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A humanistic view of Satan: the role of Satan in Stephen Adly Guirgis' *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*

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A HUMANISTIC VIEW OF SATAN:
THE ROLE OF SATAN IN STEPHEN ADLY GUIRGIS'
THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

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 Theater

by
Yohance Myles
B.A., Alabama State University, 2006
May 2009

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Wanda Webb, and grandmother, Bertha Armstead, for their unconditional love and support through parenting, prayers, and understanding. To my amazing brothers and beautiful sister; Gary, Joshua, Joseph, and Rashida, for their support, love, and believing in me. To Fabienne for the countless years of struggles and joy that has brought us to where we are now. I hope life brings you all the blessings you desire. To my wonderful three sons, Maliq, Miciah, and Christian, for their demanding, unwavering, and conquering love. I thank you boys for that honest gift of love that made me the father I have become. I will never know what that expression of love truly feels like but what a joy it has been to experience it and watch you paint such an artistic picture. I love you with all my heart.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, and foremost, I would like to thank God for the awesome journey I have experienced. It would not have been possible for me to complete such a tedious task in my life without His guidance and counsel.

I must acknowledge all of my friends who have supported me through my matriculation in school. Albert, Royd, Kodi, Alex, Jared, Christina, Johnny, and Cecile. Thank you so much. I would like to thank Gloria Ackers for her countless nights of encouraging and loving me despite my faults and hardships.

To all my professors and mentors who have bestowed upon me their wisdom and knowledge; I am forever grateful to have you in my life while growing as a man, father, and student. Once again, I cannot name all of you but would like to list a few: Dr. Tommie (Tonea) Stewart, Brian Martin, Yolaine Joseph, Dr. Tick, John Dennis, Christine Menzies, Nick Erickson, George Judy, Joanna Battles, Molly Buchmann, and Jim Murphy.

And last but not least, I thank my classmates, or as we are called the Ensemble. This has been a wonderful, and memorable, three years spent with you. I shall always cherish our work and diversity to create, and embrace this art we love to do, Scott, Leigh-Erin, Jessica, Kenneth, Andrew, and Amber. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....ii

Acknowledgments.....iii

Abstract.....v

Introduction.....1

The Art of Being.....8

Research.....10

Logical Thinking.....12

Rhythmic Sound.....14

Rehearsal Process.....16

Conclusion.....21

Works Cited.....23

Appendix A: Photos..... 24

Appendix B: Journal Notes.....29

Vita.....40

ABSTRACT

The role of Satan, in *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, was selected as the topic of this thesis in acting to be submitted to the Graduate School of Louisiana State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with the Master of Fine Arts degree in Theater. The thesis includes an introduction; discussions of acting methods: the Art of Being, logical thinking, rhythmic sounds, the rehearsal process, journal notes, photos, research, and a conclusion. It details my role/character from a theatrical and humanistic point of view. I will highlight points that will reveal my daily discoveries of this character through a technique called "The Art of Being" by Stewart. The discoveries will include aspects from spiritual/theological research on angels, and my daily reports of journal notes, which will illuminate my creative process as an artist and man.

INTRODUCTION

"Life can be quite imaginable depending on the size of one's imagination. That imagination can be quite fulfilling depending on where one can express that imagination." Expressing the imagination is one of the many ways acting can serve as an outlet to explore possibilities and purposes of life. I recall a series of questions asked in my theater analysis class taught by Les Wade. "Why are you doing Theater as opposed to law, biology, etc? What are your good qualities? What are your aspirations? Can you explain what you are doing?" I truly believe these questions are the ones that started my long journey to become an inspiring artist/actor.

I have been around theater in some fashion or form for nineteen years. Sometimes I do not deeply inquire about the pros and cons of accepting such a career/lifestyle. Acting is its own world and has become a place for me to escape at times. I love working in the theater and enjoy the hardships as well as the excitement that comes along with being an artist in this growing profession. It is quite amazing to recap my life and see how it has evolved inside a wonderful art shared by so many people. I embrace theater because of its ability to change, communicate, and amplify what is common and atypical, exasperate, collaborate, and give clarity, as well as shape, to what is absurd. Theater allows an individual to observe noticeably the

many perspectives of life whether social, political, spiritual, or educational. It also covers the personal anatomy of physicality, and psychology, to a larger global awareness. Theater could be considered the art form that encompasses all topics.

My first artistic view of art was at the age of seven. I used to color quite a lot as a child. I truly admired the ability to take a blank picture that had the absence of color and create what one thought it should express through the many spectrums of colors. My grandmother once said to me, "There is no right or wrong choice to my imagination as a child. Everyone has a special gift of creativity and as individuals, we own those rights to envision and set free our imagination as a conducive and positive influence." Although coloring did not last long, I eventually developed an enthusiasm for the Sunday newspaper comics. I remember giving different character voices to the sketches. However, the interest in creating voices for whatever I read or colored probably stemmed from watching cartoons on television.

