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Playing the Third Man (Midas' Servant, Ceyx, Morpheus as Ceyx, Orpheus, Apollo, A, Philemon) in Mary Zimmerman's Metamorphoses: a production thesis

Ronald Ludlow Reeder
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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PLAYING THE THIRD MAN
(MIDAS' SERVANT, CEYX, MORPHEUS AS CEYX, ORPHEUS, APOLLO, A,
PHILEMON)
IN MARY ZIMMERMAN'S
METAMORPHOSES:
A PRODUCTION THESIS

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
Ronald Ludlow Reeder
B.F.A., University of Texas at Austin, 1991
B.S., University of Texas at Austin, 1994
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ABSTRACT

The role of Third Man in Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* was performed in the Fall of 2006 and elected as a thesis role at that time. This thesis is a written record of the actor's interpretation of the character. This thesis includes background information on the production, reflections on acting in water, a character analysis, a five column score, reflections on performance issues, and photos.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This paper will document my experience playing the Third Man, which is the overall name for the actor playing the multiple roles of Midas' Servant, Ceyx, Morpheus, Orpheus, Apollo, A, and Philemon, in Mary Zimmerman's play *Metamorphoses*, which was performed in the Reilly Theatre, on the Louisiana State University campus, from November 1st through 19th, 2006. The production was primarily a showcase, which, in this case, means a vehicle to exhibit the acting talent of LSU's 2007 Master of Fine Arts acting class; in other words, the principle roles were all filled by me and my classmates. Overall, this documentation will include my reflections on acting in the setting of an indoor swimming pool, analyses of the seven characters I played, a score, which is a scene-by-scene list of choices I made to be played onstage, and reflections on the run of the production. Before proceeding with these topics, however, it will be helpful to relate some of the production's background.

Ordinarily, for an actor, a show's process begins with an audition. We had none for this one. The show's director, Steven Young, had my MFA acting class audition two and a half semesters earlier for *Tobacco Road*, a show that Swine Palace, the theater company which produced *Metamorphoses*, was going to be producing for the 2005-2006 season using him as director. However, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita played havoc with the state of Louisiana, and its cash flow at all levels of government, including Louisiana State University, and Swine Palace's major benefactors. *Tobacco Road*, consequently, was cancelled due to budget cuts. However, Young was asked to direct *Metamorphoses* at a later date featuring my acting class in the principle roles. Young used the experience

he gained with us during the casting process for *Tobacco Road* to make his casting decisions for *Metamorphoses*. He simply assigned us our parts.

The show's set, which was essentially an above-ground swimming pool, surrounded on three sides by surface level platforming, of about sidewalk width, with two elevated platforms on the upstage side, one above and behind the other, was designed by LSU Department of Theatre faculty member Nels Anderson. Ginger Robertson, Department of Theatre Costume Director, designed the costumes, which intermingled classical Greco-Roman elements with a 1930's Hollywood glamour look.

Eun-Jin Cho, Department Sound Designer, put together the ambitious and complex sound plot, incorporating numerous bits of music, both classical and contemporary, and sound effects. Louis Gagliano, who has worked on numerous LSU and Swine Palace shows, was responsible for the equally ambitious lighting design, which utilized both naturalistic and other-worldly effects. During technical rehearsals, when I first saw and heard first hand what was happening in terms of these two technical areas, I worried that it might be overpowering, and distract from the center of the play. Fortunately, this did not appear to be the case, as sound and lighting fused into a creative whole, serving to enhance, rather than muddy, the acting onstage.

Nick Erickson, another Department of Theatre faculty member, who also performed in the show as an actor, served as choreographer for heightened movement sequences, such as fighting or for supernatural story elements, both in the water and on ground. Overseeing all the moment-to-moment production aspects was the professional stage manager, Ellie Sturgill, a Department alumnus, who now works in Washington,

D.C. Finally, Charlie Mehler, a Department graduate student, handled the dramaturgy chores.

It was within this overall context, script, directing, design, and more, that I ultimately played my part as actor. Generally, playing a role is a challenging endeavor, including weeks of rehearsals, script analysis, and other tasks. This was no different. In addition to all these tasks was the challenge of performing scenes in a swimming pool.

CHAPTER TWO: ACTING IN WATER

We started our evening rehearsals on the Reilly Theatre's empty stage, but that quickly changed, as the set was incrementally constructed each day. Within a week or two, many of the set's platforms were in place, and the pool's outer structure gave us a good idea of the amount of water in which we would be playing. For about a week, we rehearsed in and around the empty pool, eagerly anticipating the day when the set crew would fill it with water. Our director gave us instructions for when we would finally be splashing around in the pool: bring a bathrobe; bring some flip-flop sandals; be sure to have a swimsuit and some dry clothes. He warned us that everything was going to change in terms of our rehearsal process, but I think that no words could have adequately prepared us for how radical that change would be.

For me, the greatest challenge was dealing with the cold. The production staff did everything they could to minimize the actors' discomfort in terms of temperature, but, at times, especially during the first two weeks of rehearsing in water, everything was not enough. The water was often cold. It wasn't freezing, to be sure, but it was cold enough to slow me down and make me shiver, thereby distracting me from my acting work. Apparently, the water-heating device they were using wasn't strong enough to adequately warm the water, and, sometimes, the crew forgot to turn on the heater early enough in the day so the water would be comfortable by the rehearsal time. Ultimately, they corrected these problems by installing a more powerful water heater. By the time the show opened, the water was as comforting as a warm bath.

The water temperature, however, wasn't the only thing making me cold. Climbing out of the water into the air was chilling, as well. Most of our rehearsals took

place during the month of October, which, in Louisiana, is a warm month. Consequently, LSU's Facility Services set the air conditioning at a low temperature. The production staff attempted to minimize the frigid air as much as possible, but it took a few days to get this to work out as desired. Finally, the building's atmosphere became warmer, and getting out of the pool was no worse than getting out of my shower at home.

Just as I thought things were going well in terms of temperature, however, we started wearing our costumes, which brought me back to square one. Wearing clothes in warm water isn't so bad; however, even in a warmer atmosphere, wearing soaking wet clothes is bad. It appears that not much could be done to minimize the effects of soaking wet clothes. We were just going to have to be cold until we could change into our dry costumes for later scenes. I was able to request that we alter an exit that required my going outside into the cool night air in order to stay out of sight of the audience. Fortunately, these moments of wearing freezing wet clothes didn't last long, only two or three minutes at most, and were easily endured.

The cold wasn't the only challenge the water presented. Nearly two thirds of the cast developed the outer ear infection popularly known as swimmer's ear. Fortunately, I was part of the third that did not suffer this injury. I had suffered chronically from this infection when I was a boy. So I approached this production with near paranoia about this kind of infection, and religiously guarded against it by using the over-the-counter ear drops called Swim Ear every night after rehearsal. For once in my life, I'm happy that I was paranoid about something: my fellow actors who were suffering from swim ear most decidedly did not enjoy the experience.

The water was creating a few acting problems. For instance, I had to make a couple of entrances from underwater. This was problematic because of timing. Ordinarily, making sure that I end up at a particular point on stage at a particular moment isn't a difficult thing, but moving through water is not the same thing as walking or running. Furthermore, one cannot hear cues while underwater, which made timing all the more complex. Much practice, however, made these entrances manageable.

There were other acting problems. Exiting under the water necessitated, for me, staying completely submerged until I was out of the audience's field of vision: I had a devil of a time avoiding a final, visible foot kick as I reached the masked area where I could get out of the water. As with the underwater entrances, however, practice made perfect. Further, we found that walking in the pool created splashing sounds that competed with dialogue; our director suggested that we slide our feet along the bottom, instead, and this seemed to work well. Sliding, however, led to problems with slipping on the pool's floor, which also distracted from the action onstage. Our stage manager bought ten rubber bath mats and placed them in the most slippery areas, which helped a great deal, but slipping continued to be a danger throughout the entire run. We had to be careful, and avoid moving too quickly. Finally, there was one problem that was mine alone: as Orpheus, I had to kneel under a small waterfall while I petitioned Hades. The mechanism that made the water fall caused a great deal of noise, which wasn't particularly distracting for the audience, but its close proximity to me meant that I could barely hear myself or other actors speak. However, as with entrances and exits, timing turned out to be the solution.

In the end, everything fell into place, despite all the obstacles. My family had a swimming pool when I was a small boy, and I was surprised how much playing a role in a pool was like simply playing in a pool. I had forgotten how adept I had become, so long ago, at moving in water, and it was as though it all came back to me during *Metamorphoses*. In short, the challenges that the water presented were just like any other challenges I've encountered in any other show in which I've performed. They were problems to be solved, and solve them I did.

