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Creation and development of the collage production DOC F from Faustian materials

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The University of Montana

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Creation and development of the collage production DOC F from Faustian materials

By

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John Barnes, MA, June 1988

Creation and development of the collage production DOC F from Faustian materials

Director: Randy Bolton

Literature with Faustian themes was surveyed, and five works -- Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, Goethe's Faust Part I, Shelley's Frankenstein, Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray -- plus historical materials on the development of the atomic bomb, were selected to form the basis of a production of a theater piece, titled DOC F, at the University of Montana. The production was to have an overall rock concert style.

The core of the performing ensemble was developed through a seminar-type class, which assisted greatly in developing and formulating the piece, particularly in the area of defining the basic concepts of discovery, simplicity, and completeness. These three concepts became critical parts of the working process as the show moved into production.

Parallel characters from different works were played by the same actor. The archetypal characters identified from the Faust materials were Doc F, Mephistopheles, the Monster, Helen, Gretchen, the Best Friend, the Witness, Wagner, the Pope, and the Demons. Thirteen key actions of a Faust story were also identified. In keeping with an overall rock-music concept, each action was called a "track" and the tracks were arranged into "sides" as on a long playing record album. The method of collage was employed in arranging material within "tracks."

The rehearsal process stressed games and exercises in the early stages, with mixed results. The difficulties experienced by some actors demonstrated the importance of working with exercise-developed material in a performance-oriented rehearsal as soon as possible after the exercise. The games and exercises were integral in the strongest tracks in the show.

In general Doc F was negatively received, but it did develop a small following of repeat attendees. Many of its shortcomings can be attributed to a failure to make full use of the resources of the trained ensemble, the unwise reification of the central concept of "disconnection," difficulties in working caused by too-long delays between exercises and use of information developed in them, and failure to cut the script early and thoroughly.
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Creation and development of the collage production DOC F from Faustian materials

Preparation: Spring and summer 1987

Original proposal and selection of a script

On March 19, 1987, I proposed a thesis project in which I would

... take a script of major importance, and after extensive study over the spring and summer of 1987 ... offer an academic intensive with required creative projects, focused on the script, in Fall Quarter 1987 ... direct a Showcase production of the script, using the people trained by the seminar in all major acting and design responsibilities, in Winter Quarter 1988 ... using appropriate sources, write a formal thesis assessing the results and effectiveness of the production method and summarizing what is to be learned from the experience. ("Proposal 1"

The proposal also included a discussion of plans for an approach to both the class and the production, and proposed that I would keep a diary for the duration of the project as well.

The original list of possible scripts for this treatment included twelve possibilities. After considerable discussion with my committee, Marlowe's Doctor Faustus was settled on
There were several reasons for this decision. First and foremost, I had wanted a verse script with a significant theme, but there was a substantial feeling that Shakespeare -- the obvious choice in many ways -- should probably not be the base material for a production likely to be very divergent from the norm. Second, the Faust legend, of which Marlowe's play is the first significant literary expression, seemed to have many potential echoes and resonances in literature and in contemporary life, thus making the experience more likely to be rewarding for everyone involved:

Faustus epitomizes the man of the Renaissance and modern periods who is so transfixed by the possibility of possessing scientific knowledge and the technological means to control his future that he surrenders to the allurements of seeking knowledge and harnessing energy for their own sakes. In the end, the optimistic dream that he was to realize through power turns into a hell of dread, because instead of creating his utopia he has become the slave of forces that he either fears to use or cannot control. The damnation of Faustus is the great-grandfather of the modern mentality that has produced the hydrogen bomb but prays that nuclear fire will not annihilate the whole human race. Faustus' tragedy also foreshadows both the problem of the modern scholar or scientist whose intense specialization in one narrow discipline abstracts him from common human experience and the dilemma of the artist whose disgust with the complacency and moral intertia of society closes all avenues of expression except the one leading into the limbo of aestheticism and decadence. Faustus is thus the first modern man, and his tragedy dramatizes the potential
destruction latent in all post-Renaissance civilization in the West. (Masinton 141)

Finally, several of the other scripts proposed -- e.g. Miller's *The Crucible*, Bolt's *A Man For All Seasons*, and Brecht's *Galileo* -- were heavily male and had relatively little flexibility in possible casting. These reasons for choosing *Doctor Faustus* were also effectively a set of expectations for the project: dealing with verse and language issues in acting, serious themes, resonances in life and literature, and flexible casting. But many of the consequences of the choice of *Doctor Faustus* for the course of the project, though clear in hindsight, were unexpected at the time of the choice. Among these were:

1. Because the script was less familiar to the freshman and sophomore drama students, the essential offer of the class -- a guaranteed casting and/or design assignment -- was much less attractive than it might otherwise have been, and recruitment was consequently much smaller.

2. Because Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* lacks a single, authoritative edition (most published texts are either the A Text of 1604 or the B Text of 1616 substantially amended by referring both to the other text and to later versions of the same text (Gill xv)) the choice of material would encourage manipulation of the text,
strongly encouraging the final decision to create a collage production.

3. Because the Faust legend itself occurs in so many variants in literature, music, and art, this would lead to the class being more of a "Faust extensive" than the originally proposed "intensive" on a single script. In turn this bringing of large quantities of additional material into the process would also invite heavy operation on the text.

The proposal was approved in May of 1987. Announcements were posted for the course to be offered in the fall, including the offer that any student passing the course was guaranteed a role in the show.

Research, selection of materials, basic approach

Because most of the texts used in creating DOC F are quite familiar, this section will primarily report on conclusions from research that were applied to the creation of the show, rather than on the total research accomplished. The body of material on any one of these works is enormous and cannot be adequately described in the space available here.

Research for the class began with an intensive study of Marlowe's play itself, since it is in effect the parent of
virtually all other Faustian material in any European language. (Mason 2) The crucial idea of the play, it seemed to me, was that

Doctor Faustus is a man who of his own conscious willfulness brings tragedy and torment crashing down up on his head, the pitiful and fearful victim of his own ambitions and desires. [This is] ... dramatically expressed in two major patterns of action: the repetetive pattern of moral choice leading to the alternative of spiritual destruction, and the pattern of contrast between Faustus' grand imaginative designs and the actual, vacuous accomplishments of his magical career. (Cole 191)

That is, Dr. Faustus is devoted to getting his own way, single-mindedly, by whatever means come to hand and without regard for others. Indeed, Ricks points out that the very source of his power is that he is "spirit" after his pact, thus no longer of this earth or of material flesh, and therefore cannot be harmed. (115) This gaining of power by severing of traditional bonds, allowing greater latitude of action, has been the basis of the liberal individualism that has flourished in Western thought since Marlowe's time; this trading of the security of community for the greater power of the individual has led many philosophers, following Spengler, to describe modern Western civilization as a "Faustian culture." (Slater 82, Lukacs 16)

The play is thus about the violation of connection to the real, present material world of the body ("First, that
Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance," (I, v, 98)) and of human relationships (Mephistopheles says to him "... marriage is but a ceremonial toy. / If thou lovest me, think no more of it." (I, v, 153-154)) This disconnection from the real world is at first a pathway to greater freedom and power, and then inevitably a road to destruction.

Faustus, by voluntarily cutting himself off from God (and thus from the source of being), creates in that moment both the basis of his diabolical powers -- "When Mephistopheles shall stand beside me / What God can hurt thee, Faustus?" (I, v, 24-25) -- and the condition of *poena damni*, the spiritual torture of separation from God that was supposed to be the chief punishment in Hell according to the Christian doctrine of Marlowe's time. (Cole 193, Masinton 9) The opening Chorus gives us a clear summary of just what Faustus's sin is:

... swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit,  
His waxen wings did mount above his reach,  
And melting, heavens conspired his overthrow:  
For falling to a devilish exercise,  
And glutted now with learning's golden gifts, 
He surfeits upon cursed necromancy." (Prologue 20-25)

An immediate problem in any work on *Doctor Faustus* is the decision whether to use the A Text of 1604 or the B Text of 1616. For Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, I decided to work
primarily with the B Text. The A Text is much the shorter of the two and in many ways much more concise dramatically, omitting many of the comic adventures that make up Acts III and IV of the B Text. (Steane 262) Although many scholars of the early part of the twentieth century argued that that the B Text is corrupted by interpolated material, in particular by additions that Birde and Rowley were paid to make to the script in 1602 (Gill xv), Kirschbaum succeeded in reversing most critical opinion on this question by showing that the A Text had many of the characteristics of a text reported from an abridged version written mostly to play in the provinces. (Kirschbaum "The Good and Bad Quartos") I finally found myself more convinced by the arguments of W. W. Greg in his edition of the parallel texts:

... the play [was] originally written by Marlowe in the last year of his life and in collaboration with at least one other playwright ... The text printed in 1604 [that is, the A Text] I believe to represent a reconstruction from memory of the piece as originally performed, but shortened for provincial acting, occasionally interpolated, and progressively adapted to the capacities of a declining company and the taste of a vulgar audience ... The text of 1616 [B Text] I believe to have been prepared for publication by an editor on the basis of a \ manuscript containing the authors' drafts from which the prompt-book had in the first instance been transcribed. (vii-viii)

With these basic decisions made about Marlowe's work, the next question was what to draw from the great body of Faustian literature. Because the Faust legend occurs in so
many forms in so many Western works of art, music, and literature, the first task was necessarily to arrive at a working definition of a Faustian story. Key elements seemed to be

- "...[having to do with] the fate of a man who tried to do what only God can do, a man who refused to leave to God what ought to be left to Him." (Phillips 322)
- an arrangement with the forces of evil to secure power in the material world to act without being actable on and harm without being harmable -- essentially a negative power of immunity (Ricks 116). This idea, which eventually became central to the production, I had begun to refer to as "disconnection" by the end of July. (Diary 7-29-87) The idea is expressed beautifully in the first and fourth conditions of Faustus's pact with Mephistopholes, "that Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance" (I, v, 98) and "that he shall be in his chamber or house invisible" (I, v, 101). Later, when Faustus is actually beheaded by Benvolio, he explains

Knew you not, traitors, I was limited
For four and twenty years to breathe on earth?
And had you cut my body with your swords,
Or hewed this flesh and bones as small as sand,
Yet in a minute had my spirit returned
And I had breathed a man made free from harm. (IV, iii, 73-78)

- a quest for knowledge beyond what human beings should have, initially for its own sake, but quickly for material gain, e.g. Faustus's demands for books on necromancy, astrology, and herbology immediately following the pact with Mephistopheles (I, v, 161-179)
  "... Faust does not give himself to his studies. On the contrary, his studies serve to feed his eccentricity." (Phillips 333)

- events such that all of the above brings the protagonist into conflict with God, society, and established order in "the tragic conflicts arising out of the limitless demands of man, liberated from the Middle Ages, for omniscience, for boundless activity, for the infinite enjoyment of life." (Lukacs 165)

- a day of reckoning, in which the forces of evil claim their own and the Faust figure is summoned to a literal or figurative hell. "The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike, the devil will come, and Faustus must be damned." (V, i, 153-154)

These criteria were used to restrict possible materials to those in which the criteria were major plot elements. The potential material remaining fell into a few basic
categories:

- Marlowe's play itself. The decision to use the B Text of 1616 is discussed above.

- German Faust materials, growing primarily from the widespread popularity of various translations of Marlowe's play during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Shortly after Marlowe's death, Doctor Faustus was translated into German. Many different versions were pirated, and Faust became one of the most popular subjects of popular low comedy and of puppet shows. (Hohlfeld 296) Traditionally many of these were in doggerel, and tended to focus on the comic servants almost to the exclusion of the main story. (Vietor 292) It seems to be certain that these comedies were in fact the sources from which Goethe worked; he apparently did not read Marlowe until 1818, more than twenty years after the first publication of Faust Part I. (Kaufman 18)

- Goethe's Faust Part I, and the operas based on it by Gounoud, Busoni, Bizet, Liszt, and many others

- Gothic novels, especially from the nineteenth century: The Monk (1796), Frankenstein (1818), The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886), The Phantom of the Opera (1892), and The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891).
The Faustian influence in these was early and strong. (Keech 132) Moreover, as will be discussed below, the Gothic approach to the story seemed much closer to Marlowe's than did that of Goethe and the operas.

The modern horror film, roughly from the Universal Frankenstein (1931) and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1931) forward to the present. Some notable examples include The Thing (1956), The Creeping Unknown (1954), and Forbidden Planet (1955). These are direct descendants of the Gothic materials, converted into a popular dramatic form. (Strick 294) The Faustian element in them has been explored by Philip Slater (14-17) and William Irwin Thompson (175-178), among others.

Possible materials from the progress of modern science, where originally benign pursuit of knowledge has produced unforeseen undesirable consequences. Examples of this were genetic engineering, pesticide development, and the evolution of the atomic bomb. Preliminary research revealed very little actual harm having come of genetic engineering work so far, and an absence of singular "heroic" figures in pesticide development, so efforts were focused early on the nuclear bomb materials. (Diary 7-20-87)

A final area of exploration was the search for a unifying
motif, some way to tie the disparate materials together within a common performance style or mode. The decision had not yet been made to use any text directly in performance other than Marlowe's play, and so the question was not yet one of unifying a collage as much as it was of "getting whatever else has to be there onto the stage with Marlowe." (Diary 7-16-87)

The immediate and obvious conclusion was that there was far too much material even in this shorter list of "definitely Faustian" materials to be dealt with in any one-quarter course. (Diary 8-3-87) Tight selection would have to be imposed from the beginning, both to prepare a materials list for the course and to work out the materials that I would deliberately use to influence the production.

