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LUST GLUTTONY GREED; A Collaborative Piece Exploring Modern Systems of Power and Dante's Inferno

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LUST GLUTTONY GREED
A Collaborative Piece Exploring Modern Systems of Power and Dante's *Inferno*

A Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of The Arts
Bard College

By
Eleanor Parker Robb

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2016

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I am so proud of my friends, the most fascinating, intelligent, and loving people around me from so many points in my life. You will all brighten the world as you go, just as you brightened mine. So much love to you all.

To all the seniors of Theater and Performance, I am in awe of the 20 unique ways you view the world and the 8 pieces created. I am so appreciative joining all of you in the project festival. I am so thankful for Abby, Leah, and Salome. We spent eight months working, and created something wonderful. You are amazing.

To Aunt Lizzie and Grace Mann, thank you for changing the course of my life.

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LUST GLUTTONY GREED

And so I came where light is mute, a place
that moans as oceans do impelled by storms,
surging, embattled in conflicting squalls.
The swirling wind of Hell will never rest.¹

I scribbled this vivid picture Dante Alighieri described within his *Inferno* on the first page of an empty journalist notebook. Boasting 70 sheets of green paper, this steno pad contains all of the notes I spent months wading through in order to synthesize my understanding of sin, punishment, and the *Inferno* itself. Throughout this process, I thought of how Dante created such a vivid space in four lines. This clarity helped cut through vague desires, refining our purpose. It depicts oppositional forces- the muteness of light juxtaposed to the howl of the wind. These four lines began the process of creating a work with precision, fullness, and one that evokes Dante into our own world of lust, gluttony, and greed.

In my senior project proposal I asked, ‘What is our understanding of sin in today’s more secular atmosphere than that of Dante’s Florence?’ This initial question grew to include many others: how are our bodies governed in space created to marginalize? How do we critique or undermine a capitalist system when we also buy into it? This paper will explain my approach beginning with our first semester, then my correlating research, the finalization of our project, and then the performance. I hope this will demonstrate the amount of work and care that went into the creation of a collaborative senior project.

¹ Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. Trans. Robin Kirkpatrick. New York: Penguin, 2013. Print.

PROCESS

I first read *Inferno* by Dante Alighieri during the First Year Seminar my freshman year at Bard. When we, the rising seniors in the Theater and Performance department, decided to collaborate on the same source text, I was apprehensive. At the final vote to select the text, I voted against the *Inferno*- the only 'nay' vote it received. As majority ruled, I hoped to work on Canto V, since it contained clear female characters. Abby Adler, Salome Dewell, and I joined because of our interests and we claimed Leah Rabinowitz, abroad in Berlin and thereby not present at the meeting in Resnick. Because there were more sins than groups, we conflated Cantos V, VI, and VII into one group: lust, gluttony, and greed.

Within our cantos, Dante enters past Minos into the first three circles of Hell. He viewed flocks of licentious sinners separated by winds blown throughout Lust, stepped amongst the muck and flattened sinners atoning for their Gluttony, and watched as the miserly sinners and wasteful squanderers battle with large stones in Greed. With these images in mind, Abby, Salome, Leah, and I began our work when we arrived back at Bard.

On August 31st the group met for the first time as seniors. We organized our ideas on narrative and movement, commented on themes in *Inferno*, and made plans to individually free-write on the sins we selected. We met later that week and created a group calendar, incorporating both the deadlines of the department and our own benchmarks. Based on our schedules we chose Tuesday, Thursday, and Sundays to rehearse, and during the first semester we usually met two or three times a week.

Tuesdays were our day in Studio North, our time to focus on movement when we had studio space, where as days in Olin were good for conversations and brainstorming.

As we began the process we defined for ourselves (and each other) the sins we were centering our piece on: lust, gluttony, and greed. We each wrote a few sentences and brought them to our first meeting with our advisor Jack Ferver. From my notes, my list was focused on large-scale instances of injustice or unfairness. Jack had us write down concerns we had for the piece. I wrote, "I think my main concern is that it'll get too intrinsic and mostly focus on the individualistic than big picture." I wanted to make work that focused on a broad scope but imbued with the personal. We all shared our concerns, and the only other one I wrote down that Jack said- not wanting us to be "vague really loudly." That was just such a brilliant way of phrasing a large concern- how can we create a piece that is both specific and understandable?

Early in our discussions, we wondered how to use Dante's text. From the beginning I was interested in exploring and/or indicting ritual, rules, nuns, and capitalism. One of my earliest ideas for an image was a large eye projected on the wall behind us. This idea began as an abstraction of the gaze of Dante into many circles of Hell. We read the three cantos aloud in various ways. This yielded some vague exercises that I reluctantly participated in. On September 20th, I wrote notes from rehearsal that expressed frustration with the slowness of the process, and after that day we sat down and planned out prompts to engage in what I have written as "kick our ass week". This helped get some wheels in motion to propel us up to fall break.

Over fall break, we shared a Google Doc called COLLABORATIVE SCENE DANCE PARTY in which we made our first attempt at writing some sort of plot. Overall

the text was disjointed, but gave us our first setting: hell as a nightclub. The piece included nuns, also the characters were named with our names, which created nun alter egos. They were receiving orders à la *Charlie's Angels* to go down into Hell and retrieve one of their sisters who died. Along with these first attempts at narrative, it was the first moment I wrote dialogue that synthesized my ideas about the world at large, which began a style I would employ in the later manifesto. The passage went like this:

ALL

Pope Satan! Pope Satan! Pope Satan! Defund! Defund! Defund!! Take the money put it in the military, arm our police! Fight against sexuality! Swat teams for the middle of nowhere! No arts, no healthcare, no end to poverty! Raise the prices- forget the buyers, raise the prices- forget the rest! Pope Satan! Pope Satan! Pope Satan! I AM A WOMAN MORE SINNED AGAINST THAN SINNING

Exploring Dante's satirical tone when talking about the 'sins' of today, I constructed this paragraph in an advertising way, saturating it with desire. Jack pushed this initial showing to have us question our use of nuns as vessels and the culpability yet agency within the structure of a 70's-esque plotline. He told us not to illustrate the political, be the political.

As we worked we asked a constant question: should we move from the personal out to the political, or from the political into the personal? I wanted our piece position itself with in the historical trends happening this year. I think capitalism creates a system that thrives on desire- to want a product, to need something new, to crave safety and power at all costs. Because of this, lust, gluttony, and greed are intertwined with the consumerism, just as much as we as individuals are. We looked at ways of nightclub hell and incorporating the women in Dante, but eventually it came back to nuns and convents. We knew what we wanted, but we struggled to make it.

