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An exploration of the roles of Pleribo, Adraste, and Prince Florilame in Tony Kushner's adaptation of *The Illusion*: a production thesis in acting

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**AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLES OF PLERIBO, ADRASTE, AND
PRINCE FLORILAME IN TONY KUSHNER'S ADAPTATION OF
THE ILLUSION:
A PRODUCTION THESIS IN ACTING**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

In

The Department of Theatre

By
Chaney K. Tullos
B.A., Louisiana State University, 2002
May 2005

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Jean Wilfred Meaux. This world would be a magnificent place if we all could share his kindness and compassion.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the patient and insightful acting teachers I have been blessed with since I dove into the field of acting: Ray Sibley, Allison Glenzer, Bob and Annmarie Davis, Jo Curtis Lester, Nick Erickson, Laura Wayth, John Dennis, and Leon Ingulsrud.

I would also like to thank Preston Davis, Shawn Halliday, Brace Harris, Sarah Jane Johnson, Eric Little, Michelle McCoy and Tara MacMullen; the other seven members of my M.F.A. acting class. Thanks for taking me into your family, putting up with my eccentricities and always looking out for me. I am proud of the respect and appreciation for each other's uniqueness that we were able to find and utilize for our growth as individuals and as an ensemble.

Thank you to my family for your overwhelming support and interest in what I have to say. You listened to me, helped me make decisions, pushed me, and were honest. My love for you drives me to share its depth with the world.

I am eternally grateful to Kristin Sosnowsky for always being available to help me in any and every way she could. As a boss and as a supervisor, Kristin taught me the value of patience as well as how to see the big picture. As a friend, she taught me respect and the importance of a support system in the arts. LSU Theatre and Swine Palace have been blessed to have Kristin and her husband, Jim Murphy, join the team.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Character Analysis.....	3
Character Overview.....	3
The Actor.....	11
Pleribo.....	12
Adraste.....	14
Prince Florilame.....	18
Score.....	22
Conclusion.....	38
References.....	39
Vita.....	40

Abstract

This thesis is constructed from the author's interpretation of the roles of Pleribo, Adraste, and Prince Florilame in Tony Kushner's adaptation of Pierre Corneille's The Illusion, which was presented by LSU Theatre in 2004. This thesis is a written record of the actor's work on these characters throughout the rehearsal and performance process in the form of a score. It also includes an introduction, character analysis, and a conclusion.

Introduction

The Illusion, written by Pierre Corneille in the seventeenth century and later freely adapted by Tony Kushner, officially opened on November 19, 2004 and closed December 5, 2004 at Swine Palace's Reilly Theater on the campus of Louisiana State University. The play was produced by the LSU Department of Theatre and was presented as a showcase production for the third year members of LSU Theatre's Professional Actor Training Program. The cast was as follows: Brace Harris as Pridamant, Eric Little as The Amanuensis/Gernote, Tara MacMullen as Alcandre, Shawn Halliday as Matamore, Preston Davis as Calisto/Clindor/Theogenes, Chaney Tullos as Pleribo/Adraste/Prince Florilame, Sarah Jane Johnson as Elicia/Lyse/Clarina, and Michelle McCoy as Melibea/Isabelle/Hippolyta. Costumes were designed by Polly Boersig, scenic design by Jim Murphy, lighting design by Heather Gilbert, sound design by Lewis Rhodes, and fight choreography by Nick Erickson. The show was stage managed by Melissa Miller and directed by guest director Steve Young, a freelance director from the Chicago area. This was his first show with LSU Theatre and the members of the ensemble.

Although this was my first time acting in a piece by the compelling and articulate Tony Kushner, I was fortunate that my first behind-the-scenes exposure to professional theatre was a crew assignment in Swine Palace's 1998 production of Angels in America: Perestroika, directed by the company's then artistic director Barry Kyle. That production's cast and crew, in conjunction with the compelling piece, lit a fire inside of me. How fitting is it that The Illusion would do something so similar almost seven years later?

It was clear during the conception and development phases of this play that this process would be a unique challenge. We, the third year members of the Master of Fine Arts

program in acting (MFAs), were to work in a repertory schedule in conjunction with Macbeth, a Swine Palace show in which we were also cast. Our set was to be the same as Macbeth's, and our costume designer would have the task of creating our show immediately after costuming the massive cast of Macbeth. Our rehearsal schedule was carefully built around our class and teaching schedules and around Macbeth rehearsals and performances.

It had been quite a while since I had enjoyed performing as much as I did during this production. I was blessed with a beautiful play, a wonderful cast of dear friends, a professional and positive crew, a rich role, and a solid production. Also, I can no longer underestimate how wonderful and encouraging it is to have a production that is well received by your colleagues and peers. Their kind words were, frankly, much needed and appreciated. The show's apparent success makes it one that I will treasure for years to come. My career as an actor would be truly blessed if all of my experiences mirrored this one.

In this production, I had the unique challenge of bringing several very different yet tightly connected characters to life. This text serves to document the trials, tribulations, successes, discoveries, and traps that I encountered during the creation process.

Character Analysis

Character Overview

The Illusion is unique in that the play itself plays host to three other plays, or “vignettes.” These vignettes are three very different scenes that involve different characters, locations, and time periods. However, each is presented by the same bank of actors. Four actors inhabit the three vignettes, and, though they change characters and time periods, the relationships between them remain similar. For example, all three of my characters act as a rival to the actor who plays the three characters: Calisto, Clindor, and Theogenes. Two characters in The Illusion are able to move from the vignettes to the perspective of the other characters watching the vignettes, while Alcandre and Pridamant only observe the vignettes.

The themes addressed in this play are also quite complex. In order to adequately describe them, I have included director Steve Young’s director’s notes from the program which address the final interpretation of these themes in our production:

“Pierre Corneille was undoubtedly influenced by Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave*, which suggests that reality / truth is to be found in the shadows of darkness, not in the world of sight. Thus, Corneille sets his story in a cave near Remulac, France.

