Good morning, Adam.

Good morning, doctor.

How are you feeling today?

Quite well, thank you. And yourself?

Once I get my cup of coffee, I'll be fine.

I understand.

Have you been having any difficulties?

None to speak of.

Any discomfort, anything abnormal?

Nothing to speak of, doctor.

Come closer, let me have a look at you.

Yes, doctor.

Open your mouth, say "AH"

AHHH.
Very good. Now step over here please Adam. You know the drill.

2

Of course, doctor.

1

And hold. (Pause) And relax. Very good.

2

Must we continue, doctor.

1

We must. It is absolutely necessary. Please come this way.

2

Yes, doctor.

1

Remove your garment.

2

Yes doctor.

1

Would you like anæsthesia today?

2

No doctor.

1

Very well.

2

Shall I take my usual position?

1

Naturally. Would you like to know what the procedure will be today?

2

No, doctor. As usual.

1

Are you ready for me to fasten your arms?

2

As ever.
(Pause)
1
May I touch you, Adam.

2
I don't feel that would be appropriate, doctor.

1
Of course, you're right. How silly. It's just...

2
Yes, doctor?

1
Nothing. I am blessed. We are blessed.

2
Yes, doctor.

1
You know how wonderful you are, don't you?

2
Please, doctor.

1
Your sacrifice will save us all.

2
If you say so, doctor.
Knocking disturbs the silence. Dr. Faust awakens from his daze.

F
Yes? Come in?

W
Dr. Faust? Doug Wagner, I'm a graduate student here, I'm in your –

F
10:00, yes I know. What can I do for you Wagner?

W
I was wondering if you had a moment, sir, to discuss my paper.

F
Ahh yes. Here to argue your A minus to an A, eh?

W
Actually, sir, I was intrigued by your comments.

F
That so?

W
Yes, sir. Um...I can't read them. I was wondering if you could...

F
Translate? Certainly, although I should warn you Mr. Wagner, I often have difficulty reading my chicken scratches as well. Let's see...

(He attempts to read the comment)

Are you sure I wrote this? Well, clearly the comment is simply too profound for human minds to comprehend. Is there anything else I can do for you, Mr. Wagner?

W
Actually, there is sir. You see, I've been doing some research...uh...on you...and, well, I know you're leaving at the end of the semester.

F
Yes...
W
Um...well, I was wondering if you need...a research assistant...for your current project. I have two years lab experience, another two in gene research, and last year I served as a project analyst for Dr. Valdes.

F
Dr. Valdes? How the hell is that man still alive?

W
It's a mystery. But he's the one who recommended that I take your class. I have a resume, I didn't put it down on there, but I've also done a bit of my own research. My findings haven't been published, but if you'd like to take a look at them, I brought an extra copy with me.

F
Ahh...attempting to identify genetic jibberish on the fourth chromosome, eh? Very ambitious. This is all very good, Mr. Wagner, you clearly possess the qualifications necessary but I'm afraid the answer is no. I would be pleased to write you a letter of recommendation.

W
No? I don't understand.

F
Mr. Wagner, my time at this university is coming to a sudden end. Regretfully, I have obtained a somewhat sour reputation among my colleagues. I cannot endanger your future career by signing you on to this project.

W
With all due respect, sir, my future is my responsibility. If you don't think I am fit to assist you, that's one thing. But if you think that my reputation at this university is more important than the work, well...I'd say you're full of shit. This project is larger than me or you, even, and, and-

F
Calm down, Mr. Wagner, calm down.

W
I won't take no for an answer, doctor. I'm a hard worker. You won't regret it.

F
To the contrary, Mr. Wagner, I'm almost certain I would.

W
Dr. Valdes told me about you're doing here. He told me you were one of the most prolific genetic scientists working today. He said that it was ridiculous that the university denied you tenure, but in the end, if you finish your work, it wont matter. Your work will change everything. If you finish, you usher the world into a new era. You have to finish, doctor. I want to help you.
You're a pain, Wagner, a fuckin pain in the ass. You know that? This work will consume you - fill you up and tear you apart, and once you're in, you're in for good.

W
Yes, sir.

F
Now I'm not saying yes. I am simply stating that I will be having a drink at Bosco's in the village at 5:00 and anyone interested in joining me should come at that time. Good day, Mr. Wagner.

(enter Wagner. Faust is engrossed in his work)

W
Dr. Faust?

F
Yes?

W
I'm Diane Wagner.

F
Yes?

W
Umm... I had an appointment. I wanted to—

F
Yes?

W
If you're busy, I can come back.

F
No, please. Have a seat.

(silence)

W
Dr. Faust?
Yes?

Never mind.

I'm sorry Ms. Wagner, just a few more...

(silence)

Argh...Nothing but dead ends. My apologies, Ms. Wagner. How can I help you?

Did Dr. Valdes speak with you at all? About why I'm here?

Briefly. To be honest, I have trouble paying attention to man sometimes. He's getting a bit senile in his old age.

You have no idea.

What was he supposed to tell me?

No one will talk to me, Dr. Faust. Medical doctors don't think it's a legitimate field of study. Dr. Valdes says it'll ruin my career. I disagree, which is why I'm here.

What is it you think I do?

You're a geneticist, Dr. Faust.

Yes?

You're working on something big. Everyone knows you are and they're scared.

That so?
W
They revoked your tenure, of course they’re scared.

F
Ms. Wagner, please...

W
Gene therapy is the next step for medical science. I know I could help you.

F
What about Valdes? He needs you.

W
I’m bored with Valdes. His work is useless.

F
Watch it, Wagner.

W
I’m the most qualified person at this university. Please, doctor. I’m not afraid to push boundaries.

F
You’ve made that blatantly obvious, Ms. Wagner, but the answer is no. Absolutely not.

W
Why not?

F
There is no project, Ms. Wagner. There is no work being done. And even if there was, I’d still say no.

W
I don’t understand.

F
It would be reckless and irresponsible of me to accept your offer. I’ve made a lot of people mad at this university, and now I have to pay for it. But the last thing I would ever do is bring a student down with me. I can’t allow you to ruin your reputation.

W
Let me worry about that.

F
I admire your persistence Wagner. But the answer is still no. I have nothing for you.
W
Well... Thank you for your time, Dr. Faust.

F
Wagner? A bit of advice. Stick with Valdes. Do the boring stuff now and build up your reputation. There will be plenty of time to change the world.

Nurse (M?)
Dr. Wagner? There's someone here to see you.

W
Do they have an appointment?

N
No, but she said she knows you.

W
Who is it?

N
Come see for yourself.

W
Dr. Faust? What are you doing here?

F
I was in the neighborhood. How have you been?

W
Fine, and you?

F
Fine, thanks.

W
Um... Is there something I can do for you?

F
The nurse told me you are the [position of authority] here at the clinic?

W
Yes...
You’re doing very well for yourself, then?

Dr. Faust, I’m very busy...

I don’t know if you know this, but I’ve recently begun to search for an assistant.

I might have heard that.

I’ve been interviewing people for weeks. All of the brightest doctors from across the country, graduates from Harvard, Yale...

Yes...

All of them qualified. More than qualified. And then they come in to interview and bore the hell out of me.

Is there a reason you’re telling me this?

I hoped you would apply.

As you can see, I have a job.

I know and I was foolish not to seek you out right away.

Are you asking me to come work for you?

Circumstances have changed. You’ve made a reputation for yourself and, I’ve finally recovered mine.

Why me?
And as you once said, you’re the most qualified.

I have no desire to be someone’s assistant.

I’m not looking for an assistant. I need someone with medical experience. The kinds of procedures I foresee are far too complicated for a lowly Ph.D. such as myself.

I don’t know what to say.

This is the opportunity of a lifetime, you know it is. I’m offering you your place in history, a chance revolutionize modern medicine. All you need to do is say yes.

I’ll be in touch, Dr. Wagner. Take care.

Excuse me, Dr. Faust?

Yes?

There’s someone out here to see you.

No more interviews today. I need to get some work done.

She said she has an appointment.

Does she?

No, but she has been waiting a while.

I don’t care. Send her away. I don’t have time for—

(Wagner enters)
W  
Dr. Faust?

M  
I’m sorry miss. The doctor is very busy.

W  
I only need a minute. Dr. Faust?

M  
You’ll you have to schedule an appointment. If you’ll just step outside—

F  
Wagner?

W  
Dr. Faust!

F  
Diane Wagner. It’s alright nurse. We’re old friends.

M  
Are you sure?

F  
Yes. You can go.

M  
Yes, doctor.

F  
Ms. Wagner. Please, sit. How have you been?

W  
I’ve been well.

F  
Finished with school already?

W  
Yes.

F  
Then I supposed I should be calling you doctor.
Diane.

Very well, Diane. What can I do for you?

I’d like to work for you. Here’s my resume, along with a summary of various research projects I’ve worked on, including work done while I was a resident at the University Medical Facility. I’ve also done some private research which you might find interesting. I didn’t put it on there but—

You don’t waste any time, do you?

No. I don’t.

Well, I’m thrilled to see that you are still interested, and I must say, you have an impressive resume, but I’m afraid Mephisto requires applicants to go through an extensive screening process before interviewing. I’ll have the nurse give you the number for—

I’ve done that. They refused to schedule me in.

I’m sure it was just a misunderstanding. I’ll make a phone call—

Dr. Faust, please. I’ve been trying to see you for weeks. I’ve been waiting all afternoon. Please, just a few minutes of your time. I know I’m right for the position.

(Beat) I won’t grant you any leeway. You need to convince me that you are both qualified and committed to the work, and to be frank, you’re already fighting an uphill battle. I have people applying from Harvard, Stanford – people with years of experience over you.

I understand that.

So, why, knowing the odds you’re working against, do you still think I should hire you over all of these others?
People in my field have never put much stock in the possibilities of gene therapeutics. When the leukemia breakthrough was announced, they thought it was a hoax. Even now, most medical doctors think it’s just a pipe dream.

F
People have always feared change. The mystery of the unknown. It can be terrifying.

W
But it’s foolish. You’ve proven them wrong. I don’t need to tell you how your work has changed modern medicine. And you’ve only just begun.

F
That’s true. Leukemia was just the tip of the iceberg. This research can be applied in ways we don’t even know exist. But what’s in it for you? Other than fame, of course.

W
Fame has little to do with merit, doctor. I’m interested in the work, which as far as I’m concerned, is the most exciting and relevant work going on in any field of science or medicine.

F
I would tend to agree with you.

W
Naturally. And I would be willing to bet that very few of your applicants have done as much study in this area as me. I’ve had to keep it all quiet, until now of course, but I’ve written quite a bit on the subject.

F
I can see that. Seems you have a particular interest in surgical therapy, in full grown adults. You really think it’s possible?

W
Of course I do.

F
Interesting. I admit you know your stuff Wagner. I’m impressed.

W
I just want to do the work. I want to make a difference.

F
And that’s an admirable goal Wagner. But we’re in experimental territory here. No one else has ever tread on this ground. Traditional rules and ethics don’t apply here.

W
Meaning what exactly?
F
We have the map. But the landscape is still unclear. Sometimes, in order to pave a road, rules must be stretched. Boundaries pushed. How far are you willing to go?

W
I will never disregard a patient's rights.

F
Besides that?

W
As far as I can go.
F
Have you ever been to a magic show, Wagner?

W
No, doctor.

F
Why not?

W
I don't know. Magic has never been appealing to me.

F
Really?

W
Really. I suppose I don't have the patience.

F
Or faith. Believing in magic requires a tremendous amount of faith.

W
But why put faith in something you know to be untrue?

F
Are you really attempting to place a definition on truth? Because I'm sure an army of philosophers is anxiously awaiting your discovery.

W
I'm only saying that it seems useless. Why waste your energy in illusion when reality has so much to offer.

F
Is illusion not a part of reality?

W
It's a manipulation of reality, a bending. Instead of making things clearer, it throws us in a different direction. Like a prism.

F
But even manipulations, or bendings, reveal information. Your prism bent sunlight and revealed a spectrum of hidden colors. Reality redefined by illusion.
W
I see what your getting at, doctor. But you still haven't answered my question: What is the use of faith in this situation? It reveals nothing - it promotes blindness, ignorance. Faith prevents people from desiring more.

F
A few years ago, I won tickets to see a magician. David Copperton or Copperman...

W
Copperfield?

F
Yes. I won these tickets, you see, and I went to the show with a colleague - a terrific professor who unfortunately has died since - anyway, during the show, they called for a volunteer from the audience and my friend was selected. He was thrilled, let me tell you. We both were. The magician called him to the stage and asked him to step into this upright casket looking thing. When the door reopened, my friend had vanished. Not a second later, the spotlight ran to the back of the auditorium to reveal my friend waving from the sound booth. I was stunned.

W
How did it work? Mirrors, did he have a stunt double?

F
Precisely the same questions I had. And I took it upon myself to discover the mystery. I hounded him for weeks, asking him questions, trying out hypothesis after hypothesis, and no matter what, he refused to offer even a hint. He just smiled and shook his shoulders. Even when he resigned from the university, he refused to speak, saying that he made a promise to the magician to keep it quiet. I was frustrated by this. Not knowing the secret of this stupid magic trick actually pissed me off. And it made me even angrier to know that this fucker was perfectly content to know and never tell a fucking soul!

W
What happened? Did you ever figure it out?

F
The bastard croaked! The old fuck even made a joke about it in his will.

W
I see. So...

F
He said, "Still not telling...nah nah nah nah boo boo." To answer your question, no - no matter how much I obsessed about this idiotic illusion, no conclusion did I reach.

W
So then I'm right, all that energy was wasted.
If you look at it head on, yes. But remember what you said earlier? The secret lies in the bending, what does the bend reveal?

W
I don't understand.

