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Hadiwadlo in Chattanooga:
A Critical Assessment of the Process of Producing *School for Fools*

by

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Departmental Honors Thesis

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

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**Hadivadlo in Chattanooga:
a Critical Assessment of the Process of Producing *School for Fools***

The goal of this project was to create an experimental theatre production called *School for Fools* in the Studio Theatre of the UTC Fine Arts Center in February of 2003. Spanning nearly an entire year, the process for me was one of compiling a dramaturg's notebook of research and materials related to the play, adapting and revising the text from the original, written by Belgian playwright Michel de Ghelderode in 1937, creating costume and set designs, appropriating a cast, raising funds for the production, and then directing the play.

Particularly important to this production was the idea of style. In essence, I was trying to create a production-based, rather than text-based, performance, using the Hadivadlo company of Brno, Czech Republic, as a primary stylistic reference, but also exploring the alternative perspectives and techniques of directors such as Charles Marowitz and Jerzy Grotowski.

Because the UTC Theatre Department was simultaneously producing another play in the Ward Theatre, my production incorporated a number of different artists from outside the department who served in several capacities: volunteers from the Association for Visual Artists provided assistance on both a conceptual level and then in the actual construction of costumes and set; the Shaking Ray Levis provided resource materials that I used in rehearsals to help actors with physicalization and stylized movement; and Jeff Atkins and Liz Duncan (both UTC alumni) played the lead roles.

We had a total of five shows, nearly all of which sold out. After the run of the show, I wrote an assessment of the process, critiquing the strengths and weaknesses of the production.

Hadivadlo in Chattanooga
A Critical Assessment of the Process of Producing *School for Fools*

“Edgar [Allan] Poe in one of his short stories speaks of a book which cannot be read: this is true. And I know that there are plays which cannot be performed. This was the case of *School of Buffoons*... I certainly think that such a play could never be done, and for good reason. The theatre is supposed to please and this play displeases; the theatre caresses and this play flagellates....”

from a letter by Michel de Ghelderode to
actor Marcel Lupovici, Brussels, December 21, 1952

This project attempted to realize on stage the bizarre dreams of an obscure Belgian playwright named Michel de Ghelderode—or perhaps, to use his work to facilitate my own vision of what the theatre should be. Such wrangling of intentions and the compromises that follow are the basic task accepted by any contemporary director; only in this case, given the inadequacies of the playwright and the ambitions of the director, it was necessary to combine the two roles and expand them even further to incorporate production and design. By examining my roles as author, designer, director, and quasi-producer, it is possible to qualify the strengths and weaknesses of the actual theatre event.

Before looking at individual components of the process, it would be helpful to say a few words about style. From the beginning, I knew that style would be one of the most crucial aspects of the production—it was perhaps the single thing about which I felt the strongest and knew the least. But, as actress Fiona Shaw says, and as I frequently told my cast, “I’m more interested in doing things that I can’t do than things that I can.” (*NYTimes*, 1) In many ways, this project was a means of determining what I was personally capable of accomplishing in the theatre, an experiment with the goal of finding my own sense of style, my own directorial voice. Since the most influential experience

I've had in theatre up to this point was as a witness to the great experimental theatre in the Czech Republic and Eastern Europe three years ago, I knew that my voice would understandably contain a certain Czech accent—and the more I could implement an Eastern European dramaturgy, the more I would find to make the play (which is quite uniquely European) work.

One way to begin examining the process of adapting the text is to attempt to give it some kind of historical context, that is, in terms of the style of production that I had in mind. Stanislavski, of course, would argue that the text should be the focus of everything: that the “core” of the play lies within the text, and that rehearsals should focus on getting the actors to find this core through the text. I knew from the beginning that this would not be the case with this play, that this would be a style of theatre originating not from Stanislavski and Chekhov, but from their contemporary at the Moscow Art Theatre, Vsevolod Meyerhold. For the sake of this argument we can say that the dichotomy within MAT at the turn of the century was one of two distinct styles of creating theatre, one focusing on the text, the other on production. The former was quickly packaged off to the West, where it was reborn as American Realism, which, again very broadly speaking, became the dominant aesthetic of the 20th century. The latter lingered around Europe, where it manifested in a variety of forms such as Dadaism, Surrealism, Expressionism, etc. But the production-based approach to theatre took particular hold in Paris in the 1920s and 30s, where Antonin Artaud, trying to expound on the example set three decades earlier by Alfred Jarry, developed his ideas for the Theatre of Cruelty. “There is an idea of total spectacle that must

be revived,” Artaud says in his *First Manifesto for the Theatre of Cruelty*. “The problem is to make space speak.” (Sontag, 250) In more specific terms, his vision was for a “total” theatre, an event that affected all the senses, rendering the audience to a point of vulnerability so that they could then collectively experience something profoundly spiritual. Rather ambitious, but considering the popular view of art at the time, Artaud felt that he had no other choice, certainly as he would if he were alive today: “This idea of a detached art, of poetry as something charming that exists only to beguile our leisure time, is a decadent idea, and it demonstrates loudly our capacity for castration.” (Sontag, 255) It wasn’t until decades after his death that the abstract concepts of his manifestos were realized, most prominently by directors like Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, and Charles Marowitz, all of whose work has dealt largely with some degree of adapted text. For the last twenty years or so in New York, the Wooster Group has been exploring the “total” theatre in their own style, which director Peter Sellars describes as, “a really sophisticated way to create this *Gesamtkunstwerk* [total art work] where the text is as important as the video image is as important as the sound, and nothing has dominance although the words are very powerful.” (thewoostergroup.org)

In this vein, my model for doing theatre is that of the Hadivadlo theatre in Brno, Czech Republic—both in the way they produce plays and their style of productions. A core of three actors has been with the company since its beginnings twenty-five years ago out in the provinces of Moravia. They now have a resident company of about a dozen actors, many of them rather young,

who perform all their plays, though they are constantly working with other people from different groups. If actors from a nearby theatre want to collaborate with members of Hadivadlo, which they frequently do, then they produce something that plays on a dark-night somewhere in town. The company performs anywhere from nine to fifteen plays in rep, with at least two or three different plays per week. They also travel to Prague, Olomouc, or other towns every month for various performances and frequently participate in various theatre festivals. Perhaps most importantly to their artistic success is that they constantly work with different directors, mostly from the Czech Republic, but occasionally from Russia or somewhere else; they also change artistic directors more frequently than most companies. And all of this provides for a uniquely experimental and constantly changing approach to creating theatre; their productions are highly stylized, frequently working with very subjective adaptations (e.g. *Job*, *Oedipus*, *Three Sisters*) or original works, and always extremely challenging, both to the performers and to the audience.

This was my premise for the style of *School for Fools*, and so I set about re-writing the script. I first began talking with Robert Duffy about approaching the script around a year ago, the end of the Spring semester 2002. I had been researching the play in his Conceptual Foundations of Modern Theatre course, with the goal of compiling a dramaturg's notebook. The materials included scores of interviews with Ghelderode, letters to actors and directors, photos and reviews of previous productions (though there weren't many at all), including detailed information about a production of the play that I had seen in the Czech

Republic by the Divadlo Husa na Provazku (Goose on a String Theatre) of Brno. Their production was very straightforward, sticking closely to the text (though they did edit a substantial amount, and I had a copy of their cuts to work with on this project) and staging it mostly in accordance with Ghelderode's own stage directions, which I considered to be the biggest drawback to their production. Here I think is the root of an adaptor's evil in dealing with Ghelderode. Instead of expressing his dreams through dramatic action and stage metaphor, as a better playwright might have done, Ghelderode tried to communicate by painting a picture with words—usually quite a detailed and fascinating picture, but nonetheless a picture and not action. Like a dyslexic secretary, Ghelderode inverted the messages of his mind into useless heaps on the page. He wrote stage descriptions, not directions; the dreams were lost in the process of writing, so that what should have been metaphor resulted only in opaque verbage. My task as adaptor was compounded, but in a way that directed the play very clearly toward a production-based style. The process of adaptation was one not only of making sense of the story, but of creating stage metaphors, or at least allowing spaces in the text for various music/dance actions to be created in rehearsals. Robert was quite uncertain as to how those segments would work out, but so was I, so we focused on the narrative.

Cleaning up Ghelderode's story was mostly a matter of getting to the point: identifying the sequence of events and then *trying to figure out why they happened that way*. This was a significant problem; at times it seemed as though all I had was a tangled ball of storylines with nothing in the middle. So I cut

characters (e.g. the Prince; the number and names of the actual class of fools) and streamlined the plot (see Ghelderode's original, particularly the play within the play, in Appendix I). The story became focused on fools' desire to get the Secret, and Folia's desire to be rid of it all. The hodge-podge of mythological references was eliminated; the scatological allusions were cut out of the text and, through rehearsals, recreated and made more obscene into actual events on the stage; we physicalized Folia's guilt and inner torment by having his daughter's ghost haunt him throughout the play, and so on. Again, as Artaud says about the language of the stage: "It is not a question of eliminating spoken language but of giving words something of the importance they have in dreams." (Sontag, 246)

The text was in a workable position after at least three major revisions, the final revision coming from the realization that Ghelderode's words were simply getting in the way—in order for the play to work, I would have to rewrite almost the entire thing. By the first week of January, 2003, I had a very good foundation of a text that actors could use in rehearsals and that still had a few structured "gaps" to allow for improvisation and experiments in design.

More so than with the text, the design for *School for Fools* necessitated a sense of plasticity. "If it takes approximately four weeks for an actor to figure out a character's nature and psychology, how can a designer decide what clothes he should be wearing months in advance?" (Marowitz, 159) Nonetheless, I attempted to outline designs for the costumes, set, and sound several months before rehearsals began. A preliminary groundplan was essential, both for the sake of the company's scene shop and also to configure an appropriate actor/audience

relationship, again following Artaud's idea of "a single site, without partition or barrier of any kind, which will itself become the theatre of the action." (Sontag, 248) My initial idea was to create the atmosphere of an underground vault, a cabalistic chapel, having the audience sit in church pews, with great gothic arches suspended overhead (see App. III). In the end I was able to keep most of this: we had a few arches on the ground to indicate entranceways, and the overhead effect was created through lighting, though, had I had more time and more technical skills as a designer (beyond my hastily-rendered sketches which then had to be performed extempore in order to communicate their general concept) I would have liked to have created more of a ceiling for the space. Regardless, I was thankful to be working in the studio theatre for its intimacy and acoustics, unlike the Ward, which I find to be, for the record, a rather bad place to do theatre.

Essentially, the set needed to be a playground: trapdoors, movable platforms and furniture, multiple levels and entrances/exits, curtains—all the things that mostly young and inexperienced actors could easily work with and not feel as if they were placed on any kind of formal stage, though initially it became just that. With various feedback from the actors and Robert, it was brought to my attention that the groundplan was far too shallow and the levels were too high; so I opened up the first rows of the audience risers, shortened the altar, combined the chorus's platforms into one, and, in a moment of sheer spontaneity, decided to add a confessional off to the side of stage-left with, at Robert's heartlessly atheistic suggestion, a toilet inside. A curtain across the back of the stage would

be used for a dumb-show in the Prelude. All the other set pieces (benches, chairs, pedestals) were pulled from the prop loft.

Knowing that this would be a very challenging project, I solicited the help of my neighbor, Helen Johnson, who is a talented painter and coordinator for the Association for Visual Artists. After meeting with her several times throughout the process, I had a much better perspective of the visual possibilities with both the set and the costumes—I was also able to enlist some of her colleagues to help with the division of labor/talent to make things look the way they should. She was of particular help with the costumes. We would look at my initial stimuli for the characters—a mix between the palette and textures of Ensor, the bawdiness and deformity of Brughel, the grotesqueness of Bosch and Honza Wolf, the absurdity of *Rolling Stone* and *US Weekly*, the profanity of Aubrey Beardsley, the tradition of van der Weyden, and the symbolism of the National Ballet of Zaire's production of the play in the 1980s (see App. V)—and select which elements of each would work best for the play. I had a difficult time balancing them all, though I always knew what Foliol would look like. By the time I first showed my sketches to Sydney Roberts (who was my official costume supervisor), I had slightly less than the confluence of styles for which I had hoped. However, with her suggestion, I began to simplify the designs and attempted to make them more abstract and nightmarish (some, she said and I agreed, were too literal), again trying to capture the essence of what worked in the visual resources. Eventually, I had something that worked in theory, though when the crew actually started pulling and creating the costumes, I had reservations. After three weeks of

rehearsal, the costumes were not working at all, except for Folia, and one of my actors, Jeff Atkins, called me in the middle of the night, asking me what happened to the ideas I had told him about three months ago. The ideas had been much more satirical, playing off of contemporary stereotypes and political motives—the ideas that originally had been discounted as too literal. In all the painful reality of my rehearsals, the current designs were actually too literal (I had created a bunch of medieval fools) and subsequently abstract to the point that the Royal Shakespeare Company would have found it challenging to create individual characters using them.

So, in the third week of rehearsals, I scratched six and a half of my original eleven designs, and created new ones, basing them on what I was seeing from each individual actor and with which I knew they could work. Zech became a parody of John Ashcroft, mixing hyper-patriotism with religion; Ashanti the pop-icon; Nathan the name-brand guy; Jon the radical leftist; David the militant servant of the media; and James the cellophane transvestite. Again, Artaud was becoming more and more practical:

“The nightmares of Flemish painting make an impression on us because of the juxtaposition to the real world of what has become a caricature of this world. They present us with phantoms which we might have encountered in our dreams.” (Sontag, 270)

I had also been determined to make Galgut have a snare drum for a head but ditched this in the end as well. After Laura McKee, ever my best critic, saw a dress rehearsal, we added garish face-paint to finish the effect. (see App. IV)

Less convoluted than the costume design process, the sound design came entirely from my personal cd collection, with a few effects and all of the technical wizardry created by Rhys Dawson. From the beginning I knew that music would serve a critical role in the production, though I wasn't sure how much of it would be pre-recorded. After several weeks of experimenting in rehearsals with everything from *NWA* to the Kronos Quartet, we decided on using it all. A friend of Rhys let us borrow his rather hefty sound system (two SP100s, two 15" subs, one 18" sub, and plenty of amps) which we dispersed throughout the theatre, underneath and behind the audience risers and beside and underneath the stage. Throughout the process, I felt the music to be one of the strongest elements of the play and one of the most powerful tools for the actors to work with, whether it was rap, Yugoslav gypsy music, or Polish opera. They were mostly pieces that I had known for a long time and with which I had a deep, personal connection. Several times in the process when I was feeling less than confident about my choices, my advisor Stacy Ray would ask me what had personally moved me the most in recent weeks—the answer was usually the music, and so I tried to bring as much of it as I could into the play, as much an inspiration for myself as for the actors.

Originally, I had planned for my friend Adam Cofer to design my lights—I had worked with him before on independent projects, and he seemed interested in this one. Unfortunately, he had to back out a week or so into rehearsals because of schedule conflicts (he, too, was completing his *DHON*), and so my director Robert Duffy said that he would do a basic plot for me, about which I

was covertly ecstatic. Over the course of several afternoons and a weekend, we had agreed upon a rather sensational lighting design.

Throughout all of this, and from the very beginning, I constantly asked myself, "What do I need to make this happen? What resources, both material and human, have to be in place to make this play work?" The degree to which I controlled these factors constituted my role as producer. First, there were the church pews, which I tracked down in university storage after Chris Sommers, the technical director for the Hayes theatre, overheard me thinking aloud to Larry Brick, our shop foreman, about what I could do with the audience. Bringing in volunteers from AVA to help in the construction of costumes and painting the set would be the next big factor on the production end—also, one of the volunteers, Jaime McDaniel, a professional photographer, did my production photos.

But the main issue, of course, was my cast. I knew that I would need at least four and no less than two exceptionally talented actors to make the play work, and I also knew that the theatre company would be split for the first show of the spring semester because of the other show going on in the Ward, which I also knew would acquire most of the in-house talent and resources. After hoping that Mac Smotherman, my acting professor, would play the lead, I realized that he would be too busy preparing to direct the show immediately following to be able work on mine. So I turned to people I knew outside the department and found Jeff Atkins and Liz Duncan, both UTC alumni who had continued to work in the theatre in various capacities and both of whom I had known for some time. I had acted with Liz in UTC's production of *Vinegar Tom*, and I had worked with Jeff

some five years earlier in an audition workshop that he conducted. Jeff had also worked as a professional actor for six years in Chicago, where he worked on a good deal of new scripts and won the Jefferson Award for Best Actor. I knew that if I were to have them working with me on this play for six weeks then I would want to pay them, and, considering the production constraints of doing two shows simultaneously in a small theatre at a public university in Tennessee, that I would also need to cover some of my own production costs. So, for about four months, I arranged meetings with various organizations on campus, filled out numerous applications for funding, and petitioned other potential sources off campus. In the end, I collected \$1000 from the office of Chancellor Bill Stacy, \$1000 from Dean Burhenn and the College of Arts and Sciences, \$500 from the Provost John Friedl, \$350 from the Association for Campus Entertainment, \$250 from Student Government Association, and \$200 from the University Honors Program, for a total of \$3300. After persuading a couple of students not active in the department at the time (Zech Hook and Michael Persad) into joining the cast (though Mike had never really acted before) and convincing a third (James Campbell) that he should wait before he took a semester off, and then insisting that a fourth (Nathan Gebele) read the script several months in advance and rejoin the department that semester, I had the makings of a cast. After a slight change in the structure of my DHON committee and an episode of running around in the middle of the night mending fences, I had everyone I wanted.

The other component I needed for the show to happen was an audience. Other than the traditional advertising that the department does for its shows

(posters, fliers, email, the *Chattanooga TimesFreePress* if we're lucky), I had a friend in the Graphic Design department create a full color professional poster for the show, based on some initial sketches I had done of Folia. I had the posters, which were quite striking, printed at Ideagraphx next to campus. Also, the week that the show opened I was able to land a twenty-minute radio interview with local NPR 88.1FM WUTC, during which I ranted about my own visions of the theatre, the sorry state of the arts in this country and region, and all the crap I had to put up with from people too young and inexperienced to be giving me crap about my art to get money for the show. I was also able to thoroughly solicit the email listservs for the Honors program and the Shaking Ray Levis audience. It also helped that I told many people that students would somehow get in for free, either through purchasing a lab-pass for the other show in the Ward, or by my doling out tickets at the door.

From there, I could actually get to the heart of the project: directing the play. I was confident going into auditions that I would have a competent group of artists to do the play, and although Gaye Jeffers, the director of UTC's other show in the Ward, and I had to share a casting pool, we never had any disagreements over who we wanted.

For me, the first day of auditions was a kind of testing ground to see who would explore the farthest physically. After a moment of ice-breaking exhibitionism demonstrated by Liz, everyone else quickly caught on with an explosive and very funny energy. Those who didn't catch on were left standing in shock and were not called back. The following day, I wanted to see who could

change gears, how they could adapt to the radically different tone and style of the chorus sections. Knowing that it would be a difficult transition, and also knowing that I wouldn't be able to cast our three strongest actors, I had Andrew Zimmerman and Casey Clark read the roles of Folia and Galgut, while Kelly Evans served as the chorus leader, to set some kind of precedent for the direction the scene should take. Afterwards, I saw that only a select few could handle the role of chorus leader, and even fewer could respond to my directions, though I, too, was uncertain of exactly what would work. After an hour and a half of auditions on the first day, about forty minutes more on the second, and a brief phone call that night to confirm things with Gaye, I had my cast. (see Appendix VI) With all the production demands between casts and crews of the two shows, I ended up with one more cast member than the eight that I had anticipated. That Friday night, before rehearsals began the following week, I assembled everyone involved on my production—actors, designers, crew heads, AVA volunteers—together in the studio to introduce themselves and to briefly talk about the nature of the production. The main ideas I wanted to communicate were that this would be a process that would work only if everyone brought something to the table, that this was very much an experiment, and, therefore, anything goes.

Early rehearsals involved a lot of group warm-ups and exercises, usually based on something prescribed by Marowitz or Grotowski, including extended sessions of relaxation techniques. I knew that many of my actors, being college students from the provinces of Tennessee, had not been exposed to various styles of theatre, much less been expected to roles in new, experimental plays. So, on

some nights we would watch video recordings of different productions to give the younger actors a sense of what is possible in theatre, and to give the older ones an idea of how far they could go as well. For example, we watched Grotowski's production of *Akropolis* and the Hadivadlo company's *Kral Oidipus*, then we discussed what inspired us from each one. In subsequent rehearsals, I had them imitate certain physicalizations they had seen, first as exercises, then applying them to the play, particularly as the chorus. Other nights would be less structured; I would dim the lights and play music, encouraging everyone to relax and let the music affect them emotionally and, later, to explore different rhythmic moving, with the goal of applying what they found to the play. Frequently, I had the cast look at paintings by Ghelderode's fellow countryman, artist James Ensor, for ways to communicate the sense of style and tone for specific scenes. This was quite successful and evolved into my showing them all of my visual resources, including the designs I had sketched.

After three weeks of these types of rehearsals, I had not made much headway in the realm of run-throughs, which Robert would frequently bring to my attention. We tried to do one every Friday or so, and as the weeks progressed, so did the run-throughs. But it wasn't until a kind of sweeping reassessment of things (changing two-thirds of the costume designs, and subsequently the characters themselves) that the show really took off. I explained to Jeff and Liz one afternoon that they were essentially the pilots of a plane that, at any given moment, would suddenly have wings of paper and that, instead of 1) pilot A, seeing that the wings are made of paper, freaks out and forgets how to fly the

plane, or 2) pilot B climbs to the back to try to act like a wing, that they should just concentrate on flying the plane and let me work on the technical problems. The problem, for the most part, was a matter of focus: it was difficult, if not impossible, for all of the younger actors listen and respond in the extreme manner that I was asking of them, and also to get Jeff to really take charge in a way that would ultimately drive the play from beginning to end. I had given Liz a video-recording of three performances by Min Tanaka, a Japanese Butoh dancer/performance artist, which she used to great effect, so I was not worried about her. Things came to a bit of a boiling point one night in rehearsals when, in the middle of running a scene that consisted mostly of Galgut's monologue, Jeff stopped and demanded that everyone look at him when he was talking to them. I agreed with him, and we continued running the scene: it proved to be a useful shock to everyone, and the scene played like it never had before. Afterwards, one of my cast members expressed their concerns that my having condoned the outburst would split the cast, so I addressed the issue in notes. I explained that everyone had different ways of working and that we were all moving towards the same goal. I told Jeff that I wouldn't let him do that again, but I also quoted Marowitz: "A rehearsal that doesn't begin in the boiler room will never make it to the penthouse." (Marowitz, 156) Eventually, as the students found ways to enrich and solidify their new characters, Jeff's performance gained strength as well, until, during the week of dress rehearsals, they all reached a point where they were genuinely playing with each other every night. By the time all the design elements were in place, the show had really come together.

One of the biggest challenges I faced as a director, and more generally as the creator of this production, was being able to stay true to my instincts and then communicate them to other people. As a writer, I was able to overcome my inevitable and debilitating skepticism by relying on my instincts as an actor—if I was stuck on a particular monologue, I would imagine myself on a bare stage performing the scene and eventually something would come out. But this came around to haunt me as I tried to direct an actor in creating a character from which I could not separate myself. For instance, it was extremely difficult for me to communicate to Jeff what I wanted to see from the character of Galgut—this was the single character on which I had spent the most time adapting from the original, and, as a result, the rhythms of that character’s language were the rhythms of my own mind. I am forever grateful that Jeff recognized the problem and was able to work with me on distancing myself from the character enough to justifiably critique his portrayal of him. We would discuss at some length the various archetypes that I had suggested for him, how images that resonated very clearly for me would conjure distinctly different associations for him, until eventually a compromise was reached that usually involved some minor editing of the phrasing and rhythms of Galgut’s speech. In the end I felt this was successful: my authorship was still there, and it was articulated in a way more confluent with the *mise-en-scene* (“putting on the stage”).

It was also invaluable to have as many different opinions as I did from more experienced and dissimilar-minded people throughout rehearsals: Michael Persad (the Virgin Mary) was the most immediate outlet of directorial

sensibilities, as were all the departmental members of my DHON committee. For example, it wasn't until after Stacy emphasized the incongruence of Jeff's physicality with the rest of the show that I was able to actually see it in the production photos, which I was then able to show to Jeff, who quickly responded. Although had I been able to address this problem earlier, I think Jeff could have developed his physicality much further and in a much more integrated way. Also had I had more time, I would like to have been able to experiment more with the transition into scene 5, making a more elaborate ritual of the fools' entrance.

All in all, I was very pleased with the actual performances; we sold out nearly every show and even did a Friday night performance at 11PM, which also sold out and was definitely our best show—a matter of having the right audience at the right time in the run of the production. The final show on the following Saturday afternoon was still very strong, but the audience consisted mostly of the cast's family members, many of whom found the sacrilegious tones and rap music, if not the style of the production altogether, to be a little overwhelming—at least this was the case with my own family. However, most of the responses that I received, other than the music being too loud, expressed the audience's appreciation for the immediacy of the play, both in theme and style—and I think this mix of responses can be seen as representative of the process as a whole.