My first play as a young boy was a production of Peter Pan. What an unforgettable experience! I remember the excitement of seeing a young actor playing Peter Pan flying through mid-air. Every one of those actors on stage shared with the audience of three to five-hundred kids the world of pure

imagination and creativity. Instantly there was something about theater that sparked my curiosity to investigate and experience whatever created that life-changing event. I later pursued an interest in music; discovering a passion for drumming. I started out playing the tympani for the concert band in the fifth grade and then entering middle school, switched over to play the snare drum in the marching band. Music would become another artistic pursuit I would explore over time, as I truly liked the concept of being able to create rhythmic sounds by playing charted out notes/patterns. The interesting thing about being a drummer is the amazing variety of rhythms you can give a certain tempo or pattern. I later realized it is through a pattern of rhythms we talk, walk, eat, and live. My long-term professor and mentor, Dr. Tonea Stewart, once said, "The most important rhythm a human being can always embrace is the heart, because it produces our passion," (Stewart 1998).

In high school, I returned to my first love, which was art, by taking a sculpting class. It was unique being able to express art in terms of shaping and molding a creative idea. It was highly difficult and challenging to see something in your mind and actually give it shape. Most of the time, unless we as actors create our own individual production pieces, the script is already written and we have to take what is given and either represent or recreate a character from our perspective. But

working with art like pottery, sculpting, set design, costumes, and props design, one has to create from the mind and heart and watch something that has never been seen unfold. I then decided to try my hands at playing sports, something my friends considered impossible. Although there were no intention of making sports into a career, the rehearsal process and moment of live action is something I can always relate back to theater.

My senior year in high school I began to immerse myself in learning and understanding acting. Ms. Joseph, my drama teacher at Ensley high school, introduced me to the basic theatrical terminology and taught all her students the fundamentals of theater, which gave me a large advancement in my education of drama. Upon completing high school, I realized how theater related to all of the different styles of art I had done in my life. So just as in coloring, actors paint a picture, as in drumming, actors create emotional rhythms that the audience hears and follows, and as in sports, actors practice hard and endure the pressure to present a final product to an audience.

My collegiate years were definitely the milestone that marked my honest decision to pursue acting. I consider my mother to be the most influential person in my life but I eventually met a woman who represented the idea of having a "mother away from home." Dr. Toney Stewart, actress, professor, and mentor introduced me to a way of viewing theater from an educational

perspective. I remembered entering her theater program with the "I want to be a star" complex, but graduating with a "I want to be a successful, educated, influential, African American actor that continues to discover ways of giving back into the realm of life." She completed her theater training at Florida State University where she became the first African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in theater. She later used that training to introduce to many students a method of acting that influenced her called, "The Art of Being" created by Dr. Stewart, which I will talk about in my preparation for the role of Satan.

Dr. Stewart believed that theater was inclusive of all subjects. She believed no matter what profession you decide to pursue in life that there will always be a connection to theater. Although I attended a historically black college, and most of our productions highlighted the experiences and lifestyles of African Americans, Dr. Stewart made provisions for her students to experience all aspects of theater. She created venues for us to travel and tour the country, perform at the prestigious Kennedy Center, and compete at various theater events. She was a strong advocate of furthering her students' education by constantly encouraging students to audition for graduate school programs that would expand their knowledge and training in theater.

It took me eight years to finish undergraduate school because of family responsibilities I gained over the course of matriculation in college. In July of 2006, I decided to take Dr. Stewart's words of enrichment into action by auditioning for a graduate school program. After a tedious process of choosing what programs would be beneficial to me in my further studies of theater, I selected Louisiana State University. It was here that I witnessed a tremendous amount of growth as a person, father, student, teacher, and actor. My views politically, socially, mentally, spiritually, and educationally have expanded through exploring a collective way of thinking. Louisiana State University has done an excellent job for me as an artist by selecting productions that can speak to a global audience, musicals that have shaped the minds of our youth, productions that reach out to different cultures/races, and plays that can expand one's consciousness or spiritual power. Some of these productions include: *Cocktail*, *Speak Truth to Power*, *High School Musical*, *The Heidi Chronicles*, *Hair*, *King Hedley III*, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, and *Satellites*.

I speak openly about this program in such an honest manner because it has developed in me a love for many other components of theater. Who would have thought I would have developed such a passion for scenic design during my course of training? Although perhaps not directly connected to my thesis topic, working in

the scenic shop with Jim Murphy has made me appreciate and embrace not only acting, but also having the knowledge and skills to build a unit that houses a place where characters come alive and imaginations are explored. Have I grown as an actor since leaving undergraduate school? What is different about how I entered this program and now? What opportunities has destiny positioned for me upon completion of my degree? These are all questions that perplex my brain. However, I do believe whatever decision I make to further my future, I will not leave Louisiana State University empty handed. All these experiences have brought me to my current work as an artist/actor. Therefore, it is here I begin my discussion of why I chose the role of Satan to highlight not only my growth as an actor, but with all due respect, to recap the necessary techniques/resources used to approach such a major role.

