RHINOCEROS IN THE ROUND: A DIRECTORIAL ANALYSIS

by

CHELSEA HABERLIN

BFA The University of Victoria 2007

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Theatre)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April 2013

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Abstract

This thesis explores the directorial challenges of staging Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* in the round. *Rhinoceros* examines the theme of individuals seeking refuge from personal pain and disappointment in collective ideologies through unique contemporary staging and audience immersion. It was presented as part of UBC Theatre's 2012/2013 season running January 24 to February 9, 2013.
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Analysis

*Rhinoceros* by Eugene Ionesco and adapted by Martin Crimp ran January 24 to February 9 in the Telus theatre at UBC. The cast included Georgia Beaty, Sarah Canero, Morgan Churla, Lara Deglan, Mercedes de la Zerda, Alen Dominguez, Joel Garner, Sarah Harrison, Luke Johnson, Kenton Klassen, Kat McLaughlin, Daniel Meron, Nick Preston, Matt Reznek, Nicole Yukiko Sekiya, Courtney Shields, Bethany Stanley, Naomi Vogt, Xander Williams and Natasha Zacher.

Matthew Norman designed the lights and set, Won Kyooun Han designed the sound and Christina Dao designed the costumes. Jayda Novak was the stage manager and Erica Leduc, Curtis Li and (Renee) Liyan Liu were the assistant stage managers. Tom Scholte was my advisor.

This document is structured in two parts: analysis of the play and journals documenting the production process.

The components of my analytical model include Emphatic Element and World of the Play from William Ball’s “A Sense of Direction”, a statement of theme, descriptions and super-objectives for all of the characters and David Ball’s “Backwards and Forwards” model of action analysis.

Analysis

**Emphatic Element**

The primary emphatic element in *Rhinoceros* is theme followed closely, and strongly supported, by language. The philosophical arguments put forward by the characters in the play are well developed and make up a great deal of the dialogue throughout the piece. As such, they are the primary vehicles for the expression of theme.

**World of the Play**

I am setting *Rhinoceros* in France in 1936. All costumes and props will be from this era. Before the characters transform into rhinos their costumes will be bright, colourful and geometric, inspired by modern or degenerate art of the time. After they transform into rhinos their costumes will be green grey, suggesting Nazis and the Iron Guard. The set will be highly structural, transformative, and suggested with no set pieces or props ever leaving the stage. This will ease the flow of the production, specifically the transitions.
**Theme**

People often seek refuge from personal pain and disappointment in collective ideologies. Those who move through life with a strong sense of moral certainty are particularly vulnerable to ideologies that are extreme and dehumanizing.

**Character Analysis**

- **Waitress** – 20s
  - Under the thumb of the Boss
  - Dutifully goes about doing her work despite being very intrigued by the arrival of the rhinos
  - Gets very wrapped up in any drama that is happening around her
  - Super Objective: To find meaning and connection by helping out wherever she can.

- **Housewife** – 30s
  - Quite beautiful and thrives off of male attention, especially from the Old Gentleman and the Logician, almost to the point where she plays them off each other.
  - Is so upset by the death of the cat that it’s possible she sees the cat as a child. Totally inconsolable.
  - Married.
  - Rejects younger people, preferring older people.
  - Has had some sort of quarrel with the grocer man and woman and will no longer shop at their store.
  - Super Objective: To find attention and support.

- **Grocer Woman** – 30s
  - Angry at the Housewife for no longer shopping at her store. This hints at the fact that there was some sort of incident that led the Housewife to stop shopping there.
  - Very tied to her husband, the Grocer Man, and wants to share every experience and thought with him. Despite this she is critical of him and bosses him around.
• Wants very much to make sense of the appearance of the rhinos and is interested in discovering the details of the animal.
• Super Objective: To have a smooth running, successful business.

• **Grocer Man** – 30s
  • Very insistent on getting the business of the Housewife back.
  • Charming yet quite persistent in his attempt to lure back the Housewife to his store.
  • Very tied to his wife, the Grocer Wife. They appear to have quite a close relationship and they view the world as Us versus Them. He is subservient to his wife and she bosses him around.
  • After the rhinos pass he returns very quickly to trying to get business and make money. Even though he rails against the cruelty caused by the rhinos he doesn’t do anything about it.
  • Is very interested in understanding the details about the rhinoceroses.
  • Is lured in by the Logician and hangs off his every word as he explains the rhinoceros appearance.
  • Super Objective: To please his wife and in doing so live a peaceful life.

• **Logician** – 40s
  • Very interested in helping the Old Gent figure out logic and willing to patiently walk him through it.
  • Encouraging of the Old Gent as he discovers logic.
  • Really enjoys the feeling of being right and wants to keep the old man, and everyone else around him, in a lower status than him by always being a little bit further ahead mentally.
  • Even if he doesn’t make sense he talks confidently and assuredly.
  • Interested in being the center of attention.
  • More interested in following logic than in actually figuring out a useful or practical solution to problems.
  • Super Objective: To gain the respect and admiration of everyone around him.
• **Boss at Café - 50s**
  
  - Mostly interested in making money.
  - Treats the waitress poorly. He treats her as an employee and not as a person.
  - After the rhinos pass returns very quickly to trying to get business and make money. Even though he rails against the cruelty caused the rhinos he doesn’t do anything about it.
  - Is very interested in understanding the details about the rhinoceroses.
  - Is lured in by the Logician and hangs off his every word as he explains the rhinoceros appearance.
  - He is two faced and speaks to the waitress one way and the customers entirely another.
  - Super Objective: To make lots of money by running a successful business.

• **Old Gent – 60s**
  
  - Worked for the government.
  - States that he never had much time for deep thought because he was too busy working, implying that working for the government didn’t require much deep thought.
  - Has a cat named Socrates.
  - Is very interested in learning about logic from the Logician and grows increasingly self confident as their conversation carries on, although at first he seems afraid of trying for fear of error.
  - Finds it challenging to really apply himself to the problems posed by the Logician but with encouragement is excited to really put his mind to it and proudly presents the solutions he calculates.
  - Is infatuated with the Housewife and tries very hard to help her and stay near her.
  - Is essentially the Logician’s hype man, backing up everything he says and helping to emphasis his points.
  - Super Objective: To find friendship and develop relationships.
• **Mr. & Mme. Jean** – 80s
  - Very old.
  - Mr. Jean is willing to help Berenger and is intrigued by the noise and calling while Mme. Jean wants nothing to do with the outside world.
  - Mme. Jean has no sense of hospitality and is afraid of the outside world.
  - Very similar to the old couple in *Amedée, Or How to get Rid of It*. A common type of character for Ionesco.
  - Super Objective: To live a quiet, undisturbed life together.

• **Mme. Boeuf** – 30s
  - Married to Mr. Boeuf, who works in the office with Berenger.
  - Extremely loyal to her husband, even fervently following him after he becomes a rhino.
  - Doesn’t need a reason to go with her husband other than to be with him, this is enough for her.
  - Described by Jean as fat and dumb but perhaps just over weight and simple minded.
  - Very flustered and confused throughout her scene.
  - Willing to lie for her husband to his boss to protect his job.
  - Super Objective: To be with her husband, Mr. Boeuf.

• **Mr. Papillion** – 40
  - Very single mindedly focused on the work that needs to be done, punctuality and attendance. Seems to have a difficult time looking beyond this or changing his stringent views at all, even in the face of trampling rhinos.
  - Boss at a legal publication office
  - Middle-management - very anxious about what head office will say or do.
  - Looks up to Dudard and often turns to him for guidance.
  - Attracted to Daisy and treats her like a servant, bossing her around and being short with her. Is very inappropriate towards Daisy and oversteps his boundaries with her.
• Super Objective: To please head office by running a functioning and productive office.

• **Botard** – 40
  • A retired school teacher
  • Sees conspiracies everywhere and claims to know the secret behind the sudden appearance of the rhinos.
  • Works in a legal publication office.
  • Marxist – claims to have a system of analysis that can explain all things in the world.
  • Believes the Bourgeois is corrupt.
  • Led by distrust and an inferiority complex that makes him to work too hard to be right.
  • Although he is indignant and truly difficult he is still respected by his co-workers.
  • Very much against religion.
  • Flips his point of view at the drop of a hat and is constantly lying in order to be right and keep the upper hand over his co-workers.
  • Believes in hard work.
  • Wants to raise his status above Dudard and undermine him.
  • Super Objective: To overthrow the Bourgeois by outsmarting them and raising his status above them.

• **Dudard** – 30
  • Law degree.
  • An intellectual.
  • Believes that to understand is to justify.
  • Works hard to figure out what is wrong with Berenger in order to do the right thing and help him.
  • Acts as deputy head at the law publication.
  • Believes that everything happens for a reason, that everything has a cause – this allows him to be calm and level-headed in the face of adversity.
  • He creates his own order out of any situation.
  • Weak-kneed liberal.
• All about rationality and weighing the arguments.
• In his conversation with Berenger in Act 3 he is convinced to transform.
• In love with Daisy but is unable to make a move for fear of being too forward and loses her to Berenger.
• Dislikes emotionality and emotionally led thought processes.
• Strives to connect with Daisy but ultimately loses her to Berenger and this is the final push that causes him to become a rhino. The fear of being alone pushes him.
• Wears his intolerance and liberal values on his sleeve.
• Super Objective: To do the right thing. A large part of this is first to understand what the right thing is and then to pursue it.

• **Daisy – 25**
  • Wants to protect her domestic ideal right to the end.
  • Wants to be taken seriously in the workplace.
  • In denial and tells Berenger that they can just create their own reality.
  • Very afraid about the rhinoceroses but unwilling to admit this and instead covers it up by playing house, creating a ‘fairytale life’ and pretending normalcy with Berenger.
  • Has a motherly relationship with Berenger. She is more interested in caring for him than being intimate with him.
  • Secretary.
  • Focused and hard working.
  • Keen to help those around her.
  • Wants to keep the peace and avoid conflict whenever possible.
  • Smiles through pain and sadness.
  • Willing to give second chances.
  • Super Objective: To be taken seriously by those around her and maintain the life she imagined for herself with Berenger, in order to hold onto the normalcy that would make her feel secure.
Jean - 30

- Views patience, culture and intelligence as weapons.
- Does not go to church.
- A zealous conformist.
- Speaks and thinks in platitudes.
- Believes that honouring duty is vital.
- A good friend to Berenger, they have been friends for a long time.
- Very defensive.
- Clean and tidy.
- Appearance is incredibly important to him as he believes it to be a reflection of what’s happening on the inside.
- Stubborn. Once he has an idea he sticks to it and doesn’t listen to any differing opinion.
- Really likes being right and values this over telling the truth.
- A great fan of culture and believes it has the power to transform.
- Stuck in his ways – maps out his life and does not vary from his plans.
- Is always on time and values punctuality in others.
- Is very blunt with Berenger.
- Has clear ideas about the way the world should work and his ego is quickly bruised if this is at all challenged.
- Has double-standards for people around him. For example, it’s ok for him to go out drinking but not for Berenger.
- Lives his life based on his moral certainties and never questions or challenges his beliefs.
- Super Objective: To find connection and community.

Berenger - 30

- An everyman.
- Works at a legal publication office but hates his job and doesn’t feel he fits in.
- Always late.
• Loves Daisy and wants her to think well of him and only see him looking his best.
• Naïve.
• Seeks approval and answers from those around him constantly. Wants to change his life and state of mind but doesn’t know how so he looks to others for solutions.
• Is endlessly patient until he finally really loses his patience. It is primarily excessive stubbornness that makes him flip out.
• He is out of sync with his surroundings.
• He loses his identity near the end and has to hang up a painting and look at photos to rediscover who he is.
• At the end, when he is seemingly alone on earth, he finally makes a defiant gesture and asserts his strength.
• Berenger’s humanity allows him to perceive the purposelessness of life, intensifies his suffering and finally forces him to recognize his own absurdity (Vos, 18).
• Encounters the “inevitability of a death that is a continual living” (Vos, 16) He is “condemned to live.”
• An alcoholic.
• He feels apart, feels less than – he doesn’t feel right in his own skin.
• Unclean.
• Doesn’t make a lot of money and the money he does make he spends on alcohol.
• He is looking for purpose in his life.
• Suffers from anxiety when he’s around people and drinking makes him calmer.
• Does not go to church.
• He is very patient with is friend Jean. He takes Jean’s criticisms with an open mind and responds very well to them, quickly deciding to change his ways and commit to a healthier, more fulfilling lifestyle based on Jean’s advice.
• At the beginning of the play he states that he doesn’t know if he exists.
• At the beginning of the play he is depressed. He states that being alone and socializing both depress him.
• Berenger greatly admires his friend Jean who he sees as strong willed, organized, helpful, clean and together.
• Ionesco: Such men “Suddenly find themselves naked, like a body stretched out on the sand, amazed to be there and amazed at their own amazement, amazed at their own awareness as they are confronted with the immense ocean of the infinite, alone in the brilliant, inconceivable and indisputable sunlight of existence” – this speaks to Berenger at the end of the play (vos, 7).
• Feels freedom of choice is important and rails against group mentality.
• He is never certain of anything and is always questioning his beliefs and the beliefs of those around him.
• His indecision and empathy become his source of strength.
• Only at the end when he can no longer turn to others for support and guidance does he trust in himself and stand solidly on his own.
• Super Objective: To find a purpose in life. He wants to find a reason to be alive.