I became distracted by the unimportant. How the trick is performed is irrelevant. The effect is what is interesting. Not necessarily the effect on my colleague, after all...he died. What does my reaction to the trick reveal about me. About human nature in general?

W
You're saying the trick itself is like a prism for human nature?

F
Precisely.

W
Only we aren't studying a magic trick. There's no smoke or mirrors. We're knee deep in the very core of our being. The stuff life is made of.

F
I don't see the difference, Wagner. Life, it seems, is the greatest magic trick of all.

"Meet me at Bosco's in the village." Sounds serious.

F
Have you ever been to a magic show, Wagner?

W
No, doctor.

F
Why not?

W
I don't know. Magic has never been appealing to me.

F
Really?
Really. I suppose I don't have the patience.

Or faith.

_Mephistopheles emerges as the bartender_

Bourbon on the rocks, Jack.

No problem.

Same for me.

Impressive Miss Wagner, but if you prefer something milder, I won't judge.

With all due respect, professor, fuck off. I was going to order one anyway. Isn't that right, Jack?

It is her drink of choice, doctor. Comes here quite often...

That so, Miss Wagner?

Diane. And not _that_ often. Anyway.

Anyway. What were we talking about?

Magic shows.

Faith in illusion. Truth in fabrication.

Why put faith in something you know to be untrue?

Are you telling me that you've discovered the definition of truth? Wow. I'm sure an army of philosophers is anxiously awaiting your report.
W
I'm only saying that it seems useless. Why waste your energy in illusion when reality has so much to offer.

F
Is illusion not a part of reality?

W
It's a manipulation of reality, a bending. Instead of making things clearer, it throws us in a different direction. Like a prism.

F
Nice metaphor. But even these bendings reveal information. Your prism bends sunlight and reveals a spectrum of hidden colors. Reality redefined by illusion.

A few years ago, I won tickets to see a magician. David Copperton or Copperman...

W
Copperfield?

F
Yes. I won these tickets, you see, and I went to the show with a colleague, a terrific professor who unfortunately has died since. Anyway, during the show, they called for a volunteer from the audience and my friend was selected. He was thrilled, let me tell you. We both were. The magician called him to the stage and asked him to step into this upright casket looking thing. When the door reopened, my friend had vanished. Not a second later, the spotlight ran to the back of the auditorium to reveal my friend waving from the soundbooth. I was stunned.

W
How did it work? Mirrors? Was there some sort of stunt double?

F
Precisely the same questions I had. And I took it upon myself to unravel that mystery. I hounded him for weeks, asking him questions, trying out hypothesis after hypothesis, and no matter what, he refused to offer even a hint. He just smiled and shook his shoulders. Even when he resigned from the university, he refused to speak, saying that he made a promise to the magician to keep it quiet. I was frustrated by this! Not knowing the secret of this stupid magic trick actually pissed me off. And it made me even angrier to know that this fucker was perfectly content to know and never tell a fucking soul!

W
What happened? Did you ever figure it out?

F
The bastard croaked! The old fuck even made a joke about it in his will. His lawyer was
clueless when he read, "Still not telling...nah nah nah nah boo boo." To answer your question, no. No matter how much I obsessed about this idiotic illusion, no conclusion did I reach.

W
So then I'm right, all that energy was wasted.

F
If you look at it head on, yes. But remember what you said earlier? The secret lies in the bending, what does the bend reveal?

W
I don't understand.

F
I became distracted by the unimportant. How the trick is performed is irrelevant. The effect is what is interesting. Not necessarily the effect on my colleague, after all...he died. What does my reaction to the trick reveal about me. About human nature in general?

W
You're saying the trick itself is like a prism for human nature?

F
Maybe.

W
Only we aren't pursuing a magic trick. There's no smoke and there are no mirrors. We're knee deep in the very core of our being. The stuff of life.

F
I don't see the difference, Wagner. (He motions to M for another round of drinks) Life, it seems, is the greatest magic trick of all.

Would you like a job?

M
Doctor. This one's from the folks at the end of the bar.

F
At least someone cares about me.

M
Actually, it's for her.
W
I still care about you. Double shot of Jack, please. Think you can handle it, John?

F
I've drinking whiskey by the gallon before you were even born.

W
That's not something to be proud of...

F
I know.

W
Long day?

F
I just want to drink it into oblivion...

W
How many interviews?

F
Lost count. A lot.

W
Were they all about...?

F
More or less. I kind of went into auto-pilot after a while.

W
People are getting so riled up. I thought we were helping.

F
Don't let the media fool you Diane. We are.

W
No. I know. It's just a bit overwhelming to have to be escorted into work every morning. I feel almost like a celebrity.

F
Tell me about it.

W
Does it every worry you?
F
What?

W
There’s just so much controversy. Are we tampering too much?

F
We’re simply using the resources available to better mankind. I don’t see anything wrong with that.

W
But where do we stop? How do we know if we’ve crossed the line?

F
Does there have to be a line?

W
I think so. I think should always be something mysterious about life.

F
Why?

W
I don’t know. Haven’t you ever been to a magic show, John?

F
No. Magic has never been appealing to me.

W
Really?

F
I don’t see the point in trusting something you know to be untrue.

W
Are you really attempting to define truth? My old philosophy prof would go nuts.

F
Why waste your energy in illusion when reality has so much to offer.

W
Isn’t illusion a necessary part of reality?

F
It’s a manipulation of reality, a bending. Instead of making things clearer, it throws us in a different direction. Like a prism.
But even manipulations, or bendings, reveal information. A prism bends sunlight and reveals a spectrum of hidden colors. Reality is redefined by illusion.

But the reason we know that is because someone doubted. Faith reveals nothing - it promotes blindness, ignorance. Faith prevents people from desiring more.

When I was a little girl, my grandfather took me to see David Copperfield. During the show, they called for a volunteer from the audience and he was the one they picked. He was thrilled, let me tell you. We both were. The magician called him to the stage and asked him to step into this upright casket looking thing. When the door reopened, my friend had vanished. Not a second later, the spotlight ran to the back of the auditorium to reveal my friend waving from the soundbooth. I was stunned.

Mirrors or a stunt double?

Precisely the same questions I had. And I took it upon myself to discover the mystery. I hounded him for weeks, asking him questions, trying out hypothesis after hypothesis, and no matter what, he refused to offer even a hint. He just smiled and shook his shoulders.

What happened? Did you ever figure it out?

Never. He even made a joke about it in his will.

So all that energy was wasted.

In a way, but remember what you said earlier? The secret is in the bending, what does the bend reveal?

I don't understand.

I became distracted by the unimportant. How the trick is performed could never be as spectacular as the trick itself. Sometimes I think about what we're doing as trying to figure out a magic trick. There's no smoke or mirrors. We're knee deep in the very core of our being. The stuff life is made of.
F
I don't see the correlation.

W
You don't? Life is the greatest magic trick of all.

3.4

F
Illusion is a manipulation of reality, a bending. Instead of making things clearer, it throws us in a different direction.

W
Like a prism?

F
A prism bends sunlight and shows us the inside. We see the light is made up of a spectrum of colors.

W
Right. Reality defined by illusion.

F
No, not illusion! Reality is defined by doubting illusion. Questioning mother nature's little magic tricks. A prism enables us to ask the question.

W
Everyone has to have a little faith, though John. Even you. You have your faith in science.

F
Faith promotes blindness and ignorance, it reveals nothing. It only prevents people from desiring more. I have no faith in science, or anything else for that matter. I doubt everything. I always look to know more.
There's this energy in the air today - the wind, the leaves blowing furiously in a whirlwind across campus, the trees shaking their fists at the heavens, the noise. The noise is something else. The deafening sound of the air tearing through the sky like an epic temper tantrum. It almost knocked me off my feet. The world around me, angry and awake, full of life and electricity. Do you believe in God, Wagner?

W
Excuse me?

F
God, do you believe in a God or Higher Power or something?

W
I was raised Catholic.

F
So no, then?

W
I wouldn't say no no, just no. Not now...but not really opposed to the idea either. I just think there are more exciting things that can been seen and touched and experienced. Once again, wasting time on illusions.

F
Smoke and mirrors.

W
Exactly.

F
Because I've been thinking about God a lot lately.

W
Really? Is it the work, doctor? Getting to your head?

F
In a manner of speaking, yes. And no. Sometimes I think about what we're doing here? What are we doing here?

W
We're mastering our destiny. We are taking control.
F
Yes. But are we allowed to take charge? Is it our right?

W
Are you talking about playing God, doctor?

F
Maybe. I'm not really sure. There just seems to be something exciting in the air, like the earth knows something great is about to happen. It makes me want to dive in and rush to the finish. But in this case, a stumble would be devastating - to all of us. I need to slow myself down, get some perspective. Would you like to attend Mass with me tonight, Miss Wagner?

W
Really?

F
Yeah...I think it would be refreshing. Get my mind back on track, perhaps go to confession.

W
I think I'll stay here, doctor. I have a few more hours in me. But you go...it'll be good, I think.

F
Yes...I do too. I'll be back later. Don't wait up.
Dr. Wagner, I presume?

Not yet...

Do you have any doubt?

Doubt?

Doubt. Doubts, that in a mere matter of hours, your transition from student to colleague will be complete with a shiny new title and a foot in the door.

Frankly, yes. Yes I do.

Well, Doctor Wagner, a little doubt is to be expected. Although in your case, its entirely unnecessary.

I'm flattered, sir, really, but-

John.

Sorry?


Sure you are...

Last time I checked, anyway.

Well, Doctor John Faust, I appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule to review my dissertation, but if you don’t mind, I really do need to focus. They’ll be calling me in any moment now.
Certainly, Doctor Wagner. I only wanted to wish you luck. Valdes spoke very highly of your work. Called you "Wicked smart" if my memory serves me correctly.

W
You know Valdes?

F
Sure I do. Who do you think sent me a copy of your paper?

W
Why would Valdes send you my paper?

F
I asked him to.

W
Not buyin' it.

F
Doctor Wagner-

W
Would you please stop calling me that.

F
What would you prefer?

W
Miss Wagner will suffice.

F
Very well, Miss Wagner. I'll be frank. I came here today to offer you a job.

W
Why me?

F
Your talents are unrivaled. You have a better grasp on genetics than most of the so-called experts. You need to be on the frontlines.

W
You probably know, then, that I've had many other offers...
Naturally. But my offer is more than work – you will be revolutionizing modern medicine, studying the essence of life itself in a way never before possible. I’m offering you your place in history. All you have to do is say yes.

(Mephistopheles emerges)

M
Miss Wagner? We’re ready for you. (He sees Faust) Ah! Dr. Faust! What brings a man such as yourself all the way out here?

F
Just stopping by to wish Miss Wagner here luck.

M
I wasn’t aware you knew each other. Diane?

W
We’ve only just met.

F
Quite right, although I must confess, I’ve been an admirer of Miss Wagner’s for some time.

M
Is that so? Well, you’ll find few others in our field as dedicated as Miss Wagner here. But I’m afraid I must steal her away for the time being. Diane, are you ready?

W
(She glances at Faust, and then nods)

M
Follow me, please. A pleasure as always, John.

(Mephistopheles exits)

F
I’ll be in touch, Miss Wagner. Good Luck.

W
Thank you, Doctor.

(She exits, leaving Faust alone)

Dr. Wagner, I presume?
W
No, not yet. I’m about to defend my dissertation.

F
Are you worried at all?

W
Worried?

F
Are you nervous? Are you having any doubts?

W
Frankly, yes. Quite a few, actually.

F
Well, Doctor Wagner, a little doubt is to be expected. Although in your case, it’s entirely unnecessary.

W
I’m flattered, Dr. Faust, really, but-

F
John.

W
Sorry?

F
We’re colleagues now. Please, call me John.

W
We’re hardly colleagues, doctor. You’ve revolutionized modern medicine. You’re famous. I’ve done nothing. I’m not even published.

F
Fame plays a small role in merit, Dr. Wagner. I’ve seen your work – it’s quite brilliant. I have no doubt that you’ll make some revolutions of your own in time.

W
Doctor Faust, please. I appreciate the praise, but I need to focus now. Did you need something?

F
I only wanted to wish you luck, Doctor Wagner. Valdes informed me your defense was today and I wanted to be sure to stop by.
W
You’re still in contact with Valdes?

F
Sure I am. How else would I have read your dissertation?

W
You read my dissertation?

F
Of course. As I said, brilliant.

W
I don’t understand Dr. Faust.

F
Doctor Wagner-

W
Would you please stop calling me that.

F
What would you prefer?

W
Miss Wagner will suffice for now.

F
Miss Wagner it is. I’ll be cut to the chase. I came here today to offer you a job.

W
As I recall, you weren’t interested in me. Why now?

F
Of course I was interested, Miss Wagner. How could I not be? Unfortunately, circumstances were quite different when you stopped by my office that afternoon. Things have changed since then. Your talents are still unrivaled.

W
You probably know, then, that I’ve had many other offers...

F
Naturally. But my offer is more than work – you will be revolutionizing modern medicine along with me, studying the essence of life itself in a way you never would have imagined to be possible. I’m offering you your place in history. All you have to do is say yes.
(Mephistopheles emerges)

M
Miss Wagner? Dr. Faust! What brings a man of your stature back to our humble university?

F
Just stopping by to wish Miss Wagner here luck, Frank.

M
I wasn’t aware you knew each other. Diane?

W
We’ve only just met.

F
Quite right, although I must confess, I’ve been an admirer of Miss Wagner’s for some time.

M
Is that so? Well, you’ll find few others in our field as dedicated as Miss Wagner here. However, we do have a dissertation defense scheduled at this time and if it’s not too inconvenient, we’d like to begin. Diane, are you ready?

W
(She glances at Faust, and then nods)

M
Follow me, please. A pleasure as always, John.

(Mephistopheles exits)

F
I’ll be in touch, Miss Wagner. Good Luck.