THE ART OF BEING

"Playing is not a matter of theory or learning the right way to play, but of doing by doing and discovery of experiment" (Nachmanovitch 62).

There are so many ways of approaching a role/character. The list of techniques used varies as do the many scholars that have explored performance theory such as Stanislavsky, Meisner, Brecht, Uta Hagan, and Bogart to name a few. However, as theater continues to evolve, there will continue to be new and inventive ways of exploring a role. The preparation in developing the character of Satan was by the aesthetic, yet indescribable, use of a technique called the "Art of Being" developed by Dr. Tanea Stewart. She introduced the "Art of Being" to me during my undergraduate training (Stewart 1998). She is an excellent professor and mentor who continues to study and teaches this refined method to many young theater scholars.

The most honest and mutual way of approaching any role/character is by fully embodying and inhabiting that person. The "Art of Being" explores the tools of logical thinking, expressive emotion, behavioral uniqueness, rhythmic patterns, traditions, and history of a human "being" in a given situation of circumstances/experiences. Scholars might argue that this method is an extension of Naturalism/Realism to a certain

degree, but Dr. Stewart's method presents a unique approach to acting. Therefore, I will highlight a few of the tools applied to characterize my approach to Satan in *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*.

RESEARCH

"The question is this: Is man an ape or an angel? Now, I am on the side of the angels," (Benjamin Disraeli, "qtd. in Burnham 187).

In past roles I have sometimes discovered before memorizing lines that the physicality of the character must come first. How does he/she sit, walk, gesture? With the role of Satan, it was tedious trying to get past thoughts of him being only a spirit, and bringing the humanity of Satan both physically and spiritually to the stage. My aim was to go against the stereotypes of Satan depicted with horns, tail, and pitchfork. Therefore, upon researching what we understand about Satan these elements were discovered:

- a. He is an Angel known as Lucifer, also referred to as The Morning Star (Thompson 104).
- b. He rebelled against Heaven's authority, was kicked out and then given the name "Fallen Angel." (Thompson 105).
- c. He goes against everything God stands for.

In the text of the play he states, " I don't compete with God. God competes with Satan" (Guirgis 67). In Thomas Nelson's version of the Bible, we learn how Satan beguiled Eve into tempting Adam. (Genesis 3.1). The defensive lawyer, Cunningham, uses this information as a means of evidence during her

interrogation of Satan. (see Appendix A, figure 4). She states, "According to Genesis and Ezekiel, you then tempted Eve to eat the apple in order to prove to God that He had made an error in giving man dominion over the earth" (Guirgis 67).

In my study of angels I discovered that Satan as adversary only appears under the influence of Zoroastrianism, after his exile to Babylon. (Burnham 195). Before this event, he still resides in the court of Heaven as God's servant. In the Book of Job, Satan roams the earth looking for something to do. He then goes to Heaven and discusses the matter with God, who challenges Satan to seek His righteous servant named Job. Satan's agenda was to persuade Job to curse/doubt God for his hardships, but Satan acts to attest the power and goodness of God. In the New Testament, we read about Satan tempting Jesus in the wilderness and challenging Jesus to prove that He is the Son of God. (Matt. 4.1-11). Also in the book of Luke Jesus recalls being present when Satan is banned from Heaven. Jesus says, "I saw Satan fall from Heaven like a flash of lightning." (Luke 10.18-19). The toughest thing for me as an actor was conveying discoveries in the research to the stage.

LOGICAL THINKING

In my studies at LSU, my professor, Les Wade, describes acting like "taking a trip to the zoo." It is at the zoo that we go to observe the behavior of animals in a given environment. So, in other words, the idea is to give the audience an experience in which they come to watch the behavior of whatever character is being portrayed on stage. Therefore, my goal was to break the stereotypical idea of Satan being evil, harsh, unloving, and not interested in understanding. Therefore, by using the tools of the "Art of Being," I tried to draw out the human qualities we possess in some shape, form, or fashion whether or not we consider them evil/satanic. What are some of those traits in regards to Satan: persuasive, deceitful, greedy, selfish, tempting, manipulative? With those certain aspects I questioned, "Are we as humans unconsciously influenced or do we consciously transform ourselves in any manner?" I do believe that in some particular moment of our lives we have witnessed or experienced, however minutely, those traits. We as human beings must understand that we hurt, are frustrated, get angry, become revengeful, deceptive, and have dislikes. Do we consider those qualities to be the Satan within us?

However, I did not want audience members to question their beliefs but to leave the theater with a fresh perspective on Satan. In other words, I wanted to give the audience an

experience of viewing Satan from a playwright's vision and my approach as an actor.