Backwards and Forwards Analysis

ACT 3
• Berenger asserts that he will remain human
• Berenger decides to take on the world and not give in to the rhinos
• Berenger turns to face the back wall where the rhinos are and speaks to them
• Berenger says that he will take on the whole world and calls for his gun with haste
• Berenger, as a result of having realized that he is already standing up against the rhinos by refusing to conform, snaps out of it
• Berenger says that he’s ugly and says that life is hard for him because he refuses to conform
• Berenger looks away from the mirror
• Berenger says that he wants to change but can’t and that he can’t look at himself because he’s too ashamed
• Berenger says that he’s a monster and should have joined the rhinos when he had a chance but that now it’s too late
• Berenger tries to make rhino noises but has no success and is very unhappy with himself
• Berenger says that the rhinos’ singing is seductive and tries to copy them
• Berenger takes a moment to listen to the rhinos singing
• Berenger looks at his skin and longs to have hard skin like the rhinos. He observes that his skin is flabby, white and hairy
• Berenger takes off his shirt and looks at himself in the mirror
• Berenger looks at his hands and wishes they were scratchy instead of damp
• Berenger says that the rhinos are beautiful and that he so much wants a horn to be like them but it just won’t grow. If he had a horn he’d stop being ashamed.
• Berenger takes down the paintings and throws them on the floor
• Berenger realizes he is ugly compared to the paintings
• Berenger hangs up paintings of men and women and they are much uglier than the rhinos
• Berenger sees himself in the paintings
• His failure recognizing the people in the pictures leads Berenger to pull out paintings in order to compare them to the pictures to see if he’s in them
• Berenger pulls photographs out of the cupboard and tries to recognize the people in them and he fails. He can’t even recognize if he himself is in the photos
• Berenger tries to convince himself that man’s not ugly and runs a hand over his face while looking at himself
• Berenger looks at himself in the mirror
• Berenger runs into the middle of the room and ponders whether, in fact, Daisy was right that the rhinos are right
• Berenger wonders if the rhinoceroses are right and man is ugly
• Berenger becomes unsure of what language he speaks as it is only him left speaking it
• Berenger wonders whether he could communicate with the rhinos because they don’t speak the same language
• Berenger decides to convince them to mutate back but wonders if that’s possible
• Berenger puts cotton wool in his ears and talks to himself in the mirror
• As the sounds of rhinos grows, running and trumpeting, Berenger doesn’t want to listen to the rhinos anymore
• Berenger says that there is no one to help him find Daisy because he’s the only one left
• Berenger blames himself for Daisy’s transformation because he was all she had and he let her down so she changed
• Berenger is resolved to stay a human and tells the rhinos so. He says he doesn’t understand the rhinos
• Berenger shuts the windows and locks the door because he is now alone and is worried the rhinos will get him. He is now angry
• Berenger realizes Daisy is really gone and that he’s completely alone
• Berenger searches for Daisy
• Berenger says that because of a failure to communicate and marital dysfunction Daisy has left without a word
• Berenger returns to his room with a hopeless gesture
• Berenger goes after Daisy to the landing and calls for her to come back because she promised to stay with him
• Berenger notices Daisy is gone and calls after her, asking where she is
• Daisy leaves saying that Berenger isn’t nice
• Berenger doesn’t notice Daisy leaving because he’s so busy looking at himself in the mirror trying to convince himself that man isn’t revolting
• Daisy tells Berenger that living together is no longer possible
• Berenger calls Daisy stupid
• Daisy calls Berenger a grouch
• Berenger acknowledges that they have different opinions about the rhinos and so they should no longer discuss it
• Berenger moves away
• Daisy tries to put her arms around Berenger
• Daisy sees the rhinos as gods
• Berenger tries to convince Daisy the rhinos are disgusting
• Berenger says it’s only trumpeting
• Daisy says the rhinos are singing
• Melodious music is heard from the rhinos
• Daisy says she’ll fight by Berenger’s side right to the end
• Daisy puts her arms around Berenger
• Berenger swears he’ll never give in
• Berenger apologizes
• Daisy collapses into an armchair
• Berenger slaps Daisy
• Daisy says that human love is nothing compared to the energy the rhinos radiate
• Berenger tries to convince Daisy that they’re right
• Daisy says the rhinos are natural
• Daisy looks around at the rhinos which are everywhere
• Daisy says maybe they are the ones who need to be saved
• Berenger asks Daisy to save the world with him
• Daisy says she doesn’t want to have children
• Daisy says she doesn’t see the point in trying to repopulate the earth
• Berenger tells Daisy they can renew the human race
• Berenger tells Daisy he loves her and she doesn’t say it back
• Daisy says she’s not hungry and can’t hold out
• Berenger says they’ll talk later and that they should eat lunch now
• Daisy says they should try to learn the rhino language so that they can understand their psychology
• Daisy says the rhinos can’t be cured
• Berenger thinks the rhinos are sick
• Daisy says the rhinos have nothing to do with them
• Daisy takes off her bandage
• Berenger tells Daisy he loves her madly
• Daisy says the rhinos are forever
• Berenger takes off his bandage and puts it on Daisy’s head
• Berenger says one day the rhinos will stop
• Daisy says her head hurts
• Berenger leads Daisy to the armchair and she sits
• Berenger says they have a duty to be happy and that the rhinos mean no harm
• Daisy says maybe it’s their fault
• The rhino sounds diminish and become a musical background sound
• Berenger brandishes a fist and screams for the noise to stop
• The sound of rhinos is everywhere – shaking the building
• Daisy and Berenger realize they are the only two people left
• Daisy realizes this is not a joke and that the rhinos are serious
• Berenger turns off the radio
• Trumpeting is heard over the radio
• Berenger turns on the radio to listen to the news
• Daisy pulls out the phone wire
• Daisy calls Berenger useless and reminds him that he said he’d protect her
• Daisy asks Berenger to pull out the telephone wire but he says you’re not allowed
• The phone rings
• Berenger says the rhinos are trying to be funny
• Daisy hangs up the phone
• Trumpeting is heard from the receiver
• Berenger picks up the phone
• Berenger thinks it’s the government on the phone with a plan
• The phone rings again
• Berenger thinks it could be people who have transformed but Daisy doubts it
• The phone rings
• Berenger says all they need is their love and no one can stop them from being happy
• They recognize that guilt can lead you to turn into a rhino
• Daisy says they have a duty to be happy regardless of anything or anybody else
• Daisy says they are better than most and need not have moral dilemmas
• Berenger affirms that Daisy is enough for him
• Daisy tells Berenger to stop blaming himself and that they can pick their reality and escape to another world and forget the rhinos because it will do them no good to remember
• Berenger blames himself for Jean’s transformation
• Berenger blames Daisy for Mr. Papillons’s transformation
• Daisy says she doesn’t need to be protected because there is no harm
• Berenger says he will protect Daisy
• Daisy and Berenger dream of their life together without depression and with long walks and reading and excursions
• Daisy kisses Berenger on the forehead
• Daisy soothes Berenger and he says she stops him from being paranoid
• Berenger’s head is smooth beneath the bandage
• Daisy removes the bandage from Berenger’s head
• Berenger is worried about taking his bandage off because of what might be underneath
• Daisy puts the alcohol away
• Berenger asks for more alcohol
• Daisy gives Berenger the drink and he downs it in one
• Daisy pours a tiny glass of alcohol and gives it to Berenger as a reward
• Berenger leaps up but Daisy says she’ll get it
• Daisy says Berenger is allowed a tiny drink to cheer him up
• Daisy asks if Berenger has been at the cognac and he says he has not
• Berenger says Daisy is very beautiful compared to the rhinos
• Daisy says everyone has a right to be happy
• Berenger says that happiness means selfishness
• Daisy tells Berenger to stop thinking about Dudard and interfering in other peoples lives
• Berenger says that Dudard arguing with Botard was a waste of time
• Berenger is lead to the armchair by Daisy
• Daisy tells Berenger to calm down because she’s tired
• Berenger says that as long as they’re in love he’s not afraid of anything
• They close the windows and come together
• Berenger says he wants to help Daisy through this and that he loves her
• Daisy has no regrets
• Powerful rhino noises are heard that are musical
• Rhino heads appear back wall – they are beautiful despite their monstruousness
• Berenger looks out the window and sees no humans on the streets, only rhinos
• Daisy says she wasn’t tempted to join Dudard because she’s with Berenger
• Berenger says that Daisy should have forced Dudard to stay
• Berenger runs after Dudard and tries to call him back but it’s too late
• Dudard runs out the door and off
• Daisy says there’s nothing she can do
• Berenger tries to convince Dudard he’s human and tries to get Daisy to stop him
• Dudard says it is better to criticize from within and that he won’t abandon them
• Berenger says Dudard’s duty is to oppose the rhinos
• Daisy says they’ll miss Dudard but there’s nothing they can do
• Dudard renounces marriage and says be believes in one universal family
• Berenger says Dudard has no responsibility to join the rhinos
• Dudard says it is his duty to join his friends and his boss
• Berenger says Dudard is weak for wanting to join them
• Dudard says only experience can tell who is superior
• Berenger says man is superior to rhinos
• Berenger tries to stop Dudard from leaving but Daisy says it’s freedom of choice and he can go if he wants
• Dudard says he’d rather have a picnic than eat tinned food
• Daisy invites them all to eat lunch saying it will calm them down
• Dudard says that’s the end of their numerical advantage
• Men and women run out of the landing door and down the stairs with horns and rhino heads
• Dudard, Daisy and Berenger stand at the window and watch as rhinos pour into the streets, including the fire brigade. They comment on the destruction
• Daisy says they should eat and stop thinking about it
• A wall collapses and dust covers part of the stage
• They rush to the window
• We hear the rhinos moving together very fast in a rhythm
• Berenger questions how a man like Dudard with a law degree can think of joining the rhinos
• Dudard wonders if it might be worth joining the rhinos
• Daisy says you get used to it and that no one is amazed anymore by herds of rhinos, they’ve just gotten used to it – it has become normal
• Daisy and Berenger try to convince Dudard to stay for lunch
• Dudard comments that Daisy knows her way around
• Daisy gets things out of the cupboard for lunch
• Berenger asserts and Dudard agrees that everyone’s related
• Daisy says it’s made more complicated by the fact that everyone’s got a friend or relative that’s a rhino
• Dudard says there would be too much opposition from the animal rights movement
• Berenger says all of the rhinos should be herded into pens or put under house arrest
• Dudard says he doesn’t want to be in the way and that there’s someone he’s got to meet
• Daisy invites Dudard to stay for lunch
• Daisy says she has brought food and that they should have lunch
• Berenger says they are still in the majority and should do something before they’re overrun
• Daisy says a quarter of the town’s population has become rhinos
• Berenger says they will be responsible for the spread
• Dudard says it is going to spread to other countries
• They notes that their families, religious people and artists are all transforming
• Dudard says Botard transformed because his collective spirit got the better of his anarchic impulses
• Daisy puts her basket down on the table
• Berenger says Botard suddenly decamping is no surprise because his toughness was all on the surface. Good people make good rhinos because they’re honest and they’re easily deceived
• Berenger says “go with the flow” is total mindlessness and naivety
• Daisy says Botard’s last words were “we have to go with the flow”
• Berenger has a hard time believing this and Dudard says everyone has a right to move on
• Daisy tells them Botard turned into a rhino
• Daisy say Dudard is not in the way
• Dudard says to tell him if he’s in the way and he’ll leave
• Daisy says she feels nothing about the logician and that Berenger should stay home for a few days and rest
• Berenger says he has a horrible headache
• Berenger tells Daisy the Logician is a rhino and she says she’s already seen him
• Berenger is very happy to see Daisy
• Daisy says Berenger is a poor man who’s got nobody and needs a bit of help
• Dudard asks if Daisy is a frequent visitor here
• Daisy comes in
- Berenger tells Dudard to open the door and he does
- Berenger stands staring at the rhinos yelling at them that they’re disgusting
- Daisy climbs the steps and knocks on the door
- Dudard notices that the rhinos are playing and calls them big babies
- Berenger opens the window and screams at the rhinos that he’s not joining them
- The rhinos are running circles around the buildings
- Dudard settles into the armchair and notes that it makes him think
- Berenger yells at the logician and other rhinos that he’s not joining them
- Dudard says that the logician must have weighed the pros and cons before making his choice
- They locate the logician on the street because of his boater hat and realize he’s turned into a rhino
- Dudard tells him that’s no way to talk to his fellow creatures
- Berenger calls the rhinos bastards out the window
- Dudard is excited to talk to the logician to have some of the points about the transformations clarified
- Berenger says that he wants to find the Logician because he was able to explain the rhinos
- Dudard says that Berenger’s opinions are naive
- Berenger says he does not want to be like Jean and that Dudard’s excessive tolerance is weakness and blindness
- Dudard tries to encourage Berenger to have a rational debate with him because he’s loosing control
- Berenger says he refuses to even think about it
- Dudard says they’re both
- Berenger wonders whether rhinos are practice or theory
- Dudard says that practical applications can be the acid test but only when they test a theory
- Berenger says simply that Dudard doesn't know what normal is and that he’s doing his head in with this type of chat
- Dudard says Galileo used theoretical scientific thought to overturn common sense and dogmatism
- Berenger says in practice it’s simple to prove and quotes Galileo
• Dudard says that the question of where normality ends and abnormality begins has not been answered either medically or philosophically
• Berenger says turning into a rhino is abnormal
• Dudard says he will not turn into a rhino but is simply trying to see things as a realist and that the transformation might be natural
• Berenger says that soon Dudard will be turning into a rhino sympathizer
• Dudard says that Berenger is intolerant and that to understand is to justify, that we should always start from a neutral place with an open mind
• Berenger says he condemns Papillon’s actions as it was his duty not to succumb
• Berenger says that Botard’s responses were overly emotional and that he talked in clichés and that he found his skepticism and lack of faith distasteful
• Berenger says that Dudard had a low opinion of Botard
• Dudard says Botard thought Berenger was an idiot as well
• Berenger says he thought Botard was an idiot but that now he sees he’s got real guts
• Berenger says it’s worse to transform if it’s just a whim
• Dudard says transforming is a selfless gesture
• Berenger is surprised Mr. Papillon didn’t put up more of a fight
• Dudard affirms it will not happen to them
• Berenger is afraid they will transform
• Berenger says that Papillon must have wanted to transform subconsciously and should have seen an analyst
• Dudard says the real reasons for people’s decisions are impossible to fathom
• Berenger says it must have been against his will
• After trying to avoid it, Dudard tells Berenger Mr. Papillon had turned into a rhino
• Dudard says it’s hard to find labour to mend the staircase because after working for a few days everyone turns into a rhino
• Berenger is surprised they haven’t mended the staircase and calls it negligence
• Dudard says the office hasn’t reopened
• Berenger asks if Dudard got his request for sick leave
• Berenger believes they should ask for foreign intervention to help but Dudard believes it is a domestic matter that they can deal with on their own
• Dudard says everything boils down to personal choice and that all Berenger is worried about is himself
• Berenger says that evil should be destroyed
• Dudard says it’s up to the individual if they want to transform and that Berenger has no moral right to interfere
• Berenger says this is not a situation he can accept and wants to ask for a meeting with the mayor to try and stop this
• Dudard says Berenger needs to stop torturing himself and they need to accept what’s happened and move on because there must be a good cause and they just need to discover it
• Berenger says he can’t get used to the rhinos and he’s obsessed, even in his sleep
• Rhinos pass below the window
• Dudard affirms that he doesn’t think this is a good thing and isn’t siding with the rhinos
• Berenger envies Dudard because his nerves are steadier
• Dudard says he was shocked but is starting to get used to it
• Berenger says that if it were far away he could be more calculated about it but because he has been confronted with the brutal reality he can’t help but be shocked – he can’t get over it
• Dudard says Berenger needs more of a sense of humour about it and that he needs to be more detached
• Berenger says seeing the rhinos hits him right in his heart but he is trying not to get angry because he’s seen where that leads
• Dudard says the rhinos will not attack and are quite naïve
• Berenger says he can’t go out because of the rhinos
• Dudard tells Berenger he was teasing him and that he’ll feel better when he starts going out
• Berenger feels his forehead and examines himself in the mirror but there is no change
• Berenger says he is only drinking for his own protection from the epidemic and denies being an alcoholic
• Dudard tells Berenger that he should prove it and stop drinking because he’ll be more in control
• Berenger says he’s got will power
• Dudard says that the best way of beating this is will-power
• Berenger worries his cough sounded like a rhino cough
• Dudard says Berenger’s body is rejecting the alcohol and that’s why he coughed
• Berenger empties his glass and coughs
• Dudard says no to the drink offered by Berenger
• Berenger says alcohol is good for epidemics but Dudard says that has not been proven in the case of rhinoceritis
• Dudard says the illness is temporary
• Berenger thinks the huge organic change must have some effect
• Dudard says it’s not fatal and he’s sure they can be cured if they want to be
• Berenger wonders if he’s immune
• Dudard says Berenger needs to try to get himself back to normal and not have a nervous breakdown
• Berenger closes the window
• Rhinos gallop beneath the window
• Berenger says there’s never been a flu like this before
• Dudard says there is a disease hypothesis- that it’s like flu
• Berenger says it was as if Jean had thought about it and reached a decision before he transformed and wonders about whether this happened to the others or if it was simply madness
• Dudard argues that maybe Jean transformed because he was weird and states that only the average counts
• Berenger is worried he’ll get infected
• Dudard says it could be a disease
• Berenger says that even if he was called mean-spirited he wouldn’t give in
• Dudard says maybe Jean was looking for a way to unwind
• Berenger says Jean was arrogant but that he’s happy being what he is
• Dudard says he doesn’t have a good explanation yet but because it exists it must have an explanation
• Berenger asks why this is happening
• Dudard tells Berenger that it wasn’t because of him that Jean transformed
• Berenger is shocked Jean transformed because they were friends forever and he had more confidence in him than in himself
• Dudard tells Berenger not to overreact
• Berenger says he just can’t get over it and sits
• Dudard tells Berenger to stop pacing and relax
• Berenger is scared that he’s turning into another person
• Dudard says it’s normal for Berenger to feel badly after the shock he’s had
• Berenger asks if he has a bump and Dudard confirms he doesn’t
• Berenger asks if he sounds croaky and Dudard confirms he doesn’t
• Berenger opens the window
• Berenger opens the door for Dudard who comes in
• Dudard says the door is locked
• Berenger tells Dudard to come in
• Berenger confirms it is Dudard
• Dudard Knocks on the door
• Dudard climbs to the landing and knocks on the door
• Berenger feels his forehead through the bandage and lies down on his divan
• Berenger coughs and is worried it sounds like a rhino but realizes it doesn’t
• Berenger pours himself a big cognac and drinks it
• Berenger looks out the window then shuts it
• Berenger hears rhinos and puts his hand to his heart
• Berenger tries not to drink
• Berenger checks and is relieved to find he has no bump
• Berenger wakes up
• Berenger falls to the floor fighting whatever he is dreaming
• A large number of rhinos pass beneath the window
• Berenger is on the divan with a bandage on his head having a bad dream

ACT 2 SCENE 2
• Jean as a rhino is about to break through the bathroom door
• Berenger runs off shouting
• Berenger throws himself against the back wall and it gives way
• Berenger tries to get out a few different ways but is stopped by the sight of rhinos
• Berenger is surprised to see that the rhinos are herd animals – he had previously understood them to be solitary creatures
• Berenger goes to the window and sees the herds of rhinos below. They have smashed the benches
• Berenger tries to leave the room but is met by rhinos everywhere he looks
• Jean is trumpeting and spouting abuse from inside the bathroom
• Berenger has no way of getting out because the rhinos are all over the road
• Berenger tries to climb out the window but is run back inside by rhinos
• In a panic Berenger heads for the window to climb out it and is so worn out he almost faints
• Berenger goes into Jean’s room
• Berenger heads for the Little Old Man’s door to escape only to find the Little Old Man and his wife have turned into rhinos
• Berenger wants to go into Jean’s room but hesitates
• Berenger heads back up the steps
• Berenger tries to tell the concierge about Jean turning into a rhino only to find the concierge has turned into a rhino himself
• Berenger calls for the concierge to call the police
• The Little Old Man tells Berenger to stop disturbing people and have some manners then shuts the door in his face
• Berenger tells the Little Old Man there’s a rhino in the building and that he should call the police
• Berenger opens the door onto the landing and knocks on the landing door
• Berenger rushes towards the right door shocked that Jean is now a rhino
• Jean’s horn comes through the bathroom door and he trumpets and yells garbled angry words
• Berenger succeeds in shutting the bathroom door but his jacket has been pierced by a horn
• Berenger holds the bathroom door shut against Jean and is very alarmed that Jean is now a rhino
• Jean yells that he’ll trample Berenger
• Berenger is in the bathroom with Jean telling him to calm down and then realizes Jean has become a rhino
• Berenger says he won’t leave Jean and that he’ll call a doctor to help but Jean says no
• Jean runs very fast into the bathroom and Berenger follows him
• Jean apologizes for charging
• Jean charges at Berenger and Berenger moves aside
• Berenger says that it’s as if Jean can’t see him or hear him but Jean says he can hear him perfectly
• Berenger says this is not the way Jean normally behaves
• Jean drops his pajama trousers
• Jean says he is too hot and that clothes itch and must be demolished
• Jean rushes at the bed and throws his covers on the floor while making big noises and yelling angry, incomprehensible words
• Berenger says Jean really has gone mad
• Jean reenters. He is now totally green and his lump is huge, almost a horn
• Jean says he’s all for change and sees no reason not to be a rhino
• Berenger can’t understand the words Jean is saying because he isn’t speaking clearly
• Jean tells Berenger he sees no reason not to be a rhino and that he doesn’t share his prejudices
• Berenger asks Jean if he’s mad and is very alarmed to hear he wants to be a rhino
• Jean tells Berenger he’s talking rubbish
• Berenger attempts to discuss the situation intellectually
• Jean says that he doesn’t want to hear about humans and that humanism is a thing of the past and goes into the bathroom
• Berenger tells Jean he doesn’t believe he really thinks that
• Jean comes out of the bathroom and trumpets
• Berenger says to Jean that what he is talking about is poetic fantasy
• Jean, from inside the bathroom, says he wants to destroy humans
• Berenger tries to argue for the system of human values built up by humans as something that makes them preferable to rhinos
• Jean says, while pacing, that they need to rebuild the foundations of life and rediscover their origins
• Berenger argues that no one really wants to live by the law of the jungle
• Jean says he’ll live in the jungle
• Berenger asks if Jean would replace moral laws with the law of the jungle
• Jean argues that moral laws are anti-nature and that nature is beyond moral values
• Berenger states that human moral values are incompatible with those of the rhinos
• Jean, pacing, asks if Berenger thinks human mentality is better than animal mentality
• Berenger says rhinos have the right to live their lives as long as they don’t destroy the human world in the process
• Jean argues that rhinos are living creatures who have the right to lead their own lives
• Berenger says that he doesn’t think being a rhino makes Boeuf feel good
• Jean says becoming a rhino makes Boeuf feel good and that it was the best thing for him because of this
• Jean says it doesn’t matter if Boeuf became a rhino willingly or against his will
• Jean comes into the bedroom greener and with an unrecognizable voice which shocks Berenger
• Jean forbids Berenger to call the doctor
• Berenger begs to call a doctor for Jean
• Jean states that Boeuf was hiding something, a secret life
• Jean slams the bathroom door in Berenger’s face when he tries to get in
• Berenger says that in fact Boeuf and his wife were close
• Jean says that Boeuf kept things from his wife
• Jean now has a green chest and back
• Jean comes in, removing his top
• Jean calls Madame Boeuf a great fat idiot
• Berenger says he doubts it because his wife didn’t seem to know about it
• Jean supposes that maybe Boeuf transformed on purpose
• Berenger says Boeuf must have been changed against his will
• Jean goes back into the bathroom
• Berenger is pacing the room and says that Boeuf changing wasn’t a joke
• Jean says that Boeuf is having them on and it’s just a costume
• Jean is now very green and has a very big lump on his nose
• Berenger heads towards the phone to call the doctor but moves back when he hears Jean
• Jean runs the water in the bathroom and he is puffing and blowing
• Berenger decides Jean has a fever
• Jean rushes into the bathroom to cool himself down because he’s hot
• Berenger tells Jean that Boeuf has turned into a rhino
• Jean says ‘Brr’ for the first time
• Berenger says he’s happy to listen to a friend’s advice and will stop being debauchery as promised
• Jean says it is a consequence of Berenger’s past debaucheries
• Jean says Berenger’s seeing things because he’s been drinking but Berenger confirms he hasn’t been drinking today
• Berenger observes that Jean is getting greener and greener
• Jean defends his skin saying it’s weatherproof
• Berenger says Jean’s skin looks like leather
• Berenger asks what happened to Jean’s skin and Jean says he’d rather have his skin than Berenger’s
• Jean undoes and then does up his pajama top
• Jean felt uncomfortable in his clothes now in his pajamas as well
• Jean’s voice is getting increasingly hoarse
• Jean paces between the walls (like a caged animal) with Berenger watching him – Berenger steps aside to avoid him when necessary
• Berenger tells Jean he thinks he’s going through a moral crisis
• Jean says he knows what he wants and he goes for it
• Berenger says he would never get in Jean’s way
• Jean isn’t listening to Berenger and says that human beings don’t interest him or they disgust him and if they get in his way he’ll smash them
• Jean doesn’t remember the argument
• Berenger apologizes for the argument yesterday and says it was his fault
• Berenger tells Jean he’s being a misanthrope and Jean says he is and likes being that way
• Berenger calls Jean “my dear Jean” and Jean says he is not that
• Jean says he doesn’t believe in Berenger’s friendship
• Berenger tells Jean not to be angry because they’re friends
• Berenger admits he’s not as strong as Jean
• Jean says he doesn’t like the way Berenger breaths because it’s too feeble
• Berenger observes that Jean is finding it difficult to breath
• Jean, while coughing and breathing noisily, says that he knows, better than Berenger, what’s good for him
• Berenger says he wanted to call the doctor to help Jean
• Berenger heads for the phone and Jean rushes at him and pushes him back telling him to mind his own business
• Jean pulls his hand away telling Berenger to stop touching him
• Berenger touches Jean’s hand and observes that his skin is hard and going green
• Jean pulls his arm away violently telling Berenger not to look at him like a strange animal
• Berenger, agreeing that the sticking out veins are a sign of strength, looks at Jean’s arm
• Berenger observes that Jean’s veins are swelling up and Jean says that is a sign of strength
• Berenger takes Jean’s wrist
• Jean says he only trusts vets
• Jean says that doctors invent disease but Berenger says that they cure it as well and that they like looking after people
• Berenger says Jean is wrong not to believe in doctors
• Jean says he doesn’t want a doctor or need a doctor
• Berenger tells Jean they should call a doctor
• Berenger rationalizes that if Jean’s hungry he can’t be that ill but that he should rest anyway for awhile
• Jean says he has no time to rest because he needs food
• Berenger tells Jean that he just needs a few days rest for this to pass
• Jean says he is not afraid and sees no reason to be
• Berenger takes Jean’s pulse and observes that it is normal so he has nothing to fear
• Berenger says having swollen glands is nothing to be ashamed of
• Jean asks why he’d get swollen glands
• Berenger is trying to find an explanation for Jean’s hoarse voice and noisy breathing and suggests he has a hurt throat or swollen glands
• Berenger says he wasn’t meaning to upset Jean
• Jean suggests that Berenger just likes to say mean things to him and asks if he’s looked at himself
• When Jean comes back into the room Berenger observes that his face is green
• Jean says he must have banged into something because he’s got a lump
• Jean abruptly gets up and goes to the bathroom to look at his forehead
• Berenger suggests Jean look at himself
• Jean says he does not have a lump
• Berenger goes up to Jean and observes that he has a tiny lump above his nose and that maybe he banged into something and that’s why he has a headache
• Jean asks Berenger to be more precise
• Berenger explains that’s not what he meant
• Jean counters that he is a master of his thoughts and that he is always direct
• Berenger suggests that the headache started in his sleep and that he only remembers
dreaming subconsciously
• Berenger says that Jean probably dreamed he banged his head but Jean explains that he
never dreams
• Jean suggests that he banged into something in his sleep
• Berenger asks when Jean banged into something and Jean says that he doesn't remember
• Jean's voice becomes more hoarse
• Jean says his forehead hurts and that he must have banged into something
• Jean says his voice isn't croaky, that it's Berenger’s voice that's changed and Berenger
saw he hadn't noticed
• Berenger says that Jean’s voice is croaky and that he didn’t recognize it initially
• Jean tells Berenger not to go
• Berenger says he’ll go if Jean has a headache and wants him to
• Jean confirms that he is feverish and has a headache
• Berenger suggests that Jean has caught a cold and asks if he’s feverish
• Jean says he is perfectly healthy but all the while his voice is getting more hoarse
• Berenger suggests that Jean has too much energy and that it has destabilized his nervous
system
• Jean says he feels strange in his head but not dizzy or faint
• Jean says he doesn’t feel very well and Berenger asks him what’s wrong
• Jean sits on his unmade bed and faces Berenger
• Berenger says that their argument doesn’t matter because what really matters is the fact
that there are rhinos at all
• Jean says that’s what he said and that it is too bad
• Berenger tells Jean they were both right because there are both types of rhinos and that he
doesn’t want to go into it and is sorry to have to bring it up again
• Jean tells Berenger he doesn’t feel very well and coughs
• Berenger apologizes for being an idiot and Jean says that’s nothing new
• Jean tells him to say no more about it and Berenger finds that very kind
• Berenger says that’s just an expression
• Jean asks who said the rhinos were stupid
• Jean asks what rhinos and Berenger explains the stupid rhinos they both saw
• Jean isn’t sure what Berenger is talking about
• Berenger says he was an idiot to have gotten angry with Jean over such a silly thing
• Berenger asks Jean if he’s sick and Jean groans
• Jean, with his back turned to Berenger, tells him to sit
• Berenger and Jean say they didn’t recognize each other’s voices
• Berenger asks about why Jean is still in bed and not at work
• Jean asks what time it is and why Berenger isn't at work
• Berenger enters greeting Jean
• Jean unlocks the door and invites Berenger to enter as he lies under the covers
• Jean is wearing green pajamas and his hair is all over the place
• Jean invites Berenger to come in but he can’t because the door’s locked
• Berenger says he is there to see Jean but Jean doesn’t recognize his voice and has to clarify that it’s him
• Little Old Man closes the door
• Berenger is knocking and yelling for Jean
• Little old Man’s Wife tells little old man to not just stand there chatting
• Little Old Man tells Berenger to try Jean again
• Little Old man says he saw Jean last night and he didn’t look pleased and Berenger blames himself for that
• Little Old Man, who’s name is also Jean, thinks Berenger is calling for him
• Berenger confirms he’s looking for his friends Jean
• Little Old Man opens his door and says hello
• Berenger appears, knocks and calls for Jean
• Jean is in bed under the covers with his back to the audience, coughing.

