dramatically, perhaps the most important function was the particular depiction of the father-daughter relationship and its position in the weave of juxtaposition, contrast, and resonance of images. Con plays with Creena, flatters her, even offers her a horse when he comes into a "fat legacy" (p. 29) even though, as Creena says, "Emma will be bucking" (p. 30). This warm, animated play, barefooted along the rocks, is an album entry of such a blatant contrast to the jealous, oppressive, violent-tempered father of just minutes earlier, that tension exists through the force of resonance.

While the structure of this scene's activity, its character relationships, and its prosaic dialogue suggest its transparency and demand a realistic rendering by actors, the expressive mode which contains it and the presentational, opaque physical space of both stage and "in-the-round" presence, alienate it by keeping alive that element of enactment mentioned earlier. We are aware we are watching. The suspension of disbelief convention asks us
to accept this bluish wooden surface as sand and the black stage floor and audience recesses as ocean, as the actors' bare feet slap along the cement, "splashing." There was a distinct element of "pretend" which carried, I believe, since we were successful in creating generally a conceptual unity with a balance between the opaque and the transparent as each scene adapted the particular conventions. As in all scenes, experiential detail depended upon actor belief and audience willingness to participate imaginatively. The original sound concept of ocean waves and seagulls proved absurd, however. All "environmental" sounds were dismissed and music, consistent with the establishment of the surrounding ground, prevailed.

The script gives no indication of formal segmentation for Creena's reading of her letter to Della. The stage direction reads, "Con and Petronella go. Creena reads her letter" (p. 33). Analysis had to discover just how this moment works in the play as a whole and within our production frame. I chose to isolate this reading both spatially and temporally from the decrescence of the outdoor scene so that it functioned as a formal new segment.

Creena's letter is a reflection of a particular experience which we, like Creena, have observed. Its purpose is to show us how Creena has reconstructed the experience for the romantic amusement of her friend and reconnect us with the image of Della and the earlier scene's game and revelation. By its very omission in her letter, the fact of Della's imminent death resonates more powerfully. Creena's letter provides the scene's closure. The
function of formalizing this segment through an opaque transition was to reassert the memorial experience and the fact that these fragments of provincial life are shaping Creena's story. It is she we are observing against the experience.

As the picnic party trapsed off, Creena remained on stage. She watched them leave, then looked around at the sea once more. She shrugged, then started out northeast where the others had exited as the lights started to dissolve the seaside. She reached the end of the ramp and stopped, still in light. The carousel music had faded, the lights were out in the center area, and the and the immediate area into which she walked was isolated. She opened the letter and read it, making herself at-home on the ramp. No attempt was made to define place or time. On "Yours truly, Creena Cleary" (p. 33), as she licked the letter, the lights, Creena and the men began their change into the next segment to music. Creena remained dimly lit, focusing on her mother as Josie entered with the men who carried the bed and, once it was placed, got under the covers. As she did so, a light picked up Dr. Daly as he reached the top of the southeast ramp and stood with his bag, looking, without engagement, toward Josie. He was noticed at once by Creena. As the men exited, he moved in to apply the stethoscope to Josie and the lights opened to define the bedroom. As Dr. Daly spoke, Creena decisively turned and exited.

This transition staging was to communicate Creena's awareness of what goes on about her so we then observe the scene through
that perspective. In retrospect, as I'll discuss further in the final chapter, I should have worked throughout to more consistently balance an image of Creena against the context of each scene.

Scene Six

The vector of this active segment points to a declaration of love between Josie and Dr. Daly. Dr. Daly is the impelling agent. The scene begins with the doctor-patient ritual of administering care and engaging in pleasantries. The pauses scripted into these early exchanges indicate the tension which must physically communicate the subtext and the repression of true feelings. When Dr. Daly asks "And you? How are you? How are things?" and Josie responds by talking of Con's sobriety and Emma's secretarial job, he further insists, "And you?" (p. 35) At this point O'Brien shifts the activity of conversation to that of confrontation. Daly's project is for Josie to admit she still thinks of him and desires him. The resistance is Josie's firm and successful resolve to suppress such feelings, fearing the consequences of allowing any such expression, summarized by Josie's last resistance, "I believe in rightness" (p. 36). The action of the scene is Daly's application of pressure by awakening Josie to a memory he knows will unbalance her. The crux and the closure occur as he kisses her.

The sterility of Josie's life is revealed both in the juxtaposition of Dr. Daly's advances with those of Con in the second segment, and in her short, aborted speeches resisting Dr. Daly.
Her line, "I am numb. I feel nothing" (p. 35), functions more than as a coy or surface resistance. It indicates a long pattern of submission and deliberate numbing for survival according to her own rigid code, strongly rooted in religious and social conditioning.

The decresence lies in Creena's discovering them, and at once assessing and taking control, loudly heralding her arrival with Con. The lovers break up and the catastrophic moment has been avoided.

Two segments overlap here. The decresence of the first brings on a fleeting anticipation of direct conflict. Once aborted and Con and Creena have entered, we have a unique sub-segment of oblique tension in which all characters are adjusting to present a face of normalcy. All but Con understand the tension, but he too feels the strain in the atmosphere. Ironically, it is Con who acts in the scene to dispell the discomfort by flattering the doctor, offering drink, and assuming a posture of loving husband and amicable host. This scene is unique in its portrayal of Con as oddly ineffectual in his exchange with the doctor and awkward in the role assumed in his own home. When he hasn't cash to offer the doctor, Josie relieves the moment by offering the money herself. The crux of this sub-segment occurs in the silence after the doctor tosses the money and says "Leave it. Money should never pass between friends" (p. 37). This moment must have a note of finality to it for it to resonate into the next act. The dialogue adjusts back to careful, cliche pleasantries as the
men exit, leaving Josie more alone and empty than before and Creena, who understands, with her. Josie asks for her muff and then gives it to Creena, placing definitive closure on this scene as well as on the last of an episode in her life.

The final image of this scene needed to be that of mother and daughter love. Creena's sympathy for her mother had to be the focus for resonance into Act Two when her project becomes embodied in the rejection of her mother and her home. The imaginative activity of presenting the muff to her mother as an aggressively playful animal, growling to startle Josie from her melancholy, was an invention of the actress playing Creena, and carried with it strongly resonating power of Creena's sensitivity, penetrating understanding, and capacity to express love. And again, Creena finds a game for this expression. The light pool at the act's end dissolved upon the mother and daughter's embrace. The tune, "Dochas" ("Hope"), played here for the first time and was to be repeated again in Act Two as a theme for Creena.