Pridamant, estranged from his son for the last fifteen years, seeks the help of a magician, entering the cave of the sorcerer, thrown into the pitch black, his senses in chaos, Pridamant is ripe for transformation. Three visions of the way-ward son are conjured.

The visions grow more modern / cynical in viewpoint; relationships deteriorate, while characters change names and positions. To accommodate the progression, we have made each vision its own story and placed it in a unique historic time frame. Only the father, incapable of movement, remains in the past.

Many translations make the play a treatise on love (Corneille was said to view love as an impractical and foolish notion- in fact Calisto & Melibea are named after characters in a Spanish play written in the 1200’s that condemns the notion of ‘love’ as folly). Others emphasize the more ‘illusionary /theatrical’ aspects of the work. Almost all renditions conclude

with the father and son being re-united, hence, a story of reconciliation, but the Kushner version differs.

After the theatrical tricks are exposed, we are given an actor who has yet to relinquish his role. Matamore, the lunatic, enters seeking to escape the confines of this world for the illusionary world offered by the lunar planet. The lunatic cannot have the woman he loves, and the father does not reconcile with his son. For the lunatic, a world without love cannot be endured, and a father, whose love is dictated by convenience, leaves us asking where is love to be found?

The final line “Not in this life, but the next,” suggests that love, purely and illusion in this world, will have to be sought somewhere else. Love exists not as a thing, but as air. We choose to be in love, love does not happen. “ALCANDRE: Love, which seems the realist thing, is really nothing at all; a simple gray rock is a thousand times more tangible than love is...Love is a sea of desire stretched between shores-only the shores are real...A dream which makes the world seem an illusion...The art of Illusion is the art of love...”

This begs the question of whether the play is merely an intellectual exercise? No, we must be swept into the story so that at the height of emotional intensity, when the play is ripped out from under our feet and we are left reeling as if emerging from the darkness of a cave into the light of day, we are available to be emotionally moved to an intellectual discovery.

I am thrilled to be directing this play and working with the LSU Theatre and Swine Palace staff. Kudos to Baton Rouge for supporting such wonderful institutions. Enjoy the play and tell a friend that you loved it...correction...You chose to appreciate the illusion of it all.

-Steve Young
Director”

Casting took place on Sunday, October 3, 2004. My classmates and I were told to come in prepared to read for the characters to whom we were most drawn. I was most drawn to the lover role (Calisto/Clindor/Theogenes), the magician (Alcandre), and the rival to the lover (Pleribo/Adraste/Prince) because each was a type I had not played before. I was cast as the latter. Our first read through of the play was the very next day, so there was little time for preparation. Knowing this would be my thesis role, I had concerns that the time crunch and the repertory schedule would not permit me to complete the desired research and exploration

for my thesis. Luckily, the schedule and Steve's directing style were more lenient than I expected.

After casting was complete, I reread the play in order to begin the task of bringing my character(s) to life. Below are my initial questions regarding the piece and my character(s):

1. How are my characters vulnerable?
2. Even though they serve as the protagonists, can I make the audience understand their plight?
3. Do I have three distinct characters or are they basically the same person?
4. Who is the "actor" playing the three characters and what is he like?
5. What are the relationships between the actors presenting the vignettes?
6. Do the relationships resemble those between my classmates and me?

After the first read-through, even more questions arose. Steve's interpretation of the play was different from mine yet seemed valid. Below are a few excerpts from a document he gave to us that addressed his INITIAL concept and ideas for the production:

**"MEMO
RE: ILLUSION PROD. NOTES
TO: PRODUCTION TEAM
FROM STEVEN YOUNG
DATE: 8/24/04**

...it is the intent of these notes to give us a starting point for our work on *The Illusion* and to let you know what I feel the play is about and how I see it unfolding on stage...

...ADAPTATION: The Kushner adaptation features some additional dialogue and scenes not included in other versions. While some translations make the play a treatise on love, (Corneille was said to view love as an impractical and foolish notion-in fact Calisto & Malibea [sic] are named after characters in a Spanish play written in the 1400's that

condemns love as folly), others emphasize the more ‘illusionary / theatrical’ aspects.

Most renditions conclude with the father and son being re-united, hence, a story of reconciliation, but the Kushner version does not. In fact, the father, after learning his son is alive, is loath to go to Paris, as the roads are muddy and inhospitable to travelers. Moreover, he can’t remember his son’s name. His reason for being in the cave has more to do with him than his son.

In the Kushner story, the play ends with a scene not found in other adaptations. After all the theatrical tricks are exposed we return to a fictional character. Matamore, the lunatic, enters seeking to escape the confines of this world for the illusionary world offered by the lunar planet. The lunatic cannot have the women he loves and the father does not reconcile with his son. For the lunatic, a world without love cannot be endured and a father, whose love is dictated by convenience, leaves us asking where is love to be found?

The final line “Not in this life, but the next,” suggests that love, purely an illusion in this world, will have to be sought somewhere else. Love exists not as a thing, but as air. We choose to be in love, love does not happen. (Pg. 158) “ALACANDRE: Love, which seems the realist thing, is really nothing at all; a simple gray rock is a thousand times more tangible than love is. ...Love is a sea of desire stretched between shores—only the shores are real. ...lies, hatred, murder even are all knit up in it. ...A Dream which makes the world seem-an illusion. ...The art of Illusion is the art of love...”

INTENT: The faux reconciliation, and the three theatrical scenes, are subordinate to and serve the idea of ‘love is the illusion’.

I do not see the final scene as sentimental, romantic, but the actions of a deluded man. Mind you, we want love to be tangible, we want to believe there is romance, we want to wallow in sentimentality, but the play forces the audience to re-evaluate belief structures.