The process of reducing the list to a manageable volume of materials began with the recognition that there are actually two Faust traditions: the Renaissance tradition that begins with Marlowe, and the Romantic tradition of Goethe and the operas. Although there is overall agreement on the events of the Faust story, the two traditions disagree radically about the meaning of the Faust story and about which of its events are key. Where Marlowe's Faust is a simple story of the destruction of a man whose immense potential for good was corrupted ("Cut is the branch that might have grown full
straight/And burned is Apollo's laurel bough/That sometime
grew straight within this learned man" (V, iii, 20-2)), and
ends with the destruction of Faustus, Goethe's Faust Part I
is merely part of a larger work, one in which Faust
ultimately grows and is redeemed by his near-damnation.
"For Goethe the tragic is no longer an ultimate principle;
he perceives a process of universal evolution which proceeds
victorious through individual tragedies." (Lukacs 170) Thus
the Renaissance view is that Faust reaches beyond bounds and
is punished for it; the Romantic concept is that, however
misguided his choice of methods, Faust's quest to grow
beyond himself is ultimately what redeems him.

There were several reasons for choosing to work primarily
with materials that followed the Renaissance tradition.
First of all, the project had originally been planned to
develop from Doctor Faustus as primary source, and this
necessarily implied a heavy concentrations on Marlowe's
themes and worldview. Moreover, as a purely personal
reaction, the Romantic Faust seemed to me to lack the
elemental, archetypal power that ought to be present in a
production based on a myth critical to Western culture; that
it redeemed not only Faust, but his fall with him, seemed to
vitiate the point of the story. I saw

... much more interest and power in a story of a
man who follows Western cultural ideals of
individualism, liberty, and exploration to such an extreme as to be damned for them, than in the story of a man who dares, but finally does not need to endure, damnation for the sake of his self-realization. (Diary 8-6-87)

The Renaissance tradition, for me, has the power of myth because it has gained a measure of autonomy from its cultural matrix in its refusal to judge; it neither approves nor disapproves, but simply says: this is the choice you make, and here is what comes of it. (For a further discussion of the importance of absence of judgement in myth, see Larsen 29-32). The Romantic tradition remains firmly embedded in the cultural matrix, for it sees things from Faust's personal standpoint, privileging his wish to grow at the expense of others by its final endorsement of the results of his encounter with evil, if not the encounter itself. To Goethe, Faust "... seemed not a wicked sinner, but rather a tragic brother of the modern genius." (Vietor 20) Although I felt that some reference was owed to the Romantic tradition, important as it is in many people's conception of Faust, for this course and production I decided to de-emphasize it, reading only some selections from Goethe and setting the operas aside almost entirely.

With the Romantic materials de-emphasized, the remaining materials to be considered were the German Faust materials, Gothic novels and stories, modern horror films, and the history of modern technology.
The German Faust plays and puppet plays are firmly Marlovian in their roots:

One or other of the troupes of English actors who went to Germany during the Shakesperian period took Marlowe's Dr. Faustus with them in their repertoire, and there are records of their performing it in Graz in 1608 and in Dresden in 1626. Out of this a German Faust drama gradually evolved. Translated, adapted, and much garbled and debased in the process, it was still recognisably Marlowe's Dr. Faustus that enjoyed such great popularity on the stage in Germany throughout the seventeenth and the greater part of the eighteenth century, and from the later seventeenth century onward also as a puppet play. (Mason 3-4)

However, there were several barriers to any extensive use of these materials. First and foremost, the tradition was primarily oral, with roles passed from older to younger actors without being written down. Thus we have only fragmentary and reported texts, none playable as such. (Mason 4) In any case, the only texts I could locate had not been translated from the German. (Diary 9-14-87)

Furthermore, as noted above, the material itself was in many ways simply a bad copy of Marlowe; there was little to be gained from any direct additions, although there was to be some influence on the final production, as will be discussed under "Assembling a script" below. Therefore, the German Faust materials were also removed from the list.

The Gothic tradition is a rich and elaborate one. Paradoxically, although many scholars, beginning with
Summers, have identified the Gothic movement in late eighteenth century English literature as a major forerunner of Romanticism, the versions of Faust presented in Gothic literature have much more of the Renaissance tradition about them. For instance, Ambrosio, the degenerating protagonist in Lewis's *The Monk*, seeks forbidden knowledge in arcane rites and is driven into a downward spiral of murder and rape; in his destruction at the end of the story, there is absolutely no implication that anyone, least of all Ambrosio, has benefitted from the catastrophe of a potentially great man turned to evil. Very much after the model of the Renaissance Faust, *The Monk* was the work that marked the beginning of the great period of English Gothic literature, its influence felt in virtually every Gothic novel that followed it. (Summers 8) It is possibly significant that Lewis knew Goethe in Weimar and probably saw early drafts of the *Urfaust*, Goethe's preliminary work to *Faust Part One*. (Peck 20) Certainly the whole period of the flowering of English Gothic was marked by a fascination with medieval German legends and with Faust in particular; many of the standard motifs of English Gothic novels can be found in the German Faust dramas, and in *Doctor Faustus* itself. (Summers 38)

Keech has pointed out that the Gothic novel is intended to
cause fear of a very particular sort -- that of impending
doom brought on by the progressive degeneration of its
protagonist, who has committed

... violations of moral and religious norms that
are fearful by their excess. The acts that create
fear and presage even more in the Gothic novel are
supreme. They are grievous sins, not mere wrongs
-- the worst of what man or devil is capable.
They stem not from accident or simple human
frailty or corruption, but from an agency
evaluated by the reader's moral perspective as
approaching the ultimate in evil. (133)

Further, the protagonist has a combination of "malevolent
values and admirable heroic qualities. Though the reader
may reject the evil the villain embodies, he is fascinated
by his heroic greatness." (Keech 134) Just as Faust has
fallen far from what he might have been, and his crimes are
correspondingly great, the Gothic protagonist is a being
whose "powers are extraordinary and awesome. They are also
powers either partially or totally perverted ... " (136)

Finally,

... there must be at least one character or agency
... whose essence is unrestrained power or force
or passion ... The agent of power is the focal
point of the Gothic novel's production of
apprehensive fear. (Keech 136) (Emphasis added)

It can thus be seen that intrinsically many Gothic novels
contain the basic elements of a Faust story, as discussed
above. A potentially great man contracts with
more-than-human evil to enhance his own power and liberty;
his bargain drives him to escalating, brutal crimes; and finally he is destroyed by the evil forces he has set into motion.

The Monk, though it has some Faustian connections, is still very much an eighteenth century novel, difficult and ponderous in style. Further, it was much less familiar than other potential sources of Faustian material. I decided not to include it in the course, and it played no role I am aware of in the production.

Frankenstein is of course extremely familiar to many people. In many ways it is really the most familiar form of Faust for a contemporary American audience. Levine notes that

... Victor [Frankenstein], having failed in his quest, never surrenders the dream. He is one of the first in a long tradition of fictional overreachers, of characters who seem to act out the myth of Faust in modern dress, and who transport it from the world of mystery and miracle to the commonplace. He is destroyed not by metaphysical agency -- as God expelled Adam from Eden or Mephistopheles collected his share of the bargain (though echoes of these events are everywhere) -- but by his own nature and the consequences of ... rejecting human community. (26)

Later Levine points to Victor Frankenstein's speech before recounting the story to Walton as one with a "Faustian moral" of the dangers waiting for one who "aspires to become
greater than his nature will allow." (31)

Further, there is considerable historical basis for believing Mary Shelley may have been influenced by the Faust story directly. It was in the same summer that she was writing Frankenstein, and in the same house, that Matthew Lewis orally translated large parts of Goethe's Faust Part I for Byron. (Peck 159)

Finally, Shelley deepened and elaborated a theme that I felt was vital to the Faust story, but remained mostly implicit in Marlowe: that of the spirit determined to dominate the flesh, only to learn that, at least in our earthly experience, we can know of spirit only through the flesh. As a powerful image for this theme, I think nothing surpasses the dream that she describes as the basis of the novel in her 1831 introduction to Frankenstein:

I saw -- with shut eyes, but acute mental vision -- I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life and stir with an uneasy, half-vital motion. Frightful it must be, for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handiwork, horror-stricken. .... he might sleep in the belief that the silence of the grave would quench forever the transient existence of the hideous corpse which he had looked upon as the cradle of life. He sleeps; but he is awakened; he opens his eyes; behold the horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains and looking on
him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes."

In addition to the violation of the body as a theme in its own right, this is also the appearance in the Faustian tradition of a new conceit: the personification of the forces returning to destroy their unleasher. Victor Frankenstein has violated bodies to make the monster; the monster is a sort of moving, thinking, incarnate violation of the body. In turn, it violates the bodies of everyone dear to Frankenstein, at last including his own body. This personification of the crime itself, coming back to find and destroy the criminal, persists, as will be seen, in the later Gothic materials as well.

The decision to include Frankenstein in the short list was thus relatively easy, and that suggested that other Gothic materials might be of value as well. (Diary 7-28-87)

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Gothic novel transformed gradually into the novel of psychological horror; it is difficult, if not impossible, to say at what point the transition occurred. (Schlieffe 298) In this context, The Phantom of the Opera is interesting because the author deliberately attempted to make every character both a Faust for himself and a Mephistopheles for someone else in a non-supernatural setting. However, I found no readable,
interesting translation, the Romantic Faust tradition clearly ran strongly in the book, and the Faust motif was so submerged in the individual psychologies of the characters that it would have required a great deal of effort to make anything of it for the production. (Diary 8-4, 8-7, 8-9-87) Thus, although the movement of Faust from an external set of events to an internal, psychological story was interesting, and I wanted at least one source that explored this, The Phantom of the Opera was clearly a poor choice.

The need for a novel with an "inner Faust" dynamic, one in which Faust, Mephistopheles, and the Monster coexist in a single character, was met by Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Although its preoccupations are certainly Victorian, many critics, beginning with Chesterton, have noted that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde seems Freudian almost two decades before Freud. (56) In fact Stevenson seems to have been heavily influenced in this story by his friend, the pioneer psychologist James Sully. (Block 456) The story is familiar to most readers in outline, but few remember that it is a very complex narration: the story is told in the limited third person through "Mr. Gabriel Utterson the lawyer," but in fact until very near the end Utterson does very little except visit Henry Jekyll and worry about him; almost all the facts of
the "Strange Case" come to us through people talking to Utterson, often not even about what they themselves have seen, but what they have heard from those who did see:

Stevenson expertly manages this thematic concern of balance by means of a framing technique which culminates in the novel with the reader reading what Utterson is reading, which is Dr. Lanyon's reading of what Jekyll has written. By including the reader within this expanding "community" of readers -- that is, by the technique of an in-forming structure expanding from within the text to include the reader outside the text -- Stevenson provides an ethical instruction conveying therapeutic instruction about each reader's experience of dual impulses in the self and each reader's need for active membership in the human community. [Emphasis original] (Scheick 291)

The structure of the book, then, is about prying into those things which are better left untouched, for it is not just Henry Jekyll who is destroyed by learning forbidden things -- his boyhood friend, Hastie Lanyon, apparently dies of despair after learning the facts of the case. (Stevenson 52) Further, when Faust is his own Mephistopheles, urging himself to transform himself into the Monster, it is no longer in the exchanges of the three figures that the drama is located, but in the horrified witness -- in this case, Gabriel Utterson. The witness, by the very fact of being a witness, retains the connections to the world through which information and revelation reaches him, and thus stands in
stark contrast to the Faust figure. As Block puts it:

In his search for Hyde, Utterson orients himself to the external world through his communication with characters like Richard Enfield, Dr. Lanyon, and Jekyll's servant, Poole. He tests his perceptions and his sense of self against theirs. Jekyll, on the other hand, is forced by Hyde's criminal acts to forego such contacts lest a public transformation into Hyde reveal his secret. Without such orientation to his fellow creatures, the disruptive experiences which his experiment occasions make him succumb to illusion and madness. (455)

Here, too, the re-assertion of connection to the greater whole that comes with the day of reckoning is transformed by the movement of the Faust dynamic inward into a single character. Instead of attaching to the judgement as a moral, as is done in Marlowe's ending warning not to "practice more than heavenly power permits" (V, iii, 27) or in Frankenstein's telling Walton to "seek happiness in tranquility and avoid ambition, even if it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself ..." (Shelley 340), the reassertion of connection in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is identical with the day of reckoning. For, as Chesterton says, in his response to Stevenson's detractors:

The real stab of the story is not in the discovery that one man is two men; but in the discovery that the two men are one man. After all the diverse wandering and warring of those two incompatible beings, there was still one man born and only one
man buried ... the tale is a tragedy ... the point of the story is not that a man can cut himself off from his conscience, but that he cannot. The surgical operation is fatal in the story. It is an amputation of which both parts die. Jekyll ... in dying, declares the conclusion of the matter: that the load of man's moral struggle is bound upon him and cannot be escaped. (54)

[There is a] cloven hoof in the cloven spirit called up by the Jekyll experiment. That moment in which Jekyll finds his own formula fail him, through an accident he had never foreseen, is simply the supreme moment in every story of a man buying power from / hell; the moment when he finds the flaw in the deed. Such a moment comes to Macbeth and Faustus and a hundred others; and the whole point of it is that nothing is really secure, least of all a Satanist security. The moral is that the devil is a liar, and more especially a traitor; that he is more dangerous to his friends than his foes .... " (55-56)

Because it was the best example I could find of a purely interior, psychological Faust story, and because it brought the character of the witness so prominently forward, I added **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde** to the short list of materials.

Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is Faustian in a very direct and narrow sense; a letter of his to Conan Doyle states explicitly that he chose as his model Goethe's poem. (Ackroyd 7) He later repeated this claim in letters to two magazines in defense of the novel. (Wilde "Letters" 83-86) Indeed the equivalence is easy to see; Dorian Gray matches neatly to Faust, Lord Henry Wotton to Mephistopheles, Sybil Vane to Gretchen.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* is thus a novel in the Gothic
tradition whose Faustian roots are directly acknowledged by its author. But more than this, the novel has interest in its extreme decadence compared to the world of its model — it is difficult to find anything Dorian Gray wishes to accomplish other than to acquire attractive possessions and to look physically beautiful. Harry Wotton tempts him into the vow that begins his destruction merely by convincing him that

You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray ... and Beauty is a form of Genius -- is higher, indeed, than Genius, as it needs no explanation. It is of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or spring-time, or the reflection in dark waters of the silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has divine right of sovereignty. It makes princes of those who have it. You smile? Ah! When you have lost it you won't smile ... (45)

Yet it is only the world of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* that is decadent; beneath the surface, the Faust moral retains all its vigor:

Although it also depicts a Jekyll/Hyde duality in the self and seems to accent the consequences of the egocentric pursuit of a transcendent beauty beyond time and flesh, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* certainly differs from Stevenson's ethical concerns of the sort reflected in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* ... Yet few readers close Wilde's book without a sense of some moral. Whether Wilde's novel is or is not intrinsically ethical remains a moot issue, whereas the fact that most readers respond to the work as if it were ethical in message is highly pertinent. (Scheick 291)

Furthermore, despite the Edwardian parlor veneer of the
first few chapters, the book quickly moves into a
Faustian/Gothic assault on the body fully as gruesome as the
beheadings and manglings in Doctor Faustus, the
grave-robbings, butchery, and bare-handed murders in
Frankenstein, or the sadistic club-murder in Dr. Jekyll and
Mr. Hyde. Sibyl Vane dies in ghastly convulsions after
deliberately swallowing prussic acid (Wilde Dorian Gray
128); Basil Hallward is stabbed to death in a scene that
receives six paragraphs of loving detail (192), then carved
into pieces and dissolved in an acid bath (208) and flushed
down the drain (209); James Vane is killed by a shotgun
blast that virtually cuts him in half (239), and we are
treated to a detailed description of the body (245-6); and
finally, the body of Dorian Gray is so distorted and twisted
after his death that "it was not till they examined the
rings that they recognized who it was." (264)

In addition to its superb handling of Faustian issues, the
fine quality of the writing, and especially the sharp
characterizations carried mostly through dialogue, led me to
include The Picture of Dorian Gray in the short list.

Because I strongly wanted some material drawing on current
events and issues to be included in the short list, and
because as discussed above the development of the atomic
bomb seemed to offer somewhat more potential than other
possible topics, I also included the atomic bomb materials in the short list. This was not without some considerable problems in finding and drawing Faustian parallels. First of all, nearly all the scientific work leading to the atomic bomb had been done in the pre-World War II internationalist atmosphere of nuclear physics. (Compton 6-13) Where in every Faustian story, the seeking of knowledge is inseparable from the seeking of an illegitimate power or gain, in the real world history of physics there was very little power-seeking as such, at least at a level above faculty politics. (Groueff 10-12) Further, before Szilard's groundbreaking work of the late thirties, there was an almost complete disdain for application. (Rhodes 214-225)

Indeed, at the first hint of application, in every country, the work was immediately taken out of the hands of scientists and given over to military control. Harteck and Groth's letter to the German War Office led to the immediate conscription of Germany's nuclear physicists in June 1939. (Irving 36) Less than two weeks later in Britain, G.P. Thomson and Leo Szilard's approaches to Churchill and Tizard led to a quick ban on the publication of atomic research, and the formation of a research group in the Admiralty. (39) The Japanese engineer who began atomic research there in April 1940, Takeo Yasuda, was actually a lieutenant general
in the Imperial Army. (Shapley 152) In the United States, the Manhattan Project was placed within the Army in spring of 1942. (Groves 10) And by 1943, when the Soviets entered the race in earnest, the Soviet nuclear effort was placed under control of the Red Army. (Rhodes 502)

To maintain any resemblance to Faust, without falsifying history, I found I had to reduce the whole atomic bomb story to just three points of congruence. (Diary 10-29-87) These were:

- the physicist's realization of the power in their hands, and their summoning of political authority. Note that it was no longer the atom, but the politician/general, who played the role of Mephistopheles.

- the full realization of power, with the success of the "squash court reactor" at the University of Chicago, symbolized by the code message to Washington that announced it: "The Italian navigator has landed in the New World."

- the decision in turn to unleash the atom against human flesh, and thus finally against ourselves; but note again that scientific and engineering participation in the decision was limited mostly to target selection -- the actual decision to drop the atomic bomb was made by
military and political leaders.

Though the parallel was quite weak, I decided to retain the atomic bomb materials in the hope that stronger connections could be found, so that some of the force of a contemporary issue could be brought into the production. (Diary 9-13-87)

The final short list of material to be worked from was Marlowe, Goethe, Frankenstein, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The Picture of Dorian Gray, and the atomic bomb materials.

With the basic works selected, I turned to the idea of a unifying concept. I found it in the world of rock and roll -- clearly a province for Faust's rampant egomania, if anywhere could be said to be. The idea of using a "rock concert" metaphor for the show came by late August:

Overall look like rock concert: striking images -- disconnected, hyping of emotions to screaming pt., glorification of joys/torments of single figure against big blank ground. Also pl'i's [plugs in] to general narciss'm & grandiosity of rock environment esp. punk club scene -- 70's. Exaggeration of own importance. [sic] (Diary 8-22-87)

The last refers to several punk/new-wave clubs in Chicago, St. Louis, and Detroit that I frequented in 1976-78. Despite the small size of the circle (e.g. there were probably fewer than 300 people involved in St. Louis), or perhaps because of it, many of the performers became obsessively competitive.
in the extremity of their performances, risking and often accepting physical injuries to play to the crowd and hence gratify their egos. This cutting of all bounds in the reach for power and glory seemed to me exactly the right feeling for a character who could say "Had I as many souls as there be stars, / I'd give them all for Mephistopheles." (I, iii, 102-3)

Thus, by the beginning of Fall Quarter 1987, I had a list of materials from which to work and the beginnings of an approach.

The Faust Course: Fall 1987

When I began to set up a class schedule and syllabus, I realized that students might need or request access to my records of their performance to resolve grading issues. At the same time I wanted to preserve the freedom with which I had written and speculated in the Diary. I therefore set up a second notebook, which I called the Class Record.

In practice, the two became distinct at an early date. The Diary continued to be where I worked out problems on paper, scribbled stray thoughts, and recorded impressions from some of my research and speculation. In the Class Record, I found that I was recording, as objectively as I
could, exactly what happened in class each day, together with consensus decisions of the group. Thus, in the text below, material taken from the Diary is probably more representative of my personal approaches to the issues; material from the Class Record usually records how other people approached the questions we developed in class.

The decision to extend participation beyond the class

The class for Fall Quarter had a somewhat disappointing enrollment of ten students. Further, only four of those students were juniors or seniors in drama.

This was despite a considerable effort to recruit members through posters, visiting classes, and conferring with selected students who had auditioned for Fall Quarter productions. The major problem seemed to be scheduling conflicts with a voice/speech class important for acting students and a dance class.

Another problem was difficulty in communicating the actual offer of the class -- that students who passed the class were assured of casting. Most students seemed to believe that intrinsically this required almost all the offered roles to be "crowd fillers."

A third and usually unstated problem, which I learned of
later in casual conversation with several drama students, was perceptual. Some students seemed to feel that if anyone could get cast by simply passing the course, being cast would offer little gain in prestige or visibility within the Department of Drama/Dance. This reaction was certainly understandable: competition for roles is normally keen and some acting-emphasis students may go for several quarters without a significant role, and thus an "open admission" cast struck at the whole basis of the implied merit system on which casting rests. Seen in this way, enrolling in the Faust course could appear to be an admission of insecurity or of failure.

Whatever the cause, this led to an important decision: I decided to hold supplementary callbacks and auditions in December. Several reasons justified this change of plans. First of all, it was my feeling that I did not want to be "trapped" by being restricted to the relatively small numbers (including only two women) and pool of experience available within the class. Secondly, my vision of the final production had been one of large scale spectacle that seemed to demand crowds on stage. Also, several of the more experienced class members had considerable strengths in design and technical areas and thus might be better used in other areas of the production, so that it seemed desirable
to be able to fill at least smaller roles with other people. Finally, more experienced people had to be regarded as "at risk" to be cast in other shows or given major design assignments, so there was a real prospect of losing vital people further down the road. (Diary 9-30-87)

The decision to hold secondary auditions was made quickly; the following, from my diary, dated 9-30-87, summarizes it: "Wish class had been bigger; well, lots of bodies at fall auditions. Always are."

I failed to foresee several important consequences of this decision. In retrospect, I believe that it was wrong, and the decision could have been made otherwise. The arguments above essentially stated only that I was afraid to trust the production to the skills that might be discovered or developed in the class, and wanted to reserve to myself the position of dictatorial director. I was essentially conceiving of the class as a way to "think out loud" in front of the other participants, and thus to have sympathetic members in the cast and design team who would need minimal explanations. I was not considering that the class members, after a quarter of working together regularly on creative projects, some of which would be production-oriented, might be fully equipped to work together as an artistic team that a production could be
developed from through group explorations, improvisations, and discussions. Rather, I continued to work with the concept of the auteur director imposing a carefully engineered production onto the cast. Although the course itself was set up to provide me with partners in creation, I was still planning to use them as compliant subordinates — and therefore thought that one source of subordinates was likely to be as good as another. (Diary 9-24-87, 9-30-87, 10-2-87, 10-8-87)

Nowhere is the error clearer than in the data shown in Table II in the appendix. The final company, at the time of production, was composed of seven former members of the class and four people added in later. Only one of the four added ranked, in my subjective judgement, in the top half of the actors, and in fact, though not perfect, the student's performance in the class was generally a good predictor of his or her performance in the show.

This can be seen graphically in Figure II. If we split performances by ranking into equal-sized high and low groups, and similarly split class participation/grade into equal sized groups, four categories are formed: high grade/high performance rank, high grade/low performance rank, low grade/high performance rank, and low grade/low performance rank. If participation in the course had really
not mattered much, as I was thinking at the time I decided to extend participation, the boxes should be roughly equally populated, since the two factors would be unrelated. On the other hand, if the two factors were perfectly correlated, only the low/low and high/high boxes would be populated. As can be seen in Figure II, this was much more nearly the case. The course actually made a very large difference in the quality of student participation in the production.

Furthermore, there was at least one area of relative success in which working strictly with prepared people was critical. As will be described later, my working procedure with the musicians was much more nearly the one originally intended for a group made up entirely of class members (and with one minor exception, all members of the band had taken the course). In general, the music for the show was considered one of its strong points.

Given that my whole purpose in teaching the class in the first place had been predicated on that idea being true, the mistake involved in abandoning it so quickly and easily at the beginning of the project has to be considered a grave mistake. In the final analysis this may have been my biggest single error: I did not trust, or stick to, the process I had initially planned to investigate, and supposedly made a commitment to.
Teaching the class

The first syllabus for the course called for six works to be read: Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, Goethe's *Faust Part I* (selected excerpts), Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and McPhee's *The Curve of Binding Energy*. There was also an additional reference text, Rhodes's *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*. *The Curve of Binding Energy* is a series of conversations, interviews, and explorations, conducted by John McPhee, with and about Ted Taylor, a leading designer of American fission warheads at Los Alamos during the 1950's and 1960's. I chose the book because Taylor struck me as a kind of "repentant Faustus, caught on at the eleventh hour." *Diary 8-4-87* Rhodes's book is a straightforward history of the development of nuclear physics from the early days of atomic theory in the 1890s to Mike One, the first hydrogen-fusion bomb; I used the text primarily as a resource, although two students did read parts of it and one student read it in its entirety.

The original syllabus told the class that:

Your typical week will look something like this: you will read, or re-read, part or all of a play, history, or novel. You will scribble your thoughts about it in your journal. You will turn those thoughts into an assigned creative project -- a monolog for performance, a scene with a partner, a prop you construct, a set design, a
group of drawings. You will workshop your creation with your group, and probably revise your work. Some or all of you will then present your finished work to the class... you will be required to keep a journal, which you will hand in on alternate weeks. There will be assignments given for the journal, but I expect at least one third of the material in it to be self-generated.

In practice the load proved too heavy for a class made up almost entirely of freshmen and sophomores. Younger students simply could not respond freely to works they felt an incomplete understanding of; the terror of "being wrong" was just too great. Moreover, actual exploration in class -- reading scenes aloud, discussing the result, and then re-reading the scene, sometimes several times -- turned out to be critical to giving the students enough understanding and confidence to pursue creative projects. Finally, the first week's journal submissions -- free of the fear of failure because no quality evaluations were imposed -- were much more interesting and worth reading than the creative projects which supposedly drew from them.

The second syllabus was designed to play to strengths and reward desired results more effectively. It was built around weekly journal assignments, three creative projects (one in performance, one in design, and one in an area to be chosen by the student), and student critiques of other student work.

