CONFESSIONS OF A CONSORT:  
THE ROLE OF MEG IN THE HOSTAGE  
BY BRENDAN BEHAN

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Master of Fine Arts in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
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*****

The Ohio State University
2000

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ABSTRACT

The following is a documentation of the process I undertook during the preparation, rehearsal and performance of the role of Meg Dillon in Brendan Behan's play *The Hostage*. This document is divided into five chapters. Chapter One describes the research I did for the role: reading Behan's work, viewing Irish films and researching Irish song and dance. Chapter Two details the production circumstances. Chapter Three contains a copy of my scored script along with my acting methodology and terminology. Chapter Four is a journaled account of the production process from November, 1999 to March, 2000. Chapter Five is a summary of the entire project. Appendices at the end of the document include promotional and production materials for the production. In this document I have provided a description of the process that occurred during each phase of the creation and execution of this role.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my adviser, Sue Ott Rowlands, for intellectual support, encouragement, and enthusiasm which made this thesis possible, and for her patience in correcting my stylistic and formatting errors.

I thank Phil Thompson for discussing with me various aspects of this thesis and his assistance in my Irish dialect and vocal work.

I am grateful to Dennis Parker for providing feedback on my physicality and use of costume in all my character work.

I am indebted to Christina Sidebottom who without her typing and formatting skills this document would have been an insurmountable ordeal.

I also wish to thank my fellow classmates, Carrie Bradac and Carney Schuck for their support and the privilege of sharing The Hostage as our thesis show.
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1997 – present  Graduate Teaching Associate,
                The Ohio State University

CREATIVE PROJECTS

Actor, The Ohio State University

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**Actor, Pelican Theatre**
New York, New York

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**Actor, Suffolk Community College**
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**Actor, TV/Film**

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**FIELD OF STUDY**

Major Field: Theatre
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a documentation of my process in researching, developing and performing the role of Meg Dillon in Brendan Behan’s The Hostage. The production was directed by theatre faculty member Bruce Hermann of The Ohio State University Department of Theatre and presented in Thurber Theatre located in the Drake Union, February 23-29 and March 1-4, 2000.

The Hostage was not the final production I performed in at The Ohio State University, but it was certainly the pinnacle role of my academic training. Meg Dillon was an especially challenging character for me to create because of the specific physical and vocal demands required of the role. I had to not only speak with an authentic Irish dialect but was required to sing and dance in the production as well. This unique combination of challenges was a significant reason why I chose the part of Meg Dillon for my thesis role.

My first acting role was as Kim MacAfee in the eighth grade musical production of Bye Bye Birdie. Fortunately, I continued acting in leading musical roles throughout my years at Sachem High School in Ronkonkoma, New York. During my senior year I was a national award winner in the category of Dramatic Interpretation for my school’s Forensic Speech and Debate Team. This achievement, in addition to my previous acting experience, inspired me to pursue a career in theatre. Upon graduating from Sachem
High School I decided to attend Suffolk County Community College in Brentwood, New York. This decision was largely influenced by the quality of the acting faculty and by the fact that I was enamored with the department's productions. I spent two years at SCCC and graduated with an A.A. degree in theatre. It was after this period I decided to take classes at Herbert Berghof Studios in New York City. During this time, I continued my formal education in English at Dowling College in Oakdale, New York. I wanted a career in teaching and I also wanted to pursue acting. I graduated with a B.A. in English and with an M.A. in Secondary Education from Dowling College. I continued teaching and acting in New York for the next ten years before deciding to return to graduate school for an M.F.A. in Acting. In 1997 I was accepted into the Master of Fine Arts program at The Ohio State University and have spent the past three years honing my skills in acting, directing and teaching. This thesis project has given me the opportunity to reflect upon and apply the training I have acquired during this time. My work in The Hostage was a culmination of my graduate studies and an important milestone in my career in academic and professional theatre.

The main problem I explored in this thesis project was the utilization of song and dance in Brendan Behan's The Hostage. To understand the characters in The Hostage it was important to examine the integral role that music has within his plays. During the course of my research I discovered how the songs often comment satirically upon the action of the play. They also present important perspectives about the characters who sing them. In creating the role of Meg Dillon, it was imperative to examine each of the songs in the play, and analyze any content that related to Meg’s character.
The bulk of my research was dedicated to analyzing Irish songs, developing an authentic dialect, and investigating the playwright. I spent the summer of 1999 watching Irish films, reading Irish history, and listening to Irish dialect tapes. Through this process I hoped to have a comprehensive idea of what Meg’s life was actually like in 1958 in Ireland. I discovered that it was reading Brendan Behan’s plays and reading about his life that proved to be the most informative research. By reading Behan’s plays and analyzing his songs I was able to gain a deeper understanding of Meg.

This document is divided into five chapters. Chapter One describes the research I did for the role: reading Behan’s work, viewing Irish films and documentaries, and researching Irish song and dance traditions. Chapter Two details the production circumstances. Chapter Three contains a copy of my scored script along with an explanation of my acting methodology and an explanation of the acting terminology used in the scored script. Chapter Four is an account of the production process, beginning with early rehearsals and continuing through the closing night performance. Chapter Five is a summary of the entire project, its challenges and rewards. Appendices at the end of the document include promotional material for The Hostage, reviews of the production, and other documentary and support material.

My portrayal of the role of Meg was highly influenced by a quote of Brendan Behan’s: “It’s not that the Irish are cynical. It’s rather that they have a wonderful lack of respect for everything and everybody” (Behan, Confessions of an Irish Rebel 219). I believe that this statement embodies the essence of the character of Meg. Meg has a
wonderfully salty attitude and curmudgeon-like tendencies. By doing this research project I found Meg as entertaining as the songs she sings in The Hostage and as complex as the playwright Brendan Behan.
CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH

This first chapter contains my research and is divided into three sections. In the first section I will provide information on the playwright and production history. In the second section I will present historical research on the world of the play, including the use of Irish songs and dances. The last section of this chapter includes detailed character research as it relates to the question of how to create an effective portrayal of Meg Dillon in The Hostage by Brendan Behan.

1.1

Brendan Behan was born in 1923 in Dublin and was raised in one of the tenement houses on Russell Street owned by his grandmother. Behan was from a working class family with equally strong connections to the socialist wing of the Irish Republican movement and to the Dublin theatre. After the death of her first husband, an Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) member, his mother, Kathleen Kearney Behan, married his father, Stephen Behan, a house painter, union leader and I.R.A. member. Stephen Behan is said to have first seen Brendan through the bars of his cell in Kilmainham Prison, where he was incarcerated for I.R.A. activity. Brendan Behan’s childhood was filled
with violence, poverty, alcoholism and song. Behan began writing patriotic poetry and prose while a member of the Feiania Eireans, the Irish Republican equivalent of the Boy Scouts. In 1937 he graduated from the Feania to the I.R.A. at the age of sixteen. In November 1939, soon after his grandmother and two of her daughters were arrested in Liverpool for making bombs, he also was arrested there for possession of explosives. Behan was sentenced to three years detention in Borstal, Britain’s juvenile detention center. This later became the setting of his autobiographical novel *Borstal Boy*. He referred to the years he spent in the Borstal, at Hollesley Bay, (in England) as the happiest of his life (Kearney, *The Writings of Brendan Behan* 51). Behan became known as an entertainer and songwriter, often writing and singing songs for his fellow inmates. This experience changed Behan’s perception of the English, because he discovered they were appreciative of his work. All his life he had been taught to hate the English, yet later on he would not tolerate a bad word to be spoken about them. He claimed they were the finest people he ever had the pleasure to live among.

Behan was released early from Borstal and deported to Ireland, where he was arrested for firing at a detective who was about to arrest three I.R.A. men following an I.R.A. ceremony at Glasnevin Cemetery on April 5, 1942. He was sentenced to fourteen years’ penal servitude, of which he served five before being released during a general amnesty in November, 1946. Following his release, he was arrested in Manchester for helping an I.R.A. operative escape from prison. He was again arrested in England for breaking his deportation order and deported once more.

During his imprisonment, Behan wrote his first play *The Landlady*. He also studied Irish, in which he became fluent enough to write six articles, several poems and
three plays: *Casadh Súgain Eile* (1954), which he later expanded in English into *The Quare Fellow* (1954); *An Giall* (1957), which formed the basis of his later play in English, *The Hostage* (1958); and *Lá Breágh San*, which became the basis of his unfinished play in English, *Richard’s Cork Leg* (1972), which was completed and produced by Alan Simpson after Behan’s death. Simpson also translated *The Landlady* into Irish.

Behan did not spend all of his time in prison. By his own account, he worked from 1946 to 1951 as a house painter, smuggler, and (in Paris) as a pimp and pornographer. From 1951 to 1956, he was a freelance journalist and ballad singer for *Radió Éireann*’s “The Balladmaker’s Saturday Night.” He published a crime novel in the *Irish Times* in 1953, and had a weekly column in the *Irish Press* in 1956. In 1955, he married Beatrice Ffrench-Salkeld, the daughter of Cecil Salkeld, a noted Dublin artist.

Behan’s plays have been criticized for being dramatizations of his personality. It seems the very factors that brought him international fame, his grand persona and his work with Joan Littlewood’s Theatre Workshop, are also the ones most criticized. These areas, therefore, have drawn attention away from his work to his life and personality. Critics have focused more on Behan as an outrageous character than on critical evaluations of his plays. Accusations developed that much of his work, particularly *The Hostage*, was really the work of others, especially Littlewood as described by Goorney in *The Theatre Workshop Story*. This seems supported by Alan Simpson’s assertion that Behan was a careless writer and that Simpson’s wife, Carolyn Swift, rewrote *The Hostage* and parts of *The Quare Fellow*. He claims that Behan gave no creative or organizing input to Swift and that Swift and Littlewood practically tricked Behan into
accepting most of their changes. However, others involved in the production at the Theatre Workshop, claim this to be untrue. They assert that Behan approved the suggested changes and additions that Littlewood proposed, but that the work was mostly Behan’s. (Goorney, *The Theatre Workshop Story* 104)

One possible reason why Behan is not given full credit for his plays by critics, particularly Irish ones, is that they can devalue them as “un-Irish.” This may say more about the critics’ sense of Irish national pride than about Behan’s craft. Many critics were appalled by Behan’s alcoholism and larger-than-life public persona. It can also be said that they did not approve of Behan’s view of Irish tradition. Many found his plays, particularly *The Hostage*, to be self-indulgent and destructive.

Due to Brendan Behan’s increasing problems with alcoholism, *The Hostage* was the last of his plays produced during his lifetime. *The Hostage* is a loosely translated version of Behan’s Gaelic play, *An Giall*. The central location of the play is a noble old house that has historically lodged many heroes of the I.R.A., but has degenerated into a brothel. The play’s plot revolves around an Irish boy who has been sentenced to die in a Belfast jail for killing an Ulster police officer. While the boy awaits execution, the I.R.A. takes a young English soldier hostage. This hostage, Private Leslie Alan Williams, is brought to the brothel owned by Pat and his consort, Meg Dillon. The private is being held in retaliation for the Irish prisoner’s expected execution. The Irish boy is put to death and, by accident, the I.R.A.’s hostage is also killed. The play ends with Williams’s body rising from the dead.

*The Hostage* opened October 14, 1958 at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, London, and ran for nine months. It was produced by Theatre Workshop and directed by
Joan Littlewood. Most London critics were positive about the play but a bit bewildered. The most common criticism was its lack of conventional form, because of the play’s music hall and vaudevillian comedy elements.

The Hostage then moved to Théâtre des National Festival in Paris on April 3, 1959. The play was the hit of the Théâtre des National Festival where it won the prize for the best play of the year. It received ten curtain calls and a three-minute standing ovation. As in Paris, The Hostage received ten curtain calls at its New York premier on September 20, 1960 at the Cort Theatre. Like their British counterparts, New York critics found the play unstructured and confusing but great fun. However, the audience at a German premiere in Ulm disliked Behan’s work so much that they hurled smoke bombs to protest their boredom. The Hostage has been frequently revived, three times in New York and once in London by Littlewood’s Theatre Workshop in 1972.

Behan died of diabetes and degeneration of the liver on March 20, 1964, only a few months after the birth of his daughter, Blanaid. He had asked for and received an I.R.A. funeral, which was ignored by many Irish government figures who would not attend it. The funeral attracted international media and a large portion of the Dublin working class, to whom Behan had always remained faithful.

1.2

In researching the world of the play it was important to read Howard Goorney’s book The Theatre Workshop Story. Successful partnerships in the theatre often occur when artists realize their work is taken to new heights through cooperative association with one another. One such partnership was initiated in 1956 when director Joan
Littlewood received a script from playwright Brendan Behan. Before approaching Behan’s plays one must take into account the enormous influence Littlewood had on the Irish playwright’s work. Indeed, a brief history of Theatre Workshop can be greatly informative when studying Behan’s work. Examining the theatrical methods of Joan Littlewood and her influence upon Behan’s play, *The Hostage*, provides an important context for an analysis of the songs and music contained in the play.

In London in 1954, along with fellow artist Gerry Raffles, Joan Littlewood formed Theatre Workshop, asserting that its goal would be to create a popular theatre reflecting the lives of the working class. In order to do this, Littlewood felt that a break with “conventional theatre” was necessary. The Theatre Workshop group consisted of artists who were enormously dedicated to experimenting with improvisation. Between the years of 1945 and 1953 the Theatre Workshop company toured England extensively, bringing theatre to the working classes.

In 1956, the company was solely led by Joan Littlewood. It was at this point in the company’s history that Littlewood received a copy of *The Quare Fellow* from Brendan Behan. Theatre Workshop was a theatre known for exploring political issues. The group was interested in examining the play since it was rumored to be a condemnation of judicial hanging, a practice still employed in Great Britain.

Littlewood’s influence upon this play was primarily in her style of direction. She began rehearsing the play before the cast was given scripts. This improvisational style of rehearsing furthered the company’s understanding of the play while also assisting the actors in locating the Stanislavskian super-objective of the play. Establishing an atmosphere early furthered the depth of the performed piece as the actors learned to think
of themselves as prisoners and experience prison life first-hand rather than through the eyes of an assumed character. The Quare Fellow takes place in Mountjoy Prison, Dublin, and the character after whom the play is titled is awaiting execution. Behan introduces his audience to the reactions of the other prisoners as they too anticipate the Quare Fellow’s end (Goorney 105). After the success of The Quare Fellow, Behan informed Littlewood of the nature and style of An Giall which she became eager to stage in London.

Behan first wrote the Gaelic play An Giall, a naturalistic tragedy, as an examination of political violence. Behan’s Gaelic play was well-received in Ireland yet in his book Brendan Behan’s Island, the playwright admits to wanting something different for the piece:

I saw the rehearsals of this version and while I admire the producer, Frank Dermody, tremendously, his idea of a play is not my idea of a play. I don’t say that his is inferior to mine or that mine is inferior to his—it just so happens that I don’t agree with him. He’s of the school of Abbey Theatre naturalism of which I’m not a pupil. (17)

Thus, Behan brought An Giall to England to be produced by Theatre Workshop. The act of translation and subsequent transformation that turned An Giall into The Hostage was done by Behan, Littlewood, and the entire Theatre Workshop company.

However, Littlewood did not want a simple rendering of the Gaelic piece into English; “she had much more than a straight translation in mind” (Kearney 129). Perhaps Behan’s willingness to collaborate to such an extent can also be traced to his inability to rewrite the play on his own as a result of his excessive drinking. Between the years of 1954 and 1960 Behan’s drinking made him legendary in the eyes of the public, though it
also resulted in the degeneration of his health. By 1961 Behan had developed extensive liver damage and spent the remaining four years of his life in and out of hospital.

The rehearsal process for The Hostage began in 1957 and Behan spent time in the theatre “surrounded by bottles of Guinness . . . regaling the cast for hours with anecdotes [and] songs . . . Out of all this wealth of meandering entertainment would emerge the material which could be incorporated into the script” (Goorney 110). The actors, thus fueled by Behan’s stories and songs, were left to improvise a second act. Avis Bunnage, who played the character of Meg in The Hostage, relates: “Joan was getting desperate, so one night Gerry [Raffles] sat Brendan down, pointed a gun at him and told him to write. It probably wasn’t loaded, but it did the trick” (Goorney 110). Thus Behan produced a loose, incomplete translation that was left in the hands of Littlewood and the Workshop’s improvisational practices.

The question remains: how exactly did Behan’s naturalistic tragedy, An Giall, become the spirited musical hall comedy The Hostage? An examination of some of the major differences between An Giall and The Hostage will serve to outline the obvious influence Joan Littlewood had upon the play.

An Giall was inspired by a historical occurrence Behan identified as his motivation for writing the play which was an incident during the British invasion of the Suez Canal Zone. For The Hostage, Behan used a different historical occurrence as his motivation for writing. In Brendan Behan’s Island he gives further explanation for the evolution of the situation in The Hostage:

Not far away is Nelson Street where I happened to set the scene of The Hostage. The incident of the British Tommy occurred actually in Belfast but, in real life. I’m happy to say, he wasn’t shot. As a matter of fact, he
said later that he spent the best four days of his life in the hands of the I.R.A. . . . He wasn’t taken as a hostage at all but he’d been around by accident when the I.R.A. were raiding the place [Ballykinlar Camp in County Down] for arms, so they brought him home with them for a while. They kept him in a house on the Falls Road in Belfast and he wasn’t upset because he knew he wasn’t going to be shot. The incident moved me and remained in my mind because I thought it was tragic for young fellows from England to be stuck in Northern Ireland. (16)

Added to Behan’s original cast of characters is a host of prostitutes, homosexuals, transvestites, and hypocritical religious types: Ropeen, Colette, Rio Rita, Princess Grace, Mr. Mulleady and Miss Gilchrist. The nickname for the house in which the play takes place is “The Hole.” It is a recognizable “knocking shop” housing all the outcasts of the world and represents the I.R.A. past and present (Goorney 110). Leslie’s tragic death at the end of The Hostage is not from suffocation but ironically from a bullet fired by the police while raiding the house in an attempt to rescue him. Leslie’s death is not treated naturalistically, as in An Giall. Instead, Behan has him rising from the dead and singing “The Bells of Hell.”

These substantial changes occur within a “music hall” mode of presentation, a form that was often used by Littlewood in Theatre Workshop productions. In The Hostage everyone in the cast is called upon at some point to entertain the audience with a song or a dance. Pat, the “caretaker” of this house, resembles the manager of a music hall, calling various acts to center stage or performing himself if he is so inclined. Indeed it is believed that Behan supported this music hall mode of presentation for his play because it allowed him to join in with the action of the play whenever he felt so inclined.

Behan’s objective undoubtedly is fulfilled through the style of the play itself and also through his improvisational appearances. The songs interpret the action of the play
and extend from Irish history and life itself. Most importantly, however, these many plot additions and stylistic differences, certainly encouraged by Littlewood, served to further highlight Behan’s intent of revealing the futility of patriotic fervor when it leads to hatred and violence.

While the hostage situation in An Giall is treated naturalistically, this is not the case in The Hostage. Many critics have called The Hostage absurdist theatre, particularly Boyle who states, “the outrageous humor and disconnected music plot are certainly designed to shock people” (Boyle 89). One may safely assume that Joan Littlewood encouraged Behan to explore the absurdist genre since Theatre Workshop was known for its and work in such experimental styles. The Hostage contains many of the absurdist concepts that Martin Esslin defines in Theatre of the Absurd:

If a good play must have a cleverly constructed story, these have no story or plot to speak of; if a good play is judged by subtlety of characterization and motivation, these are often without recognizable characters and present the audience with almost mechanical puppets; if a good play has to have a fully explained theme which is neatly exposed and finally solved, these often have neither a beginning nor an end; if a good play is to hold the mirror up to nature and portray the manners and the mannerisms of the age in finely observed sketches, these seem often to be reflections of dreams and nightmares; if a good play relies on witty repartee and pointed dialogue, these often consist of incoherent babblings. (Esslin 22)

Obviously, when compared to conventional theatre, plays considered absurd use distinctly different means to pursue different ends. This unique form and its ultimate purpose echoes the Theatre Workshop’s unique mandate:

We want a theatre with a living language, a theatre which is not afraid of the sound of its own voice and which will comment . . . fearlessly on society . . . Theatre Workshop is an organization of artists, technicians and actors who are experimenting with stage craft. (Goorney 42)
Many unconventional, notably absurdist techniques are seen to operate in *The Hostage*. The traditional pattern of cause and effect is abandoned in absurdist theatre. This is evident in *The Hostage*, where often there is no rationale for incidents. For example, the innocent relationship between Leslie and Teresa is advanced quite suddenly when the young couple decide to “pretend they’re on the films,” and literally jump into bed with one another (Behan, *The Complete Plays* 199). Surprising behavior such as this is explained by Esslin, “The Theatre of the Absurd has renounced arguing about the absurdity of the human condition, it merely presents it in being; that is, in terms of concrete stage images” (Esslin 25). This spontaneous act in Behan’s play is even more shocking because Leslie and Teresa sing their way to bed.

In *Theatre of the Absurd*, Esslin suggests that anger is often the underlying theme in absurdism; examples of this can be seen in *The Hostage*. The hostage situation which these people are forced to confront causes them to reflect upon and react violently against the politics of Ireland and England. As an example, Teresa attempts to explain to Leslie the mandate behind I.R.A. actions, “What about the boy in Belfast jail? Do you know that in the six counties the police walk the beats in tanks and armored cars . . . It is because of the English being in Ireland that he fought” (Behan, *The Complete Plays* 169).

Behan is said to have understood the basic absurdity of the human condition: “He realizes that man is thrown into a world which he can neither control nor understand. Behan’s answer, like that of his contemporaries, is laughter” (Boyle 61). Behan was not interested in exploring the naturalistic stage world of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin; instead he explored the absurdist possibilities of the Theatre Workshop stage under the direction of Joan Littlewood.
Behan was interested in having his work performed in a very unusual style. The Hostage cannot simply be labeled "absurdist," but rather it is a play that contains several characteristics of absurdist theatre utilized in a particular way. Behan’s songs often serve to remind his audience of the thematic images contained in his plays. When compared to "conventional musicals," song in The Hostage is often used in an apparently absurd way. Behan’s songs comment, not only on the stage action, but also on the culture of the Irish audience members. Littlewood’s significant influence upon the transformation of the original naturalistic play into the absurd music hall piece (which often contains Littlewood’s popular-theatre mark) is evident.

The Theatre Workshop was recognized by all to be a genuine workshop within which the playwright was simply another member of the creative team. Behan’s script was by no means inviolate but was used as a base which could be potentially altered by all of the performers. Littlewood explained in a radio interview in 1959 why this type of process was necessary and how it benefited all involved:

I believe very much in a theatre of actors-artists, and I think the trust that comes out of team work on what is often a new script, cleaning up points in production, or contact between actors, is essential to the development of the craft of acting and playwriting. I feel that playwrights have got to be in the theatre. If they are there, working with the fabric and problem of theatre every day, then perhaps out of our type of play, which has a great deal of improvisation in them, we shall get better plays. (Goorney 114)

Through this collective method of working, The Hostage evolved to be a piece that embodies more than a naturalistic treatment of a hostage situation. The play entertains its audience with a music hall mode of presentation, reveals the sometime absurdity of human existence, and dramatically presents Behan’s main idea: the absolute need to distinguish between the politics of a country and its people (Goorney 114).
When Brendan Behan and Joan Littlewood began rehearsal on *The Hostage* both of these individuals were working towards a piece of theatre that would become more than a naturalistic tragedy examining the volatile political situation in Ireland. Joan Littlewood’s vision for the piece evolved due to her to dramaturgy and improvisational approach to new play development. This impressive director consistently encouraged actors to think on their feet believing it was essential for a play to work in action and not simply on paper. In Littlewood’s words she strove to “take the arse out of a play,” taking that which has been written in front of a typewriter and replacing it with the same ideas expressed by actors on their feet. In addition, experimentation with absurdism and the music hall structure served to transform *The Hostage* and better present Behan’s ideas on the Irish political situation (Goorney 113).

In the course of my research I have repeatedly come across Joan Littlewood’s name in a negative context. Behan recognized his experience with Littlewood as a positive one. I firmly believe this formidable female director is entitled to the well-deserved credit. While studying Behan’s plays *The Quare Fellow* and *The Hostage*, it is evident that Joan Littlewood’s influence upon Behan’s work was considerable. She encouraged Behan to experiment in style and form and such experiments benefited Behan’s work by adding new dimensions. By moving *The Hostage* closer to the absurd-surreal genre Littlewood assists Behan’s play in capturing the absolute horror of the violent Irish political situation all the better. Joan Littlewood is a director who can accurately assess not only an actor’s capabilities but also a playwright’s. “No-one could fail to be enriched by the experience of working with Joan” (Goorney 139). Indeed, the partnership between Joan Littlewood and Brendan Behan was one that enabled both of
these artistic individuals to grow and expand their reputations while also being true to their art.

1.3

In researching the role of Meg in The Hostage, I found watching Irish films, listening to dialect tapes, reading Behan’s plays and analyzing his songs to be extremely helpful. Additionally, for a deeper understanding of the character and her motives, I familiarized myself with the writer’s body of work and the many works written on the life and writings of Brendan Behan.

The challenges I faced in creating an authentic Irish dialect included the following: using the phonetic system to learn a dialect, finding the placement of consonants, and incorporating stronger r-coloring. However, my ultimate challenge was confronting my own insecurities about vocal work. As a child, I had a learning disability, which made reading difficult for me. An optometrist recognized that I had learned to read solely by memorization. He identified my disability as “small motor hand and eye coordination.” Within the two-year period that I worked with him, I jumped five reading groups and was reading beyond my grade level. Until I took began graduate school at O.S.U., I believed this problem was behind me. However, much to my chagrin I realized that it was not totally resolved. During my second year of graduate school I had a horrendous experience learning phonetics. The difficulty stemmed from the same “small motor coordination” problem I had as a child: the inability to associate sounds with new symbols. This hindered me in using the phonetic system to learn dialects and required me to create dialects by mimicking from tapes and films. I recently used this process in creating the role of Hannah in Angels in America, Part I: Millennium Approaches. For
this project I taped O.S.U. Department of Theatre Assistant Professor Jeanine Thompson reading my lines. Since she had grown up in Utah, (Hannah’s home state), listening to her enabled me to duplicate an authentic Utah accent.

For The Hostage, the first stage of my dialect research led me to contacting an ex-colleague, Harriet Novick, a vocal and acting professor at Suffolk Community College. Professor Novick compiled a dialect tape for me which included songs, monologues, and phrases read by Irish actors and playwrights. In addition, she reminded me of my vocal strengths which include: easily picking up the intonation and the rhythm of a dialect, listening and duplicating sounds, and implementing a dialect into a role without having an “actor” voice. The conversation I had with Harriet helped build my confidence by focusing on my strengths instead of my weaknesses. Plus, I knew that in the Fall I would be working with Associate Professor Phil Thompson, my vocal teacher at O.S.U.

The second step of my research was watching films with Irish themes. I found the following list of films extremely helpful in my research: Waking Ned Divine, Dancing at Lughnasa, Michael Collins, and Riverdance: The Show. Dancing at Lughnasa and Michael Collins were helpful in seeing American and British actors duplicating Irish dialects. Waking Ned Divine was especially useful since it was an Irish film and featured Irish actors. I found some of the female characters in the film to be of the same class as Meg. By mimicking these characters’ voices, I gained valuable insight in creating Meg’s voice.

After the dialect research, I began to focus on the songs contained in Behan’s plays. I made it my goal to research, analyze and interpret these songs in order to understand what I perceive to be a very crucial aspect of Behan’s writing, which is his
songs. During my research I documented numerous and specific references contained within Behan's text. I made notes concerning these historical, political and cultural references with appropriately researched explanations outlining their importance to the character of Meg.

My research into Behan's plays has primarily been research on his songs and other works. For me, Behan's use of song in his plays is a crucial element to understanding his work because the songs reflect insights into the character's state of mind. How can one claim to fully understand Behan's work without considering the plenitude of songs and musical interludes within his plays? It is one of the aspects of Behan's writing that I most admire and I found the most useful in exploring the character of Meg.

Upon reading The Hostage one can recognize that the songs contained within the play make numerous pointed sarcastic insinuations, social comments and judgments. An in-depth examination of the songs contained within the play expands upon the theme: humans are both absurd and alive. Through song Behan makes pointed observations about human existence and, more precisely, about Irish existence. My hypothesis is that Behan uses song in the play as a means to demonstrate the futility of human existence, a futility that is compounded by patriotic fervor and violence.

Behan's melding of song and writing appears to be a natural and almost unconscious act on his part. He draws upon his past experiences, the rich Irish history of his ancestors and often presents these references through song. The writer rarely wrote anything without including a musical reference or song in full. Musical communication
was inherent in Behan’s work; it was a family tradition he continued. In *Confessions of an Irish Rebel*, he explains:

In addition to other extraordinary abilities, I’m a pretty good singer – or at least I was until my larynx gave in to too much of the gargle and too many cigarettes. And I have an extensive repertoire of songs, many of which I learnt from my uncle, Peadar, and from my mother who has never stopped singing, not even the depression stopped her . . . No matter what anybody mentioned, she’d sing a song about it. And I was doing the same . . . (219-220)

*The Hostage* is an absurdist play: a merging of farce and tragedy into one medium in order to portray the flawed human condition. Behan explores the idea that human beings are absurd but continue living despite the influence of destructive forces, as revealed in one of the thematic songs in *The Hostage*. “No one loves you like yourself” (Behan, *The Complete Plays* 219) is an example of self-centered existence based on the concept of survival, a common theme in absurdist theatre.

*The Hostage* opens with a rousing Irish song and dance routine which establishes the convention of musical theatrics in the play. These interludes accentuate the action of the play. The musical opening prepares the audience for what is to come: music and song at any point. The scenes in this play are saturated with song and dance, to such an extent that one must conclude that Behan’s characters have important information to impart to the audience through these songs.

In Act One the character of Pat, Meg’s longtime companion, explains the Anglo-Irish treaty to the people of the house. This treaty was one of the many deeds accomplished by the historical I.R.A. leader, Michael Collins. Meg laments, “Ah the poor man” (Behan, *The Complete Plays* 144). This contradiction in Meg’s reaction towards Michael Collins embodies a prominent characteristic of her personality. She is
cynical in her observations of people yet can abandon this cynicism at a moment’s notice.

When Pat begins to sing “The Laughing Boy,” a tribute to Collins, Meg joins him, reveling in the opportunity to indulge in the sarcastic sentimentality of the song:

MEG. So strong, so wide, so brave he was, I’ll mourn his loss too sore
    When thinking that we’ll hear the laugh or springing step no more.
ALL. Ah, curse the time, and sad the loss my heart to crucify,
    That an Irish son, with rebel gun, shot down my Laughing boy.
    Oh, had he died by Pearse’s side, or in the G.P.O.,
    Killed by an English bullet from the rifle of the foe,
    Or forcibly fed while as he lay dead in dungeons of Mountjoy
    I’d have cried with pride at the way he died, my own dear Laughing boy.
MEG. My princely love, can ageless love do more than tell to you
    Go raibh mile maith Agath, for all you tried to do,
    For all you did and would have done, my enemies to destroy,
ALL. I’ll praise your name and guard your fame, my own dear Laughing Boy.
(Behan, The Complete Plays 145)

This song captures many Irish people’s contradictory feelings towards Michael Collins. Historically, a considerable majority of the Irish Republican Army resented their country becoming a “free state” due to Collins’s signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty dividing Ireland into north and south. Yet the Irish public still felt the need to mourn the untimely death of such a legendary leader in Irish politics. Critics agree Behan’s song, “The Laughing Boy,” best presents the contradictory feelings regarding the mixture of emotions that surrounded Collins in life and death. In Brendan Behan’s Island, Behan shares his thoughts on the actions of I.R.A. activists Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins:

Collins and Griffith allowed themselves to be tricked into partition at the treaty negotiations ... Collins and Griffith were innocent men and honorable men, Collins was a brave man, a kind man, and one of the greatest guerrilla tacticians that ever lived ... After his death, the Irish made no song about him. Here, then is one, the Death of Michael Collins at Beal na Mblath (the Gap or Mouth of Flowers, the name of the valley he died in). (87, 91)
Behan then includes the song in its entirety in the text of his book. This song written on the occasion of the death of Michael Collins is by far the most widely-known song written about the historical rebel leader. “The Laughing Boy” in The Hostage is an abridged version of that song and sums up best Behan’s perspective on this Irish rebel leader.

It is important to understand that Meg is representing these contradictions of the working class Irish. In essence, this song represents Meg’s sarcastic and entertaining nature. Meg is a critical source of what is considered “quality entertainment.” She decides who is allowed to sing and when. Therefore, Meg becomes outraged by the pseudo-pious hymn singing of Miss Gilchrist and Mr. Mulleady. Behan satirizes this musical piety since the two Christians sing and pray in an attempt to repent their previous sinfully sexual behavior. The reaction of the house inhabitants towards this form of song is that of disgust. Meg categorically denounces it as noise lacking any musical quality at all. Behan uses this song as a means of satirizing false holiness, the form of hypocrisy he detested the most. Meg’s reaction to the song is validated when Miss Gilchrist and Mr. Mulleady chime in together singing “our soles, are souls, arseholes,” presenting the degradation of their “piety.” These two singers begin in earnest when temptation presents itself and they surrender to their desire, entirely corrupting their original intent (Behan, The Complete Plays 152).

An example of Meg’s cynical and sarcastic nature about what is entertainment can be seen in the following exchange:

PAT. Meanwhile I’ll sing that famous song, “The Hound That Caught the Pubic Hair.”
MEG. You’re always announcing these songs, but you never get around to singing them. (Behan, The Complete Plays 154)
Consequently, Pat goes on to sing “Mother Machree,” which directly translated means “Mother of My Heart.” The term appears to be a summons for the spirit of old “Mother Ireland” as she mourns the loss of many of her Irish sons. Behan’s song is strategically sung by Pat who cheerfully reveals to the audience that there is no place on earth like the world being presented on this stage. This is a world of absurd reactions grounded in contradictions. It is also symbolic of Meg who is Pat’s own “Mother of Ireland.” It is here that Meg is seen as a woman of Ireland whose heart is true but has become hardened in order to survive. When Meg discovers Leslie and Teresa in bed, she doesn’t reprimand them, but encourages their union: “What’s wrong with a bit of comfort on a dark night?” (Behan, The Complete Plays 202). Meg then scares Leslie with tales about the viciousness of English attacks upon Ireland. The stage directions indicate that Meg chants rather than sings her song about the events of the Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916, perhaps since singing might be interpreted as making light of these dismal events. The passage reads as follows:

Who fears to speak of Easter week?
That week of famed renowned
When the boys of green went out to fight
The forces of the crown. (Behan, The Complete Plays 203)

Meg is depicted in this section as a strong woman who has lived a hard life. Her advice to the young lovers may be drawn from her own personal experience. Many men died because of the political unrest in Ireland and it could be that Meg herself was in a similar situation at Teresa’s age. In fact, during the 1916 British parliament attack on the I.R.A., Meg would have been close to Teresa’s age.
The I.R.A. became convinced that physical force in the form of a military attack was necessary to show the British parliament how serious the Irish movement had become. Led by rebels such as Patrick Pearse, Tom Clarke, and Thomas MacDonnagh, 700 people presented themselves on Easter Monday in 1916 prepared for war. The initial plan was to have people all over Ireland make their way to Dublin to fight together, but a series of events prevented this. The British Navy intercepted a German ship headed for Ireland that was carrying weapons and ammunition meant to arm this massive force.

Eoin MacNeill, the founder of the Gaelic League and commander of the Irish Volunteers, took this to mean the attack would be canceled and sent couriers all over Ireland informing Volunteer commanders to do nothing on Easter Monday. MacNeill published his order in the *Sunday Independent*:

Owing to the very critical position, all orders given to Irish Volunteers for Easter Sunday are hereby rescinded, and no parades, marches or other movements of Irish Volunteers will take place. (Hodges 17)

The British authorities read the order MacNeill had written and relaxed their forces.

Despite MacNeill’s “traitorous” acts, the I.R.A. decided to press ahead. The people who gathered on Easter Monday were divided into various groups and told to take over a variety of city strong points, with the General Post Office (G.P.O.) used as the rebel headquarters.