By the conclusion of Act One, the ground of A Pagan Place had been defined, through both the play's experience and structure. The perspective of memory, with Creena both the observer and the observed had been established. The extensive mode and the ritualistic form of the transitions in and out of each formal segment presented a texture of images, motifs (romanticism of cultural values, paganism, Catholicism, male dominance and violence, limited female choices, insanity, death and disease, provincialism), characters, and institutions (marriage, school, church, pub),
through juxtaposition, counterpoint, and contrast, which not only resonate into the next act, but which are put to dramatic use there as the play shifts to the intensive mode and the action develops in a linear direction. Creena's relationship with Tinker Wiley extends to dramatic completion. Con's capacity for impulsive reaction and violence, Creena's fear of him, and Josie's sacrifice of individuality to him, focus toward a dramatic finality. The relationship between Josie and the doctor gets indirectly woven into Emma's dilemma and the themes of sexual initiation, jealousy and guilt, all introduced in Act One, play out actively in the second act. Creena's romantic image and excitement over Father Declan, just casually introduced in Act One, serves as the precipitating context for the climactic segment in Act Two which concludes the action begun and promised in the very first segment of the play.

As will be shown, the play's building to a climactic moment on the experiential level brings into parallel focus the play's formal super-structure of ritual, linking Creena's experience to the larger, archetypal theme of loss of innocence and coming of age.
Chapter Three

An Analysis of Act Two

Act Two begins in the Cleary kitchen with Lizzie bursting in upon preparations for the return of Emma from Dublin. Lizzie's opening comments provide the exposition and interject, through intonation, a note of doubt:

Well, she took us by surprise, Emma did. She must be doing her stuff to get holidays so soon. (Lizzie—her voice and manner have a note of smarminess about them and at the same time her attitude is cutting. (p. 38)

Throughout the activity of welcoming Emma home, Lizzie inserts cryptic remarks which momentarily expose the oblique tension, otherwise masked by the family's efforts at conversation, domestic bustle, and obvious attempt to make the homecoming one exemplary of family life. Through her easy jests with Con, Lizzie is established at once as a comfortable family friend. But, due in part to the isolation she experiences in her illness, is distanced enough from them to view objectively the signals they send. What trace of cynicism she in turn projects must be clear as a manifestation of her aloneness, defensiveness, and resignation living with an illness which is slowly taking her hair, her life, and her sense of self-worth.

This segment is reactive, the vector being the adjustment to Emma's arrival. The activity is that of conversation, with
the rhythms and exchanges natural and the focus diffuse. O'Brien exposes characters indirectly in this scene. Their activity, both of conversation and involvement in domestic detail, serves to mask tensions just waiting to surface. The characters are unaware of these feelings, but through their studious joviality, the inanity of the stories shared, Lizzie's keen observation, and the carefully focused staging of brief but awkward silences, we are aware of the oblique tension and forming questions as to its source as we watch. Through Lizzie the tension sharpens and focuses.

Because of the domestic detail indicated in preparing the table for a proper homecoming, and our decision not to overtly indicate Josie's anxiety but to emphasize her eagerness to have everything go well, directing clearly and sustaining a path of tension through the scene, as well as selecting the detail performed, became difficult. The scene, in the name of realism, became muddled, I fear, with a general sense of excitement, nervousness, and uneasiness which eclipsed the subtlety of character interaction and defined anticipation of conflict which was clear in the script analysis. The path of the tension can be traced as follows.

Con attempts control of the segment, enacting his project of welcoming his love child home, but Emma confuses him. After the safe and perfunctory embraces, Con, keeping the moment easy and light, tells Emma a crude story at Ambie's expense and Emma, welcoming his joviality and embracing an old habit, tops his story with a crude racial joke. After awkward silence, Con laughs to
erase the tension, but he clearly doesn't know how to react. He changes the subject to remark on Emma's beauty. Lizzie, the realist, remarks with "You got stout" (p. 40). Emma counters (quickly and defensively as we staged the moment) with, "On the contrary, I lost weight." Questions arise for interpretation. Is Lizzie deliberately cutting in her remark? If so, is she trying to provoke Emma? Con? Is she jealous? Does Lizzie suspect that Emma is pregnant? Is Emma insulted? Has there always been tension between them? Is Emma afraid Lizzie has discovered her condition? The answers are important for actor intention and character motivation, but their translation into activity can only give a pattern of behavior which evokes the questions. The selection of plot and characterization detail generally in A Pagan Place are evocative, as should be gestural choices in production, leaving questions for the audience to engage with imaginatively or kinesthetically, bridging the spaces left. In production, Lizzie chose to toss off the line casually, with just a trace of cryptic insinuation. Emma then punctuated her line by picking up her suitcase and glancing at all in the room as she exited to their awkward silence. Ambie then cut in with a trivial change of subject.

From the above exchange between Lizzie and Emma, the audience should guess that Emma is pregnant. Each little clue indicated in the pattern of tension, usually sparked by Lizzie, should reconfirm this notion. The scene is constructed around an easily recognizable situation of stock, even cliche proportion: flashy elder sister, daddy's favorite who could do no wrong, returns
home from seeking her fortune in the big city pregnant and
cared. From this earliest clue the discovery and even the fami-
ly's reaction and treatment of Emma in Scene Four are predictable.
The emphasis throughout this intensive episode of Emma should
connect resonantly with the motifs of the extensive whole, and
with Creena's experience, juxtaposing two traditional female
options for statement and for escape.

While the audience should sense the tension, the exchange
between Lizzie and Emma should not be ponderous; the excitement
of the homecoming was immediately re-established. Emma returns
and the group assembles at the table. The predominant conversa-
tional mode continued to be the sharing of stories, a safe occupa-
pation which avoided direct contact or any revelation certain to
incite conscious tension or confrontation.