In practice I decided to accept some journals late due to
the generally strained schedules of drama majors. Most students seemed to need to hand in a late journal one or two times; all but two of these delays were for one week or less, so compliance with the weekly journal was substantial but not perfect.

Projects created by the students included, among others:

- Writing and performing original songs
- drawings and paintings of characters and scenes from the texts
- performances of selections from all five texts
- cartoons and sketches
- costume renderings
- junk sculpture
- a design for a program/poster
- set designs
- various self-written texts in performance

Discoveries during class

Faust Part 1 had originally been provided almost entirely for contrast in the syllabus, to give the students access to the Romantic stream in Faustian material. It was supposed, in part, to define what Faust would not be for our production.

However, despite our use of a somewhat stilted
translation, students responded very warmly to Faust Part I. The key factor for most of them seemed to be the addition of the flesh-and-blood Gretchen as a counterpart to the spirit Helen. (Class record 34) There was a strong sense that the two works fit together, with Faust Part I the "modern" response to Marlowe. Further, Goethe's ribald humor, continuing and developing the stream that begins in Marlowe's Wagner scenes and runs deeply through the German Faust materials, seemed to take some of the intellectual chill off the theme. I agreed to reconsider the weight I had been assigning to the Romantic tradition. (Diary 10-22-87)

On the whole this was a positive gain to the project. The inclusion of Gretchen became a way to dramatize Faust's conflicting desires. Gretchen provided an opposing archetype to Helen, so that the philosophic question of "which position will Faust take philosophically and spiritually?" could be played as "which woman does he really want, and how does he want her?" (This will be discussed at greater length below, under "The characters.") Further, this was the first really strong response that the class had shown to any of the issues presented to them, and validating it with my quick, enthusiastic counter-response helped create the working environment I wanted in the
classroom. (Diary 10-25-87)

On the other hand, the decision to make greater use of the Romantic Faust tradition could have been much better handled and exploited. Had it been allowed to overturn more preset decisions than I actually allowed it to, it might have created a large central discontinuity in the material that in turn might have provided a better dramatic expression of the disconnection theme. It was not until much later, when the production was actually in rehearsal, that I came to realize through conversations with the actor playing the Faust character that the critical issue addressed by mixing the two traditions is viewpoint. Goethe's vision is Faust seen sympathetically from the inside; Faust's intentions count a great deal, and the actual process of damnation very little. Marlowe presents the story dispassionately from the outside, and his Faustus is comparatively unmotivated. Thus there is a latent tension between Romantic subjective intentions and Classical objective actions. The irony of this eventually provided much of the energy of the character, as we watched him struggle to retain his ideas in the face of their horrifying consequences. If I had firmly committed to the decision to bring the Romantic material back in -- which is to say, if I had not done it as a concession to the class, but allowed the class's perspective
to genuinely convert me to their way of thinking -- Doc F might have been a much more engaging and thus more horrifying character.

Also, a more whole-hearted decision might have allowed the operas, with their wealth of themes and depth of feeling, to also influence the production more. Given the number of talented musicians involved, and the possible solution to the chronic problem in Doc F of people standing around talking, the failure to fully exploit the class's response to Faust Part I was quite unfortunate.

Though I had been able to be flexible to some extent about the re-introduction of the Romantic tradition, in another area, it seemed necessary to take a harder line. As the class studied the atomic bomb materials, some clear problems began to emerge with drawing Faustian parallels. These were the same problems that had developed in my research, discussed above; there was simply a very poor fit to the story, and the more one learned, the poorer the fit became. Ted Taylor, to cite one example from class discussion, built bombs for about fifteen years with no apparent corruption of his personal integrity; he did not flee Los Alamos in horror, but simply decided that what he regarded as the overriding goal -- world peace -- would be better served by disarmament than by an American lead in the arms race.
The parallel to Faust was quite weak, with a distinct "tacked on" feel; several students commented in their journals that the atomic bomb material simply did not "feel Faustian." Again, to preserve a possible connection to the real, contemporary world, I decided not to cross the material off yet.

The atomic bomb materials also led to a critical question, one which I consciously dropped from the production, perhaps too easily.

Merely because a thing is widely believed and often repeated, we cannot assume it is true. It is possible that the Faust legend does not accurately reflect what really happens in the world, but is simply the reaction of the older system of symbols against the arrival of the modern world.

It is a truism that the modern industrial era arose in large measure from the breakdown of the old traditional society's web of connection. Marlowe himself seems to have been obsessed by power in an environment without God; it is hardly surprising that his interest in power lead Marlowe toward the Faust story. (Levin 161)

But the notion that the trade of connection for power was a bad one, a deal with the devil and thus ultimately a cheat, is not necessarily true, no matter how many people
believe it. Most societies prior to the modern one, measured in terms of extracted surplus value, have been more exploitive, not less. Income distribution is fairer in industrial societies than in peasant societies; poor people in the United States today have better diets, medical care, and life expectancies than kings had three hundred years ago. (Thorner 205) For the great majority of the population, the disruption of community and the severing of traditional ties has resulted in a society that is greatly to be preferred, at least from the material standpoint. If one reads it as political allegory, the Faust legend expresses a fear that has in fact failed to materialize.

The class seemed to find this issue disturbing when I raised it, during the seventh and eighth weeks of the quarter. The question I put to them was:

Do you believe that the Faustian kind of power leads inevitably to destruction, as Marlowe's Doctor Faustus seems to say it does? If you don't, how can you commit yourself to a production based on it? Are there parts or senses in which Faust is true for you?

After much discussion, the class consensus seemed to be that although the truth of the Faust legend at the social and political level was problematic, there was another level on which it made believable sense.

Individuals can achieve a sort of power by disconnecting from the people around them, by not allowing the feelings
and reactions of others to affect them. The clearest example of this psychological kind of illegitimate empowerment through the disavowal of human connection, among the materials we studied, was Henry Jekyll's progress in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The stages of the process were:

- at first, a soaring sense of freedom, liberation, and limitless possibility: "I began to profit by the strange immunities of my person. I ... could plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment, like a schoolboy, strip off these lendings and spring headlong into the sea of liberty." (Stevenson 57)

- later a need to push farther and farther, trying to recover sensation as one becomes increasingly jaded:

The pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were ... undignified; I would scarce use a harder term. But in the hands of Edward Hyde, they soon began to turn toward the monstrous ... This familiar that I called out of my own soul, and sent forth alone to do his good pleasure, was a being inherently malign and villainous; his every act and thought centered on self; drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture of another; relentless like a man of stone. Henry Jekyll stood at times aghast before the acts of Edward Hyde; but the situation was apart from ordinary laws, and insidiously relaxed the grasp of conscience. (58)

- finally, the destruction of exactly what one loves most and therefore retained a connection to. In this particular
case, Henry Jekyll himself is gone, for the body found by Utterson and Poole is that of Edward Hyde. (69)

Nor is this connection merely fictional. Much the same process has been observed in the deterioration of young alcoholics as they sever connection with their friends and family and move into the drug culture. (Newcomb, Bentler, and Collins 481)

Thus the class, and I with them, came to feel that the social/political meaning of Faust was of dubious truth and value compared with its clearly valid personal/psychological meaning. This, in turn, seemed to have several important implications for a performance.

First of all, as noted above, the mind's connection to the world is through the body, so a Faust will be at war with his body. This immediately ties into the destruction of Dr. Faustus by his body being torn into pieces at the end of Marlowe's play, to Dr. Jekyll's voluntary drinking of the potion to become the physically hideous Mr. Hyde, and to Dorian Gray's complete dissociation of the physical record (created by the deterioration of his body) from his life experiences. Further, operations on the body -- Faust's rape of Gretchen, Victor Frankenstein's dissectings and grave-robbings -- also become issues.

This preferring/privileging of the personal and the
psychological faces of Faust over the social and political ones strongly reinforced the decision to de-emphasize the atomic bomb material.

Finally, and most importantly, the story could not be told with great sympathy for the Faust figure; it would necessarily be one of self-destruction brought about by the aggressive pursuit of selfish ends, and thus the central figure was necessarily unattractive. (Diary 11-3-87) If so, the interest could not come from our engagement with a sympathetic, though flawed, protagonist, but from a kind of "freak-show" appeal: the audience would be invited to view Faust's self-destruction, and his crimes. (Diary 11-20-87) Whereas a more likeable figure would require treatment with more elision, the attraction of this Faust would depend on the audience's desire to see what happened next rather than on their "rooting for" him. Faust's crimes had to be presented visibly and as far as possible without compromise. To borrow a cinematic expression, the camera must not blink.

Perhaps the most valuable part of the class process was the requirement that every student critique nine projects by other students. For each project presentation, three "primary critics" were appointed. After presentation, the primary critics would each discuss the work for one to five
minutes; immediately following this, the rest of the class gave "quick cuts," one-minute-or-shorter critiques.
Finally, after everyone had spoken, the presenter could defend if he or she wished. Although I had started with the practice of giving a short "wrap-up" at the end of the process, as critiques became stronger and more effective I found that the wrap-up was usually unnecessary.

The primary critics were asked to evaluate according to Goethe's Triad: What did the artist appear, to you, to be attempting? Did the attempt succeed for you? Do you think it was worth attempting? (Lukacs 93) The critics were normally given two to five minutes to organize notes after the presentation, and then spoke from notes.

For about the first two weeks of presentations, I found that my wrap-up was usually focused on a critique of the critics, chiefly to prevent excessive "stroking" and failures to point out obvious errors and shortfalls. As students gained confidence, the critical process seemed to become internalized, and students began to give sharper, more pointed critiques. At about the same time, most presenters gave up defenses as such, using their time instead to ask for clarifications from the critics. (Class record 54)

The improvement in critiques showed in other ways as
well. The quick cuts gained greatly in precision and effectiveness. Artist defensiveness, though never absent, came to address the given criticism much more closely. Primary critiques became much more structured. In general, communication became much clearer, again judging from the observation that critique-question and critique-rebuttal tended to a direct match much more often. (*Diary 11-24-87*)

I was generally very happy with the results of this process.

The critique process, and the ensuing discussions in class, led to the development of some specialized vocabulary. These expressions did not originate in the class, but they did come to be crucial to our way of talking about the basic principles we felt ourselves to be working toward, and somewhat more specialized in meaning than they had been.

Three terms became very important in our discussions: the concepts of discovery, completion, and simplicity.

A discovery is the creation, acknowledgement, and incorporation of a piece of information which fundamentally alters the view of the text. Discoveries are made in a process of "intentional action," presentation, audience reaction, and re-evaluation.

I learned the term "intentional action" in Dr. Randy
Bolton's advanced acting classes at the University of Montana; I have adopted it here for my own purposes, and what follows does not necessarily reflect Dr. Bolton's views. An intentional action is an action taken by an artist, not necessarily in performance or in creating a final product, but with full attention and concentration, to explore a situation, issue, or theme. To some extent an intentional action is the counterpart of the pencil studies a sculptor does before beginning work, the character biographies some novelists do before writing in earnest, or improvising a scene before learning lines or blocking. It differs from all these, however, in being more open-ended with regard to goal -- an intentional action is often undertaken before any specific work is planned; more conceptual --- an intentional action is aimed more at the underlying questions of a contemplated work than at the specific questions of implementing a planned work; and less rigidly edited -- an intentional action is usually not so much directly included in the final work as it is allowed to influence it.

A perception brought about by an intentional action is then used to create or inform something to be presented to an audience. The perception becomes the core of a performance, presentation, or art piece which is addressed
to the rest of the group. Ideally the created work is presented without comment or annotation from the presenter; the rest of the company then discusses and responds to it.

If several members of the group agree on a response, and the response is fitting to the initial perception, the newly-created information has been acknowledged. The final step, completing the discovery, is when the acknowledged information causes the group to re-evaluate the original source material in light of the new information. As the new perception is incorporated into the group's shared view of the text, the process of discovery is completed.

In the class, discoveries happened as part of a process of experimental trial and error. In the intentional action phase, an actor, designer, or other artist selected a piece of text and a way to work on it which was deliberately unusual and quite often counter-production (though not counter-productive). For example, Michael Harlan chose to try exploring a costuming concept in sculptural form (Class Record 74), and Heather Jami Rogers performed a scene that was referred to in narrative summary but not described in The Picture of Dorian Gray (since the scene involved the breakdown and collapse of an actress performing a role, and the play and scene were stated, her intentional action was
to treat the narrative summary as directions for a performance of a specific text). (Class Record 87)

One prominent example was Ron Righter's performance of a scene from Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In the scene in the book, Mr. Hyde pounds on the door of Dr. Jekyll's friend Hastie Lanyon, bursts in, and begins making immediate demands of Lanyon. When called on to present, Ron Righter got up, left the room (closing the door behind him), and pounded on the door until one of us opened it. He then charged past the student opening the door, into the middle of the group, and began the monologue, taking it aggressively to his surprised audience. (Class Record 62)

In each case the choice of unusual approach was pursued seriously, without much apparent consciousness that the decision was unusual, at least after the commitment to the choice was made. The design piece or the performance emerged from the process and was presented and discussed in the usual way, but the open discussion after the critique (usually not necessary but almost always the indicator that a discovery was in process) quickly came to focus on the question: "Does this piece, or performance, reflect a purely personal response to the material, or has it drawn our attention to some important, overlooked implication of the text?" (Class Record 68) When the consensus answer to this
question was yes, the acknowledgement state of discovery had
happened.