Meg’s song continues with details surrounding the historical story and some of the people involved: “With Mausers bold, and hearts of gold. The red countess dressed in green” (Behan, *The Complete Plays* 203). The red countess referred to is Countess Constance Markievicz. As a member of Sinn Féin, the Countess was a woman acutely aware of Ireland’s struggle. She similarly fought to extend women’s rights as a member
of Daughters of Ireland. The Countess was a second-in-command at Stephen’s Green during the Easter Rising and refused to surrender to the British forces.

It is significant that Meg mentions the Countess, a source of pride to the Daughters of Ireland, in this song. Empathetic to Leslie’s situation, Meg is protective of him as a prisoner and does not want to surrender him to be slaughtered. She has compassion for the young man and answers him that he will not be murdered. As Meg’s song accurately states, the British first responded by sending a thousand troops to halt the rising. These troops were sent in on Wednesday, but they could not penetrate the streets around the G.P.O.. By Thursday the British retaliated by sending 10,000 troops to quell the Rising begun by 700 rebels. This massive British force began shelling the G.P.O. and burned down the center of Dublin City. Meg’s song continues:

They shot our leaders in a jail
Without a trial, they say,
They murdered women and children
Who in the cellars lay
And dug their graves with gun and spade
To hide them from our view. (Behan, The Complete Plays 203-204)

The rebels surrendered on Saturday after holding Dublin city center for six days and gaining international recognition for Ireland’s fight for independence. This recognition did not stop the British Forces from sentencing 90 men to death. On May 3, 1916, Patrick Pearce was the first rebel to be executed. Tom Clarke and Thomas MacDonnagh were also shot, and on May 4 four more rebels were put to death. These executions served to draw even more attention to the Irish struggle and turned the rebels into martyrs for Ireland’s cause. After fifteen Irish rebels had been shot, the British realized they were serving to canonize these rebels and ceased the executions.
The last two lines of Meg’s song can be interpreted in more than one manner: “Because they could neither kill nor catch, the rebel so bold and true” (Behan, The Complete Plays 204). The rebel referred to is most likely Michael Collins. Collins was active during the Rising but was able to avoid a death sentence. While in prison, Collins organized history classes and military instruction for Irish prisoners. Collins was released in a general amnesty in December, 1916 and went on to reorganize the I.R.A. and Sinn Féin, which rapidly grew under his and Eamon de Valera’s leadership.

Meg’s song functions on three levels. The song communicates just how deeply the Irish/English antagonism runs by explaining in detail the hatred on both sides. It also provides the audience with the necessary exposition to understand the Irish struggle. “Who Fears to Speak of Easter Week” is a song meant to educate the audience and to present them with the real details of Irish conflict. This song also provides Behan with a means of communicating a message. In Confessions of an Irish Rebel, Behan quotes the sections of the song while referring to his connection with the Easter Rising:

My mother had two husbands, not at the one time, of course. She married the first a little time before the Easter week, 1916 and spent her honeymoon carrying messages for her husband, brother, brothers-in-law and generally running around with my aunts and her sisters in misfortune, shifting one another’s dumps and minding one another’s babies for a long time afterwards.

The peaceful Quaker man that founded the business (Jacob’s Biscuits) would be very surprised that, with the Post Office, where Uncle Joe was, and Marrowbone Lane, where Uncle Mick was, his biscuit factory was, to my childhood, a blazing defiance of Mausers, uncles and my step-brother’s father against:

‘Odds of ten to one,
And through our lines they could not pass,
For all their heavy guns.
They’d cannon and they’d cavalry.
Machine-guns in galore,
Still, it wasn’t our fault that e’er a one,
Got back to England’s shore.’ (176-177)
After Meg’s song an argument ensues surrounding Brendan Behan and his motivation as an Irish writer. This argument quickly erupts into chaos as certain members of the house turn violently upon one another, while others use the chaotic opportunity to sing! As the stage directions describe, in the middle of this chaos Miss Gilchrist sings an English song, “Land of Hope and Glory,” while the I.R.A. officer directly counters with the Irish national anthem, “The Soldier’s Song.” Instead of leaving the antagonism at this traditional binarism, Behan inserts another level by having the Russian Sailor sing the Russian national anthem, complicating the situation in true absurdist style. This is an example of how Behan uses Meg to create a chaotic situation through song. The song she sings creates a situation of singing and fighting that turns into wild dancing.

As the third act begins, the women of the house are mourning Leslie’s situation by sounding a low, insistent keening. Pat retreats to song in order to lighten the atmosphere. Meg promptly responds, “Shut up, will you, Pat.” fearing the I.R.A. officer will hear Pat’s singing and come down to scold them all (Behan, The Complete Plays 207). The song, full of rebelliousness and rigor, is no longer a means of escape from the situation. It becomes clear that everyone in this house is a prisoner. Meg and Pat quarrel, a manifestation of the stress of their present situation. Meg and Pat’s relationship is argumentative in general, but in this scene it is apparent that their fighting is motivated by their fear. Their “Irish pride” will not allow them to express their feelings publicly. Consequently, they choose to attack one another rather than share their fears. It is here we see that Meg is vulnerable and fearful of their situation, but in denial of her feelings. Her inability to express her true emotion turns into anger. Later, Leslie makes his appeal
to everyone present that the British Government does not care about the fate of a National Service soldier. He extends his appeal by trying to physically contact Meg at which point Pat orders him back, confining Leslie to a circle he draws on the floor. Meg sings softly during Pat’s action:

I have no mother to break her heart,
I have no father to take my part.
I have a friend and a girl is she,
And she’d lay down her life for McCaffery. (Behan, The Complete Plays 217)

The first two lines of this song can be interpreted as observations from Meg’s personal history. She explained earlier in the play that she did not know her mother and she makes no reference to knowing a father either. This may explain why Meg has abandonment issues and perhaps why she conceals her emotions. To be vulnerable, loving, and affectionate is foreign to her. Meg is the tragic clown. She masks her pain with her wit, humor and sarcasm. Her attachment to Pat is similar to a parental figure. In any case, it is here that Meg is exposed as “the whore with a heart of gold,” which she states earlier in the play (Behan, The Complete Plays 157). Meg believes that only Pat knows this about her, but it is here we learn why Meg stays with him.

Meg’s song also refers to Charlie McCaffery from County Tyrone, an important participant in the bombing campaign against Britain in 1939. The heroine in her song claims she would readily sacrifice her life for the Republican movement. These lines make a clear statement about the commitment of people in the movement and can be interpreted as a warning for Leslie. The melancholy song is a tribute to Meg the singer but also a reflection on Leslie the hostage. As a hostage, he is expected to make the
ultimate sacrifice for his country. As much as they may mourn for him, Meg makes it clear no one will betray their country to help him.

In a futile attempt, Miss Gilchrist echoes Meg’s words: “I have no mother to break her heart. I have no father to take my part” (Behan, The Complete Plays 219). Miss Gilchrist hoped to belong and have her mourning for Leslie be accepted as Meg’s previously was. Meg appeals to Pat to stop Miss Gilchrist’s singing and Pat puts Miss Gilchrist in the chalk circle. Miss Gilchrist announces, “I stand fast by my Lord and will sing my hymn now” (Behan, The Complete Plays 222). She deliberately baits Meg. Meg is incensed by Miss Gilchrist’s bogus faith and piety. Meg is not a hypocrite. She ridicules and quarrels with Miss Gilchrist throughout the play. Meg is a whore without apology. She is proud of who she is and how she makes a living.

Later, as Miss Gilchrist and Leslie sing a duet, the stage directions specify “the whores and queers sort themselves out into a dance for all the outcasts of this world . . . there is jealousy and comfort in this dance” (Behan, The Complete Plays 226). These stage directions serve to outline the visual minorities (homosexuals, transvestites, prostitutes, blacks, and, of course, Irish) and serve to label certain characters as outcasts. However, these individuals are vocal, vivid outcasts who fight to obtain and secure their rights by struggling against categorization and dismissal. Miss Gilchrist sings in a form of questions:

Would you live on a woman’s earning?
Would you give up work for good?
For a life of prostitution? (Behan, The Complete Plays 226)

It is at this point in song that we understand the relationship between Meg and Pat. Pat has been her pimp, lover and friend. She has not known the love of a parent and has
nothing with which to compare her relationship with Pat. Her anger at him is justified because she cannot leave him and survive. Meg has done the best she could in this life. She is a survivor, an outcast who has to fight to secure her rights as a human by fighting against dismissal or abuse. Meg believes Pat is her only family. Like so many women in this world of prostitution, she is looking for love and a home. Pat has provided her with a home and that seems to be enough. Meg is a lonely, isolated creature who sings and dances her way through her pain. Representing the absurdity of human existence, she entertains as a means of denial through escapism. She incites chaos, and song is her means of communion with the other characters in the play. Meg’s use of song is to contradict and expose the absurdity of the human condition. A central concept in absurdist theatre, which is characteristic of Meg, is the abandoning of problems rather than solving them. When Meg and Teresa discuss the fate of the condemned prisoner in Belfast, the somber mood of the play is quickly inverted when Meg replies, “Come on Kate, give us a bit of music; let’s cheer ourselves up” (Behan, The Complete Plays 169). The problem is simply abandoned and, in true Behan style, is dismissed through song. Meg is the merging of comedy and tragedy, a true entertainer, expressing life’s trials and tribulations through song and dance.

1.4

In this chapter, I have provided research as it relates to the playwright, the production history, and the period and looked at the character of Meg Dillon from both a research and analysis point of view. In the next chapter I will detail the production circumstances of The Hostage.
CHAPTER 2

PRODUCTION CIRCUMSTANCES

The Hostage was presented in the Thurber Theatre in the Drake Union at The Ohio State University, February 23-29 and March 1-4. The Thurber Theatre is a 600-seat continental house with a 35' proscenium. The opening of the proscenium arch is 22' 0" high and 35' 0" wide. The stage is 40' 0" deep; and the apron, the raised orchestra pit, located downstage of the plaster line adds an additional 11'0" to the total stage. The apron also affords acting areas to the left and right of the proscenium arch. Thurber Theatre’s offstage wing space includes 34' 0" stage right and 20' 0" on stage left. Thurber Theatre is equipped with such features as a hydraulic orchestra lift, a counterweight fly system, and stereo sound capabilities.

The Hostage was directed by faculty member Bruce Hermann. Mr. Hermann came to Columbus last year from Richmond, Virginia where he was teaching acting at Virginia Commonwealth University and Longwood College as he finished his M.F.A. in Directing at Virginia Commonwealth University. Bruce Hermann is a graduate of Gettysburg College and attended the Neighborhood Playhouse School of Theatre in New York where he studied with Sanford Meisner. He was later appointed to the Acting Faculty of the Playhouse by Mr. Meisner, and has taught acting in professional studios in
New York and Los Angeles as well. Mr. Hermann presently teaches acting and directing at The Ohio State University. In addition to The Hostage he has directed four touring shows as part of the educational outreach program of the Department of Theatre at O.S.U. His other directing credits include: I Am a Man by Oyama, Hughie by Eugene O’Neill, Ion by Euripides, Miss Firecracker Contest by Beth Henley, and Hello From Bertha by Tennessee Williams.

As an actor, Bruce Hermann appeared as Walker in Lee Blessing’s Two Rooms in Caux, Switzerland and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, and toured the show through Virginia and West Virginia with the Blue Ridge Theatre Festival. His recent roles include Uncle Peck in Paula Vogel’s How I Learned to Drive at the St. Michael’s playhouse in Burlington, Vermont; Alceste in Neil Bartlett’s adaptation of Moliere’s The Misanthrope at The Ohio State University; Dray Chance in Naomi Wallace’s The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek for Red Herring Theatre in Columbus; and Frankie in Dealer’s Choice by Patrick Marber at CATCO.

Dr. Lesley Ferris served as the producer for The Ohio State University production of The Hostage. The stage manager was undergraduate Lori Burkholder. Undergraduate students Josh Gill and Ruth Cogley were assistant stage managers for the production. Costumes were designed by graduate student Tatjana Longerot. Scenic design was provided by graduate student Robert Krege and undergraduate Mollie Workman. David Wallingford was the undergraduate sound designer. The musical director was guest artist doctoral student Richard Williams. Faculty member Nena Couch was the dance choreographer, faculty member Jeanine Thompson choreographed the crowd scenes, and faculty member Phil Thompson was the dialect coach.
The Hostage was part of The Ohio State University’s 1999-2000 season, titled “Staging the World.” It was the second production I was involved in as an actor that season. In November I appeared as Fiokla in Nikolai Gogol’s Marriage. Auditions for The Hostage were held in conjunction with The Ohio State University Department of Theatre’s unified auditions on Sunday, November 21 and Monday, November 22, 1999 in the Roy Bowen Theatre. The other productions casting out of this audition were Jason Kravits’ Sobering Thoughts and Eudora Welty: Mississippi Stories adapted by Gloria Baxter, both to be produced by The Department of Theatre during the Winter Quarter of 2000.

Callbacks for The Hostage were held on Tuesday, November 23, 1999. The cast list posted on Wednesday, November 24, 1999 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>Carney Gray*</td>
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<td>MEG</td>
<td>Carole Russo*</td>
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<td>TERESA:</td>
<td>Caroline Bradac*</td>
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<td>MONSEWER</td>
<td>Gordon Holey</td>
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<td>RIO RITA:</td>
<td>Seth Stout</td>
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<td>MR. MULLEADY:</td>
<td>Jeremy Meier</td>
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<td>I.R.A. OFFICER:</td>
<td>Damian Bowerman</td>
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<td>MISS GILCHRIST:</td>
<td>Jessica Morgan</td>
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<td>COLETTE:</td>
<td>Heather Burley</td>
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<td>ROPEEN:</td>
<td>Jen Manvich</td>
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<td>PRINCESS GRACE:</td>
<td>Evin Douglas</td>
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<tr>
<td>VOLUNTEER:</td>
<td>Tom Greer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RUSSIAN SOLDIER: Chris Dickman

CHORUS: Kathleen Gonzales, Deborah Titus, Laura Simpson, Laura Butler, Lindsay Bloom, Paul Ring, Liam Dillon, Christina Sidebottom

(* Denotes partial fulfillment of MFA Degree in Acting)

The rehearsal period of The Hostage ran from January 5 to February 22, 2000. Rehearsals took place in Room 107 until February 8 and then we continued rehearsals in Thurber Theatre until the opening on February 23, 2000. Technical rehearsals for The Hostage took place on February 16–18 and dress rehearsals were from February 19-22. Performances of The Hostage spanned two weeks from February 23-29 and March 1-4, with eight evening performances and one Saturday matinee. The post-performance discussion for the production was on March 7, 2000 with cast members and faculty in attendance.

This chapter has provided an account of the production circumstances and the creative team involved in The Ohio State University’s production of The Hostage. In the next two chapters I will document my script analysis which was used to create the role of Meg Dillon during the rehearsal and performance process.

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CHAPTER 3

THE SCRIPT

This chapter contains a detailed description of my acting methodology. I will include an explanation of the script analysis terminology, my scored script, and a summary. I have also included a key, which explains any scoring terms or abbreviations. This chapter is divided into four sections: Description of Acting Methodology, Explanation of Script Analysis Terminology, Scored Script, and Summary.

3.1

The Stanislavsky technique has been my key method as an actor in graduate school. The Stanislavsky method is made up of several principles including the use of the super-objective, action, imagination, and given circumstances. These are the primary elements of the Stanislavsky technique that I have applied to my creation of Meg in The Hostage.

In creating the role of Meg in The Hostage, I began my process by defining Meg's super-objective. A super-objective can be viewed as the entire through-going action for the play. Stanislavsky describes a through-line of action as follows:

The main inner current of a play produces a state of inner grasp and power in which actors can develop all the intricacies and then come to a clear conclusion as to its underlying, fundamental purpose. That inner line of effort that guides the
actors from the beginning to the end of the play we call the continuity or the through-going action. This through line galvanizes all the small units and objectives of the play and directs them toward the super-objective. (Stanislavsky, *The Actor Prepares* 273-274)

The three most important Stanislavskian elements I have used in my creative process are inner grasp, the through-line of the action and the super-objective. These elements form the basis of Stanislavsky's system of acting (279). I discovered through my analysis of the script that Meg's super-objective is to gain control over Pat at every opportunity (in other words, she wants to wear the pants). Although this is Meg's super-objective, I believe many elements go into creating the complex soul of Meg's character, which is depicted in the following quote by Stanislavsky. Here he describes the importance of the actor's inner creative state in building a character:

To grasp the spiritual delicacy of a complex soul it is not enough to use one's mind or any one 'element' by itself. It requires an artist's whole power and talent, as well as the harmonious cooperation of his inner forces, with those of the author... For such work an actor's inner motive forces must be strong, sensitive and penetrating. The elements of his inner creative state must be deep, delicate and sustained. (269)

Given circumstances refers to the factual events that a playwright includes in a script. To create the inner state of a character, an actor must accept the given circumstances as real. Then the actor must dig deep to find the inner forces which will lead to fulfilling his objective. One source is using an illusionary truth which is not an actual given circumstance in the text but a truth that could be derived from it. This illusionary truth would then enhance the actor's inner creative state by answering an unknown question. For example, Meg never discusses her past in the text. However, through the given circumstances it would not be out of bounds to create an illusionary truth about her being an orphan. She sings about not knowing her parents so this could
be used as a basis for this truth. This information gives depth to her relationship with Teresa who is an orphan Meg takes under her care.

The super-objective is usually made up of many smaller objectives. Some examples of Meg's objectives in the play are: to berate Pat, to humiliate, to confuse, to conspire, to nurture, to entrap, to amuse, to host, to get drunk, to escape from life, to hide from pain, to distract, to deter the housemates from reality and, above all, to entertain.

All objectives call for some action. Stanislavsky says, "Every objective must carry in itself the germ of action" (123). Action is the physical task of pursuing a specific goal; the actor uses action to get what he/she wants. Meg's primary actions in The Hostage involve singing, dancing, drinking and fighting. She is constantly making an effort to cheer up everyone in the house with song and dance. This is how she escapes and allows others to escape from the harsh reality of poverty, loneliness, prostitution and the dilapidated Irish condition in 1960. For example, in Act Two of The Hostage, Meg sings the song Easter Week. Meg’s song recounts Ireland’s rebel history and the pride the Irish felt for their leader Michael Collins. Meg’s objective is to rouse the members of the house to join her in song. She wants to distract Leslie from asking her questions about his fate and the inhabitants of the house from their inability to rescue him. In order to achieve this she uses the actions of singing and dancing.

It is important for an actor to accept the given circumstances and utilize this information, along with his/her imagination, to create a character. The actor must always be aware of the given circumstances including time, place, environment and the other characters. Since a playwright could not possibly give a complete account of the character's entire past life, it is up to the actor to make imaginative choices that fill in the
details. To assist this process of imagination, Stanislavsky suggests that the actor ask the following questions about the character: “Who are you?” “Where did you come from?” “What do you want?” “Where are you going” “What will you do when you get there?”

To answer these questions about Meg, I used given circumstances both inherent in the script and found in my imagination. “Who are you?” Meg is approximately 38 years old. She has been with Pat since she came to live at this ramshackle brothel as a teenager. Since Meg never knew her mother or father, she needed Pat to fill that parental void. Considering Pat is quite older that Meg, he was an ideal candidate. In the script of The Hostage Pat defends his relationship with Meg in the following exchange of dialogue.

    PAT. . . Aren't we husband and wife - nearly?
    MEG. Well, nearly. (Behan 147)

This exchange led me to decide that Meg and Pat have been together a long time, specifically 20 years or more.

“Where did you come from?” There is no indication in the given circumstances of Meg having lived anywhere else but in Dublín. Therefore, I believe she has always lived a life of poverty as an orphan. Her upbringing probably included physical abuse, sexual abuse and little education. She is a classic example of a “woman of the streets.” This explains her anger towards men (namely Pat), her flagrant sexuality and her crass manner.

“What do you want?” Meg wants control and power over the household. In order to achieve this goal, she must publicly humiliate Pat to show she's the one who wears the pants. Her berating of Pat becomes a traditional form of entertainment enjoyed by all the housemates. Meg enjoys this attention.

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“Where are you going and what will you do when you get there?” Meg's only aspiration for the future is to have complete control and ownership of the brothel. This will give her the stability she has always needed. She feels a strong sense of comfort inside the walls of this house, however meager the existence. It is the only place she has ever called home and she has no intention of leaving.

In my creative exploration of Meg, I found Stanislavsky's method both useful and essential to my process. However, because of the musical, vaudevillian style of Behan's script, method acting does not lend itself very well to the success of the play. Director Bruce Hermann's dissuasion to use any particular method had great validity. I agreed with Mr. Hermann's assessment that these characters are bigger than life. Therefore, though I grounded my work in the fundamentals of Stanislavsky's technique, I did not restrict myself solely to this approach.

In good acting it is important to keep one's work simple and direct. Many actors lose objectivity in their work by judging, criticizing, or censoring themselves. The challenge for most actors is to remove obstacles that are either physical, intellectual or psychological in nature. Intuitive creation of a character allows an actor to have fun with a role and to work with self-confidence. These are the challenges I constantly face in my work. "Keeping it simple" is perhaps the most difficult, yet the most important, task for any actor.

3.2

The next section of this chapter is a copy of my scored script for The Hostage. I have included only those scenes in which Meg appears. My script analysis utilizes terms
that are Stanislavskian in derivation and have been articulated by the authors of *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*. The following key is an explanation of terms and abbreviations I used in scoring my script.

**Key to Scoring Terms and Abbreviations**

I. **Script Analysis Terms** (These appear in the left-hand column of the scored script.)

(A) **Action**: The physical pursuit of a specific goal (what you do physically to get what you want). Expressed in verb form. The verb will appear in boldface, with pertinent information after the verb appearing underlined, i.e. **to badger Pat at all costs**.

(B) **Beat** (labeled as B1, B2, etc.): A single unit of action. Beat titles will appear in quotes, i.e. "The Aligning Of Planets Between The Orphans."

(O) **Objective**: What the character wants in a given scene.

(PA) **Physical Action** (called Physical Activity in the *Handbook*): A specific bit of stage business the actor chooses to aid his/her action.

(ST) **Subtext**: The actual or implied meaning behind a line of text. Subtextual notes will appear in italics.

(*) Definitions of certain words appear with an asterisk.

II. **The Text** (This appears in the center column with only essential stage directions.)

Since Brendan Behan’s *The Hostage* contains three acts without a breakdown of scenes, the script is labeled with page numbers when there is a gap of time as Meg leaves and returns on stage.
III. **Blocking Notation Terms** (These appear in the right hand column of the scored script.)

(SL) Stage Left  (DSL) Downstage Left  (USL) Upstage Left

(SR) Stage Right  (DSR) Downstage Right  (USR) Upstage Right

(CS) Center Stage
Act One: Page 1

The action of the play takes place in an old house in Dublin that has seen better days. A middle-aged man wearing carpet slippers, old corduroys and using a walking-stick is holding court. He runs the house. He doesn't own it, although he acts as though he does. This is because the real owner isn't right in his head and thinks he's still fighting in the Troubles or one of the anti-English campaigns before that.

Since the action of the play runs throughout the whole house and it isn't feasible to build it on stage, the setting is designed to represent one room of the house with a window overlooking the street. Leading off from this room are two doors and a staircase leading to the upper part. Between the room and the audience is an area that represents a corridor, a landing, or another room in the house and also serves as an extension of the room when the characters need room to dance and fight in.

The middle-aged man is PATRICK, an ex-hero and present-time brothel-keeper. During the first act of the play PATRICK, with the aid of MEG DILLON, his consort, is preparing the room that we can see, for a guest. It contains a table, two chairs and a brass bedstead. During the action of the play the other inhabitants of the house, in search of stout, physical comfort or the odd ballad, drift in and out of the room according to their curiosity and the state of PAT'S temper. Like the house, they have seen better times. As the curtain rises, pimps, prostitutes, decayed gentlemen and their visiting "friends" are dancing a wild Irish jig, which is a good enough reason for MEG and PAT to stop their preparations and sit down for a drink of stout.
During the act these rests and drinks occupy more time than the actual work of preparation. The jig reaches its climax and the dances swing off the stage leaving PAT and MEG sitting at the table in the room.

B1.1: “Show who’s boss”

A: To reprimand
Everyone fighting
O: To claim my
position. To restore
peace
A: To cringe at this
obnoxious sound

MEG. Thank god, that’s over!

From the end of the passage comes the blast of an off-key bagpiper.
The noise recedes into the distance.

PA: Break up fight

XSL to see Monsewer
off wing SL

MEG. In the name of God, what’s that?

PA: Take two glasses of
beer

MEG. It’s Monsewer practising his music. He’s taken it into his head to play the Dead March for the boy in Belfast Jail when they hang him in the morning. You know, the one that got copped for his I.R.A. activities. Well anyway, you’ll find out more about that as the play goes on.

PA: Place beers on DSR
table

MEG. Enter CS through
hallway door to CS

PAT. I wish he’d kept it in his head. Those bagpipes get on me nerves.

PAT. Get us a bottle of stout.

MEG. Get it yourself.

PAT. I can’t move my leg.

X to DSR table
Sit at chair SL of table

MEG. There’s nothing wrong with your leg. (She reaches him a bottle of stout.) Here you are, you old scow.

PA: Place beers on DSR
table
* Scow – a large, flat-bottomed boat with square ends, used chiefly for transporting freight

A homosexual navvy, RIO RITA, attempts to get through the room and up the stairs without PAT seeing him. He is accompanied by a negro with a kit-bag. PAT spots them.

PAT. Hey, Rio Rita! Where’s your rent.

B1.2: “Poor boy”

RIO RITA. Give me a chance to earn it. (They scuttle upstairs.)

O: To inquire (about what Pat believes will happen to the boy)

To badger, to listen attentively

MEG. Do you think they will hang him!

PAT. Who, him? (He indicates RIO RITA’s disappearing backside.) They bloody well ought to.

MEG. No, the boy in Belfast Jail.

A: To correct Pat (for not knowing who I’m talking about)

PAT. There’s no think about it. Tomorrow morning at the hour of eight, he’ll hang as high as Killymanjaro.

MEG. What the hell’s that?

A: To provoke (Pat for using big words I don’t understand)

PAT. It’s a noted mountain off the south coast of Switzerland. It would do you no good to be hung as high as that, anyway.

MEG. Do you know what he said? “As a soldier of the Irish Republic, I will die smiling.”

A: To confront Pat for not knowing what the boy said

ROPEEN. Of, God save us!

* I.R.A. – Irish Republican Army

PAT. Oh shut up, Ropeen. And who asked him to give himself the trouble?
A: To **defend**
   The boy was a victim of circumstances

   **To needle** Pat about the I.R.A.

   To **incite** the others on stage to join in on **humiliating** Pat for **bashing** the I.R.A.
   To get the upper hand

* Shan Van Vocht — A woman's auxiliary magazine about I.R.A. activities

**MEG.**
   He only did his duty as a member of the I.R.A.

**PAT.**
   Don't have me use a coarse expression, you silly old bitch. This is nineteen-sixty, and the days of the heroes are over this forty years past. Long over, finished and done with. The I.R.A. and the War of Independence are as dead as the Charleston.

**MEG.**
   The old cause is never dead. "Till Ireland shall be free from the centre to the sea. Hurrah for liberty, says the Shan Van Vocht.”

**ROPEEN joins in the singing.**

**PAT (to the audience).** She's as bad as that old idiot out there. (He indicates **MONSEWER.**) It's bad enough he hasn't got a clock, but I declare to Jesus, I don't think he even has a calendar. And who has the trouble of it all? Me! He wants to have the New I.R.A., so-called, in this place now. Prepare a room for them, no less.

**COLLETTE, an attractive young whore, enters propelling a SAILOR before her.** The SAILOR obviously speaks no English or Gaelic, and seeing the bed in the room starts to take his trousers off. **COLLETTE drags him away upstairs.**

**COLLETTE.** I've got a right one here, this time. (They go upstairs).

**PAT.** It's bad enough trying to run this place as a speak-easy and a brockel—
MEG. A what?

PAT. A brockel. That’s English for whorehouse.

B1.3 “I’m no whore!”

MEG. I will be thankful to you to keep that kind of talk about whorehouses to yourself. I’m no whore for one.

PAT. Why? Are you losing your union card?

O: To restrain my anger for Pat using big words

MEG. Well, if I’m a whore itself, you don’t mind taking the best part of my money. So you’re nothing but a ponce.

PAT. A what?

The SAILOR sings lustily upstairs

PAT. A ponce. That’s English for pimp.

A: To clarify I’m no whore

MEG. Well, I’m saving up to be one. And a long time that will take me with the money you can earn.

PAT. A what?

* Brockel – an Irish whore house
* Ponce – pimp

A: To badger Pat
He is a pimp

MEG. Well, you know what you can do. And shut that bloody row up there.

PAT. A what?

* Mullingar – market town west of Dublin in County Westmeath and on the Royal Canal

COLLETTE (off). And you.

PAT (to MEG). You ought to know better than to abuse a poor crippled man that lost his leg, three miles outside of Mullingar.
A: To **negate** Pat from using his leg as an excuse

MEG. There's nothing the matter with your leg.

PAT. And how do you think we could keep the house going on what we get from Monsewer? And who would look after him in England or Ireland if I didn't?

Still seated at DSR table
SL chair of table

A: To **avow**

Monsewer is not my responsibility

MEG. Not me for one.

PAT. Well, I'll stick by him because we were soldiers of Ireland in the old days.

PA: To laugh at Pat

_B1.4 “Pat’s Lament”_

O: To **listen** attentively

On the Eighteenth day of November,
Just outside the town of Macroom,
The tans in their big Crossley tenders,
Came roaring along to their doom.

ALL. But the boys of the column were waiting
With hand grenades primed on the spot,
And the Irish Republican Army
Made shit of the whole mucking lot

*The foreign SAILOR sings on.*

RIO RITA. Oh shut up, you dirty foreign bastard.

*Whilst PAT is singing all the other inhabitants come on to the stage, join in the song, and stay for a drink.*
A: To **challenge** Pat on his nostalgia for the I.R.A. and current resentment for it today

MEG. You stand there singing about them ould times and the five glorious years, and yet you sneer and jeer at the boys of today. What's the difference.

PAT. It's the H-bomb. It's such a big bomb it's got me scared of the little bombs. The I.R.A. is out of date—

A: To **defend** the current I.R.A.

ALL. Shame. No.

PAT. -- and so is the R.A.F., the Swiss Guards, the Foreign Legion, the red Army—

SAILOR. Njet.

PAT. -- the United States Marines, the Free State Army, the Coldstream Guards, the Scots Guards, the Welsh Guards, the Grenadier Guards and the bloody fire guards.

A: To **mock** Pat for his verbal tirade

MEG. Not the Whore Guards?

PA: To spread legs and wiggle hips while still seated in chair

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_A blast on the bagpipes and Monsewer enters along the passage looking like Baden Powell in an Irish kilt and flowing cloak. The noise from the bagpipes is terrible. Everyone but MEG springs smartly to attention as Monsewer passes and salutes. Monsewer lives in a world of his own, peopled by heroes and enemies. He spends his time making plans for battles fought long ago against enemies long since dead._

To remain seated when Monsewer enters DSR table
B1.5 “Here comes the old windbag”

MONSEWER (*greeted him in Gaelic*). Cén caoi ina bhfuil tú.

PAT. Commandant-General.

MONSEWER. As you were, Patrick.

PAT. Thank you, Monsewer.

*PAT stands at ease. The rest, except for MEG, drift away.*

MONSEWER addresses PAT with a great show of secrecy.

MONSEWER. Patrick—preparations.

PAT. Everything’s ready for the guest.

MONSEWER. Good, good. The troops will be coming quite soon.

PAT *(aside)*. The troops! Good God. *(To MONSEWER)*. How many of them are expected, then?

MONSEWER. There will be two guards and the prisoner.

PA: Motion to the chorus to return to their seats (by stomping left foot)

B1.6 “Here we go again over nothing”

A: To pity Monsewer for being senile
* Slate loose – a little crazy
* Decent old skin – good old fellow

MONSEWER. Absolutely first-class. Carry on.

MONSEWER marches off to make more plans. PAT retires defeated to have another stout.

MEG. He’s a decent old skin, even if he has got a slate loose.
O: To repel against Pat's excuses for bashing the I.R.A.

PAT. Did you hear that? It's bad enough turning this place into an I.R.A. barracks. Monsewer wants to make a glasshouse out of it now.

A: To question Pat's use of the vocabulary

MEG. A what?

PAT. A kind of private Devil's Island of his own.

A: To repudiate Pat's insults about Ireland

MEG. We should be proud to help the men that are fighting for Ireland. Especially that poor boy to be hanged in Belfast Jail tomorrow morning.

PAT. Why are you getting so upset over Ireland? Where the hell were you in nineteen-sixteen when the real fighting was going on?

A: To gloat that Pat is much older than me

MEG. I wasn't born yet.

* Limeys - British soldiers
* Batman - a British Army officer's orderly
* Bass - a kind of ale

A: To reiterate this story for the audience and Pat, to prove Pat is lying

PAT. You're full of excuses. Where were you when we had to go out and capture our own stuff off of the British Army?

MEG. Capture it? You told me that you saw the Limeys in the pub. You said yourself that you bargained two hundred rounds of ammunition, and the riding britches off a colonel's batman for two pints of Bass and fifty cigarettes.

PAT. I shouldn't have given him anything. But I was sorry for him.
A: To prod an answer for Pat’s unusual behavior
*Face like a plateful of mortal sin – a whore
A: To insult Pat’s sister. To justify my statement to the audience

O: To regain order in the house

B1.7 “The dirty communist”

MULLEADY. Mr. Pat, Mr. Pat, that man, he—he’s a Russian.

PAT. A what?

MULLEADY. A Russian.

PAT. Well, is he dirty or something?

MULLEADY. He’s a Communist.

MEG. A Communist.

COLLETTE. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. He’s a Communist. Oh now Pat, it’s against my religion to have anything to do with the likes of him.
PAT. You have to pick up trade where you can these days. The only reason I know for throwing a man out is when he has no money to pay.

A: To probe Mulleady about the Russian’s monetary status

MEG. Has he got any?

MULLEADY. It doesn’t matter about his money. He’s a Communist. You, sir, are a Communist!

PAT. Have you got any money? Any gelt? Pound notes? (PAT makes a sign for money).


SAILOR. Da! Da! (He produces a big wad of notes.)

MEG. Do you see the wad he has on him? (The SAILOR throws the money in the air and beams. They all dive for the money.)

MEG. Sure, pound notes is the best religion in the world.

PAT. And the best politics, too.

As they all scrabble and fight for the money on the floor, a voice thunders from the stairs:

MONSEWER. Hark a voice like thunder spake,
The west awake, the west awake
Sing Oh Hurrah, for Ireland’s sake,
Let England quake.
SAILOR.    Mir y drushva!

MONSEWER.    Cén caoi ina bfuil tu. *(He compliments COLLETTE)* Carry on, my dear. *Ireland needs the work of the women as well, you know.* *(Exit.)*

COLETTE.    Is it all right now?

PAT.    Yes, go on.

COLETTE.    Well, I’ve been to confession three times already and I don’t want to make a mistake about it.

B1.8 “Get the old geezer”

*COLETTE takes the RUSSIAN SAILOR upstairs to bed. The excitement over, everyone drifts off, leaving MR. MULLEADY with PAT and MEG.*

O: To antagonize Mr. Mulleady for his complaining

MULLEADY.    I’m sorry, Mrs. M.—I mean about the Russian. I felt that as a God-fearing man I could shut my eyes no longer.

MEG.    Anybody would think you was doing God a good turn speaking well of him.

A: To chide Mr. Mulleady for creating chaos

MULLEADY.    Oh, and another thing—about my laundry, Miss Meg. It was due back three days ago.

PAT.    It walked back.
A: To **mortify** Mr. Mulleady with having to beg
- Prisoners' Aid Society - a charitable society for rehabilitating ex-prisoners

MULLEADY. I have to go to one of my committees this evening and I haven't a shirt to my name.

MEG. Go and ask the Prisoners' Aid Society to give you one.