ACT 2 SCENE 1
• Fireman helps Dudard and Berenger out of the window
• Berenger and Dudard have an argument over who should go out the window first, each trying to make the other go ahead
• The Fireman reappears at the window and encourages Dudard and Berenger to hurry up and climb out the window
• Berenger says he can’t go for a drink with Dudard because he has to go apologize for their argument and that he behaved badly
• Dudard asks Berenger to go for a drink
• Botard continues to argue that he doesn’t insinuate but proves as he climbs out the window
• Dudard accuses Botard of being the one who is insinuating
• Botard says that Dudard is insinuating
• Dudard says that what Botard is saying is absurd
• Botard says he will show Dudard proof of his criminality and that he is immune to his sarcasm
• Dudard says sarcastically to Botard that he thought he had everything clear already
• Botard climbs out the window saying he will speak to the authorities and make this mystery clear
• Dudard yells down to M Papillon that he’ll lock up and then lets Botard go out first
• M Papillon calls from down the ladder asking Dudard to lock up
• M Papillon climbs out with the letters for Daisy under his arm
• The Fireman tells M Papillon to hurry up because other people are waiting
• Berenger brings the letters for Daisy to M Papillon
• M Papillon asks Berenger to bring him the letters for Daisy
• Dudard, Berenger and Botard all let M Papillon go first because he’s the boss
• M Papillon tells Dudard, Botard and Berenger to climb out the window
• The Fireman reappears and asks who’s next
• Botard says that M Papillon will exploit his workers until they bleed
• Dudard says to M Papillon that he understands
• M Papillon points out to the Berenger that he is not on holiday and work will start again as soon as possible
• M Papillon tells Daisy that she can come to his house tomorrow to type out the letters
• Daisy says bye to everyone, not just to Dudard, and disappears out the window
• Dudard says goodbye to Daisy as she climbs out the window
• Berenger tells Daisy she should go out the window first
• The Fireman appears at the window, first the helmet then the man
• Dudard says it would be tricky for management if someone broke their leg and M Papillon agrees
• Botard says they’ll have to wait for the staircase to be repaired to come back to work
• Dudard says this is a special case inferring that head office will have to make concessions
• M Papillon worries about what head office will say
• Botard tells M Papillon that business will have to wait
• The firemen’s ladder leans up against the window
• M Papillon says that they should be back in the office this afternoon
• Botard tells Dudard that he has the key to events
• The fire truck approaches
• Daisy calls down to the fire truck, telling them where to go
• Dudard says that the rhinos mean nothing, they just exist
• Botard says that things have to change because it can’t go on this way
• The fire truck siren is heard
• Botard says that it is only children who can’t see and hypocrites who pretend they can’t see how the transition occurred
• Dudard asks how the transition occurred
• Botard says that hallucination has become provocation
• Daisy says that Botard just accused them of hallucinating
• Botard says that he is not raving
• Dudard says that Botard is raving and M Papillon asks him not to do that
• Berenger starts to ask who would gain from turning into a rhino but he is cut off
• Botard says he knows who’s responsible and will expose the true meaning of the provocation
• Dudard says he’d like to know where they’re hiding
• Daisy and Berenger ask what motives
• Botard says that he understands the real motives
• Botard says threateningly to M Papillon that he’ll deal with him later
• Everyone tries to get Botard to explain it but he puts them off saying one day he will
• Dudard asks Botard to explain it
• Botard says that when something happens he investigates and explains it
Botard says that he never denied it but instead was trying to work out where it was leading.

Dudard and Daisy call Botard dishonest.

Botard says he never denied the rhino facts.

M Papillon says that he will wait for the tribunal outcome and that it’s out of his hands.

Botard says that the members object to Boeuf’s dismissal without notice.

Dudard asks Botard if he still denies the facts about the rhinos.

M Papillon states that they will have to make up the lost hours.

M Papillon asks about work and Dudard says that this counts as a force majeure.

Daisy says the firemen are on their way and will get them all out.

Berenger says he’s hungry.

M Papillon asks about how they are going to get out.

Botard claims Daisy is scaremongering.

Daisy says the unconfirmed number of rhinos to date is 32.

Botard claims to have already told this information.

Daisy says their have been rhinos sightings all over town and that the number is growing.

Berenger and Dudard confirm that there are other rhinos.

Daisy explains that the reason the firemen needed some persuading to come is not because of fires but because of incidents caused by other rhinos.

Berenger asks if M Papillon can still use M Boeuf in his current state.

M Papillon says he has an employee to replace.

Berenger says that M Boeuf has guts.

Daisy says the firemen took some persuading to come and M Papillon asks if this is because of fires.

Botard observes that the whole situation stinks.

Berenger is following the rhino progress and says he can’t see them any more.

M Papillon asks if Daisy is still on the phone.

Dudard asks M Papillon if he’s done any horse riding and M Papillon says not for awhile.

Berenger observes that Mme and M Boeuf are going quickly.

Dudard, Berenger, Botard and M Papillon go to the window.
• Dudard observes that they're galloping off
• Mme Boeuf can be heard telling her husband that they should go home
• Mme Boeuf lands on M Boeuf’s rhino back
• Mme Boeuf tells M Boeuf she is with him in response to his tender trumpeting
• Berenger says that he couldn’t stop Mme Boeuf
• Mme Boeuf jumps out the window and Berenger who has tried to stop her ends up holding her skirt
• Dudard says Mme Boeuf will never jump
• Botard says that jumping is Mme Boeuf’s duty
• Berenger says that Mme Boeuf is going to jump
• Mme Boeuf is on the edge of the landing getting ready to jump and tells her husband she’s coming
• M Papillon asks what Mme Boeuf is doing
• Mme Boeuf says she’s taking M Boeuf home
• Dudard says someone should stop Mme Boeuf
• Mme Boeuf says that she can’t abandon her husband
• Berenger tells Mme Boeuf to be careful
• Mme Boeuf rushes towards the landing
• Dudard asks Mme Boeuf what she’s going to do
• Botard calls Mme Boeuf a courageous woman
• Mme Boeuf says M Boeuf is courageous and that she can’t abandon him
• Dudard says that Mme Boeuf is the injured party
• M Papillon tells Mme Boeuf that she has grounds for divorce if she wants one
• Mme Boeuf suddenly stands up and says she can’t leave M Boeuf like that
• Daisy goes out and calls the fire brigade
• M Papillon asks Daisy to call the fire brigade from his office
• Berenger suggests that they call the fire brigade and ask them to bring ladders
• Daisy says they’re too high up to climb out the window
• Botard claims to know what M Boeuf turning into a rhino is about
• Dudard, Daisy, M Papillon and Berenger head to the window while Mme Boeuf stays in her chair and Botard stays center stage
• Daisy suggests they figure out how to get out and M Papillon suggests through the window
• Botard tells Mme Boeuf that she can count on their support and asks if she’d like to join their committee
• Dudard says that he thinks Mme Boeuf has recovered
• Daisy asks Mme Boeuf if she’s feeling better
• Mme Boeuf hears M Boeuf trumpeting and says that he’s calling her
• Mme Boeuf says she can’t leave M Boeuf that way
• Botard says he will tell his strike committee and that they will not abandon a colleague in need
• Mme Boeuf closes her eyes and is slapped again
• Mme Boeuf closes her eyes and is slapped
• They all crowd around Mme Boeuf
• Botard raises his arms to heaven and asks what kind of society this is
• M Papillon asks contractually what the situation is and Dudard says they will need to consult the legal department
• Daisy says that the benefits will sort out
• Mme Boeuf is panicking
• Daisy tells Mme Boeuf not to panic
• Berenger drags Mme Boeuf into a chair with the help of Daisy and Dudard
• Daisy says to get Mme Boeuf into a chair
• Berenger calls for help
• Mme Boeuf faints into Berenger’s arms
• Daisy asks how M Boeuf will sign on for benefits
• Botard claims he understands everything as an aside
• Dudard asks if M Boeuf will be entitled to benefits
• M Papillon sauy M Boeuf is fired
• Mme Boeuf says the rhino is her husband and he responds with a violent but tender trumpeting
• Mme Boeuf stares at the rhino going round below and suddenly screams
• M Papillon claims it was only a joke
• Daisy pushes M Papillon’s hands away, calls his hands scratchy and him an old pachyderm
• M Papillon is flirting with Daisy and while stoking her cheek tells her that he’ll take her in his arms and they’ll jump together
• Daisy asks how they’re going to get down
• M Papillon blames the staircase falling on head office
• Daisy tells Dudard and Botard that this isn’t the time to be fighting and to stop
• M Papillon says that they’re in trouble without a staircase
• Dudard and Botard argue about who’s fault it is
• Botard claims this is a vile plot
• Daisy asks Botard whether or not the rhinos exist now that he’s looking at one of them
• Botard asks how it is possible that there is a rhino in a civilized country
• M Papillon tells Berenger he’s blathering and says that Botard is right
• Berenger is trying to work out whether the Asian or African rhino has a double horn
• Daisy says that the rhino is a poor little thing
• Dudard says not to stroke the rhino and M Papillon says it’s out of reach anyway
• Daisy asks what the rhino wants, observes that he’s looking at them and talks to it like a cat
• M Papillon claims that the staircase falling was foreseeable
• Dudard says he sent in a report to head office last week about the staircase
• M Papillon says that the staircase falling was bound to happen and that he’d been asking head office to replace it
• Berenger observes that the rhino has two horns and tries to figure out whether that means it is Asian or African
• Daisy confirms that this is definitely the rhino they saw before
• M Papillon asks if this is definitely a rhino and definitely the one they saw before
• Dudard asks how there is more to this
• Botard says there is more to this than meets the eye because he has never hallucinated
• Daisy says to Botard that maybe they are all hallucinating, referring back to what he said before about their claims that they saw a rhino
• Botard affirms that he sees the rhino
• Dudard asks if Botard sees the rhino
• Dudard observes that the rhino looks as if he’s looking for someone
• Daisy says that the way the rhino in circling makes it look like he’s in pain and wonders what he wants
• Berenger says he is not a rhino expert
• M Papillon calls Berenger a rhino expert and asks him to take a look at the rhino
• Berenger, followed by Daisy, rushes to the landing abandoning Mme Boeuf
• Dudard asks Berenger if he wants to see the rhinos
• Botard asks what it could mean and says that it’s strange
• Dudard and M Papillon confirm that it is not an illusion, that the rhino is there for real going around and around
• Botard says that it’s an illusion and that he can’t see anything
• M Papillon points out the rhino from on the landing
• Daisy asks Mme Boeuf if she’s feeling any better
• M Papillon, Dudard and Botard rush to the landing, bang into each other opening the door and end up in a cloud of dust
• Berenger tells Mme Boeuf to calm down
• Berenger tries to help Mme Boeuf by slapping her and giving her water
• Daisy and Mme Boeuf are startled by the trumpeting and collapse of the staircase
• The rhino collapses the staircase while doing a lot of trumpeting and the landing is left hanging in a void
• Mme Boeuf points at the rhino and observes that it looks like it wants to come up the staircase
• Dudard tells Botard to let Mme Boeuf speak
• Botard laughs and says not to be ridiculous
• Berenger asks if the rhino had one or two horns
• Mme Boeuf tells them she was chased there from her home by a rhino
• M Papillon says to Mme Boeuf that M Boeuf not being here is no reason to have a heart attack
• Dudard says that Mme Boeuf is panicking because of her heart
• Daisy gets Mme Boeuf a drink of water
• M Papillon asks Daisy to get M Boeuf a glass of water
• Berenger puts his chair center stage for Mme Boeuf to collapse into
• Mme Boeuf asks for a glass of water and a chair as she is almost fainting
• Mme Boeuf gives M Papillon a telegram saying M Boeuf will be back Wednesday
• Mme Boeuf asks M Papillon to forgive her husband and explains that he is away because he had visit family and now has the flu
• M Papillon asks where M Boeuf is and whether it was too much bother for him to come to work
• Mme Boeuf enters frightened and out of breath and says hello to everyone
• Mme Boeuf is seen quickly climbing the steps
• M Papillon says that if this continues he will fire M Boeuf and asks who has the key to his desk
• M Papillon enters
• Daisy says she hasn’t heard anything from M Boeuf about why he’s not there
• M Papillon says he needs M Boeuf and asks Daisy if he’s called in sick or been delayed
• Berenger confirms, after looking around, the M Boeuf is not here today
• M Papillon asks if M Boeuf is there
• The Department Head enters holding the attendance sheet
• Botard and Dudard sit back down quickly when the Head office door opens suddenly
• Botard says again that it is a lie
• Daisy tries to get Dudard to calm down
• Berenger tries to get Botard to calm down
• Botard stands up in a rage to face Dudard
• Botard bangs his fist on the table and says that Dudard has no right to suggest such a thing and that it’s a lie
• Dudard says to Botard that at least he is not in the pay of Balkan Bolsheviks because he is getting angry
• Botard tells Dudard not to act the innocent because he clearly knows better
• Dudard says that Botard is mad and asks what the propaganda could be for
• Daisy stops typing and says that she saw the rhino and so did others
• Berenger joins in to say that it is not propaganda
• Dudard asks what propaganda mission Botard is talking about
• Botard says that the rhino claim is part of the their propaganda mission
• Botard tells Dudard that this whole thing is a hoax and Dudard asks for clarification about what thing Botard is referring to
• Botard and Dudard resume on their conversation over Berenger’s head who continues to work
• Berenger and Botard noisily work on their corrections
• M Papillon goes into his office saying he’ll see them later
• Botard sits down grumbling – he looks bad-tempered
• Berenger sits down to work with Botard. Berenger looks passive and dazed
• Dudard sits down to work
• Daisy types at her desk
• M Papillon tells everyone to get to work
• Berenger says they have not yet finished the corrections
• M Papillon asks if Berenger and Botard have finished their corrections
• Dudard tells M Papillon he is on the final draft
• M Papillon asks Dudard how his work is going
• Botard is hurt by M Papillon’s comments and responds ironically that they must obey the boss
• M Papillon asks them to stop arguing because they’re at work
• Botard argues that the rhinos are imaginary and Dudard and Daisy contradict him
• M Papillon says that it doesn’t matter what they saw because they are at work and need to not waste company time because work needs to be done
• Daisy says that she thinks there are flying saucers
• Botard blames what they saw on collective psychosis
• M Papillon tries to get the argument to subside
• Berenger says he was a witness to the dead cat and Botard says he is not a reliable witness
• Botard says the rhino is a myth
• M Papillon says it’s time to start work
• Berenger says it is inappropriate to describe rhinos in this way and Dudard agrees
• Botard says that the rhinos are nothing more than the fruit of an overexcited female imagination
• Dudard argues that there’s a first time for everything
• Botard, saying he doesn’t want to offend, doesn’t believe they saw a rhino because that just doesn’t happen around here

• Berenger says the problem is that he doesn’t know whether it had one or two horns

• Botard says Daisy saw a one horned rhino and asks Berenger what kind he saw

• Berenger mumbles saying he’s unsure how many he saw

• Botard asks Berenger if he saw one of two rhinos

• M Papillon says they need to stop the argument because they are wasting time

• Botard tells them to make up their minds

• Dudard says he heard it had two horns

• Botard says Berenger and Daisy are conspiring to make them look stupid

• Daisy says it was a one-horned rhino

• Botard tells Berenger he is talking nonsense

• Berenger tells Botard he was with his friend Jean and other people were there as well

• Botard exclaims that Berenger does not know how many he saw in an attempt to invalidate his claim

• Berenger says it could have been two rhinos and that others saw them as well

• Botard says that Berenger has a big imagination behind his back

• Berenger confirms with Daisy that she saw the rhino as well

• M Papillon tells Botard this is dishonest of him because Berenger wasn’t involved in the argument

• Botard claims that Berenger is saying he saw a rhino only to back up Daisy who he’s partial to

• Daisy says to Botard that because Berenger saw the rhino as well it proves she’s not insane

• Berenger says to M Papillon, completely naturally, that of course he saw the rhino

• Berenger arranges his work things quickly to make up for being late

• Dudard tells Botard that his thought is rubbish

• Botard claims that university people (in reference to Dudard) are abstract thinkers who know nothing about real life

• M Papillon asks Berenger if he’s been seeing rhinos
• Berenger greets everyone and apologizes for being nearly late
• Berenger runs around the room getting ready to work at a quick pace
• Botard says that university people (in reference to Dudard) don’t have clear ideas or practical skills
• M Papillon says “well, well” to Berenger
• Daisy gives M Papillon the attendance sheet after he asks for it
• Botard says he isn’t calling Dudard an ignoramus but that universities are nothing compared to a good primary school
• M Papillon asks Botard if he is calling his colleague Dudard an ignoramus
• M Papillon tells Botard that he is overstepping the mark to which Dudard agrees
• Berenger signs the sheet and gives it to Daisy saying that it’s not yet ten past nine
• M Papillon starts to tell Botard that he’s over the line
• Botard says he will fight ignorance even in publishing houses (indicating that he is referring to Dudard)
• Daisy confirms that the boss is in and Berenger is surprised he’s in this early
• Berenger asks if the boss is in
• Daisy gets Berenger to quickly sign the attendance sheet
• Botard says he will fight against ignorance wherever he finds it
• Berenger enters and asks Daisy if he’s late
• Daisy goes to the table where the attendance sheet is just as Berenger arrives
• M Papillon asks for the attendance sheet from Daisy because it is nine o’clock and says woe betide any stragglers
• Berenger climbs the steps and cautiously opens the door to the office
• Botard says that more’s the pity they’re not in primary school
• M Papillon says Botard can spare the lecture on rhinos because they’re not in primary school
• Botard infers that Daisy is not clear in the head and begins to lecture on rhinos
• Daisy begins to explain that a rhino is a big ugly animal
• Botard says that he does respect religions although he despises them and asks Daisy to tell them what a rhino is
• M Papillon indignantly says excuse me to Botard
• Botard says that he works Sundays as well because he can’t stand priests dragging him off to church
• Dudard clarifies that this was yesterday, a Sunday
• Botard says that he’s sure it was the idle rich with nothing better to do who were watching
• Daisy says that she wasn’t hallucinating and that other people were watching as well
• Botard says that what Daisy is saying is rubbish and that he always thought she had a brain
• Daisy explains to Botard that with God as her witness she did see a rhino
• Botard says that the journalists are not to be believed and that he is surprised that Dudard, with his law degree, believes them
• Dudard says that although he didn’t see the rhinos personally, trustworthy sources did
• M Papillon tries to settle the argument
• Botard says that he is not a Mediterranean like them and that Mediterraneans love to exaggerate
• Daisy clarifies that no one here is a racist and that what they’re discussing is a cat being run over by a rhino
• Botard says that every opportunity should be taken to denounce racism
• M Papillon clarifies that they are not discussing racism
• Botard begs to differ with Dudard
• Dudard says they are not talking about racism
• Botard says that racism should not be trivialized
• Dudard tells Botard that no one disputes what he’s saying but that they’re not talking about racism
• Botard exclaims that racism is one of the great crimes of the 20th century
• M Papillon says that what they’re talking about has nothing to do with racism
• Botard asks questions about what kind of cat it was and then says he’s anti-racist
• Dudard states that everyone knows what a cat is
• Botard asks many simple and obvious questions about the article including what does he mean by pachyderm and cat making the point that the article is not clear cut
• Daisy says that the article is clear cut to her
• Dudard asks what a methodical mind has to do with it
• Botard says he doesn’t believe journalists and doesn’t believe anything he hasn’t seen himself – that he has a sharp methodical mind
• Dudard says the article is clear enough
• M Papillon says they don’t need to hear any more details
• Daisy clarifies that it wasn’t at the Place de L’église
• M Papillon reads from the newspaper that yesterday at the Place de L’église a cat was trampled by a pachyderm
• Dudard points out that the events are spelled out in the paper and that they can’t be denied
• Daisy says she saw the rhino
• Botard says that the rhino story is bullshit
• M Papillon is holding the paper and pointing at it, Dudard is indicating to Botard that the story is clear in the paper, Botard stands as if you indicate that he can’t be fooled, Daisy stands in support of Dudard