RHYTHMIC SOUND

I like to start my exploration by reading the play once or twice before the initial read through. I do not instantly look for ways of connecting to the character, but allow myself to recognize whatever the language of the play conveys. This is vital for an actor because understanding the style of language will further provide understanding about dialects, themes, and the character relationships. For example, in our production of August Wilson's, *King Hedley III*, there was a particular tempo that had to be learned in order to seize the flow of energy emitted for such a densely written play. The tempo included how fast the characters would speak and the sense of urgency needed to convey the message.

Before the rehearsal process approaches, I read the script again to look for ways in which the character relates to the other characters. Even when my character is not in other scenes, there could be hidden text that describes my character's anatomy. Questions such as, "What is Satan's influence?" arise as I explore the text. It is established in text that Satan is mostly conjured. It is only then that he appears throughout the show. It was quite compelling to look at this statement without being philosophical, spiritual, or theological. I had to recall the adolescent years of my life and remember the crucial words of my grandmother who constantly reminded me in life, "wherever

there is good; evil is always present or at least a shy distance away."

It was very difficult to come to rehearsal and be totally prepared. I envisioned Satan as a character that is not prepared although we may sense that his clever schemes are connected to an overall strategy. During one of the rehearsals the director, George Judy, asked the cast to explore an exercise of given words and to allow whatever word chosen to resonate in our body. We were also told to give a physical shape to those particular words. I remembered at one point in the exercise I began transforming my thoughts into the shapes of the other characters around me. Satan once again is what we create him to be in our minds. I began to picture Satan as a chameleon because he takes on whatever color he sees in the moment.

REHEARSAL PROCESS

My first scene in Judas Iscariot portrays Satan as a relaxed, smooth, and reserved character. The audience does sense that there is something mysterious about him, but I tried to give him as many human elements as possible to create an environment that could be open to new possibilities. (see Appendix A; figure 1). My approach on the witness stand was to allow the audience to see Satan very knowledgeable of God, Heaven, and the range of human behavior. Despite the many stories of Satan's banishment from Heaven, there was a need for me to communicate my involvement in Heaven before my choice to leave. Research describes Satan as the chief musician in Heaven, how he was adorned with musical instruments, and his stature as an angel (Thompson 113).

My method was to create a score of symphony music that was directed by Satan. With this approach, I felt like I was able to control or guide the way my interrogation preceded on the witness stand. For example, in the second act, Satan is being questioned by Cunningham about his long-standing feud with God. "Mr. Satan, you've had a long-standing feud with God, correct?" asks Cunningham. Satan responds with, "No. I love God. Very much. God made me; it says so in the Bible" (Guirgis 67). So my idea of answering this question was to compose a beautiful melody of sincere and direct answers that would fuel

Cunningham's irritation to my response that God was the Creator of Satan's existence.

In the second act of the production, the harsh reality of Satan came forth more strongly. It was not so much about portraying Satan as a fire-exploding image but more to highlight how he feels towards God taking advantage of his weakness. This was interesting because we witness a vulnerable side to Satan. After his display of anger, the audience notices Satan standing strong on the fact that he is not the cause of Judas' position but rather the free will and self-correct muscles which God has given to Judas. In the second act Satan says,

Look, I didn't make you people, God did, okay? But, there was a design flaw in the creation: He gave you free will—and to balance that out, you were designed to self correct. But unlike, the "free will" muscle, the "self-correct" muscle is not a particular favorite of the Homo sapiens. I'd say "self-correct" falls somewhere between "colonoscopy" and "firing squad" on most people's holiday "wish" lists. At any rate, the truth is: I don't have to actively compete for human souls. I don't have to lull or flatter or tempt or deceive because with God at the helm and you people running around wreaking havoc: I'll be honest, I spend most of my time on a sofa watching one-hour dramas on HBO. (Guirgis 68).

It is interesting in the play that Satan never touches anyone. In some chapters of the Bible, we have read or heard pastoral sermons proclaim, "Satan enters into Judas at the given time." (Luke 22.3). This assertion is sometimes misunderstood

and taken to mean that Satan literally places himself into the body of Judas. In the play we discover that Satan only influences through words. The fascinating thing about Satan is although the audience can visually observe his presence he is quite compelling when only spoken of or "conjured" by other characters. In the second act Jesus says to Judas,

Do you see him? (Satan appears.) Do you know him? Call unto him. Touch him. He is not there. Because he does not exist, Judas. Rather they must conjure him, and still he is but a vapor blown away by a hummingbird's breath. He is false. He is a lie. He is not real. Touch him, go ahead. (Guirgis 73).

Judge Littlefield also reveals to Cunningham Satan's existence during the court room trial. Cunningham says, "Your Honor, this witness is clearly lying I move his entire testimony be struck from the record." Judge Littlefield retorts by saying, "I'll not allow that, sorry you conjured him, what comes out of his mouth is your responsibility" (Guirgis 68).