MULLEADY. You know very well that is the committee on which I serve.

MEG. Well, go and wash one.

MULLEADY. You know I can't—

A: To **assert** my unwillingness to serve

A: To **threaten** Mr. Mulleady with eviction

A: To **claim** my position of authority
To **reprimand** Pat for taking in scrubs

- Gouger - freeloader, swindler
- Bowsey - a thug or layabout

MULLEADY. Get going, or I'll ask you for the money you owe you.

MEG. Please don't bring all that up again. You know that at the end of the month...

MULLEADY. Please don't bring all that up again. You know that at the end of the month...

MEG. Are you going? *(She drives him out.)* Fine thing to be letting rooms to every class of gouger and bowsey in the city.

PA: Rise facing Mr. Mulleady on USL staircase

X DSR back to chair SL of DSR table

PAT. Dirty thieves and whores the lot of them. Still, their money is clean enough.

A: To **vent** my dislike of Mr. Mulleady
- Sepulchre - tomb, grave

MEG. It's not the whores I mind, it's the likes of that old whited sepulchre that I don't like.
* Geezer – fellow
* Republic – I.R.A. abbreviation
* Brockel – Irish for brothel

**MULLEADY comes downstairs with a filthy shirt and scoots through the room and out of the kitchen door.**

PAT. You don’t mean Monsewer?

MEG. No, I don’t. I mean that old Mulleady geezer, though Monsewer is bad enough, giving out about the Republic and living in a brockel.

A: To insist (I don’t mind Monsewer, however, he’s not prize either)

To jab Pat for calling the house a brockel

PAT (hushing her) Monsewer doesn’t know anything about these matters.

MEG. Course he does, Pat.

PAT. He doesn’t.

MEG. He must know.

PAT. No. He thinks everybody in this house are gaels, patriots or Republicans on the run

MEG. He doesn’t, the old idiot! He’s here again.

**MONSEWER enters, on secret service, carrying a sheaf of despatches and plans.**

B1.9 “Good God, he’s here again”

MONSEWER. Patrick!

PAT. Sir!

MONSEWER. As you were. (Pat stands at ease.)

PA: to sip my beer
PAT. Thank you, Monsewer.

MONSEWER (in great confidence). Patrick, I trust we may rely on the lads in the billet if anything should go wrong tonight?

PAT. We may put our lives in their hands, Monsewer.

A: To bait Pat that there are no troops

MEG. God help us.

MEG. Most people wouldn’t know what he was saying, surely.

PAT. No, they didn’t. When he went on a tram or a bus he had to have an interpreter with him so the conductor would know where he wanted to get off.

MEG. Ah, the poor man.

A: To joke with the audience at the irony of this conversation

MONSEWER. Patrick. (He draws him aside.) Any letters arrived for me from England lately?

PAT. No, sir.

MONSEWER. Oh dear. I was relying on my allowance to finance my campaign.

PAT. Ah, never mind, sir, we’ll keep the kip going somehow.
A: To explain to the audience there is no money from England coming

MEG (to the audience). Sure, he hasn’t had a letter from England since they naturalised the Suez Canal.

MONSEWER. There’s another matter: fellow patriot of ours calls himself Pig-eye—code name, of course. Just served six months in prison for the cause. I told him that, in return, he shall billet here, at our expense, till the end of his days. Carry on. (MONSEWER marches off.)

O: To attest to Monsewer’s phoniness To banter with Pat over Monsewer really being an Irishman

PAT (to the audience). Pig-eye! He’s just done six months for robbery with violence. “Till the end of his days.” If he doesn’t pay his rent, he’ll reach the end of his days sooner than he expects.

A: To contradict earlier statements about liking Monsewer To ridicule his cheapness

MEG. Don’t you talk to me about that Pig-eye. He’s as mean as the grave. A hundred gross of nylons he knocked off the other day, from the Hauty Cotture warehouse, and not one did he offer to a girl in the street. No bejusas, not even to the one-legged girl in Number 8. The old hypocrite.

PAT. Who? Pig-eye?

*Hauty cotture – high or exclusive women’s fashions

MEG. No. Monsewer. He’s not as green as he’s cabbage looking. Calling himself “Monsewer”, blowing the head off you with his ould pipes, and not a penny to his name.

A: To expose Monsewer as a phony and penniless old fool

PAT. Well, he’s loyal to the old cause, and he’s a decent old skin.
As PAT begins to tell his story other people from the house edge in: KATE, the pianist. RIO RITA in a faded silk dressing-gown, his coloured boy-friend, MR. MULLEADY, COLETTE, and the SAILOR and OLD ROPEEN, a retired whore. They egg PAT on or mock him, if they dare.

A: To **interrogate** Pat about Monsewer's identity
* Monniker – name

MEG. Where did he get that monniker for a start? Is it an English name?

PAT. What?

MEG. Monsewer.

PAT. It's French for mister, isn't it?

MEG. I don't know. I'm asking you.

A: To **mimic** Pat saying the name Monsewer

PAT. Well, I'm telling you, it is. At one time all the toffs were going mad, talking Irish and only calling themselves by their Irish names.

MEG. You just said it was a French name.

A: To **rebuff** Pat's assumption I know Monsewer is a French name

PAT. Will you let me finish for once? What's the Irish for mister?

ROPEEN. R. Goine Vasal.

*MEG starts laughing.*
PAT.

Yes, well it was too Irish for them, too, so they called themselves Monsieur or Madame as the case might be.

MEG.

Ah, they’re half mad, these high-up ould ones.

A: To **conclude** that Monsewer is a wacky aristocrat

PAT.

He wasn’t half mad the first time I saw him, nor a quarter mad, God bless him. See that? *(He produces a photo.)* Monsewer on the back of his white horse, the Cross of Christ held high in his right hand, like Brian Boru, leading his men to war and glory.

MEG.

Will you look at the poor horse.

A: To **jolt** Pat from rehashing his glory days

To **tease, poke fun at** the picture of Monsewer

PAT.

That was the day we got captured. We could have got out of it, but Monsewer is terrible strict and honest. You see, he’s an Englishman.

MEG.

An Englishman, and him going round in a kilt all day playing his big Gaelic pipes.

A: To **suspect** this information from Pat is false

To **question** its validity

PAT.

He was born an Englishman, remained one for years. His father was a bishop.

MEG.

His father was a bishop. *(All good Catholics, they start to leave.)* Well, I’m not sitting here and listening to that class of immoral talk. His father was a bishop, indeed!

* Gaelic pipes – Irish bagpipes

PA: Rise

X USL to staircase
A: To **proclaim** to the others on stage and the audience this is acceptable because they were Protestants

PAT.

 Meg.

 RIO RITA.

 PAT.

 He was a Protestant bishop.

 He went to all the biggest colleges in England and slept in the one room with the King of England’s son.

 They get married, too, sometimes.

\[X\text{ back to DSR table and sit in SL chair}\]

\[A:\text{ To **project** my disapproval of their beliefs}\]

\[\text{To **poke fun** at the Protestants’ beliefs}\]

\[A:\text{ To **imply** the Protestants are deviant}\]

\[A:\text{ To **interrupt** Pat for changing his story}\]

\[\text{To **verify** his earlier statement about Monsewer being English}\]

\[\text{PAT.}\]

\[\text{MEG.}\]

\[\text{ROPEEN.}\]

\[\text{PAT.}\]

\[\text{Begad, it wouldn’t surprise me if he slept in the one bed with him, his father being a bishop.}\]

\[\text{Yes, he had every class of comfort, mixed with dukes, marquises, earls and lords.}\]

\[\text{All sleeping in the one room I suppose?}\]

\[\text{In the one bed.}\]

\[\text{Will you shut up. As I was saying, he had every class of comfort until one day he discovered he was an Irishman.}\]

\[\text{Aren’t you after telling me he was an Englishman?}\]

\[\text{He was an Anglo-Irishman.}\]
A: To **explode** because of Pat’s double talk

MEG. In the name of God, what’s that?

PAT. A Protestant with a horse. An Anglo-Irishman only works at riding horses, drinking whisky and reading double-meaning books in Irish at Trinity College.

A: To **resolve** that Monsewer is not a true Irishman

MEG. I’m with you he wasn’t born an Irishman. He became one.

PAT. He didn’t become one—he was born one—on his mother’s die, and as he didn’t like his father much he went with his mother’s people—he became an Irishman.

A: To **probe** the truth from Pat about how it is impossible that Monsewer was born an Irishman

MEG. How did he do that?

PAT. Well, he took it easy at first, wore a kilt, played Gaelic football on Blackheath.

A: To **question** if there is really a place called Blackheath

MEG. Where’s that?

PAT. In London. He took a correspondence course in the Irish language. And when the Rising took place he acted like a true Irish hero.

MEG. He came over to live in Ireland.

PAT. He fought for Ireland with me at his side.

A: To **terminate** this ridiculous conversation

MEG. Aye, we’ve heard that part of the story before.
A: To **finish** the conversation through complaining that we’ve heard it before

PAT.  Five years’ hard fighting.

COLETTE.  Ah, God help us.

ROPEEN.  Heavy and many is the good man that was killed.

PAT.  We had the victory—till they signed that curse-of-God treaty in London. They sold the six counties to England and Irishmen were forced to swear an oath of allegiance to the British Crown.

A: To **berate** Pat in front of the others for his foul language

MEG.  I don’t know about the six counties, but the swearing wouldn’t come so hard on you.

PA: to laugh at Pat

ROPEEN.  Whatever made them do it, Mr. Pat?

PAT.  Well, I’ll tell you, Ropeen. It was Lloyd George and Birkenhead made a fool of Michael Collins and he signed an agreement to have no more fighting with England.

MEG.  Then he should have been shot.

PAT.  He was.

A: To **regret** that Michael Collins signed the treaty and was shot

MEG.  Ah, the poor man.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: To pity the loss of this once-beloved Irish hero</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROPEEN.</td>
<td>They called him “The Laughing Boy”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT.</td>
<td>Still, he was a great fighter and he fought well for the ould cause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT.</td>
<td>They did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIO RITA.</td>
<td>Give us your son, Pat. (General agreement.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT.</td>
<td>Give us a note. Kate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pat sings the first verse and the others join in, naturally, as they feel moved, into the choruses and the following verses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: To cherish that Pat sings to me and compares me to a young maiden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROPEEN.</td>
<td>Oh, you’re sending a thrill through my bosom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: To reminisce about Michael Collins before signing the treaty To recall the pain of him being dead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>So strong, so wide, so brave was he, I’ll mourn his loss too sore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA: To giggle</td>
<td>When thinking that we’ll hear the laugh or springing step no more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA: To gigg</td>
<td>Ah, curse the time, and sad the loss my heart to crucify,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X CS to Pat singing</td>
<td>X to table DSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X to table DSL</td>
<td>PA: Sit on Rio Rita’s lap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X CS to Pat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- "Twas on an August morning, all in the morning hours, I went to take the warming air all in the month of flowers, And there I saw a maiden and heard her mournful cry, Oh, what will mend my broken heart, I’ve lost my Laughing Boy.
* Pearse – Patrick
Pearse, Commander-in-
Chief of Irish
insurgents in the Easter
Rising; executed by the
British in 1916

* G.P.O. – General
Post Office, chief rebel
stronghold during the
Easter Rising

A: To educate the
audience of the
permanent wounds left
by the British

* Thomas Ashe –
participant in 1916
rising, died in prison
while on hunger strike

* Mountjoy – Irish
prison camp

A: To arouse and
incite the others’ love
for the I.R.A.

* Go raibh mile maith
Agath – Gaelic for “a
thousand thank yous to
you

ALL.

Than an Irish son, with a rebel gun, shot down my Laughing Boy.
Oh, had he died by Pearse’s side, or in the G.P.O.,

PAT.
That’s the General Post Office. Where all the fighting took place.

MEG.
You can still see the bullet holes.

ALL.
Killed by an English bullet from the rifle of the foe,
Or forcibly fed while Ashe lay dead in the dungeons of Mountjoy,
I’d have cried with pride at the way he died, my own dear Laughing Boy.

MEG.
Up the Republic!

RIO RITA.
Now one voice.

MEG.
My princely love, can ageless love do more than tell to you
Go raibh mile maith Agath, for all you tried to do,
For all you did and would have done, my enemies to destroy,

ALL.
I’ll praise your name and guard your fame, my own dear Laughing Boy.

PA: Take Pat’s arm
X to apron and address audience
X CS and address audience
A: To forgive
Michael Collins’
betrayal and avow to
uphold his good name
To grieve his loss

PAT.  It wasn’t the end of the story. Some of us wouldn’t accept the treaty. We went on fighting, but we were beat. Monsewer was loyal to the old cause and I was loyal to Monsewer. So when the fighting was done we came back together to this old house.

MEG.  This dirty old hole.

A: To scold Pat for returning to
Monsewer’s after the war

PAT.  A good hole it was for many a decent man on the run for twenty years after that.

MEG.  Who the hell was still running twenty years after that?

A: To interrogate and to doubt the truth of
men on the run twenty years after the signing of the treaty

PAT.  All the Republicans who wouldn’t accept the Treaty. We put Cosgrave’s government in and he had the police hunting us.

RIO RITA.  Then you put de Valera in, and he started hunting us too.

PAT.  I put de Valera in—what the hell are you talking about?

RIO RITA.  I ought to know what I’m talking about—I was Michael Collins’s runner in the old days, when I was a little girl, or boy.
B1.12 “Defend Pat”

O: To **attack** Rio Rita for claiming Pat and the I.R.A. put de Valera in office

* de Valera – Eamon de Valera, American-born participant in 1916 rising; later a statesman

A: To **blast** Rio Rita and Princess Grace for insulting Pat

**PAT.** He must have had a thousand bloody runners if you were another one.

**RIO RITA.** Are you calling me a liar?

**MEG & ROPEEN.** You’re a bloody liar!

**PRINCESS GRACE.** Pick on somebody your own sex!

**PAT.** Oh go by the wall and tiddle the bricks.

**RIO RITA.** You know I was Michael Collins’s runner.

**ROPEEN.** That was over thirty years ago—you weren’t even born.

**RIO RITA.** I did my bit in O’Connell Street, with the rest of them.

**ROPEEN.** He did his bit up in O’Connell Street.

**RIO RITA.** You shut your bloody row—you want to take a bucket of water out with you when you go out the back, you do.

**ROPEEN.** Get out, will you. *(She chases him upstairs.)*

**RIO RITA.** There you are—look—she’s picking on me again. I haven’t said a word to her. I won’t argue with her—I only upset meself if I argue with that one. I’ll go and have a lie down. *(Exits)*

X to Princess Grace at DSR table
SR chair

PA: Push Princess Grace back down into chair
X to USR to the bar
A: To **insult** Rio Rita in front of the others by calling him a walking corpse

MEG. Carry on with the coffin, the corpse’ll walk.

PAT. Hiding hunted Republicans was all very well, but it didn’t pay the rent, so in the end we had to take in all sorts of scruffy lumpers to make the place pay.

**X to DSR table**

**Sit in chair SL of table**

**B1.13 “The nerve”**

RIO RITA. (*From the top of the stairs.*) You wouldn’t say that to my face.

**O: To **defend my position** of being more than a whore**

PAT. This noble old house, which housed so many heroes, was turned into a knocking shop. But I’d you to help me.

**MEG.** You had me to help you! The curse of God meet and melt you and your rotten lousy leg. You had me to help you, indeed! If I’m a whore itself, sure I’m a true patriot.

**A: To **berate** Pat for insinuating I worked as a common whore**

PAT. Course you are, course you are. Aren’t we husband and wife—nearly.

**To **admonish** his claim that I helped him make this house a brothel**

MEG. Well, nearly. Get your hands off me fun box. That’s for me customers.

**PAT.** Sure, I wasn’t referring to you. I was talking about old Ropeen and that musician, and Colette, there’s another one.

**A: To **admit** my commitment to him**

COLETTE. I don’t have to stay here.
To **remind** him that I am not his legal wife and to **punish** him by rejecting his physical advances, the sound of hymn-singing comes from upstairs. Down the stairs RIO RITA flies into the room, followed by the NEGRO, now in boxing kit with gloves on. The other people in the house flood into the room and listen to the din.

What the hell’s that? What’s going on?

**RIO RITA silences the room and tells his story.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1.14 “I’ll show them who’s boss”</td>
<td>RIO RITA.</td>
<td>I’ve seen everything, dear. I’ve seen everything. I was upstairs doing a bit of shadow boxing with my friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O: To <strong>establish</strong> control</td>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>Where the hell’s that row coming from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To <strong>impress</strong> I am the boss</td>
<td>RIO RITA.</td>
<td>It’s that man in the second floor back. He has a strange woman in his room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To <strong>intimidate</strong> every one who defies me</td>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>Old Mulleady?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: To <strong>be surprised</strong> that old Mulleady is the one making all the noise</td>
<td>RIO RITA.</td>
<td>Three hours he’s had her in there, and the noises, it’s disgusting. It’s all very well you laughing, but it doesn’t say much for the rest of us girls in the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ROPEEN.</td>
<td>No, it doesn’t, does it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>Has he got that one-legged girl from Number 8 in there?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A: To **amuse** the crowd that only a one-legged girl would be desperate enough to want Mulleady

RIO RITA. No, she’s not even out of the street, let alone the house. A complete stranger—I don’t know the woman.

MEG. Well, what sort of woman is it?

RIO RITA. A female woman, the worst kind.

A: To **demand** to know what stranger is in the house

MEG. Well, the dirty low degenerate old maniac, what does he take this house for? Mr. Mulleady, Mr. Mulleady.

A: To **contain** my alarm at having a new whore in the house

MULLEADY. Is that you Mrs. M?

MEG. Is it me? Who the hell do you think it is? Will you come down here and bring that shameless bitch down with you.

MULLEADY. What do you want? Did you call me, Mrs. M?

A: To **challenge** Mr. Mulleady
To **command** him to come out and face me

MEG. If Mulleady is your name, I called you, and I called that low whore you have up there with you. I didn’t call her by her name, for I don’t know what it is, if she’s got one at all. Come down from there, you whore, whoever you are.

A: To **manipulate** and **embarrass** Mulleady to bring down Miss Gilchrist

MEG shoos everyone out of the room and hides behind the door. MULLEADY enters, sees no one and turns to go, only to find MEG blocking his path. She thrusts her bosom at him and drives him back on to one of the chairs.
A: To degrade Mulready for looking for women outside the brothel

MULLEADY. Mrs. M., she might have heard you.

MEG. Who's she when she's at home, and what's she got that I haven't got, I should like to know.

PA: Grab breasts, turn and shake arse facing audience

MULLEADY. She is a lady.

MEG. The more shame to her, and don't you go calling me your dear Mrs. M. Nor your cheap Mrs. M. either. What do you mean by bringing whores into this house?

PAT. And it's full of them, coals to Newcastle.

COLLETTE, ROPEEN, RIO RITA and MEG crowd MULLEADY and sit on his knees, ruffle his hair and tickle him. The NEGRO shadow boxes, the SAILOR falls asleep with a bottle of vodka and PAT takes no part in this.

MEG. Now, Mr. Mulready, Mr. Mulready, sir, don't you know you could have got anything like that, that you wanted, here?

RIO RITA. Yes anything.

MEG. I'm surprised at you, so I am. God knows I've stuck by you. Even when that man there was wanting to cast you out into the streets for the low-down dirty old hypocrite that you are.

MULLEADY. Thank you, Mrs. M. Your blood's worth bottling.

A: To protect myself from being further insulted
To accuse him of breaking house rules

A: To fluster Mr. Mulready in front of the others

A: To manipulate Mulready
To tease him that I am his only ally
A: To **pretend** to care and to **dismiss** his crime

MEG. Are you all right now?

MULLEADY. Oh yes, indeed, thank you.

* Brasstitute – a pan referring to a cold handed prostitute

MEG. Right then. Bring down that brasstitute.

MULLEADY. Oh, is there any need?

MULLEADY (feeby). Miss Gilchrist?

A: To **command** him to bring the whore to me

MEG. Fetch her down.

MULLEADY. Miss Gilchrist?

A: To **demand** that he get her

MISS GILCHRIST. Yes, Mr. Mulleady?

MULLEADY. Will you come down here a minute, please.

MISS GILCHRIST. I haven’t finished the first novena, Mr. Mulleady.

MULLEADY. Mrs. M., please. I’ll get her down.

A: To **taunt** Mulleady for being afraid to call her down

MEG. I’ll give her the first bloody novena!

* Novena – Catholic recitation of prayers for nine consecutive days

MR. MULLEADY goes back through the hallway to fetch her. They appear at the front of the hallway.

X to piano CS
MULLEADY. Let us say a prayer Miss Gilchrist, and we will be forgiven. (Mulleady’s hand strays and gooses Miss Gilchrist.)

MISS GILCHRIST. In nomine – please, Mr. Mulleady, let us not fall from grace again.

MULLEADY. I’m very sorry, Miss Gilchrist, let not the right hand know what the left hand is doing. Miss Gilchrist, can you — (the hand strays again and strokes Miss Gilchrist’s tail.) — feel our souls together?

*They march down the stairs singing the corrupted version of Handel’s Largo. MISS GILCHRIST takes a firm stand, while MULLEADY hands out religious tracts.*

MISS GILCHRIST. Save your souls, my brothers, my sisters, save your souls. One more sinner saved today. Jesus lives.

B1.15 “Harass the gilly whore Gilchrist”

MULLEADY. This is Miss Gilchrist.

MEG. In the name of all that’s holy, what kind of a name is Gilchrist.

MISS GILCHRIST. It is an old Irish name. In its original form “Giolla Christ”, the servant or gilly of the Lord.

MEG. You’re a quare-looking gilly of the lord, you whore.

PA: Take pamphlet from Miss Gilchrist

O: To get rid of Miss Gilchrist

X C to Miss Gilchrist

A: To ridicule her religious piety

To poke fun at her name

PA: Tear pamphlet and throw in the air
A: To **insinuate** she is a whore and to **accuse** and to **blemish** Miss Gilchrist's claim to be a servant of the Lord

MISS GILCHRIST. I take insults in the name of our blessed Saviour.

MULLEADY. A quarter of an hour, Mrs. M.

ALL. Three hours.

MISS GILCHRIST. We were speaking of our souls.

MISS GILCHRIST (singing) Our souls. Our souls. Our souls.

MULLEADY )

(This is slurred to sound—"Our souls. Are souls. Arseholes.")

A: To **threaten** Miss Gilchrist into leaving

MEG. You can leave his soul along, whatever about your own. And take yourself out of here, before I'm dug out of you.

MISS GILCHRIST. I will give you my prayers.

A: To **shock** and **horrify** Miss Gilchrist

MEG. You can stuff them up your cathedral.

MISS GILCHRIST. I forgive her. She is a poor sinful person.

MEG. And you're a half-time whore.

PAT. Compliments pass when the quality meet.

PA: **Goose** Miss Gilchrist

PA: Pull Mr. Mulleady's suspenders
* Get - bastard

A: To bestow blame on Rio Rita in order to redeem myself

ALL. Who me?

MULLEADY starts to go.

A: To reprimand Rio Rita for talking about religion

RIO RITA. Not you, him.

MULLEADY. Me—well there’s gratitude for you. Who told you about him in the first place? I always knew what he was, the dirty old eye-box.

MULLEADY. Informer! Butterfly! You painted May-pole!

RIO RITA. You filthy old get!

PAT. Hey, what about some rent.

The room clears as if by magic. Only RIO RITA is trapped on the stairs.

RIO RITA. I wish you wouldn’t show me up when I bring a friend into the house.

PAT. Never mind all that. What about the rent? What’s his name, anyway?

RIO RITA. Princess Grace.

PAT. I can’t put down Princess Grace, can I?

RIO RITA. That’s only his name in religion.

MEG. Don’t be giving out that talk about religion.

PA: Sit at DSR table SL chair
PAT. Well, what’s his real name?

RIO RITA. King Kong. (Exit.)

A row erupts in the kitchen between MULLEADY and ROPEEN and MULLEADY enters, holding his dirty shirt.

B1.17 “I’ll cock you”

MULLEADY. Mr. Pat, Mr. Pat, she has no right to be in there all morning washing her aspidistra. I only wanted to wash my shirt. (He recovers his dignity.) All this fuss about Miss Gilchrist. She merely came to talk religion to me.

MEG. That is the worst kind. You can take it from me.

A: To justify throwing Miss Gilchrist out

PAT. From one who knows.

MULLEADY. You don’t seem aware of my antecedents. My second cousin was a Kilkenny from Kilcock.

MEG. I’ll cock you. Take this broom and sweep out your room, you scowling little bollix—take it before I ruin you completely.

*X cross CS behind Mulleady

PA: Take broom and shove it up between his legs and turn him around to face staircase

* Bollix – bollocks, testicles

A: To assault Mr. Mulleady and to yell at him for complaining

She throws a broom at him and he disappears, flicking the old whore with the broom as he goes. Things quieten down and PAT and MEG take a rest.

O: To switch the subject from Mulleady to something else

PAT. If the performance is over I’d like a cigarette.

X to DSR table sit in SL chair of table
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B1.18 “Gollywog”</th>
<th>MEG.</th>
<th>I sent the skivvy out for them half an hour ago. God knows where she’s got to. Have a gollywog.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Gollywog – French brand of cigarette</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Skivvy – maid for general housework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT.</td>
<td>What in the hell’s name is that?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: To offer Pat a Gollywog and to impress him</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: To explain how I acquired the French cigarettes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>It’s a French cigarette. I got them off that young attaché case at the French Embassy—that one that thinks all Irishwomen are his mother.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT.</td>
<td>I don’t fancy those. I’ll wait for me twenty Afton. Meanwhile I’ll sing that famous old song, “The Hound that Caught the Pubic Hair”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>You’re always announcing these songs, but you never get round to singing them.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A: To banter Pat about his constant need for attention</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PAT.</td>
<td>Well, there is a song I sing sometimes.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There’s no place on earth like the world Just between you and me. There’s no place on earth like the world Acushla, astore and Mother Machree.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B1.19 “The Sweet Skivvy”</td>
<td>TERESA. the skivvy runs in. She is a strong hefty country girl of 19 and a bit shy.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>O: To get to know this sweet young girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TERESA.</td>
<td>Your cigarettes, sir.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PAT.</td>
<td>A hundred thousand welcomes. You look lovely. If I wasn’t married I’d be exploring you.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A: To worry Teresa may have been lost

TERESA. I'm very sorry I was so late sir.

MEG. Were you lost in the place?

TERESA. I was, nearly. Shall I get on with the beds, Meg?

A: To dismiss Teresa to her duties

MEG. Yes, you might as well.

PAT. Don't be calling me sir, there's only one sir in this house and that's Monsewer. Just call me Pat.

TERESA. Pat, sir, there's a man outside.

A: To inquire why this stranger won't come in

MEG. Why doesn't he come in?

TERESA. Well, he's just looking around. Is he a policeman?

PAT. Where is he now? (Teresa goes to the window.)

TERESA. He's over there, sir.

PAT. I can't see without me glasses. Is he wearing a trench coat and a beret?

TERESA. He is, sir. How did you know!?
A: To **expose**
Pat is teasing Teresa to the audience

MEG. He’s a fortune-teller.

TERESA. And he has a badge to say he only speaks Irish.

PAT. Begod, then him and me will have to use the deaf and dumb language, for the only bit of Irish I know would get us both prosecuted. That badge makes me think he’s an officer.

TERESA. He has another to say he doesn’t drink.

PAT. That means he’s a higher officer.

A: To **insist**
I don’t want the police around

MEG. Begod, don’t be bringing him in here.

PAT. He’ll come in, in his own good time, Now, Teresa girl, you haven’t been here long but you’re a good girl and you can keep your mouth shut.

TERESA. Oh yes, sir.

PAT. Well, someone’s coming to stay here and you’ll bring him his meals. Now, if you don’t tell a living sinner about it, you can stay here for the rest of your life.

A: To **hope** Teresa will have a better life
To dream she’ll even have a decent life

MEG. Well, till she’s married anyway.

TERESA. Thank you, sir. Indeed, I’m very happy here.
PAT. You’re welcome.

TERESA. And I hope you’ll be satisfied with my work.

PAT. I’d be more satisfied if you were a bit more cheerful and not so serious all the time.

TERESA. I’ve always been a very serious girl.

Sings:

Open the door softly,
Shut it—keep out the draught,
For years and years, I’ve shed millions of tears,
And never but once have I laughed.
’Twas the time the hold picture fell,

And knocked me old Granny cold,
While she knitted and sang an old Irish song,
’Twas by traitors poor old Ulster was sold.

So open the window softly,
For Jaysus’ sake, hang the latch,
Come in and lie down, and afterwards
You can ask me what’s the catch.

A: To warn Teresa about foreign men
To forebode Teresa of Leslie’s arrival

MEG. Before these foreign-born bastards, dear,
See you don’t let yourself down,

BOTH. We’ll be the Lion and Unicorn,
My Rose unto your Crown.

PA: To smile at Teresa singing

PA: Grab Teresa’s hand and lead her to sit on Meg’s lap
To sing
MEG. Hasn’t she got a nice voice, Pat?

PAT. You make a pretty picture. Do you know what you look like, Meg?

MEG. Yes, a whore with a heart of gold. At least, that’s what you’d say if you were drunk enough.

Two men enter and begin examining the room, stamping on the boards, testing the plaster and measuring the walls. The first is a thin-faced fanatic in a trench coat and black beret. He is a part-time OFFICER IN THE I.R.A. The second man is FEARGUS O’CONNOR, a VOLUNTEER. He wears a rubber mackintosh and a shiny black cap. The OFFICER is really a schoolmaster and the VOLUNTEER a railway ticket-collector. They survey all exits and escape routes.

PA: To hold Teresa on my lap and protect her from being shot by Fergus.

B1.20 “The I.R.A. General”

RIO RITA. Is it the sanitary inspector, Pat?

OFFICER. Filthy—filthy. The whole place is filthy. (He sees the RUSSIAN SAILOR asleep.) Get rid of that, will you?

PAT. Who does this belong to?

COLETTÉ. That’s mine.

RIO RITA. Let me give you a hand with him.

COLETTÉ. Keep your begrudging hands off him.

COLETTÉ exits with SAILOR.
OFFICER. Who's in charge here?

PAT. I am.

OFFICER. Your cellar's full of rubbish.

PAT. Oh, there's no rubbish there. No, I'll tell you what there is in there. There's the contents of an entire house which nearly fell down a couple of weeks ago.

OFFICER. What are these people doing here?

PAT. Well, that's Meg and that's Teresa ... 

OFFICER. Get'em out of here.

PAT. You'd better go—get out.

A: To belittle the officer in front of Teresa
B1.21 "The Poor Boys"

MEG. Come on, Teresa—if they want to play toy soldiers we'll leave them to it.

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MEG and TERESA come in.

MEG. Can we come in now Pat?

PAT. What do you want?

MEG. We want to put the sheets on the bed.
There is a blurt of mechanical sound and a commotion upstairs. Everyone in the house rushes in to listen to a portable radio that COLETTE is carrying.

RIO RITA.          Mr. Pat, Mr. Pat!
PAT.               What is it?
RIO RITA.          It’s about the boy in the Belfast Jail. They’ve refused a reprieve.
MULLEADY.          The Lord Lieutenant said tomorrow morning, eight o’clock. No reprieve final.
ROPEEN.            The boy—the boy in the Belfast Jail?
MULLEADY.          Yes—made on behalf of the Government of Northern Ireland.
COLETTE.           I’ve lost it now.

The radio blurs out music.

PAT.               Turn the bloody thing off.
Silence.

A: To sympathize for the boy’s mother
MEG.               God help us all.
TERESA.            The poor boy.

X cross to balcony UPC
A: To **project** faith he may get a reprieve.

ROPEEN. Eight o’clock in the morning, think of it.

MEG. Ah, sure, they might have mercy on him yet. Eighteen years of age—

OFFICER. Irishmen have been hanged by Englishmen at eighteen years of age before now.

A: To **taunt** Pat and the officer for having no compassion for the boy.

PAT. Yes, and Cypriots, Jews and Africans.

MEG. Did you read about them black fellers? Perhaps Mr. de Valera could do something about it.

PAT

OFFICER ) (together for once, and with great contempt).)

Mr. de Valera!

MEG. I’m sure he could stop it if he wanted to. They say he’s a very clever man. They say he can speak seven languages.

PAT. It’s a terrible pity that English or Irish are not among them, so we’d know what he was saying at odd times.

RIO RITA. Quiet everybody, something’s coming through.

**COLETTE repeats the news item from the radio and is echoed by MULLEADY, ROPEEN, RIO RITA and TERESA:**

A: To **listen** attentively to radio announcement.

COLETTE. “Early today a young British soldier was captured as he was coming out of a dance hall in
A: To resent the boy being kidnapped

MULLEADY. Armagh by the I.R.A."

RIO RITA. An English soldier!

ROPEEN. "He was put into the back of a car and when last seen was speeding towards the border."

OFFICER. "All troops have been alerted ..."

PAT. Turn it off, Patrick, get these people out of here.

PAT. I can’t do that without making a show of ourselves.

OFFICER. Then come outside with me.

B1.22 “Barroom Banter”

PAT, I.R.A. OFFICER and VOLUNTEER go out.

RIO RITA. Who is that man, anyway?

MEG. He’s just come about the rent. He’s an I.R.A. Officer.

MULLEADY. That poor boy waiting all night for the screws coming for him in the morning.

MEG. Shut up will you?

To desist the I.R.A. officer

MEG. Shut up will you?

A: To deter Mr. Mulleady from

MULLEADY. I know just how he feels.
MEG. How do you know?

MULLEADY. Well, I was in prison myself once.

MEG. Oh, yes, he was. I forgot.

RIO RITA. Mountjoy?

MULLEADY. As a matter of fact, it was.

RIO RITA. So was I.

MULLEADY. You must have made a fortune.

RIO RITA. I'll get you a drink.

_They all sit at MULLEADY's feet._

MULLEADY. I was in a cell next to a condemned man.

RIO RITA. What were you in for?

MULLEADY. It was the _Pall Mall Gazette_ in 1919.

COLETTE. The what?

MULLEADY. The _Pall Mall Gazette_.

COLETTE. What's that?

MULLEADY. A magazine. There was an advertisement in it for an insurance company and I put all my...
A: To discredit Mulleady’s story

MEG. Well, that’s not such a vast sum.

ROPEEN. It was in those days.

MULLEADY. Yes, that’s the point. When the annuity was due the value of money had declined, so I ran off with the church funds.

A: To be appalled at robbing the church

MEG. That was a filthy thing to do.

MULLEADY. They put me into prison for that.

ALL. How sad—I never knew my mother—never to know your mother.

A: To vocalize distress with everyone’s whining
To gain control by picking on Mulleady

MEG. Are you lot going to sit there all night moaning about your mothers? Did you sweep out your room?

MULLEADY. Well, no.

A: To convey that I am boss
To delegate tasks

MEG. Well, go out and get us twelve of stout.

*MULLEADY goes and talks with KATE, the pianist.*

We’ve run dry by the look of it. And if you’re going to sit there you can give us a hand with the beds.
COLLETTE.  Do you mind—I’ve been flat on my back all day.

MULLEADY.  Kate says the credit has run out.

MEG.  Oh Kate, I’ve got a terrible drought on me.

RIO RITA.  I’ll tell you what I’ll do—I’ll run down to the docks and see if I can pick up a sailor—and I’ll bring back a crate of Guinness.  (Exit.)

MEG.  Bring the beer back here.

ROPEEN.  And the sailor.

ROPEEN, MULLEADY and COLLETTE go.  TERESA and MEG start to make the bed.

TERESA.  There’s some very strange people in this house.

MEG.  There’s some very strange people in the world.

TERESA.  I like that big feller.  There was no one like him in the convent.

MEG.  Do you mean Rio Rita?

TERESA.  Yes, it’s a gas name, isn’t it?

X USR to hostage’s bedroom

X to bed USR in hostage’s room

PA: Sit on bed
A: To **be concerned** she is so innocent

TERESA. I’ve just had the one job with the family in Drumcondra.

A: To **assume** she must have stolen something

MEG. Why did you leave there? Did you half-inch something?

A: To **clarify** what I meant about stealing

TERESA. What did you say?