CHAPTER THREE: CHARACTER ANALYSES

All quotes, except where noted, come from Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*.

The first of the seven characters comprising the Third Man is Midas' Servant. The Servant is an employee of the King, and is, at least, somewhat trusted because he can enter and leave his master's court at will. The Servant clearly respects the King, calling him "sir," and asks for direction, rather than taking the initiative, when confronted with the disruption of order brought by the drunken Silenus. Because the Servant wants to "execute" Silenus for "making trouble," it is reasonable to assume that the Servant greatly values an orderly court. He is also something of a snob. He describes Silenus as "a vagrant," and later removes him from the water "with distaste."

It seems that the Servant, then, has internalized what he perceives as values of the court. That is, Midas is very rich, so the Servant's sense of identification with his master causes him to look down on the poor; it is also likely that since Midas is a successful businessman, the Servant might obsessively value order as a principle. However, these two principles, order and snobbishness towards poverty, seem to be in conflict when Midas takes interest in Silenus. Fortunately for the Servant, this conflict quickly resolves itself when it becomes clear that the King sees potential for making money in the Silenus: acquiring money trumps all other concerns. On the other hand, it may very well be confusing to the Servant to find that the King is able to find common ground with Silenus: Midas, too, has been "three sheets to the wind."

Overall, the Servant is strikingly similar to the character Smithers from the animated television show *The Simpsons*. He very much wants to please his boss, and, in doing so, often takes what he thinks the King wants farther than it probably ought to go.

He takes his cues on behavior and belief from Midas, and constantly makes sure that everything is running smoothly. When something goes wrong, it is a crisis for him, and he panics. Only Midas can ease such anxiety. *The Simpsons* character, Smithers, has a homosexual crush on his boss, Mr. Burns. Is the Servant that I played in love with Midas?

The second character under the Third Man umbrella is Ceyx, “a king,” who “had as his queen Alcyone.” Ceyx prepares to go on a sea voyage to visit a “far-off oracle;” he will return “in two month’s time.” In order to do this he must leave behind his wife, whom he “adored.” Perhaps, despite his adoration, leaving Alcyone behind for two months is Ceyx’s primary motivation for visiting the oracle: they were happy together, but it was “a monotony of happiness.” Indeed, it seems that Ceyx plans to keep Alcyone in the dark about his trip until the very last possible moment. When she confronts him about the voyage, it is apparent that she “had heard” about it from others—is Ceyx trying to sneak away without even telling her that he is leaving?

Despite his great desire to visit the oracle, there are many disincentives for his doing so. His wife, as “daughter of Aelos, master of the winds,” desperately warns him that “those winds are wild and beyond anyone’s control,” once they have escaped their lord. Alcyone informs Ceyx that, even though he is Aelos’ “son-in-law,” no “special treatment” will be granted. She has “learned to fear” these winds, and is “petrified” that her husband might be facing them. Furthermore, Alcyone prefers that her husband take the “long and arduous trip” on land, rather than that he encounter her father’s “wild and savage” servants. Nonetheless, Ceyx is determined to travel by sea, ignoring her warnings, and later describing the winds as “freshening,” rather than menacing, and

reporting that they help his vessel to make “satisfactory progress:” “our ship ran before the wind.” It is clear that Ceyx is desperate to leave.

Another disincentive for Ceyx’s voyage is his wife’s loving desperation. “How can you leave me alone?” she asks. Alcyone “will pine in” her husband’s “absence.” His death would mean that her “life is over,” and that she will “be cursed.” She begs him, “take me with you at least.” In the same way that he shrugs off her warnings about the winds, he downplays her second argument.

Given these two massive personal obstacles, why is Ceyx so determined to make his sea voyage? Even though he claims to “hate to choose between (his) voyage” and his wife, the reality is that he feels “stranded on shore, afraid, domesticated, diminished, a kind of lapdog.” I speculate that Alcyone’s rapid-fire argument style is not a singular occurrence. That is, she probably always relates to him in this way: Alcyone is a nag, and, after years of marriage, this is finally getting under his skin. Ceyx, therefore, is in the midst of a classic mid-life crisis. Like today’s forty-something yuppie who buys a motorcycle or groovy sports car and drives madly around the city at dangerous speeds, King Ceyx desires the danger his wife describes, hoping that it will provide some sense of his lost masculinity, along with the youthful freedom it represents. At the very least, such a trip will get him away from his nagging wife for a time.

He makes sail, without Alcyone. At first, he enjoys himself, feeling vindicated by the fact that the winds appear to do nothing but help propel the ship forward, but his wife’s dire warnings do turn out to be true. “The weather” becomes “worse with every moment,” creating “one enormous green catastrophe.” Instead of reclaiming his manhood, Ceyx is rendered impotent, unable to do anything to save his ship or his men,

who “have lost belief in their captain.” Instead of finding freedom, Ceyx becomes the plaything of gods. So confounding is this turn of events that Ceyx seems to experience cognitive dissonance: he speaks of himself in the third person, thinking “in an oddly abstracted way” about the supernatural beings tossing around his ship and crew—he cannot believe what is happening, and seemingly continues to doubt his wife. Before he drowns, however, he experiences one final moment of clarity. He thinks of his “treasure,” Alcyone, and calls upon the gods for reunification with her in death. In these final moments, in his guilt about perceiving that she had nagged him and summarily dismissing her, he tries to redeem himself.

Fortunately, for both Ceyx and Alcyone, the gods grant his wish. His “dead body” changes, becoming “restored to life” in the form of a “seabird.” In his new life as a creature, he is able to rejoin his wife, who has also become a seabird. His only desire now is to live, fly, swim, and hunt with his beloved: “his head reached up to hers;” “she tried to kiss him.”

The Third Man’s third character is Morpheus. He is not, an easy character to uncover. He appears onstage for all of two minutes, and has only six short lines. Indeed, other than verifying that not much is known about him, an Internet search on the character offered little guidance.

However, the script makes several facts clear. Morpheus lives with Sleep, in his mythological realm, “in remotest Campania,” inside “gloomy caves,” which are bathed in darkness and in “almost total silence.” It is a fair assumption that Morpheus serves Sleep because the god commands Morpheus to change his shape “to that of King Ceyx” for the purpose of telling his wife that “he is dead”—this same command also makes plain that

Morpheus has the supernatural ability to change his appearance to that of others. Once on his mission, appearing to Alcyone, “in a dream,” as her “husband’s ghost,” Morpheus is all business. That is, he sticks completely to his mission, with no chatting, and no straying off topic. His objective is to convince Alcyone that he is the now dead Ceyx, “the man himself to whom it happened,” and that she should accept that he “is gone.” Only when Alcyone resists, insisting that Morpheus “go away,” is the shape-shifter forced to deviate somewhat from his basic instructions. He laces his message with a bit of romance, calling Alcyone his “little bird.” This improvised tactic seemingly works, and Alcyone finally accepts that her husband is dead, telling the being she believes is Ceyx’s ghost, “I told you.” With his mission accomplished, Morpheus immediately departs in the businesslike and efficient manner in which he came, reemphasizing his message: “put on your mourning clothes.”

This brief portrayal of Morpheus in *Metamorphoses* is, to me, strikingly similar to the way that D.C. Comics portrays the same mythological character in its 1990’s comic book series *The Sandman*. D.C.’s Morpheus is an emotionally cold and distant god of dreams, who also has the ability to change his shape. Zimmerman’s shape-shifting Morpheus, who dwells in darkness and silence, who can appear in dreams, who is exceedingly businesslike, and who only resorts to emotionalism as a last resort, could have come directly from the comic book. Without much useful information on which to base my role as Morpheus, D.C.’s version provided a great deal of spiritual guidance, which is just as well, because the series is one of my favorites. It isn’t often that I get the chance to play one of my favorite characters from popular culture.

Orpheus is the Third Man's fourth character. He is the "greatest musician of all time," but his fame and uncanny musical ability can do nothing to save his "bride Eurydice," who "steps on a snake," which bites and kills her, on "the unluckiest of wedding days." The great Orpheus then has his own impotence rubbed in his face when the "dead Eurydice" is "carried away by Hermes," messenger of the gods. All Orpheus can do is watch. He not only loses his love, at the altar, on his wedding day, which is a devastating blow in itself, but also learns that he is not nearly as magnificent as he had always believed. That is, in one moment, he loses his innocence; the world as he understood it no longer exists, and is replaced by something unfamiliar and much darker. This double whammy, losing both his place in the universe, as well as his wife, is just too much for the young musician, and he descends into a deep depression, unable to accept this new reality. "His grief" is "limitless," metaphorically "drowning" him—he cannot, or will not, "master" his great sadness.