From the very beginning, this was a process of communicating my vision of a work of art to other people, and in some of the most crucial aspects of the production, I could not see what I wanted, but I could feel it, and I would know it when I saw it. I received much more skepticism throughout the project than I

have mentioned here, and I have omitted it here as I did when I experienced it—and the same can be said about the many frustrations inherent in a collaborative work. I tried to fairly consider all criticism, doubt, dissuasion, and outright rejection with some degree of perspective and then, ultimately, stick to the vision, because I knew that in art as in politics, everything is a compromise. One year ago, when my directing professor Fred Behringer told me, “You don’t know how to read that play,” I decided to stick to my vision and to work with Robert Duffy, who entertained my ideas, still with much skepticism, though more constructive in nature. In the following year, as life in Chattanooga became more saturated with politics and, if it is possible, religion, I learned that again, in art as in politics, criticism is important, but nothing new ever comes from being conservative. I allowed myself to be indulgent with stage-time (the extended dance scenes, etc.), and I allowed my actors to be indulgent in working out for themselves the unactable ideas I was proposing; and the result was what I considered to be some of the strongest moments of the play. I focused on what made the play work for me—the music, the raw vulgarity, the sense of the sacred—and tried to give it to the actors to make it come alive for them, that they in turn could then give it to an audience.

To conclude, I think that the most important response came after the show on opening night: I was a nervous wreck, completely uncertain about absolutely everything, and my friend Brian Cagle, who had also studied in the Czech Republic some years before I did, said to me, “Congratulations—you’ve brought Hadivadlo to Chattanooga.”

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The original text of this work is available in the original language only. This edition is a translation of the original, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1963, translated by [Name], and is published here as a separate work. It is not intended to provide any kind of commentary or interpretation of the original text, but only to provide a faithful translation of the original text into English. The original text is available in the original language only. This edition is a translation of the original, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1963, translated by [Name], and is published here as a separate work. It is not intended to provide any kind of commentary or interpretation of the original text, but only to provide a faithful translation of the original text into English.

Appendix I:

Original Text

A note about the original text...

The English translation of Michel de Ghelderode's *School for Buffoons* only exists in a bound facsimile format, published by Chandler Publishing in 1943, translated by Kenneth S. White. After an extensive search to observe all copyrights in the reproducing and adapting of the text, I could not find a single authority (that still exists) to provide any kind of definite rules in the matter. The play is anthologized in the French but not in English, and for all I know the facsimile copy that I used is the only one in the universe. So, as a tribute to the much overlooked playwright, I have included in this project a copy of the English translation in an effort to save it from oblivion.

CHARACTERS

SIR FOLIAL, knight and master buffoon

GALGUT, buffoons' verger

ASTORICK,

BEELZOBE,

BAFFRY,

BOOFRENK,

CARLOY,

DREGMUND,

FRINKLE,

LILTINOR,

HORRALT,

MACAROLL,

RISKAS,

FARADEE,

SORNIP,

buffoons

ACT ONE

Scene One

[Place and time: In a former convent now secularized. An ogive-shaped room, lit from behind by a very high stained-glass rose window, through which filters dying light, caught in a snare. Upstage, right and left, two exits to the outside of the cloister and open air, intimated by the lighting. 1

[The atmosphere of an underground vault prevails, due to the bare stone surfaces; vesperal shadows are already amassing under the naves. 2

[In the background, by climbing several steps, one reaches a platform, on which an altar or pulpit may have been erected in earlier times; at present, in its center stands a traveling theatre's backdrop. The façade is garish red, its curtains made from undertaker's streamers, black with silvered teardrops. On each side of this mountebank's stage, an exit. A stately throne, apparently detached from some ancient choir stall, sits on the left side of the platform; and one sees, evenly spaced, four enormous copper candelabra holding candles thick as a man's arm. Upstage, low, two conflicting objects: against the wall at the left, a fully rigged ship mounted on a pedestal, bearing on its prow the name Fools' Cutter; at the right, a catafalque with purple draperies. At the base of the platform lie musical instruments: lutes, viols, bandores, recorders, handbells, and others. All over the walls, hung at different heights, are emblazoned obituary notices and gloomy religious paintings. Some of the latter are perforated; they depict saints under torture. 3 4 5

[Throughout the whole act, a low gong will sound the hours, half hours, and quarter hours at measured intervals.

[In Flanders of olden days, during the second half of the sixteenth century. 6

[The obstinate beat of a tambourine is heard. From the left, the BUFFOONS enter in single file, executing a pilgrims' step. Thirteen in number, they follow their verger, GALGUT, who beats on the tambourine to set the pace for this grotesque procession. The BUFFOONS sing in muffled tones. Their sauntering gait is emphasized by bows and by jerky, ridiculous gestures. Some are neither misshapen nor deformed; but not one of them is without obvious defects: limps, gibbosities, various hydrocephali, not to mention facial ugliness, accentuated by makeup. They are loathsome scraps of human refuse, the sight of whom provokes fright rather than mirth. The BUFFOONS are clothed similarly in short frocks of coarse, russet homespun and vair mantlets; but they wear colorful 7 8

1 stockings and wooden sandals which make their footsteps re-
 sound. In contrast, they unfurl eccentric forms of headdress: one,
 a steel helmet; another, a little wreath of roses; the next, a crown
 of peacock feathers; the fourth, a felt hood; or a hennin; a cap
 2 made from vine branches; a miter; copper spokes borrowed from
 a saint's head; a Beguine's cornet; an upside-down nest; and the
 others wear a ram's horns, a small beehive, and a turban.

[GALGUT, the verger, molds his obesity in a green singlet. He has
 nothing on his head except a wig of bristling, reddish horsehair,
 which makes him look like an ominous sun. The BUFFOONS
 chant.]

3 BUFFOONS [in chorus]

For the skeleton, a herring . . .

For the slut, holy wafers . . .

For the owl, tallow candles . . .

4 For the leper, a kiss . . .

For the monkey, a diamond . . .

For the bishop, nettles . . .

For the King, scrofula . . .

For the drunkard, holy water . . .

5 [When the file extends over the room's entire width, the verger stops
 beating his tambourine and, strangely silent, the BUFFOONS re-
 main in place, thumping time with their feet, rocking to and fro
 like bears. The afflictive spectacle of this ballet danced by the de-
 formed pleases GALGUT, who exhibits a ghastly, batrachian smile.
 6 After a pause, he gives an order.]

GALGUT [commands] About, face!

[The BUFFOONS obey, facing the audience. Their dance fades, like-
 wise their humming of the chant. Now the verger rouses them.]

7 For the Jew?

CHOIR A holy-water sprinkler.

GALGUT For the Devil?

8 CHOIR Pious deeds . . .

GALGUT For the scholar?

CHOIR A hand rattle.

GALGUT And for simple fools?

9 [General silence. The BUFFOONS snicker.]

1 Quiet! I'll tell you, numbskulls. Two things still devolve on buf-
 foons like you, and the two resemble each other: both are hairy,
 and both make juice. First, in time of grace, that part of their
 persons granted to you by the ladies at Court—prudes accoutred
 with holy relics—in trade for the unveiling of your extravagant
 2 manhood.

[The BUFFOONS laugh.]

Second: when you are in disgrace, to stop your monstrous gur-
 glings, the hangman's hairy claws, just the size to break your
 3 necks.

[The BUFFOONS wail.]

So it's decreed! Your share of love and death, as for any living
 creature! But for you, it's just a parody. Vile copulations and
 croaking scum for you parodies of humanity!

4 HORRALT Is that so? How is it that we're not made in God's image
 any more, brother?

BAFFRY Is that so? Why then, cousin?

5 GALGUT My little swans, consult the planet Uterus. Mother Na-
 ture, in her mysterious labors, goes awry, slips, and repents; in
 short, she creates monsters, in all the species. Our Master's taught
 us that. Our Master has read Pliny; he knows everything about
 giants, pygmies, Cyclops, and centaurs. He can describe the beast
 Catoblepas, which ate its own feet in sheer idiocy. He has tremen-
 6 dous dreams; but his mind wins, and he maintains that man is
 still the only measure, anywhere. Now, since this is the last night
 of your confinement in the seminary, and the secrets of your
 profession must soon be revealed to you, I'll tell you all I know
 about your pitiful species before the Master teaches you his final
 lesson. [Silence] My little swans, your origins are noble, infallibly
 7 noble!

[Murmur of stupefaction.]

No doubt, if you do have talent, a prince or tyrant might even
 bestow nobility on you, as a King of Spain did for Foliai, our
 8 Master; but he could never make you noble!

SORNIP What are you saying, Monsieur de Galgut?

9 GALGUT [unheeding] So bear yourselves as proudly as those lords
 who condescend to be amused by your abjection; for you are
 their peers! What am I saying? These noblemen are in all likeli-

1 hood your fathers, or else their wives are your mothers; and you breathe with the bodies they procreated! From them you're endowed with hideousness and vices; what you don't inherit are their names, their predicates . . . [*He rubs his hands.*]

2 [*The BUFFOONS, among themselves, exchange questioning glances.*]

3 Why, my worthy bastards, are your origins still obscure; why are you kicked out of what they call high society? Because those bluebloods, male and female, in their incommensurable pride, can't stand to see progeny of their own flesh less handsome than the gods of old. No sooner has one of those ladies, who claims she makes water and children in a standing position, produced an offspring, and found out that the fruit of her entrails is damned, because it was begat by some stinking he-goat of the Sabbath and not Olympian Jupiter, than yelling about teratology, she sends for the expert monstrologist. Then our own Master Folia, who knows his business, proclaims *ex cathedra* that this counterfeit mankind, this lump of anatomy has no right to baptism, but should be drowned in a latrine. Afterwards, though, he's too smart to let you drown: he takes you to his convent and nurses you on witches' baby bottles. Detached from communion with Christians, you are turned into menagerie specimens or freaks for the circus; he can sell you for a fortune. Look at you! You ought to be satisfied; tomorrow you apprentices will become masters. You will go back to the world where you began, beneath canopied thrones, beside trophies and torchlights. That's justice! You can taunt your makers and swell your sisters' bellies, if not your mothers'!

6 FARADEE And what shall we procreate, we the hideous?

GALGUT Criminal loves give fine fruit, ordinarily. You'll spawn lusty boys and gay wenches, who will soon be lackeys, servants, old renegades and sly bags. The wheel turns, the crucible boils . . . Do you know who is, or rather *was*, the father of the King's most luscious *menina*, his noble maiden of honor? The mobs in Madrid will tell you. A famous buffoon, said to be himself of royal blood . . .

BAFFRY Folia?

8 GALGUT Folia the First! That should spur you to professional dignity! Amen . . .

CARLOY Is that all, verger?

9 GALGUT By no means! The rest will come from your Master's lips. And if by any chance he's drunk, you'll hear sequels. I might mention, in parenthesis, that drunkenness is still our pet sin—

1 ours, and the monks' . . . With lust. That follows . . . But I think Folia's out of his mind. He's drinking ice water and nothing else these days; of late he's lapped up every puddle in Flanders. I can augur no good from that; I'll even predict that our last night will be anything but a frolic. Unless the impromptu I'm hatching succeeds. You two, Baffry, Horralt, don't meander away; you're going to be my confederates tonight . . .

[BAFFRY and HORRALT step forward from the ranks.]

[*In a low voice*] I've just read parts of some letters from Spain. [*Speaking loudly*] Cousins, you shall be avenged, in a few dramatic moments, for years of wandering and shameful subjection. On my oath . . . [*In the background, on the platform, the door to the left has creaked.*] The sleeper is awake again. Form ranks!

[*He recommences his tambourine beat. The BUFFOONS sway back and forth in place, with frustrated expressions.*]

In file! Forward, march!

[*The band of BUFFOONS, having lined up, leaves the scene the same way it entered, at the right exit. And the choir resumes.*]

BUFFOONS [*in chorus*]

For the chalice, a serpent . . .
For the old roisterer, a crutch . . .
For the bull, a maiden . . .
For the believer, the gallows . . .

[*Exeunt the BUFFOONS. Their chant dies. Shortly thereafter, one hears a cacaphony coming from outside. Yells, baying, caterwauling: the beginning of a recreation period. Then the cacaphony dims. GALGUT has stayed near the door, lying in wait for the Master's eruption.*]

Scene Two

FOLIAL'S VOICE Galgut? . . .

[*GALGUT does not answer. FOLIAL looms up, holding a lighted taper. He is an old man, short in stature, bald and tottering, but still quite agile and alert. Dressed in voluminous breeches of black velvet, he is wearing an immaculate shirt with lace at the collar and cuffs. He has riding boots of fine quality. On his fingers, rings flaming with precious stones. Actually, Folia is not*

1 *deformed: one might call him an overgrown dwarf, well proportioned, even graceful; but his bearing suggests a corset. His demeanor would indicate weakness and trickery, were it not for his eyes' steel luster of superior volition. Besides the eyes, he has a mime's extraordinary hands; they seem to be molding shapes or directing musicians, in the manner of a thaumaturgist. He advances like a sleepwalker.*

FOLIAL Galgut? We need more light.

GALGUT [*climbing the steps*] Milord! Did you sleep well?

3 FOLIAL I'm not certain I've slept; but I *have* dreamed, yes—scurvily! If I'm to believe the omens, I'm headed for a land of disaster. No; I was surrounded by an oozing mire, a huge black pond. You were floating around me like some bulbous bladder. I could sense that you were coming to rob me.

4 GALGUT Rob you? What could I steal from a man asleep, when God and the Devil don't even record our dreams?

FOLIAL My fever, a few of my words, a sigh? Give them back!

GALGUT Do you mean to punish me for this chimerical crime?

5 FOLIAL In another sleep, perhaps . . . I'll gore your bladder, deflate it and blow out your filthy thoughts, your pestilence! [*He holds out the taper.*] It will be sinister, tonight. Give us light!

GALGUT How these last hours creep and crawl!

6 FOLIAL Yes! If only I could boot those steeple clocks a good one in the ass . . . I'm in a hurry to be done with it, just as you are. With what? Why, this imposture, my teaching. The folly befitting my name, the madness of believing that any one can teach any one else!

7 GALGUT [*obsequious*] Master, in the forests of America, travelers have often seen an old ape surrounded by young, brawling monkeys. You know, that simian congress is one more result of scholasticism, a world-wide epidemic. Without your whiplashes, your insults and instructions, we'd have been nobodies, nowhere. But now, all of us, your disciples, trained in your skills, will swarm over kingdoms and empires to glitter in the crimson shadows of thrones! We'll perpetuate your style. The whole universe will learn that the only good buffoons are made in Flanders. Everywhere they'll acclaim us as creations of the great Folia, Charles the Fifth's colleague; Folia, the fool so clever that King Philip ennobled him, and not just in derision! [*He grabs FOLIAL'S hand and kisses it.*]

FOLIAL [*pushing GALGUT aside*] Marvelous, your flattery. But you ought to put more expression in it; at the end of your discourse, quaver!

2 GALGUT Thank you. [*He scratches his forehead.*] By the way, it's hard to understand why Philip, that unbending King, should have raised his buffoon to nobility, even if he were the greatest genius of all buffoons. Did he want to humiliate his nobles?

FOLIAL By the way . . .

GALGUT Yet everyone knows he's a King who's never been caught laughing. Did you really un wrinkle his scowl?

3 FOLIAL No; and never shall we see *him* laugh. Did I make him smile? That's too much to ask . . . cajoling the King to curl a lip over his teeth! Anyhow, I had his permission to visit my homeland one more time. And he realized that I had left something in Spain . . . my heart . . .

GALGUT What are you talking about?

FOLIAL [*to himself*] A heart? What's an object like that, to a buffoon? [*Aloud*] Galgut, they're painful honors, those conferred by kings. Away in far-off countries, their friendship tracks you down. He wrote me . . .

GALGUT Felipe, *el rey*?

FOLIAL *El rey!* . . . [*He staggers, then rubs his face.*] See, I'm still reeling from the thought of it.

6 GALGUT This requires illumination! [*He goes about lighting the tapers.*]

FOLIAL Let's make our last lesson ceremonious!

GALGUT Funeral ceremony . . .

FOLIAL That's it.

GALGUT Attuned to your soul.

7 FOLIAL [*bristling at the verger's base servility*] What do you know about my soul, when you haven't any?

8 [GALGUT, startled by this apostrophe, lays down his taper and descends the steps.]

9 As for the rest of you buffoons, you've no soul! The Louvain monks solved that little problem for me; they answered my question like real theologians. If you have any trace of a soul, they said, God's mercy extending to beasts and buffoons, it would be

1 like smoke; it couldn't conceivably have the form of an upright
flame, able to expand, but must be an ember, dispersed in your
bodies' clay. Their opinion, which they don't dare proclaim . . .
Christian charity . . . is that you're castoffs from Heaven and
Hell, the miscarried dead who assume twisted anatomies. Out of
2 here, you slimy butt!

[GALGUT *slithers toward right exit, but then waits, while FOLIAL, ex-
hausted by this angry outburst, sits in an armchair. After a si-
lence.*]

3 I'm wrong; for haven't I been meticulous in cultivating their sub-
versive venom, and isn't it pure logic they'd poison me first? . . .
Come closer, Galgut.

[*But GALGUT vanishes. FOLIAL fails to see him leave.*]

4 I meant to tell you some good news. Oh no, there are strokes of
good luck we always discover soon enough! . . . Come closer. To
my fleshless King, I give a fat buffoon. Be worthy of me and the
man you're replacing. Closer! Disgusting . . . I can't trust you;
but a decrepit, has-been buffoon forced to go back to human statu-
5 s has to confess to somebody . . . [Silence] You've whiffed the
truth; Destiny has me squashed. Three months ago, clairvoyant, I
saw far beyond these fields the tragedy this letter announces
today. The same crime, precisely. Enlightenment of this kind
comes to us from down below, you can bet on it. Since that vi-
6 sion, my eye has lost its luster, my body's power is gone; and my
buffoons have recovered their primal impudence! You're ring-
leader in their plot, don't deny it; and though you may "enjoy"
my service, you adore commanding that filthy gang. Still, I know
. . . I know from premonition . . . you'll choose your time, when
I'm worn out. Tonight you'll kill me; you'll stone me, let me die,
7 then escape. I could defend myself, for even if I don't have a
sword's edge in my eye any more, I still have one by my side.
What's more, I'm not afraid of your traps. I'd be craftier if I dis-
missed you right now and reneged on my lesson? No; I'll give it,
8 come what may. Just enforce your authority and help me to finish
it alive, or otherwise, you'll be nothing at all, only carnival
clowns. You think you've learned everything? Except one thing,
the secret of my career, my art, in fact, the secret of *any* art that
aspires to greatness! When will I expound my secret? Not until
you beg me to! [Silence] You needn't think you're committed to
9 let me live, in exchange for that supreme knowledge. Do I still
belong to this world?

[GALGUT *returns surreptitiously and takes his place again near the
steps, unnoticed by FOLIAL.*] Listen . . .

[*The Master lapses into tremulous meditation; he makes a few ges-
tures, imitated by the verger, and murmurs some incomprehen-
sible words; then suddenly rises.*]

2 These letters . . . I'll have to hide them. Philip's letter . . . [He
disappears into the background, carrying the taper.]

Scene Three

[*Quickly GALGUT races toward the right, whistles, then returns.
BAFFRY and HORRALT run up and huddle around the verger.*]

GALGUT Get to work! [He gives a paper to each of the buffoons.]
Here's the outline for a short, stark play that ends with a spasm.
4 You'll have to invent words, a few words, enough to explain the
unusual plot. And don't forget, mime comes first; though you'll
wear false faces, high mimicry does without mugging and pucker-
ing, as you know.

BAFFRY Eyow! We'll have to go in the room where they store the
5 masks?

GALGUT Afraid? Come off it, my swans; those faces, their looks of
ecstasy or death agonies are only counterfeits, a bunch of wax
impressions!

HORRALT Molded straight from life. Horrible. They give me the
6 creeps.

GALGUT Nincompoops! A carnival, lugubrious, more or less, like
any festivity featuring men's desire. Nothing but wood, leather,
parchment, and wax. [Sententious] That's Folia's library. There,
7 in a glass case, you'll find the two masks for your parts in the
play: excessively true to life, since they were cast on living per-
sons, not on the dead.

BAFFRY And you? Will you go? Everyone's heard that our Master,
with his unimaginable sources of information, his spy network,
8 collects face molds taken from famous cadavers, the greatest
criminals, too. Enough to reconstruct a whole century, history! . . .
Is it a Christian's pastime, this delicious hobby?

GALGUT An artist's, the most famous artist of them all—for even
though you may hate him, as I do, Folia is unrivalled, Folia,
9 who lifted our art to the heights of the sciences! . . . Now, time is

1 short. Go to the costume room. And then the theater, set the stage, but quietly. The instant the music stops, you'll begin.

HORRALT Mum! Though I'm afraid Foliai has sniffed our plot, for it does reek, and . . .

2 BAFFRY And we won't have surprise on our side. Those bird's eyes of his see everything; they decipher our hidden desires.

3 GALGUT I'm sure he smells a conspiracy; scheming he can sense a mile away, mayhem, too. But his sight has lost its razor edge. This time we can catch him off guard. And kill him—not with our fists, but with our tongues. That will show how unsurpassable his teaching was! Suppose we only cut him to the quick; it would be worth it! [A noise in the background: the door to the left has again opened.] Those vaults will come crashing down on him, I swear it! And the play will end in a triumphant gallows march, a chorus; you vipers will be untied to crawl through flowery meadows and tents of silk in the world's universal arena.

4 [FOLIAL reappears, wary. The verger hastily pushes the two buffoons beneath the catafalque.]

Take my dark lantern. [Exit GALGUT, very quickly.]

5 Scene Four

FOLIAL [advances, groping] Allo there? . . . Were those hornets? Or just the echoes of useless confessions coming back to haunt the chapel? [He slumps into an armchair.] Silence, gift from Heaven, can I ever have you? And you, solitude, holy solitude, you will let me suffer, expansively, not shrunken like a spider numb with cold—will you be my mate at last? And you, O Lord, if you haven't left the place entirely, will you listen when I entreat you? Let me die alone, while you watch me, not in pathos or ridicule, but in this twilight sleep—for night is climbing inside me, dour liquid, seeping toward my heart. [He laughs softly.] When your holy monks return, they'll find my skeleton right here, meditating the misery of things. And they'll fix my bones, then slide them under this catafalque, singing in their heavy, nocturnal voices. [He gazes at the catafalque.] Sublime object! It inspires daydreams. [He contemplates the ship.] Like this caravel . . . Wood, canvas aloft, and heave anchor for the infinite . . . [At this instant the drapes over the catafalque begin to move, and whispers are heard amidst them. FOLIAL becomes attentive.] Winds that swirl through the cloister are coming to take refuge, to catch their breath. Unless it's birds living here? Can the place be

haunted? . . . [FOLIAL straightens, goes down the steps and heads toward the catafalque.] Hallo, you voices . . . from beyond the grave?

HORRALT'S VOICE [rising suddenly in falsetto] Swine!

BAFFRY'S VOICE [barytonizing] Prig!

HORRALT'S VOICE That's not in your part, that handplay!

BAFFRY'S VOICE What of it, dandy-pandy? The verger married us!

[FOLIAL jumps forward and shakes the catafalque. The two BUFFOONS emerge, squealing. The MASTER seizes them by the napes of their necks and drags them roughly to the center of the room.]

FOLIAL Dismal form of pleasure, kiddoes. Did those hypothetical lusts catch spark, perchance, from the trappings of death? If that's the case, go to the cemetery. Around rotting crucifixes, on the phosphorescent humus, in thick grass, lovesick worms cavort after a heavy rain, to excite you . . .

HORRALT Master, you're mistaken. We're pure!

FOLIAL Calamity on the pure, these inactive lascivious! [He releases them.] At Escorial, we had a huge painting, one the King himself prized. It represented the Garden of Earthly Pleasures. Fruits and flowers, animals, and the sons and daughters of man pursued each other in chaotic confusion—orgasms that never expired. In a dead-end valley, that human breed hunted pleasure with sad ferocity, rabidly, under a sky bereft of light or air. I still shudder to think of it! [Hissing] Do you know, incidentally, whence cometh and whither goeth all flesh?

HORRALT From one cavity into another cavity.

BAFFRY What? So for us, everything's forbidden. What curse do we have on us?

FOLIAL A sinister question . . . It goes back so far in time that all recollection of it is lost. That original sin . . . that's why our valley is inhabited by monsters! . . . [Harshly] Go confess!

BAFFRY Since when do buffoons have a chaplain?

FOLIAL You're right. [Pursuing his vision.] The rare angels in that painting who venture into the zenith catch fire, or else they're driven away from it by flying fish or devilish puppets riding on storks. So Hell invades Heaven, and the garden of rapture turns into a realm of atonement.

HORRALT Our Master's babbling.

1 FOLIAL What? Look here! The break's over. Ring the bell.

[The two BUFFOONS scamper away toward the right. The bell clangs. It is greeted by hooting. The noise subsides. FOLIAL nimbly climbs the steps and disappears in the background.]

2 Scene Five

[The room is empty. Outside, a whistle shrills orders. Then a drum: no longer a tambourine, but a resonant, deep-toned bass drum starts to rumble, pacing a slow ommegang march. As dusk falls imperceptibly, the flame from four tapers casts tranquil light on the stage platform, while the rest of the scene remains bathed in shadows. Soon the BUFFOONS appear in parade formation, led by GALGUT beating the drum. Each parader carries a lighted taper. The last two in line, HORRALT and BAFFRY, who have no lights, separate from the file, dash up the steps and vanish from the far end of the platform through the exit right, after having exchanged quick signals with GALGUT. Once the file occupies the whole width onstage, the drum is silenced.]