This begs the question if the play is merely an intellectual exercise? No, we must be swept into the story, we must desire the reconciliation, we must be amazed by the conventions, but all of it is designed for us to experience the complexity of our desires verses reality. **We are emotionally moved to an epiphany.**

I have gone to great lengths to explain this and find a way to unify the story. I have read many reviews of the play and the most common

criticism is that the vignettes are entertaining, but the play as a whole doesn't seem to make sense. As a matter of fact, it is often described as outright confusing. I think we must make all of our choices with the intent in mind...

...**SETTING:** The play takes place in a cave near Remulac, (no, not where the cone heads live), in France. Caves symbolically represent the unconscious and are a medieval image considered the spiritual center of the human heart. One goes to a cave to seek transformation. The cave is deprived of light, an individual is thrown into the pitch black and forced to use their senses, now in chaos, in a manner they are unaccustomed. It is a place of danger, fear, and religious persecution should you be discovered."...

...**REALITY:** The scenes in the cave are reality-the vignettes are theatrical...

...**THREE VIGNETTES:** Despite indications the characters age and change economic circumstances, (we do need to observe this), I think it is more important that they be presented as theatrical scenes that do not relate to one another-are clearly their own story. (I think the fact their names change with each appearance and they play multiple characters has no other context-historical and dramatic context of their names excepted. The thread is Being that Alacandre [sic] is a sorcerer, he can move us forward and back.

The scenes progress to be more cynical and violent, even modern. The first scene is silly and gushes with passion. The second is more jaded, yet, contains overtones of romance. The third is cynical, practical, modern and harsh. The progression of these scenes must move to a more realistic tone that would convince the father that it is reality. This progression should be reflected in the style of acting as well.

Scene 1 The time is 1636; the son left 15 years earlier. I would like to set and costume the first scene in this period. Music, (perhaps a single harpsichord), and the lighting should reflect the conventions of the time.

Scene 2 Could we set and costume this scene in the Napoleonic era, the height of the Romantic Movement. (Dying for love seen as noble and the notions of honor-Hernani) Music could be a Beethoven sonata or concerto. Lighting would reflect the era.

Scene 3 I would like to put this in high-end modern dress with modern music as well. Again we should use/show the conventions of modern

stage lighting. (With sound I think amplification and stereo quality comes into play)...

...**FIGHTS:** The first slap is silly and courtly. The second fight is a dual that morphs into a tragic death. The third is violent, horrific and unexpected. The murder must be so horrific as to move the father to tears...

...**Backstage:** Perhaps we see the actors changing into street clothes, Alacandre [sic] takes off his costume, technicians begin to clean up and re-set the stage for the next show...

...**COSTUMES:** Some character things...

...**Pleribo:** (First two scenes) He is of unearned wealth and position. His clothes are over done-in contrast to Calisto. Contrasted he is physically the lesser man. He is Silvio [sic] in *Two Gents* or Malvolio in *12th Night*. His outfit is overstated and impractical. Silly color? Standing by Calisto there should be no doubt who is of money.”

The document cited above conflicted with my initial response to the play. The biggest conflict lied in my belief that the man Pridamant was watching in the vignettes was actually his son. It seemed to me that Alcandre had turned the cave into a virtual crystal ball that was showing actual “footage” of the son’s performances in the theater in which he is employed. However, upon reading the notes cited above and discussing the play with Steve, I found that Steve believed that the actor on stage was not actually Pridamant’s son, but instead was an actor who belonged to a company that worked for Alcandre. Therefore, the actor I was playing was also a member of this mysterious group of actors that worked for the magician. As you could imagine, this would add another important layer to the character(s) I was to create. My acting choices would have to be based on exactly how this idea of playing a member of an acting company playing a member of an acting company in three different plays would coagulate on stage. On pondering this interpretation, the following new questions arose:

1. If I am an actor in Alcandre's company, am I even human? Magical?
2. Am I playing myself (Chaney, an actor)?
3. What is the character arc of the actor? Are there three arcs or just one?
4. How does the actor change?
5. How does the fickleness of love (a message in the play) affect my characters' love for the girls?
6. Where does one world end and another begin? To which do I belong?
7. How do my characters change physically?
8. Could I see Pridamant and Alcandre if I wanted to?

As the production's concepts were put to the test in rehearsals, it became obvious that a few thematic choices would have to change for the sake of coherence. While this is expected in any good production, we were not always privy to why the changes had taken place and how it would affect our choices as actors. Moreover, some design or conceptual choices were made and never explained or discussed with the cast. For example, in the initial phases of creation, the play would end with the four vignette actors walking onto stage in their street clothes, as themselves, and directly address Alcandre (our employer) with comments regarding how we felt about that night's performance. Upon all exiting, Matamore was to enter searching for the moon. A giant moon would be featured, and Matamore would unsuccessfully attempt to reach it. The play would close with The Amanuensis' line "Not in this life, but in the next."

However, the final version was quite different. We would not exit as actors, and the moon (a VERY prominent theme throughout the play) was to be replaced with a series of

models that were identical to the stage on which we performed, creating the parallel mirror effect. Despite numerous attempts, I was unable to get Steve to explain what the models meant, why the presentation of our characters in modern day street clothes was removed from the play, and if the removal affected the life of the “actor characters.” As previously mentioned, Steve believed the person whom Pridamant was watching is not actually his son, but instead was an actor in Alcandre’s own acting troupe (along with my character). Our summoning was not magic at all. The entrance in our street clothes would be the only clue to the audience that we were not the actors in Paris performing with Pridamant’s son. Knowing this, I personally made the choice to abandon the fact that I was performing in the cave; my actor was on stage in Paris. Due to its eventual irrelevance, I never discussed this with the other cast members. The fact that the actor I was portraying was in a situation so similar to the one I, Chaney, was in led me to believe that the time period and location I chose to occupy was for my imagination only. Perhaps unfortunately, our production was not specific enough for this choice to have an affect on the overall concept or the other actors. It was my little secret.