The "inconsolable" and "desperate" Orpheus hatches a wild and impossible scheme in hopes of reconstructing his shattered false existence: "he dared to descend to the river Styx and crossed it to the underworld" in order to petition its ruler, Hades, that Eurydice might return to the world of the living. In his disturbed state, such a plan does not seem so impossible to Orpheus. Even though, according to director Steve Young, many had tried and failed to do the same thing before, Orpheus, still clinging desperately to his previous understanding of reality, still deeply loving Eurydice, believes he is different from all these others. He was, after all, according to Young, the son of the god Apollo, and, therefore, semi-divine. Young also states that Orpheus' musical abilities are supernatural in nature, and can "charm" animals, and "coax even rocks and trees into

movement.” Maybe Orpheus is, indeed, as magnificent as he had always been told. In order to reconstruct his universe, and to regain the woman he loves, the great musician must make himself believe that his shattered world had some truth to it in the first place. That is, he is seemingly wedged between his childlike understanding of himself, and the harsh and brutal realities of physical existence that he hopes to deny.

When he finally addresses Hades and his consort Persephone, Orpheus likens himself to them, aggrandizing himself by reminding the two rulers, that they, too, have been affected by the “power Love has.” On the one hand, he grants them that this new existence in which he lives is real, that “we all come here in the end;” on the other hand, he denies that reality by “asking for a loan.” Orpheus is so desperate to live in his past idyllic world, and to regain Eurydice, that his own death is preferable to continuing in the real world—“If you deny me. . . I want you to keep me here as well.” Amazingly, his crazed gamble succeeds. Orpheus’ song makes “the pale phantoms weep,” and “Tantalus was no longer thirsty and Sisyphus sat on his rock to listen.” Orpheus really does appear to be god-like. Hades sets a very simple condition for Eurydice’s return; Orpheus cannot look at her until they have left the underworld. “Hesitation or doubt” is a deal breaker.

Almost as amazing as the fact that he pulls off his stunt is the fact that he then proceeds to destroy what he had so desperately reclaimed, by turning and looking at Eurydice as they return to the surface. Why does he do this? The narration suggests that, when he turns to look, he is in a state of “not quite believing that it wasn’t a cruel delusion, a dream, or a mirage,” or that he suffers from “sudden self-consciousness or impatience.” My guess is that he had lived in his new dark universe for too long, that he had come too close to fully accepting that he is not so special, that people die, and that

happiness is ephemeral. Even though he had accomplished the impossible, he continued to be wedged between the two contradictory realities, as he had been since his wife was taken from him, and a momentary impulse toward the darker reality makes him disbelieve, and he looks, dooming himself and Eurydice.

However, at the moment that he turns to look at Eurydice, it is very unlikely that he is thinking about his contradictory understandings of the universe. Indeed, it is unlikely that he is thinking about anything at all. Orpheus, “not quite believing” that he is accomplishing the impossible, is extraordinarily frightened that he will fail, and once again lose the woman he loves. This fear gives him a momentary impulse to reassure himself, and he looks.

He pays dearly for his inability to abide by Hades’ terms. Not only must he live the rest of his days in a world he hates, without his love, but he must also live with the knowledge that he can blame no one but himself. He sees “his last sight of” Eurydice “again and again.” He knows that this last time he saw her, she did not recognize him, that she is truly gone. He is tortured forever by his failure. In short, the story of Orpheus, is the tale of a young man who is unable to successfully become an adult.

The Third Man’s fifth character is Apollo, the sun god. Like Morpheus, Apollo isn’t an easy character to analyze, but, unlike Morpheus, Apollo’s problematic nature does not stem from a lack of information. Indeed, the script offers plenty of insight on the sun god. Some twenty years or so earlier, Apollo had seduced a mortal woman, in “a one-night sort of thing,” fathering a son, Phaeton. Despite the fact that he plays virtually no role in his child’s rearing, and is “separated” from the mother and child, Apollo, “in all his glory. . .looks down upon” Phaeton. That is, even though he is an absent father,

Apollo is most definitely interested in Phaeton, and, perhaps, even proud of this illegitimate offspring, as suggested by the fact that Phaeton “went to an expensive school,” for which Apollo might have paid. Phaeton’s mother “still loves” his father, and it is possible that Apollo continues to have feelings for this woman, albeit in the way that a nostalgic womanizer might look back fondly on one of his conquests.

Phaeton, after being bullied by classmates because of his bastard status, and after “seeing” Apollo “pass every day” in the sky as the sun, decides that it is time to meet his father, and travels the “long way—across Ethiopia” to “the valley where” Apollo “goes to work every morning.” At this point, it becomes completely clear that Apollo has great interest in, and affection for his son. The sun god’s “secretaries” all “recognize” Phaeton, which makes it obvious that Apollo, a proud father, has made his son a recurring topic of office conversation. Apollo tells Phaeton that he is “welcome,” and willingly “listens” to his son relating the problems of illegitimate existence. Moved by his son’s problems, Apollo “grant(s)” Phaeton “a favor,” and offers him whatever he wants, which is no small gift when coming from a god. Perhaps, upon viewing his boy in the flesh, Apollo is moved beyond simple pride into a need to make up for his absentee status, and, therefore, offers this marvelous favor, to which “he swears.”

Phaeton renders problematic his father’s desire to absolve himself, however, when the son asks to drive Apollo’s sun chariot. Suddenly, the sun god’s duties to his boy and to nature are in conflict, and he balks, exclaiming, “it’s my job,” and “you can’t do it.” In seconds, Apollo seemingly finds himself mired in a classic Freudian Oedipal clash between father and son. However, after Phaeton insists, fatherly pride crowds out other concerns, and Apollo “hands over the reins.” On the other hand, Apollo is unable to

totally eradicate his sense of Oedipal anxiety, and tries to maintain control of the situation, continually “giving advice,” and warning Phaeton of the sky’s dangers: “the bull, and the lion, and the scorpion.” Phaeton then proceeds to crash the sun chariot, causing all sorts of damage and disaster, but the script never relates how Apollo reacts to this turn of events, which is just as well because the sun god’s time onstage is over once he relents to his son’s request.

Clearly, the script offers plenty of information about Apollo. The problem, then, is how the script dictates that the sun god interacts with Phaeton: “he sings ‘Un’ Aura Amorosa’ from *Così Fan Tutti*, in Italian, softly, under the entire text. . .when Phaeton quotes him. . .Apollo echoes his son in English. . .never departing from the melody.” That is, Apollo is separated from the action, on a platform high above his son, singing, mostly in Italian. How on earth does an actor translate all these delicious character traits into an aria?

Fortunately, the director decided that he would prefer a jazz aesthetic here, which is in keeping with the costuming concept, and asked me to scat-sing, like Louis Armstrong or Ella Fitzgerald, which freed me up a great deal. Being a big jazz fan, and having great familiarity with many jazz standards, I was able to choose my melodies to fit my mood. For Phaeton’s arrival, I riffed on Harry James’ “I’ve Heard That Song Before,” which is a sentimental love song, reflecting Apollo’s nostalgic love for his boy’s mother, and the sun god’s pride in his son. For Apollo’s oedipal anxiety, I riffed on Benny Goodman’s “Sing, Sing, Sing,” which is one of the most manic songs I’ve ever heard. For Apollo’s warnings about the dangers in the sky, I chose Duke Ellington’s “The Mooche,” which has a sinister sound, and its title reflects that Phaeton has gone too

far in his request. Finally, for Apollo's chariot-driving advice, I worked with the Frank Sinatra version of "Fly Me to the Moon," which is a love song, but, in Sinatra's personal style, is also quite masculine and strong, reflecting Apollo's desire to maintain control even as he gives the reins over to Phaeton. Ultimately, this all seemed fit. Like an archetypal, glamorous movie star or pop music idol who is too busy with his work to be involved in his child's life, the "shining and golden" Apollo squeezes his love-child into his hectic schedule, speaking to him in the language of the sun god's work.

The sixth character for the Third Man is simply named A, the letter "A," which, in this context, means "answer." The reason for this is obvious: all the dialogue in this scene consists of alternating questions and answers—the character Q asks the questions, and A answers them. In this way, Q and A, who "sit on diagonally opposite corners" of the pool, serve as non-traditional narrators for the scene taking place in the middle of the water, which recounts the love story between Psyche, who was more beautiful than Aphrodite, and that goddess' son, Psyche's husband, Eros, "god of love."

