

# Homo Economicus

A Poetic History of Money in 7 parts

*The audience is contained, somewhat tightly, within a veil: a rectangular wall of scrim 90'x30'x20'. Six Grecian pillars (30' high, and 4' in diameter) mark the six interval points of the rectangle. In the middle of the inside of the rectangle is a table. Half of the audience sits on one side of the table facing the other half of the audience sitting on the other side. On the outside of the veil (unseen by the audience), to allow for the crossfading of shadows, each square of scrim will have two light sources directed toward its surface. Actors and shadow puppeteers will utilize the space between the veil and the light sources. Behind the light sources, a total of 16 musicians will be set in line around the outer circumference of the perimeter. During the performance each day of the week will be presented on the veil at the beginning of each scene. The text for the last two scenes will be developed through improvisational performance exercises.*

*The table in the center of the audience is a table, but the table is a tree. The people in each of the seven scenes are flowers. Flowers that move to the rhythm of the tree and its economy. The flowers are propelled by their language- which is the blood running through the veins of their leaves. Their language, too, reflects the economic movements of their time.*

*At the end of each scene, the leaves fall; the people die, and the choir sings a passage from Job 38 as the stage hands clean up the set and pull the bodies off stage. They bring in new bodies, and a new set dressing while the choir continues to sing and the nature music theme unfolds. The flowers bloom as the lights go up on the scene. This repeats, seasonally, with each scene.*

*Job 38 serves as the source text for the performance's thematic musical material.*

*The words will not be read aloud, but sections will be sung by the choir in the overture and in interludes. This music is to be used in the prelude/creation scene and will double as the source material for the continuing nature/creation motifs that will move beneath the ideas of money and work presented by the actors. This "nature music" will also serve as a counterpoint to the ongoing shadowy visions of history passing along the veil.*

## Overture

*Darkness.*

*A woman's moan escalates into a brief shimmer. Pain.*

*A single point of a light appears on the veil.*

*More lights. The orchestra and choir begin to roll over themselves in waves of chaos.*

*Stars plunge across the sky. Over the course of millions of years they quiver into place.*

*Below, water takes shape.*

*As it begins to form and separate into land, the chest of the idea of the human frame rattles in its unreadiness. This is too much in the way that a 30 foot wave thudding onto the beach is too much. To touch it would be to break beneath it. We feel this power.*

*(On the veil) Trees... and then a dim distant tree, murky and clouded. They disappear.*

*(Music) Splashes of chains wash up on the beach.*

*(Music and veil) In slow rolling pulses, the language of drums appear from beneath the waves of the orchestra.*

*The crushing rhythm of 1,000 ton blocks slide into place across the desert.*

*Chains pull across the world of sand.*

*Something is built.*

## Saturday

Los Angeles, early 2007

Prelude to a Crash

*A black couple sits at the kitchen table, going over bills, trying to make difficult financial decisions about their house. They are on the brink of divorce. The nation is on the brink of near financial collapse.*

*His mother was a leading figure in the local civil rights movements.*

*He is a photographer who now works for Getty images, managing a small team of graphic designers who sift through images of fruit. His most recent assignment is to collect images of wax fruit for a commercial installation. Dozens of pictures of wax fruit cover the table.*

*Raised by a single mom, she used to argue against having children, but now wants to have a child.*

*The couple's language displays the tension between formless, intuitive improvisation and the efficient structure of dialectical reasoning. The two forms wash back and forth. Occasionally a moment of deep communion between the two arises, only to be overtaken by chaos or control.*

## Movement 1:

**Dialogue:** She loosely narrates his actions from the perspective of Africa. Speaks to him.

**Movement:** He enacts people from the following periods:

1. River People
2. Egypt
5. Slavery
6. Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Entertainment
7. Civil Rights / Revolution

## Movement 2:

**Dialogue:** He recites a list of identities. Improvises from each perspective.

**Movement:** She picks up and folds the costumes that are on the floor, cleans the house.

1. I am a Painter
2. I am a Photographer
3. I am a Graphic Designer
4. I am the son of a civil rights leader
5. I am the manager of a team of graphic designers
6. I am the one who has almost "made it"
7. I am the one who sifts through images of wax fruit for a commercial installation

## Movement 3:

**Dialogue:** Her inner-monologue / conversation with audience begins to be heard. There are now overlapping internal monologues. The two performers NEVER interact directly. Mainly, the connections between the two are reflected in the shifts of their private, internal monologue. We can hear them hearing each other... but they are not talking to each other. They can disagree. They can even say "I love you." But they can never talk to one another.

He:

1. Recites 5 steps to a real life. Improvises about each one.(1. Go to college...Get a good job...Buy a house...Have Children...Retire...Leave a legacy)
2. Recites interest rates, mortgage rates, stock prices.
3. Recites excerpts from his to do list.
4. Infrequently recites reasons why he knows she is NOT pregnant. Explains what a hysterical pregnancy is.

She:

1. She will say to people in the audience "I am pregnant" "I am going to have a baby" She is almost gloating. She is glowing.
2. Talks about the changes in her body due to her pregnancy (see list below)
3. Talks about what their perfect life will be like after the baby is born. How full of life it will be.

Here are some of the physical effects that can be brought on by a "hysterical pregnancy".

- a. The menstrual periods nevertheless cease.
- b. The abdomen becomes enlarged.
- c. And the breasts swell and even secrete milk.
- d. The uterus and cervix may show signs of pregnancy.
- e. Urine tests may be falsely positive.
- f. And the woman may report sensations of fetal movements.
- g. A woman may believe in her pregnancy to the point of [delusion](#) and show acute [depression](#) when no baby is born. It has been suggested that depression can sometimes alter the activity of the [pituitary gland](#) so as to cause hormone level changes that mimic the hormone changes of real pregnancy.

**Movement:** Both pacing around the space...making sure to stay on opposite sides of the space...

**End cues:** Once he positions himself at the table He will repeat: "She should sign the paper. She should sign paper. She should sign the paper. She should sign the paper. She should sign the paper..."

She will sign the paper and then say, "I am pregnant".

(Lights Out)