Throughout the scene Emma appears less and less comfortable.
Her fear and sense of alienation show in little ambiguous moments
and gestures which are indirectly critical of her home. As the
others begin eating and Aunt Bride talks on about the seaside
outing, Emma responds to the food Josie places on the table with
"Oh, colds..." (p. 40). This moment, needing punctuation for the
tension it subtly suggests, brings a defensive reaction from
Josie: "Well, we didn't know the exact time of your arrival"
(p. 40). Emma then talks of the fancy parties and fine ways of
her Dublin friends. When Lizzie asks after an awkward pause, "So
you're in with the grandees?" (p. 40), tension surfaces again,
but its cause, even its focus is unclear. The conflicts of the
inner life of these characters hold the scene in tension, but
are not explained and a production should treat them lightly. They play rhythmically under the masks we are viewing. Josie then eases the tension by suggesting that Lizzie tell the joke about the horse that "stood up to shit and is shitting still" (p. 41). The group then engages in the sharing of crude stories, all centered around excrement, and laughing. Lizzie again injects an awkward silence as she leans over the table and offers Emma a clump of hair which had come out in her comb. With this jolt of reality the conversation shifts to Lizzie's health and, by her own direction, to the subject of Dr. Daly as a "ladies' man."

While the script does not call for a reaction from Josie, the relative positioning and her own focus and rhythm as she continued her work at the buffet, had to allow her focus from all sides so that we would see her discomfort and contrast this revelation solidly with the intimate moment from the first act. Emma uses this moment as a convenient opportunity to make her departure for the doctor's office. This move is not a surprise. However, when Lizzie adds, "There's a rumour that you're one of his flames" and Emma responds with "I hope you dispelled it" (p. 41), the tension, still oblique, has been brought into focus:

(Josie has brought a piece of cake to her mouth but is not eating it. She is uncomfortable with what is being said. She is looking at Emma with a new scrutiny.) (p. 41)

This moment of silence after Emma's line is the crux of this segment, a second crux occurring when Emma prevents Con from accompanying her by inviting Creena. These two moments fore-
shadow the open confrontation and final severance of relationships which will occur in the active, high-velocity segment of Scene Four. Amid domestic activity staged in the round, and the oblique, even cryptic nature of the tensions experienced, establishing this as a moment of crux and focus as viewed on all four sides was difficult, demanding that spatial emphasis be motivated to shift the scene's rhythm. Emma's line to Lizzie needed finality. Emma then walked from the table to the doorpost for her coat. The group remained silent and watching from the table, except for Josie who watched from the buffet and asked, "Can't it wait?" (p. 42) Con then moved from the table to the doorpost, but Emma turned around and called to Creena to join her. Creena, proud and thrilled, dashed to get her sweater.

Significantly, Creena has had no focus in this segment. She is subordinate to the domestic scene and the general welcoming of Emma. She is "upstaged" by the anxiety of Con and Josie, the oddly assertive presence of Lizzie, and the tension Emma draws out as she impells the scene's action. Creena is in awe of Emma but intimidated. Emma is from a world she can only imagine. It is this image of big and little sister setting out arm-in-arm that remains when the kitchen scene dissolves. I chose to keep them on stage during the opaque transition to the next scene, finding then that their walk on the outer rim, concluding with Creena's riddle, functioned as a segment in itself.

The men appeared as the girls walked out the door. As the other actors exited, the lights in the center space faded, and the
girls rounded the outer rim to the southeast ramp in the evening light, the men effected the change. The song, "Two Sisters," which opened the second act, again played under the transition.

By the time the girls reached the door, Dr. Daly had carried on the office props and was seated at his work table, but in shadow. Creena told her riddle outside the door, isolated with Emma in the light. When Creena had finished, the light faded and, as Dr. Daly lit his kersene lamp and began speaking on the phone, the light opened upon the inner space as Emma watched from the door.

I have a riddle. What's got long legs, crooked thighs. A small head and no eyes? Do you give up? Answer: a pair of tongs. (p. 42)

With obvious symbolism, this transitional segment serves as an abstract frame for the precipitating context of this next segment. Coming spontaneously from Creena, excited in the presence of her mysterious sister, it serves to evoke the possibility that somehow Creena understands the situation. Because of the balance both between modes of plot organization and presentation and between stylistic devices generally in the use of language, images, dissolves, and conventions of individual scenes, the evocative value of this moment is not contrived. Again against the extensive super-structure of the presentation, it echoes the motif of game and ritual, and juxtaposes Creena's child-like naivete against Emma's disillusioned weariness, her sexuality, and her painful ordeal in the next action segment.
Scene Two

Scene Two is written in three action segments, organically connected and intensive in mode, but spanning three locales within the same presentational space: the center area dressed as the doctor's office, the outer rim as the path home, and again the center area, but dressed as the kitchen. In making the change in the center, the men had acknowledged the performers, keeping alive the framing device even in the transparency of this segmental group.

Emma comes to Dr. Daly with a clearly focused project: to have her pregnancy confirmed, and if confirmed, to beg Dr. Daly to abort the child and to save her family from ever knowing. The immediate resistance is created by the resentful, judgemental, chauvinistic, angry, and despondent nature of Dr. Daly, who refuses or ignores each of her pleas. The larger resistance to Emma's project is the code of the Catholic church, the narrowness of the society, and the narrowness of Emma's own vision of the options open to her.

This segment is active. It points toward a direct confrontation. From the outset we should know what Emma is doing there and that Dr. Daly, as evidenced by his harsh phone manner, his whisky flash, and his general irritability and weariness, is more the man pictured in the earlier gossip than the man we saw at Josie's bedside. Emma, to gain composure and courage, and to strain for familiar ground, flirts with him, playing upon his vanity. The actress must make clear that this activity is Emma's
deliberate offensive. When he responds positively and offers her a drink, she broaches the subject of her nausea. Physically those lines were directed away from him, keeping her distance, as she does throughout the scene. The pause in the script allowed Emma a moment of anxiety before Dr. Daly asked the inevitable question, but in phrasing which threatens Emma's tenuous composure:

When did you last have the red flag out?
I beg your pardon?
When was your last period?

Emma is now vulnerable, on the defensive, and at his mercy for the rest of the scene.

Daly sends Emma to change for the examination. The script calls for a screen on stage for Emma to change behind where we can see her from the shoulders up and experience with her the humiliation. As a screen could not work effectively in the arena, Emma exited off northeast to change.