MEG. Did you half-inch something?

TERESA. I never stole anything in my whole life.

* Half-inch – steal, slang for pinch

A: To **insist** I was not judging her

MEG. There’s no need to get so upset about it. I never stole anything either. The grand chances I had, too! God doesn’t give us these chances twice in a lifetime.

TERESA. It wasn’t that; you see, there was a clerical student in the house.

* Drumcondra – an area of Ireland, north of the River Liffey

A: To **reassure** she will be protected here

TERESA. Oh, no, and they wouldn’t be a bit pleased.

MEG. Well, don’t say anything to Pat about it. It doesn’t do to tell men everything. Here he comes now—don’t forget.

X USL to corner of hostage’s room
B1.24; “Proud to be Irish”

PAT and MONSEWER enter from opposite sides along the passage-way.

Oh, isn’t it terrible, Pat? About that poor young man. There’s to be no reprieve. Wouldn’t it break your heart to be thinking about it?

A: To listen discreetly to Monsewer and pass views on the hostage situation

MONSEWER. It doesn’t break my heart.

PAT (softly). It’s not your neck they’re breaking either.

MONSEWER. It doesn’t make me unhappy. It makes me proud; proud to know that the old cause is not dead yet, and that there are still young men willing and ready to go out and die for Ireland.

A: To listen attentively to Pat and Monsewer’s views on the boy being hung

PAT. I’d say that young man will be in the presence of the Irish martyrs of eight hundred years ago just after eight o’clock tomorrow morning.

MONSEWER. He will. He will. With God’s help, he’ll be in the company of the heroes.

PAT. My life on yer!

MONSEWER. I would give anything to stand in that young man’s place tomorrow morning. For Ireland’s sake I would hang crucified in the town square.

A: To ridicule the ridiculous image of Monsewer being hung in a public square

PAT. Let’s hope it would be a find day for you.
MEG. Yes, if you want to be sure of a crowd.

MONSEWER. I think he's very lucky.

PAT. Very lucky—it's a great pity he didn't buy a sweepstake ticket. (Coming to MONSEWER.) You were always a straight man, General, if I may call you by your Christian name. Well, everything is ready for the guest.

B25: “We’re much too serious”

MONSEWER. Good. (Exit.)

Exit PAT slowly, singing to himself the third verse of “The Laughing Boy”—“Oh, had he died by Pearse’s side, or in the G.P.O.”

O: To distract everyone and Teresa from becoming depressed about the hostage situation

TERESA. Wasn’t that ridiculous talk that old one had out of him?

MEG. Well, Monsewer doesn’t look at it like an ordinary person. Monsewer is very given to Ireland and to things of that sort.

A: To explain that Monsewer is a true Irish patriot

TERESA. I think he’s an old idiot.

MEG. Monsewer an old idiot? I’ll have you know he went to all the biggest colleges in England.

A: To reiterate what Pat told me about Monsewer and to impress Teresa with this knowledge about his education

TERESA. It’s all the same where he went. He is mad to say that the death of a young man will make him happy.
MEG. Well, the boy himself said when they sentenced him to death that he was proud and happy to die for Ireland.

TERESA. Ah, but sure, Meg, he hasn’t lived yet.

A: To reflect upon the boy’s last dying words and to boast I know what he said

MEG. Have you?

TERESA. A girl of eighteen knows more than a boy of eighteen.

A: To chide Teresa’s innocence

MEG. You could easy do that. That poor young man, he gave no love to any, except to Ireland, and instead of breaking his heart for a girl, it was about the Cause he was breaking it.

A: To argue that the boy was a victim and to genuinely sympathize with this young man’s unnecessary death

TERESA. Well, his white young neck will be broken tomorrow morning anyway.

MEG. Well it’s no use mourning him before his time. Come on Kate, give us a bit of music; let’s cheer ourselves up.

A: To avoid dwelling on this morbid loss To distract everyone by having them dance To entertain

The pianist plays a real and MEG and TERESA dance. Gradually everyone else in the house hears the music and comes to join in, until everyone is caught up in a swirling interweaving dance. Through this dance the SOLDIER is pushed by the two I.R.A. men. He is blindfolded. The dancing falters and the music peters out as the blindfold is whipped from his eyes.

SOLDIER. Don’t stop. I like dancing.
O: To be amazed by this entertaining youth
To be concerned by Teresa’s attraction towards him

A: To entertain with song

OFFICER. Keep your mouth shut, and get up there

The SOLDIER walks slowly up into the room, then turns and sings.

SOLDIER. There’s no place on earth like the world,
There’s no place wherever you be.

ALL. There’s no place on earth like the world,
That’s straight up and take it from me.

WOMEN. Never throw stones at your mother,
You’ll be sorry for it when she’s dead.

MEN. Never throw stones at your mother,
Throw bricks at your father instead.

MONSEWER. The South and the north poles are parted,

A: To poke fun at Monsewer for singing for so long

MEG. Perhaps it is all for the best.

PAT. Till the H-bomb will bring them together,

ALL. And there we will let matters rest.

PA: Sing to audience

P.A Raise arms at the end of song

CURTAIN

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Bagpipes have been playing in the distance and the sound comes steadily nearer. Everyone in the house crowds down into the passage area and stares out front as though they are looking through two windows, straining to get a sight of the procession in the street.

B2.1 “Murdering Bastard”
A: To discuss there is a band
To yell for Teresa to come outside

O: To be appalled that they are hanging the young I.R.A. officer
To respect the G.P.O. marching
To protest against the English

MEG. Teresa—Teresa—it's a band!

PAT. What's going on?

MEG. They're marching to the G.P.O. over the boy that's being hung in the Belfast Jail.

PAT. It's like Jim Larkin's funeral.

VOLUNTEER. Plenty of police about.

MONSEWER. By Jove, look at those banners. "Another victim for occupied Ireland."

* Kenya and Cyprus—both were British colonies
A: To bash England's crimes against Ireland
A: To hope England will pay someday for her crimes

MEG. "England, the hangman of thousands. In Ireland, in Kenya, in Cyprus."

MULLEADY. "Release the Belfast martyr!"

MEG. The world will see a day when England will be that low you won't be able to walk on her.

RIO RITA. "Eighteen years of age, in jail for Ireland."

ROPEEN.
COLETTE. ) Ah, the poor boy.

A: To incite the crowd to berate the British

MEG. Oh, the murdering bastards.

Exit through door to C apron
The SOLDIER comes down to the front of the stage and tries to explain to the audience what is happening.

SOLDIER. You know what they’re on about, don’t you? This bloke in the Belfast Jail who’s going to be topped tomorrow morning. You read about it, didn’t you? Papers were full of it over here—headlines that big. He’s only eighteen, same age as us National Service blokes. Anyway, they got him, and tomorrow they’re going to do him in—eight o’clock in the morning.

Exit through door X to DSL table
Sit in chair SL of table

A: To regret that the marching is over

The pipes fade away and the groups break up.

MEG. That’s the end of it.

PAT. Thanks be to God we don’t all go that way.

MONSEWER. It was a good turn-out, Patrick. (He leaves.)

PAT. It was, sir.

MISS GILCHRIST. I shan’t sleep a wink all night.

RIO RITA. Ah, you murdering bastard. Why don’t you go back home to your own country?

SOLDIER. You can take me out of it as soon as you like. I never bloody-well asked to be brought here.
The first person to take advantage of the I.R.A. OFFICER’s absence and the VOLUNTEER’s confusion is MISS GILCHRIST. While the VOLUNTEER is striving to keep MULLEADY and COLETTE out of the room, MISS GILCHRIST slips behind his back, the VOLUNTEER turns, and soon MULLEADY, COLETTE and ROPEEN are inside the room with MISS GILCHRIST. They crowd round the SOLDIER and paw and stroke him.

O: To observe and listen to Miss Gilchrist read

MISS GILCHRIST. Is this the English boy? May I give him a little gift?

PAT. What is it?

MISS GILCHRIST. It’s an article from a newspaper and as it’s about his own dear Queen, I thought it might comfort him.

PAT. Come here.

MISS GILCHRIST. No, Mr. Pat, I insist. (She reads from a paper.) It’s from the Daily Express and it’s called “Within the Palace Walls”. “Within the Palace Walls. So much is known of the Queen’s life on the surface, so little about how her life is really run. But now this article has been written with the active help of the Queen’s closest advisers.”

SOLDIER. No, thank you, ma’am. I don’t go in for that sort of mullarkey. Haven’t you got something else?
A: To delight Mr. Mulready's foolish attempts to get Miss Gilchrist's attention

MULLEADY.
Evangelina!

MISS GILCHRIST.
Who calls?

MULLEADY.
Me! Me! Me! Me! Bookie, please! Please!

A: To resent Miss Gilchrist reading such trash

MISS GILCHRIST.
Well, if the boy doesn't want it ...

SOLDIER.
Quite sure, thank you, ma'am.

MULLEADY.
May I read on, please?

MISS GILCHRIST.
Go on, Eustace.

MULLEADY (savouring and drooling over each phrase). "Because it is completely fresh, probing hitherto unreported aspects of her problems, this intriguing new serial lays before you the true pattern of the Queen's life with understanding, intimacy and detail." Oh may I keep it, Miss Gilchrist?

PAT.
Give it here. (He snatches the paper from MULLEADY.) We don't go in for that sort of nonsense. (He looks at the article.) Would you believe it. It's by an Irishman. Dermot Morrah!

RIO RITA.
I don't believe it.

MEG.
Never! And she calls herself an Irishwoman, the silly bitch.

PA: To look at newspaper and place on table
The Irish patriots leave the stage. Those remaining in the room are pro-English, sentimental, or both. MISS GILCHRIST comes down to address the audience.

MISS GILCHRIST. I have nothing against the Royal Family. I think they're all lovely, especially that Sister Rowe and Uffa Fox. I get all the Sunday Papers to follow them up. One paper contradicts another, but you put two and two together—and you might almost be in the yacht there with them. And there's that Mrs. Dale, she's a desperate nice woman. I always send her a bunch of flowers on her birthday. They even have an Irishman in it, a Mr. O'Malley. He keeps a hotel, like you, Mr. Pat. (PAT has gone long ago.)

MULLEADY (picking up the paper from where PAT threw it). I'll get this paper every day. It will be my Bible.

SOLDIER. Well, personally mate, I'd sooner have the Bible. I read it once in the stockade.

A: To mock the soldier for having read the bible in the stockade

MISS GILCHRIST. Is this true!

SOLDIER. It's blue, ma'am.

MISS GILCHRIST (enraptured). My favourite colour.

SOLDIER. You'd like it then, ma'am. All you've got to do is sort out the blue bits from the dreary bits and you're laughing.

PA: To laugh at soldier having read the bible
MISS GILCHREST. May we sing to you?

SOLDIER. If you like.

MISS GILCHREST and MULLEADY assemble themselves on either side of the table and pose. ROPEEN places an apron in the centre of the table. They sing to the tune of "Danny Boy".

MULLEADY WITH MISS GILCHREST (Crooning in harmony).

I really think us lower-middle classes,
Get thrown around just like snuff at a wake.
Employers take us for a set of asses,
The rough, they sneer at all attempts we make
To have nice manners and to speak correctly,
And in the end we're flung upon the shelf.
We have no unions, cost of living bonus

BOTH. It's plain to see that no one, no one loves you like yourself.

PAT catches them singing and drives everyone off the stage except the SOLDIER.

PAT. Come on, get out, will you? (To the SOLDIER.)

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As he sings of summers long forgotten, the genteel people of the house sip tea and listen—MULLEADY, MISS GILCHREST and ROPEEN.
B2.3 “Captains and Kings Song”

He sings:

I remember in September,
When the final stumps were drawn,
And the shouts of crowds now silent
And the boys to tea were gone.
Let us, oh Lord above us,
Still remember simple things,
When all are dead who love us,
Oh the Captains and the Kings,
When all are dead who love us,
Oh the Captains and the Kings.

A: To sing and to smile  ALL.

When all are dead who love us,
Oh the Captains and the Kings.

PA: Sing

In our dreams we see old Harrow,
And we hear the crow’s loud caw,
At the flower show our big marrow
Takes the prize from Evelyn Waugh.
Cups of tea or some dry sherry,
Vintage cars, these simple things,
So let’s drink up and be merry
Oh, the Captains and the Kings.
So let’s drink up and be merry
Oh, the Captains and the Kings.

ALL.

So let’s drink up and be merry
Oh, the Captains and the Kings.

PA: To sing

By the moon that shines above us
In the misty morn and night,
Let us cease to run ourselves down
But praise God that we are white.
And better still we’re English—
Tea and toast and muffin rings,
Old ladies with stern faces,
And the Captains and the Kings.
Old ladies with stern faces,
And the Captains and the Kings.

A.L.L.        Old ladies with stern faces,
               And the Captains and the Kings.

PA: To sing
Exit SL

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PAT rushes on to stop her saying “balls” and drags her off, curtsying
and singing again—

Only a box of matches-- --

B2.4 “Find Teresa”

O: To locate Teresa
To suspect she is with the hostage

A: To call quietly for Teresa
To avoid the volunteer by whispering

MEG enters the darkened passage.

MEG.        Teresa! Teresa!

The VOLUNTEER enters in hot pursuit.

VOLUNTEER.  Ey, you can’t go in there. Sir! Sir!

The OFFICER enters and blocks MEG’s passage.

OFFICER.     Sir, there’s another woman trying to get in to him.

You can’t go in there. Security forbids it.
A: To startle the volunteer with my sarcastic reply

VOLUNTEER. Common decency forbids it. He might not have his trousers on.

MEG. Auah, do you think I’ve never seen a man with his trousers off before?

OFFICER. I’d be very much surprised if you’d ever seen one with them on.

MEG. Thanks.

VOLUNTEER. He’s a decent boy, for all he’s a British soldier.

MEG. Ah, there’s many a good heart beats under a khaki tunic.

VOLUNTEER. There’s something in that. My own father was in the Royal Irish Rifles.

OFFICER. Mine was in the Inniskillings.

MEG. And mine was the parish priest.

OFFICER (horrified). God forbid you, woman. After saying that, I won’t let you in at all.

A: To gloat that I succeeded in shocking the officer as well

MEG. I’m not that particular. I was going about my business till he stopped me.

To cunningly distract the volunteer from my purpose of looking for Teresa

OFFICER. You might as well let her go in—cheer him up a bit.

MEG. And mine was the parish priest.

OFFICER (horrified). God forbid you, woman. After saying that, I won’t let you in at all.

MEG. I’m not that particular. I was going about my business till he stopped me.

PAT. You might as well let her go in—cheer him up a bit.

A: To outrage and horrify them with my lack of respect for the church
A: To **impact**
I want to go about my business

**OFFICER.** I don’t think we should. He’s in our care and we’re morally responsible for his spiritual welfare.

**VOLUNTEER.** Well, only in a temporal way, sir.

**MEG.** I only wanted to see him in a temporal way.

A: To **stun** the officer with my crudeness

**OFFICER.** Jesus, Mary and Joseph, it would be a terrible thing for him to die with a sin of impurity on his—

*The lights go up.*

**SOLDIER (running downstage from the bed).** Die, what’s all this talk about dying? Who’s going to die?

A: To **alleviate** the hostage’s fear of being killed

**MEG.** We’re all going to die, but not before Christmas, we hope.

**PAT.** Now look what you’ve done. You’ll have to let her in now. You should have been more discreet, surely.

**OFFICER.** Two minutes then.

**B2.5 “Easter Week Lament”**

*The I.R.A. OFFICER and the VOLUNTEER move away. TERESA stands by the bed, MEG goes into the room.*

**MEG.** She’s there, she’s been there all the time.
O: To console Leslie and Teresa
TERESA. I was just dusting, Meg.
MEG. What's wrong with a bit of comfort on a dark night? Are you all right, lad?
SOLDIER. Mum, what are they going to do with me?
MEG. I don’t know—I only wish I did.
SOLDIER. Will you go and ask them, because I don’t think they know themselves.

A: To support their choice to be together
MEG. Maybe they don’t know, maybe a lot of people don’t know, or maybe they’ve forgotten.
SOLDIER. I don’t know what you mean.
MEG. There are some things you can’t forget.
SOLDIER. Forget?

A: To blame the Irish people for forgetting the Easter Rising and what it stood for
MEG. Like here in Russell Street, right next to the place where I was born, the British turned a tank and fired shells into people’s homes.
SOLDIER. I suppose it was the war, missus.

A: To avoid discussing Leslie’s fate with him
MEG. Yes, it was the war. Do you know who it was against?
SOLDIER. No.

A: To regret that people forgot the pain
MEG. To resent their short memories
SOLDIER. I suppose it was the war, missus.

A: To recall the stories told to me as a child
MEG. Yes, it was the war. Do you know who it was against?
SOLDIER. No.
A: To explain it was a war against civilians
MEG. Old men and women, the bedridden and the cripples, and mothers and their infants.

A: To bitterly name the victims of the war
SOLDIER. Why them?
MEG. Everybody that was able to move had run away. In one room they found an old woman, her son’s helmet and gas mask were still hanging on the wall. He had died fighting on the Somme.

A: To insinuate those who lost loved ones suffered the most
SOLDIER. I don’t know nothing about it, lady.
MEG. Would you like to hear some more? Then listen.

A: To request Leslie listens to me sing
A military drum beats, the piano plays softly, and MEG chants rather than sings
PA: Sing

A To proudly sing to Leslie
Who fears to speak of Easter Week
That week of famed renown,
When the boys in green went out to fight
The forces of the Crown.

* Mausers – repeating rifles or pistols
Who fears to speak of Easter Week
With Mausers bold, and hearts of gold,
The Red Countess dressed in green,
The forces of the Crown.

* Countess – Constance Gore Booth
And high above the G.P.O.
The rebel flag was seen.

Markiewicz, participant in the 1916 rising
Then came ten thousand khaki coats,
Our rebel boys to kill.

Descend USL staircase
X to USL
* Khaki coats – uniforms of the British
* Sinn Fein – Gaelic for “ourselves alone, a political and military designation
* Louvain – city in central Belgium

Before they reached O'Connell Street,
Of fight they got their fill.

* As she sings everyone else in the house comes slowly on the listen.

A: To address the audience
To incite excitement for the cause

They had machine-guns and artillery,
And cannon in galore,
But it wasn’t our fault that e’er one
Got back to England’s shore.

For six long days we held them off,
At odds of ten to one,
And through our lines they could not pass,
For all their heavy guns.

And deadly poison gas they used,
To try to crush Sinn Fein,
And burnt our Irish capital,
Like the Germans did Louvain.

A: To humbly express the pain of the lost men of Ireland

They shot our leaders in a jail,
Without a trial, they say,
They murdered women and children,
Who in their cellars lay,
And dug their grave with gun and spade,
To hid them from our view.
Because they could neither kill not catch,
The rebel so bold and true.

The author should have sung that one.

That’s if the thing has an author.
B2.6 “The Fight Scene”

A: To **apologize** for not singing well but chanting

O: To **protect** Teresa during the fight scene

**SOLDIER.**
Brendan Behan, he’s too anti-British.

**OFFICER.**
Too anti-Irish, you mean. Bejesus, wait till we get him back home. We’ll give him what-for for making fun of the Movement.

**SOLDIER (to audience).** He doesn’t mind coming over here and taking your money.

**PAT.**
He’d sell his country for a pint.

What happens next is not very clear. There are a number of arguments all going on at once. Free-Staters against Republicans, Irish against English, homosexuals against heterosexuals, and in the confusion all the quarrels get mixed up and it looks as though everyone is fighting everyone else. In the center of the mêlée, **MISS GILCHRIST** is standing on the table singing “Land of Hope and Glory”. The I.R.A. **OFFICER** has one chair and is waving a Free State flag and singing “The Soldier’s Song”, while the **RUSSIAN SAILOR** has the other and sings the Soviet National Anthem. The **NEGRO** parades through the room carrying a large banner inscribed “KEEP IRELAND BLACK.” The piano plays throughout. Suddenly the **VOLUNTEER** attacks the **SOLDIER** and the **RUSSIAN** joins in the fight. The **VOLUNTEER** knocks MULLEADY’s bowler hat over his eyes and ROPEEN flattens the **VOLUNTEER**. MULLEADY is now wandering around blind with his hat over his eyes, and holding ROPEEN’s apiestra. The **VOLUNTEER**, somewhat dazed, sees the **RUSSIAN**’s red flag and thinks he has been promoted to guard. He blows his railway whistle and the fight breaks up into a wild dance in which they all join on the train behind the **VOLUNTEER** and rush round the room.

X to bar while fight is taking place

PA: To join conga line and dance
in a circle. All this takes about a minute and a half and at the height, as they are all chugging round and round LESLIE, PAT interrupts.

PAT. Stop it a minute. Hey, Leslie, have you seen this?

PA: Everyone stops when Pat speaks

A: To be shocked that Pat has stopped us dancing

The train stops and the dancers are left in the position of forming a ring round LESLIE which resembles a prison cage. PAT hands LESLIE a newspaper and everyone is quiet. The Irish, British, and Russian flags lie on the ground.

SOLDIER. Let’s have a look. “The Government of Northern Ireland have issued a statement that they cannot find a reason for granting a reprieve in the case of the condemned youth. The I.R.A. have announced that Private Leslie Alan Williams” – hey, that’s me, I’ve got my name in the papers.

PAT. You want to read a bit further.

MISS GILCHRIST. I’m afraid it’s impossible—you’re going to be shot.

A: To be annoyed by Miss Gilchrist’s bluntness

SOLDIER. Who are you?

MISS GILCHRIST. I am a sociable worker. I work for the St. Vincent de Paul Society and I have one question to ask you: have you your testament?
SOLDIER. I hope so.

MISS GILCHRIST. I feel for him like a mother. (She sings).

Only a box of matches—

A: To resent Miss Gilchrist’s advances on Leslie

SOLDIER. Shut up, this is serious. “In a statement today delivered to all newspaper offices and press agencies—he has been taken as a hostage—if...executed—the I.R.A. declare that Private Leslie Alan Williams will be shot as a reprisal.” Does it really mean they’re going to shoot me?

MULLEADY. I’m afraid so.

A: To listen to why Leslie will be shot

SOLDIER. Why?

MONSEWER. You are the hostage.

SOLDIER. But I ain’t done nothing.

OFFICER. This is war.

SOLDIER. Surely one of you would let me go?

_They all move backwards away from him, leaving him along in the room. They disappear._

Well, you crowd of bleeding—Hey, Kate, give us some music.
He sings:

I am a happy English lad, I love my royalty,
And if they were short a penny of a packet of fags,
Now they’d only have to ask me.

A: To control my anger at Leslie insulting us all

I love old England in the east, I love her in the west,
From Jordan’s streams to Derry’s Walls,
I love old England best.

I love my dear old Liverpool, wherever I may roam,
But I wish the Irish and the niggers and the wogs,
Were kicked out and sent back home.

PA: Raise our fingers for the Irish symbol of profanity

A bugle sounds and he salutes.

CURTAIN

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Late the same night. The SOLDIER sits alone in his room. PAT and MEG sit at the table down by the piano. TERESA, COLETTE, RITA and PRINCESS GRACE are sitting or sprawling on the stairs or in the passage. ROPEEN sits, knitting, on a beer barrel near PAT, and the RUSSIAN is fast asleep on the far side of the stage. Before the curtain rises there is the sound of keening as the women mourning for LESLIE and the boy in Belfast Jail. The atmosphere is one of death and dying. The curtain rises and PAT seizes a bottle of stout from the crate beside him and bursts into wild song:
PAT. On the eighteenth day of November, Just outside the town of Macroom, 

Here, have a drink. *(He gives LESLIE the stout.)*

Enter in dark to DSL table
Sit SL chair of table

B3.1 “Stop Your Bloody Moaning”

SOLDIER. What’s the time?

PAT. I don’t know. Ask him.

VOLUNTEER. My watch has stopped.

PAT (sings). The Tans in their big Crossley tenders, Came roaring along to their doom.

* Keening – traditional Irish sound of wailing upon the death of a member of the community

MEG. Shut up, will you Pat!

_The keening stops._

A: To _yell_ at Pat for singing

PAT. What’s the matter with you?

MEG. You’ll have that Holy Joe down on us.

A: To _fear_ the I.R.A. officer coming in

PAT. Who are you talking about?

MEG. That I.R.A. general, or whatever he is.

A: To _insult_ the I.R.A. officer high airs

PAT. Him a general? He’s a messenger boy. He’s not fit to be a batman.

A: To _mock_ the I.R.A.

MEG. I’ve heard they’re all generals nowadays.
MISS GILCHRIST in her nightclothes attempts to sneak into LESLIE’s room, but the VOLUNTEER, who is mounting guard, sees her and challenges.

MISS GILCHRIST. Leslie—Leslie—

VOLUNTEER. Hey, where are you going?

PAT. Come on, come and sit down. (PAT drags a protesting MISS GILCHRIST to sit at the table with them.)

MISS GILCHRIST. Well, you must excuse the way I’m dressed.

PAT. You look lovely. Have a drink, Miss Gilchrist.

MISS GILCHRIST. Oh no, thank you, Mr. Pat.

PAT. Get it down you.

MISS GILCHRIST. No really, Mr. Pat. I never drink.

MEG. She doesn’t want it.

PAT. Shut up, you. Are you going to drink?

MISS GILCHRIST. No, Mr. Pat.

PAT (shouts). Drink. (She drinks.) Are you aware, Miss Gilchrist, that you are speaking to a man who was a commandant at the times of the troubles.
B3.3 “Embarrass Pat”

O: To embarrass Pat for bragging

A: To imply he was an incompetent commander

A: To accuse Pat of lying

A: To defend my intelligence

A: To challenge the others to stop him from speaking

A: To halt Pat from stealing my story

MEG. Fine bloody commandant he was.

PAT. Commandant of “E” battalion, second division, Dublin brigade. Monsewer was the Captain.

MEG. What the hell’s “E” battalion?

PAT. You’ve heard of ABCDE, I suppose?

MEG. Certainly I have.

PAT. Well, it’s as simple as that.

MISS GILCHRIST. Wasn’t that nice? It must be a lovely thing to be a captain.

PAT. Can I get on with my story or not?

MEG. I defy anyone to stop you.

PAT. Now, where was I?

VOLUNTEER. Tell us about Mullingar, sir.

PAT. Shut up. Leslie, you want to listen to this. It was in Russell Street in Dublin—

MEG. That’s my story and I’ve already told him.

PAT. Oh, then give us a drink.
A: To deny Pat my serving him

MEG. Get it yourself.

PAT. Give us a drink!

PA: to sit forward of chair and smirk at Pat

*Miss GILCHRIST gives PAT a drink.

MISS GILCHRIST. Please go on, Mr. Pat.

A: To correct Pat about his facts

PAT. I intend to. It was at Mullingar, at the time of the troubles, that I lost my leg…

*Cork – southwestern Irish coastal city

MEG. You told me it was at Cork.

PAT. It doesn’t matter what I told you, it was at Mullingar, in the Civil War.

MISS GILCHRIST. Well if that’s the kind of war you call a civil war, I wouldn’t like to see an uncivil one.

PAT. The fightin’, Miss Gilchrist, went on for three days without ceasing, three whole days…

MISS GILCHRIST. And how did you lose your poor left foot, Mr. Pat?

PAT. It wasn’t me left foot, but me right foot. Don’t you know your left from your right? Don’t you know how to make the sign of the cross?

A: To enjoy Miss Gilchrist’s witty reply

MISS GILCHRIST. I do, thank you, but I don’t make it with me feet.
PAT. What the hell difference does it make, left or right? There were good men lost on both sides.

VOLUNTEER. There's good and bad on all sides, sir.

The I.R.A. Officer crosses through the room and out again.

PAT. It was a savage and barbarous battle. All we had was rifles and revolvers. They had Lewis guns, Thompsons, and landmines—bloody great landmines—the town was nothing but red fire and black smoke and the dead were piled high on the roads...

MEG. You told me there was only one man killed.

A: To **attack** Pat for lying

PAT. What?

MEG. And he was the County Surveyor out measuring the road and not interfering with politics one way or another.

PAT. You're a liar!

A: To **annoy** Pat by stating what he told me

MEG. You told me that when the fighting was over both sides claimed him for their own.

PAT. Liar!

A: To **impress** Pat with the fact I remember

MEG. Haven’t I seen the Celtic crosses on either side of the road where they both put up memorials to him?
A: To **defend** that I am telling the truth
To **prove** I am right

**PAT.**  It’s all the same what I told you.

**MEG.**  That’s your story when you’re drunk, anyway, and like any other man, that’s the only time you tell the truth.

**PAT.**  Have you finished?

A: To **accuse** Pat and all men of being liars

**MEG.**  No, begod, if whisky and beer were the prewar prices, the father of lies would be out of a job.

A: To **humiliate** Pat in front of the others
To **declare** he is a drunk and a liar

**PAT.**  I lost my leg—did I or did I not?

**MEG.**  You lost the use of it, I know that.

**MISS GILCHRIST.**  These little lovers’ quarrels.

**PAT.**  Shut up! I lost my leg. Did I or did I not? And these white-faced loons with their berets and trench coats and teetotal badges and their badges that say they only speak Irish. They speak three languages; English, Irish and rubbish, have no right to call themselves members of the I.R.A.

**MISS GILCHRIST.**  They’re only lads, Mr. Pat.

**MEG.**  He begrudges them their bit of sport now that he’s old and beat himself.

**PAT.**  What sport is there in that dreary loon out there?
A: To frustrate Pat by defending the I.R.A.

PAT. I’m not saying they haven’t did I? *(There is general disagreement.)*

MISS GILCHRIST. I heard you distinctly.

A: To taunt Pat about him being old and bitter

MEG. Weren’t you young yourself once?

PAT. That’s the way they talk to you, nowadays.

*He sulks. The keening starts again.*

MISS GILCHRIST. I always say that a general and a bit of shooting makes one forget one’s troubles.

A: To glibly reply to Miss Gilchrist

MEG. Sure, it takes you mind off the cost of living.

MISS GILCHRIST. A poor heart it is that never rejoices.

A: To admonish Pat for lying. To remind him he is old

MEG. They’ve as much right to leave their legs and feet up on the border as ever you had at Mullingar or Cork or wherever it was.
MISS GILCHRIST gets up to take a drink to LESLIE. The Volunteer throws her out of the room.

VOLUNTEER. I’ve warned you before you can’t come in here.

MEG. Leave her alone.

PAT. She’s coming on, you know, to be making smart remarks to a poor crippled man that never harmed anyone in his life.

A: To dismiss Pat

MEG. Away with you.

PAT. Let alone the years I spent incarcerated in Mountjoy with the other Irish patriots, God help me.

PA: Remove sweater

* Half-red footman – sympathizing with communism

* Sinn Fein skivvy – a maid for the free stage government

MEG. Ah, Mountjoy and the prison camps were universities for the like of you. But I’ll tell you one thing, and that’s not two, the day you gave up work to run this house for Monsewer and take in the likes of this lot, you became a butler, a Republican butler, a half-red footman—a Sinn Fein skivvy—

X C in front of piano

A: To berate Pat in front of the others

To expose him as a phony

MISS GILCHRIST. What a rough-tongued person.

PAT. Go on, abuse me, your own husband that took you off the streets on a Sunday morning when there wasn’t a pub open in the city.

X SL to Pat
A: To **destroy** Pat’s image
   To **resent** his lack of love for me

MEG.  Go and get a mass said for yourself. The only love you ever had you kept for Mother Ireland and for leaving honest employment.

PAT.  Why did you stop with me so long?

MEG.  God knows. I don’t. God knows.

---

A: To **resent** the years we spent together
   To **judge** myself for staying as long as I have

---

**On the stairs and in the passage people are dozing off. APT and MEG are not speaking. The SOLDIER is thinking about tomorrow morning and to cheer himself up, sings. The I.R.A. OFFICER passes on his rounds.**

SOLDIER.  Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,
   The darkness deepens, Lord with me abide.

---

**MISS GILCHRIST places a black lace scarf on her head, lights a candle and starts walking slowly towards the SOLDIER, keening. The VOLUNTEER is stuck helpless.**

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**B3.4 “Harassment of Gilchrist”**

O: To **focus** my attention to Miss Gilchrist

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**As she passes PAT, he blows out the candle and MISS GILCHRIST suffers a great shock.**

PAT (to LESLIE).  If you must sing, sing something cheerful.

SOLDIER.  I don’t know anything cheerful.

VOLUNTEER.  Then shut up!
Having got into the room, MISS GILCHRIST stays here.

MISS GILCHRIST. I know what it is to be in exile. Dublin is not my home.

MEG. That's one thing in its favour.

MISS GILCHRIST. I came here to work in a house, Mr. Pat.

MEG. I told you what she was.

PA: To laugh at her

MISS GILCHRIST. It was in a very respectable district. We only took in clerical students. They were lovely boys, so much more satisfactory than the medical students.

PAT. Oh yes, the medicals is more for the beer.

MISS GILCHRIST. Of course, my boys had renounced the demon drink. Being students of divinity they had more satisfactory things to do.

MEG. Such as?

PAT. You know what they go in for, reading all this stuff about "Mat begat Pat" and "This one lay with that one" and the old fellow that lay with his daughters—

MEG. And getting the best of eating and drinking, too. It's a wonder they're any way controllable at all.
MISS GILCHRIST. Sometimes they were not. Life has its bitter memories. Since then I’ve had recourse to doing good works, recalling the sinner, salvaging his soul.

MEG. Well, you can leave his soul alone, whatever about your own, or I’ll set fire to you.

MISS GILCHRIST (standing on her dignity). Our Blessed Lord said, “Every cripple has his own way of walking, so long as they don’t cause strikes, rob, steal, or run down General Franco.” Those are my principles.

MEG. Your principal is nothing but a pimp.

MISS GILCHRIST. To whom are you referring?

MEG. That creeping Jesus on the second floor back.

MISS GILCHRIST. Oh, you mean Mr. Mulready.

MEG. I do.

MISS GILCHRIST. But he is a fonctionnaire.

MEG. Is that what they call it nowadays?

MISS GILCHRIST. I strove to save him, together we wrestled against the devil, but here I feel is a soul worth the saving.
(She sings). I love my fellow creatures.

MISS GILCHRIST chases LESLIE round the table and the VOLUNTEER chases MISS GILCHRIST.

PAT. Leave him alone, he’s too young for you.

MISS GILCHRIST. Mr. Pat, I’m as pure as the driven snow.

The VOLUNTEER taps her on the backside with his rifle. She jumps.

MEG. You weren’t driven far enough.

MISS GILCHRIST returns to the table near the piano.

PAT. Hey, Fergus, have a drink and take one up for Leslie. Hey, Leslie, don’t be paying any attention to her. She’s no use to you.

The VOLUNTEER takes LESLIE a bottle of stout.

SOLDIER. Here, it’s all very well you coming the old acid, and giving me all this stuff about nothing going to happen to me, I’m not a complete bloody fool, you know.

PAT. Drink you beer and shut up.

SOLDIER. What have I ever done to you that you should shoot me?

PA: To sip my beer
PAT. I'll tell you what you've done. Some time ago there was a famine in this country and people were dying all over the place. Well, your Queen Victoria, or whatever her bloody name was, sent five pounds to the famine fund and at the same time she sent five pounds to the Battersea Dog's Home so no one could accuse her of having rebel sympathies.

MEG. Good god, Pat, that was when Moses was in the Fire Brigade.

PAT. Let him think about it.

PA: to smile at Miss Gilchrist’s witty reply

MISS GILCHRIST. They might have given us this little island that we live on for ourselves.

SOLDIER. Will you answer me one thing man to man? Why didn’t they tell me why they took me?

PAT. Didn’t they? Didn’t they tell you?

SOLDIER. No.

A: To explain to Leslie why he was captured

MEG. There's a war on.

SOLDIER. All right, so I'm a soldier. I'm captured. I'm a prisoner of war.

PAT. Yes.
SOLDIER. Well, you can’t shoot a prisoner of war.

PAT. Who said anything about shooting?

SOLDIER. What about that announcement in the newspapers?

PAT. Bluff. Haven’t you everything you could wish for? A bottle of stout, a new girl-friend bringing you every class of comfort?

PA: To sip my beer

SOLDIER. Yeah, till that bloke in Belfast is topped in the morning; then it’s curtains for poor old Williams. I’m due for a week-end’s leave and all.