Regardless of the conceptual confusions, I was still responsible for making a solid character that was compelling and supportive to the world we were to inhabit. Luckily, my inability to fully connect with the director’s vision was, in my mind, ultimately not inhibiting the character(s) I had to create. My role in the play was indisputable. I am playing an actor who performs in three vignettes, and in each vignette my character is the rival-in-love to the actor playing Calisto/Clindor/Theogenes. For clarity, I have divided the remainder of my analysis into a response and study of each of the four characters I ultimately portrayed.

The Actor

It was clear in the script and in our production that I would be playing an actor who presents three different characters in three different plays. With this fact I was faced with the question, “Who is this actor?” Even though this person never makes an appearance on stage as himself (without the mask of a character), it was still important to me that I explore who would create Pleribo, Adraste and The Prince. I soon came to realize that the answer could be as simple as saying, “The actor is me: Chaney.”

In a theoretical way, my relationship to the other actors on stage, for we are indeed actors in the script, is the same relationship that I have to them in real life. Since our characters are actors in modern day (in the eyes of the director) and in a company identical to the MFA class, I have chosen to exploit that relationship. However, this idea never manifests itself on stage. Instead, I hold on to the fact that I, Chaney, am an actor (a concept impossible to disregard) and play the scenes as I would do in any other production. As much as possible, the actor I am playing must lose himself in the world and the task at hand. Even so, there is still something at stake. There always is. Therefore, I relaxed into the fact that my actor, me, is fighting for the same things I fight for on stage: to present the best acting work I am capable of presenting.

With that decision made, “my actor” had to make sense of the roles he was about to play. It became very apparent to me as we began to analyze the play that not only does each of the vignettes represent a different view on love, but also that each character matures into a different understanding of what it is to love and be loved. The important word is “matures.” Each character does, in fact, age significantly from vignette to vignette, and Kushner gives both the characters and the audience a more mature look at the nature of love in this

progression. Therefore, I had to find out how the evolution from Pleribo to Adraste to Prince Florilame could best fit into this progression of time and maturity. Below I have attempted to recount my understanding on how each of these characters fit into the progressing worlds while fighting to make sure they were still able to stand alone as real human beings.

Pleribo

Pleribo's youth was the cornerstone of the character I created. The script shows that he is young, rich, powerful, and cocky. However, he is physically weak and unable to defend himself in physical confrontation. His one scene in the play ends with him scurrying away in defeat like an ashamed child. I decided to make Pleribo sixteen years old based on his apparent immaturity in the script. If each of my vignette characters would progress in age, I wanted to start at the very beginning. I made the decision that Pleribo had gone through puberty late and is still a bit uncomfortable in his body; leading with his pelvis and obsessing over his physical appearance. These decisions were based on the desire to find as many opposites from Calisto, the lover, as possible. Calisto was smooth and romantic; I made Pleribo harsh and awkward. My fancy costume was coupled with rosy cheeks and a strategically placed beauty mark. Unfortunately, no one ever told Pleribo that he should do something about his enormous bushy eyebrows.

Addressing Calisto, Elicia describes Pleribo by saying, "There's just one other [suitor] roundabout today, Well-bred, polite, a charming man." In reading this, I wondered why he didn't have a shot with Melibea. The answer is probably because Elicia is lying in her description. It seems clear to me that she is trying to push Calisto away from his failure in his courting of Melibea by riling him up. Pleribo may know how to conduct himself in social circles, but his arrogance and foppishness can only stay hidden for so long. He has led a very

spoiled life and is used to getting his way. Despite these negative aspects, he cares very much for Melibea and is trying to gain her in the only way he knows how.

Simply put, Pleribo is in love with Melibea because she is beautiful, intelligent, and of a respectable social class. Pleribo knows that his ability to score a female companion will probably have to spawn from his wealth because no other method has worked. In regards to character history, I have decided that Pleribo has been introduced to Melibea at several court parties, and up to this point she has shown no interest in him. He, on the other hand, has fallen in love with her. It is stated in the script that Pleribo has been in negotiations with her father regarding the acquisition of Melibea as a wife. Based on this, I believe Pleribo has just left a successful meeting with Melibea's father when he encounters his rival Calisto in the private garden.

Pleribo meets Calisto for the first time in the one scene they share on stage. As Pleribo enters and is caught digging in his nose (I wanted to offset my beautiful costume with a gross act), he knows that Calisto is below him in class by his demeanor and assumes that Calisto is also less intelligent. However, Calisto is tall, good looking, and charming; something Pleribo finds intimidating. He also quickly learns that Calisto is physically stronger than he, and that the easiest and least painful way for Pleribo to dispose of Calisto would have to be through Melibea's father.

In our production, Pleribo's quick scene in the play really opened the comic door for the audience. My character made huge declarations of love that went as far as threatening to cut off both hands, but when Calisto removes hypotheticals and threatens him physically, Pleribo runs like a coward. Having presented such a boastful and pompous character in the beginning, I found that my reaction to Calisto's slap to my face was the perfect opportunity to

find the opposite in his personality: The scared, whining child. Steve allowed us to play the slap and a resulting smack to my head in a very delicate manor, opening the door to an over the top reaction on the part of my character that proved comically effective.

Another opposite I was able to find lay in the previously mentioned threat to remove limbs in the name of love. When Calisto steps away from the rising absurdity and asks, “Would you really do that?” Pleribo responds, “No. I mean not really. I mean, who would do something like that?” Kushner provides a clear opportunity here for a shift, so I found that by playing the previous line, “Well I’d do it too [cut off both hands] and I’d also cut off my feet” in a dramatically large manner that topped all previous declarations in the play, I could shift from rival to friend in one quick moment. My subtext went from “I would chop off my limbs to beat you” to “Aren’t we silly! We should stop and go have a latte.”

While I was able to find out quite a bit about this young man, ultimately nothing was as important as knowing what he was fighting for. Prior to meeting Calisto in the garden, Pleribo has been in an ongoing battle for the hand of Melibea. After meeting Calisto, he fights just to leave the room with his dignity. He then is forced to literally fight for not only Melibea but also his masculinity; ultimately losing both. When last we hear of Pleribo, he is fighting to forever remove Calisto from the world they occupy by calling upon the physical strength of a team of gardeners employed by Melibea’s father. No one knows who won.