Therefore, as an actor it is sensible to use the language of the script to convey the ideas of Satan. George Judy mentioned during an evening rehearsal that "when Satan is out of control, he is not in control." This idea was very useful in creating intense moments without exploding or losing Satan's position of authority. The set in our studio theater was very intimate which was useful in that I did not have to vocally push to gain a level of communication with the audience. As part of

my preparation I kept journal notes of the many ideas explored and discovered during rehearsals. My fundamental approach was to deprogram all the devilish qualities attributed to Satan over the years.

However, through the method of the "Art of Being" I wanted to represent/embody the shared human connection of actors, and audience with Satan in some of the things he does to present himself. Many plays, movies, and books portray Satan as a force we cannot conquer, but if Satan is "fear" to an individual then what type of fear is Satan? Satan can only do what one allows him to do in one's own mind or spiritual beliefs. For example, we know that the characters of the lawyers, Fabiana and El Fayoumy, have past mistakes and whenever Satan feels he is being overpowered he makes the other characters recall things in their past/current experiences. This is Satan's advantage with the other characters; he conjures up things that convict the characters with their own personal mistakes. (see Appendix A; figure 3).

In a particular scene with Judas, Satan approaches in a manner that suggests Judas should have knowledge of his stature. He paints a picture of Heaven and Hell to Judas depicting Heaven as a place of concert music but Hell as the place to have a good time. (see Appendix A; figure 2). This scene caught my attention because it made me question the balance between having a good

time and going overboard with it. My own personal views of Satan have changed through the experience of playing this role.

CONCLUSION

This play helped me relate to so many things, not just in terms of spiritual ideas, but also as a human. The play itself is not one that questions only religious ideas but gives a human perspective about Judas and the people related to his life as it highlights Jesus' position in Judas' catatonic fate. The entire play takes place in purgatory and leaves questions about where we go when we die, to what degree do we identify committed actions as good or righteous actions? Was it some force outside of me causing this action? What positions do people or God hold in judging these actions? How do I embrace hope in the midst of pain and guilt? In the play *Speak Truth to Power: Voices from beyond the Dark*, there is a quote that says,

Everybody needs to open up the envelope of their soul and get their orders from inside. And nobody has ever said it was going to be easy. You don't have to see the whole stairway to take the first step. If you can't run, walk, if you can't walk, crawl, if you can't crawl just keep moving" (Dorfman 63).

I consider myself a Christian, and embrace the idea of doing a play to return me to a sense of spirituality. However, what I find wonderful about any characters portrayed is the joy in discovering elements of my character during the actual performance of the play. As I chose this role as the topic for my thesis, I believe it has been my most honest work done at Louisiana State University and represents significant growth

from the foundation given me in the "Art of Being" through the experience of graduate training as an actor and man. I am so grateful for the opportunity to have such knowledgeable professors to give me the necessary skills to market and survive in this world of acting.