Over Thanksgiving break we received **The Email**:

From: Abigail Adler <aa5455@bard.edu>
To: Jack Ferver <jferver@bard.edu>
Cc: Salome Dewell <sd8804@bard.edu>
Sent: Tue, 17 Nov 2015 21:47:57 -0500 (EST)
Subject: Meeting?

Dear Jack,

Salome and I are experiencing some anxiety with how the project and its content are progressing. The group seems to be divided up into two separate camps with us on one side, and Leah and Eleanor on the other. Salome and I got together and talked [tonight](#) and articulated the concerns and ideas that we have for the piece. We do not feel comfortable sharing this with Leah and Eleanor though we realize that it is necessary to communicate for the piece to move forward.

Is there any way that Salome and I can meet with you [this Sunday](#) to discuss our ideas and figure out how we can present them to the rest of the group?

We would appreciate if you did not discuss this meeting with Eleanor or Leah as we don't want to create further tension before we even have a plan.

Thank you so much,
Abby and Salome

Leah found the email at the bottom of an email message chain that Salome somehow forwarded to the whole group. So Leah texted the group message saying, "Hey so the private email you sent to Jack just sent to all of us just so you know." After I read it, I felt bummed. I worried that the problems that arose were not so much plot/idea disagreements, but rather personality clashing. Reflecting on my own relationship to the group, I often articulate my wants and myself, and while usually well it can sometimes forcefully. It seemed to me the email manifested a clash of wills between two ideas: a want for personal-based work vs. a want for political-based work.

The Email reminded me that good collaboration requires work. No one should feel as if they are backed into a corner or subverted by members of their group, either

between a rehearsal or an email. Particularly funny to me was the repeated use of an “us vs. them” and “team” language but when we had all read the email, those statements were redacted very quickly. It makes for a good story, while also keeping me aware of my own pattern of behavior within a group. But overall the experience was pretty humorous to me- it seemed like the plot of a reality television show!

When we settled on creating nun characters in December, I brought in a prompt to rehearsal that would serve as our own personal nun manifesto, but also begin our collaborative writing process. We wrote statements that were “I Believe, I Know, I Want” about the use of nun characters in our piece. This gave us each an opportunity to write from our own personal views of nuns and convents, while also enabling statements that veered more into political statements. These answered our group question of “why nuns?” Although focusing on our own personal attachments to nuns, together the statements became an inclusive document since we all used the same language. This became our first plot beat in a larger list of moments.

We needed to decide on what would be found in the basement, a major plot beat. We created our basement with a road box where wine and the Eucharist were stored, along with a box filled with confiscated items. This contraband box became our way in to the themes of desire and temptation that bounced around in previous meetings, and we planned to use the contents to essentially throw a party. This moment was also added onto our plot beat list that we finalized right before winter break.

Our basic structure began with Salome, Abby, Leah, and I dressing in our nuns’ habits on stage while a voice over of the nun manifestos would play. Then the lights would change to a fluorescents, and these nuns are in the basement, working. As each

performed a task, one would mess up, breaking the workflow for a second, but then continuing to work. This moment would climax with one nun (Leah) choosing not to fix the problem, and begin to read a magazine. This would distract two of the nuns (Abby and Eleanor) and the working order would disintegrate. The magazine-reading nun would then declare 'I'm thirsty,' and open the cabinet, and the final nun (Salome) would be coerced into participating. Next, a Pandora's box moment: the nuns find the contraband. Inside is something that each nun misses from the outside. They celebrate, become too loud, and then hear footsteps of the priest coming down to the basement. This ends with the nuns knowing they will again be punished. Over break, Leah and Salome were to write the first script based on this outline. The plot beats became our synthesis of the many discussions, readings, and first attempts from the fall semester, and the foundation of our final script.

RESEARCH

CONVENTS

RULES

In convents discussed by Silvia Evangelisti in her book *Nuns: A History of Convent Life, 1450-1700*, codified rules in the Western monasticism tradition gave way to a system of governance.² Daily life centered on a cycle of prayer, work, and repentance- *ora et labora* -all governed by male superiors.³ All aspects of the day were designed to keep the nuns from material goods and base desires; and they worked silently so all thoughts could dwell on God.⁴ This cyclical system fascinated me and for rehearsals I created prompts to explore repeated movement such as in an early piece of collective sewing on a large piece of cloth.

Nuns' virtues (add a quote from the other nun book) and their duties were regarded as familial, as well as holy.

The religious community acted as a 'spiritual family' and called on its members to fulfill typical family roles. Nuns were 'sisters' who should love each other equally. They were the 'daughters' of the 'mother' abbess, whom they had to obey, and were governed by the 'father' superior.⁵

Male father-like authority imposed rules and qualities that defined a nun as devout, pious, and quiet. Within the convent, this familial structuring begins in the novitiate stage, when the postulants have not taken their final vows. It is during this time that the novices are, "cloistered inside as much as possible... communication with the outside world is

² Evangelisti, Silvia. *Nuns: A History of Convent Life, 1450-1700*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007. Print. 27

³ Claussen, Heather L. *Unconventional Sisterhood: Feminist Catholic Nuns in the Philippines*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 2001. Print. 7

⁴ Ibid. 28

⁵ Evangelisti. 9

forbidden.”⁶ The world inside becomes both the governing body and the familial relation, combining in to a forceful structure of furthered by the regulations of space.

Although restrictive, the vows of sisterhood can promote greater equity- as Claussen writes when describing how the focus of her ethnography, the Missionary Benedictine’s, challenge “Philippine cultural assumptions concerning female dependence on males.”⁷ The nuns of Missionary Benedictine assumed cultural male roles through decision-making, manual labor, and earning money through the work in the convent. While subverting traditional roles, nuns still are tied to the tradition of the household-the convent here- defining space and reasoning for all actions.

SPACE

Separated from the outside world by a gate, convents typically contained a square cloister and a vast building. The gate served as the main point of contact with world, through which the convent received supplies and visitors. Stemming from a medieval tradition, monk had the key to external gate, and a prioress had the key to inner gate.⁸ The gate became a symbol in the ritual celebration of nuns, as they entered the convent for the first time in procession, representing their final departure from the outside world.⁹ The new novices would walk to see the city the final time wearing white veils to symbolize their marriage to Christ.¹⁰ This cemented the first divide between the sacred and secular worlds.

