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ABSTRACT

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF TRENDS IN DRAMATIC STYLES IN THE SUCCESSFUL, SERIOUS AMERICAN DRAMA OF THE BROADWAY STAGE IN THE 1920'S

by Charles Everett Lauterbach

The purpose of this study was to describe trends in dramatic styles in the successful, serious American dramas which were produced in the commercial theatres of New York during the period from 1919 to 1929. The study attempted to find out what the overall stylistic trends were, what styles appeared, what the dominant style of the period was, how frequently different styles were employed, whether combinations of styles appeared in plays, and what similarities or differences were displayed in plays related to particular dramatic styles. The study was limited to the consideration of popularly and critically successful, serious plays (tragedy, drama, and melodrama) which were written by native or foreign dramatists for original production on the Broadway stage.

A method for identifying dramatic styles was established that provided for a consideration of the principles, general characteristics, and form elements of a style. The method was employed to formulate criteria for identifying eight modern dramatic styles--Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Formalism, Futurism, and Surrealism.

The criteria for identifying dramatic styles were used to analyse forty-six successful, serious plays selected from the American drama of the 1920's. The plays were selected from every third

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The stylistic analyses of the forty-six plays were compared and conclusions drawn. While only four of ten theatrical seasons had been studied, it was felt that the particular conclusions reached in the investigation were reflective of the state of dramatic styles in all the seasons of the period. However, it was not claimed that all the trends in style in the serious drama of the 1920's had been discovered.

On the basis of the data collected it was possible to make the following conclusions.

1. In regard to style, successful, serious American drama of the 1920's changed from a state of near uniformity at the beginning of the decade to a state of multiformity by 1929.

2. Successful, serious plays were written in four dramatic styles: Romanticism, Realism, Expressionism, and Naturalism.

3. Symbolism, Formalism, Futurism, and Surrealism either did not appear in the theatrical seasons covered in this study or they were not adopted by American playwrights who wrote successful, serious drama.

4. Romanticism was the dominant style of successful, serious American plays in the 1920's. Realism was the second most prevalent style in the decade. Expressionism and Naturalism were minor stylistic movements.

5. A trend toward electricism was evident in the styles of serious drama in the 1920's.

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6. Similarities and differences among plays related to particular styles varied according to the styles. Romantic plays tended to be divided into two different groups, but the plays in each group were inclined to be similar. Plays associated with Realism were similar in style, but some were oriented toward the element of character and others toward the element of theme. Plays related to Expressionism tended to differ from each other. Dramas related to the style of Naturalism were quite similar to each other.

7. While Realism was not the dominant style of the period, it was a very major influence on other styles.

8. Realism was the dominant style of critically successful dramas. Romanticism was the dominant style of popularly successful dramas. Expressionism and Naturalism were not generally accepted by the theatre audiences of the period.

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1967

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF TRENDS IN DRAMATIC STYLES
IN THE SUCCESSFUL, SERIOUS AMERICAN DRAMA
OF THE BROADWAY STAGE IN THE 1920'S

By

Charles Everett Lauterbach

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The writer wishes to acknowledge the help and thought of Mr. John E. Clifford and Mr. Anthony L. Kadlec who contributed to the early planning and research of this study which was originally part of a joint project to describe stylistic trends in the American drama from 1919 to the present.

The writer also wishes to express gratitude to Dr. John A. Waite of the Department of English, Dr. Colby Lewis of the Department of Radio and Television, Dr. E. C. Reynolds of the Department of Speech, and Dr. John E. Dietrich, former head of the Department of Speech, for serving on the Guidance Committee of this study. A special note of thanks is due to Dr. James R. Brandon of the Department of Speech for his patience and understanding as the author's major adviser.

Above all, the writer would like to thank his wife for her sacrifice and aid which contributed so much to the completion of this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the third decade of the twentieth century, American theatre audiences witnessed the early plays of such renowned native dramatists as Eugene O'Neill, Sidney Howard, Robert Sherwood, Elmer Rice, Maxwell Anderson, and John Howard Lawson. Broadway welcomed innovations from European drama and theatre. The "New Stagecraft" made scene design an important factor in American theatre. By 1928, the number of theatres in New York rose to eighty. "Without a doubt the twenties proved that the American drama had achieved its majority."¹

The flowering of American drama in the twenties was marked by the appearance of a variety of newly imported dramatic styles. American drama, along with the drama of other nations, "became more fully aware of style than it had been for centuries."² While most innovations in dramatic style began abroad, "many of the most able and characteristic developments of particular dramatic styles" came "from the western shores of the Atlantic."³

¹Allardyce Nicoll, "United States of America," The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, ed. Phyllis Hartnoll (2d ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 812-813.

²John Gassner, The Theatre in Our Time (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1954), p. 7.

³Allardyce Nicoll, World Drama (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1949), p. 759.

The involvement of American playwrights of the 1920's in various experiments in dramatic style has been noted in general terms on numerous occasions. Yet investigations of this involvement are needed to render more precise observations on the appearance and development of stylistic movements in the American drama of the period. This thesis is one contribution toward fulfilling that end.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe the trends of modern dramatic styles in successful serious American plays produced on the professional New York stage between 1919 and 1929. The results of the study answer such questions as:

1. What were the overall stylistic trends of the period? What styles were exhibited in the dramas of this period?
2. Was there a dominant dramatic style in the 1920's? How frequently were different styles employed?
3. Did dramas of the 1920's contain combinations of dramatic styles?
4. What were the similarities in plays related to particular dramatic styles? What were the differences?

Definitions

Before going into the content of this study, some terms which are used in special ways require definition. "Trend" is here used as the prevailing tendency or inclination. "Modern dramatic styles" are those ways or manners of writing a play which are customarily labelled

as Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, etc.⁴ "Successful" in the context of this study describes dramas which were either commercial and/or critical successes. A play is considered to be a commercial success when its length of run was over one hundred performances.⁵ A play is considered to be a critical success if, (1) it was judged by its reviewers at the time of its original production to be a worthwhile play; (2) it was singled out as a play of merit in the years following its production in the commentary of drama critics or historians; (3) it was anthologized; or (4) it received recognition by winning any major drama awards. "Serious" includes the dramatic types of tragedy, drama, and melodrama. "American plays" are those which were written originally for the American theatre by either native or foreign authors. "Professional New York stage" is a term used to describe the commercial theatres of New York City which produce plays for profit.⁶

Limitations

This study is exclusively a descriptive study seeking to determine the trends in dramatic styles in the American drama of the 1920's. It is not an attempt at a complete history of dramatic styles of the

⁴See Chapter II for a more complete explanation and definition of style.

⁵In the Burns Mantle Best Play series for the 1920's, a production of one hundred performances is the standard for determining whether or not a play is a commercial success.

⁶The decision as to whether a play was produced professionally is based on the information included in the statistical summaries of Broadway seasons found in the appropriate editions of the Burns Mantle Best Play series.

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Secondly, although there are four areas of theatre which can be discussed in terms of style (direction, playscript, scenery, and acting), this study is limited to the consideration of playscripts only. Thirdly, this study deals only with plays written originally for production on the New York stage for the particular years under examination. This excludes plays from abroad, translations or adaptations of foreign plays, and revivals from past seasons of American drama. The majority of sources consulted for this study are from the broad area of drama and theatre. Historical, literary, and artistic sources are employed only when applicable or germane to discussions.

Significance of Study

This investigation of the stylistic development in the American drama of the 1920's is significant for two reasons. First of all, dramatic styles in themselves constitute a major area of importance in the criticism and discussion of drama. Second, the period under investigation is an important decade in the development of a truly American drama.

The concern with dramatic style, while not original with the twentieth century, is of particular importance in modern drama. Haskell M. Block and Robert G. Shedd, in their anthology, Masters of the Modern Drama, contend that, "although such terms as naturalism and symbolism, realism and theatricalism, are often artificial, we must recognize the distinctive qualities of these and other movements if we

are to understand modern drama."⁷

As for the importance of the 1920's in the history of American drama, John Mason Brown describes it this way:

It was not puberty but maturity that the American theatre achieved . . . , during the years which followed World War I and preceded the Depression The twenties were good days in the American theatre.⁸

He cites the influx of "noteworthy European plays," the scripts of "a new generation of . . . native dramatists," and the "aesthetic revolt" of dramatic artists as examples of "memorable moments" in the drama and theatre of the 1920's.⁹ Similar points of view are expressed by Barrett H. Clark,¹⁰ Joseph Wood Krutch,¹¹ and Allardyce Nicoll.¹²

This study has three distinctive features. The first is the use of a consistent, systematic method to describe dramatic styles. Such a method is lacking in previously written works, or is not employed to deal with a number of styles. Many books deal with the subject of dramatic style, usually only as a part of a wider field of investigation. In such books the manner of describing styles generally consists of the selection of a few striking characteristics from a number of

⁷Haskell M. Block, Robert G. Shedd, eds., Masters of the Modern Drama (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962), p. 3.

⁸John Mason Brown, Dramatis Personae (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), p. 3.

⁹Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰Barrett H. Clark, "The United States," A History of Modern Drama, ed. Barrett H. Clark and George Freedley (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1947), p. 654.

¹¹Joseph Wood Krutch, The American Drama Since 1918 (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1957), pp. 10-25.

¹²Allardyce Nicoll, World Drama (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1949), p. 759.

exemplary plays. This approach to stylistic description is operative in such recognized works as John Gassner's Form and Idea in Modern Theatre¹³ and Mordecai Gorelik's New Theatres for Old.¹⁴ This approach, while it may serve to identify individual styles, does not often clearly reveal the interrelationships among the elements which appear in the differing styles. In brief, no consistent or systematic manner of description is applied throughout such books. A few works — The Art of the Drama by Fred Millett and Gerald Bentley,¹⁵ Theodore Hatlen's Orientation to the Theatre,¹⁶ and Oscar Brockett's The Theatre: An Introduction¹⁷—do employ consistent approaches to style descriptions. However, the first book merely groups observations about the elements of particular styles under a single heading of "quality" and does not display any consistency of description within this heading. In his book, Hatlen presents an organized and consistent approach to dealing with styles, but only includes three styles — Realism, Naturalism, and Expressionism. In the third book, The Theatre: An Introduction, Mr. Brockett covers many dramatic styles in a consistent manner, but confines his descriptions to the analysis of a single exemplary drama.

¹³John Gassner, Form and Idea in the Modern Theatre (New York: The Dryden Press, Inc., 1956).

¹⁴Mordecai Gorelik, New Theatres for Old (New York: Samuel French, 1940).

¹⁵Fred B. Millett and Gerald Eades Bentley, The Art of the Drama (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935).

¹⁶Theodore H. Hatlen, Orientation to the Theatre (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962).

¹⁷Oscar G. Brockett, The Theatre: An Introduction (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1964).

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A second distinctive feature of this study is the attempt to reflect general critical opinions concerning the elements and attributes of particular dramatic styles. The criteria for identifying styles are compiled from a large number of sources which pertain to the field of drama and consequently present general opinions of what constitutes particular dramatic styles.

A third distinctive feature is an objective, systematic manner of selecting representative plays which takes into account both commercially and critically successful dramas. This process avoids personal, subjective selection of plays and presents a more accurate picture of given theatrical seasons in regard to their important plays. This is in contrast to two common practices of selecting plays to represent the development of American drama in the 1920's. One is the citation of enduring, quality dramas as symptomatic of the growth of drama, a practice which leads to the distortion of conditions as they actually were. The other is equally distortive and relies on the performance records of plays as an indication of achievement in the growth of drama. This study unites both approaches to treat qualitative and quantitative aspects of success in the drama of the United States.

Design of Study

Briefly, the design of this study consists of four parts. The first part covers two aspects: establishment of a method for consistent stylistic description and selection of the styles treated in this study (Chapter II). The second part establishes criteria for classifying eight dramatic styles (Chapters III-VIII). In the third part, selected groups of plays from the 1920's are compared to the

criteria in order to determine the styles of the plays (Chapters IX-XII). Then conclusions are drawn regarding the trends in modern dramatic styles in the serious American drama of the 1920's (Chapter XIII).

Criteria for establishing descriptions of dramatic styles were developed in the following manner. Information from books and articles pertaining to the drama and theatre was compared in order to determine generally accepted views on the traits of particular dramatic styles. These views were then presented in a form devised for this study which includes the principles on which a style is based, the general characteristics of a style, and the use of stylistic form elements associated with drama (plot, character, etc.). When there was a difference of opinion about what constituted a stylistic trait or when information was lacking in printed sources, additional commentary concerning particular aspects was supplied by the author of this study.

The plays from the American drama of the 1920's were selected in the following way: every third theatrical season, beginning with 1919-1920, was selected for study. This selection of every third season was done for two reasons. First, trends "do not make themselves felt in a single season."¹⁸ Second, it was impractical to locate, read, and analyze all of the hundreds of serious plays produced in the professional theatre of the 1920's. The theatrical seasons selected for this study were those of 1919-1920, 1922-1923, 1925-1926, and 1928-1929. Each season is treated in a separate chapter (IX-XII).

Next, employing the information included in the Burns Mantle Best Play editions for the selected theatrical seasons, a list of

¹⁸Clark, p. 678.

forty-six serious American plays and their lengths of production was drawn up. All plays which ran over one hundred performances were chosen for stylistic analysis. Any serious play which ran less than one hundred but more than fifty performances whose reviews at the time of its opening considered it to be artistically successful, was also included. Any play which ran less than one hundred performances but was afterward successfully revived or later anthologized, or in any other manner singled out as a worthwhile play, was also included.

The forty-six successful serious American plays which were chosen by this selective process were analyzed to determine their general characteristics and form elements of style. These analyses were compared to the criteria established herein for describing the various dramatic styles in order to identify the style of the plays. From such a determination, each theatrical season was summarized, indicating the conditions regarding the dramatic styles in that season. When all four seasons had been treated in this manner, they were compared to one another, and conclusions about stylistic trends in American drama of the 1920's were drawn.

Sources

Primary sources employed in this study consist of forty-six plays selected from the period of 1919 through 1929. Of these, thirty have been published and the remainder are in manuscript form.¹⁹ In addition, some use was made of essays, prefaces, and manifestoes by

¹⁹Two plays were never located in either published or manuscript form. Rather than exclude them entirely, an attempt was made to recreate their basic stylistic traits from secondary sources such as reviews and the material contained in Best Plays editions.

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A number of secondary sources were employed in this study. The Burns Mantle editions of Best Plays from 1919 to 1929 were used for information on plays produced in a given year, including length of run, type, author, and other pertinent data. Books, journals, and magazines devoted primarily to the fields of drama and theatre were used in the development of criteria for describing dramatic styles. Sections of encyclopedias, dictionaries, and literary histories were used when the information contained in them had some bearing on the stylistic aspect of drama. Non-dramatic sources which were cited or recommended by authors in the field of drama and theatre were referred to for this study. English or English translations were used exclusively.

CHAPTER II

DRAMATIC STYLES: DEFINITION, METHODOLOGY, AND APPLICATION

The purpose of this chapter is to define "style" as it is used in this study, to explain the method employed for describing dramatic styles, and to list those styles which will be considered in this study.

Definition of Style

For purposes of this study, style in drama is defined as a characteristic or distinctive way, manner, or mode of selecting, arranging, and emphasizing the elements of dramatic construction which is peculiar to a play or group of plays and which at the same time distinguishes it or them from other plays. This is in no way a final or absolute definition, but serves only to identify the meaning of style assumed in subsequent discussions.

The above definition was arrived at by comparing a number of definitions of style found in general references, art histories, books on aesthetics, and works pertaining to drama. As such it is in fundamental agreement with generally accepted concepts of style. Among the definitions consulted are the following:

Webster's Third International Dictionary defines the word "style" as it pertains to aesthetics as "a quality that gives distinctive excellence to something (as artistic expression) and that consists esp.

in the appropriateness and choice of elements (as subject, medium, form) combined and the individualism imparted by the method of combining."

Hiram Moderwell in The Theatre of Today describes style in drama as a "manner of executing a work of art, as contrasted with the work itself."¹

The art historian, Janson, writes that "style means the particular way in which the forms that make up any given work of art are chosen and fitted together."²

In The Arts and Their Interrelations, Thomas Munro states that "a style is a distinctive or characteristic mode of presentation, construction or expression in art."³

Oscar Brockett contends that style is a quality which results from a characteristic mode of expression or method of presentation and "may be applied to the dramatic expression of a period, a nation, a movement, or an author."⁴

Finally, the Encyclopedia of the Arts says, "Starting with . . . the figurative sense, style means those characteristics of form which are peculiar to a certain work or a group of works and which at the

¹Hiram Kelley Moderwell, The Theatre of Today (New York: John Lane Co., 1914), p. 118.

²H. W. Janson, History of Art (New York: Harry W. Abrams, Inc., 1962), p. 36.

³Thomas Munro, The Arts and Their Interrelations (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1949), p. 379.

⁴Brockett, p. 44.

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Common elements found in these definitions of style are: a characteristic manner of executing a work of art, that forms or elements are involved in determining the manner of expression, and that works of art may be grouped according to their styles. The definition of style adopted for this study attempts to include these generally accepted ideas.

A Method for Describing Dramatic Styles

The investigation of style in drama does not materially differ from investigation of style in any other art. The basis of all such investigations is dependent on a constancy in art whereby "direct acquaintance with an unanalyzed work of art will often permit us to recognize another object of the same origin, just as we recognize a face to be native or foreign."⁶ The constancy in art may make possible the recognition of stylistic similarities in works of art, but "the single name given to the style of a period rarely corresponds to a clear and universally accepted characterization of a type."⁷

Furthermore, "styles are not usually defined in a strictly logical way" since their "characteristics . . . vary constantly and resist a systematic classification into perfectly distinct groups."⁸

⁵Alois J. Schardt, "Style," Encyclopedia of the Arts, ed. Dagobert D. Runes and Harry G. Schrickel (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), p. 974.

⁶Meyer Schapiro, "Style," A Modern Book of Esthetics, ed. Melvin Rader (3rd ed.; New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 338.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

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Although perfection in the description and classification of styles appears to be impossible, "limits are sometimes fixed by convention for simplicity in dealing with historical problems or in isolating a type."⁹

In this section this study fixes limits by convention for the investigation of dramatic styles. Since no standard manner for such investigation exists, it has been necessary to develop and organize a descriptive method which is applicable to dramatic styles. This method makes possible an orderly and systematic presentation of the commentary on dramatic styles found in written sources pertaining to the drama. As such, the method provides a framework for presenting the ideas and concepts of dramatic styles as expressed by drama critics and scholars.

In brief the framework is divided into three parts: (1) principles, the over-all ideas upon which a style is based and which determine its development; (2) general characteristics, the qualities and impressions of a style which are apparent when a play is considered as a whole; and (3) form elements, the treatment of the parts of a play (plot, character, language, and theme) which make up the whole.

Principles of Style

Styles do not arise arbitrarily. They develop or change according to corresponding developments or changes in the philosophies, attitudes, and conditions of either the culture in which they appear or the art form of which they are a part.

⁹Ibid.

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Thomas Munro writes that "trends in artistic styles are never independent, but parts of still larger cultural trends embracing all forms of thought and behavior: social, political, economic, religious, and scientific."¹⁰ A similar view is expressed by Theodore M. Greene when he states,

No culture or society, . . . , is static, and no individual artist, . . . , is immune to cultural and social influences. Societies and individuals alike are continually undergoing internal change, These changes in outlook are reflected in the emergence of new styles.¹¹

The same general view is voiced in connection with the more limited area of dramatic style by John Gassner. In Producing the Play he points out that "different styles arose in response to different points of view, intentions, and conditions."¹² He expands on this statement in Form and Idea in the Modern Theatre when he writes

. . . . I relate the forms of modern drama to certain "ideas of the theatre" — that is, to certain conceptions of theatrical art and certain expectations from it. By "idea" I do not mean subject matter, but the view of theatre apparent in the play , and the special esthetic aim pursued in the work It is often difficult to distinguish between and artist's view of theatre and his view of life, society, politics or religion Nevertheless, I employ "idea" to mean something larger than mere topic or opinion, I use the term to denote some specific way of conceiving the nature and use of theatre, which in turn helps to determine dramatic form and stage presentation.¹³

From these statements it can be seen that style is dependent

¹⁰Munro, p. 339.

¹¹Theodore Meyer Greene, The Arts and the Art of Criticism (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 383.

¹²John Gassner, Producing the Play (revised ed.; New York: The Dryden Press, Inc., 1953), p. 53.

¹³Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 4.

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upon and reflective of the outlooks, views, conditions, or ideas of its environment, whether it be that of the total culture or the more limited one of an art form such as drama. The dependence of style on underlying cultural or aesthetic principles can be seen, for example, in the drama of ancient Greece. Here the dramatic style was influenced by the religious and philosophical concepts of the Athenian society. The idea that man's fate was predetermined, an intrinsic part of Greek religious belief, was reflected in the drama of the period. The unified structure of the plot, the consistency of character, and the regularity of the poetic dialogue can also be viewed as extensions of the Greek cultural ideals of proportion, harmony, and order.

In light of the above observations, it is deemed reasonable to begin the discussion of particular dramatic styles with a consideration of the ideas, points of view, or philosophical attitudes upon which the styles are based. For the sake of convenience, the word "principle" is used as a heading for this portion of style description and is understood to be a general term encompassing the various concepts of idea, world-view, philosophy, attitude, and point of view.

Characteristics of Style

Although a knowledge of the principles underlying a style is helpful in understanding its development, the actual identification or description of a style depends on an examination of its characteristics. In this study the characteristics of dramatic styles are separated into two groups, general characteristics and form elements.

This division into two groups is prompted by the remarks of Meyer Schapiro, Professor of Art History at Columbia University, in

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his comprehensive essay on style and its description. He says that, while there is no established system for describing style, "in general the description of style refers to three aspects of art: form elements or motives, form relationships, and qualities (including an over-all quality which we may call 'expression')." ¹⁴ He believes these aspects to be the broadest, most stable, and most reliable bases for style description. ¹⁵

Two of the aspects of art mentioned by Schapiro are covered in this study under the title of general characteristics. These aspects are qualities (including expression) and form relationships. The third aspect, form elements, is treated under the title of form elements.

General Characteristics

Although Schapiro lists form elements first, and deems them quite important, he does not feel that a description of form elements alone is sufficient for delineating a style. He contends, "In order to distinguish . . . styles one must also look for features of another order and, above all, for different ways of combining them." ¹⁶ He points out that the elements which make up a style "seem to be marked by the expression of the whole, or that there is a dominant feature to which the elements are adapted." ¹⁷ It is these "features of another order," "the expression of the whole," and "dominant features," together with the previously mentioned qualities and form relationships, which are the general characteristics of a style.

¹⁴Schapiro, p. 338.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 339.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 342.

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For example, the historic dramatic style of French Neo-Classicism may be said to have an austere and artificial quality. Its over-all expression can be described as one of reason and/or rationality with dominant features of decorum, elevation, and dignity. It displays a relationship of form elements in combining poetic expression, aristocratic characters, and a simple plot which adheres to the unities of action, time and place. This very relationship aids in the projection of the qualities of austerity and artificiality.

Another example of form relationship as a characteristic of dramatic style appears in the various uses of the soliloquy in drama. The fact that a soliloquy appears in a play is not as significant in identifying a style as is the particular relation the soliloquy has to the rest of the play. A soliloquy can be "constructive" in explaining the plot or relating off-stage events, or "reflective" in revealing a character's thoughts and feelings.¹⁸ In both instances the relation of the soliloquy to the structure of the play is more significant for determining the style of the play than the mere appearance of the soliloquy itself.

In summary, the general characteristics of dramatic style are described as qualities, expressions, dominant features, and form relationships. They are the over-all impressions of the style arising from the view of the play as a whole.

Form Elements

The most readily identifiable aspects of a style are those of its form elements. In drama these form elements are generally

¹⁸Cassner, Form and Idea , p. 171.

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accepted to be those described by Aristotle in his Poetics. They are plot, character, language, theme, music, and spectacle.¹⁹ Of these, only the first four are included in the criteria for the identification of dramatic styles. Music is excluded because it "is no longer an invariable part of drama."²⁰ Spectacle is also excluded because its primary means of realization is in theatre production and is therefore difficult to discuss in terms of dramatic literature.

1. Plot is the structuring or patterning of the events of the play and includes such aspects as content, action, conflict, point of attack, exposition, climax, and resolution.

2. Character is a term for the persons who appear in the drama and who carry out the dramatic action of the plot. The term includes the physical, mental, social, and moral aspects of these people.

3. Language is the dialogue spoken by the characters. It imparts information, reveals character, and directs attention to the development of the plot.

4. Theme is the over-all meaning and significance of the action of a drama. Its aspects also include the ideas, arguments, and thoughts expressed in thoughts expressed in the play.

Application

The method of describing dramatic styles discussed in preceding paragraphs is applied in this study to eight modern dramatic styles --

¹⁹Aristotle, "The Poetics," Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, ed. S. H. Butcher (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1951), pp. 23-25. The word "theme" has been substituted for "thought" which is a common translation of the Greek word for Aristotle's dramatic element. "Theme" and "thought" roughly connote the same concept, but "theme" seems to be more widely used in modern dramatic criticism.

²⁰Brockett, p. 26.

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Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Formalism, Futurism, and Surrealism. This selection is based on the fact that they are recognized as being significant dramatic styles in modern drama by critics and commentators.²¹ While these dramatic styles are considered to be of equal importance to this study, there must be some difference in the manner of discussing them in subsequent chapters. Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism,²² Symbolism, and Expressionism are

²¹See, for example, John Gassner, Producing the Play (New York: The Dryden Press, Inc., 1953); Mordecai Gorelik, New Theatres for Old (New York: Samuel French, 1940); Oscar Brockett, The Theatre: An Introduction (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1964); Fred B. Millett and Gerald Eades Bentley, The Art of the Drama (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935); Edward A. Wright, A Primer for Playgoers (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958); Kenneth Thorp Rowe, A Theatre in Your Head (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1960); H. D. Albright, William P. Halstead, Lee Mitchell, Principles of Theatre Art (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1955); Haskell M. Block, Robert G. Shedd, eds. Masters of the Modern Drama (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962); and Allardyce Nicoll, World Drama (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1949).

²²The inclusion of Naturalism as a major dramatic style requires some clarification. An examination of twentieth century dramatic commentary reveals two distinct theories concerning Naturalism as a dramatic style. One theory is that Naturalism is only a heightened and intensified form of Realism, and not a separate, distinguishable style. The second theory postulates that Naturalism is a distinct style by virtue of Zola's so-called "scientific determinism."

Typical of the first group, those who believe that Naturalism "is an extreme form of realism," is John Gassner (Producing the Play, p. 62). According to him, Realism is the general style "developed by the militant champions of Realism" (Treasury of the Theatre: From Henrik Ibsen to Arthur Miller [revised ed., New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950] p.4). He indicates that environment is a determining factor in the idea of Naturalism (Form and Idea . . ., pp. 66-67). To him this is not sufficient reason to distinguish Naturalism from Realism, since one of his criteria for Realism is also that environment and heredity are determinate factors in the formation of character. As a result his logical position is that Naturalism (as an adjunct of Realism) signifies only "a strict, often extreme, mode of Realism . . . and a rather narrow dogma introduced . . . by Emile Zola (Ibid., p. 67).

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dealt with in separate chapters (III-VII). Formalism, Futurism, and Surrealism are discussed in separate sections of a single chapter (VIII). This difference in the treatment of dramatic styles is prompted by a practical consideration. The critical commentary on the three latter styles is not sufficient to allow a complete description in terms of the method outlined earlier in this chapter. However, they are discussed in as complete a manner as sources permit. Since the criteria for stylistic identification in this study are based on a survey of critical opinions, they can only reflect the state and extent of commentary on individual styles. In view of the fact that the commentary on Formalism, Futurism, and Surrealism appears to be limited, their discussion in this study is also limited. However, they are presented in a manner which allows them to be recognized should

differences between the two styles are in their principles and general qualities, while their similarities, or near similarities, are in their form elements. Heffner, for example, claims that Naturalism can be differentiated from Realism "not by a method, but as a philosophy of life and literature" (Hubert C. Heffner, Samuel Selden, and Hunton D. Sellman, Modern Theatre Practice [4th ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1959], p. 73). In practice it "extends and intensifies the methods of realism," but in idea it follows Zola (*Ibid.*, p. 74). Brockett advances an almost identical view when he writes, "Naturalism, however, went much further than realism, for it insisted that art must become scientific in its methods, and it placed greater emphasis on the idea that all behavior is determined by the forces of heredity and environment (p. 275). It is the thought of these writers that Zola's concept of scientific determinism with its resultant heavy emphasis on heredity and environment as the sole determinants of behavior is significant enough to warrant Naturalism's place as a separate style.

In this study Naturalism is considered to be a separate and distinguishable dramatic style from Realism for the reasons expressed by writers adhering to the second view of Naturalism in the discussion immediately above. This position is also taken in view of the fact that the theory which treats Naturalism as a part of Realism admits to the extremes and specialty of Naturalism. If Naturalism is indeed an extreme and strict mode of Realism, then these very extremes must be capable of identification. They become the distinguishing features of a naturalistic style.

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In addition to the eight dramatic styles listed above, a number of other styles are mentioned by critics. These styles are excluded from this study for the reasons given in the discussions which follow.

The Epic theatre style associated with Bertolt Brecht, Erwin Piscator, and the "living newspaper" plays of the American Federal Theatre Project is not included in this study. While Epic theatre is generally recognized as a dramatic style, it is quite unlikely that any dramas written in this style would appear in the American drama of the 1920's. This observation is based on the chronological development of the Epic theatre movement. Techniques now associated with Epic theatre style did appear in the "living newspapers" of the Russian "blue blouse" movement in the early 1920's.²³ However, this movement had almost completely disappeared by 1927.²⁴ Its influence on the subsequent development of the Epic theatre style is questionable.²⁵ Actually, Epic theatre as it is known today was shaped in practice by Piscator and in theory by Brecht.²⁶ Yet the first major works of these men in Epic theatre style appeared in 1928,²⁷ the year of the last theatrical season considered in this study. The possibility of the productions of Piscator and Brecht having any significant effect on American drama in the space of less than one year is remote. The possibility of a native Epic theatre movement in America in the 1920's

²³Nikolai A. Gorchakov, The Theatre in Soviet Russia, trans. Edgar Lehrman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 145-46.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Gorelik, pp. 444-45.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 22-23.

²⁷Gassner, Form and Idea . . ., p. 251.

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is equally remote. Mordecai Gorelik's New Theatres for Old, which is well-documented in matters concerning Epic theatre, makes no claims for Epic theatre in America until the 1930's. True, some America "labor" theatres and playwrights' groups existed in the 1920's which formed the basis for the development of Epic theatre, but the actual appearance of Epic theatre plays in America was reserved for the 1930's.²⁸ In view of this chronology of Epic theatre, it appears fruitless to include a discussion of a style which evidently had no bearing on Broadway productions of the 1920's. For this reason, there is no further consideration of Epic theatre style in this study.

Theatricalism is also excluded from this study. Some plays have been associated with this style. But, as its name implies, it is primarily a theatrical style. Theatricalism as a "pure" style is rare. It usually appears in the form of theatricalist devices in plays which are otherwise recognizable as belonging to a particular dramatic style. The few plays associated with Theatricalism as a dramatic style -- for example, Thornton Wilder's Our Town and The Skin of Our Teeth -- already have been identified by many critics.²⁹ The actual number of plays written in what might be termed a dramatic style of Theatricalism is rather insignificant. Since Theatricalism is primarily a theatrical style, there is little value in discussing it further in this study of dramatic styles.

Also, so-called "basic" or "generic" styles are not discussed in this study.

²⁸Gorelik, pp. 400-401.

²⁹Gassner, Form and Idea, p. 143.

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³⁰ Gasner, *Prodr*

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Two "basic" or "generic" styles are recognized in drama. One is the "representational" style in which a play is presented "in manner and sequence of actual life, as though people were being watched through a peephole."³⁰ The other is the "presentational" style in which "the object is to project the play's content frankly and directly to the audience."³¹ Since it is not the aim of this study merely to divide dramas into two stylistic groups, these "basic" styles are of little value to it. The words "representational" and "presentational" may appear in subsequent passages which discuss specific styles, but only as descriptive terms to indicate general tendencies. There is no attempt to group plays under these "basic" style headings.

Although critics have referred to the styles of Impressionism, Selective Realism, Cubism, Constructivism, Socialist Realism, and Dadaism, these styles are not considered in this study. "Impressionism is a term that applies to a mood, or to an aesthetic endeavor merely: there is no particular dramatic form or technique (. . .) associated with its aims."³² Selective Realism, Cubism, and Constructivism belong to the realm of theatrical styles where they are useful in the discussion of the scenic elements of production. Socialist Realism as a movement is too narrowly confined to modern Soviet drama. Although many plays have been written in this style, they differ from Realism only in content, that of a socialist philosophy.³³ Dadaism in drama and

³⁰Cassner, Producing the Play, p. 54.

³¹Ibid.

³²Nicoll, World Drama, p. 794.

³³See both Cassner, Form and Idea, p. 12, and Nicoll, World Drama, p. 812.

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Summary

This chapter has stated the definition of the word "style" operative in this study, outlined a method for describing dramatic styles, and listed the styles to which this method is to be applied in subsequent chapters. The operative definition is: Style in drama is "a characteristic or distinctive way, manner, or mode of selecting, arranging, and emphasizing the elements of dramatic construction which is peculiar to a play or group of plays and which at the same time distinguishes it or them from other plays." The method of describing dramatic styles is based on the general concepts of stylistic investigation in all arts. It takes into consideration the principles which govern the rise and development of a style, its general characteristics (qualities, impressions, and form relationships), and its form elements (plot, character, language and theme). The styles selected for discussion are Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Formalism, Futurism and Surrealism.

³⁴Gorelik, p. 247.

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CHAPTER III

ROMANTICISM

Historical Background

Although the term "romantic" had been applied to the literature of a variety of periods and individual writers, including William Shakespeare and subsequent Jacobean dramatists, Romanticism in drama actually began as a solid movement in the late eighteenth century.

The beginning of the movement is marked by Goethe's Goetz von Berlichingen, produced in Germany in 1773.¹ In general, after developing in Germany, Romanticism next appeared in England, then in France, and finally became an influence on all the major national dramas of the western world. For purposes of clarity, the following outline of the development of romantic style in drama is reported in terms of national movements.

Germany

Goethe's Goetz von Berlichingen belonged to the Sturm and Drang phase of German Romanticism, a phase which ended by 1784.² A second phase of German Romanticism (contemporaneous with Sturm and Drang, but outlasting that phase) was marked by the dramas of Goethe, Schiller and

¹Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 228.

²Ralph Tymms, German Romantic Literature (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1955), p. 10.

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³ Ibid., p. 293

⁴ Ibid., p. 293

Kleist. Schiller contributed The Robbers (1778) and Don Carlos (1783). In 1788, Goethe added another major work to the movement, Egmont. This was followed by Schiller's Wallenstein trilogy (1798-99), Maria Stuart (1800), The Maid of Orleans (1801), and William Tell (1804). Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811), while usually not ranked in importance with Goethe and Schiller, wrote some notable romantic dramas, the best known of which are Penthesilea (1808) and The Prince of Homburg (1809).

The first part of Goethe's most significant drama, Faust, appeared in 1808. In this same general period, the romantic style was also employed by other German literary figures. Romanticism was apparent in the plays of Zacharias Werner and the "book-dramas of Tieck, Armin, and Brentano."³ The publication of Goethe's second part of Faust in 1832 was one of the last significant works in the German romantic movement. Romanticism as a major movement declined but did not completely die out.

England

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century English writers attempted to establish a vigorous romantic drama, but "failed to produce greatness in the romantic dramatic form."⁴ Some of England's most renowned poets — Byron, Shelley, and Browning — directed their talents to writing romantic drama. Byron's Manfred (1817) was one of the first noteworthy English romantic plays. Three years later, Shelley's The Cenci and Prometheus Unbound were completed but were denied stage production. A lesser literary figure, James Sheridan Knowles, did achieve some success with the production of his Virginius in 1820. A

³Ibid., p. 298.

⁴Nicoll, World Drama, p. 412.

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Perhaps the most vital of the English romantic dramas were Edward George Bulwer-Lytton's The Lady of Lyons (1838) and Richelieu (1839) which held the stage continuously into the twentieth century.⁵ Robert Browning's indifferently received Pippa Passes (1843) and A Blot on the 'Scutcheon (1846) were late contributions to the English romantic movement in drama.

France

The birth of Romanticism in French drama was most clearly indicated in Victor Hugo's preface to his play Cromwell (1827), in which he rejected Neo-classic principles and outlined a program for Romantic drama.⁶ Alexandre Dumas pere's Henri III in 1829 was the first romantic play to see production, but it was the success of Hugo's Hernani in 1830 that established Romanticism as a major movement in French drama.⁷

During the 1830's, Hugo, Dumas pere, and other French playwrights produced romantic drama of note. The Tower of Nesle by Dumas pere appeared in 1832. In 1834, Alfred de Musset added Lorenzaccio and No Trifling with Love to the movement. The following year, Alfred de Vigny's best known play, Chatterton, was produced in France.

For all its vigor, the French romantic movement was doomed to be short-lived. The complete failure of Hugo's Les Burgraves in 1843 signalled the end of Romanticism as a major movement in France. As a minor part of French drama, Romanticism appeared from time to time in such plays as Musset's A Door Should Be Shut or Open (1845) and

⁵Brockett, p. 226.

⁶Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 229. ⁷Ibid.

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America

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, American drama and theatre were highly imitative of English and European models. While American drama was not wholly romantic, it was strongly influenced by the romantic movement from abroad. Two of the most highly regarded native American plays written up to 1870, Robert M. Bird's The Gladiator (1831) and George Henry Boker's Francesca da Rimini (1855), were romantic tragedies.⁸

Romanticism as a dramatic style continued in America well into the twentieth century in the form of historical drama. Notable examples of this were Maxwell Anderson's Elizabeth the Queen, Anne of a Thousand Days, and Mary, Queen of Scots.

Romanticism and Melodrama

A part of the overall history of Romanticism in the drama, but important enough in this study to warrant a separate discussion, is the relationship of Romanticism to melodrama. In 1919, Irving Babbitt stated in his famous book, Rousseau and Romanticism, "Nothing is easier than to establish the connection between emotional romanticism and the prodigious efflorescence of melodrama, the irresponsible quest for thrills, that has marked the past half century."⁹ This connection existed almost from the beginning of Romanticism in drama. The generally

⁸ Richard Moody, America Takes the Stage (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1955), p. 200.

⁹ Irving Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919), p. 189.

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¹⁰ Maurice Wall
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acknowledged founders of melodrama (the German, Kotzebue, and the Frenchman, Pixerecourt) were contemporary to the initial romantic dramatic movements in their respective countries, and often imitated them.¹⁰

Allardyce Nicoll notes that in the years between 1830 and 1850 melodrama changed its settings and characters from the feudal to the rural, to the urban. In other words, melodrama became more closely connected with its contemporary environment. However, melodrama "remains romantic in the basic sense of the term, only it passes from the world of the past to the world of the present; it sheds medievalism and becomes material."¹¹

Melodrama and Romanticism are not only closely linked in modern drama, but also both have been highly influenced by Realism. As Jacques Barzun observes, "Realism often appears side by side with an agreeable make-believe which I have termed 'secondhand romanticism'"¹² John Gassner makes a similar observation when he states:

. . . A meretricious, vulgar romanticism has, besides, been present everywhere in our century, as in other times. It masquerades as prose realism and tries to cheat with false notions.¹³

For purposes of this study, Romanticism is considered to be a

¹⁰Maurice Willson Disher, "Melodrama," Oxford Companion to the Theatre, ed. Phyllis Hartnoll (2d ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 525-528.

¹¹Nicoll, World Drama, p. 485.

¹²Jacques Barzun, Classic, Romantic, and Modern (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1961), p. 106.

¹³John Gassner, A Treasury of the Theatre: From Henrik Ibsen to Arthur Miller (revised ed.; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), p. 259.

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15 Ibid., pp. 21

single dramatic style encompassing two variant forms of a basic style. The variants do not depart radically from the general characteristics and form elements of Romanticism. In order to facilitate discussion of these variants in subsequent sections of this chapter and in the actual identification of the plays which constitute the second part of this study, the variants will be referred to as "historical" Romanticism (denoting an imitation of historic Romantic styles such as Elizabethan, German, or French) and "secondhand" Romanticism (denoting plays that are basically Romantic, but which, in some respects, resemble prose Realism).

Principles of Romanticism

The principles or basic ideas which underlie the dramatic style of Romanticism can be traced back to the development of romantic philosophical theories in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Though several theories were formulated, all had in common a search "for a new system of explaining the nature of reality and the duties of man."¹⁴ These theories also shared an opposition to a concept of God and the universe which was implicit in the Hebraic thought of the Old Testament and which had governed the thoughts of Western man since the days of Plato: a concept of the universe as a perfectly functioning mechanism created by a supreme being and operating according to immutable laws.¹⁵

In the general concepts of romantic theory, God is not perfect

¹⁴Morse Peckham, "Toward a New Theory of Romanticism," Romanticism: Points of View, ed. Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 216.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 215-16.

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nor is His universe a perfect mechanism. Rather God is imperfect, but is becoming perfect through a constantly creative evolutionary process.¹⁶ Similarly, the universe, because God created it "out of himself so that he might more easily contemplate himself,"¹⁷ is undergoing the same evolutionary process. Thus in romantic theory the universe is conceived of as organic, growing, and changing rather than mechanical, static, and fixed.

A second principle of romantic theory is the assumption that everything in existence is a part of everything else.¹⁸ Since everything in the universe has a common origin in that it was created by God out of himself, it follows that God, nature, and man are all interrelated.

The world of nature is one manifestation of Spirit; man is another and a higher such manifestation, for in man Spirit seeks to become conscious of its own work. The metaphysical process is the process by which the Absolute seeks to realize itself, and all particular things are but phases within it.¹⁹

A third principle of romantic theory is that truth is apprehended through intuition. "Reason, being artificial and analytical, is inadequate to the task of comprehending the Absolute; knowing is living," and nature must be approached "through inspiration, longing, and sympathy."²⁰ The artistic or poetic experience is seen as a form of knowledge. "It is fundamentally the intuition of a cosmic unity: the intuition that the universe is not an unintelligible chaos, nor a well-regulated mechanism, but a living organism, imbued throughout

¹⁶Ibid., p. 217.

¹⁷Brockett, p. 224.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Iredell Jenkins, "Romanticism," The Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1942), p. 272.

²⁰Ibid.

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with an idea which endows it with its unity, its life, and its harmony."²¹

The concepts governing Romanticism in drama and the other arts stem from the romantic philosophical theories discussed above. These concepts include original genius, the reliance on emotion and intuition as the prime means of apprehending reality, the inherent goodness of nature and primitive man, freedom of the individual, the rejection of established rules for creating art, and the depiction of the particular and the strange.

"The conception of original genius" underlies the whole movement of Romanticism.²² "Genius may be defined as imaginative perception of the universal,"²³ or as "an innate ability to grasp intuitively the greatness of the universe."²⁴ The artist is most often the possessor of genius and his creativity springs "spontaneously from the depths of the unconscious."²⁵ Thus romantic art is based on intuition rather than reason. Romanticism in art

stresses the values of sincerity, spontaneity, and passion, It reasserts the primacy of feeling, imagination, and sentiment, It commands the artist to feel freely and deeply and to express what he has felt with no restraints, either artistic or social.²⁶

Since romanticists stress the intuitions of genius as the true bases for knowledge, they regard rational thought and all that is

²¹Albert Gerard, "On the Logic of Romanticism," Romanticism: Points of View, ed. Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 230.

²²Babbitt, p. 80. ²³Ibid., p. 41. ²⁴Brockett, p. 224.

²⁵Babbitt, p. 51.

²⁶Jenkins, p. 273.

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- 27 Babbitt, p.
28 Ibid., p. 2
29 Ibid., p. 6
30 Ibid.

associated with it as artificial and false. "The conscious analysis that is needed if one is to establish orderly sequences and relationships and so work out a kingdom of ends is repudiated by the Rousseauist [romanticist] because it diminishes wonder, because it interferes with the creative impulse of genius."²⁷ The romanticist also rejects Christian and classical disciplines because they, too, artificially control the expression of genius.²⁸ The romanticist maintains that man can only know the truth of his nature by the "free expression of his ordinary self."²⁹ The romanticist seeks "to shake off the trammels of tradition and reason in favor of free and passionate self-expression."³⁰

The distrust of rational thought and its consequences led to another principle of Romanticism in art, the turning to nature for the discovery and expression of truth. The romantic "return to nature" is based on Rousseau's idea of spontaneity -- that is, "genius resides in the region of the primitive and unconscious and is hindered rather than helped by culture."³¹ This principle can also be traced to the fundamental idea of romantic theory, according to which everything in the universe shares a common origin. Thus, a "study of any part may lead to a glimpse of the whole."³² But, since nature as a part of the universe is not subjected to the artificialities of civilization, and is therefore, closer to the original creations of God, "the more suitable it is in the search for truth."³³ For these reasons, Romanticism

²⁷Babbitt, p. 51.

²⁸Ibid., p. 46.

²⁹Ibid., p. 128.

³⁰Ibid., p. 80.

³¹Ibid., p. 65.

³²Brockett, p. 224.

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Related to the romantic "return to nature" is the principle of the inherent goodness of man. This fundamental assertion of Rousseau's philosophy postulates that man is naturally good, but that he is led into evil by an artificial and corrupt society. Society, with its limits and rigidities, conflicts with man's desire for freedom of action which leads to unhappiness. "Only get away from an artificial society and back to nature and the inner conflict which is but a part of the artificiality will give way to beauty and harmony."³⁵ In the principles of romantic art, primitive society is "idealized as a condition in which man was free to follow the dictates of his conscience without economic and political strictures."³⁶

A final principle of Romanticism, that of revolt against established political, social, and aesthetic orders or traditions, is linked to the concepts of original genius and primitivism. The possessors of "genius", according to romantic theory, must be free to follow their intuitions of truth. The freedom to do so is hampered or denied by established laws. Similarly, "artificial" society interfered with or corrupted the supposed "goodness" of the primitive way of life. The result was a revolt against existing social and political structures. Romanticists protested against "inherited laws and customs, rules of conduct for life and art, and the barriers which would bind."³⁷ "The equality of man and the freedom of action became battle cries of the

³⁴Jenkins, p. 273.

³⁵Babbitt, p. 130.

³⁶Brockett, p. 224.

³⁷Moody, p. 2.

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³⁸ Brockett, p.

⁴⁰ ibid.

⁴² Brockett, p.

⁴⁴ Jenkins, p.

⁴⁵ Victor Hugo
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new movement."³⁸ This principle of revolt was clearly manifested in the American and French revolutions of the late eighteenth century.³⁹

In the arts the romantic search for freedom in expression resulted in the rejection of the traditional Neo-classic rules. Genius was believed to be in conflict with these rules which were regarded as too confining.⁴⁰ Romanticism was in continual opposition to classicism, whose formalities it treated as fetters.⁴¹ Genius was able to make its own rules, to discover new forms which "would allow the maximum freedom in expressing the infinity of creation."⁴²

As part of the search for new forms, romantic artists began the practice of depicting the particular, the strange, and even the grotesque. Since truth cannot be arrived at by rational standards or "norms" but can be seen in the infinite variety of creation, romantic artists sought to "encompass the infinite variety of things."⁴³ They maintained that "art should concern itself with the particular and concrete, observing and reporting accurately the feelings aroused by nature."⁴⁴ In addition to depicting the particular and concrete. Victor Hugo, in particular, advocated a union between the grotesque and the sublime, "the body and the soul, the beast and the intellect."⁴⁵ According to Hugo, the

³⁸Brockett, p. 224.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Jenkins, p. 273.

⁴²Brockett, pp. 224-25.

⁴³Ibid., p. 224.

⁴⁴Jenkins, p. 273.

⁴⁵Victor Hugo, "Preface to Cromwell," trans. George Burnham Ives, European Theories of the Drama, ed. Barrett H. Clark (revised ed.; New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1947), p. 369.

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contrast of opposites would enhance beauty and make art truer to common experience.⁴⁶ The pursuit of strangeness also served to "break up the smooth and tiresome surface of artificial decorum."⁴⁷

Characteristics of Romanticism

General Characteristics

Although Romanticism is the oldest of the modern dramatic styles and has therefore undergone a number of changes in some of its particular elements, plays can be identified as belonging to this style by virtue of five general characteristics common to romantic drama. These characteristics are: (1) a tendency away from actuality which includes qualities of remoteness and escape; (2) an emphasis on emotionality and subjectivity; (3) an insistence on freedom and a corresponding rebellion against strictures which limit the individual's acting according to his desires; (4) a predilection for depicting the particular, the strange, and the grotesque; and (5) a concern for nature and uncivilized man.

First of all, remoteness and escape are grouped together as aspects of a general tendency away from actuality in Romanticism. Both of these aspects have in common a removal of dramatic action from everyday reality as most human beings experience it. Undoubtedly, this characteristic can be traced to the romantic principle of freedom in artistic creation. It is more accurate to say that it is a result of the practices of romantic playwrights.

Remoteness as a characteristic of Romanticism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was largely confined to "a return to the medieval and renaissance worlds for subjects and settings

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Babbitt, p. 55.

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and in spirit."⁴⁸ For example, one of the "most characteristic features of the French romantic drama" was an "historical reconstruction of the life, customs, and institutions of the Middle Ages."⁴⁹ This same feature is noted in German romantic drama.⁵⁰ Remoteness remained an almost indispensable quality in Romanticism even after the French and German movements, but it was expanded to remoteness in place and culture as well as in time.⁵¹ Today remoteness may also be seen as remoteness within a culture in view of a tendency in modern "second-hand" Romanticism in which the adventures of secret agents, detectives, soldiers of fortune, and others whose lives and experiences are removed from the experience of ordinary human beings are portrayed.

Romanticism in practice exhibits the qualities of "escape literature" as part of its tendency away from actuality. Heffner, Selden, and Sellman observe that "Romanticism tends to create an ideal dream world, a never-never land of the imagination. The persons who inhabit this world are equally idealized and colored by imagination."⁵² The French romantic drama of the early nineteenth century "proved to be a complicated pattern of passionate characters, extravagant contradictions,

⁴⁸Kenneth Thorp Rowe, A Theatre in Your Head (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1960), p. 178.

⁴⁹F.W.M. Draper, The Rise and Fall of the French Romantic Drama (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., n.d.), p. 131.

⁵⁰Tymms, p. 6.

⁵¹Millett and Bentley, pp. 139-40.

⁵²Hubert C. Heffner, Samuel Selden, and Hunton D. Sellman, Modern Theatre Practice (4th ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), p. 76.

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lofty declamations, and unbelievable intrigues."⁵³ The romantic French stage was filled with such imaginative and escapist fare as "moonlighted or stormy scenes," "galloping horses," and "clashing swords."⁵⁴ Escape was also noted as a feature of the German romantic drama in which the return to the Middle Ages in content and spirit "expressed a retreat from the present, a deliberate turning away from everyday reality in favour of an idyllic dream."⁵⁵ In modern usage Romanticism is used to describe plays that provide "the audience an agreeable period of escape from reality into a world more exciting or pleasantly ordered."⁵⁶ In such plays the element of escape is heightened through the use of "exotic settings" and "the pursuit of the spectacular and the sensational in situation, characterization, and emotion."⁵⁷

An emphasis on the emotional and subjective aspects of human behavior is a second general characteristic of Romanticism. From the discussion of the principles of Romanticism it can be seen that the reaction of the German and French romantic playwrights against the "emotional restraint and formal rigidity of the preceding neo-classicism" caused a "turning inward on individual personal consciousness and experience as the knowable reality and a mirror of the universal."⁵⁸ This resulted in a condition in romantic drama where the element of emotion takes precedence over the element of reason and the passion for

⁵³S. A. Rhodes, "France and Belgium," A History of Modern Drama, ed. Barrett H. Clark and George Freedley (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1947), pp. 235-236.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Tymms, p. 1.

⁵⁶Rowe, p. 179.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 180.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 178.

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fidelity for fact."⁵⁹ Indeed, there appears to be "an idealization of the instinctive and non-rational powers" of the human mind.⁶⁰ This emphasis on emotion and feeling is also noted by Heffner, Selden, and Sellman.⁶¹ Bruce Carpenter, in his book The Way of the Drama, states that "the coldly logical or matter-of-fact has no part in romance;"⁶² "the emotional or spiritual element in romance should exceed the intellectual."⁶³

The emotional side of human behavior was emphasized in French romantic drama. It was the practice of the romantic playwrights to "show us their protagonists at the zenith or nadir of their lives" where "these leading figures are seen at the last extremity of an emotion or passion."⁶⁴ One of the "most characteristic features of the Romantic drama" was the treatment of love as "an overmastering passion, upon which, and upon which only, the action of the drama must be built."⁶⁵ A similar emotionality is characteristic of German Romanticism.⁶⁶

Thirdly, Romanticism is involved with the idea of freedom and a corresponding opposition to any limitation of the freedom of the individual. The romantics' revolt against classicism resulted in an

⁵⁹Millett and Bentley, p. 139. ⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Heffner, Selden, and Sellman, p. 77.

⁶²Bruce Carpenter, The Way of the Drama (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1929), p. 134.

⁶³Ibid. ⁶⁴Draper, p. 118.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 131.

⁶⁶Tynms, p. 18.

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⁷²Trayer, pp.
⁷³Wynn, p.
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"enhancement of the freedom of the individual"⁶⁷ and a "freedom of form and expression in variety and content"⁶⁸ For the most part, the romantic revolt involves "assertion of [the] individual in thought and expression against the reduction of rule and order,"⁶⁹ but, in some instances, it represents "a defiance of aesthetic and sometimes moral authority."⁷⁰

The characteristic demand for freedom in Romanticism was apparent in the French romantic drama. As F.W.M. Draper says in his book, The Rise and Fall of the French Romantic Drama,

The same freedom which the Romantic writers demanded for themselves they allowed to the creatures fathered by their own imagination. No conventions, no moral laws which have been found to make for human happiness did they abstain from flouting in novel, poem, or play.⁷¹

Aspects of political rebellion were also seen in Romantic plays that presented the poorer classes demanding equality with the higher classes, disparagement of the nobility, and even deliberate attacks against the monarch.⁷²

German romantic drama shared the passion for freedom and rebellion. The Sturm und Drang phase of Romanticism was an expression of exaggerated individualism.⁷³ Later, German Romanticism continued to insist on "unrestricted individualism and subjectivism in art"⁷⁴ This freedom of the individual implied "the refusal to seek formal regularity, and to

⁶⁷Millett and Bentley, p. 139. ⁶⁸Rowe, p. 179 ⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Millett and Bentley, p. 139.

⁷¹Draper, pp. 240-41.

⁷²Ibid., p. 286.

⁷³Tymms, p. 18.

⁷⁴Ibid.

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Romanticism has as its fourth general characteristic a pre-occupation with the portrayal of the picturesque and the strange. Earlier romantic authors took pride in their "faithfulness to picturesque detail and local color."⁷⁶ This cultivation of the presentation of detail led ultimately to realistic drama.⁷⁷ The desire to disclose the wonder and mystery of life led to an interest in the strange, the mysterious, even the bizarre and the grotesque.

Prosser Hall Frye prefers to call this characteristic "a fondness for the striking and unusual,"⁷⁸ or a "a susceptibility to irregular beauty."⁷⁹ He explains the development of this characteristic by saying that

. . . , the writer who looks upon literature as a function of life, . . . -- such an author may succeed in producing the characteristic waywardness and "wonder" of nature. In this view the idiosyncratic as possessed of superior actuality, tends to become the exclusive subject of representation. Individualization, not typification is the desideratum. The strange, the irregular, the unusual engross a correspondingly larger share of attention. The exception rather than the principle comes to be the rule.⁸⁰

The portrayal of the strange and unusual is inclusive enough to cover the strangeness associated with evil, whether physical or psychological.

"The romanticist found it possible to invest with something of glamour

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 20.

⁷⁶Rhodes, pp. 235-36.

⁷⁷Nicoll, World Drama, p. 409.

⁷⁸Prosser Hall Frye, Romance and Tragedy (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 35.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 345.

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even the physically and morally deformed."⁸¹ Associated with the depiction of the strange and mysterious in Romanticism is an "appeal to the irrational or superrational; madness, hallucination, magic, witchcraft, and ghosts."⁸²

As has already been noted in the discussion of the principles of Romanticism, Hugo, in his "Preface to Cromwell," advocated the inclusion of the grotesque as a part of the subject matter of drama. His suggestion was followed in many French romantic plays, but the portrayal of the strange and unusual was not limited to the grotesque. The French dramatists, under the influence of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, also employed such unusual or strange content as "disguises," "duels with rapier, poniard and cloak," "superstition and the supernatural," "murders," "concealed trapdoors, secret rooms and passages," "dungeons," "alchemy, sylphs, gnomes, salamanders, naiads, [and] undines."⁸³

German romantic drama, too, displayed a concern for the strange and unusual. Authors devised bizarre situations because strangeness was not only attractive in itself but demonstrated "detachment from the inherited classicist rules of congruity and harmony."⁸⁴ They showed "an inconsistent sense of realistic observation in recording bizarre -- . . . -- details from life and behavior."⁸⁵

The fifth and last general characteristic of Romanticism as a dramatic style is the treatment of nature and man living close to

⁸¹Millett and Bentley, p. 140.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸⁴Tynms, p. 19.

⁸³Draper, p. 52.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 7.

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nature. This characteristic is a logical extension of the importance of nature in the principles of Romanticism. Nature and primitive man are unspoiled by civilization and therefore supposedly are the best links with original creation and universal truth. This concept leads to dramas "about unspoiled men living in primitive times or for those who were in rebellion against the false restraints of society."⁸⁶

In Romanticism, nature is often more than a mere background for a play; it is a means of projecting the thoughts and moods of the author and his characters. In the French romantic drama, the inspiration of nature is seen in the use of the detail of rural scenes, parks, and river banks. But nature is more than a background when a murder is framed by the rugged shoreline and lightning furrows the heavens or when lovers meet on a serene summer night lighted by the moon's first rays.⁸⁷ In these instances nature is conveniently reflective of man's actions. In German Romanticism the attitude toward nature is markedly subjective. Romantic authors "saw very much what they wished to see, and distorted, blurred -- in short 'romanticized' -- the world of physical appearances so as to obtain a projection of their own inner world of fantasy and dreams."⁸⁸

⁸⁶Brockett, p. 224.

⁸⁷Georges Pellissier, The Literary Movement in France During the Nineteenth Century, trans. Anne G. Brinton (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), p. 110.

⁸⁸Tynms, p. 26. This subjectivity in German Romanticism is apparently connected with later German experiments in Expressionism. It differs in that it does not distort surface reality nor follow the supposed psychological reality of Expressionism. The fantasy and dreams of the German romanticists were usually possible but improbable rearrangements of everyday reality.

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Since, for purposes of this study, two types of Romanticism have been noted, some comments on the identification of the general characteristics as they apply to each type are in order. Regardless of whether Romanticism in drama is "historical" or "secondhand," a play in the romantic style has a tendency away from actuality and an emphasis on emotion. "Historical" Romanticism is more likely to show a concern for nature and be involved in the ideas of freedom and rebellion. Opposition to social and moral codes is more common in "secondhand" Romanticism than opposition to political and economic restrictions. Depiction of picturesque detail appears in both types of Romanticism, although it may not be obvious in "secondhand" Romanticism, since plays of this type are at least superficially realistic. The depiction of the strange and mysterious does not absolutely need to be present in either type, but this characteristic commonly exists. Strange and mysterious events in "secondhand" Romanticism often have "rational" explanations, while in "historical" Romanticism the appearance of the supernatural or mysterious may be accepted as a convention. The concern for nature and/or uncivilized man is more common in "historical" Romanticism.

Form Elements

Plot

Plots in Romanticism are "characteristically loose in their construction" and are "free in their use of elapsed time/[and] shifts in place," ⁸⁹ "The essential characteristic of the structure of

⁸⁹Charles Cooper, Preface to the Drama (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1955), p. 139.

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- ⁹⁰ Millett and
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- ⁹⁵ Cassner, P.
- ⁹⁶ Thomas H.
Cambridge, Mass:
1887, p. 142.
- ⁹⁷ Cooper, p.

romantic drama is the substitution of the diversity of time, place, and action . . . for the unities of time, place, and action."⁹⁰ This allows the romantic playwright a "freedom in the selection and presentation of his material that is denied the strict classicist."⁹¹ The "best examples" of romantic plays adhere to a unity of action,⁹² but they are not "constrained to follow a single plot,"⁹³ that is, the subplot is used frequently. In early nineteenth century French romantic drama, playwrights claimed to be free from the "unities," but in practice they were not disregarded entirely. Playwrights did not observe the unity of place but were less free in violating the unities of time and action.⁹⁴

A second feature of the plot structure in Romanticism is the mingling of the serious and the comic. Gassner terms this practice as breaking a "unity of tone."⁹⁵ This mixture of the serious and the comic is also noted by Thomas Dickinson and Millett and Bentley.⁹⁶

There are some secondary features of structure in romantic drama. Romantic plays may use a chronological structure often composed of many scenes.⁹⁷ In keeping with a chronological structure, the point

⁹⁰Millett and Bentley, p. 141.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Carpenter, p. 134.

⁹³Gassner, Producing the Play, p. 61.

⁹⁴Draper, p. 116.

⁹⁵Gassner, Producing the Play, p. 61.

⁹⁶Thomas H. Dickinson, An Outline of Contemporary Drama (Cambridge, Mass: The Riverside Press, 1927), p. 8, and Millett and Bentley, p. 142.

⁹⁷Cooper, p. 139.

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of attack is early in the story which results in an "exposition in action" that largely replaces narrative exposition.⁹⁸

French romantic plays have some characteristic features that may sometimes appear in other nations' romantic plays. Rapid action, for example, is a commonplace in the French drama.⁹⁹ Along with this rapid action, there is often an illogical sequence of events; "scenes are usually a succession of surprises, recognitions, unforeseen and unforeseeable events, conceived in the manner of melodrama."¹⁰⁰ In many instances the plot "leaps forward by means of overheard conversations and actions beheld by concealed personages."¹⁰¹ French romantic drama often employs prologues or epilogues to carry "the story a step onward or backward."¹⁰²

Other features of the plot in French romantic drama were the retention of the five-act form in which each act was a unity "ending with a climax and a striking final line."¹⁰³ Changes of scene were rare within the act.¹⁰⁴ Plots were simple or complex, but they had to have "thrills arising from remarkable situations."¹⁰⁵ Lastly, the French romantic dramatists made "frequent use of the soliloquy."¹⁰⁶

The content of romantic drama is concerned with the "glamorous, exciting, and admirable."¹⁰⁷ It also includes "exotic settings and

⁹⁸Donald Clive Stuart, The Development of Dramatic Art (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1928), p. 511.

⁹⁹Draper, p. 171.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 118.

¹⁰¹Stuart, p. 509.

¹⁰²Draper, p. 119.

¹⁰³Stuart, p. 508

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 509.

¹⁰⁶Draper, p. 52.

¹⁰⁷Millett and Bentley, p. 143.

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pursuit of the spectacular and sensational in situation"¹⁰⁸

Closely tied with this is an emphasis in content on "the curious, the strange, and the mysterious."¹⁰⁹ There may even be some amount of realistic detail present in the content.

. . . , Romanticism is only partly opposed to Realism; its true enemy is the hackneyed and humdrum present, whether squalid or academic — a very different thing. Snatches of realism remain very welcome to Romantic sensationalists, especially as an escape from the starched dignities of Classicism.¹¹⁰

Lastly, nature often figures in the content of the plays. It is sometimes even "wild and untamed" nature in man.¹¹¹

Character

In both "historical" and "secondhand" Romanticism characters exist in an environment and atmosphere removed from everyday life.¹¹² They represent "the idealistic and imaginative side of man."¹¹³ As a result, characters in Romanticism tend to be "very strange individuals in strange circumstances."¹¹⁴ "We know them; but we do not know anyone like them."¹¹⁵ They are recognizable human types but are removed from ordinary human experience.

¹⁰⁸Rowe, p. 180.

¹⁰⁹Moody, p. 2.

¹¹⁰F. L. Lucas, The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 47.

¹¹¹John Gassner, ed., A Treasury of the Theatre: From Aeschylus to Turgenev (revised ed.; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), p. 500.

¹¹²Millett and Bentley, p. 141.

¹¹³Edward A. Wright, A Primer for Playgoers (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958), p. 88.

¹¹⁴Stuart, p. 510.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

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In both types of Romanticism, emotion plays an important part in the development of character. This emotional aspect of character was developed in early French and German Romanticism and is still discernible in modern Romanticism. For example, French romantic dramatists created characters with traits of extreme sensibility whose "abandonment of emotion" did "more credit to their hearts than their good sense," and which often took the form of self-pity -- a fondness for telling of their mental sufferings.¹¹⁶ Romanticism in general is prone to portray characters who are "slaves of passion, ambition, jealousy, melancholy, avarice, [and] lust."¹¹⁷

Complexity of character is another attribute of Romanticism. In "historical" Romanticism, "characters are conceived . . . as a complex product of a rather considerable variety of impulses, moods, motives, and emotions."¹¹⁸ Protagonists, especially, are "likely to be complex in characterization" and even minor characters "may be individualized out of proportion to their dramatic purpose."¹¹⁹ However, in "secondhand" Romanticism "there is not time for highly individualized characterization" and the persons in the play "are cast into types like melodrama figures."¹²⁰ It is possible that type characters may appear in "historical" Romanticism, but if they do they are usually quite complex types.¹²¹

Characters in "historical" Romanticism are usually of "royal or noble blood."¹²² Although not always "conventionally heroic,"

¹¹⁶Draper, pp. 237-40.

¹¹⁷Cooper, p. 140.

¹¹⁸Millett and Bentley, p. 142.

¹¹⁹Cooper, p. 139.

¹²⁰Carpenter, p. 131.

¹²¹Draper, pp. 237-40.

¹²²Millett and Bentley, p. 141.

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they are at least "fashioned on noble proportion."¹²³ In "secondhand" Romanticism, characters are not usually of the aristocracy, but even here "the commonplace man is not a suitable figure" for a leading character.¹²⁴ Characters in this type of Romanticism usually have some attribute which sets them apart from ordinary human beings.

Certain typical figures are connected with the romantic dramatic style. Earlier romantic writers developed the characters of the Byronic hero and the outcast from society. Both are depicted as suffering under despair and ennui.¹²⁵ Both have lives affected by a wrong or a crime they committed in the past.¹²⁶ Both are very emotional beings, prone to self-pity.¹²⁷ Both are often endowed with a mysterious past.¹²⁸ About the only difference between them is that the Byronic hero wars against "Fate" or a personal enemy, while the outcast from society "is in revolt against the society which has wronged him."¹²⁹ A third traditional figure in Romanticism, the romantic criminal, is an offshoot of the outcast from society.¹³⁰

Heroines in Romanticism are often non-entities, lacking in color and personality.¹³¹ Some female protagonists are "monsters of vice, . . . of ambition, and heartlessness."¹³² Still other female characters in earlier Romantic plays have many of the attributes of the Byronic hero.¹³³ A last female type is the "weak woman" who is caught up in adultery and "powerless before her passion."¹³⁴ This last type,

¹²³Carpenter, p. 130.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Draper, p. 219.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 225.

¹²⁷Ibid., pp. 237-40.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 230.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 232.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 118.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Ibid., p. 231.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 295.

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while not unique in drama (i.e., Medea and Phaedra), appears frequently in Romantic drama.

Language

Language in Romanticism is "beautiful and reflects life as we should like to imagine it but would rarely experience it."¹³⁵ Prosser Hall Frye characterizes the language of Romanticism as having a "predilection for the coruscations of style -- for the glittering word and phrase, for the exotic and exquisite epithet."¹³⁶ John Gassner states that Romanticism

may employ considerable lyricism, . . . , but the lyricism does not conform to a strict pattern like the classical choruses; it is not formal. Its dialogue is ideal (characters express their thought and emotions as they would if they were endowed with a poet's faculties), the emphasis being placed on expressiveness rather than verisimilitude. To this end, all the non-illusionistic devices of the soliloquy, the aside, the direct commentary are used freely and without any attempt to justify their presence realistically.¹³⁷

Charles Cooper writes that "there is an imaginative and orotund quality to the dialogue Poetic diction, flights of fancy, soliloquies and asides, rhetorical set pieces of poetic reflection . . . are the common features of the romantic dialogue."¹³⁸ Soliloquies, when used, are usually reflective rather than constructive.

The above descriptions of language in Romanticism are applicable to "historical" Romanticism, but "secondhand" Romanticism, because it is influenced by Realism, utilizes prose in its dialogue. This prose dialogue is usually quite close in quality to that of Realism, but in

¹³⁵Wright, p. 88.

¹³⁶Frye, p. 35.

¹³⁷Gassner, Producing the Play, p. 61. ¹³⁸Cooper, p. 140.

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some instances it may tend to ornateness and lyricism. It is mainly functional and serves to advance the plot or to reveal character. Otherwise the language of "secondhand" Romanticism attempts not to call attention to itself, but tries to pass for an approximation of ordinary conversation. Soliloquies and asides sometimes appear in this type of Romanticism, but when they do there is some attempt to justify them realistically.

Theme

The major themes of the dramatic style of Romanticism involve the subjects of escape, freedom, rebellion, emotion, and moral justice. Other themes associated with Romanticism deal with nature and fate. Many of these themes are often interrelated in a play.

The general characteristic of escape in Romanticism is marked by an avoidance of themes dealing with an orderly contemporary social environment.¹³⁹ This is a general tendency which may have some exceptions in "secondhand" Romanticism. "Historical" Romanticism characteristically turns to "situations of social disorder and to the romantic past" for its subjects.¹⁴⁰ The Romantic concern for the past is but one aspect of the escapist theme of nostalgia, a longing to get away from the here and now and back to the "radiant hues of one's dreams."¹⁴¹ In Romanticism, nostalgia is not exclusively a longing for the past, but includes the more inclusive desire to avoid the the present.¹⁴²

¹³⁹Gassner, A Treasury of the Theatre: From Aeschylus to Turgenev, p. 500.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Babbitt, pp. 79-92.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 92.