While Emma is offstage, Dr. Daly goes to the doorpost to get his coat. He sees Creena and devises an excuse to send her away on an errand. Their exchange indicates that he likes her and identifies her with his love for Josie. It contrasts the Dr. Daly Creena knows with the man Emma is about to experience. While Daly steps in to get the pills for Creena, I chose to have Creena step inside and look, wondering where her sister was, thereby involving Creena more in the scene and keeping her consciousness alive even as Emma's story is told.
In lieu of full nudity, a long hesitant cross to the examining table, holding a sheet around her bare legs as effectively as she could, was chosen for Emma. Despite her loose behavior in Dublin, Emma, in the vulnerable condition and humiliating circumstance we see her now, would have behaved modestly and self-protectively. When on the cot, the examination was performed realistically, as the sheet masked her open legs. With the consultation of Dr. Robert Chosy, a gynecologist, we did slow down the moment, emphasizing the deliberateness of the probing and the impersonal, rough way in which he examined her. This action needed to evoke the connotation of rape, a deliberate assault upon her body. The question as to whether Dr. Daly was drunk, thoughtless, uncaring, or actively aggressive should be in our minds.

Because we could not employ a screen, the urination took place offstage. This was unfortunate, as the effect of her nakedness and this phase of her humiliation was well integrated into the scene as written. Not having her whole trial contained in that space weakened the scene's intensification by diluting its focus.

Amid pauses of desperation, Emma begs Dr. Daly for an abortion. He refuses. She threatens suicide. He quickly throws off the suggestion with "That won't do much for either of you" (p. 46). Emma, further despairing and employing her last option, offers herself as his mistress. This offer is met with silence as he hands her the pills. But even these pills are not for
easing her pain. After hurting and humiliating her and offering no solution for her dilemma, he demands his fee. Emma's silence as she slowly gets her money and slaps it on the table as the doctor, across the room, holds out his hand for it, is the crux. This crux is vividly counterpointed with his first act refusal to take money from Josie. Until this crux, there has been no shift in the path of the tension. The doctor's activity of shaving as Emma begs for help provides passive resistance that hurts and frustrates more than would a direct confrontation. Emma is given no emotional outlet, save a feeble, stifled scream.

As with the domestic scenes, this scene depends upon specific physical business and gestural detail to carry the suggestion of inner life. Neither character is expressive, so the tension depends upon rhythm and the evocative nature of the pauses.

While the focus has not been on Creena, she was always within our visual range, huddled or sprawled outside the office door. As Emma slaps the coins down, the men appear, the lights dissolve the surgery, and Creena jumps up to receive Emma, who so needs her now. They begin to circle back around the outer rim, playing the northwest ramp, where they sit and share stories.

This segment is reactive, allowing Emma release from her ordeal in the surgery through game, fantasy, and sisterly reminiscence. Creena, sensing Emma needs her, entertains her. Emma is charmed by Creena's innocence; Creena is intrigued by Emma's mature, exotic aura. To physicalize this relationship, the two girls, quite unconsciously, alternated as leader. Emma would
assume Creena's walk and posturing, then Creena would assume
Emma's. An intimate portrait of two sisters is presented without
any direct character revelation or confession, but with understood
complicity. This segment also re-introduces Father Declan as the
object of Creena's sexual fantasy and informs us that Emma has
already decided to leave.

By the time the girls reach the kitchen door, Josie has
entered with a kerosene lamp and over hears Emma's pronouncement.
The segment is brief, organic, and active. Josie, suspecting,
confronts Emma as to the exact nature of her illness. Emma
counters with "You forget I am out of your clutches now" (p. 47),
and starts to leave. After Josie tells Emma to break the news
to Con, the script's direction indicates that Josie leaves and
Emma, unseen, "steals away." Josie re-enters and says, "You won't
wriggle out of this one, Miss Moderna" (p. 48).

After much attempt, I could not, given our basic frame of
staging and ground plan, find motivation for an exit and re-
entrance for Josie. In a realistic kitchen, perhaps domestic
business could have been found. However, due to the quick scene
succession in Act Two, our concept demanded that staging become
more and more minimal and scenes more specific and intensive
in function. At this point only the buffet and one chair sug-
gested the kitchen. My choice resulted in a more direct confron-
tation suggestive of the bitter battle to transpire in Scene
Four. The crux became Emma's exit line. Josie called after her,
but delivered the last line to herself. She glanced at Creena,
who shrugged. The women then exited out separate ramps and the kitchen light dissolved on their cross. Then, up the southeast ramp and into the south rim light stomped Lizzie.

Scene Three

This scene opens with a transitional segment where Lizzie tries to be admitted to the house and to find out about Emma, but leaves, rejected. We're given a quick picture of Lizzie's nosiness and her need to be included. The scene holds the action in suspension for a moment. This segment, the one before, and the one following, have a particularly cinematic rhythm and ordering as they interrupt each other's temporal direction and assert their own focus and tempo. The effect, however, is one of accretion, in the service of intensification. They must segue fluidly and organically.

The larger segment of Scene Three is marked by Creena's re-entrance into the room as the lights come up upon the inner space. The scene is a reaction to discovery. Creena and Josie learn of Emma's sexual exploits by reading her diary. In a sub-segment, as Josie stands alone and appalled, Ambie enters and concludes all suspicion with the announcement that Emma's urine test was positive and that the doctor had been drinking.

This sub-segment, as exposition, did not play purposefully in early rehearsals. It had a flat, anti-climactic ring, especially if, as it appeared textually, "Pregnancy test regarding Cleary: positive" (p. 49) were treated as its crux. Dramatic tension was
not pointed to that moment. Josie already knows. We already know. I became aware that segmental structure layers here. From Ambie's entrance the vector becomes the inevitability of Con's discovering the news. As Ambie excitedly blurts it out, Josie must become more and more agitated. We looked for a means of giving outlet for her tension. She tried to avoid Ambie, remove her boots, put on shoes. She was preoccupied and preparing now. When Con entered, Ambie's intention was to get away. These decisions helped to build tension, leading to the crux after Con's final and resonantly ironic line: "Anyone says a bad word about Emma, he'll have me to contend with" (p. 49). This moment between Josie and Con was held a moment in tableau before the act's only blackout, which should be received as the moment of discovery, again with audience engagement providing the bridge which carries the tension into the next formal segment as its precipitating context.

In the blackout, actors carried on their benches. Dr. Daly, ironically the scene's mediator, lights the lamp, deliberately echoing the commencement of the surgery scene. The lights come up on the parlor. The actors are seated on the perimeter of the space. Emma approaches the area from the northeast ramp just as Con, with lantern, approaches the outside door from the south-west ramp.