However, Q and A are clearly much more than narrators. The very fact that one character has all the answers, and the other has only questions, creates a status dynamic, with A obviously holding all the cards. Furthermore, the script calls for the role of Q to be played by a woman; this creates gender difference, and when coupled with the erotic nature of the scene in the water, also creates sexual tension between Q and A. The scene is, indeed, sexually charged. Eros is "winged, naked," and this explicit image of male nudity, which is so rare in our culture, visually dominates the action. Q wants to know if the two mythological characters have "had sex already," and A responds with a resounding "oh yes."

That this love story is a Greco-Roman myth seemingly makes Q and A's discussion more appropriate for a college classroom than for the deck of a swimming pool, and A takes full advantage of his material. Eros, according to A, is naked in order to symbolize how love must "make us transparent" and "foolish to others." Eros is blind "to show how he takes away our ordinary vision." A also touches on the metaphysical: "in Greek," the name Psyche "means the soul." A speaks of "the radical trust" needed to make love successful, and how, without such trust, Psyche must "suffer." With that trust, however, A shows Q how Psyche manages to overcome "hopeless" obstacles and great fear, which makes her love for Eros "last forever," giving the story "a very happy ending."

It is impossible for me to escape the image in this scene of a 1960's era Playboy Club. That is, the whole thing reads like something out of Hugh Hefner's playbook, especially when one considers that the actress playing Q is some fifteen years younger than I am. Obviously, A, presumably some kind of professor, writer, or intellectual, wants to have sex with Q, who is strikingly like a young college co-ed, but approaches his seduction as though American sexual consumerism and exploitation has not yet reached its full flowering. He captures her with his intellect, but infuses his intellectualizing with raw sexuality, which may very well work as a pick-up tactic with a few young women today, but not the way it might have back in the 60's. Perhaps A is Hef, himself, and Q is the young Playmate Barbie Benton, fresh off the bus from the Midwest: the wealthy and sophisticated millionaire publisher has arranged this special performance in his high-rise Chicago penthouse of the Psyche and Eros story for the

express purpose of bedding Benton. Personally, I think A manages to score once the scene has ended.

The Third Man's seventh and final character is Philemon, an "old man" who lives in relative poverty with his wife, Baucis. When the gods Zeus and Hermes, who are "disguised as beggars," come "down to Earth" in order "to see what people were really like," Baucis and Philemon are the only ones who treat them hospitably. Philemon insists that they "bring" their "guests inside," and states that the two seeming beggars are worthy of such good treatment because they "are children of god." The couple seat the gods-as-beggars "in chairs," instead of on the floor. Philemon then "set out the embroidered cloth that they saved for feast days," and presents "a plate of olives. . .and a saucer of cherry plums." In short, the two old folks treat the strangers as close friends or family.

Baucis and Philemon are then stunned by a miracle: after pouring wine for his guests, Philemon "saw that the bottle remained full." That's when "they knew" that these two beggars are "divine;" Philemon, worshiping Zeus and Hermes, apologizes for serving "such a simple meal." The gods, however, reward Baucis and Philemon for their hospitality, changing "their simple cottage" into "a glittering marble-columned temple." Zeus and Hermes offer one last favor, anything they want. The old couple, who deeply love one another, ask "to die at the same moment" because Philemon would "hate to see (his) wife's grave, or to have her weep at" his. After reaching "a very old age together," Baucis and Philemon become entwined with each other as trees.

The one thing here that seems to be the common thread running through these events is love. That is, Baucis and Philemon love each other, love all human beings, and love the gods. It isn't simply that they're good hosts, or particularly religious, or morally

better than most people: it's that, to Baucis and Philemon, there is no difference between these concepts. Loving the gods is the same as loving each other, which is the same as treating all people decently. Even before he is rewarded for his good deeds, this philosophy of love seems to make Philemon a content man, finding happiness by simply doing good things. Clearly, this is a cultural foreshadowing of a moral concept articulated elsewhere on the shores of the Mediterranean sea a few centuries later: In the Bible, Jesus says that loving God with all one's heart and mind is "liken unto" loving one's neighbor as oneself. In short, in a pre-Christian world, Philemon is a good Christian, loving himself, his wife, his neighbors, and the gods equally.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SCORE

A score is a point by point list of acting choices used in playing a role, in this case the Third Man. My score will consist of five columns. The first column includes the text, and will also include my character's objective (what he is trying to gain or achieve), as well as my character's action (how he will go about gaining his objective). The second column will list tactics (how my character goes about executing his actions). The third column will cite obstacles (the ideas, people, and things standing in the way of achieving my objective). The fourth column will name where my character focuses his thoughts, vision, and energy at that moment in the scene. Finally, the fifth column will name various activities (significant physical acts my character accomplishes in a scene, but are not actions).

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>Servant</p> <p>(Objective: Restore order Action: Raise alarm)</p> <p>[A servant enters.]</p> <p>SERVANT: Sir—?</p> <p>MIDAS: Yes, what is it?</p> <p>[SILENUS enters, drunk, vine leaves in his hair, wearing a leopard skin skirt and holding a wine bottle in a brown paper bag and some chips.]</p> <p>SERVANT: This man’s been making trouble in the town. We believe he is a vagrant, sir, of the worst, most drunken kind.</p> <p>SILENUS: Hello, King!</p> <p>SERVANT: What should we do?</p> <p>SILENUS: Nice place!</p>	Report	Midas doesn’t know the danger	Midas and Silenus	Guard against Silenus

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>SILENUS: Further.</p> <p>MIDAS: Africa?</p> <p>SILENUS: No. Further. Over the ocean. I've been there.</p> <p>MIDAS: Oh?</p> <p>SILENUS: King, I tell ya, it's like a dream, a dream. I. Am. Telling. You. That in this place the people...they see each other. And in this place they live without desire of any kind and so time? There is no time—just the blue sky above and the pretty moon at night and they got the meadows under their feet with the yellow flowers and—</p> <p>MIDAS: Well, thank you, this has been most entertaining, but—</p> <p>SILENUS: And the people live forever.</p> <p>MIDAS: What?</p> <p>[MIDAS's daughter begins to skip rope.]</p> <p>SILENUS: They live forever. They never die.</p>	<p>Midas, Silenus, daughter</p>			

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>MIDAS: What is it, some herb they have, some...</p> <p>SILENUS: Oh, no. No no no.</p> <p>MIDAS: Something in the air? Something we could distill? I have shipping fleets you know to bring it—</p> <p>SILENUS: No, no. It's—</p> <p>MIDAS: Yes?</p> <p>SILENUS: Is that your daughter?</p> <p>MIDAS: What? Yes. [To her.] Go on, get out of here! Be still for once in your life! [To him.] Go on, go on.</p> <p>[She retreats for good.]</p> <p>SILENUS: You're rich indeed.</p> <p>MIDAS: Go on. Is it an animal? Even better if it's an animal, we could breed them here. My god, the millions! Don't worry, young man, you'll get your cut—</p> <p>SILENUS: No. Nope. No.</p> <p>MIDAS: It's not an animal? What is it? What is this secret to eternal life?</p>	Midas, Silenus			

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>SILENUS: [pointing to his own head] It's here.</p> <p>MIDAS: Some formula, you have it? The formula?</p> <p>SILENUS: No, no. It's here [pointing to MIDAS's head].</p> <p>MIDAS: What?</p> <p>SILENUS: And here [pointing to MIDAS's heart].</p> <p>MIDAS: Oh that. The "inner life." What uselessness. All right then. Off you go. You may sleep in the cabana.</p> <p>SILENUS: Thank you. [He falls drunkenly, facedown in the water.]</p> <p>MIDAS: Oh for god's sake, turn him over. Someone turn him over before he drowns.</p> <p>[The SERVANT, with distaste, goes into the pool and turns SILENUS over with his foot.]</p> <p>(Action: Restore myself to order)</p>	<p>Execute Midas' command</p> <p>Exit to change clothes</p>	<p>My pants are wet</p>	<p>My pants</p>	<p>Wade through the water, trying to stay as dry as possible</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>Ceyx</p> <p>(Objective: Sow my mid-life oats Action: Tame my wife)</p> <p>NARRATOR: There once was a king named Ceyx who had as his queen Alcyone, daughter of Aeolus, master of the winds. These two adored each other and lived in a monotony of happiness. But nothing in this world is safe.</p> <p>ALCYONE: It isn't true.</p> <p>CEYX: It is.</p> <p>NARRATOR: One day Alcyone had heard that Ceyx had ordered his ship to be made ready for a sea voyage, to visit a far-off oracle.</p> <p>ALCYONE: How can you leave me alone? I'll pine in your absence. Overland, it's a long and arduous trip, but I'd still prefer that to a voyage by sea—which I fear, for my father's winds are wild and savage.</p> <p>You think as his son-in-law you may get some special treatment. Not so! Once they've escaped my father's cave, those winds are wild and beyond anyone's control. As a girl I watched them come home exhausted and spent, and I learned to fear them then. Now I am petrified, surely—</p>	<p>Put her in her place</p>	<p>She thinks she's the boss</p>	<p>Alcyone</p>	