GALGUT Halt! About, face!

[The file stops and turns to face the audience.] The Night Dance!

[GALGUT resumes his drumbeat, rapidly. The eleven BUFFOONS leap in place without gesturing. It is a ballet of automats, reminiscent of an Inca dance, with only feet and shoulders moving. The drumbeat ceases. The dance continues silently; then the drum resumes. Its rhythm speeds, with a frantic crescendo. The dance, gone wild, is a forced, violent stampede. When the din reaches maximum intensity, GALGUT blows his whistle. Everything stops. In unison the dancers fall to their haunches, then place their tapers in a semi-circle, forming a luminous band at the front of the stage.]

About, face!

[Veering on their haunches, the buffoons turn and face the platform. GALGUT puts down his drum, climbs the steps, and sits at the top. He yawns.]

My fine bawdies, every farce has an end. I, your elder, am to harangue you and say my adieu, for at dawn, you'll take to the road; you'll be on your way, someplace or other, ready for gilded slavery—the way of the wise. Some of you will go on wandering

and rejoin the rabble—the way of fools. You're marked men. You'll buffoon, and whether you choose epigrams or turds, buffooning fools shall you be, disciples doomed to the agony of making men laugh. Everyone will find his own style: some can be serenely fatalistic—you'll be proclaimed artists. The others will behave like rapsallions, and be spit at and cudged. Though you be scullery slaves or free men, you'll never escape what you are. All in all, we're the ones to be envied, for in our world, today, when hierarchies mushroom without a thought of pity, you alone can still thumb your noses, on the sidelines, and revel in your insidious brands of pleasure.

Never strain talent: that's Art. Think how indispensable you'll be in life at court, with the grey monks and the quacks: you'll be intimates of the bigwigs. Learn to identify your rulers' whims and moods, their ailments, their vices; soon you shall dominate them. Learn to watch, spy; keep your mouths shut. Learn to suffer with a smile and to hide your satisfactions; pick the exact instant to produce a witticism or a ripe fart. Be bizarre; that's the high road to jest and surprise. Watch the animals. They'll show you a thousand guaranteed comic tricks. And sharpen your memories, to sniff out every possible secret. Rulers, when they're overwrought, will ask you questions. And they'll tell all their hidden disappointments to you. Mask your emotions, your disgust, your spite, or pretend you're only simulating feelings. Not for a second must they suspect that you could be anything more than a buffoon—if they did, your presence would be a menace.

CARLOY Phrases! Paraphrases! What about instructions?

GALGUT Huh? Am I your master? Drillmaster, that's all. The formula is a mystery to me; I'm still waiting for that to be revealed, as you are. But still . . .

[The BUFFOONS begin to yawn, visibly; GALGUT, likewise.]

But still . . . [He straightens up.] Let me, before I leave, express my upstanding sentiment of brotherhood, in emulation of the old, illustrious Ulenspiegel, our leader . . . [GALGUT deems it appropriate to begin taking off his pants.] By showing you my rear, beautiful as the lunar disk! . . .

[The BUFFOONS rise and hiss him. GALGUT does not finish his act; the hissing ceases abruptly, and the BUFFOONS sit down again, pointing to the back of the room. The VERGER jumps up the steps and hoists himself into the ship.]

The Master!

Scene Six

1 [FOLIAL *has just made his appearance. He has donned ceremonial dress. A long cloak accentuates his height, on his head is a velvet toque, on his chest hangs a glittering gold necklace. A carved silver sword swings at his flank. The black and white attire and his stern bearing suggest some kind of churchman. In his right hand he holds a long whip; in his left, a small canvas bag. His gait seems to waver.*]

GALGUT Hurray! . . .

BUFFOONS [*in chorus*] Hurray!

3 FOLIAL Thank you. [*As though completely exhausted, he falls into the armchair, haggard, unaware of the assembly.*]

[GALGUT, *in his ship, unrolls a parchment. The BUFFOONS' heads turn toward him.*]

4 GALGUT [*declaiming*] Your Lordship, venerated Master . . .

FOLIAL [*with a start*] What's this?

5 GALGUT [*rhetorically*] In heartfelt gratitude, after having licked at the fragrant flower of your sweet wisdom, your affectionate disciples are prepared to soar aloft like wily bumblebees into the skies of Arcadia, aiming for the sun . . .

6 FOLIAL [*interrupting with a gesture*] Where did you get that pedant's gibberish? Didn't I teach you the laconic gibe, the retort that stings like a dart? [*Forced laugh.*] Ha! Ha! My disciples, bumblebees poking at honey? At dung, you mean!

[*A murmur from the agitated BUFFOONS.*]

Come off it!

7 GALGUT [*stammering*] Well, uh, before starting to uh taste the fruits of the ah banquet, brimful with affection . . . Er . . . [*He rips his parchment to bits.*] That will do for my speech!

[*The BUFFOONS burst into laughter and start to hiss. GALGUT comes down from his ship, gasping.*]

8 Anyway, you know our feelings. Your Lordship, I thought you doted on this ceremony.

FOLIAL Usually, no doubt, I would have demanded it. My entire

life—and yours—owe it to themselves to be ceremonious . . . Get rid of those banners, now; I'll get along without them. You see, my pets [*hesitates*] age has become a weight on me, all of a sudden. That's why I'm setting you free. Not tomorrow; this very night. There are stars in the sky; use them.

2 GALGUT [*in wry mockery*] Stars! Thanks for the treasure you bestow on us!

FOLIAL [*unheeding*] And afterwards, forget me. They claim that buffoons escape Time's outrages, like courtesans. Don't believe a word of it. Look at me now; I'm on my last legs, [*rubs his chest*] with a disease that gnaws at me . . . [*His head drops and he collapses suddenly in a sort of faint.*]

[*The BUFFOONS, excited, glance at GALGUT questioningly, their index fingers pointing at the Master. The VERGER seems hesitant. He climbs the steps and walks around the armchair, where FOLIAL is half conscious.*]

4 GALGUT We sympathize! A long life of success, burdensome honors; that will affect the strongest mind! Enough speechmaking. We admire you, Master, and we pity you! So we'll leave you discreetly, on tiptoe. And may the Almighty Master grant you a friendly angel's help. [*He snatches the whip and hides it behind the chair—an act unseen by FOLIAL.*] So be it; let's dispense with protocol and be dismissed by your paternal benediction. However, your pets [*he points at the buffoons*] and we mean those frogs, billygoats, chimpanzees, all those bestiary shapes swarming at your feet, are eager to have what you've promised them, when your punishments are finished once and for all. In their name, if it is granted they deserve any identity except that of buffoon, I implore you: tell us the Secret . . .

5 BUFFOONS [*as in an echo*] The Secret . . .

GALGUT Of your art . . .

6 BUFFOONS Of your art . . .

GALGUT I mean, of great art . . .

7 BUFFOONS Of great art . . .

GALGUT In a word—genius!

8 BUFFOONS In a word—genius!

FOLIAL [*awakened by the surge of voices, he comes out of his fainting spell. He straightens up, mumbling.*] What're you asking? The secret . . . of my art . . . of great art? Genius? . . .

Scene Seven

1 GALGUT [*obsequious*] We beseech you . . .

FOLIAL Ah, yes. I remember that . . . I promised . . . The Secret . . . My lifetime's experience . . . [*A silence. FOLIAL tears off his toque and throws it aside. Only his hands now speak, in disorder expressive of his feelings; fingers probe his forehead as though to extract its thoughts.*] Wait! . . . The Secret? My head's fuzzy . . .
2 But it was a single word . . . Excuse me one second . . . I'll find it . . .

GALGUT The Secret?

3 BUFFOONS The Secret? . . .

[*FOLIAL gestures that he no longer knows it. Clamor breaks out. The BUFFOONS rise, gesticulating and vociferating. Soon they stamp their feet angrily. Shocked, FOLIAL totters and sinks backward into his chair, mouth agape. GALGUT springs toward the BUFFOONS and imposes silence. Then he returns to the armchair.*]

4 GALGUT Forgive them, Master; Christ couldn't teach them charity; He didn't die for *them* or their species . . . Rest, now. We were asking too much of you . . .

5 [FOLIAL, reacting instinctively, presses the cloth bag against his chest.]

6 Can the secret be hidden in that bag? [*He comes upstage again.*] Watch out! He may croak too soon. Restrain yourselves a few more seconds, skunks! [*He turns back toward FOLIAL, who is still unconscious.*] Master? Wake up! Don't try to think any more. Your disciples have practiced an impromptu. Never mind the secret; we can look for it ourselves.

[FOLIAL has reopened his eyes.]

7 You're at the theater. We want to amuse you. Maybe you'll consent and approve of our skill; it's mature at last. *He points to the little stage at the rear; its curtain moves.*] Watch . . .

8 [*He thumps his heel on the floor. Quickly the BUFFOONS dash to their musical instruments and get ready, noses aloft. FOLIAL'S eyes wander in evident bewilderment.*]

First the prelude . . .

[*At the foot of the platform, the BUFFOONS form an orchestra. Each holds his favorite instrument: a recorder, a quinton, a bandore, tubular bells, a viola da gamba, not to forget a sort of shrill oboe (the sharpest timbre of all) which is to play the cantus firmus. The five noninstrumentalizing BUFFOONS rock to and fro in cadence and act as an accompanying chorus, wordless and close-mouthed. At a sign from the VERGER, the improvised orchestra leader, a symphony begins. It is a sad, solemn pavane. No doubt this performance aims at parody; but despite a tendency to play out of tune, the musicians are still artists. Their outmoded, morbid melodies blare out, punctuated by mistakes and quick recoveries. GALGUT, without a pause in his conducting, retreats toward the right edge of the platform, going backwards, to free the angle of vision and to judge the music's effectiveness.*]

[*Hearing the first chords, FOLIAL pays heed. His face relaxes; he listens intently. This harmony appears to stir his senses, to kindle memories of bygone artistic triumphs. Almost imperceptibly, as though captured in hallucination, he rises, and without being fully aware of it, goes through the motions of a dance. Having mounted the platform, he performs a pavane. Transfigured, he smiles in ecstasy, as if dancing with an invisible partner. Indeed, the actor he used to be prevails anew and improvises weird figures like those etched by a gawky marionette. In slow companionless ballet, casting numerous shadows, he whirls, macabre and noble. This is also a lesson affecting GALGUT and the BUFFOONS, who watch in amazed admiration. The music ends at last, moribund, while the dancer, as though suspended on wires, remains motionless. GALGUT hurries to support the old man, worn out from his exertions, as the BUFFOONS applaud. GALGUT takes him to the armchair, where the aged dancer lets the others help him to a seat.*]

7 GALGUT [*kneels, one knee on the floor*] We're grateful, Master! You see! In your honor, we started a play; but you're acting it now! Truly you will be called more than the most perfect buffoon of all; you will be called a poet! And we'll suffer, for we can foresee that even if we've had the honor of being your disciples, we'll never leave mediocrity. We'll always be grimacing fools, laughter's sorry slaves. As of this moment, the show is finished, since you gave it in our place. So, I implore you, give the signal to send us away.

9 FOLIAL No, my friend. I command that the comedy continue . . .

- 1 GALGUT Tragedy, if you please.
- FOLIAL I do please. I didn't dance to bewilder you; it was to prove what inspiration can do. That's how we perform irresistible feats, those that divide true talent from counterfeit.
- 2 GALGUT Inspiration? What's that?
- FOLIAL How should I know? Perhaps some operation of wizardry, beyond our understanding.
- GALGUT Is it true, then, that we're implicated in sorcery, somehow? In the name of Heaven, must we look through Hell's antechambers for the secret you won't entrust to us?
- 3 FOLIAL Aagh! Have the Demon himself show you the light. At His Catholic Majesty's Court, you can't fail to meet his Satanic Highness. Unless he sees what a simpleton you are. [*Growing excited.*] You're getting on my nerves. It's time to quit this schoolmasterly prattle! On with the play! Comedy, tragedy, or masquerade—are you sure what you're staging? Do you have a surprise for me?
- 4 GALGUT Yes, just what you ordered. You'll see a spectacle that will astound you. So stick tight to your armchair.
- 5 FOLIAL [*mockingly*] Astound me? You? Do you think you're playing for a bunch of rhetoricians? Don't you know, blubberhead, that I've written a hundred plays and donated scenes to the best dramatists in Spain? Let's see this masterpiece. What's the title?
- GALGUT *A Night in Escorial!* Dedicated humbly to you, in remembrance of your stay in that sublime residence.
- 6 FOLIAL Hah! Who says I like to remember that? . . . What's the plot?
- GALGUT I beg your pardon. I reserve the right . . .
- 7 FOLIAL Babble! That's what I predict: ridiculous, insipid dialogue concocted by mountebanks.
- GALGUT [*stands erect in vexation*] It's a drama, one genuine act, the truth warm as life. I didn't invent a thing.
- 8 FOLIAL [*worried*] Then where did you get it? You've never gone to Escorial, and like everybody else, you're in the dark about what really happens there.
- GALGUT Where I found it will be my secret. To each his turn. May I begin the play?
- 9 FOLIAL No. First, I'd like to know . . .

- GALGUT To take my advantage, my surprise? Too late now, your Grace! [*He leaps toward the small stage.*]
- [*The BUFFOONS, who have gotten their instruments, obey a gesture made by the VERGER and strike up a pompous march. GALGUT pulls a string at the edge of the stage, opening the curtain and revealing a brightly lit scene. The background represents an alcove, with little curtains visible, carefully closed. Left, on a pedestal surrounded by flowers, a statue of the Virgin, in a triangular dress of orfray, crowned and bejeweled, scintillating in the caress of the candles' gleam at her feet. Beneath the statue, a prie-dieu. To the right, fruits and flacons on a credence table. Alongside, crystal goblets. Also at the right, a doorway hidden by a drape.*]
- [*The march ends. GALGUT has found a hiding place in a dark corner. FOLIAL, standing, seems to start toward the stage, but decides otherwise and sits down. Besides, the show is beginning. From offstage laughter and exclamations resound; then BAFFRY (as FOLIAL II) appears, entering backwards. His face is covered by a full-length mask with flexible chin. It is a sardonic but subtle mask, enamel pink, enlivened by a handlebar mustache. The actor's glistening eyelids emerge from it. BAFFRY, dressed in velvet of pearl gray, has a silver lamé cloak over his shoulders. He carries a dagger. Gesturing, he beats off imaginary companions who are trying to accompany him as he enters.*]
- FOLIAL II My countless thanks, gracious gentlemen, for having deigned to show me to my nuptial bedroom; but respect the rites of love, or rather, the sacraments, and don't violate the sacred threshold! You want to see too much! Haven't I presented to Court spectators, those enchanted Spaniards from every nook of the land, the wondrous enactment of my marriage, union of ugliness and beauty, madness and wisdom? How you chortled, my noble friends, and what hilarity; it's my turn to laugh, now! Your pleasures are almost finished; mine are just beginning. What more could you ask? A close-up view of the Beast's and Beauty's love-play? Just imagine that tender mystery. You can be sure I'll perform as well as you would yourselves in my place; tonight, I'll be spectacular, a *man* like all of you! Who needs your advice, your love potions! Hasn't God endowed me with the talent to lavish all kinds of rapture? Now let me handle the conquest. Don't bother to say good night; I won't have a wink of sleep before sunrise . . . The happiest of all buffoons salutes you, gentlemen, and up the steps I go, lighthearted, to the altar of Venus . . . [*He makes salutations and closes the drape, then returns, looks at the alcove, fills a goblet with wine and empties it in one gulp.*] To Love! To my

1 old Master Folia, first to bear the name, whose glory I've inherited! It's his daughter I'm to marry, beautiful Veneranda, born for the Gods' enjoyment and mine! To my colleagues from Flanders, distant friends in the convent at Dullendael, O humble neophytes who will soon be exalted by my triumph!

2 [At this statement, the BUFFOONS applaud, and FOLIAL II bows quickly.]

3 Alone! Finally! I'm swelling with excitement and happiness. Victory! I'm drunk, and not only from wine! My head's in a spin. Oho, friend, guard her well, and don't lose sight of her before the right moment! Ha! Ha! This marriage—what an apotheosis! King Philip, austere *Felipe*, had to see the wedding for himself, so he spied on us from a hiding place in the sacristy. He had to bite his lip to keep from exploding with spite. It's my turn to burst, now. Think of the lot of them who'll be purple with envy tonight, panting around my room, the thirsty curs. And what's accomplished in there is not going to be a fool's strut, that's sure! [He sits down and rubs his forehead.] Can I be adrift in some unworldly dream, and am I to wake alone, with nothing but mockery? No! She does exist in all her splendor; she's made of flesh, not vapor. In that alcove, she's weary from a long wait; little can she dream what a strange sacrifice awaits her, the venerian combat when I'll come out on top.

5 [The BUFFOONS chuckle. Rising, the actor pours himself another goblet of wine.]

6 Of course I'll need courage and gallant strategy, but I have experience, don't I, and the will to conquer? [His expression darkens.] Still, I'm not blind; I don't forget what I am . . . She'll submit, no question about it. Yet she does look like virtue incarnate. Impassive, sovereign virtue. As I recall, sweet Veneranda, our childhood games—and I've loved you since I was a boy—those games were pure, always. And our engagement, ceremonious, even if it was improvised! No! I can't believe what's in store for me, since behind these curtains—and I could easily throw them open—lies a marvelous *menina*, a pure-blood lady, who had every right to a distinguished alliance . . . If only the marvel doesn't vanish! [He listens.] How quiet that alcove is! Not a breath, not the slightest rustling of wings from dreams mounting in the air! Good heaven! Has she been kidnapped? That's been done before, tasteless jokes like this, when the groom was a mere buffoon. Will I find a cold, plaster skeleton instead of my warm, pink virgin? [He goes toward the alcove.] Veneranda? [Silence.] Wife?

[Silence.] Fear is choking me . . . Veneranda, are you asleep? Veneranda, I'm on my way, stiff and aflame all over. Why don't you jump and giggle, as entranced prudes are supposed to? . . . No mother to console you now; and your father, Sir Folia, must curse you as he curses me—but what's that to us? Didn't the Church agree to bless our union, after all, and didn't the King approve of it? Henceforth, my darling, our souls and bodies can join without remorse. Come, call me, say my name, let me come in to your murky shadows. [Silence.] A mortuary is no deader than this . . . [He comes forward and drinks more wine.] I'm weakening, now. A cloud . . . I wonder . . . I don't understand this preamble . . . That closed alcove frightens me. I expected to see a naked figure rush out, alarmed, perhaps, but belonging to me! [Furious.] Veneranda? . . . [In anguish.] Veneranda? [Begging.] Veneranda? [Staggering, he goes toward the statue of the Virgin and falls to his knees at the prie-dieu.] O Holy Virgin, illumine me. Thank you. My memory is reviving thoughts from long ago, faded away in rapture. Yes, we always leap pell-mell into marriage bonds, or fly like some mad bird headed toward sunlit mirrors. It's afterwards we stop to ponder. Now I see. My flesh is chilled. I understand the scorn, all the ridicule and laughter at the Spanish Court. [He stands more erect.] Duncel! Maybe my so-called fiancée is pure in some way, but she's not pure in heart. She's known love. All of a sudden that dawns on me. O daughter of the supreme buffoon, O marvelous child, O fair-haired trinket, you've grown in the throne's shadows, and I wasn't the only playmate in your games. The Prince was your master, and he's no little boy any more. He's powerful, violent; he has a man's passions. And when he first climbed those steps to the throne, it didn't turn his eyes away from his delicious companion. I could see that much, I, a simple buffoon. Then their games made progress, intimate and more intimate. Wasn't his most beautiful maiden of honor worthy of that fervent affection? Aha! How could she say to me, one day when I let myself go in a wild spurt of words and admitted my love—hopeless and deformed as it was—that there was only one difference between a child and a buffoon, the hump back? I was dazzled. But that's all finished; I'll have to see everything clear. Blast this monologue, a bridal night takes two players, it seems to me! [Yelling an order.] Back there! In the alcove! Wife?

[Determined, he walks toward the alcove and throws open its curtains. He recoils, stupefied. As though sculpted and painted, Madonna-like, impassive, erect, HORRALT (as VENERANDA) sits clutching a heavy rosary to her breast. In her left hand she holds a bouquet of lilies. Her opaque, coppery hair is enhanced by a

1 *diadem of diamonds. Dressed in blue moiré specked with pearls, she looks like a morbidly styled mannequin, a sumptuous mummy, in a dress which shapes her figure tightly. A cloak of black lace covers her from shoulder to foot. Her mask is wax colored. Seeing this apparition, the actor FOLIAL II emits a raucous laugh. But from the platform, SIR FOLIAL has wrenched loose*
 2 *from his armchair and taken a few steps toward the tiny stage as if to intervene. GALGUT rushes toward him and makes him sit down again.]*

FOLIAL What kind of sorry joke is this?

3 GALGUT Don't interrupt it, Master; it will be wonderful. [*Stays by the armchair, ready to intervene once more if need be.*]

[*Onstage, the action proceeds.*]

4 FOLIAL II Wife! Do you think you're still at mass? It's time for other liturgies. Had you given up hope I'd appear? What sort of trip were you expecting? What divinity were you worshipping in your prayer?

[*He rips off the rosary and throws it away. VENERANDA does not move.*]

5 What about these burial flowers; would you like them well crushed, these lilies of purity? [*He grabs the bouquet and stamps on it.*] Do you realize, now, that I'm the master? [*Silence.*] I anticipated a different welcome. Come here!

6 [*Slowly VENERANDA approaches.*]

This is the night for your *début* in love, not in religion, my pretty one. Sparkle, laugh, lose your head—that's your role! Everything you want is yours! Emeralds, flowers, lapdogs, a carriage, a reliquary, an alabaster retable, an illuminated mass book, what haven't you been given today along with my name? Letters from hundreds of dignitaries, the King's compliments, an archbishop's benediction! I was prepared, myself, to give you one last, magnificent present, a quaint specimen all the Court ladies were battling to have, one I guarded greedily: a superb phallus decorated with ribbons. O pleasurable object! Its shadow, cast on the wall, torments the ladies' sleep!

[*The BUFFOONS titter in excitement.*]

9 Come, night is here, and I'm suffering while my pleasure is put off. Be good, that is, do as I say; I mean, listen to reason. [*He fills*

a goblet with wine and holds it out to her.] Drink, seal the carnal contract!

[*VENERANDA takes the goblet, spills the wine, then drops it all on the floor. FOLIAL II is enraged.*]

You want disaster, you want to doom our good fortune? Harpie! That's enough! Undress. I have marital powers. If I must, I'll sound the Palace alarm and the whole Court can see you shamed.

[*He approaches her. VENERANDA repulses him with both hands. Distraught, he falls to his knees.*]

Veneranda, in the name of our marriage sacrament, answer! Do you love me?

VENERANDA [*in a feminine voice*] No!

FOLIAL II If you can't improvise love for me, then friendship?

VENERANDA No!

FOLIAL II Esteem, at least, for a childhood friend, your father's beloved disciple?

VENERANDA No!

FOLIAL II [*getting up*] Can you be completely inept in love or any real feeling?

VENERANDA I'm all too apt, alas.

FOLIAL II So it's hatred? Veneranda, do you hate me?

VENERANDA No! But I might . . . Leave me here, alone!

FOLIAL II Tonight? Are you going mad? If so, I'm not the madman here! I want to see, at least, what's concealed under those clothes of joy, your bridal dress.

VENERANDA Only mourning clothes, a virgin's dress . . . No, not a virgin, a widow. [*She opens her dress wide, exposing the breast.*]

FOLIAL II [*with a shout*] A hairchest? What are you trying to expiate, woman?

VENERANDA A capital lapse.

FOLIAL II This, for a night devoted to pleasure?

VENERANDA A night I'll devote to suffering.

FOLIAL II You mean I'm to be tricked and ridiculed on the marriage threshold? What grotesque oath did you swear? Are your charms only a ruse, a disguise package to cover up some sordid,

1 bigoted hag? If I could just believe, before I get enraged, that all
this is a jest, a monk's whim . . . that your hairchest hides real
flesh, flesh that begs for something besides maceration, milady?

VENERANDA It's yours to take, this miserable body . . .

2 FOLIAL II But you're not giving it? I must be cursed! Your heart,
then—what's inside? Are you giving that to God?

VENERANDA If I could have it back again, it's to God I'd give it.
But God won't take one part alone, He doesn't want a heart full
of earthly love; He can only accept an empty heart, one He can
fill with his divine love . . . Pure heart, vase of gold . . .

3 FOLIAL II [*tottering*] I understand. If you had surrendered your
body's cold clay to me in this fools' bargain—our marriage—your
ignescent heart would be someone else's anyway. You love . . .

VENERANDA I love . . .

4 FOLIAL II Who is he?

VENERANDA He's . . . out of his mind!

FOLIAL II Ah! Hah! So, what about me? I'm a fool; little's the
difference! Aren't a crazy man and a fool satellites of the same
throne?

5 VENERANDA Yes . . . But the insane reach heights near the sun,
whereas fools stay in darkness, down below. And don't mention
his name, unless you bend your spine, buffoon!