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APPENDIX A: PHOTOS

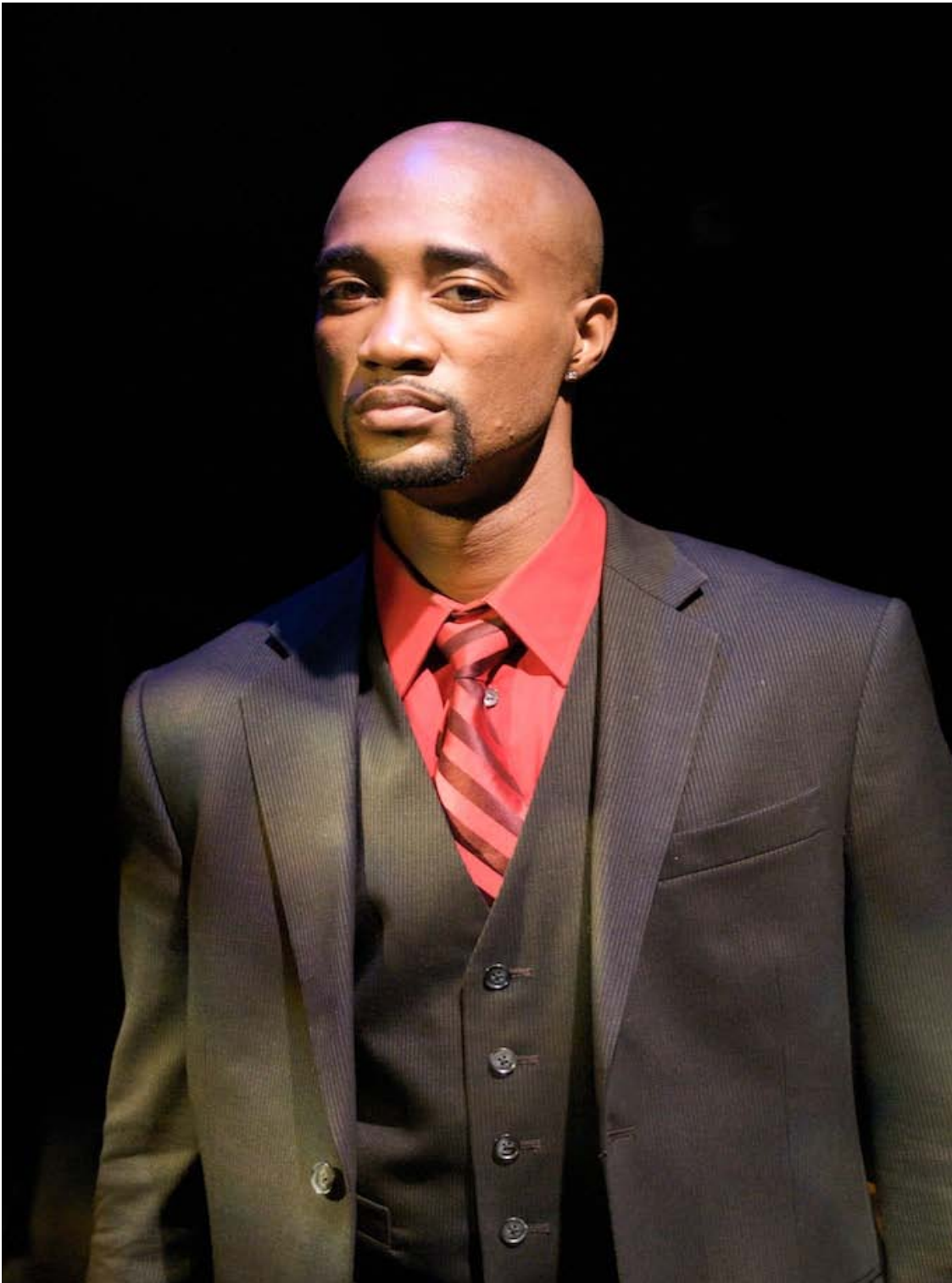


Figure 1: Satan "The Adversary" (Photo by Nick Erickson)



Figure 2: Satan and Judas. (Photo by Nick Erickson).



Figure 3: Satan and Fayoumy. (Photo by Nick Erickson)