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>NARRATOR: she said,</p> <p>ALCYONE: If you die my life is over and I shall be cursed with every reluctant breath I draw.</p> <p>CEYX: My love, I hate to choose between my journey and you but how can I live this way? Stranded on shore, afraid, domesticated, diminished, a kind of lap dog?</p> <p>ALCYONE: Take me with you at least, and we'll meet the storms together, which I fear much less than to be left a widow.</p> <p>CEYX: In two month's time, I'll be back—</p> <p>ALCYONE: No. I fear you won't. I know you won't.</p> <p>CEYX: In two month's time. For that short time, you can be brave and endure the trial of waiting.</p> <p>NARRATOR: She was hardly consoled, but she saw she could not hold out any longer in the face of his resolve. She allowed herself to be soothed and consented to his going.</p> <p>[SAILORS enter with oars.]</p>	<p>Wade to center of pool</p>	<p>The elements, keeping my men coordinated and focused</p>	<p>My ship</p>	<p>Man my command post, a short pillar on the pool deck</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>There were no more details left to be checked, no last-minute changes to make, and the men, arranged on their benches, were ready to row and go. He boarded and gave the sign. And then he turned to wave at her. She waved at him while the ribbon of black water widened between the ship and shore. She gazed at him until he was no longer distinguishable but still she could see the ship. And she narrowed her eyes to the horizon and watched it as it receded to a smaller and smaller object. And then the whole hull was gone, and only the sails remained, and then they, too, disappeared. She gazed still at the empty and desolate blue and then went to her empty bedroom to lie on the huge and vacant bed and give herself over to weeping.</p> <p>CEYX: The vessel cleared the harbor and caught the freshening wind, which set the rigging to singing and slapping against the spars. I ordered the rowers to ship their oars and the sailors to set the yards and make sail. Our ship ran before the wind. We made satisfactory progress all that day and had reached a point of no return, with as much blue water astern as remained ahead.</p> <p>NARRATOR: But as the sun was sinking in the West, the water, everywhere blue until now, began to be flecked with the white capped waves sailors dislike.</p> <p>[Enter POSEIDON and his HENCHMAN.]</p>			<p>My ship, Alcyone</p> <p>My ship, the sea</p>	

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>The weather was worse with every moment for the winds were on the loose.</p> <p>[The storm begins. POSEIDON and his HENCHMAN attack CEYX, the boat, the SAILORS.]</p> <p>CEYX: Reef the sails! Bail the water! Secure the spars!</p> <p>NARRATOR: But Poseidon and his Henchman had arrived. The rest was one enormous green catastrophe.</p> <p>[The storm escalates. The men wrestle in the pool.]</p> <p>CEYX: He thinks in an oddly abstracted way that the waves are lions crazed with hunters' wounds, or that the ship is a besieged town attacked by a horde of madmen.</p> <p>HENCHMAN AND CEYX: One would think that the heavens were crazed with lust</p> <p>CEYX: to join the turbulent sea</p> <p>HENCHMAN AND CEYX: which returned their bizarre passion and tried to rise up and embrace the air.</p>	<p>Grapple with the Henchman</p>	<p>The weather is getting worse</p> <p>The Henchman has god-like strength</p>	<p>My ship, the weather, my men</p> <p>The Henchman</p>	<p>Get off my perch and join my men on the deck and in the water</p> <p>Stay above the water</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>Morpheus</p> <p>(Objective: Serve my master Sleep Action: Convince Alcyone that I'm her dead husband's ghost)</p> <p>SLEEP: [calling] Morpheus! Mor-phe-us! Come and change your shape to that of King Ceyx. Go to his wife and tell her [yawning] ...tell her he is dead.</p> <p>[MORPHEUS enters as CEYX. SLEEP sees him.]</p> <p>That's good. That's very good. Now go!</p> <p>[SLEEP stumbles away. CEYX, shrouded, approaches ALCYONE. She stirs.]</p> <p>ALCYONE: Sir, you seem like a seafaring man, can you tell me, where is my husband, Ceyx? Have you seen him on the sea? When is he coming home? His ship is strong and unmistakable. Have you seen him? [Pause.] Sir?</p> <p>CEYX: [dropping his shroud] Do you not know me? Has death undone me so?</p> <p>ALCYONE: No!</p> <p>CEYX: Look at me I charge you—look at me.</p>				

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TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>ALCYONE: No! I won't. I won't!</p> <p>CEYX: Look at me, and know your husband's ghost. Your prayers have done no good, for I am gone, beyond all help or hope forever.</p> <p>ALCYONE: Go away!</p> <p>CEYX: I am not some bearer of tales, but the man himself to whom it happened. Look at me, my little bird.</p> <p>ALCYONE: I told you. I knew it would happen and I begged you not to go. I knew the day you sailed I had lost you forever.</p> <p>The ship, my hopes, and my life grew smaller all at the same time. You should have allowed me to come—</p> <p>CEYX: Little bird—</p> <p>ALCYONE: This is no good, no good—that I should be living and you be elsewhere or nowhere? I'm drowning now in the air, I'm wrecked here on the land where the currents are just as cold and cruel.</p> <p>CEYX: Get up from your bed and put on your mourning clothes.</p>	<p>Romance her</p>			

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>[He begins to go.]</p> <p>ALCYONE: Wait for me! Come back! Where are you going? Wait and I'll go with you as wives are supposed to go with their husbands.</p> <p>[But he is gone.]</p> <p>Ceyx (again)</p> <p>[HERMES enters carrying CEYX and places him in the water.]</p> <p>LUCINA: She remembered his last kiss, the way he turned to the ship, could not bear it, and turned again to her.</p> <p>ALCYONE: What is that out there? Oh, it is a man. Alas, poor sailor, for your wife and...</p> <p>[She sees that it is CEYX.]</p> <p>LUCINA: The gods are not altogether unkind. Some prayers are answered.</p> <p>ALCYONE: Ceyx, is this how you return to me?</p>	<p>Exit through fog and underwater</p>			

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>Orpheus</p> <p>(Objective: Get married Action: Go to the alter)</p> <p>NARRATOR: You've heard about Orpheus the greatest musician of all time, and his bride Eurydice? His was the unluckiest of wedding days.</p> <p>[The sound of wedding bells. The chandelier is fully illuminated. ORPHEUS and EURYDICE move toward each other with ATTENDANTS. But, as she approaches, EURYDICE steps on a snake. We hear a loud hissing, and the joyful wedding bells become funereal. The scene changes to one of mourning, as the dead EURYDICE is carried away by HERMES. A new NARRATOR enters with a music stand and steps into the pool.]</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: Orpheus and Eurydice: Number One: Ovid, A.D. 8.</p> <p>(Objective: Rescue my wife from Hell Action: Seduce Hades with my music)</p> <p>[As he speaks, the Underworld materializes around him. We see PERSEPHONE and HADES; THE FATES, snipping their threads; A SISYPHEAN CHARACTER; and various other DENIZENS of the Underworld.]</p>	<p>Walk briskly</p>	<p>I can't get there fast enough without endangering myself</p>	<p>Eurydice</p>	

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>HADES: Orpheus, turn around. [Calling] Eurydice.</p> <p>[Eurydice enters.]</p> <p>Your song has moved us, Orpheus, and you may have her on one condition. As you ascend and leave this place, she will not walk beside you; but she will be following. You must not, until you pass our gates, turn around to look at her. If you look at her before you reach the sunlight, she is ours. Forever.</p> <p>ORPHEUS: I understand.</p> <p>HADES: Hermes will accompany you. Remember, hesitation or doubt and our gift must be returned. A simple enough condition?</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: It ought to have been. The singer led the way, ascending the sloping path through the murk.</p> <p>[ORPHEUS walks on the deck, followed at a little distance by EURYDICE, who is limping from the snake bite. HERMES follows her.]</p> <p>A long way they traveled, almost all the way. But you know what happened: Concerned for her, or not quite believing that it wasn't a cruel delusion, a dream, or a mirage, he turned.</p>	<p>Escape Hell with my beloved</p>	<p>It's dark; I'm not sure of the way; I'm not even sure she's with me</p>		<p>Wade my way back out of the pool, up the ramp, and onto the deck</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>[ORPHEUS turns around; as he does, HERMES lifts EURYDICE and pulls her away as she and ORPHEUS reach for each other.]</p> <p>EURYDICE: Farewell.</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: that was his last sight of her.</p> <p>But he saw it again and again.</p> <p>[ORPHEUS, EURYDICE, and HERMES reassemble in their original positions. They walk forward, ORPHEUS turns around; as he does, HERMES lifts EURYDICE and pulls her away as she and ORPHEUS reach for each other.]</p> <p>EURYDICE: Farewell.</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: Is this story a story of love and how it always goes away?</p> <p>[ORPHEUS, EURYDICE, and HERMES continue to repeat their action. Each time, EURYDICE is a little closer to ORPHEUS when he turns.]</p> <p>EURYDICE: Farewell.</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: Is this a story of how time can move only in one direction?</p>	<p>Verify that she's with me</p>	<p>I can't see her without looking at her</p>		