⁶ Claussen. 69

⁷ Ibid. 93

⁸ Evangelisti. 49

⁹ Ibid. 50

¹⁰ Ibid. 50

Along with the rules for daily life, the monastic tradition also regulated to the relationship to the outside world. Saint John wrote in his *Rules for Nuns*,

A soul chaste and consecrated to God should not have constant association with externs, even with her relatives, wither they coming to her or she going to them; lest she hear what is not proper, or say what is not fitting or see what could be injurious to chastity.¹¹

This sentiment permeated the spaces where the public and private met within the convent; churches meticulously regulated the chastity of their cloistered nuns. The rules of the convent permitted the public to be in two places: the parlor and the church. Guests were able to visit with family or seek guidance in the parlor. The bishop solely granted visiting licenses, and made judgments based on principles Saint John put forth.¹² The rigor of enforcing space restrictions is still in place today. Claussen writes,

The sisters slept and ate their evening meals in cloister, and their cells and communal recreation sessions were off-limits even to the postulants and novices in formation; in short, they spent significant time in spaces I could only learn about second hand.¹³

In the parlor, a gate separated nuns from guests, and a listener nun witnessed conversations.¹⁴ While seemingly austere, business, and gossip could be conducted within the parlor, making it an intersection of the communities in and outside the convent.¹⁵ I mulled over the use of the parlor in performance, thinking about how we could manifest this divide of worlds between the audience and ourselves.

The public could also attend mass in the church, the second space within the convent accessible to the public. Another gate separated the nuns from view until most

¹¹ Evangelisti. 43

¹² Ibid. 51

¹³ Claussen. 5

¹⁴ Evangelisti. 51

¹⁵ Ibid. 51

important part of service- the consecration, when they would sing as a chorus. As Evangelisti notes, “The convent church epitomized the ambiguity of the nuns’ position in society: they were a group apart, but remained linked to the outside world.”¹⁶ This separation is inherent to the experience within the convent, something we explored when thinking of the audience in our piece

CLOTHING

The decision that all the characters were novices impacted the costume design, requiring shorter habits while still having garments that covered us from head to toe. In Evangelisti’s research she writes,

The habit, as well as the veil and cloak, was the sign of their definitive departure from the world, and their inclusion in the spiritual family of the monastic community.... Their habit, their short hair... marked their condition of eternal chastity as brides of Christ.¹⁷

These notes helped immensely when designing the piece. At first, finding four outfits that matched challenged us. After unsuccessfully finding dresses that worked, we settled into a skirt/shirt combination. Going back into the rack room of the costume shop, I found this black linen vest that tied in the front, which I then flipped around to make a smock. It was the missing piece, which made us look more uniform and neutral. I made a pattern from the existing smock, bought fabric, and made three new smocks to fit Abby, Leah, and Salome. They turned out well and helped me feel more ‘nun’.

THEATER

Theater gave nuns the opportunity to perform plays, adding an aspect of collective life in the form of recreation. Plays were staged during holy festivals, when sisters would

¹⁶ Evangelisti. 53

¹⁷ Ibid. 29

either write, copy, or commission plays.¹⁸ Some of these were performed for rites of passage, such as during the clothing of the novices, which was the official entrance into the convent's religious life.¹⁹ These plays would promote spiritual learning; they added a visual demonstration engage the audience of sisters in regards to morality. In the practice of these plays, decorum, rhetoric, proper pronunciation, and delivery were stressed, a large component to the daily behavior for a nun.²⁰

The convent became a recurring image, a symbol of imprisonment and exclusion from the world outside.

With limited volunteers to perform, the nuns would often play many roles; even scarcer were materials to create costumes and a set.²¹ Nuns wrote allegorical and moral abstraction plays. *Nacimiento*, by Maria de San Alberto, presented four nuns embodying the four virtues of the convent: poverty, chastity, obedience and patience.²² They risked provoking superiors if they played male characters. Nuns were forbidden to wear men's clothing because it was viewed as sinful transgression that could prompt sexual desire, but playwrights and performers often ignored these rules.²³ The audience would watch the performances either outside the gates if the play were in the courtyard, or from the viewing side of the parlor through the grill. This created a dynamic we hoped to emulate within our performance.

¹⁸ Evangelisti. 102

¹⁹ Ibid. 102

²⁰ Ibid. 103

²¹ Ibid. 109

²² Ibid. 104

²³ Ibid. 111

SORORITIES

The structures of both sororities and convents rely on space, rules, and devotionals. Just as nuns have their convent, sororities have their houses. Nuns have their own religious ceremonies of devotion, sororities “rush” in order to gain new members through a selective process. This process of becoming a sorority “pledge” is reminiscent of women becoming novices in the convent- both are the transitional moment prior to full sisterhood, moving from one world to another. At the first National PanHellenic Conference (NPC) in 1891, the assembled sororities established separate organizations, ruling an individual could only join one organization.²⁴ The NPC is made up of 26 historically white sororities, founded on sisterhood but also exclusion, often still mostly white to this day.²⁵ Journalist Vendela Vida conducted research at UCLA by pretending to rush Delta Delta Delta (aka Tri Delt) wrote of sororities’ “appeal and advantages of group membership... [a] perfect blend of freedom and security; sororities, like many American organizations, offer their members a new social identity.”²⁶ It is this coveted identity within the group that is honed through traditions and rules in order to remain elite.

Similar to the nuns who wrote plays for ceremonial rights of passage, rushing often has a component of performance,

At Alpha Delta Pi I have a painful conversation with a cheerleader and watch the sisters perform ‘We Go Together’ from *Grease*.... At Chi Omega I watch a Batgirl skit scripted to show off the virtues of

²⁴ "Adventures in Friendship: A History of the National Panhellenic Conference." *National Panhellenic Conference* (2012): n. pag. 2012. Web. 14 Apr. 2016.

²⁵ Bueneke, Kate. "Outfits Aren't the Biggest Problem With Sorority Recruitment." *The Atlantic*. N.p., 18 Feb. 2015. Web. 19 Apr. 2016.

²⁶ Vida, Vendela. *Girls on the Verge: Debutante Dips, Gang Drive-bys, and Other Initiations*. New York: St. Martin's, 1999. Print. 38

a Chi Omega: 'A Chi Omega spends fifty to seventy-five percent of her time partying, but she also spends time doing philanthropy and scholasticism,'... At Pi Beta Pi there's *another* skit, this one based on *Dick Tracy*.²⁷

Skits and plays are presentational demonstrations of the organization of the sorority, showing off their creativity and enviable sisterhood. They are lessons in the culture of the group, from partying hard to antiquated values (*Grease* and *Dick Tracy*). Today, the advent of social media has increased viewership of a once semi-secretive evening of performance. Sorority recruitment videos published to Youtube attract an audience outside of their pledges- Delta Gamma at University of Miami posted a recruitment video on January 6, 2016 and over 1.8 million people viewed their collage of yachts, pools, and uncontested opulence.²⁸ This consumable performance of sisterhood and the 'you wish you were part of this' image creates a product that fit in well with the view that lust, gluttony, and greed exists in many nuanced layers of institutions today.