Adraste

If Pleribo represents the less mature end of my spectrum of characters, then Adraste is caught somewhere between the foppish, silly love of Pleribo and Prince Florilame’s deep, mature, collected and bitter-sweet passion. Adraste and Pleribo share a number of similarities. Both are rich, cocky and play the role of the rival-in-love. However, Adraste differs in the fact

that he is smarter, dangerously quick-tempered, and unafraid of confrontation. If Pleribo represents the young, pubescent fool-hearted lover, then Adraste plays the role of a sexually deprived, lustful and lonely man. While Pleribo's love can still be seen as innocent, the story told in vignette two led me search for the danger in the love and actions of Adraste.

In vignette two, the passion of the two lovers has blossomed into something more sexual, direct, and dangerous. The actor playing Clindor abandons the method of silly persistence used by Calisto and uses his brain and sexuality to charm his love interest.

Referencing the script, these are the other unarguable facts concerning Adraste:

1. He truly is in love with Isabelle.
2. He is in negotiations with her father to buy her as a bride, but he would rather gain her through mutual love.
3. Not only does Isabelle have no feelings for Adraste, but she also finds his persistence annoying.
4. Like most of the other characters, Adraste sees Matamore as a loon and not as a threat.
5. Adraste has some sort of relationship with Lyse.
6. Adraste has meet or seen Clindor before.
7. Adraste knows how to sword fight.

With few solid facts regarding the character, I had several choices to make. First of all, I wondered how Adraste carried himself physically. Based on the scene where he literally begs for any sort of affection from Isabelle, I came to believe that he must suffer from some sort of low self esteem. However, it is also clear that Adraste is not awkward or shy.

Therefore, I felt it best to explore his low self-esteem in the way he carries his body. A lowered and tilted head and slumped shoulders seemed to provide me with a virtual armor, but more interestingly was the way in which it changed my glance. This posture lends itself to focusing right under the eyebrows, a posture made famous by the late Princess Diana. Once the comparison dawned on me, I knew I had found a posture that would protect the lowest of esteems while still conveying some sort of regal mysteriousness. It became my mask of power.

Another choice that was unavoidable was the ways in which Adraste fought for the love of Isabelle. The trap of this character would be to make him unchangingly evil and undeserving of Isabelle's hand and lacking of any sympathy from the other characters or the audience. I felt it was not only important as an actor to fight this, but I also realized that a more likable Adraste better suits the play. Despite all of this, I had to remember that there is a reason Isabelle does not even consider taking his hand.

Eventually, I found that every decision regarding this character was rooted in one fact: Adraste is truly in love with Isabelle. This fact allows the audience to sympathize with his plight (to some degree), gives me something distinct to fight for as an actor, gives Calisto and Isabelle something clear to fight against, and justifies Adraste's overwhelming behavior.

Even with Adraste's obvious love for Isabelle, it was still necessary to find more levels in the character. Due to the fact that Adraste dies in a violent and heated sword fight, I wanted to find an opportunity to expose other ways he could do battle: a battle of wits. The scene in which Adraste confronts Clindor about his passion for Isabelle gave me the perfect opportunity. In this scene, I made the choice to confront him in a very still and controlled manner, being careful not to seem anything more than cool and in charge. Making this choice

not only gave me an opposite for the heated fury in the sword fight that takes place later in the vignette, but it also allowed me to arc from calm and collected to a stage of enraged panic in one scene.

Even though the text of the script supports these decisions by quickly establishing that a prior relationship exists with Lyse, almost nothing is stated about the way in which and how well they know each other. I derived the belief that if he greets her with the question, “You spoke with him?” and is comfortable enough to offer her a bribe quite out-right, it is safe to assume that they have spent time alone together. While a maid of this time period is of a station significantly below Adraste, her knowledge of her mistress’ activities gives her power over Adraste. Knowing this, I decided that it was important to not be abrasive and officious and yet maintain my ability to dominate her. This gave me the opportunity to make a discovery: She has the knowledge (which I need) and I have the money (which she needs). Diplomacy would be an important skill in my relationship with Lyse.

Even though I had found the diplomatic, love-filled and grief-stricken sides of Adraste, it is impossible to forget that his main purpose in the vignette is to serve as an obstacle for the love of Clindor and Isabelle. Kushner and Corneille don’t want the audience to wish for Adraste’s success. He is the “bad guy.”

Knowing this and that I found the above mentioned layers, I was able to have fun with the protagonist side of Adraste. Not only did my Adraste threaten the life of Clindor, Steve allowed me to physically threaten Isabelle as well. Given his passion and the intense nature of the characters throughout the vignette, I thought it was a valid choice for Adraste’s passion to reach a point where he would physically harm Isabelle’s persistent rebuff. After all, the consequences would be little or none. Her status as a commodity to her father and

Adraste's rank would prevent any legal or familial backlash. In Adraste's eyes, she was being disrespectful and deserved the lesson. Not only did I feel that this choice was valid, but I also felt it raised the stakes for the whole vignette.

Unlike Pleribo, we see the fate of Adraste. He dies in a battle for a woman he truly loves. Like the other characters in this vignette, Adraste is fighting with all of his heart for what he believes, but he is unable to control the strong feeling that boil inside him. This inability is ultimately his demise.

Prince Florilame

In the play's third vignette, the well of passion between the two lovers has run dry. Unable to remain faithful in his relationship with Isabelle, Theogenes has turned to the Princess for a dangerous bout of adultery. In this final installation, the characters are forced to deal with the reality that not only can love change, but it can wither and metamorphose. Something intangible is just that; it is seen differently by each that views it. Therefore, the vignettes have taken us from a lighthearted, youthful look at love to a mature, settled, and bitter view.