ACT 1

• Berenger drinks the cognac
• Berenger decides that he’s too upset to go to the museum today and will put off improving his mind to another time
• The Boss returns with the large cognac for Berenger
• Berenger sits alone regretting getting angry with Jean
• The Boss goes inside to get Berenger his cognac
• Berenger regrets fighting with Jean and orders a large cognac from the Boss. He drinks to dull the pain
• The Grocer Man states that they won’t let their cats be mowed down by rhinos as he heads into the shop
• The Grocer woman calls the Grocer man inside saying there will be customers soon
• The Boss and the Grocer man say that they won’t let their cats be mown down by rhinos or anything else
• The Grocer Man says that although it may be logical he will not stand by and watch the rhinos be destructive
• A procession of the Housewife, in full mourning, Daisy and the Waitress walk past as if at a funeral
• The Old Gent raises his hat and follows the Logician out saying goodbye
• The Logician says goodbye and begins to exit
• The Old Gentleman agrees that it’s totally logical
• The Logician says to Berenger that at least now the question has been correctly posed
• Berenger says to the logician that his explanation does not answer the question
• The Logician and the Old Gent discuss the fact that it is not possible for the rhino to have grown a horn in just a few minutes and that there must then be two if you could prove having seen one with one horn the first time and one with two horns the second time
• When Berenger tries to get in on the conversation the Old Gent tells him not to interrupt
• The Grocer Woman shrugs and goes into the house leaving the discussion
• The Grocer Man agrees with the logician
• The Grocer Woman says that she doesn’t understand the conversation
• The Logician, Boss, Grocer Man and Old Gent try to make sense of whether the rhino had one or two horns and whether there was one or two of them
• The logician says they must first address whether the two rhinos they saw were the same
• The Logician tells Berenger that this conversation is primarily for his ears but can include the others
• The Boss, Grocer Woman and Old Gent tell the Grocer Man to let the Logician speak
• The Logician tells them all that that is not in fact the argument
• Boss, Old Gent, Grocer Woman and Man ask the Logician to explain how many horns the Asian and African rhinos have
• Berenger and Grocer Man tell the Logician that it is a great honour for them
• The Logician shows his identity card
• The Old Gent introduces the Logician to Berenger and Berenger says he is pleased to meet the logician
• The Boss exclaims “Christ, a Logician”
• The Housewife, in tears, introduces the Logician
• The Logician finally joins in the conversation and starts to introduce himself
• The Old Gent points out that they need to settle the problem
• The Grocer man, Woman, Boss, Old Man and Berenger debate whether the rhino had one or two horns and whether it was African or Asian
• Berenger is sorry that he wasn’t more easygoing with Jean. He calls Jean stubborn and says that he loves being outrageous and showing everyone how clever he is
• Boss, Old Gent, Grocer man and Woman discuss whether the Asian or African rhino has two horns
• Berenger says that deep down Jean has a heart of gold
• The horn debate continues
• Berenger says that Jean can’t stand being contradicted and it makes him explode
• Boss tells the Grocer Woman that her husband is right that the Asian has one horn and the African has two
• Berenger says that he shouldn’t have contradicted Jean, Daisy was right
• Grocer woman yells from the window to her husband that he always has to be different
• Daisy and the Waitress drag the upset Housewife with her dead cat to the café doorway
• Daisy tells the Housewife to be sensible
• The Grocer Man says that he thinks Jean was right
• The Housewife is inconsolable
• The Old Gent says to Berenger that he was right
• Daisy says to Berenger that both he and Jean were wrong
• The Old Gent says that Berenger that he was right, that the Asian rhino has two horns and the African has one but the Grocer Man says that Monsieur claimed the opposite
• Boss says to the Waitress to go find a coffin for the cat
• Berenger says to Daisy that it wasn’t his fault that Jean got angry
• Daisy tells Berenger that he shouldn’t have made Jean so angry
• The Housewife says that it was as if her cat could talk
• Jean calls Berenger a Drunkard and Berenger tells him to take it back
• The Old Gent discusses with the Grocer Man the various colours of the Asians
• Jean begins to exit off right very quickly and angrily but turns before he leaves
• The Housewife says she could always tell what her cat wanted
• Jean says to Berenger that he will no longer waste his time with him and they won’t be seeing each other again
• The Housewife says that her cat was always so clean
• The Boss, Grocer Woman and Waitress acknowledge that the fight between Jean and Berenger is getting nasty
• Berenger tells Jean that he’s scarlet
• Jean tells Berenger that he’s yellow
• The Housewife says that she’s had her cat since he was little
• The Waitress remarks to the Grocer Woman that she had an Asian friend while the Old Gent and Boss discuss having Asian friends
• Daisy tries to get Berenger and Jean to stop fighting
• The Housewife says that he cat loved them so much
• Jean is about to leave in anger
• The Logician follows the conversation attentively but does not participate
• Jean yells that Asians are yellow
• The Housewife continues to moan and says that her cat was so gentle, just like them
• The Waitress says that Asians are people just like them and Daisy agrees
• Berenger says that he isn’t Asian and that that Asians are people like everyone else
• Berenger says that he doesn’t have horns and never will but Jean says that he does
• The Grocer man tells the Old Gent that shopkeepers can’t know everything
• The Grocer woman says to the grocer man that he should know
• Old Gent asks what kind of rhinos have one horn and that the shopkeeper should know
• Boss tells Jean and Berenger that they don’t want any trouble
• The Grocer woman says that Berenger and Jean are going to fight and Grocer Man says he doubts it
• Jean says Berenger has horns and calls him an Asian know it all
• Daisy asks Berenger to not get angry
• Berenger asks Jean if he wants to bet on it
• The Housewife is alone and remembering how sweet her cat was
• Jean tells Berenger that it is in fact the opposite of what he was saying
• The other characters crowd around Jean and Berenger as their argument builds, leaving the Housewife on her own
• Berenger says it is the Asian with one horn and the African with two
• The Boss tries to break up the argument between Berenger and Jean
• Berenger calls Jean an attention-seeker and a pedant, raising his voice
• The Old Gent tells the Housewife to be philosophical
• Jean tells Berenger that he never talks nonsense
• The Boss tells the housewife that she has to face the fact that her cat is dead
• The Housewife cradles her dead cat and cries that she doesn’t want another one
• Jean asks Berenger if he’s saying Jean is talking nonsense and Berenger confirms that is in fact what he’s saying
• The Grocer Wife yells from the window that the Housewife can have her cat
• Berenger tells Jean that what he’s saying is nonsense
• The Housewife, after drinking the cognac, cries out for her dead cat
• Jean says that because the rhino had its head down it was easier to see
• Berenger says that the rhino had its head down
• The Old Gent asks the Housewife if she’s feeling better
• Jean says that he’s not confused, his head’s clear and he knows how to add up, inferring that Berenger’s head is not clear and that he can’t add up
• Waitress, Grocer Woman and Daisy all comfort the Housewife
• The Old Gent and Daisy encourage the Housewife to drink the cognac and the Waitress finally holds the glass to her lips, making her drink
• Berenger tells Jean that the rhino went by too quickly for him to have had time to count that horns and that it was in a cloud of dust
• The Boss encourages the Housewife to drink the cognac by telling her it’s a nice one
• The Old Gent backs up Berenger saying that the rhino was going fast
• Daisy tells the Housewife that drinking the cognac will do her good
• Berenger suddenly becomes irritates with Jean and says that he is talking nonsense because the rhino went by too fast to even be able to see the horns
• The Waitress brings out a cognac and the Old Gent offers the housewife some cognac saying it will cheer her up and she says no to it in tears
• Jean says that the one before had two horns, making it an Asian rhino, and that this one had one, making it an African rhino
• The Boss says that the two rhinos were in fact one
• Daisy asks if they mean the same rhino went past twice
• The Grocer Woman concurs that it was the same rhino both times
• Jean tells the Grocer Man that it wasn’t the same one
• The grocer man says that the rhino has already been past their shop once
• The Housewife sobs that she doesn’t want any cognac
• The Waitress goes into the café to get a cognac
• Boss tells the Waitress to bring out a cognac and that Berenger is paying
• Berenger tells the Waitress to bring the Housewife a cognac
• The Grocer Woman says poor pussy cat from the window
• Jean says poor woman about the Housewife
• The Old Gent encourages the Housewife to sit down
• The Boss tells the Waitress to get the Housewife a glass of water
• The Housewife is cradling her dead cat and crying
• Grocer Woman, from in the window, asks Daisy what she makes of the cat’s death
• Grocer Man asks the logician what he makes of the cat’s death
• Jean asks the Old Gent what he makes of the cat’s death
• The Old Gent leads the Housewife to a café table to sit down
• The Grocer Woman speaks from the window saying that the death of the cat is upsetting and Daisy concurs
• The Old Gent encourages the Housewife to calm down
• The Grocer Woman, from the window, encourages the Housewife to calm down
• As she goes inside the Waitress tells the Boss that all he thinks about is money
• The Boss, cleaning up the chairs, tells the Waitress she owes him a thousand francs for the broken glass
• The Waitress has picked up all of the broken glass into her apron and is instructed by the boss to put it in the bin
• The Housewife is crying out for her dead cat
• The Logician says to the Housewife that all cats die, it was to be expected, and that she should accept it
• The Old Gent says to the Housewife that he’s hoped they’d meet again but in less tragic circumstances
• The Housewife is moaning and cradling her dead cat
• The Grocer Woman, from the window, and Jean say that that’s going too far
• The Boss and the Waitress, while clearing up, both say poor pussy cat
• Berenger says good morning to Daisy and apologizes for not having shaved yet
• Daisy says hi to Berenger and asks if he saw the rhino
• Berenger asks the Housewife not to cry because she’s breaking their hearts
• The Old Gent asks the Grocer Man what he makes of the dead cat
• The Boss points out the overturned chairs and the broken glasses to the Waitress
• On her way to the broken glasses and overturned tables the Waitress looks back at the Housewife saying poor little pussy-cat
• Jean and Berenger rush over to the Housewife who is moaning with her dead cat in her arms
• The Boss tells the Waitress to clean up the overturned chairs and broken glasses
• Everyone expresses their sadness about the poor little pussy cat, crowding around the Housewife
• The Housewife moans that the rhino ran over her cat and the waitress repeats this
• The Housewife appears without her basket holding her dead cat who is covered in blood
• There is a very loud meow and a very loud woman’s scream
• Everyone says unbelievable
• Berenger tries not be seen by Daisy
• The Boss tells the Waitress that she’ll be paying for the broken glasses
• The Waitress expresses that the rhino was unbelievable
• Footsteps of people running away are heard with lots of people expressing “oh my god”
• Berenger sees Daisy, is shocked and doesn’t want to see her because he looks badly
• Daisy enters yelling that she’s seen a rhino
• Jean says that the rhino was charging quickly and almost hit the shops
• The Boss tells the Waitress that it was no reason to break glasses
• Everyone yells that they’ve seen a rhinoceros
• Jean says “Christ! A rhinoceros!” setting off a chain of similar reactions
• Jean gets up knocking over his chair and looks to the left where there is the noise of a rhino running in the opposite direction
• The Old Gent, Jean and the Logician all ask what the hell that sound is
• Jean and the Old Gent try to explain themselves by screaming over the noise
• Berenger uses his hands as an ear-trumpet and tries to understand what Jean was saying
• Loused noises drown out what is being said
• Jean says that what matters is control – he can control himself and Berenger can not
• The Old Gent shouts at the logician a question about what is in a cat’s nature
• Berenger shouts that he is not saying Jean is a drunk but why is he supposed to be one when Jean’s not
• The Logician explains to the Old Gent that even without paws a cat has to catch mice because it’s in his nature
• Jean shouts to Berenger not to call him a drunk
• Berenger asks Jean to tell him why that might be
• Jean says to Berenger that he is just having an innocent drink which is not at all like when Berenger drinks
• Rhinos are heard approaching from the back of the stage to the front always in the wings on the left. It is the sound of their footsteps, trumpeting, breathing and thundering hooves
• The logician says that the old gent is making progress in logic
• Berenger tells Jean he is making a bad example by going off to get drunk
• The Old Gent says that a cat with no paws couldn’t run fast enough to catch mice
• Jean says that he keeps his promises and he promised he’d go
Jean wishes Berenger well with his new commitments but that he is meeting some friends for a drink tonight.
The Logician tells the Old Gent that his mind’s really grasped the concept.
Berenger asks Jean if he’ll come see the play with him and Jean says he can’t tonight.
The Old Gent says to the Logician that justice is one more facet of logic.
Jean says that he has it in his diary to have a siesta this afternoon so he can’t come to the museum with Berenger.
Berenger promises Jean and himself that he will commit to this new life of learning and asks Jean to come to the museum with him this afternoon.
Jean tells Berenger that he has to see it through and totally commit.
The Logician tells the Old Gent that justice is logic.
Berenger decides that this afternoon he will go to the museum and tonight he’ll get two ticket to the theatre.
The Old Gent asks the Logician for clarification about why what he’s talking about wouldn’t be logical.
Berenger decides that instead of drinking he’ll commit himself to culture and that he feels better and more clear-headed already because of that decision.
The Logician says that depriving a cat of its paws wouldn’t be just and therefore wouldn’t be logical.
Berenger says that he will make a solemn promise to himself and keep it.
The Logician says that would deprive the other cat of its paws and humiliate it.
Jean says that instead Berenger should promise himself because that’s what counts.
Berenger promises Jean that he will get himself up to speed on contemporary culture.
The Logician tells the Old Gent that this would make one cat highly privileged.
Berenger tells Jean that he is right and that he will get himself up to speed as suggested.
The Old Gent says that one cat could have six paws and one cat none at all.
Jean says that Berenger should go to the plays of Ionesco because it would be a perfect introduction to contemporary culture.
Jean tells Berenger that there is an Ionesco play on right now and that he should go.

The Old Gent works through the question posed by the Logician positing that if they took away two of the eight paws from two cats.

Jean asks Berenger if he knows about the avant-garde plays they're talking about now and whether he's seen any plays by Ionesco and Berenger says that unfortunately he has only heard about them.

Jean suggests that instead of spending his surplus cash on alcohol that instead he should buy tickets to see an interesting show.

The Old Gent works out that there could be one cat with five paws and another cat with one paw but then asks the Logician if they would still be cats.

The Logician retorts with the question “why not?”

Berenger agrees with Jean.

Jean proposed that instead of drinking Berenger could use his time intelligently by going to museums, reading books, taking himself to lectures. Jean argues that Berenger would be less depressed and that within four months he’d be a cultured man.

The Logician asks what other solutions there might be, encouraging the Old Gent to apply himself and the Old Gent starts calculating again.

Jean explains to Berenger that he has quite a bit of free time available: he works eight hours a day but he has Sundays, evening and three weeks off in the summer which all together is plenty if he applies himself.

The Logician tells the Old Gent that he can always find time to improve himself, the Old Gent responds that it’s too late for him now and the Logician retorts that it’s never too late.

Jean tells Berenger that he can always find time, Berenger responds that it’s too late, and Jean retorts that it’s never too late.

The Old Gent says that there was never time to use his talent because he worked for the government.

Jean tells Berenger to put the spare time that he does have to use and to not let his life go to waste.