For example, in our discussion of the above three projects, we found several important things:

- Michael Harlan's junk sculpture of the Frankenstein monster had a proportionately-oversized solid metal cylindrical phallus that looked extremely threatening and brutal. The "monster" was made up entirely of hard metal surfaces, completely unyielding. The image of brute power and complete untouchability led us to the idea that rape would be central to Faustian sexuality -- an idea that found immediate support in Frankenstein and Faust Part I. (Class Record 74)

- Heather Jami Rogers brought forth an important aspect of the Gretchen figure. We had all thought of her primarily as a simple victim of disaster, and thus in a serious but somewhat bathetic and sentimental way. In her performance, we could see that because Sybil Vane/Gretchen takes herself so seriously, she become finally a little ludicrous, and her vanity is an important flaw in her character. She still engages our sympathy, but her smug excesses of virtue make her a bit laughable, especially when she takes a pratfall. This led to the realization that through slapstick, the
audience could be brought to some sympathy with Faust's aggressions against Gretchen, thus making them partly culpable when the ultimate brutality of her destruction was presented. (Class Record 87)

- Ron Righter's presentation of the piece from Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde called us to recognize that an incident which Stevenson buries under several layers of nested narrative, brought forward into the present, was in fact highly dramatic and striking, stating beautifully the central idea of the attraction of forbidden knowledge:

Will you be wise? Will you be guided? ... or has the greed of human curiosity too much command of you? Think before you answer, for it shall be done as you decide. As you decide, you shall be left as you were before, and neither richer nor wiser ... Or if you shall so prefer to choose, a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power shall be laid open to you here in this room upon the instant; and your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan. (Stevenson 50, Class Record 62)

Discoveries thus became a major purpose of the in-class presentations. It was observed, however, by several students that discoveries rarely occurred when the project was oriented only toward discovery. (Class Record 81) It had to be pursued seriously as a real work of art; further, it needed two properties that we later called "completion" and "simplicity."
A work was said to be completed if it could be appreciated by the group without comment or annotation by its creator. Completion thus entailed being sufficiently processed to have an access to the audience and to at least attempt an answer to the questions it raised. (Class Record 77)

The absence of access was a serious flaw in completion, which probably prevented discovery frequently. Many pieces and performances were weakened by being in a kind of private code, alluding to personal experiences of the artist or to highly specialized knowledge. Consequently, though meaningful and significant to the artist, they simply failed to reach us except through a filter of post hoc explanation. A completed project was one with a calculated, well-prepared access.

Further, a completed project did not merely pose a question, letting the discovery, if there was to be one, emerge from the class's discussion after the critique. A completed project attempted to propose and defend an answer or a proposition; it thus required us not merely to consider it, but to accept it or refute it. Trying to answer the question made it necessary for us to search for the answer; merely posing the question allowed the group to merely discuss without coming to any conclusion, always an easier process but not usually a productive one. (Diary 10-28-87)
For example, Russ Gay did a quite complete oil pastel of the Frankenstein monster, working from descriptions in the novel. In the course of doing this, he did considerable anatomical research, because the monster was stated to be both more than eight feet tall and preternaturally strong, and in fact eight foot tall humans are much weaker in proportion to their size than normal humans. Thus he studied how the monster would have to be proportioned differently from a human being -- chest spacing for the much larger heart required, thicker bones, longer fingers with larger muscles to allow him to hang onto the heavier objects he could lift. He did several pencil drawings, modifying anatomical charts and observations of his own body, to get the underlying skeleton and musculature right. Finally, he prepared a detailed, master pencil drawing without skin -- and then did the oil pastel work over the drawing, obliterating his anatomical work on one level, but making it fully accessible to us on a more important one. Though we could not see the extra ribs and muscle attachments or the modified joints, we were able to see the monster as the characters in the novel would see him -- as a gestalt of a distorted human being. The effect was far more powerful than if Russ Gay had given us an hour long anatomy lesson with slides. (Diary 11-20-87, Class Record 66)
The term "simple," applied to a project in class, was the antonym of "busy." Initially, many projects tended to scatter focus among many possible objectives, as if in the hope that a random shot might happen to hit on something important and thus justify the project as a whole. Several students seemed to be averse to running the risk of a complete miss that accompanies a tight focus.

As the spirit of acceptance-to-enable-discovery developed in the class, this "shotgunning" became less common, but persisted. The critical discussion process began to focus on issues connected with this, and in the sixth week of the quarter, the group as a whole worked out a formulation that "it is more desirable to have a small, very highly selected group of closely related details than a larger, less selected, looser set of details ... " (Class record 91)

I would refine this further by specifying that "closely related" in this context means that nearly every detail is recognizably related to nearly every other detail. My guess is that a small, closely related set of signs will often yield more interesting returns to exploration than a big, loose one because the audience encounters signs one at a time, moment by moment, and the perceived richness of the moment is probably closely related to the number of other signs that the present sign points forward and backward to;
the more closely related, the more every sign gains power from synecdoche. (My thinking on this has been heavily influenced by Foucault 131-159 and by Sperber's essay on Levi-Strauss).

For example, Frank Vigil chose, early on, to do a set of single-panel cartoons, scattering shots at various scenes from various works read up to that point. The Vigil drawings consisted of "Dr. Faustus as child making deal w/bully and crossing his fingers; Faust Mephisto & Gretchen as a heavy metal band, accompanying face drawings of each; faces of all 3, also, separately; teenage Victor Frankenstein masturbating, caption 'making something dead come to life.' [sic]" (Class Record 29) Discussion paid scant attention to anything except the drawing of Gretchen, which had a strangely fascinating mixture of innocence under a very decadent exterior, expressing a sort of longing to be seduced. A "simpler" presentation, focused on a set of studies of Gretchen, might have yielded much more in the way of discovery. Later in the quarter, Frank Vigil constructed an artifact, a lifescale mockup of a workable atomic bomb, and built a performance around demonstrating it to us. This work was much simpler, and much richer in its connotations; class discussion of it took up nearly the whole class period, and could easily have gone much longer if time had
permitted. (Class Record 117)

Transition to Production: December 1987

**The characters: first step toward a script**

The problem of tying the show together was uppermost in my mind as early as a diary entry dated September 30, 1987, and many of my notes during October and early November dealt with this issue. Two decisions are found in a note dated November 15: the show would narrate all five or six materials (the decision not to include the atomic bomb materials was not yet made) chronologically, and casting would be by parallel character (e.g. the actor playing Marlowe's Faustus would also play Goethe's Faust, Victor Frankenstein, Dr. Jekyll, Dorian Gray, and possibly Enrico Fermi, Leo Szilard, or Robert Oppenheimer). My notes on this end with the hope that this would "point audience toward story under the stories." (Diary 11/15/88)

As the work continued, it became clear that the script would not be fully ready before the scheduled supplementary auditions; thus it became important to have a list of characters and to know a good deal about them. Moreover, I had come to see the "story under the stories" as a story of interactions between the archetypal characters who inhabited it. The fundamental dynamic of this story was to be
disconnection to gain power, followed by disaster caused by wielding power without connection. It seemed to follow that the story of a Faust figure should be told in terms of his connections to the world, which would mean his connections to the other characters. Thus much of what the story was about would be defined by the connections of other characters to Faust, and of the progressive severing of those connections. I arrived, after some consideration, at the following set of archetypal characters in the story under the stories:

**DOC F**, the Faust figure, is the one who severs connections to gain freedom of action. In the process, he destroys or mars every human being with which he comes into connection.

The stories agree on the process but differ on the motives. Marlowe’s Faustus is hardly a character at all, in the modern sense of a figure whose role, character, and actions are interrelated but separable, and his motives are diverse, scattered, and never clearly stated; often worldly ambition (e.g. I,i, 56-62) or delight in knowledge (II,ii — the encounter with the Seven Deadly Sins), sometimes sensual pleasure, as in his speech to Valdes and Cornelius (I, i, 105-117), and toward the end, naked fear of Mephistopheles mixed with an erotic passion for Helen (V, i).

One reason that the reasons seem so mixed is that they are
all rationalizations after the fact, or ways that Faustus talks himself into continuing. In the first line of Act I, it is clear that Faustus has already decided his course; this is a play about the consequences of the decision rather than about the decision. One might almost say that Faustus has no real psychology; Marlowe was not to know what happens when a man makes a pact with the Devil, not what causes a man to do such a thing or how he decides to. (Brooke 97-99)

Goethe's Faust, on the other hand, is a dusty old scholar who very clearly gives himself over not merely to the world of spirit, but specifically to the dark, sensual underside; much of his motivation is to seek the pleasures he missed through a long life of dry study, and in that pleasure to find the transcendence his studies have failed to produce (lines 398-425).

In the nineteenth century horror novels, motivations are generally clearer and simpler, but they lose much of their ability to convince us that anyone would pursue them to the point of utter destruction. Victor Frankenstein seeks fame and scientific immortality (Shelley 77); Henry Jekyll a way to indulge in various never-named vices without soiling his reputation (Stevenson 57); and Dorian Gray nothing more than perpetual physical attractiveness. (Wilde 49)

The difficulty in fitting together sharp differences of
motivation in the later sources led me back to Marlowe's approach: it mattered more what Doc F did than why he did it. This decision had implications that did not become clear until later. First and most important, it meant that most of Doc F's statements about his reasons would be self-contradictory and hence devalued, inviting the audience to disbelieve them. This implication of hypocrisy would undermine the audience's belief in Doc F's good qualities, and that belief was essential for both audience identification and a sense of real tragedy. Further, since the unreliability of Doc F's statements about his motivations put most of the burden of maintaining sympathy on his actions and relations, and these grew increasingly ugly as the story progressed, whatever empathy Doc F had from the audience would weaken through the course of the play. I believe that these were significant factors in distancing the audience from the material.

**Mephistopheles** is the being who tempts Doc F, secures his allegiance to Hell, maintains that allegiance by threats and bribes, and finally rejoices in the destruction of Doc F at the end of the story. In Marlowe, his pure, unalloyed malevolence shines through in his last speech:

*Faustus:* O, thou bewitching fiend, 'twas thy temptation
Hath robbed me of eternal happiness.

MEPHISTOPHELES: I do confess it, Faustus, and rejoice; 'Twas I that, when thou wert i' the way to heaven, Damned up thy passage; when thou took' st the book, To view the Scriptures, then I turned the leaves And led thine eye. What, weepst thou? 'Tis too late, despair, farewell: Fools that will laugh on earth must weep in hell. (V ii 88-96)

Goethe's Devil is more suave and sophisticated, intended to charm rather than alarm the audience:

... during the first performances of the drama, in 1829 ... the director, August Klingemann, prescribed that the actor was to perform the role of Mephistopheles "with the avoidance of everything gruesome or frightening, instead to carry it through dashingly, adroitly, with sparkling humor and in the diction of an elegantly profligate man of the world. (Jantz 4)

Yet he is still very definitely malicious at heart, still me faustophilos -- the Greek for "no friend of Faust," believed by some critics to be the origin of the name:

Mephisto does carry through every wish, but almost always he does so in a way that will involve Faust in guilt, will lower his human dignity, will bring indignity upon him, will gradually, he hopes, dull his human sensibilities, blunt his conscience, inure him to wrong, and thus little by little remove him from the human toward the brutal ... (Jantz 14)

Lord Harry Wotton, the Mephistopheles figure in The Picture of Dorian Gray, is not so much actively malicious as
simply in search of his own pleasure; he finds Dorian's
destruction a charming subject for gossip. In this he is
closer to the entirely internal devils of Frankenstein and
Jekyll.

But in every case, Mephistopheles is essentially
interested in only one thing. No matter how much
Mephistopheles varies his tactics, his sole purpose is to
bring about Doc F's destruction.

THE MONSTER enters the Faustian stream with Frankenstein.
He is in one sense or another created by Doc F, as early
fruit of the newly gained forbidden knowledge. He is
created to fulfill some desire of Doc F, but quickly proves
to be both unsuited to the purpose and too independent to be
controlled. (Stevenson 57, Shelley 72) Turned loose in the
world, he becomes a malevolent force of destruction obsessed
with revenge on the creator who has spurned him. The
Monster, at least in Shelley and Stevenson, is "in at the
kill," witnessing his creator's destruction and dying soon
after, his death a final expiation for Doc F's crimes.

HELEN comes mostly from Marlowe; she is said to be the
ghost of Helen of Troy, but we have only Mephistopheles's
word for that, and she may be simply an image. She does not
speak in Doctor Faustus, and at first would seem to be of
little more significance than the Seven Deadly Sins or the
other minor roles. Yet she turns up every time Faustus is about to repent, and finally it is apparently his consummation of his lust for her (in the famous "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships" soliloquy in V i) which places him beyond the reach of salvation. (Kirschbaum "Reconsideration" 91)

For the production of DOC F, the interpretation I chose was that Helen was not so much a woman as Doc F's power-fantasy idea of a woman. Only at the end, in the moment of consummation, would Mephistopheles strip off the mask of image and force Doc F to face Helen as another being. This would be a conscious reversal of Marlowe's moment of damnation, when Faustus gives what belongs to the real world of the flesh ot the spirit world of image; here we would see, too late, that the spirit rests always on a foundation of flesh.