6 FOLIAL II [*bends low*] Don Carlos! . . . You love the Prince?
You're not the only one. Oh, I can picture a childhood infatua-
tion, still smoldering. Douse it, sweetheart. What maiden of honor
hasn't fallen in love with her Prince? Don't presume he's noticed
you!

7 VENERANDA If he'd never discovered me, I might have been hap-
pier. But alas, when I promised to spend my life in his service, he
agreed, and he's kept faith, for quite a long time.

FOLIAL II But the King? Does he know of that nonsensical prom-
ise? No, only the royal buffoon can have heard that secret, and
your confessor. Ask heaven for pardon, and you can have mine.

8 VENERANDA [*kneeling before the Madonna*] Pardon me, Maria,
pure amid the impure. My crime was immense, but it was done
by destiny. I took marriage vows without love or honesty; my
scheme was vengeance. The Prince no longer loved me; I was
abandoned. And I had vile plans, the kind you create in the delir-
ium of passion, when your mind is balked. You know, Maria,
9

1 what they are. I hinted to a buffoon, a fawning mongrel who
sleeps at my feet, that I might show him some favor. I knew he
was jealous of his rival—as he supposed—the Prince. And I
meant to humiliate the King's son by choosing a buffoon as his
successor. What a laugh he had at that! The whole Court laughed.
2 But I was in a trap, and I went ahead, obstinate, with the impos-
ture, to permit that outrageous marriage and incite a scandal in
3 hopes that my lover would revolt and return to me. I marched to
the altar, still certain that Don Carlos would jump in and stop
me. He never came. Even after the benediction, I hoped that
when he heard the venerian privileges granted that monster, the
4 thought of the one woman who had touched his tortured spirit
would make him break into my bedroom, seize me, and take me
5 from this prostitute's alcove in one final show of spite . . .

FOLIAL II And he never came! [*He falls to his knees and crawls
toward his "wife."*] Right now, at this dramatic moment, he
drinks, he laughs, he sings; in his heart, he's cast you out, to have
his sport with ten others. I know their names! Come! [*He seizes
her.*] I'll press you so hard that your heart will be empty, too. I'll
forgive your sham and your tricks, since they brought you to me.
After all, aren't you the only one who's been duped? I'll do more.
Save your heart for the Prince, and let me take what's entirely
6 yours, what belongs to your honor, and from now on, though you
may not admit it, to mine. The body I hunger for, that flesh I'll
devour time and again like a hot-blooded hound, I'll cover with
foam, and even . . .

[*He gets up and hands VENERANDA a whip he has taken from the
table.*] Under your whiplashes. [*He laughs.*] Look, our friends the
courtesans added this to your pile of wedding presents, not guess-
ing how they'd help me!

VENERANDA [*arises and throws the whip aside*] Folia!!

7 FOLIAL II My name! She's pronounced it! At last! [*He falls at her
feet.*] I'm your slave, your buffoon. Speak!

VENERANDA I'll speak, for the last time, no doubt. So you let me
keep my heart? No, thank you. It isn't enough. I'm a woman of
absolutes. Let me keep my body, in its hairshirt.

8 FOLIAL II What absurd idea? . . .

VENERANDA What ultimate modesty . . . Spare me. Shut me in a
cloister, but don't touch me.

FOLIAL II I'll learn the whole truth!

9 VENERANDA Not from my lips. Kill me instead, then strip my ca-

daver. Your eyes can see what my mortal affliction is. Don't take the wife of another man, a unique, impossible, guilty love!

FOLIAL II Royal slut! Honor orders me . . .

VENERANDA My honor will have its say before yours! [*She draws a dagger from her inner clothing.*] Mary, Mother of God, you are a woman; understand and intercede . . .

FOLIAL II [*grabs the dagger*] It's written that the only good marriages are bloody! Your blood will flow, virginal or otherwise!

[*He rushes at VENERANDA, dagger poised. At this instant, SIR FOLIAL tosses his armchair aside violently and runs toward the stage. GALGUT tries to restrain him, but is thrown back. All the BUFFOONS shudder and let out shrill screams. The MASTER has jumped on the stage and seized BAFFRY's arm.*]

FOLIAL [*yelling*] Murderer! You tried to kill your Master's daughter!

[*FOLIAL pushes BAFFRY off the stage, grasps HORRALT, embraces him, realizes his error, pushes him aside and finally hurls him from the stage. Now in a wild fury, he demolishes the alcove, upsets the furniture and the Madonna, and leaps off the stage. He takes a few steps on the platform and collapses, sobbing. The BUFFOONS begin to hiss. Grotesquely, they applaud the two actors and insult the old buffoon in his distress. GALGUT, motioning, attempts to calm them. Relative quiet. SIR FOLIAL, after rolling over and over on the floor, stops motionless.*]

GALGUT Dead? [*He leans over FOLIAL, probes the body, then straightens up.*] The old man is finished. The great buffoon has passed away; the farce can go on. Everyone in turn will be promoted to Master. Grant him your tears . . .

[*The BUFFOONS proceed to cry, parodying grief.*]

And now acclaim these two stupendous actors who by their skill in the play have crushed the most debonair comedian of all.

[*In front on the platform, BAFFRY and HORRALT stand up, remove their masks and bow. Frantic acclamation from the BUFFOONS.*]

Triumph!

[*Several BUFFOONS have seized musical instruments; they begin a tune for the occasion. Others spring high in the air. The rest hold*

out toward the platform, where the two actors strut, some bouquets and laurels; brambles, trusses of hay and thorns pile at their feet. The two actors embrace. GALGUT pats them affectionately. But all of a sudden a whistle shrieks in space. During the previous minute, SIR FOLIAL has slipped surreptitiously to the overturned armchair, found his whip in it and stood up, unnoticed. Now he is seen, menacing, face flushed with anger, eyes flashing. Unanimous cry of terror. GALGUT jumps off the platform, but BAFFRY and HORRALT are unable to flee; caught in the whirlash, they cower belly downward on the floor.]

FOLIAL [*laughs harshly*] The interlude is over; but the lesson continues, and will soon end. I'll not congratulate you, Baffry and Horralt. You tried to be tragedians, and unleashed laughter; you tried to eliminate me, and you restored my lifeblood! Your performance woke me; before long, you'll see proof of that! [*He laughs.*] Not easy to kill, a pedigree buffoon! This calls for merry-making; and as we proceed, you'll learn the secret. [*He points at his whip.*] Don't you understand yet, dunderheads? But before you receive the alms my talent bestows on you, listen to the play's ending, for there's been no final curtain, yet . . . The conclusion has been performed far away in the depths of Spain. [*He pulls out a letter from his side.*] On your knees, filthy corpses; it's Felipe el rey who speaks . . .

[*The BUFFOONS kneel.*]

In this letter, the King informs me . . . "Thus, my dear companion, having learned of this calamity so soon after the celebration, I went to pay my respects to the remains of your daughter, beautiful Veneranda, on whom death conferred the features of innocence, a grievous smile. My affection for you led me to have an artist mold this mask of her smile, which I send to you . . ."

[*Silence. FOLIAL takes out a mask from a black canvas bag lying on the floor. Coming up to HORRALT, he makes him stand, then sticks on his face this brand-new mortuary mask, with its rigid smile.*]

"As for the man who murdered her, disregarding his talent and the esteem I bear his Master, yourself, O dear friend, I delivered him to the executioner, who strangled him slowly while beautiful Veneranda was being placed in her coffin of ebony—this, of course, was in the marriage bedchamber. I was present. Your pupil died badly; he made a frightful face, developed marvelously. Since this was his most masterful grimace, I had it set in plaster as soon as he had rasped his last breath. I send it to you,

1 with the thought that you may find some consolation in gazing at it, although charity enjoins you not to harass this base soul. Signed, Felipe, at Escorial, on the . . ."

2 [FOLIAL *throws the letter down, and taking a second mask, an unbearably tortured countenance, forces it on BAFFRY'S head. BAFFRY tries in vain to turn his face aside. The BUFFOONS whimper. Their moans increase and gradually become shrieks of terror. But FOLIAL cracks his whip.*]

3 FOLIAL Enough! I'll be brief! Put that catafalque in the middle of the room!

[Two BUFFOONS scurry to pull the catafalque to the center, placing its long axis widthwise.]

4 You, Baffry, and you, Horralt, are now exactly what your last masks represented: two cadavers. You'll finish your wedding night stiff and cold, in this alcove of emptiness. Get into the catafalque, rot!

5 [HORRALT and BAFFRY descend the steps and disappear inside the catafalque.]

Funeral service! Sing, verger, the Day of Wrath, the terrible day when the Church fulfills its promises. You, buffoons, take those torches of mercy and circle round . . .

6 [The eleven BUFFOONS form in file, each holding a taper, and with heads bent, they slowly begin to parade around the catafalque, as GALGUT, in a powerful bass voice, starts to chant.]

GALGUT

7 Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla,
Teste David cum Sibylla.

BUFFOONS [in chorus]

8 Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando iudex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus.

FOLIAL Speed it up!

9 [With the whip, FOLIAL lashes the circling BUFFOONS, who go faster and faster, while GALGUT, voice now cracked, continues.]

GALGUT

Tuba mirum spargens sonum . . .

FOLIAL Faster!

[FOLIAL lashes the BUFFOONS, who scream and whirl in merry-go-round pattern. He laughs. He whips them harder. Since GALGUT has stopped his chant and is whining, his hands joined and held out toward the Master, it is FOLIAL who takes up the refrain, singing it in bits and pieces, as if he were drunk.

. . . Per sepulchra regionum
Coet omnes ante thronum

[And FOLIAL goes wild, lashing like a madman from atop the platform. The BUFFOONS howl, bump against the catafalque and walls, and jostle each other; some fall and get up again. Then, in clusters, they rush toward the exist right, then toward the exit left, still exposed to the whistling whip. Finally the doors give way and these human clods tumble out. Clamor continues in the dark. GALGUT scurries blindly a few seconds and then escapes in turn. Only the catafalque remains. But each time BAFFRY and HORRALT try to climb out from a corner of it, the whip forces them inside, where both scream. Next the catafalque moves, pitches wildly, and begins to travel throughout the room, lashed by FOLIAL, who laughs incessantly and whips it with savage ferocity. Soon the walking catafalque finds a door and disappears. FOLIAL is exhausted. He sees nothing, no one. But the silence excites him.]

6 FOLIAL Aha! You've seen reason, at last? Listen to your old Master; listen . . . Verily, I say unto you . . . The secret of our art, great art, art, all art that purports to endure? . . . [Instant of silence . . . In a low but distinct voice.] The secret is CRU-EL-TY! . . .

7 [He stands pensive for a moment, tears filling his dilated eyes. Then he recommences slashing at empty air, at first weakly and afterwards with more and more power, stiffening. His tear-streaked face turns radiant from inner joy. In a sweeping sower's arc, he flagellates open space. Then, his swing even larger, he whips himself without pity, not feeling anything . . . Like an automaton, tragically. The curtain falls in slow motion, while from nearby, dawn tints the stage and the hour strikes, ineluctable. A cock crows . . .]

THE END

Field for Fields

by Lewis Williams

FIELD OF FIELDS (1964) by Lewis Williams & Bruce Lee Jung

Classical

Felix (1964) by Lewis Williams

Gauge (1964) by Lewis Williams

Fiel (1964) (1st & 2nd)

Fiel (1964) (3rd & 4th)

at least two fields, all are incomplete normally and provide a field

Notes: The fields are always arranged

in a regular pattern

and are always arranged

in a regular pattern

Appendix II:

Adapted Text

In a field, the fields are arranged in a regular pattern and are always arranged in a regular pattern. The fields are arranged in a regular pattern and are always arranged in a regular pattern. The fields are arranged in a regular pattern and are always arranged in a regular pattern.

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School for Fools
an adaptation by Ben Williams
based on Michel de Ghelderode's *L'Ecole des Bouffons*.

Characters:

Folial, the Master Fool

Galgut, his protégé

Fool 1 (later as Folial the Second)

Fool 2 (later as Veneranda)

at least 4 other fools: all are incomplete mentally and physically, deformed

Note: The fools are always onstage—when they are not onstage as characters, they appear somewhere onstage in the convention of the Greek chorus, reacting (mostly without sound) to the ongoing scene. They should do this as clever, mocking, satirical fools.

Prelude

In a former convent now secularized. The atmosphere of an underground vault. Steps leading to a pulpit which has been transformed into a stage. An open curtain in front of the baptistry, which has been covered. A throne. A catafalque. Clutter of fools' musical instruments and tools.

Light is very dim. We hear Folial moaning in his sleep—the sounds echo and reverberate through the old convent. Echoes of Folial's voice as he talks in his sleep, which is harsh and nightmared, and shadows of Folial's restless sleep fill the room.

By shadow, we see Galgut watching Folial sleep, then stealthily approaching his shadow, searching him up and down. Galgut finds a letter and reads it. Folial stirs, and Galgut freezes. He tries to slowly slip away, but is caught by Folial's disembodied voice, which grows and echoes within Galgut's head. Galgut enters the room under Folial's control.

Folial's voice: Listen....listen to the *lesson*—no no no...stay in line....you'll never learn—
you'll never learn the Secret—never be *real*—that's not the Art—you
must *suffer*... That's it—Yes—No—you're fooling yourself—*fooling*
yourself—stay in line— nothing... What?... Ve... Veneranda...
Veneranda... No—no, that's not the secret—Back to work!—Formation!
Posture—form—*technique*—you'll learn! Heh heh—you'll learn, Galgut!
Ha ha—The King's fool—heh heh heh—you'll learn the Secret...

The echo stops. Galgut is released, disoriented.. He looks around very slowly, resolved to kill. He calls in the fools.

Scene 1

Galgut: Fools! Fall in!

A single fool literally falls in (Galgut slaps forehead) and runs off again. Immediately, Galgut signals for the music to begin as the fools enter from all directions.

Fools: For the dead, money—
For the slut, holy wafers—
For the poor, condoms—
For the criminal, an army—

For the sick, a crayon—
For the bishop, a little boy—
For the King, the clap—
For the drunk, holy water—

Galgut halts the music. They continue on.

Galgut: About, face!

They obey. He tests them.

Galgut: For the Jew?

Fool: A mosque!

Galgut: For the Muslim?

Fool: Bacon!

Galgut: For the scholar?

Fool: A hand rattle!

Galgut: And for simple fools?

Silence, confusion. They snicker.

Quiet! I'll tell you. Fools like you still get two things in life, and the two resemble each other. Both are hairy, and both make juice. One in time of grace, the other in time of disgrace. First: that part of their persons granted to you by the ladies for being a good fool!

Fools laugh.

The other: the executioner's claws, ready to squeeze the blood out of you for being a bad fool!

Fools wail.

There you are! Your share of love and death, as for any living creature. But for you it's just a parody. Real fools never love, only pretend, and they're never loved in return, only mocked. This is the life of a real fool, the life of your Art. So why live it, you ask? Why not surrender to the church, the custodians of morality, and strangle yourselves now? Because we have the Secret, the Secret of our Art, the Secret that makes us real fools. And real fools don't die.

Now, since this is the last night of your confinement in the seminary, the Secret of your profession must soon be revealed to you. So, I'll tell you what I've learned of our species before the Master teaches you his final lesson. *(Silence)* My little swans, your race is royalty!

Fool: What do you mean?

Galgut: I mean you to bear yourselves proudly, as rich lords do! For you are their peers! What do I mean? These noblemen are your fathers, or else their wives are your mothers, and you breathe with the bodies they procreated! Only, you don't inherit their names, their reputations.

Dumb show begins.

Why, my worthy bastards, why are you kicked out of their high society? Because they can't stand to see their own flesh and blood turn so ugly! All the ladies at Court claim they can piss and give birth standing up—but when they realize that the fruit of their entrails is damned, then they want to get rid of it. They cry for help. And who answers the call? Our own Master Folial, who tells them that this counterfeit mankind, this lump of anatomy, has no right to baptism, but should be drowned in a toilet! But he's too smart to let you drown. Once he's out of sight, he takes you here to his convent and nurses you in his practice. And here you are turned into working fools. He can sell you for a fortune! Look at you! You ought to be satisfied—tomorrow you apprentices will become masters! You will go back to the world where you began, where you belong: beneath the thrones, beside the footstools. That's justice! You can taunt your makers—and swell your sisters' bellies, if not your mothers'!

Cheering.

Fool: Let's do it!

Galgut: Wait! Not yet. First we must graduate from this school, and to do that we must learn the Secret, the great Secret of a fool's art.

Fool: We don't need a secret—we're already fools!

Galgut: You'll be nothing without the Secret. Carnival clowns.

Fools moan.

Listen. I have a plan to get all of us out this prison, and I'll need your help. But to do it you must pass a test, a test much harder than anything your Master could give you. You must fool the old man himself. You must fool your Master Folia!

Fool: But how? He's the King's fool!

Galgut: He *was*. But he fell from His Grace.

Fool: Why?

Galgut: You remember the ghost, up by the clerestory at night? I know who she is... Now you'll have to fool for your lives—for if you fail, we all die.

Fool: Why wouldn't Master Folia tell us the Secret?

Galgut: Folia's old. He's forgetting what he *is*.

Fool: He's our Master—he saved us!

Galgut: He's dying because he's not *real*. There's icewater in his veins, and he's ready to leave us as carnival clowns. But this way we can force him to give us the Secret—but he mustn't suspect.

Fool: What do we do?

Galgut: We must take our Master's hand and gently lead him back through the past, through the mockery of his fool's life, to the ghosts and corpses he sleeps with every night. You two... (*He selects two fools.*) You're going to be my confederates tonight. I've just read parts of a letter from the King's court. Cousins, tonight you will be avenged for years of wandering and shameful subjection. And you must fool, or die.

A door creaks open.

The sleeper is awake again. Form ranks! In file! Forward, march!

The fools, in formation, exit in song.

Fools: For the bull, a maiden—
For the believer, the gallows—

Galgut disappears into the shadows, watching his Master from a distance.

Scene Two

Folial's voice: Galgut?

Galgut does not answer. Folial looms up, holding a candle. He is old and hunchbacked, arthritic—his gait wavers from a creeping, Charlie Chaplin-esque snoop of a bloodhound, to the thick, tottering labors of a dying man. At this moment he is the latter, moving like a sleepwalker.

Folial: Galgut? We need more light.

The fools appear elsewhere on the stage, perhaps above and behind Folial, as the chorus.

More light.

Galgut does not light any candles, instead he tests his master's vision, taunting him in the dark. Folial suddenly turns around.

Galgut: My lord! Did you sleep well?

Folial: I'm not certain I've slept—but I have dreamed. Yes. I was surrounded by a great black pond. You were there, floating around me. I could sense that you were coming to rob me.

Galgut: Rob you? What could I steal from a man asleep?

Folial: The weight on his mind, a few words, a sigh? Give them back!

Galgut is not sure how to respond—he at once pities and is wary of the old man. Folial tastes the air.

Tonight will be ceremonious. *(He holds out the candle)* Give us light!

Galgut: These last hours creep and crawl...

- Folial: Yes! If only I could boot those steeple clocks a good one in the ass. I'm in a hurry to be done with it, just as you are.
- Galgut: With what?
- Folial: My teaching, this imposture, the folly befitting by name, the madness of believing that anyone can teach anyone else!
- Galgut: (*obsequious*) Master, without your whiplashes, your insults and instructions, we'd have been nobodies, nowhere. But now, all of us, your disciples, trained in your skills, will swarm over the empires to glitter in the shadows of thrones! We'll perpetuate your style. The whole universe will learn that the only good fools are made here. Everywhere they'll acclaim us as creations of the great Folial, Folial the First, the fool of the King!
- Folial: Marvelous, your flattery. But your technique is lacking. And I'm not the fool of the King.
- Galgut: But you were, for many years. And you've spawned this school so that you can teach us the art of our race—and also so that your most prodigious student will be the fool of the King!
- Folial: You don't want to be that.
- Galgut: Why not, Master? Why not be the celebrity fool and inherit your name?
- Folial: Folial the Third... No. You can fool without the folly.
- Galgut: Why did you leave, Master? Why did you resign from the King's service?
- Folial: It was time for another fool.
- Galgut: Your student.
- Folial: Yes.
- Galgut: Folial the Second.
- Folial: Yes.
- Galgut: And did you warn *him* not to go?
- Folial: I don't know.
- Galgut: What happened to him?
- Folial: What do you mean?

Galgut: He learned the Secret, didn't he?

Folial: Yes. Yes, he did.

Pause.

Galgut: But I shouldn't be the fool of the King.

Folial: No—Galgut. You don't understand yet—

Galgut: I do understand! I understand your whip! I know what I am!

Folial: You don't know what a fool's art is.

Galgut: Is it not what you teach us?

Folial: You don't listen to what I teach you.

Galgut: Listen, Master—the ghost. The maiden. She walks around, up by the clerestory.

They look around. Folial is worried, unsure if Galgut is telling the truth.

She curses us. She curses our race.

Folial: Galgut.

Galgut: Do you know who she is, Master?

Folial: Galgut... you'll learn. It's the King—he's the Fool. He'll write you a letter...

Galgut: What letter is that, Master?

Folial: Nothing, nevermind.

Galgut: This requires some light.

He lights other candles.

Folial: Where are you? Galgut—let's make it ceremonious!

Galgut: What, Master?

Folial: Our last lesson—a ceremony!

Galgut: Funeral ceremony—

Folial: That's it.

Galgut: Attuned to your soul.

Folial: What was that? What do you know of a soul when you haven't got one? You're nothing without me, without my Art. You're castoffs from Heaven *and* Hell, the miscarried dead. You all should find another profession.

He smells the air.

You know I can't see you, Galgut, but I can smell the poison inside you. I put it there.

He propels Galgut towards him.

Come closer, Galgut. I meant to tell you some good news.... Come closer. To the King, I give my finest fool. Be worthy of the name. Closer...disgusting...

He seizes Galgut and throughout the next passage manhandles him, moving around the room.

I can't trust you. You've whiffed the truth. You think you know, but I saw it coming—I saw far beyond these walls the tragedy in this letter. The same mockery. Since that vision, my eye has lost its luster, my body's power gone, and my buffoons know it. You're leading their plot, I know. Don't deny it—you like the power it gives you? To lead a chain of fools? But I know—I know from premonition. You'll choose your time, when I'm worn out. Tonight. You'll kill me. You'll let me die, then you'll escape. I could defend myself—my eyes aren't as sharp anymore, but my whip is. What's more, I'm not afraid of your traps. I'd be smarter if I let you go right now and renege on my lesson? No. I'll give it—come what may.

He releases him. Folial collapses into his throne. Galgut, regaining his senses, steals his Master's whip and strangles him..

Just help me this last time—help me to finish it alive. Or else you'll be nothing at all. Only carnival clowns. You think you've learned everything—except one thing, the secret of my career, my art, the secret of any art to be remembered.

Pause.

You can kill me, and never learn the Secret.

Galgut releases the whip from around Folial's neck. Folial senses something else in the air and leans from his throne. He sees Veneranda's ghost up above.

Listen....

Folial mumbles to himself, and then to the vision:

Veneranda?

He suddenly rises, looking around.

These letters...I'll have to hide them. The King's letter...they mustn't see...

He disappears to his door.

Scene 3

Galgut, alone, throws the whip down again and kicks the throne. He quickly runs to the side and whistles for the two selected fools to come—they run in and huddle around him.

Galgut: Get to work! (*He gives each a paper.*) Here's the outline for a play—it's short and stark and ends with a spasm. You'll have to invent words, a lot of words, enough to explain the plot. But you'll have help. And you'll have to wear false faces.

Fool 1: No! We'll have to go in the room where they store the masks?

Galgut: Come off it—they're just a bunch of wax impressions!

Fool 2: Molded from dead people! Horrible—they give me the creeps.

Galgut: Morons! It's only Folial's library. Just imagine working in there alone every night as he does.

They moan.

You'll be in and out fast. Once you're there, in a glass case, you'll find the two masks for your parts in the play—very true to life, since they were cast on living persons, not on the dead.

Fool 2: And you? Will *you* go? Why do *we*? Everyone's heard that our Master collects faces taken from cadavers—why?

Galgut: That's what artists do—they imitate life.

Fool 1: But he's imitating *death*!

Galgut: I don't know—don't question your Master's Art.

Fool 2: Then what are *you* doing?

Fool 1: We thought you hated him.

Galgut: Do you want your freedom, or do you want to stay under his whip? Even though you may hate him, and I do, Folia is unrivalled. He lifted our art to the heights of religion. He turned the work of a simple fool into the faith of the King. But now he's forgotten his lesson. You've got to be hard! You've got to suffer! Go get the faces, then to the theatre and set the stage, but quietly. The instant the music ends, the play begins.

Fool 2: But I'm afraid Folia has sniffed our plot—it reeks and-

Fool 1: And we won't have surprise on our side. He sees everything. He knows what we're thinking before we think it.

Galgut: I'm sure he smells a conspiracy. But his sight has lost its edge. This time we can catch him off guard, and kill him—not with our fists, but with our tongues, like worthy fools. That will prove the value of his teaching!

Fool 1: And what if he doesn't tell us the Secret?

Galgut: Then we tell him ours. (*Holds out the scripts*)

Fool 2: What is ours?

Galgut: A few memories that Folia would die to forget.

Fool 1: Suppose we only cut him to the quick-

Galgut: It would be worth it.

Fool 2: I don't want to do it.