The Logician tells the Old Gent that he’s not devoid of talent but that he just never used it.
• Berenger argues with Jean that he has so little spare time
• The Old Gent poses to the Logician that the first possibility could be that one cat could have four paws and the other two
• Jean tells Berenger that he is too self-effacing and that he has talent, which Berenger is surprised to hear, and that he should use it to find out what’s what in literature and the arts
• The Old Gent says that there are several possible solutions and the Logician tells him to fire away
• Berenger says that Jean’s suggestions are very good and asks then what
• Jean suggests that Berenger spend less on alcohol and suggests that he improve the way he dresses. To demonstrate this point Jean points at and names his own articles of clothing
• Berenger argues with Jean’s suggestion saying that laundry is so expensive
• Jean says that what Berenger needs to do is dress properly, shave and wear a clean shirt
• The Old Gent gets a piece of paper out of his pocket and works out the problem posed, telling the Logician to hang on a moment
• The Logician tells the Old Gent to work out the problem. The problem is: we take away two paws from two cats, how many paws does each cat have left?
• Jean tells Berenger not to be such a baby at the same time that the Logician tells the Old Gent not to be such a baby in response to them saying that they don’t see how
• The Logician encourages the Old Gent to use his brain and try and think
• Jean encourages Berenger to use his brain and try and think
• Berenger asks Jean how he gets himself up to speed and says that it’s tricky and easy for Jean perhaps but not for him
• The Old Gent says that the problem is tricky, the Logician counters saying that in fact it’s simple and the Old Gent argues maybe for the Logician but not for him
• The Logician poses this problem to the Old Gent: from these two cats take away two paws. How many does each have left?
• Berenger asks Jean how he gets himself up to speed
• Jean explains that he is referring to the weapons of patience, culture and intelligence and tells Berenger that he should learn to dazzle and get himself up to speed
• The Logician says that logic has no limits and that he’ll show this to the Old Gent
• Berenger asks what weapons Jean is talking about
• Jean explains that Berenger finds the weapons inside himself using will-power
• Berenger asks where he finds the weapons Jean is referring to
• The Logician explains that logic entails mental arithmetic and the Old Gent observes excitedly that it has many facets
• After much thought the Old Gent replies to the Logician that the answer is eight paws
• Berenger asks what he is supposed to fight with and Jean replies that he should fight with weapons
• The Logician says that Fricot also has four paws and asks the Old Gent how many paws Fricot and Isadore have to which the Old Gent asks together or separately and the Logician says either way
• Jean tells Berenger that life’s a struggle and it’s cowardly not to fight
• Jean asks Berenger if he’s just giving up and Berenger asks what else can he do
• Berenger says that his boss adores Dudard and that he’s got no future and no qualifications, therefore no chance
• The Logician says that it is a hypothesis
• The Logician states that Isidore the cat has four paws and the Old Gent asks how he knows this
• Berenger says that he thinks Daisy is already keen on Dudard, a colleague at work with a law degree who’s highly skilled and has a big future with the company. Berenger believes that Dudard and Daisy have a big future together and that he can’t compete
• The Logician suggests that he and the Old Gent refocus on cats and he agrees
• Jean says that the fact that he didn’t want Daisy to see him in this state proves that he’s not indifferent to everything. He asks Berenger how he can expect Daisy to be attracted to a drunk
• The Old Gent states that Socrates is a cat and the Logician says that it was logic that revealed the fact
Jean recognizes that Berenger is in love with Daisy
Berenger asks who Jean thinks he is interested in
Jean calls Berenger a clown and a liar. He states that although life doesn’t interest Berenger, somebody does
The Old Gent says that what the Logician says is true because he’s got a cat called Socrates
The Logician presents another syllogism that is that all cats die and that Socrates is dead therefore Socrates is a cat
Jean tells Berenger that he doesn’t think that therefore he doesn’t exist because “think and you shall be” (This is a syllogism which falls right in the heart of the Logicians explanations and examples of syllogisms)
Berenger says that he doesn’t know if he exists
Jean confirms that the dead don’t exist and laughs crudely. He asks Berenger how he can be depressed by something that doesn’t exist
Berenger tells Jean that there are more people dead than alive and that being alive is the exception
Jean tells Berenger that in fact nothing is more normal than being alive and the proof is that everyone’s alive.
Berenger tells Jean that it’s not normal to be alive
The Logician agrees that logic is a beautiful thing as long as it’s not abused
The Old Gent tells the Logician that logic is a beautiful thing
Jean tells Berenger that he’s contradicting himself and asks him to clarify whether being alone or not being alone is depressing him and says that Berenger calls himself a thinker but he won’t obey logic
Berenger says that being alone and socializing both depress him
The Logician confirms that logically speaking the Old Gent is correct but that the opposite is also true
After much reflection the Old Gent confirms with Logician that logically speaking, according to the logic posed by the Logician, his dog is in fact a cat
Berener tells Jean that he hardly has the strength to go on living and maybe doesn’t even want to
Old Gent tells Logician that his dog’s got four paws and the Logician states that his dog is then a cat
• Logician states a typical syllogism that a cat has four paws and that Isadore and Fricot have four paws therefore they are cats
• Berenger observes that Jean has great strength and Jean says that he has strength physically, morally, and because he’s not an alcoholic. He tells Berenger that it is the alcohol depressing him
• Logician and Old Gent sit at a table a little to right and behind Jean and Berenger
• Logician tells Old Gent no harm done and Old Gent tells this to Jean
• Jean says sorry to Old Gent
• Old Gent says mind out to Jean and sorry to the Logician.
• Old Gent bumps into Logician who is starting to pose a syllogism until the bump cuts him off
• One of Jean’s arms bangs into the Old Gent
• Old Gent and Logician reenter
• Jean tells Berenger that he is talking rubbish and says that he himself weighs more but feels like a tiny little bird and flaps his arms to demonstrate
• Berenger tells Jean that he’s never gotten used to being himself and he feels heavy as if he was carrying another man on his back. He says that when he drinks the weight vanishes and that he recognizes himself again
• Jean tells Berenger that he is suffering from an alcohol induced depression and the self-pity of a chronic drinker
• Berenger tells Jean that he’s tired, has been for years, and that it’s hard for him to hold up his own body
• Jean says that Berenger forgets how to behave when he drinks
• Berenger admits to being anxious, especially when around people, and says that he drinks to feel calmer and more relaxed. He says that drinking allows him to forget
• Jean asks Berenger what he’s afraid of
• Berenger confides that he doesn’t like being an alcoholic but that if he doesn’t drink he feels afraid
• Jean tells Berenger that when he drinks he is not in control of his own body and that he is digging his own grave by drinking so much. Jean tells Berenger that all of this drinking is making him fade away
• After Daisy disappears Berenger returns to Jean and apologizes for the trousers
Jean says that Daisy doesn’t look scary to him
Berenger tells Jean to keep his voice down because he doesn’t want Daisy looking at them
Jean sees Daisy and asks Berenger if that’s who he’s afraid of
Berenger sees Daisy and tries to hide from her because he doesn’t want her to see him in this state
When he sees Daisy, Berenger dumps his glass on Jean’s trousers making them wet
Jean tells Berenger not to drink and Berenger agrees
Berenger states that if he doesn’t drink his pastis the Waitress will and goes to drink it
Jean takes a big swig of his pastis and Berenger continues to hold his
Jean tells Berenger to put his pastis on the table and not to drink it
Berenger says cheers and lifts his glass
Berenger agrees that it is madness that a rhino ran by and tells Jean that it’s not worth fighting over the rhino that has disappeared and therefore not longer exists and suggests they change the conversation
Jean says to Berenger that the rhino running by should not have happened
Berenger appeases Jean by agreeing that a rhino roaming the streets is not good
Jean says to Berenger that he never considers anything
Berenger says to Jean that he didn’t say the rhino wasn’t dangerous, only that the danger had no occurred to him
Jean interrupts Berenger saying he wants to finish what he was saying and then states that the rhino is a particular problem because it is market time
Berenger states that actually lots of people are at mass and therefore much of the town was not at risk
Jean asks Berenger why, if he respects him so much, is he contradicting his statement that it’s dangerous to have a rhino go charging through town on a Sunday with the streets full of children
Berenger tells Jean that he is not putting him down but that in fact he rates him very highly
Jean asks Berenger why he acts like he can explain everything and why he is putting Jean down
• Jean asks Berenger why he claims to be able to explain everything and Berenger says he never said anything like that
• Berenger says that it’s impossible for thoughts to enter the brain if you haven’t got one and Jean argues with him
• Jean says that some thoughts enter the brain even if you haven’t got one
• Berenger says that if he hasn’t got a brain all the more reason why a thought wouldn’t enter it
• Jean tells Berenger that he hasn’t got a brain
• Jean asks Berenger if he has any more insults and Berenger says that the thought would never enter his brain
• Berenger tells Jean he’s stubborn
• Jean tells Berenger that he is putting him down and Berenger says he would never allow himself to put down Jean
• Jean says that he hates being put down
• Berenger argues that he would never try to score points
• Jean says that Berenger is trying to score points
• Jean says that Berenger is always as he is today and Berenger denies it
• Berenger says that it’s just today that he’s having hard time talking seriously because of his hangover. He indicates this by pointing to his head
• Jean says that Berenger is not being witty, that his paradoxes are stupid and that he is incapable of talking seriously
• Berenger is tired and irritated with Jean and says maybe the rhino was lurking under a rock or nesting in a drought-stricken tree
• Jean asks Berenger where he thinks the neighbourhood swamps are located and reminds him that the area is very dry
• Berenger naively confirms that he is feeling lost today
• Jean says that Berenger is lost in an alcoholic fog if he thinks that there are neighbourhood swamps
• Berenger suggests that perhaps the rhino has been hiding out in a neighbourhood swamp
• Jean counters that it’s impossible for the rhino to be from the circus because the town hasn’t licensed any kind of itinerant entertainment since they were children
• Berenger suggests that the rhino came from a traveling circus
• Jean counters that there hasn’t been a zoo in the town since the animals were decimated by the plague many years ago
• Berenger says that he only said maybe the rhinos were from the zoo
• Jean says that if Berenger thinks the rhinos are from the zoo then he’s dreaming
• Berenger suggests that maybe the rhinos escaped from the zoo
• Jean says they should be complaining to the local authority about the rhinos
• Berenger agrees that the rhinos are unsafe and that it shouldn’t be allowed. He tells Jean that they are now out of range and will be safe
• Berenger yawns and Jean asks him to cover his mouth
• Jean says that a rhino roaming the streets in mind-boggling, that it shouldn’t be allowed and that he is shocked that Berenger isn’t surprised by this
• Jean says he can’t get over it and Berenger replies that everyone can see he can’t get over it but that it was just a rhino
• The Logician and the Old Gent exit
• The Logician explains to the Old Gent that a syllogism consists of a main proposition, a secondary proposition and a conclusion to which the Old Gent asks what conclusion
• Jean tells Berenger that he can’t get over the rhinos and that it just shouldn’t happen
• The Logician tells the Old Gent that he is going to tell him about syllogisms and the Old Gent is excited
• The Old Gent tells the Logician that the Housewife is gorgeous
• Jean tells Berenger that he can’t get over that there was a rhino in town
• The Housewife makes eyes at the Old Gent then exits
• The Old Gent says that he does hope they will take a walk together sometime and the Housewife concurs
• The Housewife tells the Old Gent that her husband is waiting for her so they'll have to take a walk another time
• Berenger lies telling Jean that he ordered mineral water and that the Waitress must have misheard to which Jean shrugs disdainfully and unconvinced
• The Old Gent asks the Housewife if she’d like to take a walk with him
• The Waitress appears with two pastis and Jean is surprised that it’s alcohol
• The Logician gives the cat back to the Housewife
• The Housewife thanks the Logician for holding her cat
• The Old Gent raises his hat and kisses the Housewife’s hand, telling her it’s been an enormous pleasure to meet her
• Jean sits back down and thinking about rhinos says that it’s amazing
• The Grocer Man takes the Housewife’s money saying she should shop with them because that way she wouldn’t have to cross the street and run these risks
• The Housewife gives her money to the Grocer Man and thanks the Old Gent, who has put everything in her basket, saying that he displayed real French courtesy unlike the young people today
• The Grocer Man tells the Housewife that it is a hundred francs a litre
• The Logician holds and strokes and coos to the cat
• The Grocer Man comes back with a bottle of wine for the Housewife and tells her that he’s also got leeks
• Berenger tells Jean that he doesn't make much of the rhinos, just that it’s pretty dusty
• Jean asks Berenger what he makes of the rhinos
• The Logician tells the Old Gent and the Housewife, as they pick up the shopping, to put it all back methodically
• The Grocer Woman goes into her shop
• The Old Gent tells the Housewife that it’s the least he could do
• The Waitress confirms that he’s ordering two pastis and goes into the café
• The Old Gent helps the Housewife pick up her shopping and she tells him that’s very kind
• Berenger orders two pastis from the Waitress
• The Logician is holding and stroking the cat
• The Grocer Man goes into the shop telling the Housewife that what he is giving her is quality stuff in unbreakable bottles
• The Grocer Woman tells the Grocer Man to fetch the Housewife another bottle
• The Boss tells the Waitress to serve Jean and Berenger
• Jean asks Berenger what he makes of it and Berenger asks what he’s referring to
• The Grocer Man tells the Housewife he’s got lots of good quality wine
• The Housewife tells the Logician that the cat is sweet as can be and tells the others that the wine is so expensive
• The Boss tells Jean, in response to his question about what he makes of that, that the rhino went like a comet and that you don’t see that every day
• The Logician asks the Housewife if the cat scratches as he takes it from her
• The Waitress tells Jean, in response to his question about what she makes of that, that she’s never seen it before
• The Housewife remarks that at least she didn’t drop her cat
• Jean asks the Waitress and the Boss what they make of the rhino running by
• The Grocer Man tells the Grocer Woman that it serves the Housewife right for not shopping with them
• The Housewife tells the Logician that she’s pleased to meet him
• The Waitress remarks that rhinos move quickly
• Jean asks Berenger what he makes of the rhinos running by
• The Waitress remarks that the rhino is already out of site
• The Logician says that fear is irrational and that reason must overcome it
• The Housewife thanks the Old Gent for his offer of help and shares that she was terrified
• The Old Gent offers to help the Housewife clean up her shopping
• The Boss says that the rhinos shouldn’t be allowed and the Waitress remarks that it was incredible
• The Old Gent helps the Housewife pick up her scattered shopping and chivalrously doffs his hat
• The Housewife remarks that the rhinos were unbelievable and that she was terrified
• Berenger gets out his handkerchief to wipe himself while stating that it did look like a rhino and that it made a lot of dust
• Everyone except Berenger states that the rhinos running by was unbelievable
• The rhinos are now far off and everyone stands looking at it except Berenger who remains sitting and apathetic
• Jean remarks to Berenger that the rhino was unbelievable and asks if he saw it
• The Housewife’s groceries are scattered all around her
• Berenger averts his head to avoid the dust but says nothing and makes a face
• Everyone but Berenger is watching the animal
• The Housewife has dropped her shopping and her bottle but not her cat who she remarks was terrified
• Everyone says “Oh my God”, even from the wings
• The Boss says the Waitress is being daft until he also see the rhino and says “Oh my God” and that it’s unbelievable
• The Waitress remarks to her Boss that it’s a rhinoceros
• The Grocer Woman is bumped by the Old Gent, tells him to mind out, and in turn bumps into the Grocer Man who tells her to mind out
• The Old Gent disappears behind the two grocers
• The Boss pokes his head out of his café and asks what’s going on
• People run away and dust is kicked up by the beast
• The Waitress and Jean are standing while Berenger stays apathetically sitting
• The Old Gent, who has followed the Housewife in, rushes into the grocery
• The Housewife appears, runs to the middle of the stage, remarks “Oh my God” and drops her basket and her shopping scatters and her bottle breaks. She manages to keep hold of her cat
• The Logician enters rapidly remarking that a rhino is charging along the pavement
• The Grocer Woman tells her husband, the Grocer Man, to come and see and he remarks that it is a rhinoceros
• Jean remarks that the rhino is charging full pelt nearly hitting the shops
• Everyone’s eyes follow the rhino
• Everyone except Berenger remarks “Christ! A rhinoceros!”
• Jean leaps to his feet, knocking over his chair, and telling Berenger that he sees a rhinoceros. Berenger is dazed and remains sitting
• Berenger is apathetic and seems to hear nothing as he calmly answers Jean’s question but his answer can’t be heard over the rhino
• The Waitress and Jean wonder what that sound is
• The rhino sounds have become very loud and he can hear galloping close by and audible panting
• Jean says that although he wasn’t invited, if he had been invited he wouldn’t have gone and begins to explain why but is interrupted by rhino sounds
• The Waitress comes out of the café and asks Jean and Berenger what they’d like to order
• Jean asks if he was there partying and Berenger says that he wasn’t invited
• Berenger explains that it wouldn’t have been polite to have said no to Auguste so he had to go out
• The sound of breathing and a wild animal is heard as well as a long trumpeting
• Jean says that he wasn’t invited to their friend Auguste’s birthday
• Berenger tells Jean that last night he was celebrating Auguste’s birthday
• Jean asks Berenger where he was last night for his drunkfest and implies that he may not be able to remember
• Berenger asks what duty Jean speaks of and Jean gives the example of his duty as an employee
• Jean says he is better than Berenger because the superior person is one who fulfills his duty
• Berenger denies saying that he is superior to Jean
• Jean asks Berenger if he is saying he’s naturally superior
• Berenger says that not everyone can be like Jean and that he himself can’t adjust to life
• Jean says that he works just like everyone else but that he has will-power and so he’s able to stay as put together as he is
• Berenger tells Jean that the town is boring that there’s nothing to do, that he works a job he’s not cut out for eight hours a day and that he only has three weeks off in the summer. He says that by Saturday he’s tired and needs to unwind, implying he needs to drink
• Berenger tells Jean he is hard and Jean replies that Berenger deserves it
• Jean tells Berenger he is ashamed to be his friend
• Berenger says he doesn’t remember where the white dust came from
• Jean asks where the dust on Berenger’s shoulders came from
• Berenger hits himself on the shoulders to clean himself off and dust comes off of him
• Berenger reaches out to Jean for a clothes brush but Jean says he doesn’t carry one because it would distend his pockets
• Jean tells Berenger to turn around because his shoulders are a disaster and it looks like he’s been leaning against a wall
• Jean says that Berenger’s shoes haven’t been polished and in response Berenger tries to hide his feet under the table
• Jean tells Berenger that his clothes are crumpled, his shirt is filthy and that he’s pitiful and repellent
• Berenger remarks that Jean is always immaculate
• Berenger tries to give the tie back to Jean but Jean tells him to keep it because he has others
• Jean says that cirrhosis is fast approaching for Berenger
• Jean takes back his comb and pockets it
• Berenger remarks that his tongue is all coated and Jean says that is hardly surprising
• Berenger examines himself and his tongue in the mirror Jean gives him
• Jean remarks that Berenger hasn’t shaved and tells him to look at himself, passing him a mirror
• Jean give Berenger a comb and he thanks Jean and vaguely combs his hair
• Jean remarks that Berenger’s hair is all over the place and Berenger runs his fingers through his hair
• Jean gives Berenger a tie and Berenger does it up any old how
• Jean asks Berenger what happened to his tie and Berenger says, putting his hand to his neck, that he doesn’t know
• Berenger says that it’s not true and that he is hung over less often on weekdays because of work
• Jean remarks that every Sunday Berenger is hungover and that weekdays are the same
• Berenger admits that he is hungover
• Jean tells Berenger that he stinks of drink
• Berenger confirms that he does feel rough
• Jean says that Berenger looks dead tired, half asleep and that it’s clear that he’s been up all night
• Jean tells Berenger that he is in a sorry state and Berenger is surprised he thinks so
• Jean says that he is speaking of Berenger’s gullet and says that it is land needing constant irrigation and Berenger says this comparison is far fetched
• Berenger gently asks what Jean means by this comment
• Jean examines Berenger and exclaims that he is not thirsting for water but for something else (implying alcohol)
• Berenger says that with more rain they’d all be less thirsty, he plays on Jean’s mention of science by saying that popular science could supply them with scientific clouds
• Jeans states that popular science tells us the more we drink the thirstier we get. This is in reference to an alcoholic’s relationship with alcohol
• Berenger remarks that it is incredibly hot and dry
• Jean is surprised that Berenger mentions drinking first thing in the morning
• Berenger asks Jean what he’s drinking
• Jean and Berenger sit down
• Berenger agrees that he’d never try telling Jean that he turns up on time
• Jean tells Berenger not to even pretend that he ever shows up on time
• Berenger agrees that Jean is right and he tries to explain himself
• Jean tells Berenger that he doesn’t have time to waste waiting and knowing that Berenger will always be late he shows up late as well
• Berenger says that if Jean has only just arrived as well he doesn’t need to feel guilty
• Berenger and Jean sit at one of the outside café tables
• Jean says that he’s only just got here
• Berenger apologizes and asks if Jean has been waiting long
• Jean says to Berenger that he is late as usual by almost a half an hour
• Berenger enters from the left and says good morning to Jean
• Jean enters from the right and says to Berenger that he finally made it, indicating that he’s late
• The Grocer Woman says to her husband, the Grocer Man, in reference to the Housewife, that she’s the stuck-up one that won’t shop at their store any more
• The Grocer Woman opens her shop window and looks down at the Housewife
• The Housewife crosses the stage in silence with her cat and her shopping basket
• The curtain goes up
• Before the curtain goes up the bells ring
August 15

“I believe that the writer shouldn’t deliver messages because he isn’t a postman”
– Ionesco

This idea will be one of my goal posts as I work through this process. Ionesco was a man full of strong opinions, which could have led his work to be highly didactic and preachy. The belief that a writer isn’t a postman is what makes his work so fantastic. He asks questions and explores theories rather than expounding to his audience. His uncertainty is clear in his work. He doesn’t know what the right answer is therefore he questions everything. It is vital in our process that we answer a lot of the questions asked in the play for ourselves in order to build the world of the play; but, ultimately, we need to be sure to make room for the audience to find their own meaning in the metaphors. A metaphor loses meaning when it is too concrete, it becomes didacticism disguised as metaphor and this is not Ionesco’s intention. For example, if the rhinos were very clearly Nazi soldiers, wearing full uniforms and goose-stepping, there would be no room for audience interpretation. They would be spoon fed the answers rather than searching, and I believe that Ionesco wants the audience to search for meaning because it makes them think deeply about the topic.

September 1

“ The true nature of things, truth itself, can be revealed to us only by fantasy, which is more realistic than all realisms”
– Ionesco “La demystification par l’humour noir” (p. 192 The Theatre of the Absurd)

This quote provides me with great insight into Ionesco’s motivations and theories as a playwright. I agree with this sentiment. It reminds me of Brecht’s concept of making strange. By taking an idea out of naturalism and into an alternate reality, by turning truth on its head, you open it up to interpretation. It allows for discussion and exploration of a truth. Everyone sees and interprets the world differently and by exploring ideas through fantasy you allow room for the audience to digest a story in their own way. I will lean on fantasy as truth in my staging of Rhinoceros and I will seek to explore what this concept looks like in practice.
Royal Court research guide
The Martin Crimp adaptation of *Rhinoceros* that I am using was written for, and originally produced by, the Royal Court in 2007. The Royal Court study guide has been of great use to me in my research and preparation for rehearsal. Some of the points made in the study guide have become guideposts for my production.

One of these ideas is that *Rhinoceros* marks the first time Ionesco wrote characters with plausible psychology. Dominic Cooke, the director of the Royal Court production, went so far as to say that because of the character psychology this play is not absurdist, but more magical realism, noting that it is a very personal play about Ionesco’s own struggles. I disagree and would still classify *Rhinoceros* as a piece of absurdist theatre but I appreciate this thought. I think that it is in fact a piece of absurdist theatre because it uses so many conventions traditionally associated with the theatre of the absurd. These conventions include incoherent dialogue, a protagonist who is essentially struggling with the futility of life and broad metaphors that permeate a play.

It is important to me that the characters be grounded with clear objectives and concrete, believable relationships. I am not interested in playing up the silliness of the play but instead want to focus on what it is about these people that leads them to conform and transform. There is no payoff in playing up the absurdity and humour off the top. I want to understand and demonstrate what sets Berenger apart. Ionesco himself said that the play is a farce but that “it is above all a tragedy” (qtd. in Royal Court Background Pack 9). This is vital to me. The audience can, and should, laugh at times but, by the end of the play, they should be connected to Berenger and what happens to him should be heartbreaking.

The Royal Court study guide suggests not having the actors BE rhinos, but instead having them inhabit some of the essential characteristics and qualities of rhinos. This is important for me in my staging. There is no way for me to convincingly have realistic rhinoceroses on stage so I need to find a way of portraying what they represent without literally having rhinos on stage.

Another great element in the Royal Court Background Pack is a list of quotes by Ionesco. One of my favorite ones concerns his opinions on the Bourgeois. Ionesco railed against the Bourgeois saying: “For me the petit bourgeois is just a man of slogans, who no longer thinks for himself but repeats the truths that others have impressed upon him ready-made and therefore lifeless. In short, the bourgeois is a manipulated man” (qtd. in Royal Court Background Pack10). All of the
bourgeois characters in the play are seen as simple individuals who follow the crowd and their single-minded beliefs without ever thinking for themselves or asking the important questions before acting. The bourgeois are far more willing to transform as they are not free thinkers.

**What led Ionesco to write *Rhinoceros***?

Eugene Ionesco was born in 1909 to a French mother and a Romanian father. He spent the critical years of young adulthood (13-30) in Romania at a time when the country’s aggressive racism and widespread anti-semitism led to the creation and popularization of the radical nationalist political party of the Iron Guard. Ionesco is traditionally seen as a French writer when in fact he spent his formative years in Romania and was highly influenced by those times. The Iron Guard was a far-right political party in Romania from 1927 until early WWII. They were ultra-nationalist, fascist, anti-communist and promoted orthodox Christian faith. They were anti-Western and demanded state anti-semitism promoting violence against Jews. Of that time in his life Ionesco said:

> Men metamorphosed into beasts, rhinoceros…you would run into an old friend, and all of a sudden, under your very eyes, he would begin to change. It was as if his gloves became paws, his shoes hoofs. You could no longer talk intelligently with him for he was not a rational human being. (qtd. in Quinney 37)

*Rhinoceros* was written as a way for Ionesco to explore the mindset of those who so easily succumbed to an aggressive mentality. It can be seen as an allegory for many events including the Nazi occupation of France, the Cold war communist attitude of the Leftists in Paris, and the immersion of Romanian youth into fascism in the 1930s. It was written in 1959 but reflected back on what Ionesco witnessed throughout the 1930s. The 1930s was not only a time of great political upheaval but also a time of large personal change in Ionesco’s life. In 1936 Ionesco married Rodica and that same year his mother died. He was experiencing love and loss throughout this time of great political turmoil and change, very much like Berenger.

Another large factor that led Ionesco to write *Rhinoceros* was his discovery of the journals of Denis de Rougemont. Ionesco credits Denis de Rougemont’s journal entries with the inspiration for his short story *Rhinoceros*, published in 1957, which later led to the play. In his journals Rougemont described the: "delirium which electrified him" as he was lured into a Nazi rally attended by Hitler. His conclusion: "I am alone and they are all together." These images were potent for Ionesco.
Theatre of the Absurd

There are several trends apparent in all absurdist plays. It is important for me to identify as many of these elements as possible in *Rhinoceros* and understand them within the larger context of the genre. Labeling a play as absurd is really only useful in that it helps in understanding and gaining insight into the work of art.

The plays of the theatre of the absurd “consist of incoherent dialogue as if one had a bad phone connection-full of static, elusive, abrupt, frustrating, and often hostile” (Vos, 5). This is present in both act one and act two of *Rhinoceros*. The interaction between all of the characters in act one is as if they often don’t hear each other. They are quick to get angry and the majority of the transitions are very abrupt. In act two the workers in the office single-mindedly pursue their objectives as if they are in entirely different worlds while existing in the same space.

In absurdist theatre the protagonist is cut off from God, nature, society and himself (Vos, 6). This describes Berenger. At the beginning of the play he has no sense of who he is. He is disconnected from life and is searching for meaning and connection. He goes so far as to say “I don’t even know if I am me” when describing how lost he feels. Berenger feels like he doesn’t belong, like he doesn’t fit in anywhere. He lives with a “sense of cosmic homelessness” (Vos, 6), a state typical of protagonists in the theatre of the absurd. “The absurdist playwright believes that man’s existence is absurd because he is born without asking to be born and dies without seeking death” (Vos, 7) therefore he ultimately has no control over his existence. There is an isolation of the self in the theater of the absurd. This isolation and sense of feeling lost is important to discover in Berenger and to make clear on stage.

The trick with this concept is to find a way to make it dramatically interesting. Watching a man struggle and feel lost for two hours is highly uninteresting. The dramatic tension and the journey are found in the man’s attempt to pull himself out of hopelessness and find meaning. This will be vital in the portrayal of Berenger. He is lost and he is alone but he desperately seeks a life that is different; a life full of connection, love and meaning. This can only be found in other people and he tries to find it in every single interaction. This play asks the question “Wherein lies a man’s hope?” (Vos, 8) and it will be up to Berenger to show us a man hoping and working for a different life.
Another tool seen consistently in the theatre of the absurd is paroxysm: “What the characters, and thus the spectators, experience in the Theatre of the Absurd is a rhythm that moves from intensity to paroxysm” (Vos, 33). A paroxysm is “Any sudden, violent outburst; a fit of violent action or emotion” or “a severe attack or sudden increase in intensity of a disease, usually recurring periodically”. In *Rhinoceros* the paroxysm would be Rhinoceritis and its spread throughout the village.

Martin Esslin literally wrote the book on the theatre of the absurd and coined the term. He said that the theatre of the absurd represents the attitude of the time in which it first emerged, the 1950s and 60s:

> The hallmark of this attitude is its sense that the certitudes and unshakable basic assumptions of former ages have been swept away, that they have been tested and found wanting, that they have been discredited as cheap and somewhat childish illusions. (Esslin, 23)

Absurdist playwrights, like Ionesco, challenged and questioned everything around them. Ionesco believed that blindly following the herd was a dangerous trend and he went about breaking down and confronting that idea with *Rhinoceros*.