As in the other two vignettes, my character finds himself right in middle of Kushner's treatise on love. Once again, a rich and powerful man finds his one true love has been stolen by the lover character, in this case Theogenes. However, it is quite clear that The Prince is not the same man as Adraste; age has taught him the power of self-control. Based on the text, these are the facts that affected my creation of Prince Florilame:

1. He is married and his wife is in the midst of an affair with Theogenes.
2. He is ruler of the kingdom that all of the characters occupy, and Theogenes works as his "right hand man".

3. In his one scene, the Prince has just returned from a trip by boat early because of “troubling news.”
4. He claims to have been hunting this morning and his hawk was killed by an archer.
5. He knows upon entering that Theogenes has been sleeping with his wife, but chooses not to say a word about it.
6. In this vignette, the love that is fought over is not of Hippolyta (the character played by the actress who played the first two female characters fought over); it is a character that is never seen on stage.

Examining the simple text in the scene and Kushner’s treatise on love in this vignette, it is obvious that the difference between Prince Florilame andAdraste is Prince Florilame’s ability to control his rage and success in finally conquering the lover character. I imagined he was in his mid forties (even though I knew I never read that age on the stage). The passion and rage visible in my other characters still exists in the Prince; he is just better at controlling and harnessing them. He is also in a stronger position of power, a position that would even allow him to get away with murder.

My biggest obstacle with The Prince was setting up the sudden murder of Theogenes. It is clear in the script that the murder should be a surprise to the audience, but it was important to decide whether or not the Prince walked into the situation planning to kill him. After some thought, it seemed more interesting and script-supporting if Prince Florilame’s intent in the scene was to let Theogenes decide his own fate; The Prince would spare Theogenes’ life if he admitted to the affair, or The Prince would kill Theogenes if he failed to take advantage of the opportunity to come clean. The script supports this by the manner in which The Prince confronts Theogenes. Using the death of the hawk as a metaphor for the

impending death of Theogenes, Theogenes has the ability to foresee and put a stop what is coming. The Prince's refinement would never permit him to state out right what is being alluded to; therefore his sudden explosion of animalistic revenge is the result of Theogenes' inability to rise to his level. The fate of the tattered love between Theogenes and Hippolyta ultimately lies in the hands of Theogenes.

While the relationship between Prince Florilame and Theogenes is the driving force behind the scene, it would be impossible to ignore the importance of The Prince's relationship with Hippolyta. Upon exiting, he simply replies to Hippolyta's cries of disgust by saying, "Hippolyta, don't anger me. Justice has been done for you as well. He never was worthy of your love." In saying this, it is clear that there is some sort of relationship between the two. It seems most likely that their exchanges would have stemmed from her husband's work as a trusted advisor to the Prince, but it seemed to me that something more must be going on between them. Why would he do such a horrific thing in front of her?

My decision was based on the fact that this was the one vignette where my character was not in love with the female lover, or at least that it was not stated in the script. I decided that the progression of the state of love and the progression of my character from vignette to vignette would support my decision that the Prince did at one time love Hippolyta. However, his maturity and further understanding of the nature of love prevented him from ever acting on his feelings. He could see that that love she shared with Theogenes would far eclipse that. While The Prince was eventually able to move past his feelings, the opportunity to make her suffer a little was too hard to resist. I made sure that his line "He never was worth of your love" was truthful and apologetic.

As the Prince calmly exited the scene of the crime, he wiped the blood off of his knife and restored it to his jacket pocket. I never was able to imagine what happened after that. Like all of the other characters, we are left in the dark by the playwright.

Score

Act 1, Pleribo & Calisto

Objective: To exit without being harmed or threatened physically or emotionally
Essential Action: To extinguish

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p><i>(Enter Pleribo)</i></p> <p>CALISTO: Who are you?</p> <p>PRIDAMANT: Ah, it must be my son's rival, looking for his lover; poor fool; against this sharp-billed shriek he doesn't stand a chance.</p> <p>PLERIBO: Who are you?</p> <p>CALISTO: Calisto. Who loves Melibea more Than he loves himself, or God, Or the world, or all the world's riches.</p> <p>PLERIBO: Pleribo. Who loves Melibea more than that.</p> <p>CALISTO: I love her so much that if she asked me to cut off my hand I'd do it.</p> <p>PLERIBO: Well I love her so much that if she asked me to cut off one hand I'd cut them both off.</p> <p>CALISTO: Well I love her so much that if she asked me</p>	<p>To dominate</p>	<p>He will try to top my passion for Melibea</p>	<p>I have just come from a successful meeting with Melibea's father. As I walk through his garden I am finally able to rid my nose of a pesky booger, but Calisto catches me</p>

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>to cut off both hands but she didn't really want me to I'd do it anyway.</p> <p>PLERIBO: Well I'd do it too and I'd also cut off my feet.</p> <p>CALISTO: Would you really do that?</p> <p>PLERIBO: No. I mean not really. I mean, who would do something like that?</p> <p>CALISTO: I would.</p> <p>PLERIBO: This is a private garden. You'd better leave.</p> <p>CALISTO: Make me.</p> <p>PLERIBO: Uh, I forgot something inside.</p> <p>CALISTO: No. (<i>Calisto slaps him</i>) If you love Melibea, fight for her.</p> <p>PLERIBO: But I don't want to fight you.</p> <p>CALISTO: You have to. We're rivals.</p> <p>(<i>Pleribo rushes toward Calisto who easily knocks him down</i>)</p> <p>PLERIBO: That really hurt! That really hurt! You...hurt me!</p>	<p>To buddy</p> <p>To warn</p> <p>To deflect</p> <p>To plea</p>	<p>He doesn't want to befriend me</p> <p>He threatens me</p> <p>He won't let me leave and slaps me</p> <p>He forces me to fight and proves himself physically stronger</p>	<p>My face swollen and bleeding</p>