GRETCHEN is drawn from Goethe's character, and from Shelley's Elizabeth Lavenza and Wilde's Sybil Vane. If Doc F was to give his love finally to Helen, who was spirit, and thereby to damn himself, for dramatic purposes it should be presented as a choice. The counterpart to Helen was to be Goethe's great dramatic addition to the story, Gretchen, a young, innocent girl who becomes the victim of Faust's lust -- but from whom Mephistopheles cunningly isolates him until
his lust is on the way to becoming real love, thus making his crime all the greater. Naturally, since the Faust story is tragic, Doc F would finally choose Helen. Further, the precedents in the literature all said that Gretchen would come to a bad end. Goethe’s Gretchen dies in prison after killing their child. Sybil Vane poisons herself after Dorian cruelly abandons her. Elizabeth is murdered by The Monster, and Shelley coyly hints at rape as well:

She was there, lifeless and inanimate, thrown across the bed, her head hanging down and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair ...
her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier. (306)

The FRIEND (or VALENTINE, in the production of DOC F), is the composite representation of a noticeable pattern; because Faust is a great soul and potentially a saint (so that his fall becomes more important), all the authors give him many friends. After all, he is an intelligent, charming, and capable man. As with Gretchen, those close to him tend to come to bad ends, or else to be left as shocked witnesses to the horrors of the denouement. These friends are usually virtuous and decent; they serve to remind us what Faust might have been, unfallen angels to supply contrast to his fallen one.

The WITNESS (UTTERTON, in Stevenson's expression of him) is a persistent, quiet figure whose roots go back to
Marlowe's three Scholars, who we first see on their way to investigate

... what's become of Faustus, that was wont to make our schools ring with sic probo. (I, ii, 1-2)

In many ways he is the Apollonian counterpart to the Dionysian Monster, careful, restrained, and controlled, who sees everything (though always a little too late) and survives as the perceiver of the meaning of the story. It is worth repeating here Stevenson's famous description of Utterson:

... he had an approved tolerance of others; sometimes wondering, almost with envy, at the high pressure of spirits involved in their misdeeds, and in any extremity inclined to help rather than to reprove. "I incline to Cain's heresy," he used to say quaintly; "I let my brother go to the devil in his own way." In this character it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of downgoing men. And to such as those, so long as they came about his chambers, he never marked a shade of change in his demeanour. (1)

WAGNER is the familiar rascally servant; he appears in nearly every version except Frankenstein and even there many of the servants have their moments of comedy. But beyond that, Wagner is also the comedic archetype response to Faust's pretensions. Faustus prepares to "tire my brains to get me a deity;" Wagner wants to "make all the maidens of
our parish dance naked before me." Doctor Faustus buys Mephistopheles's service with his "glorious soul;" Wagner procures a servant by promising him "Nan Spit, our kitchen maid ..." Wagner is lewd and ribald; in my modifications of his lines I drew heavily on the traditional German Faust plays mentioned above, in the performance of which the Wagner character was permitted frequent obscene ad libs. (Mason 4)

The Pope, and figures of authority generally, appear in the harsh glare of ridicule in Marlowe, Goethe, and Wilde, and are often fairly inept in Stevenson and Shelley. A persistent undercurrent in all the works is that the people in charge genuinely do not know what they are doing. This is one way in which Marlowe breaks sharply from the classical tradition -- a break he can hardly have been unaware of: his people of standing are rarely people of stature, but are instead as venial, shallow, and stupid as the meanest servant. (Brooke 99) The mockery of temporal authority echoes the defiance of divine authority, and thus undercut Faust's hope for salvation. (Brooke 97) It also gives the audience an enjoyable identification with Mephistopheles, one that might otherwise not be there, in his succession of nasty tricks on this grotesque figure.

Finally, for the various minor characters who seem to
represent the spirit world rather than the fleshly one, I used the term DEMONS.

Auditions and casting

The audition procedure asked most participants to pick up a specified piece and prepare it for performance. The pieces were poems selected for a present but hidden narrative line and fairly dense imagery; author and title were deleted, although the information was available if an auditioner requested it.

Class members were required to participate in these auditions whether or not they planned to go on into production; others were invited, as callbacks from fall quarter auditions and from the auditions being held at the same time for the production of The Diviners.

The use of director-selected audition pieces serves several purposes. First, a younger actor may simply have more acting talent than literary taste. Giving him or her a selection to prepare compensates to some extent for poor choices of audition material, including the well-known tendency in some inexperienced actors to look for "shocking" material as an attention-getter. Secondly, a director familiar with the piece can coach effectively and thus
better judge how well an actor responds to his direction. Finally, and most importantly, the choice of somewhat difficult "literary" material allows the director to see some of the actor's natural process: how much of what kind of effort will this actor put into a text?

Turnout for callbacks, and decisions to go on by the members of the class, were more than adequate in numbers and sex balance to cast the show. This included a mostly adequate range of musical abilities, with two exceptions -- our only bass player was a novice and not up to the skills of the other musicians in the cast, and, although at the time I thought the problem of finding one was minor, we had no drummer. These would have major impacts on the overall sound of the show.

One other point to be returned to here was the casting of class members versus "add-ins." A pattern of some importance appeared here; see Table I and Figure I in the appendix. There were originally thirteen roles; the largest two were filled by actors who had earned A's in the class, the next largest by one who had earned a B. At the other end of the scale, the three smallest roles were filled by an actor who had earned a C and two with no prior participation.

The underlying structure here may well be more skewed than the table and figure nominally show; there were few older
males to choose from, and none who elected to continue from
the course, and since I had decided I wanted an older male
to play Utterson, the only high-ranked non-class person in
the table could be considered an anomaly. Moreover, two of
the three largest women's roles were taken by the two women
in the class, both of whom earned A's, and the other larger
women's role was taken by an actor who had done some outside
reading from the source materials and arranged to discuss it
with me prior to the callbacks.

This may simply be director bias in casting, but I believe
that the better explanation is that actors with the
extensive preparation of the course were more "ready" for
the show. This seems to be borne out by the experience of
rehearsals as well.

Assembling a script

Assembling the script required addressing several issues
at once. The three critical issues, as I saw them, were
audience access, format, and the overall concept of
disconnection. These were obviously not unrelated.

As noted above, two decisions had already been made about
audience access: that the parallel stories would be told in
basically chronological order, with little flashing forward
or back, and that parallel characters would be played by the same actor.

This issue of access also influenced the decision on the question of overall format. I wanted a familiar format for the audience, so that there would be something for them to grasp and hold to in the confusion caused by the pervading disconnection. In keeping with the motif selected before, I chose the format of a record album: individual tracks that were related to each other loosely, so that the total effect would be greater than that of the sum of the individual tracks, but each track could be taken as a performance by itself. I derived the structure of an album from my own admittedly small and random sampling of albums whose structure I liked; it seemed to call for:

- more tracks on Side 1 than on Side 2; hence longer tracks on Side 2
- a short thematic-statement track in Side 1 Track 1
- a rough alternation between "harder" and "softer," and longer and shorter tracks, often using two short hard tracks to balance one soft long track
- a strong track with a weak or absent resolution at the end of Side 1; in effect a cliffhanger inviting the audience to turn the record over
- Side 2 Track 1 (often) a long, soft track pulling
together several motifs and themes from elsewhere on the album
- Side 2 Track 2, and the track before last, to be the major "power cuts" on the album
- the last track to be short and end either in a blow-out or a fade on a repeated restatement of some important theme

With these considerations in mind, and using Marlowe's pattern as a kind of privileged master plot as well, I set out a rough outline:

SIDE 1

1. Teaser -- invitation to the audience
2. Doc F decides to sell his soul
3. Wagner mocks the entire process to come
4. Doc F makes his pact and creates the Monster
5. Doc F disavows his connection to the Monster
6. Doc F, with his material needs and longings for knowledge gratified, seeks love
7. Doc F pursues Gretchen, who falls in love with him
8. Doc F finds he is unable to repent

SIDE 2

1. Doc F abandons the idea of salvation, celebrates his
personal freedom, and mocks authority

2. Doc F rapes and murders Gretchen

3. Doc F seeks to destroy all his connections to the world and finds he cannot

4. Doc F pays the price and goes to hell

5. The Monster and the Best Friend witness the wreckage

Having put the gross outline into place, the next question was that of format within tracks. For most tracks there were materials in several texts, and frequently they seemed to me to comment on and reply to each other in a way I hoped to make available to the audience. (Diary 12-2-87) The problem was to find an underlying principle, applicable in all tracks, that would allow this to happen.

The concept I selected was that of collage, or assemblage. Collage is juxtaposition and placement of real objects and/or representational images of objects deliberately to express the idea of the piece through relative position, boundaries between images and objects, distortions of images and objects, and total form simultaneously. In the plastic arts, collage is identified by two physical characteristics of the work:

1. They are predominantly assembled rather than painted, drawn, modeled, or carved.

2. Entirely or in part, their constituent elements are preformed natural or manufacturing materials,
objects, or fragments not intended as art materials. (Seitz 6) In literature, collage is "the arrangement of words, each carrying with it an image or an idea surrounded by vague aura of associations ... " Examples of this are found in the poetry of Mallarme, Apollinaire, Jacob, Cendrars, and Reverdy, and to some extent in the later novels of Gide. (13) In a collage, then, pieces of the several texts would be drawn and arranged in such a way that the breakpoints between them, their ordering within tracks, their juxtaposition with other text, and the total structure of images they formed within a track would all be significant.

But the collaging of the text by itself does not fully answer the question of form. Umberto Eco has pointed out that theater, film, and television have developed a rich variety of archetypal scenes, scenes that appear little altered in numerous dramatic presentations. He calls these scenes intertextual archetypes and defines them as "a pre-established and frequently re-appearing narrative situation that is cited or in some way recycled by innumerable other texts, and provokes in the addressee a sort of intense emotion accompanied by a vague feeling of deja vu ... " (5) He goes on to show that intertextual archetypes, when collaged, produce a workable narrative, and that this is in fact a common working method for filmmakers
as diverse as George Lucas, Woody Allen, and Michael Curtiz. In most films, however, the collage is deliberately smoothed over by writing in a continuity of names, past events, and so forth. (11) This was potentially an approach to the script, but I chose instead to leave the collage raw, ragged, and unsmoothed.

There were two major reasons for this decision. First of all, a genuine smoothing would have demanded the writing and editing of a full-length play based on the original materials, and time simply did not permit it. Also, the third major concept, that of disconnection, seemed to demand sudden, rough, ragged cuts between texts. (Diary 12-6-87)

The script was actually composed by pasting up clipped materials from the five main sources, then penciling in modifications and occasional stage directions. The version we went into rehearsal with drew materials from:

SIDE 1

1. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
2. Doctor Faustus, Frankenstein, The Picture of Dorian Gray (primarily)
3. Doctor Faustus (influenced by the German Faust materials)
4. Frankenstein
5. Doctor Faustus, Faust Part I (primarily)
The "starting version" of the script took about three hours to read at the first reading in December. Plans to add music threatened to add still more time to the production. Procedurally, the goal was to cut during rehearsals as part of an improvisational process. As will be seen, in practice this sometimes worked well but had some significant failures.

The last issue to be addressed, disconnection, was a particular problem area precisely because it was reified into an issue. Breaking connections is an action, and actions are the basis of drama; an already broken connection
is static, and hence not dramatic. Indeed, it can easily be actually anti-dramatic, for theater is about meaningful action, and action without context is meaningless; disconnection from context actually destroys the basis of theater. On review of my diary, in preparing this report, I find frequent mentions of the "theme," "motif," and "issue" of disconnection from roughly mid-November on. Setting "disconnection" up as the key to the production led to a situation where I saw any broken connection as a positive good, leading me first to slash at any connections I found in mis-en-scene or design (e.g. my note to myself as costumer in my diary, 12-28-87: "Costumes need to look like no two people in same show."). This, among other things, probably led to the "incoherence," "lack of any attempt to make sense," and "meaningless -- impossible to understand" cited by several faculty members at the critique.

The Production: Winter Quarter 1988

Development during rehearsal

During the first few rehearsals, the primary goal was to integrate the new members into the already-formed ensemble from the class, and to familiarize the entire company with the basic performance issues for the show.

To this end, the first three rehearsals were set up as
intensive exercises. The idea behind the exercises was to give everyone a chance to work together in exploring, and eventually being able to work with, their reactions to the emotionally loaded issues at the core of DOC F: torture, rape, masochism, invasion of the body, and humiliation among them.

Many of the exercises were "games." I use the term "game" for an exercise with a non-determinate outcome in which actors are given objectives that will place them into some degree of conflict with each other. In every game there is also a considerable element of cooperation as well, in that the "opponents" must share the game, play it together, and to some extent interpret its rules and events together. Games are a way for an ensemble to play and "jam" collectively on these issues; facing these loaded issues together, it was hoped, would help to pull together an ensemble.

The first day was taken up with an exercise I call a "blank space walk through." The idea of the exercise is to structure the first group reading of the script to give the actors the maximum early exposure to doing its actions and participating in its transactions. The actors are given a blank space, a square area without furniture and with no obvious "audience side." They are told to stand within the
space when their characters are on stage, and to sit quietly somewhere along the boundary line, facing into the area, when their characters are off stage.

When they are on stage, they are to read each line, or some portion of a longer line that seems to be a unit to them, and after finishing speaking, move to the position within the space, relative to the other characters, that they feel expresses physically their relationship to the other characters. This can include their relationship to characters sitting on the sidelines. They are told specifically not to read ahead, plan their next positioning, move on their lines (because it is important for them to listen to what they are saying, rather than to try to "act" it), or to attempt to "perform" by miming a realistic set or props. Since authority tends to be perceived as audience, the person conducting the exercise should change vantage points frequently.

Besides the rules stated above, the actors are asked to try to remain open-minded and in the scene, observing what happens rather than trying to compose it. This requires not "blurring out" -- i.e. getting focused on the task of reading and walking as if those were the issues at hand, and ignoring the process happening between characters.