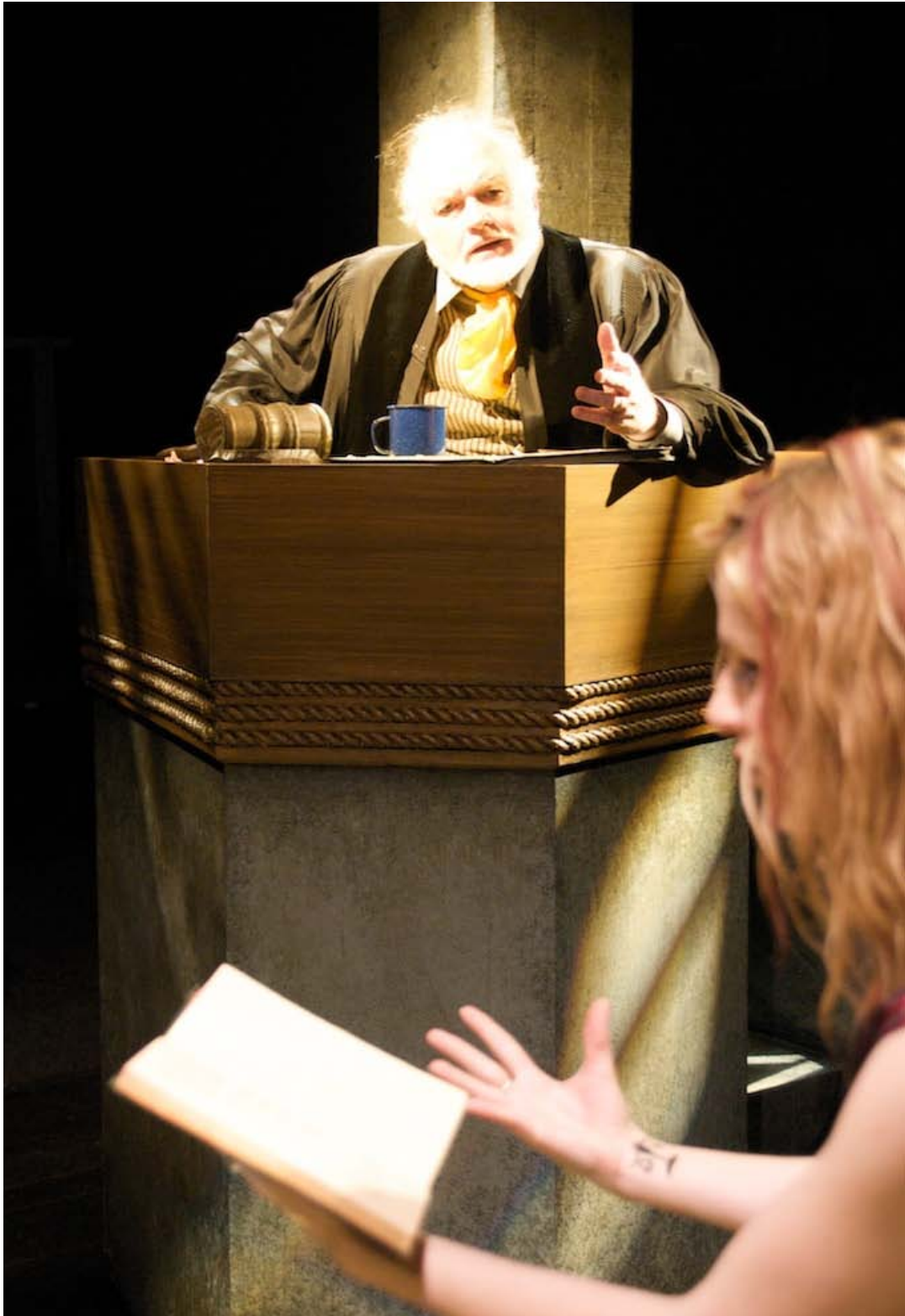


Figure 4: Judge and Cunningham. (Photo by Nick Erickson)



Figure 5: The Truth. (Photo by Nick Erickson)

APPENDIX B: JOURNAL NOTES

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot

October 30, 2008

Satan

Today is our first read through of *Judas*. I am very excited about this show and the rehearsal process. I have chosen to write my thesis paper on the role of Satan for various reasons. I highly believe this play will expand me in many areas of my life as a man, student, father, husband, and actor. I will in no way try to make this thesis paper one that dives into deep spiritual answers but one that will serve as a guide to understanding humanity through the choices we make whether good or bad. My first question is "Who Satan is?" and "Why do we fear and hate an entity that was created by God?"

Alternatively, is Satan something not created by God, but what we create him to be through our own desires, fears, passions, choices, and understanding? This play deals with the confines of purgatory. Where are we now as a culture? How do we define purgatory other than its connotative definition? What are the themes of this play? So tonight's first read through was successful. Many images became clear to me hearing the cast read the script tonight. Satan was relaxed and collective in areas

that may later have more levels to them. I think I will later explore the scenes between Fabiana Aziza Cunningham and Satan. What is the relationship between the Judge and Satan? What is Satan's connection with Butch Honeywell? How does Satan relate to Judas?

Define these elements:

Truth vs. Lie

Light vs. Dark

Good vs. Evil

Love vs. Hate

Despair vs. Hope

I am going to go back, re-read the play, and drop the words of the playwright into my "being."

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot.

October 31, 2008

Satan

The first stumble through of Act I with Satan and Judas was very relaxed. We discovered many natural and honest choices and interaction with the characters. I began to explore the construction of the set to see how it resonates with Satan's physical choices. In the second run through of our scene, I discovered several playable moments between Judge Littlefield and Satan. In this particular scene, Satan enters and immediately sets the atmosphere that no one should offend him in any manner. I established my connection with Cunningham by pointing out vital information I have known about her. The character Satan has the most fun with is Fayoumy. He flatters Satan because of his nervousness. Fayoumy has this personal quality of "arousing" individuals to win them over.

The director chose to read the scene between Judas and Satan again. By doing this we discovered the fun, gentle, and innocent side of Judas compared to the "betrayal" stereotype that has been tied to Judas throughout religious history. Satan has a candid way of relating to Judas and imposing thoughts that make Judas question himself. This diagnosis only formulates guilt in Judas' mind and keeps him in a place of denial.

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot.

November 01, 2008

Satan

Evil equals curiosity. So what is curiosity? Does our free will of "being" allow us to explore the open possibilities that lead us to entertain thoughts that pilot the destruction, pain, or temporary happiness we experience? On the other hand, are we pre-destined to have already done the things we think are presently happening events? During the creation of Adam and Eve, we learn that their fall was due to the tempting of the Evil One (Satan). The Evil One's only objective is to beguile others to follow his path in going against the rules to hurt God or whatever higher Deity that exists. In that particular reading of the beginning of time we understand that Eve was tempted by questioning and not by some action inflicted that forced her to choose between obedience and disobedience (curiosity).

1. Why did Adam and Eve choose the "Tree of Life" rather than the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?"

2. What was more intriguing about good and evil than having a never-ending life free from death?

Are we constantly forced with the responsibility of balancing the knowledge of good and evil that inevitably gives the reward of producing a healthy and sustained life? In our daily practice we make choices between what is bad versus good; short versus long term; right versus wrong regularly. The list goes on and on confronting us with choices among the many possibilities of life that challenge our thinking and growth as humans.