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>CALISTO: I did?</p> <p>PLERIBO: Yes. I've never been hit before.</p> <p>CALISTO: I could keep hitting you. And it would hurt more and more. But do you know what will make the pain completely unbearable? Melibea will come through that door soon. She'll see you beaten. It hurts to be hit. It will hurt much more to be thoroughly humiliated in front of her. Don't you agree?</p> <p>So I'm going to turn my back, and you can leave. Better hurry, because I hear her coming down. If I turn around and you're still there. It will be very unpleasant for you. Take my word for it.</p> <p><i>(Exit Pleribo)</i></p>			<p>Melibea will see me hurt and disgraced</p> <p>I will have to win her through her father</p>

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>I have no more feeling for you, Adraste, Than the dead have for anything; I'm insensate, for God's sake Let me rest in peace.</p> <p>ADRASTE: You ought to pity me, at least.</p> <p>ISABELLE: I do.</p> <p>ADRASTE: And should I live on that? Pity, When I'm ravenous for your love?</p> <p>ISABELLE: You may be ravenous; I have no food to give. I do pity you. Your pain's unnecessary and absurd. I don't mean to bruise your tenderness With my harshness, but please know, Adraste, That I cannot love you, do not love you, And want nothing other than your absence. Only your persistence makes us enemies.</p> <p>ADRASTE: Enemies. You will never be an enemy of mine, Isabelle. I loved you long before we ever met; We two are torn halves of one whole that existed In some earlier, better world than this. You defy all of heaven's designs if you refuse to love me.</p> <p>ISABELLE: Then I defy them; tell heaven to stop asking me</p>	<p>To sell</p> <p>To romance</p> <p>To topple</p>	<p>She pushes me away and tries to leave again</p> <p>She pushes me</p> <p>She kicks me in the crotch</p>	<p>She will break her coldness and kiss me</p>

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>To do impossible things.</p> <p>ADRASTE: Listen to me, Isabelle. Your father's chosen me, you know he has; I have to have you; if not through love, I'll invoke the Law and his paternal right To settle your affairs as he sees fit.</p> <p>ISABELLE: That's a dead end, and a desperate move. If I'm taken as goods, traded With a handshake and a bill of sale, I promise you That I will poison both Your bed and your life with my hatred of you.</p> <p>ADRASTE: A quick death with you in a poisoned bed Is better than living alone. I'll take my chances. Your father's walking in his garden. I'll close the deal. The bill of sale was drawn up long ago.</p> <p>ISABELLE: Please, Adraste...</p> <p>ADRASTE: You pity me. I can't be guided by pity for you. My love's too fierce; it won't permit me to Pity the woman who hates my love. I go now to claim you: my murderer; my bride.</p> <p><i>(Adraste exits)</i></p>	<p>To impend</p>	<p>She won't back down</p>	<p>Her father will punish her for this</p>

Act 1, Adraste & Clindor

Objective: For Clindor to abandon courting Isabelle
Essential Action: To reign

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>ADRASTE: I can't help but envy your fortune, Boy. Isabelle, who flees when I approach, As though a sudden rainstorm has spoiled the day, Was listening very carefully to you. One wonders what you have to say to her.</p> <p>CLINDOR: Only what my master Matamore Would like me to convey.</p> <p>ADRASTE: I think it would be better if your master Took his madness and its messenger Somewhere else.</p> <p>CLINDOR: My master, Sir, is harmless; He can't compete with you.</p> <p>ADRASTE: You seem intelligent, a decent sort of man, It's inexplicable that you should serve This monster of ego run amok; no poverty Or need for gold could justify this servitude.</p> <p>CLINDOR: You're rich, Sir, and have never felt The need for gold; I respectfully suggest you have no idea What sorts of things poverty justifies.</p>	<p>To emasculate</p>	<p>He doesn't seem uncomfortable in my presence</p>	<p>I see them touching</p> <p>Shawn in that silly costume</p>

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>ADRASTE: I don't trust you; and I respectfully request I never see you here again.</p> <p>CLINDOR: It's hardly fitting, my lord, For you to feel so threatened by a man of my low rank.</p> <p>ADRASTE: I don't feel threatened; I've already won the prize. Her father's signed a wedding pact with me. Your master's a pest, but he makes me laugh. You I don't find funny in the least. Climbers and pretenders never are.</p> <p>CLINDOR: Someday you'll be sorry you said that.</p> <p>ADRASTE: Are you threatening me?</p> <p>CLINDOR: No. I'm prophesying, Sir, a gift if have. I take my leave, with your permission.</p> <p>ADRASTE: Granted instantly. And may swift winds blow you on your voyage hence. <i>(Clindor exits and Lyse enters)</i></p>	<p>To advance</p>	<p>He leaves</p>	

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>As much as Matamore amuses her, As coldly as she feels toward you, So much and more does she entirely yearn for him. She's sick with love.</p> <p>ADRASTE: Then let her sicken and die! I'll kill her for this treason! I...</p> <p>It's disgraceful for a lady of her rank To throw herself on paupers.</p> <p>LYSE: He tells me that his father's rich, But they're estranged; he says all sorts of things. He pretends to be a simple sort of servant, but He can talk like the Devil, beautiful words, And he scatters them freely, in every direction.</p> <p>[Objective & Essential Action Change]</p> <p>Objective: To recruit Lyse as an ally Essential Action: To spark</p> <p>He can make you forget Were you stop and he begins, And after five minutes conversation you find That you're breathing in tempo with him. It's eerie. I'm worried. For my mistress' sake.</p> <p>ADRASTE: Your loyalty's impressive, Lyse. Is it for safe?</p>	<p>To employ</p>	<p>She is not as enthusiastic as I would like</p>	<p>The ring</p>

