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Unpacking BEFORE the Journey: Stewing in the Joy of Rehearsal

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

“Unpacking BEFORE the Journey”:  
Stewing in the Joy of Rehearsal

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Michael Turner

Committee in charge:

Gregory Wallace, Chair  
Ursula Meyer  
Charles Oates  
Manuel Rotenberg

2016

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The thesis of Michael Turner is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2016

## DEDICATION

For Mom.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

“Unpacking BEFORE the Journey” :  
Stewing in the Joy of Rehearsal

by

Michael Turner

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California, San Diego, 2016

Professor Gregory Wallace, Chair

Before coming to UCSD I had this job where I traveled nearly every week. I got very good at traveling. I knew exactly where to leave my car, where to eat in every airport and exactly what to pack for any trip without thinking about it. But, I HATED to unpack. My wife would get upset at me as my packed bag would sometimes sit there until it was time to leave again. At which point, I'd dump out the old things, toss in the new, and away I went.

When I played Berenger in Rhinoceros, I learned that unpacking can be as fun as the trip itself. It was the first show I have ever done where the processing of unpacking the show was more fun than actually performing it. I really enjoyed rehearsing. The show was a mystery that simply couldn't be solved. So every day I had to come in like a detective and search for more and more clues. This exploration was truly enlightening. It taught me the ways I normally look for clues and their shortcomings. And, in turn, it taught me that the art of being a good detective (and hence a good actor) is to always find new ways to search. And in this way I realized that often, the process, gives more lessons than the performance ever can. Lessons of acting, lessons of life, lessons of empathy and mostly the lesson that, life isn't about the destination, it's about what you have in your bag when you get there.