**Paradox**

In his article “The Absurd as Warning”, George E. Wellwarth calls Ionesco “The archbishop of paradox” (Wellwarth, 6). Ionesco bases his plays on the twin pillars of protest and paradox with the goal of his plays being to protest against the social order and the human condition. Ionesco uses absurdity to break through the confining orders of reality to “beyond-reality” that “renders the everyday reality against which it protests ridiculous by contrast” (Wellwarth, 6). He used the exaggeration of reality to “point to the ridiculousness of certain aspects of everyday life” (Wellwarth, 6) and in doing so used the technique of paradox. This can be seen through out *Rhinoceros* including the conversations had by the Logician in act one and Botard’s tirade in act two.

Ionesco states that the only possible type of communication is the indirect method of paradox. Two predominant themes in Ionesco’s work are “1. The paradox of the isolation of the individual in the midst of his fellows. 2. The paradox of the ultimate meaninglessness of actions which, taken together, constitute the sum of human existence” (Wellwarth, 7). *Rhinoceros* is somewhat
different thematically because Ionesco is saying that man has some free choice within the “context of his temporal life and is therefore morally responsible for his actions” (Wellwarth, 7). With responsibility human existence takes on meaning – human actions mean something because they may have results. This idea is present throughout the play and is one we will explore in rehearsal.

**Characters**

One of the biggest challenges in *Rhinoceros*, and theatre of the absurd in general, is the seeming one dimensionality of a number of the characters. The majority of the characters in the theatre of the absurd have either “family names or particular professions. They are not that rooted within society. Instead they are defined by their function” (Vos, 29). This serves many purposes when it comes to communicating theme and making a strong argument but is challenging to a director when it comes to character journey and overall story arc. In terms of theatricality it can be quite intriguing in moments such as the repetition of identical bits of conversation with different characters speaking the lines. This happens a lot in *Rhinoceros* and speaks to the universality of those lines. This occurs specifically in the café scene with Berenger, Jean, Old Gentleman and the Logician where the overlapping dialogue and repeated lines serve to augment and link their individual conversations.

Ionesco often used a person with the same name but different personality in several plays. Berenger is a good example of this as he appears in *The Killer, A Stroll in the Air, Rhinoceros* and *Exit the King*. It has been suggested that Berenger represents Ionesco and that his differentiation in character in each play points to how Ionesco was feeling at the time when he wrote the play.

Ionesco was highly influenced by Punch and Judy shows as a young child. What he found so intriguing was an image of the world that appeared to him as “strange and improbable but true as true, in the profoundly simplified form of caricature, as though to stress the grotesque and brutal nature of the truth” (Vos, 32). This early influence led Ionesco to create characters that were like mechanical puppets. In *Rhinoceros* people pop in and out of their windows and act like robots all saying the same lines. They are “empty frames, which the actors can fill with their own faces” (Vos, 32). I loved this image and have taken liberties playing with this idea in Act One in terms of staging.
Ionesco describes the characters in *Rhinoceros* not as “stereotypes” but as “archetypes” “that function on a mythic plane but with enough naturalistic details to ground them in the particular and thereby maintain their immediacy” (Untitled Theater).

**Themes**

A variety of themes arise out of this play. For me the most important theme is the idea of individuality versus collective mentality. This theme is what I will use as my map throughout the production. This goes hand in hand with the question about how human beings could be so savage. For me the answer lies in people losing themselves in a group. This concept is seen time and again throughout the play. People get wrapped up in the thoughts around them and start thinking what others are thinking. Characters repeat what other characters have said or speak simultaneously. After many people, especially authority figures, have collapsed the remaining humans find it easier to justify why the metamorphosis is desirable. The rhinos become more beautiful as the play progresses and the audience is forced to recognize that an impressionable individual might have similarly perceived the swelling ranks of Nazis as superior. Dudard refers to the rhinos as the “universal family” and expresses his desire to join them. This alludes to the idea of the rhinos as the Aryan master race, physically superior to the rest of humanity. Rhinos, despite being beautiful because of their brute strength and power, become more violent over the course of the play. Humans become more ugly throughout the course of the play but Berenger demonstrates that true beauty lies in moral strength.

Having said this, I’ve collected a short list of other themes that arise within the play and are important to keep in my mind as we work:

- The ability to rationalize small choices that get you closer to being a part of the group
- One must commit oneself to a significant cause in order to give life meaning
- Logic and absurdity
- Moral Certainty
- “Apply yourself”
  - The importance of putting your whole self into your life – either through figuring out a problem, learning or being a hard worker. This is a theme that comes up in the conversation between the logician and the old gent when the logician encourages him to really apply himself to figuring out and calculating the problems of logic that are posed to him. The old man is then rewarded by the
Logician for his ability to apply his mind and make sense of the problems posed. This theme also arises in the conversation between Jean and Berenger in act one when Jean is encouraging Berenger to spend his extra money and time on culture and expanding his mind rather than on drinking. Jean suspects that in four weeks Berenger will be a “cultured man”. There is a very clear goal set here and a very clear idea that a man of culture who uses his time wisely and applies himself to the goal of knowledge acquisition is far superior to a man that wastes his time with fun and drinking. Ionesco is not supporting this idea, but states it as a common argument made amongst the bourgeoisie.

- The idea of humanism, that is an examination of systems in which human interests are predominant.
  - This theme comes into play specifically in the conversation between Jean and Berenger as Jean is transforming into a rhino. At the beginning of the play Berenger hardly has the will to live, he doesn’t feel alive and has no belief in his humanity. As Berenger watches Jean transform, watches Jean lose his humanity, he begins to find humanity in himself. When Jean declares that humanism is dead he is in the last steps of his transformation and has almost lost all of his rationality and ability to think reasonably. He is becoming an animal. It is at this point that Berenger truly begins to discover what it means to be human and what he must fight for. He comes life as he watches Jean fade away.

September 15

I have been pondering design and have some preliminary ideas to bring to my meetings with Matthew, Christina and Han next week. I think that all props should be highly realistic. There is enough in the play that is stylized (dialogue, characterization, structure, rhinos) that I need to find points of grounding in reality. The props will be one of those points. They will be minimal and very simple.

I am going to set the play in Aix-en-Provence. This is a small village near Marseille. I have chosen this location because a lot of things about this area fit in nicely with the location described in the play. It has a warm climate, large churches, lots of fountains, fine old mansions, tree lined boulevards, wide streets and lots of public squares. It is known for its quiet charm and elegance. It is a university town with lots of museums, opera and dance. This location is not necessarily something the audience will ever be able to recognize but will be good for us to know as a team.
In terms of sound I’m thinking I’d like to use a microphone as Jean transforms into a rhino. Perhaps his voice begins to distort as he transforms. I think this will help to augment his transformation. When the rhinos first appear I want to hear their hooves, breathing, trumpeting and trampling

Ionesco is very prescriptive about the production elements in *Rhinoceros*. With the set he has paid particular attention to detail. The set design that Ionesco has laid out is for a proscenium stage configuration and we are working in the round. I have chosen to stage the play in the round because I want the audience to feel like they are inside the story. I want the play to be highly immersive and I want the audience to have the feeling that they are living in a world where everyone is turning into rhinos. I don’t want there to be distance between the audience and the stage. Theatre in the round will be the best way to achieve this effect.

I am going to pay close attention to what Ionesco prescribes, retain what is possible and alter what must be altered to work within our staging. I think it is vital to first understand what is described in the text and why it is that way before deciding to change it. Here is what Ionesco has laid out:

- The description of the set in Act 1 (We need lots of ways to come in and out of the circle)
  - A square in a small provincial town
  - Upstage there is a building with a ground floor and an upper floor
  - On the ground floor of the building there is the frontage of a grocery shop
  - The grocery shop is entered by means of two or three steps up to a glazed door
  - Over the frontage there is a sign that reads “Epicerie”
  - On the upper floor there are two windows where the grocers live
  - Above the building we see the bell tower of the a church in the distance
  - Between the grocery and the right of the stage a little street leads away
• On the right, at a slight angle, there is the frontage of a café
• Over the café there is another story with a window
• On the street outside the café, on the terrace, there are a number of tables and chairs stretched out to almost center stage
• There is a dusty tree close to the chairs
• The sky is blue and the light is harsh
• The walls are very white
• It’s midday summer
• The description of the set in Act 2 Sc. 1
• A state or privately run office – a publisher of legal texts
• Upstage center is a large double door over which is a sign “Head of Department” or “Chef de Service”
• Upstage left Daisy has a little table and typewriter
• Against the left wall, between a door leading out to the staircase and Daisy’s little table, there is another table with the attendance sheets on it where employees sign in
• Downstage is the door onto the staircase. We see its top steps, the last bit of handrail, a small landing
• Downstage is a table with two chairs. On this table there are proofs from the printers, inkpot and penholders. This is the table where Botard and Berenger work. Berenger will sit in the left hand chair and Botard will sit in the right one
• Near the right-hand wall, another table, bigger, rectangular, also covered with papers, proofs from the printers etc. Two chairs (more ‘important’) face each other at this table too. This table is for Dudard and Monsieur Beouf
• Dudard will sit at the chairs against the wall, facing the other employees
• Between the upstage door and the right-hand wall there is a window
• If there is an orchestra pit you can set up a window frame at the downstage edge facing the audience
• In the right-hand upstage corner is a coat-stand on which hang grey overalls or old jackets. The coat-stand could also be placed at the front of the stage, close to the right-hand wall
• Against the walls are rows of books and dusty files
• At the back left over the shelves there are signs reading “Jurisprudence” (legislative acts)
• On the right-hand wall, which may be slightly on an angle, signs say “Journal of legal proceedings, Tax Law”
• Over the head of Department’s door a clock says three minutes past nine
• On the table, surrounded by the three characters spread out on top of the proofs is a big open newspaper

• The description of the set in Act 2 Sc. 2
  • Jean’s apartment
  • The stage is divided in two
  • On the right is Jean’s bedroom
  • Upstage against the wall is Jean’s bed and he’s lying in it
  • Centre stage is an armchair or chair in which Berenger will come and sit
  • On the right, centrally, a door leads to Jean’s bathroom
  • On the left of the room a partition wall divides the stage
  • In the center of the partition wall a door leads to the landing
  • On the left of the stage we see the staircase, the last few steps leading to Jean’s apartment, the stair rail, the top of the landing
  • At the back on the landing level is the door to the neighbour’s apartment
• Lower down, at the back, is the top of a glazed door over which is written ‘Concierge’
• The description of the set in Act 3
  • Virtually the same arrangement as the previous scene
  • We’re in Berenger’s bedroom which is a lot like Jean’s
  • There are a few additional bits of furniture that distinguish Berenger’s apartment from Jean’s
  • There is a staircase on the left and a visible landing
  • There is a door at the end of the landing
  • There is no concierge’s lodge as there was at Jean’s
  • There is a divan upstage on which Berenger sits
  • There is an armchair, a little table with a phone, maybe an extra table and a chair
  • There is an open window upstage
  • There is a window frame downstage

At this early stage here are some costume ideas and questions I’m exploring. It will be important to figure out how to transform Berenger from a disheveled drunk at the beginning to someone with moral strength and conviction at the end. How can costume help with this transformation?

I’m thinking that the rhinos could have grey suits, neutral facepaint and horns. The grey outfits do not all need to be same but all need to be the same colour – kind of a greeny grey. The green is important as it represents military, the Iron Guard and Nazis. At the beginning all costumes will be very colourful, clashing, form fitting, bright and iconic with the characters clearly defined. By the end of the play all costumes are grey, rough and baggy. The aesthetic will go from Degenerate art to the art of the Third Reich.

Here are some of the big costume questions I’m currently mulling over:

• How does the art of the time influence how the rhinos look when they’re beautiful? How do we make them beautiful?
• What is the most effective way to demonstrate the strength of the rhinos?
• Do I want to set it in 1959 (when it was written) or 1936 (leading up to WWII)?
Casting
Here is a breakdown of the characters in the play:

ACT 1
Housewife
Grocer Woman
Jean
Berenger
Waitress
Grocer Man
Logician
Old Gentleman
Boss of Café
Daisy
Rhinoceroses

ACT 2 SCENE 1
Berenger
Daisy
Monsieur Papillon
Dudard
Botard
Madame Boeuf
A Fireman
Rhinoceroses

ACT 1 SCENE 2
Berenger
Jean
Monsieur Jean
Monsier Jean’s Wife
Rhinoceroses
ACT 3
Berenger
Dudard
Daisy
Rhinoceroses

Auditions went very well. Most of the casting fell right into place with it being clear right away that Georgia was perfect for Daisy and that Kenton was great for Botard. Joel has always been in my mind as the ideal Jean because I think he’ll be fantastic in the transformation scene but we will have to do a lot of work with him on diction and posture to help scene one work. Many of the second year women did a fantastic job in the auditions and I was able to give a number of them roles in act one. The biggest struggle was casting Berenger. I had had it in my mind for many months that Matt would be Berenger. I was so sure that I even told him this, a move that later got me in trouble. That's how sure I was. Unfortunately he really floundered in the auditions. He wasn’t able to find the need in Berenger and didn’t do a good job listening in scenes. I spoke to him about this between the first and second audition but he still brought a lot of apathy into the second audition and didn’t play the desperation in Berenger. Alen was fantastic as Berenger in the auditions. He brought a beautiful naivety and sense of searching to the role. After much debate and discussion we decided that Alen is strong and that it would be better for him to be in the highly challenging role of Dudard and that Matt, with some work, would be a great Berenger. I decided to trust my initial instincts about Matt.

Here is my final casting:
Berenger- Matt
Jean – Joel
Housewife - Sarah H
Grocer Wife – Naomi
Grocer Man - Nick
Waitress - Morgan
Logician - Al
Old Gentleman - Daniel
Boss of Cafe - Kenton
Daisy - Georgia
M Papillon - Luke
Sound Designer Meeting #1

Yesterday I had my first conversation with Han about the sound. We are on the same page about wanting to have the show be vertical rather than horizontal. We will use all of the levels of the Telus that are available to us. He had some great ideas about focusing on the bells at the beginning of the show. I like the idea of the bells almost being the heartbeat of the village before the rhino invasion begins. He also talked a lot about rumblings coming from under the stage moving up to the top of the pillars. This is intriguing to me as an idea because it sets the tone of anticipation right off the top. It’s as if the town is okay on the surface but underneath something is brewing. I think it will add a really nice driving force and will leave the audience feeling uneasy, it will provide a sense of impending change. Personally I know this feeling well. Before a big change comes in my life I always feel anxious, uneasy and unnerved as if my footing isn’t solid. Then a change comes and I understand why I felt that way, I was prepared for a shift. The deep rumbling from under their feet to over their heads will give the audience that same feeling – they’ll feel uneasy and not know why but then the change will hit and it will become clear. Han wants to use large subwoofers to create this effect. It will create a sound and will hopefully shake the towers.

Han also made the suggestion that we should perhaps put tap shoes or heavy soled shoes on the rhinos so that as they move their footsteps will be heard loudly. This will be a really effective way to accentuate the feeling of a group of rhino. You will literally be able to hear, see and feel them crash around in a bunch.

I was telling Han about Christopher Riley; a piano player who has amazing songs that begin melodious and end up discordant and haunting. This music really jumped out at me and I feel it could be very appropriate for the show. In our discussion Han said that he felt the discord comes at the beginning of the play and that by the end order has been restored and the music would be
melodious. I have never thought of the play that way. I see the show as society falling apart, losing order and becoming chaos. It was extremely fascinating to me that he saw it the other way around and I’m going to explore this idea further.

**September 16**

I watched this great movie called "The Architecture of Doom" all about how Hitler and the Nazis used art as a way to control their people. They basically hated modern art calling it "Degenerate art". They gathered it all up and showed it in exhibits to demonstrate to people what they needed to avoid and then they burned the pieces.

I want to make all of the costumes at the top of the show in the style of modern art from the 1930s. It's a lot of colours, bold shapes, deformities, big hats - really fun stuff that demonstrates individuality. Then when they become rhinos they become the art that the Nazis admired, the art of the Third Reich.

This helps us to answer the question of what is beautiful about the rhinos - beauty is in the eye of the beholder and to the Nazis cleanliness, structure and sameness were the benchmarks of beauty. Nazis believed that purity and sacrifice could lead to the creation of a more beautiful world. They understood the importance of art because the leaders of the Third Reich were artists themselves (painters, poets, sculptors). Hitler was a failed painter who wanted to be an architect and it was actually while watching an opera that the ideas for the Nazi take over started to form in his mind. Hitler had three fixations

- Lintz
- Antiquity
- Wagner “Whoever would know Nazism would first know Wagner” (*Architecture of Doom*) said Hitler

The scenic possibilities of opera intrigued Hitler and in Wagner he saw his idol. He recognized a creative artist and politician in one person, he identified with the notions of art as the basis of a new civilization and he also believed, as Wagner did, that life and art could herald the advent of a new state.

Propaganda became Hitler’s artistic outlet. Hitler created Nazi props (costumes, flags) in sketches and functioned as the “set designer, director and leading actor” (Wishman, “Architecture of
Doom”). He organized rallies that represented the “Myth of the body of the German folk. This myth, the people the masses seen as one body, would become a basic element in the Nazi vision of racial purification” (Wishman, “Architecture of Doom”). By 1933 Hitler had assumed complete control of Germany. One of his first moves once in power was to purge all modern art by showing it publically and then burning it. He did this as a warning. These exhibitions were called Degenerate Art exhibitions and they washed over Germany. Cultural degeneration was seen as a genuine threat – Jewish people were felt to be the instigators. Jews, race mixing and degeneration were the enemy.

Hitler dreamed of founding a museum in Lintz and began a collection of what he believed to be the ideal art works. Originally there were 74 works in the collection and in 1937 the House of German art was unveiled.

The Nazis created a movement around cleaning up work places and homes as they believed that cleanliness would provide a new lease on life, the beauty of labour, “clean workers and tidy workshops” (Wishman, “Architecture of Doom”) was the slogan. Beauty of labour meant liberation of the workers through cleanliness. The belief was that if one shows the worker how to wash properly, thereby raising him to a bourgeois level he will realize that he has nothing to fight for. The workers aesthetic awakening would free him from his class and, at the same time, free society as a whole from the abrasive conflicts caused by class struggle. Society would be cleansed of all ugliness and all people would be happy and healthy and striving for a common goal.

This idea reminds me a lot of the conversation between Jean and Berenger in act 1. Jean explains to Berenger that if he cleans up, looks better and pays more attention to culture he will be purged of his alcoholism and unhappy thoughts. These suggestions would not get to the root of his problems but instead mask the unhappiness underneath.

**September 29 - Costume Ideas**

Christina and I have been exchanging a lot of emails with photos we like. We’ve decided to set the show in 1936 and have moved forward quite a bit with our concept about the rhinos this week. I found a video from a cabaret with a bunch of people doing a dance where they were bent at the waist and wearing masks on the top of their heads. This made it look like they were animals with four legs and a face in front, just like a rhino. They were also wearing rough textured neutral masks. I would like to try to pursue this as an option. It would mean that as people transform
they would change their physicality quite a bit by bending at the waist and putting down their arms as hoofs in the front. Then by the end of the transformation their real face would be facing down to the floor and only their neutral mask would be visible. It’s a nice representation of their loss of self for sameness. They literally lose their faces.

Another idea Christina has brought forward is that the rhinos could wear armour. Rhinoceroses have this amazing folded skin that is very textured, rough and structural. She sent me some photos today of armour made out of clay. This is perfect because of the rough, gritty texture. We could perhaps have rhinos in a grey/green suit with accents of clay armour on their arms, shoulders, legs and face. This might also give us a way to do the horn – make it out of clay and have the whole mask look like armour.

### History of the production

Ionesco wrote *Rhinoceros* in 1959. It is said to be his first attempt at using real psychology in one of his plays. It was first delivered on BBC radio in August of 1959 and was first staged in Dusseldorf in October 1959 (directed by Karl-Heinz Stroux with Karl-Maria Schley as Berenger). It premiered in Paris in 1960. The set designer was Jacques Noel and each scene contained scenery that incorporated signs indicating location. This production was performed at the Odeon under the direction of Jean-Louis Barrault, who also played Berenger.

The English adaptation by David Prouse premiered in London at the Royal Court in 1960. In this production Orson Welles directed and Laurence Olivier played Berenger. The American premier came in 1961 when *Rhinoceros* opened on Broadway with Eli Wallach as Berenger and Zero Mostel, famously, playing Jean. This production was directed by Joseph Anthony and produced by Leo Kerz.

Since its premiere in America *Rhinoceros* has had more productions in the US than anywhere else in the world. *Rhinoceros* has been performed all over the world with its first production in Romania in 1964 in Bucharest at the Teatrul de Comedie under the direction of Lucian Giurculescu. There was a short animated film version of *Rhinoceros* produced in 1964 by Jan Lenica. I’ve watched it and it’s an odd little film that seems to be very loosely based on *Rhinoceros*, with the plot and characters barely recognizable. The film version of *Rhinoceros* was made in 1974 and was produced by Tom O’Horgan starring Zero Mostel as Jean and Gene Wilder.
as Berenger. The film is an example of a situation where the farce and comedy was played up off the top therefore there is no dramatic pay off at the end.

**September 29 – Conversation with Cathy about movement**

The big journey in *Rhinoceros* for the majority of the characters is from individual to collective. There is a loss of self for sameness. I have an idea that at the beginning of the play they all have different Suzuki walks. I know from doing Suzuki in the Telus during the Voice Intensive that the sound of those walks in the space is awesome. It will create the impression of uniqueness and differentiation. Then as they become rhinos they will all start doing Suzuki walk one - the slow drag and stomp walk. By the end of the show the Telus will be filled with that haunting march on all levels of the theatre. I think it will be very powerful and will make the audience feel like they are trapped in a world of rhinos.

**October 2**

I’ve been reading *The Theatre of the Absurd* by Martin Esslin and have made some awesome discoveries. I’ve just read this passage:

“Once the audience has realized what the author is driving at, the play should end. But it is not the conceptual, formulated *moral* that Ionesco tries to communicate, it is his experience, *what it feels like* to be in the situations concerned.”