After the rushing process, sororities offer a place within their ranks by offering a 'bid'.²⁹ When a student receives their bid to become a sister, they enter into a system of rules. Each member must pay sorority dues, money that goes to group events and formals, a price tag of 1,280 dollars per semester.³⁰ Each pledge becomes receives a big sister, a member who has been apart of the organization for at least a year, and becomes a little sister themselves.³¹ A sorority family relationship is built in a chain of 'biggs' and 'littles', stretching into eons of passed down traditions. The friends who I have in

²⁷ Vida. 21

²⁸ Artec Media. "Delta Gamma | University of Miami - 2016." *YouTube*. YouTube, 06 Jan. 2016. Web. 13 Apr. 2016.

²⁹ Vida. 33

³⁰ NerdWallet. "How Much Does It Really Cost to Go Greek?" *USA Today College*. USA Today, 17 Nov. 2014. Web. 22 Apr. 2016.

³¹ Vida. 33

sororities document their ‘families’ on social media, four heads in descending order-senior to freshman, great-grand big to little. These images and performances are apart of the visual culture of today’s social media. And just like nuns, service is fundamental to all Greek organizations. All organizations have a philanthropy component, one of the founding ideals.³²

Sororities are complex organizations with an incredibly long history. Why did we want to use them in our piece? Greek life plays a large roll in our psychic space of what college is/is not. Without that culture at Bard, opinions and knowledge are formed from the outside looking in. So much of collective information of sororities comes from movies and what we see on the Internet. For example, I read a Jezebel article called “Batshit Sorority Pledge Email ‘Cannot Stress How Important Spanx Are’” from January 2015. The email in question detailed the rules for the big “polish week,” (the week before the rushing begins). Much like the convent, those in powerful positions regulate appearance:

If you are not wearing the required makeup, I will stop you and apply it myself. I don't care if you're late for class. I don't care if you're a sophomore or a super senior. I will stop you. If you don't know how to apply all this makeup, check out my Pinterest board. I picked out all the videos and products with you guys in mind!³³

This demonstrates a duality of power along the lines of ‘this is what you have to do for me, but look at all the things I am giving you in return!’ This manner of speaking highly influenced how Leah would motivate the nuns around her. It is almost like both Greek life and convents say, look at how much we give you, now we require this of you.

³² “Adventures in Friendship: A History of the National Panhellenic Conference.”

³³ Merlan, Anna. "Batshit Sorority Pledge Email ‘Cannot Stress How Important Spanx Are’." Jezebel, 16 Jan. 2015. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.

Sorority members resemble nuns- both of these organizations structure themselves around familial units. By organizing themselves around valuing good ‘daughters’ or ‘sisters’, these institutions place high value on determining worth. In order to be a nun, one must be worthy of God’s love and devote oneself to upholding it. In kind, in order to be a sorority sister, one must be worthy of the love of the family collective and devote oneself to upholding that. In exchange, one becomes the embodiment of piety in a divine organization of one’s choosing. The give and take of the sorority and the convent create incredibly intrinsic communities. They perform for the male gaze, either an omnipresent deity or the fraternities they were created in opposition to. The structure, differences and similarities between both sisterhoods fascinate me and were incredibly necessary for our project.

CORPORATIONS

Although there are many artists who influence me, corporate language inspired much of my writing for this project. How do companies sell themselves to their employees and then to their market? How could the Alpha sell her ideas? Reading the manifestos of companies such as Lululemon, Whole Foods, and Crossfit, I realized the language they use is so amazingly rich with self-promotion and cultish reverence, “We go to extraordinary lengths to satisfy, delight and nourish our customers. Advocates do more than shop with us, they talk about Whole Foods Market to their friends and others.”³⁴ How can humans use the technology and advancements of companies in order to improve (or update) themselves? These manifestos became a cornerstone of our piece. Since even the author of the texts we read were unknown to the consumer, reader and us, the words

³⁴ "Core Values." Whole Foods Market, 2016. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.

took on a tone of mystic gravitas I instantly hoped to recreate. Especially because of the self-importance coursing through each line, these texts were fascinating:

Creativity is maximized when you are living in the moment.

Do one thing a day that scares you.

Live near the ocean and inhale the pure salt air that flows over the water (Vancouver will do nicely).

Your outlook on life is a direct reflection of how much you like yourself.³⁵

Not only is this found on the Lululemon website, these statements, along with many others, are printed on the reusable tote bag that each pair of \$98.00 yoga pants are placed into post purchase. These statements are “lights their fire,” (according to their website), are an advertisement for their company, and a coveted symbol of a lifestyle and wealth. What does it mean when an ethos becomes so corporate it’s an ad?

All of these varied ideologies exist in a world of self-promotion in order to gain new members of an elite group. These entities create power dynamics through rules and rituals, thereby keeping one group in charge of another. There is an inherent reliance on order and structure, as well as personal gain masked through group endeavor. The use of convents, sororities and corporations inspired me greatly while writing this piece, especially because of the interplay with desire, want, and capital- or lust, gluttony, and greed. These models let us explore the sins in our project in both religious and secular contexts, providing our group with concrete examples to inspire new material.

³⁵ Lululemon. "The Lululemon Manifesto." Lululemon Athletica, n.d. Web. 14 Apr. 2016.

CREATION

Leah, Abby, and I came back a week early to work, meeting in the last full week of January. Salome was auditioning for grad school so she was unable to be back at Bard. The three of us decided to meet as often as possible, to further the four-page script Salome and Leah wrote in collaboration over break. I suggested that the nuns just form a cult in the basement in reaction to the laborious punishments and temptation and go from there. Abby and I had such a long conversation that it led to us purchasing poster board and markers from CVS. By the time Leah arrived we were writing out our new ideas about our play on the paper taped to the walls of Abby's apartment. For the first time in a couple of months, I felt creative excitement. We were all on the verge of a much-needed breakthrough.

Following this two hour-long conversation, I went home and wrote the first draft of what would become our final script. I expanded on the play that Salome and Leah wrote, keeping their dialogue as the first four pages, which hardly changed throughout the process. After the disruption of work and the initial interest, Sister Leah introduces the cabinet, the germ of our initial idea growing into a Pandora's box moment. This validated Leah's legitimacy as the omnipresent cultish sorority sister. This manifestation of temptation would pull Sisters Abby and Eleanor into Leah's control, while creating Sister Salome's conflict of right vs. wrong.

Sister Salome and Sister Leah were placed on opposite ends of a spectrum of devotion- one as a leader, one a follower. In order for Sister Leah to convince Sister Salome, there must be a break through. Through the first couple of drafts, Sister Leah's

tactics and Sister Salome's responses were unconvincing. Jack suggested that Sister Leah use "I was just like you, but now I'm so much better—you could be too if you listen to what I tell you." This added a different tone to Leah's character, pushing her further into the role of a sorority sister with a shoulder-to-cry-on, who would then whip you into shape. The moment had to be pushed even further, so we created the clap to increase Leah's omnipresence and get Abby and me out of the scene. With the invention of the mystical clap here, Abby and I found other places for Leah to clap that would have it seem purposeful ability not random gesture. I think by the final draft we struck a balance between what Salome wrote and what would further her character's journey, as well as giving Sister Leah concrete tactics.