Galgut: (*Attacks him*) What do you want? You want to be a *clown* in the *carnival*? You want to fool yourself? That's nothing! That's death! You want to die? Is that what you want?

Folia's door creaks open again. Galgut releases the fool.

Galgut: The play will end with Folia lashing his own back, I swear it!

Folia enters.

Quick, under there!

He hastily pushes the two underneath the catafalque and exits.

Scene 4

Folial: Veh...Veneranda? Hallo? Just the echoes of useless confessions coming back to haunt the chapel. *(He slumps into chair)* Silence, gift from Heaven, can I ever have you? And you, solitude, holy solitude, let me suffer expansively, not shrunken like a spider numb with cold. Let me die alone, while you watch me, not in pathos or ridicule, but in this twilight sleep—for night is climbing inside me, seeping toward my heart. I want only to forget, and escape these dreams. *(laughs softly)* When your holy monks return, they'll find my skeleton right here, meditating the misery of things. And they'll fix my bones, then slide them under this catafalque *(deep sigh)* Even it whispers to me of dreams.

The fools peek from underneath the catafalque and eventually move around, but staying in the shadows and leading Folial on.

Fool 1: Listen to him—our Master's crazy!

Fool 2: Why?

Fool 1: He thinks we're ghosts!

Folial *(pursuing the voices)* Is it possible a chapel can be haunted? Hello—you voices, from beyond the grave?

Fool 1: *(in a deep voice)* Yes.

Folial: You know me.

Fool 1: Yes.

Folial: I'll be with you soon enough.

Fool 2: Where is that?

Fool 1: *(elbows Fool 2)* Yes.

Folial: But they mustn't find out... *(He pulls out the letters.)* I can trust you with these. You know what they say. You can see her, I know—my daughter, my Veneranda, I know. Keep these safe with her. Help me.

Fool 2: *(in falsetto)* Father! Folial! It's me Veneranda!

Folial: Veneranda!

Fool 1: Yes, and someone else.

Folial: Who?

Fool 1: Your pupil, Folia the Second.

Fool 2: Yes, he can't keep his hands off me! He wants to rape me!

Fool 1: Shut up!

Fool 2: He wants me to call him daddy!

Fool 1: Do not!

The two fools begin bickering and fighting. Folia discovers them, seizes them, and drags them to the center.

Fool 1: Master, you're mistaken. We're pure!

Folia: Fuck the pure. Do you know from whence comes and whither goeth all flesh?

Fools 1 and 2: (*in unison*) From one cavity into another cavity.

Folia: Yes. That's right. Nothing's pure. Now tell me—what were you saying?

Fool 1: Master, we didn't know what we were saying. We're not pure—it's unknown to us, or at least we know it's unknown-

Fool 2: Or there's absence of evidence, or there's evidence of absence-

Folia: Absence... absence of what?

Fool 1: Purity! At least, for *us*, that is, it's absent—but *you*, Master, you *know*. The King's fool—you are known everywhere! You are *evidence* of purity. And you can teach us to know our unknowns and absences.

Folia: Hmf.

Fool 2: Yes, Master.

Fool 1: You can tell us, Master—tell us the Secret. We won't say a word

Fool 2: No one will know a thing,

Fool 1: We'll know it, then leave, and be absent.

Fool 2: And unknown.

Fool 1: Are you feeling well, Master?

Folia: Listen... Go ponder your profession. Get out of here.

They scamper away. Foliol is left alone, unstable, fading fast. He exits.

Scene Five

Dusk falls. Music as the fools enter, led by Galgut. They prepare for the ceremony.

Galgut: Halt! About, face! My fine buffoons, every farce has an end. On this, our final night together, we shall dance in celebration, for at dawn, you'll take to the road. You'll be on your way, someplace or other, ready for gilded slavery—the way of the wise.

Fool: Why do we have to slave?

Galgut: Why do we have to slave...?

(cue NWA "Approach to Danger" and Public Enemy throughout)

Look outside: we, as artists, can survive in the world in only two ways. We can go on wandering and rejoin the rabble—the way of fools. Or we can fool for the courts—the way of professionals. My swans, the King's throne is a seat of lies, and all we have to do is fool them into believing their lies are truth, as we've always done, as all artists do. We learn to watch our rulers' whims and moods, their ailments, their vices. We learn to watch and keep our mouths shut—learn to suffer with a smile. We sharpen our memories to sniff out every possible secret—for rulers, when they're overwrought, will ask you questions: and they'll tell all their hidden disappointments to *you*. And you give them what they want: if they want plastic flags, give it to them, if they want a song and a navel, give it to them. We mask our emotions, our disgust, our spite—we pretend we're only simulating feelings. Not for a second must they suspect that we could be anything more than a buffoon. If they did, our presence would be a menace. Once you've fooled *for* them, you fool *within* them. Fool with their sight, their ears, deceive their noses, trick their tongues—for then, you will rule the rulers. But even if you succeed in fooling the rulers of our world, you're still left to fool yourselves. You're marked men. You'll buffoon, and whether you choose epigrams or turds, buffooning fools you shall be. Whatever your style, literal or fancy, you'll never escape what you are. But all in all, we're the ones to be envied, for in our world, you alone can thumb your noses on the sidelines, and revel in your own brands of pleasure.

Foliol enters.

So for now, we shall dance—in celebration of your past and future foolery, and in reverence to your Master, even if he can't see you. Remember what you will, and while it lasts, you can fool yourselves.

As Folial enters, they perform a dance, each fool paying reverence to Folial, one at a time, in his own manner—most are profane. Folial is dressed in ceremonial garb, a large robe, a tall hat, and he carries his whip and a small bag. His health is much deteriorated. As the dance ends, Folial falls into his throne. Everyone eagerly waits for him to announce the Secret. After a tense silence, he speaks.

Folial: My ass aches.

Fools are very uncertain. Galgut unrolls a parchment.

Galgut: Your Lordship, venerated Master-

Folial: What's this?

Galgut: In heartfelt gratitude, after having licked at the fragrant flower of your sweet wisdom-

Folial: You can't flatter the dead.

Awkward silence.

Galgut: Well, uh, before starting to, uh, taste the fruits of the, ah, banquet, brimful with affection...er... That will do for my speech.

The fools laugh and hiss.

Anyway, you know our feelings. Master, I thought you doted on this ceremony.

Folial: Yes, I did. My entire life, and yours, owe it to themselves to be ceremonious... Get rid of those banners now. I'll get along without them. You see, my pets, (*he stands before them*) age has become a weight on me, all of a sudden. That's why I'm setting you free. Not tomorrow—this very night.

The fools stir.

And afterwards, forget me. They claim that buffoons escape the outrages of Time. Don't believe a word of it. Look at me now, gnawed away by the disease of it...

Folial tries to exit, but collapses in a faint. The buffoons, excited and uncertain, watch as Galgut carefully climbs up next to his master's ear.

Galgut: We sympathize, Master! A long life of success, burdensome honors. Enough speeches. We admire you, Master, and we pity you! So we'll leave you discreetly. May God do something good for you.

He hides Folial's whip behind his chair.

So be it. Now, Master, your pets are eager to have what you've promised them. In their name, if it is granted they deserve any identity except that of a fool, I implore you—tell us the Secret.

Fools: (*echo*) The secret...

Galgut: Of your art...

Fools: Of your art...

Galgut: I mean, of great art...

Fools: Of great art...

Galgut: I mean, our lives!

Fools: I mean, our lives!

Folial: (*coming to, very confused*) What're you asking? The secret...of my art...of great art...your lives?

Galgut: We beseech you...

Folial: Ah! Yes. I remember that. I promised... The Secret... My lifetime's experience...

Silence. Folial feigns forgetfulness. The fools try to help.

Wait! The Secret? My head's fuzzy.... But it was a single word... Excuse me one second... I'll find it...

Galgut: The Secret?

Fools: The Secret?

Folial hears the ghost up by the clerestory. He indicates that he doesn't know. The fools riot. Folial sinks into his chair. Galgut calls them back to order.

Galgut: Forgive them, Master. Christ couldn't teach them charity. He didn't die for their species. Rest now. We were asking too much of you. (*to the fools*) Watch out! He may croak too soon. Restrain yourselves, or we've got nothing! (*back to Folial*) Master? Wake up! Your disciples have practiced a play! Perhaps it will help you remember the Secret.

Folial comes to.

Look! You're at the theatre. You must consent and approve of our skill—it's mature at last. Don't try to think any more, just watch.

Galgut orders the fools to take their places.

First, the prelude.

Scene Six

At Galgut's command, music begins—a crashing and chanting that turns into a solemn hymn. It entrances Folia, who rises and slowly dances—a swansong, during which Folia again sees Veneranda's ghost. The fools watch in awe and admiration. As the music ends, the fools applaud, and Galgut quickly assists Folia back into his chair.

Galgut: We're grateful, Master. You see—in your honor we started a play, but you're acting it now. We're sorry, Master. We will suffer for you, for we can never leave mediocrity. We'll always be fools, the sorry slaves of laughter. The show is finished. You gave it in our place. So I implore you, give us the signal to send us away.

Folia: No, my friend. I command that the comedy continue.

Galgut: Tragedy, if you please.

Folia: I do please. I didn't dance to bewilder you—it was to prove what inspiration can do.

Galgut: Inspiration? What's that?

Folia: How should I know? It's beyond our understanding.

Galgut: But then-

Folia: Agh! On with the play! Comedy, tragedy, or masquerade—are you sure what you're staging?

Galgut: Yes, just as you taught us. It will astound you.

Folia: Astound me? You? Oh yes—ha! Let's see this masterpiece. What's it called?

Galgut: *A Fool's Wedding!* Dedicated humbly to you, in honor of your fond memories of the royal court.

Folia: Who says I like to remember that? What's the plot?

Galgut: I beg your pardon. I reserve the right-

Folia: Babble! That's what I predict.

Galgut: It's a drama, one genuine act, the truth warm as life. I didn't invent a thing.

Folial: Then where did you get it? You've never gone to the King's court. You don't know what really happens there.

Galgut: It's my secret. May I begin the play?

Folial: No. First, I'd like to know-

Galgut: To take away my surprise? Too late now, your Grace!

Galgut moves away and signals the fools to assume their places. The baptistry curtains are pulled open, revealing the scene—an alcove, a statue of the Virgin Mary (played by a fool), and a doorway hidden by a drape. Folial starts to interrupt, but sits down. Fool I (as Folial II) enters, wearing a mask, a goblet of wine in hand, a dagger at his side, and much inebriated. He addresses the fools, who have assembled as the wedding crowd.

Folial II: Thanks, thank you, gentlemen, for showing me to my nuptial bedroom—but respect, please! You want to see too much! Haven't I presented you good people of the court with the wondrous spectacle of my marriage? What more could you ask? A close-up view of the Beast's and Beauty's love-play? Woah-ho, just imagine! You can be sure I'll perform as well as you would in my place. Tonight, there'll be no fooling around—I'll be a *man* like all of you! Hey—who needs your advice, you rich prick! Huh? Hasn't God endowed me with the talent? Now let me handle the conquest. Oh, and don't bother to say goodnight—I won't have a wink of sleep before sunrise!

He waves them off, looks at the door, and drinks.

To Love! And to my old Master Folial—it's his daughter I've married, beautiful Veneranda, locked away in all her purity all her life, and now just for me. Oh, and to my colleagues in the convent, who better get something out of all this!

Fools cheer. Fool I bows quickly.

Alone! Finally! And what a marriage it was, huh? Who'd believe it? A hunchbacked fool and the King's daughter... I mean, the Queen's daughter, whatever, she's royalty right? God bless our old master Folial.

Folial grumbles from his chair. Galgut restrains him.

But screw you fucks—watch me! What's accomplished in there is not going to be a fool's strut, that's for sure!

It's a mockery, right? No! She's real. Flesh and blood. Right in there. You see, she's weary from a long wait, but I'm coming!

The fools laugh. Foliail II drinks more wine and is suddenly sober.

Still, I'm not blind. I don't forget what I am.

It's quiet in there. Not a breath. Has she been kidnapped? That's been done before, jokes like that, when the groom was a fool.

He moves close to the door.

Veneranda? Wife? Hey, are you asleep? Veneranda, I'm on my way, stiff and aflame all over. No mother to console you now—and your father, Sir Foliail, must curse you as he curses me, but what's that to us? Come on, call me, say my name, just like daddy, let me come in.

He opens a curtain: the Holy Virgin enters.

Mary mother of God, help me! I'm expecting to see some tits here! Veneranda? Veneranda? Veneranda?! (he kneels, clutching the "statue" of the Virgin) O Holy Virgin, illumine me. (Virgin lights a match, then slowly lights a cigarette) Thank you. Oh! Oh! Oh! Now I see! Now I understand why she's locked herself in there! She's ashamed—to marry a fool! But what the hell is she thinking? I mean what the fuck does she think she is—a princess? She's a bastard! Or a daughter-bastard—whatever! She came from the loins of a fool! She's not pure! Fuck this monologue, a bridal night takes two players! Hey! Back there behind the door! Wife!

He walks to the curtains and throws them open. He recoils at the sight of Fool 2, as Veneranda, wearing a beautiful mask, clutching a rosary and a bouquet of lilies, praying fervently. Fool 1 and the others burst into laughter. Foliail starts towards the stage, but Galgut rushes to restrain him.

Foliail: What kind of sorry joke is this?

Galgut: Don't interrupt it, Master, it will be wonderful.

Foliail II: (resuming) Wife! What is this! Do you think you're still at Mass? (rips away the rosary) Hey! What about these burial flowers? (he stomps the flowers) What do you think about that? I'm the master now! Hey—watch this!

He pulls out his dagger, decorated with ribbons—its shadow giant on the wall. Fools titter in excitement.

It's my graduation present from the convent. All the ladies in the court were battling to touch it—you like the ribbons? Huh? Come on! It's our honeymoon! I'm in pain here!

Offers her wine.

Come on, have a drink. Seal the contract! *(She drops the wine)* Hey, what the fuck? You think I need any more derision in my life? Harpie! That's it—strip! I have marital powers!

Veneranda: No!

Folial: Don't you love me?

Veneranda: No!

Folial II: Ok, how about friendship?

Veneranda: No!

Folial II: Esteem at least?

Veneranda: No!

Folial II: Fuck *me*!

Veneranda: No!

Folial II: Do you hate me?

Veneranda: Just leave me here alone!

Folial II: Tonight? Are you mad! At least let me see what's under that dress!

Veneranda: No, you don't want to see!

He pulls open her dress, exposing her hastily-rendered hermaphroditic body.

Folial II: What the fuck is that?

Veneranda: My father's inheritance.

Folial II: What the fuck is *that*!

Veneranda: It's yours to take, this miserable body-

Folial II: I'll take it, but you're not *giving* it! I must be cursed!

Veneranda: No, you're not cursed. I'm the one who's cursed. I'm the one who spent my life locked away in the attic of your master's school!

Folial II: You could have climbed out! Just let me-

Veneranda: No! I was locked away because my parents were ashamed of me!

Folial: (*from throne*) No-

Veneranda: They tried to pretend I didn't exist! My mother was too ashamed!

Folial: It was her!

Veneranda: And my father, your master, used me to save his own life!

Folial: I saved us!

Veneranda: The King would have killed us both, but my father fooled him into letting us go.

Folial: I saved us!

Veneranda: The King spared my father's life, on the condition that I would be locked away!

Folial: No—I saved you!

Veneranda: So he could have his little school for fools-

Folial: I'm a *fool*! You're all *fools*!

Veneranda: And this is what I get! This is my father's way of making it up to me! By having me marry his fool student!

Folial II: Hey, I graduated! I learned the Secret!

Veneranda: You even have his name!

Folial II: So wait—you were locked up in the school? How come I never saw you?

Veneranda: You were too busy pleasing your Master to hear me cursing you. Too busy trying to earn my father's name so you could carry on his madness!

Folial II: Hey, what do you know about being a fool? You were locked up in the attic!

Veneranda: You *chose* to be a fool! I was *born* this way!

Folial II: So what—are you just leading me on here? What about the marriage?

Veneranda: (*kneeling before the statue*) Forgive me, Holy Virgin, pure amid the impure. Forgive me for leading on this fool. I had prayed that when my mother and the King saw me in their court, that they would stop the marriage, that they would take me back-

Folial II: But you're a *fool*!

Veneranda: No! I hate you! I hate you all!

Folial II: Fuck you you freak!

Veneranda: I'm not one of you!

Folial II: I don't care—I'll have you anyway! Look, our friends gave this as a wedding present. (*picks up Folial's whip*) Here! Please! I'll be *your fool*! You can do what you want with me! Your father taught me well!

Veneranda: (*throws the whip aside*) Folial!

(*Folial I writhes in pain. Galgut watches vengefully.*)

Folial II: My name! She's pronounced it at last! I'm your slave, your fool. I'll give you what you want!

Veneranda: You'll never have me. (*She steals his dagger from his belt*) Mary, Mother of God, you are a woman—understand and intercede-

The Virgin takes the dagger from her and gives it to Folial II.

Folial II: Who's the fool now!

He rushes at her. Folial leaps from his chair. Galgut tries to stop him but his thrown back. Everyone panics. Folial jumps to the stage and seizes Fool 1.

Folial: Murderer! You killed your Master's daughter!

Folial throws Fool 1 aside and embraces Fool 2, then realizes his error and throws him aside, too. Folial smashes the stage, sobbing. The fools applaud their actors and hiss at Folial. Galgut tries to restrain them. Finally, Folial collapses, rolls on the floor, and is still. Galgut checks the body. Silence.

Galgut: He's dead. The great buffoon has passed away. The farce can go on!
Everyone will be promoted to Master! Grant him your tears.

The buffoons parody grief.

And now acclaim the actors, who have defeated the greatest comedian of all!

The two remove their masks and receive their acclaim.

Free!

Great cheering and celebration—cut short by the crack of Folia's whip. Folia, revived, reigns them all in as they try to escape. He laughs harshly.

Folia: The interlude is over—but the lesson continues! You two—you tried to show tragedy, and unleashed laughter. You tried to eliminate me, but your performance has awakened me! Not easy to kill, a pedigree buffoon! Now we can celebrate! We'll finish your play, for there's been no final curtain! (*cracks whip—He pulls out a letter*) On your knees—it is the King who speaks!

The fools kneel.

This is the work of a Master Fool! Here! Here is the last laugh! (He reaches into the canvas bag lying on the floor and reads) "In thanks for serving as my greatest fool, here— (He takes out two masks) here are the death masks of your daughter Veneranda and your pupil who killed her. May such a great fool as yourself find a good use for them!"

Moment of silence, Folia frozen with laughter.

Thank you. Thank you my fools. Let's finish the play.

Folia speaks as he forces the masks onto the faces of the two actors. The fools moan, then shriek. Folia cracks his whip.

Put that catafalque in the middle of the room! You two! Here are your roles—two cadavers! And you'll finish your wedding night stiff and cold—get into the catafalque, rot! (*They do so*) Funeral service! Sing, Galgut! Fools, formation! March!

The fools, holding candles, slowly parade around, chanting as music plays.

Folia: Don't fool yourselves! You're professionals now! Speed it up!

He lashes them. They go faster.

Folial: Faster!

He continues to lash them. They scream, frenzied. Galgut begs for mercy. Folial joins the chorus.

Don't fool yourself, Galgut! Now listen—listen to your old Master... I remember the Secret! The Secret of our art, of our race, of any art that hopes to endure... but you already know it. You've learned well, my fools. The secret is Cruelty!

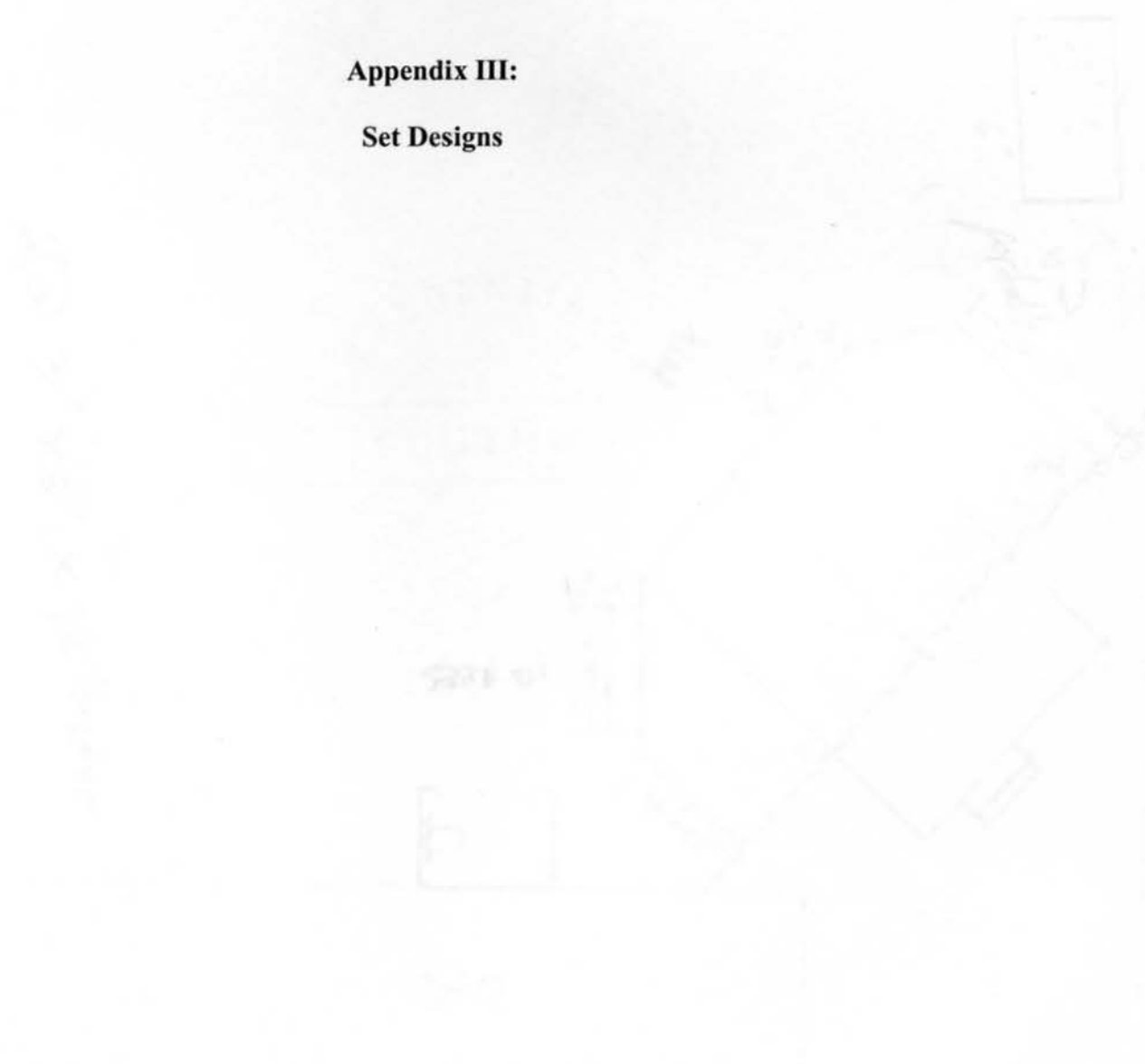
Silence. All stage and house lights come up. Folial cries with joy. He takes off his ceremonial hat and shoves it onto Galgut's head. The fools have learned their secret and so they leave individually, uncertain—all but Galgut who remains, stunned. Folial laughs. Blackout.