W
Thank you, Doctor.

(She exits, leaving Faust alone)
W
The patient is ready, doctor.

F
Very good, Wagner. Let's begin.

W
Preparing for primary incision.

F
Center it there. Good. Set initial pace at one hundredth per cycle.

W
One hundredth per cycle. Whenever you're ready, doctor.

F
Beginning primary incision.
W
We have an image doctor.

F
Magnify to fifty.

W
Magnifying to fifty. Is that close enough doctor?

F
For now. (Beat) Ok, we're in the neighborhood. Let's slow down one thousandth per cycle.

W
Slowing to one thousandth.

F
Set magnification to seven fifty. Good. We should be getting there soon.

W
Yes doctor.

F
I think this will do. What do you think, Wagner?

W
Very good.
Alright, let's prepare to isolate.

Switching over.

Are you ready?

As ever.

Isolate the strand.

Isolating.

Very nice. Begin the scan.

Scan in progress.

OK...let's take a break. (He begins to step away.)

Yes doctor. (She remains)

Wagner?

Look at him. He looks so peaceful.

Is everything alright, Wagner?

Yes...fine.

What's the hold-up then. The scan will take at least an hour, you know that. There's no need to stay and watch.
Doctor?

Yes, Wagner.

I think we should halt the procedure.

Halt the procedure? Are you serious?

Look at him. He’s content. He likes the way he is. It makes him feel unique. How can we take that from him?

Are you worried because he revoked consent? Don’t worry too much about that, Diane. We’re not taking anything from him but a debilitating affliction. And besides, he was already under the influence of the medication. He didn’t know what he was saying.

Doctor, he’s been saying it all along. The only reason he consented in the first place was because we gave him no alternative. He’s been against the idea since the beginning. We have no right to be doing this to him.

This operation will enable him to lead a normal life, free him from pain. We are working with his best interests in mind.

It doesn’t matter what we think are his best interests. He doesn’t want us to proceed. We are ethically bound.

He doesn’t know what he wants – he’s never known a life free from pain. He thinks that pain is normal. I feel that we are ethically bound to use our resources to cure people of their afflictions, to take away pain from those who suffer.

Not if they don’t want us to, John.

Diane, I understand where you’re coming from. I do. I only want what’s best for Bill.
W

F
I am not stopping. End of discussion.

W
Dr. Faust, if you do not stop, I publicly announce what you have done. I hate to threaten you, I don’t see an alternative.

F
I’m not threatened by you, Diane. Because if you decide to announce that Bill revoked consent, which I may add you have no proof of, I will release proof of your involvement, which will not only make you look like a hypocrite, but will ruin your chance of ever having a career in this profession. Now I suggest that you either take ten and cool off before we resume or leave the premises quietly.

W
You fucking bastard.

(She exits, Faust remains alone for a moment, before being joined by Mephistopheles as a nurse)

M
Is everything alright, Dr Faust? I just saw Dr. Wagner rushing out of here.

F
Oh yes, everything is fine. She’s just feeling a little ill.

M
Would you like me to take her place, doctor?

F
That would be wonderful. The scan is still in progress. Let’s grab some coffee and I’ll describe what we’ll be doing in this next leg of the procedure.

M
Sounds good, doctor.

6.2

F
Is everything alright, Wagner?

W
Nurse, will you excuse us for a moment?
M
Doctor?

F
Do as she says.

M
Yes, doctor. (M exits, but watches from afar)

W
I think we should halt the procedure.

F
Halt the procedure? Now?

W
Yes. Before it's too late.

F
Why?

W
We're not ready. We don't know enough about this procedure. The data isn't conclusive.

F
What makes you think the data isn't conclusive?

W
All of our tests have been on primates. We haven't fully considered the effects, particularly in the long-term, on humans.

F
We know precisely where the defective gene is located and we know how to correct the sequence. What more do you want?

W
More time. For example, we have yet to determine the effect such an alteration will have on a person's creative abilities.

F
I wouldn't worry too much. Once the sequence is corrected, his genetic code will be completely normal. I don't anticipate any problems.

W
But there's still a chance it could go wrong.
Isn’t that true for any operation?

What if the procedure debilitates him in some unforeseen way? How can we just go on without knowing?

Risk is a part of the business Wagner. If you don’t take them, nothing happens and you get left behind.

Aren’t you afraid of messing up? Of messing him up?

I don’t mess up. I’ve made mistakes, of course, but I never mess up.

What about...(that girl)?

There is risk in any procedure. Bill knew the nature of the procedure.

I don’t think so. He was frightened.

Who isn’t frightened before surgery, Diane? This isn’t like you. One minute, you just as anxious to start as I am and then next, you want to stop everything. What’s the problem?

It’s not ethical. Whatever the benefits, whatever the risk. It’s not ethical to proceed without the patient’s consent.

We have his consent. On paper. Whatever he might have babbled after being sedated is irrelevant.

How can you say that? As a doctor, how can you justify going forward with a procedure the patient has explicitly forbidden.

I don’t think it’s wrong. I’m working with his best interest in mind.
W
He said no. Nothing else matters.

F
Diane, I understand what—

W
Don’t patronize me, John.

F
I’m not. I’m trying to tell you that it’s ok. We’re doing what’s best for Bill.

W
You don’t give a shit about Bill. You only care about you.

F
That’s not true.

W
Then stop the procedure.

F
I am not stopping.

W
Stop or I’ll go public. You’ll be ruined.

F
Was that a threat, Dr. Wagner?

W
Please, John. There are some lines you just don’t cross. Don’t make me do this to you.

F
Do what? Go public? Be my guest, Dr. Wagner. Tell the world that Bill revoked consent.

W
I’ll do it.

F
I know you will. And with the consent forms adorning Bill’s signature, the video surveillance of
you wheeling him in, and the nurse who watched begin the procedure yourself, who wouldn’t
believe you. Yes, you have everything you need to ruin me forever.

beat
Don’t ever threaten me, Diane. I could destroy you with a single phone call. Now, I suggest you either take ten and cool off before we resume or pack your office and get the hell out.

W
You son of a bitch.

M (re-enters)
Is everything alright, Dr. Faust? I just saw Dr. Wagner...

F
Yes, fine. She’s feeling ill.

M
Would you like me to step in, doctor? I’m not as qualified as Dr. Wagner, clearly, but I know what I’m doing.

F
Do you think you can handle it?

M
Absolutely.

F
Let’s prepare for phase two.
M
I see the doctor is hard at work

F
Leave me alone...I have no time for you.

M
Come now, John. What seems to be the trouble?

F
I don’t want to speak to you. Leave.

M
But I just got here...

F
I said get the fuck out of here!

M
John, John...quiet down. You never know who might hear.

F
I don’t care who hears me.

M
Even if they hear you talking to...someone like me? Can you afford to loose any more friends at this place?

F
I wouldn’t be down here at all if you hadn’t killed that fucking kid.

M
What makes you think I had anything to do with that?

F
You gave me a live virus! You assured me you would help. Instead you almost ruined everything.

M
I can hardly be blamed for your oversights. I simply provide the raw material...it’s up to you to double check your work. Although, you seem to have a history of neglect in that department.

F
What do you want?
M
Just checking in, John. To see how the new arrangement is treating you.

F
It’s wonderful. I especially enjoy the fluorescent lights and lack of windows.

M
That’s the spirit, John.

F
I want out.

M
Out of what?

F
The wager. I want out of it.

M
I don’t believe that’s possible, John.

F
You cheated. You forced me to do harm.

M
‘Cheated’ is such a harsh word. I may have influenced certain events which in turn influenced other certain events, forming a chain reaction resulting in what you call being cheated. But I hardly think it’s cheating. Besides...you’re still doing good. Everyone has minor setbacks. Even Einstein.

F
I wouldn’t call Hiroshima a minor setback.

M
It’s all semantics anyway.

F
I want out.

M
The answer is no. I’m afraid a signature signed in blood is far too strong of a contract to break over something so small as a death. But don’t despair, a bright light shines for you at the end of the tunnel. I guarantee it. Good day John.
Diane

Jake was always an adventurer. It was almost like he couldn't wait to walk, like there was some imaginary race or something and he was constantly practicing. One of my girlfriends told me that her son didn't walk until he was much older and we used to laugh and laugh imagining Jake walking out of the womb, like he already knew how, like he'd spent all of his time in there practicing - he kicked hard enough. He used to love running around with Zoro in the back yard, Zoro is our dog, a little pug that we got shortly before Jake was born. He and Zoro used to just run around, Zoro would chase him and they would wrestle and I can remember the sound of Jake giggling whenever Zoro licked his face, his voice would carry throughout the whole house. He was such a happy child and I think that despite...um...being sick...he still is. He is just so full of light and...and hope. Um... When the doctor told us that he needed a bone marrow transplant, and what the procedure was like I nearly collapsed. I couldn't breathe, it was just such a shock. And then we found out that no one, not me or Dan, my husband, his brother, their son, my sisters, no one fit. Not even close. They gave him no more than two years to live. For the next three months I watched my little running boy stop running and that, I think, is the worst thing ever for a mother - knowing that there is nothing you can do to take away your child's pain. I couldn't take it, I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, I had to quit working, Dan was working doubles, gone all the time and... This procedure was introduced to me by a friend of Jake's physician. Dan and I had always planned on having more children. I'm not good with the technical terms, but essentially instead of natural conception, they took a fertilized egg or eggs rather and found the ones that carried the right code, ones that would match up to Jake. After Ethan was born, we used to sit for hours on the porch and I would just talk to him - tell him stories, about Mommy and Daddy, and about his older brother. And he used to stare back with his big brown eyes and smile. He was always smiling. After several months, once he was old enough, once his body could handle the procedure, they extracted marrow from his pelvic bone and gave it to Jake. I'll never forget the sound of Ethan screaming - it was awful, lasting for an eternity. That's all I can remember from the operation - his terrible crying and once again, there was nothing I could do to soothe him. I was helpless and worse than that...I knew it was our fault...I had subjected my son to this torture in order to save my other son. After the operation, Jake began to make a recovery and was up and about in no time. Ethan recovered as well, but while Jake's progress was like rebirth...Ethan just seemed to...go inward...like...he disliked us...for what we did to him. For weeks, I couldn't hold him without him bursting into tears. The doctors said it was simply the recovery period, that it would pass and that he would have no memory of the operation. And although Ethan has returned to perfect health, almost a year and a half later, there's something different about him...he's sadder or something. I remember holding Ethan right after the operation and I remember thinking that the expression on his face was almost accusatory - like saying "How could you do this to me?" I told my husband and he told me that it was nothing, just my imagination. But I felt...still feel...guilt. Dan doesn't seem to have noticed any of this. He says we love our boys equally - 'and if one can save the other, why not do it? If anything, the kid will be happy to have saved his brother's life, right? I think they took more than his marrow. We wanted both of our sons to live and grow and love. But Ethan's first memory will be betrayal.
The smell of asphalt filled my lungs as I drove into work this morning. Construction crews have been working on this intersection for months. Actually, the project, I believe, was supposed to have been completed in May but they did something, put something in the wrong place or something... I can't... Oh yeah! These morons literally had their project plans upside down, they were looking at the fucking thing backwards and put medians where the street was supposed to go and tore down this woman's house and poured cement down and didn't realize there was a problem until some genius noticed that the fucking streets didn't line up. So for another three months I have to drive out of my way every morning, adding another thirty minutes on to my commute, basically causing me a lot of unnecessary stress. My doctor says I need to sleep more. I tell him everyone needs to sleep more and then politely ask him to fuck off, what the fuck does he know anyway? If he only knew a fraction of the things I know, if he even had a glimmer. But no one has any clue. No one knows what I'm doing, no one even has a clue.

DNA is not self-reproducing, second, it makes nothing, and third, organisms are not determined by it.

1
Time?

2
About 9:30.

1
Getting off to a late start, aren't we?

2
Can't imagine that it will matter too much.

1
Awesome.

2
Turn right up here.

1
Got it.

2
Cool.

1
Talk! About something... I'm so bored.
2 About what? We've been driving for five minutes.

1 About, philosophy - I don't know - Let's talk about civil rights.

2 Totally for them, you?

1 Can you try? Please? We never talk anymore. Always driving, always together, never speaking.

2 Got to focus on the road, the trip. Otherwise we'll get lost, never find our way back.

1 Can we play a game or something? Anything really, just to pass the time. The road is so boring.

2 Got anything in mind?

1 Tic-tac-toe?

2 Absolutely not.

1 Concentration?

2 Guess I could play that... What do you do first?

1 Catagories - Pick a catagory and then try to keep naming things in that category.

2 Green things.

1 Tadpoles

2 A leaf.
Tulip stems.

A street sign.

A hedge.

This game is boring.

Are you content just driving in silence?

Tried to tell you that earlier.

Great. Well, fine, then...let's just stop talking. In fact, let's just stop driving, let's just stop everything.

Central Dogma says we must continue, therefore, we continue.

Tell me why. Why must we follow Central Dogma? We've never even seen it. We don't even know that it exists.

All of you act the same way.

Act the same way?

That's right.

Tell me what you mean by that?

According to Central Dogma, you all begin to act as you're acting now, just before.

Could you please stop. I don't want to go anymore.
Going to arrive before long. And I couldn’t stop anyway.

Talk to me.

Almost there now. You won't have to worry for much longer.


Try to relax.

Unloading Passenger. Please Stand by.

Try to stay calm.

Calibrating New Vehicle. Please Board at this time.

Good-bye.