After being renamed by Alpha, these characters had only one more requirement. The finale to the impressive display put on by a demented nun/sorority sister required a contract, the linchpin of the cult leader's argument. During that initial January conversation, we discussed company manifestos that became the basis of the contract. The company manifestos Abby had gathered were extremely influential, particularly for their focus on the creation of self for the greater good i.e. higher production and more profit. In my opinion, the core of this industry of 'betterment' is to simultaneously extol virtues while saying the only thing that will get you there is buying their product. I used the company manifestos to inspire the corporate language of Leah's sisterhood. Essentially, Alpha created an ad, in a society where sleek, updated, newness are extolled as supreme virtues (but really only so you buy more). While Alpha espoused rhetoric condemning the work and punishments of nun sisterhood, she used the guise of self-improvement for a sisterhood that would ultimately require similar tasks and punishments

We decided an end for the play after another two-hour-long conversation about not knowing how to end the play. In the January 31st draft, the play with a dance to the song “God Only Knows” by the Beach Boys. We always discussed ending with a music, and there was a general want for a big dance number of some kind.³⁶“ In writing, the song was a separate entity from the play; rather it was a note on our own group dynamic and the end of the project. “God Only Knows” perfectly described how many of my feeling about the project: no matter what I don’t know what I’d be without them.

We presented this idea, with no choreography, to Jack. He pointed out what it would be like for the audience to hear these iconic male voices after our piece that had no male voices within it. The conversation propelled us to question our next step, maybe a movement section that depicted “the first update”? We debated the merits and realized we had no time to choreograph movement that was specific and polished enough by the performance.

After many different ideas for a conclusion, I said to the group, “I just don’t think I can generate anymore.” This statement served a dual purpose: firstly, I actually felt like I couldn’t generate a new ending that would satisfy everyone, and secondly, those words became the ending that satisfied the group. I threw out the idea that Beta/Eleanor would say that to Alpha/Leah, and the response would be, “Well you have to.” For me, this represented the unrelenting demand to produce even when you cannot, while also representing the process of this piece within the context of the theater department. Even when we felt really terrible about our project, our group, and ourselves we still had to

³⁶ This came from a general love of the dance break in Miguel Gutierrez’s *Age & Beauty Part 2* set to KC and the Sunshine Band’s “Keep it Comin’ Love”. We all felt joy in that moment of performance; especially since our own table discussions could sometime resemble the table discussions seen in that piece.

produce. Even when I felt like I creatively directed too much, I still had to make an ending.

After suggesting these two sentences, I went and played “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun” on the computer of Olin 204. I suggested karaoke earlier in February, because it was an inherently amateur art form, but we up until that point hadn’t found a song. We had this ‘of course’ moment when we listened to it together. This song represented a lot about how we viewed our project and our place in the world at large. We really wanted to have fun, and I think (for the most part) succeeded.

We had a seamless transition into Luma, helped immensely by everyone in Fisher- and especially Emily, the Stage Manager, who was always willing to laugh during our runs (thank you a million Emily), and Jason, our lighting designer, who helped us clarify moments, and Matt, for doing everything under the sun to get us to performance. During our spacing and tech, Abby would continue one of her roles as a viewer, stepping out and making calls that refined the whole piece. She created all the A/V of our piece, and facilitated decisions with the Tech team, that put the final pieces in place for show time.

The creative process for this piece resided in a place of constant flux and negotiation as we learned how to work together. The process became stressful when personal feelings manifested through action rather than group discussion. Although I got into some standoffs and head-butting moments with both Salome and Abby, those in the end were productive because I saw what content I felt passionately about verses the things I could change for the better. Sometimes in the effort of time, I would be harsh when critiquing work, which is not the best way to collaborate. The process occasionally

could have been smoother, such as the instance of **The Email**, but in the end we used that for our advantage. Once we negotiated the process of expressing ourselves, we were able to express our collective voice and goals clearly.’

PERFORMANCE

Jack encouraged us to find pleasure in the performance of our piece. This was the final step in creating our senior project- finding the joy in the work we made together. Finding our groove required a certain amount of appreciation of each other, which we forgot to look for at our most frustrated. Seeing my co-collaborators work hard to give life to the ideas we've been bouncing around really grounded me and made the three performances new each time. For me the performances followed the best progression: Friday had energy, Saturday matinee had clarity, and Sunday matinee had a combination of the two. The inherent joy in running like a well-organized machine bubbled to the surface of performances, which made our piece so fun.

I found myself surprised by how much the audience impacted the performance. I had not considered the dynamic between real audience watching and us in the basement. There were many performative gestures within our piece, although in the basement they were for an imaginary audience. I became aware of the audience when they laughed, which served to only increase my ridiculousness on stage. When the manifesto was recited, there is a clear moment of performing for an audience. I like to think these three nun/Greek letters are broadcasting their epiphany worldwide, even if it's only in the basement. They think they have gained a moment of clarity, but in reality they are reading from an imaginary teleprompter, joining with the masses.

IOS INFINITY

I've begun to know what works and what does not in collaboration, and I hope to build on that. I do feel that this was both an ending but also a beginning. I am proud that I wrote so much of the script; I've always felt challenged by writing dialogue, so for me to even like what I've written was a big deal for me. It was magical to create something with so much care and diligence. I hope that my group is also as proud of the work we made together.

“What are we saying, why are we saying it?” We struggled throughout our process to answer the question that Jack asked every time we showed work. Evaluating my work in this paper, I have a clearer understanding of my answer. I am saying that I exist in structures of power that limit individual creation by enforcing rules and regulations, and when I try to resist I realize I am culpable within many systems all at once. I am using these feelings to create work that recognizes its place and indicts those who wish to remain unaware.

As a college senior, reflecting on an end while on the edge of a new beginning, I realize that I am leaving an education system that asked for years us to create individual projects, and then the rules changed. Requiring us to create our senior project with newly set parameters threw us off the deep end. The mandate that we must collaborate in order to receive departmental support, space, and budgets felt cold and prompted an almost cliquish mentality. I initially agreed to participate so that it would not create an “us vs. them” environment amongst the seniors. I learned many lessons and I am grateful to have participated. Within this structured department, Bard College, and the world-at-large, I co-exist within many areas of privilege, inherent to my being. As the nuns try and

undermine the punishments of the church, to gain ownership of their own production, they enter a similar scenario- a wannabe sorority system, where there is a new leader, who gives new rules to abide by. Just as a class we hoped to circumvent new rules, we ran into challenges of exclusion and efficacy of leaders.