Appendix III:

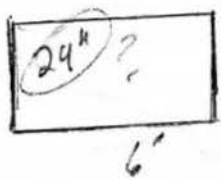
Set Designs

Appendix III:

Set Designs



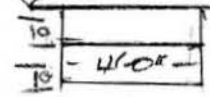
- 43 -



x 2 portable

trap

36"



12 RISES

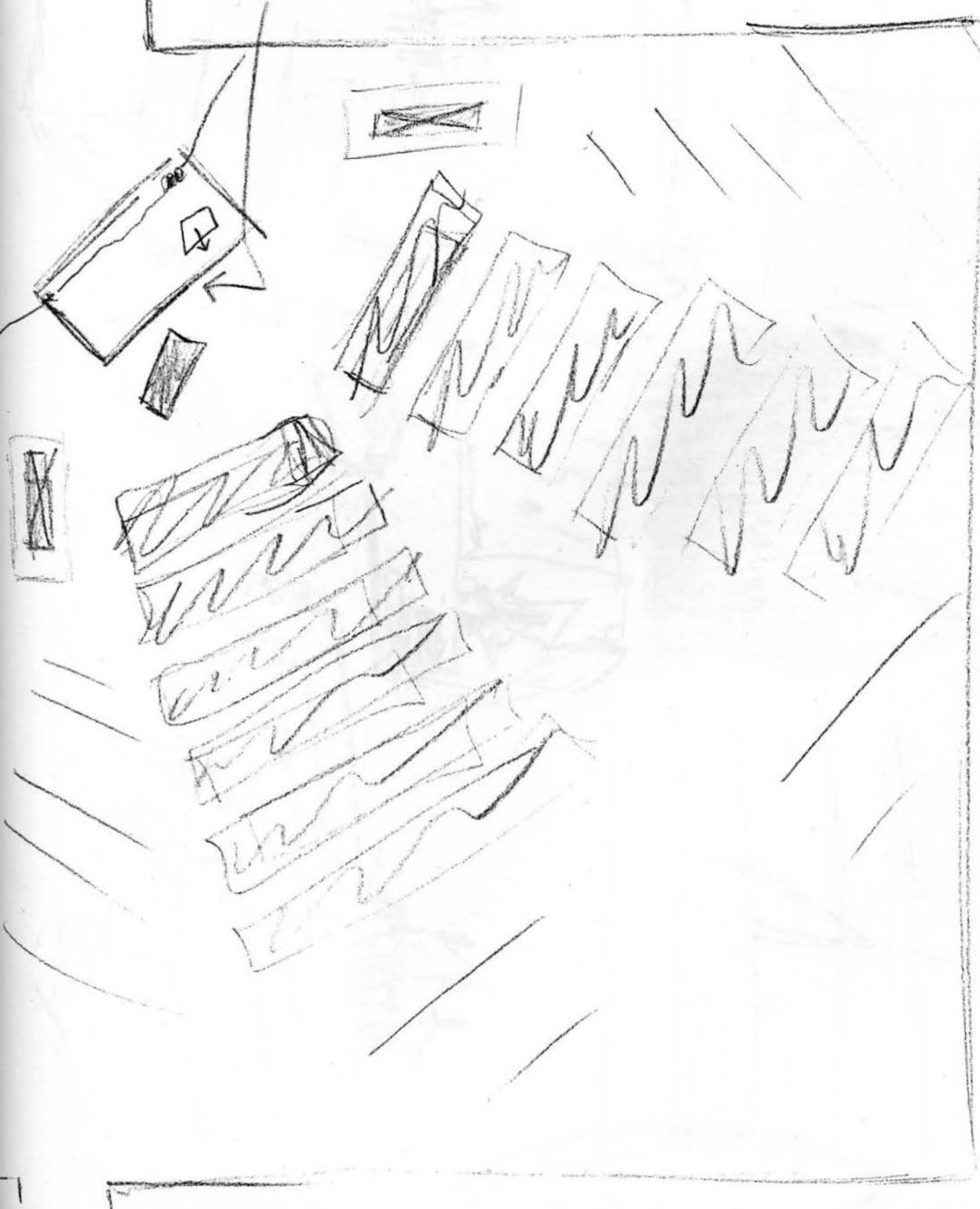


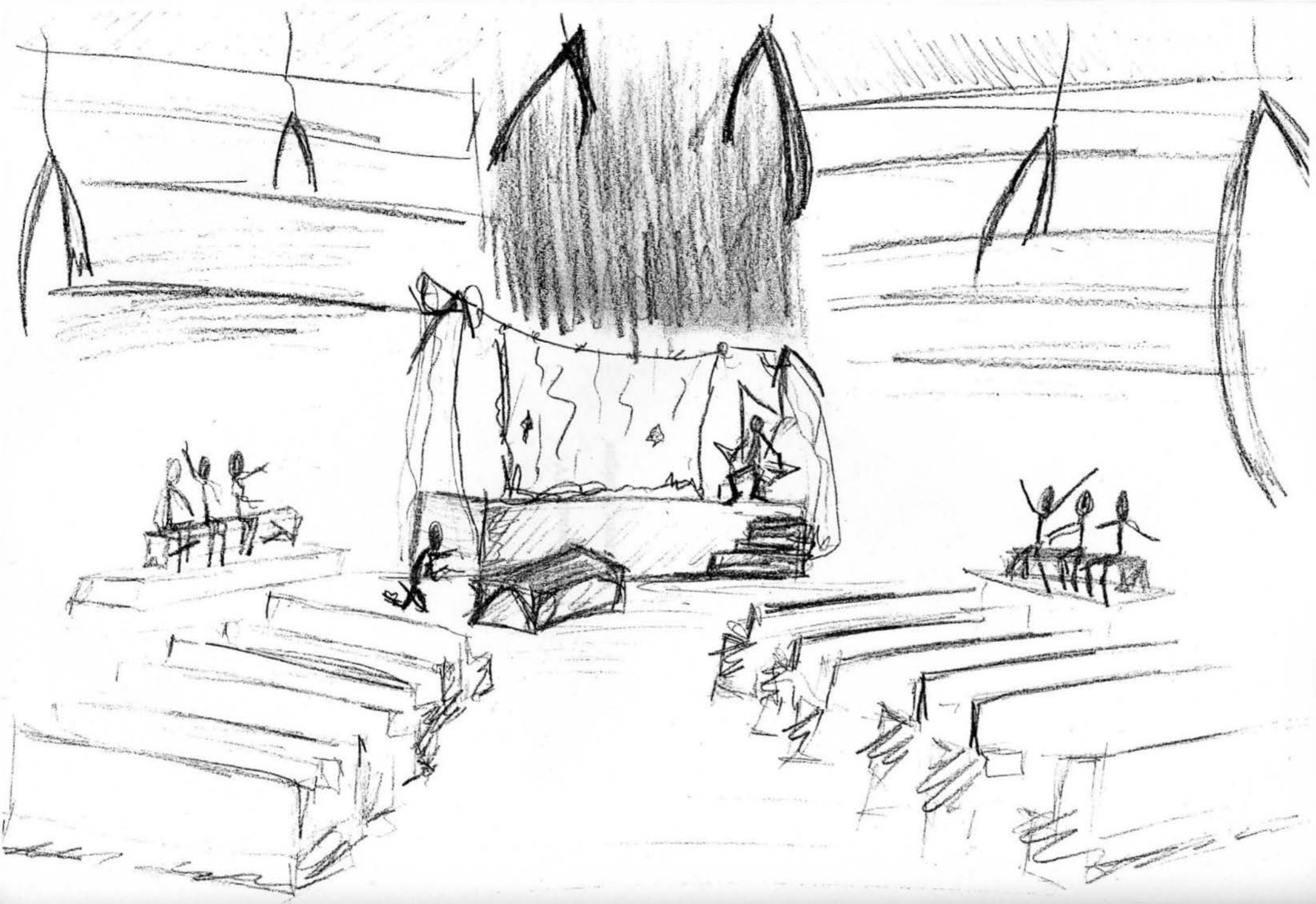
3/16 scale

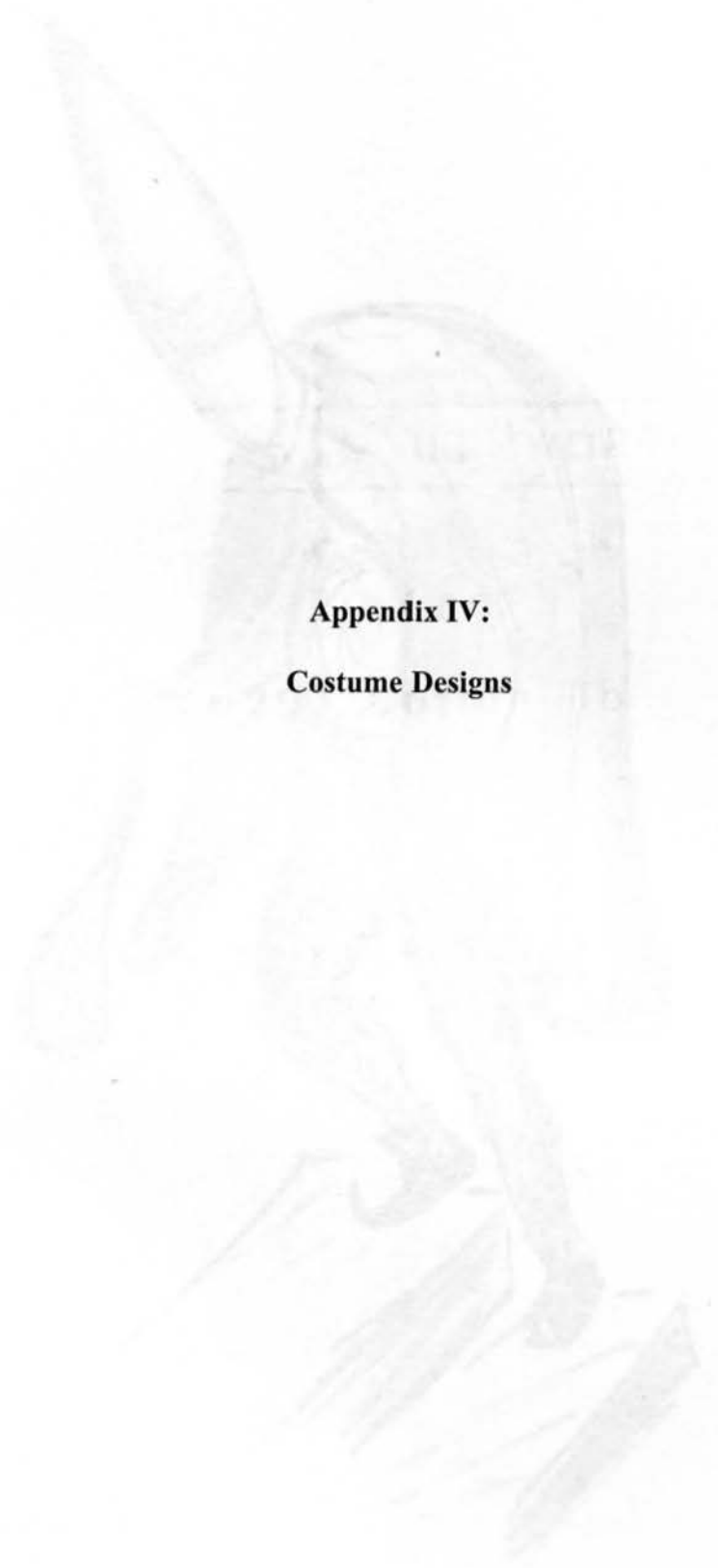
20 3' x 6' x 12" HIGH

Light effect
from under stage
in 4 panels

Far-eye for shadows







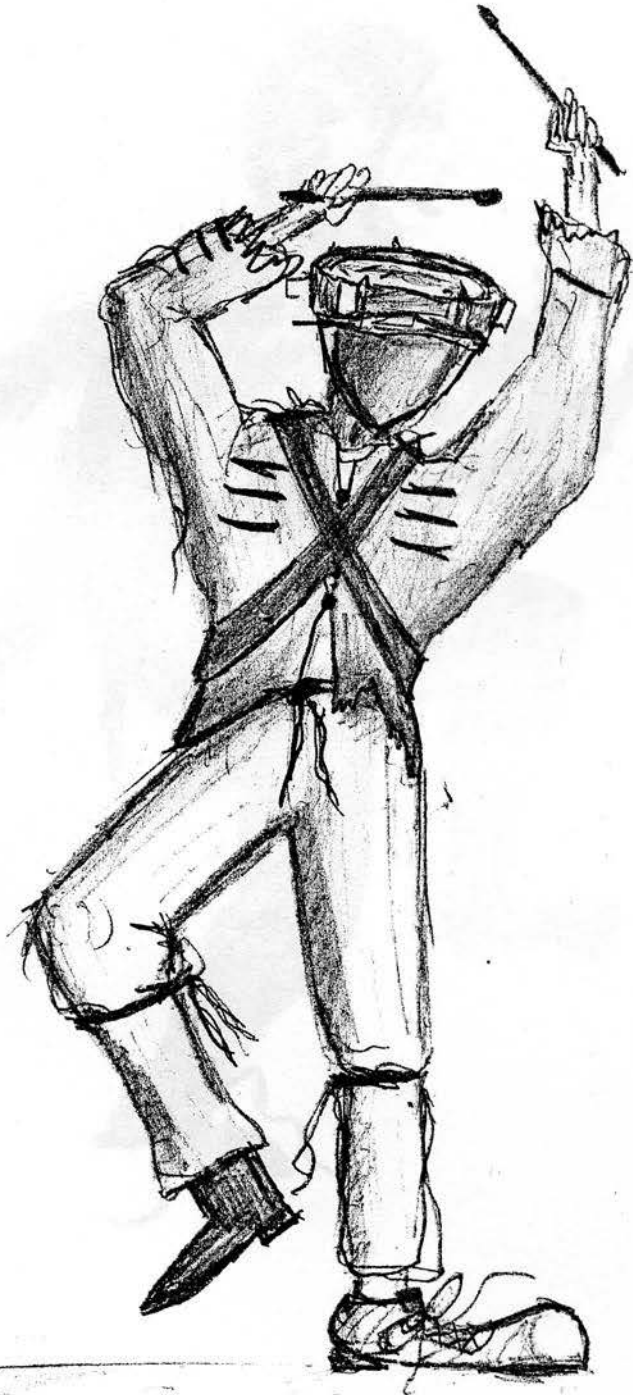
Appendix IV:
Costume Designs



Liz

Fotial FINAL
Scene

or black/white/gray
white face
face to rub
is at en



Calcut

grom
r
grom



Fool



Too!



Singlety

- do Lucy

Fool 2

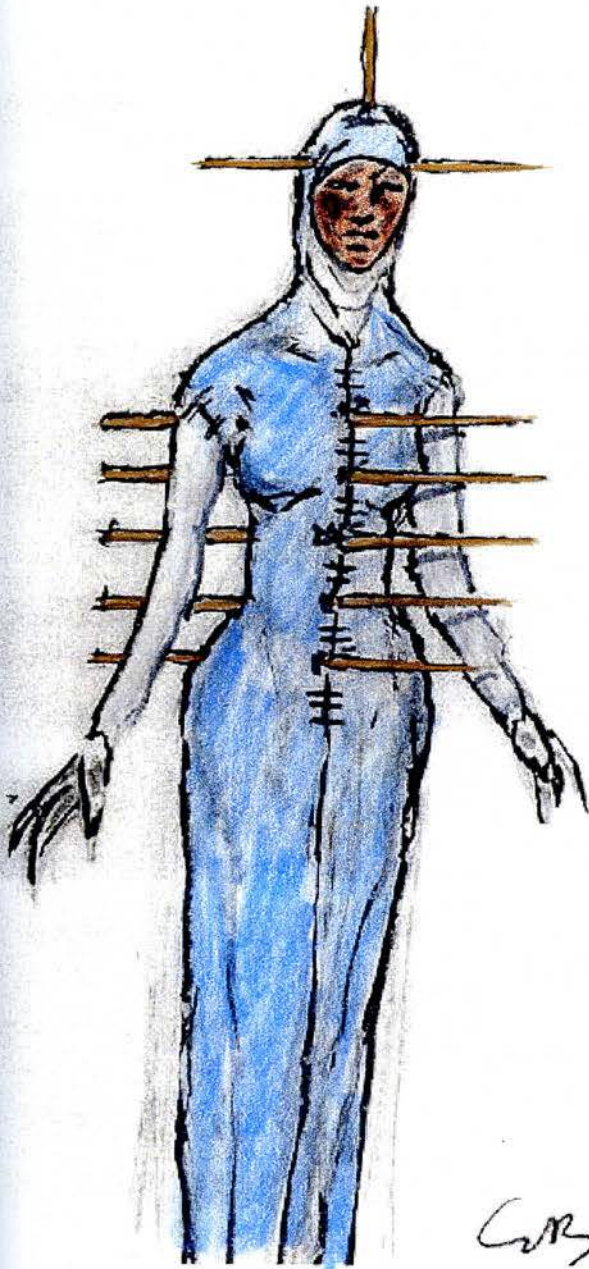


Pattern

Budget
Jeff



Fool 1
Gebele



Virgin Mary
(Michael Pessad)

Cory 75



flashing - red/gaffer
god figure - body suit (skin colored - blue/pinkish)
↳ painted wings
- gauze

Veneranda's
Ghost
Ashanti?



Newspaper
costume
↳ (headlines)
+
Guns

lots
of
GWB
+
Sports page
-color

Boots
hood

David

James
Transsexual Fool

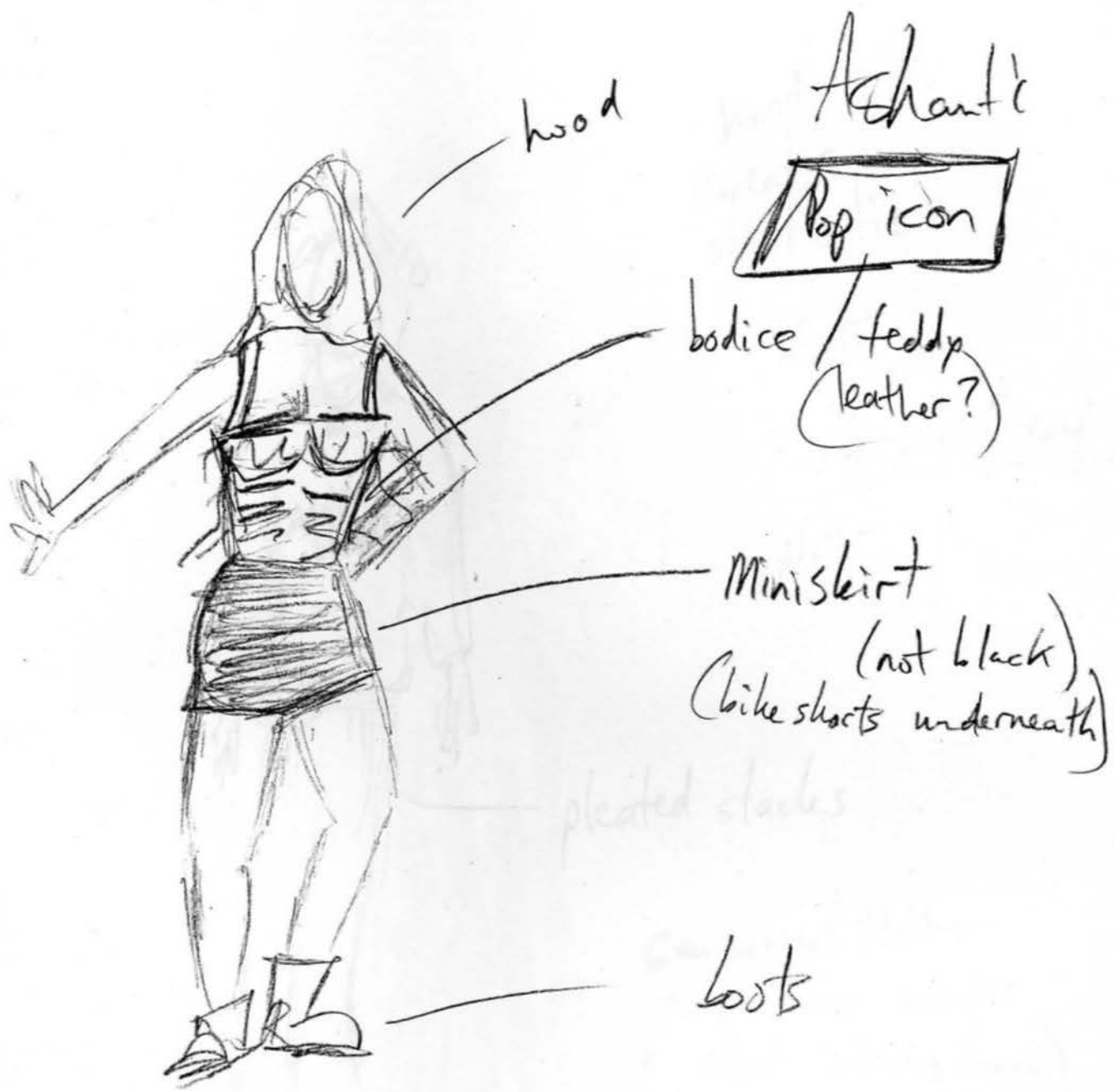
hood red plastic-wrap

fake tits

sorority sweat pants
bright colors

boots







hood
sweater
shirt & tie

Boots

Normal Guy

Nathan

pleated slacks

Can we get Nathan
a plain navy sweater
& attach lettering (iron-on?)

- Ben



Patchwork
type shirt

Zech

John Ashcroft Fool

Red, White, Blue, Gold

-Paint everything

Jon

head

Leftist
Radical
Fool

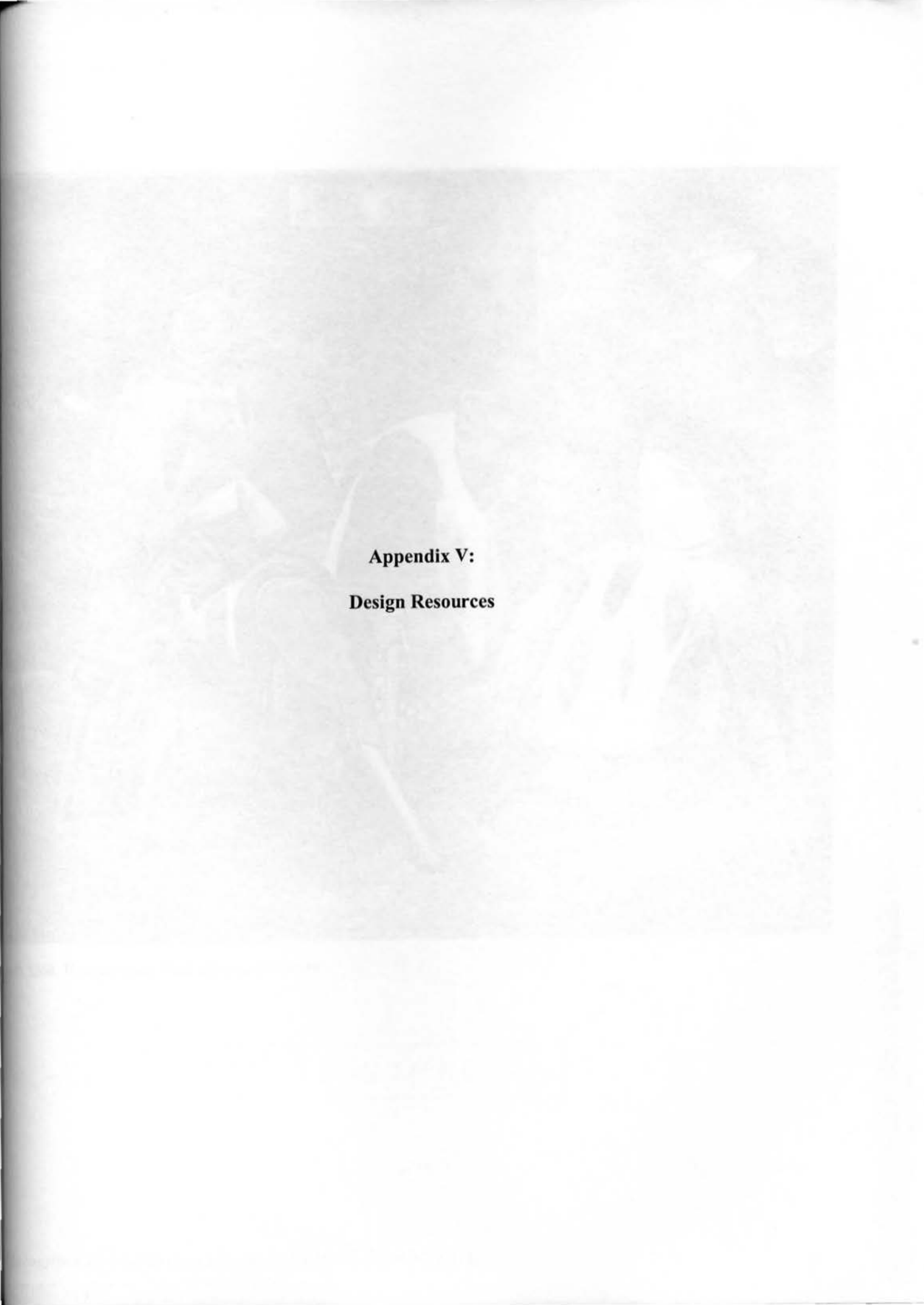
cut out
arm pits

Ideological
T-shirt
(stickers!)