A: To be puzzled by the soldier’s concern he will be killed

PAT. It’s bluff, propaganda! All they’ll do is hold you for a few days.

MEG. Sure, they might give him a last-minute reprieve.

A: To reassure Leslie that he may not be held much longer

SOLDIER. Who, me?

MEG. No. The boy in Belfast Jail.

SOLDIER. Some hopes of that.

A: To clarify that the other boy needs to be released first

PAT. The British Government might think twice about it now that they know we’ve got you.
A: To beg Pat to stop talking and go to bed

PAT. Eh, let's have a drink.

MEG. I want me bed, Pat. Never mind a drink.

SOLDIER. Here mum, listen—(Coming out of the room.)

PAT (to the SOLDIER). Where are you going?

SOLDIER. I'm just going to talk to...

PAT. I'm going to fix you...Leslie.

A: To question what Pat has in mind to do to Leslie

MISS GILCHRIST starts to sing softly:

I have no mother to break her heart,
I have no father to take my part.
I have one friend and a girl is she,
And she'd lay down her life for McCaffery.

A: To console Teresa that Pat will not harm Leslie

PAT. Now I'm going to draw a circle round you, with
this piece of chalk. Now, you move outside that
circle and you're a dead man. Watch him,
Feargus.

PA: To caress Teresa's arm and smile

He draws a circle round LESLIE and the VOLUNTEER points his gun
at him.

SOLDIER. I bet that fellow in Belfast wouldn't want me plugged.

PAT. Certainly he wouldn't.
SOLDIER. What good’s it going to do him?

MEG. When the boy’s dead, what good would it be to croak this one? It wouldn’t bring the other back to life now, would it?

The VOLUNTEER comes away from LESLIE to sit near the piano.

A: To point out how ridiculous it is to kill Leslie out of revenge

SOLDIER. What a caper! I’m just walking out of a dance hall—

ALL. No!

He tries to walk out of the circle and the VOLUNTEER grabs his gun.

PAT. Walk in.

A: To be alarmed that Leslie is walking out of the circle

SOLDIER (back inside). I was just walking out of a dance hall, when this geezer nabs me. “What do you want?” I says. “Information,” he says. “I ain’t got no information,” I says, “apart from me name and the addresses of the girls in the N.A.A.F.I.” “Right,” he says, “we’re taking you to Dublin. Our Intelligence want to speak to you.”

PAT. Intelligence! Holy Jesus, wait till you meet ‘em. This fellow here’s an Einstein compared to them.

SOLDIER. Well, when will I be meeting them?

PA: To jump up from chair when Leslie attempts to leave circle
PA: To immediately sit back in chair
PAT. Maybe they'll come tomorrow morning to ask you a few questions.

SOLDIER. Yeah, me last bloody wishes, I suppose.

MISS GILCHRIST (sings). I have no mother to break her heart, I have no father to take my part.

A: To command Pat to shut Miss Gilchrist up or I will

MEG. Pat, will you do something about that one?

PAT. Can you see that circle?

MISS GILCHRIST. Yes.

PAT. Well, get in it.

He rushes MISS GILCHRIST into the room. MISS GILCHRIST carries on singing.

A: To resent Miss Gilchrist is singing again

MISS GILCHRIST. I have one friend and a girl is she, And she'd lay down her life for McCaffery.

PA1. Leslie, come down here. That old idiot would put years on you. I can't stand your bloody moaning.

MISS GILCHRIST. I'll have you know, Mr. Pat, I had my voice trained by an electrocutionist.

A: To insult Miss Gilchrist's voice

MEG. It sounds shocking.

PA: To moan and sigh
VOLUNTEER (jumping to attention) Sir, it’s neither this nor that, sir, but if you’re taking charge of the prisoner, I’ll carry out the other duties and check the premises.

PAT. Yes, you do that, Feargus.

A: To ignore the conversation between Pat and the volunteer. To lose concentration and begin to fall asleep.

VOLUNTEER. It’s only a thick would let the job slip between his fingers.

PAT. You may be blamed, Einstein, but you never will be shamed.

VOLUNTEER. I hope not, sir. Of course, sir, God gives us the brains, it’s no credit to ourselves.

PAT. Look—I don’t wish to come the sergeant-major on you, but will you get about what you came for?

VOLUNTEER. I will, sir. directly.

A: To indulge in falling asleep.

He salutes smartly and marches off into the growing dark, getting more and more frightened as he goes.

MISS GILCHRIST. I have such a thirst on me, Mr. I. (She looks at the crate of empties.) Oh, Mr. Pat, you gave that twelve of stout a very quick death.

PAT. You could sing that if you had an air to it. Leslie, pop out and get us twelve of stout. Go on—just out there and round the corner go on—you can’t miss it. Tell’em it's for me.
Leslie takes some persuading, but finally, seeing his chance to escape, leaves quietly. Everyone else is falling asleep. There is a long silence, then a terrific clatter.

Volunteer. Hey, where do you think you’re going?

Soldier. He told me I could...

Leslie runs back, hotly pursued by the Volunteer. Everyone wakes up in alarm. Pat is furious.

A: To be alarmed by the chaos of Leslie and the volunteer returning

Volunteer. I caught the prisoner, sir, trying to escape.

Pat. You’re a bloody genius, Einstein. (The Volunteer beams.) If you’re so fond of that circle, you get in it. (He takes a swipe at the Volunteer with his walking stick and drives him into the circle. The Volunteer is puzzled.) Leslie, come and sit over here.

Soldier. Oh yeah, you’re just leading me up the garden path, sending me out for beer. All of a sudden, I turn round and cop a bullet in my head. Anyway, I can tell you this, an Englishman can die as well as an Irishman any day.

Pat. Don’t give me all that old stuff about dying. You won’t die for another fifty years, barring you get a belt of an atom bomb. God bless you.
LESLIE comes down to sit with PAT and MEG, as MONSEWER enters at the back of the room with the I.R.A. OFFICER. The VOLUNTEER reports to them about the disturbance.

B3.5 "Cat Fight"

MONSEWER. Have you checked his next-of-kin?

VOLUNTEER. He hasn’t got none, sir.

O: To confront Miss Gilchrist
To attempt to stop her from moving

The I.R.A. OFFICER and VOLUNTEER synchronize watches and the OFFICE and MONSEWER depart. The VOLUNTEER sits at the table with his gun trained on LESLIE’s back.

PAT. Come and sit down here and don’t pay any attention to them.

MEG. Ignore them. Come on, lad.

A: To encourage Leslie to calm down and sit

SOLDIER. You know, up till tonight I’ve enjoyed myself here. It’s better than square bashing. You know what they say? (Sings.)

PA: To sip my beer

When Irish eyes are smiling,
Sure, it’s like a morn in Spring,
In the lilt of Irish laughter
You can hear the angels sing.
When Irish eyes are happy—

A: To be delighted with what a nice voice Leslie has

None of the Irish know the words, but they all hum and whistle. MISS GILCHRIST starts keening and the singing stops.

PAT. It’s all right, it’s one of ours.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A: To mock Miss Gilchrist for her false acclaim of only wanting to mother Leslie</th>
<th>MISS GILCHRIST.</th>
<th>Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I feel for this boy as if I were his mother.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>That's remarkable, that is.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISS GILCHRIST.</td>
<td>It would be more remarkable if I were his father.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>Were his father? How many of you are there? I never heard you were married.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISS GILCHRIST.</td>
<td>You never heard the Virgin Mary was married.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>That was done under the Special Powers Act by the Holy Ghost.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISS GILCHRIST.</td>
<td>Oh, Miss Meg, I repulse your prognostications. It would answer you better to go and clean your carpet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>How dare you? When I was ill I lay prostituted on that carpet. Men of good taste have complicated me on it. Away, you scuff hound, and thump your claw with the other hypocrites.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISS GILCHRIST.</td>
<td>Pray do not insult my religiosity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEG.</td>
<td>Away, you brass.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISS GILCHRIST.</td>
<td>I stand fast by my Lord, and will sing my hymn now:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Special Powers Act - government restrictions on due process for certain "political" cases

A: To accuse her of lying about her true identity

A: To degrade Miss Gilchrist for bringing up religion

* Scuff hound - stray dog

A: To shock Miss Gilchrist by my promiscuous nature To defend my choices in life

X rise from chair
X USL to piano

X DSI, to chair SL of DSR table
* Brass – phony
A: To demand she leave the house

I love my dear Redeemer,
My Creator, too, as well,
And, oh, that filthy Devil,
Should stay below in Hell.
I cry to all those Russians
Please grant me this great boon,
Don’t muck about, don’t muck about,
Don’t muck about with the moon.

A: To resent Miss Gilchrist is a hypocrite and to suspect she is a phony

I am a little Christ-ian,
My feet are white as snow,
And every day, my prayers I say,
For Empire Lamb I go.
I cry for Albert Einstein,
Now he’s the boy for me,
You can have your cake,
And eat it too, by relativity.
But don’t muck about with the moon,
Don’t muck about, don’t muck about,
Don’t muck about with the moon.

PA: to moan at Miss Gilchrist

A: To imply Miss Gilchrist is a phony To yell at her for singing

ALL

Get off the stage, you castle Catholic bitch.

PA: To throw shirt at Miss Gilchrist

*Castle – associated with Dublin Castle, and hence with the former Irish ruling class, the ascendancy
A: To insinuate Leslie may have brought this trouble on himself

MISS GILCHRIST.

She is a no-class person. Things haven’t been the same since the British went.

SOLDIER.

They’ve not all gone yet—I’m still here. Perhaps you can tell me what these people are going to do me in for?

Still seated at DSL table

SL chair of table

MEG.

Maybe you voted wrong.
A: To **accuse** Leslie of causing trouble

SOLDIER. I'm too young to have a vote for another three years.

MEG. Well what are you doing poking your nose into our affairs?

A: To **blame** Leslie for being taken hostage

SOLDIER. In what affairs? What do I know about Ireland or Cyprus, or Kenya or Jordan or any of those places?

B3.6 “Queer Song”

OFFICER (as he crosses the stage). You may learn very shortly with a bullet in the back of your head.

RIO RITA. You'll put a bullet in the back of nobody's head, mate.

WHORES. Oh no, it's not his fault.

MULLEADY. He should never have been brought here in the first place. It means trouble. I've been saying so all day. It's illegal.

PA: to laugh at Rio Rita’s witty reply

*The action takes a very sinister turn. At the mention of bullets there is rush by everyone to blanket LESLIE from the OFFICER, MULLEADY appears as if by magic and summons RIO RITA and PRINCESS GRACE to him. They go into a huddle. The other inhabitants of the house are mystified. All that can be seen are three pairs of twitching hips, as they mutter and whisper to each other.*
A: To inquire why they are all turned around shaking their butts together

MEG. What are they up to?

PAT. I wouldn’t trust them as far as I could fling them.

COLETTE. What are you up to?

RIO RITA. We’ve made a pact.

*There is much homosexual by-play between MULLEADY and the two queers.*

COLETTE. What sort of a pact? Political or--?

MULLEADY. One might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion.

MISS GILCHRIST is horrified.

A: To be annoyed Miss Gilchrist is interfering again

MISS GILCHRIST. Eustace, what are you doing with those persons?

MULLEADY. Oh, we’re speaking now, are we, Miss Gilchrist? That’s a change. Ever since you’ve been interested in that young man’s soul, a poor Civil Servant’s soul means nothing to you.

MISS GILCHRIST. Eustace, what has happened to you?

MULLEADY. You can’t do what you like with us, you know.

RIO RITA. Don’t you know? *(He comes down to the audience.*) Do you? Well, for the benefit of those
To be amused by his crude remarks

who don't understand we'll sing our ancient son, won't we, Uncle? (MULLEADY and GRACE join him.) Blanche? (This to the NEGRO.) Isn't he lovely? I met him at a whist drive. He trumped my ace. Give us a note, Kate. Will you try another one, please? We'll have the first one, I think.

PA: To laugh at Rio Rita

RIO RITA, MULLEADY, PRINCESS GRACE (sing.)

A: To be shocked by their choice of song

When Socrates in Ancient Greece, Sat in his Turkish bath, He rubbed himself, and scrubbed himself, And steamed both fore and aft. He sang the songs the sirens sang, With Oscar and Shakespeare, We're here because we're queer, Because we're queer because we're here.

PA: To laugh and smile at their singing and dancing

MULLEADY. The highest people in the land Are for or they're against, It's all the same thing in the end, A piece of sentiment.

A: To enjoy the confusion of Leslie and Teresa not knowing what the song is about

PRINCESS GRACE. From Swedes so tall to Arabs small, They answer with a leer,

ALL THREE. We're here because we're queer, Because we're queer because we're here.

PA: To smile at Teresa

PRINCESS GRACE. The trouble we had getting that past all the nice censors. This next bit's even worse.
MULLEADY. All those who believe in fairies, raise their hands!

RIO RITA. One more war and the world is ours!

PRINCESS GRACE. SOULTRAIN!!!

The song ends and the three queers gyrate across the stage, twisting their bodies sinuously and making suggestive approaches to LESLIE. LESLIE is about to join in when MISS GILCHRIST throws herself at him.

MISS GILCHRIST. Leslie, come away, this is no fit company for an innocent boy.

SOLDIER. No, mum.

MISS GILCHRIST. Leave off this boy. He’s not used to prostitutes, male, female or email.

A: To be amused Miss Gilchrist is so concerned for Leslie

MEG. Get out, you dirty low things. A decent whore can’t get a shilling with you around.

RIO RITA. Shut up, Meg Dillon, you’re just bigoted.

MEG. Don’t you use language like that to me.

A: To regain control over Rio Rita shoving Miss Gilchrist’s head in his chest

MISS GILCHRIST. Leave off this boy. He is not a ponce.

SOLDIER. No, m a builder’s labourer. At least, I was.
MISS GILCHRIST.  Honest toil.

SOLDIER.  It’s a mug’s game.

MISS GILCHRIST.  Oh, my boy.

They sing a duet, LESLIE speaking his lines.  As the song goes on, the whores and queers sort themselves out into a dance for all the outcasts of this world.  It is a slow sad dance in which ROPEEN dances with COLETTE and PRINCESS GRACE dances first with MULLEADY and then with RIO RITA.  There is jealousy and comfort in the dance.

A: To shun Miss Gilchrist for singing again

MISS GILCHRIST.  Would you live on woman’s earnings,  
Would you give up work for good?  
For a life of prostitution?

SOLDIER.  Yes, too bloody true, I would.

MISS GILCHRIST.  Would you have a kip in Soho?  
Would you be a West End ponce?

SOLDIER.  I’m fed up with pick and shovel,  
And I’d like to try it once.

MISS GILCHRIST.  Did you read the Wolfenden Report  
On whores and queers?

SOLDIER.  Yeah, gorblimey, it was moving,  
I collapsed meself in tears.

PA: To moan at Miss Gilchrist
Well, at this poncing business,
I think I’ll have a try,
And I’ll drop the English coppers,
They’re the best money can buy.

MISS GILCHRIST. Good-bye, my son, God bless you,
Say your prayers each morn and night,
And send home your poor old mother,
A few quid—her widow’s mite.

At the end of the dance the RUSSIAN silently and smoothly removes
MISS GILCHRIST. The whores and queers melt away, quietly cooing
“Leslie!” There is a moment of stillness and quiet, when TERESA
comes down into the darkened room and calls.

TERESA. Leslie, Leslie!

The VOLUNTEER is asleep at LESLIE’s table. He wakes up and sees
TERESA.

VOLUNTEER. You can call me Feargus! (He leers
lecherously.)

PAT (to VOLUNTEER). Hey, you’ll have us all in trouble. Attention!
Quick march—left, right, left, right . . . Come on, leave ‘m in peace.

B3.7 “Goodbye Scene”

A: To be grateful she has finally passed out from drinking too much.

PA: To sign with relief she has finally passed out.

B3.8 “Raid Scene”

A: To run for cover

PA: Place sweater on Teresa’s shoulders

MEG. I want to see what’s going on.

Exit through hallway CS

Enter hallway CS
PAT. Get your head down. They’ll open fire any minute.

MULLEADY (from the roof). Stand by. Two of you stay on the roof. The rest come down through the attic with me.

RIO RITA (from the cellar). Six round the front, six round the back, and you two fellers follow me.

PAT. And take your partners for the eightsome reel. (The piano plays.)

Å: To be curious about what is happening on the top of the stairs

MULLEADY. O’Shaunessy!

O’SHAUNESSY (from the rear of the house). Sir!

MULLEADY. O’Saunessy, shine a light for Jesus’ sake.

O’SHAUNESSY (off). I will, sir.

MULLEADY. Shine a light. I can’t see a bloody thing.

O’SHAUNESSY (off). I can’t, sir, the battery’s gone.

MULLEADY. To hell with the battery.

RIO RITA. Charge!

Princess Grace has joined the police... (A whistle blows.) The whistle’s gone and they’re off.
(MULLEADY crawls past the window on the window-sill.) There's a man crawling along the gutter. He's going, he's going, he's gone! (Crash of falling body, and a quarrel below.)

SOLDIER. Teresa! Teresa! (He thinks he's found her.) Sorry, mum, I didn't know it was you.

Rise behind bar
PA: Turn on flash light
Return behind bar

There is an ominous silence. The piano is playing sinisterly.

MONSEWER. Where's that officer chap?

A: To be insulted and annoyed Leslie confuses me with Teresa

PAT. I can't see him anywhere, sir.

MONSEWER. Do you mean to say he's deserted in the face of fire?

Suddenly a bugle sounds the attack. Figures run to take up positions surrounding the room

PAT. They're coming in.

MEG. Let's run for it.

MONSEWER. Hold fast!

X CS to hostage

A: To escape out of the house

TERESA. Leslie, my love. A thousand blessings go with you.

A: To fear being captured or shot

PAT. Don't cry. Teresa. It's no one's fault. Nobody meant to kill him.

A: To be shocked the boy is dead

TERESA. But he's dead.
A: To **grieve** Leslie's death
To **pity** Teresa's loss

PAT.

So is the boy in Belfast Jail.

TERESA.

It wasn’t the Belfast Jail or the Six Counties that was troubling you, but your lost youth and your crippled leg. He died in a strange land, and at home he had no one. I’ll never forget you, Leslie, till the end of time.

To **agree** Pat never really cared for Leslie’s welfare

*She rises and everyone turns away from the body. A ghostly green light glows on the body as LESLIE slowly gets up and sings:*

The bells of hell,
Go ting-a-ling-a-ling,
For you but not for me,
Oh death, where is they sting-a-ling-a-ling,
Or grave they victory?
If you meet the undertaker,
Or the young man from the Pru,
Get a pint with what’s left over,
Now I’ll say good-bye to you.

The stage brightens, and everyone turns and comes down towards the audience, singing:

*ALL.*

The bells of hell,
Go ting-a-ling-a-ling,
For you but not for him,
Oh death, where is they sting-a-ling-a-ling,
Or grave they victory?

PA: Slow motion turning US

X DSL towards apron

PA: Sing and raise arms in unison

PA: To smile and sing

**CURTAIN**
3.4

Having to describe the method by which I approach a scripted role is a difficult task. It is an intuitive process incorporating a variety of methods, the choice of which depends on the challenges and demands of the role. However, the Stanislavsky technique has been a method I have used as a basis for all my character work. The scoring of a script is an important element in creating organic choices for a character. By organic I mean choices that are closely linked to the given circumstances of the play and are not made simply for the sake of being clever or interesting. As an actor, it is important to read a script as many times as possible in order to understand the playwright’s intent and to be true to the text. Although the characters in The Hostage were larger than life, the text still contained a specific set of given circumstances. It was necessary to adhere to these in order to make the characters believable. The process of scoring a script thoroughly is an important tool in creating and documenting authentic choices in my work on a character.
CHAPTER 4

REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE LOG

The following is a rehearsal and performance log for my work on Meg in The Hostage. The informal style of writing reflects the journal format of this portion of the thesis. Unless otherwise noted, all page numbers refer to the script of The Hostage as printed in Brendan Behan The Complete Plays. Although my research began in Summer, 1999, this journal documents my process beginning November, 1999.

Monday, November 22, 1999

For the general auditions I performed two pieces: Rita from Educating Rita and Bunny from The House of Blue Leaves. This is the first time I have used these two monologues as contemporary contrasting pieces or as a package for audition purposes. I was quite pleased with the results. After I auditioned I decided to join the rest of the auditors to see the other auditions. It was enlightening to observe these auditions. I was especially impressed with David Price, Christina Sidebottom, and Jeremy Meier who were all very professional and detailed. They had some wonderful transitions between their monologues. However, I must admit that I was a bit disappointed with some of the undergraduates; I think they need to pay more attention to detail. I would suggest that it
should be mandatory (I will insist on this in the future for my acting classes) that we encourage the students to attend the audition seminars. I informed students in my classes wanting to audition about the seminars. I also performed during these seminars at the request of Sue Ott Rowlands. I feel that this is a beneficial way for us to prepare the undergraduates for the general auditions. Some of them looked really lost when searching either for lines or clear transitions between their pieces. However, I would say this was an informative experience, not only as a performer, but also as a future acting teacher. I gained immense knowledge about what is important to have students work on in pieces, especially transitions, in order to show a real contrast between characters.

Tuesday, November 23, 1999

Bruce held the callbacks for The Hostage tonight. I read about fifteen minutes with Jessica Morgan, Christina Sidebottom and Jeremy Meier. It was fun to begin reading Meg aloud in front of an audience. It is always an exciting moment to just dive in there and really search for the character. It was nice not to have to audition for this role. The pressure was off and it was fun to be a reader. I was never a reader at an audition before. It seemed that I had some interesting moments between Christina and Jeremy, and also with Jessica. I was impressed with the quality of the actors that we have in the department.

The second half of the auditions entailed the undergraduates coming in and singing. This was really a lot of fun. I was amazed at how talented our department is, especially how courageous it was for all these students to come in and sing. Bruce had a really interesting concept. He had the actors come in and sing pieces which they had
chosen themselves. He asked them to sing them again as if it was one o’clock in the morning and they had been drinking. I thought this was a fascinating concept because the actors were able to let loose and really delve into the singing without being self-conscious about their voices. I would have to say that this was an enlightening experience for me. I was not aware of the quality of singers we had in the department. It was enjoyable to sit there with Carrie Bradac and encourage these students to really let loose and have some fun. We clapped along with them and tried to motivate everyone to feel comfortable singing in front of us.

I am really excited about this project. I realize that when I am singing as Meg, it is important that I keep in mind that it is late in the evening. In addition, we have all been drinking; we are in a bar and, indeed, need to be performing. At the same time we must be conscious of the fact that we are entertaining ourselves as well as an audience. I also look forward to working with Bruce. He seems to be a very relaxed and motivated director. I thought the direction he gave everyone was precise and encouraged them to get up there and sing. In addition, I think it also gave me a lot of courage to get up there and sing. Rick Williams, our musical director, asked me what my voice was like. Having listened to the tape of The Hostage, I realized that Meg’s voice is rather deep, and certainly deeper than my own. I sang for Rick and he informed me that he is able to transpose music and not to worry. This was something that I have been concerned about, considering Meg’s voice is much lower than my own on the tape. Rick seems to be a good musical director. It is rare to find someone who is able to transpose music. He has a relaxed attitude about the production. Rick is working towards his doctorate in music here at O.S.U. and I think he is someone who will be beneficial to the production.
Wednesday, December 1, 1999

Tonight was the first meeting for The Hostage. Bruce has organized a meeting to introduce us to one another and to give us an idea of what is going to be expected of us in this production. Bruce has informed us that we can get a copy of the score to the play at the Music Library, which I had already done over the summer. He supplied us with tapes so we can listen to the singers as well. The musical director, Rick Williams, is going to have us all sing so he can see where our vocal range lies. Phil Thompson is also in attendance tonight to tell us what to study in terms of developing a dialect. He suggests that we all read the script several times so we can familiarize ourselves with the rhythms of the Irish dialect. Phil also explained that it is imperative that we work on the dialect in a very slight way and use a variety of sounds, especially from the Dublin influences. He also suggested that we look at the film, The Commitment, by Alan Proctor and also The Snapper. These films will give us a variety of Dublin dialects. In addition, Ulysses by James Joyce is an excellent source for us to use for a Dublin accent. He suggested some other sources, such as Hear My Song, which has a Northern Irish dialect, and Waking Ned Devine, which is set northwest of Dublin. These are good sources for rhythms and background. For the soldier's accent, Phil suggested the film Yellow Submarine. He also suggested the films 2010 and Moscow on the Hudson for the Russian soldier. Bruce explained that Monsewer has a very “posh” British upper-crust accent. He explained how the show originated from the play An Gail, also by Brendan Behan. It is important that we do not have such a strong dialect that it will take away from being understood. It is also important for us to study music hall variety shows. The Hostage is a burlesque, vaudevillian type of production and Bruce emphasized that it is very important for
us to keep that in mind. He also suggested that we read Ulick O’Connor’s biography about Brendan Behan. O’Connor was a member of Behan’s group but was not as educated as the others he ran with at the time the production takes place. Behan loved to walk into any pub and just start singing. Bruce explained that the Irish culture is one of singing feelings and this is very important. I found the production meeting that Bruce held tonight beneficial in terms of getting to know everyone and Bruce’s expectations. It was also productive in obtaining resources besides the ones I have already used in my thesis to further my research on Meg and Irish history. Bruce gave us a handout on Irish films and I was pleased to see that I had seen more than half of these over the summer. These included Michael Collins, The Crying Game, In the Name of the Father, Waking Ned Devine, Dancing at Lughnasa, and My Left Foot. I was pleased that it was beneficial to have spent time this summer watching these films. I look forward to working on The Hostage with Bruce. He seems to have a relaxed and confident manner about him. He wants us all to keep in mind that this is a play with which to have fun.

Although we will be singing on stage, it is not as if we are singing in a musical production. He wants us to keep in mind that this play does include music and song. The focus, however, is not on how well we sing, but should be on how much we enjoy ourselves and interact with the audience.

In addition, Carney handed out a list of films for us to watch. Kristen gave us a source from the Internet that is a chronological list of the events that happened during the period in which The Hostage takes place (1960) and the references that are made throughout the play.
Wednesday, January 5, 2000

Tonight was our first rehearsal of The Hostage. I am finding certain words difficult to pronounce in the script and am compiling a list. Carrie has been transposing them for me. Our first reading was very exciting because it was fun to see everyone delve into the work. Tonight we are working on Act I. Bruce informed us to think of this play as vaudeville, to recognize the jokes, not to concern ourselves too much with the dialect, to look for and work on the comedy aspects of the script. My personal goal for this read through is to listen and react.

The play takes place in 1960. The Irish situation in 1960 is based on the border raids. Pat talks about nabbing a “hostage” and how there was a real lull in the action of the I.R.A. during the period in which the play takes place. Bruce also told us that between the years of 1916 and 1921 the uprising was squashed by the British, and the Irish wanted revenge. The characters in the play were not alive during this period, except for Pat and Monsewer who were fighting during the period (Pat was probably just a boy when he fought with Monsewer). Bruce emphasized that everyone has real hard-core opinions in this play. It made me think of one of my lines about Monsewer having a bishop for a father. (This is a joke but it also brings up Meg’s own feelings about being Catholic and making jokes about Catholics.) Bruce told us that it is important to listen for crowd reaction and how everyone responds. The residents of the house are a bunch of misfits who have been living off the graces of Monsewer. This old mansion was once the center of the auxiliary and it has now fallen apart. Apparently Monsewer is the only character who doesn’t know he is in the play. Bruce has explained to us that it is
important that our characters realize they are in a play; for us to think about this as a sitcom such as the *Jackie Gleason Show*. However, a real love story is involved which is reflected in the characters of Leslie and Teresa. He wants us to think big and exaggerated. We are putting on a performance and we are to have a lot of fun. I certainly agree with Bruce’s interpretation on this production. I see these characters as exaggerated, bigger than life, entertaining not only the audience but also one another.

One of the interesting facts I learned at this first rehearsal is that the St. Vincent de Paul Society is comparable to the Salvation Army (which is also something I came across in my research). However, I was surprised to learn that it was an embarrassment to take from this society, that the very poor who beg for help had hard feelings against the St. Vincent de Paul. “It’s like biting the hand that feeds them.” Another interesting fact was that the Irish sang songs at the drop of a hat. It is part of their culture for the Irish to sing songs, and part of the reason why we are all here. We are singing misfits in a music hall comedy. The characters in the play are sexually and intellectually repressed which was reflected in Irish society between the years of 1950 and 1960. Bruce wants us to look for the libido in our characters, to “go on the rampage” in expressing the sexuality in all the dances and dialogue. Something I came across in my research, and which Bruce also mentioned, is that Behan was a homosexual or bisexual. It makes sense, therefore, that he has transvestites and homosexuals in most of his productions. He reiterated that this production has a saloon atmosphere. We should use humor to keep the sadness at bay. We are drinking and entertaining ourselves in order to distract ourselves from the sad situation taking place with the I.R.A. soldier. This has been a sad situation not only for the people of this house but for Ireland. I would say from this first rehearsal that I
really gained a sense of how Bruce wants to make this a music hall comedy. This rehearsal was valuable because I was able to read aloud some of the words with which I have been struggling. Carrie has been of immense help to me writing these words out, not phonetically, but by breaking down the syllables in a way that I could understand.

Some of the words are:

- Monsewer → Mon-syoo-er
- Auld → Auld
- de Valera → dev-uh-lare-uh
- Shan Van Vocht → Shawn vawn vokt
- Sepulchre → Sep-ul-ker

**Thursday, January 6, 2000**

The designers presented tonight. Robert Krege discussed the set. He explained that the set is so large because of the huge cast size. He explained that people will drift in and out of catacomb rooms; that because the characters are repressed, the set represents the depleted state of the characters’ minds and bodies. There will be broken out walls on the stage behind the bar, and a trap-door through which people will pop up. Robert emphasized the fact that these characters are falling apart; the set, therefore, reflects this by the walls having slates missing which were used as firewood. He will also have light and smoke coming through these spaces. The front area will have footlights to reflect the burlesque flavor of the production. He is using two spotlights to give a searchlight image when the raids take place. In addition, there will be writing on the walls to give the audience a sense of these characters leaving their own mark. The set represents a feeling of crumbling apart, which illustrates how everything is in disrepair. Again, to reflect the desperate state of mind of the characters.
Tatjana Longerot, the costume designer for The Hostage, presented next. She is intermixing burlesque images with realistic elements, using bold colors. The costumes will reflect their poverty because most of the characters will only have one costume. Meg will be padded in the breast and hip areas. I find it exciting to be playing a character that will be rotund and also large bosomed. The women in the play will be wearing garter belts. This also reflects the sexuality of their characters, reinforcing that these women were of ill-repute. I have only one costume change and I find this to be wonderful, considering how many changes I have had to deal with in other productions. This way I can be concentrate on the role and not be preoccupied with what I need to be wearing. It is interesting that Tatjana collected most of her information from National Geographic magazines, which documented Ireland in the late 1950s. The other exciting thing about Meg is that she is going to be a blonde. I must admit that in my own visual images of the character I didn’t envisage her a blonde as much as a redhead, but I am adaptable. I feel that a blonde Meg will reflect a lighter side of her character.

The second half of the rehearsal started with us reading Act Two. Bruce has asked us to drop our dialects for now. Oh well, I practiced over the break on this Irish dialect but I do understand his point. He wants us just to read and listen to one another. Thank God we are taking a vocal course with Phil. I guess I am feeling a bit insecure on having to search for this dialect in front of others tonight. I am very grateful that we will be working with Phil on this independently in class. Phil will be helpful to me in identifying areas where I need to work. I feel intimidated with some of the language in the play, especially the Gaelic, considering my problems with syllables. This also stems from my dyslexia. It always seems to be a struggle for me to work with foreign
languages. The Gaelic is going to be difficult but I have faith Phil and Carrie will help. Carrie Bradac has been writing out all the words that I have trouble pronouncing in a way that I can understand them. She is able to identify the syllables that I have trouble pronouncing. I made a list for myself in order to practice. Thank God for Carrie. She has an excellent ear and can translate the sounds I am not processing. It was challenging to read without the dialect tonight but I understand Bruce’s point. We shouldn’t get into bad habits. It also allowed me to just focus on listening; I was saying my lines and not wrapped up in how I said them. I am enjoying this rehearsal process very much. I think this is going to be a fun show. It is exciting to be in a show with Carrie, Carney and Jessica. What a nice experience to be working with the other graduates with whom I have been in school for the past three years in such a fun, rip-roaring comedy.

Friday, January 7, 2000

Kristin Crouch, the Assistant Director, had information to pass along to us this evening. The Irish resent the English because they took their lands, which increased Ireland’s poverty. In 1801 Ireland became part of England. The Irish were denied cultural activities such as song, dance and employment. The English considered the Irish savages. In 1858 Jim Larkin began a group called the Irish Brotherhood, which later became the Irish Citizen Army. In the beginning they were considered harmless. Sinn Fein and Ourselves Alone fought before World War One in non-violent groups. They stood for total independence from Britain and were taken over by de Valera. The Easter Rising which pertains to my character Meg. considering I sing the song Easter Week, was an event involving home rule being suspended and the main rulers taking control of the
General Post Office on O'Connell Street. They held the post office for six days of fighting, after which nine days of executions of the I.R.A. leaders took place. One of these rebel leaders was Padraig Pearse. I have documented all this information earlier in my thesis. Kristen further talked about Michael Collins not believing in de Valera's non-violent Sinn Fein and how he started the I.R.A. in retaliation. However, Michael Collins negotiated the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1920. De Valera thought this was a humiliating compromise for the Irish and consequently Collins was killed by the anti-treaty Republicans. Eventually this led to the Irish Army versus the Free State Army. 

De Valera opposed the treaty and became one of the leaders of the Free Staters. He also later became the Prime Minister of Ireland and ran the Free State, which eventually became the Republic Army, the official army of Ireland. Throughout this, England was responsible for Ireland remaining a poor country. The Orange cause, which Carney discussed, was a concept developed by the English to divide and conquer Ireland. To achieve this, the British planted people who were loyal to the crown in Northern Ireland in order to split the Irish between Protestants and Catholics. Actually the British thought to pit the Protestants against the Catholics, especially native Irish Catholics against foreign Protestants. This was a productive rehearsal tonight. Although I don't have as much to read in Act Two as in Act One, I was intrigued just listening to everyone else read. Again, I feel this is going to be a fun, challenging project. I am grateful to have chosen Meg for my thesis role.
Monday, January 10, 2000 – Afternoon Rehearsal

This afternoon I had rehearsal with Carney and Bruce. This is our acting class that we attend from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Bruce is using this class as a rehearsal period for us to work on scenes from The Hostage. This was an exciting rehearsal for me. Bruce asked many important questions, such as why are Meg and Pat are in this situation? Why do they tell the same old stories all the time? He said the beginning scenes of the play are mostly exposition, and explained how our characters just keep “jawing at one another.” Some other questions he asked were: Why are we saying these things now and in the manner in which they are said? How often do we have these conversations? When is the past brought up? Why does the past upset the character of Meg? I found this last question intriguing. I believe the past upsets Meg because it didn’t include her. She is jealous of the relationship Pat shares with Monsewer. Pat seems to have respect for Monsewer but not for Meg. Therefore, I think Meg is jealous of the love Pat has for Monsewer. I believe she feels threatened and insecure of Pat’s love for her. She also doesn’t want to talk about the past because it brings up painful memories of her own, especially of being an orphan. One of the other interesting questions Bruce asked is if Pat and Meg sleep in the same bed. From looking at the script, I believe they do. Meg makes references to wanting to go to bed instead of having a drink; the references to Pat having no use of his leg seems to have a lot of sexual innuendo which I believe she has first-hand knowledge of. One of the other things Bruce discussed with us is what is different about telling these stories now? How is this evening different than any other evening? I felt confident that the circumstances of the
play have changed because of the soldier’s capture. It is not an ordinary evening. Although these stories may be old and retold often, this evening is different because an I.R.A. man has been taken in a Belfast Jail and a British soldier is being held here in the brothel. The circumstances are all different because now these memories of the past are being brought up with nostalgia, opinion and pain. Again, I believe this is a productive way for us to rehearse. I feel grateful to have an acting class that deals solely with working on the production. This is something I have not experienced in the past. Hopefully, it will beneficial to me in developing my character, especially since this is my thesis role.