As I enter the workforce, I will be given new rules. As I make art, I will have to contend with the powers at be. How can I continue with a practice that is inclusive? How can we use our privileges to make things better?? How will I view and react current manifestations of lust, gluttony, and greed in the world? When all these questions overwhelm me, I think “love and Service, Eleanor,” as Jack would say, “love and service”. I’m thankful that I’ve had the people surrounding me who will teach me this lesson. I’m grateful the amazing professors I have met, and my peers who make me laugh. I am grateful for Bard. I am endlessly proud that I worked with Abby, Leah, and Salome to create something we collectively own. I can’t believe how quickly four years have just happened. Here’s to more love and service for all of us.

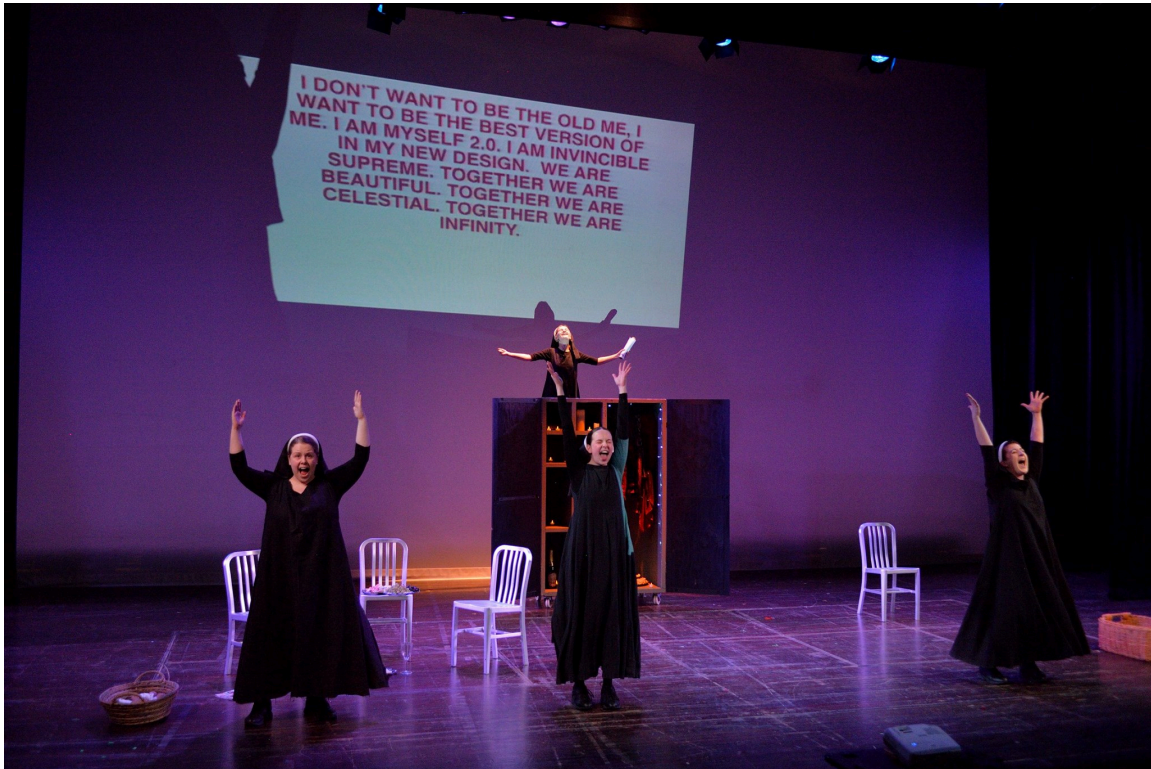
TOGETHER WE ARE BEAUTIFUL. TOGETHER WE ARE CELESTIAL. TOGETHER WE ARE INFINITY!!!!

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PHOTOS





LUST GLUTTONY GREED

A senior project submitted to the Division of the Arts at Bard College
Presented as a part of the INFERNO Festival

Created in collaboration by

Abigail Adler '16
Salome Dewell '16
Leah Rabinowitz '16
Eleanor Robb '16

Jack Ferver, Advisor

Characters

ABBY/GAMMA

Abigail Adler

ELEANOR/BETA

Eleanor Robb

LEAH/ALPHA

Leah Rabinowitz

SALOME/THETA

Salome Dewell

Fluorescent lights come up. Three nuns (SALOME, ELEANOR, ABBY) are sitting in metal chairs on stage. They begin their work. SALOME goes to back to polish silver, ELEANOR goes to sew/mend, ABBY peels potatoes. The fourth chair is empty. LEAH enters, holding her habit in her hand. She is unseen by the others. She sits, dons the habit, surveys the nuns. LEAH pushes her whole stack of BIBLES over. She pulls out a star magazine, begins reading. The sound of the bibles tipping over alerts the others, and they treat her as if she's been there the whole time.

SALOME

It would be soooo nice if we could all devote our minds and bodies to the tasks at hand. *LEAH takes no notice. ABBY and ELEANOR look over, interested.*

SALOME continued

The tasks at hand.

LEAH still does nothing. ABBY and ELEANOR look at each other, trying to figure out what to do.

SALOME

Put that thing down and sort, Sister. Or do you want extra time in the basement.

Beat. SALOME/ELEANOR/ABBY resume work. L picks up magazine again. ELEANOR and ABBY notice and are astonished and impressed by her brazenness. They look over at SALOME, who is hard at work. ELEANOR/ABBY sneak over to LEAH.

ABBY

Where did you find that?

LEAH

Around.

ELEANOR

Around where?

LEAH

I have my ways.

LEAH/ELEANOR/ABBY crowd around the magazine. ELEANOR gasps at something in the magazine, followed by giggles from LEAH/ABBY. SALOME looks up.

SALOME

What did I just say?

LEAH

Relax, I'm just taking a break.

SALOME

I swear to God in Heaven. When you are punished, you will do the work you are assigned, *without* breaks.

LEAH

Do you think you have that much authority to tell me what to do? Please. You don't even know how to send a confidential email.

SALOME

What?

LEAH

If someone just knew how the "reply all" function worked, and I hadn't read it, none of us would be here.

SALOME

All I ask is that we just do what we've been told so we can finish and continue our worship, which I'm sure, is in everyone's best interest.

ELEANOR

It was a little unfair of you to send that email from the library computer; after all we were working just as hard as you...

SALOME

Really? I can't believe you're still talking about that it happened, it was a mistake, get over-

ABBY

Stop! Stop it. Please.
There is a beat.

LEAH

You ladies can finish this magazine, I've got plenty more. I'm thirsty.