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- 143 Carpenter
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Topics of freedom and rebellion are frequently associated with Romanticism. "The untrammelled soul or the soul which seeks to break its bonds" is a characteristic theme of a great many romantic plays.¹⁴³ As Gassner writes, romantic playwrights are absorbed in "the struggles of a unique individual, heroically, at odds with conventions and his environment."¹⁴⁴ In "historical" Romanticism the theme of political freedom and the rebellion against injustice, tyranny, and inequality is more pronounced than in "secondhand" Romanticism. Both types of Romanticism often include the theme of personal freedom from the limitations of social and moral codes.¹⁴⁵

There is a wide range of emotional subjects in Romanticism. Most of them are expressive of "inward life, moods, and emotions."¹⁴⁶ Many aspects of love are covered in the themes of Romanticism including "overwhelming love at first sight,"¹⁴⁷ "the courtesan regenerated by love,"¹⁴⁸ adulterous love,¹⁴⁹ and jealousy.¹⁵⁰ Melancholy, anguish, despair, and sentiment are also manifestations of emotion in the themes of Romanticism.¹⁵¹

Melodrama's concept of moral justice can be considered a theme of "secondhand" Romanticism, and may even be found in "historical"

¹⁴³Carpenter, p. 130.

¹⁴⁴Gassner, Treasury of the Theatre: From Aeschylus to Turgenev, p. 500.

¹⁴⁵Brockett, p. 225.

¹⁴⁶Millett and Bentley, p. 143.

¹⁴⁷Tymms, p. 300.

¹⁴⁸Albert Joseph George, The Development of French Romanticism (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1955), p. 29.

¹⁴⁹Draper, p. 295. ¹⁵⁰Carpenter, p. 130.

¹⁵¹George, pp. 29-32.

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Romanticism. This theme is that "no matter how horrible the trials of the virtuous characters or how powerful the villainous, the good are always rewarded and the evil are always punished."¹⁵²

Other themes of Romanticism are concerned with nature and fate. First, since the influence of nature on Romanticism has been discussed in other sections of this chapter, it is sufficient to say that the general ideas of the essential goodness of unspoiled nature and uncivilized man are carried over into the themes of some romantic plays. Secondly, the concept of the operation of fate in man's life is not an exclusively romantic theme, but has been noted in some romantic plays. This theme is evident when a hero "is subjected to an arbitrary external destiny from which he cannot free himself."¹⁵³ Often this theme takes the form of characters suffering because of the sins of their fathers.¹⁵⁴

Summary: Criteria for Identification of the Dramatic Style of Romanticism

Principles of Romanticism

Romanticism as a dramatic style is based on general philosophical theories formulated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These theories advance the view that the universe and all things in it, including man, are manifestations of an absolute spirit which is in the process of becoming perfect through constant creative evolution and which can only be apprehended by the subjective mind. Thus the romantic universe is an organic one in which everything in it is a part of everything else since everything in it has a common

¹⁵²Brockett, p. 236. ¹⁵³Tymms, p. 12. ¹⁵⁴Draper, p. 228.

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Drama and the other arts, guided by the theories of romantic philosophy, are created according to aesthetic principles which view the artist as a person gifted with original genius -- an intuitive grasp of the universal -- which is expressed freely without regard to any established rules, conventions, or standards. The artist's subjective imagination is his only guide. This imagination is stimulated by observation of nature unspoiled by civilization. Details, the particular, are studied because they are truer to the infinity of creation than the norms or abstractions arrived at by rational thought. The strange and grotesque, because they exist in nature, are introduced into art and are used as a contrast to beauty. The romantic revolts against society both artistically and politically because its rules interfere with the expression of his intuition.

Characteristics of Romanticism

General Characteristics

The first general characteristic of Romanticism is a tendency away from actuality. Enough detail and suggestion of observed reality is included to lead the reader or spectator to believe that the actions presented could or might happen. However, the feeling of actuality is modified by the remoteness of a romantic play in time, place, or culture. Romantic dramas impress one as being an escape from everyday reality because they customarily contain elements of excitement, sensation, and imagination that are not common to ordinary human experience. There is a great sense of the improbable in the drama of Romanticism.

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The second general characteristic of Romanticism is emotionality and subjectivity. Logic and common sense seem to be excluded or minimized. There is an idealization of the instinctive and non-rational powers of humans. To some degree, emotional appeal is common in all drama, but in Romanticism emotions seem to be aroused and expressed for their own sake.

The third general characteristic of Romanticism is a search for freedom and an opposition to any limitations which affect the actions and desires of the individual. The rebellious quality in Romanticism may take the form of opposition to any established political, social, or moral order. "Historical" Romanticism is more likely to deal with political freedom than is "secondhand" Romanticism.

The fourth general characteristic of Romanticism is an inclusion of the strange, the mysterious, and the grotesque. A part of this characteristic is the depiction of the picturesque and local color, but this is truer of earlier Romanticism in which realistic detail was a novelty. "Secondhand" Romanticism, which superficially resembles Realism, is an extension of this aspect of early French and German Romanticism. Nevertheless, both types of Romanticism often deal with unusual, even bizarre, situations, settings, and characters. Even the supernatural and fantastic are not excluded. Physical and psychological evil and deformity can also be encompassed under this characteristic.

The fifth and last general characteristic of Romanticism is its concern with nature and man unspoiled by civilization. Nature is idyllic and free from the evil that, in the romantic view, civilization spawns. There is a tendency for nature to reflect the moods and actions

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Form Elements

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Plot structure in Romanticism is loose in its treatment of the traditional unities of action, time and place. The unity of action is usually retained, but action is often complicated in the main plot and sometimes subplots are employed that add to the complexity. There is a free use of elapsed time and shifts in place are not uncommon. The unity of tone is broken by a mingling of the serious and the comic.

A common trait of plot in Romanticism is a many-scened chronological structure featuring an early point of attack with exposition carried out through action rather than narrative exposition. The unfolding of the story often appears as a series of thrills presented in a rapid melodramatic manner. The use of overheard conversations, prologues, and epilogues to advance the action of the plot is sometimes found in Romantic drama. Soliloquies, asides, and other rhetorical devices are employed for the same purpose but are more common to "historical" Romanticism.

Plot content in Romanticism usually provides for excitement, suspense, imagination, and glamor. Exotic settings, sensational situations -- in general, the strange and the mysterious -- are frequently a part of romantic content. Subject matter from the past is characteristic of "historical" Romanticism. The world of nature is often used as a setting, but is less likely to appear in "secondhand" Romanticism.

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Characters in Romanticism, while not wholly unrealistic, are usually improbable persons. Their actions and reactions are guided more by emotion than reason. They are often victims of emotional states connected with love, ambition, jealousy, melancholy, despair, self-pity, mental anguish, avarice, and lust.

Characters are rather complex personalities in "historical" Romanticism, but tend to be "types" in "secondhand" Romanticism. Royalty or noble persons are portrayed frequently in "historical" Romanticism. Even in "secondhand" Romanticism, the commonplace human being is seldom a leading figure.

Traditional characters of Romanticism are the Byronic hero, the outcast of society, and the romantic criminal. Virtuous heroines in Romanticism are usually colorless in personality, but less reputable female characters are more complex and show traits of lust, ambition, and heartlessness. Byronic self-pity and melancholy is also found in heroines. The weak woman enslaved in adulterous passion is a favorite figure in Romanticism.

Language

Language in Romanticism has two forms. In "secondhand" Romanticism, dialogue is in prose which is primarily functional in advancing the plot. It is seldom poetically ornate. As such, it is quite similar to the language of Realism. In "historical" Romanticism, dialogue tends to be poetic and ornate. It is often an informal lyricism, rather than a strict poetic form. Expression is idealized; characters speak with a poet's gift for language. Language often takes the form

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of reflective soliloquies, asides, and even set speeches. These techniques of language are not wholly excluded from "secondhand" Romanticism, but if they appear they are realistically motivated -- that is, there is some attempt to treat them as a natural occurrence rather than as a convention.

Theme

Themes in Romanticism usually avoid ideas and problems of contemporary society and environment. "Historical" Romanticism turns to the past for its themes. "Secondhand" Romanticism, although often set in a contemporary environment, usually evades extensive involvement in the ideas of that environment. Both types of Romanticism often have themes of nostalgia, a desire to ignore the present and a longing to live according to one's dreams and memories.

Themes of Romanticism often involve a search for freedom of the individual from political inequalities or the limitations of social and moral codes. Characters are frequently seen as rebelling against the conditions which curtail the free expression of their individuality or desires. The theme of political liberty is more common to "historical" Romanticism than to "secondhand" Romanticism.

Themes concerning the emotions of individuals are often found in Romanticism. Typical of these themes are love at first sight, the enobling power of love, the anguish of jealousy, the despair of melancholy, and the degradation of adultery. Sentiment is also common as a theme in Romanticism.

"Secondhand" Romanticism often projects the theme of strict moral justice in which the good are rewarded and the evil are punished.

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Other themes of Romanticism concern nature and fate. Things in a state of nature are seen as being good because they are unspoiled by civilization. This is particularly true of men who live apart from the "corruptions" of society. Fate as a determinant of man's destiny is not exclusively a Romantic theme, but is incorporated into some romantic dramas. According to this theme, man cannot escape an arbitrary external fate. Often fate takes the form of the sins of the father being visited on his offspring.

CHAPTER IV

REALISM

Historical Background

While the last quarter of the nineteenth century is generally accepted as the period of the emergence of Realism as a significant dramatic style, it must be pointed out that traits now associated with Realism were discernible in the drama of earlier ages. Evidence of this may be found in Elizabethan middle-class tragedy and such eighteenth century plays as George Lillo's The London Merchant and Lessing's Miss Sara Sampson.¹

Prior to 1875 there was also a shift toward Realism in theatrical production. As early as 1804, a stage designer in the court theatre in Mannheim, Germany, "joined pairs of wings that contained practicable doors or windows."² Goethe's autobiography included an objection to the use of the box set on the French stage.³ In England, J. R. Planche's 1824 production of King John was one of the first attempts at archaeological accuracy in production.⁴ Seven years later,

¹Cassner, Form and Idea, p. 5.

²Kenneth Macgowan and William Melnitz, The Living Stage (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 344.

³Ibid.

⁴A. Nicholas Vardac, From Stage to Screen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. xxi.

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Madame Vestris introduced "surface realism in English decor,"⁵ and in 1841 employed box sets at the Olympic Theatre.⁶

In drama the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century produced a number of sporadic attempts at Realism. "Durable examples" of this are Gogol's The Inspector-General (1836), Hebbel's Maria Magdalena (1844), and Turgenev's A Month in the Country (1849).⁷ The dramatic works of Émile Augier and Alexandre Dumas files in the middle of the nineteenth century also tended toward Realism. In particular, Dumas files attempted to found a drama of "social utility" which would treat contemporary social problems.⁸

Dumas files, Augier, and others developed realistic techniques, but it was such playwrights as Ibsen, Zola, and Shaw, along with directors such as Antoine and Stanislavsky who added idea, method, and skill to technique to found a true style of Realism,⁹ a style fostered by sweeping changes in the western world.

Although many of these changes had begun in the eighteenth century, they reached their culmination in the nineteenth century. Revolutionary developments in agriculture, industry, science, politics, and society,¹⁰ had a notable impact on many other aspects of world

⁵Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 299.

⁶Clayton Hamilton, The Theory of the Theatre (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1939), p. 46.

⁷Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 5.

⁸Brockett, p. 263.

⁹Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 5.

¹⁰Alan S. Downer, ed., Great World Theatre (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 484.

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culture, including drama. The concern of playwrights with these developments led to the realistic dramatic style.

Realism was the result -- or concomitant -- of the urbanization and mechanization of life, It was the result -- or concomitant -- of democratic reformism, of the new concern with the condition of the people. It was the result -- or concomitant -- of the rise of physical sciences which aimed at controlling nature by knowing its processes.¹¹

After its growth in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Realism attained a position as the dominant dramatic style of the twentieth century. Among its notable practitioners were England's Arthur Wing Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, and John Galsworthy, Russia's Chekhov, and America's Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams.

Principles of Realism

The view of the world and man in Realism is an outgrowth of a number of more inclusive ideas and concepts which have shaped the modern world. Realism may be incorporated "within a larger historical or philosophical framework -- which will be that of some form of modern scientific empiricism."¹²

Realism is "a by-product of the scientific movement."¹³ The development of the realistic style was influenced by a general tendency of man to turn more and more to science and scientific method for solutions to problems generated by the rapid and revolutionary changes in the nineteenth century.

¹¹Eric Bentley, The Playwright as Thinker (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1946), p. 23.

¹²Ibid., p. 25.

¹³Millett and Bentley, p. 146.

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One of the major influences on the growth of the scientific movement was the philosophy of positivism, expressed by Auguste Comte (1798-1857).¹⁴ Comte held that observation of fact was the only solid basis for human knowledge and that from such observation invariable laws could be discovered. In effect, he postulated a scientific, objective method of dealing with the phenomena of existence. He advanced one idea in particular that had great relevance to the growth of Realism. He called for the application of scientific or positive knowledge to social phenomena. He felt that the establishment of a positive social science would promote order throughout society.¹⁵

No less influential than positivism to the shaping of scientific thought in the nineteenth century were the doctrines set forth by Charles Darwin in his book, The Origin of Species. Darwin's book contained two major concepts: "evolution, or the idea that all forms of life have developed gradually from a common ancestry; and . . . the survival of the fittest, as an explanation of the reason for evolution."¹⁶

The works of Marx also had considerable influence on the historical and philosophical milieu of Realism. Marx emphasized the conditioning effect of environment on human behavior, but contended that the circumstances of environment could be changed by man.¹⁷ He thus advanced the concept of change in human behavior and society.

¹⁴Brockett, p. 261

¹⁵Alburey Castell, An Introduction to Modern Philosophy (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963), pp. 217-26.

¹⁶Brockett, p. 261.

¹⁷Hatlen, p. 162.

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The principles of Realism as a dramatic style stem from the general ideas of Comte, Darwin, Marx, and other intellectual leaders of the nineteenth century. From these ideas, playwrights evolved a style of writing, but not necessarily a program for "realistic" dramatic creation. There is no single source for the formulation of the principles of Realism. The number of dramatists and their various employments of Realism make it impossible to render precise descriptions of the views underlying Realism. At best, only the general bases of realistic thought can be advanced.

First, Realism adopts the methods and views of science. It stops short of the experimental aspects of science, however, and concentrates on "meticulous and precise observation, analysis, and recording of specific details."¹⁸ As a result, Realism is limited to the empirical aspects of science.

Another effect of the scientific influence on dramatic art is the concept of man as a natural object. Man becomes, in this view, "another object for study and control."¹⁹ "He is a case study, capable of being examined and investigated."²⁰

Second, Realism views heredity and environment as the two main factors which shape human character. Man is a product of the interactions of the physical attributes he is born with, the conditions which surround him, and his will. "His physiology is as important as

¹⁸Hatlen, p. 147.

¹⁹Brockett, p. 261.

²⁰Hatlen, p. 144.

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his intellect in determining his conduct."²¹ Although heredity and its effects appealed as subject matter to a number of dramatists, it was environment that held a special fascination for realistic playwrights.

It is the concept of environment "as a dynamic element of human experience" which marks the modernity of Realism.²² More importantly, it is "the idea of the stage as an environment, rather than as simply or mainly a platform for acting, that effected fundamental changes in dramatic art."²³ Environment has a double influence on Realism. Content in Realism was affected by depicting the environmental factors as they influenced character, and the conventions of Realism were a result of treating the stage itself as environment.

Thirdly, the concern with scientific empiricism and the factors of heredity and environment are linked to a principle of Realism which embraces the idea of progress in improving human relations and behavior. This view stems from a philosophical-historical assumption which was augmented by Darwin's theory of evolution. "If man has evolved from an infinitesimal grain of being to the complex creature he is now, greater and greater improvement and inevitable progress seem to be clearly indicated."²⁴ "The notion of progress is essentially associated with the theory that science will necessarily continue to increase the sum of human knowledge, and the possibilities of human conquest in the world of Nature,"²⁵ Progress, although supposedly inevitable,

²¹Hatlen, p. 144.

²²Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 23. ²³Ibid., p. 19.

²⁴Brockett, p. 261.

²⁵Hugh Sykes Davies, Realism in the Drama (London: Cambridge University Press, 1934), p. 94.

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The concept of progress requires some qualification in its relation to Realism. It is more aptly an assumption on the part of the realistic playwrights rather than stated doctrine or program. Progress is implicit but not necessarily explicit. Realistic drama could demonstrate the operation and effect of progress directly but the idea of progress is more often implied in dramas which depict conditions which are in need of change. In such dramas, a supposedly objective picture of social difficulties and problems only reveals the status quo. The implication is that if some action were taken to deal with them, then the resultant change would lead to progress. It is also possible that realistic drama may be used as a stimulus to the society in general to make it aware of problems in order that it may turn its attention to them. All in all, the idea of progress is related to the principles of Realism, although this relation is not always immediately obvious.

The last principle of Realism is that it attempts to be "true to life." According to Kenneth Thorpe Rowe,

The aim of realism, . . . , is truth to life, inner and universal; but what distinguishes realism is truth to life in external and particular detail. Realism as a method ascertains truth by observation and communicates it by direct representation.²⁷

While Rowe's statement seems clear enough and is representative of a number of other statements by various critics, it glosses over a disagreement among critics about how true Realism actually is to life.

²⁶Brockett, p. 261.

²⁷Rowe, p. 180.

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29. August St.
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The argument about the nature of "truthfulness to life" in Realism stems from two differing conceptions of the style. Some commentators, because they believe there is little, if any, distinction between Realism and Naturalism, lay stress upon the realist's duty to repeat the very look of life. They say that Realism sees truth as a reproduction of reality since it demands "a more or less literal picture of people and happenings."²⁸ This view of Realism is what Strindberg characterized as "photography which includes everything, even the grain of dust on the lens of the camera."²⁹ Realism in this sense is parallel to what Henry James called the "emotion of recognition." It might be termed journalistic reporting. Other critics believe that the "truth to life" in Realism is more than the depiction of the externals of reality. They feel that Realism is

true to the deeper motives of human character and to the underlying currents of social development; not in the sense of being photographically reflective of other aspects and irrelevant details. It does not strain to be natural, and yet it is never unnatural. The mirror is not held up to life, but life is subjected to a rigid selective sense, and through that transformed into art.³⁰

In this study the concept that Realism is "true to life" in the sense of being true to the obvious external aspects of the world of observed reality is not accepted as a principle of Realism. This concept is more germane to Naturalism which is treated separately here as

²⁸Kenneth Macgowan and Robert Edmund Jones, Continental Stagecraft (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1922), pp. 4-5.

²⁹August Strindberg, "On Modern Drama and Modern Theatre," Playwrights on Playwriting, ed. Toby Cole (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), p. 17.

³⁰Sheldon Cheney, The Theatre: Three Thousand Years of Drama, Acting, and Stagecraft (rev. ed. New York: Longmans, Green, 1952), p. 35.

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a dramatic style. In effect, so-called photographic realism is more compatible with the naturalist's theory of the "slice-of-life."³¹

This study accepts the idea that Realism is "true to life" in that it approximates "real life as close as is compatible with the nature of dramatic illusion."³² Realism attempts to produce the illusion of reality rather than reproduce life itself. In Realism the selection, arrangement, and "manipulation of observed fact result in the revelation of hidden or more general truths than accurate reproduction of the apparent reality would yield."³³

Characteristics of Realism

General Characteristics

Realism has been used to identify a wide variety of plays which range "from the plain reportorial or slice-of-life sort over near Naturalism, to the emotionally condensed sort over near Romanticism."³⁴ Millett and Bentley describe three types of realists as follows:

[A . . right wing which] grasps only partially the implications of the scientific point of view, is likely to share a fairly hard-headed sentimentalist's views of human character, [and] to judge his characters and their behavior unconsciously in accordance with the mores of his own social group. There is, besides, an important type of realist . . . that not only does not attempt the objectivity of the scientist but earnestly espouses a particular standard of morals and philosophy, and uses the drama to express his social purpose and his social criticism. . . . The left-wing realist is the type of artist who in continental criticism is usually called a naturalist.³⁵

³¹See Chapter V, "Naturalism," pp. 87-88. ³²Davies, p. 119.

³³Alan S. Downer, Fifty Years of American Drama: 1900-1950 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1951), p. 64.

³⁴Cheney, The Theatre:, p. 450.

³⁵Millett and Bentley, p. 147.

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Despite the diversity of plays which may fall under the category of Realism, they all contain some general characteristics which mark them as similar in style. These characteristics are 1) depiction of the contemporary world, 2) a reliance on the concept of environment, 3) an emphasis on the element of character, 4) the fourth-wall convention, and 5) selection and arrangement in the imitation of actions and details from actual life.

Realism, with few exceptions, "is primarily concerned with the contemporary scene, contemporary people, contemporary ideas and ideals" ³⁶ This characteristic is traceable to the historical-philosophical background in which Realism developed. As T. W. Hatlen observes, "when a society becomes concerned primarily with the physical and material aspects of living based on sense knowledge, then the artist looks to real life for his means of expression." ³⁷ Given the general thoughts and attitudes of the late nineteenth century, it is logical that dramatists would create plays which "restrict themselves to the minute observation of man in the ordinary and eternal conflicts of daily life." ³⁸

Immediacy is a basic concern in Realism. In a realistic drama, "the background . . . is immediate in time and place to the author and his audience, specific in locale, and treated with fidelity to physical facts and social manners." ³⁹ Characters in the drama of Realism are "normal to the background, more often than not representative." ⁴⁰

³⁶Heffner, Seldon, and Sellman, p. 73.

³⁷Hatlen, p. 143.

³⁸Downer, Fifty Years , p. 53.

³⁹Rowe, p. 181.

⁴⁰Ibid.

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41. Heffner,

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While the emphasis in Realism is on the contemporary, a past period may be treated in a realistic manner.⁴¹ The Crucible by Arthur Miller is a notable example of this. Exceptions, however esteemed or striking, do not alter the general tendency in Realism to depict the contemporary world.

A second general characteristic of Realism is its emphasis on the concept of environment. In Realism the surroundings of the characters are treated as more than the "local color" of Romanticism, the latter often introduced for novelty. Realists expanded the idea of imitating details of a particular locality and introduced environment which was treated "not merely as the background for a dramatic complication but as the foreground itself."⁴²

In Realism the particular handling of environment is significant. The realistic playwright avoids presenting the details of the observable world for their own sake. He wishes to express "an awareness of kinetic relations between the individual and society."⁴³ Details, both material and social, are selected to show the effect of environment on the characters portrayed. The dramatist presents "convincing representations of meaningful experiences,"⁴⁴ not a totality of experience from the actual world of reality. In Realism, environment is not employed to deceive the audience into believing what they are witnessing is like life in the actual world. It is

⁴¹Heffner, Seldon, and Sellman, p. 73.

⁴²John Gassner, A Treasury of the Theatre: From Henrik Ibsen to Arthur Miller, (rev. ed.; New York, Simon and Schuster, 1950), p. 3.

⁴³Gassner, Form and Idea, p. 63. ⁴⁴Ibid.

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used to help the spectator perceive the relation between human character and its material and social surroundings.

An emphasis on the form element of character is a third general characteristic of Realism as a dramatic style. In Realism "the principal object of imitation is always man; description of the material world, construction of plot, are thus subsidiary and contributory to character portrayal."⁴⁵ Realism attempts to present both people and action that are familiar to the audience but the "best realistic plays emphasize characterization rather than complicated plotting."⁴⁶ Due to Realism's imitation of details of the observable world, the realist commonly "is driven to an exacting study of the surface manifestations of character."⁴⁷ In its form relationships, Realism emphasizes the element of character, but not to the point where other elements lack relative importance.

A fourth general characteristic of Realism is the so-called "fourth-wall convention." This identifying characteristic is actually more apparent in the theatrical production of realistic drama, but it can be perceived in the manner of writing plays in the style of Realism. The assumption of this convention did much to change the art of theatre and drama and to dictate most of the other conventions of realistic theatrical style.⁴⁸ In Realism this convention provides for the presentment of the material of a play "in the manner and sequence

⁴⁵Hatlen, p. 145.

⁴⁶Lodwick Hartley and Arthur Ladu, Patterns in Modern (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), pp.8-9.

⁴⁷Millett and Bentley, p. 150.

⁴⁸Brown, p. 484.

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of actual life, as though people were being watched through a peep-hole."⁴⁹ According to the fourth-wall convention, characters in a drama are "supposed to be seen as they would be seen if the fourth wall of any living room or bedroom were suddenly removed and an audience permitted to watch unsuspecting, everyday mortals going about their everyday business in an everyday manner."⁵⁰

Finally, a general characteristic exhibited by Realism as its selective technique in portraying actual life. In realistic drama it is essential that the actions of the characters and the setting of the play be accepted as a "true" picture of life.⁵¹ It need not be a total, inclusive picture, however. The "true" picture presented in Realism is accomplished by the suggestion of reality (rather than by its actual photographic depiction) through a process of selection. Realistic plays commonly "give the impression of being the real thing without including the infinity of unnecessary and confusing detail one might find in real life."⁵² In short, Realism pictures life, "but not in stark photographic detail. Rather it selects, arranges, and discards."⁵³

⁴⁹Gassner, Producing the Play, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁰Brown, p. 484.

⁵¹Mary McCarthy, "Realism in the American Theatre," Harper's CCXXIII (July, 1961), 49.

⁵²Richard Corson, "Styles of Scene Design," Dramatics Magazine, XIX (1947-48), 5.

⁵³Wright, pp. 89-90.

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Plot

In Realism the element of plot is marked by 1) a structural compactness, 2) a late point of attack, 3) an attempt to reduce theatrical conventions to a minimum, and 4) the use of contemporary story material.

Realism exhibits a "compactness of form that has not been known since the time of the Greeks."⁵⁴ This compactness in realistic plots is achieved by "organic means" rather than "by means of tricks and devices,"⁵⁵ which are melodramatic and are therefore "foreign to Realism."⁵⁶ The compactness of structure in Realism is characterized by "careful construction, exposition, and motivation."⁵⁷ It commonly adheres closely to the three unities, "for it is likely to be economical in its shift of time and place and to the use of a single plot."⁵⁸

A secondary plot technique appears to be the employment of the late point of attack. The plot tends to concentrate the action at the moment of crisis.⁵⁹ This late point of attack leads dramatists to adopt Realism's "retrospective method of playwrighting,"⁶⁰ which is related to the tendency toward compactness in realistic plays.

⁵⁴Sheldon Cheney, The New Movement in the Theatre (New York: Mitchell Dennerley, 1914), p. 36.

⁵⁵Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 35.

⁵⁶Cheney, New Movement , p. 45.

⁵⁷Cooper, p. 140.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹McCarthy, p. 46.

⁶⁰Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 32.

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A third characteristic of plot structure in Realism appears to be the attempt to reduce theatrical convention to a minimum,⁶¹ in order to produce the illusion of everyday reality.⁶² One technique is the weaving of exposition into the rising plot action.⁶³ The minimization of theatrical convention is perceptible in the omission of great complications of plot and climaxes, and the de-emphasis of the "big scene."⁶⁴ Soliloquies and asides, both obvious theatrical conventions, are eliminated from realistic plots.⁶⁵

Many critics indicate that the plot material in Realism should be from contemporary life. Cooper, for example, claims that contemporary life should be the source for all plot material,⁶⁶ and Gassner goes further by saying that the treatment of the character's contemporary environment as a factor in the determination of human conduct and destiny is also an attribute of story material in Realism.⁶⁷ The practice of choosing content from contemporary life is all but absolute in Realism; however, there are some exceptions. Content from past periods has appeared in realistic plays, but has been treated in terms of ideas contemporary to the author and his audience.

Character

The element of character in Realism can be described in terms of four factors. They are 1) social class, 2) plausibility, 3) complexity,

⁶¹Rowe, p. 181. ⁶²Gassner, Producing the Play, p. 62.

⁶³Cheney, New Movement , pp. 75-76.

⁶⁴Millett and Bentley, pp. 148-149.

⁶⁵Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 30.

⁶⁶Cooper, p. 140. ⁶⁷Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 37.

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Realism may be employed to depict any level of society, but the prevailing tendency in realistic drama is to portray characters from the middle class, the lower middle class, and the working class.⁶⁸ Today, the common man -- whether ordinary, humble or downtrodden -- is the predominant figure in realistic drama.⁶⁹ Earlier Realism of the nineteenth century featured characters from the middle class. As Realism expanded, characters were drawn more and more from the working class and the peasantry.⁷⁰

Characters in realistic drama are "credible men and women."⁷¹ The playwright in Realism "attempts to present types of people and action that are familiar to us."⁷² "The characters are treated with particular truth to individual lives and personalities."⁷³ Overall, Realism tries to be "faithful and accurate" in its "rendition of life and character."⁷⁴ However, faithfulness and accuracy in rendering characters does not mean a rigid copying of observable reality. It is enough if the characters in Realism present the illusion of being plausible, probable human entities.

Characters in Realism are relatively more complex in their make-up than those in older forms of drama. They are "composites of a large number of varying and contradictory impulses."⁷⁵ Realistic

⁶⁸McCarthy, p. 45.

⁶⁹Hatlen, p. 149.

⁷⁰Gassner, Treasury of the Theatre: Ibsen to Miller, p. 4.

⁷¹J. W. Marriott, Modern Drama (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., n.d.), p. 57.

⁷²Hartley and Ladu, p. 8.

⁷³Rowe, p. 181.

⁷⁴Millett and Bentley, p. 151.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 150.

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playwrights often reveal their characters as "individuals with conflicting psychological drives, products of heredity and environment."⁷⁶

It is peculiar to realistic drama that often such conflicts go unresolved.⁷⁷

It is also common in Realism that the imitation of action in regard to character is not that of "violent physical action as much as the inner crisis, thus penetrating the surface and giving insight into their [characters'] desires, aspirations, and frustrations."⁷⁸ The inner, or psychological-social, complexity of character in Realism is accompanied by a complexity of detail in the external aspects of character, such as dress, manners, and physical appearance. The realist spends much effort on the "surface manifestations of character."⁷⁹

In dealing with the relationship of character to heredity and environment, realists did not overemphasize the mechanistic and animalistic aspects of man as did the naturalists. "The realist found it possible to show both sides of man and dealt with many characters who were close to the norm in behavior and outlook."⁸⁰

Language

Prose is generally considered to be a mandatory characteristic of Realism.⁸¹ The dialogue is natural, even colloquial at times. In

⁷⁶Hatlen, p. 149. ⁷⁷Millett and Bentley, p. 150.

⁷⁸Hatlen, p. 149. ⁷⁹Millett and Bentley, p. 150.

⁸⁰Hatlen, p. 150.

⁸¹See, for example, Gassner, Treasury of the Theatre: Ibsen to Miller, p. 3; Wright, p. 89; Millett and Bentley, p. 150; Cooper, p. 140; and Rowe, p. 183.

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85. Ibid., p

87. Ibid., p

addition, the dialogue should be functional, with individualizing speech patterns and dialects, and even personalized details of human interest. It is utilitarian, "serving to advance the plot or delineate character, rather than to call attention to itself."⁸² Discussion is often considered to be an important feature in Realism.⁸³ Although it is a part of the dialogue of realistic style, it has some influence on plot, too. G. B. Shaw, when he wrote of the technical novelty in Ibsen's plays, pointed out that the structure of the "well-made" play (exposition, situation, and unravelling) had been changed by Ibsen to exposition, situation, and discussion.⁸⁴ Shaw felt that "the introduction of the discussion and its development until it so overspreads and interpenetrates the action that it finally assimilates it, making the play and discussion practically identical" was the factor that aided in separating Ibsen and post-Ibsen drama from previous dramaturgical practice.⁸⁵

Discussion is "a manifestation of a critical spirit that helps shape the modern realistic play and to give it a significance well above that of merely pictorial realism."⁸⁶ In Realism, psychological conflicts and social situations "can provide engrossing drama when they are presented largely through discussion or argument."⁸⁷

⁸²Hatlen, p. 151.

⁸³Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 42.

⁸⁴George Bernard Shaw, The Quintessence of Ibsenism (New York: Hill and Wang, n.d.), p. 171.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 184. ⁸⁶Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 42.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 43-44.

Theme

The word which most appropriately describes the themes of Realism is "humanitarian." There is a general spirit in realistic plays which evinces a deep concern for contemporary social problems, and contemporary individual human problems.⁸⁸ Cheney calls this general concern a "sympathetic interest in the common man."⁸⁹ Such concern and interest leads realists to demonstrate in their plays that man alone is responsible for his current plight. They attempt to indicate that social change is needed or to direct the path of change.

Particular themes deal more specifically with the humanitarian spirit. They treat individual man's psychological problems, his duty to share ethical relationships with his fellow man, and his responsibility to social institutions. Society's obligation to each individual, family relationships, sex, and economic conflicts also appear in the themes of Realism.⁹⁰

Summary: Criteria for the Identification
of the Dramatic Style of Realism

Principles

Realism is strongly influenced by science and adopts the methods of scientific empiricism in which man is seen as an object for study and control. Realism is concerned with the objective treatment of heredity and environment as major influences on human character. Realism is also linked to an idea of inevitable progress which can be

⁸⁸Cooper, p. 140.

⁸⁹Cheney, New Movement in the Theatre, p. 38.

⁹⁰Hatlen, p. 151.

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Characteristics of Realism

General Characteristics

Realism is primarily involved with imitating the contemporary, immediate world of man and society. Historical periods may be imitated in a realistic manner, although such imitation is rare.

Realism emphasizes the concept of environment in relation to character. The perception of the relationship between the individual and his surroundings is a primary aim, rather than mere copying of the details of environment.

Realism emphasizes the form element of character more than any other element.

Realism also generally observes the fourth-wall convention, apparent not only in production, but also as an influence on the form of the drama.

Realism imitates life but does not reproduce it. Realism selects and arranges the aspects of life presented on stage. This selection and arrangement aids in distinguishing Realism from Naturalism, since both styles imitate the details of empirical reality.

Form Elements

Plot

Realistic plots are marked by structural compactness, late point of attack, reduction of theatrical convention, and the use of

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Character

Characters in Realism can be drawn from any social class, but are most often members of the middle and low classes. Regardless of social position, they are portrayed as credible, probable people. Characters are relatively complex in their physical and psychological make-up. Often their psychological conflicts are important aspects of the dramas in which they appear. They are influenced by heredity and environment. Characters are close to the norm in behavior and outlook.

Language

The dialogue of Realism is always written in prose. It appears to be natural to the character and his position. It is primarily functional rather than ornamental. It seldom calls attention to itself. Discussion and argument often are an integral part of the dialogue.

Theme

Realistic plays demonstrate a "humanitarian" concern for contemporary man and society. Their themes usually revolve around responsibility -- man's responsibility to himself, his family, his fellow man, and his society, as well as society's responsibility to its individual members.

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³Hatlen, p. 158

CHAPTER V

NATURALISM

Historical Background

Like Realism, Naturalism in drama developed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in response to changes in the social and intellectual attitudes of the western world. Prior to this time, there had been some "important forerunners" of the naturalistic drama, "among them Henriette Marechal (1865), by the Goncourts; La Revolte (1870), by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam; [and] Daudet's L'Arlesienne (1872)."¹ However, it was Émile Zola's dramatization of his novel, Thérèse Raquin, in 1873 which marked the beginning of a consciously naturalistic style.² More important that the play was Zola's challenging preface to it which led other playwrights to follow in his footsteps.³

After Thérèse Raquin, Zola continued to contribute plays and provocative essays to the cause of Naturalism. His collection of essays dealing with the theoretical aspects of Naturalism was published in 1881 under the title of Le Naturalisme au théâtre. This event spurred a developing trend toward naturalistic playwriting

¹Corelik, p. 133.

²"France," Oxford Companion to the Theatre, p. 291.

³Hatlen, p. 158.

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⁴Rhodes, "France
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⁵Ibid., pp. 243-

⁷Alrik Gustafson:
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⁸Franz Rapp, "G

exemplified by the appearance of Henri Becque's The Vultures (1882) and La Parisienne (1885).

Naturalism in theatrical production was fostered by Andre' Antoine when he founded the Théâtre-Libre in 1887.⁴ Although Antoine's main contributions were important to the development of a naturalistic theatrical style, his Théâtre-Libre in its brief existence (1887-1894) also provided exposure for over forty dramas, most of them naturalistic in style, and helped transform the "character of the French theatre."⁵

"Naturalism as a conscious movement was largely ended by 1900."⁶ Yet, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, several renowned naturalistic plays were written by dramatists of various nations. Russia's Leo Tolstoi shocked the Victorian era with his sordid peasant drama, The Power of Darkness (1886). In Sweden, a letter from Zola praising The Father led August Strindberg to create a masterpiece of Naturalism, Miss Julia (1888).⁷ A year later the German playwright, Gerhart Hauptmann wrote Before Sunrise, a seamy picture of life in a coal-mining village.⁸ This play was followed by Hauptmann's most renowned naturalistic drama, The Weavers (1892). In the same year in England, G.B. Shaw's Widower's House, with its attack on "slum-landlordism," appeared. Shaw also exhibited naturalistic

⁴Rhodes, "France and Belgium," The History of Modern Drama, pp. 243-45.

⁵Ibid., pp. 243-44.

⁶Brockett, p. 277.

⁷Alrik Gustafson, "The Scandinavian Countries," The History of Modern Drama, p. 28.

⁸Franz Rapp, "Germany," The History of Modern Drama, p. 79.

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Although somewhat lessened in importance as a stylistic movement, Naturalism continued into the twentieth century. Shortly after the turn of the century, the French playwright, Eugène Brieux wrote Les Avariés (1902), "a study of venereal disease which, as Damaged Goods, created a sensation in England and America."¹⁰ Within the same year, the Moscow Art Theatre scored one of its greatest triumphs with the production of Maxim Gorky's now famous naturalistic drama of life in the Moscow underworld, The Lower Depths.¹¹ Naturalism also appeared in such plays as Elmer Rice's Street Scene, Eugene O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh and Long Day's Journey into Night, John Osborne's The Entertainer, and Tennessee Williams' Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.¹²

Principles of Naturalism

There is divided critical opinion as to whether Naturalism can be considered as a distinct dramatic style apart from Realism. It is true that certain similarities are apparent in the principles of both styles. Naturalism and Realism are very similar in that they are based on objectivity in observation and presentation. They are somewhat similar in their concern with the factors of heredity and environment, although Naturalism tends toward extremes in its insistence on these factors in determining human action and character.

⁹Hatlen, p. 159.

¹⁰"Brieux," Oxford Companion to the Theatre, p. 96.

¹¹"Gorky," Oxford Companion to the Theatre, p. 329.

¹²Rowe, pp. 186-187.

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¹⁴Vernon L. Parr
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¹⁵James K. Feibl
Philosophy, ed. Dagobert
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¹⁶Paul L. Soper,
Speech, XXXIII, No.

While there is little in the above principles that reveals a marked difference between Naturalism and Realism, the styles do differ in the degree of selectivity employed in depicting the actual world and in the deterministic philosophy which is the basis of Naturalism. Such differences warrant the consideration of Naturalism as a style related to but separate from Realism.

Although Naturalism and Realism share a common historical background and similar intellectual influences,¹³ Naturalism is rather rigidly based upon a philosophy of determinism which "sets it apart from Realism."¹⁴ According to this philosophy, "every fact in the universe is guided entirely by law" and "all the facts in the physical universe, and hence also in human history, are absolutely dependent upon and conditioned by their causes."¹⁵ These doctrines, along with related doctrines of positivism, led to a naturalist theory that "drama should systematically portray the true processes of the individual human being in relation with his environment, wherein cause-to-effect laws work out inexorably, quite aside from conventional morality or the sentiments of the spectator."¹⁶ In Naturalism

¹³See Chapter IV, "Realism," p. 64.

¹⁴Vernon L. Parrington, The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1958), p. 324.

¹⁵James K. Feibleman, "Determinism," The Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1942), p. 78.

¹⁶Paul L. Soper, "Backgrounds of Naturalism," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXIII, No. 1 (February, 1947), 52.

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18 Rockett, p.

19 Frank W. Chan-
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21 Émile Zola,
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"the individual was to be exhibited as the product, puppet, and victim of the inexorable forces of heredity, instinct, and environment, for man was to be regarded as a wholly natural object subject to natural processes."¹⁷

The deterministic view of the relation between man and the factors of heredity and environment marks a difference between Naturalism and Realism, a difference in degree. Man's inherited attributes and his surroundings are a part of the principles of Realism, but Naturalism places a "greater emphasis on the ideal that all behavior is determined by the forces of heredity and environment."¹⁸ (*Italics mine.*) In dealing with these forces, Naturalism accentuates "man as an animal, a creature material, a mere link in the chain of phenomena."¹⁹ Naturalistic playwrights tend to imply that "men . . . behave as they must; that is, their hereditary traits and instincts shape and determine their character and frequently overpower their reason or moral scruples."²⁰

In the principles of Naturalism, as in those of Realism there is an insistence on objectivity in observation and presentation. Zola had called for direct observation, exact anatomy, and the depiction of "what is" in works of literature.²¹ The dramatist was to

¹⁷Cassner, Form and Idea , p. 67.

¹⁸Brockett, p. 275.

¹⁹Frank W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1929), p. 35.

²⁰Cassner, Treasury of the Theatre: Ibsen to Miller, p. 3.

²¹Emile Zola, "Naturalism on the Stage," trans. Samuel Draper, Playwrights on Playwriting, ed. Toby Cole (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), p. 6.

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be coldly objective in observing and recording; he was never to allow his own "ideas or outlook to intrude."²² Zola wrote,

I am waiting for someone to put a man of flesh and bones on the stage, taken from reality, scientifically analyzed, and described without one lie I am waiting for environment to determine the characters and the characters to act according to the logic of facts combined with the logic of their own dispositions. . . . I am waiting, finally . . . until the playwrights return to the study of nature, to the anatomy of man, to the painting of life in an exact reproduction more original and powerful than anyone has so far dared to risk on the boards.²³

It should be noted that the objectivity of Naturalism is a theory, an ideal. In practice, many naturalistic playwrights failed to be truly objective, due either to their social or personal prejudices or to a concern for dramatic form.

Unlike Realism which employs selectivity to suggest reality, Naturalism is more exact and accurate in its imitation of observed reality, especially in the details of environment. Zola wrote that the dramatist must make use of environment as novelists do.

. . . a novelist no longer looks on man as an intellectual abstraction . . . ; he is a thinking animal, who forms part of nature, and who is subject to the multiple influences of the soil in which he grows and where he lives. That is why a climate, a country, a horizon, are often decisively important. The novelist no longer separates his character from the air he breathes; . . . ; he simply makes a note of the material conditions in which he finds his characters at every hour, and in which the facts are produced, in order to be absolutely thorough, and so that his inquiry may belong to the world's comprehensive view and reproduce reality in its entirety.²⁴

Zola acknowledged that it was not only possible to "produce the reality of environment on the stage," but that it was a necessity

²²Brockett, p. 275.

²³Zola, "Naturalism on the Stage," p. 6. ²⁴Ibid., pp. 10-11.

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²⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁷ Rowe, p. 126.

²⁸ Emile Zola, "The Drama," ed. Barrett
et al., (1947), p. 401.

²⁹ Ibid.

"imposed on the theatre as an essential condition of its existence."²⁵
 As a result of Zola's views and the practice of other playwrights,
 "the stage setting was given greater importance under naturalism than
 in any previous movement."²⁶

The concern for environment and the "minute and cumulative detailing" of it is directly related to the naturalistic principle of the "slice of life."²⁷ This principle is widely recognized as peculiar to Naturalism and aids in distinguishing the naturalistic style from Realism.

The "slice of life" concept developed as a part of the opposition to the theatrical conventions of the "well-made" play. Zola expressed this idea as a delving "into the living drama of the two-fold life of the character and its environment, bereft of every nursery tale, historical trapping, and the usual conventional stupidities."²⁸ He felt that for the dramatist "there should no longer be any school, no more formulas, no standards of any sort; there is only life itself"²⁹

The dramatists who followed the views of Zola wrote plays which negated "theatricality and skillful dramaturgy" and attempted "to give the impression that what happened on stage was actuality unorganized, without a beginning, a middle, or an end."³⁰ The aim was to transfer

²⁵Ibid., p. 11.

²⁶Brockett, p. 276.

²⁷Rowe, p. 186.

²⁸Emile Zola, "Preface to Thérèse Raquin," European Theories of the Drama, ed. Barrett H. Clark (2nd rev.; New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1947), p. 401.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Hatlen, p. 160.

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a segment of life as accurately as possible to the stage without distorting it by artistic selection and arrangement. The customary structural elements of dramaturgy such as complication, discovery, climax, and denouement were regarded as harmful to the presentation of a true picture of life. In Naturalism, the point at which the story was to begin appeared to be selected at random and its end seemed equally arbitrary.³¹

Characteristics of Naturalism

General Characteristics

The dramas produced under the influence of naturalistic theory exhibit five commonly shared general characteristics. They are:

1) portrayal of life in the lower strata of society, 2) frankness in the presentation of sordid or unpleasant aspects of life, 3) an aura of pessimism, 4) an emphasis on the element of character, and 5) a "slice of life" manner in dramaturgy.

Naturalism commonly draws its content from the lower classes in society. There is little basis for this selection in the principles of Naturalism, yet in practice there is "a marked tendency toward selection of the lower levels of society and lower human types as subject matter."³² Naturalism seeks to depict reality, but the reality it depicts is "primarily that of the lower middle and working classes."³³ In turning "the drama to scenes of humble and low life," Naturalism utilizes "scenes and characters from city tenements and the underworld, from industrial environment, from peasant life and folk life, from

³¹Brockett, p. 276.

³²Rowe, p. 187.

³³Rhodes, p. 245.

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³⁴Heffner, *Selected*

³⁵Marriott, p.

³⁷Gassner, *Form*

³⁸Chandler, p.

⁴⁰Kurt F. Leide
H. Dagobert D. Rune
p. 230.

commerce and business."³⁴ Such characters can also be found in Realism but they are much more predominant in Naturalism.

Naturalism exhibits a frankness in presenting sordid, unpleasant, and depressing events in its drama. Again this is evident in practice and not necessarily in theory. The life that is depicted in naturalistic drama is often ugly and crude.³⁵ Man's animal nature is frequently emphasized.³⁶ Scenes of degradation, disease, and sexual license abound in Naturalism.³⁷ The naturalist often resorts to "sensationalistic experience;" he is likely "to dwell upon crime, vice, squalor, the misery of the fourth estate, primitive instincts in primitive people, or else morbid passions in people of the higher class."³⁸ "The naturalist breaks sharply from the realist in his preoccupation with only the ugly and squalid aspects of character and action."³⁹

Naturalism's deterministic view of human character and action and its presentation of unpleasant details of life in the lower strata of society cause much of naturalistic drama to appear pessimistic in tone and quality. Pessimism, in a general sense, is concerned with gloominess, despondency, magnification of sorrow and evil, and contempt for the world as it is. Such concern has led pessimists to suggest compensations or to offer remedies.⁴⁰ In the drama of Naturalism, a

³⁴Heffner, Seldon, and Sellman, p. 75.

³⁵Marriott, p. 72. ³⁶Heffner, Seldon, and Sellman, p. 74.

³⁷Gassner, Form and Idea, p. 68.

³⁸Chandler, p. 33. ³⁹Hatlen, p. 158.

⁴⁰Kurt F. Leidecker, "Pessimism," The Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1942), p. 230.

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⁴¹Parrington,

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Dickinson, P

⁴⁵Zola, "Prefa

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Naturalism displays "a bias toward pessimism."⁴¹ However, the pessimism apparent in naturalistic drama is not without purpose. Naturalistic dramatists frequently portray the dark and gloomy side of life in order to spur society toward reform of conditions.

Naturalism disdains nothing, however ugly, that can stir the feelings to an appreciation of human conditions as they exist. Specifically, naturalism recognizes the unnatural in our social structure and does not hesitate to emphasize it, to the end that dissatisfaction may incite to the building of a new structure more closely in accord with the laws of nature.⁴²

Accordingly, Naturalism often uses its pessimistic view to attain positive ends and in this manner is allied with some aspects of Realism. Yet the dramatists of Naturalism differ from those of Realism in that "their insistence is upon the evil which exists rather than upon the good for which they long."⁴³

Like Realism, Naturalism emphasizes the element of character.⁴⁴ The "slice of life" principle with its aversion to customary dramatic practices in plotting makes character more important. The primacy of character can be seen in Zola's comments on his play, Therese Raquin. He wrote that the action of the drama consisted of the "inner struggles of the characters" and depended upon a "logic of sensation and sentiment."⁴⁵ Gorky, in his preface to The Judge, indicated a similar view when he stated that characters "must be

⁴¹Parrington, p. 324.

⁴²Chandler, p. 34.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Dickinson, pp. 126-27.

⁴⁵Zola, "Preface to Therese Raquin," p. 401.

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46 Hatlen, p. 2

48 Gassner, Pro

49 Brockett, p.

50 See Chapter

driven by their own inner impulses, create the incidents and episodes -- tragic or comic -- and direct the course of the play, being permitted to act in harmony with their own contradictory natures, interests, and passions."⁴⁶

In Naturalism it is characteristic to have the action of the play appear to be a "slice of life." This is a logical consequence of the principles of Naturalism. Naturalists incline toward seemingly "plotless plays" which appear to be "reproductions of the unarranged and often uneventful course of daily existence."⁴⁷ In this, Naturalism differs from Realism which, while projecting an illusion of the actual world, selects and arranges the events of ordinary life in a manner more in keeping with established traditions of dramatic form.

In production, Naturalism is similar to Realism in following the "fourth-wall" convention but "adheres strictly to the peep-show theory that the characters observed on the stage are non-theatrical."⁴⁸ Naturalism seeks to reduce theatrical convention to a minimum and lead the audience to believe that what they see on stage is a segment of real life.⁴⁹

Form Elements

Plot

The element of plot in Naturalism is similar in many ways to that of Realism.⁵⁰ It takes its content almost exclusively from the

⁴⁶Hatlen, p. 161. ⁴⁷Gassner, The Theatre in Our Time, p. 78.

⁴⁸Gassner, Producing the Play, p. 62.

⁴⁹Brockett, p. 276.

⁵⁰See Chapter IV, "Realism," pp. 73.

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⁵¹ Chandler, p.

⁵⁴ Dickinson, p.

⁵⁵ Millett and

⁵⁷ Zola, "Natur

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Although the plot element in Naturalism and Realism is similar in many ways, there are two factors of plot in Naturalism which aid in distinguishing it from Realism. They are 1) a "slice of life" structure and 2) subject matter which treats the less edifying aspects of human life. Both factors have been mentioned under the general characteristics of Naturalism, but their relation to plot requires some clarification.

Naturalism insists that the "slice of life" should be "the formal principle of drama."⁵³ It "seeks to dispense with the technical expedients both of romanticism and of the well-made play: soliloquies, asides, confidants, rai^{son}neurs."⁵⁴ As a result, traditional techniques of dramaturgy are minimized to the point that it is sometimes impossible to be aware of them as technique.⁵⁵ The "slice of life" principle "favors an arrangement of facts after the pattern of life."⁵⁶

Although Zola wanted playwrights to paint life in "exact reproduction,"⁵⁷ the fact that drama is an art form requiring selection,

⁵¹Chandler, p. 33. ⁵²Dickinson, p. 126. ⁵³Rowe, p. 186.

⁵⁴Dickinson, p. 126.

⁵⁵Millett and Bentley, p. 148. ⁵⁶Dickinson, p. 126.

⁵⁷Zola, "Naturalism on the Stage," p. 6.

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⁵⁷Zola, "Naturalism on the Stage," p. 6.

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arrangement, and heightening made such a demand impossible to fulfill.⁵⁸ Naturalism, in denying the existing techniques of plotting, had to develop some techniques and conventions of its own.

Naturalists, in keeping with the "slice of life" theory, attempted to make their dramas appear plotless, without apparent form. They replaced complicated plots with simple ones.⁵⁹ They discarded "the literary and narrative qualities of the production, style, symmetrical dialogue, etc., in favor of the observed surface qualities of life."⁶⁰ They emphasized minute details of environment.⁶¹ They presented "haphazard conversations -- a dialogue terse, broken, rambling, as that of life."⁶² "Potentially dramatic scenes were underplayed, suggested or even avoided altogether."⁶³ In short, the naturalists could not escape the need for structure in plays so they were careful to disguise the mechanism of plotting in order to make their dramas appear to be a "slice of life" from the actual world.

Sordid, depressing, unsavory subject matter is commonly found in Naturalism as an element of plot. This trait is so marked as to be a general characteristic of the style. It was noted in the early history of the style in the productions of the Théâtre-Libre which were labeled

⁵⁸Brockett, p. 276.

⁵⁹Rhodes, p. 244. "Simple" is used in the sense that the overall story is easily summarized. In the attempt to imitate the often rambling actions of everyday life, the naturalist may present a rather complicated ordering of events.

⁶⁰Dickinson, pp. 126-127.

⁶¹Rowe, p. 186.

⁶²Chandler, p. 33.

⁶³Hatlen, p. 160.

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65 Ibid., pp. 2

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rosse, a term roughly translated as "crass," but more accurately defined as "'a sort of vicious ingenuousness, the state of soul of people who never had any moral sense and who live in impurity and injustice, like a fish in water.'"⁶⁴ Antoine and his playwrights

portrayed the seamy side of existence in exaggerated fashion — far too often with a mere cynical acceptance of what they saw or thought they saw. . . . Antoine's dramatists usually began with the premise that sordidness, stupidity and hypocrisy are the dominant forces in the world.⁶⁵

Naturalistic plays after the time of the Théâtre-Libre were less extreme in their treatment of the sordid and unpleasant, but they continued to depict "life in its crudeness and ugliness, its formlessness and colorlessness."⁶⁶ The details of naturalistic plays were unsavory as the author's intentions and the law allowed.⁶⁷

Character

Some aspects of character have already been discussed under the general characteristics of Naturalism: portrayal of human beings from the lower levels of society, the primacy of character over other elements, and the influence of character on plot. Consequently, there is little need to discuss them further here. Yet naturalistic characters can be identified by some additional attributes. They are 1) complex in nature, 2) heavily influenced by environment, 3) tend to passive victims of forces within and around them, and 4) members of lower society. Occasionally, a social group may be treated as a

⁶⁴Gorelik, p. 133. Gorelik is quoting the French critic Filon.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 134-135.

⁶⁶Marriott, p. 72.

⁶⁷Cassner, Producing the Play, pp. 62-63.

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The persons depicted in the drama of Naturalism are generally complex in their physical and psychological make-up. The naturalistic dramatist attempts to create plausible individuals.⁶⁸ As in his handling of plot, he employs

an unobtrusive technique in the delineation of characters, revealing them cumulatively bit by bit and showing complex motivations frequently at odds with one another. The protagonist does not move in a straight line toward his goal from conscious intent but is bedeviled by doubts, frustrations, torn by inner conflicts, ridden by passions.⁶⁹

Strindberg described the persons in his play, Miss Julie, as "characterless" since character to him signified "a man fixed and finished."⁷⁰ He wrote, "I do not believe, therefore, in simple stage characters; and the summary judgments of authors -- this man is stupid, that one brutal, this jealous, that stingy, and so forth -- should be challenged by the Naturalists who know the richness of the soul complex and realize that vice has a reverse side very much like virtue."⁷¹ He indicated the complexity of the characters in Miss Julie when he stated that they were "conglomerations of past and present stages of civilization, bits from books and papers, scraps of humanity, rags and tatters of fine clothing, patched together as is the human soul."⁷²

In Naturalism, character development is almost completely dependent upon environment. Zola, in an essay on the novel, wrote,

⁶⁸Rhodes, p. 244.

⁶⁹Hatlen, p. 160.

⁷⁰August Strindberg, "Preface to Miss Julie," Six Plays of Strindberg, trans. Elizabeth Sprigg (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1955), p. 64.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., p. 65.

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⁷³Emile Zola
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⁷⁴Hatlen, p.

⁷⁶Parrington.

⁷⁸ibid., p.

"We consider that man cannot be separated from his surroundings, that he is completed by his clothes, his house, his city, and his country, and hence we shall not note a single phenomenon of his brain or heart without looking for the causes of the consequences in his surroundings."⁷³ The previous discussion under the principles of Naturalism should make abundantly clear the role of environment in the development of characters in Naturalism.

The naturalistic emphasis on environment affected the element of character in several ways. Individuals were regarded as victims of circumstance,⁷⁴ "helpless and futile victims of impulses and powers which they cannot control."⁷⁵ The desire to demonstrate the effects of environment led naturalists to select characters of three types, this in spite of a theoretical objection to character types. One type was the character of "marked physique and small intellectual activity," a person of "strong animal drives."⁷⁶ "Characters of excited, neurotic temperament, at the mercy of moods, driven by forces that they do not stop to analyze" comprised a second type.⁷⁷ Sometimes the behavior of this character type was "aggravated by a physical defect."⁷⁸ A third type, "a strong character whose will was broken," appeared occasionally.⁷⁹ In order for the naturalist to show the "debilitating effects of unfavorable environment" he chose "characters who were twisted,

⁷³Emile Zola, "The Novel," The Experimental Novel and Other Essays, trans. Belle M. Sherman (New York: The Cassell Publishing Co., 1893), p. 232.

⁷⁴Hatlen, p. 160.

⁷⁵Millett and Bentley, p. 149.

⁷⁶Parrington, p. 324.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 324-25.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 325.

⁷⁹Ibid.

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wayward, and grotesque."⁸⁰ Finally, the preoccupation with environment often caused man to be depicted in his animal nature.⁸¹

In Naturalism, the characteristic selection of humans from the lower levels of society is in part a result of the naturalist's desire to demonstrate environmental cause and effect. It is feasible that naturalists could show the influence of heredity and environment on any level of society, but the characterization of members of higher levels would necessitate including qualities of education, culture, and rationality. These qualities would then tend to obscure or complicate the expression of environmental cause and effect. It appears simpler to choose members of a level of society closer to nature to clearly indicate the effects of heredity and environment.

Some naturalistic plays have a "collective rather than an individual hero."⁸² In such plays, "no matter how vividly the individuals of the group may be distinguished from one another, they are most important to the meaning of these plays as members of the group."⁸³ Individual characters tend to lose stature when a group is viewed as the protagonist.⁸⁴ The "collective" or group protagonist, while often associated with Naturalism, is more of a curiosity, however, than a general trait of character in naturalistic playwriting.

Language

"What I want to hear on the stage," said Zola, "is the language as it is spoken every day."⁸⁵ Basically, naturalistic dialogue

⁸⁰Hatlen, p. 160. ⁸¹Heffner, Seldon, and Sellman, p. 74.

⁸²Cassner, Form and Idea, p. 35. ⁸³Ibid., p. 36.

⁸⁴Ibid. ⁸⁵Zola, "Naturalism on the Stage," p. 12.

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exhibits a more phonographic technique than the realistic technique. Zola would rather see more "elasticity, and greater naturalness" than that of simple Realism.⁸⁶ By that he meant that

. . . if we cannot produce on the stage a conversation with its repetitions, its length, and its useless words, at least the movement and the tone of the conversation could be kept the best style on the stage is that which best sets forth the spoken conversation⁸⁷

August Strindberg, again in his preface to Miss Julie, advocated departing from traditional "well-made" dialogue "by not making . . . characters catechists who ask stupid questions in order to elicit a smart reply."⁸⁸ In addition his comment mirrors Zola's by asking for "real-life" talk in plays.

I have avoided the symmetrical, mathematical construction of French dialogue, and let people's minds work irregularly, as they do in real life where, during a conversation, no topic is drained to the dregs, and one's mind finds in another a chance cog to engage in. So, too, the dialogue wanders, gathering in the opening scenes material which is later picked up, worked over, repeated, expounded and developed like the theme in a musical composition.⁸⁹

Naturalistic dramatists seem to have adopted the suggestions and examples of Zola and Strindberg, because a formal principle of Naturalism is "the renouncement of any poetic embellishment and the minute reproduction of everyday speech, down to its slightest inflection."⁹⁰ The dialogue of Naturalism reads like a "seemingly literal rendering of ordinary speech, with its circumlocutions, pauses,

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Strindberg, "Preface to Miss Julie," p. 68.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 69.

⁹⁰H. F. Gatten, Modern German Drama (New York: Grove Press, 1962), p. 29.

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⁹¹Heffner

⁹²Ibid.

⁹⁴Farrine

⁹⁵Ibid.

[and] uncompleted thoughts."⁹¹ It frequently includes "slang, local accents and idioms, jargon, folk speech and dialects."⁹²

Theme

There are two dominant themes in Naturalism: 1) human action and character are determined and controlled by environment and heredity, and 2) man is a victim of other men, his society, and his own instincts. Both themes are closely related and both stem directly from the principles of Naturalism.

Naturalistic dramas suggest that man is a product of his birth and his surroundings. Further, he is subject to deterministic, natural laws which he cannot control. As a result, a frequent idea projected in naturalistic dramas is that man is an animal, "a product of a callous nature."⁹³

A strict adherence to the demonstration of the effect of heredity and environment on personality results in a view of man as an impotent victim of uncontrolled forces. The naturalist chooses to portray man as "the individual defeated by the world."⁹⁴ This theme has two forms: "1) Life is a trap, 2) Life is mean."⁹⁵ Such themes may be related to environment or "imperious desires -- but the outcome is usually hopeless sorrow -- sometimes stolid resignation, sometimes fierce protest, but with no other end than annihilation."⁹⁶ The naturalist, like

⁹¹Heffner, Seldon, and Sellman, pp. 75-76.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Hatlen, p. 158.

⁹⁴Parrington, p. 324.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

playwrights in many periods throughout the history of drama, sees man as a victim of fate.

But the Fate of the naturalists is no arbitrary destiny; it is rather the inevitable reaction upon the individual of his race, his heredity, his environment. These influences are so powerful that he lacks the will to struggle against them. His will, indeed, is but a resultant of such forces If he acts, it is but to obey some impulsion of lust, avarice, hatred. Vice and crime are the themes of the naturalist, morbid longings, distraught minds, sordid evils of the social system.⁹⁷

The themes projected in Naturalism have caused the style to be labeled as pessimistic. While it is true that crime, vice, animal instincts, sexual passion, and other sordid subjects appear in Naturalism, some critics have attempted to defend its pessimistic view. In a historical context, Naturalism is seen as a "response to the social democratic movement of the times."⁹⁸ In order to change conditions in society, the naturalists took a first step by focussing "attention on the rottenness of society."⁹⁹ They argued that life "must be faced in its grimmest and most horrible aspects; only so can it ever be improved."¹⁰⁰

Summary: Criteria for Identification of the Dramatic Style of Naturalism

Principles of Naturalism

Naturalism is based on a philosophy of scientific determinism which views the world as subject to natural laws that dictate all

⁹⁷Frank Chandler, The Contemporary Drama of France (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1921), p. 52.

⁹⁸Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 34.

⁹⁹Hatlen, p. 162.

¹⁰⁰Chandler, The Contemporary Drama of France, p. 52.

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cause and effect. Man in this context is regarded as an object whose action and character are subject to the natural laws of heredity and environment. The naturalist attempts to adopt the methods of science and to be objective in the observing and presenting of material from the actual world. This objectivity leads him to a concern for the details of life. He insists that the presentation of carefully observed details must be presented as a "slice of life" itself.

Characteristics of Naturalism

General Characteristics

In Naturalism, life in the lower levels of society is portrayed. The sordid, unpleasant, bestial aspects of life are frankly treated. A general pessimistic attitude is evident. The element of character is paramount. A "slice of life" quality is particularly characteristic.

Form Elements

Plot

Content is taken from contemporary life. Theatrical and dramatic conventions are minimized. The main feature of naturalistic plots is the "slice of life" technique in which the dramatic action is presented as a close approximation of observed reality. Plots are simple, but filled with many details of ordinary life. Theatrical climaxes and "big scenes" are avoided or underplayed. The plot may appear to have no beginning and no end. Content is frequently depressing, sordid, and "crass."

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Character

Naturalistic characters are often complex mixtures of physical and psychological factors. The naturalist avoids types, theoretically, and seeks to present developing or dynamic individuals. Attributes of character stem from heredity and environment. Characters often appear as victims of their physical, psychological, and social circumstances. They tend to be of three kinds: 1) "physical" people of strong animal drives and little intellectual activity; 2) neurotic, excited, temperamental people who are driven by forces they do not bother to analyze and whose behavior is often complicated by some physical defect; and 3) people of strong character whose will has been broken. Occasionally, a collective or group protagonist appears in naturalistic drama.

Language

The dialogue of Naturalism is phonographic in technique. It contains repetitions, circumlocutions, and pauses, to achieve a speech like that of the actual world. Slang, jargon, idioms, dialects, and folk speech are common.

Theme

Naturalism projects the theme that human character is determined by heredity and environment. Man is regarded as a victim of a world he cannot control. Life is seen as mean or as a trap. Man seems doomed to defeat and annihilation. Themes have a strong suggestion of pessimism.

CHAPTER VI

SYMBOLISM

Historical Background

Just as the romantic movement of the early nineteenth century was a reaction against the formal Classicism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the realistic movement of the second half of the nineteenth century was a reaction against Romanticism, so too in the last decade of the nineteenth century the symbolists reacted against the theatre of Realism. As a variant form of Romanticism,¹ Symbolism began as a poetic movement, strongly influenced by the philosophical idealism of Bergson; the poetry of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Verlaine; the painting style of the post-impressionists; and the music of Wagner.²

Symbolism arose first in the literature of France when the

¹John Cassner points out that while the spirit of symbolist drama is certainly romantic, the two styles exhibit significant differences. "The romantic drama is explicit, whereas the symbolist drama is suggestive. The former has the clear outlines of a well-defined action, whereas the latter has an elusive, penumbral content. Romantic drama is insistent -- . . . -- even when mysterious; symbolist drama is ambiguous -- . . . -- even when its content is simple." As for the treatment of environment, "the romanticist glamorizes the environment or uses it for effects of horror, but, unlike the symbolist, he does not abstract it into a symbol of the soul of the play or the state of mind of a character." (Form and Idea , p. 128).

²Cassner, Treasury of the Theatre: Ibsen to Miller, p. 259.

so-called "neo-Romantic" poets reacted against the "cold, formal poetry of Parnassians like Leconte de Lisle, and declared themselves 'symbolists'."³ Specifically, it was in 1886 that the French poet Jean Moréas, in an article in Figaro, proposed that the term "symbolism" be applied to a particular literary tendency which up to that time had been generally labeled "decadence."⁴

In drama in the 1880's, the established realistic and naturalistic schools of playwrighting were challenged by the new group of symbolist writers. Led in spirit by Maurice Maeterlinck, who wrote under the influence of the poets Mallarmé and Verlaine, Symbolism became the "fashionable mode of expression in the 1890's."⁵ It was during, and immediately following, the 1890's that Maeterlinck wrote his most impressive symbolist dramas -- The Intruder (1890), The Blind (1891), his most successful full length play, Pelleas and Melisande (1893), The Interior (1895), and The Blue Bird (1908).

Although Maeterlinck was recognized as the leading dramatist of the Symbolist movement, other major playwrights were involved in the creation of symbolist drama. Ibsen's later plays such as The Master Builder (1892), Little Eyolf (1894), and When We Dead Awaken (1899), turned toward Symbolism.⁶ Even the German playwright, Gerhart Hauptmann, departed from the ranks of the realist-naturalist writers

³John Gassner, Masters of the Drama, (3d ed.; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1954), p. 412.

⁴Paul Scholfield, "The Age of Symbolism," Living Age, Vol. 350, No. 4438 (July, 1936), 440.

⁵Gassner, Form and Idea, p. 98.

⁶Gassner, Masters of the Drama, pp. 380-83.

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long enough to contribute his partially symbolic play, Hannele (1893), and his wholly symbolic play, The Sunken Bell (1896), to the drama of Symbolism.⁷

The immediate effects of the development of Symbolism in drama were two-fold. In theatre it led to a series of innovations in stage production, particularly in stage settings.⁸ In drama, it partially loosened the hold of Realism on dramatists and brought the poet back into the field of playwrighting.⁹ Maeterlinck, Hofmannsthal, Claudel, Andreyev, Synge, Yeats, and even O'Neill at some time turned from the observation of ordinary life toward the freer use of imagination in Symbolism.

Principles of Symbolism

The principles which underlie Symbolism as a dramatic style are derived from two related sources, Maurice Maeterlinck's essays on drama and the symbolist movement in French poetry led by Stéphane Mallarmé. Since Maeterlinck's concepts of drama were greatly influenced by the French poets who established the basic tenets of Symbolism in literature, it is necessary to outline the general principles of Symbolism in poetry before attempting to treat the particular theories advanced by Maeterlinck. Such an approach is not meant to imply,

⁷Ibid., pp. 459-60.

⁸As John Gassner states, "The best and lasting effect of symbolism, and not only on the nonrealistic but on the realistic theatre of all gradations, came from the efforts of scene designers and stage directors." (Treasury of the Theatre: Ibsen to Miller, p. 259). Although the scenic and stage practices of such figures as Appia, Craig, and Robert Edmund Jones are important, the discussion of them is beyond the scope of this study.

⁹Gassner, Form and Idea, p. 98.

however, that one source is more important than the other. The general philosophy of the symbolists gained whatever importance it had in drama principally through the plays and essays of Maeterlinck. On the other hand, Maeterlinck's concepts of drama were not original with him, but were personal interpretations of basic symbolist theory.

The symbolist movement in poetry embodied a search for truth, an ultimate, absolute truth. Mallarmé and the other disciples of Symbolism denied that such truth could be found by observing the immediately perceivable world or resorting to rational thought processes.¹⁰ Such methods were alien to their concept of the nature of reality. They held that "truth is to be grasped only by intuition."¹¹

The symbolists' insistence on an intuitive knowledge of reality was based on their world-view. They believed that the observable world was not true reality, but a reflection of an ideal, invisible Absolute.¹² According to Mallarmé's aesthetic theory, the world is divided into a material system which is representative or symbolic of a spiritual system that is ideological, permanent, abstract, and "inaccessible to the continual flux of matter."¹³

To Mallarmé and other symbolist writers, "external phenomena . . . [were] symbols of a higher system of ideas."¹⁴ The "higher

¹⁰Brockett, p. 287.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Calvin S. Brown, et. al., The Reader's Companion to World Literature (New York: New American Library, 1956), p. 432.

¹³Hayse Cooperman, The Aesthetics of Stéphane Mallarmé (New York: The Koffern Press, 1933), p. 18.

¹⁴May Daniels, The French Theatre of the Unspoken (Edinburgh: University Press, 1953), p. 23.

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system of ideas" has been variously termed as spiritual, inner reality, universal, eternal, soul, essence, and absolute. Regardless of what it had been called, to the symbolists it was the source of all true knowledge of man and the world.