Monday, January 10, 2000 - Evening Rehearsal

Tonight Rick Williams had us all sing the chorus parts to *The Hostage*. Rick is a wonderful music director. He seems to have a grasp of what we need to be working on in this production. He recognizes that we are not musical performers, but actors singing in a play. Rick spoke briefly about his background, and how he is a doctoral student of music, presently working on several productions. He has worked in New York singing professionally and made his living giving private lessons. Rick made several suggestions for rehearsing the songs in the show. He told us to concentrate on diction, especially beginning and end consonants, to be aware that there will be no official cut-offs to the songs, and that we will just have to feel them for ourselves. I am singing alto, which is something I sang in high school and is familiar. The full evening was a flashback to my high school days when I sang in the musical productions. It was exciting to have the piano playing and everyone singing and having a good old time. Rick said that we are
singing at half voice during these rehearsals. If we were to use our whole voices we would most likely lose them before the production. This is an important point considering most of the cast are not singers and for some this is their first experience singing on stage. After hearing Rick play piano, I am not too concerned about the vocals being heard in the Thurber Theatre. He understands that we are not singers, per se, and he is aware of not overpowering our voices with the piano. This enables us to be heard in the rehearsal space. One of the wonderful aspects about Rick is that he wrote an entire score to *The Hostage*. He actually wrote out his own sheet music. This is a testament to what a wonderfully talented man he is. I was amazed that he can transpose music just by ear. I think he is a great find to have at O.S.U. It is a pleasure to have someone who can work with theatre actors and is able to transpose music to suit how actors sing.

**Tuesday, January 11, 2000**

Tonight we started with chorus rehearsal and everyone sang. Rick, the musical director, had us begin with breathing exercises. He had us sing sitting on the edge of our chairs and sing on a G, singing up the scale using ‘ah.’ He impressed upon us that posture is an important aspect of breathing. Diction is very important to enunciating and singing in the alto register. Vowels are internally formed in the back of the mouth. Rick explained that we use our head voices in order to form vowels and we are not using our frontal face structure. He spoke about voiced consonants versus unvoiced; when we use full voice we can have pitch; when we use unvoiced there is no pitch. It was difficult for me to sing high because my range has definitely lowered with age. This was something I had not been aware of until we started all the choral exercises.
I enjoy working with Rick. I find him to be an actor’s musical director. He is very aware of what our registers are and what our problems are as an entire group. I think it is wonderful to have a musical director who is aware of how actors sing. He realizes that we are actors singing and not expert musical performers.

After singing we joined Bruce and worked on scenes from the play. Tonight I explored my relationship with Mr. Mulleady, who is played by Jeremy Meier. I thought that the questions that Bruce asked were “right on the money.” Some of them were, Why do I pick on Mr. Mulleady? What is our relationship to one another? Why would Meg be willing to do his laundry? Why is it that I am upset that he has brought Miss Gilchrist into the house? These are questions that I have asked myself as well, but it was nice to have the director vocalize them and expect an answer. I realized that Mr. Mulleady is an older gentleman who is living on the good graces of both Pat and Meg. I think the reason that Meg picks on Mr. Mulleady is that he allows her to do so. He hasn’t paid his rent and has no intention of ever doing so. He has brought another woman into the house, and we are threatened by this. In fact, not only has he brought in another woman, but she happens to be a self-righteous, pious, religious whore. Meg immediately takes a dislike to Miss Gilchrist because of her false piety. I think Meg is further infuriated by the fact that Mr. Mulleady has taken on this sense of false piety himself. I believe my relationship with Mr. Mulleady is one that is not personal but professional. I know he has been sleeping with other whores in the house, especially the young girl who lives in number 8. I also view him as a poorly dressed tenant who is rather late with his rent. I think the reason Meg does his laundry is because it is somehow included in his rent.
I enjoyed reading the scenes with everyone tonight, especially Jessica and Jeremy. It was a lot of fun to find that Miss Gilchrist and Meg do, indeed, become cats with one another. Bruce has even instructed us to feel that we are having a cat-fight when we dig into one another. Even though it may not become a physical altercation, it will be one of real viciousness towards one another. This also, again, brings up Meg’s strong feelings about the Catholic Church. Although Meg was brought up Catholic and has great animosity towards the Catholic Church, she is more opposed to the Protestants. The only time Meg defends her religion is against the Protestants. Meg becomes offended with Miss Gilchrist’s false piety and jabs at the Catholic Church. Meg is definitely torn about her opinions towards the church. I also believe this brings up Meg’s strong feelings about any kind of false pretense. She seems to dig into people who put on airs and who think they are above others. Meg believes she knows herself and what she is about. Meg takes offense at anyone who pretends to be “higher than thou.” This is why Miss Gilchrist brings up such strong animosity in her and why she becomes a direct target for Meg to bait, ridicule and, eventually, annihilate. I felt that tonight’s rehearsal was successful and I gained great insight into both the characters of Mr. Mulleady and Miss Gilchrist.

Wednesday, January 12, 2000

This afternoon Carrie Bradac and I worked on the scenes between Meg and Teresa. It was a productive rehearsal with just the three of us together. Bruce asked some important questions, one being, what is the relationship between Meg and Teresa? Why do I take such a liking to this young girl when it seems that everyone else in the
play gets my ridicule? I had, through my research, tried to tie together between Meg and Teresa the idea that they are both orphans. I think Meg has a motherly instinct towards Teresa. She realizes that Teresa is an orphan who was brought up in a convent by nuns; she has no mother and father – the same as Meg. She is quite innocent and Meg has a genuine concern about this young lady’s welfare. I also believe that Meg wants to protect Teresa from a life of prostitution. When Teresa reveals to Meg that she was thrown out of Drumcondra because she was involved with a clerical student, Meg instructs Teresa not to reveal this information to Pat. I believe this is because she doesn’t want Pat to know that Teresa has lost her virginity because Pat may put her “on the market.” I think Meg is trying to protect her from becoming a whore. If Pat believes that Teresa is a virgin, and quite innocent, Teresa may avoid getting involved in any prostitution while staying in this home. Meg further enjoys Teresa because she is a pleasant young girl. She sings well, she is quite shy, she runs errands for Meg at the drop of a hat, and she does whatever is required of her. Meg finds Teresa entertaining and delightful to be around. There is an innocent quality about Teresa, and Meg sees her as someone who needs her protection. I feel this is an excellent interpretation of their relationship.

I enjoyed the scenes that Carrie and played together. I discovered that I used my own relationship with Carrie to project upon the relationship between Teresa and Meg. I have protective and dear feelings towards Carrie. Our relationship is a good source for the relationship between Meg and Teresa. Bruce brought up this same point and I thought it interesting that he realized the two of us have a rapport between us that is similar to the characters of Meg and Teresa.
This evening’s rehearsal was for the chorus. We worked on all the choral numbers within the play. I am finding that I am much more comfortable with the songs that I sing with the chorus, especially *Laughing Boy*. This afternoon Carney and I got together and worked for about half an hour on clarifying some of the Gaelic language in *Laughing Boy*. Carney helped me to pronounce the Gaelic and to clarify the notes. I was much more comfortable singing *Laughing Boy* in front of everyone else at rehearsal tonight. I felt much more confident about doing the solo work within the piece.

The most challenging aspect of singing is the breathing. Rick used a wonderful image; to feel as if one’s guts are being squeezed out when taking air into the diaphragm and releasing it. This image was helpful to me and flashed me back again to high school. I remembered my high school choral teacher using the same image in order for us to hold breath longer. This is something that I could relate to and understand. Tonight’s rehearsal was enlightening. I am pleased with how fast the play is progressing.

**Thursday, January 13, 2000**

I tried on my wig and shoes today. It was an interesting day and fun to see how Meg will look with blonde hair. Tatjana was extremely informative about how my character was going to look. We are going to use bright lipstick, strong eye make-up, and a pale complexion. It was interesting to try on the shoes because I had to pick a pair that I could dance in. That was my priority as an actress. It was hard knowing that Tatjana wanted me to use a pair of higher heels; however, I am 5’9” and wearing a pump that is over 2” is difficult for me to move in. The only time I ever wore heels that high was when I had done some modeling when I was much younger. I tried to convince her to let
me wear something lower in which I would feel more comfortable to dance. We
rehearsed pages 215 and 217 with Bruce tonight. Most of the action will take place
downtown. This is the scene where Mulleady, Rita Rio, Meg and Pat work together,
talking about Mr. Mulleady's past, and about why he is here in the house now. Also,
within these pages, we clarified some intentions of where we are all coming from. I
discovered that Meg has some strong opinions about Pat constantly rehashing the past.
Meg berates him for this because Pat always seems to dwindle into his old war stories,
especially about himself and Monsewer. I also discovered that Meg's jealousy towards
Monsewer becomes even more clarified as the play continues. Meg corrects Pat in this
scene for telling the facts wrong, such as when he goes on about when "Queen Victoria,
or whatever her bloody name was, sent five pounds to the famine fund and at the same
time she sent five pounds to the Battersea Dog's Home so no one could accuse her of
having rebel sympathies." Meg responds with "Good god, Pat, that was when Moses was
in the Fire Brigade" (215). It is clear that Meg feels these to be old, worn out tales that
Pat has changed the facts about. It seems to be a clear intention of Meg's throughout the
play to correct Pat in his facts; to question whether Pat is telling the truth now or was he
telling the truth then.

In this scene Meg also begins attacking Miss Gilchrist more. She becomes quite
disgusted with Miss Gilchrist's drunkenness. When Miss Gilchrist begins singing, "I
have no mother to break her heart. I have no father to take my part. I have one friend and
a girl is she, And she'd lay down her life for McCaffery" (217). Meg feels that Miss
Gilchrist is laying into her and poking fun at the fact that she doesn't know her mother.
She is also disgusted by the fact that Miss Gilchrist is becoming more and more
intoxicated, and that she is keening quite loudly. Meg manipulates Miss Gilchrist by egging her on to drink more. This is the scene where Meg and Miss Gilchrist practically have a cat-fight with one another. Bruce instructed us tonight that we are both going to be held off by the men on stage to keep us from actually going at one another’s throats. Jessica and I got a tickle out of this, considering it flashed us both back to *The Man Who Came to Dinner* when we fought over Brian Otting’s character, Bert Lawrence. Jessica reminded me that we have this experience to draw on from that production in order to develop this cat-fight between our two characters. Again, I am quite pleased with the way rehearsals are going. I feel Bruce asks clear, insightful questions.

**Friday, January 14, 2000**

This afternoon Carrie and I practiced Irish dancing with Nina Couch in Room 107. This was something I had great concern about, considering that I don’t have a lot of dance experience. The only dance experience I have is from doing high school musicals and most of the characters I had played had a minimal amount of dancing. The exception to this was the leading player in *Pippin* and I remember struggling through the dance scenes. Overall, this was a successful rehearsal. Nina had taught a course on period dance in my second year of Graduate School, so she is familiar with my movement challenges. I felt confident working with her and actually performed better than I thought I would. The dance sequence which Carrie and I will be doing is not long; however it is something that needs to be precise and worked out. Carrie and I were amazed at how far we got in just one rehearsal. We took notes for ourselves in order to recreate the dance sequence on our own. We rehearsed for almost two hours with Nina. Bruce arrived later
to see how it had gone. It felt good to be able to tell him that it was a successful rehearsal for all of us.

During tonight’s rehearsal we worked with the choral director, Rick. Basically, what he did tonight was to have us walk around the room, singing all the songs from the play that involved the chorus. This was an interesting way to have us sing. It was the first time that I felt we were all performing and singing with one another. People just walked around aimlessly, putting their arms around one another, and interacting with people who were singing different vocal parts (e.g. alto, tenor, soprano, and baritone). Everyone was able to keep their vocal parts without becoming confused, despite moving around. The challenge of getting up on our feet was how to remember our vocal parts while listening and relating to one another. I gravitated towards people with whom I would be interacting on stage during specific songs. For example, when I sang the Laughing Boy I automatically migrated more towards Carney. When I sang any of the chorus songs I interacted with the characters of Ropeen and Rio Rita who always seem to be my audience members when Meg is badgering Pat. Meg needs their support, reassurance and encouragement in order to lay into Pat. Again, this was a successful rehearsal and a creative idea of Rick’s. It challenged us, not only as performers, but also as singers to hone our skills.

Today I also gave Phil Thompson a blank tape in order for him to read my dialogue in the Irish dialect. Both Carrie Bradac and I are having Phil record our lines on tape so that we can listen to them. I realize that this is the best method I have found to work on a dialect. When working in Angels in America I recorded Jeanine Thompson reading my lines on tape. It was an immense help to me in creating the role of Hannah,
using a southwestern dialect. It is imperative to me, and quite fortunate, that I have someone like Phil to do this. My aim this weekend, since I don’t have rehearsal on Saturday, Sunday or Monday, is to work on my thesis research and the methodology that I am using to create the character of Meg. I discovered, in defining the method I used to create the character of Meg, that the basis of that research was the Stanislavsky Method. Having started with the imagination, considering there is little information given in the text about Meg’s prior life, I had to use my imagination to create an inner life for this character. Behan’s script of The Hostage does not lead to in-depth character study. As I said earlier, therefore, having to create prior facts about Meg was left up to me. There was not enough information to draw from in the text.

Monday, January 17, 2000

Today I wrote up the methodology section of my thesis (Chapter 3). I realized that the Stanislavsky Method gave me a basis on which to start; however, it is my musical background, from which I need to draw to make this larger than life character. Meg is not based in reality. One of her overall objectives is to entertain. However, when writing the chapter, I realized that another of Meg’s aims, which eventually became her super-objective within the play, is to gain control of this household, to “wear the pants.” She wants everyone in the house to know that she is the one in charge. Meg runs the whores, the tavern, and calls all the shots in her relationship with Pat. Meg is an extremely strong female character. This is something that I have experienced in other roles I have played. It seems I am cast as women with strong personalities. In listing these, I would say that although Liubov in The Cherry Orchard appeared as a weak, frail woman who needed
protection, in reality she was a strong woman who had to take care of her brother and all the other characters in the play. Lorraine in The Man Who Came to Dinner was definitely a strong woman who expected to get what she wanted; whether it was power, a man, or a good role. I would say that, although she may have appeared quite frail and over-protected by the rest of her family, Bella in Lost in Yonkers had strong desires and wants. She knew how to stand up to her mother when she needed to and she had more courage than any of the other characters within the play. Bella had the courage to confront her mother with who she really was. In reflecting on the prior roles I have played at O.S.U., I realize that Meg is different, because she is quite crude, loud, berating, and humiliating towards others. However, what she does have in common with the other characters I have played is her strong desire to get what she wants. She has no use for the hypocrisy that others seem to accept so easily.

The last two days I have been practicing the dance sequence that I will be performing with Carrie Bradac. Carrie and I spent about half an hour today working out our dance sequence. She was so helpful in clarifying some of the steps, with which I have been fumbling. I must admit that I am quite overwhelmed with the amount of business that Meg does in this show. One moment she is singing, the next she is dancing, and sometimes she is doing both simultaneously. There are many challenges for me in playing the role of Meg: dialect, dancing, singing, entertaining and interacting with the audience. Bruce has emphasized that having the audience feel they are part of the show is one of the major elements involved in the success of the production. It is challenging having to interact with the audience, at times, breaking the fourth wall. Bruce reiterated the fact that this is a vaudeville, music-hall style. By breaking the fourth wall we are not
required to break character but to involve the audience as if it was another member of the cast. I believe it will be challenging as performers to stay in character and, at the same time, include the audience.

**Tuesday, January 18, 2000**

At tonight’s rehearsal we blocked Act One. I discovered some interesting things about the character of Meg while interacting with Pat. I believe that Pat has a higher education than Meg and is far more worldly. Most of Meg’s questions to Pat involve the vocabulary that he uses regarding places and things. Meg, I believe, does not have any formal education apart from being able to read and write. This flashed me back to the character of Bella. Although Bella had a learning disability and was considered slow, I do not believe this is Meg’s problem. I believe that Meg is just uneducated in any formal way and, therefore, feels insecure about her own intelligence. I also think that part of the reason she is with Pat is because she feels Pat is worldly and knowledgeable. It was challenging at rehearsal to block scenes without being off book. I have been waiting for a vocal tape from Phil Thompson in order to work on the dialect. Since he has not been able to do that, I have been tentative about getting off book without having a full grasp of the Irish dialect.

I enjoyed tonight’s rehearsal and found it to be challenging. I concentrated on Meg’s body and how she would sit and carry herself. I realize this is a stretch for myself considering the fact that the bodysuit, which I will be wearing, is quite larger than my own. I also felt somewhat empowered by the fact that Meg will be a larger woman. Indeed, she has to have a full-figured body in order to project the powerful image that she
has on stage. At tonight’s rehearsal it was quite entertaining to watch the undergraduates engrossed in their characters. They immersed themselves in the work and were having a good time. Bruce conducted the rehearsal in an interesting way, having everyone do blocking and then go back and rehash the blocking we have previously done.

Overall, I felt this rehearsal allowed me to discover more aspects of Meg’s personality. I realized that part of the reason Meg badgers Pat is because he is always talking about the past. Meg doesn’t focus on the past. She is a present-moment person. She enjoys catching Pat when he elaborates on old stories and changes the facts. I believe this is the only time Meg is able to exert her intelligence. She reprimands Pat when he changes the facts in his stories. Meg, therefore, can shine in front of the others and show that she is, indeed, more intelligent than him. However, I do believe her deep-rooted insecurity stems from the fact that feels less intelligent than Pat. I believe Meg’s image is very important to her. She wants everyone in the house to know she is the boss and wears the pants. It is important to Meg that she exerts her power over Pat. She uses the tactic of humiliation in order to show the others that she is the one in control.

Tonight’s rehearsal was not only informative to me as the character of Meg, but also in my own abilities as an actress. Having to write blocking and, at the same time, act and get off book are difficult tasks for any performer. This always seems to be the most nerve-wracking stage for me. Rehearsing in Room 107 with the limited resources we have, makes it difficult for me to visualize all the different places on stage. I had the same problem when I was working on *Lost in Yonkers* when Luke Yankee would try to describe the different rooms just by the tape markings on the floor. Hopefully I will feel much more comfortable when we move into Thurber and there is some sort of set for me.
to visualize exactly where I am going. I am enjoying this production and will be more confident once I am off book and have the rehearsal tape from Phil Thompson.

**Wednesday, January 19, 2000**

This afternoon we had vocal class with Phil Thompson and he played us some tapes from an Irish radio program called *Father Ted*. Some of the samples from this were extremely entertaining. Phil impressed upon us today the use of pitch variety and our head voices. I, particularly, need to breathe between all my words in order to create an authentic Irish dialect. Phil was in attendance last night for a brief while to watch parts of our rehearsal. One word he told me to work on was cigarettes, to emphasize the ‘R’ and overall that was his general note. Unfortunately, I have been working on emphasizing my ‘Rs’ for the past three years. Other words were: duty (juty), hanged (anged), I.R.A. (Oye), R.A), decent (daysent).

Some of the entertaining samples from the tape were words such as bastard and arse. I thought this was a productive class today in order for us to hear an authentic Irish dialect being done by an Irishman. Phil has been helpful in this process and he is still working on developing a tape for Carrie Bradac and myself with him reading our lines. I feel bad that Carrie and I have been badgering Phil about this tape. I think we are both feeling tentative about getting off book until we have a rehearsal tape for this Irish dialect. It is difficult to learn lines in a certain rhythm and then have to change it.

This afternoon Carrie and I worked with Nina Couch on dancing. I find this process intimidating considering dancing is not my forte. (Later, Christina Sidebottom was helpful in identifying the problems I was having with some minor steps.) Overall
this was a very good rehearsal. Nina went through this process with both Carrie Bradac and myself since we have a dance sequence together in Act One. Bruce attended rehearsal to decide the length of this piece. I was more confident about the sequence by the time rehearsal ended.

At rehearsal this evening we worked again on Act One. We were able to run the entire act and I was more confident this evening in my abilities to remember blocking. Before rehearsal I spent approximately half an hour going over the blocking we did the previous evening in order to make sure I was on task for this rehearsal. Overall, I would say today was a productive day in terms of doing vocal and dance work for The Hostage. I am finding Nina Couch and Phil Thompson to be invaluable resources in this production in order to achieve both of these goals.

**Thursday, January 20, 2000**

This afternoon Carney and I worked together for about two hours on our audition monologues for *King Lear* and our lines in *The Hostage*. Since we have still not received the tape from Phil Thompson, I am beginning to become nervous about getting off book. I was glad to know that Carney has been just as concerned as I have been. I enjoyed working with Carney this afternoon. I would say that over the last three years Carney has been invaluable in terms of breaking down dialogue, especially when working on Shakespeare. Carney has a good ear and insight into this material. He was also very encouraging. I realized how much I value having him as a fellow student in this program.

At tonight’s rehearsal we began to block Act Two. The character of Meg doesn’t appear much in this act, at least early on, but she is still part of the action. It was nice
tonight to be mostly an observer. The undergraduates were wonderful, especially Gordon Holey, Tom Greer and David Price. I was impressed with all their performances. I believe this is going to be an entertaining show. In part this is because everyone is enthusiastic about the work. Bruce has set up a relaxed atmosphere in which we can all feel creative. I am especially appreciative, considering some of the other experiences I have had at O.S.U. in which the directors were more result-oriented. Bruce allows us to experiment during rehearsals and encourages risk-taking. It has been a freeing experience to create a character without feeling the director is a critic.

This afternoon I had my first fitting for Meg. Aimee Greer did a wonderful job of creating the body for Meg. I was amazed at how large she is going to be. When I viewed myself in the mirror I actually believed in this character. I think this is going to be an invaluable resource for me in exerting Meg’s power. Meg has tremendous power, which is emphasized in the fact that she is a large woman. The suit also expresses Meg’s sexuality. In this respect, I mean she is someone to be reckoned with. I think she is sexually appealing because she is so voluptuous. It was definitely a defining moment for me to see this character actually come alive before my eyes.

I believe of all the shows I have done here at O.S.U., The Hostage has not only been challenging but enjoyable. In reflecting on my last three productions here, I am amazed how privileged I have been to play so many diverse characters. While having my fitting today I recalled playing the characters of Lubov, Lorraine, Bella, Hannah and now Meg. I have portrayed a span of characters from all different walks of life. How wonderful to be in school and to be fortunate enough to play so many wonderfully rich characters.
Friday, January 21, 2000

In tonight's rehearsal we finished blocking Act Two. I cried today at home because of the stress I was under. I was relieved, but saddened, to find that Carrie was crying at rehearsal. I guess we were feeling overwhelmed. We have been upset because we feel insecure with the dialect and, in general, overwhelmed in school. Although our class load appears to be lighter these days, the roles we have chosen as thesis pieces are very demanding. I am enjoying working on this show. It is challenging, however, to be rehearsing so often. We rehearse three days a week from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and then again at 6:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. It is difficult to find time with our journal writing, learning lines, dialect work, singing and dancing. I don't think any of us realized the challenges involved in these roles. I don't regret choosing Meg as my thesis piece; I just feel overwhelmed with the demands. This has been an especially challenging week, considering we are all stressed with auditions for King Lear. Carney has his heart set on playing Kent and has been primarily focusing his attention on his audition. I have been stressed from working with students on auditions. I have worked with ten students this week from half an hour to forty-five minutes each. I enjoy this work and find it beneficial to me as a teacher. It is valuable to me as an actor as well to be involved in this process; however, it involves much of the time I should be using to write. I want my students to feel confident and to be prepared for these auditions. I realize how important it is for them to appear professional and to have the chance to be cast within the department. As much as this may have distracted me from working on Meg these past couple of days, I feel confident that I made the right choice to work with my students.
Saturday, January 22, 2000

Today were the auditions for King Lear. In the first audition Carrie Bradac played Regan, Jessica Morgan played Cordelia and I auditioned as Goneril. Phil gave me an excellent note in this audition, which was to use my head voice in order to create Goneril’s character. This was an excellent note because I could also apply it to the character of Meg when using the Irish dialect. I need to use more of my head voice on stage and Phil reminding me within the audition to do so was an important note to myself. The second time I auditioned, I was Goneril, Carrie Bradac Cordelia, and Robin Gordan Regan. Sue gave me an excellent note: to have Goneril profess her love for Lear not having “got the memo” she was going to be asked this question. This enabled me to find Goneril’s naiveté by fumbling her lines in order to create a character that is confused.

I also ran into Joy Reilly today and we discussed The Hostage briefly. Joy and I decided that we would make an appointment to discuss this further. Joy had played Meg in The Hostage under Rex McGraw’s direction. I like Joy Reilly and respect her. I am glad she is going to take the time to talk to me about her process in this role. I also spoke to Joy about a student of mine, Joey Schultz, who had an audition for Joy for Viet Rock. I informed her that I had worked with him privately and he is quite talented and was just nervous about the audition. In working with my students, I realized how nervous I get within the audition process. I concentrated today on listening to the notes that were given to me in the audition by both Phil and Sue, and to relax. I enjoyed reading with Jon Farris. How wonderful it is to work with these guest artists. I am looking forward to him playing King Lear. He reacts in such a beautiful manner. He listened to each and every
one of us and to react honestly to what we were saying. He was also encouraging and supportive of our work. I am excited that we have someone of his experience in this production from whom we can learn. I am also excited for Sue to work with him again because I realize that this role is Lear is demanding and she has someone quite talented who will be able to handle this role. Overall, I was pleased with the auditions today and I felt more relaxed than I had been in the past. It was nice that Sue had pulled me aside to give me a note about Goneril not getting the memo and, therefore, helped me create a character within the audition. It was also nice to hear Carrie Bradac and Robin Gordon read. They are both fine actresses and I hope both of them will be cast in these roles. I felt today was productive and, although I couldn’t spend a lot of time thinking about the character of Meg, it was fortunate that I ran into Joy Reilly who reminded me that I still need to concentrate on this role.

**Sunday, January 23, 2000**

We rehearsed today from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. We worked on blocking Act Three. Although my character has less to do in this act, it is an important act within the play. I realize that Meg is becoming more and more intoxicated as the night goes on, and she is getting tired. She also becomes much more confrontational with Pat and Miss Gilchrist. I attempted today to start the cat-fight in Act Three, which Bruce had discussed in the rehearsal process. However, I did take it a bit too far by thinking it was to be a physical altercation. I soon learned Bruce had something different in mind, which I think will play a lot better. Meg is just going to verbally confront Miss Gilchrist and berate her in
front of the others on stage to humiliate her. I had the impression that it was going to be a physical fight but I am glad to know it is only a verbal cat-fight.

I was tired in today's rehearsal. This has been a long week for me. As I said, working with students on audition pieces, having to do the third chapter of my thesis, and also auditioning made this a long, difficult week. However, I did feel that today's rehearsal was productive. I was pleased to know that we have finally finished blocking Act Three. In fact, we are practically completed with blocking the entire play, which is a tribute to Bruce as a director. I am starting to find the character of Meg and understand why she is so confrontational. I believe Meg is a heavy drinker and, not only that, but is a person who holds a lot of anger within herself. Meg is a woman to be reckoned with and the other characters seem to be her pawns and victims of whatever mood suits her. I especially enjoyed the scene in which Meg and Pat have a confrontation about him telling stories with all the wrong facts. This is something that Meg does throughout the entire play but in Act Three, she really lays into him for this behavior.

It had been a real pleasure to work with Jessica, Carney, and Carrie in this production. I enjoy the scenes that I am getting to play with each of them and find it so easy to develop Meg working in these scenes. They are gracious actors, focused, and care about the work. This was an interesting rehearsal in terms of my finding the drunkenness of Meg, not only physically, but also in her manner. Meg becomes boisterous and opinionated in this act. She also starts to dwell on the past a bit herself, by singing about her mother. She becomes infuriated with Miss Gilchrist for making fun of her pain. I believe Meg is haunted by the past but, unlike Pat, she refuses to dwell or obsess about it. Meg is someone who sticks to the facts. If Pat deters from those facts or
tries to alter what happened in the past, Meg becomes infuriated. I believe the comfort she has in the past is based on knowing the facts. Therefore, she expects everyone to remember it in detail and not to embellish on what happened. She especially becomes angry with Pat because he uses his war stories to entertain and does not stick to the facts. Overall, today’s rehearsal was quite productive. I am excited that we are finally done blocking and can start delving into the work. I also spoke to Phil Thompson and he is going to make the tapes this weekend that Carrie and I need for our roles. I appreciate him taking the time to read our lines for us in the Irish dialect. I know this will be of immense help to me in order to learn my lines. I need to be precise in learning this Irish dialect correctly the first time. Having Phil make a tape for me, reading my lines, will help me to do this.

Bruce gave us some general notes tonight after rehearsal. He impressed upon us that all the exits and entrances we make on the stage have to be bursting with energy. He said that next week will be a good opportunity for us to delve deeper into the work. We have blocked most of Act Three and only have the final scene to block with the chorus, which we will do tomorrow evening. He also impressed upon us that we have to think of everything in actions. What am I doing? What do I want? What strategies am I going to use? What are my tactics? How am I going to get there? These are things that he wants us to concentrate on. Considering that we will have the entire play blocked tomorrow night, it is time we think about our actions in every moment in the play. I believe that, at this stage in the rehearsal process, Bruce’s notes are valid. I, personally, have been starting to score my script. I see the importance for us to identify our strategies, actions
and tactics, moment to moment in the work. Overall, I felt Bruce's general notes were valid and important for all of us to work on.

**Monday, January 24, 2000**

At tonight's rehearsal we worked with Rick Williams and the choral pieces. Rick is back in attendance at rehearsals now that his production with the Music Department is over. I worked with him on *Easter Week*, which appears in Act Three. Rick was able to raise the song by one octave, which is much better for my vocal range. I am much more comfortable singing in a minor key as opposed to a major. Rick has a wonderful ear and is able to transpose music on the spot. This is something that is absolutely invaluable to me at this point in the rehearsal process.

Also tonight we blocked the final scene in Act Three. The chorus was in attendance and it was exciting to have everyone on stage at once for the raid. Bruce began blocking the scene after the chorus rehearsal. Carney and I had business of moving the piano around which was a lot of fun. We will actually be moving it in a full circle on stage while we are trying to hide behind it. What I gained from tonight's rehearsal was that we are becoming an ensemble. I see that everyone at rehearsal is working together and enjoying themselves. This was a goal of Bruce's when we began rehearsal and I think it is one that he has achieved. He has a relaxed attitude that everyone seems to appreciate. I am pleased we have finished blocking the entire show. I am finally comfortable rehearsing in Room 107. However, I do look forward to working in Thurber Theatre. It is important that we get into Thurber as soon as possible in order to gauge everyone's vocals and singing ability in the space. Tonight, we worked with
Rick on the songs, I could hear that we were not as loud as we need to be once we get into Thurber. It seems that the soloists are loud in volume but that some of the choral members are weak. I am excited about the singing and the dancing in this production. It is flashing me back to when I did musical theatre. If I have gained anything from being in *The Hostage* and playing Meg, it is this love of getting on stage and singing again. I look forward to this challenge, even though I am a bit intimidated by it. It has given me the courage to consider auditioning for musical theatre once I graduate.

**Tuesday, January 25, 2000**

Today we rehearsed Act One with the chorus. I had my heavy body suit on for Meg tonight. I felt I had much more grasp of the character wearing this heavy body. It was nice that Bruce commented that he could see a big change in my physicality just by wearing this suit. I definitely felt more empowered as Meg and her stature was more developed and present on stage. I also began to branch out a bit when I was singing the songs. I felt more comfortable interacting with the characters on stage now that I have them memorized. Overall, tonight’s rehearsal served me to feel more confident in my movement on stage and vocals. I am beginning to get a better grasp of the dialect now that Phil Thompson has made a tape for me. This afternoon I practiced working with the tape and I feel more confident in reading my lines aloud. The tape demonstrated the nuances that need to be included in this Irish dialect. I feel that Meg is becoming much more crude, loud and boisterous through my vocal and movement work. I believe this is due to the dialect work and having Act One pretty much to memory.
It was fun to have the choral members involved in the action of the play and reacting to what we were doing on stage. I am appreciative that we are at this stage in the process. I believe this is largely due to the fact that the choral members are now involved in the process, dancing and interacting with us on stage. My goal for this coming week is to be off book by the time we have our first run-through on Sunday. I have been trying to delegate my time in order to rehearse with Carrie and Carney to get off book. Hopefully, I will achieve my goal on Saturday when I have the day to myself in order to rehearse. I find that, although reading with others helps me to get off book, it is important to work alone to achieve an amount of success on this dialect. My greatest challenge at this stage in my rehearsal process is to commit my lines to memory and, in doing so, remember them with the nuances of the Irish dialect.

Bruce gave us some general notes tonight after rehearsal. The first note he gave us was that he appreciates all our enthusiasm in this production. However, we need to be careful about stepping over one another's lines. This is something that he has mentioned to us before in rehearsal but now that we have the chorus involved in the process it is important that everyone is aware of who is speaking and when. His overall general note was that we all need to listen to one another closely and not to create business or ad-lib. This only takes focus from the person speaking on stage. I felt these were important notes considering we now have the entire cast involved in the process. There seems to be chaos on stage with everyone reacting as loud as they are. Although this is encouraging to us as principal performers in the production, it is a deterrent to the audience as to where they should keep their focus. I agreed with Bruce's general notes and I believe as we become more aware of one another, this will be achieved.
Wednesday, January 26, 2000

Tonight we worked with the chorus, implementing them into Act Two. I had my full body suit on tonight. I could feel a real difference in Meg, having not only the lower area of her body but also huge breasts. I must admit this is a bit heavy to wear and it concerns me how hot I will feel in the costume once we get on stage. I found myself perspiring in the rehearsal process because of the added weight. However, I am pleased with the difference it makes in my character’s believability, not only to myself but to everyone else.

Tonight’s rehearsal went well in that we were able to run through the entire act twice. In Act Two Meg does not appear often. This will be my down time as an actress in order for me to regain focus and come in full blast in Act Three. In this act Meg really berates Pat in front of the others. In Act Two my action is to serve more as a choral member than as a principal player. I have some brief scenes with Teresa and Pat but overall Meg appears only briefly in this act. I thought tonight’s rehearsal was productive in terms of looking at my lines and watching the action taking place by the other performers. I was able to engage in watching the action on stage and appreciate the fine work of the other performers. I especially enjoyed the scenes between David Price and Carrie Bradac. Their characters seem to be the only real people within this play, especially Carrie’s role of Teresa. She has brought a real honesty and believability to this young, naive woman. By watching this act, I was able to understand how important it is for Pat and Meg to be more exaggerated than the other characters in the play. Much of the humor and comedy fall on our characters. Carney and I are walking that fine line of how to achieve believability within these exaggerated, “over-the-top” characters. Carney
and I have discussed at length how hard it is to look at the audience and say lines, to
genuinely treat the audience as if it was another member the cast. In my research on Joan
Littlewood I remember distinctly how important it is that the audience feels included as a
character in the play. It should be a natural event for us to turn around and blatantly say a
line to them. This is something Bruce wants even more from Carney and myself. He
would like us to give the bulk of our lines to the audience as opposed to saying them to
one another, unless they have to be directed towards each other. This has been a
challenging aspect of this play and it also flashes me back to doing musical theatre. It
seems that in musical theatre, as well as in Shakespeare, that asides to the audience are
common. However, this is something that I haven’t done in a long time and I am only
recently starting to feel comfortable with it. These asides to the audience are important.
However, the most important aspect of them is that they are believable.