GCCGATTAATAATCGATCGAT

ATTAAATATCGCGCGGGCGATCG

*****************************************************************************

FAUST

The smell of asphalt filled my lungs as I drove into work this morning. Construction crews have been working on this intersection for months. Actually, the project, I believe, was supposed to have been completed in May but they did something, put something in the wrong place or something...I can't...Oh yeah! These morons literally had their project plans upside down, they were looking at the fucking thing backwards and put medians where the street was supposed to go and tore down this woman's house and poured cement down and didn't realize there was a problem until some genius noticed that the fucking streets didn't line up. So for another three months I have to drive out of my way every morning, adding another thirty minutes on to my commute, basically causing me a lot of unnecessary stress. My doctor says I need to sleep more. I tell him everyone needs to sleep more and then
politely ask him to fuck off, what the fuck does he know anyway? If he only knew a fraction of the things I know, if he even had a glimmer. But no one has any clue. No one knows what I'm doing, no one even has a clue.

**Mephisto**
You have gone further than anyone else in your field. You are Einstein to a cave dweller. They are playing with sparks as you learn to create fire in the palm of your hand.

**Faust**

I see all of these people around me, cashiers, waiters, mechanics, geneticists even. They wake up every morning and follow the same mundane pattern that man has followed since the dawn of time. It took billions and billions of years for man to arise from the ooze, billions more to take a solid shape, another billion to walk upright. And what precisely have we accomplished since then? What will be the great achievement of the next billion years? Fashion sense?! Shoes?

**Mephisto**

But what about art, doctor? Language? Certainly man’s ability to articulate thought is an achievement.

**Faust**

An achievement, yes. But learning how to piss is also an achievement. And undoubtedly one to be proud of.

**Mephisto**

Man did not learn how to ‘piss,’ doctor. Pissing is something all life does in some capacity or another. It does not signify progress.

**Faust**

Our ability to speak is of little consequence when one considers the emergence of a species from nothingness. I’m talking about evolution. Language, and expressions of language are merely byproducts of this phase of biological progression. The cavemen needed fire to aid in survival which effectively aided in their evolution. Language, while I admit is a pillar of civilization, does not perpetuate the species in anyway, does not directly aid in natural evolution. That is, unless one takes into account the creation of the ‘pick-up line.’

**Mephisto**

A pillar of modern civilization.

**Faust**

Yes. But even that is not necessary. We'd still fuck without language. The only difference is that less people would get in trouble for calling out the wrong name.

**Mephisto**

But without language, knowledge could not exist beyond an instinctual level. Your brain would not have the capacity for it. You, for instance, would be as useful to the species as a high-school drop-out. You’re intellectual potential would not even exist.

**Faust**

Precisely my point. Everyone is just sitting around, living these horribly mundane existences, waiting for the next phase of evolution slap them in the
face. But we don’t have to wait? Our invention of language and accumulation of knowledge has given us a unique opportunity – to choose the next phase of evolution. To make the decision ours, truly forge our own destiny.

MEPHISTO
So, what is your intention, doctor?

FAUST
What do you imagine it is? To sit around and wait for this billion years to come to an end? No, no. My intention is to skip them.

MEPHISTO
Do you remember what you said to me when we first began, doctor? ‘One must proceed carefully in uncharted territory.’ You are about to go to a place no one thought possible.

FAUST
I seem to recall that it was you who first planted the idea in my head. As I recall, it was you who approached me. Am I wrong? Did I misinterpret the message? Are we throw all of our work to the side and recede back into the ooze?

MEPHISTO
No.

FAUST
No? Then what? I am anxious to know why you have waited until now suggest caution? Do you doubt my ability to-

MEPHISTO
I didn’t mean to imply any fault on your part, doctor, of course not. I am merely suggesting that with such great things at stake, caution be exercised.

FAUST
Caution is not the problem. Time is. I’m not as young as I used to be. This work could take decades and I intend to see it through.

MEPHISTO
I only have your best interests at heart, doctor. I am your humble servant and at your disposal. If you need more time, simply ask.

FAUST
Ask?

MEPHISTO
Ask.

FAUST
When you first introduced yourself and offered me this...opportunity, I thought to myself that it was all too good to be true. But I accepted anyway. Do you know why?

MEPHISTO
Because you wanted more.

FAUST
Damn right, I wanted more. I knew where to look, I knew what to look for. I
knew everything, but it was only instinct, hypothesis. Nothing could be proven - nothing could be disputed either, there was no way to test any of it. And then you came along and offered me precisely what I needed. And, blindly, I followed. I put aside my ethical reservations, severed my professional connections, essentially gave up everything to pursue evidence of something I only believed to exist. Because I knew I was right. It was foolish. I knew it then as I do now. How can one trust something so perfect, something that continues to prove all suspicion, almost like...magic. But I put all that aside because I had to know. And I will not let it all go to waste. I will not stop this work until it is finished, and I'll be damned if anyone can force me to. So, you can either continue to aid me in my work or you can get the fuck out of here.

MEPHISTO
As I said before, doctor, I am you humble servant. Seek and ye shall find; ask and thou shall receive.

FAUST ...
I want more.

Day after day, he sits in his cave
Alone with his thoughts and pondering -
Memories of life rush in like the tide
And evaporate like dew in the morning.
Figures from behind cast their shadows before him,
Dancing on the wall to the rhythm of the flame -
If only he could turn and see their faces,
Catch a glimpse, hear a voice, speak a name.

So day after day, he sits in his cave,
His memories and wishes fleeting -
In this cold new world, only two thoughts live;
"Need to eat - need to drink," endless repeating.
With a rush of desire and a passion swell,
Satisfy and gratify in just one move.
But try as he may, and reach as he might,
No end to his thirst or hunger in sight.

And day after day, he sits in his cave,
As he relentlessly struggles for an ending -
Taunted by solutions so clear and close,
Fantasy of sense, he tastes without tasting.
Life's a constant torment, a mindless campaign,
Stranded in misery, a stagnant life.
Surrounded by water, but we cannot drink.
Sweet fruit dangles high, but we cannot eat.
SCRATCHINGS
He can taste the fruit which dangles close-by,

He was a great man, a ruler and a king,
And dined with the gods in his cottage -
They praised his wit and said kind things
And so he thought that he could trick them.
But when she tasted human flesh, the goddess cursed

Anguish goes down nicely with black coffee,
And that seems to be all that I need to face another day.
The burning hot, brown oil-like liquid,
Tasting of bitter ash reminds me that
Life is a torment, to live is a punishment,
And to persist in such a campaign is insane.

I'm dried up, my inspiration gone,
Fleeting out my open window like a run-away birg.

My mind wanders up, through the foggy sky,
Mysteries of life and sunsets shrouded.
Fire blazes fast from a shadow nearby
A brief shining shock and then clouded
Surrounded by water, but cannot drink.
Sweet fruit dangles high, but I cannot eat.
Did you hear?

2

About Mary?

1

Yes.

2

Only a word.

1

What?

2

Only that she disappeared.

1

Disappeared? No.

2

No? Then what?

1

Not disappeared.

2

Then what?

1

Vanished.

2

Vanished?

1

Vanished.

2

But not disappeared?

1

No, not disappeared.

2

I don't understand.

1

She vanished, not--

2

Disappeared, I know.

1

You see then?
See what?

What happened? It's clear, isn't it?

Apparently not.

She vanished! Into the air!

Did you see it?

No.

Then how do you know.

I remember.

You remember, but you didn't see.

Precisely.

You're crazy.

I don't understand.

I'm not surprised.
DESIGN

Along with writing the play, a large aspect of the project involved design work, including full production design and graphic design. This work was displayed as part of the final reading, but it is still unknown as to whether they will be used as a guide when the show is produced. Regardless, the creation of these projects allowed the actors and audience an imaginary playing ground for the performance.

Note: Three original designs accompany this project: A hand drawn rendering of the set, an unofficial poster, and a placard (one in a series of ten). In addition, I've attached "design notes" to the end of this book, which contain sketches of design possibilities (many of which inspired later design work).
The Scenic Design
The set contains three circular playing areas (two with 7' diameter, 1' from the ground; one with 10' diameter, 5' from the ground) which are connected by ramps. The largest playing space is ground level, between the ramps and in front of the ten foot platform.

As a whole, the set is intended to resemble a three ring circus, a magician's playground. The idea behind the design is to fool the viewer: as a whole the set appears to be in perfect symmetry, but on closer inspection, we can see the inside is askew. I chose to make the set relatively plain because there are so many locations used in this play and this way, the audience is more free to paint the set with their imagination. Actors can move efficiently from one place to the next and with four playing spaces, several actors can be on stage at once doing different things.

The two smaller circles are mirror images of each other. The ramps connecting these circles to the main cylinder appear to almost barge into one another, making the stage picture imperfect. The top cylinder was designed to be the home of the trunk and Mephistopheles. By using a trapdoor, the illusion of people and objects appearing and disappearing from the trunk will be relatively simple. The ladders in the background are abstract unions of DNA with fire. The two smaller projector screens are intended for words and quick images while the larger screen is intended for film segments.

Poster Design
The idea behind the Da Vinci poster is to combine the old with the new, much like Faust is combined with genetics. Various sketches by Da Vinci were complied to form one image, over which the letters “A,T,C, and G” are written.

Placards
These title cards were used for the final reading. The color scheme matches the logo and the images on each are visual summaries of its display.
As part of our grade, we were required to keep an online blog (or journal) and update it regularly. The idea was to have a space available where we could collectively go and reflect on the work being done. Often times, the journals were used as discussion forums, places to vent frustration, or a means to express controversial ideas in a more private way. Some people even used them to post early drafts of scenes they had written in an effort to conserve paper. The following is my full unedited journal.

Note: All journals from the seminar can be viewed from:
http://thehumanfaustusproject.blogspot.com/

My journal is located online at:
http://zflovbc.blogspot.com/
We are currently a week deep in the project. Ironically, I’ve missed out on a week due to ACTF (and a small delay in book arrival). Since returning to Muncie this Sunday, I’ve spent just about all of my free time playing the catch-up game - which is rarely a fun game to play. As of this second, I’ve read Faust and Dr. Fautus, Copenhagen, A Number, and good chunks of Genethics and Modest Witness. But there is something unique about this catch up game. You see, in addition to VBC everyday, I work each morning from 8-10 and nearly every evening from 5:30-10:30 leaving naught but the wee hours of the morning for study. To ward off sleep, Sunshine Cafe has become a second home to me - like an office that serves food and an endless supply of coffee. Remarkably this method has proved to be a particularly fruitful method of approach. Aside from the sleep deprivation, my brain is having a great time. It enjoys not being torn in seventeen thousand different directions, the freedom to venture deep into one specific area of study. I think one of the most frustrating things about being an undergraduate is not the class work, but the fact that the massive amounts of study rarely overlap and study can very rapidly become exhausting. I find myself anxiously diving into these texts, looking forward to another four hour stint at Sunshine, ready to continue my study.

There are two kinds of readings that are happening right now. We’ve got the informative: books like Genethics, Genome, and Modest Witness which are directly related to the science and provide a base from which we can build our project. The other are dramatic texts: the Faust plays, Copenhagen, and A Number, plays that incorporate scientific figures and ideas into their dramatic structure and in turn serve to be both educational and dramatic. The plays I think are really the key to figuring out how to do this ourselves. By reading the works of other writers who have done this same type of work, we can take the material we are studying and see ways to use it dramatically. We are beginning to see how to ask the right questions: How does the Faust myth apply to the study of the human genome? What are the moral and ethical issues involved? How might this be staged? Is realism our best bet? If the study is inward, would it not be a good idea to set the play within a human being? Are we looking at creating an allegory? Whose story is this? And so on? The questions are coming rapidly and I am excited to see how they’ll be answered.

Two separate thoughts occured to me while reading Genome tonight. One is a metaphor for the relationship between RNA and DNA and the other is a possible link between theology and genetics. I’ll start with the metaphor: It seems to me that the emphasis has been placed entirely on DNA. It is the recipient of all credit, the key to the secret of life. But like the chicken/egg paradox which Ridley parallels it to, DNA could not have been first. Rather than being an origin, DNA seems to the Rosetta Stone of human evolution, a record book. RNA, Ridley says, was first to self-sustain. It was RNA that stumbled upon the idea of DNA as a means to record its progress. Because of its relatively short life span, RNA somehow created DNA as a way to remember its progress. It’s like the Coca-Cola company and the human beings are like RNA. A human discovered coke, a human decided to sell coke, a human solidified the recipe, and humans are responsible for the creation and distribution of the product (not the recipe, which is top-secret). The DNA is the recipe. The people will be forgotten, but the product remains for generations.

The second thought is about the first strand of DNA. At some point, there may have been an
original strand of DNA, billions of years ago - presumably the first spark of life, the great great ancestor of humanity, a divine blessing. DNA replicates itself by splitting and reforming the missing part - One strand will always yield two daughter strands, each of which contain a piece of the original. But unlike a cell, it doesn't grow and split. It simply copies itself. Ultimately we have copies of copies of copies, but all are identical (or at least contain partially identical parts, because as the generations went on, the DNA became more detailed) to the original. But the original never ceased to exist. It still copies itself and copies itself. Somewhere in the universe, some being or former being possess a fragment at least of the ORIGINAL DNA structure, and thus a hint of that original life inducing divinity. If God created life, perhaps his Son was the lucky one to inherit either one or both of the original strands. God can be simplified into genetics. The idea is far fetched, and is certainly crazy, but its the work of science fiction. But what if it were true? Could it hypothetically be possible for someone alive today to have the original half strand of DNA somewhere inside of them?

1/19
Today we've begun to discuss our debate topics. I'm working with Ethan to defend the point the authors of Genethics are making in their discussion of Genetic screening, specifically as it relates to criminal profiling. The chapter focuses on a study that ultimately began in the 60's when a man was discovered to have a mysterious extra Y chromosome. What does this additional chromosome imply, both about the nature of the Y chromosome itself and about the gene expresses itself? The original study implied that men born with that extra chromosome (approximately 1/1000), tend to be more aggressive (among other things).