The symbolists wanted to express the truth of spiritual things, "the 'soul' of that which can be apprehended only by the soul -- the finer sense of things unseen, the deeper meanings of things evident."¹⁵ They could not depend on observation of the material world which, to them, was transient and imperfect. Instead, they sought "to reveal the mystery of inner life and the spiritual harmony between visible and invisible reality" through expression of "analogies and correspondances which the poet alone can grasp."¹⁶ In other words, "The symbolists insisted that things themselves have a soul and that we must endeavour to grasp the inner correspondences which exist between ourselves and the world."¹⁷

The symbolists believed that the knowledge of the relationships between the eternal and transient worlds could only be expressed by symbols.¹⁸ They felt that the artist's intuition of the absolute "should be conveyed by suggestions rather than by description or analysis."¹⁹ As a consequence,

¹⁵Arthur Symons, Dramatis Personae (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1923), p. 99.

¹⁶Block and Shedd, p. 157.

¹⁷Pierre de Bacourt and J. W. Cunliffe, French Literature During the Last Half-Century (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927), p. 256.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Daniels, p. 24.

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Symbolism had the power of suggesting; it did not state any realities, subjective or objective . . . ; it was founded upon exaggerated memories, registered and expressed by the artist, who did not portray them, but implied them. In this wise, the symbols had a universal aspect,²⁰

The symbolist writer was not as interested in communicating his thoughts directly to others as he was in giving them suggestions which would "induce them to think and dream for themselves."²¹ As Mallarmé said in his Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire,

To name an object means to suppress three parts of the enjoyment which consists in gradually guessing its meaning. To suggest it, that is its dreamlike function. The perfect unfolding of the mystery constitutes the symbol.²²

In the Symbolist movement the reliance on suggestion (symbols) to communicate the truth of external reality was based to a great extent on Mallarmé's ideas about poetic language. Wallace Fowlie explained the concepts in this manner:

The theory of the suggestiveness of words comes from a belief that a primitive language, half-forgotten, half-living, exists in each man. It is a language possessing extraordinary affinities with music and dreams. Poetry, in the putting to use of this exceptional language, is the establishment of relationships between things in the world and the sensitivity of the poet. This is a form of esoterism, a way toward a spiritual knowing of the universe when the symbol will be found to be ever real and ever suggestive.²³

The belief that the artist can only suggest the nature of the absolute realm led the symbolists to emphasize the "importance of the sound of the verse and the need for fastidious craftsmanship in creating

²⁰Cooperman, pp. 10-11.

²¹Bacourt and Cunliffe, p. 266.

²²M. Joubert, "Mysticism in French Literature," Contemporary Review, Vol. 151, No. 1 (January, 1937), . 98.

²³Wallace Fowlie, Mallarmé (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 264.

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the effects of music through words."²⁴ Mallarmé believed that "since music was the art that could express everything through suggestion, since it was the beyond of words and visions, it was the aim of poetry to reach the realm of music."²⁵ In their attempts to produce "effects like those of music," the symbolists tended to view their use of symbols as having "an abstract value like musical notes and chords."²⁶ The use of symbols rather than direct description supposedly enabled the symbolists to achieve the indefiniteness of music which, because it communicates no direct idea, has the power to suggest different meanings to different listeners. This is in keeping with Mallarmé's wish merely to suggest or allude and leave the reader to create the meanings of the suggestions or allusions for himself.²⁷

One principle of Symbolism that had a direct bearing on drama was the idea that the theatre should be a unification of all the arts. "The notion that external reality in its multitudinous and varied forms is but a manifestation of interrelated primordial ideas . . . [led] to the conception of a fusion of all arts, themselves different aspects of these higher ideas."²⁸ This principle, although expressed by Mallarmé, was originally advanced by the German composer, Richard Wagner, who viewed the "drama as a grandiose celebration of mythic and ritualistic values."²⁹ He "dreamed that poetry and music, . . . , would be united

²⁴Calvin S. Brown, p. 432. ²⁵Cooperman, p. 103.

²⁶Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 21.

²⁷Cooperman, p. 15.

²⁸Daniels, p. 23.

²⁹Block and Shedd, p. 6.

in the art of the future, the drama."³⁰

The drama was to be created by the spontaneous blending of the art-forces. The task of the dramas was to depict real actions, render them intelligible to the general public by a supreme emotional motivation; this emotional understanding could best be attained through a perfected union of the arts.³¹

Wagner's relation to Symbolist thought was clearly evident in that he believed

the drama was to reveal the outer aspect of an inner meaning, persuade the witness to concentrate and follow by the creation of a suited and impressive atmosphere, inspire him with great religious (social religious) faith. The feeling of awe, aroused by the lofty and mysterious atmosphere, was to fill the audience with an unlimited appreciation for the miraculous event called art. . . . the drama was to be the end of all expression, an inner significance and an outward spectacle condensed and unified.³²

Mallarmé imitated Wagner's ideas but did not share his lofty view of theatre which Mallarmé saw as "the poetry of the masses."³³ Theatre was for the average audience and poetry for "the rarer minds."³⁴

The drama, as Mallarmé saw it, aroused the imagination of the audience by appealing to all the senses at once, by appealing to them directly (not abstractly as did his own poetry); at the same time the drama never depended upon the audience to complete or to supplement the presented materials. Like the symbolism of the Catholic church, like the symbolism of all ages, the drama was to awaken dreams and visions in the soul of the witness³⁵

Up to this point only the principles of Symbolism which have application to the drama have been enumerated. Remaining ideas of Symbolism are excluded because they are relevant to the arts of poetry

³⁰Cooperman, p. 89.

³¹Ibid., p. 90.

³²Ibid., p. 95.

³⁴Ibid., p. 98.

³³Ibid., p. 105.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 98-99.

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His essay, "The Tragic in Daily Life," suggests that a play should delve beneath concrete reality and deal with man's inner life and the universe. He wrote, in reference to Sophocles' Philoctetes, that

the chief interest of the tragedy does not lie in the struggle we witness between cunning and loyalty, between love of country, rancor, and headstrong pride. There is more beyond: for it is man's loftier existence that is laid bare to us. The poet adds to ordinary life something, I know not what, which is the poet's secret: and there comes to us a sudden revelation of life in its stupendous grandeur, in its submissiveness to the unknown powers, in its endless affinities, in its awe-inspiring mystery.³⁶

In another essay he expressed a similar view when he stated that the dramatic poet

must bring down his own ideas of the unknown into the world of living men, into the everyday world. He must show us how, under what form and conditions, according to what laws, to what end, the superior powers act upon our destinies, the unintelligible influences, the infinite principles of which he as poet is convinced the universe is full.³⁷

As part of his theory of drama, Maeterlinck advanced the idea of a "static" drama. Although he later repudiated the concept,³⁸ it had some relevance to the works of a number of literary figures, including

³⁶Maurice Maeterlinck, "The Tragic in Daily Life," Playwrights on Playwrighting, ed. Toby Cole (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), p. 32.

³⁷Maurice Maeterlinck, "Preface to the Plays," European Theories of the Drama, p. 415.

³⁸In 1913 Maeterlinck wrote to Barrett H. Clark: "You must not attach too great importance to the expression Static; it was an invention, a theory of my youth, worth what most literary theories are -- that is, almost nothing." (European Theories of the Drama, p. 411).

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John Millington Synge, James Joyce, and Leonid Andreyev.³⁹ Maeterlinck believed that the tragic elements in everyday life were more real than those of great adventure. In this he did not differ greatly from the realists and naturalists. But what made Maeterlinck's view unique was his addition of the idea that "normally tragedy was interior and almost completely without external movement."⁴⁰ Maeterlinck wrote that for him an old man sitting in an armchair but sensing the world around him, "motionless as he is, does yet live in reality a deeper, more human, and more universal life than the lover who strangles his mistress, the captain who conquers in battle, or 'the husband who avenges his honor.'"⁴¹ Maeterlinck pointed out that something akin to "static" drama seemed to exist in the Greek classical plays which depicted a life that was almost motionless.

In most cases, indeed, you will find that psychological action . . . even has been suppressed, or at least vastly diminished, . . . , with the result that the interest centers solely and entirely in the individual, face to face with the universe. . . . ; he is at rest and we have time to observe him. It is no longer a violent, exceptional moment of life that passes before our eyes -- it is life itself. Thousands and thousands of laws there are, mightier and more venerable than those of passion; but these laws are silent, and discreet, and slow-moving; and hence it is only in the twilight that they can be seen and heard, in the meditation that comes to us at the tranquil moments of life.⁴²

Although Maeterlinck was seldom direct in his statements about "static" drama, it appears that he envisioned a drama all but devoid of physical and psychological action which would turn the spectators' minds to

³⁹Gassner, Treasury of the Theatre: Ibsen to Miller, p. 266.

⁴⁰Gassner, Masters of the Drama, p. 413.

⁴¹Maeterlinck, "The Tragic in Daily Life," p. 31.

⁴²Ibid., p. 32.

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Maeterlinck found that the beauty and greatness of tragedies lay not in action, nor in dialogue that supported or explained the action, but in a seemingly superfluous dialogue which is addressed to the soul. He observed that

"it is just those words that are spoken by the side of the rigid, apparent truth, that constitute the mysterious beauty of the most beautiful tragedies, inasmuch as these are words that conform to a deeper truth, and one that lies incomparably nearer to the invisible soul"⁴⁴

Maeterlinck extended this idea to include the use of silence as an important part of the language of drama. He felt that events were determined by "words one cannot hear," that in moments of silence souls whispered a "secret word" to one another.⁴⁵ It was this dialogue which should be echoed in drama. To Maeterlinck, speech was inadequate to convey real and inmost thoughts; only silence could transmit them from soul to soul.⁴⁶ Through the use of silence and spoken words which mainly suggest and imply, Maeterlinck sought "to evoke the invisible, the intangible, the subconscious, and the unintelligible."⁴⁷

⁴³Ibid., p. 34.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 33-34.

⁴⁶James Huneker, Iconoclasts: A Book of Dramatists (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), p. 374.

⁴⁷Stuart, p. 634.

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Characteristics of Symbolism

General Characteristics

The plays which critics incline to list under the heading of Symbolism are diverse in nature and type. Even Maeterlinck, the major representative dramatist of Symbolism, exhibited changes in his approach to creating symbolist plays. Yet, in spite of many individual differences, the majority of symbolist dramas can be identified by certain general tendencies which they share in common with each other. These attributes are: 1) an extensive employment of symbols for communication of thoughts and feelings, and 2) evocation of mood, atmosphere, and feelings.

As for the primary characteristic of Symbolism, it is obvious from the very title of "Symbolism" that such a style is involved in the use of symbols. But, since the word "symbol" is subject to a wide and often confusing number of definitions, it is necessary to discover what particular meaning the term has in symbolist drama.

"A symbol in its most direct definition, is something that stands for something else, a thing that stands for more than itself."⁴⁸ This simple definition is applicable to the three uses of symbols in drama. These uses may be identified briefly as 1) the fixed symbol (for symbols whose meaning is generally identifiable even in the world outside drama), 2) the contextual symbol (for symbols whose meaning is determined by the context in which they appear), and 3) the indefinite symbol (for symbols whose meaning is involved with inner spiritual reality).

⁴⁸Sheldon Cheney, Stage Decoration (New York: The John Day Co., 1928), p. 51.

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Fixed symbols found in drama usually have the same meanings as they do in ordinary life. For example, the Cross is the symbol of Christianity and "Old Glory" is the symbol of the United States.⁴⁹ Such symbols are readily accepted and cause little confusion in meaning because the relationship between the symbol and what it stands for has been established through tradition and convention. The fixed symbol could be employed in any style of drama, even Naturalism, because it has the same meaning whether it appears in life or art. This does not mean that such a symbol means exactly the same thing to every individual. Any use of symbol is subject to ambiguity, but the fixed symbol is apt to be less ambiguous than the other types.

The contextual symbol has no fixed meaning outside the drama in which it appears. The relationship between the symbol and that which it represents is established in a particular play for purposes of that play alone. An example of the contextual symbol is found in Ibsen's Rosmersholm where white horses symbolize death. In the world outside the play, white horses have no generally recognized association with death, but Ibsen, early in the play, states the white horses appear at Rosmersholm when a death is about to occur. In this way an ordinary object becomes a symbol within the context of a drama. Although there may be some ambiguity in the use of contextual symbols, generally their meaning is definite and complete within the play in which they appear.

The indefinite symbol is used to suggest the relationship between the concrete world and an absolute, intangible reality. "The

⁴⁹Wilson, p. 20.

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⁵⁰S. C. de
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⁵¹Juliette
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external, visible part of the symbol must be a concrete picture, taken so straight from the real world that its clear and ordinary meaning is comprehensible even to those who would not search in it for any depth; but beyond that concrete picture there must be open boundless horizons of the hidden, infinite, eternal, immutable and incomprehensible essence of things."⁵⁰ The indefinite symbol has no meaning that is fixed by tradition or convention. Like the contextual symbol it is selected by the dramatist for purposes of a particular play. It differs from the contextual symbol in that its meaning is not complete within the play. Its meaning is completed in the relationship to some intangible world beyond the play and beyond ordinary life. The indefinite symbol tends to be very ambiguous and encourages the individual auditor to "read his own philosophy or his own moral into the play."⁵¹

An example of the indefinite symbol appears in the water motif of Maeterlinck's Pelléas and Mélisande. Water is presented in several ways. Lovers meet by pools of water. Pelléas is killed near a fountain. The castle stands over a bottomless pit filled with water. Women try to wash away stains on the castle steps with water. Thus water carries connotations of love, death vastness, and futility. Yet these are only personal interpretations. The fact is that "it is impossible to assign a definite meaning to each of these motifs or symbols."⁵² They do not guide the auditor to a meaning but suggest several meanings.

⁵⁰S. C. de Soissons, "Maeterlinck as a Reformer," Living Age, Vol. 224, No. 3159 (January 21, 1905), 141.

⁵¹Juliette Knapp, "Symbolic Drama of Today," Poet Lore, Vol. 32 (June, 1921), 232.

⁵²Brockett, p. 290.

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The indefinite symbol is the one most often employed in symbolist drama. A play may be identified as belonging to the dramatic style of Symbolism "when the method of using concrete things to suggest spiritual or otherwise intangible values is made the primary objective of the dramatic presentation."⁵³ The use of the indefinite symbol does not necessarily rule out the possibility of employing both fixed and contextual symbols along with the indefinite variety. The main point is that the indefinite symbol is predominant. The appearance of this particular symbol in significant number is a characteristic of Symbolism.

Secondly, Symbolism in drama seeks to evoke feelings and moods rather than present concrete facts.⁵⁴ It is logical, in view of the principles of Symbolism, that the symbolist dramatists strive for the expression of moods through the use of symbols rather than presenting direct, concrete occurrences.⁵⁵ In symbolist drama "the scenes do not hang together at all--there is no sequence of action, only of moods; or rather the same mood persists throughout."⁵⁶ In plays such as Maeterlinck's Pelléas and Mélisande, mood is as important as action in determining the play's structure."⁵⁷ His drama, The Princess Maleine, is marked by "intensifications of mood through such atmospheric effects as the incessant pounding at the door or the

⁵³Hartley and Ladu, p. 10.

⁵⁴Block and Shedd, p. 157.

⁵⁵Gassner, Masters of the Drama, p. 412.

⁵⁶Huneker, p. 373.

⁵⁷Brockett, p. 291.

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raging of a violent storm."⁵⁸ In general, symbolist plays gain their effects "not in what is said and done in them alone, but also in what is suggested and felt, although unexpressed and unseen."⁵⁹ Although critics have pointed out many faults in the drama of Symbolism, "it gave a new importance to the creation of atmosphere and mood."⁶⁰

Form Elements

Plot

Due to the playwright's desire to suggest the intangible or infinite, the plots of symbolist dramas have two levels of comprehension, the narrative and the symbolic. The symbolic meaning is supposedly the most important; therefore the narrative level of the play is usually a vehicle of the symbolic. Although these two levels are related, symbolist plays are written "with the two planes of meaning kept steadily in mind and with no confusion of the planes."⁶¹ The narrative level of the plot in many cases is similar in nature to that found in other styles. It may be romantic or even realistic, for "fantasies such as Maeterlinck's Bluebird, Sutton Vane's Outward Bound, and Sir James Barrie's Dear Brutus and Mary Rose present themselves to us as 'real' stories."⁶²

⁵⁸Block and Shedd, p. 157.

⁵⁹S. A. Rhodes, The Contemporary French Theatre (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1942), p. 5.

⁶⁰Block and Shedd, p. 6

⁶¹Millett and Bentley, p. 164.

⁶²Gassner, Form and Idea, p. 102.

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One critic described the two planes of meaning in symbolist plots as an "aloofness" of the story from its fable.

Not only is the story complete, it is satisfying as well The underlying fable enhances and lights up the story, it is true, but it is usually more independent of the plot than the fable of old allegory was. Hence, while the problem or truth presented by means of symbolism is not any less significant or important, it is much more subtle so that the fable usually becomes part of the background, as it were, and elucidates the action rather than the action elucidating the fable as was more often the case in old allegory.⁶³

Symbolist drama, then, has two planes of action: "the visible action on the stage evokes the invisible action behind the scenes."⁶⁴ Often the conflict in a play is carried out in terms of symbols, while the "objective causes of conflict are pushed into the background."⁶⁵ Playwrights like Maeterlinck substituted "the tragic conflict man wages against his apparently antagonistic, secret doom" for the "clash of human motives in love, honor, duty, [and] greed which constituted the commonplace fare of the realistic drama."⁶⁶ As a result of such practice, "no great importance should be attached to the story in the foreground, which is a kind of charade permitting us to guess at a greater meaning."⁶⁷

Although the two planes of action are the most striking characteristic of plot in Symbolism, a number of secondary traits have been

⁶³Knapp, p. 232.

⁶⁴Stuart, p. 631.

⁶⁵Gorelik, p. 201.

⁶⁶Rhodes, The Contemporary French Theater, p. 59.

⁶⁷Gorelik, p. 202.

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"The Symbolist playwright is inclined to finish the play at the moment when his protagonist recognizes more or less fully the issues with which he is faced."⁶⁸ In a play such as Pelléas and Mélisande, the time and place of the action are indefinite and the action appears illogical since "events do not occur in terms of cause and effect."⁶⁹

In subject matter Symbolism tends to make us of "fairy-tales and legends of long ago, and distant civilizations into which are poured modern conflicts of the soul and the senses."⁷⁰ Medieval settings and themes are common.⁷¹ Unlike the realists and naturalists, "the Symbolists chose their subject matter from the past and avoided any attempt to deal with social problems or to recreate the physical environment of its characters."⁷²

Character

The element of character in Symbolism is affected by the two levels of plot and the playwright's desire to suggest the intangible or allude to a higher reality of the spirit. On the narrative level, characters are simple, almost types. Often a character becomes a symbol of some force or factor operating on the supposed higher plane of existence.⁷³ As a result, the character's behavior on the narrative level is dictated by what it is he is meant to symbolize, rather

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 227.

⁶⁹Brockett, p. 289.

⁷⁰Franz Rapp, "Germany," A History of Modern Drama, pp. 81-82.

⁷¹Nicoll, World Drama, p. 621.

⁷²Brockett, p. 288.

⁷³Gassner, Producing the Play, p. 64.

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than by dramatic necessity or causal motivation. Characters frequently seem to be "unreal abstractions" of humanity whose being and action serve to demonstrate a relationship with a system of ideas.⁷⁴ They may be described briefly as improbable persons.

Characters are not finely or definitely drawn, details are slight. Their motivations are equally indefinite and difficult to understand by standards usually applied to characters in drama. They are driven by forces stronger than themselves, forces of an invisible world. "It is not the texture of daily living which is important . . . , but the realm of the spirit which lies beyond the physical facts of existence."⁷⁵ Symbolism substitutes "disembodied ideas" for a picture of life and "abstract types" for living men and women.⁷⁶

Language

In Symbolism "the whole message of the dramatist is conveyed in the meaning of the words."⁷⁷ Since Symbolism in the drama subordinates action and character, language is the most important element in the style. It is through the medium of language that symbolist playwrights seek to suggest the mysteries of life. In the broad sense of the word, the dialogue is "poetic," dealing as it does with symbols. Verse is not a mandatory requirement for symbolist drama, although Maeterlinck and others did write a number of plays in verse. At any rate, language in Symbolism does not attempt to imitate the patterns of everyday

⁷⁴Daniels, p. 42.

⁷⁵Brockett, p. 292.

⁷⁶Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 100.

⁷⁷Daniels, p. 41.

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The particular attributes of language in Symbolism are best illustrated in the dramas of Maeterlinck. In Pelléas and Mélisande

the language . . . is extremely simple. Its simplicity and repetitiveness suggest a beginner's textbook in reading. But this repetitiveness helps to emphasize the recurring motifs, and the simplicity is designed to prevent too much interest in surface reality.⁷⁸

In The Intruder, mood is created by "carefully contrived repetition and nuance."⁷⁹ Generally, his plays have poetic, imaginative qualities; the words spoken in them "sound mysterious and pregnant with meaning."⁸⁰ They are marked by the use of pauses which are also pregnant -- "empty, forbidding vestibules to woful edifices."⁸¹ In dramas such as The Intruder, Maeterlinck achieves an air of mystery "by means of half-uttered thoughts, haunting repetitions, and still more haunting silences."⁸² Characters in Maeterlinck's dramas "never pronounce complicated, philosophical dialogues or monologues; their sentences are short, simple, abrupt, expressing that which they feel and not that which they would think, if they were to ponder over their impressions."⁸³

⁷⁸Brockett, p. 292.

⁷⁹Block and Shedd, p. 157.

⁸⁰Rhodes, The Contemporary French Theater, p. 62.

⁸¹Huneker, p. 373.

⁸²Gassner, Treasury of the Theatre: Ibsen to Miller, p. 266.

⁸³Soissons, p. 143.

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Theme

Symbolist themes encompass the spiritual, the aesthetic, and the irrational. They are "depersonalized, set in the larger stage of the cosmos," and are not concerned with "the ordinary clashes of will of the social drama."⁸⁴ Themes deal with "such universal but vague ideas as love, life, and death."⁸⁵ They treat those things "which, in the course of experience, human beings have tended to attach the greatest values" such as "patriotism, religion, love, and in a vaguer field, ethics and morality."⁸⁶ Problems of popular philosophy and mysticism appear frequently in symbolic drama.⁸⁷ Essentially, Symbolism is viewed as "a cult of the mysterious and mystical" since its ideas reflect a belief that "we live in a mysterious, 'poetic' universe rather than a concrete world of facts."⁸⁸

The concept of Fate, while not unique in Symbolism, appears as a theme. Symbolists attempted to represent "the strife between creatures of the flesh, on one side, and the dramatis personae of Fate, on the other."⁸⁹ Fate, in symbolist drama, is a mysterious, intangible power before which men are powerless.

. . . in the presence of destiny all creatures are alike, the strong and the weak, the innocent and the guilty; all, like puppets, are equally helpless. Their actions and words on the stage are the shadows and echoes, faint cries, brief exclamations, silent but eloquent pauses, that betray the intense conflicts they wage beyond the reach of mortal eyes and ears⁹⁰

⁸⁴Dickinson, p. 172.

⁸⁵Brockett, p. 293.

⁸⁶Millett and Bentley, pp. 164-65.

⁸⁷Knapp, p. 233.

⁸⁸Gassner, Form and Idea, pp. 101-105.

⁸⁹Rhodes, The Contemporary French Theater, p. 5.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 61.

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The operation of Fate in symbolic dramas such as those of Maeterlinck is, in a way, as deterministic as it is in Naturalism. "Characters are at the mercy of forces just as destructive and far more mysterious than those of heredity and environment."⁹¹ The fate of man in the world of Maeterlinck's plays is more frightening because his world is "unknowable and beyond human control."⁹²

Summary: Criteria for the Identification
of the Dramatic Style of Symbolism

Principles of Symbolism

The ideas assumed as a basis for Symbolism in the drama derived from the general movement of Symbolism which drew its inspiration from the writings of Stephane Mallarmé and Richard Wagner. In particular, Maurice Maeterlinck postulated thoughts aimed directly at a development of symbolist drama.

The symbolists sought to project their intuitions of a spiritual world through suggestion and symbol. They denied the observable world as being the realm of truth; it was merely the extension of an invisible world of absolute and universal truth. Due to the nature of this abstract world, it could not be known directly; it could only be suggested. The language best suited to suggest the universal world was that which most closely imitated music which, because it states nothing directly, has the power to suggest different meanings to different listeners. Language came closest to music when it employed

⁹¹Brockett, p. 290.

⁹²Ibid., pp. 290-91.

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symbols. The poet, through the use of symbols, could reveal the correspondences which exist between the concrete and abstract worlds. The suggestive power of words was, in turn, based upon a theory of primitive language which, although half-forgotten and half-living, still existed among men. Symbolist poets attempted to make use of this language, which was closely connected with music and dreams, to establish relationships between the concrete and absolute worlds.

From Richard Wagner, the symbolists borrowed the idea that drama was to be the amalgamation of all the arts. Theatre was to appeal to all the senses at once and evoke dreams and visions in the mind of the spectator. It was to suggest ideas and leave the individual auditor to develop his own meanings.

Maeterlinck contributed the idea of a "static" drama in which physical and psychological action were drastically curtailed in order to reveal the inner realities of life that arise in periods of contemplation. He also advanced the idea of a "dialogue of silence," a communication between souls which was not dependent upon direct statement. This concept involved the employment of silence, pauses, and symbolic utterance. Through such means as "static" drama and indirect speech, plays were to evoke the "real" or spiritual world which lies beyond everyday existence in the observable world.

Characteristics of Symbolism

General Characteristics

Symbolism exhibits an extensive employment of symbols for the communication of thoughts and feelings. The particular type of symbol found in symbolist drama is indefinite rather than having a fixed

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traditional meaning or a meaning arising from the context in which it is employed. The symbolist symbol is involved with an inner spiritual reality. Such symbols have the aim of approaching the indefiniteness of music. They communicate nothing directly and therefore may suggest a variety of interpretations to members of an audience. The meaning of the indefinite symbol lies beyond the play, beyond ordinary life, in an intangible and spiritual world. Although the indefinite symbol is most characteristic of Symbolism, it does not rule out the appearance of fixed and contextual symbols in symbolist drama.

Symbolism characteristically evokes moods and feelings rather than dealing with concrete events or actions. Symbolist dramas depend more on what is suggested and felt than on what is said and done.

Form Elements

Plot

Symbolist plots have two levels of comprehension, narrative and symbolic. The narrative level may appear to be similar in nature to other styles of playwriting but it is the vehicle for a symbolic level of comprehension. The visible action of the narrative level evokes an invisible action behind the scenes. Conflicts are relegated to the symbolic level and their objective causes are not always apparent on the narrative level. Although the narrative level of plot may provide a complete and satisfying story, it functions mainly to suggest a greater meaning on the symbolic level.

Symbolic drama plots often substitute recognition for action. Events often do not occur in terms of cause and effect; they appear to be illogical in sequence. The time and place of the action are frequently indefinite. The content of Symbolism seldom deals with contemporary social problems or environment. For this it substitutes subject matter from the past, even fairy-tales and legends.

Character

Characters in Symbolism are usually uncomplex in their attributes and tend to be types rather than unique beings. They frequently are employed symbolically and thus appear as abstractions of humanity. What they stand for is more important than what they are.

Details of characterization are slight. Motivation is not logical in the sense usually assumed in drama. Characters are driven by forces of an invisible world rather than by their own needs and feelings. They are improbable persons.

Language

Language is the most important element in symbolic drama. Dialogue is not meant to be realistic but poetic in nature. Verse is not a necessary requisite, although several symbolic plays were written in verse.

The language of Symbolism substitutes suggestion for description. Playwrights, such as Maeterlinck, employ simple dialogue with repetitions, recurring motifs, and long pauses. It is mysterious, moody, and punctuated with silence. Thoughts are half-uttered. Sentences are short, often abrupt. Complicated dialogues and monologues are avoided. Dialogue expresses feeling rather than thought.

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Theme

Themes in Symbolism are universal but vague. They are not concerned with social or individual experiences. Love, life, death, religion, and patriotism are common, as are problems of popular philosophy and mysticism. Infrequently, themes related to ethics and morality are included. None of these themes are unique to Symbolism, but their particular treatment is. Themes are expressed in a broad and vague manner which is difficult to state directly.

Over-all, there seems to be the theme of a mysterious universe in which man wages a futile battle against intangible forces of Fate. Themes go beyond the ordinary world and hint at a cosmological conflict between mortal man and his secret, spiritual destiny. Strive as he may, man is helpless before the forces of the universe.

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CHAPTER VII

EXPRESSIONISM

Expressionism in drama formed a part of a general movement in the arts in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Most of the important work in Expressionism came from German authors, although writers in other nations made some significant contributions.

Expressionism, as a movement in drama, literature and painting, arose in Germany during the first quarter of the twentieth century. While primarily a German aesthetic development, it appeared in the arts of other nations as well. In Germany, this development at its high point covered roughly the period from 1910 to 1925 and "coincided with the two main events of that period, the First World War and the revolution which followed in its wake."¹ As a result, Expressionism "has often been described as a reflection in the sphere of art and literature of the social and spiritual upheaval wrought by these events."² The ferment and turmoil of this period and these events produced a revolutionary reaction not merely in art but also in the realms of the ethical, social, and even the political.³ The cultural

¹Garten, p. 102.

²Ibid.

³Walter Sokel, ed., Anthology of German Expressionist Drama . (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1963), p. x.

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chaos of German life did much to influence the theory and practice of native artists.

Although it is convenient to refer to Expressionism as a movement in literature, in the pure sense of the word it was not. It didn't "represent a clear-cut, unified reaction or progression;" it was "composed of protestants who . . . [had] in common only the ardor of their protest."⁴

Expressionism was not a program guiding individual authors as they wrote their works. It was a term applied by critics, editors, anthologists, and historians dealing with a group of authors. The term was used after the fact. Most of the authors usually called Expressionists felt that they were expressing themselves in new ways, they groped for new terms to define their feeling. However, they rarely applied the term Expressionist to themselves.⁵

The first recorded use of the word "Expressionism" came from the French painter, Julien-Auguste Herve', as a description of an exhibition of his works at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris in 1901.⁶ In Germany, after 1911, the term became more firmly established in written criticism.⁷

In literature, the expressionists in general were "deeply influenced by Dostoevski, Nietzsche, Walt Whitman, and Rimbaud,"⁸ as well as "the philosophy of Bergson."⁹ Equally influential was the

⁴Isaac Goldberg, The Drama of Transition (Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Co., 1922), p. 269.

⁵Sokel, Anthology, pp. xi-xii.

⁶Richard Samuel and R. Hinton Thomas, Expressionism in German Life, Literature and the Theatre (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, Ltd., 1939), p. 10.

⁷Garten, p. 104.

⁸Sokel, Anthology, p. x.

⁹Calvin S. Brown, p. 158.

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concept of the subconscious as advanced by Freud and Jung.

But even before Freud and Jung, the intellectual atmosphere in the wake of Romanticism, and German philosophy from Schelling to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, had given intimations of the concept of the subconscious. Even those Expressionists who were not conversant with the actual works of Freud and Jung could not help but be familiar with the climate of thought that had given rise to psychoanalysis in the first place.¹⁰

Dramatists in particular were influenced by Büchner, Wedekind, and especially, Strindberg.

In the years immediately preceding World War I, Strindberg was the most frequently performed playwright on the German and Austrian stage. The young playwrights who were to shape Expressionist drama devoured his works and received inspiration from his experimental "dream plays" -- To Damascus (1898-1904), A Dream Play (1902), and The Ghost Sonata (1907).¹¹

Guided by such literary and non-literary influences, Expressionism emerged as a dramatic style in a series of provocative, although not always coherent, plays. However, these plays did not entirely display a unity of purpose and practice. Expressionism before World War I

bore the stamp of extreme subjectivity, indeed of anarchy. The lone and isolated individual strove to give expression to the full life he craved. The expressionist plays written before 1914 were mainly personal dramas, depicting the struggle of a man to break away from his everyday environment in order to live his life to the full.¹²

This phase of Expressionism was its "Mystic" form which was "content to express its views of man and its states of feeling."¹³ About 1914 expressionist drama developed an "Activist" trend "with distinct social and revolutionary tendencies."¹⁴

¹⁰Ibid., p. xiv.

¹¹Sokel, Anthology, p. x.

¹²Garten, p. 106.

¹³Brockett, p. 298.

¹⁴Garten, p. 107.

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Expressionist Activism, which "sought to transform man and society through a program of action," proved to be of "principal importance in the theatre."¹⁵ Although Activism became the dominant phase of Expressionism, it did not completely replace the Mystic form. "Between these two poles, expressionist drama vacillated, now accentuating the lone individual in his quest for self-fulfillment, now the problems of social transformation."¹⁶ Dramatists associated with Mystic Expressionism were Oskar Kokoschka (1886-), Ernst Barlach (1870-1938), Franz Werfel (1890-1945), Reinhard Johannes Sorge (1892-1916), Paul Kornfeld (1889-1942), and Walter Hasenclever (1890-1940).¹⁷ Activism in Expressionism was connected with such dramatists as Carl Hauptmann (1858-1921), Stefan Zweig (1881-1942), Karl Kraus (1874-1936), Fritz von Unruh (1885-), Ernst Toller (1893-1939), and Georg Kaiser (1878-1945).¹⁸ The Mystic and Activist schools were not mutually exclusive; a number of playwrights wrote in both forms.

Although Expressionism as a major movement declined rapidly after 1925, it managed to transcend national and time boundaries to become an integral part of modern literature.¹⁹ "Expressionist principles inform O'Neill's The Great God Brown; Thornton Wilder's Our Town, and The Skin of Our Teeth; . . . Elmer Rice's The Adding Machine; and a number of works by Sean O'Casey, Tennessee Williams,

¹⁵Brockett, p. 298.

¹⁶Garten, p. 108.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 108-20.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 121-47.

¹⁹Walter Sokel, The Writer in Extremis: Expressionism in Twentieth-Century Literature (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959, p. 1.

Samuel Beckett, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, and others."²⁰ Certain aspects of Expressionism also appear in the Epic theatre style.²¹ Even as renowned a play as Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman contains scenes that "are more or less expressionistic in treatment."²²

Principles of Expressionism

In a sense, Expressionism was related to Romanticism and Symbolism. It emphasized intuition and subjectivity and denied that observable reality is "true" reality. Like the romantic movement, the expressionist movement "rebelled against propriety and 'common sense,' against authority and convention in art and life."²³ The dramatists of Expressionism

rejected the tradition of the "well-made play," and the canons of plausibility and "good taste" in art. They openly defied the ideal of objective recording of everyday life, on which "realistic" theatre since Scribe and Ibsen had been based.²⁴

Expressionism was also linked with Romanticism "by its emphasis on the individual consciousness."²⁵ "Expressionist plays projected the author's romantic self-pity and isolation in the modern world, as well as their equally romantic self-glorification, their dreams of changing the world into a place in which they would feel at home."²⁶

As for Symbolism, Expressionism shared a few of its ideas and techniques, but turned against its "disdainful aloofness from

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Sokel, Anthology , p. xxi.

²²Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 13.

²³Sokel, Anthology , p. ix.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Rowe, p. 210.

²⁶Sokel, Anthology , p. xxiii.

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contemporary urban reality."²⁷ Expressionist thought echoed symbolist thought in believing that "reality is not the outer world," but the "the inner world of thought and vision."²⁸ Expressionists denied the "momentary semblances of naturalism" as being truly real. They were more interested in the essence of things than in their images.²⁹ Like the symbolists, the expressionists viewed the natural world as "the foundation of the spiritual."³⁰ They postulated two levels of existence. "The one . . . [was] that of apparent reality which . . . [was] inadequate and unsatisfying; the other . . . [was] the ideal world in which the true reality of the future will be fulfilled."³¹

Expressionist, symbolist, and romantic theories were also similar in their view that knowledge of ultimate reality was to be gained intuitively rather than rationally.³² But, from this point in theory, the expressionists departed from symbolist and romantic concepts to establish principles which governed the particular attributes of Expressionism as a dramatic style. These principles were formulated almost exclusively by German artists but had application to subsequent developments in the expressionist drama of other nations.

The expressionists believed the world was all one, that is, "all things are one thing."³³ "Soul and body, material and immaterial, subject and object, these are anti-poles for the concept of reality but

²⁷Ibid., p. ix.

²⁸Jethro Bithell, Modern German Literature 1880-1950 (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1959), p. 360.

²⁹Ibid. ³⁰Samuel and Thomas, p. 59. ³¹Ibid.

³²Carl Enoch William Leonard Dahlström, Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionism (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), pp. 50-51.

³³Ibid., p. 53.

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are not endowed with separate existence; they are antitheses from which reality may be wrested."³⁴ In order that reality may be grasped an instrument is required to unify the anti-poles or antitheses. The ego is the unifying instrument

that moulds oneness of the countless items poured into it. The ego is the predominate element in the universe; it is indeed, the very heart of the world's reality. For the artist, the ego is a magic crystal in which the absolute is in constant play. . . . It is this ego, . . . , that actually gathers reality in its ultimate character.³⁵

As a result, the expressionist seeks intuitive knowledge of reality by turning "everlastingly unto his 'self,' turns his gaze within the ego."³⁶ Man cannot comprehend reality or gain meaning from chaos by logic, science, or formulae. "The quick of reality can only be gathered or apprehended intuitively by virtue of the integration of manifold experience; . . . , by the flow of ego and world in the supersubjective individual."³⁷ In effect, expressionist theory tends toward solipsism in that it sees the universe as a manifestation of the ego.³⁸ "Only if all is a manifestation of ego, . . . , can this same ego intuitively comprehend the all, and the essential reality that lies behind its material face."³⁹

This tendency toward solipsism was but one aspect of a highly personal vision of reality. In addition,

the Expressionists assumed that Nature is anthropomorphic (that is, they ascribe human characteristics to nature) and they portrayed it in such a way as to suggest human feelings, ideas, or perceptions. Thus, the Expressionist

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 49-50.

³⁶Ibid., p. 50.

³⁷Ibid., p. 51.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

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was not concerned with reproducing external appearances, but rather sought to interpret all objects, actions, and experiences in strictly human terms. The dramatist expressed his vision of happenings, no matter how personal and subjective that view might be.⁴⁰

Perhaps the most widely recognized factor in the principles of Expressionism was its concern with the subconscious. The belief that genuine reality is inner reality led expressionists to investigate and portray the private, personal world in which man's "secret and sometimes unconscious desires, aspirations, conflicts, frustrations, [and] hallucinations" dwell.⁴¹ Under the influence of the psychological theories of Freud, Jung, and others, expressionists made "efforts to deal with psychological reality, the subconscious, the man beneath the skin."⁴²

It is this strange and confusing, subjective reality that the expressionist wished to explore. . . . The expressionist strives to project the essential qualities of objects, experiences, and people from the inside out. He is not concerned at all with copying what meets the eye. Accurate representations of shape, size, and appearance hold no interest for him. He wishes to plumb the depths where man really lives.⁴³

In principle, Expressionism aspired to achieve more subjectivism in drama by emulating the effects of music. The expressionists were similar to the symbolists in viewing music as free from concrete reality.

Music transmutes objective experience into subjective experience so thoroughly that in the objectification of the latter the original experience is wholly lost from consciousness. It formulates no scientific theories, it gives in orchestrations no social creeds, it pronounces no religious doctrines and indeed offers no philosophical concepts.⁴⁴

⁴⁰Brockett, p. 298. ⁴¹Hatlen, p. 169. ⁴²Ibid., p. 167.

⁴³Ibid., p. 169.

⁴⁴Dahlström, pp. 56-57.

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The expressionists felt and declared that "there must be a means in the arts for expressing reality as music does."⁴⁵ In their approach to drama the expressionists were somewhat analogous to the musical composer. They desired to communicate the feelings awakened in their inner beings without being compelled to imitate empirical reality; they wanted "to present the essential qualities of an experience through imaginary and fanciful analogues to indicate the texture and quality of life within."⁴⁶

Expressionism bore a marked relation to religion. The movement was not allied with any particular creed or institution, but with "the spirit of all religions."⁴⁷ This aspect of expressionist theory was another instance of the unification of anti-poles. "It is not a desire to escape to God, to flee the world, but a yearning to realize God, to find oneself in God, and God in self."⁴⁸ While expressionists cried out for God, "for a spiritual concept of life," they rejected "the crass materialism of the institutionalized forms of religion."⁴⁹ They wanted "spiritual values unhampered by heavy theology and convention."⁵⁰

The result is that expressionism develops something of a passion for the Orient, the mother of religions, and for mythologies, the foster-children of religions. Distance from institutions, whether time or spatial distance, makes possible an emphasis on spiritual values. This concept of religion is necessarily closely qualified by mysticism, for a confessionless religion becomes more and more mute as it becomes less explicative.⁵¹

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 57.

⁴⁶Hatlen, p. 169.

⁴⁷Dahlström, p. 57.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 58.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 57-58.

The search for God, for spiritual values, was typical of both Mystic and Activist Expressionism; however, the Mystic expressionists were "particularly concerned with the problems of Man and God" and "more interested in the liberation of the soul than in the reform of society."⁵² In its totality, Expressionism was "essentially a spiritual movement aiming at the moral regeneration of man, and unrelated to any specific social programme."⁵³

Finally, Expressionism was concerned with human values, the worth of man. Expressionists felt that there was a need for "a spiritual brotherhood among men."⁵⁴

For expressionism, there is no problem of the individual and the group to be solved mechanically and captioned Anarchism, Republicanism, Democracy, Socialism, Communism, or any otherism. Again expressionism would point out that the individual on the one hand and the group on the other are anti-poles; the heart of reality lies somewhere between the two. This heart of reality lies in the spiritual brotherhood of man, and can only be attained by a réévaluation of the meaning of human. Expressionism points to essential human values rather than to the product of man's hands or intellect.⁵⁵

The Activist branch of Expressionism was most influenced by a concern for human values. It wished to "transform society so that man's greatness might be fully realized."⁵⁶ To these expressionists "man was no longer a product of his environment, driven by forces beyond his control, but he was himself a driving agent, capable of transforming the world according to his vision."⁵⁷

⁵²Samuel and Thomas, p. 14.

⁵³Garten, p. 107.

⁵⁴Dahlström, p. 58.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 58-59.

⁵⁶Brockett, p. 298.

⁵⁷Garten, pp. 104-105.

Characteristics of Expressionism

General Characteristics

In spite of the fact that some commentators believe Expressionism is not a distinct style "distinguished by the employment of any single technique,"⁵⁸ a rather diverse number of plays may be identified as belonging to an expressionist style by virtue of four common characteristics. These characteristics are 1) presentation of psychological states or "inner reality;" 2) employment of a dream-like musical structure; 3) distortion, extremism, or exaggeration in the elements of the play; and 4) the use of symbols. It is possible that all plays that might come under the heading of Expressionism may not include all four of these characteristics; nevertheless, they may conform to a majority of these features. This qualification is necessary in view of the scope of Expressionism, encompassing as it does various periods, nations, and purposes. As has been noted, even the German Expressionist movement was divided into Mystic and Activist camps.

First of all, Expressionism was guided by modern psychological and psychoanalytic theories. Since the expressionists were frequently concerned with the inner life of the mind and spirit, "they availed themselves of the discoveries and the language of the newer psychologists, and particularly the psychoanalysts and psychiatrists who had appeared since the turn of the century."⁵⁹ Expressionists attempted to suggest "the individual consciousness, . . . the inner conflicts and states for which there was no external equivalent in action or speech and which could not be represented directly on the stage."⁶⁰

⁵⁸Hartley and Ladu, p. 215. ⁵⁹Brown, p. 510. ⁶⁰Rowe, p. 205.

It was their manner of giving "concrete form in the theatre to all that was purely subjective."⁶¹

They wanted to look within their characters, treat them subjectively, tap their streams of consciousness if need be, penetrate their innermost beings, and lay bare their dreams, their inhibitions, and the hidden workings of their minds--reactions and mental states which could not be included in the external observation of the camera. In short, they sought the eye of the X-ray instead of the camera.⁶²

Serious and renowned playwrights of the stature of Strindberg and O'Neill turned to Expressionism because they felt that

poetic feeling alone was ineffectual and that realism could project neither inner experiences nor the external world as it presented itself to the troubled spirit They regarded the inner self not as a fairly orderly organism that moved more or less clearly toward well-defined, attainable ends such as winning a girl or getting on in business, but as a highly unstable compound of promptings and confusions.⁶³

All in all, it is quite characteristic that Expressionist plays attempt to represent the inner, psychological aspects of man. Plays from earlier dramatic periods exhibit this feature to a limited extent. For instance, Macbeth saw a "dagger of the mind" and a Banquo invisible to the guests at his table. Modern Expressionism differs from such earlier plays in that it turns most, if not all, of a play into a projection of inner, psychological reality.

A second characteristic of expressionist drama is the employment of a dream-like structure. Probably the most famous statement of the intent of this type of structure was written by August

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Brown, p. 509.

⁶³Gassner, Treasury of the Theatre: Ibsen to Miller, p. 261.

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Strindberg in an introduction to his drama, The Dream Play.

In this dream play, . . . , the Author has sought to reproduce the disconnected but apparently logical form of a dream. Anything can happen; everything is possible and probable. Time and space do not exist; on a slight groundwork of reality, imagination spins and weaves new patterns made up of memories, experiences, unfettered fancies, absurdities and improvisations.

The characters are split, double and multiply; they evaporate, crystallise, scatter and converge. But a single consciousness holds sway over them all--that of the dreamer. For him there are no secrets, no incongruities, no scruples and no law. He neither condemns nor acquits, but only relates,⁶⁴

While Strindberg did not guide all of the development of Expressionism, his idea of the dream-like structure remains as a major characteristic of Expressionist drama.

The dream-like structure of Expressionism is closely related to the desire to depict the inner reality of the human mind.⁶⁵ In expressionist drama

The characters are made dream-like shadows, figures that are not even types, unhuman but still not supernatural. In practice we are given, paradoxically, embodiments of unbodied visions of delight or of nightmare Very often these figures are mutes, mere hallucinations, delirious figments of the fevered brain of the dreamer (either the author or the central figure of the drama).⁶⁶

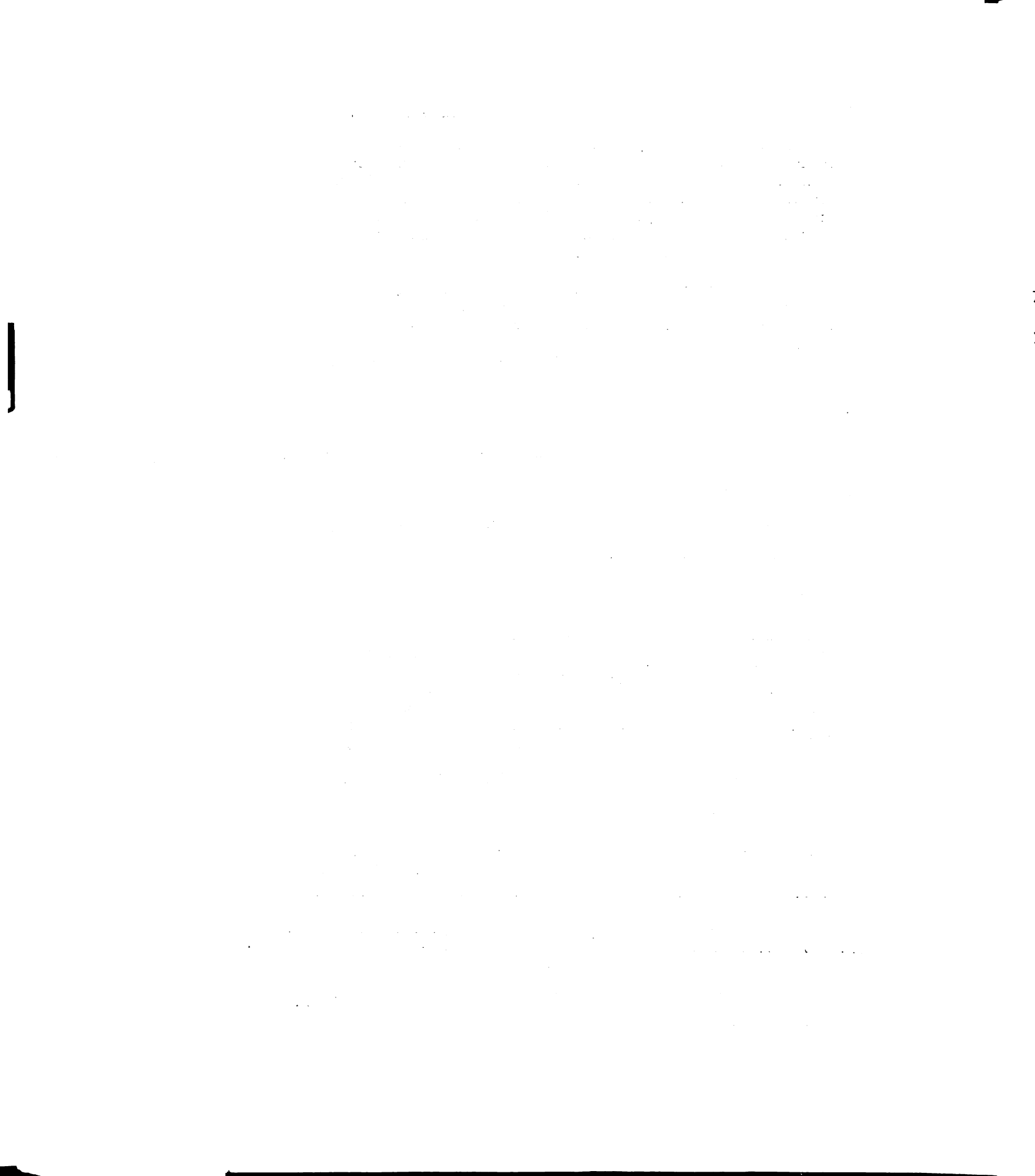
Like the characters, the setting and action of the plot take on the appearance of a dream.

. . . since the external world was presented as the world formed by the dreamer or the perceiver, it fragmented itself,

⁶⁴August Strindberg, "Author's Note to The Dream Play," Six Plays by Strindberg, trans. Elizabeth Sprigge (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1955), p. 193.

⁶⁵William Angus, "Expressionism in the Theatre," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XIX, No. 4 (November, 1933), 483.

⁶⁶Ibid.



too; it appeared dislocated, turned out of shape, and exaggerated by the character's state of mind Making a fluid subjective private world out of an objective one ordered by conventional perceptions, playwrights even abolished the conventions of time and place by which we usually live in society Past and present mingled freely in expressionist plays: Memory intruded itself into the present situation and not only dominated but altered it,⁶⁷

These quotes should serve to indicate the dream-like quality of Expressionism. It should be pointed out, however, that "dream-like" is more of a convenient term than an exact description. Unlike the French Surrealists, "the expressionists rarely reproduced actual dreams. Rather, the structure of many of their plays resembled, in some respects, the pattern of the human mind in dream and reverie."⁶⁸

In its crude aspects, Expressionism is dramatized daydreams and fantasy. In its subtler and more interesting examples, Expressionism parallels the concealing symbolism and subliminal suggestiveness of night dreams In them projection and embodiment of psychic forces take the place of imitation of external facts; association of ideas supplants construction of plot based on logical connection of cause and effect.⁶⁹

The appearance of the dream-like structure in Expressionism has led some critics to say that the style has "a rather formless dramatic pattern."⁷⁰ Such an observation is questionable. It is true that the expressionists often depart radically from conventional or traditional dramatic patterns, but they do have a form of their own. The expressionist, "like the dreamer, concentrates entirely on the purpose of expressing an inner world and refuses to let conformity to external

⁶⁷Gassner, *The Theatre in Our Times*, pp. 200-201.

⁶⁸Sokel, *Anthology*, p. xiv.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xiv.

⁷⁰Angus, p. 482.

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reality divert him from his purpose."⁷¹ Conventional dramatic structure is rejected by the expressionist "since he wishes to center his attention on the essential actions no matter when or where they occurred without being obliged to produce the gradual development of exposition and the close-knit articulation of antecedent and consequent relationships."⁷²

In place of the conventional dramatic form, the expressionist substitutes "a new structural pattern, closer to music than drama--the presentation and variation of theme."⁷³ The materials of Expressionism "are to be employed as a composer employs his notes; merging them into the unity of an immediate appeal."⁷⁴ For example,

the first impression given by Sorge's The Beggar, . . . is one of bewildering formlessness. The play flies in the face of the plot-centered tradition of drama with which we are familiar. Yet a closer examination of the play reveals the opposite of formlessness--careful craftsmanship and richly woven texture The intricate arrangement of themes closely corresponds to the composition of a symphony rather than a drama in the traditional sense.⁷⁵

In Expressionism, "the abandonment of a logical, unified plot does not mean the abandonment of theatrical form."⁷⁶ It is characteristic for expressionist plays to use "an episodic structure of dramatic 'stations' without causal sequence to one another but constituting a succession of events or stages in the progress of the protagonist

⁷¹Sokel, The Writer in Extremis , p. 38.

⁷²Hatlen, p. 170.

⁷³Sokel, Anthology , pp. xiii-xiv.

⁷⁴Goldberg, p. 276.

⁷⁵Sokel, Anthology , pp. xv-xvi.

⁷⁶Ibid.

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from an initiating action to the resolution."⁷⁷ In addition, an expressionist play may have a "subconscious logic" of its own.⁷⁸

Expressionism, as its third characteristic, presents "processes of exaggeration, condensation, and distortion."⁷⁹ In order to make his "expression more emphatic, the Expressionist, exactly like the dreaming mind, distorts features of reality by exaggeration."⁸⁰ Distortion and exaggeration are a result of the expressionist's attempt "to give the palpable essence of things, their qualities sharply intensified, not their appearance in reality."⁸¹ "The world, as seen in many expressionist plays, is distorted because it is sensed subjectively, or because it is refracted by the author's criticism of society."⁸²

Plots are disjointed and confusing, or cease to be recognizable as such. Dialogue suddenly changes from prose to hymnic poetry and rhapsodic monologue, completely interrupting the action. Lyrical passages alternate with obscenities and curses.⁸³

In some expressionist plays, "distortion and deformations of visual and auditory images are resorted to in order to show reality as seen through a disordered mind."⁸⁴

⁷⁷Rowe, pp. 205-206.

⁷⁸Gassner, *Treasury of the Theatre: Ibsen to Miller*, p. 262.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Sokel, The Writer in Extremis , p. 39.

⁸¹Bithell, p. 360.

⁸²Gassner, Producing the Play, p. 65.

⁸³Sokel, Anthology , p. xiii.

⁸⁴Alan Reynolds Thompson, The Anatomy of Drama (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946), p. 343.

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A fourth characteristic of Expressionism is the use of symbols. Instead of attempting to represent real life, expressionists "work through a medium of visible symbols, using types instead of characters, and preferring the abstract to the concrete."⁸⁵ "Fantasy and extravagant symbolism" suggest "some abstract theme or subjective struggle in the mind of the character or author."⁸⁶ In brief, "the projection of abstract ideas and psychic situations into symbolic images and happenings is one of the most basic features of Expressionist drama."⁸⁷

In some respects the use of symbols in Expressionism does not differ from the use of symbols in Symbolism. In both styles symbols are used to communicate ideas and feelings that are incompatible with direct communication. As in Symbolism, all three levels of symbols (fixed, contextual, and indefinite) may appear in Expressionism.⁸⁸

Although similar in some respects, the symbolism of Expressionism has its particular traits. It is noted for the "vehemence of its symbols."⁸⁹ Gorelik even terms it "hysterical symbolism" and notes that it was "often drawn from Freudian psychoanalysis."⁹⁰ Other sources of expressionist symbolism appear to be "the whole mixed tradition of allegorical representation including the political cartoon and the comic strip."⁹¹ Symbols in Expressionism are often more visual than

⁸⁵Marriott, p. 57.

⁸⁶Thompson, p. 90.

⁸⁷Sokel, Anthology , p. xviii.

⁸⁸See Chapter VI, "Symbolism," pp. 114-117.

⁸⁹Gorelik, p. 248.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 252.

⁹¹Krutch, p. 239.

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Dynamic utilization of setting and stage (. . .) expresses many things formerly expressed by language, or not expressed at all An immediate appeal is made to the audience's sense rather than its conceptual thought.⁹²

In Expressionism "the background of the action is **usually** symbolic of the states of mind of the characters (. . .) and often the entire action itself is one elaborate symbol."⁹³ As opposed to the "tranquilly beautiful symbols of Symbolism, the symbols of Expressionism are "explosive."⁹⁴ All in all, the use of symbols in Expressionism goes "beyond ordinary symbolism."⁹⁵

While it is true that the expressionists employed symbolism, it is not enough in itself to represent anything new or revealing in their plays.⁹⁶ The use of symbols remains as a major characteristic of Expressionism but does not serve by itself to identify dramas as expressionist. It is only in conjunction with other traits that this characteristic is significant.

Form Elements

Plot

Since the expressionist must somehow embody an inner, subjective truth, he must seek a means adequate for expressing his personal

⁹²Sokel, Anthology , p. xviii.

⁹³S. Marion Tucker, ed., Modern Continental Plays (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1929), p. 471.

⁹⁴Gorelik, p. 246.

⁹⁵Gassner, The Theatre in Our Times, p. 201.

⁹⁶Ibid.

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vision. He is not bound to an attempt to create the illusion of empirical reality; therefore, he may use any technique he can devise in order to produce his subjective vision. While this is true in theory, expressionist practice reveals the use of identifiable techniques that have become associated with Expressionism as a dramatic style.

The attempt to present a personal, inner view of reality leads the expressionist to replace the familiar conflict of independently motivated characters with a form of plotting in which no genuine conflict arises. "With few exceptions Expressionist drama conforms to an 'epic' or narrative approach, rather than a strictly dramatic pattern."⁹⁷ The plot element in Expressionism is based on a "showing and telling of themes," a structure that "can be traced to the Christian miracle and Passion plays."⁹⁸

Another result of Expressionism's subjectivity and its consequent absence of conflict is "the pageant or pilgrimage-type structure of many full-length Expressionist plays" in which "a loosely connected 'life-story,' a series of 'stations,' pictures, and situations takes the place of a well-knit plot."⁹⁹ Such plays "show a character's

⁹⁷Sokel, Anthology , p. xx.

⁹⁸Ibid. The "epic" form of plotting is similar to that in Epic theatre which is not surprising since Epic theatre was influenced by Expressionism. As Walter Sokel points out, "both Expressionism and Brecht's Epic Theater emphasized theater as 'show' or demonstration rather than as drama with emphasis on action and suspense. The difference was that most Expressionists (although by no means all) sought to appeal to the emotions, while Brecht's Epic Theater tried to appeal to the critical intellect of its audience." (Anthology, p. xxi.)

⁹⁹Ibid.

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progress, or, more usually, deterioration, through a series of events at many times and many places."¹⁰⁰ The use of the "life-story" plot is typical of the expressionist's practice of employing "metaphor, fable, parable, and allegory" in dramatizing the inner life of man."¹⁰¹ The pageant structure allows the expressionist to present his story at the moments of most interest. He concentrates "on a series of events--pivotal, revelatory moments which . . . [are] free of clap-trap and innocent of padding, moments which . . . [march] bravely into the essence of the event, which . . . [determine] character or . . . [register] growth or retrogression, crucial moments of crises rather than half hours of preparation."¹⁰²

The "epic" or narrative approach to plotting with its pageant or pilgrimage-type structure, although simple in design, is often complicated by other factors in Expressionist plays. The result is the dream-like quality noted under the preceding section on general characteristics. "The action is usually presented in brief scenes, which are connected only by the fact that all present successive emotional reactions or phases of . . . [an] idea."¹⁰³ The episodic action "may move on several different planes at once."¹⁰⁴

Expressionist plays seldom conform to "normal" concepts of time or place; the action seems to take place in a void where "specific time and space . . . are either warped or ignored or discarded."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰Bernard Grebanier, Playwrighting (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1961), p. 329.

¹⁰¹Marriott, pp. 226-27.

¹⁰²Brown, p. 509.

¹⁰³Tucker, p. 471.

¹⁰⁴Hartley and Ladu, p. 10.

¹⁰⁵Angus, p. 483.

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There are some exceptions to this tendency toward unspecified time and place, especially in historical Expressionist drama where "date and scene of the action" are indicated "comparatively closely," but "nearly all other plays dispense with such details."¹⁰⁶

Often in plots of expressionist dramas, the "world of reality and the unreal world are found side by side; sometimes they alternate."¹⁰⁷ Depending on the "varying phases of its dominant idea or the successive moods of its characters," an expressionist play may move from reality into dream, "finite into infinite, consciousness into subconsciousness."¹⁰⁸ Frequently, the alternation of planes of consciousness, the shifting from reality to fantasy, is used to represent the supposedly "anarchic state of the world."¹⁰⁹

Scenes in expressionist drama "do not always follow in logical order to tell the story in the accepted manner" of conventional dramaturgy.¹¹⁰ Although the expressionist "frequently retains the division into acts and scenes," such a "division does not usually correspond to the actual distribution of the subject-matter."¹¹¹ He prefers "a rapid sequence of short scenes which have a sort of cinematographic effect on the mind."¹¹²

Experience is shattered into its elements and reformed to suit the playwright's purpose. . . . Climaxes and crises appear without preparation, exposition is simplified to

¹⁰⁶Samuel and Thomas, p. 40. ¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁸Tucker, p. 471.

¹⁰⁹Gassner, Masters of the Drama, p. 485.

¹¹⁰Wright, p. 90. ¹¹¹Samuel and Thomas, p. 40.

¹¹²Marriott, pp. 229-30.

direct communication or neglected altogether.
 The action is caused by the effect desired, rather than
 the necessary or probable consequences of an integrated
 series of events.¹¹³

Even when the expressionist writes a play with a recognizable plot pattern, "the motives that activate the characters are often inadequate or unexplained and their actions are in consequence startling, unexpected, and violent."¹¹⁴

No matter how confused or chaotic the dream-like structure may appear, the expressionist attempts to achieve a cumulative emotional effect by piling scene on scene. His "method of working, then, is not a clear and orderly arrangement of the parts in an organic or consecutive fashion, but rather a jumble of fragments which suggest, rather than describe, the experiences of the play."¹¹⁵

Character

The most striking and easily identifiable attribute of the characters in Expressionism is their personified, abstract names. Most often they are "characters without personal names, representing types, classes or ideas."¹¹⁶ At times expressionists revert "to the technique of the moralities by personifying abstractions in order to express their own revolutionary attitudes."¹¹⁷ Persons are named according to sex, occupations, and family relationships or after numbers and letters. Characters labeled "the Poet," "The Man In

¹¹³Hatlen, p. 171. ¹¹⁴Thompson, p. 343. ¹¹⁵Hatlen, p. 171.

¹¹⁶Rowe, p. 205.

¹¹⁷Thompson, p. 342.

Gray," and even "X," "Y," and "Z" are presented on stage.¹¹⁸ Often times characters are anonymous.¹¹⁹ Through the use of abstract names, the characters lose their personal identity and become representative of forces larger than themselves. Such names also emphasize the impersonality of a "machine" society.

Expressionist characters are also described by critics as being unreal, types not individuals, depersonalized, "automata, live puppets, or pure creations of the imagination."¹²⁰ They do not often conform to the standards of behavior connected with conventional human beings in observable reality. "Some strange detail, some distortion or implausible exaggeration, a grotesque twist, an intentional incongruity, appearances at empirically impossible times and places, again and again destroy our illusion that we might face three-dimensional persons of flesh and blood."¹²¹

Due to the subjective nature of Expressionism, the persons portrayed are usually projections from the mind of the author or from the mind of his major characters. In some plays the characters, their actions, and their motivations are parts of the author's subjective view. Their identity and actions are determined by his feelings. "The author portrays himself and projects all other characters out of his ego as reflections of this dramatic presentation of self."¹²² In other expressionist plays, the thoughts of major characters are portrayed, "or the audience is given a distorted view of the action as

¹¹⁸Corelik, p. 252. ¹¹⁹Marriott, p. 228.

¹²⁰Hartley and Ladu, p. 10.

¹²¹Sokel, The Writer in Extremis, p. 37.

¹²²Dahlström, p. 65.

seen through the eyes of the protagonist."¹²³ In plays of this second type, "the subjective feelings of the important characters are given full play to express themselves in the action of the play."¹²⁴ In both types of plays, the characters may appear to be unmotivated in the sense of character motivation found in traditional forms of drama. However, they are motivated by the inner thoughts of either the author or his major characters. The expressionist suspends the normative laws of causality and motivation so that only one single, subjective purpose rules.¹²⁵ The motivation is similar to that appearing in dreams: "Wish becomes act, emotion becomes event."¹²⁶ For instance, characters may change identity or "acquire abnormal attributes indicative of the protagonists state of mind or the author's attitude toward society."¹²⁷

In the type of Expressionism in which the moods and thoughts of the protagonist determine the action of the play, "the characters with whom he contends may be but projections of his own personality."¹²⁸

The protagonist in Expressionist plays usually serves as an existential example, a paragon, very much like Christ in the Passion plays. The other "characters" are not so much characters as functions in his mission or martyrdom. They represent his opportunities, obstacles, parallels, variations, and counterpoints. Genuine antagonists do not exist. There are antagonistic characters, usually

¹²³Wright, p. 90.

¹²⁴Grebanier, p. 328.

¹²⁵Sokel, The Writer in Extremis , p. 38.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Gassner, The Theatre in Our Time, pp. 200-201.

¹²⁸Nellie Burget Miller, The Living Drama (New York: The Century Co., 1924), p. 276.

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¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Gassner, The Theatre in Our Time, pp. 200-201.

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¹²³Wright, p. 90.

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¹²⁵Sokel, The Writer in Extremis , p. 38.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Gassner, The Theatre in Our Time, pp. 200-201.

¹²⁸Nellie Burget Miller, The Living Drama (New York: The Century Co., 1924), p. 276.

philistines, materialists, often scientists or engineers, moralists and sentimentalists. However, these antagonistic characters do not act as independent personalities motivated by aims of their own, but as foils to the protagonist.¹²⁹

Expressionists attempt to bring a universality to their characters in order that their conditions might parallel that of mankind. An instance of this is the Cashier in Kaiser's From Morn to Midnight who "represents mankind in its search to escape the stultifying results of modern life."¹³⁰ Ideally, the expressionists wish the drama "to become the expression of all spiritual powers and the dramatis personae . . . [not] mere characters but super-realistic, ecstatic figures, the intensified expression of human nature."¹³¹

Language

The expressionists, in their attempt to render the inner reality of the mind, displayed a number of diverse techniques in regard to the element of language. Some techniques were adopted from earlier dramatic periods, some were borrowed from other literary forms, and some were developed by the practitioners of Expressionism.

In expressionism, language is a function of expression and not a means of characterization; therefore, the expressionist, unlike the realist and naturalist, doesn't attempt to imitate the speech of everyday life.¹³² Rather, the expressionist favors a language which is "austere and sparing, . . . shorn of all poetical adornments,"

¹²⁹Sokel, Anthology , pp. xx-xxi.

¹³⁰Brockett, p. 305.

¹³¹Franz Rapp, "Germany" A History of Modern Drama, p. 104.

¹³²Sokel, The Writer in Extremis. . . . , p. 40.

which rises occasionally "to impassioned outbursts, always with the sole intent of conveying the author's message."¹³³

Expressionists revived traditional devices such as the aside and the monologue in their effort to project the inner mind of the author or his protagonist.

Interior or stream-of consciousness monologue, which differs from the old soliloquy in its psychological realism, became one of the most frequently used methods of externalization, often dominating a play. In the expressionist monologue the playwright undertook to suggest the nature of stream of consciousness as a flow of images rather than formulated thought and the flashing of words instead of full sentence structure.¹³⁴

Soliloquies and asides, frequently of considerable length, were used as a means of directly communicating to an audience "the inner experiences, the intimate secrets, the psychoanalytic free expression of affects and ideas."¹³⁵

Dialogue in Expressionism ran the gamut from "long-winded rhetorical harangues" in monologue form to a "telegraphic style of exclamation."¹³⁶ It is this "telegraphic" dialogue that is most often cited by critics as being particularly associated with Expressionism. It was the end result of the expressionists' endeavor to forge their own language.

In the process, grammar and syntax were ruthlessly overthrown, articles eliminated, sentences clipped, new words created. In some extreme instances, the dialogue was reduced to bare exclamation, the ecstatic cry was the ultimate mark of expressionist diction.¹³⁷

In Expressionism "the single emotional word replaced the involved

¹³³Garten, p. 131.

¹³⁴Rowe, p. 205.

¹³⁵Angus,, p. 483.

¹³⁶Thompson, p. 343.

¹³⁷Garten, p. 105.

conceptual sentence as the basic unit of . . . language. Repetition, variation, modulating echo, and contrapuntal clash of single words are essential parts of Expressionist dialogue."¹³⁸ The use of "telegraphic" dialogue gave "an impression of unreality or half-reality."¹³⁹

Stream-of-consciousness monologues, "telegraphic" dialogue, and the use of symbols (noted under general characteristics) are the most striking features of language in Expressionism. However, there are some secondary traits that should be mentioned. Pantomime appears frequently as a type of visual language to aid in expressing the inexpressible.¹⁴⁰ Lyric verse is sometimes found in less violent scenes of plays.¹⁴¹ In many instances, verse and prose are employed alternately.¹⁴² Like Symbolism, Expressionism makes use of silence and pauses to a greater extent than in conventional drama. "The deliberate use of the pause as a significant means of expression (. . .) reveals most clearly the kinship between Expressionist drama and music. Dots and dashes [in the script] are the equivalents of pauses in musical scores."¹⁴³ Lastly, mass choruses which chant and pantomime in "mechanical unison" may appear.¹⁴⁴

Theme

Any treatment of the themes of Expressionism must consider that the style included Mystic and Activist forms. A quality of

¹³⁸Sokel, Anthology , p. xviii.

¹³⁹Gassner, Producing the Play, p. 65.

¹⁴⁰Angus, p. 484.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Bithell, p. 388.

¹⁴³Sokel, Anthology , p. xix.

¹⁴⁴Angus, p. 484.

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subjectivism infuses both branches, although they have different specific characteristics. These express themselves most obviously in the expressionist's thematic concerns, resulting in essentially two thematic areas.