Because this does make every line take considerably more
time than it will in performance, and because the script at that point was uncut, the blank space walk through resulted in a quite long (four hour) first rehearsal. Toward the end, tiredness seemed to cause a significant "blurring out" problem, but most of the actors seemed to leave excited and interested in the show.

I had identified two tracks, the first two of the second side, as critical to the show; they were juxtaposed partly for that reason. Side One Track One was to show the wild, carnival atmosphere of Doc F's disconnection-created freedom deteriorating from slightly wicked fun into cruelty and nastiness. Side Two Track Two was to carry that theme to its logical conclusion, with the rape and murder of Gretchen and Doc F's shrugging off the consequences.

Because these scenes were emotionally at the heart of the show, I devoted one full night to an extended set of exercises to explore each of them. It was hoped that the exercises would serve as "group intentional actions" allowing the cast to discover what the core of the play was about.

The first night focused on the development of Side One Track One. The procedure here was to work through the scene as a "you are at a party" improvisation; then to work simple exploratory exercises to broaden the range of what could be
done at the party, making each trip through the party at higher stakes and with potentially greater nastiness. I began by simply turning on some music and asking everyone to dance with everyone else; then we added dancing while saying the lines, and then dancing while improvising some actions in character, and while working to get a contact with another actor before speaking the line. In this process we also did considerable cutting of the script.

Then, after a short break, I had the cast work with various forms of simulated masturbation and intercourse, working up from each individual working alone with his or her eyes closed (fairly complete privacy) up to forming two lines facing each other, moving the lines to change partners every thirty seconds or so, and having everyone in the cast pretend to have sex with every other person in the cast (since the exercise was structured so that everyone always had a partner or two partners, it deliberately downplayed some of the sense of performance for an audience -- anyone who might be watching was occupied with doing something similar, and so the experience was common rather than public).

After a break, we did the party improvisation again, but this time with my announcing "intensity levels." This was a simple counting up to five, raising the level every few
minutes. At "one," at the beginning, the party was supposed to look much as it had in simple improvisation; by "five," everyone was to be having simulated sex with at least one other person. Thus each called off number was a call on the group to move another step on the curve from "party" to "orgy."

There was an immediate change in the atmosphere of the party improvisation this time; the direction in which things were to go put many of the actors onto some sort of edge -- dread, anticipation, some feeling about the environment. Energy was much higher, and after some initial nervousness overall concentration and focus also improved. The exercise had made the transition to a game -- one that I felt was reasonably successful at this point, with some considerable discovery made. One cast member commented that for him the party this time was an exploration of what he secretly hoped for when he went to parties; another pointed out that although she had had similar fantasies, the actual experience of "dry running" them had convinced her of the essentially repulsive, dehumanized social climate that would have to underlie them.

Next, another dimension was added by exploring some very limited stage "combat" -- no actual fighting was allowed, but the actors worked with contacting each other and working
together to set up apparent punches, kicks, and other attacks. When the group had become proficient enough with this, we ran the "party to orgy on a five count" sequence once again, with the added complication that from level three onward, every transaction with another actor, including the simulated sex, was to involve some sort of physical "attack," and that these attacks were to escalate with the rising intensity level.

The problem may have been that again, too much work had been planned for a single evening, or it may have been that my focus was mostly on making sure that inexpert actors did not actually hurt each other and so much less of the side-coaching was relevant to the exploration planned, but the last time through lacked much of the energy and focus of the previous time. Actually, I believe that a major observation that the actor playing Wagner made to me afterwards was probably accurate: he felt fairly comfortable with the simulated sexual exchanges and quite comfortable with simulated violent exchanges, but the request that he mix the two gave him a great deal of anxiety when he tried to follow instructions, so he found himself alternating the two kinds of encounter rather than trying to do them simultaneously. He felt that many people had been doing the same thing.
Whatever the problems with the less successful last time through the scene, the cast again appeared to leave in good spirits. A key point, to be referred to later, is that this rehearsal actually involved four run-throughs of the track, with a run-through at the beginning and at the end. Thus the games and exercises were constantly addressed, in the context of this rehearsal, to immediate work on the scene.

I am inclined to believe that his perception was accurate because of the events of the following night. The next night had been slated to be a short one in which we would work on the climactic rape and murder of Gretchen in Side Two Track Two. The actress playing Gretchen had been asked to wear something form fitting, and wore a close-fitting leotard top that left her shoulders bare.

I asked her to sit in the middle of a circle formed by the rest of the cast. I announced that the night's work would be on violence and on "knowing what you are doing when you do it." Then I asked that everyone, using the index finger of one hand as the "pencil" and the palm of the other as "paper," draw Gretchen. They were instructed to not worry about "getting done," and since of course there was no visible picture, it seemed to be fairly easy for them to avoid self-criticism and to simply stroke the appropriate outline onto their palms. As they did this, they were asked
to work for increasing palm and finger sensitivity and to follow the lines they saw as carefully as possible.

This basic technique, for me, has long been a way to bring my visual perception of an object outside myself into a direct physical expression within my body. Comments from the actors tended to confirm that it was working in this way for them too.

The objective of this first phase had been to sensitize everyone strongly to the actor's body, to make them intensely conscious of her physical being.

I then asked them to line up, and asked her to lie down on a table. They were instructed to mime, working for as accurate a physical sense as possible, walking up to the table, looking at her body once more, and then thrusting a knife into her chest and killing her. I asked them to do this in complete silence.

Most members of the group seemed quite shaken at the end of this part of the exercise; I asked them to take one further step before break. They lined up again as before, but this time the actor playing Gretchen was to cry out at the moment of the thrust. Further, before the thrust, they were to make eye contact with her; she would say "Please don't;" they were then to keep the contact until they had clearly communicated that they were going to go through with
the thrust, and then finally thrust.

It was necessary to take a fairly long break after this, and to discuss the work so far, before proceeding. I pointed out that the scene we were building toward was a rape, and that what they were experiencing here was the essentially brutal quality of violence, something that many television and film conventions, and quite a few theatrical conventions as well, have been set up to downplay. We were instead working toward "knowing what you are doing when you do it;" specifically, the concept developed earlier that by delaying the rape, Mephistopheles is able to make it a much bigger crime, because by that time Doc F has come to love Gretchen and to know her too well to be able to reduce her to an object.

We began to differentiate roles in the process, and to elaborate the act of the knife thrust from one simple, clear, destructive physical act into something more complicated and ambiguous. The other actors, at Mephistopheles's direction, would carry Gretchen to the table and "bind" her to it; they would then clap and chant "do it" rhythmically as Doc F advanced to the table, Gretchen asked him not to, he decided to thrust the knife into her, and finally the knife thrust came as a crescendo. Utterson and Valentine were bound to pillars as helpless
observers, serving as another voice condemning Doc F and those urging him on. As elaborations were added, the initially simple act became a brutal ceremony of human sacrifice.

We took one more break at the point where the ceremony seemed to be a "finished work." Many actors were quite distressed, some actually in tears, and some time to calm down seemed to be necessary.

When we reconvened, I again offered some explanation and sympathy for the difficult job they were trying to do. We had now created the symbolic ground for the crime; we would be setting a realistic figure against it.

The last step was to take the "human sacrifice ceremony" and transform it into a realistic improvisation. The situation I gave them was to be a barroom rape; the crowd was to first tie up Gretchen's possible protectors, then tie her to the pool table, then cheer and applaud while Doc F raped her on the table. This of course is a crime that appears with some frequency in the newspapers; I stressed that they were to draw on the ritual, ceremonial material in developing a feeling for the meaning of the action, but they were to play it in a direct, physicalized way drawing heavily on sense-memory.

This final improvisation was painfully vivid and intense
even for people not taking part in it; the assistant stage manager was unable to remain in the room.

Following the exercise, the group sat down to talk about their feelings and reactions. Several members were particularly upset by things they had found themselves doing and saying in the course of the improvisation; many of the group made arrangements to meet and talk later about the experience.

There are several things worth noting about this early work. First of all, on the positive side, the two tracks whose development started this way were in my opinion eventually among the strongest and most memorable in the show. They were also finally the easiest to work with in rehearsals -- easier to cut, easier to block, and easier to communicate with actors about. I believe that this came from a shared understanding, at an intuitive, unspoken level, of what the scenes were fundamentally about.

On the negative side, about a week after these exercises I received a letter from a member of my thesis committee; the two professors of drama on my committee had received some extremely negative feedback through various channels. The letter read, in part:

I am getting a lot of second hand information ... from your cast and people "they have talked to" that your rehearsals are teetering on the brink of being personally destructive to your cast members,
evidently because of exercises you are having them do ... certain "encounter type" exercises while just dandy for people under the care of a doctor have no place in a theatre rehearsal. They amount to an invasion of each actor's privacy, and that, a director has no right to do ... If people aren't getting a sense of joy and wonder from what they are going through in your exercises, then the exercises stink. I am sure that by timely and sensitive probing, you can get this situation back on track.

When I investigated the situation, talking with several members of the cast, I found that many were severely upset, and that a problem in communication had been exacerbated by the fact that I had been the person conducting/refereeing the exercises and games, so that, since the actors felt that I was responsible for their distress, they were much less willing to talk with me about it. In particular, the distress focused on the "human sacrifice" improvisation done in preparation for the rape scene, and on another improvisation done in preparation for the scene where Doc F was to build the Monster from pieces of the other actors. Re-examination of my diary reveals a critical fact: the improvisation for the rape scene was done ten days before any other work on the scene was done, and there was a gap of six days between the "monster assembly" improvisation and the beginnings of work on the scene. Although in most ways the "party scene" improvisation dealt with more distressing material more directly, it produced almost no such distress.
On reflection, I think that the root of the problem was simply that material and information developed in games and exercises must be applied immediately. When application is delayed, the actors are left with deeply disturbing feelings and experiences which cannot be readily integrated into their work; thus instead of being expressed in the work, the feelings emerge as distress in the actors' personal lives.

Furthermore, doing the exercises so long before they could be used seems to have led to some compromises that might not have been necessary otherwise. For many of the actors, the focus of distress became not the exercises they had already gone through but the things they were expected to deal with on stage in the show. For example, the three younger women playing Demons felt particularly disturbed by a costume element -- that all three Demons would have detachable, external male and female genitalia on their costumes and would switch from male to female as the situation demanded. There had been some strong reasons on each side for keeping or getting rid of this design element, but because the decision was being made in an atmosphere where actors were already disturbed and uncomfortable, "... it loses some of the idea of the Demons power to manipulate themselves in any way except to escape pain, but on the other hand, people are pretty worked up and maybe we can find some other way to get
it that won't ... create the upset." (Diary 1/22/88)

Finally, one external problem of which I was unaware at first seemed to give particular problems to the actors playing the First Demon, Helen, Gretchen, and Valentine. All, in their high school and community theater experience, had been taught to try to "pump up" their emotions, to "really feel" what was happening on stage, and to evaluate the quality of their work by the intensity of the emotion they felt. The actor playing Doc F, although he was aware from his training that this tends to produce strained and less credible performances, chose for personal reasons to pursue this path as well.

This clearly put all of them into a severe double bind, in that instead of using discoveries made during the exercises, they were trying to recreate emotions felt during them. Since the exercises dealt with horrifying and repulsive subjects, these actors essentially were saying to themselves, "The worse I feel, the better job I am doing."

Thus, if they felt, as most actors do early in rehearsals of difficult material, that they were not doing as well as they should, and were therefore unhappy, the only recourse open to them seemed to be to try to feel worse.

As a rule of thumb for the future, I suggest that the stronger the material worked with in an exercise or game,
the more important it is to actually work the scene it is addressed to within a short time, preferably the same night. In many cases, it might well be better to block and work the scenes for some time before the exercises, so that actors have a clear idea of what they are expected to do before being given material and exploration to do it with. This, in effect, lets the actors gain confidence and the perceptual equipment with which to confront the frightening, threatening, or repulsive content of some strong scenes.

At the end of the first week, another problem developed in that job and personal conflicts forced the actors playing the Fourth Demon and Utterson to leave the show. The Fourth Demon had been a minor role, and it was reasonably easy to reassign his lines; but Utterson was a quite substantial role, originally intended for an older male, and thus very difficult to replace. After considerable hesitation, I finally settled on combining the role with Valentine, especially as the actor playing Valentine at that time was doing quite well in rehearsals and appeared capable of taking on the larger role.

In the second week of rehearsals, we began more or less conventional blocking of Side One, cutting of the script, and the creation of music for the show. The blocking needs little explication; I was simply "doing Act I by the book."
This was in part because, despite the time and preparation that I had put into it, I was still thinking that "... the whole purpose of side one is to set up side two." (Diary 1/10/88) To some extent this problem persisted right down to production. In my diary, after the first dress rehearsal, I wrote "If I had it to do again, I'd just do the second act." (2-14-88) In any case, as will be discussed below, most of the original blocking for Act I was discarded about a week later.

The procedure for cutting used a variation on the "look and listen" exercise. Actors with dialogue were asked to sit facing each other, to get contact, and to simply speak the words in whatever way they could find to use them in the here and now. As they finished each line, they were to look down and place a pencil checkmark by anywhere from one to three words that seemed to them essential to what they had been saying. After the dialogue was completed, they were then to retain only the sentences containing those words and try the dialogue again. Quite often this produced a perfectly playable set of lines; occasionally it was necessary to re-introduce a line or two to give necessary information.