Scene Four

The controlling activity of this active segment is the in-
terrogation of Emma. Con's project is to discover the father of her child. Emma's refusal provides the resistance. It manifests itself into confrontive action with both Con and Josie. This scene, contrasting all others, has both high velocity and intensity. It bounces fiercely from one triangular conflict to another, losing for a moment, but always returning to, the scene's vector of final confrontation and parting of Emma and Con. The velocity supports Con's hot impulsive temperament. Each stimulus strikes a full response.

Con first confronts Emma. She resists. Josie joins in. Emma lashes back at her, ending with "You were neither wife nor mother" (p. 51). Josie slaps her. Con unleashes his energy on Josie. For a moment it is their confrontation. Creena, on impulse and in rigid fear, completes one of Josie's lines. Con violently snaps at her and Josie defends her—another triangle. Then Ambie defends Creena, only to get physically shoved aside by Con. Emma joins Con in chastizing Creena (a pathetic shift in character from the sisterly need of an earlier scene) and Con turns back on Emma. She resists. When Con turns to the doctor to suggest abortion, Josie, re-entering from the kitchen with Creena, intervenes:

Good God no! (Pointing to Ambie.) Remember when Ambie's Queenie took slippery elm she bled through nine layers or newspaper? She bled buckets. (p. 52)

The trio sparks briefly until the doctor asks for a drink. The action holds in taught and silent tension while Josie, now hostess,
serves the gin. I felt it important that Con's next attempt at interrogation be tempered by that extended and private moment. This moment also contained significant dramatic action to the development of Creena's story. In learning that Ambie had had a girlfriend driven to attempt abortion, she loses a degree of innocence. The information slips passionately from Josie and must crush Creena. Ambie is no longer the innocent protector and comforter. He is now linked to that sexual world Creena is learning to perceive as cruel and deceitful. Missshapen Wiley threatened "pooly" Con used Josie sexually for his selfish pleasure and as a weapon against Creena; Josie had an affair with a married man whose genuineness is questioned as he drinks and treats Emma cruelly; Emma's sexual conduct is now alienating her from her family; the entries in her diary are of physical encounters lacking in love and romance; and no "Romeo" stands by her now.

While we must see this change in Creena regarding Ambie, it must play tangentially to the primary action. As rehearsals progressed, a chance to establish this severance in trust was found in the silence before Con resumes his questioning of Emma.

As the actors all sat on the perimeter of the inner space, (the center area was used or crossed for strong moments of attack or accusation), Josie came back with Creena ("Good God no!") and Creena looked across at Ambie, who turned away, still on the bench Creena had earlier shared with him. As Josie prepared drinks, Creena, needing to sit, had to cross back to the west side. She
did not sit with him, but on the bench next to his and faced away. The portrait was now one of separation. How consciously that moment read, I cannot know, but it did create a moment of visual focus without diverting the scene.

The actor played Con's second attempt to pry information from Emma wearily. The strain had worn them all down. His violence surfaced only once again as Emma addressed the doctor.

While the vector is directed to discovering the details of Emma's pregnancy and, in the process, punishing her and baring all the family guilts, the action twists as the path of the tension builds to the crux from Emma's usurpation of the offensive with a controlled, bitingly truthful attack on Josie, ending with "Your martyrdom hung over us like a shroud, over us all" (p. 53). The actors originally attacked their exchange as another battle, but, as we worked this toward a moment of crux, their choice altered. This truthful confrontation between mother and daughter, and Emma's final rejection of her mother, Overpowered her family's rejection of her. This reversal is the climax of these four scenes of Emma's story and it parallels Creena's rejection and the play's climax later, as Creena too, after a violent attack by her father, rejects her mother and her home. With Emma's accusation, no more debate is possible. Josie knows Emma is right. This analysis allowed their delivery as well to evoke the strong suggestion that Emma knew about Josie and Dr. Daly long ago and knows the hypocrisy of them both in their behavior toward her now.
Con's last line of questioning was delivered with loud and empty fervor. We chose that Emma's telling him at last the name and home town of the father was not a capitulation but a recognition that the information would lack consequence. She was leaving.

An important connection was made in the scene's decresence. As Emma began her exit, limping toward the northeast ramp (does the cast on her leg imply that she tried to jump as she had threatened?) Creena spontaneously and quietly joined her to give her support. The men leave and the last two images we see as the lights dissolve the parlor are Creena and Emma hand-in-hand and Josie alone with the lamp, starting her exit down the southwest ramp.

The next segment extends the complicity of the sisters. It is reactive to the interrogation segment and is one of farewell. It functions economically to direct the focus back to Creena and our awareness that all that has transpired is now part of Creena's experience. She has begun to change.

The dialogue, like that in the following segment, is evocative and poetically economic and should be played slowly and placed. The two sisters crossed the dark space with a flashlight and perform the segment outside the doorpost on the south rim:

Where are you going?
I'm going back.
How will you get there?
I'll get a lift. I always do.
(Pause.)
You'll go through all the towns.
The hick towns. Nenagh, Kinegad, Portroe.
Towns and townlands. Meadows and chieftains.
Dublin my city.
(As Emma goes off, Creena waves.)
Her city.
One day you'll fall in love.
One day, no never. (p. 54-55)

This exchange is a formal goodbye and a quiet recognition of the
ground which contains them both. Creena's last line, delivered
as a simple statement of fact, tells us she has been profoundly
affected by all she has witnessed. I staged Emma distancing her-
selves from Creena slowly during the lines and turning back for her
last line as though she felt some explanation were necessary.
Creena rejects it.

Except for a later reference to the birth of her child,
Emma's story is complete. The transition now must re-establish
point of view through Creena and opaquely return to the controlling
structure or ritual, preparing us for the climactic scene of
Creena's initiation, where the presentational and the experiential
merge.

To effect this, we chose not to have a blackout on Emma's
exit. Creena must stay in our vision and the center space must
be prepared in our presence. When Creena begins her intoning,
we must expect a parallel moment to that of the opening scene.

What evolved was to play the same Gaelic refrain which had opened Act One after Creena's line, "One day, no never." Creena walked slowly to the southwest ramp as three men entered from the other ramp. She turned and watched them remove the set props. As the last man exited, the pagan place light replaced the blue wash of the transition. Into this space Creena walked, arms held high holding the stones and crossing half-way around the perimeter, then stepping directly into the center. She knelt and began placing each stone on her chant. The next episode of the rhythmic structure had begun.