1/22
I've just finished watching the Spanish film Fausto 5.0, in an effort to explore ways to retell the original Faustus story in a contemporary setting. The film, aside from being in Spanish was, in a word, confusing. Dr. Fausto was certainly a surgeon who worked exclusively with the terminally ill. His practice appeared to be entirely ethical, in other words, his primary concern seemed to be for the well-being of his patients and his work to help them, while experimental, was always done for the patients best interest. While on his way to a conference, a woman on the train asks him to hold her bag while she uses the restroom and then vanishes, leaving Fausto with the mysterious item. Plagued by his good nature, which to some would suggest has lead Fausto to lead an extraordinarily dull life, Fausto refuses to open the parcel and intends to leave it at the desk of his hotel. Before he can do so, his life is interrupted by a strange, energetic man claiming to be a former patient, which, given that Dr. Fausto works exclusively with terminal cases, is a bit unusual. Apparently the man's entire stomach had been removed, but he seemed to be doing quite well. So well, in fact, he desperately demanded that he repay the good doctor with an unlimited amount of wishes. From this point on, the plot becomes extremely fuzzy. It breaks away from the originial Faustus tale and become more like a genie movie - each wish flies by almost unnoticed, but we watch as Fausto's personality comes out. The wishes keep turning sour; terrorifying things keep happening to Fausto. The film ends abruptly with Fausto asking to be "done," the death of the strange man, and Fausto learning that there's more to life than working all day (presumably, he the hooks up with his long time assistant Julia and live happily ever after).

The flim seemed dry to me. Fausto, either because of writing or acting, was not an intriguing character. Nothing about the man sparked interest or excitement - the was not mystery, no place
for the imagination to take flight. The was no hidden darkness inside which I think is the essence of the character. Things just kept happening to him - he was an innocent bystander in his own life which sadly, is not fun. I thirsted to see him faced with a decision between right and wrong and choose wrong. But the wishes were also accidental almost. He didn't want them and never tried to use them to their full capacity, which a traditional Faustus character would have done on the first try. So in the end, the Doctor is rewarded for his blandness and is allowed to continue on, having learned his lesson...blech.

That said, the approach to the Mephostopholes character was a pretty good one. He is introduced as a strange, but friendly man - too friendly, it seems, so from the first moment there is an air of creepiness about him. He is a man full of mystery - why does he want to help Fausto, how did he survive his operation, why can't he take a hint?! Then, later, we see his dark side come out and soon, the man who was once a ray of beaming sunshine becomes more sinister. His interest in Fausto accelerates, taking on at times the appearance of sexual passion (although its never expressed) and at other times that of a parent with child. He takes Fausto on many journeys, some of sexual fantasy (by offering Fausto his daughter and a woman at a nightclub), some of reckless mischief (by breaking into someone's house and destroying valuables), and some of unimaginable horror (when he wakes up, bound to an examination table, with a dog eating from a rather large open wound in his stomach). In the end, after bailing Fausto from jail and being commanded to stop granting wishes, the man confesses that he will miss his new friend and seconds after driving off, dies when his car explodes. We discover, as Fausto does, that the man who he examined years ago did in fact die - the death warrant, however, was never signed.

1/23

Dr. Faustenstein - Faust is a geneticist, on the verge of a revolutionary breakthrough. He is recognized by the scientific community as being the foremost authority on the human genome and believes it to be within his power to create a genetically perfect human being from scratch. He has all of the pieces and the most advanced breeding technology at his finger tips. He has successfully created super mice, gone through the mouse genome and hand selected a compilation of genes to create an entirely new breed of mouse, complete with super-enhanced physical and mental abilities. The next step is to tackle the human genome. The project is so highly controversial that his university has forbidden further research, let alone experimentation. He has in fact made one attempt at the creation of a new human, which was genetically perfected at the embryotic stage. The child was a genetic miracle, bred to be perfect physically and mentally, and indeed could have been, had he not died shortly after birth. The mystery of the child's death is what drives Faust to continue his research illegally. The child died of unknown and seemingly supernatural causes, for he was in perfect health and seemed to be doing quite well. The autopsy refused to show any sign of abnormality and in fact, the death appeared similar to that of someone who dies of natural causes - he simply expired. The secret, Faustsuspects, is in that uncharted region of man known as the soul - the part of every man and woman that is, for lack of a better term, greater. The secret of the human soul must lie within the genome, perhaps in one of those seemingly useless genes scattered about the chromosomal highway. But where?

Today we got into our first hardcore debate - ethical questions involving gene manipulation, eugenics, and the role of "God" in the creation of the human being. Should we pursue knowledge until we know how to "correct" defects? Can we cure humanity of disability? Well,
the question is why does disability exist in the first place, or what is a disability? We spoke earlier of sub-cultures growing from groups of people who share common "defects," the prime example being deaf culture. If given the opportunity, as many hearing impaired parents have been, should the parents do what they can to provide their children with a so called "normal" life? One of the points I made in the debate, though I don't necessarily agree with this 100%, is to look at the human body less as part of who we are as people and more life a vehicle that simply gets us from one point to the next and do basic tasks in between. In other words, when you get a flat tire on your car, you don't simply accept this set back and try to accomodate it. You fix it so that your vehicle can operate at optimal performance levels. The same idea works with the body - if we can repair a problem before birth, essentlall before legal life begins, why shouldn't we take steps to ensure this person is given the best working vehicle possible? It seems almost more cruel, more inhumane to possess this knowledge and choose pain and disability for the next generation when concievably we can wipe out all physical and mental defect within a matter of generations. However, the dilemma at this point becomes almost theological. Many say to cross the line of genetic manipulation is to step in and play the role of God (which assumes that God or a greater power of some sort is responsible - a fairly great presumtion). But what purpose could there possibly be behind intentionally giving someone a physical or mental defect, other than population control. To make this sound a little less horrific, compare human beings to any other species of animal that inhabits the earth, taking away for a moment our self-appointed divinity or right to the earth. When a By altering our genome, are we messing with things that ought not be tampered with? Should we simply leave well enough alone? By fixing our mistakes, correcting the errors of nature, are we in essence loosing the very substance that makes us human? Where does humanity's secret lie?

In the future, there are two species of humanity: homo sapien and homo faustius. The later term refers to a race of beings who at the embryotic stage of development underwent artificial gene perfection. Free of physical or mental defect, the Faustians possess superior intellectual and athletic capabilities and enhanced immune, reproductive, digestion, cerebral, respiratory systems. They can also be engineered on a more superficial level, giving those who desire, godlike features down to the shape of one's finger nails. Given this freedom to affect change on the human genome, trends emerge from generation to generation; popular choices have been specialized height, hairless bodies, perfectly tanned skin, beautiful finger and toenails, and even such things as pink eye pigment, super human muscle mass, and enlargement of certain body parts. The new trend leads toward language, answering the question: can we speak more beautifully? Acting under the credo that Shakespeare was the most brilliant poet of all time, the newest generation to reach adulthood has been engineered to speak only in perfect iambic pentameter, enriched with an inclination to speak only the most perfect word combinations. Faustians look back on their history and recognize Dr. Faustus as their Creator and worship him like a god. In fact, he is acknowledged by all Faustians as the return of the Christ, bringer of Heaven to Earth. He is praised as Faustus Christ and this religion is law. For the homo sapiens, whose ancestors refused to allow their offspring to undergo gene therapy (either by monetary deficiency or moral objection), perform the lower tasks of humanity or live in isolated groups of revolutionaries. One of the Shakespearean generation of homo faustius, born without the ability to speak in prose, searches for an answer.
I didn't really get too much out of the Museum visit and any number of factors could be to blame. I used to work in a science museum and am familiar with the style of teaching that is used in the majority of the exhibits. I don't find these type of exhibits to be particularly interesting or thought evoking - to me they are just games, cranks to turn, buttons to push, handles to pull. The fascination for making a light turn on tends to override the message that the light's turning on is intended to offer - for both me and for the children the exhibit is aimed toward. I found myself getting tired and restless, wandering aimlessly from exhibit to exhibit, anxious to find something other than cartoons and games with little or no correlation to the science "thing" in question. Probably the most interesting place for me was the "heart" room - a dark hallway with vividly stunning portraits of the human circulatory system, artistic renderings of human beings which simultaneously explored the outer doings of the body and the inner ones. The redness was a stark contrast to the overwhelming black, making each portrait glow and inviting further investigation from the viewer. I also found the space to be peaceful - I was the only one inside at the time and I found the break from spastic children refreshing. My brain woke up briefly as I explored each area (one of particular interest was the inside look at the effect of smoking on the body...god i need to quit). But unfortunately that type of exhibit was in short supply and the only other thing I really enjoyed was the flight simulator, which was more about playing a video game where you really turn upside down with your character than learning anything about flight. Come to think of it, I think science museums tend to fail when it come to achieving their goal of providing children with a good time and something they can know. Exhibits are too non-human - they grossly simplify things into mere button pushing, the point becomes who can get their baby to develop faster, not how does that happen. The most successful exhibits are the live demonstrations. I used to do the demonstrations and I noticed that by giving the kids hands-on experiences, we provoked them to ask questions - I see my hair standing up...what makes that happen? WHY! The science became alive, suddenly they could see it and recognize it in everyday life. It was fun and exciting and mind blowing. A parallel can be drawn to what we're doing here - its murder to make this into a museum piece, even if its a museum piece at a cool science museum, because no matter how flashy and spectacular it is, it still lacks luster. The issues that we discuss and debate can't be presented as words on a screen or even through dramatized debates because these things have nothing to do with Random McJoe over there who wants to know why the hell he should care. Well, why should he? How do we tell this story, the human story, and make it applicable not only to Joe, but to Tom, Dick, Jane, Julie, and Snarflorg? We explore the ways that the science intersects with us on a daily basis. We explore the ways that we encountered our genome before we even knew existed. We not only prove that this topic specifically relates to and links all life together, but we explore the why and furthermore, we explore what that means. What does it mean that we share many things in common with Mr. Tree who we like to cut down for paper, Mr. Cow, who we feel deserves to be genetically engineered to fatter and dumber so that we can eat more of him? What do we do with this knowledge?
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1/31

A couple. One is an energetic scientist, on the forefront of discovery, bringing home new and fantastic stories each evening. "We've discovered the gene that determines sexuality...who would have guessed it?!" "We've found a way to alter the genetic code to make mice resistant to breast cancer, which means a cure is in sight!" "Our research has proven that there is indeed a gene that determines precisely how tall a person can grow!" The other, for many years, has remained quietly supportive. But tonight's discovery strikes a familiar cord and causes turmoil between the two. - blah

Character Ideas -
Genes vs. will power. We like to think that we are in charge of our own destiny, that we have been bestowed with a touch of divinity, that free will is our God given right and privileged. But how powerful are we really? We don't like to put much faith in fortune telling or the idea that our actions have already been recorded in some heavenly book. We feel secure knowing that ultimately, the way we live our lives is up to us. But is it really? For people with Huntington's Disease, for example, the future is not only known, but hauntingly accurate. In fact, with relative precision, one can know how old they'll be when the madness sets in and how old they'll be when they die. How can life continue with the knowledge of one's own fate, knowing that no action or amount of will power can change it? I imagine a character who has experienced the death of a family member, his father, because of this disease. One day, his father was the man who raised him, the man who coached his little league team and came to every play, the man who loved his family and sacrificed his own dreams to send his children to college. Weeks pass and suddenly his father has been reduced to a weeping wreck, a ghost of the man he once knew, who does not even recognize his own son. After a fairly rapid decline, his father died - at the age of 55 - too young. The man, in his early twenties, fears that he will meet the same fate and goes to a doctor for testing. After a long and dreadful night, he reaches the conclusion that the knowledge would be unbearable, that if he knew his fate, he would not want to live knowing how he would die. However, by an unfortunate accident, he accidently happens upon his results and unintentionally discovers that he is indeed positive for the disease. Furthermore, it is likely that it will set in sooner for him than it did his father. How can life proceed?

The following idea is a little less realistic and a little less defined and hard for my non-scientific brain to articulate. I think it would be an interesting idea to play around with personification - giving a voice to genes, zygotes, chromosomes, and so on. Confront them with questions or better yet, circumstances. They are being tampered with. How do they respond? How are they personified to begin with? Are there archetypes that would correlate well (For example, would an X chromosome be a nun and a Y chromosome be a skateboarder?) Do they welcome outside interference or do they protest? How do they interact with each other? How could the cycle of life and replication be represented - is there a metaphor that fits well?

2/2

We're getting into characters now and the biggest conflict that I'm having, both with my own work and the work others are producing is this sort of clinging to a world that hasn't even been established. So many of these characters are defined primarily, if not exclusively, by their environment - for example, the piece becomes more about the rules of some futuristic world where eugenics is law instead of focusing on who these people are. I made the point today that slice of life scenarios, bits of time that capture the character doing some mundane activity, are much more insightful and beneficial at this point in the process. I also am seeing a problem emerge that frightens me a bit - that is people becoming too married to their work, proposing a scene with very specific backstory and a very specific intention and becoming so married to the idea that idea of altering it or even opening one's self to suggestion becomes almost offensive. I think, as much as it is a horrible thing for a final product, generality might be what we want to shoot for at this point. If the world is already defined in this small piece, how can it fit with anything else? Specificity needs to come from character and intention, and leave the circumstances of the world blurry.

We have an interesting challenge ahead of us tonight - write in a different style. Worse, even,
our writings are too reflect the Haraway book, which is difficult for a number of reasons. My method of writing has been very stream-of-conscienceness until this point— I take an image or an idea and begin by going into descriptive detail and allowing the scene or monologue to grow from that. My "Diane" monologue was the child of a heated discussion we had in class- the Faust monologue was born from me noticing freshly lain asphalt on the road during a lunch break. So the task for this evening is to figure out a new way— figure out what exactly my style is. And I think that, although I tend to favor the use of descriptive imagery and metaphor within my work, the feel remains to be mostly realistic. So tonight, after work, I tackle some form of stylization. My plan for the moment is to take passages I circled in 'Gene' possibly connect them to images or songs or styles and see if I can craft something that breaks from realism and explores the less tangible. Perhaps metatheatre? Perhaps dramatize Haraway? Perhaps heightened language would be fun to try? well...here goes.