Mystical Expressionism as practiced by the German playwrights of the early twentieth century was "first and foremost engaged in searching for the essential reality in our universe."¹⁴⁵ This movement in a large sense was "a search for God, an attempt to deify the human self."¹⁴⁶ It "sought wide themes, heaven, hell, cosmos, humanity, and in revealing a world gave a new conception to the facts of individual life."¹⁴⁷ The plays written under the influence of Mystic Expressionism abounded with Messianic allusions.

The artist and his hero . . . [were] seen as prophets crying in the wilderness, bringing the glad message of "rise up and be human" to an unresponsive multitude. The multitude . . . [was] usually nothing less than the world of humanity. Cosmic significance . . . [was] the order of the day.¹⁴⁸

All in all, there was a religious character to the Expressionist drama of the Mystics which tended toward the metaphysical or mythological.¹⁴⁹

While both forms of Expressionism reject empirical reality and embrace a subjective, egocentric world, the Activists incline more toward actually dealing with the empirical world than do the Mystics. Thematically, the Activists approach man and the objective world in two ways.

¹⁴⁵Dahlström, pp. 80-81.

¹⁴⁶Angus, p. 485.

¹⁴⁷Dickinson, pp. 268-69.

¹⁴⁸Bamber Gascoigne, Twentieth Century Drama (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1962), p. 21.

¹⁴⁹Dahlström, p. 78.

First, much of the drama concentrates upon the negative aspects of the present. It attempts to show how current ideals have distorted man's spirit and have made him a machine through false values. Second, a smaller proportion of the drama looks forward to the transformation of society and to a time when harmony between man's environment and his spirit can be achieved. Expressionist Activist drama, then, usually aims at making the audience aware of the present's shortcomings, or suggests a program for accomplishing a more perfect future.¹⁵⁰

Activist Expressionism "proclaims an idea, that of the New Man and of a New Humanity, which is to be no longer subjected to the limitations of State and nation, society and traditional laws, and which is to be transformed into a community of love, goodness, and peace."¹⁵¹

Expressionism of the Activist type often deals with modern social problems.¹⁵² Although "the intellectual content of expressionism is not especially striking," its themes do treat "well-worn ideas of protest against materialism, mechanization, and militarism."¹⁵³ It presents such social themes as the conflict between the old and new generations (often projected as conflict between father and son), man's relation to the proletariat, and man's relation to the community as a whole.¹⁵⁴ Above all, the themes of Expressionism emphasize human values: "Love, spiritual brotherhood, the elemental virtues and motives in conflict with the conventions and impositions of 'civilized cultures.'"¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰Brockett, pp. 298-99.

¹⁵¹Samuel and Thomas, p. 60.

¹⁵²Wright, p. 90.

¹⁵³Hatlen, p. 174.

¹⁵⁴Samuel and Thomas, pp. 63, 64, and 110.

¹⁵⁵Angus, p. 486.

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Summary: Criteria for the Identification of
the Dramatic Style of Expressionism

Principles

Expressionism, in denying that empirical reality is ultimate reality, parallels a number of concepts of Romanticism and Symbolism.

For the expressionist, the knowledge of ultimate reality is intuitively gained by a process in which the ego, the self, gathers and unifies antithetical elements which have no separate existence of their own. Thus the ego, in effect, creates ultimate reality. The world becomes an extension of the subjective vision of the individual. As a consequence, the expressionist assumes that nature is anthropomorphic and ascribes human characteristics to it.

The influence of the concept of the subconscious guides the expressionist to investigate the inner mind of man, the level beneath the rational and conscious. He deals with psychological reality, the private, personal world of man.

Expressionists seek to emulate the effects of music, since music releases feelings supposedly without reference to empirical reality.

Expressionism embodies a rather mystic religious attitude in seeking to realize God. It wants spiritual values free of dogma and ritual.

Expressionism is concerned with the worth of man, and seeks a spiritual brotherhood of humanity. In the Activist phase of Expressionism, there is a wish to transform society in order that man may realize his greatness. In Expressionism, man is not the product

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of his environment; he is considered to have the power to change the world according to his visions.

Characteristics of Expressionism

General Characteristics

Expressionism tries to suggest inner conflicts that cannot be presented directly on stage. It projects the purely subjective in concrete form. The subconscious world of man is not presented in any orderly fashion but is often confused and unstable.

Expressionism characteristically employs a dream-like structure. Action is often fragmented, dislocated, and illogical when compared to the standards prevailing in empirical reality. Projection and embodiment of psychic forces take the place of imitation of external facts; the association of ideas or moods supplants construction of plot based on logical connection of cause and effect. The episode dream-like structure is closer to a musical form of theme and variation than to conventional dramatic patterns.

The elements of an expressionist play often appear distorted and exaggerated. Things do not appear as they do in empirical reality because their qualities are intensified or changed according to the subjective attitude of the author or his major characters.

Expressionism exhibits a characteristic employment of symbols of differing types (fixed, contextual, and indefinite) which are noted for their vehemence and hysterical quality. They are often projected visually through action and setting.

Form Elements

Plot

Expressionism conforms to an "epic" or narrative approach to plotting. Plots are based on the showing and telling of themes. Conflict in the sense of opposed, independently motivated, characters seldom arises. Many full-length expressionist plays exhibit a pageant or pilgrimage-like structure treating the life-story of a protagonist and showing his progress in a series of events at many times and many places. Exposition and preparation are minimal or ignored completely. The concentration is on crucial events, crises, and climaxes.

The "epic" approach to plotting is often complicated by rapid shifts in time, space, and planes of consciousness which give the story a dream-like quality. Action may appear to take place in a void -- times and places are usually unspecified except in historical expressionist dramas. Plots seem to be a jumble of fragments which suggest, rather than describe, the experience of the play.

Character

Expressionist characters are frequently identified by personified, abstract names based on their family relationships, sex, occupation, appearance, or function in the play. They are described as being types, depersonalized, puppet-like, and purely imaginative. They are generally unlike conventional beings from empirical reality; some aspect of their character calls attention to the fact that they are not flesh-and-blood entities.

Characters are usually projections of the subjective mind of

the author or of his major characters and act according to states or shifts in his subjective mind. For this reason, they may appear to be unmotivated in the conventional dramatic sense.

The protagonist in many expressionist plays may contend with other characters who are projections of his own personality, which represent variations and counterpoints of himself or opportunities and obstacles in his life. Antagonistic characters appear as foils to the character of the protagonist.

Language

Expressionist language is spare, unadorned, and does not attempt to imitate the speech of everyday life.

Expressionism utilizes the aside and the monologue to project the character's thought directly to the audience. The monologue which attempts to reveal the stream of consciousness of the character is often lengthy. It contains a flow of images and a flashing of words, rather than full sentence structure and rationally formulated thought.

Expressionism makes striking use of a "telegraphic" style in dialogue. Emotions and thoughts are expressed in uncomplete sentences or by single words.

Pantomime may be considered as a part of Expressionist language, aiding visual communication. Lyric poetry may be found in less violent scenes. Prose and poetry may be used alternately. Pauses appear more frequently than in conventional drama. Mass choruses, chanting and pantomiming in unison may appear.

Theme

The themes of Expressionism are divided according to its Mystic and Activist phases. Mystic expressionists are concerned with a search for God, a deification of the human self. They encompass themes of heaven, hell, humanity, and the cosmos. Cosmic significance is the order of the day. Prophet-like, the artist cries out to mankind to rise and be human.

Activist Expressionism maintains many of the religious themes of the Mystics but deals with empirical reality in themes which treat the negative aspects of the present or call for a transformation of society in order that man may realize his potential. Activist themes deal with the dehumanizing of man by modern society which has made him into a machine. They protest against materialism, mechanization, and militarism. They present conflicts between old and new generations. Man's relation to the proletariat and the community as a whole are also common themes.

CHAPTER VIII

FORMALISM, FUTURISM, AND SURREALISM

The manner of presenting the three dramatic styles in this chapter differs from that employed in the previous five chapters. This difference stems from a lack of sources upon which to base a full treatment of these styles in terms of the method for describing styles presented in Chapter II. An attempt is made to present at least the principles and characteristics of these dramatic styles.

Formalism

Formalism as a dramatic style is only discussed in any detail by John Gassner in his Form and Idea in the Modern Theatre. Although the term appears rarely in the commentaries of other authors, the style Gassner describes is not just his invention. Allardyce Nicoll in World Drama does not actually use the term "Formalism," but he does treat the same plays and authors that Gassner includes in his discussion of Formalism. In fact Nicoll appears to make a plea for what Gassner calls Formalism in the conclusion of World Drama.

If there is hope for a revival of dramatic power in our time, that hope is to be found mainly in the fact that in some quarters at least . . . formalized intensity is being welcomed. . . . when we observe what considerable steps in advance have been taken by the poetic play, when we see how the ancient themes are being given new meanings in modern works, and, particularly, when we note how French dramatists are striving passionately to create a new foundation for tragedy, . . . , we may well be justified in wondering whether a fresh glory is not near at hand when

we consider what important suggestions for the future have been variously exhibited by Murder in the Cathedral, Electre and Eurydice we may perhaps be justified in letting our imaginations move forward with pleasant anticipation into the realm of the theatre to come. In certain circles, at least, a renewed interest in form -- the be-all and end-all of dramatic art -- is being born.¹

In view of the comments of such recognized authors as Gassner and Nicoll, it is reasonable to include a discussion of various experiments in dramatic style under the heading of Formalism. Gassner is the exclusive source here since Nicoll's comments are too closely tied to criticism of individual plays to be useful in a general discussion.

Principles of Formalism

John Gassner writes that "If the word [Formalism] has any semantic value at all, it is that of signifying conspicuously formal play structure and artificially devised -- hence 'formal' -- characterization, action, and speech."² The concept of Formalism stems from principles which are associated with Copeau and Yeats.

They had noble aims, these and other dreamers of stylized, more or less ritualistic art: The spirit of man would be liberated by the very process of setting bounds -- the bounds of art -- to the limitation of an action and the imitation of conversation. Man would be magnified to the degree that action was purified of all but symbolic content, that characterization was refined into typicality, that speech was subjected to the jewelled yoke of formal utterance. Life on the stage would recover its antique grandeur to the degree that action was made ritualistic, characterization sculptural, and language ceremonial.³

¹Nicoll, World Drama, p. 942.

²Gassner, Form and Idea, p. 166.

³Ibid., p. 165.

Characteristics of Formalism

The concern for obvious form, the deliberate artificial treatment of character and language, and the search for a more or less ritualistic drama are the characteristics which tie together an otherwise diverse group of plays which include some of the works of William Butler Yeats, T. S. Eliot, and Jean Giraudoux.⁴ Formalism in its diversity has not developed a style as much as it has employed stylistic devices such as the use of maske, choruses, "asides" or soliloquies, and narrators.

Cassner says that "it was inevitable that . . . formalist experiments should have . . . favored the use of masks as in the classic and primitive rituals."⁵ The mask aids in depersonalizing characters and can, in general, "distance, elevate, and dignify dramatic experience, freeing it from the temporality and flux of realistic theatre."⁶

The use of choruses in Formalism is borrowed from the historic classical style. This device is noted in Eliot's plays, Murder in the Cathedral and Family Reunion, Giraudoux's Electra, and O'Casey's Within the Gates. Cassner observes, "A single individual, speaking alone or with other characters, may also perform the function of the classic chorus in a more or less informal manner."⁷

Similarly, the use of the "aside" or soliloquy in Formalism is borrowed from historic dramatic styles. In Formalism the "aside" or soliloquy is employed in an obvious and direct manner without any

⁴Ibid., pp. 167-71.

⁵Ibid., p. 167.

⁶Ibid., pp. 167-68.

⁷Ibid., p. 171.

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attempt to psychologically or realistically "motivate" it. It is used to "startle and stimulate the audience by violating illusion."⁸

The narrator is used in a variety of ways as a formalistic device. Gassner points out that in Cocteau's The Infernal Machine, "the narrator is a disembodied voice," and in Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie, the boy, Tom, is both a narrator and a major character in the play.⁹

Summary of Formalism

Formalism as a dramatic style is an attempt to produce a drama with more or less ritualistic qualities in order to recapture the magnificence of historic classic styles. As such it is concerned with the projection of the formal structure of drama. It seeks an abstraction of character and language in order to heighten and dignify dramatic experience. It is deliberately presentational in its obvious use of conventions such as masks, choruses, soliloquies, and narrators.

In its concern for form, its search for modern ritual art, and its use of historic conventions, Formalism can be said to come nearest of all modern dramatic styles to historical Classicism. Gassner offers a provocative and stimulating argument to the effect that Realism has the essential character and qualities of Classicism.¹⁰ It is not the purpose here to attempt to refute his argument, but to point out that the more obvious conventions and patterns of the classic style fit the principles and practices of Formalism. Indeed, since formalistic

⁸Ibid., p. 172.

⁹Ibid., pp. 172-73.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 79-97.

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experiments are often patent imitations of classic style, the result could not be otherwise. According to Gassner, "In classical art the work stands in some fundamental relation to its age."¹¹ He claims this is true of Realism. Formalism, on the other hand, in its imitative capacity, stands in relation to another and acient age.

Futurism

In its beginning years (1909-1915), Futurism was championed by the poet F. T. Marenetti, the director Enrico Prampolini, and others.¹² It led to little of importance in playwrighting. In the theatre, however, it "tended to lead in three directions: first, towards the substitution of 'mechanical' form in place of the current types of scenery; secondly, towards the subordination of the playwright to the director; and thirdly towards an emphasis in action upon physical movement."¹³

Principles of Futurism

Futurism aims to "express the marvelously dynamic nature of the machine."¹⁴ Its "idea of theatre" is epitomized in "speed, power, and force."¹⁵ In the Futurist Manifesto of 1909, the movement's advocates wrote, "We feel the need of delivering ourselves from old sensibilities, in order to create definitely the new plastic art of

¹¹Ibid., p. 89..

¹²Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 95.

¹³Nicoll, World Drama, pp. 726-27.

¹⁴Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 109.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 111.

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the machine."¹⁶ In yet another declaration of principles, the Manifesto del Teatro Sintetico Futurista, Marinetti, Settimelli, and Corra called for a reformation of the theatre and drama.¹⁷ They called for the exploitation of the straight line and the "synthetic" which is defined as the "ideal abstraction of typical forms."¹⁸

From the ideas expressed in the manifestoes, the futurists developed two major concepts: "the idea or sense of space based on appreciation of flat planes, and the idea or sense of function, wherein all romantic ornament was stripped away until only the essential remained."¹⁹ Allardyce Nicoll elaborates on these concepts by stating,

Futurism is a destructive force in that it rejects the "beauty" of the past and endeavors to overthrow completely that romantic cult of loveliness which, in its eyes, is nothing but futile escapism. At the same time, it attempts to be constructive by clamoring for a new art from which these romantic delicacies have been banished, an art which will reflect the mechanical civilization surrounding us. In place of the rounded line so characteristic of romantic artistry Marinetti boldly demands the straight line of girders and factories; in place of the hunting charms of the poetic he asks for a blatant, staccato form of expression that, if need be, will substitute mere sounds for the richer tones of the human voice.²⁰

From these concepts it is apparent that Futurism is not only opposed to the romantic, but also to the realistic and naturalistic.²¹

Characteristics of Futurism

The principles and concepts of Futurism resulted in the

¹⁶Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁷Rosa Trilla Clough, Futurism (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1961), p. 144.

¹⁸Nicoll, World Drama, pp. 795-96.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 796.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 726-27.

²¹Ibid., p. 796.

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"synthetic" play which Rosa Clough describes as

a brief performance in which entire acts were reduced to a few sentences, and scenes to a handful of words. Only critical turning points were enacted and definitive statements uttered. No sentiments, no psychological development, no atmosphere, no suggestiveness. Common sense was banished, or rather replaced by non~~sense~~. Stupidity, as such, was heralded as humor.²²

In this "synthetic" drama traditional rules of dramaturgy and production were to be replaced by "dynamic improvisation." "Thus a Futurist play, a 'synthesis' of many acts and scenes, did not require months of preparation; it was improvised and presented in a few minutes."²³

Summary of Futurism

Futurism as an overall movement was most important in painting. Its greatest influence in the dramatic arts was in theatrical scenery and production.²⁴ It had some importance in drama because of its influence on Expressionism.²⁵ Futurism can be summed up briefly as a style concerned with machines and the mechanical which attempted to emphasize function by removing all but the essentials of dramatic action and thereby stressed the ideal abstraction of typical dramatic forms. As such it is anti-realistic.

Surrealism

Surrealism as a general movement in the arts exhibits a spiritualistic trend and is based on representing dreams interpreted according to Freud's theories. This movement

maintains that there exists, and seeks access to, a "real", world that lies behind the artificial world of ordinary

²²Clough, p. 55. ²³Ibid., p. 144. ²⁴Ibid., pp. 147-50.

²⁵Nicoll, World Drama, p. 796.

objects given in normal awareness. [It] argues that what is found on the conscious level is an arbitrary construct of mind, determined by habit and custom, and that the function of art is to recover and report the world as originally experienced and felt. [It] seeks to disintegrate the clear logical life of intellect, so as to search for its materials on the subconscious level, and discover there the true and primitive meanings that things have for us prior to the forms that we impose on them.²⁶

Surrealism has proven to be a provocative and controversial movement but has failed to produce "any drama of merit" and is only important in playwrighting and production as a forerunner of other movements or as an influence on other styles.²⁷ Except for Alfred Jarry's Ubu roi, Guillaume Appollinaire's Les Mamelles de Tirésias (The Breasts of Tirésias), and a number of plays by Jean Cocteau, Federico Garcia Lorca, and the Franco-Belgian playwright, Fernand Crommelynck, Surrealism has not been a widely imitated dramatic style.²⁸

Principles of Surrealism

The Surrealist Manifesto, penned in 1924 by Andre Breton, defined the movement as "pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing or by any other means, the real process of thought."²⁹ This "process of thought" and the unconscious mind are the keys to the surrealist aesthetic. They attempted "to capture from consciousness the fugitive fantasies and images that issue from the unconscious without premeditation, recognizable origin or connection."³⁰ Some surrealists were so extreme as

²⁶Iredell Jenkins, "Surrealism," Dictionary of Philosophy ed., Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1942), p. 307.

²⁷Brockett, p. 343. ²⁸Nicoll, World Drama, pp. 773-76.

²⁹As quoted by Gorelik in New Theatres for Old, p. 255.

³⁰Rowe, p. 212.

to plead that "art" should consist merely in (a) automatic writing or (b) the faithful recording of dreams; but the cleverer among the adherents of the movement . . . , allowed themselves to admit an element of the ordering imagination, without, however, abandoning their belief in the fundamental importance . . . , of the subconscious.³¹

To the surrealist, the best way to create art is "automatically" in much the same way that automatic writing is produced by spiritualists.³² For this reason, surrealists shunned any deliberate procedure in art and sought their idea of "real" creativity in the subjective, the unpremeditated, and the inspired.³³ They found the materials for artistic creation "in the poems and paintings of children and the insane, the scrawls 'doodles' [sic] which nervous people execute upon telephone pads, the antics of asylum inmates, the dreams of psychopaths and the vain and fugitive images which lurk in the dark corners of the normal mind."³⁴

Characteristics of Surrealism

Surrealist drama shares with the general movement the principle of seeking truth "by freeing the mind from rational control and activating the subconscious mind through a dreamlike state."³⁵ This principle leads the surrealist dramatist to reject familiar reality, logic, rationality, coherence, and order. Instead he resorts to "inconsistencies, tricks, enigmas, startling juxtapositions, sophisticated anachronisms . . . , and, above all, fantasies."³⁶ For example,

³¹Nicoll, World Drama, p. 774. ³²Gorelik, p. 255. ³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Brockett, p. 343.

³⁶Gassner, Form and Idea , p. 110.

in Jean Cocteau's Orpheus, Eurydice receives letters delivered by a mailman and Orpheus passes to the realm of Death through a mirror.³⁷

The following are further examples of surrealistic practices in drama and theatre. In 1936 a Danish production of Kjeld Abell's musicomedy, The Melody Was Lost, featured surrealistic devices.

A bouquet, bridal gown and silk hat drift across the stage. Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" floats raucously out to the audience, a stereoptikon from the rear of the stage repeatedly flashes pictures of second-rate honeymoon resorts while a toiled waiter drags a dinner table in and out. "I am Aurora," explains a chambermaid with the wings of an angel, who dusts off the morning sun just as the alarm clock rings and the curtain goes up on the Larson's little two-room apartment.³⁸

Also in 1936 the V. and W. Theatre in Prague produced a surrealistic musicomedy titled Heaven and Earth. Gorelik describes its setting:

Ionic pillars ornament the classic facade, which is enlivened with strings of dried corncocks, a beehive and a bundle of rags; the columns, about to fall to pieces, are tied together with wire and twine. The interior consists of a single crumbling wall from which the wallpaper is peeling off in shreds; it has a hole in the middle for the tin flue of a coal stove. When Jupiter is annoyed, rain, bricks and plaster spatter down in front of the setting.³⁹

Lastly, there is the example of Salvador Dali's ballet, Bacchanale. Although it is obviously not a drama, it does illustrate Surrealism on stage. Bacchanale, labeled a "paranoiac performance" by its creator,

centered rather casually around the mad King Ludwig II of Bavaria, Wagner's patron, The ballet took place before a backdrop on which was painted a huge swan made of cracked plaster with a classical pediment on its neck. Ludwig, chased by Death in the form of an umbrella, fell dead surrounded by a ring of umbrellas.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Gorelik, p. 259.

³⁹Ibid.

In the interim there were dances by fauns with bushes as well as horns growing out of their heads. Prima ballerina was a dreamlike albino Venus in white tights.⁴⁰

From these examples, it is evident that Surrealism in theatre is anti-realistic, illogical, irrational, and perhaps incoherent. Yet these very qualities are quite in keeping with the principles of Surrealism which postulate an avoidance of observed reality and rational process in creativity.

Surrealism in drama is "often classified as a weird form of expressionism."⁴¹ It is evident that Surrealism's reliance on dream technique and its concern with the subconscious appear in the style of Expressionism. However, to the expressionist these are merely certain techniques employed in order to project his ideas to the spectator. In Surrealism these techniques appear to be ends in themselves.

Summary of Surrealism

Surrealism is based on a guiding principle that the function of the subconscious mind is the true process of thought, and that "reality" lies in the projection of the intuitions of the subconscious. Its general characteristics are seen as dreamlike action, irrationality, extreme subjectivity, and fantasy. The nature of the surrealist principle and the limited number of plays written in this style make it impossible to describe its treatment of form elements in drama. However, the style does employ such devices as inconsistency, enigmas, deliberate anachronisms, and surprising juxtapositions.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 255-56.

⁴¹Herbert Philippi, Stagecraft and Scene Design (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953), p. 173.

CHAPTER IX

THE BROADWAY THEATRICAL SEASON OF 1919-1920

This is the first of four chapters devoted to presenting stylistic analyses of "successful" serious dramas by American playwrights. The first section of each chapter deals with the selection of the particular plays from a Broadway season which meet the standards of popular and critical success stated in the introduction to this study. In the second section of each chapter the selected plays are analyzed and compared to the criteria for dramatic styles established in Chapters III through VIII. The last section of each chapter summarizes the results of the analytic process and states any relevant observations.

Play Selection

The seasonal summary portion of the Burns Mantle edition of The Best Plays of 1919-1920 lists one hundred and forty-two plays which opened on Broadway in that theatrical season.¹ Ninety-three of these plays are eliminated from further consideration in this study because they are comedies or musical comedies. Another group of thirteen plays is eliminated because they are translations or adaptations of foreign dramas. Four revivals of plays from past seasons or dramatic periods are also eliminated. Lastly, a group of twenty-five serious plays

¹Burns Mantle, ed., The Best Plays of 1919-1920 (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1920), pp. 335-458.

written originally for production on Broadway do not fit the standards of selection on the grounds that they ran less than one hundred performances and did not receive favorable reviews from the critics at the time of their opening nor any recognition of value from later anthologists or scholars.

Ten plays meet the standards of selection operative in this study. Nine of them ran over the one hundred performance mark which indicates popular success. An Elmer Rice play, For the Defense, which only ran seventy-seven performances, is also included as a "successful" play on the basis of favorable reviews at the time of its opening on Broadway. The plays which are analyzed in the next section are as follows:

At 9:45 by Owen Davis

Beyond the Horizon by Eugene O'Neill

Déclassée by Zöe Akins

The Famous Mrs. Fair by James Forbes

For the Defense by Elmer Rice

The Sign on the Door by Channing Pollock

The Son-Daughter by George Scarborough and David Belasco

The Storm by Langdon McCormick and George Broadhurst

A Voice in the Dark by Ralph E. Dyar and Willard Mack

The Acquittal by Rita Weiman²

²This play is listed out of alphabetical order because the script for it cannot be located and it is necessary to treat it somewhat differently from the other plays in the chapter.

Stylistic Analyses of Plays

The organizational method used to analyze plays for their stylistic aspects is consistent throughout this and the three following chapters. It follows a pattern somewhat similar to the one used in describing the major styles in Chapters III through VIII. The first section of each analysis contains a brief resumé of the play under the heading of "story". This is followed by the analysis proper which is divided into two parts. The first part considers the overall effects of the play, its general characteristics. This portion of the analysis makes use of the general characteristics outlined for styles in earlier chapters to determine what style the individual play may be associated with. The last portion of the analysis considers the form elements of individual plays -- plot, character, language and theme. These form **elements** are compared to the various criteria for the form elements of styles as derived in previous chapters. From the comparison of general characteristics and form elements of an individual play with those formulated for major and minor styles, the style of the play is described. When there is some discrepancy between general characteristics and form elements, more value is placed on the general characteristics for determining the style of the play.

At 9:45 by Owen Davis

Story

Howard Clayton, son of Judge Clayton, is shot under mysterious circumstances at 9:45 in the evening. While he lies near death, Captain Dixon of the police sets about to apprehend the person who shot him. Among the suspects are Jim Everett, a demobilized Army hero

who had had an argument with Howard; Ruth Jordan, an ex-fiancée of the wounded man; Tom Daly, a chauffeur who had not been repaid for a loan made to Howard; and Doane, a butler who had been badly treated by the younger Clayton. All suspects have good motives and poor alibis, but it turns out that Mary, the daughter of the butler, shot Howard because he had changed his mind about marrying her. The play ends as Judge Clayton says, "Captain Dixon, if my son dies, I am going to make it my business to take care of this girl; if he lives, he'll do it himself."³

General Characteristics

At 9:45 exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. It is "involved with imitating the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." For example, characters smoke, dance, and drive cars. One major character is an ex-captain from World War I. The settings of the play are Judge Clayton's library, a hotel waiting room, and a bedroom.

The play observes a "fourth-wall convention." The characters never acknowledge the presence of an audience.

At 9:45 also exhibits three characteristics associated with Romanticism. It has a "tendency away from actuality" which is accentuated by the imitation of a culture which is remote from common experience, "elements of excitement and sensation," and a general sense of improbability.

The cultural world of the upper class is depicted. Judge Clayton employs a maid, a butler, and a chauffeur. The glamorous aspects of

³Owen Davis, At 9:45 (New York: Samuel French, 1928), p. 86.

this world such as hotel dances, evening clothes, and elegant surroundings are treated almost exclusively.

The elements of excitement and sensation include the breaking down of a door, the discovery of a wounded man, three confessions to the same crime, and the sudden exposure of the true criminal at the very last moment of the play.

The general sense of improbability is enhanced by the culture depicted and the elements of excitement. It is also aided by the "convenient" appearances of the characters when the plot requires them. Character relations are also improbable. Howard Clayton is such a reprehensible personality it is difficult to believe that two attractive young ladies consider marrying him.

As in Romanticism, the play emphasizes emotionality rather than logic or common sense. Two characters love each other so much that they each confess to the crime to protect the other. The girl who actually did the shooting cannot offer a valid reason for doing so. She was overcome by hurt and rage when Howard said he wouldn't marry her. Judge Clayton offers to protect and care for her, even though she has almost killed his only son.

The play is romantic in dealing with "unusual, even bizarre situations." Howard is found wounded inside a closet of a locked room. Yet the gun found in a wastebasket of that room is not the gun used to shoot him. The triple false confessions are also an indication of the bizarre in the play.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of At 9:45 contains traits associated with Realism. It displays a "structural compactness," a "late point of attack," and the "use of contemporary story material." Action, though often complicated, is unified. The unity of place is only slightly broken by a scene in a hotel waiting room. The unity of time is strictly observed. From the late point of attack -- the discovery of Howard -- to the end of the play takes only two hours. The play's setting is roughly 1920, which is the time of the original production of the play.

The plot element in At 9:45 includes two traits of Romanticism. The action unfolds in a "series of thrills presented in a melodramatic manner." The solving of the mystery, the shifting of suspicion from one character to another, and the deus ex machina conclusion indicate this trait. The plot content "provides for excitement, suspense, imagination, and glamour. The sensational situations and the elegant surroundings of the upper class reveal this aspect of the play.

Character

The persons portrayed in the play have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They are not wholly unrealistic, but are "improbable persons." Jim Everett is a war hero, but his actions do not indicate as much. His stature lies more in the adulation of the other characters and the repetition of the fact that he was decorated in the war than in anything he does. Howard Clayton comes from a respected wealthy family and yet is reprehensible and callous. No

explanation for his behavior is offered.

Characters tend to be "types." Captain Dixon, the largest role in the play, is never described as anything more than "of the New York police."⁴ He is efficient and direct in his investigation; he seems to have no other life than that of a detective. A similar lack of dimensionality is apparent in the rest of the characters. They are not highly individualized persons.

Language

The dialogue of At 9:45 contains traits which are associated with Realism. It is written in prose, and is natural to the characters and their positions. Most of the characters express themselves in acceptable, correct English. The chauffeur is less "proper" with his moderate use of slang and occasional lapses of grammar. There is also a maid who is characterized by her Irish accent and a humorous employment of Irish idioms.

Theme

The themes of At 9:45 correspond to those of Romanticism. Ideas and problems of the contemporary society are avoided. The world surrounding the actions of the drama is almost completely ignored.

In addition, love is a central concern. This is shown in the characters of Jim Everett and Ruth Jordan and their willingness to make sacrifices for each other. It is also the motive for the shooting of Howard Clayton.

Finally, the play projects the idea of moral justice. The innocent are freed of suspicion and the guilty are punished. Howard is

⁴Ibid., p. 10.

shot as a result of his poor treatment of an innocent girl. She in turn must be tried for the shooting.

Style of Play

At 9:45 exhibits two characteristics of Realism and three of Romanticism. The elements of plot and language correspond to those of Realism, while the elements of character and theme are related to Romanticism. The play appears to be basically romantic with traits of Realism. Such a combination suggests that the style of the play corresponds to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

Beyond the Horizon by Eugene O'Neill

Story

James Mayo owns a farm in New England which he hopes to pass on to his two sons, Andrew and Robert. But Robert, after having attended college briefly, decides to leave the farm and go to sea with his uncle, Captain Scott. His plans are changed when Ruth Atkins, a girl who has known Andrew and Robert since childhood, reveals that she loves him rather than his brother. When Ruth and Robert announce their engagement, Andrew, who had thought that Ruth might marry him someday, is hurt and decides to join Captain Scott on his ship for a three-year voyage. His father curses him for leaving the farm and tells him not to come back.

Three years later, James Mayo is dead, Ruth and Robert have a child, and the farm has begun to fail because Robert's bookish and poetic personality cannot cope with the demands of farming. Andrew returns from his voyage and Ruth, who no longer loves Robert, believes

that he will set the farm right and perhaps take her away from Robert. Ruth reveals to Robert her true feelings. But life away from the farm has changed Andrew into a quite materialistic person bent on making money. He no longer loves Ruth and has no desire to stay on the farm. He departs, leaving Robert with the knowledge that Ruth no longer loves him.

Five years later, Robert's mother and daughter are dead, the farm is nearly in ruins, and Robert himself is dying. Andrew returns with a doctor, but nothing can be done to save Robert. He dies on a hillside after making Andrew promise to look after Ruth. Andrew does so for Robert's sake, but a chance for a reconciliation between Ruth and Andrew appears remote as the play ends.⁵

General Characteristics

Beyond the Horizon exhibits four general characteristics associated with Realism. The play imitates "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." It demonstrates a relationship between the characters and their environment. The form element of character is emphasized. A fourth-wall convention is observed at all times in the play.

The contemporary, immediate world imitated in the play is that of a twentieth century New England farm. The persons depicted are individuals from the lower middle class, who perform such commonplace tasks as running the farm, preparing meals, and keeping accounts.

⁵Eugene O'Neill, Beyond the Horizon (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920). Reprinted in Representative American Plays, ed. Arthur Hobson Quinn (3d. ed. revised, New York: The Century Co., 1925), pp. 973-1013.

The relationship between environment and character is apparent in the lives of the three main characters. Andrew's personality is altered as a result of his experiences away from the farm. He changes from a good natured young farmer into a somewhat cynical and materialistic wheat speculator. Robert dies because his poetic and thoughtful nature is incompatible with the practical demands of a farm environment. Ruth's change from a beautiful young girl full of love into a prematurely aged woman incapable of love is due to the impoverished life she leads with Robert. Changes in character also lead to changes in the setting. The sitting room of the Mayo house reflects the decline of life on the farm as it is altered from a place of comfort and order in the first act to one of decay and dissolution in the final act.⁶

The major center of interest in the play rests in the element of character. The events of the play are arranged to appear the results of conflicts within and among Robert, Andrew, and Ruth. The plot's main function is to reveal the lives of these people.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Beyond the Horizon contains traits associated with Realism. The ordering of events can be considered "structurally compact" even though a unity of time is not observed -- eight years separate the first and third acts. There is a unity of action which centers on the relationships among Robert, Andrew, and Ruth. There

⁶Ibid., pp. 973 and 1001.

is a unity of place, the Mayo farm. Although the scenes are separated in time, individually they feature a late point of attack and a use of retrospective exposition to reveal the occurrence of events prior to the opening of the scene. This is how knowledge of the deaths of James Mayo, Mrs. Mayo, and Robert's daughter, Mary, are made known.

The play is also realistic in that "obvious theatrical plotting" is avoided. Events appear to have a cause and effect relation. Andrew's return to the farm is carefully foreshadowed through the use of letters and conversation. Robert's death is not unexpected; indeed, it seems inevitable. The use of contemporary story material in the play is also consistent with the traits of realistic plots. This material includes such references to the immediate world as grain speculation, the use of automobiles, and the economic situation in Argentina.

Character

The persons portrayed in Beyond the Horizon exhibit traits of character which are associated with Realism. The characters in the play are "drawn from the middle class." They are "portrayed as credible, probable people," who are "close to the norm in behavior and outlook." They are "relatively complex in their physical and psychological make-up." Their "psychological conflicts are important" in this play. "They are influenced by heredity and environment."

The characters appear as credible persons who belong in the middle class New England farm environment. They react believably to events in their lives. Andrew, disappointed when Ruth decides to

marry Robert, leaves the farm to avoid further hurt. Ruth as a young girl is drawn to the poetic and dreamy nature of Robert, but grows to hate him when he cannot cope with the more practical aspects of farm life. Robert attempts to blame his failures on bad luck and seeks to lose himself in reading rather than face his problems.

Robert is the best example of the physical and psychological complexity apparent in the characters of the play. He is handsome, but has a weakness about his mouth and chin.⁷ His delicate health in childhood has caused him to avoid many physical pursuits and to turn to books and poetry. His personality is affected by a conflict between his dreams of traveling "beyond the horizon" and his love of Ruth. When he becomes aware that Ruth no longer loves him, he withdraws more and more into himself and seeks escape in reading.

The psychological conflicts of the characters are the most important element in the play. Ruth wants romance and comfort. These desires are frustrated by Robert's inability to run the farm properly. Because he cannot give her comfort, she loses her love for him. Since Robert has given up his dreams of travel for her love, he too is frustrated by the loss of both love and dream. This creates a situation in which Robert and Ruth unwillingly torment each other. It is the presentation of this conflict which produces interest in the play.

The influence of environment on character has already been mentioned under general characteristics. There is also some indication of the influence of heredity in the character of Robert. He tends to be more like his mother and has inherited her slightness of physical

⁷Ibid., p. 973.

form and her refinement of movement and expression. "Whatever of resemblance Robert has to his parents may be traced to her."⁸

Language

The dialogue of Beyond the Horizon corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose. It appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. Discussion and argument are an integral part of the play.

The prose employed in the dialogue appears natural to people living in a New England farm community. Except for Robert's speech, the dialogue gives the illusion of normal conversation. Robert expresses himself a bit more poetically and learnedly than do the other characters. This appears as a result of his brief exposure to college and his preference for reading. Captain Scott, an uncle of Robert and Andrew, expresses himself in a manner in keeping with his occupation as a seaman.

Discussion and argument appear in the first act when Robert talks to Andrew and Ruth about the beauty of far off places. They also appear throughout the play in conversations between Robert and Ruth about his failures.⁹

Theme

The themes of Beyond the Horizon are associated with those of Realism. They deal with the psychological problems, and family relationships, and individual human problems.

⁸Ibid., p. 979.

⁹Ibid., pp. 976-78, 993-95.

The theme of man's psychological problems should be apparent from the discussion of character. Equally important is the conflict between man's responsibility to himself and his responsibility to his family. Neither Robert nor Andrew remain true to their own desires. Robert is destroyed because he chooses to be more responsible to his family than to his dreams of travel. The problem of family relationships is embodied in the marriage of Robert and Ruth. Finally, the play demonstrates a concern for individual human problems. It is the frustration in the lives of Ruth and Robert which guide the play; it is their particular problems which are of greatest interest.

Style of Play

Beyond the Horizon exhibits four characteristics of Realism. All of its form elements correspond to the same style. It is clear that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

Déclassée by Zöe Akins

Story

The marriage of Lady Helen Haden to Sir Bruce Haden is ended when love letters between Lady Helen and Edward Thayer are given to Sir Bruce by Thayer, who is "getting even" for having to apologize for cheating at bridge. Lady Helen, who has always lived "recklessly" and doesn't know the value of money is dropped from high society as a result of her divorce. At the end of two years she is nearly penniless, when her friends take pity on her and re-establish her in the "respectable" world. A millionaire, Rudolph Solomon, wants to marry

her, but she refuses. Solomon learns that Edward Thayer is the man for whom Lady Helen sacrificed her first marriage. He tries to unite Lady Helen and Thayer at a party in his home, but the two do not meet until after Lady Helen has been mortally hurt in a traffic accident. As she is dying, Thayer confesses his love for her and asks her to be his wife.¹⁰

General Characteristics

Déclassée exhibits four characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is a "tendency away from actuality;" that is, the events presented in the play are remote from the common experience of everyday life. Emotion and illogicality figure in the play to a marked degree. There is a desire on the part of the protagonist to rebel against the social and moral code of her peers. Finally, there is a suggestion of the strange and mysterious in the life of Lady Helen.

Remoteness from common experience is suggested by the social background of the play, international high society. Hardly a major character appears who is not titled, rich, or talented. Two English lords (one a diplomat), one Italian Count, and a Jewish millionaire are included in the cast. In addition, there is a professional dancer who doubles as a Gypsy fortune teller, a personal maid who is an accomplished opera singer, and a team of three acrobats. The descriptions of the characters and their elevated positions in society should serve to indicate the improbability of this play. There is a definite tendency away from actuality.

¹⁰Z^oé Akin, Déclassée (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1923).

The characters are guided more by emotion than by reason or common sense. Lady Helen forces Thayer to apologize for cheating at bridge, even though he has threatened to give some letters to her husband that will reveal her love affair with Thayer. When she is on the verge of poverty, she gives valuable jewels away without considering their worth. Rudolph Solomon loves Lady Helen so much that he seeks to reunite her with Thayer in order to make her happy. The characters seem to be more motivated to make grand gestures than to take reasonable actions.

Lady Helen rebels against the moral code of her society. She desires to be free from the social strictures of her world and carries on a love affair with Edward Thayer, even though she knows such action will result in divorce and social ostracism.

There is a suggestion of the strange and mysterious in the life of Lady Helen. She is descended from ancestors who led extravagant lives and came to violent ends. Her travelling companion, a Gypsy fortune teller, reads some secret doom in the lines of her hand. This doom manifests itself in the form of a taxi which runs Lady Helen down.

The play also exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism: the fourth-wall convention and the imitation of the contemporary, immediate world of man and society. The contemporary world is suggested by the presence of such details as travel by ocean liner, tea in an exclusive New York hotel, women smoking, and playing cards.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Déclassée contains traits associated with Realism. There is a "structural compactness" evident in each of the three acts. Each is marked by a late point of attack and employs retrospective exposition to explain events prior to the action depicted. The unity of time is ignored -- the play covers a period of two years. The unity of place is not maintained either, as the action shifts from London to New York.

The plot of Déclassée also exhibits traits associated with Romanticism. The ordering of events is obvious and makes a great use of coincidence. Mr. Solomon just happens to meet Edward Thayer in New York and invites him to the same party attended by Lady Helen. It is also coincidental that Thayer tells Solomon of his bridge cheating episode.

Romanticism sometimes employs overheard conversations to advance the action of the plot. Such a device is used in the opening of Act II to relate what has happened to Lady Helen in the two years since her divorce.¹¹

"Plot content in Romanticism usually provides for excitement, suspense, imagination, and glamour." All of these are supplied in Déclassée. There is excitement in the confrontation over cheating at bridge. There is the suspense of whether Thayer will reveal his affair with Lady Helen. Suspense is also aroused in the last scene over whether Lady Helen and the reformed Edward Thayer will be reunited.

¹¹Ibid., p. 65.

There is imagination and glamour in the depiction of the frivolity and elegance of life in high society.

Character

The persons portrayed in Déclassée have traits which are associated with the characters of Romanticism. They are "improbable persons." Lady Helen is "a victim of an emotional state connected with love." She is also a "relatively complex" person. Edward Thayer bears a remote resemblance to the "romantic criminal."

The improbability of the characters is illustrated by the fact that they belong to a class of nobility that can expect the King and Queen of England to attend charity bazaars. Lady Helen is the daughter of an earl, and can trace her ancestry through several hundred years of English history. Lady Helen's husband is an ex-butcher who has been knighted for his contributions to the economy of England.

Lady Helen's life is dominated by her illicit love for Edward Thayer, a love "like a child from that Never-Never Land, where nothing is quite real."¹² She is divorced by her husband and turns down a marriage to a millionaire because of this love.

Lady Helen reveals a relatively complex personality. She is kind and loving to those who are equally affectionate. She has a strong sense of justice and fair play. This is demonstrated by her action in forcing Edward Thayer to apologize for cheating, even though he threatens to ruin her marriage. Yet she carries on an adulterous love affair. She doesn't know the value of money or objects and is

¹²Ibid., p. 83.

extremely extravagant. In dying she is noble and brave. She requests champagne and a cigarette and bids the orchestra to continue playing Mozart because "Mozart's so gay."¹³

Edward Thayer has some resemblance to the "romantic criminal" type found in Romanticism. True, his crimes are only those of cheating at bridge and betraying the woman with whom he is having an affair, but he is haunted by them. They cause him to leave England and go to South Africa where he becomes rich through hard work in the diamond mines.

Language

The language in Déclassée corresponds to that of Romanticism. The dialogue is written in an ornate prose style. It does not attempt to capture the language of ordinary speech. Characters express themselves in an idealized fashion as if they had "a poet's gift for language." The author, in her own way, tries to make expression beautiful and elevated. Here is a typical example:

SIR EMMETT: I should be seeing ghosts -- ghosts of the mad Varicks racing their phantom horses down the winds of eternity; swift riders with their plumes streaming and their armour flashing, their phantom hounds leaping before them, a great race -- warriors, courtiers, sportsmen, riding into oblivion . . . and Helen, the last of their line, following, -- a ghost of tomorrow. The Varicks should have made a better ending.¹⁴

Theme

The themes of Déclassée are associated with those of Romanticism. There is an avoidance of any meaningful social question. Instead the author presents a story which deals with the pity of unfulfilled love.

¹³Ibid., pp. 98-99.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 37.

It also shows the ennobling power of love as Thayer is transformed by his love for Helen. Helen's life shows a mild rebellion against social and moral codes. She lives according to her dreams and the memory of a lost love.

Style of Play

Déclassée exhibits four characteristics of Romanticism and two of Realism. The plot is primarily romantic, but contains some traits of Realism. The form elements of character, language, and theme are related to Romanticism, specifically "historical" Romanticism. The combination of romantic and realistic aspects suggests that the style of the play corresponds to "secondhand" Romanticism. Some note, however, should be made of the presence of traits associated with "historical" Romanticism.

The Famous Mrs. Fair by James Forbes

Story

Mrs. Fair, who has served as a major in the ambulance corps and has been decorated with the Croix de Guerre, returns to her family at the end of World War I. Her lecturing and appearances as a celebrity cause her to neglect her family. A series of incidents in which she almost loses her husband to another woman and her daughter to a crooked lecture manager make her aware that her first responsibility is to her family. She decides to return to her role as housewife, with her husband's promise to allow her to engage in part-time welfare work.¹⁵

¹⁵James Forbes, The Famous Mrs. Fair (New York: Samuel French, 1920).

General Characteristics

The Famous Mrs. Fair exhibits four characteristics of Realism. It imitates "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character is emphasized, as is the relation between environment and character. Finally, a fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play.

The play, written in 1920, imitates life in the United States shortly after World War I. Mrs. Fair, the protagonist, experiences difficulty adjusting to life at home after serving in the ambulance corps in France. She has become aware of what women can do to help improve society. Her experiences reflect some of the problems in the developing independence of women which occurred in the earlier years of this century. Her home on Long Island and her family and friends are also illustrative of the then contemporary world.

Character is emphasized in the drama. Mrs. Fair's concern for aiding society and her feelings of responsibility to her family produce a conflict which becomes the center of interest in the play. Her husband, Jeffery, also suffers from a conflict between being loyal to his wife and enduring her neglect of him and his children. These conflicts determine the action of the play.

The influence of environment on character is apparent in the fact that wealth and education enable the characters to be free of the basic needs of life, thus allowing them to become involved with the problems of society. Environmental factors are also involved in the near break-up of the Fair family. In the end of the play, the need for a home environment wins out over the concern for broader social involvement.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Famous Mrs. Fair contains traits associated with Realism. The "structural compactness" of realistic plots is evident within each scene, but the overall pattern of the play violates the unities of time and place. The action of the play covers the months between May and October. The unity of place is maintained until the last act, when the setting shifts from the Fair home on Long Island to the Fair apartment in a New York hotel. However, all individual scenes except those of Act III are marked by late points of attack and the use of retrospective exposition. Act III has a continuing action which requires little exposition. The unity of action is observed, although it is complicated by two relevant subplots. One subplot centers on the engagement and marriage of Mrs. Fair's son and the other is concerned with Mrs. Fair's daughter and her involvement with an unprincipled lecture manager.

The plot of the play contains one trait associated with Romanticism. The third act "appears as a series of thrills presented in a rapid melodramatic manner." Mrs. Fair's daughter is tricked into an elopement with the lecture manager, the Fairs call the police, and the police catch the fleeing couple. The daughter is returned and reunited with the family. None of this action is actually presented, but is reported by Mrs. Fair's son. Nevertheless, it is a piece of obvious theatrical plotting which is more common in Romanticism.

Character

The persons portrayed in the play have attributes of characters associated with Realism. They are credible, probably people who are close to the norm in behavior and outlook. Mrs. Fair is a complex personality. As mentioned earlier, Mrs. Fair's psychological conflicts are important aspects of the drama. As discussed under general characteristics, the characters are influenced by environment.

The characters appear to be normal people patterned on common expectations of behavior. Mrs. Fair becomes too caught up in public service to realize what family problems she causes. Her husband is tempted into adultery by her neglect. Their son marries a girl from a lower class, but they do not object when they determine her love is genuine and not motivated by their wealth. The daughter is a normal young girl who is almost led astray by lack of close parental attention. Little these characters do or say, except in the third act, is not plausible, normal, even typical.

Mrs. Fair might be described as a "well-rounded" character. She is dedicated to her work and yet does not lack a sense of humor. She displays some anger and becomes stubborn about her family's attempts to dissuade her from going on a lecture tour. She is remorseful when she realizes the consequences of her actions. She is hurt, but forgives her husband for his adulterous affair.

Language

The language in The Famous Mrs. Fair corresponds to that of Realism. The dialogue is written in prose and is natural to the characters and their positions. Discussion and argument are integral parts

of the dialogue.

Characters are generally identifiable by their speech. The younger characters use slang expressions to a minor extent.¹⁶ Mrs. Fair and her friends who served in France employ a few expressions indicative of their experiences in service.

Although it appears as a natural part of the dialogue, there is extensive discussion and argument about the place of women in the modern world. Mr. and Mrs. Fair carry on a long conversation about this topic early in the third act. There is also some discussion and argument between Mr. Fair and his son about marriage to people of other classes.

Theme

The themes of the play correspond to those of Realism. The play is basically concerned with family and social relations and duties. Specifically, the play projects the idea that women can and should serve society, but not at the cost of their roles as wives and mothers. The theme is "responsibility."

Style of Play

The Famous Mrs. Fair exhibits four characteristics of Realism. Its form elements all correspond to the same style. Although the plot shows some tendency toward Romanticism in its obvious plotting of the third act, this factor is not important enough to alter the overall style of the play which is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 22.

For the Defense by Elmer RiceStory

The evil Doctor Kasimir, psycho-hypnotist, is murdered while Anne Woodstock and Selma Thorne are present in the room. Anne is the prime suspect and is brought to trial. She is prosecuted by a young district attorney, Christopher Armstrong, who is in love with her, but believes her to be guilty. Anne is proven innocent through means of a "flash-back" scene which shows the actual events of the day of the murder. The play ends with Christopher and Anne reunited and planning their marriage.¹⁷

General Characteristics

For the Defense exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. It imitates the contemporary immediate world of man and society and it observes a fourth-wall convention.

The contemporary world is suggested in the settings of the drama, two modern apartments and a judge's office. In addition, the investigative methods of the police are related in some detail. The dress and general appearance of the characters, except for Dr. Kasimir, are not out of the ordinary.

The play also exhibits two characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is a "tendency away from actuality." The strange and mysterious are present in the drama.

The tendency away from actuality is not found in the cultural background, but in the implausible action and the improbable

¹⁷Elmer Rice, "For the Defense," unpublished play; U. S. Copyright Office; Washington, No. D53151 (November 22, 1919).

characters. The play concentrates more on providing excitement and mystery than on depicting characters from the observable world.

The tendency away from actuality is emphasized by the appearance of the strange and mysterious in the play. Dr. Kasimir is an evil blackmailer who wears a jeweled turban. In addition, he has the power of hypnotism, a factor which figures prominently in the play. While hypnosis has come to be rather commonplace, in the historical context of the 1920's it must have been considered a strange and mysterious power to the average person. The fact that evil is associated with Dr. Kasimir's strange powers is also a trait of Romanticism.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of For the Defense contains traits associated with Romanticism. The play is "loose in its treatment of the traditional unities of action, time, and place." "The unfolding of the action appears as a series of thrills." The plot content provides for excitement and suspense.

As for the looseness of plotting, the point of attack is early -- before Kasimir is killed -- and the exposition is carried on in terms of action rather than narrative exposition. The unity of action is observed, although it is complicated by the use of a "flash-back" device which shows the actual conditions surrounding the death of Kasimir. The unity of time is broken; the play covers the time necessary to depict the murder and bring the suspect to trial. The action shifts in place at various times from Kasimir's apartment to Anne's apartment to Judge Gray's office. The "flash-back" scene in

Act III interrupts the continuity of action in Judge Gray's office.¹⁸ While such a device is not in itself an indication of a romantic plot, it does allow for free use of elapsed time and shifts in place which are attributes of Romanticism.

The plot is arranged to unfold in an exciting and suspenseful manner. The murder, Anne's arrest, Christopher's assignment as Anne's prosecutor, the "flash-back" that reveals the actual murderer, and the rapid ending of the play demonstrate some of the thrills in the drama.

The plot content is intended to be exciting in itself. A beautiful woman supposedly kills an evil, blackmailing hypnotist and is tried for the murder by the man she loves.

Character

The persons portrayed in the play have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They tend to be melodramatic types rather than probable people. Dr. Kasimir is an obvious villain. He is not characterized as much by his actions as he is by his appearance -- swarthy complexion, penetrating eyes, and jeweled turban. Christopher Armstrong is the "strong arm" of the law, a hero who will prosecute a criminal even if she happens to be the girl he loves. Anne Woodstock, like other virtuous heroines in Romanticism, is a rather colorless personality. The characters do not strike one as being real people. They seem to be motivated by no other force than the necessity to make the plot function properly.

¹⁸Ibid., Act. III.

Language

The language of For the Defense corresponds to that of Realism. The dialogue is written in a functional prose manner. It is unadorned and appears to imitate the speech of everyday life, at least superficially. Dr. Kasimir speaks with an accent which is not identifiable with any particular linguistic group.

Theme

The theme of For the Defense corresponds to the theme of moral justice found in "secondhand" Romanticism. Anne, who is innocent, is accused of the crime but is exonerated and reunited with Christopher. Dr. Kasimir meets a violent end as a result of his evil schemes. In short, the good are rewarded and the guilty punished.

Style of Play

For the Defense exhibits two characteristics of Realism and two of Romanticism. The element of language is related to Realism, but the other three elements correspond to Romanticism. The realistic traits found in the play do not alter the basic romantic inclination of the play. The combination of romantic and realistic attributes indicates that the style of the play is associated with the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

The Sign on the Door by Channing Pollock

Story

An innocent young secretary, Anne Hunniwell, dines with her employer's son, Frank Devereaux, at a restaurant which is raided by the police. A flash-photo is taken of them when they are arrested.

Five years later, it is disclosed that Anne and Frank jumped bail after being arrested. Anne is now the wife of "Lafe" Reagan, a widower with a daughter of eighteen named Helen. Frank again appears, this time in pursuit of Helen. In order to protect the girl, Anne goes to Frank's room to plead with him to leave the girl alone. Shortly after she arrives, her husband appears to see Frank about his involvement with a friend's wife. Anne hides in the room, her presence unknown to her husband. The men argue, scuffle over a gun, and Frank is killed. "Lafe" puts the gun in Frank's hand, unknowingly locks his wife in the room, and puts a "do not disturb" sign on the door. Anne is arrested when the police arrive and becomes the chief suspect for a murder charge. She is exonerated, however, and is forgiven by her husband.¹⁹

General Characteristics

The Sign on the Door exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. It imitates "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." It observes a fourth-wall convention throughout.

The imitation of the contemporary world is evident in such details as the food which is served in the restaurant that is the background for the prologue of the play. Flash photographs are taken of people in a police raid. The settings are described with an attention to detail that indicates an attempt to depict a realistic environment for the action.²⁰

¹⁹Channing Pollock, The Sign on the Door (New York: Samuel French, 1924).

²⁰Ibid., p. 5.

The play also exhibits three characteristics associated with Romanticism. A "tendency away from actuality" is evident. The characters appear to be guided by emotion rather than logical thought or common sense. A crucial scene depicts a bizarre situation.

In spite of many realistic details, the play contains elements which indicate a tendency away from actuality. Excitement and suspense provide the main center of interest. The police raid which ends the prologue, the reappearance of Devereaux after a period of five years has elapsed, the struggle in which Devereaux is killed, the discovery of Anne in the dead man's room, and her unexpected delivery from suspicion are experiences too far removed from those of commonplace individuals to be plausible.

Logic plays a very small role in the play. The characters act and react to immediate emotional stimuli and seldom, if ever, temper such action and reaction with thought. If Anne ever told her husband or anyone else about the innocence of her connection with Frank Devereaux, little of the ensuing involvement in a major crime would have happened. She also displays a certain lack of thought in going to Devereaux's room. There is also the question of why "Lafe" Reagan didn't call the police after accidentally killing Devereaux.

An unusual, bizarre situation climaxes the action in the play. Anne is locked in the dead man's room. She knows the true circumstance of Devereaux's death but cannot tell anyone for fear of implicating "Lafe."

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Sign on the Door contains traits associated with Romanticism. It is loose in construction. The unity of action is maintained, but there are several shifts in time and place. The prologue, which is indicative of romantic plots, takes place five years before the main action of the play. The setting of the play changes from a New York restaurant to a home in New Rochelle and back to a hotel room in New York.

The play tends to be romantic in plot in that the point of attack is early, which allows the story to unfold in terms of action rather than narrative exposition. The use of overheard conversation to advance the plot, a trait identified with Romanticism, appears in the hotel room scene, where Anne listens to the argument between Devereaux and "Lafe."

As in Romanticism, the plot content of The Sign on the Door provides excitement and sensational situations. This trait should be obvious from the discussion under general characteristics.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Sign on the Door have attributes of characters associated with Romanticism. While not wholly unrealistic, they tend to be dramatic types. They are rather **shallowly** drawn and generally reveal only one aspect of a pattern of behavior. Anne Hunniwell first appears as a young girl unacquainted with the ways of city life. Her relations with Devereaux reveal her naive approach to the world. Her very name suggests sweetness and goodness,

"Hunni" (honey) for sweetness and "well" for good. Devereaux is a lecherous villain, but the cause of his behavior is never really explained. He seems to exist to menace the "good" people in the play. All in all, the characters appear to be improbable persons.

Language

The language of the play corresponds to that of Realism. The dialogue is written in prose and appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. Speech does not serve to distinguish character except in the case of the Irish policeman, Officer McLaughlin.

Theme

The theme of The Sign on the Door corresponds to that of Romanticism. The play demonstrates the idea of moral justice, where the good come to no harm and the bad are punished. Anne, in spite of hiding an incident from her past, is an innocent and good person who is exonerated and forgiven; Frank is an evil lecher and is killed as a result of his misdeeds.

Style of Play

The Sign on the Door exhibits two characteristics of Realism and three of Romanticism. The element of language is realistic, but the other three form elements are romantic. This mixture of romantic and realistic traits indicates that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

The Son-Daughter by George Scarborough and David BelascoStory

Dong Tong, a respected Chinese merchant in New York, must raise a large sum of money to pay for his share of the support of a revolutionary party in China. In order to get the money, he reluctantly has to resort to selling his daughter, Lien Wha, to the Chinese merchant who will bid the most for her. Lien Wha is in love with Tom Lee, who is disguised as a coolie type of laborer in order to hide his true identity which is that of the son of the revolutionary leader in China. Lien Wha consents to her father's plan and is auctioned off to be the bride of an evil merchant who has to pay a very large sum for her since Tom forces the bidding upward. On her wedding night, Lien Wha kills her husband and then flees to China with Tom. At the end of the play, which is set two years later in China, Tom and Lien Wha have a son and the revolution is won under Tom's leadership.²¹

General Characteristics

The Son-Daughter exhibits five of the characteristics associated with Romanticism. The three most obvious ones are "a tendency away from actuality," an emphasis on "emotionality and subjectivity," and the depiction of picturesque local color. The characteristics of "the search for freedom" and the goodness of uncivilized man also appear to a minor extent.

The tendency away from actuality in the play is furthered by the culture depicted in the drama and the presence of exciting and

²¹George Scarborough and David Belasco, "The Son-Daughter," unpublished play; U. S. Copyright office, Washington, No. D52753 (October 2, 1919).

sensational elements. First, the culture presented in the play is that of the modern day Chinese residents of New York City. This culture is remote from the experiences of ordinary individuals. All characters are Chinese who follow their particular customs and speak their own version of English. Chinese ritual, ceremonies, and pageants appear frequently. Second, the exciting and sensational events in the drama reveal an inclination toward "escape" drama. For example, in the last scene of Act III, Tom Lee disguises himself and tries to rescue Lien Wha from her villainous husband on her wedding night. Tom fights with the husband and is apparently killed. Lien Wha then kills her unwanted groom by strangling him with her long queue of hair after which Tom revives and escapes with her.

The play places a strong emphasis on emotional appeal. Tom and Lien Wha fall in love at first sight. Pity and sentiment are supposed to be aroused by Lien Wha's conflict between daughterly duty to her father which forces her to marry a man she hates, and her love for Tom. The parting of Lien Wha and her father is particularly tearful and emotional.²² Emotions of fear and horror are meant to be aroused by the Sea Crab and his henchmen, thugs hired by Lien Wha's husband, as they menace and pursue Lien Wha and Tom.

A search for freedom through rebellion against established political order, which is characteristic of Romanticism, appears in the play but is secondary in its influence on the action. Although some of the earlier parts of the play are related to a revolutionary struggle in China, it is not until Act IV that the reasons for the revolution

²²Ibid., pp. 45-47.

and the reports of its progress figure in the plot. There is also a slight suggestion of rebellion against social and moral codes involved in the love of Tom and Lien Wha. They lament over the cruelty of a traditional Chinese way of life which forces Lien Wha to marry a man she hates in order to aid her father. In spite of their protests, they do not actually break the code of their society.

The play displays a characteristic of Romanticism in its depiction of local color and the picturesque. Many supposedly Chinese customs and celebrations are included in the action of the drama. The marriage of Lien Wha, an elaborate ritual which is described in detail, is accompanied by fireworks, noise, and vivid color. The authors provide interest by presenting striking details of a culture which is not generally seen by the average audience member. At times the action of the drama appears to halt in order to concentrate on bits of local color.

The play touches briefly on the romantic idea that the less a man is influenced by civilization, the better man he is. Lien Wha first falls in love with Tom Lee when he is disguised as a coolie. His simplicity and taciturnity have more appeal to her than does the wealth and status of her father's fellow merchants.

The Son-Daughter exhibits one characteristic associated with Realism. The play imitates the contemporary, immediate world of man and society. Several of the Chinese characters wear modern Western clothing. Some references are made to actual locations in New York. Mention is made of automobiles and steamships.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Son-Daughter contains traits associated with Romanticism. There is a "looseness" in the treatment of the traditional unities. The play has a chronological structure. Direct address is used to advance the plot. The plot content "provides for excitement, suspense, imagination, and glamor."

The plot is loose in its construction. There is a unity of action but it is complicated by the use of subplots. The main plot centers on the lives of Tom Lee and Lien Wha, but her father's difficulties, the schemes of the Sea Crab, and the revolution in China are woven into and sometimes interrupt the primary action. The unity of time is broken by a two year passage of time between Acts III and IV. The unity of place is all but ignored, as the action first shifts to various locales in New York and then jumps to China.

The play has a multi-scened, chronological structure which features an early point of attack. There is little narrative exposition. The play begins with the disclosure of the financial problems of Lien Wha's father, and proceeds to present the major events which lead up to the successful conclusion of the revolution two years later. This chronological structure enables the story to unfold as "a series of thrills in a rapid melodramatic manner."

In Act IV, direct address to the audiences is employed to advance the plot. A character identified as "The Orator" steps before the curtain and explains that the story of the revolution in China must be telescoped in order to save time. He then relates the events of the

war and the experiences of Tom Lee and Lien Wha in the two years since Act III. This device is common in "historical" Romanticism.

The plot content provides thrills and excitement. The play is filled with fights, attempted murders, killings, narrow escapes, emotional love scenes, and colorful pageantry.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Son-Daughter have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They tend to be dramatic types rather than probable persons. Emotion plays a large role in their actions.

In spite of their outwardly Chinese appearance, the characters are readily identifiable as a cast of a melodrama. Tom Lee is the hero -- strong, intelligent, and likeable. Lien Wha is the heroine -- lovely, innocent, and dutiful. Her husband is the first villain -- greedy, lustful, and cunning. He employs the Sea Crab, a merciless and thoroughly evil criminal. The remainder of the persons in the play also appear as types rather than rounded characters.

The characters are guided by emotions which are not discernibly motivated. Tom Lee and Lien Wha fall in love at first sight, yet the nature of their mutual attraction is not explained. It seems to arise from the requirements of the plot rather than from anything in them as individuals. Similarly, the avarice and lust of the husband are ill-concealed and unmotivated. He is given attributes of character which do not develop within him. All in all, characterization is superficial at best. If the people portrayed are Chinese, they are the Chinese of imagination and not of observation.

Language

The dialogue of The Son-Daughter corresponds to both Romanticism and Realism. In a brief note on the play the authors state that they have attempted to preserve the flavor of Chinese idioms without resorting to 'pidgin-English.'²³ In doing so they have created a dialogue with attributes of "historical" Romanticism. Prose is used in the dialogue, but it is an ornate and overblown prose full of metaphor and simile. It attempts to be poetic, although the effort is seldom successful. While most of the dialogue is of this 'poetic' variety, a more realistic prose is employed in scenes of violence or exposition.

Some songs are present as part of the language of the play. In addition, physical action often replaces the need for dialogue. Several important scenes are explained in stage directions and carried out in action unaccompanied by dialogue.

Theme

The themes of The Son-Daughter correspond to those of Romanticism. The ideas present in the play include the minor ones of rebellion against tyranny and the goodness of unsophisticated men. Major themes include the power of deep love and the desire to live according to one's dreams. Overall, there is the theme of moral justice; the good prosper and the evil perish. None of the themes apparent in the play have any connection with problems of contemporary society and environment.

²³Ibid., p. 1.

Style of Play

The Son-Daughter exhibits five characteristics of Romanticism and one of Realism. The form elements of plot, character, and theme all correspond to Romanticism. The element of language contains traits of both Romanticism and Realism. The presence of realistic traits in a basically romantic play indicates that the style of "secondhand" Romanticism. Some note should be made of the tendencies toward "historical" Romanticism in the drama.

The Storm by Langdon McCormick and George BroadhurstStory

Manette Fachard and her father, Jacques, live in an isolated section of the French Canadian woods. Her father dies and she is befriended by two men, Burr Winton and David Stewart. All three become trapped in Burr's cabin by a snow storm which lasts all winter. Both men fall in love with her but she refuses to make a choice between them. When spring comes, Manette has to decide which man will go to Calgary for supplies and which will stay with her. She refuses to choose, but David, through trickery, makes it appear that she has chosen him to remain. However, a forest fire surrounds them before Burr can leave. They are saved from death by an Indian, Maniteekwa. Manette reveals her love for Burr, and David leaves them to be together in the north woods.²⁴

²⁴Langdon McCormick and George Broadhurst, "The Storm," unpublished play; U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D52137 (July 5, 1919).

General Characteristics

The Storm exhibits three characteristics of Romanticism. It has a "tendency away from actuality," an emphasis on emotional appeal, and a "concern with nature and man unspoiled by civilization."

The tendency away from actuality is apparent in the remote setting of the play, the Canadian woods. The characters are isolated from the immediate world of society. Although the time of the play is the contemporary one of 1920, there is little in the play that relates it to any specific time.

The play appears to emphasize sentiment and emotions connected with rather idealized love. The emotions displayed by the characters are not unrestrained or "soul-shattering." On the contrary, they are gentle and unbelievably sentimental. There is pity for a young girl whose father dies and leaves her an orphan in the wilderness. There is the anguish of deciding which of two handsome men to marry. Love is presented as an imaginative young girl might view it.

The setting in the Canadian woods, Manette's decision to marry Burr, and the rescue by the Indian illustrate the involvement of the play with nature and uncivilized man. The forest environment is idealized in its presentation. Manette and her father early in the play carry on a significant conversation about the beauty of living in the forest. The author's description of the setting indicates that the forest is an idyllic background for the action.²⁵ There is also the suggestion that nature mirrors the emotions of the characters. At the end of Act I when Manette, grieving for her father, is comforted

²⁵Ibid., p. 1.

and taken in for protection by Burr and Dave, a feeling of contentment and peace is established. At this point, a light glows through the cabin window and a gentle snow begins to fall. The forest fire in the final act similarly reflects the conflict between Dave and Burr. Human passions flare up and so do the trees of the forest. The goodness of man uncorrupted by civilization is projected in Burr and Maniteekwa. Manette chooses Burr over the educated and cultured David because of his simplicity and goodness which stem from his closeness to nature. Maniteekwa is almost a stereotype of the "noble savage."

Form Elements

Plot

The Storm contains traits associated with plots in Realism. The story is rather simple and maintains a strict unity of action. The unity of place is observed in that all scenes take place in or near Burr Winton's cabin. However, the unity of time is broken; the action covers a period of two months. Even though the unity of time is not observed, the individual acts of the play appear to have the structural compactness found in Realism.

The play also contains traits in its plot which are associated with Romanticism. The point of attack -- the arrival of Manette and her father in the forest -- is early, and does away with the need for extensive narrative exposition. The result is a chronological structure which presents events as they occur rather than reconstructing them.

The romantic plot content of excitement and suspense is not apparent in the play until the final act. A forest fire, brave attempts by Burr and David to protect Manette, and the dramatic rescue by

Maniteekwa more than make up for any thrills lacking in the earlier acts of the play.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Storm have attributes of characters associated with Romanticism. While not wholly unrealistic, they are improbable persons. Manette, an orphan in the wilderness, is too good and understanding to be plausible. David Stewart is characterized by his fashionable clothing and his English accent. He resorts to trickery to win Manette which is not consistent with his general personality. He is all the more improbable as a character when Manette chooses to marry Burr. His graciousness and failure to protest when losing a girl he deeply loved is just not believable. Burr tends to be a type character -- a rough-appearing prospector with a good nature and a heart of gold.

Language

The dialogue of The Storm corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in a rather unornate prose and is natural to the characters and their positions. Dialogue aids in distinguishing the characters. Manette and her father speak with French Canadian accents, David with an English accent, and Maniteekwa with some Indian version of English.

Theme

The themes of the play correspond to those of Romanticism. Most of the major ideas are rather time-worn thoughts about love. Manette says that God works in strange ways to make people see and adds that "love can start a storm in the heart."²⁶ Overall, the play imparts

²⁶Ibid., p. 101.

the concept of nostalgia, an escape to an idyllic world of nature where one can live in happiness. The fact that the only wrong act in the play is performed by a cultured Englishman indicates that civilization is corruptive. The completely good persons in the play are all close to nature.

Style of Play

The Storm exhibits three characteristics of Romanticism. The form elements of plot and language are related to those of Realism, while the elements of character and theme correspond to Romanticism. The combination of realistic traits in a basically romantic play indicates that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism. Some suggestion of "historical" Romanticism is also present in the drama.

A Voice in the Dark by Ralph E. Dyar and Willard Mack

Story

A young woman, Blanche Warren, is accused of murdering Hugh Sainsbury, a rather worthless young man. This accusation is based on the eye-witness account of Mrs. Lydiard, a deaf old lady, who saw Blanche bending over the murdered man with a revolver in her hand. However, Mrs. Lydiard heard nothing of a quarrel that preceded the killing. (Mrs. Lydiard's version of the crime is acted out in pantomime.) Blanche denies being guilty and tells her version of the crime. (Again acted out, but with dialogue). A third version of the events of the murder is related by a blind newspaper seller who has heard another young woman confess that she committed the crime. (His

description is acted out in darkness, with dialogue only.) In a following scene, the blind man recognizes the other young woman's voice and she confesses to the murder, thus freeing Blanche of suspicion.²⁷

General Characteristics

A Voice in the Dark exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. The fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is also an imitation of the "contemporary, immediate world of man and society."