Thursday, January 27, 2000

Tonight we worked with the chorus blocking Act Three. We all had tremendous
fun tonight during the raid scene which happens at the end of the play. I appreciate that
Bruce opened the door for us to give input on scenes. For example, when we had the
raid, Bruce had asked us what we thought about everyone going behind the piano to hold
up their searchlights. I was glad that I felt comfortable enough to let him know what I
thought would work and was pleased that it was something he could use. This is a
wonderful trait in a director and something that I have dearly missed in the passed two
years. The last experience I remember like this was when I was the associate director
with Rex in The Man Who Came to Dinner. Rex was quite generous in the same way
letting me contribute ideas while we were working on the production. Again, I think it is wonderful that Bruce has taken ideas that not only I have thought of, but everyone working in the show. This demonstrates that Bruce does not have a tremendous ego and that he wants this to be a successful production. He realizes we have all worked before and may have things to contribute to this process. It was nice that Sue Ott Rowlands came to watch a portion of our rehearsal. She thought we were having a tremendous amount of fun and she, indeed, was right. This show is tremendous fun for all who are involved. It is a humorous piece with constant action. I did not have my bodywear tonight as it is being fixed by the costume studio. I missed the body suit and I realize how much it influences the physicality of Meg.

This was a successful rehearsal for all of us because we were able to make this raid come alive. This was something I had concern about when reading the play since it is a chaotic scene. I have to say that Bruce did an excellent job of defining the script and bringing it to life. I think this was a challenging task for any director to have to do, considering the fact that Behan’s stage directions are vague. The dialogue within this raid scene is fractured. Many of the characters are talking at one another in a chaotic fashion, making it difficult for the audience to make sense of what is happening until Leslie is found dead on the floor. I believe this was probably the biggest challenge Bruce had in directing this play and I must say that he was successful. Of all the shows I have worked on here at O.S.U., this has been the most enjoyable. I am so happy that I will be ending my school year working with Bruce Hermann and Sue Ott Rowlands in production. They are faculty members with whom I feel comfortable and I am impressed

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with their skills. I feel honored that I am playing Meg in *The Hostage* and will be playing Goneril in *King Lear* in the Spring Quarter.

**Friday, January 28, 2000**

This afternoon Carrie and I had rehearsal with Bruce Hermann on Act One. The scene we worked on takes place in the hostage’s bedroom. Bruce wanted to time how long it would take Carrie to put the sheets on the hostage’s bed. Bruce had provided some linens that he had brought from home and we were able to time out how long this would take Teresa to do. Carrie and I worked with Bruce for about half an hour this afternoon and we were able to accomplish this task.

At tonight’s rehearsal we worked with Rick Williams on our solo pieces. I was glad to do this considering that we haven’t been able to rehearse *Easter Week*, the song Meg sings in Act Three. Rick was able to identify the problem I am having with the song. He said everyone is stamping their feet too loudly on stage. He talked to Bruce about quieting the chorus while I am singing and he also slowed down the piece so that I could keep up with him on the piano. Then we worked with Bruce individually on scenes. I worked with Bruce on the scene that takes place in Act One with Rio Rita and Mr. Mulleady leaving to go upstairs after I have yelled at the two of them for causing trouble in the house. Then Bruce had us rehearse the scene with the chorus. Tonight’s rehearsal ended about 8:30 p.m. Bruce realized we were all tired and allowed us to go home early.
My body suit has still been in the costume studio getting repaired. I am hoping I will have it back by Monday in order to get used to working in it. Overall, tonight’s rehearsal was brief, however, it was important that we were able to clean up these scenes.

Saturday, January 29, 2000

Tonight Carrie Bradac came over for dinner and we tried to help each other get off book. We worked for about four hours this evening reading lines with one another. It is wonderful to have such a good friend with whom to rehearse. My goal this weekend was to get off book and I am glad to see that I have been able to achieve that. However, tomorrow we are having a full run-through of the entire play and I am hoping that I will retain most of what we worked on this evening. In addition, I worked with the tape that Phil Thompson gave me. I am finding this tape beneficial in creating the Irish dialect for the role of Meg. I believe of all the tasks I have in this thesis role, creating the Irish dialect will be the most challenging.

Sunday, January 30, 2000

Today we had our first run-through of the entire play and I was pleased that I retained most of what Carrie and I rehearsed on Saturday night. I feel a lot more confident being off book. It was also beneficial to have an entire run-through with the chorus. Considering we don’t open for another three weeks, I think we are at a decent stage in this process. For our first run-through it was quite a success. Tomorrow we have our first showing for the designers and, again, this will be an entire run-through of
the play. It will be nice to have an audience come in and see the work we are doing. I am hoping they will enjoy the play as much as we enjoy doing it.

After rehearsal, Seth Stout, Carrie Bradac and I went to see Angela’s Ashes. I had a great appreciation for this film, especially working on Meg in The Hostage. Angela’s Ashes takes place in the same period of time that The Hostage does. Although Angela’s Ashes was quite a serious piece compared to The Hostage, I gained valuable information about this time period. The film was enlightening also in terms of dialect. Seth, Carrie and I found ourselves, at times, speaking aloud from the film words that we use in The Hostage. I think tonight was a successful way for us to do research in an entertaining form. Angela’s Ashes is a film based on Frank McCourt’s novel about growing up in Ireland in the early 1950s. This film had a strange impact on me in the way it depicted the poverty in Ireland during this period. The characters in the film, although quite serious in nature as compared to those in The Hostage, face the same challenges, including dealing with the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Prisoners’ Aid Society. There were scenes in the film that showed how the Irish resented these aid societies. However, they needed them because they weren’t able to get jobs during this horrendous time in Ireland. Although the film was depressing in its content, I did find it valuable as research for working on the role of Meg in The Hostage. I can understand why some women during this period resorted to prostitution. In the film the main character’s mother had been abandoned by her husband and was left with four children. Unlike Meg, she did not resort to prostitution, but she did live in a home where she was forced to have intercourse with the man in order to provide a home. I enjoyed this film and I am glad we had the opportunity to see it.

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Monday, January 31, 2000

Again, we did a run-through tonight of the entire production. Phil Thompson was in attendance. Some of the general notes that Phil gave us were quite valuable. He told us all to do sound checks once we get into Thurber Theatre. He asked that the graduate students sit in the audience to listen and check volume for one another. He also instructed us to take bigger breaths on entrances and exits on stage. At this stage in our dialect work, Phil suggested we should all do a bit less. He said we now have a real grasp of the language, and need to do less in order to be understood.

Tonight's rehearsal was quite long. However, I was glad that I had the body suit to work with. I am much more comfortable wearing this suit. In addition, I am finding playful things to do with it. For instance, in the scenes between Mr. Mulleady and Miss Gilchrist, I was able to flaunt Meg's body and her sexuality. Meg is crude and flagrant with her sexual innuendoes in this production. She enjoys ridiculing Mr. Mulleady for his sexual inadequacies and desires. What was effective about using the suit in these scenes was demonstrating how Meg is quite proud of her huge breasts and voluptuous body.

The notes that Bruce gave us after the run-through this evening were quite helpful. For instance, the note he gave me in the scenes between Teresa and Meg is to sit further down on the bed in order not to block Carrie. In addition, Meg should enter the room knowing what Teresa and Leslie have been doing. In fact, he says it is this knowing quality of Meg's that provokes Leslie to ask her questions about his fate. This is because Meg seems to know all that goes on in the house and Leslie assumes that Meg will have answers for him. I felt this was an important note and is in accordance with
Meg's character. Meg is the one in control in the home and, therefore, is most likely to have the answers Leslie needs. Within the scene, Meg sings Easter Week, trying to explain to Leslie what has happened to the Irish over the past decade. It is because of this conversation with Leslie that she is provoked to sing this song. This is an instance within the play that Meg flashes back to her own past and what she has seen happen in Ireland. For instance, she speaks about an old woman who was found abandoned in her room with her son's helmet and gas mask still on the wall after he died fighting on the Somme. Meg tells Leslie about this image because it reflects what has happened to the Irish after the rising.

Meg is passionate in Easter Week. As an actress I am finding it difficult to project the song. It is a chant, which is unfamiliar to me. I have sung in musicals before, however chanting is quite different. Enunciating my vowels and consonants becomes imperative because the song does not have a lyrical sense to it. Rick and Phil both gave me a wonderful note of not pushing from my neck. I believe I am pushing this song vocally because it is a passionate number in the play. Bruce told me several times this is the most important song within the play because it tells the tales of what has happened to the Irish people. It is quite challenging to find the passion Meg feels within this brief scene with Leslie. This has been intimidating for me as an actress, considering the dialogue is brief before the song. What I have been using is the fact Meg doesn't often talk about the past. Therefore, when Meg does sing about the Easter Rising, she confronts her own demons about what has occurred in Ireland. Rick suggested that I take my time with this piece. He has changed the key several times, since that it was originally written in a very low octave. However, it is still not in my vocal range so I
have been struggling with creating a passionate image and, at the same time, worrying about how I am sounding. I am quite intimidated singing this song and it will be my ultimate challenge within the show.

Tuesday, February 1, 2000

Bruce gave us general notes tonight before we had rehearsal. The only note he gave me was to come up the stairs earlier in Act Two when I find Teresa and Leslie in the hostage’s room. He also told me that he enjoys hearing Carney and I sing *Laughing Boy*. Last night’s rehearsal was long and difficult. We ran Act One and afterwards we went back to clean up some of the scenes. Carney and I were quite tired at this point in the process. We rehearsed two scenes for about an hour and a half after we ran Act One.

During this rehearsal I realized how demanding Act One is on all of us. There is much physicality within the act and also a lot of singing. Carney and I have most of our dialogue in Act One. The scenes between Pat and Meg are difficult in terms of memorization. Although both Carney and I are off book, it is difficult to follow the conversations within the script. Behan jumps around in the script and has Meg and Pat repeating the same things over but in different ways. Tonight’s rehearsal was taxing because of the physical demands and singing. Most of the cast members I spoke with after rehearsal commented that they didn’t find this a productive evening because we were all tired. It is challenging to maintain the high energy of these exaggerated characters when we are going back over scene work. These characters demand high energy because they are bigger than life.
I am finding more playful moments within the play. I have been working on clearly expressing Meg's sexuality. Bruce's overall note for us was to be on the rampage with the sexuality. Actually, he stated that this play is about sex, sex, sex, sex! I think this is apropos considering the fact that the play takes place in a brothel and the jokes contain much sexual innuendo. However, what has been challenging to me as an actress is to express the sexuality through my lines and Meg's body. For instance, when Mr. Mulleady comes downstairs in Act One after being called down by Meg, she questions him as to why he has brought another whore into the house. She states, "What does she have that I haven't got?" In order to be playful, I pull at my breasts and shove them in Mr. Mulleady's face. I believe this expresses the crudeness of Meg's sexuality.

We need to do either a run-through at rehearsal or just scene work. The combination of both seems to be taxing on us as performers. I understand Bruce's need to have this work done within the rehearsal process. However, to do a run-through and then do scene work is quite demanding, considering the fact that we are all students and have long school days. I was spent and Carney was also having difficulties. After rehearsal we discussed that the problem may have been that a run-through after a vocal warm up had really taxed us both. This rehearsal demonstrated how demanding this character will be to portray every evening on stage. Therefore, it is important to keep my concentration within rehearsal and to conserve energy when I can. This flashes me back to playing Fiokla in The Marriage. When Anatoly directed, he was helpful in teaching us how to create big, broad, energetic characters. Fiokla would run on and off stage with high energy. I discovered through that play when to exert energy and when to conserve it. After last night's rehearsal, I realize that Act Two will be my down period. Therefore,
I can conserve energy to come in full blast in Act Three when Pat and Meg really go at each other.

**Wednesday, February 2, 2000**

This afternoon we had rehearsal with Bruce. Carrie, Carney and I rehearsed for about forty-five minutes. This became a bit tedious considering we have gone over these scenes several times in these afternoon rehearsals. Since there are only four of us in this class, there are not many scenes for us to work on together. I don’t know how productive these afternoon rehearsals will become within the next several weeks, considering we have done most of the work. However, we cleared up some of the blocking between the three of us in Act One. Unfortunately, the scene that we worked on was only several pages long. I hope in the next few weeks we will be able to cut down on these afternoon rehearsals. Personally, I have attended every single one of them, which makes sense since Meg is the only character who appears with Teresa, Miss Gilchrist or Pat. Therefore, I have been getting quite tired having to rehearse two hours every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and then go into the rehearsal process for another four hours. I am hoping that once we go into production we won’t need to work on any more scenes from the play.

At tonight’s rehearsal we worked on Act One. Rick and I were able to work on Easter Week. Although Rick is doing all he can to help, this song is still difficult for me. Again, we had to change the key of the song and work out blocking. Rick had some thoughts about how to project the song. For instance, whenever I have to sing, he thinks it best that I stand still. Therefore, when I do walk it should be on the music between
each verse. Rick suggested this because the song is a chant and the volume is very important. Considering that it is out of my vocal range, it is important for me to stand still and use my diaphragm while singing. I am glad Rick and I had the opportunity to work on the song alone. The warm-ups we do every night before the show don’t give us the opportunity to work together.

Since Bruce did not need me, except to work on a couple of scenes in Act Two, I suggested to Rick that perhaps we could use that time to work together. I am feeling insecure about this number considering that the whole chorus is going to be stomping while I am singing and the piano is at full volume. Rick understands the constraints I am under with this number and has been supportive in telling the cast that they have to be aware of how loud they are stomping. I felt tonight’s rehearsal went a lot better than the previous evening. I think Bruce realized that we are all tired and his frustration is coming out of having to work with the chorus and implementing them into the scene work. Therefore, I could understand why he has become a bit frazzled having to work in Room 107. I believe at this stage in the process we need to be working in Thurber Theatre. Hopefully next week we will be able to do that.

Thursday, February 3, 2000

Tonight’s rehearsal was difficult for me. In fact, I think it was perhaps the most difficult night I have had during this whole process. I became a bit annoyed tonight because I felt that Bruce was not being direct in giving notes. I understand the pressure a director is under when having to work in a small space and directing approximately twenty-five people. However, I was embarrassed to discover that although Bruce has
been giving us general notes, one of them was specifically directed at me. He had not made this clear, and I had no idea that his general note about not putting “ohs” in front of lines was meant for me. He seemed annoyed that I was doing this and actually said, “I have counted that you have done this fifteen times tonight, Carole.” I want to make it clear that I didn’t mind the criticism; it was that I felt hurt that he couldn’t have told me directly I was doing this. I realize that part of being an actress is that we are quite sensitive about the work. I feel I have been working hard this week and I am tired. This has been a difficult week for me personally as well. Therefore, I think I may have been over-sensitive about Bruce’s reprimanding me in front of the cast.

In addition, he told me that I had been sitting improperly for the character of Meg. Again, I became upset. However, I was able to use this in the work in order to do the attack scene towards Pat in Act Three. Upon reflection, I understand that Bruce is also becoming frustrated because Act Three has not been working ever since we incorporated the chorus. There are too many people talking on stage and doing business now. However, I must admit that I was disappointed and did take it personally.

I have been working to put this aside and realize that this has been a difficult week for all of us. Although I understand this was not personal, I would like to talk to Bruce. I want him to know he can tell me whatever he needs about my work and that this role is important to me. I feel I have been putting a great amount of work into this role, and I want him to feel comfortable in telling me if he is dissatisfied with anything I am doing. I believe that Bruce is a good director and will understand why I have become frustrated. I also realize this is part of the work and that we all need to put aside the personal in order to be productive. This is something I have had to do numerous times as
an actress, not only here at O.S.U. but in other productions. In addition, I have sat on the other side of the table as a director. I think this was important for me tonight, not only as an actress, but as someone who wants to direct. I realize that we are all working with human beings. As a director, I not only have to be aware of how I phrase things and people's feelings, but that it is also important to recognize that the work does come first.

I hope it doesn't sound as thought I am venting about Bruce because that is not my intention at all. I have a great respect for what he is doing. I realize how hard he has been working. I just thought it was important to note that I had to put aside my own insecurities, ego and address this issue. I realize that I need to communicate when I am feeling uncomfortable. I hope at some point I will be able to discuss this incident with Bruce and clarify that I want him to feel that he can give me any notes he needs to and that I will work on them to the best of my ability. Tonight was difficult, not only for myself but for others. In talking with some of the other members of the cast after rehearsal, I realize they also felt a lot of tension in Room 107. Perhaps we are all getting quite frustrated having to work in this small space, doing a play that requires such constant conversation and action.

Friday, February 4, 2000

Tonight we did an entire run-through of the play. Bruce called me this afternoon to tell me that we did not have class. I felt that I had my energy focused on this run-through. I felt confident tonight with my work. I especially realized how tiring it is going to be doing this show. In fact, having to sing, dance, and speak with a dialect are all extremely challenging tasks in this production. I am glad we didn’t have rehearsal this
afternoon because I needed my energy to focus on this run-through tonight. I was pleased that we were able to accomplish this run-through without having to stop constantly. This is something I had been concerned about considering the fact that we have just put the chorus in many of the scenes we are working on.

All these wonderful actors and actresses are to be commended for their work. They were committed in these scenes which they have only recently learned. This is a real tribute to the dedication of the undergraduates we have in this department. I have enjoyed worked with the undergraduates the past three years. They have enthusiasm for the work and a dedication that is far above what I have seen in many other programs. The undergraduates in this department are committed in their class work and this is reflected in the rehearsal process. They also have a great enthusiasm for the work which I hope they will never lose.

As I said, this was a successful evening for all of us and I was glad that Bruce released us as soon as the run-through was over. Before that he gave us some general notes. For instance, we all need to listen to one another and make sure we are not stepping on one another's lines. We must react to the jokes on stage, to what people are saying, to the events that are occurring. I think this is something that is quite challenging about this play, not only for people in the chorus but also for us as principal players. We all need to listen and react to one another. If what we are doing on stage is not interesting to one another, I doubt it if will be interesting to the audience. I am taking more risks in this rehearsal by talking to the audience. This is something Bruce has discussed with Carney and I at great lengths. We need to direct more of our lines – actually as much as we possibly can – to the audience. This has been difficult for me to do considering the
fact that we are in constant conversation with one another. Pat and Meg are often debating issues with one another. Therefore, tonight I had to focus on what things I could use as asides to include the audience in these conversations. This has been a challenging task for both Carney and I, and something that I think we are both feeling more at ease with. I was pleased I felt more comfortable interacting with the audience and speaking to them directly.

I do not have rehearsal this weekend, therefore I will be spending the time working on my script. I have been starting to score my script and break down the actions that Meg takes in each moment. This is an important process in writing my thesis. I hope to find the exact terminology which best suits Meg’s intentions moment to moment. I also would like to work on running my lines until they are so in my head that I can say them in my sleep. I am grateful to have this time off because this has been a taxing week. I think, at this stage in the process, it is important that we get into Thurber Theatre. The work we have been able to do in Room 107 is coming to a conclusion.

Monday, February 7, 2000

This afternoon Bruce and I met privately for rehearsal. Bruce has decided that he would like to speak to each of us individually about the process. I was grateful for this time because I was able to talk to Bruce about what had occurred last week and how I had been upset. Fortunately, this is exactly what Bruce discussed with me during this meeting. He talked about how difficult it has been for all of us to be rehearsing in Room 107 and what a frustrating week it had been. He also talked about how he wants us to have an open dialogue. He wants to know when we have comments, not only about the
work going on at rehearsal, but about things that he may say or do that would, indeed, upset us. I thought this was insightful of Bruce to discuss with me. He said he was going to be talking to Carrie, Carney and Jessica this week also. He feels this is our thesis process and he wants us to enjoy it, to feel that we have open communication with one another. I thought this was a wonderful idea at this point in our work. Bruce said we need to get out of Room 107 and get into Thurber Theatre. Room 107 is hot to rehearse in, and there are too many people in there so that we were all getting quite frustrated.

I agreed with Bruce's assessment and talked to him about what I am going through. Bruce was open about telling me about how happy he was with my work as Meg. I was somewhat surprised at this because I have been struggling in this role. Considering that Meg is such a boisterous, loud, huge woman, I feel she may be the furthest character from myself I have played. It was interesting that Bruce said he felt my instincts were right on the money with Meg, that Meg is one who doesn't tolerate pretentiousness or people's bull-shit. Bruce said he feels that I am a direct person, like Meg, and would have low tolerance for games. This was insightful to me as an actress in this role because it gave me something else that is similar between myself and Meg. I was pleased Bruce believes my physicality of this character is working well and that my comical instincts are on the mark. This was something I wasn't confident about last week. Some of the direction Bruce gave was to play extremes. I told him at this point in the process I would like to know what things he feels are working. He understood this would be my concern, considering we only have two and a half weeks before we open. However, he said the direction in which I am taking this character is exactly where he
wants it to go. This relieved my mind a great deal that I am achieving the goals we both seem to have in mind for this character.

I thought about Sue Ott Rowlands while I was speaking to Bruce. I remembered a conversation I had with her last year when I was feeling quite insecure playing Hannah in Angels. Sue had told me that I have good instincts and I need to believe that. I think the conversation I had with Bruce today reaffirmed what Sue told me then. I believe as an actress I need to be more confident in my instincts and believe that I am achieving what I need to do in a role. I need to trust the fact that I am doing the work and the work is showing. Perhaps it is because I have high standards for myself combined with a great amount of self-doubt, that I don't trust my instincts as clearly as other performers. This has been my challenge the past three years in this program. I have come to grips with this and realize that only I can solve it for myself. I have to believe that I put all that I can into a role and that my instincts are there for me to rely on in the process. I believe I have gained more confidence in my abilities having worked in a production every quarter during the past three years. It is because I have always focused my attention on my work and have put the effort into what I do, that I have gained confidence as an actress. However, I will not enjoy this process fully until I trust my instincts more. It is this enjoyment of the work that I look forward to. I don't want to feel that every time I take a role I beat myself up throughout the entire process. Bruce told me that he enjoys the fact that I take risks and explore options. This is something that both Woody King and Luke Yankee commented on when we worked together. Both of these directors pointed out that I was able to explore different choices within the work. I think, at this point, I have to realize that this is an asset and feel comfortable that I am doing the work.
This was an important conversation today and helped me to focus on myself within this process: to evaluate the things I have learned about myself as an actress over the past three years, and to know my challenges, strengths and weaknesses. I appreciate that Bruce realized it wouldn’t do us any good to keep re-hashing scenes during this two-hour period. At this point talking about the work would be more productive. I feel much more confident about my work having talked to Bruce.

Tonight at rehearsal we worked on the raid scene and the fight scene in the beginning of Act Three. Bruce ended rehearsal early because we are still unable to get into Thurber Theatre. Considering I don’t do much in either one of these scenes, there isn’t much for me to talk about. However, I do believe, at this point in time, we need to get into Thurber Theatre and that we are all becoming quite frustrated.

This does not mean to imply that we are frustrated the set is not done. It is just frustrating that we haven’t been able to use the space at this point in our process. I did go in to see the set after rehearsal with Robert Krege. I am impressed with the set Robert has built for this production and I was also amazed at how much it looks like the model. I appreciate Robert’s talents and abilities. It is wonderful that this is his thesis show.

**Tuesday, February 8, 2000**

Tonight we worked in Thurber Theatre on the set for *The Hostage*. We did a run-through of the entire play this evening. I enjoyed working in Thurber Theatre and I instantly felt more comfortable than I have been in Room 107. Bruce even commented to me after rehearsal how he sees my character coming alive in the space. There is a certain level of exaggeration with these characters that can be achieved on this stage. I was
pleased to finally work on the set. Robert has done a wonderful job in recreating this old, deteriorating mansion. The set has quite an imposing presence. It is probably the largest set I have worked on at O.S.U. However, because of the hugeness of the set it allows us to be more exaggerated in our character’s behavior. For instance, I was able to interact more with the audience because there was an actual theatre in which we were working. I was able to direct much more of my dialogue out into the audience now that we are in the space. I also exaggerated more of Meg’s behavioral gestures. For instance, I often smiled, laughed or made faces towards Pat to a larger degree than I had done in Room 107. It is amazing how space can affect a performer. The audience is such an essential character in this play. Being in Thurber emphasizes the fact we have someone to play with and they are indeed a part of the play.

I thought this was a successful run-through. I am more confident in my characterization of Meg now that we are in the space. I am glad Bruce also could see a leap in the interaction Carney and I had with the audience now that we have moved into Thurber. At this point in the process, it was important for us to be on stage using the set. There is a lot of stage business in The Hostage. I discovered on the second level of the set it is important for all of us as actors to enunciate our words, to avoid pushing vocally, and to make sure we have clear diction. It is difficult to be heard from the second level; I had experienced this in undergraduate work. It flashed me back to how important it is when walking or talking on a staircase, to make sure you are not looking down at your feet, to focus out towards the audience and speak to the back of the theatre.
Wednesday, February 9, 2000

Tonight we worked on Act Two of *The Hostage*. I am not in this act much, however I did find the opportunity to work on my lines behind stage. This is important because so much of the dialogue in Act One and Act Three falls between Pat and Meg. Carney and I have been working hard to find the rhythms in our scenes. Since I had some down time in this act, I used the opportunity to re-hash my lines. In Act Two I sing *Easter Week*, which I am becoming much more confident about. Rick was unable to be at rehearsal, however I did sing the song a capella with movement. Since I am singing standing still and moving only on the music between verses, I have much more control over my voice. I have been feeling much more confident in my singing abilities with this song now that I have rehearsed it quite a few times with Rick. Act Two establishes the events that will happen to Leslie in Act Three. The audience learns why the Irish people are angry towards the English and why Leslie has been captured. Although Meg does not appear often in this act, *Easter Week* is an important song, establishing what happened to the Irish during the Easter Rising. It is a passionate song and, therefore, demands a lot of physical and vocal energy in order to achieve this high intensity. I believe that because tonight's rehearsal was in Thurber Theatre, I had much more confidence in singing this song and bringing out the deep emotion associated with it.

I am more confident with my instincts in this role after my conversation with Bruce on Monday, finally immersing myself in this character without feeling the need to critique myself. I am finding the comedy is coming from a space in myself of natural ease. I have always been comfortable doing comedy especially since most of my background has been in musical theatre and I am using that as a way to freely explore the
numerous comical aspects of the play while maintaining authenticity in everything Meg does. I have always believed that comedy is only effective if it comes from something authentic. For example, in Prisoner of Second Avenue, if Jack Lemon hadn’t played Mel as a man who happened to say funny things while having a nervous breakdown, it would not have worked. I have recently seen Jack Lemon in an interview on the Actors’ Studio and he said that Mel’s breakdown had to be serious in order to be funny. If you look at Prisoner of Second Avenue it is really a tragedy within a comic situation. Ironically, this is something I had always felt about that role. It made me feel sad when I watched Prisoner of Second Avenue and yet I would find myself laughing. I believe The Hostage is a prime example of this. Meg and Pat are tragic characters who, due to the rat-tat-tat conversation, appear comical. However, if we were just to play the jokes it would be a stand-up comedy act as opposed to a real relationship. It is important in portraying the character of Meg to be aware of her original intent. If it is funny that is a bonus; if not, at least it is honest. Therefore, The Hostage is a prime example of comedy through tragedy.

Thursday, February 10, 2000

Tonight we ran Act Two. Some of the general notes that Bruce gave us before rehearsal were that we need to understand the circumstances in the play and respond to everything in this act because of the hostage being taken. We especially need to respond to the action on stage in our singing and dancing. He also told us that when Pat yells at Miss Gilchrist to drink, everyone needs to pick up their drinks. In this act Meg sings Easter Week. This is the first evening that I have felt confident singing this song. Perhaps this is partly due to the fact that I sang it a capella. Since Rick was unable to
attend rehearsal tonight, we had to sing everything without a pianist. However, I am more confident in the blocking of this number not only vocally but also physically. For instance, when I come down the stairs while singing the first verse, I was able to push forward with my body instead of with my vocals. I realized the most difficult challenge while singing is to express the emotion not only vocally but also physically. I discovered moments when Meg raises her arms and her fists out of passion. 

_Easter Week_ is about the Easter rising that took place in Ireland. This is a wordy song so it is important while I am singing the chorus is careful not to stomp louder than my voice. This is something Rick has worked on with the chorus. If they rush their stomping, I have to rush my singing. Consequently, what happens is that I am being drowned out by the chorus and forced to sing faster. Considering this song is so verbiage, this is a difficult thing for me to do. This was the first night I felt comfortable with the chorus stomping along with my singing because they were much slower in their pace. Although I don't have much to do in this act, this number is an important one and something that has been a great challenge to me. I am glad that at this point in the process it is becoming easier for me to immerse myself in the song. I am slowly becoming comfortable with it not only vocally but also physically. However, I wish it was not a chant and I could sing it in a key that was higher.

**Friday, February 11, 2000**

Tonight we worked on Act Three of _The Hostage_. This is a particularly difficult act for me considering that Pat and Meg really go at one another verbally. I have been implementing the notes I got from Phil Thompson about breathing before each of my
lines in this verbal attack. Therefore, I am finding it helpful in raising my pitch in order
to be heard more distinctly. Phil was in attendance at rehearsal tonight and I felt much
more confident when he said I had a real grasp on the dialect. Phil said he only had a few
notes for me and that the most important one was for me to inhale before my lines which
come up sporadically within the script, in order to keep my pitch high. However, he said,
since I had a real handle on the dialect now, this should be something that will come
easily. I really appreciate having Phil attend these rehearsals because he has some
insightful things for us to work on. I believe at this point in the process it is important to
have Phil there to make sure we are still on task.

Bruce told us tonight that we will not be having rehearsal this weekend. I must
admit that I was quite glad to hear this, as it has been a tiring week. This role demands a
lot of energy physically and at times I have felt quite taxed after rehearsal. I was grateful
to have this weekend off considering that on Monday we will be doing a full run of the
show. Therefore, I can conserve some of my energy to give it my all. I plan to catch up
on my writings for my thesis this weekend. At this point in the process I feel quite taxed
from writing so much about this character. I believe this probably happens to most of us
as graduate students. There seems to be a point when you feel there is nothing more to
write about how you are creating a role. I imagine this is because we are going to open
within a week. I feel that I have done most of the work on the role over the past several
weeks. I realized today that we will have been rehearsing seven weeks by the time the
production opens. This is a luxury that we normally do not get here at O.S.U. It is
something that I feel has been a benefit and yet, having it as my thesis role, has also been
difficult. In terms of constantly critiquing the process we are doing, I feel that there is a

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point when there is not too much new happening as there was early on. I think this is something that Carney, Carrie and I have been experiencing at this point. However, it is nice that I do have this luxury to understand the process I go through in creating a role.

**Monday, February 14, 2000**

Tonight we had crew watch and we did an entire run-through of the show. Phil Thompson was again in attendance and gave us some general notes about breathing. I think perhaps one of the insightful things I have learned through this vocal process is breathing, not only in speaking lines but also in singing. I spoke with Phil after rehearsal and he had several notes for me which he will give me on Wednesday. However, he said that I am doing very well with this Irish dialect and there is not need for me to worry. This was a big relief for me considering that early on in the process this was quite a challenge. I discussed with Phil how I found it beneficial to work with the tape he gave me, and how this is the best way for me to do dialect work.

The run-through went well this evening and Bruce said he would give us notes on Tuesday before rehearsal. I realize at this point how important it is to have an audience. It was nice to have the crew watching us and responding to what we were doing on stage. However, I also realized there is so much action on stage that it is difficult for Carney and I to maintain the audience’s attention while we are speaking. There are people running upstairs, in and out of rooms, and the audience is responding to this. Early on in the day I had spoken to Phil privately and told him that this was a concern. I feel that I have to talk over people in order to be heard. Phil completely understood what I was saying and told me at tonight’s rehearsal he would check to make sure I am being heard. He also told me
not to push and to have a true check of where I am falling vocally. I was glad after rehearsal Phil told me he could hear me “just fine.” The only note he had was to breathe before my lines. I feel like I have been breathing before I say my lines but I guess I have to inhale much more. This was a nice evening for us, having an audience responding to what we were doing. It was also nice to get through the entire show without anyone calling, “Line!”

Tuesday, February 15, 2000

Today I had a costume fitting at 11:30 a.m. It was a great amount of fun to see myself fully dressed as Meg. I am still amazed, when I see myself in the mirror, at being this huge woman. I also found it funny to see myself with a blonde wig. I had a mental image of Meg that is coming closer to the one that I am seeing now. I did see Meg as a huge woman, somewhat tacky in dress and yet quite sexual. I must admit that this Meg is a little more dowdy than the one I had imagined, actually quite eccentric-looking. However, I realized that I could use this within the character because she is a bit eccentric, and an odd ball. These characters are all misfits in society and I think the costume that Tatjana has created reflects that. Meg will be wearing a red, flowery dress and a lot of beads. I think the beads reflect an older woman who is tacky in her choice of jewelry and clothing. It important that Meg has this element of tackiness because she is such an outrageous, bawdy character. I am content with the result and, as I said earlier, am amazed at the fact of seeing myself play such a huge character. Considering my own size, I feel that this is stretch for me, and something I probably would not get to do in the
real world. I would probably not be cast as Meg as producers would be able to get a woman who was larger in size.

I have found at rehearsal that every time I put on this huge body suit, I immediately become hungry. Christina Sidebottom thought I should write about this in my journal, how every night I put the body suit on I feel like I wanted McDonalds. I don’t know if it is something psychological about wearing the large suit that makes me hungry or if it is the fact that I associate food with Meg, but it is something Christina observed as an interesting development with my character.

At tonight’s rehearsal we did scene work. It seemed the notes that Phil made about the actors distracting from Pat and me speaking were taken in by Bruce. I spoke to Bruce before rehearsal tonight and he wanted to clean up the scenes in order for us to be heard. The chorus has been very enthusiastic, however, they have been speaking over a lot of our lines and Bruce wanted to make sure that Carney and I will be heard. I thought tonight’s rehearsal was productive because we cleaned up a lot of sloppiness that was taking place since we have implemented the chorus. I think tonight’s rehearsal was productive considering we are going into tech as of tomorrow and we needed this time to clean up the show. I am looking forward to getting into tech because it has always been a sign to me, as an actress, that we are going to open soon.

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Wednesday, February 16, 2000

This afternoon I met with Phil Thompson to go over some of the notes he took on Monday night. Again, he told me that I have a grasp on this dialect and it is only small
nuances that I need to work on. For instance, I seem to be emphasizing the word “whore” too much. He also said that when I say “decent” I am emphasizing with “daysent” too much. Overall, I would say Phil feels I may be pushing the dialect and now I can pull back. Again, he told me that I need to inhale before my cues and that this will change my pitch. Phil told me not to be concerned about being heard because he was able to understand everything I said on stage. Phil also said that he would be at rehearsal tonight to observe some of the other characters and that we don’t need to work with him again this week because we all seem to be in pretty good shape.

Tonight we had our first technical rehearsal. I actually had a lot of fun tonight doing this tech. Everyone was patient and worked well together. Although techs can be difficult and long, this one seemed to pass quite quickly considering the amount of scenes we have. I felt it was well organized and everyone was on task. Again, I enjoy doing techs because I realize the process is coming to an end and we will be opening soon. I feel confident at this stage that we are ready for an audience and that the work we have done is paying off. Unfortunately, tonight our musical director, Rick, was injured. This was of great concern to everyone, considering that he had injured his shoulder. I hope Rick will be OK and able to perform with us when we open. It actually became a concern for me tonight because I like having Rick as our musical director and feel it would be a loss if he is unable to perform. It is always upsetting to have anyone injured in production. I think this is something that makes us realize that we are all human and must take care of ourselves. Any time someone is injured in production I believe it is a sign that we need to be careful of where we are walking and what we are doing on and off stage. Hopefully, this will not hinder the production. I believe that Rick will be OK.
Thursday, February 17, 2000

Tonight we had our second tech. We were able to get through Act Two and the beginning of Act Three. Techs are always long and tiring. However, tonight’s tech was productive in terms of us getting on our feet for this production. In terms of character work, techs are always difficult. I find in technical rehearsals that the emphasis is not on the actors but on the design of the production in terms of sound and lighting. Therefore, it becomes tedious to jump from scene to scene in order to work on character. However, I am pleased with how the tech rehearsals are going in terms of how fast we are moving along. I was tired at tonight’s rehearsal because I have had a cold. I spoke with Rick (who has returned and is feeling better) about my vocals. He has suggested that I take some decongestants in order to get rid of the congestion I have had. I have taken his advice and I have been on Claritin for the past two days.