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>[The action repeats]</p> <p>EURYDICE: Farewell.</p> <p>[The action repeats.]</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: Is this the story of an artist, and the loss that comes from sudden self-consciousness or impatience?</p> <p>[The action repeats.]</p> <p>EURYDICE: Farewell.</p> <p>[NARRATOR ONE exits as NARRATOR TWO enters and places her music stand in the water. During the following, ORPHEUS, EURYDICE, and HERMES walk slowly and continually around the periphery of the pool.]</p> <p>NARRATOR TWO: Orpheus and Eurydice: Number Two. Rainer Maria Rilke. A.D. 1908.</p> <p>ORPHEUS: He said to himself, they had to be behind him; said it aloud and heard it fade away. They had to be behind him, but their steps were ominously soft. If only he could turn around, just once.</p>	<p>Verify that she is with me</p>	<p>I can't see her without looking at her</p>		<p>Slowly get back into the pool from the deck, in unison with Hermes and Eurydice, and stand knee deep</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>NARRATOR TWO: But looking back would ruin this entire work, so near completion.</p> <p>ORPHEUS: Then he could not fail to see them, those other two, who followed him so softly:</p> <p>HERMES: The god of speed and distant messages, a golden crown above his shining eyes, his slender staff held out in front of him, and little wings fluttering at his ankles; and on his left arm, barely touching it: she.</p> <p>NARRATOR TWO: A woman so loved that from one lyre there came more lament than from all lamenting women; that a whole world of lament arose, in which all nature reappeared: forest and valley, road and village, field and stream and animal; and that around this lament-world, even as around the other earth, a sun revolved and a silent star-filled heaven, a lament-heaven, with its own disfigured stars—; so greatly was she loved.</p> <p>EURYDICE: But now she walked behind the graceful god, her steps constricted by the trailing grave clothes.</p> <p>NARRATOR TWO: uncertain, gentle, and without impatience.</p>	<p>Turn around, and with my back to the audience, wade upstage about halfway. Freeze in mid-motion</p>			

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>EURYDICE: She was deep within herself, like a woman heavy with child, and did not see the man in front or the path ascending steeply into life. Deep within herself. Being dead filled her beyond fulfillment. Like a fruit suffused with its own mystery and sweetness, she was filled with her vast death, which was so new, she could not understand that it had happened.</p> <p>HERMES: She had come into a new virginity and was untouchable; her sex had closed like a young flower at nightfall, and her hands had grown so unused to things that the god's infinitely gentle touch of guidance hurt her, like an undesired kiss.</p> <p>NARRATOR TWO: she was no longer that woman with brown eyes who once had echoed through the poet's songs, no longer the wide couch's scent and island, and that man's property no longer.</p> <p>EURYDICE: She was already loosened like long hair, poured out like fallen rain, shared like a limitless supply.</p> <p>[ORPHEUS slowly turns to look at her.]</p> <p>NARRATOR TWO: And when, abruptly, the god put out his hand to stop her, saying, with sorrow in his voice:</p>	<p>Verify that she is with me</p>	<p>I can't see her without looking</p>		

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>Apollo</p> <p>(Objective: Be a good father Action: Sing my magical jazz tunes)</p> <p>[At this point PHAETON’s father, APOLLO, enters upstage, carrying a music stand. Throughout the rest of the scene he sings “Un’ Aura Amorosa” from <i>Cosi Fan Tutti</i>, in Italian, softly, under the entire text. Occasionally, when PHAETON quotes him in his narrative, APOLLO echoes his son in English, al the while never departing from the melody of the song but sliding seamlessly between the Italian lyrics and the English text. PHAETON pauses only slightly between APOLLO’s English phrases. He neither sees his father nor acknowledges his presence.]</p> <p>PHAETON: So she tells me to go over to the valley where my dad goes to work every morning and just ask him to set things straight. To, you know, “do right by me.” So I set out and it’s hot and it’s dusty and it’s a long way—across Ethiopia. And I hitch part of the time and part of the time I walk and finally, finally, I get there. And the hill is steep.</p> <p>THERAPIST: But this passage is never easy.</p> <p>PHAETON: At the door are my dad’s secretaries, the days and the hours and the century, but they recognize me and</p>	<p>Welcome him by scat singing constantly, riffing, for now, on “I’ve Heard that Song Before”</p>	<p>My son might not love me</p>	<p>Phaeton</p>	<p>Dance a bit while I sing, snap fingers</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>they say go on in. And there he is all shining and golden, and I can't even look at him he's so bright. And you know what he says to me? He says, "My son, you are welcome."</p> <p>APOLLO: [singing underneath] My son you are welcome...</p> <p>PHAETON: "Speak, Phaeton, to your father."</p> <p>APOLLO: Speak, Phaeton, to your father.</p> <p>PHAETON: I cannot even tell you what this was to me. So I tell him everything, you know, I just spill my guts. He listens to me and he says, "Let me grant you a favor,</p> <p>APOLLO: Let me grant you a favor...</p> <p>PHAETON: whatever you ask shall be yours."</p> <p>APOLLO: Whate'er you ask shall be yours.</p> <p>PHAETON: And he swears to it.</p> <p>THERAPIST: The conventional exordium of the initiate from latent to realized potential is inevitably accompanied by a radical realignment of his emotional relationship with the imago of parental authority.</p>	<p>Resume scatting, riffing on the same melody</p>			<p>Sing these words to the tune of "I've Heard that Song Before"</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>PHAETON: Where have you been all my life, Dad? It's my turn. Hand it over! So he hands over the reins, but he won't stop giving advice. You know, like "Don't fly too high,</p> <p>APOLLO: Don't fly too high...</p> <p>PHAETON: Nor too low, stay in the tracks, go slantwise."</p> <p>APOLLO: Go slantwise...</p> <p>PHAETON: On and on. But I didn't listen.</p> <p>THERAPIST: Myths are the earliest forms of science.</p> <p>PHAETON: It was over before it began. It was chaos, okay? Out of control, as if no one was driving. You know, my knees were weak, I was blind from all the light. I set the earth on fire. And I fell. And it just destroyed me—you know, I was just completely and utterly destroyed. O-V-E-R. Over.</p> <p>[APOLLO's song ends. PHAETON rises abruptly and leaves the stage. APOLLO exits.]</p>	<p>Relent to his request, but control the situation by emulating Frank Sinatra, riffing on "Fly Me to the Moon"</p>			<p>Sing lines to the tune of "Fly Me to the Moon"</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>A</p> <p>(Objective: Seduce Q Action: Envelop her in my classiness)</p> <p>[Music transition. A raft, covered in red fabric, and bound with gold rope, is placed in the water. Q and A enter and sit on diagonally opposite corners of the deck. The doors open and EROS enters. He is winged, naked, blindfolded, and carrying a golden arrow. Throughout the following he will come forward and lie down to sleep on the raft in the water.]</p> <p>Q: Who is this?</p> <p>A: This is Eros, god of love.</p> <p>Q: Why does he have wings?</p> <p>A: So he can move quickly from body to body.</p> <p>Q: Why is he naked?</p> <p>A: To make us transparent.</p> <p>Q: To make us what?</p>	<p>Teach her</p>	<p>She might figure out what I'm doing</p>	<p>Q, Psyche, Eros</p>	<p>Sitting on the deck, slowly kick my feet in the water</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>A: Transparent in our love. Foolish to others. Exposed.</p> <p>Q: Why is he blind?</p> <p>A: He is always pictured blind, but he really isn't.</p> <p>Q: Because in love we are so ignorant and so compulsive?</p> <p>A: There's that.</p> <p>Q: What else?</p> <p>A: He is blind to show how he takes away our ordinary vision, our mistaken vision, that depends on the appearance of things.</p> <p>[EROS lies down on the raft to sleep. Throughout the following, PSYCHE enters, carrying a candelabra. She makes her way down the stairs and along the deck, very slowly and quietly.]</p> <p>Q: Who's this coming down the stairs?</p> <p>A: Her name is Psyche.</p> <p>Q: Psyche? Her name is Psyche?</p>				