The contemporary world is suggested by the period of the play and its setting. The play takes place in 1920, the year of the production of the play, in the New England town of Briarcliff. The townspeople speak with an accent native to that area. A train depot scene includes the background noise appropriate to such a location. These and other details project an illusion of everyday reality.

The play also exhibits two characteristics associated with Romanticism. They are "a tendency away from actuality," and the presence of unusual or bizarre situations.

The tendency away from actuality is fostered by elements of excitement and sensation in the play. The primary interest of the play rests in the solving of the mystery of who shot Hugh Sainsbury. His murder, the three different versions of it, and the surprising solution of the crime are too far removed from common experience to be plausible.

²⁷Richard E. Dyar and Willard Mack, "A Voice in the Dark," unpublished play, U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D52281 (July 25, 1919).

The presence of the unusual and bizarre in the play is indicated by the fact that a deaf woman and a blind man are used to relate the events of the murder. It is also unusual that the blind man happens to be in the right place at the right time to hear a woman confess to the murder. While the events in the play are not impossible, they are highly improbable.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of A Voice in the Dark contains traits associated with Romanticism. The play is "loose" in its construction. It makes free use of elapsed time and has frequent shifts in place. A rather simple story is complicated by the use of three "flash-back" scenes, each of which relate a different version of the murder. Little retrospective exposition is present because the material usually related through exposition is acted out in the "flash-back" scenes.

Other attributes of Romanticism present in the plot are the use of overheard conversations to advance the action, and the employment of a prologue. The blind man overhears the confession to the crime, for example. The prologue to the play presents the enactment of the murder. Finally, the plot content of the play is romantic in that it presents excitement and suspense.

Character

The persons portrayed in the play have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They tend to be dramatic types. There is nothing in Blanche Warren's character to distinguish her from any

other woman her age beyond the fact she is attractive. Mrs. Lydiard and Miss Meredith are old ladies who appear in the play. They can be identified by the fact that Mrs. Lydiard is deaf and Miss Meredith is not.²⁸ Except for his blindness, there is little attempt at characterizing the newspaper seller. The reason that the characters appear to be dramatic types is that they do not seem to change or develop as a result of the experiences depicted in the play. There is no further interest in them after the plot has been untangled.

Language

The dialogue of the play corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and attempts to imitate the speech of everyday life. Mild swearing and repetition of phrases add a realistic effect. A few characters have New England accents.

Theme

The themes of the play correspond to those of Romanticism. The play projects the idea of moral justice; Blanche Warren is freed from suspicion and the real murderer is apprehended. An obvious theme of the play is that things are not what they seem. This particular theme is not associated with any dramatic style. There is no theme in the play which deals with contemporary human or social problems.

Style of Play

A Voice in the Dark exhibits two characteristics of Realism and two of Romanticism. The form element of language is realistic, but the other elements all correspond to Romanticism. The inclusion of realistic traits in a primarily romantic play indicates that the style of

²⁸Ibid., p. 19.

the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

The Acquittal by Rita Weiman

Story

Since no published or manuscript version of this play has been discovered, this brief description from The Best Plays of 1919-1920 must serve as the story of the play.

Kenneth Winthrop has been acquitted of the murder of his aged benefactor, a philanthropist with a kind heart and a lot of money. Joe Conway is a San Francisco reporter detailed on the case, and one who is not satisfied with the verdict. Because the dead man was his friend, Joe purposes to follow up the acquittal of Winthrop. Secreting himself in the Winthrop house he skillfully and patiently pieces together such bits of evidence as he is able to collect and finally extracts a confession from Winthrop that he did, in fact, commit the murder. Rather than face facts, Winthrop commits suicide and Mrs. Winthrop, his young widow who has some time since lost all affection for her husband, promises that after a decent interval, she will listen to the proposal of the young reporter, in whom she has acquired a sympathetic interest during the course of the trial and the events that followed.²⁹

General Characteristics

In view of the fact that the actual play cannot be examined, any analysis must be based on assumptions made from the available records of the play. A review of the play by Alexander Woolcott does not contain much information of value except for the observation that the actors helped to improve the basically melodramatic form of the play with "everyday" types of stage business.³⁰ From this it is assumed

²⁹Mantle, Best Plays of 1919-1920, p. 411.

³⁰New York Times, January 6, 1920, p. 18.

that the play itself did not strike Mr. Woolcott as being particularly realistic.

From the story outline in The Best Plays of 1919-1920 it is assumed that the play fits the style of "secondhand" Romanticism. It appears to depend on mystery and excitement as elements of interest. The setting of a rich philanthropist's home suggests a remoteness from common experience. The events seem to fit the romantic requirement of excitement and sensation. The newspaper reporter "secrets" himself in the Winthrop house, and forces a confession from the guilty party who then commits suicide. The reporter thus wins the hand of the killer's widow. This last event also suggests the love element so often found in Romanticism. Although the telescoping of the action necessary in giving a brief description of the play may distort the actuality of the complete play, this drama seems rather implausible.

Form Elements

Evidently the plot structure of the play helped convey a feeling of reality. There are only two settings mentioned and the action only covers one day.³¹ From this it is concluded that the play had a structural compactness associated with Realism.

There is nothing in the story outline to indicate anything definite about character or language. The theme of moral justice, however, is evident in Winthrop's suicide and the reporter's winning of the widow.

³¹Mantle, Best Plays of 1919-1920, p. 410.

Style of Play

From what little evidence is available, it appears that The Acquittal probably is related to "secondhand" Romanticism. Mr. Woolcott's review did not indicate that the play differed greatly from similar mystery plays on Broadway at that time.³² Since most of them conform to the romantic pattern, there is little reason to assume that The Acquittal does not. In view of the manner resorted to in determining the style of this play, its place in the pattern of trends in style on Broadway cannot be equated with those plays which are given a full examination.

Summary of the 1919-1920 Season³³

Eight out of the ten plays selected for purposes of this study from the "successful," serious American plays of the 1919-1920 Broadway season were written in a style corresponding to Romanticism. These plays were At 9:45, A Voice in the Dark, The Storm, Déclassée, The Son-Daughter, The Sign on the Door, For the Defense, and, probably, The Acquittal. Two of the ten plays were written in a style associated with Realism. These plays were Beyond the Horizon and The Famous Mrs. Fair. There was no evidence or any other dramatic styles in the selected plays.

Although Romanticism was the dominant style for the season, variations in the style itself were evident. Three plays--Déclassée, The

³²New York Times, January 6, 1920, p. 18.

³³Although a number of plays in this and following chapters exhibit characteristics and form elements of more than one dramatic style, they are summarized according to their major stylistic inclination. The matter of combinations of elements from different dramatic styles is treated in the concluding chapter of this study.

Son-Daughter, and The Storm--tended to reveal one or more aspects of "historical" Romanticism. Of the three, The Son-Daughter exhibited the strongest inclination toward the "historical" variant of Romanticism. The remainder of the plays included some aspects of Realism but maintained their basic romantic style. At 9:45, For the Defense, The Sign on the Door, A Voice in the Dark, and, probably, The Acquittal showed a tendency toward Realism in the element of language and in the surface details of character and setting. In every romantic play the implausibility of action and the shallowness of character were the prime bases for identifying the plays with the style of "secondhand" Romanticism. With the sole exception of one scene in The Son-Daughter, the fourth-wall convention was observed in all dramas in the season.

The plays exhibiting a realistic style, Beyond the Horizon and The Famous Mrs. Fair, adhered quite closely to the criteria for identifying Realism. The latter play contained some obvious plotting in its final act, but this was not sufficient enough to affect its basic relation to Realism.

CHAPTER X

THE BROADWAY THEATRICAL SEASON OF 1922-1923

Play Selection

One hundred and seventy full-length plays opened on Broadway in the theatrical season of 1922-1923.¹ Out of this total, ninety-five plays were comedies, musical comedies, or revues. As such they are not a concern of this study nor are the twenty-five adaptations or translations of foreign dramas which appeared in this season. Ten revivals of dramas from earlier seasons or dramatic periods were presented. The remainder of the plays in this season were serious dramas written by American or foreign authors and intended for original production on Broadway. However, out of a total of forty of these plays, thirty ran less than one hundred performances and did not receive favorable reviews at the time of their openings, nor any significant critical recognition since that time.

Thus ten plays fit the standards of selection established for this study. Eight of them ran over one hundred performances, although two of these plays, Sun Up and Uptown West, were held over into the next season where they passed the mark of one hundred performances. Sun Up was also given further recognition as a successful play by

¹Burns Mantle, ed., The Best Plays of 1922-1923 (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1923), pp. 432-586.

being included in Arthur Hobson Quinn's Representative American Dramas. The other two plays, The Adding Machine and Roger Bloomer, ran less than one hundred performances but received favorable reviews at the time of their openings. In addition, both have been anthologized.

The plays which are analyzed in the next section of this chapter are as follows:

The Adding Machine by Elmer Rice

The Fool by Channing Pollock

Icebound by Owen Davis

It is the Law by Elmer Rice

The Last Warning by Thomas Fallon

Rain by John Colton and Clemence Randolph

Roger Bloomer by John Howard Lawson

Sun Up by Lula Vollmer

Uptown West by Lincoln Osborn

Whispering Wires by Kate McLaurin

Stylistic Analyses of Plays

The Adding Machine by Elmer Rice

Story

Mr. Zero, a slight and balding middle-aged bookkeeper, has been working for the same business for twenty-five years. His wife nags him to ask his employer for a raise. When he does so he is informed that he is to be replaced by an adding machine. In a rage, he kills his employer. He is tried and executed for the crime. After a series of life-after-death experiences, Mr. Zero ends up operating an adding

machine, supposedly in heaven. He is told that he and his kind have been and always will be the slaves of society. His soul is reincarnated and he is returned to life on earth deluded by the hope that his new life will be different from his previous one.²

General Characteristics

The Adding Machine exhibits four characteristics associated with Expressionism. The play attempts to present the inner thoughts of its characters directly to the audience. It has a dream-like quality and distorts elements from empirical reality. In addition, it makes use of symbols to project moods and ideas.

Although there are others, the best example of the direct projection of subjective thought occurs in the opening of the second scene in which Mr. Zero and Daisy Diana Dorothea Devore are working together on bookkeeping. Although they speak alternately, they are not engaged in ordinary conversation. He muses about observing a young woman through the window of her apartment, his unhappy marriage, and the possibility of murdering his wife. Daisy contemplates suicide and remembers a company picnic she attended with Mr. Zero.³ Neither character is made aware of the other's thoughts, yet the audience is aware of both.

The play demonstrates a dream-like quality in its seven scenes which shift from an almost realistic world to the realm of the dead, and, finally, to a supposed heaven. The dream-like quality is aided by a distortion of elements in the play. Mr. Zero's bedroom is

²Elmer Rice, "The Adding Machine," Modern American Dramas, ed. Harlan Hatcher (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1949).

³Ibid., pp. 35-38.

"papered with sheets of foolscap covered with columns of figures."⁴ The mechanical aspect of society is shown in the identical dress of Mr. Zero's neighbors. Mr. Zero's rage when he is fired is projected visually and aurally through the use of revolving scenery, flashing red lights, loud music, and deafening noise. The paper tape of the adding machine which Mr. Zero operates in heaven fills the room. "It covers the floor and the furniture, it climbs the walls and chokes the doorways."⁵ The dream-like quality verges on nightmare in the end of the fifth scene when a head and arm emerge from a grave and hurl a skull.

Symbols appear in The Adding Machine to project the meaning of the play. The main symbol, of course, is the adding machine itself which stands for the mechanization of society. The sound of the machine in the background is also used symbolically from time to time. Identically dressed characters symbolize the conformity of a mechanistic society. The aforementioned scene of Mr. Zero's rage is an instance of symbolization through distortion. Mr. Zero's name itself is a symbol; he is "nothing" in the world, the lowest of creatures.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of the play contains traits associated with Expressionism. The action is carried on in seven episodes which correspond to

⁴Ibid., p. 32.

⁵Ibid., p. 58.

crucial events in the "life story" of Mr. Zero. His journey from life to death and back to life is the center of interest. Expressionism is also evident in the shifts of time, place, and planes of consciousness in the play. Time is almost completely unspecified. Places are largely unidentified except for Mr. Zero's bedroom, his place of work, and the idyllic setting of the Elysian Fields. A shift in planes of consciousness is illustrated in scene two when the subconscious thoughts of Mr. Zero and Daisy are interrupted by the conscious work of adding figures.

The plot also contains traits of Expressionism in that it largely ignores exposition and preparation. Nothing is told or shown of Mr. Zero's trial except his speech to the jury and their verdict. His execution takes place between scenes and he appears next in a graveyard. These changes in time and place have a logic of their own which fits the purpose of the play, but they also add a dreamlike quality to the play.

Character

The persons portrayed in the play have attributes of character associated with Expressionism. The most obvious connection is in the use of abstract or symbolic names for the characters. Most are named after the numbers zero through six. Mr. Zero's employer is simply called "The Boss." A man Mr. Zero meets in the graveyard scene is named Shrdlu which has something to do with his occupation, proof-reading. Most of these characters are no more than cardboard figures; they have little complexity or individuality.

Mr. Zero is physically a very ordinary type of person and is

meant to represent mankind. Like the other characters, he is primarily a projection of the author's mind. Unlike some expressionist dramas, The Adding Machine does not present other characters who represent aspects of the personality of the protagonist. Mr. Rice uses Mr. Zero to show how man is affected by machines. He shows how man has become enslaved and insensitive to beauty in modern society. In the Elysian Fields, Mr. Zero cannot hear the music because he does not understand love and beauty.

Language

The dialogue of The Adding Machine corresponds to that of Expressionism. Monologues are employed to communicate the character's thought directly to the audience. Mrs. Zero's lengthy diatribe at her husband in the first scene is a good example of this trait, as is Mr. Zero's address to the jury which constitutes all of the fourth scene.⁶ Both are constructed as a flow of images rather than as rationally formulated thought.

The "telegraphic" speech associated with Expressionism appears most obviously in the third scene. Mr. Zero, his wife, and his neighbors carry on a conversation in short, abrupt sentences which contain trite expressions and inconsequential family gossip.⁷ A brief line of dialogue spoken by the Boss just before Mr. Zero kills him is the most "telegraphic" speech in the play. "I'm sorry -- no other alternative -- greatly regret -- old employee -- efficiency --

⁶Ibid., pp. 32-34, 43-46.

⁷Ibid., pp. 41-42.

economy -- business -- business -- BUSINESS -- ."⁸

Theme

The themes of The Adding Machine correspond to those of Activist Expressionism. The play "treats the negative aspects of the present." It protests against a society which treats man as a machine. These themes are evident in the title and the entire context of the drama. Mr. Zero is deprived of love and beauty. His fate is to be born and reborn as a slave to society. He returns to life only to operate a "super-hyper-adding machine" with the toe of his right foot.⁹

Style of Play

The Adding Machine exhibits four characteristics of Expressionism. In addition, all of its form elements correspond to those of the same style. In view of this analysis, it is clear that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Expressionism.

The Fool by Channing Pollock

Story

The "fool" in the play is Dan Gilchrist, a relatively wealthy young man who is the assistant rector of a church. He decides to attempt to live as Christ might live in modern times. He is fired from his position for preaching that the church should take an active part in the problems of modern society. He loses his fiancée, Clare Jewett, because he insists on giving his money to the poor. She marries

⁸Ibid., p. 39.

⁹Ibid., p. 62.

Jerry Goodkind for the security his wealth can provide. Jerry's father, George Goodkind, hires Gilchrist as a mediator in union disputes. He is dismissed from this position when he submits costly, generous plans for arbitration, plans that provide for a humanitarian treatment of the workers.

Gilchrist then founds "Overcoat Hall," a mission in New York, as a means of rehabilitating the poor and deprived. Clare visits him there and tells him how miserable her marriage to Jerry has become. She offers to leave Jerry and marry Dan but he refuses and tells her she must do her duty to help Jerry, now an alcoholic. Dan's efforts to aid the poor are misinterpreted by others. A mob attempts to beat him because they think his work in helping the wife of an alcoholic husband is a cover for a prostitution racket. George Goodkind tells the mob that Dan is insane because he thinks he is the son of God. The mob jeers and asks for a sign from God to prove Dan's "worthiness." The sign appears in the form of a miraculous cure of a crippled girl.

In the end, Dan continues with his mission work. He has earned the trust and respect of the poor. Clare finds her happiness in ministering to Jerry who is dying of alcoholism. George Goodkind realizes that Gilchrist is not a "fool" and a failure.¹⁰

General Characteristics

The Fool exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. It is concerned with "imitating the contemporary, immediate world of man and

¹⁰Channing Pollock, The Fool (New York: Brentano's, 1922).

society." There is an emphasis on the element of character and on the relation between character and environment.

The contemporary, immediate world is suggested in the first act by the conversation of female church members which mentions such modern dances as the "fox-trot" and the "shimmy."¹¹ The women are decorating a Christmas tree with electric lights. In both the first and second acts there are discussions of contemporary problems involving labor and management. One person in the play works at Macy's department store. These and other details give a sense of immediacy to the drama.

There is an emphasis on character in the play. It is Dan Gilchrist's spiritual mission which guides the plot and provides the interest of the play. His effect on Clare and George Goodkind and the conflicts he causes in their life are also important to the action. Minor characters are drawn with some care.

The play treats the concept of environment and its effect on character. Dan Gilchrist's concept of a Christ-like life revolves around the idea of changing the environment of the poor. His plans for settling a coalmining strike include shorter work hours to provide time for education and healthier family conditions. The success of Gilchrist's attempts to improve men by improving their surroundings is demonstrated through the character of Umanski. This illiterate, Polish coalminer learns to express himself properly in English, gains a better job, and continues to educate himself as a result of leaving the mines and being exposed to better social and working conditions.

¹¹Ibid., p. 19.

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The Fool also exhibits one characteristic associated with Romanticism, the appearance of the strange or unusual. Two "miracles" are presented in the action of the play.

First, when the women are decorating the Christmas tree in the church, they cannot make the star of Bethlehem light up. Later, Dan is alone with a poor man and they talk about the possibility of a modern man leading a life like that of Christ. There is a strong implication that the poor man is Jesus. As he speaks, the star of Bethlehem on the tree begins to shine. The poor man vanishes.

The second miracle occurs when the mob that attacks Dan asks him to show them a sign that he is a son of God. A crippled girl drops her crutches and runs over to protect Dan. Later, this "miracle" is explained away: the girl suffered from "hysterical paraplegia" which was cured by the shock of seeing Dan attacked. However, the explanation is not given until the act after the "miracle" occurs.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Fool contains traits associated with Romanticism. The plot is "loose" in its construction. Although the unity of action is maintained, it is complicated in its presentation. Gilchrist becomes involved in the marriage of Clare and Jerry, the union problems of George Goodkind, the education of Umanski, the marital problems of a mob leader, and the care of Mary Margaret, a crippled girl. The unity of place is not observed: the settings of the play shift from a church to Goodkind's home to "Overcoat Hall" to Gilchrist's room. The unity of time is broken: the play begins on

Christmas Eve of 1918 and ends on the same date in 1920.

A chronological structure with an early point of attack often found in Romanticism is evident in The Fool. The play opens just before Gilchrist makes his decision to follow Christ's ways and then traces the consequences of this decision for a period of two years.

Character

The persons portrayed in the play have attributes of character associated with Realism. They are credible, probable people who are rather complex in personality.

Dan Gilchrist is characterized as a probable person.¹² Even though he is presented as a religious figure, he does not lack human qualities. He is a reformer but does not look like a stereotype of one. He is thirty-three years old, athletic, charming, and good-humored.¹³ Yet he displays more than one side of his character in the play. He is sometimes troubled by the failure of his efforts to aid humanity. He renounces Clare's offer to leave Jerry for him but the renunciation is difficult and troubles him.

Other characters are presented as probable persons. Clare Jewett loves Dan, but cannot face the hardships his way of life includes. She attempts to evade the misery of her marriage with Jerry, but finally reconciles herself to Jerry's drinking problem. She

¹²The names "Gilchrist" and "Goodkind" are obviously symbolic and have a relation to the themes of the play. However, the presence of only the two names doesn't warrant identifying an element of Symbolism in the play. Whereas Symbolism tends toward vagueness of meaning, these obvious symbolic names make the meaning of the play clearer. The names are too minor a factor in the totality of the play to be important in its stylistic identification.

¹³Ibid., p. 44.

appears to make believable reactions to difficulties not unknown in everyday life. George Goodkind also shows a complexity of character in his attitudes toward Gilchrist. He is positive that Dan is a fool and yet likes him. He even visits Dan from time to time, out of concern for him. Goodkind wishes to help people, but not if it hurts him in any way.

Language

The dialogue in The Fool corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. Wealthy and poor people are distinguished by patterns of speech. Umanski, in particular, is individualized through dialogue. His development is shown by a change in his use of the English language. In his first appearance in the play, he speaks in broken English. By the end of the play his usage is markedly improved.

Another trait of Realism in language is the appearance of discussion and argument in the play. In some respects, the entire play may be viewed as a social sermon. Gilchrist and Goodkind debate about the proper way to treat workers. They argue the merits of Gilchrist's approach to life. Clare and Dan discuss responsibility in marriage.¹⁴

Theme

The themes in The Fool correspond to those of Realism. The entire play projects a "'humanitarian' concern for contemporary man and society." Gilchrist attempts to guide men toward a better life through love and understanding. The ideas of duty and responsibility

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 106-108, 172-73, 142-45.

in personal, family, and social realms are presented again and again. Gilchrist is responsible to himself. He asks Clare to carry out her duties to Jerry. He tries to make Goodkind bear some responsibility to society in his treatment of coalminers.

Style of Play

The Fool exhibits four characteristics of Realism, and one of Romanticism. The form element of plot corresponds to Romanticism. The form elements of character, language, and theme correspond to Realism. While the play displays a mixture of realistic and romantic traits, it cannot be related to "secondhand" Romanticism because the realistic elements of character and theme are very important to the play. In view of this condition, the style of the play may be considered to be related to the dramatic style of Realism. However, special note must be taken of the romantic aspects of the play.

Icebound by Owen Davis

Story

When Grandma Jordan, a relatively wealthy New England farm woman, dies, her farm and money are willed to Jane Crosby, a second cousin, instead of to one of the immediate family members. Unknown to the rest of the family, the inheritance is meant actually for Ben Jordan, the youngest son. Ben is the "black sheep" of the family and is hiding to escape prosecution for allegedly burning a barn of some men he had had a fight with. Ben appears just after Grandma Jordan's death and is arrested. Jane Crosby arranges for Ben to be placed under her supervision until his trial. She takes over the farm and

family, refuses to share her inherited wealth with the Jordans, and forces Ben to work on the farm. Hard work and discipline alter Ben's way of life. He grows to love Jane and she finally reveals to him that the farm and his mother's wealth were intended to be his. Following the provisions in the will, she had held the inheritance until he demonstrated responsibility and decent behavior. Jane arranges to have Ben's trial cancelled by paying for the burned barn. Jane and Ben are planning to be married as the play ends.¹⁵

General Characteristics

Icebound exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. The fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." Character and the "concept of environment in relation to character" are emphasized.

The play contains many suggestions of the contemporary world. The setting is a farm in Veazie, Maine, in 1922, the year the play was produced. The characters speak with New England accents. Details of farm life are presented or alluded to. Ella, an unmarried sister of the Jordan family uses a sewing machine to hem towels. In the second act, Ben rushes from the house to tend a sick horse. Jane orders clothing from a mail order business.

The element of character is emphasized in the play. The play centers on the question of whether or not Jane can reform Ben. Her efforts to teach him responsibility and his uneven advance toward that end guide the action of the play. Secondary interest is provided by

¹⁵Owen Davis, Icebound (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1923).

the conflicts between Jane and the rest of the Jordan family.

Environment and its relation to character are integral parts of the drama. The settings reflect the traits of the people who live in them. The Jordan sitting room "is as dull and as drab as the lives of those who have lived within its walls."¹⁶ Character and environment are directly referred to by Ben, when he says,

That's what nature's done for us Jordans, -- brought us into the world half froze before we was born. Brought us into the world mean, and hard, so's we could live the hard, mean life we have to live.¹⁷

To him the Jordan family character and the land are both "icebound."¹⁸

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Icebound contains traits associated with Realism. It exhibits a "structural compactness," and the action is uncomplicated and unified. All events presented have a bearing on the relation between Jane and Ben. The unity of place is observed: all scenes occur on the Jordan Homestead. Since the action covers the time from October, 1922, to March, 1923, the unity of time is not maintained. However, each of the three acts employs retrospective exposition which is carefully worked into the rising action. In this manner, the will provisions which figure so prominently in the play are presented without surprise or melodramatic effect. Plot content from the contemporary world is also apparent in the play.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 66.

Character

The persons portrayed in Icebound have attributes of character associated with Realism. They are credible, probable people close to the norm in outlook and behavior, with relatively complex personalities. As observed under general characteristics, they are influenced by environment.

The credible, probable quality of the persons depicted is evident in Ben's character. In the beginning of the play, he is surly and defiant. He does not willingly take over work on the farm. The threat of prison, however, motivates him to obey Jane. As he becomes accustomed to Jane's presence, he displays warmth in his recollections of France during the war. His developing friendship with her begins to erase the hostile aspects of his behavior. Yet he appears most human in that his progress is not direct. He reverts to older patterns of behavior when he is frustrated or troubled. He is sensitive to the opinions that others have of him.

Ben and others show a complexity in personality. Jane is quiet yet aggressive and firm. The other members of the Jordan family quarrel and make fun of each other, but manage to maintain a unity as a family. They are basically serious people who are not above indulging in dry humor. They appear to be natural persons from a middle class background.

Language

The dialogue in Icebound corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in a prose which appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. All the characters have New England accents but the

author attempts to show distinctions between two grades of rural middle class people in his dialogue.¹⁹ The element of discussion in the dialogue which is associated with Realism appears in scenes between Jane and Ben.²⁰

Theme

The themes of Icebound correspond to those of Realism. They revolve around personal and family responsibility. The central action of the play is concerned with the rehabilitation of Ben. Jane seeks to make him take pride in himself and realizes his individual worth. His love for her and his change in attitude reflect the theme of human responsibility. Ben has proven his worth by planning to bring happiness to others.

Style of Play

Icebound exhibits four characteristics of Realism. Its form elements all correspond to those of Realism. It is clear from this analysis that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

It is the Law by Elmer Rice

Story

Two good friends, Gordon Travers and Andrew Woodruff, are both in love with Ruth Cummings. She marries Gordon, then Andrew, believing he was tricked by his friend, plots revenge. He locates a down-and-out dope addict, Sniffer, who looks exactly like him. He tattoos an

¹⁹Ibid., p. 4.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 66-69, 111-13.

identifying birthmark on Sniffer's arm and then kills him with a pistol. Andrew calls Gordon and the police. Andrew's timing works, and the police discover Gordon in Andrew's apartment with the dead body. Gordon is tried for the murder of Andrew, and sentenced to life in Sing Sing prison.

Ruth doesn't believe Gordon is guilty and attempts to prove his innocence. Eight years later, Andrew reappears disguised as an Englishman with a beard. Ruth arranges a plot of her own by which Andrew is identified and thus allows Gordon to be freed from prison.²¹

General Characteristics

It is the Law exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. The play observes a fourth-wall convention and imitates "the contemporary world of man and society."

The contemporary world is suggested by such details as a bridge game in the prologue to the play. Gordon is sent to Sing Sing prison, an actual place. The time of the play roughly corresponds to the date of its original production in 1922.

The play also exhibits two characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is a tendency away from actuality which is fostered by the inclusion of strange and unusual events.

The tendency away from actuality is apparent in the improbability of the story itself. It depends too much on coincidence, mistaken identities, and disguises. Andrew, a man of culture who is welcome at exclusive clubs, happens to meet a man from the lowest level of life

²¹Elmer Rice, "It is the Law," unpublished play, U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D60234 (March 13, 1922).

in New York who looks enough like Andrew to be his twin. Andrew's disguise as an Englishman is not detected by men who have known him all of his life. While none of these events are absolutely impossible, they are incredible.

A part of the tendency away from actuality is the inclusion of the strange or unusual. Andrew can stop his pulse and appear to be dead. He can become mentally unbalanced by the sight of fire tongs. He verges on insanity throughout the play. This psychological deformity, coupled with Andrew's villainy, is particularly indicative of a trait in Romanticism.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of It is the Law contains traits associated with Romanticism. It is "loose" in construction and makes free use of shifts in place and lapses in time. The unity of action is complicated by the use of a "flash-back" technique. A prologue, a device often appearing in romantic plays, presents a murder in the Gotham Club. The first act is set nine years earlier and begins to relate the events that led up to the action of the prologue. In essence, the play is presented in reverse order. The epilogue resumes the action at the point where the murder had just occurred in the prologue.

The unities of time and place are largely ignored. The events of the play cover a time span of nine years, and occur in four different locales, including the warden's office in Sing Sing prison.

The plot content of thrills and sensation associated with plot

in Romanticism is evident in this play. Murder, disguise, and mistaken identities are important to the action of the drama.

Character

The persons portrayed in the play have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They are improbable people who tend to be dramatic types.

Gordon Travers and Ruth Cummings are exemplary of the shallowness of character in the play. He is handsome and well-bred; she is attractive and relatively wealthy. Neither appears to change in behavior or attitude as a result of the experiences they undergo in the play. Even eight years in prison do not have an effect on Gordon.

The improbability of Andrew Woodruff as a person is evident in his strange powers of pulse control. He is made all the more improbable by his phobia about fire tongs. There is some attempt to motivate this quirk in his personality. It stems from a childhood experience in which his father beat his mother with fire tongs.

Although this trait may be viewed as an indication of the influence of environment, it is used in the play to create sensation rather than to reveal the role of environment in forming character. It is a superficial treatment of the relation between character and environment. It is significant that only this one trait of his twisted personality is environmentally motivated.

Sniffer also indicates a tendency toward dramatic types. His character attributes consist of "sniffing" narcotics, wearing old clothes, and talking in a gruff voice. He is a criminal type, not a criminal personality.

Language

The dialogue of It is the Law corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and is natural to the characters and their positions. Except for the criminal jargon of Sniffer and the English accent Woodruff affects in his disguise, the language does not serve to distinguish the characters from one another. The element of discussion found in Realism appears in the play, but is generally unimportant to the action. Gordon and the warden of Sing Sing talk briefly of how prisoners are the victims of social injustice, but the idea is never brought into the play at any other point.²²

Theme

The themes of It is the Law correspond to those of Romanticism. Andrew's villainy involves the romantic themes of love and jealousy. Emotions connected with love figure in this story. Andrew's villainy involves Ruth's rejection of his love, and the jealousy which results. Ruth's loyalty to the imprisoned Gordon illustrates the ennobling power of love. In addition, the theme of moral justice is present. Gordon and Ruth, the innocent victims of an evil mind, are restored to happiness at the end of the play. Their tormentor is punished for his transgressions.

Style of Play

It is the Law contains two characteristics of Realism and two of Romanticism. The language of the play is similar to that of Realism, but the other three form elements correspond to Romanticism. This

²²Ibid., p. 12.

relationship of characteristics and elements indicates that It is the Law corresponds to the style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

The Last Warning by Thomas F. Fallon

Story

Five years before the beginning of the play, Woodford, a theatre-manager, is murdered under mysterious circumstances during a production of a play titled The Snare. The theatre in which the murder occurred is believed to be haunted by Woodford's ghost and has been closed ever since his death.

As the play begins, Arthur MacHugh, an actor-turned-detective, has gathered together most of the cast of The Snare and is going to produce the play in order to help solve the mystery of Woodford's murder. The rehearsals of the play are plagued by seemingly supernatural events, and one person is murdered. The Snare is performed, however, and the murderer revealed. By the end of the play all the supernatural events have been explained as tricks and devices contrived by the murderer.²³

General Characteristics

The Last Warning exhibits one characteristic associated with Realism. It imitates "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The play is set in "modern times" in a Broadway theatre. Details of play production are presented. Electricians roam the stage. Scenery is moved about by "grips". Actors run through scenes for the

²³Thomas F. Fallon, "The Last Warning," MS, Samuel French, New York.

director. Few details of the world beyond the stage are physically evident, but they are alluded to by the characters.

The Last Warning also exhibits two characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is "a tendency away from actuality." In addition, the strange and unusual appear in the action of the play.

The tendency away from actuality is apparent in the preposterous story of the play. Although conditions of play rehearsal are presented in detail, the world of theatre is remote from the common experience of average people. This world is rendered even more unlikely by the suggestion that the theatre is haunted. Equally unlikely is the use of a play performance to capture a criminal. Disguises, secret panels, and false identities also suggest a tendency away from actuality.

Strange, unusual, even supernatural events appear in the action of the play. These events have a rational explanation which is revealed in the denouement of the play, but at the time of their occurrence the audience is led to believe they appear without human manipulation. The ghostly laughter of the dead theatre-manager is heard. A strange vapor seeps in under a door to his office. Eyes glow in the dark. A very large spider is dropped among the cast on stage. A sandbag crashes to the floor, nearly killing one of the actors.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Last Warning contains traits associated with Realism. There is a "structural compactness" to the structure of the

play. A basic unity of action is complicated by the play within a play. However, all events relate to the solution of the mystery. The unity of time is partially observed: the action covers no more than two days. The unity of place is maintained although the action shifts between the stage and an office of the theatre. Retrospective exposition is worked into the rising action of the play. By this means the events surrounding Woodford's murder five years ago are related. However, some necessary exposition is left out in order to allow for surprises at the end of the play.

The plot also contains some traits associated with Romanticism. The action unfolds as a "series of thrills in a rapid melodramatic manner." The first act ends with ghostly laughter as a strange vapor drifts in under the door. Sudden revelations of false identity shift suspicion from one character to another, lights black out, and strange eyes glow. A murder occurs. These events supply a content of sensation and excitement which is often associated with Romanticism.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Last Warning have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They are improbable people who tend to be dramatic types.

Most of the characters appearing in the play have some connection with the theatre. They seem to be stereotypes of the acting world. Richard Quail is a director who throws tantrums and browbeats actors. Dolly Lynken, the leading lady, is attractive, affected, and prone to over-emotionality. There is a "dumb" chorus girl who is actually MacHugh's wife in disguise. MacHugh is a leading man type -- handsome,

athletic, and intelligent. He is also an actor-turned-detective, yet the change doesn't seem to have affected his personality since he "plays" at being a detective. The villain's assistant is a Cockney electrician. His accent is the only significant means of singling him out from others in the play. The characters' motivations in general seem to be the demands of the action. Little they do or say disturbs the flow of exciting events.

Language

The dialogue of the play corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose. It appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. However, except for the electrician's Cockney accent, speech does not serve in individualizing characters. Elements of discussion and argument only appear in the play to advance the plot. There is no treatment of a meaningful or thoughtful idea. The language of the "play within a play" differs slightly from the dialogue of the rest of the drama. This is not unrealistic, however, since The Snare is a period costume play.

Theme

The themes of The Last Warning correspond to those of Romanticism. There is no treatment of ideas from the contemporary society. The only obvious themes are concerned with moral justice. However, the play concentrates more on the punishment of evil than it does on the rewarding of good. As trite as they are, the play projects the ideas that evil cannot thrive and crime does not pay.

Style of Play

The Last Warning contains two characteristics of Romanticism and one of Realism. The plot contains traits of both Realism and Romanticism. The element of language is related to Realism. Theme and character are related to Romanticism. The predominant style of the play appears to be Romanticism. Inclusion of elements of Realism indicates that the play most closely corresponds to "secondhand" Romanticism.

Rain by John Colton and Clemence Randolph

Story

A number of travelers are detained temporarily on the island of Pago Pago in the South Seas. One of the travelers is Sadie Thompson, a prostitute. Her efforts to relieve the boredom brought on by the rain offend a missionary, Reverend Alfred Davidson. He interrupts a raucous party in her room and throws her phonograph on the floor. He is thrown out of the room by some Marines. Davidson's humiliation about this leads him to take action against Sadie. He forces the governor of the island to order Sadie to return to the United States where she will be imprisoned for an incident she was involved in. The conflict between Davidson and Sadie grows until Sadie can no longer fight back. Davidson then attempts to change Sadie's life through religious salvation. He succeeds in making her repent and to agree to return to America to accept her punishment. However, his religious zeal is overcome by his sexual desires. He seduces Sadie and the guilt of this action drives him to commit suicide. At the end of the play Sadie is to go to Australia and begin a new life with a Marine

sergeant.²⁴

General Characteristics

Rain exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play and the element of character is emphasized.

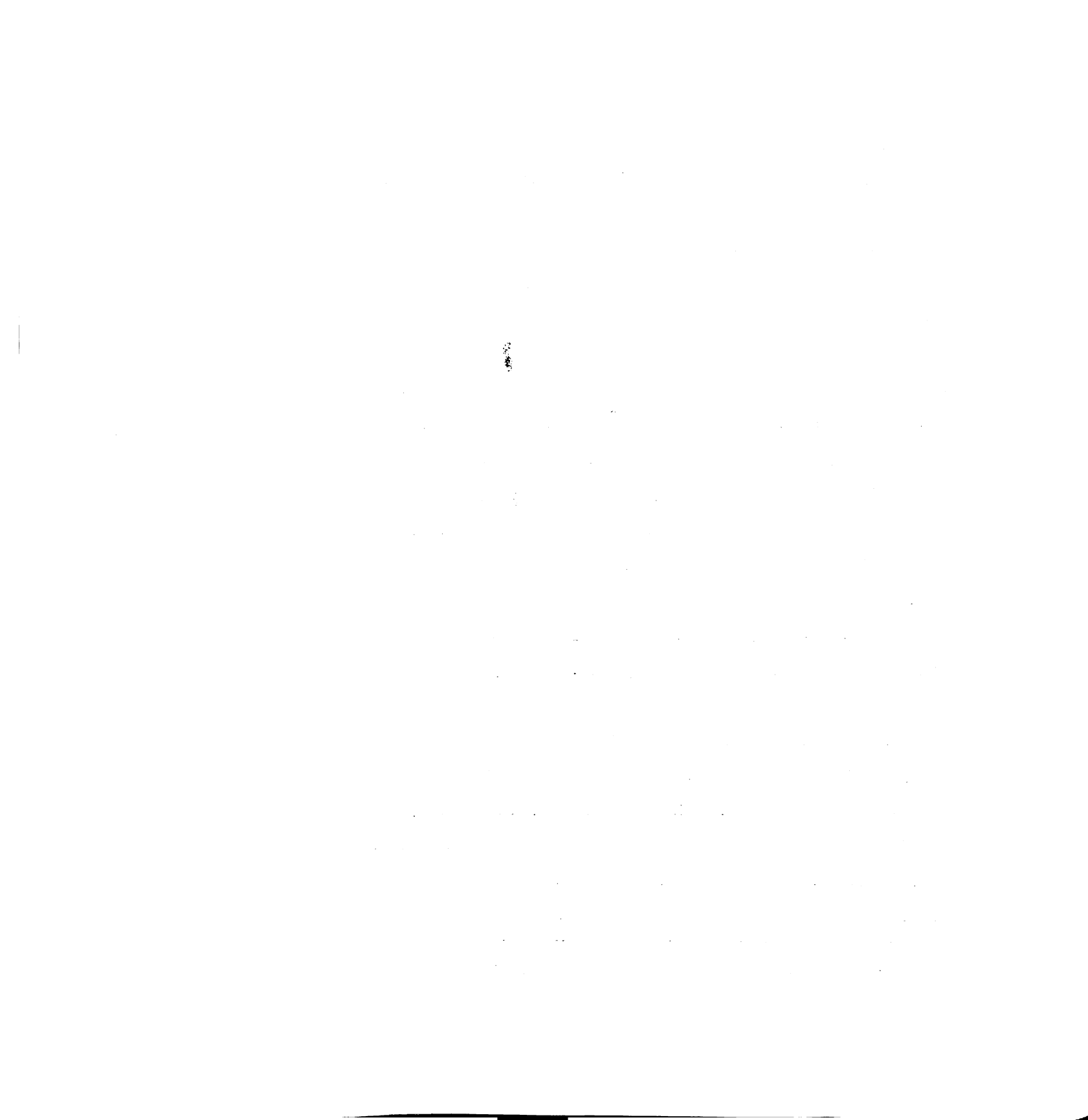
Character emphasis is apparent in that the action of the play revolves around the conflict between Sadie Thompson and Reverend Davidson. She wants to be allowed to find happiness in any way she can. He is driven to seek her salvation and reformation. The opposition of these characters provides the interest in the drama.

The play also exhibits three characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is "a tendency away from actuality." Emotionality and subjectivity are important elements in the play. A search for individual freedom from the strictures of moral and social codes is presented.

The tendency away from actuality is fostered by the remoteness of the setting. Although the contemporary, immediate world is suggested, it is far removed from the exotic island of Pago Pago.

The conflict between Sadie and the Reverend Davidson is primarily emotional and subjective. Sadie appears to live for the moment. Her temporary change in character is brought about by a combination of fear and the emotional fervor of Davidson's preaching. He frightens her and preys on that fear to awaken guilt in her. Her temporary conversion is not one of rational choice but of emotional

²⁴John Colton and Clemence Randolph, Rain (New York: Liveright, Inc., 1923).



disturbance. The religious zeal of Davidson is emotional rather than logical. His God is one of fear and not of love. His seduction of Sadie is an unthinking emotional action; he succumbs to instinct.

A search for individual freedom from the limits of established codes is manifested in Sadie's desire to lead her life as she sees fit. She resists Davidson's efforts to change her life; she tells him to leave her alone. When he preaches against the evil of her life she says,

You take care of your own evil, and I'll take care of mine I know what you want! You want another scalp to hand to the Lord. Well, you don't get mine,²⁵

She wants to go her own way and not ask any favors.²⁶

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Rain contains traits associated with Realism. It displays a "structural compactness" marked by a careful employment of retrospective exposition worked into the rising action of the drama.

The plot's structural compactness results from a fairly strict observance of the traditional unities. The unity of action is simple and only slightly complicated by a subplot in which Sergeant O'Hara plans to take Sadie to Australia to be his wife. The unity of place is observed in that all scenes take place in the living room of Joe Horn's hotel-store. The unity of time is ignored. The action covers a period of six days.

²⁵Ibid., p. 127.

²⁶Ibid., p. 117.

Retrospective exposition is woven into the rising action. For example, Davidson's abhorrence of sex is mentioned by Mrs. Davidson near the end of the play just before he commits suicide over his seduction of Sadie. Davidson's past success in religious conversion is revealed bit by bit, parallel with actions which are aimed at reforming Sadie. The story of Sadie's life is revealed through brief sections of exposition.

Character

The persons portrayed in Rain have attributes associated with the characters of Romanticism. They are improbable people. In addition, Sadie may be identified with the romantic criminal of "historical" Romanticism. A final attribute, the strong influence of emotion on the action of the characters, has already been mentioned under general characteristics.

While not wholly unrealistic, the two major characters are improbable persons. Sadie is a manifestation of the romantic idea of freedom. Although she is portrayed as a prostitute who smokes, drinks, and swears, her basic qualities are the positive human ones of friendliness, vitality, understanding, and warmth. She wants to live as she pleases and does not wish to interfere with anyone else's right to do the same. She represents the instinctive and non-rational aspects of human life, a hedonism aimed at seeking personal happiness and love unfettered by any laws or standards. This romantic idea of freedom embodied in the character of a prostitute is too nearly ironic to be plausible. Reverend Davidson is also an improbable person because of his relation to the same idea of freedom. He is too obviously the

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representative of social and moral codes. He seeks to curtail freedom, to make humans conform to his idea of religious morality. As a foil to Sadie, he is outwardly good. He has no vices; he preaches God's love and forgiveness. His religious zeal masks ambition, pride, and lust. In the end, he is destroyed because he denies the instinctive and non-rational side of his being.

The character of Sadie has some relation to the romantic criminal type found in "historical" Romanticism. She is trying to escape punishment for a minor criminal offense committed in California. She claims to be unjustly accused. The crime is characteristic of Romanticism in that its exact nature is never stated.²⁷

Language

The dialogue of Rain corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. Sadie is individualized by her use of slang expressions, some of them rather coarse. The Marines in the play express themselves in a similar manner. Reverend Davidson, Doctor McPhail, and their wives speak in a manner which is appropriate to their educational backgrounds. The element of discussion associated with Realism appears in a scene in which Sadie and Davidson argue about morality and salvation.²⁸

Theme

The themes of Rain correspond to those associated with Romanticism. They avoid involvement in contemporary problems of society. As

²⁷Ibid., pp. 173-75.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 175-78.

discussed under the form element of character, the concept of freedom from established moral and social codes is apparent in the play as a major theme. The romantic theme of the corruptive nature of civilization is touched upon in a conversation between Dr. McPhail and Davidson when Davidson explains how he teaches the natives the concept of sin.²⁹ This theme is also partially suggested by the fact that the only really untroubled person in the play is Mrs. Horn, a native of Pago Pago.

Style of the Play

Rain exhibits two characteristics of Realism and three of Romanticism. The elements of plot and language correspond to Realism, while Romanticism is evident in character and theme. Although characteristics and elements are fairly well divided between the two styles, the play tends to be basically romantic because of the importance of character and theme to the total play. The presence of realistic elements in a play which is basically romantic, indicates that the style of the play corresponds to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

Roger Bloomer by John Howard Lawson

Story

Roger Bloomer, an average American young man from a middle class family in Iowa, ponders great questions of life aroused by his reading and study. He gives up a college education and a chance to enter his

²⁹Ibid., pp. 107-108.

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father's business to go to New York to find out what life is about. New York offers him no help in solving his problems. He almost starves before meeting Louise, a girl from his home town who aids him. Roger still despairs and tries to kill himself but is unsuccessful. Louise steals some money to help Roger, but he makes her return it. She is caught while taking the money back and commits suicide. Roger is held as a witness and jailed. While in his cell, he has a nightmare in which his various desires, experiences, and fears are presented. His father frees him from jail and the play ends.³⁰

General Characteristics

Roger Bloomer exhibits four characteristics associated with Expressionism. It tries to "suggest inner conflicts that cannot be presented directly on stage." It "employs a dream-like structure." Elements of the play are "distorted and exaggerated." Symbols are used.

The play suggests the inner conflicts of Roger Bloomer as he approaches manhood. He dislikes the materialism of his father. He is troubled by the idea of sex. He despairs to the point of attempted suicide. These conflicts are presented in the entire context of the play but are particularly obvious in a number of interior monologues spoken by Roger and in the nightmare sequence near the end of the play.

A dream-like structure is apparent in the play. This is not only true of the nightmare scene, but also of the rest of the play. There

³⁰John Howard Lawson, Roger Bloomer (New York: Thomas Seltzer, Inc., 1923).

are approximately eight scenes in the first act alone. By changes of lighting and the drawing of curtains the scenes follow each other in rapid order with no appreciable break between them. The rapidity and number of changing scenes is not as important as the fact that each scene presents only enough material to give an impression of how Roger views the world around him.

The dream-like structure is accompanied by distortion and exaggeration of elements in the play. This distortion and exaggeration is not constant. It appears now and then as in the case of the college examiner . .

He is a little grey man in flowing black collegiate robes lined with purple; a fantastic figure; on his owl-like head a mortar board. He sits on a throne-like chair. On the wall behind him an enormous map of the United States.³¹

The nightmare scene near the end of the last act is almost completely exaggerated and distorted.³²

Symbols are used in the play as reflections of Roger's varying states of mind. A fat landlady represents a repulsive aspect of sex. A ragged man symbolizes death.³³ And again, the nightmare scene is filled with symbols of Roger's inner feelings and frustrations.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Roger Bloomer contains traits associated with Expressionism. It is episodic; the play contains at least twenty scenes.

³¹Ibid., p. 57.

³²Ibid., pp. 195-225.

³³Ibid., pp. 89-90, 124.

"Conflict in the sense of opposed, independently motivated characters seldom arises." Roger Bloomer carries what conflict there is in the play within himself. He has some minor arguments with a home town acquaintance, but this is an unimportant example of conflict. The play "exhibits a pageant or pilgrimage-like structure treating the life-story of a protagonist and showing his progress in a series of events at many times and in many places." This trait of Expressionism is obvious in the story of Roger Bloomer as he is driven from Iowa by a quest for a solution to life's meaning and finds love, death, sex, and frustration in New York. The plot also shows a tendency to ignore preparation and exposition in order to deal with crucial events. The first act illustrates this tendency in the rapid, panoramic view of life in Iowa and Roger's sudden decision to go to New York. In one scene Roger mentions going to college and in the next he is taking entrance exams. No explanation is offered of what happened between the two scenes.³⁴

Character

The persons portrayed in Roger Bloomer have attributes of character associated with Expressionism. Many of the minor characters in the play do not have ordinary names but are merely identified by their occupation. They are named Street Walker, Drug Clerk, Detective, Judge, etc. Most of them appear too briefly in the action to exhibit more than the most obvious of character traits. The Street Walker is described as "very thin, queer bedraggled hat perched on bright peroxide hair, big feverish eyes in an old face, carrying a little black

³⁴Ibid., pp. 45-57.

bag."³⁵

The major characters are not meant to be much more than suggestions of actual people. The author specifies that Roger Bloomer "must be played by an actor of sturdy virile appearance, giving impression of average American boy."³⁶ Louise is more of a symbol than a character. The same is true of Roger's father and mother.

Eugene Poppin, an acquaintance of Roger's, is an example of a type of character found in Expressionism. He is a foil for Roger. He may be viewed as a projection of Roger's personality. He is a material and social success and handles women very well. Many of these things Roger would like to do, but cannot.

Language

The dialogue of the play corresponds to that of Expressionism. Although some passages or scenes approach Realism in their language, the dialogue does not generally attempt to imitate the speech of everyday life. It is spare and unadorned except for monologue which contain a prose poetry marked by images and metaphors. These monologues are expressionistic in their use of flowing images and flashing words rather than logical thought or complete sentences. For example, this passage from a monologue by Roger:

Myself, against all these generations, I mocking, asking . . .
red with fever tossing in the night . . . alone till the dawn
brings laughter I myself, fighting my body, denying
my body . . . a man is made out of flesh and passion! All
right. . . . Come on, you damned ghosts, come on, you laughing
shadows, I'm strong and alone, and somehow . . . I'll beat
you yet.³⁷

³⁵Ibid., p. 114.

³⁶Ibid., p. xi.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 56-57.

The "telegraphic" style of dialogue which is associated with the language of Expressionism is apparent in such scenes as the one between Roger's father and Mr. Poppins in which short, trite sentences are used to discuss the problems of sending sons to college.³⁸

Theme

The themes of Roger Bloomer correspond to those of Expressionism. Roger's quest for the meaning of life is reminiscent of Mystic Expressionism. However, the play also projects a dissatisfaction with the present society. Roger doesn't like the materialism and mechanization of his world. He finds that New York is like Iowa, that both do not meet the needs of youth. His rebellion against the older generation represented by his father is also a reflection of an idea in Activist Expressionism.

Style of Play

From the above analysis, it is clear that Roger Bloomer exhibits all the general characteristics of Expressionism. Its form elements, too, correspond to those of Expressionism. In brief, the style of the play corresponds to the dramatic style of Expressionism.

Sun Up by Lula Vollmer

Story

Widow Cagle lives in a mountain cabin in North Carolina with her son Rufe. Her husband was killed some years before by revenue agents and now her son must serve in France in World War I. She has

³⁸Ibid., pp. 22-26.

no concept of the world beyond the mountains and believes the war is like the Civil War of her youth. France, to her, is just over the hills. She protests Rufe's going away because there will be no one to carry on the feud to revenge the death of her husband. Rufe tells her that feuds are wrong, a lesson he learned at a mission school. She is not convinced, but resigns herself to Rufe's departure. Before he leaves, he marries Emmie who moves into the Cagle cabin. Rufe is killed in France. The day the letter arrives announcing his death, a stranger appears at the cabin. He is a deserter from the Army trying to get back to his mother. When Widow Cagle learns her son is dead, she takes pity on the stranger and decides to protect him from the law. She is informed by the sheriff that the stranger is the son of the man who killed her husband. As she raises a rifle to kill the stranger, she hears her dead son whisper to her that love and not hate will make the world better. She doesn't kill the stranger. Instead, she helps him elude the law officers surrounding the cabin and to make his escape.³⁹

General Characteristics

Sun Up exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. It observes a fourth-wall convention throughout the action. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." Both the element of character and the relation between environment and character are emphasized.

³⁹Lula Vollmer, "Sun Up", Representative American Plays, ed. Arthur Hobson Quinn (3d. ed. revised; New York: The Century Co., 1925).

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In Sun Up the contemporary world which is imitated is that of the mountains of North Carolina. Details presented in the play suggest everyday life on a farm. Widow Cagle sweeps the floor with a brush broom. Rufe carries a hoe and places it inside the door. Someone leaves a gate open and the calf gets in with the cow. Cooking utensils hang by the fireplace. Such details are only a few of the many which give a sense of reality to the action and setting of the play.

The element of character is important in Sun Up. The action of the play is aimed at demonstrating the change in Widow Cagle from a bitter woman seeking revenge in a feud to a compassionate being who helps the son of her worst enemy. The action and interaction of character guides the development of the plot. Rufe's influence on his mother determines her decision to spare the stranger.

The relation between environment and character is apparent in the play. Rufe is strong because of the physical demands of farm life. The frail, wiry body and wrinkled face of Widow Cagle reflect her attempts to wrest a living from the land. Her insistence on continuing the feud reveals the values of her society. Rufe's objection to the feud stems from his exposure to religious teaching in the mission school.

The play also exhibits one characteristic associated with Romanticism. A strange, supernatural event occurs near the end of the play. As Widow Cagle prepares to kill the stranger, she hears a whisper from her dead son, which stops her. None of the other two characters on stage hear the whisper. They only exchange looks which indicate she is mad.⁴⁰ The event is apparently supernatural, yet the

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 1042.

message whispered to Widow Cagle is a variation of the ideas Rufe talked to her about before he left for the war. It could be considered to be a momentary psychological state rather than a truly supernatural occurrence.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Sun Up contains traits associated with Realism. Each of the three acts of the play displays a "structural compactness." The action is simple and unified. The unity of place is observed in that all scenes take place in the Cagle cabin. The unity of time is not maintained; the play covers a period of eight months. Retrospective exposition is employed in each act and is integrated into the rising action of the play. In the first act it is used to reveal the circumstances of the death of Widow Cagle's husband and in the third act it is the means of disclosing Rufe's death in France. "Theatrical plotting" is avoided; the events appear to have a cause and effect relationship. Even the sudden appearance of the stranger is carefully worked into the plot.

Character

The persons portrayed in the play have attributes of character associated with Realism. They are members of a low class of society. They are credible, probable people. Two other traits, their importance in the play and the relation of character to environment, have already been discussed under general characteristics.

The social status of the characters is that of the rural lower class. Their ignorance, lack of sophistication, and industriousness are consistent with their level of society.

Widow Cagle is a credible character because different aspects of her personality are revealed. She is shrewd in financial matters. She is "a very positive character, but the tenderness in her nature shows in spite of her efforts to conceal it."⁴¹ She can be bitter and angry about the memory of her husband's death. Her credibility of character is enhanced by the fact that she changes her attitude about revenge as the result of her experiences, the loss of a son and his teachings.

Jim Weeks, a relatively minor character, is also a credible person. He is a deputy sheriff, who prefers to be called "sheriff". He is a fat, older man who compensates for his appearance by trying to convince others he is better educated than they. "But now and then he forgets, and falls back to the mountain mode of speech."⁴²

Language

The dialogue of Sun Up corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. It is marked by an imitation of speech patterns and dialects from the mountains of North Carolina. There are few circumlocutions of expression; that is, the manner of expression is rather direct and not repetitive or rambling. Here is an example:

⁴¹Ibid., p. 1020.

⁴²Ibid.

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Bud heared right once. The sheriff wuz to see me t'other day.
 'Pears like a city man has bought the land next to ourn, and
 he's ofeered our place will spile his view. But I ain't sellin'
 out to 'blege no rich man.⁴³

Theme

The themes of Sun Up correspond to those of Realism. The play demonstrates a concern for individual human problems as evidenced by its concentration on the life of Widow Cagle. The idea of responsibility to family and society is shown in Rufe's willingness to go to war to discharge his duty as a citizen. When he leaves other members of his wife's family aid Widow Cagle. In its totality, the play has a humanitarian theme which projects the idea that hate must be replaced by love if the world is to be "set right." Widow Cagle's refusal to kill because of her hate for the stranger's family is one step toward the realization of this ideal. The small hatred in North Carolina is related to the great hatred involved in the war which claims Rufe's life.

Style of Play

Sun Up exhibits four characteristics of Realism and one of Romanticism. Its form elements are all related to the style of Realism. Since the one romantic characteristic could be justified as a psychological state, it should not be counted too heavily in the identification of the play's style. From the analysis it is apparent that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

⁴³Ibid., p. 1021.

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Uptown West by Lincoln OsbornStory

Sakamoto, a native Japanese man who has been educated in America, remains there to marry Mildred, an American girl. Sakamoto and Mildred have difficulties in their marriage due to differences in their cultural backgrounds, but Sakamoto does everything possible to make the marriage a success. Shortly after the birth of their son, Mildred is convinced by her sister Florence that her marriage to Sakamoto won't work out. Florence arranges a meeting between Mildred and Allan Reed, a former friend of Mildred's. Mildred tells Sakamoto that she no longer loves him, but loves Allan instead. Then Sakamoto's son is killed when Mildred leaves him with a neighbor while she goes out with Allan. Sakamoto, grief-stricken, decides to put an end to Mildred and himself. In his darkened apartment, he mistakes Florence for Mildred and strangles her. He then takes his own life.⁴⁴

General Characteristics

Uptown West exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. It observes a fourth-wall convention throughout the action of the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character and the relation between environment and character are emphasized.

Modern man and modern society are imitated in the play. The "uptown west" of the title refers to a part of New York, upper Manhattan. The Sakamoto family lives in an apartment house. Their

⁴⁴Lincoln Osborn, "Uptown West," MS, Samuel French, New York.

son is killed when his buggy is struck by a car. There are references to motion pictures.

The characters are the most important element in the play. It is their conflicts which provide the interest of the drama. Sakamoto is torn between two cultures. His Japanese friends want him to follow their traditional ways, but his love for Mildred separates him from them. Yet he cannot completely understand Mildred's desire for a more exciting life. Mildred, too, suffers from a conflict between loving Sakamoto and being accepted by her friends. She can't stand the serenity of life with Sakamoto. She wants the glamor of life she believes Florence enjoys. It is the conflict within the characters rather than the conflict between them which guides the action of the drama.

The relation between environment and character is the factor which produces the conflicts of the characters. Sakamoto, although exposed to American life, cannot escape from the conditioning of his early years. Mildred is affected in much the same way. She marries Sakamoto, feeling that love will overcome any obstacles between them. Her environmental influence proves too strong and she seeks the company of her own culture. Misunderstanding and tragedy are the result of the influence of environment on characters in this play.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Uptown West contains traits associated with Realism. The play displays a "structural compactness" in each of its three

acts. The unity of time is broken, but the unities of action and place are maintained. The drama covers a period of eight months. Its action is unified in that all events are directly related to the marital difficulties of the Sakamoto family. All three acts take place in the Sakamoto apartment.

"Obvious theatrical plotting is avoided." The murder and suicide at the end of the play are carefully prepared for and are not sudden surprises for sensational effect. Retrospective exposition is used extensively and is often woven into the rising action of the play.

Character

The persons portrayed in Uptown West have the attributes of character associated with Realism. They are drawn from the middle class. They are credible, probable people. Two other traits, the importance of the characters to the drama and the emphasis on the relation between character and environment, have already been mentioned under general characteristics.

The middle-class background of the major characters is established by their residence, an apartment, and the occupation of Sakamoto, a business man. The credibility of the characters is established by the presence of varying attributes they display. Sakamoto is not a stereotype of the Japanese. He emerges as a probable human being. He is intelligent, quiet, and reserved. His love for Mildred is seldom declared aloud but shown by his care and devotion. Sakamoto is most believable in the pride he displays over his son. He even appears a bit silly in his attentions to him. His acts of murder and

suicide, although a result of despair and anger, are undertaken calmly and with resignation. He is an altogether sympathetic character. Mildred is equally credible. She is a basically good person who made a wrong decision. Her romantic ideas about love are changed by the realities and demands of marriage. She feels remorse in betraying Sakamoto and deep guilt over her neglect which caused her son's death. She may be a bit immature, but she is not immoral or heartless. Both Sakamoto and Mildred are believable in that they are changed by the experiences they encounter.

Language

The dialogue of Uptown West resembles that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their occupations. Some attempt at imitating the everyday patterns of speech are apparent in repetitive and incomplete sentences. The characters are individualized by their expression. Florence uses more slang than Mildred. Sakamoto and his Japanese friend display a difference in their accents: Sakamoto's is less obvious. The element of discussion sometimes associated with Realism exists in the play in conversations between Sakamoto and his friend. They talk about the problem of marriage between people of differing cultural backgrounds.

Theme

The themes of Uptown West resemble those of Realism. They deal with individual human problems, namely those of marriage between different races. These ideas are treated sympathetically. Over all, there appears to be a theme of human understanding. In the play, a lack of human understanding leads to destruction. The play does not

imply that cultures cannot merge, but that in present society, it is difficult.

Style of Play

Uptown West exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. All of its form elements, too, correspond to those of Realism. In view of this analysis, it is apparent that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

Whispering Wires by Kate McLaurin

Story

A hard-driving millionaire, Montgomery Stockbridge, receives a letter informing him that he will be murdered and that a grave has already been dug for him. He calls in a squad of private detectives to protect him. He then receives a whispered telephone message, telling him he will be killed at midnight. In spite of all precautions, he is shot at midnight while talking on the telephone. There are several suspects for the mysterious crime -- his butler, his private secretary, a young man who wishes to marry his daughter, and a man he ruined financially. While the detectives try to solve the crime, another phone call informs Doris, Stockbridge's daughter, that she will die in the same manner as her father. She is saved from death when the telephone repairman is discovered to be responsible for her father's death. The telephone has a small pistol concealed in it which can be triggered by shouting into a phone on the other end of the line.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Kate McLaurin, Whispering Wires (Boston: Walter H. Baker Co., 1934).

General Characteristics

Whispering Wires exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the action of the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society."

Details of the contemporary world appear in the play which is set in a time identical with the opening of the play in 1922. Montgomery Stockbridge invests in plans to build a flying boat. New York's Central Park and Grand Central Station are alluded to.⁴⁶ The dependence of the entire story on the technical aspects of the telephone indicate the contemporary nature of the world imitated.

The play also exhibits two characteristics of Romanticism. There is a "tendency away from actuality" and a strong suggestion of the strange and unusual.

The tendency away from actuality is a result of the elements of excitement and sensation in the drama, all of which are remote from the common experiences of ordinary men. Woodbridge learns that a grave awaits him. He receives whispered telephone messages threatening death. He is shot in a locked and guarded room. Strange men prowl the halls of the Woodbridge mansion. Lights suddenly black out and when they come on again a note is discovered pinned to the door with a knife.⁴⁷ Although these events are explained at the conclusion of the play, their immediate effect is one of the strange and unusual.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 111, 113.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 99.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Whispering Wires contains traits associated with Realism. It displays a "structural compactness." The traditional unities are strictly observed. The action is complicated but unified. All events are related to the commission and solution of the murder. All three acts take place in the library of the Stockbridge mansion. The events of the action occur in a period of twenty-four hours. Retrospective exposition is employed extensively to explain the backgrounds of the characters and their relation to the deceased. Such exposition is woven into the rising action of the drama, although some facts are not revealed until after the climax of the play.

The plot also contains one trait associated with Romanticism. The plot content is one of excitement, suspense, and sensation. This should be obvious from the story and the discussion under general characteristics.

Character

The persons portrayed in Whispering Wires have attributes associated with Romanticism. They are improbable persons who tend to be dramatic types. Montgomery Stockbridge is depicted as a heartless tycoon. He delights in the financial ruin of others. He trusts no one. He is overbearing, abrupt, and rude. There is not one appealing trait in his entire personality. The only emotions he shows are fear when he is threatened, and anger at a young man who wants to marry his daughter. The private detective, Drew, is not even described physically. Nothing is revealed about him but his

ability to conduct an investigation. He has an assistant, Jackson, who cracks jokes and pinches the French maid, Jeanette. Barry McGill is an Englishman from a bankrupt family. He is only differentiated from the rest of the characters by his accent. In brief, the characters appear to be a means of revealing an exciting plot. They do not seem to be credible, probable persons.

Language

The dialogue of Whispering Wires corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. Although the dialogue has the general sound of everyday speech, it does not serve to distinguish characters from one another except in the obvious accents of McGill and Jeanette.

Theme

The theme of Whispering Wires corresponds to one of Romanticism. There is no concern in the play with problems of contemporary society. The only apparent theme is that of moral justice. The man who arranged for Woodbridge's murder did so because he believed that Woodbridge cheated him in a business transaction. He is arrested at the end of the play. McGill is freed of suspicion and is engaged to Doris. The evil are punished and the good are rewarded.

Style of Play

Whispering Wires exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism and two associated with Romanticism. The form element of plot has both realistic and romantic traits. The form element of language is related to Realism. The form elements of character and

theme are related to Romanticism. While characteristics and form elements are almost evenly divided between Realism and Romanticism, the play is too improbable to be truly realistic. The presence of realistic elements in a basically romantic drama indicates that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

Summary of the 1922-1923 Season

Analyses of the ten selected "successful," serious plays from the Broadway theatrical season of 1922-1923 revealed that in regard to style four plays (The Fool, Icebound, Sun Up, and Uptown West) were written in a style related to Realism, four plays (Whispering Wires, The Last Warning, Rain, and It is the Law) were written in a style related to Romanticism, and two plays (The Adding Machine and Roger Bloomer) were written in a style related to Expressionism. No other dramatic styles were represented in the selected plays of this season.

Characteristics and form elements associated with Romanticism are evident in two of the four realistic plays. The Fool by Channing Pollock includes the appearance of the strange or unusual and exhibits a romantic structure in its plot. Lula Vollmer's Sun Up also employs an incident of the strange or unusual.

On the other hand, characteristics associated with Realism are evident in all of the romantic plays. All four demonstrate an adherence to the fourth-wall convention. They also are alike in their attempt to imitate contemporary man and society. The element of language in each of the four plays corresponds to Realism. They are

mainly romantic in their characteristics and in the form elements of character and theme. The combination of realistic and romantic elements reveals a correspondence between these four plays and the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

The two plays related to Expressionism correspond to all the characteristics and form elements of that style. Both contain themes related to Activist Expressionism, but Roger Bloomer by John Howard Lawson also included a theme associated with Mystic Expressionism.

CHAPTER XI

THE BROADWAY THEATRICAL SEASON OF 1925-1926

Play Selection

Two hundred and thirty-nine full-length plays opened on Broadway in the theatrical season of 1925-1926.¹ Out of this total, one hundred and fourteen were comedies, musical comedies, or revues. As such they are not a concern of this study, nor are the forty-one adaptations or translations of foreign dramas which appeared in this season. Sixteen revivals of dramas from earlier seasons or dramatic periods also were presented. The remainder of the plays in this season were serious dramas written by American or foreign authors and intended for original production on Broadway. However, out of a total of sixty-eight of these plays, fifty-six ran less than one hundred performances and did not receive favorable reviews at the time of their openings, nor any significant critical recognition since that time.

Thus, twelve plays fit the standards of selection operative in this study. Eight of them ran over one hundred performances during the season. Three of them, The Bride of the Lamb, Kongo, and The Mud Turtle, ran over fifty performances and received favorable reviews at

¹Burns Mantle, ed., The Best Plays of 1925-1926 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1926), pp. 418-610.

the time of their original productions. One play, Lucky Sam McCarver, ran only twenty-nine performances, but is included as a "successful" play on the basis of its recognition as a representative American play in an anthology edited by Montrose J. Moses.²

The plays which are analysed in the next section of this chapter are as follows:

The Bride of the Lamb by William Hurlbut

Craig's Wife by George Kelly

The Enemy by Channing Pollock

The Great Gatsby by Owen Davis

The Great God Brown by Eugene O'Neill

The Green Hat by Michael Arlen

Kongo by Chester DeVonde and Kilbourn Gordon

Lucky Sam McCarver by Sidney Howard

Lulu Belle by Edward Sheldon and Charles MacArthur

The Mud Turtle by Elliot Lester

Shanghai Gesture by John Colton

Twelve Miles Out by William A. McGuire

Stylistic Analyses of Plays

The Bride of the Lamb by William Hurlbut

Story

In a small town in the midwestern United States, Ina Bowman leads an uneventful life troubled only by her husband's developing alcoholism.

²Montrose J. Moses, ed., Representative American Dramas (revised ed.; Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1941), pp. 673-720.

One Sunday afternoon the local minister brings Reverend Albaugh, a traveling evangelist, to her home to ask permission to use some land owned by her husband for the erection of a tent to house revival meetings. The Bowmans not only give their permission, but also invite the Reverend Albaugh to be a guest in their home during his stay in town. Ina and her daughter, Verna, attend the revival meetings. Albaugh's preaching develops an almost hysterical religious feeling in Ina, a feeling related to her physical attraction to him. The confusion of religious and sexual feelings leads her to plead with him to take her with him on his revival tour. He refuses because she is married. She breaks down in a state of hysteria, and "allows" Albaugh to seduce her. Her mental unbalance leads her to kill her husband with poison so that she will be free to follow Albaugh. She no more than finishes committing the crime when a woman arrives at her house and announces that she is Albaugh's wife. When Albaugh is confronted by the woman, he admits that he is married. The shock of this betrayal and the discovery of her act of murder cause Ina's final mental decline. While she is being taken away by the sheriff, she wears a veil, carries an imaginary bouquet, and announces that her imaginary "groom" is Jesus. Ina becomes the Bride of the Lamb.³

General Characteristics

The Bride of the Lamb exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. It observes a fourth-wall convention throughout the action of the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary,

³William Hurlbut, The Bride of the Lamb (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926).

immediate world of man and society." The element of character and the relation between character and environment are emphasized.