Bruce has given us notes again about not speaking over one another’s lines. He said within this tech rehearsal it is important that the chorus does not speak over Carney’s and my lines. I am glad that he said this because several people who have come in to see the process have noted they are having difficulty hearing what is being said on stage. I think it is important at this stage in the process that the chorus knows exactly when and where to come in. They seem to have had problems knowing how much to react to what is happening on stage. By this I mean they are reacting before lines and jokes are being said. I hope after this rehearsal the chorus will be more aware of what the principals are saying on stage and when they should honestly react. I am not implying that the chorus is in any way misbehaving. It is just difficult for them to know how much to react, considering the fact that we have been doing the show for several weeks now. I believe
at this stage in the process we need to have an audience. It seems they are all reacting to
lines being said to which an audience will react to instead. I think once we have an
audience the chorus will not have to work as hard.

Friday, February 18, 2000

Tonight was our last technical rehearsal. We worked on the raid scene before we
started rehearsal this evening. This is a difficult scene in terms of technical design.
There is an explosion in this scene and everyone is running around in the dark. I believe
this will probably be the biggest challenge in our technical rehearsal. We had to do it
several times in order for it to work. I think everyone was very patient tonight at this
technical rehearsal. I believe everyone is working hard to make this fun. Most of us
were joking with one another and were able to laugh at how long the process has been
taking. I must admit that I think the technical staff has done a wonderful job of making
this an easy process, and we were all relaxed and able to enjoy ourselves. Tomorrow is
our first dress rehearsal. I am looking forward to hopefully running through the entire
production without stopping. At this point in the process it is important for us to be
getting into costume in order to get used to what we are going to look like. I have a great
personal challenge considering the body suit I am wearing and the elaborate jewelry. I
am looking forward to finally taking Meg on stage in full bloom. Therefore, tomorrow’s
rehearsal is important for me in terms of knowing how others are going to react to this
character and if my physicality is believable.
Saturday, February 19, 2000

This afternoon we had our first dress rehearsal, which I feel went quite well. I am glad to finally be in costume and to have had a full run-through of the show. The costumers were quite helpful in terms of make-up and dress. Carney and I rehearsed for about half an hour before rehearsal in order to make sure we were on task with our lines. Carney and I have been having difficulty in Act One with the conversation between Meg and Pat about Monsewer. The lines are repetitive and it is important for both of us to be clear with one another on our cues. The rhythms in this play are difficult and Carney and I have been working hard to keep the pace going. I am finding that when we pick up on cues from one another and delete pauses, the play rhythm flows. I also practiced with Jeremy for about ten minutes on our scene in Act One because our cue pick-ups have been slow there as well. I believe this is happening because there is so much action on stage while the two of us are trying to talk. It is important for us to listen to one another and pick up our cues faster. The challenge of this play is for all of us to listen to one another and react quickly. There are so many people in this play that at times it is difficult to hear one another and to focus on what is being said. I believe this was a productive first dress rehearsal in terms of all of us picking up our cues and reacting.

After rehearsal Bruce gave us some general notes about how the chorus needs to avoid reacting before the punchlines. Apparently this is still happening, and I hope that once we get an audience it will stop. This has been a challenging production considering the fact that there are twenty-three people in the play. I sympathize with the chorus because there are so many of them and it is hard for them to gauge their volume. This is
something I hope will dissipate once we get into production and have an audience reacting to what is being said on stage.

Dennis Parker was kind enough to tell me that he feels I have the physicality and believability of Meg. Dennis said that I am walking from my abdomen and this is working well. He said that heavier people walk a bit slouched and more forward from the abdomen. This, apparently, was playing clearly to him. I respect Dennis Parker very much and was pleased to know that the work I am doing is showing. I used a lot of the props that Tatjana has given Meg, such as a handkerchief, necklace, watch and sweater. I was able to use the handkerchief in order to show the hot climate of this play. Tatjana has told me several times that it is very hot in this mansion and to use the handkerchief when I feel the need. Carrie and I had a nice moment when Meg puts her sweater around Teresa. Tatjana had suggested this because she believes the sweater represents the motherly instinct in Meg. Therefore, she thought it would be a nice touch if I put the sweater around Teresa’s shoulders before I leave in Act Three. This worked well and Bruce commented, how he liked this little touch. I believe it is important to always have good communication with the costumers. They have all worked hard on creating what a character looks like and I think it is an actress’s job to use these costumes and props to the utmost advantage. I was happy that Tatjana felt I was using the costume in the way that she had envisioned it and that there were not any problems with choices I had made. I can’t wait until we are in front of an audience. I believe the problems with the chorus reacting will dissipate once we have an audience. I think at this point in the process we are all becoming a little stale. We are communicating with an audience in an empty auditorium. Therefore, it becomes tedious to speak to an audience when there is none. I
am excited that we are opening in several days and happy that we have two more full rehearsals before we do. At this point to have several run-throughs before we have our opening on Wednesday is important. I am looking forward to opening and can’t wait to see what differences there will be once we have an audience present.

Monday, February 21, 2000

Tonight was our second dress rehearsal. My eyes have been bothering me so I went to the medical center this afternoon. Apparently the glue from the false eyelashes has irritated my skin. The first thing I did this evening was to speak to Tatjana about discontinuing the use of the false eyelashes. It was difficult for me to put on make-up tonight, considering that my skin has been so tender. I am hoping it will clear up before we open on Wednesday. Tatjana was very understanding and insisted I should not wear too much make-up at this stage in order for my skin to heal before we open.

Tonight’s dress rehearsal went well and we all seemed to have more energy. I believe this was the best run we’ve had of the show. Personally, I felt this was an important rehearsal for me in terms of letting go of the notes Bruce has given me, and taking ownership of this role. Tonight I emphasized enjoying the process and having fun with Meg. This is something that is important to me in the process. There seems to be a point where I say, “OK, let’s let go of the director and let me take ownership.” I felt in this dress rehearsal I had accomplished this task and apparently it was seen. Bruce commented that Carney and I had an awful lot of energy and that the production has really taken a big leap for everyone. I know this is an important process two days before we open, to take ownership of a role and enjoy it. I am becoming more confident in my
physicality of Meg and am taking larger physical risks. For instance, in Act One I flaunted Meg’s arse and boobs not only to Milleday but to the audience as well. I am finding that I am moving much more with this body in different terms than I thought I would be. I believe this is because I am letting go of some physical limitations that were imposed by Bruce. Therefore, the rehearsal was an insightful one for me in terms of taking broader physical risks. Both Tatjana and Robert Krege commented about how they could see me using my body more. As I said earlier, I think that at this point in the process we do need an audience and it is important that we have someone to interact with. We are ready to open, we need to open and we all need an audience.

Tuesday, February 22, 2000

This is our final dress rehearsal. Bruce said this evening that we were able to cut twelve minutes off the production from the previous evening. I spoke with Carrie, Jessica and Carney before we had dress rehearsal and all of us agreed we wish we were opening. This is the first production I have worked on at O.S.U. where I felt the need to open before we did. This has been a lengthy rehearsal process and we have needed an audience for the past several nights. However, I was pleased with the overall results of the dress rehearsal and feel we are more prepared than we have been in other productions. I am looking forward to the opening tomorrow night and I hope an audience will give us the enthusiasm we need in order to continue. Opening night is usually the most nerve-wracking night of the whole run for me. I am never comfortable on an opening night because it is the first time of interacting with an audience. Considering that The Hostage relies heavily on audience reaction, this seems to be a challenging element. I plan to
make it my goal to be calm for opening night and confident in the work that I have done. Bruce seems to be confident in what we are doing and feels that we are in a great place to be opening tomorrow night. Therefore, I must trust my director and believe we are ready.

4.4

Wednesday, February 23, 2000

Tonight was opening night of The Hostage. I was extremely nervous even though I had mentally prepared myself. I spent the day relaxing and trying to keep my mind off the fact that this was going to phase me. Overall opening night was a success in terms of us getting through the play and having an audience. It was a bit distracting having the audience because they laughed in places that no one had expected. Therefore, the beginning of the show ran slower than normal because Carney and I had to stop for laughs. Some of the laughter went on for a lengthy period of time. Carney and I needed to gauge when we should come in with our lines. We had a champagne toast after opening night with Robin, Jessica, Michael, Carrie, Carney and myself. This has been a nice way to celebrate the opening of The Hostage and also that we have all completed our thesis roles.

After tonight’s opening Jeremy and I discussed the scene in which I take a broom and stick it up between his legs. This is something we have been trying to work on for the past week. Unfortunately, the timing hasn’t been working to our satisfaction. Tonight before the show Jeremy and I spent time working on this action. Physical comedy is difficult to do, especially when you take a broom and shove it up between a man’s legs. I am quite tentative about doing this because I don’t want to injure Jeremy.
However, he has let me know he is comfortable with what I have been doing and he hasn't been injured. However, we do need to work out the timing in order to get a laugh. Jeremy seemed quite disappointed that we didn't get the expected laugh. Unfortunately, I had told him that you never know when an audience is going to laugh. However, we will perfect this business and find out if it is something that is meant for laughter or not.

We all went out to Burns Pub to celebrate and Phil Thompson was there. He told me I seemed to push my voice in the beginning of the show and to just relax; to realize that my pitch is such that I don't have to put that much effort forward. I told Phil that with an audience reacting, I was afraid Carney and I weren't being heard. He said that he could feel both Carney and I pushing and that at this stage we can just back off, inhale, and let the lines come. Inhaling before speaking is something that I have been working on for the past month. I was pleased Phil said by Act Three he felt we were speaking with such ease that it was not a concern at all. Therefore, I will see on tomorrow's run if this is still a problem. I imagine it was just my opening night jitters. I always seem to get nervous on opening night because this is the first time presenting a character in front of a real live audience. I am hoping at some stage in my career I will feel more confident in my work and look forward to opening nights.

**Thursday, February 24, 2000**

Tonight was the second performance of this play and I found it to be much more enjoyable than opening night. The timing of the play seems to be picking up, especially in the early scenes between Carney and me in Act One. I have been working hard on picking up my cues as fast as possible and on inhaling. The audience reception tonight
was not very enthusiastic. However, I did not let this influence my performance or take away my own enthusiasm. I felt much more comfortable tonight in portraying Meg because the pressure of opening night had passed. I have been trying to relax into this role and take more ownership of my work. My goal for this run is to enjoy myself as well as to maintain the energy of my character throughout the play. Several people have approached me to tell me that they are amazed at the amount of lines I have and the energy I am using in this role. I found this kind of ironic, considering that Meg doesn’t have any monologues, which usually have been a tedious task for me in learning my lines. I found this production easier in terms of getting off book. The amount of energy used to portray this character is demanding, both physically and vocally. I did agree that this has been a challenge for me in both of these areas. However, considering I am sitting most of the play, I was surprised by these comments. It is amazing what an audience will observe about a performance.

Friday, February 25, 2000

Tonight was, in my opinion, the best show we have done so far. The timing of the first act moved, we picked up cues faster, and the pacing was where it should be, especially in Act One. It is important in this play to pick up our cues in Act One. When this timing is right the rest of the play seems to fall into place. I was pleased with the performance tonight and I believe my energy in all three acts was where it should be. I actually enjoyed myself this evening and I think this was in part because of how well the play has been flowing. Tomorrow we have two performances of The Hostage and my plan is to rest this evening and get ready for tomorrow’s work. Two performances of a
three-hour play can be quite draining, especially with a role that is both physically and vocally challenging. I have been trying to conserve my voice during the day in order to use it in the evenings. It is important to conserve vocally when I am teaching in order not to wear out my voice. Luckily, I did not have to teach today and was able to rest my voice.

**Saturday, February 26, 2000**

This morning we had our teachers’ seminar for the high school teachers and performed an afternoon matinee for them. Joy Reilly conducts these seminars for the local high schools and usually invites several of the actors in the production to participate. I thought the seminar went quite well and, in fact, I became quite emotional when talking about acting. Joy asked us the question, “Why do we act and what does acting mean to us?” It was interesting to realize that I have a real love-hate for this art. I think I love acting because it has given me great self-esteem in my life. Unfortunately, I find it difficult because of the emotional demands. When asked this question I didn’t have an answer except that I felt acting has given me great self-esteem. It is something that I am grateful for in my life and want to instill in others. For example, I teach acting because I do love performing and it is something that has helped me value my own self-worth. I believe this is a gift I want to share with others to make self-discoveries. During the teaching seminar today, when I was speaking about the process of acting, I become emotional because I realized I really do love teaching. I think as much as I enjoy getting up on the stage and doing the work myself, I enjoy watching others just as much. I especially enjoy when I see students who come into their own by taking on a challenge
and feeling good about themselves. I would say this seminar was enlightening to me, not only as a performer, but also as a future acting teacher.

Today's performances went quite well. We had a wonderful audience this afternoon and also this evening. I came home between shows in order to rest my voice and to close my eyes. I find that doing two shows of three hours in length in one day can be extremely tiring. This has given me the incentive to get through today. I am becoming more relaxed and confident in this role. I believe this is because we have been running the show over the last several days, and are finally getting the flow, the timing and pacing down. I believe we needed to run this show in its entirety more than we did in the rehearsal process. It seems that after we ran the show for several days in a row, we have it down. In the rehearsal process we often rehearsed one act at a time and didn't start running the show as a whole until dress rehearsal. Therefore, I think the experience of the past three days enhanced Saturday's matinee and evening performances.

Tuesday, February 29, 2000

We had Sunday and Monday off this week, which gave us plenty of time to recuperate from the double performance on Saturday. For tonight's performance, in order to prepare for having not done the show for the past two days, I reviewed my lines. Tonight's performance went quite well. However, the audience was a bit dead. This always seems to affect the cast in terms of feeling we are performing to an empty house. Considering the fact the audience is a big part of what we are doing, it seems to affect us when there is no reaction to what is happening on stage. I realize no matter how the audience is reacting, it is important for us to just continue through. I feel that we are at a
good stage running this show in spite of having the last two days off which did not seem to affect tonight’s performance. In fact, tonight was special in terms of having faculty come to the show that did not attend on opening night. There was the support of knowing they were in the audience. However, the cast was upset that the audience was not as reactionary as on previous evenings. I spoke with Bruce this afternoon and it seems unfortunate that the show has not been reviewed by The Columbus Dispatch. The only newspaper that reviewed the play was The Lantern. This was unfortunate in terms of using these reviews as part of our thesis material. It was also unfortunate for us in terms of not getting any feedback on how the show is being received by the public. However, Bruce did say that he was quite pleased with opening night and thought that the show was better than he had anticipated.

Friday, March 1, 2000

Tonight’s audience was wonderful. They actually applauded after every song which had not happened before. It seemed that the energy we were getting from the audience gave the cast a lot of enthusiasm to perform. I observed that everyone had a lot more excitement about tonight’s performance and we all agreed that this is the best audience we have had. At this stage I am feeling ready for us to close on Saturday. This show is quite draining in terms of energy. A three-hour show that demands so much physically is quite tiring. I found myself perspiring profusely this evening in the body suit and I realized this has been a constraint that I won’t miss when working on other shows. At this stage in the process there is not much more to explore with Meg and I have been beginning to think about my next project, King Lear. I have read King Lear
and am I looking forward to playing the role of Goneril. However, considering we still have three more performances after this evening, I realize that I must keep my attention on the role I am now in and enjoy it. I actually feel that I am enjoying it more and I finally feel quite comfortable in the role. However I do look forward to this closing and moving on to work on *King Lear*.

**Thursday, March 2, 2000**

In reflecting upon my journal I realize I was much more positive than I intended to be about this process; perhaps it is important during a rehearsal process to stay positive. In re-evaluating the work it is important to recognize those things that were not beneficial to dwell on during the rehearsal period. Unfortunately, throughout this run I have not been quite pleased with how my character was developed, especially in terms of blocking. I don’t think I have done a show where I have felt so constricted with my movement. I was instructed how to sit, instructed how to walk, and instructed how to stand. I have had the freedom in other roles to decide how my character would sit, walk or move on stage. This is the first role where I did not have that freedom. I was instructed that heavy women don’t walk lightly on their feet, and that it takes heavy women a great amount of effort to get up from their chairs. Also, Pat and Meg don’t walk much because they are old and lazy. I must admit I was not comfortable with these choices. In my research I discovered that Meg was only 38 years old. I know she is a size 20 but disagree with the stereotype of all heavy women being viewed as either lazy or sluggish in movement. Actually, I think the contrast of Meg being a heavy woman and light on her feet would have given this character another dimension. I think it is
important when working on characters to explore contrasts. If characters are always fast in movement, then there has to be moments when they are not. If the character has an abrasive personality there also has to be moments of love. I believe this is true in all areas of acting. This is what was missing in our production of The Hostage.

I believe in this production we went for laughs and jokes but we neglected to explore the love of Ireland. Considering all the research I did last summer and fall, I believe the Irish are a loving culture. Not only do they have a great love of song, and dance, but also for each other. Unfortunately, because of poverty, famine, and political upheavals, the people of Ireland had to develop a strong exterior in order to combat these major issues within their culture. Unfortunately in this production of The Hostage, I think we focused too much on the gags and not enough on showing a culture, especially a sub-culture within this Irish community, where acceptance and love is part of how this household is run. This was very disappointing to me in working on The Hostage. I found it difficult at times to bite my tongue. It was difficult not to focus on my perceptions and to recognize my role was to be an actress and to do what the director instructed me to do. This is something over the past several years I don’t really enjoy about acting. Perhaps it is what attracts me to directing as I grow older. The creative control of an actress is quite limiting, especially when working with someone who has very strong opinions, ideas or views of how the production should go.

The positive side of working in The Hostage was working with the undergraduates. The enthusiasm they brought to the work made it difficult for me to dwell on the restraint I was feeling within myself. I realize this was an ensemble, this
was not only my thesis role but Carrie’s and Carney’s and that there were twenty-five other individuals on the stage with us.

Meg, in *The Hostage*, is not a pinnacle role which will be remembered as one of my better roles at O.S.U. However, it is an experience that I will cherish because of working with Carrie, Carney and Jessica. It was nice to be in a production with my classmates. If there is anything from this experience to remember, it is the joy of working with some very talented undergraduates and fellow classmates. Although I may have seen this production in a different light, I realized my job was to explore choices and let the director choose the final product. The discussion I had with Bruce in his office several weeks ago when he was sensing my discomfort, was directly influenced by this issue. I was feeling restricted in this role. I believed the love that Carney and I were trying to project in Act One was taken away; which was upsetting to me. I believed these characters came off as too harsh and angry at one another. On reflection, Carney and I discussed how we wanted to show more of the love between Meg and Pat. Unfortunately, the director had a different view; he said he knew couples like this, especially his own parents who have this kind of “tit for tat” relationship; that Meg and Pat should not express their affection towards one another. I believe this is the model he used for us in the rehearsal process. It was during the afternoon rehearsal process where we explored these characters’ relationships. I believe this is why the afternoon rehearsals were quite frustrating to me because I had a very different take on these characters. However I realize that my role as an actress is to explore character and to offer things on the table for the director to choose. When I met with Bruce several weeks later in his office to talk about the process, I was glad he was satisfied with the results. He said I
explored many choices and I told him I appreciated his positive feedback. I asked if he was satisfied with what he was getting. Bruce said he certainly was and this was how he viewed our characters, as these combative, middle-aged, sluggish people. It would not be fair to blame Bruce in any way for the results of either my performance or the production of *The Hostage*. I believe this was an extremely difficult play to direct. I respect the amount of research he did, a quality I always admire in a director, and although I enjoyed working on *The Hostage* I have never felt quite so limited in a role since I played Hannah in *Angels in America*. Therefore, I assume it was because of the tremendous amount of work required for this production that the director needed to have results immediately in order to block and keep control at rehearsals. The production was also affected because we were in Room 107 far too long; if we had been on Thurber stage sooner, perhaps he would have had more time to block and take risks with us moving around more. I believe this was a great hindrance to the play because many of the characters were in the same places over and over. I literally only moved from one table to another. And, in fact, only rose three times within a three-hour play. I believe the blocking had greatly affected the rhythms of the dialogue and also the fluidity of the production.

**Friday, March 3, 2000**

Tonight’s performance went well. It seems that, at this stage of the process, we are ready to close. Everyone is getting quite tired; we had rehearsed for at least six to seven weeks prior to opening. It had been an enormous rehearsal process and I think we were ready to open before we actually did. Therefore, everyone has been complaining tonight they feel ready to close. Personally, I am ready to put Meg to rest. I have begun
focusing on the role of Goneril in *King Lear* and my auditions for LAMDA which take place in March. Like most actors, it seems that when you are at the end of a production you automatically start thinking about your next job. I am excited about working in *King Lear* and realize I am a little intimidated with the challenge of playing Goneril. However, I am pleased that I am going to be playing Goneril. I realize Shakespeare’s language has always been a challenge for me in terms of memorization, so I have already highlighted my lines and am ready to start memorizing the text.

Upon reflecting on the process of acting and developing the character of Meg in *The Hostage*, I realize this play was a tremendous challenge for me. At times it was liberating but overall quite problematic. It was liberating to think that I could play a character who was Irish, a whore, and a size 20, a character I don’t believe I would be cast as if I weren’t in an academic situation. There is a liberating, challenging element to playing a character that you know is quite a stretch from things you have played before. However, what was problematic in this role was the fact that I didn’t feel I had the freedom to play. My view of the character deviated quite a bit from the director’s.

Also, I was quite disappointed in the musical work on the song *Easter Week*. Although Rick was wonderful in exploring octaves with me, he strongly believed he wanted me to sing in a key of C; I am more comfortable in the key of A. Rick would tease me often that I needed to smoke cigars because this song was not about me singing pretty. He believed Meg was chanting and needed to have an abrasive voice. Chanting in this low octave was hard on my voice. I sing so low that I am pushing my voice in ways I have never had to do before when singing on stage and I was not pleased with the result. I was especially challenged when Bruce decided to have me singing this song
walking down a staircase. This was probably the most upsetting element for me of working in this production. It is extremely difficult to sing and chant. When Bruce decided to have the chorus walking out on stage, marching, while I was singing and walking down a staircase, it took the wind out of my sails. I had to focus on trying to project my voice and not to fall down the stairs, rather than being able to incite the audience with this passionate Irish tale. This was another area in which Bruce and I disagreed. Bruce saw Meg as angry and upset about what took place in Ireland. However, I felt what was missing in this song was the passionate pride all these characters had about how they stood up during the Easter rising. Having us all march out on stage being angry took away from the passionate pride the Irish felt of having stood their ground against the British. It was a great disappointment to me that the passionate pride in this song was lost.

In addition, I was upset with the modern references, for example, the joke that Miss Gilchrist makes pertaining to O.J. Simpson and the Bronco, the “more filling, tastes great” beer commercial and the other dialogue that was changed in order to update the play. The reason this discouraged me is that The Hostage remained basically set in 1958 and bringing in these popular references of the year 2000 seemed inappropriate and awkward. I believe in this production the emphasis became on getting laughs and not on creating the world of the play. I had researched and spent my entire summer working on this play that this was not the production I imagined I would be working on when I first read The Hostage. However, I understood that this was not the production any of us had imagined, considering it is an obscure play.
Therefore, I will end my critique of what I felt was missing or limiting in this production in terms of creating my character. I have learned during the past three years that it is important to stay positive and open. In order to get through the rehearsal process as pleasantly as possible and remain open to the work, I needed to release these judgments. However, these were points I could not neglect to mention. I would not have felt satisfied if I did not address them in my journal.

Saturday, March 4, 2000

This was our last performance of The Hostage. I always enjoy closing night because there is a real satisfaction of having completed something of value and importance to everyone in the cast. Carney, Carrie and I all celebrated after the show tonight with champagne. I actually conducted a little ritual in order to have closure to these important thesis roles. We held hands together and expressed gratitude for those things we gained from the production and released those things that were frustrating. Then I had each of us tell the other what it was we observed as growth in each other, not only in performance but in general over the last three years. It was touching to have this ritual and I realized how important it was for Carney. Carney expressed how he was flattered and happy we wanted to do this with him. He was grateful Carrie and I influenced his decision to choose Pat as his thesis role. I don’t want to go into detail of what we said to one another; however, I did want to mention that I realized in that moment of expressing our deep affection for one another, how much we have bonded over the past three years. I will forever remember The Hostage as a labor of great work.
that I shared with two people whom I really care about. This made the whole production worthwhile to me, not only as an actress but also as a human being.

4.5

Prior to portraying Meg in *The Hostage* I had never kept a journal during the process of creating a role. However, I discovered this method to be beneficial for an actor. Documented throughout this journal are the challenges that I encountered in this role, such as singing, speaking in an Irish dialect, and wearing a body suit. It was because of having to daily evaluate the rehearsal process that I was able to examine these problems in detail. In addition, this document served in setting specific tactics and goals for each rehearsal. I had an objective for each rehearsal because the journal assisted in organizing and prioritizing specific target areas.

It is imperative for an actor to consistently explore choices that will assist in the creation of characters. By keeping a daily log I became more emotionally invested in my acting choices because I was required to evaluate them on a continuous basis. In addition, it gave me a perspective on my acting choices and helped me to understand choices of the director’s which were different from my own. It also assisted with examining discoveries about my character in depth. By writing detailed accounts of a discovery I applied the information to a role in a more complex way. For example, when I discovered that Meg resented Miss Gilchrist for her religious piety, I applied this information to other discoveries about my character. I realized the reason why Meg resented Miss Gilchrist so passionately was because of religious conflicts within herself.
that Miss Gilchrist represented. Therefore, I was inspired by keeping a rehearsal log and found it to be a useful tool I will use in the future when working on a role.
CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis process I have evaluated the value of research to an actor. In the case of Meg in The Hostage, I believe the research I did on Ireland had a great impact on creating my character. The research also gave me an advantage in understanding how the improvisational elements of the play were an integral part in creating this production. The most challenging element of performing in The Hostage was the direct contact of speaking to the audience and breaking the fourth wall. I believe it was because of the research I had done on Joan Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop, that I had a foundation on which to develop my character and to understand how improvisation was an integral part of the play. I was able to understand the importance of breaking the fourth wall because I understood the improvisational approach Littlewood used in creating The Hostage. I believe the use of research in creating the role of Meg enriched my performance in such a way that it would be hard for me not to research other roles in the future.

The thorough scene analysis was also helpful to me as an actress. At this stage in my acting, scene analysis is often something I leave to my intuition, only returning to a beat-by-beat textbook analysis when I encounter a problem in a scene. However, in
working on The Hostage this process not only helped me to clarify the actions that were
taking place on stage, but also to learn what I know and don’t know about script analysis.
The Hostage was the most difficult script I have ever had to score. This challenge was an
important one for me not only as an actress but also as a director. Considering that I
eventually want to teach in an academic institution, it is important that I am able to score
a script thoroughly and have the confidence to know that I can.

In the nine performances we had of The Hostage, I believe the most challenging
element was settling into the rhythms of the show. It was only during the second week of
performance that I believe we had a real grasp of how the play worked as a whole.
Because we had to sing and dance for approximately three hours, The Hostage required a
great amount of stamina and endurance from me as an actress. I found that because of
the intense vocal demands of the role, I needed to rest my voice as much as possible
when not speaking on stage. In addition, I also had to do extra warm-ups before Act Two
in order to make sure I was able to sing Easter Week effectively.

The relationship between Pat and Meg was an integral part of the play and an
important partnership that Carney Gray (as Pat) and I built with one another. Within the
production of the play, Carney and I came a long way in creating a love-hate relationship
that existed between our characters Meg and Pat. However, it was during the
performance run that Carney and I were able to explore more of the affectionate nature
between these two characters.

On a technical level, the most challenging elements in having The Hostage as my
thesis role were working on an Irish dialect and singing. I was quite fortunate to have a
dialect coach and a musical director to help me with these challenges. I discovered that
working on *The Hostage* was taxing physically because of the great vocal demands. I needed to know when to expand my vocal energy and when to simply relax. This was an area that both Phil Thompson and Rick Williams were helpful with by teaching me to recognize when I was pushing my voice too much. This is a challenge I need to address as an actress, and this role certainly helped me to become aware of when I am pushing my voice.

Portraying Meg in *The Hostage* was a wonderful, challenging obstacle course. In order to achieve a sense of satisfaction as an actress, one must be open, pleasant and accessible to the demands of a role. Meg was certainly one of the most challenging roles I have ever had to play, not only because of having to sing, speak with a dialect and dance, but also because of having to wear a body suit more than ten dress sizes larger than my own. To create a physically believable character, and have an audience to accept the authenticity of Meg, was an extremely challenging task on which I focused much of my attention.

I do not regret choosing Meg as my thesis role because of all the challenges I encountered in creating this role. I realize it is important to be challenged as an actress, and although we may not always feel fully satisfied with the product, it is important to take on roles that stretch our abilities and help us grow, not only as actors but also as people. This thesis role, as Meg in *The Hostage*, showed me the value of research and discovery within the rehearsal process. Although the process was a roller-coaster ride of challenges and demands, I believe I was fortunate to have such a rewarding role as my thesis project.
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**AUDIO AND VIDEOS:**


APPENDIX A

DIRECTOR’S CONCEPT STATEMENT
THE HOSTAGE BY BRENDAN BEHAN DIRECTOR’S CONCEPT STATEMENT
By Bruce Hermann

Through the bloodshot perspective of Brendan Behan’s The Hostage we find ourselves living in a microcosmic, late 50’s world where romantic, idealistic Ireland has fallen down and can’t get up. This world, once a “noble old house,” has seen better days and housed many heroes. But now heroic Ireland is down in the dumps; the world in a mess. Yes, this fine house, once a nerve center for I.R.A. operations, is now “a knocking shop.” Its inhabitants have nothing more going for them than does the paint peeling off the walls. Yet in this sordid, sleazy dive now run exclusively for profit, we find Behan’s pure Libido on a rampage of Dionysian destruction. Think of Harpo Marx, W.C. Fields, or Jackie Gleason on steroids (Oh, how sweet it is!). For this is a world of anarchy, where every social orthodoxy that has built a protective wall around mankind is blasted with uninhabited abandon and joy. Behan wages total war on all social institutions except brothels and distilleries.

The substance of our world is taped together with burlesque routines, Irish jigs and reels, barroom ballads, and outrageously “blue” gags. There is a slip of a tragic plot, but this exists as glue for the music hall parade of vaudevillian howlings. “This is a SERIOUS play,” says the dour, humorless, fanatical I.R.A. officer after a typical irreverency. This response to the goings-on only serves to encourage more of the same. It is not serious, it is hardly a play. With the exception of the barely lucid Monsewer, the characters are all aware that they are actors who want the audience to have just as much fun as they are. It is vaudeville.
The plot finds its foundation in Irish myth, where our hero Leslie, the kidnapped young British Tommy of the title, is put through his mythological paces, including falling in love with the resident vision of innocence, Teresa (the orphan with a heart of gold) as he awaits his fate as an innocent bystander. This act of love is both literally and figuratively at the center of the play and follows many Irish myths including that of Lonengrin, where the heroine does all in her power to save her hero-love. But this is also where we part ways with Sean O’Casey and into Ionesco. Behan’s whores are breezy, tough, wisecracking hookers; the brothel is a den of depravity; and the hero’s accidental death is followed immediately by his resurrection and a final group song (“The bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling for you but not for me”). The comedy shoots out of the sides of all mouths in this grotesque gallery of lowlives. These characters are stereotype and cliché pushed to shock. There is the madam, Meg, and her “ponce,” Pat, winging razor-sharp wit at all things pretentious; a religious eccentric, Miss Gilchrist, goosed in the middle of her hymn by Mr. Mulleady, an ex-postal clerk with a sanctified air and roaming hands; and two drag queens named Rio Rita and Princess Grace, staking their claim to exist (and make great fun) in this post-war Dublin of sexual and intellectual repression. These characters mesmerize and bedevil in a world where, as J.P. Donleavy recalls, "tomorrow can only be a little bit worse than the very worst you are feeling today."

In this old tenement the clock is on its face and the past intrudes into and controls the present. The air should seem filled with the sounds of popping stout corks; the corners filled with bottles. We can almost smell the damp walls and cavities. There is a feeling of long corridors, like tunnels in the earth; rooms plagued with moldy mattresses,
a single light bulb burning in a hallway, the floor stained and cluttered, the walls layered
with peeling paint, a scabby ceiling. And like a breathing layer of smoke on the walls,
behind the closed doors, and up by the ceiling, our gallery of characters is part of this old
house, watching, waiting under stairs, behind doors, for the next song, the next quip, the
next trick, the next argument. We would love to add a chorus of up to ten inhabitants and
customers who join in every song and dance.

The brothel would indicate a cult of squalor. The open-necked shirt Pat might
wear reveals a navel clogged with lint. Bodies unwashed, leaking shoes, and the aroma
of spilt Guinness are standing here. The queens are outrageous, but spent. The pious
religious nuts are tattered and at the end of the line to godliness. The I.R.A. fanatics are
playing dress-up for a game of cops and robbers. Monsewer remains a living relic of the
Troubles long past (kilt and bagpipes included).

So how do we respond to a young orphan serviceman due to be shot in the
morning? Well, with some eighteen songs and several jigs and reels. There is a piano
player (and, if possible, a fiddle and drum) and a place to play and sing and dance.
Certainly the closer we get to his execution, the harder, faster and drunker come the
songs and jokes. And in order to end the story we need a spectacular keystone kops
police raid where in the ensuing chaos our hero is shot and killed by mistake.

The dialects are all thick Irish, except our Cockneyed Leslie, and the sailor. And
the rhythm of the songs and jokes is just as important as the rhythm of the language. The
topical nature of the jokes and songs should allow our audience to come to attention to all
those institutions of Behan’s world. Yet they should also perk up at the mention of Bill
Clinton, Jesse Ventura, the war on drugs, organized religion, or even trying to find a
parking spot at Ohio State. Behan would have found any and all these subjects fit to be executed in the morning if they weren't such great targets, if it weren't all so absurd and if he weren't so hung-over.
APPENDIX B

COSTUME DESIGN SCHEME
The Hostage by Brendan Behan was first produced in 1958 by Joan Littlewood’s Workshop in London. The central action evolves around a young British soldier being held captive in a Dublin brothel in retaliation for the pending execution of an Irish patriot. The prostitutes, drag queens, and freaks of the lodging house all take a liking to Leslie, the soldier. Teresa, an orphaned country girl, and Leslie fall in love. The question of the soldier’s fate creates enormous tension, which is counteracted through song and dance by the other characters. The action finally cascades into a police raid and ends with the accidental shooting of the soldier, who immediately comes back to life to sing yet another song.

The script has burlesque overtones and makes use of low comedy devices. In that spirit, the director suggests borrowing ideas from Music Hall and Vaudeville. The style tends to be presentational, as the characters are aware of being on stage and shift in and out of character, as well as some directly addressing the audience. The world of the brothel is messy, run down. Anarchy rules. The director states that, “the bodies are unwashed,” they are spent and tattered around the edges. The characters all represent stereotypes, instantly recognizable and pushed to the maximum. They also fall into five different groups: Ireland of the Past, Ireland of the Fanatics, Ireland of Pro-English, Ireland of Romance/Ideal, Ireland of Outcasts.

After the director and design team discussed the historical period, it was agreed to set the play in the late 1950s, as it was originally produced. The Ireland of that time in
regard to socio-political views differs much from the Ireland of today and the play would not make sense in a contemporary setting.

The color palette, as well as line and shape, should be reflective of the burlesque nature of the play. Colors will be rich, intense, inspired by “technicolor” of 1950s photographs, yet dirtied and faded through the use of various distressing techniques. They will contrast the stark black and white look of the I.R.A. officers and the more earthy colors (brown, beige) of Leslie, Teresa and Pat. Shapes will be somewhat exaggerated. For example, Pat will have a beer belly and Meg a large bust. The exaggeration will carry into makeup and the use of some three-dimensional pieces and wigs.

Fabrics should be highly textured and patterned. In accordance with the different groups of characters both natural and synthetic fibers will be used, including fake fur, lace and feathers. The overall “look” should be eclectic and translate into a feeling of chaos and messiness.

There will be subtle changes in the characters to reflect their growing admiration for the soldier; Teresa will appear more mature after her sexual encounter with him.
APPENDIX C

PUBLICITY POSTER
The Hostage

by Brendan Behan
directed by Bruce Hermann

an irreverent Irish comedy

Thurber Theatre, Drake Union
February 23 at 7:30 pm
February 24 - 26, 29, March 1 - 4 at 8 pm
February 26 at 2 pm