2/3
OK...first off...JD is looking over my shoulder now, so all criticism of his work and/or him in general will be censored now and saved for later.

Props to people today. Not only are people stepping out of the realm of the comfortable, but taking risks and 90% of the time, brilliance was the result! We're not telling each other about the world, ranting on about insignificant details, but we're delving into characters and issues - things are finally becoming dramatically interesting. Once again, it makes me a little nervous. Will people start becoming overly connected to their pieces? I just hope that people can keep some sort of level of separation between themselves, their validity as artists, and the work they create. Allow for the freedom to fail - to suck, to be terrible, to FUCK UP! Don't be afraid of making something terrible. Just make something bold - don't tip toe around ideas - FUCKING DIVE IN AND DON'T LOOK BACK! (Ok...that was intended to be enthusiasm, not anger...)

That said, I hate Haraway (the author, not the person - although reading bits of her blog only made me like her less). In my opinion, she may as well have written in Greek and illustrated with complex mathematical formulas. Ok, so the ideas are great, really. Some of them suck...some of them I thought WHO CARES, and some I thought could and should have been stated more planely - at least at first. How amazing was it when today, almost by accident while discussing current related events, we fell in to a sensible ethical discussion of the stuff Haraway was trying to talk about. She makes me feel dumb, and by dumb I mean incapable of comprehension. I have 'not understood' things before, and been frustrated. But...argh...now I feel dumb because I can't find the right words (also because I just typed the word dinf for find)

Ok so the issue of the day, the one that really "ground my gears" so to speak, was the discussion of the self-important man. An issue which will almost always lead to religion. What is a soul? Are human beings alone endowed with one? Are we the center of our universe? Or are we simply another animal? Or worse...are WE the virus? Are we the heathens? Issues like population control, allowing death and disease to be not awful, evil entities - but HUMANE ways to promote quality of life for the surviving majority. Human beings have taken themselves out of the food chain, risen above the circle of life. Now it's a line. We have taken control of every facet of our world (except weather) - we engineer animals and plants so they can provide us with ideal food and medicine, we pave our environment and make artificial environments that
suit us better, we even control our deaths - cremations, vaults, caskets all prevent our bodies from returning to the earth. We take and take and take and all we give back is our waste. We are no better than the animals we test. Therefore, why not test ourselves. Perhaps, one day, if artificial birth is perfected, natural births will no longer be required and the population can undergo universal regulation. (Bold, eh?)

The final thought I want to think - This isn't fully formed in my head yet, but the idea of process vs. thing, the image of getting in your car, driving to work, going out to lunch vs. watching a city from 96 stories high, confusing the map for the thing itself. All Haraway, I know...I just wish she spoke English.

2/4
I've escaped Muncie for the weekend and headed to sunny Fort Wayne. And by sunny I mean arctic hell - exactly the same weather as Muncie. I rarely go home - usually just Christmas and vacations (and never for more than a day or two...I'd go nuts and my family would too). This time, I've come home to take care of the woman who cared for me from kindergarten until high school - my grandmother. A few years ago, she was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and began to require almost constant in-home care. My father would leave home every morning hours before dawn and return hours after dark so he could spend time with her - needless to say, his constant absence put a bit of a strain on the family, especially on my Mother. In July, they decided to move in with my stubborn grandmother - every wife's dream, living with her mother-in-law. My grandma, according to mom, views the family in the following order of priority and significance. At the top is my dad, her perfect shining son who can do no wrong. Next come my sister and I, both in college and both fairly bright and outgoing. Trailing miles behind is my other sister, the closest one we have to a black sheep (mainly because she enjoys reading and privacy). And last, at the very bottom, despite being one of the most humble and self-less human beings I've ever known, is mom, who can do no right in grandma's eyes. Despite my grandma's anything-but-subtle disdain for mom's kindness, mom continues living with my grandma until weekends like this where it becomes necessary for her to escape. So her, dad, and my youngest sister have driven to New York to see my middle sister play basketball (she's a freshman on her school's division 2 team at St. Michael's College). And I, being relatively close by, have been recruited to essentially babysit the most depressing woman in the entire world. Don't get me wrong, I love my grandmother very much. It's been painful to watch her go from fully functional down to complete helplessness. Her reflexes are failing, her mind is fuzzy, and her emotions are a wild roller coaster. She is on a strict regiment of medical cocktails, different pills for different times of day. She worries that she will (or, more specifically, I will) forget to give her the meds she needs and something bad will happen. The "cruel" person inside me begins to ask questions. What good is this medicine doing? Is it keeping her alive and in pain? Is it keeping her in a constant haze, dulling her senses and blurring each day together? Are the drugs really keeping her alive or, to coin a phrase commonly used in discussion, forcing her to go against nature? "Cruel" man strikes again, as I try to imagine the life my mom and dad might be living if they were to put her into a retirement home or were she to die. Who are these medications really helping? My main task for the evening is to ensure that my grandma goes to bed no earlier than 9:00, so that she will have a full night's rest. It's especially exciting because she keeps trying to trick me into thinking that her bedtime is actually 6:00, or 7:00, or 8:00. I won't be fooled. My dad warned me that if she goes to bed any earlier than 9:00, she wakes up in the middle of the
night and won't be satisfied unless everyone else wakes up with her. I can't be bothered with that. So I refuse to allow her trickery to trick me! Side note - she thinks Ray Charles was "too loud" and the Ridley's book is "rubbish." Aww!

2/6
List of Work
Monologues:
Diane - Mother who chronicles the decision to ensure her newborn child will be a bone marrow match for her sick son.
Faust - A little rant about stupid construction workers.

Scenes:
Faust & Mephisto - based on the monologue mentioned above, this is a conversation exploring Faust's quest for knowledge and power
Genetic Highway - Abstract piece - we are all about our genes. Two people in a car speaking incomplimentary lines which mimic the "genetic code," (AT-GC)

Poem:
Tantalus - Tantalus in Plato's cave, tormented by unobtainable desire.

2/9
Dear Blog,
Sorry I haven't been to see you in a while, you know how it is: You're editing a documentary, you can't get the program to work, your footage is trapped on a crappy computer, you have to pack up shop and head to a computer lab to do the work and then you live there for 12 hours...needless to say, I haven't had much me time, let alone, time for you. Now don't get me wrong, Mr. Blog. I do love you and care for you deeply...but sometimes after a long day of work, it's just more satisfying to watch 10 episodes of Scrubs and get in a solid five hours of rest before starting the whole process over again. But I do apologize and I'll try to let it happen again...thought it probably will. To make up for it, I'll post some of what I've written - complete with pictures! You like pictures, don't you? I knew it. But first, I wanna talk briefly about the crisis mentioned above.

"If there is no soul, if God doesn't exist, why shouldn't I just kill myself?" I got an IM last night from someone close to me, which more or less, said what I've quoted above. I immediately called her up and we proceeded to talk on the phone for a good forty minutes. She is a college freshman, a devout Christian, a scholar, an athlete, a friend - an amazing person. And thanks to a philosophy class, where discussions of the soul had been taking place, she was on the verge of a complete breakdown last night. The talk was about faith - and it intrigued me a bit as to why she would call me, of all people, to talk about God and the meaning of life. I'm not a Christian (not an atheist either) and I'm not a religious person - I don't feel the need to define the higher power, whatever it may be. Personally, I am content not knowing, content to not have the answer. Which works for me, but in a conversation about God and Jesus and the meaning of life, I'm a little lost. So when I call her and she is sobbing uncontrollably about not wanting to live because if Jesus isn't beside her, there isn't a point. (Note: I'm not trying to mock her or anyone's beliefs in anyway - this is just so foreign to me that talking about it feels awkward) What can be said to
that? How does an agnostic comfort a Christian? Genetics? Well, I tried - and it worked to a certain extent. Central Dogma even became part of the conversation - the idea that some invisible and incomprehensible energy exists in all life is astounding. And it has to be more than just some code - as Harraway would put it (if she spoke English), the thing is more than its map - its so much greater. Eventually, the discussion headed in a new direction. The core of the problem, I think, was that college for her is a big change. Lots of new and different people. Lots of new circumstances to adapt to - and the key is adaptation. Allowing yourself to be open to new things. But the questions, the initial conversation, is sticking with me... If there is no soul, what's the point of living? Oh man...this whole Jesus stuff is complicated... where does it all fit?

Ok...enough of that...

2/15

Brief update.

We've progressed to the next step of the process. People have branched out and the work is becoming more focused. I am among six or so writers who are responsible for expounding on the areas that need expounding. My specific assignment is to develop a bit of exposition for Faust, perhaps by using the Wagner character as a means to learn a bit more about who this man is. This is hard.

I'm trying to find a voice for this guy, a sense of who he is. He's got to have a sense of humor, at least at first. If he takes himself too seriously, then there is no way to connect with him. Actually, at this point Faust is becoming a hybrid between Dr. O'Hara and Dr. Shea, two of the most brilliant (and insane) professors ever to profess. Which is a little scary...ok...very scary. But I'm getting stuck. I've decided to make Wagner an ambitious grad assistant who, in some way or another, has discovered the secret project Faust is working on. In the scene, they meet and have a bit of bantor. It's a little bland - but I like the idea and with some revision, it could work like I want it to.

My process thus far has been to begin with something seemingly unrelated to the subject at hand. But for some reason, when it comes to plugging a scene into a specific place, I'm having difficulty. In other words...I'm a bit stuck.

Hmm...........

Limbo...........

2/16

Alright...enough is enough. It's funny - whenever I have plenty of time to do something it either turns out to be crap or never gets done. All my best work is done on the fly, it seems. Not to say that I dont plan ahead, I do. But the pressure of a deadline forces me to get the work done instead of trying to be brilliant. Which is what my trouble is right now. I feel like I'm trying too hard, forcing the work instead of just letting it come out. The problem is I don't really know how to proceed. I could write the "opposite" yes, but unfortunately the only opposite to nothing is everything which leaves me back where I started - with nothing.
I'm trying to write a third installment of my Faust/Wagner scenes. The first scene, Faust reluctantly takes Wagner under his wing as a research assistant. The second scene, the two have a conversation about faith and magic (more exciting than it sounds I hope), and the third is about ... God, maybe? I like to let my environment influence the writing, and the environment today is very exciting, to me at least. As Faust says in the only thing I have written so far:

"There's this energy in the air today - the wind, the leaves blowing furiously in a whirlwind across campus, the trees shaking their fists at the heavens, the noise. The noise is something else. The deafening sound of the air tearing through the sky like an epic temper tantrum. It almost knocked me off my feet. The world around me, angry and awake, full of life and electricity."

Unfortunately I have no idea how to go on. I began the scene out, in an earlier attempt, with Faust inquiring about God and asking Wagner to attend Mass with him. I like the theology, I like working God into the equation. But I feel stale today - like everything I write is crap mcdoublecrappola. I keep trying to clear my head and start fresh, but the only result has been more crap. More time...? Possibly...I mean, I am already thirty minutes past deadline.

Where does it go? What can another conversation reveal? What should it reveal about Faust? Should it be a plot point? A character point? Both? Have they had success, failure, luck, anything exciting??? Perhaps a breaking through happens, or an idea is about ready to burst like waterballoon. AHHH!!!

EDIT: Maybe Faust is starting to go mad? How have his discoveries thus far affected him? Does Wagner know about Mephisto? Does he care? Furthermore, is Wagner another pawn of Mephisto???

2/19
WHY ARE YOU IN THIS PLAY, MR. WAGNER?

is what I screamed when reading the old-school Dr. Faustus. And then I went back in time and slapped Marlowe. In the old school version, Wagner is like mini Faust, but completely uninteresting, serving no apparent purpose.

In our version, the original idea was to use Wagner as a way to get more character development from Faust. But now, we have to figure out why he now she is here! AHH!!!

Here are some random ideas:
like Hal, eager to prove oneself, willing to concede that she is not the best in her field, needs to learn from Faust, she's a little out of her league
Wagner - possibly an employee of Mephisto?
***is she in for fame, personal glory????????
she could fit well into the chimera dream sequence
faust fires her for some reason...or she quits...or dies in the explosion
While it is intriguing to have Wagner be a member of either Mephisto or the group that bombs the "clinic," it's a little contrived at this point...obvious and forced. I'm really getting into the idea that she is in it for herself, personal glory, and that she is doing all in her power to tie her name to the work Faust is doing. I think I'll write a scene tomorrow...nothing creative can possibly emerge from my brain tonight.

2/22
This project is hard. For some reason or another, when I try to sit down and realize a storyboard in After Effects, I become a severely challenged infant. The program just won't click for me - which is frustrating because I get Final Cut & Photoshop. Nothing looks good, things move awkwardly, everything is cheesy are artificial, in a word crap.

I've refined the storyboard idea to a tutorial on the "process of cosmetic gene therapy," and I'm designing the piece as a website for interested parents. I think this is at very least a decent idea - its certainly more plausible than literally creating dozens and dozens of options for facial features. The idea was create your own human - but instead of creating one, I'm showing (at least, I intend to show) how the process is done.

But I'm so frustrated with the program, I could kill a tree.

2/23
This may turn into a rant...we'll see how it goes. I think I'm just going to look through some of the notes I took during the reading and add some other thoughts I've had.