The contemporary world is suggested by the inclusion of details from everyday life in an American home. In Act I, Ina dusts the furniture, chides her husband for not going to church, gossips with neighbors who drop in, listens to accounts of current motion pictures showing in town, and prepares the Sunday dinner.⁴

The element of character is emphasized in the play. The plot is devoted to revealing the mental destruction of Ina Bowman. Its events are selected to show the stages of her development from a rather ordinary woman into a demented religious fanatic. Her inner conflicts provide the center of interest in the drama.

The relationship between character and environment is apparent in the play. Ina is initially attracted to Reverend Albaugh because he represents an excitement that is lacking in the stultifying environment of her life with Roy, her alcoholic husband. The wish to escape from this existence is established in a scene in which Ina daydreams aloud to her daughter.⁵ It is also reflected in the attention Ina pays to a neighbor who tells about the plots of adventurous motion pictures she has seen.⁶ Ina's mental collapse may be interpreted as a result of the inability to reconcile her sensual passion with the religious mores of her background. The influence of environment is also apparent in the character of Albaugh. His success in evangelism, his superficial charm, and his commanding voice stem from his years as a carnival and vaudeville performer. His morality, too,

⁴Ibid., pp. 5-28. ⁵Ibid., pp. 42-43. ⁶Ibid., pp. 25-28.

is evidently based on this earlier environment.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Bride of the Lamb contains traits associated with Realism. It displays a "structural compactness" in each of its three acts. It does not observe the unity of time, however, since the action of the play covers a period of one week. The simple action of the plot is unified. The unity of place is strictly observed in that all three acts are set in the living room of the Bowman home.

The use of contemporary story material and retrospective exposition also indicate a realistic plot. The exposition is woven into the rising action and reveals not only the happenings between acts, but discloses details from the rather distant past of the characters. Generally, the play avoids obvious plotting. The only exception is the sudden appearance of Albaugh's supposedly dead wife. However, her explanation of her surprising arrival is logically and carefully explained. It is a plausible action.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Bride of the Lamb have attributes of character associated with Realism. They are drawn from the middle class. They are credible, probable people who are complex in their traits of personality. Two other traits, the importance of the characters to the action of the play and the relation of environment and character, have already been mentioned under general characteristics.

The plausibility of the characters is illustrated in the person

of Ina Bowman. When she first appears in the play, she seems to be an ordinary housewife. She cleans, cooks, and is concerned over her daughter's social behavior. She relieves the dull routine of her life with daydreams and an interest in romantic motion pictures. Another side of her personality is revealed in her developing interest in the Reverend Albaugh. Her long-repressed sensual nature becomes apparent. Yet she hides this instinct from herself by sublimating it into religious ecstasy. Finally, a firmness in her character is shown in the desire to go with Albaugh in spite of any obstacles. Ina Bowman appears credible in her initial traits of commonness, but through her actions reveals a complexity of personality.

Language

The dialogue of The Bride of the Lamb corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. Colloquial expressions and use of grammar effectively suggest middle western American speech. Minor distinctions between characters are conveyed through dialogue. Ina's husband, Roy, reveals the influence of his college education in his expression which is more grammatically correct than that of the other characters. Reverend Albaugh employs many quotes from the Bible in his speech, but usually speaks in a convincing imitation of everyday language.

Theme

The themes of The Bride of the Lamb correspond to those of Realism. There is a sympathetic concern for the problems of individuals. Ina Bowman's need for a fuller life and her betrayal in

attempting to achieve it indicate this concern. The play also projects an involvement in the idea of social responsibility. The conversion to faith by over-emotional means is shown to be destructive. The play does not attack religion, but it does demonstrate a concern for the effects of faith untempered by rationality. The subject of sex and its influence on individuals is a major theme and indicates a relation to the themes of Realism.

Style of Play

The Bride of the Lamb exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. All of its form elements correspond to those of the same style. It is apparent that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

Craig's Wife by George Kelly

Story

Harriet Craig's marriage to Walter Craig is not founded on any deep love for the man. Her memories of a childhood spent with a step-mother have driven her to seek security and to make her house the center of her life. All of her actions are selfish and are aimed at preserving her social reputation and the permanence of her home. While she is absent visiting her sister, Walter becomes innocently and only incidentally involved in a scandalous murder. For her own sake, she secretly attempts to hide his connection with the crime in order to keep his name out of the newspapers, thus avoiding any damage to her reputation. Walter's discovery of her action also reveals to him that it is his house and the security he offers that Harriet wants and not him. He arranges to give her the house and leaves her

forever. As the play ends, she is deserted by everyone and left alone in her house.⁷

General Characteristics

Craig's Wife exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character is emphasized and the relationship between character and environment is apparent.

The contemporary world is suggested by the inclusion of such details as telephones and newspapers, both of which figure in the action of the drama. Harriet wants to keep Walter's name out of the newspapers. Her phone call to a residence in which a murder took place is traced by the police. In addition, the appearance or mention of cigarettes, automobiles, and plain-clothes detectives indicates that the background of the play is the immediate one of the twentieth century.

The emphasis on the element of character in the play is carried to the point that the drama appears to be a character study of Harriet Craig. There is little in the play that does not relate to her or her selfish concern for security. The very title of the play indicates the importance of Harriet Craig's personality.

The relationship between character and environment is demonstrated in two ways. First, Harriet's desire to control home and husband arises from her experiences before adulthood. In a discussion

⁷George Kelly, Craig's Wife (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1926).

with Walter she clearly states the influence of these experiences and adds, "I saw what happened to my own mother, and I made up my mind it 'ud never happen to me."⁸ Second, Harriet's character determines the environment of her home. The house itself "reflects the excellent taste and fanatical orderliness of its mistress."⁹

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Craig's Wife contains traits associated with Realism. A "structural compactness" is apparent. The play conforms strictly to the unities of action, time, and place. The action is only slightly complicated by Walter's involvement in the investigation of a crime and romance between Harriet's niece and a young professor. Unity of action is maintained, however. The investigation of the crime is used to reveal Harriet's true character to Walter. Her interference in the niece's romance is a means to demonstrate the depth of Harriet's feelings about security. The unity of time is observed; "the entire action of the play transpires between five-thirty in the evening and nine o'clock the following morning."¹⁰ The unity of place is maintained in that all three acts are set in the living room of Walter Craig's house.

The "structural compactness" is aided by an extensive use of retrospective exposition which accompanies the rising action of the play. It is in this manner that the reasons for Harriet's behavior

⁸Ibid., p. 123.

⁹Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁰Ibid.

are revealed. The revelation of her childhood environment appears in the climax of the play, the point when Walter decides to leave Harriet. For a moment, her past and future are revealed side by side.

As in Realism, obvious plotting is avoided. The details of Walter's incidental involvement in a murder are explained early in the play and are not used for purposes of surprise or suspense. Careful preparation and cause-and-effect logic are evident in the plot.

Character

The persons portrayed in Craig's Wife have attributes of character associated with Realism. They are credible, probable people who are relatively complex in personality. Two other traits, the importance of the characters to the play and the relationship between character and environment, have already been discussed under general characteristics.

The fact that Harriet Craig is unlikable and in some ways frightening does not detract from her credibility as a character. Although the author does not offer a description of her physical appearance, he provides several incidents which reveal different aspects of her personality. That she is efficient, orderly, and demanding is established by the manner in which she handles her servants and the household accounts. Her apparent love for her husband is shown by her concern over his relation to a murder. She appears to be kind in her conversations with her niece. An argument with Walter's aunt reveals mental agility and firmness in Harriet's character. These various traits are all related to one motive, the securing of Harriet's

future. This consistency of motivation and its varying results give Harriet Craig the appearance of credibility as a character.

Walter Craig is also a probable person who is close to the norm in outlook and behavior. He reacts plausibly in attempting to disassociate his name from a murder scandal. It is also plausible that fear of arousing unnecessary suspicion leads him to go to the police and explain his connection with the crime. He reveals a dimensionality of character in his love for Harriet. His refinement and outward calm prevent him from making overt gestures of his love. Rather he shows his love in following Harriet's desires. Yet he refuses to be "one of those wife-ridden sheep that's afraid to buy a necktie for fear his wife might not approve of it."¹¹ When he is finally aware that Harriet plans to turn him into such a "sheep," his hidden romantic beliefs in individuality and love lead him to separate from her. His pleasant exterior hides a firmness and sensitivity Harriet is unaware of. He, like Harriet, is a complex and strongly motivated personality.

Language

The dialogue of Craig's Wife corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. Through the use of language, a difference in social level of characters is established. The two female servants are more colloquial in their speech than are the rest of the more educated members of the Craig household. The element of discussion which is

¹¹Ibid., p. 121.

associated with Realism permeates the entire play. The place of women in modern society is the subject of one conversation between Harriet and her niece.¹² Walter and Harriet discuss the need for truth and honesty in marriage in a scene near the end of play.¹³

Theme

The themes of Craig's Wife correspond to those of Realism. They demonstrate a concern for individual human problems, namely, a woman's search for security. There is also the theme of family responsibility, the necessity of trusting one another in marriage. These two themes may also be considered as a reflection of a broader social problem inherent in the changing role of women in society. The playwright indicates that Harriet's solution to the problem of security may be symptomatic of an attitude in many women.¹⁴

Style of Play

Craig's Wife exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. Its form elements all correspond to those of the same style. It is clear from this analysis that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

The Enemy by Channing Pollock

Story

The play is set in Professor Arndt's flat in Vienna and covers a period of time coinciding with World War I. The action begins on June 28, 1914, and concludes in June of 1919. In general, the play

¹²Ibid., pp. 16-19. ¹³Ibid., pp. 167-70. ¹⁴Ibid., pp. 125-26.

deals with the effects of war and hate on human character.

Act I shows family life in the Arndt apartment just before the outbreak of the war. Professor Arndt teaches at a university. His daughter, Pauli, is loved by two men. One, Carl Behrend, is attempting to become established as a playwright; the other, Bruce Gordon, is a graduate student from England. Carl is reluctant to propose to Pauli because his future as a playwright is uncertain. Although Bruce loves Pauli himself, he encourages Carl to propose. Carl does so and Pauli accepts. This happy event is interrupted by the news of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Serbia, which marks the beginning of World War I.

In Act II, three months later, Carl and Pauli are married and living in the Arndt apartment. The effects of the war are already being felt in the family. The professor is in trouble with the university because of his pacifist views. Carl's father, August Behrend, is beginning to make large profits from his farm. He argues with the professor about the war. Bruce Gordon, who has not yet left Austria, drops in for a visit but is insulted and sent away because he is an Englishman and the English have entered the war. Carl has been drafted into the army as an officer and leaves for the front as the act ends.

In Act III, which takes place in March of 1917, the Arndt apartment is again the setting. The professor has been dismissed from his position. The family is suffering from poverty. The baby son of Pauli and Carl is ill. Inflation has made the professor's savings useless. August Behrend comes to see his grandson and again argues with the professor about the morality of the war which is

making August a rather rich man. A soldier bursts in and announces Carl's death in battle. Pauli's grief is doubled when her baby dies, too.

In Act IV it is June of 1919. The war is over and the Arndt family is beginning to recover financially and emotionally. Bruce Gordon returns and offers his sympathies to Pauli and proposes to her. She refuses in order to remain true to her love for the deceased Carl. Once again, August Behrend pays a visit and the debate with Professor Arndt is resumed. Bruce and Pauli discuss the joys of peace, but in the background children are beating drums and playing at war.¹⁵

General Characteristics

The Enemy exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the action of the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character and the relationship between environment and character are emphasized.

Although The Enemy, produced in 1925, depicts the period of World War I, it can be considered an imitation of the contemporary world. Many of the actual dates and events of the war are mentioned in the story. The experiences of the characters are common in any real war environment. Objects used or mentioned in the play suggest the modern world. A few examples are typewriters, electric lights, newspapers, and automobiles.

The element of character is emphasized. The playwright employs

¹⁵Channing Pollock, The Enemy (New York: Brentano's, 1925).

his characters to demonstrate his theme of war and hatred. He draws them as plausible people who suffer from the effects of aggression. He also shows that the attitudes which lead to war are present in individuals. It is the characters' reactions to events beyond their control which provides interest in the drama.

An interrelationship between character and environment is established in the play. The general war environment results in changes in the actions of characters. Carl turns from the arts to battle. August Behrend becomes a selfish materialist. Poverty tempers the idealism of Professor Arndt. The immediate environment of the Arndt apartment reflects the changes in the characters' lives. Tasteful art objects and small items of luxury apparent in the first act disappear from the setting as poverty makes it necessary to sell them.¹⁶

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Enemy contains traits associated with Romanticism. The play is loose in its treatment of the traditional unities. Although the unity of place is preserved -- all scenes take place in the Arndt apartment -- the unity of time is broken by the depiction of events which cover five years. The action of the play is unified in that all events have a bearing on the war and its effects on the characters. This unity of action is extremely complicated, however. The relation between Carl, Pauli, and Bruce, and the continuing

¹⁶Ibid., p. 1.

conflict between August Behrend and Professor Arndt are almost equal in interest. Subplots complicate the action further. A loan made by Professor Arndt to a former servant is used to reveal the problem of inflation in Austria. The problem of a neighbor whose career as a newspaperman is affected by fluctuating attitudes toward the war also comprises a part of the action.

The play has an early point of attack and follows a chronological structure. The story unfolds in action, and narrative exposition is usually employed early in scenes to disclose the happenings between acts.

Unlike many plots in Romanticism, the plot of The Enemy does not appear as "a series of thrills presented in a rapid melodramatic manner." However, some thrills and melodrama are apparent in the endings of the first three acts. Act I ends with the news of the assassination that triggers off the war. Act II ends with Carl's departure for the front. Act III ends with the disclosure of the deaths of both Carl and his son. Such incidents as these are not prevalent enough in the action to justify calling them "a series of thrills," yet they are too obviously plotted to be convincing as realistic action.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Enemy have attributes of character associated with Realism. They are drawn from the middle class. They are credible, probable people who display a complexity of personality. Two other traits, the importance of character to the drama and the relation between character and environment, have already been

discussed under general characteristics.

The characters appear to be credible, probable people. Professor Arndt has unpopular pacifist views. His idealism is apparent, but he only espouses thoughts. He does not take action. His intelligence and objectivity in discussion appear to be natural to him and his profession. However, he can lose his objectivity rapidly when he is involved personally in matters. He is shown as a family man who enjoys his pipe and takes pride in his grandson. August Behrend is not a particularly admirable man, but he is credible in his views and actions. He is a rather common man who takes advantage of the war to make money. He is not troubled about the morality of his actions. To himself, he is a good man who is helping his struggling country. He cannot understand why the Professor refuses the offer of a loan because the money offered is gained from the selling of wheat to the army.

The complex nature of two characters should be apparent from the discussion immediately above. In addition, Carl Behrend demonstrates a complexity of personality in his character. His interest in writing almost prevents him from marrying Pauli because he feels he will not be able to provide an adequate living for her. Although he is idealistic about his writing, he is realistic about what such a career means. When he writes a pacifist drama, the idealism he displays in the play does not carry over into his efforts to get the play accepted and produced. He is willing to change the ending to please a producer. The fear of war and death nearly reduce him to hysteria and cowardice, but he goes into the war anyway. The account of his death indicates he was a brave officer. His last actual

appearance in the play shows that his humanitarian, pacifist idealism has been supplanted by nationalism and militant patriotism.

Language

The dialogue in The Enemy corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. Professor Arndt is appropriately the most eloquent speaker in the play. August Behrend is prone to express himself at times in trite phrases or slogans. The characters in general speak a language which appears to imitate ordinary speech. The element of discussion associated with language in Realism is obviously apparent in the play. There is a continuing debate throughout the play between Professor Arndt and August Behrend over the subject of war. The same ideas are brought up in discussions between other characters. In many ways, the play is a dramatized discussion of the folly of war and the need for love among mankind.

Theme

The themes of The Enemy correspond to those of Realism. They display a "humanitarian concern" for contemporary man and society. The subjects of war and hate are presented again and again as evidence of this concern. The moral blindness of unreasoned patriotism is dealt with. The question of profit from human disaster is present. The title indicates the major theme of the play, the enemy is hatred. Overall, the element of theme is emphasized in The Enemy.

Style of Play

The Enemy exhibits four characteristics of Realism. The

element of plot corresponds to Romanticism, but the other three form elements are related to Realism. Although the traits of Romanticism apparent in the plot call attention to the manipulation of action, they do not outweigh the general characteristics of the play nor the importance of the element of theme. While special note must be taken of the influence of Romanticism in the play, it appears that the style of The Enemy is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

The Great Gatsby by Owen Davis

Story

While he is a soldier stationed in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1917, Jay Gatsby meets and falls in love with Daisy Fay. They have an affair and she promises to marry him when he returns from the war. During his absence, Daisy is compelled to marry the wealthy Tom Buchanan. Upon Gatsby's return, he discovers he has lost Daisy to a rich man and sets about to win her back. He becomes a bootlegger in order to attain the wealth necessary to make him socially equal to Daisy. He does become wealthy, but Daisy will not divorce her husband. Instead she offers to become Jay's mistress. He refuses, and before any further attempts can be made to make Daisy marry him, Jay is killed by a chauffeur who mistakenly believes Jay is having an affair with his wife.¹⁷

General Characteristics

The Great Gatsby exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the action

¹⁷Owen Davis, "The Great Gatsby," MS, New York: Samuel French, n.d.

of the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character and the relation between character and environment are emphasized.

The contemporary, immediate nature of the world imitated in the drama is established by the time of the play and by their actions. Except for the prologue to the play, the events of the play occur in 1925, just one year before its production on Broadway. Actual geographical locations like Louisville, Kentucky, and Long Island, New York, are the settings of the play. The fact that Jay Gatsby is a bootlegger establishes the play as contemporaneous with the Prohibition era.

The element of character provides the major interest in the play. Jay Gatsby's attempt to realize the dreams of his youth by being a member of high society is one part of this interest, as is the nature of the love affair between Daisy and Jay and the conflicts it arouses. It is the motivation of the characters and their conflicts with each other which guide and determine the action of the plot.

The concept of environmental influence on character is demonstrated in the play in the characters of Daisy and Jay. Gatsby's drive to live among the rich and privileged is prompted by his life as a boy. He was not entirely a deprived youth, but he was made aware that some people lived a much better life. Daisy is also influenced by the level of culture from which she comes. Although she loves Jay, she cannot give up her social position with Tom and bear the opinions others would have of her if she married a social-climbing bootlegger. The influence of her social environment will

not allow her to do anything that is not outwardly acceptable. Her offer to become Jay's mistress is consistent with the mores of her special world.

The Great Gatsby also exhibits characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is "a tendency away from actuality in the play" and a rebellion against the strictures of a social code.

The tendency away from actuality is fostered by a remoteness in culture from ordinary human experience. Except for the prologue, the play deals with life in a wealthy social climate. Although this world is depicted credibly through the use of realistic details, it does not seem to be a real world. Except for Daisy and Gatsby, the characters are rather shallow. They wear evening clothes to elegant parties and say clever things. They represent an idealized world that one would like to attain but seldom does.

Jay Gatsby's turn to bootlegging in order to gain the wealth to attract Daisy is an example of a rebellion against the society depicted in the play. His attempts to get her to divorce her husband and marry him is another aspect of this rebellion. The fact that Gatsby is unsuccessful does not affect the presence of this romantic characteristic in the play. His fight against the social code which keeps him from Daisy is the important factor.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Great Gatsby contains traits associated with Romanticism. It is "loose" in its overall structure. The action of the play is simple and unified. However, the unity of place is

ignored as the play shifts from Kentucky to a cottage and the library of Gatsby's home on Long Island. In addition, the unity of time is broken by an eight year time lapse between the prologue and Act I, a time lapse of a week between Act I and Act II, and a ten-day time lapse between Act II and Act III.

As in Romanticism, the plot displays an early point of attack and follows a chronological structure. Narrative exposition is present in the plot, but functions mainly to reveal the events that transpire between acts. The use of the prologue is particularly indicative of Romanticism in the plot.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Great Gatsby have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. Aside from Gatsby and Daisy, the characters tend to be two-dimensional and shallow. While they are not stock dramatic types, they are also not entirely believable people.

Gatsby and Daisy are reminiscent of the complex characters found in "historical" Romanticism. "They are recognizable human types but are removed from ordinary human experience." Gatsby most resembles the "outcast from society." He suffers from a wrong done to him in his past, the marriage of Daisy to another man. He is in revolt against the society which wronged him. He displays states of ennui and melancholy, because his attainment of wealth has not brought him happiness or the woman he loves. Daisy appears to be a romantic figure because she is the victim of an emotional state connected with love. Her willingness to enter into adultery with Gatsby also suggests

a relation to romantic female characters.

Finally, she displays a predilection toward self-pity, a fondness for telling of her mental sufferings.

Language

The dialogue of The Great Gatsby corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. It attempts to imitate the speech of everyday life. Some use of slang associated with the Prohibition era is evident. However, the dialogue does not greatly aid in individualizing characters. The element of discussion sometimes associated with Realism is not present to any marked degree.

Theme

The themes of The Great Gatsby primarily correspond to those of Romanticism. There is a theme of nostalgia in Jay Gatsby's desire to live according to his dream of being an equal in Daisy's social world. This is coupled with the theme of rebellion against the code of that social world. Above all, the play relates a love story in which characters suffer from an unrequited love, a love denied by the world around them.

The themes of the play secondarily correspond to those of Realism. There is a projection of the shallowness of wealthy society. The drama also deals with the rather trite idea that money does not buy happiness. Gatsby's wealth cannot compensate for his life without Daisy.

Style of Play

The Great Gatsby exhibits four characteristics of Realism and two of Romanticism. The form element of language corresponds to Realism, but the form elements of plot and character are related to Romanticism. The themes of the play are primarily romantic but there is some evidence of a relation to themes of Realism. In spite of the fact that four characteristics of Realism have been identified, the play appears to be basically romantic. Although the element of character is emphasized, as it is in Realism, the characters are primarily romantic. The influence of environment, another realistic trait, serves to add to the complexity of romantic characterization. The presence of realistic elements in a basically romantic drama leads to the conclusion that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

The Great God Brown by Eugene O'Neill

Story

Dion Anthony is an artistic person who is divided between pagan and spiritual impulses. He hides his inner torments behind a mocking and defiant outward personality. A young girl, Margaret, falls in love with the outer personality and chooses to marry Dion in preference to another lifelong friend, William A. Brown. After seven years of marriage, Dion is the father of three sons, but is unhappy because he has failed as an artist. His frustrations lead to dissipation. Margaret arranges for Dion to work for Brown, who is now an architect. Dion makes Brown's business even more successful, but he continues to be inwardly tormented and declines in health. Brown still desires

1

Margaret and when Dion dies in his home, Brown hides the body and assumes the identity of Dion. He then attempts to live the life of two people. The strain of this dual role begins to destroy Brown, for he too begins to suffer the torments that afflicted Dion. To Margaret, he appears to be Dion. To the men in his office, he appears to be Brown. He plans to finish the plans for one more building and then arrange matters so that his identity as Brown will be destroyed. He will sign his business over to the identity of Dion and eradicate his identity as Brown by making it appear that Brown dies abroad. He will then be only Dion and can carry on his life with Margaret. The plan is only partially carried out when the complications of it and Brown's dual identity create a situation in which it seems that Dion has killed Brown. He is pursued by the police and killed in his home. Margaret lives on with three grown sons and remains true to the memories of Dion.¹⁸

General Characteristics

The Great God Brown exhibits four characteristics associated with Expressionism. It projects subjective inner conflicts of personality in a concrete form. It has a dream-like quality. Elements of the play are sometimes distorted and exaggerated. Symbols are employed in the play.

The projection of thoughts and feelings from the inner mind is obvious in this play. Through the use of masks, many of the characters present two sides of their personalities. The mask represents the outward aspects of the character, the person seen as others see him.

¹⁸Eugene O'Neill, The Great God Brown, The Fountain, The Moon of the Caribees and Other Plays (Boni and Liveright, 1926).

When the mask is not worn, the character expresses his subjective thoughts. For example, in the prologue Dion wears a mask with "the expression of a mocking, reckless, defiant, gaily scoffing and sensual young Pan" which covers his own face, a face described as "dark, spiritual, poetic, passionately supersensitive, helplessly unprotected in its childlike, religious faith."¹⁹ With the mask on he taunts his parents and makes light of their plans for his college education. When he is alone, he removes the mask and then expresses his inward torment:

Why am I afraid of love, I who love love; Why am I afraid, I who am not afraid; Why must I pretend to scorn in order to pity? Why must I hide myself in self-contempt in order to understand? Why must I be so ashamed of my strength, so proud of my weakness?²⁰

While the play has a confused but recognizable story, it exhibits a dream-like quality in presenting it. The twelve scenes of the play are set in six different locations and cover a period of over eighteen years. This episodic structure is not dream-like in itself; however, the frequent shifts in place and time, together with other elements in the play do suggest a dream rather than reality.

One of the other elements in the play which furthers the dream-like quality is the use of distortion and exaggeration. The mask convention is one example of this element in the play. Another is the description of the backgrounds of the scenes. No matter what the location of the scene, the furniture arrangement is the same and suggest a "court-room effect."²¹ Distortion and exaggeration are also

¹⁹Ibid., p. 14.

²⁰Ibid., p. 20.

²¹Ibid., p. 26.

apparent in the action of the play. In the first scene of Act IV, Brown changes back and forth from his own identity to that of Dion several times in rapid succession.²²

Symbols are used extensively in the play. The characters themselves are symbolic. Dion Anthony represents pagan and Christian attitudes in conflict. Dion stands for Dionysus and Anthony for Saint Anthony. The name William A. Brown indicates the average and common nature of the character. Cybel, a prostitute on the empirical level of the play, is named after a nature goddess. She represents earthiness and sensuality. She is even called "Mother Earth" at one point in the play.²³ Objects and sounds also are present as symbols. Cybel's parlor contains a cheap alarm clock and an automatic piano which plays the same sentimental medley of "'Mother -- Mammy'" tunes.²⁴ They represent the ideas of time and birth or motherhood.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Great God Brown contains traits associated with Expressionism. It employs an episodic, narrative approach and follows the life-story of a protagonist. It also deals with the revelation and repetition of themes. Another trait, the frequent shifting of place and time, has already been mentioned under general characteristics.

The twelve scenes of the play indicate the epic nature of its plot. The point of attack is early and follows the experiences and

²²Ibid., pp. 87-90.

²³Ibid., p. 50

²⁴Ibid., p. 39.

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the President's annual message to Congress.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the financial state of the country and the government's plans for the future.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the land and natural resources of the country.

4. The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the state of the navy and the government's plans for the future.

5. The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the state of the army and the government's plans for the future.

6. The sixth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the state of the country's relations with other nations.

7. The seventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the state of the army and the government's plans for the future.

8. The eighth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the state of the navy and the government's plans for the future.

9. The ninth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the land and natural resources of the country.

10. The tenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the financial state of the country and the government's plans for the future.

11. The eleventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the state of the army and the government's plans for the future.

12. The twelfth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the state of the navy and the government's plans for the future.

13. The thirteenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the land and natural resources of the country.

14. The fourteenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the financial state of the country and the government's plans for the future.

15. The fifteenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 3, 1862. It contains information about the state of the army and the government's plans for the future.

conflicts of Dion Anthony. True, there are two protagonists in the play, Dion and Brown. This use of a double protagonist points out the thematic concern of the play in that when Brown takes over the identity of Dion, he too is troubled by the same conflicts of the creative personality. Although Dion dies physically, his spiritual aspects are important to the play until the very end, when Margaret places a "timeless kiss" on the mask which represents Dion.²⁵

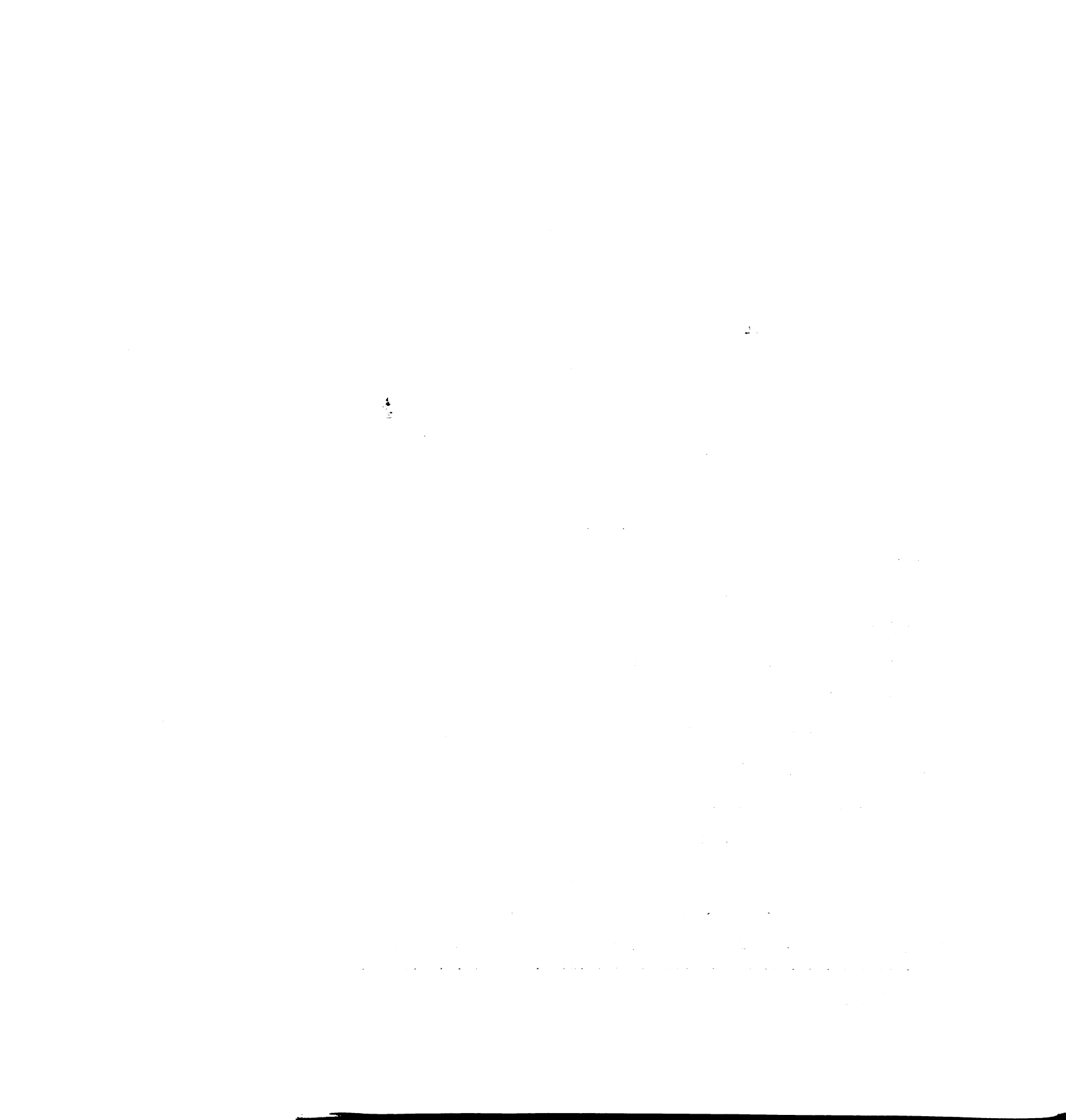
The plot resembles those of Expressionism in its tendency to ignore preparation and exposition. It deals with the crucial events in the lives of Dion and Brown. It concentrates on moments of crisis and climax.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Great God Brown have attributes of character associated with Expressionism. They tend toward abstract personification. They are not conventionally motivated, and appear as a projection of the subjective mind of the author. To some degree, characters in the drama represent counterpoints to or variations of the protagonist.

The abstract or personified nature of the characters is suggested in their symbolic names. Such names suggest a number of meanings and serve to emphasize the fact that the characters are not imitations of real people from the empirical world, at least not in terms of their outer aspects of personality. The names tend generally to identify the function of the character in relation to the ideas of the play. The lives of Dion Anthony and William A. Brown are not as

²⁵Ibid., p. 98.



important as the ideas their actions represent or suggest. They are not independently motivated in the traditional, conventional sense of the word. O'Neill's view of the creative personality guides the movement of the characters.

Although the play is not clear in all of its efforts to relate Dion and Brown, it does suggest that rather than being separate characters, they are manifestations of one character or at least are most meaningful when viewed as complementary aspects of mankind. Brown represents traits lacking in Dion which would make him an effective being. On the other hand, Dion's traits are equally lacking in Brown. Cybel seems to be a projection of both personalities, since both turn to her for different reasons. Of course, each of the three characters have an independent identity. Yet the ambiguous nature of character symbolization does not exclude the possibility that the three characters are somehow manifestations of one character. No matter how this possibility is viewed, it does serve to emphasize the presence of expressionistic traits in the characters.

Language

The dialogue in The Great God Brown corresponds to that of Expressionism. Generally, it does not attempt to imitate the speech of everyday life. Interior monologues are employed to reveal the subjective states of characters.

Imitation of everyday speech is not completely excluded from the play, but the most striking thing about the dialogue is the use of the interior monologue. Such monologues appear frequently in the play. In addition, short asides are delivered by the characters. These asides

are not directed to the audience, but appear to be short expressions of subjective thought not meant to be heard by the other characters on stage. As for the monologues themselves, they are reminiscent of Expressionism in their use of imagery and stream-of-consciousness quality. One brief example from Dion's thoughts on his mother's death may serve to indicate the nature of these monologues.

The last time I looked, her purity had forgotten me, she was stainless and imperishable, and I knew my sobs were ugly and meaningless to her virginity; so I shrank away, back into life, with naked nerves jumping like fleas, and in due course of nature another girl called me her boy in the moon and married me and became three mothers in one person, while I got paint on my paws in an endeavor to see God!²⁶

Theme

The themes of The Great God Brown correspond to those of Expressionism. Although the play demonstrates several themes, the main theme is related to the Mystic phase of Expressionism. Overall, the play projects a spiritual quest for meaning. Dion and Brown (when he takes on Dion's identity) both seek God. The conflict of the pagan and the spiritual permeates the play, but in the end the spiritual predominates. When Dion dies, his face is that of a martyred saint. In his death Brown finds God. His last words are

I know! I have found Him! I hear Him speak! "Blessed are they that weep, for they shall laugh!" Only he that has wept can laugh! The laughter of Heaven sows earth with a rain of tears, and out of Earth's transfigured birth-pain the laughter of Man returns to bless and play again in innumerable dancing gales of flame upon the knees of God!²⁷

²⁶Ibid., pp. 44-45.

²⁷Ibid., p. 95.

Style of Play

The Great God Brown exhibits four characteristics of Expressionism. All of its form elements correspond to those of the same style. It is clear that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Expressionism.

The Green Hat by Michael ArlenStory

Iris March's family is regarded as a bad lot by the rest of the circle of upper English society. For this reason, Sir Maurice Harpenden arranges to break up a romance between his son, Napier, and Iris. Iris still loves Napier, but in 1913 she marries Boy Fenwick, a close friend of her brother, Gerald. On her wedding night, Boy Fenwick dies in a fall from the window of their hotel room in France. Iris will reveal none of the circumstances of his death other than that he died "for purity." The scandal of Boy's death and Iris' reluctance to talk about it further cloud her already questionable reputation.

Ten years later in London, Iris calls on Napier in an effort to find her brother. Their conversation rekindles their youthful love. She admits that she has had many lovers in the ten years since Boy's death, but she has never lost her love for Napier. Napier is touched and although he is engaged to be married to Venice Pollen, he decides to marry Iris instead. After a night of love, Iris and Napier are confronted by Hilary Townshend who berates them for betraying Venice who loves Napier deeply. Iris, because she has been hurt by love, will not hurt Venice. She departs and leaves Napier to

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marry as he had planned.

Nine months later, in a French convent, Iris is near death from the effects of bearing Napier's stillborn child. In delirium she calls for him. He arrives with his wife, Venice, and the sight of him restores Iris' will to live. She sends him away without telling him she has had his child.

Four months later at the Harpenden estate in England, Sir Maurice learns that Napier and Iris plan to run off to South America together. When Iris arrives he tries to prevent them from leaving. He brings up the subject of Boy Fenwick's mysterious death. Iris tries to stop him from discussing it, but it is revealed that Boy leaped from the window when she displayed shock upon learning that he had contracted venereal disease shortly before their marriage. The reason she lied about his dying for purity was that she was afraid the truth would affect her brother who worshipped Boy. Rather than being relieved that the truth is known at last, Iris despairs that the one decent act in her life has been revealed. Napier rebels against his father and leaves to take Iris away in her car for the boat to South America. He returns within minutes, because Iris has lied to him about Venice's expecting a child. The return of Napier to his wife is Iris' final act of decency. As a house guest watches from the veranda, he describes the crash of Iris' car into a tree, a crash too avoidable to be an accident.²⁸

General Characteristics

The Green Hat exhibits two characteristics associated with

²⁸Michael Arlen, "The Green Hat," The Best Plays of 1925-1926, ed., Burns Mantle, pp. 121-59.

Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the action of the play, and the element of character is emphasized.

Although, as will be shown, the characters are those of Romanticism, they are the center of interest in the play. The turns of fortune in the love of Iris and Napier and their reactions to them constitute the action of the drama. Iris in particular is the focus of attention.

The play also exhibits three characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is "a tendency away from actuality" in the drama. Emotion and subjectivity are apparent in its characters. It deals with a rebellion against the strictures of a social and moral code.

The tendency away from actuality is seen in the play's depiction of culture remote from common experience. The English and Continental social sets are portrayed. They live in expensive hotels, travel widely, and possess estates. Only the surface and glamor of this culture is revealed in the characters and their actions. Although the improbability of the characters is a matter for another discussion, it aids in promoting the tendency away from actuality.

Emotion and subjectivity guide the actions of the characters. Emotions of love and passion guide Iris throughout the play. Her numerous affairs are an attempt to forget the love she has for Napier. Napier's "seduction" of Iris after he is engaged to Venice is a non-rational act. In addition to the emotion displayed by the characters, the play appears to be aimed at provoking more pity and sentiment than the subject matter warrants.

Iris displays a romantic rebellion against the laws of society, and views them as "cruel, bullying, phantoms."²⁹ Although she suffers for it, she lives as she pleases, with her many lovers. As she angrily tells Sir Maurice Harpenden,

You talk to me of our England, of us. . . . — I despise our England! I despise us! We are shams with patrician faces and peasant minds. You want to bully me with your traditions.³⁰

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Green Hat contains traits associated with Romanticism. It is "loose" in its construction. The action is unified and relatively uncomplicated. The unity of time is largely ignored since the events of the play cover a period of over eleven years. The unity of place is also ignored as the action shifts to locations in France and England.

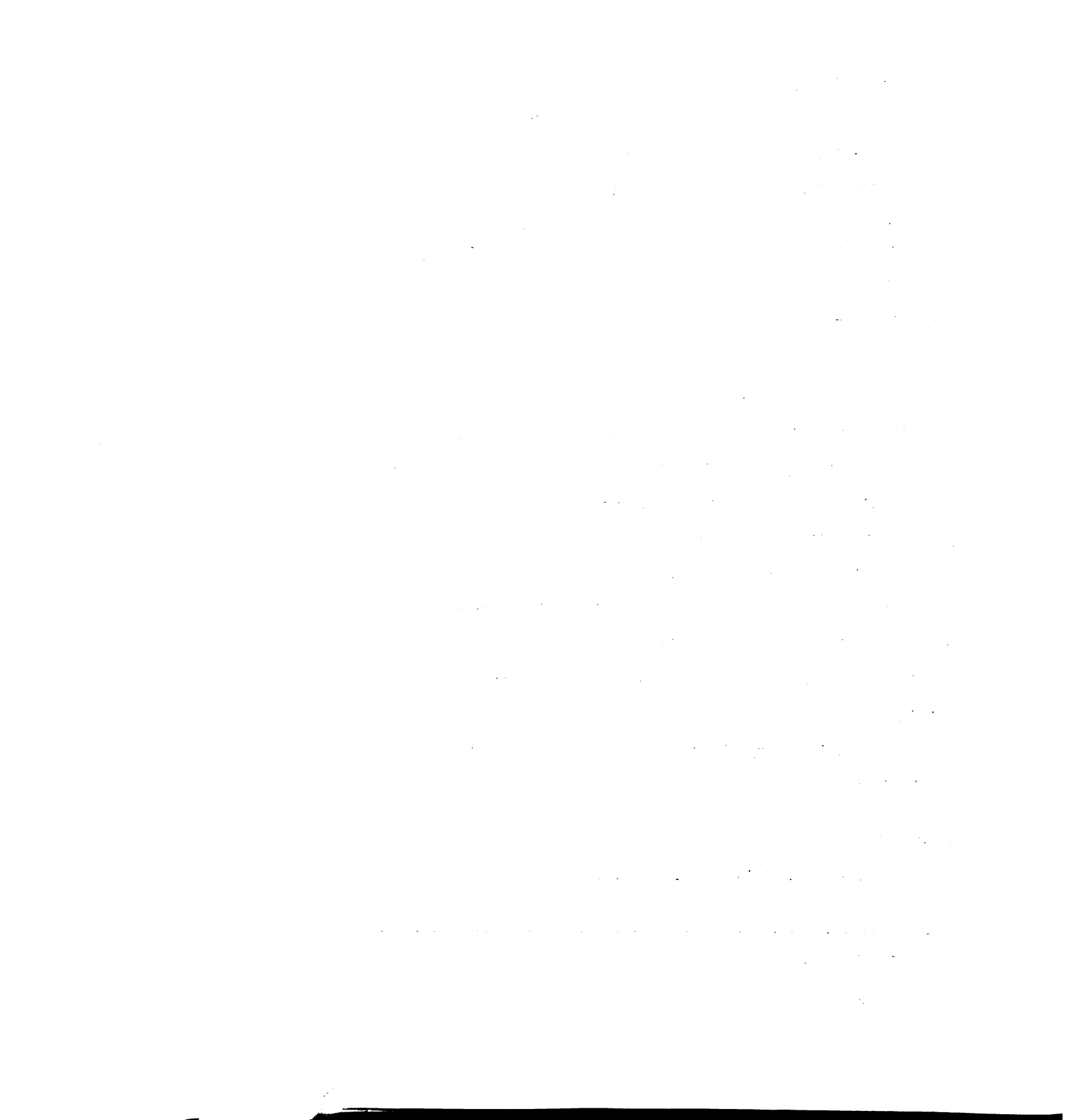
The point of attack is early and the action is revealed in a chronological sequence. Narrative exposition is used to fill in the details of events between acts. Except for the disclosure of the details of Boy Fenwick's death, the exposition is not interwoven with the rising action. Expositional material tends to be located near the beginning of acts.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Green Hat have attributes associated with the characters of Romanticism. The characters tend

²⁹Ibid., p. 137.

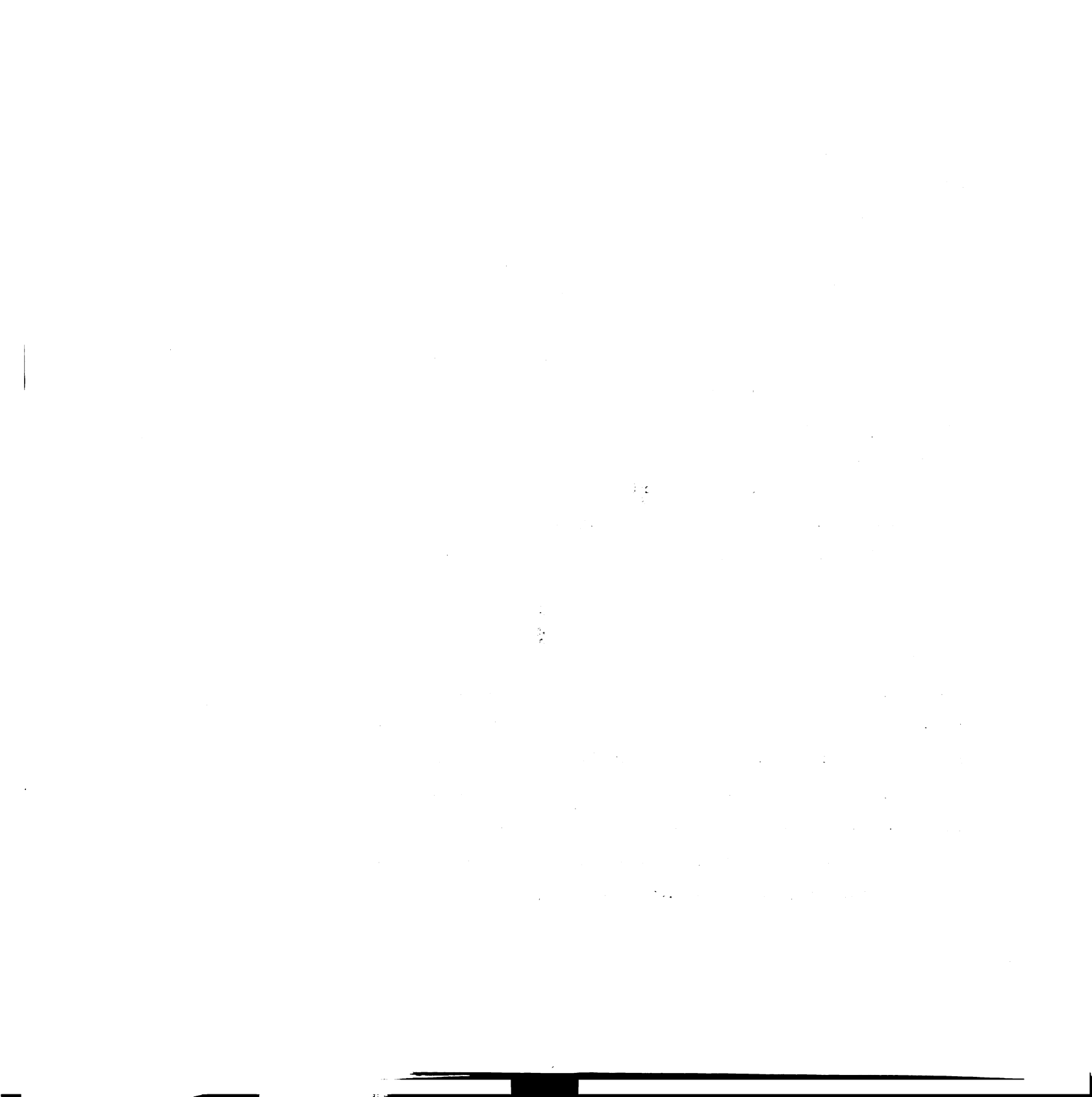
³⁰Ibid., p. 154.



to be improbable people guided by emotion rather than reason. They are "victims of emotional states connected with love." Traits of the typical romantic character, "the outcast of society," are discernible in the person of Iris.

The improbability of the characters is first apparent in the names of some of them which seem to be chosen for their uncommon nature, as, for example, Napier, Maurice, Hilary, Venice, and Conrad. In addition, the characters are improbable because of a lack of depth in their depiction. They are not exactly stock types, but then they are not wholly realistic. Sir Maurice is too one-sided as a supporter of the traditions of his class. He claims to have broken up Napier's youthful romance with Iris out of affection and regard for him. Yet this affection and regard are not revealed in the action of the drama. Napier does not seem to display those attributes which Iris sees in him. That is, whatever appeal he has exists for Iris alone.

Iris is a character who suffers as a result of her love for Napier. This love drives her into adultery and unhappiness. Eventually the inability to have the man she loves leads her to suicide. All of these feelings and actions indicate a trait of Romanticism in character. In addition, she is reminiscent of the "outcast of society" found in "historical" Romanticism. A mysterious event in her past, the suicide of her husband, affects her life. It causes her to rebel against the society which wrongly accused her. Consistent with this romantic type, Iris is prone to self-pity and ennui.



Language

The dialogue of The Green Hat corresponds to that of Romanticism. For the most part, it is written in an ornate prose that does not imitate the speech of everyday life. It is idealized speech for the most part. There are many passages which appear to approach the dialogue of Realism, but overall the characters speak as if they had a poet's gift for language. This quality is apparent in such passages as the following:

Iris, it's as though you came from an undiscovered country, where the stars stream over a sky wider than ours, where the men are strange and strong, where the women wear their souls like masks on their faces, and their souls know not the truth nor lying, not honor nor dishonor -- not good nor evil³¹

Theme

The themes of The Green Hat correspond to those of Romanticism. They do not deal with any contemporary social problem. They are primarily concerned with love. Its destructive power is seen in the life and death of Iris. Its ennobling power is seen in the sacrifices Iris makes to ensure the happiness of Napier. In addition, the play involves an idea of rebellion against established order. Even the theme of the sins of the father being visited on his offspring is suggested by the family reputation of the Marches which leads Sir Maurice to oppose the first romance of Napier and Iris.

Style of Play

The Green Hat exhibits two characteristics of Realism and three of Romanticism. All of its form elements correspond to Romanticism, although there is some indication of Realism in part of the dialogue.

³¹Ibid., p. 137.

The presence of realistic elements in this basically romantic drama indicates that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

Kongo by Chester DeVonde and Kilbourn Gordon

Story

About twenty years before the actions depicted in the play, Kregg stole the affection of Flint's wife. In a fight between Kregg and Flint over this incident, Flint was crippled permanently by a kick in the spine.

As the play opens, "Deadleg" Flint is in a remote part of the Belgian Congo. He has carved out a small empire there in which he controls the natives and the few whites of the area. His desire to take revenge on Kregg leads him to use Kregg's daughter, Annie, as bait to lure Kregg into his domain. When Kregg is trapped, Flint drives him to suicide through slow mental and physical torture. He plans to subject Annie to the same fate when it is revealed that she is his daughter and not Kregg's. He then arranges for her to escape to civilization through the jungle with Kirk, a young doctor with whom she has fallen in love.³²

General Characteristics

Kongo exhibits one characteristic associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the action of the play.

³²Chester DeVonde and Kilbourn Gordon, "Congo," unpublished play, U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D73651 (December 12, 1925). The play was produced under the title of "Kongo," but the copyright manuscript bears the title of "Congo".

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1863. It is a very important document, as it contains the President's message to the Congress regarding the state of the Union and the progress of the war.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War Department, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the military operations and the state of the army during the year 1862.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the naval operations and the state of the navy during the year 1862.

4. The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the land and mineral resources of the United States and the progress of the public land sales.

5. The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the financial operations and the state of the treasury during the year 1862.

6. The sixth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War Department, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the military operations and the state of the army during the year 1862.

7. The seventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the naval operations and the state of the navy during the year 1862.

8. The eighth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the land and mineral resources of the United States and the progress of the public land sales.

9. The ninth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the financial operations and the state of the treasury during the year 1862.

10. The tenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War Department, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the military operations and the state of the army during the year 1862.

11. The eleventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the naval operations and the state of the navy during the year 1862.

12. The twelfth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 10, 1863. It contains a detailed account of the land and mineral resources of the United States and the progress of the public land sales.

Kongo also exhibits three characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is a "tendency away from actuality" in the play. It depends a great deal on emotionality. Strange and unusual events appear in the action.

The tendency away from actuality is seen partly in the rather indefinite setting in time of the play. Its actions appear to take place in the twentieth century. Mention of ocean travel, modern medicine, and the use of modern firearms indicate the contemporary world. However, there is no close imitation of immediate man and society. The remoteness in place also fosters a tendency away from actuality. The play takes place in an isolated region of the Belgian Congo. The rather preposterous story of the play also suggests a tendency away from actuality.

The play depends on emotion to a great extent, both in its characters and in its general appeal. Flint's mania for revenge, the mental and physical sufferings of Kregg, and the love of Annie and Kirk all include freely expressed emotion. It is evident that the play is aimed at arousing emotions of fear and sentiment in its audience.

Although there is a rational explanation for them, strange and unusual events occur in the play. Flint controls the whites by controlling the natives through apparent "black magic". He has arranged wires, secret panels, and other devices to produce apparently supernatural effects. The thrills which arise from these effects provide much of the interest in the play.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Kongo contains traits associated with Romanticism. It is "loose" in its treatment of the traditional unities. The unity of place is observed in that all scenes take place in Flint's store in the jungle of the Belgian Congo. The action is unified but complicated by subplots. Annie's romance with Kirk is connected with the main action of Flint's revenge on Kregg, but assumes some importance of its own. While not related enough to each other to be considered a subplot, a number of incidents involving the natives and Flint interrupt the direct flow of action. The unity of time is largely ignored. A period of one month elapses in the play.

This manner of handling the unities results in a chronological structure in plotting. Narrative exposition is not entirely excluded, but is reserved for relating events which happen between acts. Annie's true relation to Flint is not gradually revealed in the rising action of the plot, but is reserved as a surprise for the end of the play. This incidence is only one example of the tendency of the play to unfold as a "series of thrills." The plot is most romantic in that its content is one of suspense and excitement.

Character

The persons portrayed in Kongo have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. While not wholly unrealistic, they are improbable people. Most of them tend to be dramatic types.

Flint, especially, is an improbable person. He displays a romantic trait of character in that his evil personality and his

physical deformity are related. There is also the romantic quality of the grotesque about him. Kregg is also an improbable person. He breaks too easily and suffers too loudly from Flint's mental and physical torture. He performs the function of being a victim rather than exhibiting independently motivated actions of a character.

Anne, Kirk, and the natives tend to be dramatic types. The two young lovers are not particularly distinguishable from other young lovers in similar dramas. The natives are stereotyped, and are portrayed as natural children of the jungle, easily cowed by "magic".

Language

The dialogue of Kongo corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. Language is used to distinguish between two groups of characters in the play, the whites and the natives. The whites express themselves in a way that imitates the speech of ordinary civilized life. The natives speak a type of "pidgin-English." The element of discussion plays little or no part in the drama.

Theme

The themes of Kongo correspond to those of Romanticism. Ideas and problems of contemporary society are totally excluded. The play projects ideas connected with the emotions of revenge as is evident in Flint's plans. Love at first sight is a secondary theme in the subplot between Annie and Kirk. A primary theme is that of moral justice. Kregg is punished for the wrongs he inflicted on Flint. Flint in turn is punished for his revenge by losing Annie after he learns she is his daughter. Annie and Kirk, the only "good" people

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in the drama, are rewarded by mutual love and escape from the jungle.

Style of Play

Kongo exhibits one characteristic of Realism and three of Romanticism. All of its form elements except that of language correspond to those of Romanticism. The analysis reveals that the play is basically romantic. The inclusion of realistic traits in this romantic drama indicates that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

Lucky Sam McCarver by Sidney Howard

Story

A self-made man, Sam McCarver, owns an exclusive nightclub. In the course of his business, he meets and falls in love with Carlotta Ashe, a not too respectable member of an American "aristocratic" family. Sam, in addition to loving Carlotta, sees in her the opportunity to climb further up the social ladder. Carlotta marries Sam, partly out of gratitude, after Sam helps to get her out of trouble over a drunken New Year's Eve party in his club. Their marriage is not happy. Carlotta is dissatisfied with the manners and education of her ex-barkeeper husband, and seeks unsuccessfully to improve him. Sam, on the other hand, cannot stand the parasitic members of Carlotta's social set. The marriage is over in a year. Carlotta's extravagance and ill-health force her to depend on a man who is a wealthy but reprehensible society member. Her health is destroyed and she dies of heart disease on the same night that Sam calls on her

to offer her twelve thousand dollars a year to support herself.³³

General Characteristics

Lucky Sam McCarver exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the action of the drama. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character is emphasized. The influence of environment on character is evident in the play.

The play is set in a time corresponding to the opening year of the play. The contemporary world of that time is suggested by references to Prohibition, jazz music, and the fox trot. Sam's wealth is gained from Wall Street and Oklahoma oil wells. In short, backgrounds of the 1920's are convincingly suggested.

The title of the play indicates the importance of the element of character in the play. Lucky Sam McCarver is a biography of a self-made man. The drama does not follow the complete life of McCarver, but it does depict two of the important years in his rise to great wealth. Carlotta Ashe and Sam McCarver are the center of interest in the play. The plot is almost non-existent. It provides for four scenes between Carlotta and Sam, and reveals the changes made in each of them. His rise and her decline guide the action of the play.

The influence of environment is evident in the play. Sam's past is revealed bit by bit and helps to explain Sam's personality. His drive for success and wealth are motivated by a desire to forget his

³³Sidney Howard, "Lucky Sam McCarver," Representative American Dramas, Montrose J. Moses, ed., (revised ed.; Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1941), pp. 673-720.

past. At the same time his manner of dealing with people (which he learned in the lower levels of society) is carried over into his new position in society. Sam changes outwardly as he gains polish, better speech, and finer clothes, but he remains the same man essentially throughout the play. Carlotta is similarly influenced by her environment. She can not get used to the idea that she is no longer independently wealthy. Her early experiences do not prepare her to deal with the practical matters that her mature years encompass. Differences in environment make it impossible for Sam and Carlotta to have a meaningful relationship.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Lucky Sam McCarver contains traits associated with Realism. While the structure of the entire play violates the unities of time and place, there is still a "structural compactness" evident in each of its four scenes. These scenes are actually four episodes in the life of Sam McCarver. Each displays a unity of time, place, and action. Each also contains retrospective exposition which not only fills in the details of events which occur between scenes, but also continues to reveal more and more about the past of the main characters. Obvious "theatrical plotting" is avoided. Even a murder in the first act is worked carefully into the action of the play. It is not meant to provide thrills or excitement.

Although the shifts in time and place might indicate a trait of Romanticism in the plot, these shifts actually serve to show changes in character. A reasonable amount of time must lapse in order that

the development of the persons may appear credible. These shifts are a result of the importance of character to the drama.

Character

The persons portrayed in Lucky Sam McCarver have attributes of character associated with Realism. They are credible, probable people. They are also relatively complex personalities. Their importance in the drama and the influence of environment on them have already been mentioned under general characteristics.

Carlotta and Sam are not "ordinary" people, but they are credible, probable persons. Carlotta is described as complex in her physical attributes. She has a face which is "fragile and exquisite" but the "boyish gawkiness of her bodily movement" detracts from a sense of complete beauty.³⁴ Mentally she is intelligent, but she expresses herself in "one mess of musical-comedy catch phrases."³⁵ Sam McCarver displays a similar complexity. He is handsome in a rough way. "As the occasion demands, he can be terrifyingly harsh or benignly mellow"³⁶ His intelligence is directed toward gaining wealth and he does not waste time doing anything for its own sake. Both Carlotta and Sam are credible in their misunderstanding of each other. They seem able to see faults in each other, but are unable to see faults within themselves. They are also interesting in that they are not wholly sympathetic or unsympathetic people.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 684-85.

³⁵Ibid., p. 688.

³⁶Ibid., p. 679.

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Language

The dialogue of Lucky Sam McCarver corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. Characters are individualized through dialogue. Sam's attempts at improving himself are made clear in his speech. He frequently corrects himself when he uses poor grammar. Carlotta's use of catch phrases renders her dialogue distinguishable from that of other characters. Carlotta's society friends often express themselves in an affected manner which is consistent with their position and behavior. The element of discussion is found in the play, but is not prevalent. However, McCarver and a former husband of Carlotta do talk over Sam's practice of "using" other people to get ahead.³⁷

Theme

The themes of Lucky Sam McCarver correspond to those of Realism. The play deals with individual human problems. The conflicts between Sam and Carlotta project the idea that power and wealth should not be sought for their own sake. Carlotta's own difficulties point out the need to face the reality of life. Perhaps the basic theme of the play is expressed by Carter Ashe, one of Carlotta's former husbands. He speaks to Sam about his "using" people: "Once a man begins to depend on other people, he has to consider them."³⁸ This statement indicates a theme of personal and social responsibility.

Style of Play

Lucky Sam McCarver exhibits four characteristics of Realism. All

³⁷Ibid., p. 706.

³⁸Ibid.

of its form elements correspond to the same style. It is evident that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

Lulu Belle by Edward Sheldon and Charles MacArthur

Story

Lulu Belle is a Negro prostitute with many male admirers. Her uninhibited manner and love of fun make her a center of attention in her neighborhood. Partly in jest, she makes advances to a married barber, George Randall. He falls in love with her, and she delights in tormenting him. George deserts his wife and family for Lulu Belle, but she drops him for a prize-fighter, Butch Cooper. George knifes and kills Butch in a fight over Lulu Belle. Lulu Belle then becomes the mistress of a degenerate French nobleman, the Vicomte de Villars. He dresses her beautifully, and teaches her to speak French. George, who has been running from the law, still loves Lulu Belle, and works his way to France. He enters her apartment one night and pleads for her to come back to him. She taunts him, and then refuses his plea. In a rage, George strangles her with his bare hands. He is caught by the police and sent to await trial.³⁹

General Characteristics

Lulu Belle exhibits two characteristics associated with Naturalism. It portrays "life in the lower levels of society." Also,

³⁹Edward Sheldon and Charles MacArthur, "My Lulu Belle," unpublished play, U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D72824 (September 4, 1925). The play was produced under the title of "Lulu Belle," but the copyright manuscript bears the title "My Lulu Belle."

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"sordid, unpleasant, bestial aspects of life are frankly treated."

Lulu Belle depicts the conditions of existence among the low level of New York. The background of the first act is a sidewalk of San Juan Hill in the Harlem district.⁴⁰ Most of the Negroes who live there are shown spending what money they have on liquor, narcotics, and prostitutes, all escapes from the life they lead.

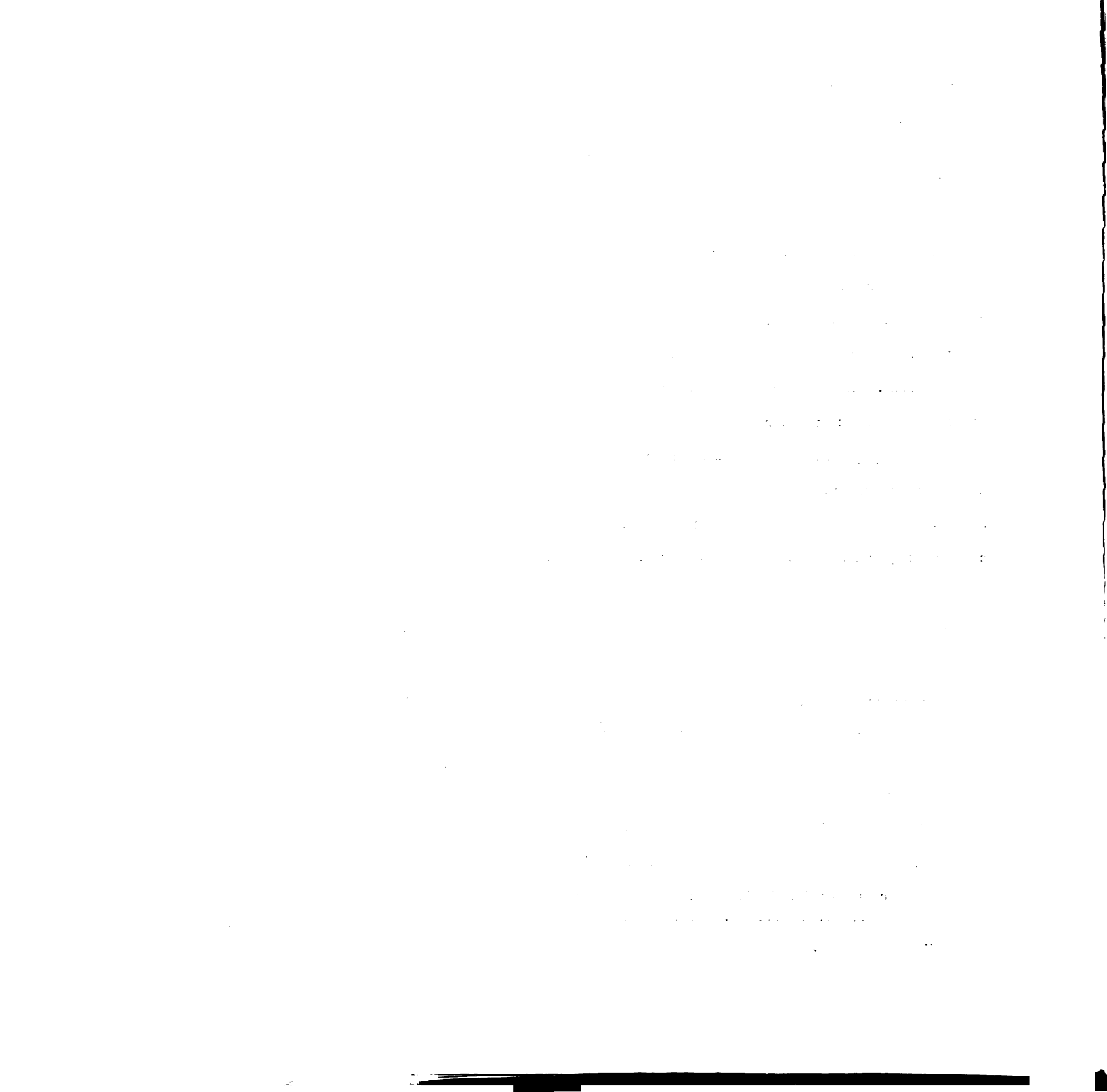
The sordid and bestial side of the characters is obvious in the play. Lulu Belle is amoral and erotic in her obvious sexuality. George and Butch fight like savage animals over her, until George kills Butch. In the first act, two women also carry on a fight that draws laughter from the rest of the characters watching it.

Lulu Belle exhibits one characteristic that can be associated with either Naturalism or Realism. The element of character is emphasized. In spite of all its welter of detail, the play is primarily a character portrait of Lulu Belle. Her amorality, ambition, and sexuality guide the actions of other characters and the actions of the play. The conflicts aroused in George over his desire for Lulu Belle lead to actions which provide interest in the play.

Lulu Belle also exhibits three characteristics of Romanticism. There is an emphasis on emotionality and subjectivity. The play includes a rebellion against the moral and social codes of society. Local color and the picturesque are depicted.

The instinctive and non-rational powers of human beings are emphasized in the characters of the drama. While there can be some argument for Naturalism in the animal behavior of some of the

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 1.



characters, this character attribute is softened in its impact.

George may revert to savagery in his fight with Butch, but his attraction to Lulu Belle is not portrayed as entirely one of sexual instinct. He agonizes too much over his love. If he is guided by a strong sexual instinct, it is aroused only by Lulu Belle. The fact that George displays a great deal of self-pity in his conflicts over the love of Lulu Belle indicates that the emotionality and subjectivity in the play are more romantic than naturalistic.

Lulu Belle and George both display a tendency to revolt against the established laws of society. Lulu Belle does so openly. She glories in shocking people with her language and behavior. The fact that she is a prostitute and finds no shame in her profession indicates a disregard for common morality. George suffers from his revolt against the established social order. He loses a wife and children and becomes an outcast of society when he breaks society's laws. An important point about this revolutionary attitude in the play is that Lulu Belle is rather idealized in her disregard for the mores and strictures of society. She is happy, untroubled, and "sassy."

The inclusion of details of local color is apparent in the play. Harlem is shown in the first act as a colorful and noisy environment. Men gamble on doorsteps. Children play tag. Two women argue and fight as a crowd urges them on. Uninhibited gaiety and music are shown in a Saturday night dance at the Elite Grotto. These details of life in Harlem are viewed as local color rather than as an attempt to present a "slice of life." Only the first twenty-one pages of the first act suggest the "slice of life" concept of Naturalism. The

details are used to create mood. They become less numerous as the dramatic action of the play is established.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Lulu Belle contains traits associated with Naturalism. Its content is sordid and "crass." It is taken from contemporary life. Both of these traits should be obvious from the discussion under general characteristics.

It is important to note that while the naturalistic traits in the play are important elements in its style, other traits of Naturalism are not present. The play does not avoid or underplay "big scenes" or theatrical climaxes. The "slice of life" technique is used to create atmosphere, but it is not employed to the extent that the play appears to have no beginning and no end. The beginning of the dramatic action is hidden in the detailed depiction of life in Harlem in the first act. However, the ending of the play is unmistakable. The "slice of life" concept is a device in the play, and not the determinant of plot structure.

The plot of Lulu Belle also contains traits associated with Romanticism. Over all, the plot is "loose" in its construction. Although details tend to obscure it, the action of the play is simple and unified. However, the unity of time is ignored. The action of the play covers a period of almost six years. The unity of place is broken, as the events of the play are set in three locations in Harlem and one in France.

The chronological structure associated with Romanticism is present in the play. The point of attack, the first confrontation between Lulu Belle and George, is early, and the drama unfolds in action which does away with the need for extensive narrative exposition. The action is not revealed as a series of thrills, but some events in the play clearly are included to induce excitement. Two examples of this are the fight between Butch and George and the strangling of Lulu Belle. The emphasis on isolated bits of excitement indicate a romantic trait in the plot.

It should be added that the plot of the play bears a striking similarity to that of the opera, Carmen.

Character

The persons portrayed in Lulu Belle have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. While not wholly unrealistic, they are improbable people. They are guided more by emotion than by reason. Lulu Belle is related to the "less reputable female characters" found in "historical" Romanticism.

George is an improbable person in that his changes in character are too rapid and dramatic. In Act I he is a shy, moral man who loves his family and goes to church. Three months later, in Act II, he is consumed by lust and has completely cut himself off from his past. Sex is clearly his motivation, but it is not tempered by any other consideration. George demonstrates a romantic trait in that he is almost literally the victim of an emotional state connected with love, jealousy, melancholy, despair, self-pity, and lust.

Lulu Belle is improbable in her enthusiasm for living the life she does. Her amorality is made appealing. The sexual attraction

she has for men is overemphasized. But, above all, Lulu Belle comes closest to resembling the less reputable female characters in "historical" Romanticism. Like them, she shows traits of lust, ambition, and heartlessness. Her sexual nature has been mentioned several times already. In addition, she is ambitious. She chooses her lovers in order to rise higher in her particular society as is evident in her choice of the prize-fighter. Her ambitions are fully realized when she becomes the mistress of a count. Heartlessness is shown by her treatment of George. She first becomes interested in him as a challenge to her abilities to attract men. She pursues him until his purity no longer exists and then turns her back on him. She continues to resist his love until he kills her.

Language

The dialogue of Lulu Belle corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. Since most of the characters are from the same social class, language does not serve to distinguish them from one another. Dialogue in the play attempts to imitate the speech of everyday life. Slang and jargon are used frequently. However, the dialogue is too direct in the expression of ~~the~~ thoughts and the advancement of plot to be considered the phonographic speech of Naturalism. The element of discussion often associated with Realism is absent from the drama.