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>LYSE: Not on the open market, but for a good cause...</p> <p>ADRASTE: Will this do as a deposit?</p> <p>LYSE: Handsomely. I'm all for you.</p> <p>ADRASTE: I want to catch them making love.</p> <p>LYSE: Easily arranged. They rendezvous down at the arbor in fifteen minutes. You'll find them together. Will Clindor be hurt?</p> <p>ADRASTE: Yes. I promise you that. If I can return my pain to its wellspring, I'll do it happily. And if he feels Even a drop of what I've suffered, He'll carry the scars till his dying day.</p> <p><i>(Adraste exits)</i></p>			<p>Killing him</p>

Act 1, Adraste & Clindor

Objective: To kill Clindor

Essential Action: To outwit

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p><i>(Enter Adraste & Lyse, Adraste with sword drawn)</i></p> <p>ADRASTE: Your hand on hers, slave, is profanation. Your punishment, to lose that hand.</p> <p>CLINDOR: Her name upon your lips is even greater profanation; Your punishment, to speak no more.</p> <p><i>(Swordfight begins)</i></p> <p>PRIDAMANT: This isn't dangerous, is it, it looks dangerous...</p> <p>ALCANDRE: I'll make it disappear if it upsets you.</p> <p>PRIDAMANT: No, wait, let me... Oh! Look at that! Look at him go. It's wonderful! Thrust! Thrust! Thrust! Thrust! Parry, hah! I... oh I must be careful not to get overexcited... Wow! What technique he has, he fences like an aristocrat, elegant but not foppish, not affected, what a fighter he... Oh, he's dropped his sword, how clumsy, he was always so easily distracted, I... Careful, fool, careful, put a little life in it, boy, for the love of God you can do better than that, head up, eyes front, straighten your spine,</p>	<p>To outfox</p>	<p>He is a better fighter than I expected</p>	

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>stop slouching around and...after him, after him, do something right for once, you...Oh!</p> <p><i>(Clindor stabsAdraste)</i></p> <p>ADRASTE: Isabelle!</p> <p><i>(Adraste dies)</i></p>	<p>To apologize</p>	<p>Death</p>	<p>Isabelle's astonished face</p>

Act 2, Prince Florilame, Theogenes & Hippolyta

Objective: For Theogenes to confess to and end his affair with my wife
Essential Action: To intimidate

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>THE PRINCE: Ah, Theogenes, there you are.</p> <p>THEOGENES: Your Grace! Back sooner than you planned; Did the weather turn your ship around?</p> <p>THE PRINCE: A hurricane that blew up unexpectedly From the Windward Islands; And troubling news arrived from home.</p> <p>HIPPOLYTA: I hope your wife, The Princess, is well.</p> <p>THE PRINCE: Never better. The trouble's small, A private matter, and easily dispensed with. I've been hunting.</p> <p>THEOGENES: I thought I heard your hawk.</p> <p>THE PRINCE: Mmmm. You probably did. A pity. This morning, at the hunt, An archer killed him accidentally. He served me very well, that hawk.</p> <p>THEOGENES: That is a pity. Hawks are hard to train.</p>	<p>To test</p> <p>To press</p>	<p>He is showing no signs of cracking or confessing</p> <p>He still will not crack</p>	<p>Theogenes making love to my wife</p>

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>THE PRINCE: Yes, and rarely worth the trouble. Too intelligent, too proud. The arrow Caught him in mid-air, a perfectly-constructed Thing of flight, in an instant destroyed, A tangle of broken feathers on the ground. <i>(The Prince stabs Theogenes repeatedly)</i></p> <p>PRIDAMANT: No! Stop! Alcandre, stop this! He's being murdered! That man is murdering my son!</p> <p>HIPPOLYTA: No! Please! Your Grace! Stop! Clarinal! Help! Murder! Murder!</p> <p>PRIDAMANT: He isn't dead, he isn't dead.... <i>(The Prince cuts Theogenes' throat & Clarina enters)</i></p> <p>[Objective & Essential Action Change]</p> <p>Objective: To leave unharmed Essential Action: To B-line</p> <p>CLARINA: Oh pity on my soul, Your Majesty, what have you done?</p> <p>PRINCE: Nothing that the Law would not have done. My wife, like my crown, Are cornerstones in the edifice of state.</p>	To kill	He doesn't die immediately	The blood
	To extinguish	The two women are distracted and Hippolyta doesn't understand why I did it	Hippolyta has a look of hatred in her eyes

<u>Text</u>	<u>Tactic</u>	<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Images</u>
<p>He should have known better.</p> <p>HIPPOLYTA: Assassin.</p> <p>PRIDAMANT: ASSASSIN! MURDERER! Alcandre, turn it back, I...my heart...</p> <p>PRINCE: Hippolyta, don't anger me. Justice has been done or you as well; He never was worth of your love.</p> <p><i>(The Prince exits)</i></p>			

Conclusion

Pleribo, Adraste, and Prince Florilame are not good men. People laughed as Pleribo fled the stage in defeat. No one in the audience or on stage mourned the death of Adraste, and I would hope that no one thought it was acceptable for Prince Florilame to murder Theogenes. In spite of their faults, I had a responsibility to make these characters as human as I could. No one can see the fear in Pleribo's heart. Adraste dies for the woman he truly loves, and Prince Florilame must live with the torture that his own wife has jeopardized their relationship for something he apparently can not provide. Collectively, their feelings and passion have left them all alone and bitter, but oddly their futures are left wide open. If only they can find the strength to pick up the pieces.

Bringing these characters to life was not an easy task. It was imperative that each of the three characters be fully developed and complex people. However, I also had the task of linking them together under the structured progression of Kushner's themes on love. Pleribo's views of love had to be young, fresh and immature, Adraste must be mature and bold, and the Prince was the learned and meticulous man the other two thought they were. Three separate units come together as one: the actor.

The dynamics of the cast of The Illusion, the complexity of the characters, and the enthusiasm of the audience made this production the first in years that was a total delight to perform every night. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to put my training to the test in such a beautiful play. I am proud of the actor and person I have become, but with this pride comes the realization that I have a long way to go. This does not mean that I feel green in my craft; I simply am beginning to understand the true potential that lives inside of me and the understanding that an actor's work is never done.

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