And then this:

“To wake up the audience, to deepen their awareness of the human condition, to make them experience what Berenger experiences is the real purpose of Ionesco’s play.”

I want to create a production that puts the audience at the center of the action and that puts them inside the story. They need to feel the vibrations of the rhinos, sense their proliferation 360 degrees around them and feel the fear that Berenger does. I have been asking myself how the audience will stay engaged through out the duration of the play since it is very long and the moral becomes clear fairly early on. They will stay engaged because they will be empathetic with the everyman protagonist and they will feel the destruction of his world along with him.

**October 11**

One of the main purposes of the Nuremberg rallies was for the people who attended to be reborn as a new people. Being reborn speaks to a biological change occurring at a cellular level. People
who attended the rallies wanted to change, to be better, to be cleaner, to be closer to Hitler. Berenger speaks of the people who turn into rhinos as having undergone a biological change harkening back to the change wished for by the rally attendees.

The rallies were very highly organized. Photos show neat, tidy rows of people, thousands upon thousands of people. They were not scattered about but set in order. The rallies had an agenda and targeted objectives. Order can be seen as beautiful. It is clean and neat. The rhinos, although ugly creatures in real life, become extremely beautiful by the end of the play. A part of this beauty comes from their organization and unity as a group. There will be 25 of them and they can be organized in tidy rows and configurations.

**October 28**

I had a realization that Berenger is the only character in the play consistently asking questions and his questions are never rhetorical. It’s very important that every time he has a question mark he use it as a genuine question. Even when he has a long bit of dialogue that sounds like a confident statement at the end, if he is asking a question, it needs to be played genuinely. He is very unsure. He is searching for truth and meaning and can only find it in other people. He can’t find strength in himself and is constantly begging others for it. Listening is vital to Berenger. He is searching and when you search you listen really well.

Something that became very apparent in auditions is how important it is to find love and caring in the play. Without this it could easily become one note and would be difficult for the audience to engage with it and connect with Berenger. Daisy and Berenger need to have a real love and fondness between them. If it’s real then Daisy’s transformation at the end is tragic. Berenger has lost his one true love and his last chance at a normal life. Jean and Berenger have a long history and, although Jean is constantly barking at Berenger and criticizing him, it comes from a place of love and compassion for his friend. Berenger needs answers and Jean is more than willing to offer them. Berenger states that he “just can’t get over” Jean’s transformation and the audience needs to have seen their love in order for this to be potent. There is also a real fondness between Dudard and Berenger. They are work buddies and Dudard needs to show care for Berenger. Dudard is a smart man and is happy to use this knowledge to the benefit of his lost and frightened friend.
October 30
On page 145 Berenger blames himself for Daisy’s transformation. He says that he was all she had and that he let her down. He blames it on a “failure to communicate”. I think this is the spark that leads to all transformations in the play. This realization came based on my Backwards and Forwards action analysis and the identification of the triggers and heaps. When people have a situation with a friend where there is a failure to communicate that leads to them being let down or hurt they transform into a rhino. Jean and Berenger have a fight about the rhinos in act one and then Jean transforms. M Papillon makes a sexual advance on Daisy, she rejects him and then he transforms. Botard is proven wrong in his beliefs about the rhinos by his coworkers and the appearance of Mr. Boeuf as a rhino and he transforms. Dudard realizes that Daisy, the woman he loves, is in a relationship with Berenger and then he transforms. When characters recognize rhinos as an option they are quick to transform once they are let down by a friend or hurt. Someone who they trust or something that they know for sure changes or surprises them and they change. They abandon the human race for the other side, a side where they can find safety and family. Everyone but Berenger sees a life with the rhinos as a utopia. They give into the natural world and view their life as more brutal and ugly than what they would have as a rhino.

Rhinoceroses
Apparently a group of rhinos is called a crash. That is so visceral, I just love it. What an amazing description of their movement and impact as a group.

Right now I am struggling with the question of how I make people look like rhinos. It’s still very important that they have horns as horns are spoken of a great deal in the show but I need to find a way to do this that is simple and effective.

A big part of deciding how the rhinos will look is determining what they represent. There is much that has been written on this and I have identified a few quotations I feel speak to what I believe. Martin Esslin said:

As usual, I went back to my personal obsessions. I remembered that in the course of my life I have been very much struck by what one might call the current of opinion, by its rapid evolution, its power of contagion, which is that of a real epidemic. People allow themselves suddenly to be invaded by a new religion, a doctrine, a fanaticism. . . . At such moments we witness a veritable mental mutation. I don’t know if you have noticed it, but when people no longer share your opinions, when you can no longer make yourself understood by them, one
has the impression of being confronted with monsters—rhinos, for example. They have that mixture of candor and ferocity. They would kill you with the best of consciences. And history has shown us during the last quarter of a century that people thus transformed not only resemble rhinos, but really become rhinoceroses. (Esslin 181-82; Sarrute 1960 interview)

Ionesco first wrote *Rhinoceros* as a short story, published in 1957 in a volume called *The Colonel’s Daughter*. He has refused to identify the rhinos as fascist or communist, saying vaguely that they represent authority in all its horrific glory. Ionesco wrote in his diary when he was in Romania and watching Fascism rise up around him “The Police are rhinoceroses. The Magistrates are rhinoceroses. You are the only man among the rhinoceroses. The rhinoceroses ask themselves how the world can have been run by men. You ask yourself: is it true the world once was run by men?”

Ionesco read the diaries of Denis de Rougemont who was living in Nuremberg in 1936 and wrote of attending a Nazi rally attended by Hitler “I am alone and they are all together.” He used the rhinos as a symbol of man’s inherent savage nature but this is revealed very slowly throughout the play. They represent fascist tyranny and the absurdity of a universe that could produce such metamorphosis.

The Nuremberg rallies were annual rallies of the Nazi Party in Germany held from 1923-1938. They were large Nazi propaganda events, especially after Hitler’s rise to power in 1933. After 1927 these rallies took place exclusively in Nuremberg. They were held in Nuremberg because it was situated in the center of the German Reich and the Nuremberg police were sympathetic. The number of people attending the rallies finally reached over half a million from all sections of the party, the army and the state. The primary aspect of the rallies was to strengthen the personality cult of Hitler, portraying him as Germany’s savior, chosen by providence. The gathering masses listened to Hitler’s speeches, swore loyalty and marched before him. The rallies served to demonstrate the might of the German people. The visitors of the rallies, by their own free will, were subordinate to the discipline and order in which they should be reborn as a new people.

Wellwarth says that *Rhinoceros* is “an obvious commentary on the disintegration of reason and morality under a totalitarian state, with special reference to Nazi Germany” (Wellwarth, 8). He believes it to be an allegory for Nazi Germany going on to say: “The discordant roaring of the rhinoceroses turns into a barbarically rhythmic marching song; their undisciplined rampaging turns into the measured tramp of the goose-step” (Wellwarth, 8). This is a beautiful image that
has stuck with me, the idea of the measured tramp of the goose step. I will find a way to bring this image to life in my production.

To me the essential qualities of the rhinos are strength, beauty, blindness, single mindedness, collective mindset, sameness, unity and power. In order to achieve these elements aesthetically I will have them masked with horned masks to hide their individual faces and demonstrate the horns. I will have them all wearing the same colour but in outfits that are reflective of who they were before they transformed. Physically I will have them walk in a variation on Suzuki walk 1 in time with each other because of unity this creates and the strength of the slide and stomp of the walk. They will be rigid and unchanging. They will move as one strong unit.

**Syllogism**

The Logician talks a lot about syllogisms in act one. This is not a word I’m not familiar with so I looked it up.

Definition of Syllogism:

*Logic*. An argument the conclusion of which is supported by two premises, of which one (major premise) contains the term (major term) that is the predicate of the conclusion, and the other (minor premise) contains the term (minor term) that is the subject of the conclusion; common to both premises is a term (middle term) that is excluded from the conclusion.

The Logician explains it this way “a syllogism consists of a main proposition, a secondary proposition and a conclusion”.

**Shadow and silhouette**

I’m going to use shadow and silhouette a lot in this show. Tom and I were discussing today how shadows and gobos could be used to create doors and windows. The set is an island without doors, walls or windows. This provides us with many opportunities but also many challenges. Using shadows will allow us to define space and suggest set pieces. Shadows will also be useful in making the rhinos present on stage. When the rhinos first appear in act one I want it to look like there is an eclipse across the stage, as if a large figure moves across the sun blocking out the light. This will happen twice in the first act both times the rhinos run by. I would also like to have large shadows of rhinos going across the stage as the number of rhinoceroses increases. Matthew and I will explore this idea further to see what can be done with shadow and silhouette.
November 15
I have a fairly long rehearsal process, which is great because with the scale of this production I will need every minute of it. Here is my plan for how to use rehearsal time:

• On the first day we will introduce ourselves, do design presentations, I will say a few things and then we will read the play
• For the first three weeks of rehearsal we will not call the ensemble and we will not integrate rhinos. I want to start by mapping out the primary action and then flesh it out later with the rest of the cast
• We will spend a few days at the table, allotting 10 minutes per page. We will go through the script breaking it into units, naming each unit and then determining an objective for each unit
• The second pass through the script will be on our feet loosely blocking the play, again allotting 10 minutes per page. I will decide where the characters enter and exit but beyond that I will allow the actors to stumble their way through the scene finding where they need to be based on their objectives and relationships. I think this will lead to highly organic and motivated blocking
• After the play is blocked we will do our first stumble through. I won’t give notes but will instead clock for myself where the challenging bits are in the show and focus on working those in the next pass through
• The next pass through will be to firm up blocking, work challenging bits and clarify character and journey. For this pass through we will integrate the ensemble and the rhinos. We will again allot 10 minutes per page
• At this point we will primarily focus on runs and working bits. I will aim to get in three more runs before tech. It will be important to do lots of runs in order for the cast to find the flow of the play and for Matt to find the endurance to stay in it for the duration of the play. He’s never before had a role this large and I imagine it will be challenging for him to find the energy to play the whole show. He’ll need lots of runs to find this

November 19
Today I had a good meeting with Tom, Jacqueline and Christina. Jacqueline asked me to speak about what my top priorities are with this project in terms of costuming. She said that down the
line this will help us to make the tough choices if any need to be made. This was a good exercise for me and here’s what I came up with:

1. The transition from degenerate art to the art of the third Reich. This is in terms of colour, cut and overall aesthetic feel.
2. The change from individuality to everyone being the same. This is indicated with colour and mask.
3. The unity of the rhinos and making sure their faces are hidden.
4. Demonstrating the strength of the rhinos.

Jacqueline also had the fantastic suggestion of keeping all of the characters in the same costumes until they transform into rhinos. Even though we see Berenger, Daisy and Dudard over the course of the few days they never change their clothes. I like this idea a lot. It takes the costumes out of reality and into a more stylized world. They become almost like cartoons or archetypes. It also makes their transformation into rhinos even more obvious. I love the image of Daisy wearing the same gorgeous yellow dress every time we see her until she transforms.

**November 25, 2012**

One of the big ideas Matthew and I are working with is having the set be highly transformative. No prop or set piece comes off or on stage for the entire play. Everything begins on stage and is transformed. There are doors in the floor that open to reveal other rooms. The three tables can be moved to create the different locations and props are used in various scenes. This concept has taken a lot of time to map out but I think it will be stunning and will lead to an easy flow.

Today Matthew and I talked through the whole play on the set using a model. It took about two hours. We blocked every entrance and exit and talked through any potential snags we might encounter on the set. I’ve never before had the opportunity to talk through a whole play on the set with a designer in this way. It was incredibly useful in ensuring that we’re both on the same page going into rehearsals. I was sure to assert that these decisions were preliminary and that changes may occur once I start blocking with the actors. He was open to this as long as I kept him in the loop.
One of the hurdles we encountered was who would do the set changes from scene to scene and act to act. We determined that from act 1 to 2 the Grocer Man, Grocer wife, Waitress and Boss will do the set change. During the intermission the crew will change the set and from act 3 from scene 1 to 2 the rhinos will facilitate the set change. It is quite minimal from scene to scene with the primary difference being the location of the tables and their height. It looks at this point like set changes will be able to happen quickly and efficiently.

Because Matthew is doing the set and the lights he’s come up with lots of great ways to define the space using light and gobos. This is really useful as it allows us to have a more minimal set and define space with lights instead.

He’s made nice use of the second levels in the first act, using them as the second floors of the café and shop. This opens up lots of opportunities for me in terms of making this a vertical, rather than horizontal play.

December 4, 2012

Today is the first day of rehearsals. It feels like it’s been a long time coming! I want to talk a little bit off the top to get things rolling and to get everyone on the same page but I want to be sure not to talk too much as not to hijack the day. Here is what I will talk about:

- I’m going to say just a few things before we get started, but not too many because this is OUR production, not MY production.
- That is really important to me, that you bring your creative voice, your opinions and yourself to this process. I am very open to suggestions and ideas and am willing to try anything once. I like to work collaboratively and am thrilled to hear any ideas.
- I want you to feel safe to make mistakes in this process. This is a big show and it demands a lot from all of us. The only way we can live up to this script is by taking big risks and when you take big risks you might fail. I’m good with that. Go for it. You should make many
mistakes a day and if you don’t you’re not really giving it.

• Now a bit about my concept. I’m setting this show in 1936. Ionesco was inspired to write Rhinoceros after reading the diaries of Denis de Rougemont, a man who was living in Nuremberg during 1936. He wrote of his experience attending a Nazi rally attended by Hitler. His conclusion from this rally was “I am alone and they are all together.” This play can serve as a metaphor for any period in time when conformity takes over but for us it is about the rise of the Nazis.

• We are setting the show in a small French town 25km outside of Marseilles called Aix-en-Provence. No one watching the show will ever know this but if you want a location in mind look into Aix-en-Provence.

• Aesthetically this production will begin by being styled after degenerate art. This was the term the Nazi’s used to describe all modern art in the 1930s. It included styles such as cubism, Dadaism and surrealism. Lots of bold shapes and bright colours, atonal music and jazz-influenced sounds. When the Nazis rose to power they gathered up all of this art and displayed it so that everyone could know and see for themselves what evil art it was. As the rhinos take over the arts of the Third Reich will begin to be the predominant aesthetic. This is characterized by a style of Romantic realism based on classical models.

• I want to say one final thing and it is a quote from Ionesco about this play: “I have read the American critics on the play and noticed that everyone agreed the play was funny. Well, it isn’t. Although it is a farce, it is above all a tragedy.” This is important to me. Although the play may be funny I don’t want us to
play it for laughs, I want us to play it for truth. In this way the story will truly be able to shine through.

December 5
A few months ago I heard a great episode of Tapestry on CBC radio that was about moral certainty. This jumped out at me because so much of what they were saying about the dangers of moral certainty is present in *Rhinoceros*. I have listened to it again a few times since then and the more I listen to it the more I can identify the traits and dangers discussed in the play. Moral certainty has the potential to be very dangerous. Nietzsche believed there was no source of absolute morality and challenged people to free themselves from conventional morality. In *Rhinoceros* Berenger is the only character truly free from absolute morality, he is the only character who is constantly tearing down his beliefs, questioning them and reevaluating.

In the episode they discussed it being vital to become aware of our conditioning and why we believe what we believe. We must question and understand what we believe to be true. We cling to moral certainties and are tempted to follow the herd mentality because being in a place of not knowing makes us insecure. This leads us to stick to our ideologies and moral certainties. The British philosopher Bertrand Russell observed, “Most of the greatest evil that man has inflicted upon man comes through people feeling quite certain about something which, in fact, was false.” This is most evident in the language used by Jean and the Logician in the first act and then Botard in act two. Most of what these men say in untrue but the more they are challenged the more they cling to their incorrect beliefs.

In the episode of Tapestry they provide the anecdote of liberal students being asked why racism is wrong. For the most part they were appalled at even being asked. The problem with this is that if they are not able to explain and defend their moral certainty about racism being wrong then they are very susceptible to changing their mind and flipping sides. We need to be able to explain why we believe what we do in order for it to be lasting and true. We need to be able to challenge our own beliefs and we need to strive to see both sides and if we don’t we have the potential to cause a lot of harm in the name of right versus wrong. I have asked all of the actors to listen to the episode of Tapestry and think for themselves how this applies to their character. I think everyone will be able to find a relationship to this idea.
Why do they transform?
Why does the rest of the town transform and Berenger does not? Esslin explains it this way: “they admire brute force and the simplicity that springs from the suppression of over-tender humanistic feelings” (Esslin). In response to the question of why Berenger doesn’t transform Ionesco has said “it is probably impossible to give any explanation”. I wonder if in fact Ionesco didn’t want to give an explanation because he wanted to leave it up to the audience to decide why he doesn’t transform. Also, because Berenger is based on Ionesco maybe it was difficult for him to pin point exactly what in himself keeps him from transforming. Either way, I believe that it is possible to provide some reasons for why Berenger doesn’t transform and through our exploration of the script we will discover these reasons.

December 17
Today in rehearsal we blocked act 3. Matt and Georgia played the five pages leading up to Daisy’s exit straight through without stopping and they found some amazing stuff. The dramatic arc was clear, they listened earnestly to each other and responded honestly and also discovered some beautiful, natural blocking. We’ve generally been working through the blocking a half page at a time but their work was so wonderful that I let them go for a while. It was remarkable to me that the first time getting this section on it’s feet that they were able to make that much of it.

When we got to the last page of the script Matt and I had a conversation about what it means when Berenger “snaps out of it” and decides to stand up to the rhinos and boldly asserts himself as the last human. Matt mentioned that he’s been reading Hamlet and brought up the similarity between this moment in the play and this passage in Hamlet:

Not a whit, we defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, ‘tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come- the readiness is all. Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows what is’t to leave betimes, let be.

In this moment Berenger realizes that there is no way to control what will be, what the future will bring. He finds in himself strength in his belief in humanity and decides that no matter what may come he has humanity to hold onto; even if it is only his own.
All of the actors did really fantastic work today. It was such a joy as a director to watch them start to feel comfortable in the skin of their characters and make choices from a place of knowing those people. It’s a great sign that we’re on the right track.

December 18

Georgia is doing an amazing job in the role of Daisy. She has taken a character that on the page is fairly one-dimensional and discovered an intriguing woman with very clear objectives. Right now she is struggling a bit to find her journey leading up to her transformation. Honestly I feel that a large part of that is her being too hard on herself because all of the right pieces are there; she just needs to give them time to settle into place. She is going to meet one on one with Tom to talk through this portion of the script.

I feel that the seed has already been planted for Daisy’s transformation when she walks into Berenger’s house. She is terrified of the rhinos and trying hard to cover up the number of transformations for Berenger’s sake believing that if they can create a happy home together that they can be saved from transforming. A big part of her wanting to hide out and create a fairy tale with Berenger is that she’s worried that she won’t be strong enough to hold out because she is already slightly intrigued by the growing rhino family. Even family members of hers have transformed so she thinks that maybe transforming is not so bad.

As her relationship with Berenger starts to disintegrate and the fear overtakes her Daisy gets closer to changing. When the phone rings and it’s the rhinos she realizes that there’s no escape and that they’ll get in any way they can. She is then further convinced after Berenger slaps her and this leads her to truly see the beauty in the rhinos for the first time. Berenger calling Daisy stupid is the final straw for her and she runs away knowing that a life as a rhino will be superior to a pretend fairy tale life with Berenger.

I feel that Georgia will become clear with all of this information and as we start doing more runs it will really start coming together for her. The trick is for Daisy to stay in the world of artifice and pretend as long as she can before she lets the fear and doubt take hold. In this way a clear journey will emerge.
December 20

I looked back at *Play Directing: Analysis, Communication and Style* by Francis Hodge to see what he had to say about blocking in the round. Since we have already loosely blocked the entire play, with the exception of the integration of the ensemble, I wanted to see if he had any additional gems of wisdom that could help clean up the work we’ve done. His statement that “the intimacy of the arena stage is its prime convention” (Hodge, 206) jumped out at me as this is what I liked about the idea of using arena staging. The audience will feel so close to the rhinos that they will feel the sense of fear and uncertainty felt by the characters in the show.

Hodge suggests that “looking through the scenery” (Hodge, 207) can provide the audience with a unique view into the action and this is a convention we use often in our blocking. For the entirety of the play there are suggested windows on stage left and stage right of the main raised playing space and many audience members will have to look through these windows to see the action on the platform. This will provide them with the sense of being peeping Toms, peeking into someone’s home.

In reference to composition and blocking Hodge states that it is best to follow a “cat and mouse game of composition” (Hodge, 208) where the actors are often in motion with actors pursuing each other as they pursue objectives. This will be something I will be looking to add more as we continue to work through cleaning up blocking. This idea will help to activate and animate portions of the play that are seated or stagnant for long periods of time. Hodge states very eloquently something I have felt for a while about blocking: “If the actors understand their intense relationships to one another, good blocking cannot help but materialize” (Hodge, 209). I have tried to block *Rhinoceros* ‘organically’ as much as possible with the actors finding their way through the scene first rather than me just coming in and telling them how to move. It has been my experience that when the actors understand their objectives and obstacles that they easily find their way through the blocking of a scene without me needing to micro manage their movements. In this manner the movement throughout the play is motivated and the actors only move when it helps them get what they want. After the actors have had a chance to go in and stumble through the blocking themselves I will also work through it with them beat by beat to clean up and solidify what they found but all of this is influenced and driven by their initial impulses dictated by their “intense relationships” (Hodge, 209).
Prologue & Suzuki walks
We blocked the prologue this week. I was originally calling it an intro but have decided that it is almost a full prologue since in a way it sums up the entire action of the play in one and a half minutes. I wanted a prologue as I felt it would help to set the tone for the rest of the play. In the first one and a half minutes the audience is plunged into the world of the play forcing them to sit up and pay attention. I think it’s great to start a show with a big kick right off the top and the prologue provides this.