I agree - we kind of lost Faust, especially in the middle. I think one of our goals in the upcoming weeks should be to, perhaps, look back to our sources and search for ways our Faust could follow a similar path. Marty's comment toward the end of the talkback I think was very valid - we never see Faust's other side. I think this is a great opportunity to explore the idea that perhaps people aren't worth saving, which gets into some of the debate topics, specifically those involving overpopulation. Also, Joe's comment about exploring the "strength and arrogance" of Faust along with the "deceptive and evil" aspects of Mephistopheles I think was very valid. Faust seems too passive at this point - things happen around him or to him, but I don't see any ambition on his part, which I think is imperative. Mephistopheles is just kind of blah - I don't see him "presenting" Faust with choices so much as stalking him or randomly popping in to say hello.

People kept mentioning the idea of Faust as an Everyman, which is great, awesome, terrific. Here's the problem: is Faust is Everyman in every situation, he's boring and completely stagnant. He has to take a journey - beginning as Everyman, making choices and possibly becoming an Anti-Everyman, before returning to some sort of stasis. I think that's the point of the Faust story. Journeys, people...journeys.

I think once that is figured out, once we give him more of an overall drive and ambition, it will become more clear what his drive is in each scene. Furthermore, I think Wagner's role needs to be less active - she's doing lots of stuff Faust should be doing. It would probably be awesome to spend a bit more time with their relationship and focus on things like the inherent sexual tension as well as the progress of the project and future ideas.
Another point made tonight - Too many cool characters - we see only glimpses of awesome characters we want more of. Then become frustrated that they never appear again. I think one possible solution - granted this may take massive efforts from all involved - would be to revisualize the story, keeping in mind our most powerful tool. WE ARE AN ENSEMBLE. Why not use that to our advantage? I imagine a group of storytellers - narrators, if you will, 15 of them - gathered together on stage, stepping forward to share their bits of the story when necessary. They work as a whole to tell the story, which gives freedom to have a limitless number of characters. My point is that if we establish ourselves within the play as a group of people telling this story (adding a layer of metatheatricality to the entire thing), we justify the thousands of characters and styles. Maybe? I don't know. I just feel that for a piece this episodic, it makes a lot of sense.

Lastly, going along with a suggestion Danni Ireland made - I think it might be interesting (not necessarily good or bad) to explore the idea of one of the couples being homosexual and they are coming to the clinic to produce a child that they can both be genetic parents of. This (depending on a variety of circumstances) could be seen as one of the advantages to genetic testing, which would help show more than one side to the issue (which two people noted seemed to be the problem - an overwhelming amount of "genetic engineering is bad" coming from the scenes)

Ok - the rant above was entirely based on feedback from the audience tonight. Below is a compilation of my own thoughts and conversations I've had with others.

First off, I have a big problem with the homoeroticism in the Jacob scenes and the subsequent locker room scene. I don't understand why it's there. Once people start getting undressed and sitting around almost naked, this play becomes something else. The setting of "bath house" seems to be completely arbitrary. Why must it be in this location? Aren't there other more likely, more plausible places to be? Furthermore, if the scene must be in the bathhouse, why can't these men undress themselves? Why does some invisible guy (who, by the way, has not been invisible until this point) take off their clothes for them?

I'm glad all of the reckless making out was cut, and although I like Jacob kissing Faust as a sign of subordinance, I don't know how that will read. But even more, the scene between Mephistowel boy and Faust is completely gratuitous - I can't see how it furthers either plot or character by having another guy hitting on Faust. Too much homoeroticism for a play not about homoeroticism - enough is enough. I think these scenes are confusing - it's like being suddenly tossed into a different story and I'm not sure how to respond. I do know that they made me uncomfortable and I didn't think that was useful or necessary - not in this play anyway.

Also, I worry that the supersoldier subplot is taking thunder away from Faust himself. It's almost as though the focus shifts to the success or failure of the super soldier project than Faust's struggles in ethics and morality.

I don't understand the purpose of the Mayhew Lazlo scene. I don't know what it does for plot or character development and I really don't think its that funny. In has to be thirty to sixty seconds - absolutely no longer. Same goes for the rap - its more of a gimmick than anything else. It makes
me pity the actor doing it and it makes the piece as a whole lose some of its integrity.

Overall, I think my main comment is less is more. Much needs to be cut, much needs to be dramatically shortened, and we need to focus on pacing of the piece. My main note was THIS IS SOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO LONG!!!

Alright...rant complete. Enjoy!

3/15
First things first...
Here are my ideas for a title for this bad boy:

~Dr. Faust and the Magical Mister Mephistopheles
~The Greatest Magic Trick of All
~Smoke and Mirrors

That said, I still think that calling it the Human Faustus Project is our best bet. I think the original name does a nice job combining Faust with the Human Genome. And that's a name that I think everyone likes.

More to come later...

3/21
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More to come later...

3/23
Ok...I'm pretty much just going to go through my notes and rant on a few things. I'm not censoring myself, so please forgive me. I'm just going to be blunt because it's easy.

First of, Mark was great. I think he provided some insight to the script that was very valuable and will greatly influence our final draft.

Now, on to the ranting. As I was listening to the play today, I got bored. Perhaps because I've heard it so many times, but I don't think so. My biggest comment is that I didn't care about a single character. I never felt compelled to root for anyone. I was indifferent about Faust, Wagner,
the various Men and Women, the government folks...everyone. Mephistopheles was vaguely interesting, but mainly because the character itself is so strange. There is just something missing...maybe it has something to do with finding each character's limits...what lines won't they cross, and then how can they be forced to cross them...I guess what im saying is i don't see any sort of overarching theme happening within the characters individually.

The solution, i think with the exception of some line tweaking and editing, is to cut some scenes, or at least chunks of scenes. For example:

-trim all of the scenes between just Faust and Mephistopheles. Or edit. Everytime I see one of these bad boys in the script, I hate my life because nothing is surprising. There are so many of these scenes that it's a relationship we're used to (even though Mephistopheles is always a different character). We dont need exposition anymore. Make them short and sweet.

-cut anything having to do with guisewhite or jacob or supersoldiers. if the play is a roller coaster, these scenes are the part of the ride where we are ripped from the rail and thrown to our death. when we arrive at this point in the play, we lose our footing...we enter a world that we havent seen yet and that doesn't fit into the one we've already created. the characters aren't believable, their motives are unclear, and faust is like a completely different person here. how does this subplot advance our knowledge or understanding of faust or faust's struggle? ok, we learn that he'll prostitute himself out for more funding in order to continue his work, but do we ever see him directly reap the benefits of this trick? NEVER. It's completely unrelated to anything else in the play. Maybe if it could tie back in, perhaps. But as it stands, it serves no purpose. I don't understand why we dwell upon this area for so long. I want to care and when we get to this phase, all i care about is when it ends. If we cut these collection of scenes, not only do we dramatically simplify what's going on in the entire story, we open ourselves more room elsewhere to explore some of the more specific questions Mark proposed.

Those are my two big things. And I write knowing that I've always been the voice of opposition with this group of scenes, but that's because they to me are scenes from another play. In a different context, they work splendidly. And I have tried to make them fit in my head. I have. But they just don't. Not to me. The ideas are interesting. But I think we're trying to tackle too many things, and this is the perfect place to cut and simplify. We're trying to tell a story that will make people consider ideas and most of all ask questions. But not about the structure.

I don't think it's ever a good idea to throw a ton of shit at a wall and see how much sticks. Instead of throwing a ton of shit, we should concentrate on making the best shit possible and make it all stick.

4/5
Crunch time folks...this is where we separate the men from the boys...and uh...the women from the boys too...hmm...

Stressful times at the VBC. We've all got mile long to-do lists and tension is running high. It feels like we all need some sort of means to relax, a group bonding time. Perhaps involving
alcohol and pizza? Oh yes.

Do I seem a bit incoherent? It might be because I feel like I havent slept in ages. The final leg of VBC work has finally come to kick my ass, and that coupled with jobs, Alpha Psi Omega, Reflex, and GRADUATION is causing some serious freaking out. At least internally. What I need is a violent emotional breakdown so I can get all that crap out of my head and start to get shit done. Just to get an idea of what I'm working on, here is my current Life To-Do List:

For the VBC:
- Build 3-D model of the set and paint
- Create a color rendering of the set
- Sort through documentary and pick the highlights
- Act for films
- Memorize lines/rehearse song
- Layout design for the displays

Honors:
- Finish my blasted honors thesis...ARGH!

MLC:
- Finish the departmental newsletter (hopefully that will be done by friday!)

Reflex:
- Write the Banquet skit
- Act for Reflex film
- Show on April 28

Peace Corps:
- Finish application (just need to revise my essay and submit!)

Johnny Carinos:
- Just cut back hours...working 3 days (Sun, Mon, Tues)

APO:
- Theatre & Dance Weekend Publicity
- Banquet Preparation crap

Other:
- Audition for Summer “Shakespeare” Show - DONE!

So my plate is a little full. And my blasted job at 8:00 am isn't helping. Luckily Mom is coming down to visit tomorrow morning. That will be good for my life.

So here's to the last stressful semester of my life! (Oh wait...grad school...)
In the midst of filming and rehearsals there is was and always will be (or so it seems) the design projects.

Right now, Dustin and I are painstakingly striving to make something cool to show for the final reading.

The Scenic Design:
It started with a quick sketch drawn in pen in my journal. Handed that to Dustin and using Vector, he made a 3-D model and put it in a 3-D UT (that you can actually fly through!)
Now I'm working on a 2-D ink rendering with black, red, and brown ink while Dustin makes a real life scale model of the set.
Once these are finished, we add things like screens and curtain legs, and then I paint Dustin's real life model while he paints the 3-D one.
After that, he shifts to costumes and I focus on the layout design for the final displays.

Currently, like I said, I'm working on a fancy rendering of the set. Given that I've never actually done this before, I'm a little nervous. For the past few days, I've been practicing with pen and ink, focusing primarily on manipulating light and shading. I'm going for a somewhat realistic rendering, but I know my own skill level and I also know that it probably won't look too realistic. That isn't to say it won't look good. I've been doing tiny tiny renderings using the ink pen and been fairly successful I think. I'm worried about color, light, and variety of textures. I can draw the shapes and I know how to shade...but I need to practice a bit more before starting the big rendering (which I want to be roughly one inch scale), which I hope to begin tomorrow afternoon.

Exciting times, I say. Very exciting...and I mean it. This is awesome, because I'm doing work now that I've always wanted to do but haven't been able to (because of pesky things like graduating on time).
NOTES

I've included the following section because I think it offers a glimpse into a typical day of work at the Virginia Ball Center. That said, one could hardly say that any given day was typical by any means. At times, we'd gather around in our "war room" and debate issues raised by certain scenes, other days we traveled to museums, we rehearsed at Cornerstone Center for the Arts and Muncie Civic theatre, and worked late at night on various side projects. But here's a glance anyway.
• WEDNESDAY - Cornerstone 11:00, VBC 2:00
• MONDAY - Cornerstone until 3 then back to VBC to setup displays
• TUESDAY - P/U screens/dvd/proj from VIS and THEAT early
• TUESDAY 11:00 at VBC then meet at 1:00pm at Muncie Civ
  • black pants, black undershirt

******************************************************************************
******************************************************************************

• Research and Write Play
• Rehearse and Stage the Play
• Weekly Documentaries about process (2 and a half week process)
• Full documentary for presentation
• Multimedia for the final showing
• *The Builders Association*
• Designs for Final Showing
• Displays for Final Presentation
• Marketing and Promotion

DOCUMENTARY TEAMS
Doc #1 JD and Kyle Fisher
Doc #2 Tco and Ethan
Doc #3 **Dustin and Zack** (Week 4)
Doc #4 Peter and Kyle Johnson
Doc #5 Margaret and Kate
Doc #6 Joel and James
Doc #7 James and Tara
Doc #8 Elliott and Kyle Johnson
Doc #9 Tara and Tco
Doc #10 James and Peter

Get BOOKS!!!
First Week of Reading Assignments
-Goethe Faust (part 1), Marlowe Faustus (all), A Number (all), Copenhagen (all), Haraway (Intro, Syntactics, Lynn Randolph Commentaries), Ridley (Intro, Chaps 1-3), start looking at Cartoon Guide to Genetics

BLAKEY LECTURE 1/18, 1/19
• Protein structure - amino acids
• The R groups are the charms on a bracelet, the chains are carboxls
• pink/yellow blue/green
• Structural, Receiving, Transport, Enzymes, Activate, Deactivate, Connect, Break
• my brain will implode
• Unsaturated fats can be penetrated by H20, liquid at room temp...Saturated just visa versa
• Proteins
  Amino Acid - single organic molecule
• Nucleotides - single organic molecule
• Nucleic Acids - polymer
  Two sugars, five different types of bases
  AG purines, CT pyrimodines --> opposites attract AT (2 H-bonds), GC (3 H-bonds)
• 3.2 billion base pairs in the human genome (6.4 billion for embryo)???
• 12.8 billion base pairs in a kerotype (sp?)
• chromosome 1 = 3,000 genes (complete content unknown)
• chromosome 21 = 51,000,000 base pairs
• How close are we to playing God? Can/Should we manipulate the genome to achieve a more idealized person? Eugenics.
• The earlier you catch the cell, the more possibilities it has - it can be triggered to become a liver, a femur, or an entirely new individual

BIO MAN!!! Due by to me by Friday the 20th, Due to Jen by Tuesday the 31st
Insert bios directly into email for Jen
Final version as a Word Document

Joel Miller is a sophomore acting major/creative writing minor from Fort Wayne, Indiana. His acting credits include The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Equus, and J.B. He has written several sketches, one of which won him special recognition at the Central District Youth Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Margaret Ruling is a junior theatrical studies major with a minor in flute performance. She graduated from Snider High School in Fort Wayne in 2003. While at Ball State University she has worked on various shows, but her favorite role has been Inez in No Exit in the Cave last semester.