Theme

The themes of Lulu Belle correspond to those of Romanticism. Although the contemporary world is the background of the play, there is no involvement in any ideas or problems of modern man or society.

The theme of rebellion against established order has been pointed out under general characteristics. The primary themes in the play deal with aspects of love. George loves Lulu Belle at first sight. He suffers from the anguish of jealousy. The play demonstrates that love can destroy, that unrequited love can lead to hate.

Style of Play

Lulu Belle exhibits two characteristics of Naturalism, one associated with both Naturalism and Realism, and three of Romanticism. The form element of plot displays traits of both Naturalism and Romanticism. The elements of character and theme are romantic. The remaining element of language is realistic. It is plain that the style of the play is not clearly associated with a single dramatic style. However, the romantic characteristics and traits in form elements are predominant. The love story so reminiscent of Carmen stands out above the numerous details from life and the sordidness of the subject matter. For all of its attempts to appear real, the play does not actually deal with real life. In view of the analysis, it is apparent that the play is basically romantic, but contains elements of Realism and Naturalism. For this reason, it is concluded that the style of the play corresponds most closely to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism. Special note, however, should be made of the presence of elements of Naturalism in the play.

The Mud Turtle by Elliot Lester

Story

Lem Trustine returns from a yearly trip to Minneapolis to his father's farm in the wheat belt of Northern Minnesota with Kate, his



bride. Because of the suddenness of the marriage and the fact that Kate was a waitress, Old Trustine believes that she is a cheap woman who took advantage of the pleasant but unsophisticated Lem. He unjustifiably accuses her of being wanton and scheming. When she protests, he resents her spirited defiance of him and slaps her in front of Lem. He wants to prove again that Old Trustine is the master of the farm and his family. Kate is proud, and will not give in to him. While outwardly cowed, she vows to "get even" for Old Trustine's treatment of her. She learns of the importance of the wheat crop in the financial plans of Trustine. When a storm threatens, the wheat must be harvested rapidly. She offers herself to a hired man if he will wreck the threshing machine so that it can't be used to get the wheat in. The hired man does so, but Kate refuses to give in to him. Instead, she tells Old Trustine of her success in ruining his crop and forces Lem to make a choice between her and his father. Lem sides with her and they plan to leave the farm. Old Trustine, broken in spirit by a double calamity, bows to the will of Kate and begs her and Lem to stay. They do.⁴¹

General Characteristics

The Mud Turtle exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character is emphasized. The influence of environment on character is apparent.

⁴¹Elliot Lester, "The Mud Turtle," unpublished play, U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D67532 (April 24, 1924).

The contemporary world is suggested by the location of the action of the drama, and objects that are used in the action. The play is set in Northern Minnesota on a farm which has motorized threshing machines and trucks. In addition, mention is made of an actual city, Minneapolis. The fact that Kate was an independent working woman also indicates the contemporary nature of the play.

Character portrayal and conflict are the important factors in the play. It is the opposition of the strong wills of Kate and Old Trustine which determine the action of the drama.

The influence of environment is apparent in the characters. Kate's strength of character stems from the necessity of having to make her own way in life. Old Trustine is hard and shrewd because the demands of running a farm have made him that way. His sons obey him because they have never been allowed to disobey. The plain and spare nature of the living room in which the play is set reflects the practical and unimaginative attitudes of Old Trustine.⁴²

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Mud Turtle contains traits associated with Realism. It displays a "structural compactness" in its treatment of the traditional unities. Action is unified and simple. Only the bargain between Kate and the hired man complicate it, and even this incident has a strong and obvious relation to the main action, the conflict between Kate and Old Trustine. The unity of place is strictly observed

⁴²Ibid., p. 1.

in that all scenes are set in the Trustine farmhouse. The unity of time is partly ignored. The play covers a period of several days. The particular handling of the unities in the play results in a late point of attack. However, there is not a great deal of narrative exposition present in the play after the first act.

The play is realistic in its avoidance of "theatrical plotting." There is a logical cause-and-effect relation between all the events in the play. The only incident not arising directly from the conflict between Kate and Old Trustine is the storm. However, its probability is established well before it appears. That is, it is not meant to be an element of surprise in the drama.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Mud Turtle have attributes associated with characters in Realism. They are credible, probable people who display some complexity of personality. In addition, they are drawn from the middle class. Two other traits, the importance of the characters to the drama and the influence of environment, have already been mentioned under general characteristics.

The credible nature of the characters is demonstrated in the person of Kate. She is neither strikingly beautiful nor plain. She is far from sophisticated, but has learned to deal with people. Her actions in the drama are particularly probable. She is quite shocked when her father-in-law resents her. She is too proud to be bullied, but when it is plain that Old Trustine can back verbal threats with physical action, she pretends to give in to him. The fact that she is a woman alone in a strange environment seems to justify her desperate attempts at revenge. She is also credible when she cannot allow

herself to be seduced by the hired man. She can think of the deed, but she can't face the reality of it.

Language

The dialogue of The Mud Turtle corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in an unornate prose which appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. Kate's speech is a bit more refined than that of the farm family. The father is distinguished by his slight French-Canadian accent. Many colloquial expressions and the contractions of the endings of words aids in giving the dialogue the appearance of imitating everyday speech.

Theme

The themes of The Mud Turtle correspond to those of Realism. They deal with individual human problems in a family situation. The need for a father to accept others brought into his family is projected in the play. Another theme is that lack of human understanding is the cause of difficulties in life. There is also the suggestion that people should be judged by what they are and not what they do. Old Trustine's narrow views caused him to think that a waitress was somehow immoral.

Style of Play

The Mud Turtle exhibits four characteristics of Realism. Its form elements all correspond to those of Realism. It is clear from this analysis that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 1, 1861. It is a very important document, as it sets out the President's policy for the new year.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the financial state of the country at the beginning of the year.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the interior of the country at the beginning of the year.

4. The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the Navy at the beginning of the year.

5. The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the War at the beginning of the year.

6. The sixth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the State at the beginning of the year.

7. The seventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the War at the beginning of the year.

8. The eighth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the Navy at the beginning of the year.

9. The ninth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the interior of the country at the beginning of the year.

10. The tenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the financial state of the country at the beginning of the year.

11. The eleventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the State at the beginning of the year.

12. The twelfth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the War at the beginning of the year.

13. The thirteenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the Navy at the beginning of the year.

14. The fourteenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the interior of the country at the beginning of the year.

15. The fifteenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the financial state of the country at the beginning of the year.

16. The sixteenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the State at the beginning of the year.

17. The seventeenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the War at the beginning of the year.

18. The eighteenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the Navy at the beginning of the year.

19. The nineteenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the state of the interior of the country at the beginning of the year.

20. The twentieth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 1, 1861. It contains a detailed account of the financial state of the country at the beginning of the year.

Shanghai Gesture by John ColtonStory

The play is set in a Chinese bordello in Shanghai, China. Twenty years before the events depicted in the play, Mother Goddam (proprietress of the bordello) had been a Chinese princess married to Sir Guy Charteris. In order to marry his English sweetheart, Sir Guy sold Mother Goddam into white slavery. Unknown to Sir Guy, Mother Goddam substituted her infant daughter, Poppy, for his newborn child, Ni Pau.

As the play opens, Mother Goddam has invited Sir Guy to a Chinese New Year's Eve party at which she plans to reveal the substitution of children twenty years before. She entertains with an auction in which Ni Pau is sold into the lowest level of prostitution, the floating junks on the river. Sir Guy objects to the fate of the girl, and Mother Goddam enjoys a moment of revenge, as she reveals that the girl is Sir Guy's real daughter. He is powerless to stop Mother Goddam, however. Her revenge is short-lived because she discovers that her daughter, Poppy, has become a complete degenerate. Mother Goddam's revenge turns to horror and she strangles Poppy. Seeing that she has become the victim of her hate, Mother Goddam then arranges to have Ni Pau freed and returned to Sir Guy.⁴³

General Characteristics

Shanghai Gesture exhibits one characteristic associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the action

⁴³John Colton, Shanghai Gesture (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926).

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Figure 1. The effect of the concentration of the *Agrobacterium* suspension on the transformation efficiency of *Agrobacterium* strains.

of the drama.

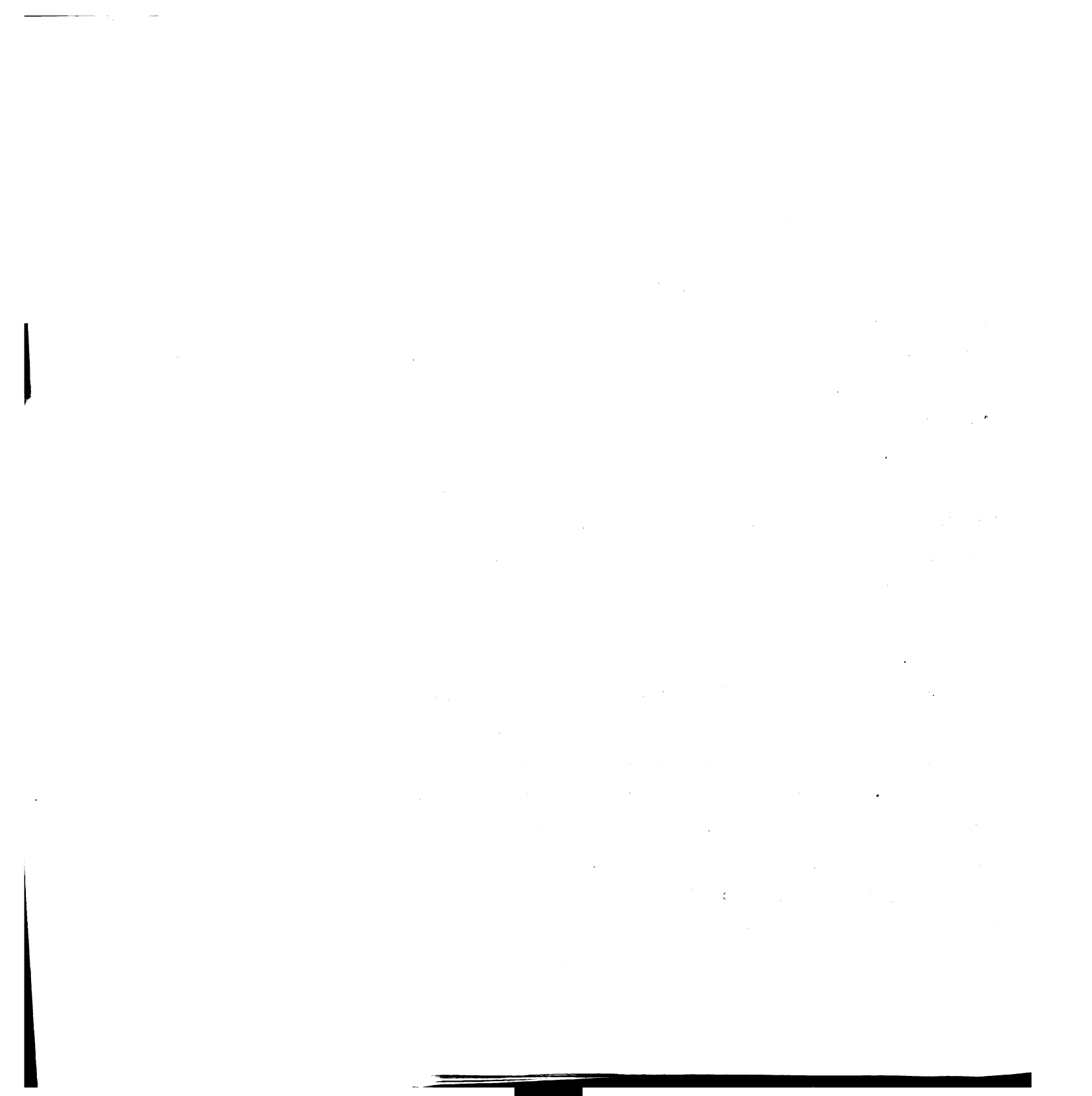
The play also exhibits four characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is an evident "tendency away from actuality." Emotion is an important element in the action. A rebellion against established order is presented. In addition, there is a depiction of local color and the picturesque.

The tendency away from actuality stems from the remoteness of the play in place and culture. The setting is a bordello in Shanghai. The cultural background is supposedly Chinese. Any sense of actuality is also destroyed by the improbable events of the plot and the incredible nature of the characters.

Emotion, rather than logic, controls the action of the drama. The play depends on a strong, even extravagant display of emotion. There is little subtlety in the hatred and cruelty of Mother Goddam. It drives her to revenge and then murder. She and the other characters react almost instinctively, without recourse to rational thought. The murder of Poppy is one example of the irrational and emotional element in the play.

A rebellion against established order is evident in the play. The life of Mother Goddam depicts a breaking of almost every moral and social law. She was wronged as a young woman and her revenge against this wrong takes the form of defying the world about her. She believes that she is above the laws that govern ordinary people. Her actions are self-centered; they are an attempt to satisfy her individual desires.

The play is marked by a depiction of local color. The surroundings of an opulent bordello are described in detail. The settings are variously titled "The Gallery of the Laughing Dolls," "The Grand Red



Hall of Lily and Lotus Roots," "The Little Room of the Great Cat," "The Green Stairway of the Angry Dragon."⁴⁴ Chinese costumes, idioms and music also add local color to the play. This use of local color also promotes a romantic feeling of exotic beauty as well as an aura of the strange and unusual.

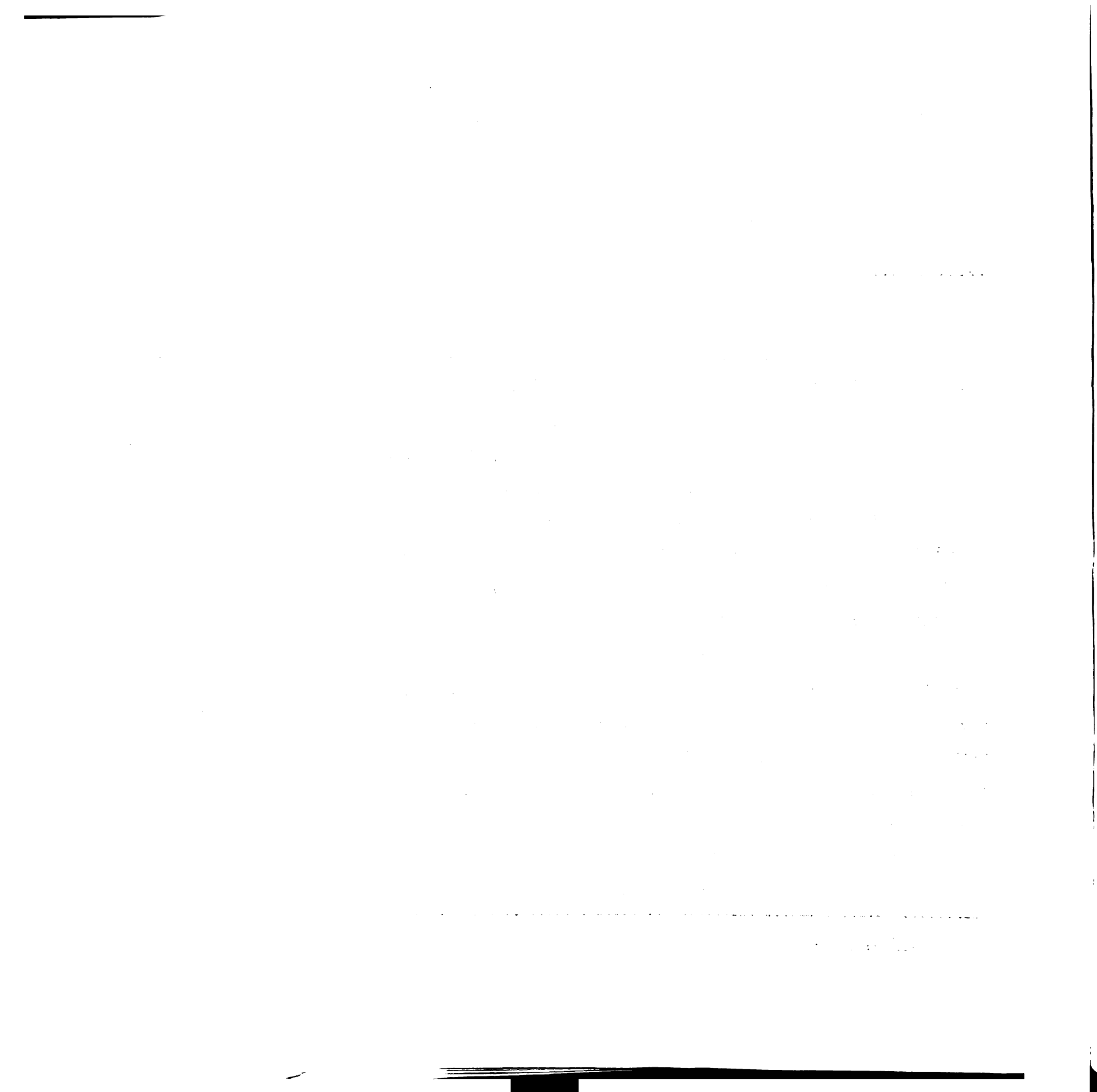
Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Shanghai Gesture contains traits associated with Realism. It displays a "structural compactness" in dealing with the traditional unities. The unity of time is strictly observed in that the events of the play all occur within a period of twenty-four hours. The unity of place is only slightly broken. The play has five settings, but all are located in Mother Goddam's brothel. The action is unified, but it is complicated by two relevant subplots, the stories of Ni Pau and Poppy. The point of attack is late and retrospective exposition is woven into the rising action of the play.

The plot of the play also contains traits associated with Romanticism. The action unfolds as a series of thrills in presenting a content of excitement, suspense, and glamor. The vengeance of Mother Goddam, her confrontation with Sir Guy, the auction of Ni Pau, the surprising revelation of Poppy's degeneracy, and the strangling of Poppy indicate part of the thrills and excitement in the play. Costumes, settings, and music provide the glamor. The exotic settings and the sensational situations are elements of the strange and the

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 3.



unusual in the play.

Character

The persons portrayed in Shanghai Gesture have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They are improbable people guided by emotion rather than by reason. Mother Goddam displays traits which correspond to characters in "historical" Romanticism.

The characters are improbable by their very identity. They are not the persons of ordinary experience. Mother Goddam is a Chinese princess and a bordello keeper. Sir Guy is a titled Englishman influential in the government of Shanghai. Ni Pau is a slave in a brothel, yet she manages to stay "pure." Poppy is a person of wealth and privilege, and in addition, an alcoholic, a narcotics addict, and a nymphomaniac. The role of emotion in the characters' actions has already been mentioned under general characteristics.

Madam Goddam corresponds to a type of character found in "historical" Romanticism. She is an "outcast of society." Wrong done to her in the past leads her to take revenge on the people and the society who wronged her. Both her initial betrayal and the urge to "get even" make her suffer from melancholy and self-pity. In addition, Mother Goddam displays the traits of the less reputable female characters in "historical" Romanticism. She is lustful, ambitious, and heartless.

Language

The dialogue of Shanghai Gesture corresponds to that of Romanticism. It is written in ornate prose. The expression is idealized as if the characters had a poet's gift for language. Although there are

many passages which appear to be "realistic" dialogue, the overall tendency of speech in the play is not to imitate the patterns of conversation in everyday life. Chinese accents are not employed, but supposedly Chinese idioms are. The dialogue is not truly poetic, but it attempts to be. The characters are further glamorized by their use of short phrases in French and Spanish.

Theme

The themes of Shanghai Gesture correspond to those of Romanticism. There is no involvement in contemporary human or social problems. Mother Goddam projects the idea of nostalgia, a dream of living according to one's wishes and desires. She dwells upon how happy she and Sir Guy might have been. The theme of opposition to established order also appears in the play. Several ideas about love are present. In the main, the destructive power of spurned love is emphasized. The death of Poppy indicates that the theme of fate is operative in the drama. The sins of her mother are visited upon her.

Style of Play

Shanghai Gesture exhibits one characteristic of Realism and four of Romanticism. The form element of plot has both realistic and romantic traits. All the other form elements correspond to those of Romanticism. The play, therefore, appears to be basically romantic with some inclusion of realistic elements. This indicates that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

Twelve Miles Out by William A. McGuireStory

The rather mundane life of John and Jane Burton in their home on the coast of Long Island is intruded upon by the appearance of Gerald Fay and his gang of rumrunners. He interrupts one of their many arguments, to take over their home as a hiding place for a cargo of liquor. Only ten minutes later, Michael McCue, a hi-jacker, and his gang arrive and take the liquor, the Burtons, and the Fay gang on board their schooner. They sail twelve miles out and anchor. John is tied up below and the rival gang leaders both show an interest in Jane. They fight over her and Fay wins, killing McCue. Fay's love for Jane awakens his sense of nobility. The next day when they are captured by revenue agents, Fay decides to go straight. Jane has fallen in love with him and agrees to divorce her husband and marry Fay.⁴⁵

General Characteristics

Twelve Miles Out exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the action of the drama. There is an attempt to imitate "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society."

The contemporary world is suggested by the cottage of the Burtons with its electric lighting and objects associated with life in the twentieth century. The criminal activities of Fay and McCue involve rumrunning, a crime particularly connected with the Prohibition

⁴⁵William A. McGuire, "Twelve Miles Out," unpublished play, U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D73429 (November 21, 1925).

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The play also exhibits two characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is a "tendency away from actuality" and the concept of a search for individual freedom.

The tendency away from actuality is seen in the improbability of the story itself. The rapidity of change in the action and the preposterous circumstances indicate an escape from actuality, not an imitation of reality. One may accept Fay's taking over the Burton home, but the idea of criminal capturing criminal is too improbable to elicit belief.

Both Fay and McCue illustrate the concept of a search for freedom in the play. They both believe in themselves and in the freedom to do what they please. The play seems to project the idea that laws don't apply to all men. There is a definite idealization of the criminal's opposing society in that both McCue and Fay are depicted as sympathetic characters.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Twelve Miles Out contains traits associated with Romanticism. Although it observes a unity of time, it is "loose" in construction. The unity of place is broken by the shifting of the action between the Burton cottage and McCue's schooner. The action is unified but complicated. There is much evidence of obvious, theatrical plotting in the construction of the play. Although the unity of time is observed, the point of attack is early. There is little narrative exposition employed in the plot and the action

unfolds as "a series of thrills presented in a rapid melodramatic manner." Jane's drunken brother is killed by one of the gangs in the first act. Act II ends with a knife fight in a dark ship's cabin. Altogether, the plot provides the excitement and suspense often found in dramas of Romanticism. In addition, the plot appears to be superimposed on the characters. What they are and what they do seems to have little effect on the ordering of events.

Character

The persons portrayed in Twelve Miles Out have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They are improbable persons who tend to be dramatic types rather than rounded individuals.

The improbability of the characters is emphasized by the suddenness of the love that McCue and Fay develop for Jane. The two men are also improbable in their rivalry over her. Although McCue has Fay in his power, he consents to a knife fight to determine who will win the girl. Both men enter into the fight with a bravado and calmness which is unbelievable. Jane is improbable, too, in her lack of individuality. She is an object of action and not an imitation of a real person. John Burton is too cowardly and dull to appear probable. He is too obviously a foil for the romantic criminal with whom Jane falls in love. "Romantic criminal" is an apt name for both Fay and McCue. As noted, they are drawn as sympathetic characters in spite of their lives of crime.

Language

The dialogue of Twelve Miles Out corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in an unornate prose and appears natural to the

characters and their positions. The gangs of both Fay and McCue are composed of national types who speak with various accents -- English, Chinese, and Cockney. The dialogue is mainly functional in that it serves to advance the plot. There is little interest in the language for its own sake.

Theme

The themes of Twelve Miles Out correspond to those of Romanticism. Although set in a contemporary world, there is no involvement in problems of modern man or society. There is an idealization of the theme of individual freedom which borders on license rather than liberty. Love at first sight is projected in the characters of McCue and Fay as they fall for Jane. The ennobling power of love is demonstrated when Fay decides to reform because of his love for Jane. The idea that a romantic, exciting life is better than respectability is evident in the fact that Jane plans to divorce her husband, a model of middle class virtues, in order to marry the much less respectable Fay.

Style of Play

Twelve Miles Out exhibits two characteristics of Realism and two of Romanticism. The form element of language corresponds to that of Realism, but the other form elements are related to those of Romanticism. In view of the analysis it is evident that the play is basically romantic with some realistic traits. This mixture of elements indicates that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

Summary of the 1925-1926 Season

Analyses of the twelve selected "successful," serious plays from the Broadway theatrical season of 1925-1926 revealed that in regard to style five plays (Craig's Wife, The Enemy, The Mud Turtle, The Bride of the Lamb, and Lucky Sam McCarver) were written in a style related to Realism, six plays (The Green Hat, Twelve Miles Out, Shanghai Gesture, The Great Gatsby, Lulu Belle, and Kongo) were written in a style related to Romanticism, and one play (The Great God Brown) was written in a style related to Expressionism. Characteristics of Naturalism were present in Lulu Belle but not to the extent that the play could be considered naturalistic. No other dramatic styles were represented during the season in the selected plays.

Except for one play, The Enemy, the plays associated with the dramatic style of Realism correspond fairly closely to all of the criteria for that style. Obvious manipulation of events in Mr. Pollock's play are related to Romanticism.

On the other hand, characteristics and traits of Realism are evident in all six of the romantic plays. All exhibit a fourth-wall convention. The element of language in four of them corresponds to Realism. Lulu Belle is of particular interest because its basically romantic nature contains some indication of traits associated with Naturalism. All six of the romantic plays are related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism. However, three of them -- The Green Hat, Shanghai Gesture, and Twelve Miles Out -- contain characters who tend to resemble persons in "historical" Romanticism.

The single play related to Expressionism, The Great God Brown,

corresponds quite closely to the criteria of that style. The play appears to be associated with the Mystic phase of Expressionism.

CHAPTER XII

THE BROADWAY THEATRICAL SEASON OF 1928-1929

Play Selection

Two hundred and twenty-seven full-length plays opened on Broadway in the theatrical season of 1928-1929.¹ Out of this total, one hundred and eight were comedies, musical comedies, or revues. As such they are not a concern of this study, nor are the twenty-two adaptations or translations of foreign dramas which appeared in this season. Twenty-two revivals of dramas from earlier seasons of dramatic periods were also presented. The remainder of the plays in this season were serious dramas written by American or foreign authors and intended for original production on Broadway. However, out of a total of seventy-five of these plays, sixty-one ran less than one hundred performances and did not receive favorable reviews at the time of their openings, nor any significant critical recognition since that time.

Thus fourteen plays fit the standards of selection operative in this study for this season. Five of the plays ran over one hundred performances during the season. Eight ran over fifty performances and enjoyed favorable reviews at the time of their opening. Two of these plays also received special recognition. Gypsy by Maxwell Anderson was chosen as a "best play" by Burns Mantle in his annual book on the

¹Burns Mantle, ed., The Best Plays of 1928-1929 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1929), pp. 352-512.

Broadway stage.² Machinal by Sophie Treadwell was selected by John Gassner as one of the best plays of the 1920's.³ One play, Gods of the Lightning by Maxwell Anderson and Harold Hickerson, is included even though it only ran twenty-nine performances. It, too, was selected by John Gassner as one of the best plays of the 1920's.⁴

The plays which are analysed in the next section of this chapter are as follows:

The Age of Innocence by Margaret Ayer Barnes

Brothers by Herbert Ashton, Jr.

Exceeding Small by Caroline Francke

Gods of the Lightning by Maxwell Anderson and Harold Hickerson

Goin' Home by Ransom Rideout

The Grey Fox by Lemist Esler

Gypsy by Maxwell Anderson

Harlem by W. J. Rapp Wallace Thurman

Jarnegan by Charles Beahan and Garrett Fort

Machinal by Sophie Treadwell

Mr. Moneybags by Channing Pollock

Singing Jailbirds by Upton Sinclair

Street Scene by Elmer Rice

Congai by Harry Hervey and Carlton Hildreth⁵

²Ibid., pp. 283-315.

³John Gassner, ed., Twenty-five Best Plays of the Modern American Theatre: Early Series (New York: Crown Publishers, 1949), pp. 495-529.

⁴Ibid., pp. 531-65.

⁵No script of this play was ever found in published or manuscript form. For this reason it is listed out of alphabetical order and analysed in a manner differing from that employed for other plays in this chapter.

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the methods used in the study.

3. The third part of the report is a discussion of the results of the study.

4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion and a list of references.

5. The fifth part of the report is a list of appendices.

6. The sixth part of the report is a list of figures and tables.

7. The seventh part of the report is a list of footnotes.

8. The eighth part of the report is a list of references.

9. The ninth part of the report is a list of appendices.

10. The tenth part of the report is a list of figures and tables.

11. The eleventh part of the report is a list of footnotes.

12. The twelfth part of the report is a list of references.

13. The thirteenth part of the report is a list of appendices.

14. The fourteenth part of the report is a list of figures and tables.

Stylistic Analyses of PlaysThe Age of Innocence by Margaret Ayer BarnesStory

Ellen, an American woman, returns for a visit to her native country to escape the miseries of her unhappy marriage to an insane Polish nobleman, Count Olenska. There she falls in love with Newland Archer, a young man on his way to becoming a powerful political figure. Newland, however, is engaged to Ellen's cousin, May van der Luyden. He loves Ellen, but marries May because Ellen will not hurt May by stealing Newland. Ellen and Newland carry on a brief affair, but when Ellen learns that May is to have a child, she gives up Newland and returns to her demented husband. Forty years later, Newland and his oldest son journey to Paris. The son calls on Ellen, but Newland does not, since he wishes to remember her as she was in his youth.⁶

General Characteristics

The Age of Innocence exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. The element of character is emphasized.

Since the play is primarily a love story, the action of the play centers on Ellen and Newland. While they are not particularly credible characters, their conflicts between love and duty, and passion and nobility guide the ordering of the events in the play.

⁶Margaret Ayer Barnes, "The Age of Innocence," unpublished play, U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D86253 (September 27, 1928).

The play also exhibits two characteristics associated with Romanticism. There is "a tendency away from actuality." The drama also depends a great deal on emotional appeal.

The tendency away from actuality in the play is evident in its depiction of a world remote in time and culture. Except for the last act, the play is set in the 1870's. The society portrayed is one of the upper classes, one in which countesses can fall in love with men destined to become governors. The improbable dignity and "nobility" of the characters also suggests a tendency away from the actual.

Although there is some display of strong emotion in the play, its overall emotional appeal is one of cloying sentimentality. The portrayal of a thwarted love between two attractive persons who do "the noble and proper thing" is aimed at arousing pity and tears. The ending of the play is particularly sentimental. In it, the old Countess Olenska meets Newland's son who looks like his father did when Ellen and Newland parted.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Age of Innocence contains traits associated with Romanticism. It is "loose" in construction. The unity of action is maintained and is only slightly complicated. The unity of place is ignored in that the five scenes of the play are set in four different locations, three in America and one in France. The unity of time is broken as the events of the play range over a period of forty years. Actually, the first three scenes take place within the period of a year. It is the last scene which encompasses the greatest jump in time.

The handling of the unities in the play results in a plot with an early point of attack and does away with the need for a great deal of narrative exposition. The plot unfolds in action, but the events are not thrilling, exciting ones. They show the development of the love between Ellen and Newland and its unhappy termination.

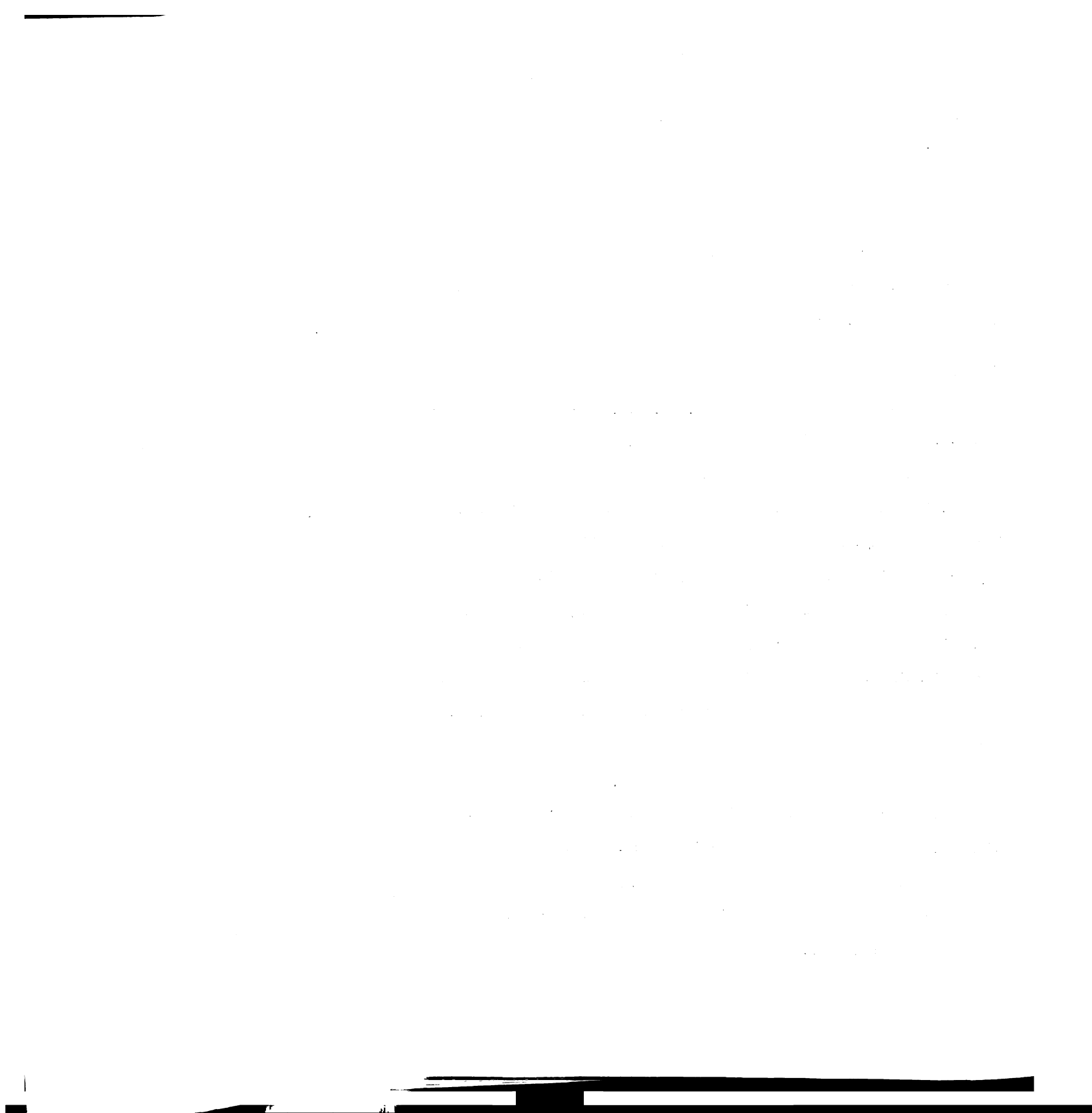
The plot content is romantic in that it deals with an idealized and glamorous world. The settings are elegant, the characters superbly dressed, and their actions dignified and noble.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Age of Innocence have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They are not credible, probable people. They are also persons of royalty.

Although emotion plays a large role in the lives of the characters in the play, it is the control of this emotion which makes them appear to be improbable persons. They are too idealized in their restraint. Ellen and Newland give in to passion only once and even this event is too elegantly portrayed to suggest that it is the result of sexual instinct. Ellen's decision to give up Newland to avoid hurting May is too noble a gesture to be probable. Her actions are admirable, but they are not always believable.

Persons of noble rank appear in the play. While Ellen is the only character with an actual title, the other characters may be viewed as a part of an American "aristocracy." Although he is placed against a background of a democratic society, Newland is depicted more like a prince than a political figure. He and other characters definitely are not commonplace people.



Language

The dialogue of The Age of Innocence corresponds to that of Romanticism. It is written in prose and superficially suggests the speech of everyday life. However, it is characterized by elegant, well-phrased expression. The characters speak the way more common persons might like to speak. They all exhibit a gift for using language well. Like the characters, the dialogue is idealized. Short phrases of foreign languages are included to enhance the refinement of the characters. The language of the play is not wholly unrealistic, yet it is not an imitation of speech from ordinary, everyday life.

Theme

The themes of The Age of Innocence correspond to those of Romanticism. The play projects an idea of nostalgia. As its title indicates, it is a look back to a time more pleasant and better ordered. The drama does not deal with any problem of modern man or society. It does present themes of love and compassion. There is suffering from a love that cannot be. A sentimental thought about the sanctity of family life is evident in Ellen's decision to leave Newland when May is to have a child. Ellen wishes to protect the children, both born and unborn.

Style of Play

The Age of Innocence exhibits two characteristics of Realism and two of Romanticism. All of its form elements correspond to those of Romanticism. The presence of realistic characteristics in a basically romantic play indicates that the style of the play is related to the

dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

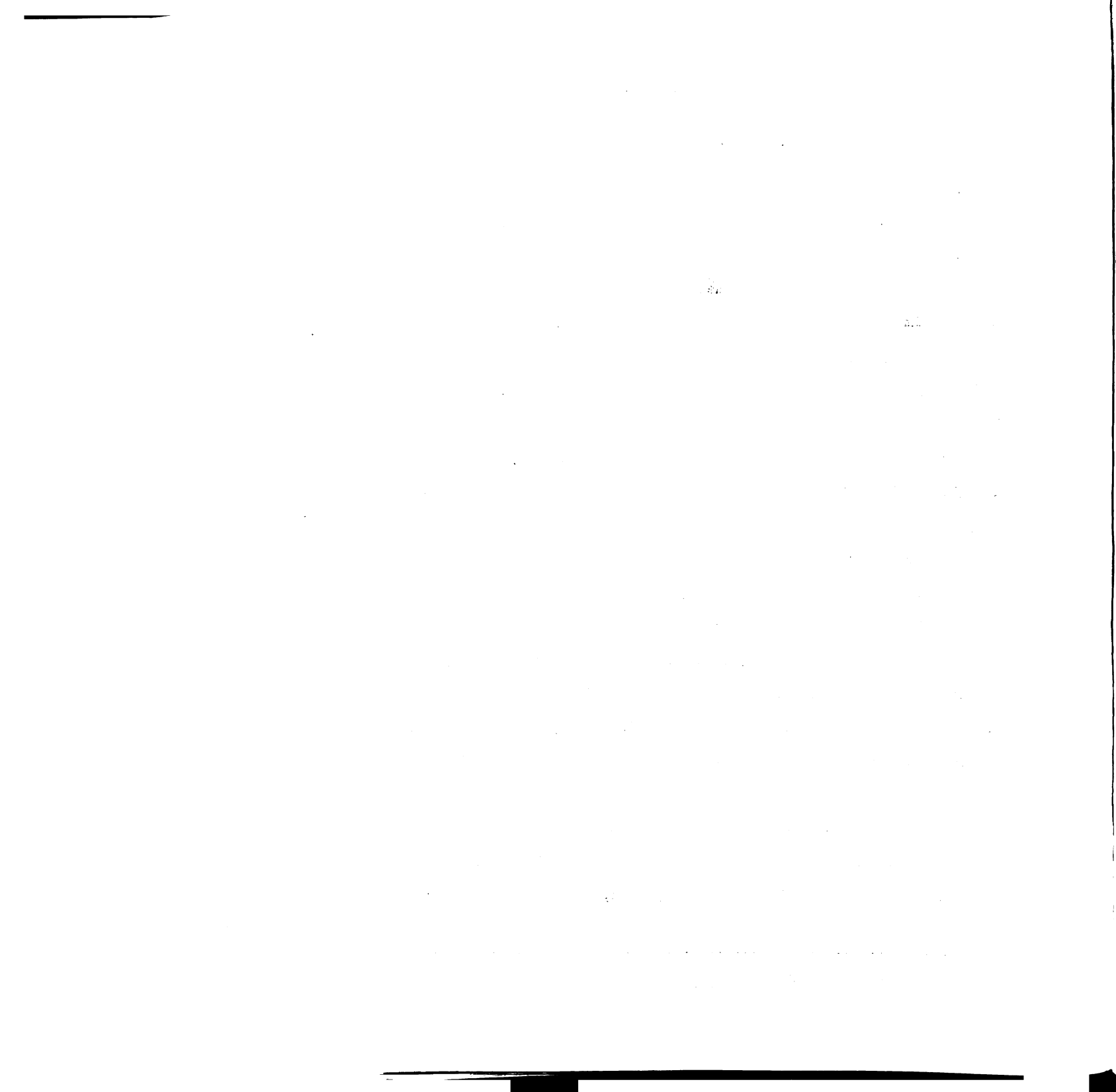
Brothers by Herbert Ashton, Jr.

Story

In a prologue to the main action, three doctors carry on a friendly argument about whether heredity or environment is the important factor in human development. Dr. Steven reveals a plan for an experiment which may settle the argument. He has located identical twin baby boys in a foundling home. He proposes that one be raised by a childless couple, Judge Naughton and his wife, and that the other be given to a poor woman at a settlement house. Later the doctors can see for themselves what type of men these boys become, and judge the effects of different environments on the same hereditary backgrounds. His plan is accepted.

Thirty years later, about 1929, the twins are mature men. The one raised in the slums, Ed Connelley, is a good-natured, intelligent fellow with solid values and sound ambitions. Judge Naughton's adopted son, Robert, is a lawyer driven to narcotics addiction by overwork. Robert kills a dope peddler, and Ed is accused of the crime. Robert successfully defends Ed in the trial, and Ed is freed. Robert's addiction gets him in more trouble, and he is placed in a sanitarium. In order not to disturb the delicate health of Mrs. Naughton, Ed assumes the identity of Robert and wins the love of Robert's fiancé, Roma. Robert breaks out of the sanitarium and is killed. Ed's deception is discovered by Roma, but she reveals that she loves him more than she ever loved Robert.⁷

⁷Herbert Ashton, Jr., Brothers (New York: Samuel French, 1934).



General Characteristics

Brothers exhibits three characteristics associated with Realism.

A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The concept of environment figures in the play.

Details and actions in the play suggest the contemporary world of the late 1920's, the period of the play's opening. Judge Naughton reads the Wall Street Journal, Ed receives a call in a phone booth, and Prohibition is referred to several times.⁸

As is obvious from the story, the concept of environment figures in the play. It must be pointed out, however, that the manner of dealing with this concept is not related as much to character as it is to plot. Environment and heredity are the subject matter of the play, but they are not shown in actual operation in the drama. The development of the twin boys is almost absolutely contrary to what social and psychological sciences would predict. The concept of environment is too obvious to be ignored as a characteristic, but its main function in the play is as a device to further a melodramatic plot.

The play also exhibits one characteristic associated with Romanticism, a "tendency away from actuality." In spite of its realistic details and its involvement with the concepts of heredity and environment, the play is too preposterous to elicit belief. It is filled with elements of excitement and sensation. Three murders and a gunfight in a darkened barroom figure in the action of the play. Disguises also complicate the action. Ed's impersonation of Robert is one instance and another is Dr. Leslie's disguise as "Feeler," a blind man, which

⁸Ibid., pp. 19, 45, 46, 61, 65, 79.

he assumes to watch over Ed while he is growing up in the slums. The disclosure of this disguises of thirty years is one of the surprises at the end of the play. While it may not be a concern of dramatic literature, the theatrical thrill of the play is largely dependent on the fact that one actor plays both Ed and Robert. Through the use of doubles and trick panels in the setting, a whole series of rather "marvelous" quick changes are made possible. Much of the complication in plotting is caused by the employment of this device.⁹ The improbability of the characters doesn't do much to diminish the tendency away from the actual in the play. Although this characteristic is the only romantic one evident in the play, it is so predominant that it outweighs the realistic characteristics.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Brothers contains traits associated with Romanticism. It is "loose" in its treatment of the traditional unities. Several subplots complicate the unity of action. Dr. Leslie's disguise as a blind man, Roma's romance with Ed, the gang war that Robert becomes involved in, and Robert's escape from the sanitarium do not exhaust the complications of the plot. The unity of time is ignored. The play contains a lapse of thirty years between the prologue and Act I. There is also a lapse of one month between Act II and Act III. The unity of place is broken as the action shifts from the club room of the prologue to Judge Naughton's home to Joe's "dive" along the waterfront.

⁹Ibid., pp. 9-10.

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The point of attack is very early and the play unfolds in a series of thrills. Narrative exposition is not totally absent, but neither is it woven into the rising action of the play. Many bits of expository material are reserved for surprise disclosure at the end of the play. The use of the prologue is also an indication of Romanticism in the plot of the play.

Character

The persons portrayed in Brothers have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They are not credible, probable persons. They tend to be dramatic types rather than fully-drawn individuals.

In doubt due to the fact that one actor is required to play two roles, Ed and Robert are rather obviously drawn and contrasted. Robert is "mean," "almost a heavy; nasty, very irritable."¹⁰ Ed is "carefree, happy, jovial."¹¹ Such contrast does not produce credibility. The three doctors in the play are almost indistinguishable in action and attributes. They are neatly differentiated by age. In the prologue, Holden is thirty, Moore is thirty-five, and Stevens is forty.¹² Roma, the love interest in the story, has nothing to distinguish her from any other character of a similar nature in other plays of this type.

Language

The dialogue of Brothers corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears to be natural to the characters and their positions. The major characters in the play are distinguished from

¹⁰Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.



the minor ones through the use of dialogue. Minor characters as a rule speak a rough and uncultured language filled with mild oaths and slang expressions. They are the customers in Joe's "dive". The major characters express themselves in a manner which passes for ordinary speech. Although a difference between groups is established by the use of language, there is not much difference in speech within the groups themselves. The dialogue is primarily functional, and is used to advance the complicated action of the plot.

Theme

The themes of Brothers correspond to those of Romanticism. As pointed out under general characteristics, the theme of heredity and environment is not dealt with in any truly meaningful manner in the play. There does not seem to be any involvement in contemporary social problems. Robert's dope addiction might be termed a reflection of a social problem, but it is quite incidental in the totality of the play. Some rather trite ideas about love are developed in the romance between Ed and Roma, but they, too, are rather incidental. The main theme discernible in the drama appears to be the concept of moral justice. Ed, the upstanding slum dweller, is rewarded with a good home and a beautiful girl, while Robert, a degenerate lawyer, is killed for his involvement in criminal activities.

Style of Play

Brothers exhibits three characteristics associated with Realism and one with Romanticism. However, the romantic characteristic is so pronounced that it is considered to outweigh the realistic elements in the play. The element of language in the play is related to Realism,

but the remaining form elements correspond to Romanticism. The inclusion of realistic traits in this basically romantic play indicates that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "second-hand" Romanticism.

Exceeding Small by Caroline Francke

Story

Gert's memory of her sister's unhappy marriage which failed because of economic problems makes her hesitant to marry Ed. Min, Gert's friend, tries to get her interested in an older businessman. Ed finally pleads with her to marry him. He is positive that their love can overcome the difficulties of living on limited means. She finally agrees to the marriage, and for a while they are happy, although Ed only earns twenty dollars a week because of his limited education and skills. They begin to quarrel over the frustrations of their meager existence, when Ed suffers a heart attack. The doctor tells him he can live longer if he can find a job which doesn't require physical labor. All means of receiving help are closed to Gert and Ed, and in love and despair, they turn on the gas and lie down to die.¹³

General Characteristics

Exceeding Small exhibits four characteristics associated with both Realism and Naturalism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the action of the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of

¹³Caroline Francke, Exceeding Small (New York: Samuel French, 1928).

character and the relationship between character and environment are emphasized.

The contemporary world is suggested in the first act in the depiction of a Chinese restaurant. It is a "stenographers paradise" with small booths, a dance floor, and jazz music.¹⁴ Slang expressions and catch phrases used in the play seem appropriate to the period of the 1920's.

The element of character is emphasized. The story is an extremely simple one of two people whose love cannot save them from the conditions of the life they lead. While Ed and Gert are not terribly interesting people, it is their hopes and frustrations which the play focuses upon. Other characters are of some interest and even minor characters are carefully drawn.

The relationship between character and environment is well-established in the play. It is the environment which eventually destroys the characters. Gert's reluctance to marry Ed, although she loves him, stems from her environmental experiences. She has seen her sister fail in marriage because there was not enough money to save her sister's child. The demands of his environment have shaped Ed's character. He has had not time for education and can use only his physical skills.

The play also exhibits three characteristics associated with Naturalism. It treats unpleasant aspects of life. A general pessimistic attitude is present. To some extent, a "slice of life" quality is apparent.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 5.

There is little that is actually sordid in the drama, but many of the actions it depicts tend to be unpleasant and depressing. Ed and Gert live in a condition of near-squalor in a one-room apartment. Their attempts to find happiness and to better their condition fail. The moments of gaiety in their lives only serve to emphasize the unpleasant realities of near poverty and impending death. **The fact that death is more welcome than life is to them** is an illustration of the depressing atmosphere of the play.

An attitude of pessimism permeates the drama. The characters' hopes never become realities. Love and physical desire lead Ed and Gert into a marriage they are sure will not be affected by the problems of their level of society. When Ed's heart condition becomes known, they do not completely despair. They believe that they will get help from relief organizations or that Ed can find a job that will not aggravate his weakened heart. Their plans for escaping their problems are cancelled one by one until their situation is hopeless. Death becomes the only solution. The entire play depicts the destruction of hopes. No dream is allowed fruition.

A "slice of life" quality is projected by the play. The beginning of the action is not immediately apparent in the many details depicted in Act I. Characters are shown enjoying a Saturday night out. Ordering meals, dancing, and light banter interrupt the revelation of the relationship between Ed and Gert.¹⁵ The story does not develop in any direct manner. The other acts of the play also contain details that are not directly relevant to the main action. In the second scene of

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 5-33.



Act II, much time is devoted to the preparation and eating of a dinner to entertain two friends of Ed and Gert.¹⁶ Even the final scene leading up to the suicides of Ed and Gert is interrupted by Min, who drops in to offer sympathy and to tell of her new romance.¹⁷

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Exceeding Small contains traits associated with Naturalism. As mentioned above, the content is taken from contemporary life. Also the play appears to be a "slice of life." The story is quite simple, but "filled with many details of ordinary life," such as eating, changing clothes, and silly "horseplay." Climactic moments in the play are underplayed, but not avoided. After Ed suffers his heart attack and is examined by the doctor, Gert does get emotional, but at the end of the scene, she sits calmly on the edge of the bed "rocking to and fro slightly."¹⁸ As is often the case with the "slice of life" technique, the plot appears to have no beginning. However, the play has a definite end as Ed and Gert wait for the gas fumes to fill the room. The content, too, is naturalistic in that it is depressing.

Character

The persons portrayed in Exceeding Small have attributes of character associated with Naturalism. They display a close relation to the influence of environment, a factor mentioned under general

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 47-55.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 71-77.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 64.

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characteristics. Ed and Gert appear to be the victims of physical and social circumstances. Ed's heart and the sexual attraction between Gert and Ed contribute to the idea that physical conditions have ensnared them both. Social circumstances make it impossible for Ed and Gert to deal with their problems. Both appear to correspond to a type of character found in Naturalism, "physical people with strong animal drives and little intellectual activity." The bestial side of the characters is not overemphasized, but they certainly do not display any mental interests. They are motivated to attain a level of creature comfort and little else.

Language

The dialogue of Exceeding Small corresponds to that of Naturalism. It is a close imitation of common speech of the lower levels of society. Slang and idioms are employed throughout. Repetitions and pauses are also used. The following speech by Gert is typical of the dialogue appearing in the play:

Lissen, Ed. You think I don't love you because I hold out on you. You don't know -- see? You think I don't want to marry you; to have you comin' home each night for dinner; to have you to do for; to know that you an' me belonged -- see? God! I would work my fingers to the bone for you, Ed, and like it. . . .¹⁹

Theme

The themes of the play correspond to those of Naturalism. The drama shows that human character is determined by heredity and environment. "Man is regarded as a victim in a world he cannot control."

¹⁹Ibid., p. 39.

This idea is amply projected in the lives of Ed and Gert. They are not immoral or corrupt persons; they only seek what so many others already have. Yet these simple wants are never to be theirs. Ed's physical condition and his social world doom him. Life is seen as a trap. Ed says, "The cards is stacked -- see?"²⁰ His pessimism is also apparent in the rest of the play.

Style of Play

Exceeding Small exhibits four characteristics which may be associated with either Realism or Naturalism. It also exhibits three characteristics associated with Naturalism alone. All of its form elements correspond to those of Naturalism. It is clear that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Naturalism.

Gods of the Lightning by Maxwell Anderson and Harold Hickerson

Story

A union leader and an anarchist, Macready and Capraro, cause the authorities some difficulty in a city on the eastern seaboard. When a payroll messenger is killed in a robbery, they are unjustly accused of the crime. The prosecution, through various means, manages to influence witnesses against the accused and to "frame" the two men. Their lawyer, Gluckstein, is brilliant in their defense, but cannot prevent them from being sentenced to the electric chair. There is some hope that the governor of the state will grant a stay of execution, but the play ends as news of the men's deaths is flashed on a screen on a

²⁰Ibid., p. 79.

newspaper building.²¹

General Characteristics

Gods of the Lightning exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society."

The play imitates the contemporary society of the 1920's. It is based partly on an actual event of the period -- the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti. Although the city in which the events take place is not identified, it is on the eastern seaboard of the United States. The men are sentenced to die on August 10, 1927.²² Details and allusions made in the dialogue suggest the contemporary social background of America in that period.

The play also contains two characteristics associated with Romanticism. The play exhibits emotionality and subjectivity. It is largely concerned with a search for freedom and a corresponding rebellion against established social order.

Actually, both of these above characteristics are closely related. Macready is often indignant and angry at the men and society around him. He protests longly and loudly against the injustices he sees in this world. However, the rebellious attitude of Macready and others in the play is not clear as to its origin. True, some terrible things have happened to the rebellious characters, but they were a

²¹Maxwell Anderson and Harold Hickerson, Gods of the Lightning (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1928).

²²Ibid., p. 93.

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result of their revolt and not the cause of it. The playwrights do not provide the motives arising from environment that might explain the actions and attitudes of their characters. In short, an emotional protest against the world as it is appears to guide the play.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Gods of the Lightning contains traits associated with Romanticism. The play is "loose" in its treatment of the traditional unities. The unity of action is maintained, but it is complicated by subplots. A few of these subplots are the romance between Macready and Rosalie Suvorin, Mr. Suvorin's involvement in the payroll robbery, and the influencing of a number of trial witnesses. The unity of time is ignored, as the events in the play cover several months. The unity of place is broken in that the action shifts from the Lyceum Restaurant to the district attorney's office, to the courtroom, and back to the restaurant.

The point of attack is early and the action is revealed in a chronological sequence. Narrative exposition is employed to reveal events happening between scenes. This exposition is not closely associated with the rising action of the play, however. There is some evidence of "obvious, theatrical" plotting in the sudden appearance and confession of Suvorin to the robbery and murder.

Character

The persons portrayed in Gods of the Lightning have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They are not credible, probable people. One of the characters, Suvorin, is reminiscent of the

"romantic criminal" type found in "historical" Romanticism.

While not wholly unrealistic, the characters tend to be incredible, improbable persons. They are rather shallowly drawn. Macready is eloquently indignant most of the time, although he does show some tenderness for Rosalie. However, these two traits are about the extent of his characterization. Capraro is quiet in his protest, but equally eloquent. Neither Capraro nor Macready demonstrate any negative aspects of personality. There seems to be an idealization of them as persons. Although their protests and actions are out of the ordinary and aimed at established laws and conditions, Macready and Capraro are portrayed as sympathetic characters. Those who represent society are depicted as unsympathetic characters. They tend to be villains who are cynical and corrupt. The rather clear distinction between the characters who protest and the ones who punish makes the play appear improbable.

Suvorin, the restaurant owner, has the character traits of the "romantic criminal" type from "historical" Romanticism. He commits robbery and murder as part of his effort to "get back" at a society which wronged him. As he says,

. . . I tasted your justice. I drank it deep. I bear its marks on my body and I bear them on my brain. My wife died and I had loved her. She died after fifteen years of your justice and I swore by the bleeding Christ you would pay me!²³

Language

The dialogue of Gods of the Lightning corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters

²³Ibid., p. 86.

and their positions. The low-life characters in the restaurant employ slang and ungrammatical constructions in their expressions. Throughout the play there appears to be an attempt to imitate the common speech of everyday life. Mild swearing and interrupted sentences add to the sense of realistic conversation. Although it appears as a natural part of the dialogue, there is one set speech by Capraro before the court which is reminiscent of the use of a similar language device in Romanticism.²⁴

The element of discussion often associated with Realism is very evident in the play. In many respects the entire play is a discussion of social justice.

Theme

The themes of Gods of the Lightning correspond to those of Realism. The major theme of the play is related directly to contemporary American social and political problems. This theme is that men in a just society should be judged by their actions and not their thoughts or beliefs. Macready and Capraro are executed because their beliefs did not conform to those of the established order, not because they were guilty of a crime. Such a theme is involved with society's responsibility to the individual, a theme of Realism.

Style of Play

Gods of the Lightning exhibits two characteristics of Realism and two of Romanticism. The form elements of plot and character correspond to those of Romanticism; however, the form elements of

²⁴Ibid., pp. 91-92.

language and theme are related to Realism. Although the play has aspects of the two styles, the romantic characteristic of revolt against society must be considered more important to the play than the imitation of contemporary society. The play is viewed as basically romantic, but greatly influenced by Realism. Elements of Realism in a basically romantic play indicate that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

Goin' Home by Ransom Rideout

Story

When World War I breaks out in Europe, Israel Du Bois, a Negro, is left in France by his American employers, the Powells. Israel is conscripted into the French Foreign Legion, where he becomes a hero and earns the Croix de Guerre. At the war's end he marries Lise, who believes him to be a rich man, and helps her manage a café. A troop of American Negro soldiers visits the café on their way back to the United States. They are commanded by Israel's former white master, Edward Powell, now a major in the A.E.F. When Major Powell learns of Israel's marriage to a white woman, his Southern views cause him to be highly offended. He tells Lise that Israel is not a rich man and she admits that she only married Israel for his supposed wealth. The major has been drinking when he tells Israel the truth about Lise's attraction to him and attempts to get Israel to go back to his "rightful" place in America. Major Powell and Israel quarrel and then fight. A huge African soldier, Israel's best friend, attacks Major Powell with a knife, and Israel then kills the soldier. The major's attitude toward Israel changes and he manages to have Israel

cleared of blame for the killing. At the play's end, Major Powell and Israel are "goin' home."²⁵

General Characteristics

Goin' Home exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character is emphasized. The relationship between character and environment is apparent.

An imitation of the contemporary world is presented in the play. The characters are recognizable Americans of both the Negro and the white races. Their behavior is that of men who are returning from a war. The allusions made to the war itself are consistent with the actual events of World War I. The rather ordinary actions of common men are depicted as the characters drink, sing, and dance in celebration of their impending return home.

Although much of the drama depends on the unfolding of a relatively complex plot, the element of character is the center of interest. Israel's wish to be respected as an individual and his reluctance to return to a life of servitude are important aspects of the story. Major Powell's racial blindness and his eventual recognition that his "servant" is a human being are of equal importance. Some turns of the plot seem contrived, but the relation between these two men does not.

The influence of environment on character is clearly shown in

²⁵Ransom Rideout, "Goin' Home," Goin' Home and Other Plays of the 1927 Contest (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1928).

the play. Major Powell's Southern background dictates his treatment of Israel and the Negroes in his regiment. He is the master and they are his servants. He knows no other possible relationship until Israel saves his life. A change in environment results in a change in Israel's character. The French view him as a hero and an individual, not just as a "colored man." He achieves dignity and firmness in his new surroundings. Yet the environment of his youth still affects him. In the moment he has a choice between saving Major Powell's life and seeing him die, Israel saves him because in a second he saw all his life "back home."²⁶

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Goin' Home contains traits associated with Realism. It displays a "structural compactness" in dealing with the traditional unities. The unity of time is strictly observed in that the events of the play occur in less than twelve hours. The unity of place is maintained: all scenes are set in the interior of Lise's café. The action is unified, but complicated by two relevant subplots: the desertion of a Negro soldier and the friendship between Israel and the African soldier he has to shoot in order to save Major Powell.

The point of attack is late and retrospective exposition is employed to reveal the past lives of the major characters. There are some moments of obvious excitement in the play, but they are preceded

²⁶Ibid., p. 75.

by careful preparation. The last third of the play is marked by some obvious plotting which is usually foreign to plays of Realism. This factor in itself does not overshadow the general trend of the plot toward Realism, however.

Character

The persons portrayed in Goin' Home have attributes of character associated with Realism. They are credible, probable persons who display a relative complexity of personality.

Although fifteen of the twenty-three characters in the play are Negroes, there is no attempt to draw them as stereotypes. Not every one of them is highly individualized, but they do appear to be individuals rather than members of a group. Jim, who attempts to desert, is bitter about the conditions he knows await him in America. Samba Saar is a full-blooded African in the French Army. Tom is almost uneducated and speaks with a more pronounced accent than the rest of his companions. However, the credibility of character is best shown in the persons of Israel and Major Powell.

Israel is presented as an honest and decent person. His experiences have provoked changes in his attitudes and ideas. It is quite probable that he is torn between his early training and his way of life in France. He realizes in the end that he cannot escape from the need to be with his own people, but this realization does not make him happy. He also appears very human when he relates how he was frightened into serving in the French army.²⁷ His bravery and heroism are not idealized.

²⁷Ibid., p. 40.

Major Powell reveals a complexity of personality in his ambivalent attitude toward Negroes. He wants to separate Israel from Lise for two reasons. He is offended by the idea of interracial marriage. On the other hand, he wants to protect Israel from Lise's avarice. Major Powell appears to be more human in dealing with the white characters in the play. With them he displays a wider range of character traits. He tends to become a two-dimensional character when dealing with his troops and Israel. This is probable since he sees the Negroes as servants and not as human beings. He is not an unsympathetic character, however. His concern for Israel appears to be genuine, although it is based on false assumptions about how Israel should live.

Language

The dialogue of Goin' Home corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. The soldiers swear a great deal and use slang often. "Negro" accents are employed, but they differ from character to character. French language and French accents appear frequently in the dialogue. The element of discussion is present in the play. Major Powell and Israel converse about the Negro's position in American society. A similar discussion is carried on by Israel and the deserter, Jim.²⁸

Theme

The themes of the play correspond to those of Realism. They

²⁸Ibid., pp. 43-46, 74-76.



demonstrate a sympathetic interest in human problems. Israel's relation to Lise and his desire to be truly free are such human problems. The play raises one question which may be regarded as a major theme. That is, what is society's responsibility to the Negro? Jim points out that Negroes can fight for their country, but that they have no real place in that country.²⁹ The play fails to do more than raise the question, however. All in all, in a broad sense the play attempts to deal with contemporary social problems.

Style of Play

Goin' Home exhibits four characteristics of Realism. All of its form elements correspond to those of the same style. It is clear that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Realism.

The Grey Fox by Lemist Esler

Story

In 1499, a Florentine of thirty, Niccolo Machiavelli, asks to lead a diplomatic mission to the state of Forli. He is sure that honesty and openness in the affairs of state should be displayed. He is granted command of the mission. In Forli he is tricked and cheated by the Countess of Forli, Caterina Sforza, who keeps him ignorant of his betrayal by becoming his lover during his ten day visit. When he learns he has been made a fool by Caterina, he denounces idealism in diplomacy and embraces deceit and cunning as the weapons of power.

Four years later, Machiavelli is already established as the most capable statesman in Florence. He is called "The Grey Fox" because of

²⁹Ibid., pp. 59-60.

his slyness in manipulating the states of Italy for the gain of Florence. He gains some revenge against the Countess Sforza when the Florentine armies under the command of Cesare Borgia capture her at Forli. She comes to ask Machiavelli to save her son's life when he is in danger of being assassinated by Borgia's men. Machiavelli arranges for the son to become an officer in Borgia's army, thus insuring his safety. Then Machiavelli spurns an offer of love from the Countess by saying that they are now even for the "favors" granted him in Forli four years before.

Six years later, Machiavelli is at the height of his career. He is now master of treachery and deceit. He discovers a plot against Florence involving Caterina's son, and arranges to have him killed in battle. For her part in the plot, Machiavelli sends the Countess Sforza to a convent in Florence. She invites him there in order to have him assassinated. The scheme fails and Caterina is murdered by Jeffro, Machiavelli's servant. Machiavelli is heart-broken because, in spite of all her treachery, he had never forgotten his love for her in Forli ten years before. Disguising his true feelings, he delivers a ringing, patriotic speech to the people of Florence.

Five years later, Machiavelli is revealed as a white-haired old man. He has been stripped of power. His book, The Prince, which he sent to the De Medici family, is used against him. They banish him from Florence forever. In his bitterness, Machiavelli denounces all honest and worthy attempts to govern. He advises Jeffro to be stupid, cowardly, and treacherous.³⁰

³⁰Lemist Esler, The Grey Fox (New York: Samuel French, 1930).

General Characteristics

The Grey Fox exhibits two characteristics associated with Romanticism. The play displays "a tendency away from actuality." Emotion and subjectivity guide the actions of the characters. A search for political freedom is dramatized to some extent.

The tendency away from actuality is fostered by remoteness in time, place, and culture. The play takes place in Italy in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Although the subject of the play is the life of an actual person, Machiavelli, there is little attempt to imitate actual historical events. The drama emphasizes the relationship of Machiavelli and Caterina and completely ignores the fact that the historical Machiavelli was married and the father of children.³¹ This and other factors render the play a fictitious biography of a real personage.

In spite of all the intelligence and acuity displayed by Machiavelli in the play, he is primarily guided by emotion. He is devoted to his native state of Florence. It is this feeling of patriotism which actually guides the rational and devious thoughts of the man. His infatuation with Countess Sforza stems from a ten day affair with her in his youth. It influences him to allow her freedom even when she and her plans are a threat to Florence and himself. Her hatred, in turn, is only partly inspired by reasons of state. She cannot forgive him for spurning her offers of love made when Machiavelli saved her son.

Machiavelli and Caterina both seek the freedom of their

³¹Ibid., p. 110.

respective states. The conflict between them arises largely over the political conflict. In the early part of the play Machiavelli demonstrates a rebellious attitude toward the established policy of dishonest diplomacy, but his betrayal by Caterina wipes out all signs of this idealism. Caterina's search for personal freedom leads her to plan the assassination of Machiavelli.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of The Grey Fox contains traits associated with Romanticism. It is "loose" in its handling of the traditional unities. The action is unified, but extremely complicated. The main action, the relation between Machiavelli and Caterina, is interwoven with subplots of diplomatic intrigue, military campaigns, and deceitful friendships. The unity of time is ignored: the actions of the drama cover a period of fifteen years, from 1499 to 1514. The unity of place is also ignored in that the eight scenes of the play are set in seven different locations. The rather free use of elapsed time and shifts in place are some indication that the plot is a romantic one.

The plot is marked by an early point of attack and unfolds in a multi-scened chronological sequence. Action largely replaces narrative exposition. This action often provides thrills and excitement as is evident by the number of murders and assassination attempts in the play (including one mass execution of over ten men).³²

Overall, the plot is quite similar to those found in "historical"

³²Ibid., p. 65.

Romanticism. However, the plot does not include soliloquies or asides to advance the action. The use of an epilogue in the play also suggests "historical" Romanticism.

Character

The persons portrayed in The Grey Fox have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. While not wholly unrealistic, they are not credible, probable people. They display some complexity of personality. The two major characters resemble dramatic types found in "historical" Romanticism.

The characters are fictional imitations of actual persons. Machiavelli as a character in this play is an improbable person partly because he fails to conform to what is known of the historical Machiavelli. He is drawn as a sympathetic character whose seeming villainy masks the noble and honest person he actually is. The difference between his outward acts and his actual motives produces a complexity of traits in his personality. He is cruel, tender, cynical, sentimental, and melancholy. The character of Machiavelli is reminiscent of the Byronic hero of Romanticism. He suffers from ennui and despair in a life affected by a wrong committed against him in the past. His betrayal by Caterina causes a change in appearance and personality which is too sudden to be credible. When she reveals he has been duped by her, he

sheds from his face and body all expression of love, of youth. Over his lips creeps the twisted smile which is to accompany him through life, the smile which meant "What do you take me for? A fool?"³³

³³Ibid., p. 41.

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Caterina is also an improbable person. She, too, is complex in that she is beautiful, sensual, intelligent, and fearless. She resembles the less reputable female characters of "historical" Romanticism. She displays traits of lust, ambition, and heartlessness. Her laugh is described as "cynical and mocking, but carries in it also more than a little pleasure."³⁴ She seemingly enjoys lust but uses her body to further the cause of her small empire. She has little feeling or pity for those who stand in the way of her ambition.

Language

The dialogue of The Grey Fox corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. The author of the play attempts to give a feeling of immediacy to his drama by employing an imitation of modern speech. Soldiers and commoners in the play even use modern words and slang in their conversations. One soldier says he receives "pay fur overtime -- after four o'clock."³⁵ His companion rouses the Swiss Guard by shouting, "Ya Swiss Boy Scout!"³⁶

Theme

The themes of The Grey Fox correspond to those of Romanticism. There is no involvement in contemporary human or social problems. Instead, Machiavelli's life is used to project nostalgia. He wishes to live according to his dream of a united Italy. Political freedom for their respective states is an ideal of both Machiavelli and Caterina. More important than these ideas, however, are the themes

³⁴Ibid., p. 33.

³⁵Ibid., p. 21.

³⁶Ibid.

of emotion in the play. Patriotism, thwarted love that turns to hate, conflict between duty and love, and sentiment are explicit in the drama. Love of country and love of persons are primary subjects of the play.