ABBY

There's a water pitcher in the corner....

LEAH

Like it's obvious- I'm thirsty. I'm getting something to drink.

ELEANOR

What is there to even drink down here?

LEAH

Let's play a game. Ladies, what do we drink on Sundays?

ABBY

Water.

ELEANOR

Ooh! Another glass of milk at dinner?

LEAH

NO. (*It's so obvious*)... At communion....

ABBY

Oh, the blood of the Lord!

ELEANOR

Oh right, yeah! Wine!

LEAH

Exactly.

ELEANOR

So what? We literally drink that every Sunday.

LEAH

Yeah, one mouthful. You gotta drink a little more for the real fun.

ELEANOR

But, like, *how*?

LEAH

(*Story telling esque*) Have you ever wondered where all the sacraments were kept when they weren't being used for church?

ABBY

I've never really thought about it.

LEAH

What if I told you that there was more than working—more fulfillments, more gratitude, and better sisterhood some other way?

ABBY

What does that have to do with communion?

ELEANOR

What do you mean?

LEAH

Open the cabinet.

ABBY

How? We can't do that-- we don't have the key.

LEAH

Don't worry sisters; I'll make sure you can do anything you want.

LEAH pulls a bobby pin from under her habit and gives it to ELEANOR and ABBY. They are mesmerized. They move in, ABBY takes the bobby pin with great care and brings it UPSTAGE CENTER with ELEANOR. ABBY begins to pick the lock.

ABBY

Are you sure this is supposed to work?

LEAH

Turn clockwise.

ELEANOR

How do you know that?

LEAH

I've had experience

ABBY fails. ELEANOR takes the pin. She succeeds. They pause. And turn to look at LEAH.

LEAH

Satisfaction awaits.

SALOME

What are you talking about? Who do you think you are?!

LEAH

You'll see.

ABBY and ELEANOR open the CABINET. Pandora's box moment. It's filled with some sort of mash up between a sorority closet and a dusty church cabinet. LEAH has decked it out with stolen tea lights, lots of wine and crackers, and outfits, pulled together from the church-run consignment shop/her own ingenuity. She has prepped for this moment for years. LEAH sidles up and pulls out two bottles, and four glasses.

ABBY gasps with delight as LEAH pours her and ELEANOR two huge glasses. She crosses to SALOME and leaves a glass at her feet. Moves CENTER.

LEAH

A toast. To a new sisterhood.

ELEANOR and ABBY move to flank LEAH. They cheers. SALOME looks on in horror. She starts to pray. SALOME has her eyes closed and prays more fervently throughout this. LEAH, ELEANOR, ABBY finish their wine.

LEAH

I'm hungry.

ABBY

Is there something to eat in the cabinet?

LEAH

Come sit with me. I'd love to share.

They move their chairs to form gossip corner diagonal from SALOME. LEAH goes back UPSTAGE CENTER to CABINET. ABBY and ELEANOR sit, excitedly waiting to see what comes next. SALOME is consumed with pious action- perhaps picking up discarded work, reading the bible, etc. LEAH brings a box of communion crackers.

LEAH

Here, eat some of these

ELEANOR

I can't believe we're eating these.

ABBY

I've never had more than one at a time! *Whispers* They're not that good when you eat more than one I think...

ELEANOR

Yeah, they're a little dry...

LEAH

Oh, do you want something else?

ABBY

Do you have something else?

ELEANOR

We wouldn't want to impose...

LEAH

No, not at all! Please, I want you to have satisfaction.

She gets up, goes to the CABINET. LEAH opens a drawer in the CABINET and pulls out a serving tray of assorted chocolate candies and grapes. She carries it to the cluster of chairs

LEAH

Abby.... how do you feel about peeling potatoes all day?

ABBY

Well, I guess this isn't the worst punishment I ever received here. *Lowers voice so that Sister SALOME cannot hear* One time, I once filled my bed with spare robes so I could sneak out of my room to smoke, but one day I forgot, and that's how she found me,

ABBY Continued

smoking Marlboros in the bathroom at 3 in the morning. I was on toilet duty for months after that.

LEAH

Oh no!

ABBY

It's better than when we had to shovel the sidewalk after that huge snowstorm because we talked during Monday night services, and we didn't have anything covering our faces

LEAH

That seems like overreacting.... Eleanor, this isn't your first time being punished right?

ELEANOR

No! Remember that time when I slept through the trip to the shrine and had to wake up for the next week two hours before everyone else and scrub the floors? My fingers were so dry and red, and so painful!

They all laugh, raucously.

LEAH

How excessive.

ABBY

Right?

ELEANOR

That's what we're saying! One time, we tried to argue a punishment for being late to dinner and then we got doubly punished.

ABBY

Or that time....

She stops- Upset.

LEAH

Abby, you can tell me anything. I'm here for you.

ABBY

That time when I got my knuckles struck with a ruler for...

It's quiet for a second. ABBY shakes her head, not going to continue. ELEANOR picks up.

ELEANOR

I guess we always seem to be getting in trouble... This is probably the best punishment we've ever had.

LEAH

You both deserve it.

ABBY

Thanks for listening to us... no one here really does.

LEAH

It was my pleasure.

ELEANOR

Hey what else was in that cabinet? Do you really mean when you say.... fulfillment?

LEAH

Oh, has being a novice not provided contentment for you?

ELEANOR

Well, not exactly... Joining the convent I thought I was getting the best of both worlds-sisterhood and serenity. But with all this work and all these punishments, I feel like I've lost sight of who I am... And I'm scared that... this isn't my true path.

LEAH

Her plan might work

Our lives can seem as if there is no direction or -

SALOME

Addressing Eleanor

You don't mean that, you cannot mean that.

ELEANOR

I think I do, I've never really been able to say it in words before, especially surrounded by all these sisters all the time. I feel like I'm trapped, that someone tipped an empty glass over me, so even if I screamed... no one would hear me.

ABBY

Anytime we expressed ourselves, it seemed like we were punished. We're constantly hidden. We sit and read in the parlor and the public views us from behind a gate. Literally.

ELEANOR

We are the amorphous voices filling the church every Sunday. And for what?

ABBY

Forgive me for thinking this can't be it.

SALOME

Think of the beauty. You are good and virtuous and pure.

ABBY

Our routines repeat an endless cycle-

SALOME

Your entire life is an endless cycle; it's all endless cycles- that is how life is. Heaven will free you from that. Just listen, just open your mind, He is speaking so clearly-

LEAH

Have you ever heard Him?

SALOME

How can you ask me that? Every night I pray, every waking moment I hear His voice ringing in my ears-

LEAH

What does He say to you?

SALOME

Everything. He reminds me of everything that I can be for Him, of all of the ways that I can do more, be more.