Zack Florent is senior theatre major from Fort Wayne, Indiana. Over the past four years he has studied acting and directing for both stage and film, served as a board member for the BSU chapter of Alpha Psi Omega, dabbled in improv comedy as a member of REflex, and traveled abroad to study ancient theatre in Greece and Italy. After graduation, Zack plans to spend two years in the Peace Corps before returning for graduate school and moving to Chicago.

Kate Lumpkin, a sophomore theatre and telecommunications major, welcomed the opportunity to study the Human Genome Project with some of her colleagues in an effort to create a new theatrical experience for her community. "What I love about acting is the way only a play can send a message to hundreds of audience members every night and only an actor can deliver that message. But to have the opportunity to create a new message is an experience I simply couldn't resist."

J.D. Ostergaard is a senior Telecommunications Production student, but most of his experience is theatre based. Last spring, he was summoned to Michael O'Hara's digital project to video document
the theatrical process for "Two Character Play". Jen Blackmer has followed O'Hara's lead and latched onto J.D. by making him the primary documentarian for this project as well. In his sparse free time, he watches "Scrubs."

Ethan Mathias is a junior theatre major focusing on directing. He has directed or musically directed productions of A New Brain, Seussical – The Musical, Grease and Godspell. Ethan has also been privileged to perform principal roles in the Ball State productions of Touch, Assassins and The Comedy of Errors.

Dustin Spence is a junior at Ball State University majoring in Acting and Lighting Design, and has brought his wide range of interests to this project. Along with being a lighting designer (an aspect of the project that he will work on), he is very interested in physical acting styles and stage combat. All of this along with the experimental nature of the project and Dustin's general dorkiness has made him extremely enthusiastic about working on the Human Faustus Project this semester.

James E. Roberts was born in New York, New York. Raised in Deerfield Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, he moved to Muncie, Indiana to join the Ball State family to further his education. He looks forward to this experience and the final product of this unique and wonderful project.

James Thomson is a Theatrical Studies major who is very interested in various forms of storytelling, particularly through writing. He has previously written and directed short skits and scenes for his directing classes and has many ideas coursing through his mind for future projects.

Peter Corey is Junior in the Acting Option with a focus on theatre and film. His future plans are to move to either Chicago or Los Angeles to pursue acting, or at least network well enough to guarantee a job within theatre. He would like to thank his teachers, friends, and especially his family who look at any endeavor he pursues as an opportunity for greatness, while guiding him and supporting him along the way.

Kyle Jean Fisher, a senior theatrical studies major with an emphasis in directing and management; made her directorial debut this past fall with Diana Son's Stop Kiss. Previous credits include assistant director for Two Character Play by Chris White, which was commissioned as part of Dr. Michael O'Hara's digital textbook Back Stage Pass. Kyle Jean is a member of Kappa Delta sorority, where she has held the office of President. She is excited to be focusing all her attention this semester on the study and creation of the Human Genome play.

Tara Branham is a sophomore at Ball State University who majors in Theatre (Acting) and Telecommunications (Multimedia). She was drawn to this project by its attempt (and hopefully success) at combining theatre with multimedia storytelling. Tara has acted in J.B. and Stop Kiss and assistant directed Loves Fire.

Tyler Core(T-Co) is a junior Telecommunications major (with an emphasis in Multimedia) and a double minor in Graphic Design Technology and Digital Publishing. When not designing graphics and making things "pretty," he enjoys many pursuits. Most notably, Tyler plays piano and drums, reads modern romantic poetry, prints t-shirts, watches the Food Network religiously, and thrives on good company.

Kyle Johnson is a Sophomore Acting and Musical Theatre Major from Indianapolis IN, and discovered his love of theatre in his time at Cathedral High School. He hopes to move to Chicago when he graduates where he plans on acting for a few years before heading back to grad school to get his Master's so he can teach.

Elliott Lemberg is a senior double major in Theatrical Studies and Theatre Education. Upon his graduation in the spring of 2007, he plans to attend graduate school, where he will earn his M.F.A. in directing. While here at Ball State, Elliott has directed productions of David Mamet's Speed-the-Plow, Naomi Wallace's War Boys, and Mark Ravenhill's Some Explicit Polaroids. For this particular project, Elliott, who also considers himself a writer, looks forward to contributing to the collaborative creative process involving the gestation of a new play based around two very provocative subjects (i.e. Faustus and the Human Genome Project).
THE XYY DEBATE - PRO

In 1965 it was reported that individuals born with the XYY chromosome configuration appeared with high frequency in penal and mental institutions. (The XYY configuration is a rare genetic condition in which males, normally XY, have an extra Y chromosome.) These findings raised the possibility that the XYY condition might be associated with deviant behavior. Subsequent investigations showed that only a small fraction of the total number of XYY individuals ever turn up in a mental or penal institution. Even so, available data suggest that the number is higher than would normally be expected.

Without sufficient evidence to link the genetic condition with deviant behavior patterns, other explanations were put forward. One was that the XYY condition might show up more frequently in lower socioeconomic groups. Social, economic and environmental conditions then might account for the incarceration of XYY individuals. This suggestion too has now been discredited.

In the Dec. 19 SCIENCE, Stanley Walzer and Park S. Gerald of Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston report on chromosomal studies of 10,348 newborn males (12 of whom were XYY). All were compared for parental social class, maternal age and race. The number of chromosomally abnormal infants in the non-Caucasian group was smaller than among the Caucasians. Other factors had no bearing on the situation. The researchers conclude that socioeconomic factors may play a role in the confinement of XYY individuals, but that there is no evidence that these factors exert any significant effect on the frequency of XYY births.

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Item:

Discussion notes 1/24

- How do we make the discussions and debates into something practical, a vision we can realize???
- Dr. Faust is a representational character, his thirst, his quest for more knowledge parallels the human thirst for more...
- Faustus myth allows us to explore theological questions with gene explorations.
- Structure???
• Genetic myths - LUCA

• By creating a genetically "perfect" human being, are we in essence "selling our souls" to science? Are we giving up a critical part of ourselves to create the next generation of humanity?

• vignettes - Dr. Faustus as a linking character -

• Faust can be less of a person...perhaps its a corporation...a bunch of scientst working for Faust Pharmaceuticals.

• Faust (Everyman) presented with a choice
  • presented with choice by Mephisto ("devil"?)
  • Mephisto takes on different forms - newscaster, pharm. rep., helen of troy (doesn't always have to be evil, asks questions)

• THE CHOICE - lets move ahead - "sell the soul"

• What happens when the choice is made, because of the choice?

• Circular plot - knowledge is flowing freely, out of control, information overload and the result takes us back further than where we started. Too much to process, the weight of the knowledge becomes our destroying factor.

• STRUCTURE - DNA!!! Two stories, or two perspectives of the same story, one goes forward and one goes backward. What happens

1/30

concept vs. affect (emotional response)

WAR - intellectual

P - aesthetic choices just to "look cool", emphasis on the visual rather than the other stuff

Postmodern theatre - do we view realism as a deeper means of connection, as opposed to exploring completely nonrealistic characters people as things and ideas instead of simply people look for meaning in an experience

-church and state-
gay politicians?!?

media based culture...fucking media...goddamn them and their propaganda (ex. Sept. 11)

trangendered child, genetic mistake?

use the media in the play as a representation of the media in the world

Documentary - remember who the target audience is. Inside jokes are BAD! Continuity is key!

is this the same boat...or is this the same boat - who is running the boat?

humans tend to sentimentalize existence, the idea that Man is the center of the universe, our origins as people, God made us different than animals
but animals know how to live in symbiosis with their environment...man is more like a
plague...does that make god evil?
self-importance - removed ourselves from nature

"we are not more than our genes"

condensed life - so full of flavor
*
**
***
**
*
locations, intersections, places

NOTES ON ROUGH DRAFT
(2/9)************************************************************
-first scene, despite optimistic nature of the lines, should seem very dry - Second voice should be pessimistic - a reluctant savior.
-no sense of establishment of place/character...need exposition, introduction to the world and or character before plot takes off
-MEPHISTO as one person, symbolic prop or symbol,

2/13 - monday
writing from a place of experience...you already have information about what the character said you played the character and took that experience into the writing
punch line of a cruel cosmic joke
Elohim - implies many females
this world doesn't necessarily have anything to do with our own
too much exposition - ::::dies::::::
simplicity -

POSTERS
1. Title
2. Logo
3. Time/Date/Location (IRT, 140 W Washington St., Indy, IN)
4. VBC for CI
5. 765-287-0117
6. www.bsu.edu/humanfaustus
- perfect people
- baby being returned
- must be aware of what the word "faust" symbolizes, what baggage does he carry
- faust never actually SELLS HIS SOUL
- skipping over the actual signing, very significant moment
- condemnation, can we deal with hell
- what will faust never do? what are his limits? what will make him cross those boundaries? state this in the beginning!
- the clinic is too accessible, the facility is much much bigger
- why is wagner back at the clinic?
- maybe oncoman should die...
- check out experimental techniques? do they seem real, valid? do they need to be?
- need to make mephistopheles's shapeshifting seem deliberate
- if we take away faust as a symbol, we must do the same for mephistopheles
- is faust merely stealing the work, or is he improving himself in any way - perhaps he needs to be referencing the book
- how does the book change faust???
- doesn't seem phased by losing his job, his approach to life changes
- what is wagner's character arch, her function in the script as a whole
- she is scully from x-files
- she is intellectual, faust is past that...sells his soul because all the knowledge didn't reveal the meaning of life
- names of MAN/WOMAN
- super soldiers, logical and surprising... REVISE Jacob
- restating yourself
- the way wagner refers to faust...does the formality lessen as they get to know each other better
- romance would be logical...makes betrayal more personal
- how do we use language to make the characters distinctive. word repetition, heightened language, colquialisms, etc.
- faust is selfless in the beginning...can he have another opportunity to be selfless later and then pass it up???
- gain new information...if its already clear, no need to repeat it!
- be aware of language choices, characters names
- be careful where we show bias...who do we target?? who do we leave behind?
- not everything needs to be stated...CUT EVERYTHING!!!
Next step in projects -> Monday 3/24

-Mephistopheles...who is he? Why is he there?
--where do we draw the line for Mephistopheles...what are the rules for the characters he plays?
what role does forsythe play?
what line will faust not cross? recognize Mephistopheles throughout?
-perhaps add a scene where his tenure is revoked, or right after
-guisewhite/jacob scenes could be the third weird world...presented by mephistopheles...go a bit more abstract, and make the characters even more archetypal...melodrama

++
+++ "She made meth in a bathtub with Jesus." - Zack
"We don't need no stinkin' realism!" - Jen
"We're better than them..." - Margaret
"Are you eathing a potato?" - Jen
"He was flipping out because his honey-bun was stuck." - Tara

WAGNER'S THROUGHLINE - WRITE A BUNCH OF SHIT!!

***1. Wags wants to be Faust's assistant - more confident - starts selfish goes to selfless
***2. Wagner interviews for a job (has an MD now), she's hired to be a medical doctor, play a specific role in the procedure, shows up for an interview without an appointment, won't take no for an answer...schools for doctors => harvard, john hopkins, washington u (in st. louis), pennsylvania, univ. of calif (san fran), duke, u of washington, stanford, university of mich (ann arbor), columbia u. college of physicians and surgeons.
3. Split scene - first procedure - fixing the "gay gene" - no conflict, procedure prep/review
***4. Bar scene - reverse characters? action of the scene? what is the point of the story? why/how is magic brought up? what conversation/debate brings this topic up? searching for ways to bring up to faust that there are ethical boundaries that shouldn't be crossed, as a reaction to the outrage caused by "gay gene" procedure, simplify language, there are things that cannot be explained and should not be explained, the drink is for wagner
5. "I have brown eyes"
6. Bill interview
7. Bill surgery
8. Dream scene

conflict with faust....trick mephistopheles
Scenic Design

Full View

Detailed View
the human faustus project

00:00:00 - may 3, 2006

virginia hall center for creative inquiry

765-287-0117

www.bsu.edu/humanfaustus
Display Design

characters
"our assignment: to create characters that may be graphed for the group to explore when creating scenes or vignettes for the show" kate lampkin

creating a poster
"i want the poster to project the audience's curiosity" tyler core

poetry inspired
by art
"when i saw the picture, it just spoke to me and motivated me to write my piece" ginae elbert

monologues & scenes
"i didn't write it to be said that way, but you can't hold on to your own reflections when writing a script" petra evory

the human
genome project
"i am excited that we have one half of a story to tell people" jean elliot

creating a logo
"the logo needs to be a melting pot, one visual image that embodies all of our principles and goals" tyler core

design
"it started with a quick sketch in my journal" jay thomson

chimeras
"we were told to think of a chimera [a unique being formed from the parts of other beings, like a griffin] that spawned from the picture we chose" jay thomson

writing the script
"writing, writing, and more writing. honestly, should i have expected any less from a seminar that is centered around writing a play?" nora brockman

chicago
"sure was a little girl who might benefit from this technology and i left wondering whether she even considered the impact that this vision could have on her life" kris stein

Title Cards used for Final Reading
DEADLY SINS - DANTE'S INFERNO

Purgatory
Wander

Clone

[Diagram of various scenes related to the theme of Dante's Inferno]

[Additional symbols and text indicating transitions]
DRONE - ENDLESS REALITY
MINDLESSLY WANDER
DEVOID OF HUMANITY
BARCODE STAMPED - NAMED A NUMBER
COLORLESS NOISE - LONG TO SLUMBER
PEACE LESS PAIN - FEELING NUMB
WARMTH IS MEMORY - DEATH COME
IMAGE OF TIME - FACELESS CREATURE
DRONE ON FOREVER - MOVE SLOWLY
PASSIONATE YEARN - ANOTHER LIKE ME
The Human Faustus Project
Ball State University
Willy Award
2005-2006

Mr. F.