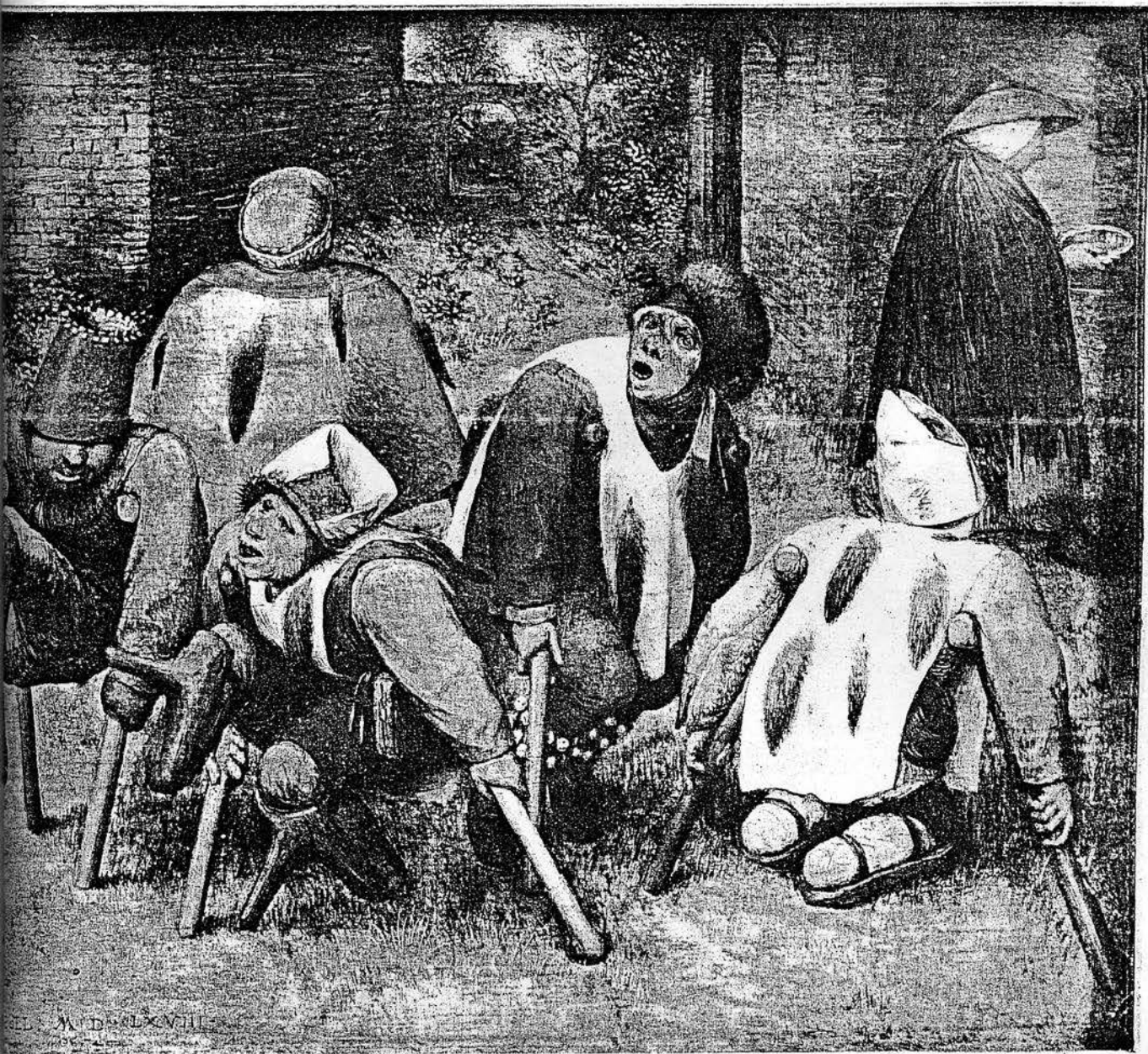


Patchwork
hippie skirt

Boots



Appendix V:
Design Resources



Peasants. 1568. 18 × 21.5 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre

Color
Palatte





K radosti.

Je to slyš, když se na nás někdo
ustavičně mračí.

Imich to já mám radši.

A tak málo k radosti mi stačí.



salome's dance

dslby

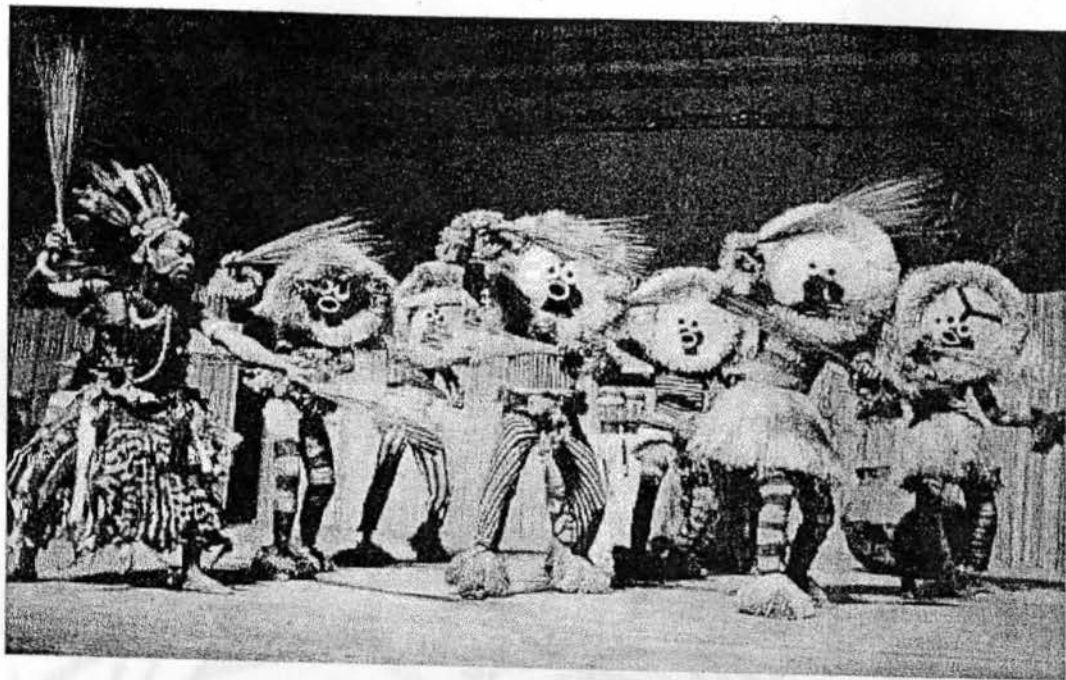
toad / fits

les



AUBREY BEARDSLEY

Aubrey Beardsley, *The Lacedaemonian Ambassadors*.



"L'école des sorciers"

—parts

National Ballet of Zaïre
mise en scène - Jean-Paul Humpers
Palais du Peuple, Kinshasa - Sep. 30, 1987

Clive Barker's
Lost Souls
The Official
Web Site





We love the misanthrope for several reasons. He is representative, human in spite of himself. Some years ago, Joan Didion wrote that a self-sufficient recluse like Howard Hughes represented “the dream we [Americans] no longer admit,” in which case misanthropy may be what we ate before we had the dream. Especially for the young and the simple, the misanthropic position has some of the same sweeping idiot appeal that anarchy does. People suck, man. Yeah, and government, too. In a similar vein and to a similar sort of mind, misanthropy offers the allure of an incontrovertible argument, for which the misanthrope himself is the best if not always the most witting evidence. A species capable of producing such hateful specimens is ipso facto hateful.

On the other hand, misanthropes can conceal genuine benevolence—in which case misanthropy amounts to no more than a pose, as it is in a character like Matt Bramble in Smollett’s *Humphry Clinker*, and to some extent in the figure of Dr. Johnson. In an age such as ours, when people have cultivated the fine art of appearing to care a good deal more than they actually do, the benevolent misanthrope is bound to seem refreshing.

Misanthropes demand less of us. They are not so insufferable as certain philanthropists. One thinks of Thoreau’s remark that if a man were coming to his house with the conscious intention of doing him some good, he would run for his life. No such danger with a misanthrope; he can make the best kind of neighbor precisely because he has no desire to be one. At least another misanthrope might think so. In a 1994 study designed to determine which Americans were more concerned with matters of security, those tending toward misanthropy were less inclined to favor tighter measures. Typically it was the respondent who felt “most people are trustworthy and helpful” who favored stronger protection. Those conducting the study claimed to be surprised, but the results make sense if you postulate that the subjects were thinking more about the persons who would be providing the security than about those who would be breaching it. Depending on the direction of his distrust, a misanthrope makes the best kind of civil libertarian or the worst kind of fascist.

Misanthropes also arouse a missionary lust for conversion. The way that lechers are drawn to



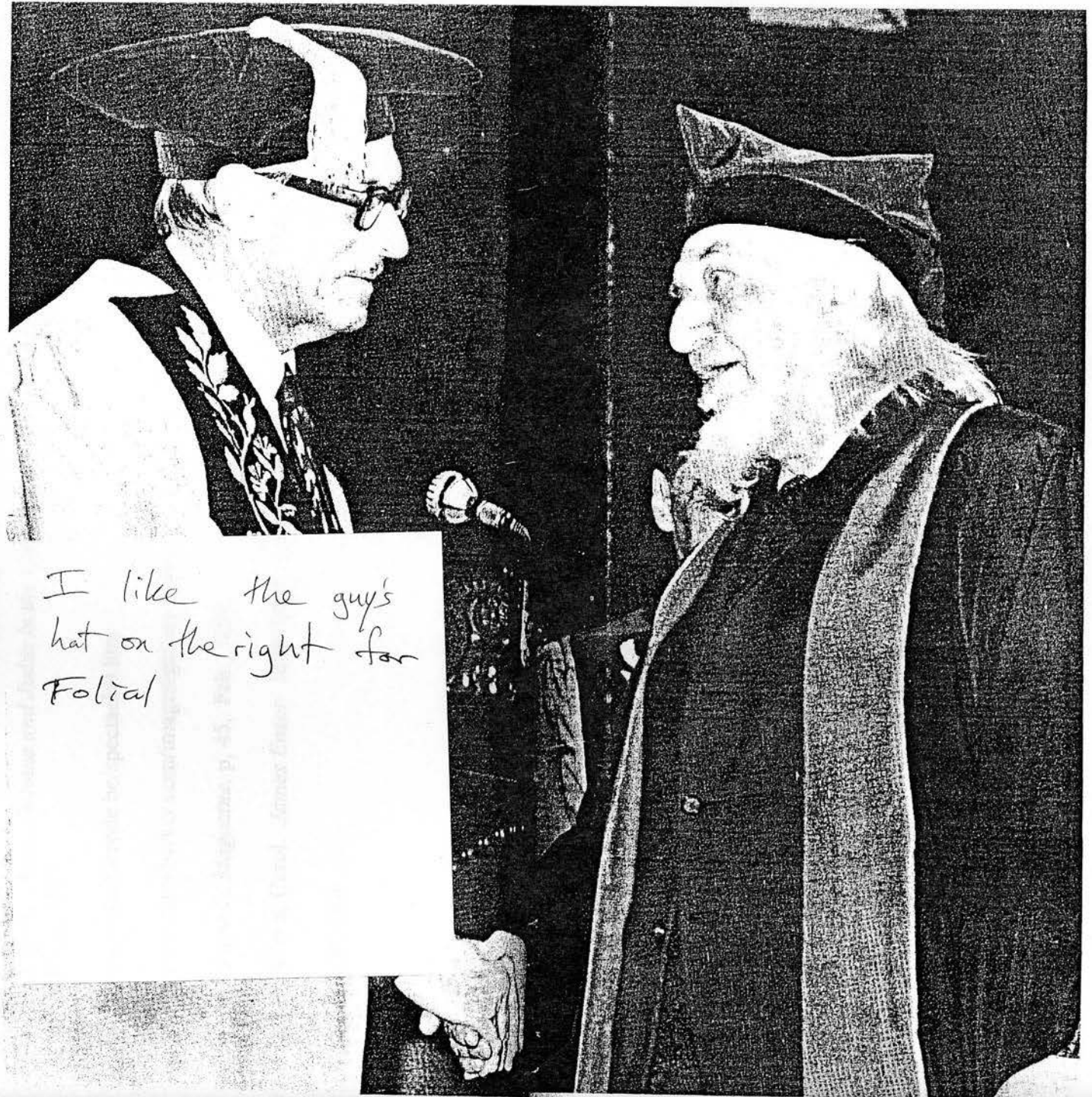
Cat. 29

The Assassination 1890

Oil on canvas 60 x 77 cm

*Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio; Gift of Howard D. and Babetta L. Sivak,
the Donors to the Campaign for Enduring Excellence, and the Derby Fund*

- colors
- skints



I like the guy's
hat on the right for
Folial

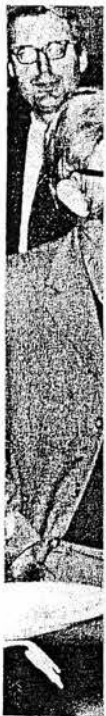


Photo: Pre
The Natio
symposiu
delegates
Mr and f
and Mr I
and Com

y doctorates were conferred by UNISA in its
internationally renowned artist, Professor
d an honorary doctorate in Literature and
re shows Professor Battiss being congratu-
heo van Wijk, principal of the University.
doctorate in education was awarded to
well-known Natal educationist. This is the
has awarded an honorary doctorate to an
was previously honoured by the State
Jersey, USA, when he was awarded an
literature.

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THEATRE PERSPECTIVE

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga - Department of Theatre and Speech/University Theatre Company

Volume XIV / February 2003 / Number 4

School for Fools

based on Michel de Ghelderode's *L'Ecole des Bouffons*

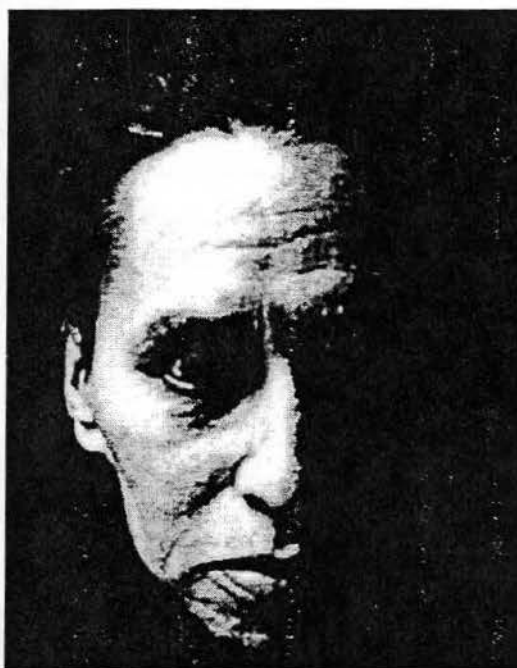
"Edgar Allan Poe in one of his short stories speaks of a book which cannot be read: this is true. And I know that there are plays which cannot be performed. This was the case of *School of Buffoons*... I certainly think that such a play could never be done, and for good reason. The theatre is supposed to please and this play displeases; the theatre caresses and this play flagellates...."

from a letter by Michel de Ghelderode to actor Marcel Lupovici, Brussels, December 21, 1952

Director's Notes

I tend to agree with this rather honest insight Ghelderode makes about his own writing. The play, as he wrote it in 1937, is impossible to perform: impermeable monologues, arcane language, a hodge-podge of mythological references, a labyrinthine plot, a loose association of characters, and, subsequently, a dearth of action—all contribute to the play's failure, its dramatic still-birth. Behind all this clutter is an idea, a powerful sense of direction that this type of theatre should take, and a unique view of the possibilities of live theatre. In a letter dated Dec. 26, 1948, Ghelderode suggests something about the style of his play *The Ballad of the Grand Macabre*, referring to the French avant-garde director Lugné-Poe: "This is the real theatre—everything is black. Lugné-Poe felt this farce to be huge and saw in it popular, primitive theatre. The play has never been performed; I wonder why?"

In response to his ironic question, I would say, simply, no one knew what to do with Ghelderode's work.



Michel de Ghelderode

Besides the fact that they were a dramatic mess, his plays could not be easily categorized as Symbolist, Surrealist, burlesque, or any other dominant aesthetic of the time, and to try to categorize him even now is futile. Ghelderode was a re-

cluse—he shut himself off from the movements pervading his native Belgium and all of Europe. He admits being influenced by the great writers of the 16th century—the complexity and extremity of Shakespeare and Johnson—and those to whom he refers as his "ancestors," the great Flemish painters Bosch, Rubens, the Breughels, and Ensor. At times he might resemble playwright Jean Genet in his grotesque depiction of moral corruption, both personally and collectively, but Ghelderode is too strong a Christian to be classified with Genet's outright godlessness. And although certain themes of his work may resonate with Samuel Beckett's existential despair, he is not entirely an absurdist. He was, to his own detriment, simply a dreamer.

Ghelderode never worked in the theatre; he always com-

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The Department of Theatre & Speech/University Theatre Company
of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
presents

School for Fools

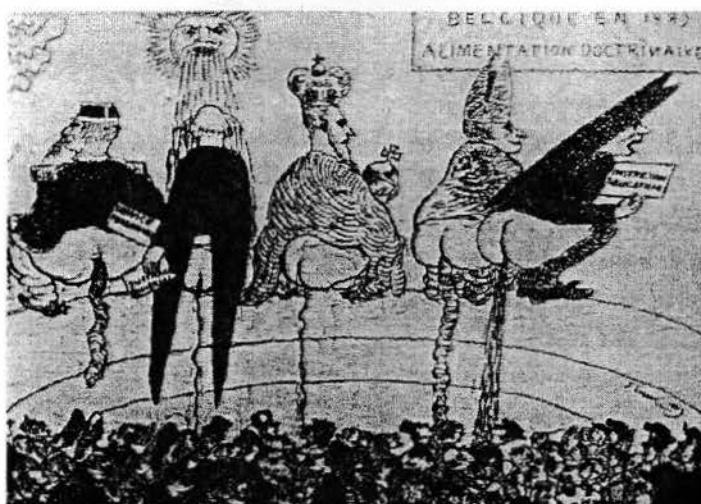
adapted from Michel de Ghelderode's
L'Ecole des Bouffons
by Ben Williams

Directed and Designed by Ben Williams
Lighting Design by Robert Duffy
Sound Design by Rhys Dawson

Cast

Folial	Liz Duncan
Galgut	Jeff Atkins
Fool 1 (later as Folial II)	Nathan Gebele
Fool 2 (later as Veneranda)	James Logan
Fools	David Becker Ashanti Brown Jon Durnell Zech Hook
Veneranda's Ghost, Virgin Mary	Michael Persad

Setting: a former convent now secularized



Doctrinal Nourishment by James Ensor (1889)



15, 17, 18, 22 February 2003
UTC Fine Arts Center-Studio Theatre

Production Staff

Technical Specialist.....	Larry Brick
Stage Manager.....	Laura Coates
Assistant Costume Designer	Jess Kenyon
Special Painting and Design	Helen Johnson, Jaime McDaniel Sheila Ruiz
Graphic Design	Joey Ciccoline
Assistant Stage Manager and Wardrobe	Mark Thomasson
Light Console Operator.....	Patrick Ley
Sound Console Operator	Rhys Dawson
Costumes	Jess Kenyon (head), Nathan Bowen
Sets	Jesse Williams (head) Heidi Fritz, Mark Thomasson, John Martin Jennifer Jones, Bryan Williams
Props.....	Heather Vandergriff (head) Rachel Farrar, Patricia Fritts, Mikah Poole
Lights	Patrick Ley (head) Mike Hanrahan, Charles Samuels
Production Interns	David Becker, Rachel Burnett, Casey Clark, Laura Coates, Mac Crox, Rhys Dawson, Patricia Fritts, Matt Johnson, Jess Kenyon, Mikah Poole, Kat Linkins, Jesse Williams, Andrew Zimmerman
House and Publicity	Kay Hobgood, Ashanti Brown, Tiffany Lee
House Manager	Jess Kenyon
Fundraising	Ben Williams
Producer	Robert Duffy

Acknowledgments

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communicated with actors and directors through letters from study. He was a writer, not a producer—a fact which he openly admitted, and an obstacle that he tried to overcome by giving more interpretive freedom (at his own peril) to directors. Here, I think, is the main reason that Ghelderode has been historically ignored. He wrote these plays (overaltogether) before it became routine for directors to re-visit the possibilities of production-based performance. Directors like Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, and Charles Drouot (who tried to realize the ideas of Antonin Artaud, whose Theatre of Cruelty seems to be near the heart of Ghelderode's own bizarre dreams) might have brought the insight and craft to bring Ghelderode's distinctive theatrical vision to life on the stage. My adaptation of *L'Ecole des Fous* is an attempt to merge Ghelderode's vision with classical dramaturgy.

Who Are the Fools?

In the original, Ghelderode describes in meticulous detail the physical deformities of the fools, their freakishness, "stigmatisms, various hydrocephali," etc. The key characteristic that I retained from all this was the fools' sense of incompleteness. All of them have been trained in their respective art for the entirety of their lives, yet they still lack one thing that will make them complete—the great *secret of their Art*. As with the disciples of any ideology, the organized system of belief in which faith transforms metaphor into absolute fact, the moment they see themselves as standing for some absolute truth, they become fools. They believe so strongly in their idea of themselves that they miss the big picture.

But, the prize student at this academy for fools, tells his fellow students to look outside: the world as he sees it is full of contradictions—seats of power lost in their own deception and personal insecurities, needing the artists to tell them what they want to hear, to confirm their absurd perspectives.

THEATRE PERSPECTIVE

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Robert Duffy, Editor

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Laura Bush recently called on American poets for a national day to "celebrate the written word," but when she found out that the poets (various laureates and Pulitzer Prize winners) planned to criticize her husband's war platform, she summarily cancelled the event, denouncing the poets as "adolescent" and condemning them for making their art "political." She had wanted to hear great contemporary poets laud the past poets of this country, notably Dickinson, Hughes, and Whitman, lauding, perhaps, the way America was, say, 150 years ago, when Strom Thurmond was still alive. Of course, the fact that Whitman was a homosexual and vehement war critic must have slipped the First Lady's mind.

Looking further into a cast of fools that wields power over our lives and fortunes, we find some masters of deception. For example, the dialogue between Fools 1 and 2 in scene 4 was derived almost verbatim from one of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's press conferences. And, as Robin Williams asks, does Bush ever talk when Cheney is drinking water?

Ghelderode believed that, in many ways, we had never left the societal divisions of the 16th century: the rich and poor, the aristocracy and outcast, the master and slave, the innate racism and "class warfare." So much of our news media, as Michael Moore suggests in his film *Bowling for Columbine*, preaches their own doctrine of fear and consumption. And with what are we left? In such a frenzy of preaching, what happens to belief? What must we do to the sacred to make something to make something sacred again? Only the Master Fool knows the Secret.

Ben Williams
Adaptor and Director
School for Fools



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Appendix VII:

Written Preparation

- 1. The first two sentences of the second paragraph of the first article of the Constitution of the United States are: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do hereby constitute and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."
- 2. The first sentence of the first article of the Constitution of the United States is: "All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives."
- 3. The first sentence of the second article of the Constitution of the United States is: "The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America."
- 4. The first sentence of the third article of the Constitution of the United States is: "The judicial Power shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish."
- 5. The first sentence of the fourth article of the Constitution of the United States is: "The Representatives and Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors in that State."
- 6. The first sentence of the fifth article of the Constitution of the United States is: "The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Electors in each State, shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors in that State."
- 7. The first sentence of the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States is: "The Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors in that State."
- 8. The first sentence of the seventh article of the Constitution of the United States is: "The Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors in that State."
- 9. The first sentence of the eighth article of the Constitution of the United States is: "The Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors in that State."
- 10. The first sentence of the ninth article of the Constitution of the United States is: "The Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors in that State."

Preparation for *School for Fools*
Ben Williams

I. Given Circumstances

Environmental facts

summary: inside an abandoned convent; atmosphere of an underground vault, whispers echoing everywhere, sweat, paranoia, a prison, sharp Gothic arches point in different directions—God is not there: a hallowed place that has been hollowed out, abandoned, empty, hard cold heavy stones, decay, mold, architecture of bones, pain, rhythmic exercises, abortions, outcasts, lowest of the low, suffused light through caked windows, candles, smoke, desiccation, cobwebs, dust, a medieval barrenness and simplicity, very private, hidden-away, very secluded, very still

Geographical location:

- an abandoned convent—otherwise unspecified. The original text set the play in Flanders, with the King's court being in Escorial, Spain, but this has no significant influence on the current text. Ghelderode chose these places for their romantic and historical associations (in his mind), but they mean nothing to contemporary audiences.