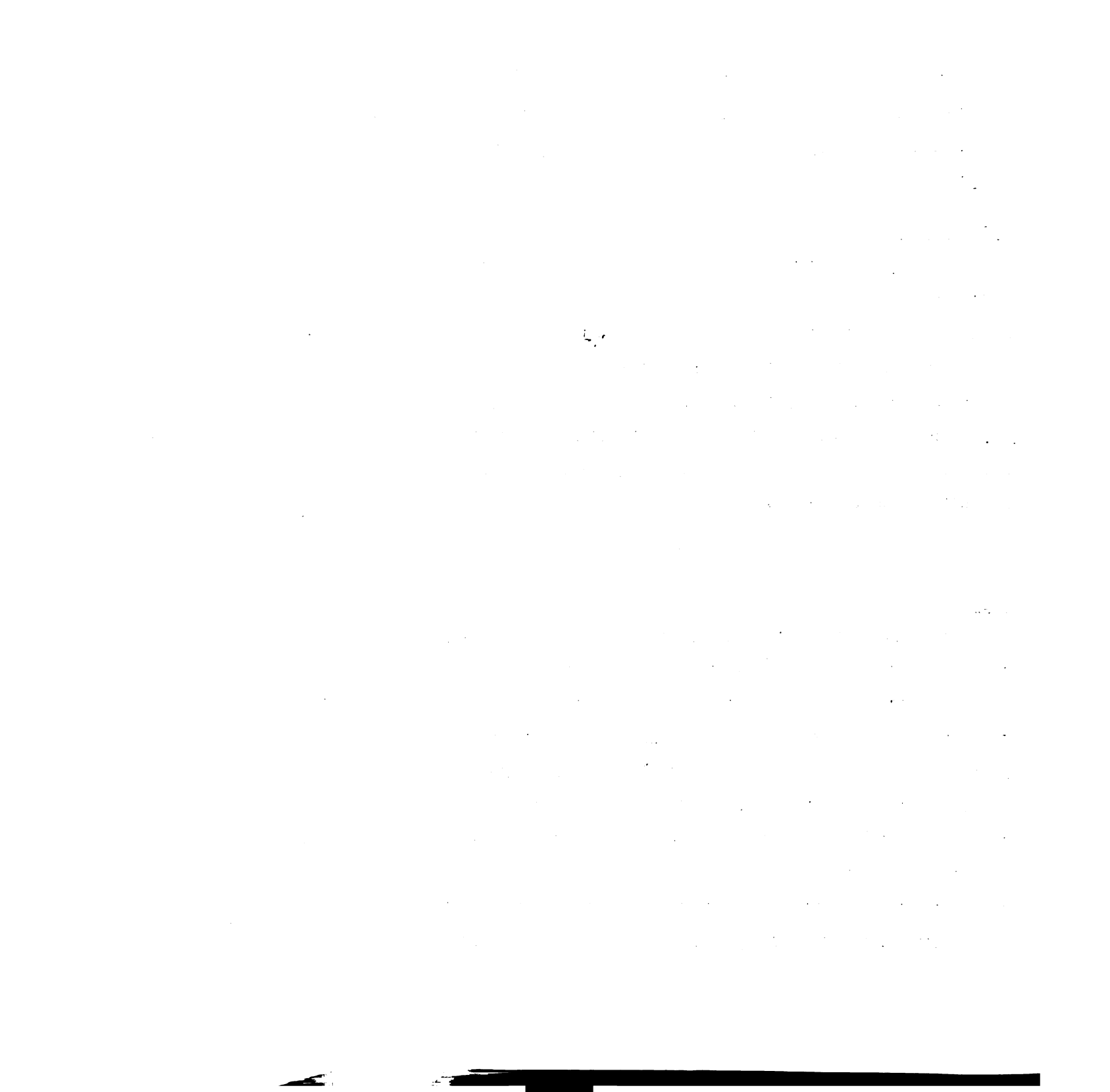
Style of Play

The Grey Fox exhibits three characteristics of Romanticism. All of its form elements except that of language are related to those of the same style. The dialogue corresponds to Realism, but it is not enough of a factor to outweigh the prevailing romantic quality of the drama. From the analysis it is evident that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "historical" Romanticism. It is not related to "secondhand" Romanticism, because it does not deal with the contemporary world.

Gypsy by Maxwell Anderson

Story

Ellen and David Hastings have a rather unconventional marriage. She loves David, but hates to be tied down by anything, including marriage. Ellen is self-supporting and goes out with other men. Although she is not faithful, she prides herself on telling the truth about her affairs. David has just forgiven her for an affair with Jerry, an actor, when she begins a romance with a novelist, Cleve. She leaves David and tells him she is going to live alone in order to avoid hurting him. Actually, she shares her room with Cleve. When David discovers this, he is "shattered" by the experience. Cleve, who has witnessed David's misery, sees that Ellen is no more faithful



to him than she had been to David. Rather than be hurt in the same way, Cleve leaves Ellen. At the end of the play she is talking on the telephone to another man. The implication is that her pattern of infidelity will be repeated.³⁷

General Characteristics

Gypsy exhibits four characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character is emphasized. Environmental influence on character is evident.

Backgrounds and details in the play suggest the contemporary world. The drama is set in New York City in the 1920's, the period of the opening of the play on Broadway. Actual street addresses in the city are given in the play, such as "West 18th Street" and "East 41st Street."³⁸ In addition, the use of telephones and telegrams in the play suggest the contemporary world.

Character is the most important form element in the play, which is essentially a dramatic portrait of a neurotic woman. Ellen Hastings and her inability to establish lasting or meaningful relationships with others is the center of interest in the play. The play reveals her disturbed personality and the possible reasons for it, but does not offer any solutions to her problems. In the course of the action, she comes to realize that her desire to be unhampered in life is actually

³⁷Maxwell Anderson, "Gypsy," The Best Plays of 1928-1929, Burns Mantle, ed., (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1929).

³⁸Ibid., pp. 283, 306.

an inability to love. This realization does not alter her behavior or bring her happiness. What Ellen is and what she does determines what little plot there is in the play.

The influence of environment on character is evident in the play in the relationship between Ellen and her mother, Marilyn Russell. Although Ellen hates her mother, she becomes more like her as the play progresses. As a girl of ten, Ellen had witnessed her mother's infidelity. She also saw her mother enter into three marriages. Her mother was too busy to pay any attention to Ellen, who went to boarding schools and did not live at home.³⁹ These incidents in her early environment "explain" her inability to enter into lasting love affairs.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Gypsy contains traits associated with Realism. Although some liberties are taken with the unities of time and place, the play displays an overall "structural compactness." The action of the play is extremely simple. The unity of time is violated in that the events in the play cover a period of almost five months. The unity of place is largely maintained, although the last act differs in setting from the first two acts. While there are deviations from a strict adherence to the unities, the play is rendered structurally compact by the use of retrospective exposition which is woven carefully into the rising action of the drama. As the story

³⁹Ibid., p. 290.



moves forward, more and more of Ellen's past is revealed. Discovery of her neurotic behavior is accompanied by information relating to the cause of the behavior.

Character

The persons portrayed in Gypsy have attributes of character associated with Realism. They are credible, probable people who display some complexity of personality. The psychological conflicts of one character are important to the drama as a whole. One other trait, the evidence of environmental influence on character, has been mentioned under general characteristics.

The persons in the drama are not dramatic types, but they do resemble types of people found in empirical reality. David Hastings is "a suggestively aesthetic young man of open countenance and trusting eyes."⁴⁰ He is not a strong man mentally, physically, or emotionally. It is probable that he would allow his wife to "date" other men. He will do anything to make her happy. He cannot effectively cope with the world, and he finds comfort in the love of one human being. He is also credible in the fact that he can intellectually agree to let Ellen be free but cannot bear the reality of her freedom and the infidelity it entails. He forgives her for one affair, but the second is too much for him.

Ellen is also a probable and complex person. She believes in feminine independence and is semi-intellectual. She flirts with men and otherwise makes herself attractive to them, but can't really love them in spite of all her avowals to the contrary. Her psychological

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 285.

problems invite most of the interest in the drama. She claims she doesn't know who she is. Her search for freedom is vague and undefined. She hates herself for what she is, but is powerless to do anything about it.⁴¹ In seeking love she destroys others. Her personality and her actions are not sympathetic, but they are quite credible.

Language

The dialogue of Gypsy corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. The characters express themselves in a fashion consistent with their fairly high educational levels. They speak of Marx, Gibbons, James Fenimore Cooper, and Nietzsche in their rather shallow intellectual conversations.

Discussion is used extensively in the dialogue of the play. In some respects the entire play may be viewed as a discussion of modern marriages and changing values. However, particular passages of discussion deal directly with marriage and fidelity.⁴²

Theme

The themes of Gypsy correspond to those of Realism. They demonstrate a concern for individual human problems in treating the life of a neurotic woman. Ideas in the play also touch on the responsibility of individuals toward each other. In some ways, Ellen's difficulties arise from an inability to assume any responsibility. Ideas concerning sex are included in the play and indicate

⁴¹Ibid., p. 312.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 286-90.

a relation to themes of Realism. Overall, the play projects a concern for the problems which arise from the changing values and standards of a society.

Style of Play

Gypsy exhibits four characteristics of Realism. All of its form elements are related to the same style. It is evident that the style of the play corresponds to the dramatic style of Realism.

Harlem by W. J. Rapp and Wallace Thurman

Story

Seven Negroes, the members of the Williams family, come to New York's Harlem district from their poor life in South Carolina. The better life they seek in the North turns out to be a myth, and they suffer from a number of unhappy experiences in Harlem. A daughter, Cordelia, becomes a semi-prostitute. The threat of poverty forces them to give "rent parties" in order to pay their landlord. Cordelia meets a West African Negro who wants to marry her, but she refuses and becomes involved with a gambler. When the gambler is slain, the West African is accused of the crime. He is proven innocent, but his love for Cordelia does not prevent her from falling lower into the world of squalor that is Harlem.⁴³

General Characteristics

Harlem exhibits four characteristics associated with both Realism and Naturalism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the

⁴³William J. Rapp and Wallace Thurman, "Harlem," unpublished play, U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D87133 (December 10, 1928).

play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society." The element of character is emphasized. The influence of environment on character is evident.

The contemporary world is the object of imitation in this drama. The scene is Harlem, an actual district of New York City. The time is the late 1920's, the period of the original production of the play on Broadway. The use of jazz music and modern dances suggests the immediacy of the play. The immigration of Negroes to Harlem from the South depicted in the drama also suggests the contemporary nature of the play.

Although there is a great deal of interest supplied by the plot, the element of character is most important to the drama. The dashed hopes of the Williams family and the frustration of their lives are the focal points of the story. In particular, it is the degradation of Cordelia which is of major interest.

The relationship between character and environment is obvious in the play. Specifically, it is the change in environment which affects the characters most. The honest peasants of South Carolina are forced into less honest ways of life by the sordid surroundings of Harlem.

In addition, the play exhibits three characteristics associated with Naturalism. "Life in the lower levels of society is portrayed." "Sordid, unpleasant, and bestial aspects of life are frankly treated." To some extent, a "slice of life" quality is evident.

The low level of life depicted in the play is that of poor Negroes in Harlem. The people portrayed are largely uneducated, amoral, and downtrodden. The settings of the play also are described in a way

which suggests poverty, squalor, and ruin.⁴⁴ Sordid and bestial aspects of life in this part of society are frankly presented. Drunkenness, narcotics addiction, gambling, prostitution, and murder figure in the action of the play. Cordelia Williams' erotic animal appeal is emphasized.

While it cannot be claimed that the entire play appears as a "slice of life" some scenes suggest this quality. The opening of the play and the second act "rent party" suggest the sordid and animalistic lives of the characters. They fit into the action, but are more important for the mood they create. They contain more action and detail than is necessary to merely advance the plot. The jazz music and orgiastic dancing at the party are particularly effective as details of a "slice of life."

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Harlem contains traits associated with Realism. It displays a "structural compactness" in the handling of the traditional unities. The unity of action is maintained, although the action is somewhat complicated (especially towards the end of the drama). The unity of place is largely observed in that the events of the play occur in two settings, the Williams' apartment and the gambler's room. The unity of time is broken, as the play covers a period of a week.

The point of attack in the play is late. The action begins

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 1.

after the arrival of the Williams family in Harlem. Retrospective exposition is employed to a large extent in the beginning of the play to establish the former life of the Williams family. However, the play tends to unfold in action rather than narrative exposition after the first act.

The play deviates from plots associated with Realism when it shows a tendency toward "obvious, theatrical" plotting. The murder of the gambler and the arrest of the West African are rather contrived situations. Such plotting is usually foreign to realistic plots.

One trait associated with Naturalism appears in the plot. Its content is depressing and sordid.

Character

The persons portrayed in Harlem have attributes of character associated with Naturalism. Their attributes "stem from heredity and environment." They appear to be "victims" of their social circumstances." There is some relation between them and types associated with Naturalism. In addition, there is some suggestion of a group protagonist.

The sordid and bestial traits of the characters arise from the influence of heredity and environment. The fact that they are Negroes dooms them to live in an unpleasant environment. The environment in turn shapes their character. Pleasures are few and education is almost non-existent. It is small wonder the animal side of their natures is dominant. This observation does not necessarily apply to the older members of the Williams family who have not been exposed to

the Harlem environment for a great length of time. However, environment seems to play a major role in shaping the lives of the minor characters.

The characters in general appear to be trapped by their social conditions. Race, poverty, and lack of skills or education make it difficult to escape from Harlem.

Most of the persons in the play conform to a character type found in Naturalism. They are persons of strong animal drives and little intellectual activity. Cordelia is a prime example of the presence of this type in the play.

In some respects, the Williams family ~~may~~ be viewed as being a group protagonist. This naturalistic trait is not consistent in the play. The first half of the play appears to center on the family as a group, but the second half tends to concentrate on Cordelia. However, Cordelia's decline into immorality is a concern of the entire family.

Language

The dialogue of Harlem corresponds to that of Naturalism. It is written in prose and appears to be a close imitation of Negro folk speech. It is marked by the use of slang and colloquial idiom. Pauses, broken sentences, ungrammatical constructions, and repetitions reinforce the "phonographic" quality of the dialogue.

Theme

The themes of Harlem correspond to those of Naturalism. The corruption of Cordelia in the play emphasizes the idea that character is determined by environment. Life in Harlem is projected as mean.

The social condition of the characters entraps them. They appear to be victims of a world they cannot control. In spite of some scenes of excitement and gaiety, the play projects a general atmosphere of pessimism. However, there is the implication that changes in environment might improve the condition of the people. Although Cordelia succumbs to indecency, other members of the Williams family maintain their honest ways.

Style of Play

Harlem exhibits four characteristics associated with both Realism and Naturalism. It also exhibits three characteristics associated primarily with Naturalism. All of the form elements except that of plot correspond to those of Naturalism. The element of plot is related to Realism, and contains some traits which deviate from that style. The play lacks one requisite of a naturalistic drama, that of an overall "slice of life" quality. While the play is not entirely naturalistic, it is more closely related to that style than to any other. From this analysis the style of the play may be viewed as corresponding to the dramatic style of Naturalism. Some note, however, should be taken of the realistic plot and the effect of melodramatic plotting which prevents the play from being considered wholly naturalistic.

Jarnegan by Charles Beahan and Garrett Fort

Story

A rough ex-convict, Jack Jarnegan, works his way into the motion picture industry. He earns the reputation of a demanding but

accomplished director. In filming a picture he is introduced to Daisy Carol, a girl like many others he has met who have come to Hollywood for quick fame and recognition as a "star." Although Jarnegan does not have any romantic interest in Daisy, he appreciates her sensitivity and innocence and makes an effort to protect her from unscrupulous movie industry people. In spite of Jarnegan's efforts, Daisy is lured into an affair by the promise of furthering her career. Edward Bernard, one of Jarnegan's directing competitors, seduces Daisy, and she becomes pregnant. Bernard arranges for her to have an abortion, and Daisy dies from the effects of the operation. When Jarnegan learns of Daisy's death and the causes of it, he gets drunk and "storms" into a fashionable Hollywood party. The play ends with Jarnegan's bitter and violent denunciation of the motion picture industry and its immorality.⁴⁵

General Characteristics

Jarnegan exhibits two characteristics associated with Realism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary, immediate world of man and society."

The play imitates the contemporary world of motion pictures in Hollywood, California. The time of the action is the late 1920's, and is identical with the period of the original production of the play. Objects and details of action present in the drama are consistent with the actual world of Hollywood. The use of telephones,

⁴⁵Charles Beahan and Garrett Fort, "Jarnegan," unpublished play, U.S. Copyright Office, Washington, No. D82852 (February 13, 1928).

the depiction of story conferences, and the bargaining over contracts provide a sense of reality.

Jarnegan also exhibits one characteristic of Romanticism. There is "a tendency away from actuality" in the play. The Hollywood setting of the play may or may not be considered remote from common, everyday experience. This is a matter of personal interpretation. However, the tendency away from actuality is apparent in the improbable nature of the story itself and in the improbable characters who appear in it. An ex-convict, who brags he spent the five dollars given to him upon leaving prison on whiskey and a woman, becomes an influential Hollywood director. He takes a respectable interest in an innocent young girl from the Middle West, but she is seduced by an unscrupulous director. The whole chain of incidents does not elicit belief. In addition, except for Jarnegan, the characters are drawn as extremes of good or bad.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Jarnegan contains traits associated with Romanticism. It is "loose" in its handling of the traditional unities. The unity of action is maintained. Action is relatively simple and only slightly complicated by subplots involving minor problems in the career of Jarnegan. The unity of time is ignored, as the action of the play covers a period of at least two years. The unity of place is broken. There are different settings for each of the three acts.

The point of attack is early, as the action begins with Jarnegan's attempts at becoming a director. The story unfolds in a

chronological sequence which makes the extensive employment of retrospective exposition unnecessary. Exposition is used, however, to relate events occurring between acts.

Character

The persons portrayed in Jarnegan have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. Except for Jarnegan, they tend to be "types," He is a complex character, but an improbable person.

Daisy Carol and Edward Bernard are examples of the "type" characters in the play. Daisy is a girl from the Middle West who goes to Hollywood to make her fortune. She is pretty and very innocent. However, she does not show any complexity in personality as a character. Daisy is used as a means to motivate the character of Jarnegan, but her own motivations are not established. Edward Bernard is just too evil a person to be probable. He is lecherous, immoral, and irresponsible. He mainly functions as a villain in the play.

Jarnegan displays several factors in his personality. He is hard-driving in making the arrangements for his pictures. He has an unhuman aloofness about him when he deals with his subordinates. Yet he has a sense of humor and can show some concern for weaker persons like Daisy Carol. His actions are quite human when he learns of Daisy's death. In spite of a dimensionality in his characterization, however, he is an improbable person. His prison background is well-established by exposition in Act I. He is "hard-boiled" and rough, but has a "soft heart" for Daisy. His tough exterior and his "heart of gold" are too trite to be probable.

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Language

The dialogue of Jarnegan corresponds to that of Realism. It is written in prose and appears natural to the characters and their positions. Some characters express themselves in an affected manner, but this seems a reasonable extension of assumed exterior personalities. Swearing and slang expressions are used extensively. Extraneous conversation about drinking and parties adds to the realistic effect of the dialogue. One character, Nathan Leedman, is identifiable by his "Yiddish" accent.

The play as a whole is not dependent on the element of discussion, but Jarnegan's speech at the end of the play is evidence of an attempt to provoke thought through dialogue.

Theme

The themes of Jarnegan correspond to those of Realism. The play illustrates the need for responsible action in the treatment of human beings. Jarnegan's denunciation of the motion picture world points out the immorality of "using" people and taking advantage of their weaknesses. In a sense, the play deals with social values. The false values of the seemingly glamorous picture society are indicted in the play. Daisy's life shows that the pursuit of sudden fame can lead to destruction. Although the play pertains to a particular part of society, it demonstrates a need for ethical relationships among humans.

Style of Play

Jarnegan exhibits two characteristics of Realism and one of Romanticism. The form elements of plot and character correspond to

those of Romanticism. Language and theme are related to Realism. In view of the improbability of the play in general and its characters in particular, Jarnegan is considered to be a romantic play which includes realistic attributes. The combination of stylistic elements indicates that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of "secondhand" Romanticism.

Machinal by Sophie Treadwell

Story

A Young Woman is frustrated and numbed by life in modern society. She works as a stenographer in an office and goes home to the stultifying company of her mother. She gets married to a man who is insensitive, and offers her little understanding. She becomes a mother, but this brings her no joy or peace. A man takes her to a speakeasy and then to a room where he is intimate with her, yet she is still "unfulfilled." Then she murders her husband, is tried for the crime, found guilty, and executed.⁴⁶

General Characteristics

Machinal exhibits four characteristics associated with Expressionism. The play suggests inner conflicts in concrete form. It employs a dream-like structure. Aspects of the empirical world appearing in the drama are distorted and exaggerated. The use of symbols is apparent.

Through the use of interior monologues, the play presents the

⁴⁶Sophie Treadwell, "Machinal," Twenty-Five Best Plays of Modern American Theatre, pp. 495-529.

subjective thoughts of the Young Woman in a direct manner. In episodes one and four, she reveals the confusion in her mind.⁴⁷ These monologues are especially expressionistic in that they are "not presented in an orderly fashion." Thoughts are briefly stated and not logically connected in the common sense of the word.

The play employs a dream-like structure that resembles a musical form of theme and variation. Most of the nine episodes of the play reflect the same theme of alienation from a mechanistic society. The Young Woman is not free to be herself; she is hemmed in by the demands and wants of other characters. She is a cog in the machinery of the office. Her mother needs her for security. Her husband wants her for sex. Each episode emphasizes some aspect of the mechanical nature of the Young Woman's world.

Distortion and exaggeration aid in producing the dream-like quality of the play. In the first episode characters speak short, repetitious sentences in monotonous voices. Hackneyed phrases accompany mechanical gestures and movement.⁴⁸ The total effect is one of life in a typical business office, but this life is abstracted into distortion and exaggeration. Distortion and exaggeration are also evident in the trial scene.⁴⁹

The life of the protagonist is symbolic of life in modern society. The episodes of the play symbolize common experiences of almost any person's life. Sound is used symbolically to suggest the world surrounding the Young Woman. Most of the sounds are either

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 501, 508-509.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 497-501.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 519-26.

noisy, strident, or mechanical. Sounds of typewriters, radios, jazz bands, riveting guns, pianos, hand organs, telephone bells, telegraph instruments, and airplanes are heard throughout the play.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Machinal contains traits associated with Expressionism. As already mentioned under general characteristics an episodic musical form of theme and variation is employed in the play. The plot of the drama is also marked by a pageant of pilgrimage-like structure which reveals the life story of the protagonist in several places and times. For example, the Young Woman's life is presented in episodes which depict marriage, motherhood, adultery, murder, and death. The plot is also expressionistic in that preparation and exposition are largely ignored. Action jumps from scene to scene rather than following a pattern of cause and effect. Rapid shifts in time and space are frequent.

Character

The persons portrayed in Machinal have attributes of character associated with Expressionism. They are identified by abstract or personified names. Although they are imitations of beings in empirical reality, they are not human entities. In addition, several characters represent obstacles and opportunities in the life of the protagonist.

Not a single character in the play is identified by anything but his or her function in the play. The characters are identified by

act, strident, or mechanical. Sound of glass, wood, metal, leather, riveting guns, pianos, hand organs, instruments, and airplanes are heard in the background.

Point of View

Plot

The plot of *Madame Bovary* contains little that is new. As already mentioned under general characteristics, the mutual form of theme and variation is used. The plot of the drama is also marked by a pattern of variation. The structure which reveals the life story of the protagonist in places and times. For example, the novel begins with a scene in episodes which depict marriage, motherhood, and death. The plot is also expressive of the protagonist's death. Exposition is largely ignored. Action begins from scene to scene rather than following a pattern of cause and effect. Events in time and space are frequent.

Character

The persons portrayed in *Madame Bovary* have attributes of character associated with Romanticism. They are identified by abstract or personified names. Although they are imitations of beings in empirical reality, they are not human entities. In addition, several characters represent obstacles and opportunities in the life of the protagonist. Not a single character in the play is identified by anything but his or her function in the play. The characters are identified by

such names as Filing Clerk, Nurse, Priest, and Third Reporter. None of them has a given name or surname.

Although the outward appearance of the characters is not distorted in any way and they appear to be human beings, the characters do not act like persons in empirical reality. They are given one or two outstanding characteristics which serve to identify them. For example, Young Woman has beautiful hands and a habit of arranging her hair over her ears.⁵⁰ The characters serve a symbolic purpose and are not meant to present actual people.

Obstacles and opportunities in the protagonist's life are represented by other characters in the drama. The Mother represents the stifling home life of the Young Woman. The Husband represents the dullness of domestic life. The Man represents love and pleasure.

Language

The dialogue of Machinal corresponds to that of Expressionism. It is spare, unadorned, and does not attempt to closely imitate the speech of everyday life. It is marked by two long interior monologues in which the Young Woman expresses her inner thoughts. These monologues are not written in complete sentences, nor do they project complete ideas. For example, in the first monologue, the Young Woman says,

Marry me -- wants to marry me -- George H. Jones -- George H. Jones and Company -- Mrs. George H. Jones -- Mrs. George H. Jones -- Dear Madame -- marry -- do you take this man to be your wedded husband -- I do -- to love honor and to love -- kisses -- no -- I can't⁵¹

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 497.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 501.

The example above from the interior monologue also illustrates the expressionistic use of "telegraphic" dialogue. This device of language is used extensively in the play. Almost the entire first episode is written in a telegraphic form. Few sentences are over six words in length. Often speech is limited to short phrases or even single words.⁵²

Theme

The themes of Machinal correspond to those of Expressionism. Ideas in the play are related to both the Mystic and Activist phases of Expressionism. The Young Woman's frustration in life and her wish to be free suggest the Mystic side of the style. It is a call for man to rise up and be human. However, the play is primarily related in theme to Activism. The entire play presents a protest against the mechanization of human life. No new plan or suggestion to change society is presented, but the negative aspects of the world as it is are projected. The depiction of the almost systematic destruction of the Young Woman demonstrates that the play is concerned with the effect of the machine age on man.

Style of Play

Machinal exhibits four characteristics of Expressionism. All of its form elements correspond to the same style. The element of theme contains traits of both Mystic and Activist Expressionism, although the Activist ideas seem predominant. In light of this analysis, it is apparent that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style

⁵²Ibid., pp. 497-501.

The example above from the interior monologue of the character illustrates the expressive use of "telegraphic" style. This style of language is used extensively in the play. The language is written in a telegraphic form, and the words are often in length. Often speech is limited to single words.

Themes

The themes of *Machinal* are expressed in the play. These in the play are related to the themes of Expressionism, of Expressionism. The Young Woman's condition is to be free suggest the theme of the play. The man to rise up and be human. However, the play is related to the theme of Activism. The entire play is related to the mechanization of human life. No new life is suggested in the society is presented, but the negative aspect of the world as it is are presented. The depiction of the almost systematic destruction of the Young Woman demonstrates that the play is concerned with the theme of the machine age on man.

Style of Play

Machinal exhibits four characteristics of Expressionism. All of the form elements correspond to the same style. The element of theme contains traits of both Mystical and Activist Expressionism, although the Activist theme seems predominant. In light of this analysis, it is apparent that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style

of Expressionism.

Mr. Moneypenny by Channing Pollock

Story

John Jones has worked for twenty years as a clerk in a bank. One day while guarding a shipment of money, he expresses a desire to be as wealthy as those who own the bank. Mr. Moneypenny appears seemingly out of nowhere. Jones is promised immense wealth if he will sign himself over to Mr. Moneypenny. Jones does so and enters into a life of extravagance and pleasure. He find, however, that everyone in his family enjoys his money but him. He is driven to the point of death by working to keep money flowing. All of his activities are directed by Mr. Moneypenny. Jones decides that wealth is not as important as happiness, and returns to his former way of life.⁵³

General Characteristics

Mr. Moneypenny exhibits three characteristics associated with Expressionism. It has a "dream-like" quality which is enhanced by the use of distortion and exaggeration in the elements of the play. Symbols are used frequently in the drama.

The drama as a whole seems to be more like a dream than an imitation of empirical reality. It is primarily an allegory of modern life in which association of ideas supplants construction of plot based on a logical connection of cause and effect. The play is more

⁵³Channing Pollock, Mr. Moneypenny (New York: Brentano's, 1928).

musical in form than dramatic. It follows a pattern of theme and variation. The theme, the evil of wealth gained for its own sake, is established by the end of the second of eight scenes. The remainder of the scenes are episodes illustrating such related ideas as marriage for riches instead of love, families spoiled by too much wealth, the boredom of an overprivileged life, and the toll that the work to gain wealth takes on man's health. The play is by no means an imitation of a dream, but it suggests a state of dreams rather than one of reality.

The suggestion of a dream is furthered by the distortion and exaggeration of elements in the drama. An office scene in the second episode contains an "enormous metronome" which "gives the tempo of office activity."⁵⁴ The office itself is not an everyday type of office. "It is the apotheosis of such an office -- the office of a super-tired businessman might vision in a nightmare."⁵⁵ The distortion and exaggeration found in the office scene is carried on throughout the play in actions and objects too numerous to mention.

The allegorical nature of the play requires the use of many symbols. The basic action of the play itself is symbolic of the author's view of a materialistic society. Faust-like, Jones sells his soul to the Devil, Mr. Moneypenny, whose name obviously suggests wealth. This event implies that the American society has lost its spiritual values in the pursuit of materialism. All of the symbolism in the play is quite obvious. The strain on men who seek great wealth is symbolized in one brief incident. Jones is shown on a treadmill

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 27.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 29.

trying to reach stacks of bills and coins. He is burdened down with briefcases and tangled in ticker tape. Mr Moneypenny goads him on with a whip. Jones yells he is dying, but the treadmill continues to run.⁵⁶

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Mr. Moneypenny contains traits associated with Expressionism. It conforms to an "epic" form of construction. The eight scenes of the play change rapidly in time and space. The pageant or pilgrimage-like structure found in Expressionism appears in the play. The life-story of John Jones is followed as he dreams of wealth, attains it, suffers from it, and finally rejects it. As in Expressionism, only crucial events are portrayed in this life-story. Although the play has a definite logic of its own, the exposition and preparation found in conventional dramas are largely ignored with the result that the play does not seem to progress by cause and effect. Also, the author indicates that the play takes place "here and now," yet the action seems to occur in a void of unspecified times and locations.⁵⁷ Over all, the plot provides "a jumble of fragments which suggest rather than describe the experience of the play."

Character

The persons portrayed in Mr. Moneypenny have attributes of character associated with Expressionism. For the most part, they have

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 128-29.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 1-3.

abstract personified names. They are puppet-like and purely imaginative. They are definitely not imitations of human beings.

Some of the major characters have recognized given names and surnames such as John Jones, Murphy, David Jones, and Carrie Jones. But even these names are selected for their commonness in order to suggest universality. The majority of characters are named after their function in the play or their appearance. Some have seemingly different names which are all associated. For example, the office typists, who all look alike, are identified by the names of flowers -- Violet, Rose, Iris, Pansy. The office clerks are named after colors -- Black, White, Brown, Gray.

The names of the characters are only one indication of the depersonalization in the drama. The "persons" in the play are allegorical figures manipulated by the author in order to project his ideas. They have little or no apparent motivation of their own. Puppet-like, they act according to the requirements of the theme. John Jones may represent mankind, but he is not based on an imitation of human attributes found in empirical reality.

Language

The dialogue of Mr. Moneypenny corresponds to that of Expressionism. Although it contains passages of dialogue which may be identified as realistic, it does not generally attempt to imitate the speech of ordinary life. Frequently, a "telegraphic" style of dialogue appears in the play. An office scene contains stylized dialogue of this type which employs short advertising slogans such as "Big Money . . . Quick and Easy!" -- "Buy Today . . . Pay Tomorrow!" -- "Brighten Your

Eyes!" -- "Whiten Your Skin!" -- "Kiss-Proof and Permanent!"⁵⁸ Unison chanting and even singing are also included in the language element of the play.⁵⁹

Theme

The themes of Mr. Moneybags correspond to those of Expressionism. In particular, they are related to the Activist phase of the style. The play obviously and directly calls for a change of values and attitudes in present society. It does not deny that wealth is necessary, but it does deplore life that is purely materialistic. As one character says, man must be taught "that to have money, and nothing else, is to be very poor."⁶⁰ In addition to materialism, the play deals with the mechanization of society. Many of its scenes depict characters behaving as machines. The drama is related to Activist Expressionism in that its themes treat the negative aspects of the present and call for a transformation of society.

Style of Play

Mr. Moneybags exhibits three characteristics of Expressionism. All of its form elements conform to those of the same style. From this analysis it is evident that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Expressionism.

Singing Jailbirds by Upton Sinclair

Story

A union organizer for the I.W.W., Red Adams, is arrested and

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 36. ⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 62-63. ⁶⁰Ibid., p. 154.

jailed for his part in a Los Angeles strike. Because of his uncooperative attitude, he is placed in solitary confinement on a diet of bread and water. He resolves not to eat in order to be a symbol to his men of defiance against unjust laws. Darkness and starvation cause him to gradually lose his mind. The dreams and hallucinations stemming from this decline are dramatized. They reveal the unjust treatment of labor by the capitalistic society and Red's ideal of a new world. As Red dies, I.W.W. songs are sung quietly in the background.⁶¹

General Characteristics

Singing Jailbirds exhibits four characteristics associated with Expressionism. The play projects the inner, subjective thoughts of characters in a direct, concrete form. There is a "dream-like" quality apparent in the play. Distortion and exaggeration of elements accompanies the "dream-like" quality apparent in the play. Distortion and exaggeration of elements accompanies the "dream-like" quality. The use of symbols is evident.

The play is primarily involved in projecting the inner thoughts and the dreams of its protagonist. The dreams and hallucinations of Red Adams are presented in dramatized form. In addition, several interior monologues reveal Red's rambling thoughts while he is conscious. The most striking of these monologues is over five pages in length.⁶² This play is mainly devoted to presenting "reality" as it is viewed by the protagonist. His dreams and thoughts determine

⁶¹Upton Sinclair, Singing Jailbirds (Pasadena, California: published by the author, 1924).

⁶²Ibid., pp. 30-36.

the scenes presented and the overall shape of the drama.

As is obvious from the above, the play has a "dream-like" quality. Reality and dreams are mingled. Earlier scenes when Red is first placed in solitary confinement are quite realistic. As his mental and physical condition deteriorates, the line between reality and dream begins to disappear. The dreams become more and more fantastic and distorted. In spite of their nature the presentation of these dream scenes is carefully ordered. Dreams of the past are almost realistic in tone. Dreams of Red's present are based on empirical reality, but contain elements of distortion and exaggeration. Finally, Red's dream of the future is quite mystical and unrealistic.

Distortion and exaggeration are present in the dream sequences, but are moderately employed. When Red dreams of his unfair trial, the characters are seen as animals.⁶³ However, distortion and exaggeration are also evident in the rapidity of change in scene and locale of the dreams. Some of Red's memories are distorted, too. He imagines an affair between his mistress and the District Attorney, an event that has no basis in fact nor any likelihood of actually happening.

The use of symbols is apparent in the play, although they are employed sparingly. When the characters turn into animals in the trial scene, the lawyer is portrayed as a "jack-in-the-box," the informer as a snake, the judge as a tiger, and the police as bulls.⁶⁴ In another scene, Red recalls the death of his wife from a self-

⁶³Ibid., pp. 63-71.

⁶⁴Ibid.

inflicted abortion. He cries out, "Blood," and the lights on stage turn red.⁶⁵ Finally, there is a "messianic" symbol in the last of Red's dreams. He sees the future in which an enormous statue of himself is erected in an idyllic park in memory of his martyrdom for the cause of labor.⁶⁶ He is almost Christ-like, a "saint" of the I.W.W.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Singing Jailbirds contains traits associated with Expressionism. Its structure is episodic rather than dramatic. It follows a pageant or pilgrimage-like pattern in depicting the life-story of Red Adams. The episodic nature of the play is complicated by frequent shifts in time and place. The use of a simple setting and changing lights enables scene to follow scene almost simultaneously. The shifts in planes of consciousness as Red drifts from reality to dream and back to reality are also indicative of Expressionism.

Character

The persons portrayed in Singing Jailbirds have attributes of character associated with Expressionism. Red Adams is not wholly unrealistic, although he is rather idealized by the author. His sense of justice and his rough nobility are rather incredible. However, his suffering and his reactions to darkness and starvation are quite probable. Yet he appears to be used for some purpose rather than

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 53.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 82.

being independently motivated. His life and his agony are a symbol of humanity in general and labor in particular.

The other characters in the play appear to be projections of the subjective mind of the protagonist. Undoubtedly, these characters have an existence of their own, but they are projected to the audience as seen by Red. The District Attorney and the police are obstacles in Red's life. His wife and his mistress represent the few moments of love and peace in his life. The change of characters into animals in the trial scene is explained by their being projections of Red's inner mind. At that moment they seemed to be animals to him, so they are projected as animals to the audience.

Language

The dialogue of Singing Jailbirds corresponds primarily to that of Realism. In spite of all the elements of Expressionism in the play, the dialogue is largely an imitation of everyday speech. It is quite colloquial and marked by swearing, slang, and poor grammar. Fully two-thirds of the dialogue in the play is of the realistic variety.

Several elements in the dialogue of the play do correspond to Expressionism, however. Several long interior monologues appear, all spoken by Red Adams. They are marked by rambling, uncompleted thoughts which suggest a stream-of-conscious approach to revealing subjective thought.

The "telegraphic" dialogue associated with Expressionism is apparent in only one scene of the play. A parody of trial procedures is presented in a short rapid-fire manner.

Theme

The themes of Singing Jailbirds correspond to those of Expressionism. Red's defiance of the law is an attempt to reform society for the good of the proletariat. He sees the world as unjust to those who labor with their hands. The play dwells on the negative aspects of society. In these themes the play is related to Activist Expressionism. The Mystic phase of Expressionism is present to a limited extent in the "messianic" vision Red has of the future. However, this theme appears to be less important than the Activist ones.

The themes of the play may also be viewed as corresponding to those of Realism. This is not incompatible with the general expressionist tendency of the play. While there is a general expressionist theme which involves improving society, there is a specific theme related to labor and its problems in modern society. This concern for a contemporary social and human problem is related to the ideas associated with Realism. Although this idea is advanced by the play, it is clear that the expressionist themes are primary and the realistic one secondary.

Style of Play

Singing Jailbirds exhibits four characteristics of Expressionism. The form elements of plot and character also correspond to the same style. The element of language is primarily realistic and secondarily expressionistic. The element of theme is primarily expressionistic, but does have some relation to Realism. While not every aspect of the play is clearly expressionistic, the general quality of the drama

suggests that its style is related to the dramatic style of Expressionism, in particular to Activist Expressionism. However, special note should be taken of the traits of Realism in language and theme.

Street Scene by Elmer Rice

Story

Anna Maurrant, a mature woman and mother of two children, finds little love and affection in her marriage to Frank, a narrow-minded, insensitive man. She carries on an affair with Steve Sankey, a milkman. The illicit relation is common knowledge in the neighborhood, but is kept from Frank, who travels as a stagehand. One hot June day, Frank, who has been drinking, returns unexpectedly and discovers Anna and Sankey in the Maurrant apartment. In a drunken rage, Frank shoots Sankey dead, and mortally wounds his wife. He runs from the apartment and hides from the police. While the police search for him, his wife dies in the hospital. Frank is caught shortly afterward and taken to jail. As the play ends, another couple comes to rent the Maurrant apartment.⁶⁷

General Characteristics

Street Scene exhibits four characteristics associated with both Realism and Naturalism. A fourth-wall convention is observed throughout the play. There is an imitation of "the contemporary world of man and society." The element of character is emphasized. Finally, the relationship between character and environment is evident.

⁶⁷Elmer Rice, Street Scene (New York: Samuel French, 1929).

The contemporary nature of the play is suggested by its setting and the details included in the action. The drama unfolds in front of "a 'walk-up' apartment-house, in a mean quarter of New York."⁶⁸ The time of the action is parallel with the opening of the play on Broadway, in 1929. An extremely large number of details from empirical reality are included, as, for example, street excavation, home milk delivery, ice cream cones, and ambulances. In addition, the noises of New York City life are heard unceasingly in the background. They include "the distant roar of 'L' trains, automobile sirens and the whistles of boats on the river."⁶⁹

The element of character is emphasized in the drama. Over forty persons appear in the play, and of these, about fifteen are drawn with some care. It is their personalities and their reactions to the Maurrants' difficulties which provide the interest in the play. There is little that is extraordinary about the persons portrayed, but the total effect of the play depends on the depiction of them as they go about a rather ordinary way of life.

The influence of environment on character is also emphasized in the play. The immediate effect of environment is shown by the reactions of the characters to the heat of a June day. Almost all of them remark about their discomfort, and repeat the same tired phrases about perspiration and humidity.⁷⁰ The deeper effects of environment are apparent in the behavior of Anna Maurrant. Her sensitive nature which attracts her to music and other forms of beauty is

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 3.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 6-7, 15, 18, 23.

incompatible with the life she leads with the unimaginative Frank. The family environment drives Anna into her affair with Sankey. In general the environmental conditions revealed in the play are not conducive to meaningful human relations. As Rose Maurrant says to Sam Kaplan, ". . . things might be different, if you only had a chance to breathe and spread out a little."⁷¹

Street Scene also exhibits four characteristics particularly associated with Naturalism. Life in the lower levels of society is portrayed. The sordid, bestial, unpleasant aspects of this life are frankly treated. The play appears to present a "slice of life." A general pessimistic attitude is evident.

The people and the environment in the play are of a low level of life in America. The setting is a slum area. Many of the characters are either foreign-born or are second generation Americans. They are rather poor and not well educated. Most of the men work at menial jobs.

The affair between Sankey and Anna Maurrant is but one instance of the frank treatment of sordid aspects of life in the play. An open treatment of sexuality is also apparent in a minor incident between Mae and Dick, as he gets her drunk and leads her off to a friend's apartment.⁷² Frank Maurrant is portrayed as a somewhat bestial type of human being. He is physically strong, belligerent, and mean. His intolerance and lack of intellectual curiosity are obvious in his discussions with others. He actually doesn't talk much, and then only in short sentences. His drunkenness and

⁷¹Ibid., p. 232.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 92-96.

uncontrollable rage which lead him to murder are also indications of his animal-like nature.

The large number of characters and the seemingly aimless progression of the play indicate a "slice of life" technique in the play. Although selection and manipulation of details from observed reality is evident upon close reading, the immediate effect of the play is one of a complete imitation of reality. The main action dealing with the Murrants is woven into many other events. These various incidents do not develop in a direct manner. Interruptions of particular actions is frequent. For example, a discussion of poetry between Rose and Sam Kaplan is broken up as Mr. Buchanan calls for Mrs. Murrant to help his wife who is in labor. The lives of the characters are also entangled. Rose likes Sam Kaplan, but his sister, Shirley, opposes their friendship because it might interfere with Sam's plans for a college education for which Shirley is sacrificing her own financial well-being. In addition, many extraneous details and characters are introduced into the action. They provide atmosphere and aid the "slice of life" quality, but they could be eliminated easily and not affect the main actions of the play. In every act unnamed characters stroll across the sidewalk in front of the apartment house who have nothing to do with the action of the play at all. For example, two girls pass over the stage talking about eyeglasses. They speak seven short lines of dialogue, exit, and do not reappear.⁷³ All of the interruptions, entanglements, and extraneous details produce a "slice of life" quality in the play.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 136-37.

A general attitude of pessimism is generated by the drama. The content is depressing, and little hope of change in the condition of the characters is suggested. Mrs. Maurrant says, "What's the good of being alive, if you can't get a little something out of life? You might just as well be dead."⁷⁴ Sam Kaplan also reflects a pessimistic mood when he says to Rose, that God is an illusion, a lie "that people tell themselves, because reality is too terrible for them to bear."⁷⁵ Finally, pessimism is suggested by the end of the play in which nothing seems to have changed as a result of the minor tragedy that occurred in the neighborhood. Another couple moves into the Maurrant apartment and life goes on as before. Although the pessimistic feeling is strong, there is some hope for a better life shown in the parting of Sam Kaplan and Rose. She leaves the slum to seek a better existence, and Sam returns to his studies to gain an education which may someday free him from his surroundings.

Form Elements

Plot

The plot of Street Scene contains traits associated with Naturalism. As mentioned under general characteristics, the play employs a "slice of life" technique. There is a close approximation of observed reality. The plot is simple but filled with many details of ordinary life. Theatrical climaxes or "big scenes" are avoided or underplayed. For instance, Act I ends in silence as Rose and Sam say good night. Act II has an exciting finish as Mrs. Maurrant is brought out on a

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 155.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 166.

stretcher, but the most exciting part of the act, the murder, occurs seventeen pages before the end of the act.⁷⁶ Act III ends very quietly.

The play does have a beginning and end, but they are not immediately obvious. It takes most of the first act to establish the conflict between Mr. and Mrs. Maurant. The exposition which reveals the condition of these characters is interwoven in rather unimportant incidents. The end of the action, when Frank Maurant is led away by the police, occurs almost ten pages before the end of the play.⁷⁷

Character

The persons portrayed in Street Scene have attributes of character associated with Naturalism. Mrs. Maurant reveals a complexity of factors in her personality. She is a good mother and a sensitive person. Yet she enters into an affair with a rather loud and crude man. She aids her neighbors and has their respect except for her affair with Sankey. She has many positive qualities but cannot escape the promptings of her sexual instinct.

Mr. Maurant, on the other hand, resembles a type found in naturalistic drama in that he is a physical person with strong animal drives and little intellectual activity. He threatens and bullies, but does not ~~try~~ to understand. He has a strong sense of how a family should be handled, but lacks the love and compassion to be a good husband or father.

As mentioned under general characteristics, the characters' actions stem from the influence of environment. They seem to be

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 183-200.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 230-39.

victims of this environment. The frustrations of living in their social conditions suppress desirable human qualities and foster a behavior more animal than human.

Language

The dialogue of Street Scene corresponds to that of Naturalism. It is a close approximation of everyday speech. Except for Rose and Sam, the characters speak with poor grammar and frequent mispronunciations. Many of the characters are of various national origins and employ accents of those nations. Mr. Fiorentino even lapses into Italian conversation at times. Efforts are made to distinguish characters from one another through their speech. Even "American" accents range from Rose's rather common one to the "Brooklyn" dialect of some minor characters. Slang is employed frequently, as is swearing. Some employment of interruptions and pause also marks the dialogue as corresponding to Naturalism.

Theme

The themes of Street Scene correspond to those of Naturalism. Man is shown as the victim of a world he cannot control. Frank Maurrant says of his crime, "It ain't that I meant it to be. It's just the way things happened to turn out, that's all."⁷⁸ Life in the slum is viewed as a trap. Mrs. Maurrant, Rose, and Sam all speak of escape from their conditions. As mentioned under general characteristics, the general theme of pessimism is apparent in the play. The play does not project the idea that man is doomed to defeat and

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 229.

annihilation, but it does suggest that certain men in particular social conditions are.

Style of Play

Street Scene exhibits four characteristics which may be associated with Realism and Naturalism. In addition, it has four characteristics associated with Naturalism. All of its form elements correspond to those of Naturalism. In light of this analysis, it is clear that the style of the play is related to the dramatic style of Naturalism.

Congai by Harry Hervey and Carlton Hildreth

Story

The background of the play is French Indo-China at the time of World War I. The plot of the play as described in The Best Plays of 1928-1929 is as follows:

Thi-Linh, half-caste daughter of a native Annamite mother and a French father, loves Kim Khouan, also a native, who deserts her. Thereafter Thi-Linh defiantly lives the life of a **congai, or courtesan, and manages through a succession of experiences, to be a little revenged on life and the French officers in Indo-China.**⁷⁹

General Characteristics

From what can be gathered from information in The Best Plays of 1928-1929 and an anonymous review in the New York Times, Congai exhibits one characteristic associated with Romanticism. There is a

⁷⁹Best Plays of 1928-1929, p. 429. This play was not available in book or manuscript form. It does not appear to exist in the files of the U.S. Copyright Office.

tendency away from actuality in that the play is set in a culture remote from the experiences of ordinary individuals. In 1929, the year of the play's original production, French Indo-China must have been relatively unfamiliar to the western world. The exotic nature of this culture is established in the depiction of "atmospheric tropical settings" and "oriental costumes."⁸⁰

Form Elements

Plot

From limited sources, it can be inferred that the plot of Congai contains traits associated with Romanticism. There is an indication that it is "loose" in its treatment of the unities. The unity of time is ignored in that the events of the play evidently cover a period of time necessary for Thi-Linh to be deserted by her lover, to become a courtesan, and to live "through a succession of experiences."⁸¹ The unity of place is ignored as six settings are employed in the drama. They are a pool, a street, a bungalow, a barracks, a house, and a governor's office. The first two of these settings are located in the city of Stung Treng and the rest are located in Saigon.⁸²

Character

Very little is revealed about the characters in the play except that Thi-Linh seeks some revenge and that she defiantly lives the life of a courtesan. The newspaper review also mentions that although

⁸⁰"Congai," New York Times, November 28, 1928, p. 24.

⁸¹Best Plays of 1928-1929, p. 429.

⁸²Ibid.

she lives a life of shame, she behaves "with noble resignation and sweet consideration."⁸³ In spite of her betrayal, her heart is with her native lover and their son.⁸⁴ These comments on the major character indicate attributes of Romanticism in characterization. It appears that Thi-Linh resembles the "outcast of society" type of character found in "historical" Romanticism.

There is not enough information to indicate anything about the elements of language and theme in the play.

Style of Play

It appears from the available information that Congai exhibits one characteristic of Romanticism. Enough of the plot is presented to identify it with the same style. The only evidence concerning the element of character indicates that it, too, is related to Romanticism. On this limited analysis, it is assumed that the style of the play corresponds to the dramatic style of Romanticism. However, it is not possible to state whether the play is related to "secondhand" or "historical" Romanticism. In view of the manner resorted to in determining the style of the play, its place in the pattern of trends in style on Broadway cannot be equated with those plays which are given a fuller examination.

Summary of the 1928-1929 Season

Analysis of the fourteen selected "successful," serious plays from the Broadway theatrical season of 1928-1929 revealed that in regard

⁸³New York Times, November 28, 1928, p. 24.

⁸⁴Ibid.

to style six plays (Jarnegan, The Age of Innocence, Brothers, The Grey Fox, Gods of the Lightning, and, probably, Congai) were written in a style related to Romanticism, three plays (Street Scene, Exceeding Small, and Harlem) were written in a style related to Naturalism, three plays (Machinal, Singing Jailbirds, and Mr. Moneypenny) were written in a style related to Expressionism, and two plays (Goin' Home and Gypsy) were written in a style related to Realism. No other dramatic styles were represented during the season in the selected plays.

Three plays -- Brothers, Gods of the Lightning, and Jarnegan -- correspond to "secondhand" Romanticism. They reveal varying degrees of influence from Realism. All observe a fourth-wall convention and imitate the contemporary world. These plays employ dialogue associated with Realism. Gods of the Lightning and Jarnegan are of particular interest since their themes are related to those of Realism. All of the plays are primarily romantic in the elements of character and in a characteristic tendency away from reality. Two plays, The Age of Innocence and The Grey Fox, contain aspects of "historical" Romanticism. The latter play especially is closest to this phase of the style. Yet it shows some influence of Realism in that its fifteenth and sixteenth century dialogue corresponds to that of twentieth century Realism. The play also conforms to the fourth-wall convention. Both The Age of Innocence and The Grey Fox portray characters resembling those of "historical" Romanticism, characters of the nobility or aristocracy.

Of the three plays containing characteristics and elements of Naturalism, Street Scene is the most clearly related to the style by virtue of a closer conformity to the "slice of life" technique. This technique is apparent but not as prevalent in Harlem and

Exceeding Small. Sordid and unpleasant aspects of life appear in all three plays. In addition, a pessimistic attitude is present in these plays. This attitude is especially marked in Exceeding Small.

Harlem shows some tendency toward the depiction of a group protagonist. This play also disturbs its general naturalistic pattern by the employment of obvious plotting in its concluding act.

The three plays of Expressionism are quite different from each other. Machinal and Singing Jailbirds show some predilection toward Mystic Expressionism, although they are primarily of the Activist phase. Mr. Moneypenny is also related to the Activist movement and is the most fantastic in its employment of expressionist techniques. The other two plays have a closer surface relation to Realism. Singing Jailbirds contains dialogue which is closer to Realism than Expressionism. Machinal displays the closest imitation of expressionist language. In regard to theme, Singing Jailbirds shows some inclination toward Realism, although this is secondary in importance in the play.

In terms of style, there is little of striking interest in two plays of Realism that appear in this season. Although Goin' Home and Gypsy differ greatly in subject matter, they are quite clearly related to Realism. Goin' Home displays structural compactness in its plot, while Gypsy is much more of a psychological character study.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to describe trends in dramatic styles in the "successful," serious American drama of the 1920's. In order to accomplish this end, a method for describing dramatic styles was developed. Utilizing this method, criteria for identifying eight modern dramatic styles were established. The criteria for recognizing these styles were used to analyze forty-six "successful," serious American dramas selected from every third Broadway theatrical season, beginning with the season of 1919-1920. The analyses of the dramas from each of four theatrical seasons were reported in separate chapters and summarized. These analyses formed the bases on which the following conclusions were drawn.

While definitive conclusions are made concerning only four seasons treated in this study, qualified conclusions may be reached dealing with all ten seasons. If the six theatrical seasons not included in this study are similar in nature and pattern to the four which are included, then the definitive conclusions of this study may be extended to encompass stylistic trends in "successful," serious American drama for the entire period of the 1920's.

However, it is not claimed that all trends in dramatic style in the 1920's have been discovered. Investigation of the theatrical

seasons omitted from this study might reveal further trends.¹ Yet it is improbable that such an investigation would negate the particular conclusions reached in this study.

In brief, the view is held in this study that the trends in styles in "successful," serious American dramas of the 1920's indicated by the investigation of four evenly separated theatrical seasons reflect the state of dramatic styles in all the seasons of the period.

Conclusions

Some questions were presented in the introduction to this study which may now be answered on the basis of the data gathered in this investigation.

1. What were the overall stylistic trends of the period? What styles were exhibited in the dramas of this period?

Within the context of this study, it appears that the "successful," serious American drama of the 1920's changed in terms of style from a state of near uniformity at the beginning of the decade to a

¹It is quite possible that the six theatrical seasons not treated in this study are similar in nature and pattern to the four which are. A cursory investigation by the author of all the theatrical seasons in the 1920's revealed that they correspond in several ways. The total number of productions in each season is roughly two hundred. About half this number are comedies or musical comedies. Translations and adaptations of foreign dramas along with revivals of plays from past dramatic periods or theatrical seasons constitute about one-fourth of the total. The remaining quarter of the dramas are usually serious plays by American authors. About fifteen of this quarter may be considered either popular or critical successes.

While these are only approximate figures, they do reveal a similarity among the theatrical seasons of the 1920's. If they are similar in these respects, it is reasonable to assume that they may be similar in others, including trends in dramatic style.

state of multiformity by 1929. Successful plays were written in four dramatic styles: Romanticism, Realism, Expressionism, and Naturalism.

In the theatrical season of 1919-1920, eight of the selected plays (At 9:45, A Voice in the Dark, The Storm, Déclassée, The Son-Daughter, The Sign on the Door, The Acquittal, and For the Defense) appeared to be written in a style which corresponded to Romanticism and two (Beyond the Horizon and The Famous Mrs. Fair) in a style related to Realism. In the theatrical season of 1922-1923, four of the selected plays (Whispering Wires, The Last Warning, Rain, and It is the Law) were deemed to be written in a style corresponding to Romanticism, four (The Fool, Icebound, Sun Up, Uptown West) in a style related to Realism, and two (The Adding Machine and Roger Bloomer) in a style associated with Expressionism. In the theatrical season of 1925-1926, six of the selected plays (The Green Hat, Twelve Miles Out, Shanghai Gesture, The Great Gatsby, Lulu Belle, and Kongo) appeared to be written in a style corresponding to Romanticism, five (Craig's Wife, The Enemy, The Mud Turtle, The Bride of the Lamb, and Lucky Sam McCarver) in a style related to Realism, and one (The Great God Brown) in a style associated with Expressionism. In the theatrical season of 1928-1929, six of the selected plays (Jarnegan, Congai, The Age of Innocence, Brothers, The Grey Fox, and Gods of the Lightning) were deemed to be written in a style related to Romanticism, two (Coin! Home and Gypsy) in a style corresponding to Realism, three (Machinal, Singing Jailbirds, and Mr. Moneypenny) in a style associated with Expressionism, and three (Street Scene, Exceeding Small, and Harlem) in a style related to Naturalism.

Clearly, Romanticism, which appeared in eight out of ten plays, was the predominant style of the first theatrical season. In addition, the primary tendency in all of the romantic plays of this season was toward "secondhand" Romanticism. In contrast, the last theatrical season was found to be quite diverse in that four dramatic styles were employed by playwrights. Further, the "secondhand" and "historical" variants of Romanticism and the Mystic and Activist phases of Expressionism were recognizable in the 1928-1929 season. In short, "successful," serious American drama of the 1920's changed from near homogeneity to diversity in dramatic styles in the course of ten years.

It is significant that the dramatic styles of Symbolism, Formalism, and Surrealism were not employed in any of the forty-six selected plays. From this fact it may be concluded that either these styles appeared in theatrical seasons not covered in this study or that they were not adopted by American playwrights who wrote "successful," serious dramas.

2. Was there a dominant dramatic style in the 1920's? How frequently were different styles employed?

Again, within the context of this study, it appears that Romanticism was the dominant dramatic style of the "successful," serious American plays of the 1920's. No other style in any single season appeared more often than Romanticism. Only in the theatrical season of 1922-1923 was Romanticism equalled in number of appearances by another style, Realism. Dramas written in a style related to Romanticism constituted eight of the ten selected plays from the theatrical season of 1919-1920, four of the ten selected plays of 1922-1923, **six**

of the twelve selected plays of 1925-1926, and six of the fourteen selected plays of 1928-1929. The total number of plays related to Romanticism which appear in this study is twenty-four.² This number represents just slightly more than one-half of the forty-six selected plays. Clearly, the findings of this study indicate that in four of the ten seasons of Broadway drama in the 1920's, Romanticism was the most prevalent style employed in "successful," serious drama by American playwrights during the 1920's.

As for the frequency of appearance of styles other than Romanticism, this study shows that Realism was the second most prevalent style in the selected drama of the period. It appeared as the style of thirteen dramas. Expressionism and Naturalism appeared relatively infrequently. Expressionism was the style of six plays and Naturalism of three. Expressionism appeared in every theatrical season but the first one. All three naturalistic dramas were produced in the final season of 1928-1929.

It may be concluded that Romanticism and Realism were the most frequently employed dramatic styles. Expressionism and Naturalism may be viewed as minor stylistic movements in the selected American drama of the 1920's.

3. Did dramas of the 1920's contain combinations of dramatic styles?

A trend toward eclecticism was evident in the serious American

²Two plays, The Acquittal and Congai, may be subtracted from this total because the means of analyzing these plays was not based on an actual reading of them. They are only assumed to have been romantic dramas. However, their inclusion or exclusion as romantic drama does not affect the overall conclusions concerning Romanticism as a dramatic style.

1. The first group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

2. The second group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

3. The third group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

4. The fourth group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

5. The fifth group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

6. The sixth group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

7. The seventh group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

8. The eighth group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

9. The ninth group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

10. The tenth group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

11. The eleventh group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

12. The twelfth group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

drama of the 1920's. The analyses of selected plays revealed that many plays of a certain basic dramatic style contained characteristics or traits of other styles.

Dramas written in the style of "secondhand" Romanticism included aspects of Realism. Several mystery melodramas, such as At 9:45 and Whispering Wires, exhibited the realistic characteristics of a imitation of the contemporary world and the observance of a fourth-wall convention and had plots which were structurally compact with a rather strict adherence to the traditional unities. Two plays reflecting a romantic style, Jarnegan and Gods of the Lightning, had themes associated with Realism. In addition, a large majority of the plays associated with Romanticism contained dialogue related to Realism. Typical of these plays were The Sign on the Door, For the Defense, and The Last Warning.

On the other hand, some basically realistic plays incorporated traits of Romanticism. The romantic characteristic of dealing with the strange or unusual appeared in The Fool and Sun Up. Obvious plotting and thrilling scenes, traits connected with Romanticism, were apparent in The Enemy and The Famous Mrs. Fair. The chronological structure of plot found in Romanticism also was found in such realistic plays as The Fool and The Enemy.

Lastly, one romantic play, Lulu Belle, contained sordid subject matter associated with Naturalism. Singing Jailbirds, a basically expressionistic play, had dialogue related more to Realism than Expressionism. The themes of this play were related secondarily to those of Realism.

From the above and other examples found in the play analyses,

it is apparent that a mixture of dramatic styles occurred in a number of the selected plays from the "successful," serious American drama of the 1920's.

4. What were the similarities in plays related to particular dramatic styles? What were the differences?

Romanticism

The analyses of the selected plays revealed that there were differences between two groups of plays related to Romanticism. However, there was a great deal of similarity among plays within the groups, especially in "secondhand" Romanticism.

Over fifteen of the romantic plays were related to "secondhand" Romanticism. These plays were connected with Romanticism by such characteristics as a tendency away from actuality, the inclusion of some aspect of social freedom or rebellion, and the depiction of the strange or unusual. Generally, they were marked by improbable action and characters. As a group, they displayed rather undistinguished themes. These plays exhibited some tendency toward Realism in that they usually appeared to imitate the contemporary world of their era, observed a fourth-wall convention, and employed dialogue resembling that of Realism. Among the plays containing most, if not all, of the attributes of this group were At 9:45, Twelve Miles Out, Brothers, It is the Law, and The Sign on the Door. It should be noted that most of the plays in this group were mystery melodramas.

Approximately seven of the selected plays related to Romanticism contained elements which were reminiscent of "historical"

Romanticism. The "outcast of society" and the "romantic criminal" were most often imitated in the form element of character. Some plays primarily devoted to themes of love and sentiment also tended toward "historical" Romanticism. Examples of the type of play found in this group were Déclassée, Rain, Shanghai Gesture, The Age of Innocence, The Great Gatsby, and The Storm. While these plays tended toward "historical" Romanticism, there was only one play included in the entire study, The Grey Fox, which was primarily associated with the "historical" variant of Romanticism.

Realism

Dramas related to the style of Realism were, for the most part, concerned with the element of character and the relationship between character and environment. Such plays as Craig's Wife, Gypsy, and Lucky Sam McCarver tended to be character portraits. Second to character in realistic plays was the element of theme. Concern with individual and social problems was marked in such plays as Uptown West, The Enemy, The Bride of the Lamb, and Goin' Home. All the realistic plays were alike in that they depicted the contemporary world, observed a fourth-wall convention, and imitated the speech of everyday life in their dialogue. The largest single area of difference among the realistic plays was in the form element of plot. Most of the plays were structurally compact within individual scenes but did not display this compactness throughout the entirety of the play. Only in Craig's Wife and Goin' Home were the unities of action time and place strictly adhered to.



Expressionism

Dramas related to the style of Expressionism tended to be different from each other, although each corresponded to the criteria for that style. Mr. Moneybags was the most fantastic of the group in its use of distortion and exaggeration, while Singing Jailbirds tended to include some aspects of Realism, especially in its dialogue. As for similarities, The Adding Machine, Singing Jailbirds, and Mr. Moneybags, whose themes implied a criticism of modern society, were primarily related to Activist Expressionism. Machinal and Roger Bloomer were also related to Activism, but displayed some tendency toward Mystic Expressionism. The play closest to this phase of the style was The Great God Brown.

Naturalism

Dramas related to the style of Naturalism were quite similar to each other. They all displayed a frankness in treating the sordid and unpleasant aspects of life in the lower levels of society. All three projected an attitude of pessimism, but only one, Exceeding Small, did not offer some hopeful aspect of life to temper this attitude. In addition, many of the characters in these plays were inclined to be physical "types" with little intellectual talent. Street Scene and Exceeding Small were similar in their approach to the "slice of life" technique associated with Naturalism, but shifts in time and place tended to destroy the "life-like" illusion in Harlem.

In addition to answering the questions raised in the introduction to this study, one other conclusion may be made. Realism was not the prevailing style of the period, but the employment of its

characteristics and traits in other dramatic styles shows that it was a major influence on all styles appearing in the American drama of the 1920's.

The fourth-wall convention of Realism is a characteristic of Naturalism as well. However, this characteristic appeared in twenty-two of the twenty-four romantic plays. All in all, this convention was observed in thirty-eight of the forty-six plays analyzed in this study. Another characteristic of Realism, the imitation of the contemporary world, was present in thirty-four of the selected plays. Dialogue associated with Realism appeared in at least thirty dramas. In short, Realism was a very major influence on the serious drama of the period, even though the style was not the dominant one of the decade.

Further Observations

The conjectures contained in the discussions which follow are related to this study, but are not consistent with the original aims, intentions, and limitations of the investigation. In addition, some of the following commentary involves a certain amount of subjective evaluation.

Dramatic Styles: Popular and Critical Success

If a differentiation is made between the popular and critical success of the plays included in this study, additional conclusions regarding stylistic trends in the American drama of the 1920's may be drawn. Such a division was not made in the major portion of this study, since there was an attempt to treat the total pattern of styles

as they appeared in the period. "Success" was the sole criterion, whether it was popular or critical.

Realism

Realism was the dominant style of critically successful dramas analyzed in this study. This does not mean that dramas associated with Realism did not enjoy popular success as well. Eight of the thirteen realistic plays in this study ran over one hundred performances. However, of all the plays considered in this study, the ones related to Realism, as a group, have received the most critical recognition. Specifically, the realistic plays which were both critical and popular success were Beyond the Horizon, The Famous Mrs. Fair, The Fool, Icebound, Sun Up, Uptown West, Craig's Wife, and The Enemy. In addition, the remaining five realistic dramas (The Mud Turtle, The Bride of the Lamb, Lucky Sam McCarver, Gypsy, and Goin' Home) received critical recognition although they ran less than one hundred performances.

The fact that a majority of the critically successful dramas included in this study were realistic in style is consistent with generally held opinions that Realism is the dominant style of drama in the twentieth century. However, it appears that such opinions are based on consideration of the quality of drama and not on popularity. In brief, when the American drama of the 1920's is characterized as realistic in style, it would appear that only the best of its plays are considered.

Romanticism

Romanticism was the dominant style of popularly successful

dramas. Only four of the twenty-four dramas in this study judged to be written in a style of Romanticism ran less than one hundred performances. The four plays were For the Defense, Kongo, The Grey Fox, and Gods of the Lightning. It is the author's opinion that the latter two plays have some merit. The same cannot be said of many of the popularly successful romantic plays. Out of the twenty romantic plays which were popular successes, only Rain and The Great Gatsby are judged by the author of this study to be worthwhile drama. Based on subjective evaluation, only four of the twenty-four romantic dramas included in this study appear to exhibit qualities of good drama.

Obviously, the conclusion reached in this study that Romanticism was the dominant style of "successful," serious American drama of the 1920's is directly related to the inclusion of popularly successful dramas. A few of these plays did receive critical recognition, however. Déclassée, Rain, and The Green Hat were chosen as "best plays" by Burns Mantle. Gods of the Lightning was selected by John Cassner as one of the twenty-five "best plays" of the 1920's.

In general, the critical reception of the romantic dramas included in this study was poor. As a group, the plays of Romanticism, while they enjoyed popular success at the time of their original productions, did not display the qualities of enduring drama of merit.

Expressionism

In this study dramas related to Expressionism generally were found to be critically successful plays. Only one play of this style, The Great God Brown, was both popularly and critically successful. Machinal, The Adding Machine, Roger Bloomer, Singing Jailbirds

and Mr. Moneybags ran less than the one hundred performance total which indicates popular success.

While more data from theatrical seasons not included in this study is needed in order to make definite conclusions about the status of Expressionism in the serious drama of the 1920's in America, the tentative suggestion is made that the style was not accepted generally by the commercial theatre audiences. Expressionism as a dramatic style seems to have been of interest primarily to critics and historians.

Naturalism

Since only three plays in this study were associated with the style of Naturalism, it is difficult to generalize about the relation of critical and popular success in these dramas. Street Scene, Exceeding Small, and Harlem were all critical successes, but only Street Scene achieved popular success. The tentative conclusion that can be drawn from the fact that only one of a very small number of naturalistic plays was a popular success is that Naturalism was not accepted generally by the commercial theatre audiences of the 1920's.

Author's Commentary

Dramatic Styles and Subjectivity

The element of subjectivity plays a large role in dealing with questions of dramatic style. However, the author feels that the criteria for identifying dramatic styles contained in this study were useful in narrowing the areas of subjective judgment.

One may gain ideas and feelings about the style of a play by

viewing it in its entirety, but the employment of the various criteria enables one to make more rational decisions based on established standards. Of course, even these decisions cannot always be entirely free of subjective influence. For example, the difference between "secondhand" Romanticism and Realism is apparent in the element of character. Deciding whether a play is romantic or realistic in style may depend on whether the characters are viewed as improbable or probable. This judgment of probability is essentially subjective. While the criteria aid in reducing the area of subjective judgment, they do not entirely eliminate it.

Characteristics and Form Elements

Overall characteristics provide a better means of relating dramatic styles of plays than do details of form elements. A rigid conformity to identifying specific traits may be misleading in determining the style of a play. The very fact that characteristics are general in nature renders them a more flexible means of dealing with styles.

For example, Realism is identified with "structural compactness" in plot. However, some of the most obvious melodramas of "second-hand" Romanticism analyzed in this study had structurally compact plots that conformed to the unities of action, time, and place. In this respect, such plays are realistic. However, the romantic characteristic of "a tendency away from actuality" identifies the plays more aptly.

Suggestions for Further Study

1. A study similar to this one might be undertaken to investigate the theatrical seasons of the 1920's not included in this study. Such an investigation, when compared with the present one, would present a rather complete record of trends in dramatic style in "successful," serious drama in America in the 1920's.

2. Studies of dramatic style in comedy are also recommended. The description of dramatic styles in comedy would in itself provide enough material for a doctoral research project. The possibilities of investigating comedy styles in the American drama of the twentieth century are numerous in view of the fact that the majority of the plays offered on Broadway are comedies.

3. A study related to scenic styles is suggested. Again the establishment of criteria might constitute an entire thesis. A study of this nature would necessitate developing a method of describing scenic styles. There is also a need for a study of the relationship between scenic and dramatic styles.

4. A study might also be undertaken to determine whether there is any connection between general conditions of life in the United States and the appearance of dramatic styles. This suggestion is prompted by the observation in this study that Naturalism appeared as a style in a few dramas at a time when America was experiencing an economic "boom." How was the pessimism of this dramatic style related to the general optimism of the nation?

5. A study of the employment of dramatic styles by individual playwrights might be done. Of course, much has already been written about Eugene O'Neill, but this study indicates that Elmer Rice and

Channing Pollock also wrote in a number of different dramatic styles.

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