The evolution of the prologue began as an improvisation. After the completion of table work the first thing we blocked was the prologue. The characters where asked to improvise their arrival, interactions and exit from the city square. We played this same scenario through several times until it began solidifying into something that was interesting and dynamic. Once this was done we timed out the entrances and exits to avoid traffic jams, as traffic jams occur very easily in the moat and around the stairs. Once this was done we established a tableaux to come right at the end of the prologue. We then added props and worked out the prologue again with this new level of integration.

The cast did some work on Suzuki walks with Cathy which allowed them all to learn Suzuki walk number one, which is the walk for the rhinos, but also several different walks with the intention of having each character walk very uniquely. After the work with Cathy the cast was given ten minutes to play with the walks in the context of their character to find a way to work one of the Suzuki walks into the movement of their character. Following these ten minutes we made a catwalk and every actor walked down the catwalk to demonstrate their new walk. It was pretty amazing what they were able to do and every character became far richer and more interesting with the addition of a more stylized character walk. We then took these walks and applied them to the prologue.

Han has decided to use only music by Eric Satie throughout the show. I love this choice and feel that the songs he’s chosen really help support the dramatic action. Over the holiday break, after having seen the prologue, Han found and edited a song called Cinéma. I then blocked out a few elements of dance or choreographed movement to add into the prologue. The choreography consists of three dance moves that are done a few times throughout the minute and a half prologue. The first few times the movement moves through the group, with every person doing it once and then finally everyone doing it together. This represents the way rhinoceritis moves
through the town. One at a time each person is affected and by the end they are one unit moving together. When they do the choreographed movements they completely drop character and behave, both in their face and body, as if they have been possessed, as if something has taken over their being and forced them to move in this way. As soon as the movement is over they immediately return to their character and go about their business. The effect is quite powerful and once the brightly coloured costumes are added it’s going to be a striking prologue.

January 4

My director’s notes for the program are due today. Here they are:

When I first read *Rhinoceros* I knew I had to bring it to life. The bold metaphors laid out so elegantly by Ionesco were endlessly intriguing and I knew that this was a play I could spend a long time digging into.

Eugene Ionesco was born in Romania in 1909 and spent the critical years of young adulthood there at a time when the country’s aggressive racism and widespread anti-semitism led to the formation and growth of the radical nationalist political party of the Iron Guard. He watched friends, family and seemingly rational people all around him become Iron Guard sympathizers. Ionesco himself could not and would not conform. Years later Ionesco read the journals of Dennis de Rougemont in which he spoke of his experience at a Nuremberg rally in 1936. Rougemont described the "delirium which electrified him" as he was lured into the rally attended by Hitler. His conclusion: "I am alone and they are all together." This sentiment struck a cord in Ionesco due to his early experiences in Romania and encouraged him to write a play that epitomized this idea.

It has been said that the theatre of the absurd speaks not only to us but also from us and for us. Ionesco did not set out to shove a message down his audience’s throat, going so far as to say “I believe that the writer shouldn’t deliver messages because he isn’t a postman”. Rather than delivering a message Ionesco reflects back to us what he experienced in his life and asks us to use these observations, expressed through unflinching metaphors, as a tool to examine our own choices and to ask questions about how we use our own lives. In *Rhinoceros* I see my life and decisions reflected back at me and I am made even more curious about the choices I make and have made in my relationships. I hope this play inspires a sense of curiosity about human nature in you, as it has in me.
I want to express my deep gratitude to the cast, design team and crew who from day one rose to the challenge of this enormous piece, said yes to the vision and gave it their all. Thank you.

January 6
Today we integrated the ensemble and the rhinos into the whole play. This was a long day. The rhinos enter and exit over ten times in act three and there are twenty of them so it took many hours to work through. I had a basic map of who I wanted to be on stage when so it ran fairly smoothly but as always happens things are different on paper than they are in practice so a lot changed as we worked through. The cast was really wonderful, very patient and hard working all the way through. At one point they got restless and chatty which made it difficult for me to grab their attention when we were ready to move forward. I just asked them to restrain from talking while they waited and after that the talking stopped completely. They are a very disciplined bunch and I feel grateful to have such a fantastic cast.

I was also happy with myself for staying so patient throughout the day. I was majorly multi-tasking, working out a lot of complex blocking while at the same time fielding questions from all angles. A few years ago I would have become overwhelmed and frustrated in a situation like this but I gave myself permission to not always know the answer to everything that came my way and this really helped me stay calm. If an actor asked about something and I wasn’t sure the answer I would either ask them what they thought or told them we would look at that this the next time through. There is a great freedom that comes in allowing oneself to not always have the answer right away.

Encountering Costume problems
Today I was told that there is not the time or money to fully pull off the original costume concept. I was asked to make some tough decisions around what needed to go. We have decided to cut the armor for the rhinos and to just go with grey clothing and masks. The masks have turned out incredibly well so I’m okay with this change. I am working on being malleable and accommodating with the production team whenever possible as long as it doesn’t compromise the ultimate vision. They seemed surprised that I took this so well but it seems to me that we’re all working towards the same goal and it’s preferable to be positive and constructive rather than angry if it’s not something that can be changed and isn’t anyone’s fault. It’s a big show with a
small budget and limited resources so at a certain point concessions have to be made. I believe I behaved the way a professional would and that’s important to me because I am striving to be one.

The Stage Management Team

Jayda has done an amazing job as the stage manager for this production. It is a giant show with a massive cast and some very complex technical elements. The ASM team has not been as great and Jayda has had to take on a lot of their tasks as well. She’s been endlessly patient but I know she’s doing too much because they can’t always be trusted. The ASMs are particularly struggling with being on book in runs. The play moves very quickly and so I think they have a hard time keeping up and jumping in on cue when necessary. They are often too slow or too quiet or unclear and Jayda ends up taking over. I hope that when we get into the venue and more production elements are integrated that they will be able to step up to the plate.

Jayda and I have worked very well together so far and I think a large part of this is that we have a similar energy. I do things very quickly, make split second decisions and often change my mind. She has been entirely able to keep up with this and seems to really work well in a fast paced environment. I feel very safe having her on my side and it allows me to focus solely on directing knowing that everything off stage will be competently taken care of.

January 7

The rhinoceros sounds are difficult for humans to do and end up, so far, being fairly ineffective. Brad Gibson came in and did a session with the group on how to make rhino noises. A great deal of the session was about how to properly warm up their voices in order to be sure to safely make the sounds. Once they started making sounds it was clear how challenging the sounds are for a human voice to make. It involves the rattling of the soft pallet which is hard to do and very difficult to sustain. They learned three kinds of rhino sounds, a baby rhino, an adult rhino and a trumpet. We are going to have to use a great deal of recorded sound to support the rhino sounds made by the actors. It may be that we only use recorded sound if the sound made by the humans doesn’t become more effective.

January 10

After a run Tom mentioned that now that he’s seeing the whole show he thinks that argument is the emphatic element. I still think the emphatic element is theme but this is a great point as it demonstrates to me that the arguments in the play – between Berenger and Jean, between
Berenger and Dudard, between Berenger and Daisy and all of the debates that occur throughout act 1 and act 2. I need to really jump off the page and must be very clear. In order for this to occur the actors need to be a lot clearer about their objective on every line, their obstacle to getting this objective and what their stress words are. This isn’t something I can spoon feed them. It’s something they’ll need to work out on their own.

January 14
We moved into the theatre today. It is looking amazing. I was shocked by how small the space seems when it’s fully in the round. It is incredibly intimate. On the second level you feel like you’re on the stage, like you’re in Berenger’s bedroom. This is such a wonderful surprise. Some of the most memorable theatre experiences I’ve had were at the Belfry Theatre in Victoria sitting on the balcony. The balcony on house right hangs almost over the stage so that from those seats you feel completely a part of the action. A similar feeling occurs from the second level of the towers in the Telus when it is fully in the round.

The other thing seeing the theatre has made me realize is that the play is far too loud at this point. I had been warned by several people who know the Telus well that sound carrying in the space was challenge. With this in mind I choreographed a very loud play with lots of stomping rhinos and crying and yelling. Now that I see how small the space is I realize we will really need to pair down the extraneous, supporting volume and amp up the volume of the spoken words to ensure that the arguments, that the true meat of the story and the action, cut through the supporting sounds. I see this being a significant challenge over the next week.

January 15
Act two Scene two is really lagging behind the rest of the play. This is in large part my fault because I was focusing on Jean’s physical transformation far more than I was focusing on his mental transformation. This has led to a scene with a lot of movement and interesting voice work but an unclear argument. This is happening both in the way Joel is delivering his arguments and in how the transformation and changes in Jean are landing on Berenger. We have had to take a step back with this scene and talk through it line by line. The goal of this was to identify exactly where Jean speaks as a rhino, where he is in his transformation at what point, and how Berenger clocks Jean’s transformation. Going through line by line and focusing on still, harnessed energy, rather than lots of movement, will help to clarify the journey for both characters in this scene. Clarity is key in a scene with so much action.
January 16
The Jean transformation scene took such a giant leap forward today. They’re really finding it now. Jean’s arguments are strong and his transformation is carefully mapped out. Berenger is listening and responding honestly. You can see him really taking in and processing what’s happening to Jean. I think it may, in time, be the most striking scene in the play. The transformation is well defined and the arguments are really cutting through the physical action. The work we did paid off and Joel’s performance is remarkable.

January 17
It has been fantastic having Brad Gibson at rehearsal. He has been wonderful at pin pointing moments that are unclear and suggesting strong physical and vocal solutions. At times he takes actors aside to work with him and this support is very welcome. First of all because he’s a voice genius with a fantastic ear who can work with the actors to solve vocal problems efficiently but also because with 20 actors and so many details to look at I don’t have much time for one on ones with the actors. Because they are students they need one on one time and Brad is there to provide this for them.

As a younger director I very easily felt threatened and got my back up over suggestions or people trying to help solve problems that arose. I would quickly get defensive and flip my lid and then no problems could be solved and conflicts would occur. Basically my ego was easily wounded and it was massively unhelpful and just a big waste of time and energy. I’ve been finding that in this process I don’t have that problem at all and because of that I have been able to garner even more respect from the cast and crew. By behaving the opposite from the way I previously behaved I have been able to get the respect I wanted all along.

January 19
Daniel has lost his voice. He’s been on voice rest for five days now, no talking at all, and his voice is barely returning. Tom called me concerned last night after a conversation with Brad. They’re not sure that his voice will be healed for opening. Tom asked me to come up with a backup plan and I’ve decided to train Alen as an understudy. He’s fantastic and will be able to do it with a bit of rehearsal. We’ll give him a small book to have his lines in so that he doesn’t need to memorize everything and then we’ll schedule a rehearsal for the blocking.
Brad came into rehearsal to listen to Daniel’s voice and provided him with some advice about things to do that will help to heal his voice. I’m really hoping his voice returns before Wednesday. I’m trying to stay calm about it to not make Daniel feel worse but it’s making me pretty anxious that after all this work an understudy may have to be brought in. Alen would only step in for act one and Daniel would do the rest of the play when he’s a rhino and doesn’t have to talk. It’s good that he could still at least be in a part of the show. This has been a great lesson in not sweating something you can’t do anything about. I could spend a lot of time panicking about this but there’s no point if I can’t fix it. Acceptance is pivotal in this situation. Just work on a solution and don’t stress over the problem itself.

We blocked the curtain call today but it was a bit sloppy, quick and dirty. Needless to say I’m not thrilled with what I came up with. The challenge is that there are a lot of actors to gracefully cram into a small space in a very short amount of time. The original idea was to get everyone up on the raised platform in a circle, have them bow and run off the stage then have Matt come out of the trap and take a bow on his own.

While we were working on the blocking of the curtain call Matt looked unhappy. He’s pretty transparent and after many weeks of working with him it’s become very apparent when he’s unhappy. After rehearsal we talked about the blocking and he suggested that perhaps the other leads, Georgia, Alen, Kenton and Joel, should also get individual acknowledgement rather than simply being lumped in with the larger group. This is a really good point and I felt bad about not having thought about it before. The new idea for blocking is that the ensemble line up on the main deck around the raised platform, we’ll get the minor characters up on the raised platform and they’ll all bow together. After this we’ll have Georgia, Joel, Kenton and Alen come out of the trap, bow and then join the rest around the stage on the lower deck while Matt comes out of the trap to take his solo bow then they’ll all point to the booth and then all bow together. Hopefully we can do all of this within the one-minute song.

**January 21**

Daniel just showed up after the day off and he has a bit of a voice. Yay! This is a huge relief. Brad isn’t sure his voice will be back for opening but it’s looking hopeful. We will still get Alen ready to fill in just in case but it’s looking like Daniel will be able to step into the role again soon. I should also mention that Alen has done a remarkable job stepping into the role. He is a brave and talented young actor.
The lights are starting to come together. It has been a long slow process as lighting in the Telus is very challenging because of where lights can be hung. Lights can either be hung pointing directly down at the stage or from the sides. This leads to lights that are really bright on the stage and dark on faces, lights that shine right into the audience’s eyes or really sharp shadows. Matthew is also a new lighting designer, I don’t think he’s done very many lighting designs before this. He’s working really hard and has really wonderful ideas but is finding it time consuming to implement his ideas in a way that is effective. From what I can gather it seems like programming is challenging and he’s had to bring in some help.

January 22

Matt just walked by, saw that I was writing my thesis and asked if I was writing a chapter on him and it made me think that’s actually not a bad idea. He is Berenger and I’ve spent a lot of time working with him specifically throughout this process. It’s been really impressive how he’s risen to the challenge of this massive role. He is on stage talking and living through situations with incredibly high stakes for the majority of the play. What a huge role for a 23 year old. Last year I saw Matt in a scene and knew immediately that he was going to be my Berenger. He had a certain air about him, a way of delivering his lines that was so real, so true that I felt he could find the gentle, kind heart of our play’s hero. I worked with him again in the summer and after seeing his fantastic work ethic and real desire to discover and explore a role I felt he was the right man for the part.

Unfortunately when it came time for callbacks he didn’t bring it. He played the lethargy of the character over all else and was having a really difficult time finding anything beyond that. Berenger is interesting because of his best efforts to work through his fatigue, his depression and his feelings of worthlessness. He is intriguing and we love him because he wants more. Despite all odds he believes that more is possible. He also loves fiercely, more than any other character in the play. Matt was not finding this in the auditions. On top of this he was doing a poor job of listening and responding honestly to his fellow actors. After much discussion with Tom, and a few small glimpses in callbacks from Matt of what he was capable of I decided to take the risk and cast him.

For the first week of rehearsal I really wasn’t sure that this was the right decision. He continued to play the lethargy and seemed unable to work through it. But over time with encouragement to
listen and a lot of time spent defining clear objectives he is really coming along. I trust him to
carry this role. He has discovered the urgency and need in Berenger and is doing a fantastic job
listening. I can now see Berenger clinging to others and clinging to Daisy like she was a drug. He
is also doing a great job with the character journey and has been able to clearly identify the
turning points for Berenger. He has worked hard and has come into his own throughout this
process.

Opening
Opening went remarkably well. It was sold out and the audience was very receptive. I was really
thrilled with the energy on stage, the pace, the intentions, and the listening. Everyone did an
amazing job. It was great to have Daniel back in the role of the Old Gent and it seems as if his
time away from the role fueled him. He was much clearer and cleaner in his actions than before
he lost his voice. I now feel very confident leaving the show in the cast and crew’s capable hands.
I’m sad to be handing it off but excited that I can do so without a worry about the quality of the
show.

February 7
We have had three wonderful talkbacks for this show. The first was the general public and the
second two were with a French class that studied Rhinoceros and then came to see it and had
private talkbacks. I took the opportunity to ask the audience questions about the play in order to
gauge what the audience was getting from the metaphors in the play. I decided on two specific
questions that I wanted them to answer:

1. What were the rhinos to you? How did you interpret them?
2. Why didn’t Berenger become a rhino? What was different about him? What is it that you
saw in him that made him stand apart

I recorded one of the talkbacks and am going to share it here with you:

Me: I have some things that I’m curious about in the way the audience is seeing it. It’s an
obscure play that deals a lot in metaphors so I’m curious about how those metaphors are being
received. I have a couple of questions I’m curious about. With these questions there is not “right”
answer. Even Ionesco himself doesn’t have an answer to a lot of questions so I’m just curious
about what you saw and what you interpreted.
Audience:

- It’s society.
- Because Ionesco went through WW2 and there was a lot of social unrest he is referring to that. He could be referring to Nazism or the Iron Guard.

- From the start he didn’t do things the way everyone else did. It would make sense that he doesn’t go along with everyone else because he was never conforming.
- Everyone else was undermining him but he knew who he was and so he couldn’t become anyone else

The questions we were asked by the audience included:

- How did the stairs break?
- Do you think it would have been has effective if it wasn’t theatre in the round? Having it in the round doesn’t give the audience an alibi. You are a part of it.
- How do the rhinos feel about being rhinos? Are you having fun?
- There were a few people dressed as rhinos who were just standing there doing nothing. I was wondering what was purpose of that?

- What made you want to do this as your thesis?

Me: I love the theatricality of the script, things like the overlapping conversations and the rhinos themselves. Themes of non-conformity, I think that’s really interesting. There was a lot about it didn’t understand and I liked the idea of having to spend a year with it as my thesis project because I wanted to come to understand the things that I didn’t get about it. I think that’s a really great way to choose a script. If there’s something confusing it means that it’s something that will be intriguing about the process. I knew it was a play that was too big to produce on my own and that it was a play that wouldn’t necessarily make money because absurdist plays don’t necessarily sell. I knew that the university could provide me with the support I needed to bring this massive play to life. I’m glad I chose it.

- What do the rhinos represent to you?

  o Alen: Chelsea and I had a conversation awhile ago about what I thought the rhinoceroses were and because I had a really hard time getting into my scene because it’s so talky and the idea is very long that feels repetitive. I didn’t want to
come up with what the rhinoceroses were. I don’t have a specific something, I just know that they’re something else, not us. Not good or bad. That is my argument throughout the play. Then he just lets go. I don’t feel like Dudard conforms, he just lets go of whatever it is he’s holding onto. It’s not a specific group, just the other.

- Nick: For me, it is so much nicer to have a sense of family and community than being isolated, so even if you can’t be yourself to be a member of a group is a nice relief.

- Natasha: Those of us in the ensemble got to make our own characters because we weren’t written into the script. The character I developed was unmarried. It was funny because a few nights ago I noticed that Sarah had an engagement ring, I actually noticed it during a scene. It hit me really hard, as my character, that no one wanted to be with me. So that prompted joining the group, joining the collective mentality where she was wanted and accepted.

- Then an audience member remarked that one of the most powerful pieces is that each person joined for a different reason and you could feel it so richly. Really an interesting individual transformation. Even if they were joining the collective it was each of them for their own motivation.

- Why immersive in the round theatre?

Me: You are a part of it. I think immersion in theatre is vital. I think too often an audience is safe in theater and they are allowed to think “isn’t that lovely” or “man I’m bored” but if you really immerse an audience inside of it they have to connect with it or it’s uncomfortable, you have no choice but to be involved.

Reflections
Looking back over the whole journey I feel that all in all this production was a success. Having said this there are a few choices that I regret. I believe that I gave the ensemble in act 1 too much freedom with their movements and that several of the characters, specifically the flower seller and the Grocer Wife, ended up with physicality that was too exaggerated for the world of the play. This led them to pull focus and I talked to some audience members who were confused by these characters. I could have done a better job being more rigorous with keeping all of the characters in the same world.
Another choice I regret was having the table cloths from act 1 turn into the smocks in act 2. This was a very small thing but it always bothered me when I watched the show because neither the table cloths nor the smocks looked very good and concept ended up trumping effectiveness and clarity. This should never be the case.

I wish I had had more time to work with the rhinos. I felt good about the rhino blocking but felt that with more time it could have been fantastic. Often their stomping was too loud and their locations weren’t always ideal. This could have been perfected with more time.

I was also ultimately not entirely satisfied with the lighting. Matthew and I had conversations about ideas that weren’t ever fulfilled in full including silhouettes and shadows. These elements were suggested but not fully realized. A lot of tech time was devoted to trying to evenly light the stage and the actors and there wasn’t enough time left for the details.

In the end I felt that there were more major successes than failures. I was thrilled with the aesthetics of the piece. The look of the rhinos in contrast with the colourful costumes at the top of the show was striking. The set was highly transformative and created an incredibly immersive experience for the audience.

I felt great about the performances of the actors and I believe that a few of them took large steps forward as performers throughout this process. This is something I’m very proud of.

The critical and audience response was very positive. We had large houses almost every night and I’m thrilled with the comments made about the show in reviews. This is one of my favourite quotes. It comes from Mark Robins at Gay Vancouver:

The ultimate test though comes in the cast’s ability to tread the fine line between the absurdity and reality and where it could easily be played for more laughs (it is still quite funny), there is a solid base in presenting the material with the seriousness that Ionesco himself demands. Even as the individuality of the character's "walks" morph into the forceful and aggressive rhinos it is not played for laughs, but with underlying understanding of the more serious text. While much of that understanding is done at an actor’s level, director Chelsea Haberlin has obviously gone to great pains here to ensure a consistency.
This sums up beautifully what I had hoped to achieve with the piece.

I will take away many lessons from this process. In a way this entire document has been a summation of the lessons learned but I will list a few of the large lessons here. I learned that patience and saying yes are incredibly valuable and that you don’t always have to know the answer as the director as long as you’re open to actively figuring it out with your team. I learned a vast amount about how to root theatre of the absurd in a believable place using clear objectives. I learned a lot about how to communicate with young actors and to never underestimate the power of the question “what do you want?” and the statement “clarify your intentions”. I learned that you can and should push your show to be the best it can be right up until opening night because only then is your job complete. It is in fact to everyone’s benefit if you demand greatness. One of the biggest things I learned is that I really love the work of Ionesco and the entire canon of absurdist plays that are out there. I believe that they should be produced far more often than they are and I will strive to do so. They have a lot to say about life and ask questions that are vital for us to explore, even in 2013.
Works Cited


Tapestry http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/Tapestry/ID/2290436017/