Though it may seem that cutting in this way is arbitrary, it in fact relies on the well-known method of "key words,"
often used by actors in preparing conventional text for performance. The exchange of the key words, and the emotional subtext that accompanies it, is developed in the look and listen exercise. Thus each actor speaks only the emotional core of his part of the transaction. Occasionally some information that is necessary is buried in an undramatic portion of a conversation, but in good writing -- and all our sources were well-written -- it tends to be in the same sentences with the keywords. The "core to core" quality in the dialogue produced by this method of cutting fit well with the idea of collage. Indeed, it might have been applied effectively to the problem of cutting the show as a whole.

Because my musical skills and training were limited, I worked with the musicians in the way that many directors commonly work with designers. In our system of working together, first I would point out a passage that could become a song or that I needed underlying music for (often these were places where Marlowe had soliloquies). The musicians would then talk about it with me, offering suggestions, until we agreed on which of them would act as primary composer. Sometimes this was the musician whose ideas appealed to me most; sometimes it was a person with a special feel for the material, due to the role the musician
played in the show or to some personal connection. I would then discuss be basic issues that I felt the music had to address with the composer; when possible, I tried to do this with the other musicians present, because I found that their input, discussion, and comment was very valuable in the early stages.

The composer would then go off to work privately, perhaps conferring with me occasionally. At an agreed date and time, he would bring back a melody, some possible lyrics (where we didn't simply use Marlowe), and some idea of an arrangement. The band would then "jam" on the new song while I listened. Afterwards, we would discuss the song, its fit to the situation, and how it should be modified. Arrangements usually developed out of the band's jam sessions but on some more complicated pieces a particular musician would be assigned the job.

This process, simple as it was, seems to me to be the key to what should be working procedure in a show like DOC F. Consistently, evaluations of the finished show mentioned the music as one of its strong points; the audience liked the music more than they liked most other things about the show.

It may well be that precisely because the musicians were working together to get the core of the material in front of
them, rather than trying to fit a director's preconceived notions of what a scene was about, the music so often cut to the essence, where "text" scenes did not. A better working procedure with actors might have emphasized more improvisation, more interaction, and much greater liberties with the text.

On Wednesday of the second week, a stagger-through/problem-fixing rehearsal was observed by two members of my thesis committee. Their reaction, quoted in my diary, was that "... this looks like a perfectly ordinary play except that people have more than one name. And it's a long play. Where's the wild stuff?" (1/16/88)

This led me to try a working procedure I came to call "distressing a scene." I would take scenes that had already been blocked or worked out conventionally and try making them difficult for the actors to do in ways that emphasized the meaning of the scene. For example, the last track of Side One had been a more or less static dialogue between Mephistopheles and Doc F. The underlying issues, it seemed to me, were that the real world was calling Doc F back, especially through Gretchen, away from the realm of spirits. It was calling him both for his affection and because he was beginning to hurt it.

I expressed this at first by having the rest of the cast
lie on the stage, reaching up to touch Doc F and Mephistopheles and moaning for attention. The scene seemed to improve in energy and variety of levels, but remained unfocused.

The scene gained some focus by having Mephistopheles lead Gretchen around blindfolded, so that in addition to the general environment calling to him, Doc F was confronted with the specific threat that the course he was on would lead to her destruction. A final gain in focus and power was obtained by having an agreed signal between Mephistopheles and Gretchen so that he could cause her to scream with pain at will; for several rehearsals, he was allowed to do this on impulse, so that Doc F had no idea when he would be confronted with the trump card of Mephistopheles's ability to blackmail him through the torture of Gretchen. (It also helped, incidentally, with my process of deciding when the moments of torture should happen.)

A further example of distressing a scene was the work on Side Two Track Three. The track is simply a repetition of murder scenes from *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, done at an accelerating pace, intended to emphasize that Doc F would be forced to compound his crimes at an accelerating pace. Aside from the basic
problem that the scene was static and repetitive as conventionally blocked, it also posed the problem that so much of the horror of those murders in the novels rested on the fact that they happened in warm, friendly living rooms, between close friends. Not only did the scene seem to require furniture, it seemed to require a whole elaborate set to suggest the warm cosiness of a gaslight-era upper class home — and no other scene in the show would need furniture at all.

The solution came after several different distressings were put on the scene. Because the scene had been a particular problem, I had been working it intensively with the actors involved and had run a little overtime, so that the rest of the cast had arrived. I had not been able to do the one thing I most wanted to do — try it on a full-fledged living room set — because the rehearsal hall had very little furniture at the time. My stage manager jokingly suggested that rather than just keeping the cast sitting around, I should use them as furniture.

Something about the idea caught my fancy. I quickly had the actors set themselves up as an armchair, sofa, hassock, and lamp, and had Doc F and Valentine play the scene on the "living furniture." When the time for his entrance came, the actor playing Wagner, who was serving as the lamp, mimed
doffing his lampshade and walking straight into the scene; picking up on this, when Mephistopheles was supposed to immobilize Valentine so he could be killed, the actor playing Mephistopheles, acting as the couch arms, simply reached around and grabbed Valentine. The scene was frequently interrupted by fits of giggles from the hassock and armchair, as well as from the two actors who were still playing people, and concentration was quite poor, but despite those problems, the scene was suddenly fresh and fun to watch.

A later inspiration had the actor playing Mephistopheles, who was keyboardist for the band, playing an increasingly fast ragtime during the scene.

It was also about the third week of production that the last vestiges of the atomic bomb materials were dropped from the show; they had become so anomalous that they were a genuine burden to deal with. My feeling now is that this may have been another consequence of reifying and elevating "disconnection." In a show with strong internal connections, the atomic bomb material would have been forced into interactions with the rest of the text, and might have had a chance to inform and enhance the production. In a disconnected show, pieces intrinsically remained separate and it was all too easy to discard them.
After this time, production continued in a relatively conventional manner; there is relatively little that is unusual or of interest to report.

Cuts during performance

During the week of dress rehearsals and performances, it was made clear to me by several faculty members that the show, at about two and one half hours, was too long for comfortable viewing, and because it was extremely "talky" in large parts of the first act, also very difficult to follow. It was strongly requested that the show be cut by at least half an hour over the two days between the first and second weeks of production.

Much to my surprise, material turned out to be very easy to remove, and the requested cut was easily exceeded, ending up with a running time of around an hour and fifty-five minutes. The cut version, moreover, was tighter, cleaner, and clearer than the old long one. (Diary 2-22-88)

It is difficult to determine a reason for not having made the cuts earlier from a survey of the diary; my reasons for failing to make the cuts sooner are still not clear to me, but materials in the diary and in my notes at the time offer some clues. Aside from failure of perception or stubbornness, both of which may well have played a role, the
reasons I failed to make these cuts earlier seem to have included:

- a desire for fidelity to the text; this may have come from the guilty realization that most of the stronger tracks were quite far from the original texts, so that if I were to cut the slower parts, I would be eroding whatever fidelity remained. In a production of this kind, of course, this concern might be called absurd.

- the actual difficulty of watching the show at the greater length was less apparent to me. It might have become clearer during dress and tech rehearsals, but at that time I was acting as my own costumer and in fact had little attention to spare as director at that crucial time. "For four days this show hasn't had a director -- it's had a costumer taking the director's notes for him." (Diary 2/15/88)

- some resistance to the idea when it was broached to the actors. The slower passages were apparently being used by some actors to "warm up on stage."

In any case, these reasons cannot be taken as justifications; they are causes of, not excuses for, the error.

Evaluations
DOC F opened to generally negative response from faculty and community. One faculty member actually proposed that the show be closed early. There were numerous walkouts on some nights of the show also, a mixed but finally negative review in the local newspaper, and one letter of protest in the student newspaper.

In the critique of 3/1/88, the principal objection to the show from the faculty was that it was badly done — "a complete lack of craft," in the words of one professor. In some cases this may have been reading the choice of disconnection as accidental incoherence, but the fact that such an interpretation was possible is certainly a severe critique in its own right; after all, when a convention is violated, it is important for the audience to have a clear way to understand that it is not through simple ignorance. Also, several professors felt that Doc F was incomprehensible even to a very sophisticated audience. Also, some members of the faculty found the production offensive due to a combination of these above problems, because the perceived incoherency and obscurity made it impossible to see the reasons behind the savagery of the rape scene. Finally, some faculty saw a problem in the commitment of resources — money, shop time, actors, and time in the theater — during a quarter when other
productions were badly strapped, to a production they felt should have been foreseen as probably failing.

Reading of some papers from introductory and non-majors classes, and interviews and private conversations with some instructors and students, revealed that students seem to have objected primarily to the obscenity, the "negative attitude about life" (a phrase that occurs many times in one class, suggesting that it may have a common source, perhaps in classroom discussion prior to the students' writing), "Satanism," and especially to Doc F's sadistic treatment of Gretchen. (Several students make it clear that they were already offended by the way he treated her prior to the rape scene; one wrote "I was sure grossed out but I wasn't surprised.")

The show also attracted a small group of repeat attendees, probably not more than fifteen, who came to see it multiple times, often bringing friends with them. These people do not form a large enough sample to generalize well, but the comments I have gotten from the few I have talked to seem to indicate a few common likes about the show: some striking images, especially the assembly of the monster, the intimidation of Doc F at the end of the first side, the party scene, the rape, the "living furniture," and the death scene; the use of vertical space in the set and in the large
number of objects flown in and out; the music; and "it's fun because I keep trying to figure it out and every time I see it I see a lot more." In general this is also reflective of positive comments from student papers.

In the text above, I have discussed what I think were the major errors in the process of creating Doc F. The four principle ones were:

- the extension of participation beyond the members of the original class
- the reification -- and elevation to a supreme principle -- of the untheatrical idea "disconnection"
- the use of games and exercises dealing with intense, primal emotions too long before the actual use of the material on stage
- failure to cut sufficient text early enough

Taking each of these in turn, here is what I now believe could and should have been done instead:

- A deeper commitment to working improvisationally with a small group of prepared people might have led to both better exercises and games for many scenes and to better implementation of what emerged from the games and exercises. Some of the "crowd effect" might have been lost, but on the whole the gain in available,
effective working time by working only with the prepared would probably have more than compensated.

Disconnection would become a dramatic idea if instead of a free-floating quality, applicable to anything, it had become a rule of action; e.g. "Establish several vital connections in the audience's mind early in the show, and then violate them at carefully chosen times for an escalating sense of disconnection, crime, and loss of control."

As mentioned above, it might have been more effective to develop an intense, powerful action for each track, and to work that action as a cast in a context that would provide an immediate opportunity to use the information developed. Eventually the scenes built from these exercises were some of the most effective in the play, but the pain and distress brought about by some exercises could probably have been avoided by giving the actors a chance to work with them in a context clearly leading to performance. This is clearly shown by the fairly happy experience of the party scene, where quite strong material in exercises seems to have caused little or no problem because the actors could apply it immediately, and the actors were able to integrate it rather than being forced to dwell
on it fruitlessly.

- The show should have been cut earlier, and possibly more deeply. Something like the core-to-core structure developed in the look and listen procedure for cutting dialogue might have been applied to good effect.
## APPENDIX: Tables and Figures

### TABLE I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>GRADE/PARTICIPATION</th>
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<tr>
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<td>A</td>
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</table>

*Rankings are by number of lines in original assembly of DOC F*
script. In addition to regular letter grades, "P" here denotes one member of the cast who chose not to take the course but voluntarily did some of the reading during fall quarter; 0 denotes those with no prior preparation.
FIGURE I

DATA from TABLE I
GROUPED AND PLOTTED

Ranking by number of lines in script of 12-18-87

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class grade or participation

In addition to regular letter grades, "P" here denotes one member of the cast who chose not to take the course but voluntarily did some of the reading during fall quarter; 0 denotes those with no
prior preparation. There were thirteen members of the cast; the halfway point for number of lines rankings was set between 6 and 7, creating a high category of six members and a low category of seven members. For grade/participation, the halfway point was set between C and B, creating a high category of six and a low category of seven members. In the line ranking the decision to assign the central odd member to the low group was based on the greater difference in numbers of lines. In the grade category the decision on assignment was based on simple rule of equivalence.
TABLE II

GRADE or PARTICIPATION in class
versus subjective ranking of performance
at the time of production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>GRADE/PARTICIPATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOC F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEPHISTOPHELES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONSTER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAGNER</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRETCHE N</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMON 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALENTINE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMON 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMON 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POPE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELEN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rankings are my subjective judgements. The lower the number, the better the ranking. Many rankings are tied. In addition to regular letter grades, "P" here denotes one member of the cast who chose not to take the course but voluntarily did some of the reading during fall quarter; 0 denotes those with no prior preparation.
FIGURE II

DATA from TABLE II
GROUPED AND PLOTTED

Performance rank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class grade or participation

Rankings are my subjective judgements. The lower the number, the better the ranking. Many rankings are tied. In addition to regular letter grades, "P" here denotes one member of the cast who chose not to take the course but voluntarily did some of the reading during fall quarter; 0 denotes those with no prior preparation. There were eleven members of the cast; the halfway point for performance rank was set between 3 and 4, creating a high category of six members and a low category of five members. For grade/participation, the halfway point was set between C and B, creating a high category of six and a low category of five members. In the performance category the decision to assign the central odd member to the high group was based on the subjective judgement that differences in real performance were greater between the actor ranked 4 and the actor ranked 3, than between the actor ranked 3 and the actor ranked 2. In the grade category the decision on assignment was based on simple rule of equivalence.
Works Cited


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Ricks, Christopher. "Doctor Faustus and Hell on Earth." Essays in Criticism 35 (Spring 1985): 101-120.


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