Scene Five

Just as Wiley had appeared in Act One, Father Declan enters from the northeast, "called up" by Creena.

This scene demanded tight analysis. Perhaps more than any other scene, this segment is subject to the particular sensitivities brought to it by the director and the actors involved. The scene is fraught with ambiguities and evocative possibilities never made explicit in the script.

To begin with, the impelling agent for this scene is in question. Father Declan enters Creena's space and asks her what she's doing. She lies and says "Counting" (p. 55) Before he arrived she had been "doing spells." We know that Declan has been part of her fantasy life. Was he in her mind as she intoned? Does she think, again as in Act One, she may have caused his being
here? Who has initiated this meeting?

Secondly, the scene allows, after a stormy sequence of family life, cruelty, rejection, and sexual guilt, a chance to see our innocent central character alone with her first object of sexual interest. It was important that this scene carry no ironic tone. We see Creena here at her most vulnerable, and fascinated by Father Declan's appearance, the mysterious qualities she attributes to him, and the exotic places he has been. Has his appearance now aroused sexual stirrings within her?

Thirdly, the scene strongly echoes the opening segment and the vector and path of tension, however oblique, clearly point to a rape, but the indirect dialogue, the subtly flirtatious statements of Creena herself, and Declan's enchantment with the child in her, make an aggressively obvious statement about an evil, lusting priest deflowering a little girl, or a blanket satirical comment on the Roman Catholic Church, simplistic and false.

Do you want a toffee?
You're very pale.
I suppose they have a tan.
Who?
The girls my age.
Do you smoke?
No. (Smiling.) I have had a puff though.
(Looking at the toffee.) If this was a conversation losenge it'd say something.
Like "mud in your eye."
You're fast.

No. Emma is. Do you do baptisms?

While the precipitating context naturally presents a sense of foreboding, the actors must not play our fear. Declan must not come on with the intention to rape. The course of the action, as we rendered it, lead to his overtly seductive action gradually. To establish that Declan was intrigued by her youth and charm, but keeping the sexual tension, Declan, behind her back, took one of her stones. Creena, feeling her privacy invaded, reaches out for it. He, teasing her, makes her work for it: "Who do you love?" (p. 55) She follows his lead. The whole scene plays with this subtle game of control and intice.

The segment is active, with sexual initiation the vector and, finally, the crux, but the project/resistance relationship, as suggested above, is highly oblique. Declan's awareness of his motivation and its sharpening into conscious intention completes, I decided in the rehearsal process, after he spins her around and physically steadies her. Even Creena is instinctively aware of the change:

I can see myself in your belt.

It's Aztec.

I don't look in the looking glass anymore.

Why?

For a special intention.

(Their heads are close together as they both look at themselves in the surface of the belt.)
You can tell me anything. Everything. I'm your friend and I'm very fond of you.

What was that? I heard something.

No you didn't.

It could be the Tinker. He prowls at night.

Poor Tinker. How he must be...hemmed in.

He talks to himself.

Like you.

What was I saying when you came in, Father?

Call me Declan.

I couldn't.

You could if I insisted.

(Pause.)

Let's go over the fields. (p. 57-58)

In that pause lies Declan's intention. Creen resists with "No, we'll sit here," but she cannot refuse the priest—or does she want to go? Is the clue for her accompanying him the line, "People are always leaving here...they all go." (p. 58)? She needs to trust him? Is she obeying a priest? Is she aroused? Is she afraid? Of what?

While the actress herself needs to decide these answers, the activity chosen can only pose questions as to inner life. Declan's final speech, delivered as he leads her off, face to face, is a series of disjointed images, suggestive rhythmically of a desperate prayer, expressive of his inner need, confusion, and pain.
O'Brien leaves the scene's actual closure to the audience's imagination and then deliberately renders our assumptions ambiguous through this scene's plot and structural relationship to the following scene and the offstage action.

Scene Six

As Father Declan takes Creena offstage, the music, now identified with Creena, is heard and the lights fade on the disappearing image of Declan and Creena. There is a pause, then a screaming of "No, no, no..." (p. 58). We suspect that the screams are in reaction to Declan's assault, but then Con enters dragging Creena to center stage. He beats her, while the men and Wiley, having run in on the ramps, watch, condemning Con, but making no physical effort to stop him.

The moment offstage bridged the transition. Time was condensed here. The leading of Creena offstage by Declan, the dragging her back on by Con, and the beating should be seen as one complete action. The two segments overlap. The beating is the completion of Creena's sexual initiation. We do not know exactly what happened between Declan and Creena, but we do see how Con has placed the guilt. In less than one minute of stage time, Creena is violated by both her male role models—her father and her priest.

In reviewing this moment of the actual production against the analysis, I find that I failed to play the beating for its fullest value. The scene demanded not only to have the beating
alone on stage and more brutally conveyed through a controlled rhythmic stylization (symbolic of the sexual act begun), but the men, on entering, needed to be more distant and passive in their involvement, more consistent with their roles up to this moment. Con's intensely ironic line, "You trollop you!" (p. 58) needed key focus in the scene. Just minutes before Con was blasting Emma over the man who had gotten her pregnant. By any strict Christian moral code he could have addressed this line to her, but did not. Too much personal pride and guilt were wrapped up in Emma. Instead, all his violent anger vents itself upon Creena, a victim.

This scene is the play's major crux, not only in linear intensification and thematic drive, but also in the ritual framing structure. Initiation is complete. Creena's innocent, natural spirit has been sacrificed to social value and pattern, however pagan. The opaque form and transparent activity are symbolically one. The staging needed a framing by the men in a chorus relationship. Con's action, their comments, then Josie's aborted protest needed clearer separation. The scene played emotionally and the generality was clear and gripping, but the visual and rhythmic support were not as full as they might have been.

Con exits and the second stage of the climax is enacted. Josie comes to Creena to give her love, but at the same time, in conditioned fashion, defends Con: "Your father had to do it, had to for your own good. Don't think he enjoyed it" (p. 59). Clearly Josie feels remorse, but cannot express it. We played
Josie's attempt to soothe Creena with the subtextual project of wanting Creena's acceptance and forgiveness, to be absolved of her guilt. The closure of Creena's rejection of her mother took place as Creena slipped silently from Josie's lap after the plea, "Just give me a sign, give me a word" (p. 59). As Josie exited to Creena's music theme, lights dissolved slowly on Creena, who lay motionless upon the ground.