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: What's she doing here?</p> <p>A: She's married to the god, but she's never seen him.</p> <p>Q: Why is that?</p> <p>A: He forbids it.</p> <p>Q: How did they meet?</p> <p>A: Psyche was so beautiful, the goddess Aphrodite hated her. She sent her son to punish her, but he fell in love instead.</p> <p>Q: Does she know that he is a god?</p> <p>A: No. She suspects he is a monster.</p> <p>[PSYCHE is startled by something. She looks over her shoulder, then continues along the deck.]</p> <p>Q: Have they had sex already?</p> <p>A: Oh yes.</p> <p>Q: And how was that?</p>				

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>A: It was good.</p> <p>Q: Then why does she suspect he is a monster?</p> <p>A: Her jealous sisters told her so.</p> <p>[PSYCHE is startled again. Then she continues.]</p> <p>Q: And she listened to them?</p> <p>A: Unfortunately, yes.</p> <p>Q: So now she's coming to see him as he sleeps?</p> <p>A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: To make certain.</p> <p>A: Yes.</p> <p>Q: With her eyes.</p> <p>A: Yes. She's very young. It happens all the time.</p> <p>Q: She doesn't trust what she has felt herself.</p>				

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>A: Not with the radical trust we need.</p> <p>[PSYCHE steps into the pool. She moves slowly, so as not to make noise. She approaches the sleeping EROS and holds the candelabra over him, looking. This happens in silence.]</p> <p>Q: What does the word “Psyche” mean?</p> <p>A: In Greek it means “the soul.”</p> <p>[Wax from the candles falls on EROS. He wakes suddenly and turns abruptly toward PSYCHE. They stare at each other a long moment. Then, in one motion, she extinguishes the candelabra in the water. She and EROS begin to separate under the following.]</p> <p>Q: What’s going to happen to her now?</p> <p>A: She’s going to suffer.</p> <p>Q: And?</p> <p>A: She’s going to suffer.</p> <p>Q: And?</p>				

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>A: She's going to suffer.</p> <p>Q: What does she have to do?</p> <p>A: She is given horrible and lonely tasks by Aphrodite.</p> <p>Q: Such as?</p> <p>A: Sorting thousands of little seeds one from the other.</p> <p>Q: How did she manage?</p> <p>A: Some little insects help her.</p> <p>Q: Like in fairy tales?</p> <p>A: Like in all the fairy tales.</p> <p>Q: What else?</p> <p>[PSYCHE sinks into the water.]</p> <p>A: She had to go down to the Underworld, fetch various things.</p> <p>Q: Wasn't she afraid?</p>				

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>A: She was petrified, but she did it all the same.</p> <p>Q: Wasn't it hopeless?</p> <p>A: It was hopeless, but she did it all the same.</p> <p>Q: What did Love do in the meantime?</p> <p>A: He healed his little wound. It hurt him so much when she looked at him like that. The wax from the candle fell on him and burnt him.</p> <p>Q: How does it end?</p> <p>A: She finishes her tasks and Zeus declares enough's enough.</p> <p>Q: He overrides Love's mother?</p> <p>[EROS and PSYCHE look at each other. They begin to move toward each other.]</p> <p>A: Yes. And further, he gives Psyche a special potion and she becomes immortal. Then he declares that their marriage will last forever.</p>	<p>Inject a shot of romance</p>			

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>Q: Does it?</p> <p>A: Of course.</p> <p>Q: So it has a happy ending?</p> <p>A: It has a very happy ending.</p> <p>[EROS and PSYCHE approach the raft and sit on it together.]</p> <p>Q: Almost none of these stories have completely happy endings.</p> <p>A: This is different.</p> <p>Q: Why is that?</p> <p>[PSYCHE and EROS kiss. And kiss again.]</p> <p>A: It's just inevitable. The soul wanders in the dark, until it finds love. And so, wherever our love goes, there we find our soul.</p> <p>Q: It always happens?</p>	<p>Move in for the kill</p>			

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>A: If we're lucky. And if we let ourselves be blind.</p> <p>Q: Instead of watching out?</p> <p>A: Instead of always watching out.</p> <p>[Silence]</p> <p>Philemon</p> <p>(Objective: Be a good pre-Christian Action: Love myself, neighbors, and the gods equally)</p> <p>PHILEMON: [entering] Baucis, why are you standing there! We must bring our guests inside.</p> <p>ZEUS: Do you know us?</p> <p>PHILEMON: Of course.</p> <p>HERMES: You do?</p> <p>PHILEMON: Yes—</p> <p>HERMES: Then who are we?</p>	<p>Treat these poverty stricken strangers like favorite family members</p>	<p>We weren't expecting guests and have to make do with what's on hand</p>	<p>The two strangers</p>	<p>Bring them food, pillows, etc.</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>PHILEMON: Why, you are children of God. Come in, come in.</p> <p>[At this point, the narrative divides among several members of the company. They enter and exit variously, carrying illuminated candles in wooden bowls, which stand in for all the items they will mention. They hand these bowls to BAUCIS and PHILEMON, or place them in the water themselves. The scene is active: The entire surface of the water becomes the “table” being set with illuminated candles.]</p> <p>NARRATOR TWO: The two immortals, satisfied that their disguises had not been seen through, entered the house, lowering their heads to fit through the door.</p> <p>BAUCIS: No, don’t sit on the floor! Sit on chairs, as quality people do.</p> <p>NARRATOR THREE: Philemon ran to get another chair.</p> <p>NARRATOR FOUR: And Baucis fetched two pieces of cloth to pad them so the strangers might rest easy.</p> <p>NARRATOR FIVE: She stirred the coals in the hearth and fanned the fire to cook them a meal.</p>				

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>NARRATOR ONE: Philemon set out the embroidered cloth that they saved for feast days.</p> <p>NARRATOR TWO: Baucis saw that one of the legs of the chair was short and she propped it up with a shard of a pot.</p> <p>NARRATOR THREE: Philemon set out a plate of olives, green ones and black, and a saucer of cherry plums.</p> <p>NARRATOR FOUR: Then there was cabbage and some roasted eggs...</p> <p>NARRATOR FIVE: For dessert there were nuts, figs, dates, and plums.</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: And a basket of ripe apples.</p> <p>NARRATOR TWO: Remember how apples smell?</p> <p>[A pause. Everyone inhales and remembers. Then they continue.]</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: At last, with a show of modest pride, they brought out a bit of honeycomb for sweetness.</p> <p>NARRATOR TWO: Philemon poured wine from a bottle, but as he filled the glasses of the guests, he saw that the bottle remained full.</p>				

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>ALL NARRATORS: And then they knew.</p> <p>[NARRATORS exit.]</p> <p>BAUCIS: Oh, mercy! Mercy!</p> <p>[She runs with her husband to kneel in front of the gods.]</p> <p>PHILEMON: You are divine and we've served you such a simple meal. Baucis, go and kill the goose!</p> <p>ZEUS: Let it live. We are gods and we thank you. You've done enough, more than your nasty neighbors thought to do.</p> <p>[The original NARRATOR of the scene enters with three other members of the company, all carrying bowls of candles. As she speaks, they come forward, kneel in the water, and set the bowls floating. There is music under the line of NARRATOR ONE.]</p>	<p>Worship these two gods</p>	<p>We haven't treated them as well as possible and they might be angry</p>	<p>Zeus and Hermes</p>	<p>Kneel and pray</p>
<p>NARRATOR ONE: Suddenly, everything was changing. The poor little house, their simple cottage, was becoming grander and grander, a glittering marble-columned temple. The straw and reeds of the thatched roof metamorphosed into gold, and gates with elaborate carvings sprang up, as ground gave way to marble paving stones.</p>	<p>Praise these two gods</p>	<p>There is no way to really express how happy this unexpected gift makes me</p>	<p>The gods, our new palace</p>	<p>Dance on the deck and slosh around joyously in the water on the stage left pool ramp</p>

TEXT	TACTIC	OBSTACLE	FOCUS	ACTIVITY
<p>ALL: Let me die the moment my love dies.</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: They whisper:</p> <p>ALL: Let me not outlive my own capacity to love.</p> <p>NARRATOR ONE: They whisper:</p> <p>ALL: Let me dies still loving, and so, never die.</p>				

CHAPTER FIVE: PERFORMANCE ISSUES

They say that the devil is in the details, which is as true of acting as of anything else. As with all live theater, problems will emerge once the show is performed in front of an audience. That is, what is rehearsed does not always work as intended. Sometimes these problems are inherent in the script. Sometimes the director's choices are at odds with the actor's choices. Sometimes an actor's choices are simply ill considered and must be revisited. Here are some of the problems I encountered when performing *Metamorphoses*.