LEAH

So you're never enough.

SALOME

Of course not. If any of us were ever enough there would be no reason to live. I have always known I was meant for this. I have known ever since I was a child that when I became a nun, I would be the most devout, the most beautiful. I would strive for perfection. I can always improve, always do better. There is always more for me to reach for and to find.

LEAH

You'll always be empty. You will always be starving for more. Always hungry.

SALOME

This is the life I chose. This is the only life. This is the life I chose. I can always be better, I can always do more-

LEAH

You have no control, you have no meaning, you will never have satisfaction when you give away your power.

SALOME

I....

LEAH

You are powerless, why do you do this to yourself? Why do you think this is ok? This hierarchy that you subscribed to is holding you back, keeping you from the perfection you seek. It makes you dependent. It makes you pathetic.

SALOME

I am doing my duties, I work so hard, and I'm doing this for the greater good, I'm doing this for me.

LEAH

No you're not, you're just a cog in the large machine and you will never benefit from that. Why don't you believe me?

SALOME

Because I'm terrified! I just want to mean something

LEAH

I was once like you. I thought those same things. I thought I was worthless, this place made me feel worthless. But I have found the way to make all of those feelings evaporate. You can be someone. You can be complete. You can be so much better. You mean something to me.

(LEAH claps again. ELEANOR and ABBY sit up. SALOME stands up from her chair. LEAH takes SALOME's chair, pulls it upstage, and stands on it to deliver her sermon)

You're being asked to constantly produce. Create for the greater good placed well above your station. In this damp basement you toil, and for what? Some salvation that will be given to you once you die? But I've figured something out. I've heard it in the buzz of these lights, the undeniable current of energy that runs throughout our world. Who says we can't be in charge of our own production? I say we produce ourselves. Make us the most fulfilled, curious, most innovative, happiest people in the world. We can indulge in our pleasure, eschewing these stifling robes and confines for a higher calling. Our basement becomes our kingdom, and we will thrive. Trust me.

SALOME

I trust you.

ELEANOR looks around, raises her hand awkwardly, puts it down, fiddles with her robes

ELEANOR

How will we "thrive" in this musty basement?

LEAH

I have prepared everything to give you the tools you need to emerge, a beautiful, rewarded, devout BETA.

ELEANOR

A BETA?

LEAH

YES, part of this emergence is through creating a new self. Your new self is the best version- the prime model, the most up to date. I have that power.

ABBY

What would I be??

LEAH

You would become the supreme version of you- free of guilt and punishment, a GAMMA.

ABBY

Wow... A GAMMA

SALOME

Softly... And what would I be?

LEAH

With some consideration... A THETA.

SALOME

What does that mean?

LEAH

You'll be the best you. No more doubt. No more fears. A THETA. Confident and strong.

ELEANOR

And what will you be?

LEAH

I am the ALPHA

LEAH goes to the closet and brings out a small bag

LEAH

Now, do you pledge to follow my teachings and view me as your ALPHA?

SALOME/ELEANOR/LEAH

Yes.

From now on, they speak into the microphones.

ALPHA

Good. Let's begin.

She Claps again. BETA/GAMMA/THETA take their places for affirmation

Each of you please read one of your new life-affirming positive messages to live by.

BETA

Make updating a habit. Any moment you doubt yourself, you are a lesser version. Don't hesitate-innovate.

GAMMA

Your five senses are the only things that are real. Thrive in the beauty of truth, excellence, and tech.

THETA

ALPHA is the ultimate update. Strive to be like her, but remember that ALPHA created you.

ALL

WE'VE BEEN BEGUILLED BY THE IDEA THAT ANYONE ELSE IS IN CHARGE OF OUR PRODUCTION. WE'VE BEEN SUBMERGED BY FRUITLESS PIETY. WE RENOUNCE OUR PAST SELVES TO BECOME OUR BEST SELVES. WE WERE POWERLESS AND THE ONLY WAY TO REGAIN CONTROL IS TO LISTEN TO OUR ALPHA.

BETA

"There is a pain that hurts and a pain that changes you" Expel the pain that hurts.

GAMMA

There is an update that controls and an update that changes you. Expel the update that controls.

THETA

There is a god outside and a god inside of you. Expel the god outside of you.

ALL

WE ARE REPROGRAMING OUR SYSTEMS. WE HAVE BEEN LIVING OUR BEST SELVES FOR OTHERS. WE ARE RECLAIMING SELFISHNESS. WE ARE REINVENTING SISTERHOOD. WE ARE REDUCING OUR DEPENDENCY ON OTHERS AND NATURAL GAS. WE WILL BE HYBRIDS OF NEW TECHNOLOGY. *BETA GAMMA THETA move towards each other, they are together at last.*

BETA

I thought I would be saved by the church, but now I've found salvation.

GAMMA

I thought I would be fulfilled by the church, but now I've been fulfilled.

THETA

I thought I would be nothing without the church, but now I'm somebody.

ALL

I DON'T WANT TO BE THE OLD ME, I WANT TO BE THE BEST VERSION OF ME. I AM MYSELF 2.0. I AM INVINCIBLE IN MY NEW DESIGN. I AM SUPREME. TOGETHER WE ARE BEAUTIFUL. TOGETHER WE ARE CELESTIAL. TOGETHER WE ARE INFINITY

They scream as Alpha raises her arms, reveling in the chaos.

ALPHA

Now sign that you agree to the terms and conditions.

GAMMA

But it's so long!

BETA

Just sign it!!!!

They sign on the dotted line. All three turn and walk upstage to ALPHA, anxiously awaiting her blessings.

ALPHA

Bless you, my LETTERS.

ALPHA blows glitter on her new followers. They turn to face the audience, reveling in their new sisterhood.

ALPHA

Let's begin the first update.

BETA/GAMMA/THETA hold hands and march upstage, giggling. This is their Miss America moment. They have earned it.

Before the update can begin, there are three loud footsteps that emanate from above. BETA/GAMMA/THETA freeze, and look up.

THETA

How would we ever go back up there?

BETA

Why would we ever go back up there?

ALPHA

We will never go back up there. They aren't ALPHAS, BETAS, GAMMAS or THETAS. They are not as shiny as us. Our glows will not be diminished. We will pray to ourselves,

ALPHA continued

rejoicing in my creation of you. The communion is now our body and our blood. This basement is our heaven, real and here. We are saved.

We can be godly together.

ALPHA prepares for the first update. They freeze.

A blue screen with karaoke countdown bars appears. It counts down from eight to one.

Nothing happens. It counts down again. Nothing happens.

ELEANOR

I don't think I can generate anymore.

LEAH

Well, you have to.

LEAH claps. The four of them strike a pose, smiles wide and empty eyes.

The karaoke screen finally works. They sing.

Blackout.