Date:

- The date is not specified. The original text was set sometime in the fifteenth century, but it might as well be the present. The medieval dynamic is important, but the references to King, Court, etc. are obvious parallels to the money-brokers who run our current government. To use the cliché, the play is “timeless.”
 - it is the night of the fools' graduation
- significant dates: (in history of fools)
- Late Gothic period 1200-1350
 - Renaissance 1350-1700 (approximately)
 - NWA releases second album 1991
 - Donald Rumsfeld as Sec'y Defense 2000

Economic Environment

- The economic environment has very little bearing on the action of the play
- only hope for earning a living is to fool, to slave for the upper class
- King and Court are centers of wealth
- The fools must perform or die—their professional skills are their livelihood
- Folia is able to provide them with what they need while in the convent

Political Environment

- King and court rule everything outside the convent—never seen within convent, only rumored, but the King's status is still recognized
- Outside, the nobility has power over the lower class
- The fools are powerless, in a sense—therefore they must fool the higher powers to get what they want, i.e. to rule the rulers, as Galgut puts it
- Folia, once the fool for the King, is the authority within the school
- Folia's prodigy students then go to the Court to fool for the King and gain respect among other fools

Social Environment

- Nobility—at the top
- Fools—in the middle
- Carnival clowns—at the bottom
- A danger exists in the possibility of falling into a lower class
- It is nearly impossible to rise to a higher class
- Noblewomen have affairs then attempt to abort the offspring—creating the race of fools
- Fools place tremendous value on their racial identity—it unites them against the nobility and differentiates them from the lowest form, the carnival clowns
- The King's Court is the most important society outside the convent—all fools aspire to get into the Court, but only one does, and he is held in high regard by all the other fools
- There is little competition from the other fools to replace Galgut, who will be chosen as the King's fool, only for them to get into the court somehow
- Folia's legacy as King's fool—the goal of each student is to become the prodigy student and inherit Folia's name and title to serve the King
- the fools value their professional skills, learning the skills and secrets of their art in order to trick others to get what they want—they must fool or join the circus, which is similar to death for the fools
- their art, race, and revenge motivate the fools
- the fools place in life is beneath the thrones, beside the footstools, but they perceive that as a position from which they can then rule their masters

Manners

- Fools show reverence to Folia, move in formations at Galgut's command
- their art teaches them to deceive, masking their true emotions—they have their stock shtick, dances, gestures, etc., but, as Folia shows them, their movements can also be sublime

Physical environment

- Gothic architecture
- Folia has a library where he stores death masks in a glass case
- Catafalque—an altar for funeral ceremonies
- Capucin monastery—architecture of bones
- chamber pots
- church pews, altar, baptistry, pulpit transformed into makeshift stage
- hard cold stone walls
- secluded from the world—no threats from outside, no one would want to come near the convent

Religious Environment

- the sacred has been overcome by the profane in order to find a new sacred
- medieval sense of religion for those outside the convent—heaven above, hell below, earth in between—Jesus is savior, all must be baptized and practice the doctrine of the Bible in order to go to heaven
- within the convent art has become religion
- Cruelty is secret of art—being brutally honest with oneself equals spiritual purity, being a real, professional artist
- Any deviation from cruelty, e.g. trying to forget the past or one's status in life as a fool, leads to the only real sense of sin and self-degradation, an insult to the art and race of fools
- the fools have been rejected by both heaven and hell—spiritually incomplete
- they convert the convent into their school
- everyone believes in ghosts, very superstitious
- the fools are failed abortions, baptized in toilets, saved by Folia, but in order to learn the secret they must kill their savior, who is reborn through cruelty, and they themselves gain spiritual completion and enter into the world
- for Galgut, Folia is a kind of God-figure with whom he becomes very disillusioned and disappointed, but in whom he still believes is some way of touching the sacred
- the fools are taught that much suffering is necessary in order to be true to the art

Previous Action

- Folia was the fool for the King
- He cuckolded the King
- The King and Queen wanted to kill the bastard child and Folia, but Folia pleaded/fooled for mercy, and they spared their lives, on the condition that Folia must take the child and leave the Court, never to return
- Folia started a school for fools

- He kept his daughter, Veneranda, locked away in the attic of the school—she would walk around near the clerestory at night and curse the fools: they thought she was a ghost
- Folia's prodigy student at the time inherited his master's name and became Folia II, and he went to serve as fool for the King
- Folia had his daughter marry Folia II, thinking it would be a way of giving her a new and better life
- Veneranda hated all the fools and refused Folia II's advances, so he killed her
- The King found out about the crime and had Folia II executed—he then had death masks made of the two victims and sent them back to Folia, along with a letter explaining what had happened
- All the other fools who are now in the school were attempted to be aborted by their parents, but Folia rescued them all and took them here to his convent and taught them how to become professional fools
- They have been in the school for quite some time—long enough to graduate
- Folia dreamed that Galgut was coming to rob him—he had a vision that tragedy would befall him and that Galgut would lead a plot to kill him
- Folia has influenced his students into seeing their art as a religion
- Folia's physical and mental condition have deteriorated since he's left the King
- Veneranda inherited a horribly deformed body from her father
- She knew that her mother was ashamed of her and tried to hide her

Polar Attitudes

Folia: >My teaching is useless. I'm forgetting it all and dying.
 >My teaching succeeded. I remember the secret and am very much alive.

Galgut:>I don't need Folia. I trust my powers enough to challenge him.
 >I do need Folia. He is much greater and more powerful than I am.

II. Dialogue

summary:

- language varies from poetic and lyrical to vulgar and burlesque
- very colorful, Folia is a master of language—Galgut is learning it, but still uncomfortable at times in speaking, especially around Folia
- lot of surprise
- very playful

- they talk around things, as fools do—a lot of careful consideration, but much more spontaneous and immediate in the play w/in play
- Folia, Galgut, and Veneranda are much more educated than the others
- Language works best in contradictions and juxtaposition of ideas and images, especially in Galgut's speeches to the fools
- A lot of questioning and repetition, especially with Fools 1 and 2
- Language starts and stops with abrupt and incomplete trains of thought, especially with Folia's voice in Galgut's head at beginning of play
- For the most part, the characters really do listen and respond to each other
- Very high degree of violence in the language
- Some alliteration
- very rough in play w/in play
- refined in Folia, for the most part, and in Galgut's bigger speeches to the fools
- not very refined at all in fools
- not too much challenge in the language itself—the words come easily for these characters, only a few stumbling blocks, e.g. Galgut around Folia
- Folia uses a more poetic and ceremonious language, if not at times antiquated
- Galgut is more demonstrative, rhetorical, and proselytizing
- Language can be compared somewhat to Brecht's—a blend of politics, poetry, and humor, though here, perhaps, a wee bit more profane
- Speech of Fools 1 and 2 w/ Folia is directly quoted from press conference of Donald Rumsfeld
- Other language influenced by hip-hop groups like NWA, Public Enemy, Tricky
- A lot is hidden in Folia's speech w/ Galgut and the fools, and in Galgut's speech w/ Folia, not much else hidden, especially in play w/in play
- Galgut, Folia, Folia II, and Veneranda become very engaged w/ their speech

kinds of words:

- Secret
- Veneranda
- Formation, lesson, listen, posture, line
- Slut
- The clap
- Love
- Art

- Real—mockery—parody—imposture—folly
- Confinement
- Seminary
- Swans
- Bastards
- Procreated
- Counterfeit mankind
- Lump of anatomy
- Baptism—toilet
- Apprentices—masters
- Carnival clowns
- Fell from His Grace
- Clerestory
- Corpses
- Confederates
- Light
- Weight
- Whiplashes
- Style
- Flattery
- Prodigious
- Race
- Ceremony
- Soul
- Premonition—memory—forget
- Traps
- Kill
- Career
- False faces
- Creeps
- Morons
- Cadavers
- Life-death
- Unrivalled
- Religion—faith
- Kill him with our tongues
- Theatre, stage
- Conspiracy
- Edge
- Memories
- Confessions
- Gift from Heaven
- Holy solitude
- Pathos, ridicule

- Twilight sleep
- Catafalque
- Crazy
- Trust
- Pupil
- Rape
- Daddy
- Cavity
- Fuck the pure
- Absence, evidence, know, unknowns
- Profession
- Celebration
- Artists, rabble, courts, deceive, trick, marked, disgust, spite, dance, reverence
- Gratitude
- Ass
- Gnawed away by disease
- Burdensome honors
- Experience
- Christ
- Species
- Croak
- Prelude
- Slaves
- Inspiration
- Comedy, tragedy, Masquerade
- Babble
- Nuptial, spectacle, beauty and beast, love-play, rich prick, endowed, conquest, purity, colleagues, convent, royalty, screw you fucks, fool's strut, blind, vision, sight, curse, daughter-bastard, monologue
- Sorry joke
- Master, contract, derision, harpie, honeymoon
- Inheritance, locked away, freak, May, Mother of God, intercede
- Buffoon
- Comedian
- Interlude
- Pedigree
- Awakened
- Cadavers, funeral, march
- cruelty

Summary: the focus should be on contradictions and juxtaposing the sacred with the profane: sharp-soft, awake-sleep, baptism-toilet, pure-impure, love-death, known-unknown, memory-forgetting, Heaven-Hell, etc.

- all are vulgar at some point, Folia II more than anyone else, Folia the most reserved

kinds of images:

- dead, money, slut, holy wafers, poor, condoms, criminal, army, sick, crayon, bishop, little boy, king, clap, drunk, holy water, jew, mosque, muslim, bacon, scholar, hand rattle
- hairy, juice, ladies, executioner's claws, blood, swans, abortions, baptized in a toilet, thrones, footstools
- prison
- icewater in his veins
- ghosts and corpses he sleeps with every night
- bull, maiden, believer, gallows
- light
- black pond
- steeple clocks
- whiplashes
- ghost, maiden walking around by the clerestory
- funeral ceremony
- miscarried dead
- poison
- eye lost its luster
- carnival clowns
- hands round the neck of the man with the whip
- death masks in a glass case
- shrunken spider numb with cold
- skeleton under the catafalque
- cavities
- plastic flags, song and navel, suffer with a smile, epigrams or turds
- fragrant flower
- sorry slaves of laughter
- flesh and blood
- Holy Virgin
- Miserable body
- Death masks

summary: again, the focus should be on contradictions and juxtaposing the sacred with the profane—very much about truth/reality and deception/performance, death and resurrection, remembering and forgetting

III. Dramatic Action

summary:

- Galgut leads the fools in a revolt to try to overthrow their master Folia because they feel that he has betrayed them, that he is not being true to the art that he is teaching them, and so they have lost faith in him. Folia

himself is torn between trying to continue to teach or giving up and dying. Folial does not want to face his personal ghosts, his past—he is old and has been avoiding it, wanting to die in peace—and therefore, he is forgetting the secret of his art, that is, cruelty, brutal honesty. So the fools, led by Galgut, force Folia to face his past by putting on a play about the death of his daughter. But in doing so, they revive him: the act of cruelty precipitates a spiritual rebirth for Folia, and he teaches them their final lesson, which they already know but didn't know they knew. The fools celebrate and leave the convent—all but Galgut, who is stunned, having been so obsessed with overthrowing Folia that he missed the bigger idea, his purpose in being in the school, and subsequently he inherits his master's title, becoming the next Folia.

- Galgut's desire for revenge drives the play up until Folia's rebirth, then Folia finishes it in delivering the final lesson
- Folia is the protagonist
- Galgut is the antagonist

shape of the action:

- Galgut discovers the letter that the King sent to Folia, thus discovering Folia's weakness, but he is overcome by his sense of duty and regimen
- He calls the fools together and persuades them to join his plot to overthrow Folia
- Folia disrupts the meeting and intimidates Galgut into helping him finish the graduation ceremony. Then Folia senses the ghost of his daughter Veneranda and, in a moment of vulnerability, runs off.
- Galgut meets with two fools to finalize the plot. They hear Folia returning and hide.
- Folia longs for death in a reverie. He catches the fools hiding. They try to fool him into revealing the secret, but he resists and leaves.
- Galgut calls the fools together a final time and preps them for the graduation ceremony
- Folia enters and they perform for him
- Folia attempts to release the fools and reveal the secret, but he is scared by his daughter's ghost and withholds the secret
- The fools begin their play about the death of Folia's daughter
- Folia becomes entranced by their music and performs a dance for them. The fools are all amazed, and Galgut is stricken with guilt over the deed he is about to commit.
- They continue with the play, which shows Folia II trying and failing to woo Veneranda who rejects and derides him. As Veneranda lashes out against the race of fools and in particular her father, Folia is wracked with guilt. When Folia II moves to kill Veneranda, Folia rushes the stage and collapses.
- The fools think they have succeeded and begin to celebrate.

- Foliai revives and makes them all finish the play in a funeral procession. He reveals the secret to them. He then passes his title on to Galgut and releases the fools.

Climax: the fools overthrow Foliai, who then resurrects himself and reveals the secret of their art

breakdown:

Unit 1 The Beating

Foliai commands; Galgut obeys

G: inspects

F: punishes

G: obeys

Unit 2 The Test

Galgut instructs; Fools affirm

G: commands, prompts

F: affirms

G: prompts

F: affirms

G: prompts

F: affirms

G: tests, instructs, entertains, scares, exhorts

Unit 3 The Prep

Galgut rouses; Fools join

Unit 4 The Plot

Galgut incites; Fools join

G: restrains

F: protests

G: warns, scares

F: obeys

G: encourages, incites

F: questions, resists

G: corrects

F: prompts

G: lures

F: resists

G: exhorts

F: yields

G: entices, instructs, warns

Unit 5 Interrupted

Galgut orders, Fools obey

Unit 6 The First Test

Galgut probes, Foliai evades

F: beckons, commands

G: assuages

F: tests

G: evades

F: needles, commands

G: assuages

F: resists

G: prompts

F: evades

G: flatters

F: chastises

G: flatters

F: resists

G: probes

F: evades

G: probes

F: evades

G: cajoles

F: ignores

G: prompts

F: resists

G: interrogates

F: evades

G: needles

F: suspects

G: probes

F: affirms

G: interrogates

F: resists, ignores

Unit 7 The Trick

Galgut scares, Foliai warns

G: scares, intimidates

F: pleads

G: needles

F: warns

G: elicits

F: dismisses, evades

G: scares

F: pleads

G: interrogates

Unit 8 Tables Turn

Folial bullies, intimidates, Galgut resists

F: diverts

G: amuses

F: affirms

G: jibes

F: admonishes

G: resists

F: bullies, intimidates, punishes,

G: attacks

F: silences, evades

Unit 9 Finalize the Plot

Galgut instructs, Fool 1 criticizes, Fool 2 resists

G: instructs

F2: refuses

G: coerces

F1: criticizes

G: admonishes, instructs, lures

F2: dares

G: ignores

F1: criticizes

G: evades

F1: questions

F2: resists

G: exhorts, orders

F1: resists

F2: pleads

G: reassures

F1: resists

G: orders

F2: resists

G: instructs

F1: checks

G: reaffirms, promises, orders

Unit 10 The Reverie

Folial prays

Unit 11 The Deception

Fool 1 lures, Folial pleads, Fool 2 questions

F1: ridicules

F2: questions

F: doubts, beckons

F1: lures

F: begs

F1: reassures

F: pleads
F2: questions
F1: lures
F: implores
F2: entices
F: disbelieves
F1: lures
F: follows
F1: lures
F2: jibes
F1: admonishes
F2: teases
F1: admonishes

Unit 12 Caught
 Folial doubts, Fool 1 and 2 deceive

F1: begs
F: corrects, chastises
F2: obeys
F: chastises
F1: pleads, evades
F2: evades, deceives
F: scorns
F1: evades, deceives
F: doubts
F2: reassures
F1: lures
F2: reassures
F1: cajoles
F2: reassures
F1: needles
F: evades, dismisses, orders

Unit 13 Final Lesson
 Galgut orders, instructs, entertains, rouses, Fools accept

Unit 14 The Ceremony
 Folial teaches, Galgut flatters

F: evades
G: flatters
F: resists
G: flatters
F: criticizes
G: evades
F: teaches, blesses, ignores
G: reassures, pities

Unit 15 The Bait

Fools and Galgut implore, Foliai resists

G: implores

Fools: implore, prompt, etc.

F: criticizes

G: beseeches

F: resists

G: begs

F: deters

G: reassures

Unit 16 The Dance

Foliai amazes, Fools and Galgut revere

G: thanks

F: dismisses

G: corrects

F: exhorts

G: questions

F: evades

G: criticizes

Unit 17 The Set-up

Galgut reassures, Foliai doubts

F: orders

G: reassures

F: ridicules

G: cajoles, needles

F: evades, criticizes

G: resists

F: insults, bullies

G: challenges

F: interrogates

G: resists, dares

F: evades

G: trumps

Unit 18 First Round

Foliai II: boasts, entertains, rouses, doubts, beckons

F: criticizes

G: reassures

Unit 19 Upping the Ante

FII: pleads, Veneranda refuses

FII: begs

V: refuses

FII: pleads
V: refuses
FII: implores
V: refuses
FII: beseeches
V: refuses
FII: scorns
V: refuses
FII: begs
V: refuses, begs
FII: admonishes, begs
V: refuses

Unit 20 The Attack

FII implores, Veneranda attacks, Folia pleads

FII: demands
V: scorns
FII: berates
V: ignores
FII: pleads
V: admonishes
FII: doubts, entices
V: refuses, admonishes
F: begs
V: attacks
F: pleads
V: exhorts, admonishes
F: implores
V: insults
F: pleads, berates
V: attacks
FII: impresses
V: rejects

Unit 21 The Final Push

FII: attacks, Veneranda rejects, Folia attacks

FII: questions
V: admonishes
FII: scorns
V: insults
FII: berates
V: ignores
FII: demands
V: refuses
FII: attacks
V: rejects

FII: pleads, berates, implores

V: pleads

FII: begs, pleads

V: rejects

FII: attacks

F: attacks

Unit 22 Celebration

Galgut and Fools celebrate

Unit 23 The Finale

Folial reigns, Galgut obeys, Fools obey

F: interrupts, instructs, commands, lures, releases

IV. Characters

summary: The pattern is that Galgut effectively turns into Folial. He becomes the cruel master that he tried to destroy. He moves from rage, to power, then to disenchantment, ending the play where Folial was at the beginning.

Galgut is the leader of the fools, he gains power over them by questioning Folial's power.

Fools begin as individuals, hapless, incomplete, disorganized—they unite into an organized collective mass in producing the play for Folial—they leave as individuals, complete, self-sufficient. They are the gang, a gang-mentality, sense of loyalty.

Folial moves from sleep and near death to full life and awake.

The fools' professions are at stake, their futures, their sense of self-worth and respect, which is essentially life or death.

Folial and Galgut are in a bid for power.

Folial

objective: to teach his students their final lesson

obstacle: his desire to give up and die, his lack of faith in them

will: strong in the end, but falters throughout

moral stance: values the sublime possibilities of his art, discipline, control, not honest with himself until very end of play, stricken with guilt about the death of his daughter, haunted by it and wants to atone, tries to be honest with the fools, more honest with Galgut, values his art more than anything

decorum: varies between trance of a sleepwalker, to a nimble Charlie Chaplin-esque gait, very expressive hands, hunchback, stiff and slow moving, body is in state of decay, easily exhausted, full of blood and energy at end of play, swift and hard, raggedy raspy voice, scary sick laugh

adjectives: haunted, cruel, old, dying, hard, soft, weak-kneed, nimble, haggard, tired, exhausted, cunning, genius, inspiring, traditional, immortal, cold, savage,

bullying, owl-like, bullish, giddy, astonishing, impeccable, impenetrable, scared, lonely, guilt-ridden, tormented, devilish, paranoid, delusional, raving, lucid, light,

Galgut

objective: to overthrow Folia

obstacle: his respect for Folia as a great artist

will: obsessively strong when alone, but not so much in the presence of Folia

moral stance: values power, discipline, suffering, self-flagellation, regimen, honest with himself, honest with others, not honest with Folia, values the fools as a race, obsessed with revenge to get back at Folia because he (Galgut) values the art so much

decorum: stern face, a great performer, very captivating and expressive, powerful voice, young powerful body, high energy, very nimble, overstrained a lot of the time, fiery tongue

adjectives: raging, dangerous, wrathful, diligent, rebellious, subservient, self-flagellating, calculating, methodic, spontaneous, rousing, raucous, proud, determined, self-doubting, unsteady, green, powerful, youthful, insistent, obedient, loud, abrasive, coercive, manipulative, certain, unyielding, restrained, controlled, lost, betrayed, jaded, vengeful, obsessive, compulsive, entertaining, flattering

Folia II

objective: to woo Veneranda, to get laid

obstacle: his desperation

will: quite determined, but has keen moments of self-doubt

moral stance: values attention, public acknowledgement, values conquests of any sort, particularly sexual, values wit and language, values sexual prowess, honest with himself, honest with others

decorum: swaggers instead of walks, always plays to his audience, puffy chest, scrawny frame, smiles and laughs a lot, very loud abrasive annoying cutting voice and laughter, knobby knees

adjectives: braggadocious, loud, cock-strong, unsure, childish, giddy, bi-polar, desperate, insulted,

flamboyant, proud, confident, timid, jock-ish, bigheaded, impenetrable, sappy, horny, predatory, hapless, misinformed, unstable, spontaneous, improvisational, terrified

Veneranda

objective: to deter Folia II and prove him wrong

obstacle: her guilt and rage

will: iron

moral stance: values truth, despises the race of fools as being dishonest, mean, and useless, values faith in herself, very honest with herself and others, not ashamed to bring the dark things out into the light, values purgation and atonement, unforgiving to those who have betrayed her

decorum: savage anger, hot fiery attitude, strong hard voice, body is bound in braces but still very strong and rigid, doesn't let anyone speak over her, doesn't move around very easily, solid

adjectives: bitter, betrayed, violent, broken, defeated, acidic, harsh, cruel, harpie-esque, jaded,

demonstrative, stentorian, vociferous, sad, cold, heartbroken, pained, devout, pure, fragmented, used, fiery, hemorrhaging, overflowing, acerbic, chaste,

Fools

objective: to obey Galgut, to impress Folia, to learn the Secret, to graduate

obstacle: their fear of Folia, fear of failure

will: generally shaky, must be coaxed and commanded

moral stance: value regimen, obedience, the art, value their Master and Galgut as leaders, very proud of themselves as a race

decorum: full of energy, very responsive vocally and physically to everything around them, fast, high bubbly voices, lots of giggling and laughter, constantly taunting and pinching each other, moans and cries, big distended grins and frowns, quick in formations, dances

adjectives: incomplete, herd-like, individual, collective, uncertain, vocal, unified, aborted,

abandoned, useless, amoeba-like, responsive, timid, wild, untamed, raw, willing, eager, stubborn,

dumb, clever, brainless, feisty, torrential, repulsive, charming, naïve, relentless

V. Idea

meaning of the title:

a contradiction, an oxymoron—teaching someone to deceive, which turns out to be much more difficult and complex than it would seem: in order to deceive, one must not deceive oneself—in a sense, they are trying to learn something that cannot be taught

philosophical statements:

- The fools' first song
- Real fools never love, only pretend, and they're never loved in return, only mocked. This is the life of a real fool, the life of your Art. So why live it, you ask? Why not surrender to the custodians of morality and strangle yourselves now? Because we have the Secret, the Secret of our Art, the Secret that makes us real fools. And real fools don't die.
- Tomorrow you apprentices will become masters! You will go back into the world where you began, where you belong: beneath the thrones, beside the footstools. That's justice!
- You'll be nothing without the Secret. Carnival clowns.
- He's forgetting what he is.
- My teaching, this imposture, the folly befitting my name, the madness of believing that anyone can teach anyone else
- You can fool without the folly

- It's the King—he's the fool
- That's what artists do—they imitate life. But he's imitating death!
- He lifted our art to the heights of religion. He turned the work of a simple fool into the faith of the King. But now he's forgotten his lesson.
- We can kill him—not with our fists, but with our tongues, like worthy fools.
- Do you know whence comes and whither goeth all flesh? From one cavity into another cavity.
- Look outside: we, as artists, can survive in the world in only two ways. We can go on wandering and rejoin the rabble—the way of fools. Or we can fool for the courts—the way of professionals—and in this way, we slowly regain the shadow of a life we would have had, with the families from which we were cast out.....But all in all, we're the ones to be envied, for in our world, you alone can thumb your noses on the sidelines, and revel in your own brands of pleasure.
- My entire life, and yours, owe it to themselves to be ceremonious.
- The claim that buffoons escape the outrages of time. Don't believe a word of it. Look at me now, gnawed away by the disease of it
- Forgive them, Master. Christ couldn't teach them charity. He didn't die for their species.
- We will suffer for you, for we can never leave mediocrity. We'll always be fools, the sorry slaves of laughter.
- I'm a *fool*. You're all *fools*.
- Not easy to kill, a pedigree buffoon.
- The Secret of our art, of our race, of any art that hopes to endure...but you already know it. You've learned well, my fools. The secret is Cruelty!

implications of the action:

This play is about Folia, an old Master fool, who is torn between the desire to give up and die, or to teach his students their final lesson, the secret of a fool's art. When his students, in a plot to overthrow him, put on a play about the death of his daughter, Folia is driven to reveal the Secret and sends them out into the world.

VI. Moods

1. nightmare
2. rap concert
3. gospel revival
4. spy game
5. waking the dead
6. tug of war with a wall
7. haunting
8. beating a dog
9. rousing the troops
10. praying for release
11. teasing the sick

12. Donald Rumsfeld press conference
13. Malcolm X speech
14. Transcendental orgy
15. extracting teeth
16. Religious experience
17. shutting up my grandmother
18. bawdy stand-up
19. watching a pig try to fuck a lamb
20. claws in guts
21. disembowelment
22. new years eve
23. pin drop

VII. Tempo/Rhythm

1. slow
2. very fast
3. moderate
4. faster
5. slow
6. moderate
7. slow
8. methodically slow
9. fast
10. slow
11. faster
12. much faster
13. moderate
14. fast
15. moderate
16. very slow
17. faster
18. fast
19. faster still
20. faster still
21. very fast
22. fast
23. moderately fast, then slow

Archetypes

Folial is the father
 the teacher
 the master
 the sage
 the dying old man
 the amnesiac

the savior
the redeemer
the dictator
the tyrant
the last of his kind
the old school
the experienced
the pope
the fool
the trickster
the greatest performer

Galgut is the leader of the street gang
The pupil
the son
the servant
the novice
the rebellious youth
the sinner
the plebian
the new school
the first of his kind
the trickster
the foil
the adolescent
the jealous rival
the ringleader

Folial II is the braggart
the virgin groom
the jealous child
the rapist

Veneranda is the voice of reason
the victim
the judge
the accuser
the cursed
the protestor
the female

What type of play is this?

A grotesque tragicomedy.

What is this play about?

The paradoxical nature of art. For the fools, it is about forming an identity and discovering the power and meaning of their art.

What is the intent of the play?

To show the cruelty, the brutal honesty and discord, inherent in art.

With what feeling should the audience leave?

Peter Brook, commenting on Grotowski's production of *Akropolis*, says he left with the impression of having experienced something "rather nasty."

What is the world-view of the play?

Art is a very contradictory thing—it questions and deceives, while at the same time asserting certain truths and dogmas. The world operates on dualities and paradoxes. The world does not care about artists. In order to survive, artists must deceive, while at the same time they must be brutally honest with themselves, never fooling themselves into thinking that they are something more than what they are. They must be cruel in order to be real, to be professional—if they were to fool themselves, they would become mere clowns.