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot

November 2, 2008

Satan

Today is the third read-through of the play. Question: How do we affect Jesus? Satan does not want to end the suffering. He wants to recruit more prospects into his kingdom. Satan definitely has more knowledge of God than anyone else in this play does.

1. Why is Satan after the Honeywell?

One reason is because of Satan's knowledge of Honeywell's infidelity. It is something that God despises. Satan tells Honeywell to wear clothing that is fit for summer weather. It is going to be very hot wherever Honeywell's destination may be. Satan has been under some type of agreement with Judge Littlefield for souls. So what is the exchange? Satan has some type of hold on the Judge's life that has protected him from going completely to hell.

1. There need to be active and passive choices.

2. Are our lies our truth we deny?

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot.

November 3, 2008

Satan

Tonight's rehearsal was a good stumble through being off book. The scene seemed to lack the spontaneity and pacing from the previous rehearsal. I tried to recall the moments I discovered in the past rehearsal. I do not know why I tried to recreate that experience knowing I am supposed to live "moment to moment" within each new discovery. I want to incorporate an impressive yet mystic mood about Satan upon his entrance. Do not play being smooth but only allow what is happening in the room to affect Satan. Satan is conjured to be whatever they want you to be.

Director Notes

1. Where is your breath in the scene?
2. Do not lose the importance of the words and use of language.
3. Be mindful of the tension in the forehead.
4. Listen before moving and do not forget to play all sides.

Look for Adul Mazzi-Hatten in audience. Make a connection with Judge Littlefield at a certain point upon entering the scene. Recognize Cunningham once you are seated on the witness stand. Upon entering the bar establish Satan's relationship with Judas, and find the "play" of the scene. Keep driving the words through the thought. What are the physical and vocal discoveries of Satan? Get out of Satan's head and into the other characters' heads. What are you trying to *cause* or *effect* in Judas? I want to explore the "heavenly" qualities of Satan versus the stereotypical "hellish" aspect known about Satan. What is Satan's focus? To paint pictures with the words/language used during the play.

VOICE NOTES

Do not get muffled.

Be careful of not going too fast with the language.

Keep the energy up while in the scene with the other character. Remember to play the articulation of the words.

Clarity is vital.

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot.

November 4, 2008

Satan

In today's rehearsal, the director asked the cast what they understood about purgatory. How is it vital to this trial? How do we overcome despair? Where does faith play a part in it?

Define these terms.

Science vs. Faith

Existentialism vs. Suffering

Question vs. Answers

How am I using the language to change something in the audience and me? Satan is everything you conjure him to be. Be careful of adding inflections into the language of the play to not lose the truth. The second half of this reading will be tabled until next week.

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot.

November 5, 2008

Satan

Tonight's rehearsal was quite interesting concerning details. I played more with the thought qualities of Satan. My relationship with Judge Littlefield was slightly off. However, I will continue to look for more levels with Judge Littlefield. My mood tonight seemed more fun than usual. There still needs to be an exploration of the "chemistry" and "pacing" between El-Fayoumy and Satan. Try different variety and tones.

Play up the flattery with El-Fayoumy. Entice the audience. Remember they are the jury too. I discovered a wonderful rhythm tonight with Judas by indulging more with his drunkenness. I totally believe Satan takes advantage of Judas.

EXPLORATION EXERCISE

(5) Words to describe Satan.

(5) Words with each character you have a connection/relationship with in the scene.

(5) Words to show how Satan feels during each scene.

The Last Days of Judas Iscariot

November 11, 2008

Satan

Tonight we started with the entrance of Satan during the second act. My approach for tonight's rehearsal was to explore it from an extreme perspective. It was like adding fuel to fire. I discovered that in this scene there is a certain amount of refined, unique, and tasteful control expressed by Satan. During the scene Satan sets the ground rules about his superiority. Satan pleads his case about God "stealing souls" from hell. This scene discusses the understanding of God between Satan. There is a constant battle between good and evil. What rightful place does evil have in the course of life? Is there an agreement between God and Satan for souls? Satan exposes El Fayoumy and Cunningham's dark secrets, which are their truths about themselves. I felt like I had lost a lot of the discoveries and connection to the other characters that I experienced the previous week. A good amount of the language was distorted because of the lack of breath and base support. I felt so detached from the character. I was grasping for something that apparently was not working during tonight's rehearsal.

VITA

Yohance Myles was born in Birmingham, Alabama. He grew up in a small community named Central Park. He was raised by his mother and grandmother. He has three younger brothers and one older sister. He is the father of three boys. After high school, he got his Bachelors of Arts in theater from Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama. His resume includes performances at The Kennedy Center, The Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Auburn University in Montgomery, and the University of Louisville. In the fall of 2006, he started his candidacy for a Master of Fine Arts in theater at Louisiana State University. During his course of training his classmates toured China with *The Heidi Chronicles* in conjunction with Louisiana State University China Initiative. He plans to graduate with said degree in May of 2009 and then move on to do film and more theater.