Just as the four scenes from Emma's appearance to her departure, these two scenes from Declan's appearance to Josie's exit, present one complete dramatic action, the latter in more skeletal, evocative form.

Emma returned to Dublin. If the stock story extended beyond the play's action, she would probably become a prostitute—one female option for escape from and rejection of home. The next segment presents us immediately with Creena's choice.

Scene Seven

After a momentary blackout, underscoring completion, and a clap of hands, lights come up on the full inner space of the schoolroom. Creena sits in the same place she sat before in that room. A nun is addressing the "class," as the final female role presented from this ground. This recruitment segment is welcome comic relief after a painful and climactic scene. The nun easily and sincerely sings the praises of the service of the Lord in platitudes and dogmatic cliches. She speaks of exotic places. The segmental type is oratory and it juxtaposes another romantic picture of the church against the insidious evil locked within
it as seen in the character of Declan, who had himself just completed missionary work in an exotic land. The crux occurs when Creena raises her hand. We know she has made a decision:

But child, the question has only just been put. Let it sink in. Deliberate.

I was going anyhow. I was going to ask the missioner when he came in June. (p. 61)

From the moment she was dragged on stage by Con, Creena had become the impelling agent of this drama. She has a project. She is no longer the observer. The following three scenes follow this project to its conclusion. They function as sub-segments, as the overriding vector is Creena's leaving home.

The dialogue makes clear to us that she is not going because of some divine calling, though she is well-versed in the language: "It's like a summer's day inside my head" (p. 61). She is choosing to leave home by a well-established, culturally acceptable route. Emma's choice is not open to her, nor is marriage. The scene's final image was Creena's crossing to kiss the crucifix and then quickly exiting off. The nun held out the crucifix so that Creena had to cross to center. She knelt briefly and ran. She was to be positioned center stage in the following three scenes as well. Her run offstage began the presentational shift to the next activity segment. The nuns exited and the men appeared for the change, followed immediately by the appearance of Lizzie and Josie, holding the black clothes and awaiting Creena's entrance.
Scene Eight

I had Creena walk to center stage in her underwear, where Josie hands Lizzie the black clothes and Lizzie dresses Creena. This sub-segment to the vector of departure gives completion to particular threads of implied action. Lizzie's hair is all gone. Her impending death replaces that of Della. We learn that Emma's baby was a boy and that it had bad blood. "It's blood had to be changed" (p. 62). This echoes Emma's hateful exchange with her father in Scene Four where he curses her unborn child:

May it come out festered and headless
and puce.

With your blue blood flowing through. (p. 52)

It is significant that Creena speaks to Lizzie only when Josie has gone offstage. Not one line is delivered to Josie, nor does Josie speak. This segment should make clear that Creena will not speak to her mother again. The actors had considerable difficulty accepting this fact, and particularly my decision regarding the extension of the rejection to the final scene. In the need to respect their own instincts, I shifted from my position in the original analysis of the final scene, as I will discuss. What we established here was that Josie, in the dressing activity, did attempt to establish contact with Creena and that it was Creena who rejects her.

Josie starts to slip the coat on Creena's arm. Creena, her back to her, steps away. Lizzie counters and takes the jacket from Josie and puts it on Creena. It is then that Creena says,
"I'll have another name, a saint's name." Lizzie, somewhat enviously, responds, "I hope it's a lovely name, like Assumpta or Rossario or something" (p. 62). As the lights segue slowly into the next segment's atmosphere, Josie and Lizzie exit in opposite directions and Creena crosses down the southwest ramp, barely lit. She holds there, facing southwest, until Wiley situates himself on the northeast ramp and begins his chant.

The segment's crux then became Creena's stepping away from Josie's silent offer to help her with her coat. This was the final act of both women to an oblique conflict—with tension so internalized that no confrontation could occur to relieve it.

In the decresence, Creena announces indirectly that she will, even by name, no longer be associated with home, no longer share the name Josie assumed by marriage to Con. The decresence supported, as did the portrayal of the nuns, the references throughout to the church, and Creena's child-like fascination with ritual, the irony of Creena's action. Her choice, while temporarily safe and an escape from the torment of home, will threaten to strip her individualism, regiment her, and deprive her of further choice. The church will provide her with a coherent pattern of value, but its ritual will now control her.

Scene Nine

The script's stage direction has Creena remain on stage and Wiley heard behind her. I discussed with the lighting designer the possibility of holding Creena in a pool of light and having
another special on Wiley as he spoke. As rehearsals progressed with the analysis, this concept did not make the necessary statement.

Creena has been emotionally and physically violated in a scene which took us full circle from the opening sexual threat. Wiley too is a victim, as was Miss Davitt, of a place which could not contain them. Symbolically, Wiley is the embodiment of the perverted, deformed, human waste of this area and time. While Wiley introduced the theme of sexual aggression, it was only a manifestation of his own impotence and victimization. Creena knows this. What needs to be made clear in this goodbye segment is that she is actively seeking him out. She is entering his territory:

I never came here before.

The Great Gales.

It's lonesome here.

It is. (p. 63)

Our original staging failed to make clear that Creena is saying goodbye to a place and her innocence through Wiley, and exercising the knowledge she has attained by now acknowledging him as a suffering human being ("I hope your lumbago gets better!"). And he need play no more aggressive games upon her. He has seen her suffer too.

As Wiley chants (a passive, self-directed rhyme as opposed to Creena's opening active intonation), Creena crosses to him on
the long diagonal. Only this path is lit in moonlight. The exchange is deliberately spare and its significance will be in the reception by the viewer. What matters in production is the simplicity of the action and Creena's demonstration of trust. Creena says goodbye and wishes him well. Wiley gives her his only possession. Tension lies only in the remnants of our association with Wiley—what we still fear could happen. But, in light of all the contrasting elements and motifs leading to this moment, we doubt that it will.

The final image left us was Wiley limping back alone to his few possessions and scooping them up with his cap in the absence now of his tea-caddy. This cross should connect with the resonance from his solo exit in Act One.