I was dissatisfied with how I played Midas' Servant. In rehearsal, I found a great deal of compelling character material, about order and social class, but the playwright, Zimmerman, doesn't really have the Servant doing much—he simply enters, says his lines, and then observes the rest of the scene. The director, Young, seemed content to take the playwright's lead, and directed me to simply be still for most of the time I was onstage during the scene. It is disheartening, indeed, to discover exciting needs and desires within the role I'm playing only to find that I must squeeze them all into a small perfume-sized bottle. During performance, I was continually looking for opportunities to use what I had found, but was unable to do much without distracting audience attention from the scene's main action.

The moment when Ceyx drowns also caused me difficulty. The struggle with Poseidon's Henchman was physically disorienting, climaxing with my being spun in circles, on his back, while facing the ceiling. I had a difficult time getting myself into what I feel is a required state of contrition toward Alcyone, desiring redemption by appealing to the gods. I never felt entirely satisfied with how the moment played. To be

fair, I made a choice for my spoken prayer, but felt as though I was simply speaking, rather than playing a role. I did not solve this problem.

My character choices created a problem in the Morpheus scene. A week or two into the run of performances, the actress playing Alcyone told me that she was having great difficulty finding the emotional depth she needed for playing the moment honestly. She strongly implied that it was because of how I was approaching playing Morpheus—she needed more love from me. I responded that I’m not really playing her character’s husband, Ceyx, but rather a god of dreams who is only posing as Ceyx; certainly, Morpheus does not love Alcyone. Nonetheless, it was clear that my decision to make the character emotionally cold was having some unintended and negative consequences. I decided to improve Morpheus’ disguise. When it was time to romance Alcyone with the phrase “my little bird,” I really tried to love her. Apparently, this did the trick, and my scene partner seemed much more emotionally involved in the moment.

They say an actor shouldn’t pay attention to reviews, but a local critic, Ed Cullen, made a good point about the Apollo scene: “Reeder’s scat jazz accompaniment adds nothing to the scene. . .[Phaeton] is going 90 to nothing only to be slowed by. . .Reeder.” Elevated, standing on the production’s highest platform, and yards away from Phaeton, it wasn’t really easy to get a feel for the flow of the overall scene, and since I was singing, I could not hear my cues as well as I would have liked. Perhaps Mr. Cullen was right. I tried singing my lines a bit earlier than I had in rehearsal, overlapping Phaeton’s lines, so there was no interruption in the dialogue. The actor playing Phaeton liked my adjustment, and the stage manager seemed to have no problem with the change, so I kept it.

As with any complicated endeavor, unforeseen problems will occur, no matter how much one plans. Acting is no different. The fortunate thing is that such problems rarely threaten the overall quality of the show in which I'm performing. That's just as well because, even though I managed to solve some problems satisfactorily, one or two of them eluded me. Like they say, the devil is in the details.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Working on *Metamorphoses* was certainly a rewarding creative experience.

Being cast in a play, in itself, is always an opportunity for me to work in my chosen art form, acting. For any person who calls him or herself an artist, creating art is one of the primary drives behind life itself. I suppose I could say that almost any show in which I'm involved is creatively rewarding. This show, however, offered much more.

Swine Palace's production of *Metamorphoses* struck me as a much bigger project than other shows I have done. It seemed a massive collaborative effort, with numerous individuals working with me both directly and behind the scenes. With the production's massive set, bizarre swimming pool machines, projection screen and projector, and other odd devices, I sometimes had the feeling that we were working on a N.A.S.A. space mission, at mission control, and on and around the launch pad, rather than working on a play inside a theater. Because I'm such a science fiction geek, I was really excited by the sheer scale of it all.

I also really enjoyed some of the other unusual circumstances surrounding the production. This is the first, and, perhaps, the only time I have ever acted in or around a swimming pool. While it was problematic, I came to find a simple pleasure in my daily routine for dealing with my rehearsals in water. I would have to shower before rehearsal, to make sure I wasn't somehow dirtying the water, and again after rehearsal in order to get all the chlorine off me. I would have to carefully hang my swim trunks and bath robe after every rehearsal, as well, so that it would be dry for the next day. I also even came to enjoy the process of cleaning out my ears with alcohol.

Water, however, was not the only unusual aspect for me about this show. I got to play some strange characters, who don't function or behave like real people, such as Apollo, who scats and sings all the time, or A, who simply sits by the pool and answers questions posed by a young, attractive woman. It was also great fun to perform in the midst of what seemed like countless special effects, such as projections, unusual lighting, an eclectic range of music, and various, odd sound cues. It was fun to think of myself as a Hugh Hefner type, a swinging hipster in the 1960's. I was honored to play my favorite figure from Greek mythology, Orpheus. It was a hoot to be a tree onstage once again, coming full circle as it were: my first onstage role, when I was in kindergarten back in 1973, was playing a tree, in a chorus of trees. It was marvelous, indeed, that I was allowed to try my hand at scat-singing, which I had never attempted, and I found I'm not awful, due to the fact that I've been listening to, and enjoying scat singing for decades now. It was also fun to be the jazz D.J., choosing great songs on which to riff from America's rich selection of jazz standards.

Probably the most significant aspect of my work on *Metamorphoses*, however, is that it gave me purpose and focus while I was dealing with the break-up of my marriage. My wife had moved out of our house some six weeks before we started rehearsals. I was in a state of great emotional pain. My big fear was that my overall emotional state would cause me to be disoriented and distract me from my work. To be honest, I'm sure that happened to some extent but in working on the show, especially one as diverse as this, gave me a focus and grounded me. I think things might have been much worse for me in those dark days if I had not been involved with *Metamorphoses*. I also speculate that this show was of great help to me, in that its themes of love and loss, especially in the

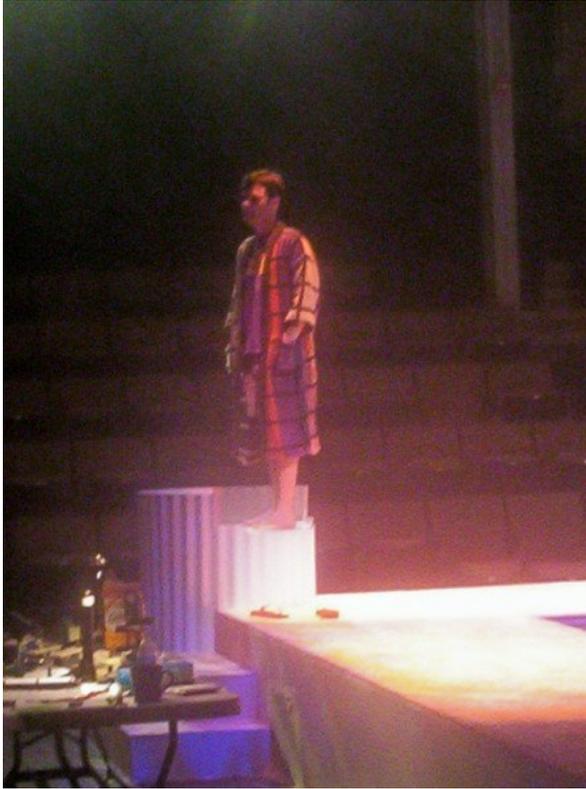
Orpheus scene, served a strong cathartic function which was most helpful. I'm lucky that we did this show when we did it.

On the whole, playing the Third Man was a grand experience.

PHOTOS



In rehearsal: Ceyx and Alcyone (Photo by Nikki Travis)



In rehearsal: Ceyx mans his command post.
(Photo by Nikki Travis)



In rehearsal: The attack on Ceyx's ship (Photo by Nikki Travis)



Production Photo: Morpheus-as-Ceyx and Alcyone (Photo by Steve Young)



Production photo: Orpheus (center) pleads his case to Hades (Photo by Steve Young)



Production photo: Eurydice says “Farewell” to Orpheus before Hermes returns her to the Underworld (Photo by Steve Young)



Production photo: Phaeton (lower left) tells his tale, while Apollo (center) scat-sings
(Photo by Steve Young)

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VITA

Ron Reeder was born January 3, 1968, in Houston, Texas, which is also where he received his primary and secondary education. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drama production from the University of Texas at Austin in May of 1991, and his Bachelor of Science degree in Radio-Television-Film from the same school in May of 1994.