Scene Ten

Scene Ten enacts a more traditional farewell with family and town. I staged the scene formally, as a final tableau in a presentational space. As the lights fade on Wiley's exit, they come up slowly, spreading a faint sunset over the full space as Mr. Holland, Caimin, Petronella, Aunt Bride, Lizzie, Con, men and Josie walk up the ramps and space themselves around the outer rim. All focus on Creena as she walks into the center. After Aunt Bride presents her with a cake, Con, almost suggesting that he understands what has happened, steps toward her and offers, "I might have flared once or twice. (Pause.) I wish I hadn't" (p. 64). He cannot be direct with her. His offer of
money is presented in the form of a preposterous verse, to which Creena simply responds, "I'll go now" (p. 64).

The vector is the completion of Creena's project and the drama's closure. A strict reading of the text appears to say that Creena leaves and no connection is made between Josie and Creena. Con tries to get Josie to wave, but Josie doesn't: "We're not her people any more" (p. 64). I still believe O'Brien intended an absolute and final break between mother and daughter, leaving Josie empty, having lost her only love—a bitter contrast to the final scene in Act One. A production which throughout were more relentless in presenting the harsh edges and cruelties of the ground, could sustain this frigid silence as the appropriate activity for the play's close. However, Joy, the actress playing Josie, had great difficulty remaining passive in the scene, believing so strongly that Josie needed to try to hold Creena back or at least, half enviously, say gesturally to her, "I understand." Beth too, as Creena, desired to acknowledge her mother, to say goodbye—perhaps forgive? The resulting decision was to have Josie step toward Creena, as though to stop her. Then, aware of the inevitability, she stopped. Creena, after starting out, stopped, thought of her mother, and turned back. They exchanged a look of understanding and letting go. Creena then turned and left. Josie's last line was then one of fact and resignation.

The positive and tearful audience response to this moment showed its dramatic effectiveness, but I'm not sure that O'Brien
had directed the play toward evoking that response. I believe this concluding scene may have been more true to the play's central theme had it denied us the hint of reconciliation and warmth we craved. However, the moment as staged still posed a question as opposed to a statement, open to interpretation and to the imaginative closure effected by the audience in the scene's final silence.

Act Two, then, has drawn the extensive images, motifs, and themes introduced in the fragments of Act One, into dramatic form and completion. Critical fragments of Greena's childhood have been thematically counterpointed and contrasted, her rite of passage into adulthood has been effected, and the ground of western Ireland has been explored against an opaque form to allow it universal scope and significance.
Chapter Four
Conclusion

The preceding chapters have presented an analysis of a production of *A Pagan Place* which evolved from a process rooted in a vertical script analysis. As demonstrated through this particular play, such structural analysis explores drama as units of action dependent upon explicit or implicit activity, with rhythm of involvement and disengagement as the basis for segmentation. The script analysis begins by examining the activity which governs each segment, then the relationship of one segment to the next. The determination of this relationship then helps to find the overall structural pattern of the play's controlling action. In much traditional drama that structure would be causal and intensive. While, as was shown, a loosely intensive pattern is implicit in *A Pagan Place*, the segmentation is not organic and causal, but formal and rhythmic, dependent upon a pattern of point-counterpoint, image and activity repetition, juxtaposition, and contrast.

The advantage of using such an analytical process, discussed in great detail in *The Dynamics of Drama*, is that an understanding of the nature and controlling pattern of a script's segmentation leads to a conceptual determination regarding a relationship between the script and the theatrical form to pursue. It was through the play's motifs, formal segmentation, and
questions created through the "spaces" in the text that I developed the theatrical concept of ritualistic enactment.

The use of the extensive mode, but at the same time the carrying of an action begun in the first act to completion in the second, resulting in the central character's assumption of a project, helped me to see the overriding motif to be one of sexual initiation and a coming of age. This theme, the often poetically spare dialogue, the extensive mode, and the formal units supported an opaque, openly symbolic physical staging. At the same time, the domestic scenes of colloquial language, the specifically experiential fragments presented through a memorial point of view, and the attention to establishing a specific ground, supported realistic characterization, gestural detail, and transparency within the segmental units. Thus, the directorial task was to conceptually balance these two demands.

I believe that the design concept arrived at early in the preparation was instrumental in allowing our presentation to achieve such a balance between the ritualistic superstructure and the individual fragments of experience, establishing the ground of both Irish daily life and ancient cultural heritage and thus creating the implicit comparison between Catholicism and paganism.

In our production the transitions carried the ritual frame. The game/ritual motif present in each segment as explored in the preceding analysis allowed for a structural connection to be made between the units and the whole. In retrospect I find that a sharper focus on that motif in production would have better
physicalized the play's form and made more thematically clear the
distinction between the child's fascination with primitive energy
and ritual and adult society's shaping and use of cultural pattern
for control. To have better carried that motif, the relentless-
ness of the harsh ground, and the other extensive relationships
in the play, sparer detailing, fewer props, and less business at
times would have allowed sharper focus of both activity and pur-
poseful segmental linkage. As rehearsals progressed I came closer
and closer to this achievement, but my anxiety over losing the
experiential belief by a too all-imposing form, prevented my
making as strong a commitment as I may have made. Also in retro-
spect, I find that greater use of Creena could have been made
in the formal transitions to keep our perspective always balanced
between the transparency of the fragments and awareness of the
observer/perpetrator of the memory.

One of the more liberating aspects of my analytical process
for this production, influenced by Beckerman, was its lack of
inhibiting generic terms—comedy, tragedy, melodrama, impression-
ism, expressionism, etc. These terms imply a definition of
theatrical form and stylistic concern imposed on a work, rather
than allowing such decision to evolve from the work's own partic-
ular, always unique form. All assumptions must be drawn organically
from the work in question, not defined or implied from the
general and forcing the particular to obey. This aspect of struct-
ural analysis especially will I carry into all my future work.

In keeping with the primary principle of vertical analysis
Appendix

Ground Plans of Interior Scenes
(Scale: \(\frac{\text{\(\times\)}}{\text{\(\text{\(\times\)}}=1'}\))

Key:

Bu---Buffet
T----Table
W----Washstand
S----Stool
C----Chair
B----Bench
Pb---Porter Barrell
D----Door Post
Bd---Bed
Act I

Scene 1

Farmhouse Kitchen
Act I

Scene ii and II, viii

Classroom
Act 1
Scene iii
Della's Bedroom
Act I

Scene iv

Mr. Holland's Select Bar
Act I
Scene vi
Josie's Bedroom
Act II
Scene i
Farmhouse Kitchen
Act II
Scene iii
Kitchen
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