AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THE ADAPTATION OF AUGUST STRINDBERG'S THE FATHER FOR TELEVISION

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THESIS

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THE ADAPTATION OF AUGUST STRINDBERG'S *THE FATHER* FOR TELEVISION

by

Gerald C. Beckwith

AN ABSTRACT

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Michigan
State College of Agriculture and Applied Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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THESIS

Although the adaptation has assumed a position of increasing importance on television few attempts have been made to analyze the particular problems involved in the writing of a television adaptation. This study was undertaken, therefore, in an effort to satisfy, inasmuch as possible, the need for more detailed information on this subject.

In keeping with the above purpose this study treated the problem of writing the television adaptation in a process which involved the steps listed below.

1. A study was first made of the television medium itself, in order to determine its characteristics, potentialities and limitations, particularly as those characteristics might effect the selection and treatment of an adaptable work.

2. August Strindberg's The Father was selected for an adaptation treatment after an analysis of its suitability to the television medium and a recognition of its importance as a piece of dramatic literature.

3. A careful and complete study was made of the play selected relative to such matters as dramatic type, style, theme, plot construction, character delineation and dramatic weaknesses, information which could be utilized by the writer in making his adaptation of the play.

4. An attempt was made to adjust Strindberg's concept of the play to the needs and demands of the television medium and the nature of its audience.

5. The problems involved in the adaptation process were analyzed and various conclusions were drawn as to their general nature.

On the basis of the particular problems encountered during the course of the study criteria were established for the selection of materials suitable for adaptation to the television medium and a procedure was set-up which could be followed in subsequent adaptations. Further, as a result of this study, the writer was able to reafirm his recognition of the television adaptation as a significant dramatic form in its own right, one which involves problems particular to its own nature and a procedure which differs from that of an original television drama.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his sincere gratitude to Dr. Robert P. Crawford, for his experienced guidance and supervision in the organization and composition of this study.

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Gladys,
without whose understanding and inspiration
this study would never have been completed.

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CHAPTER I

A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

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A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Background. The television industry uses a great amount of dramatic material each week in the course of its programming activities. The "Comparative Network TV Showsheet" of Broadcasting-Telecasting for the month of May, 1953, for example, shows a total of sixty-two dramatic type programs weekly for that month.[1] Together, the listed programs total over thirty hours of entertainment, comparable to the time required to view twelve Broadway plays, or over twenty motion pictures.[2] As was so graphically stated by Goodman Ace,

> This new medium has a voracious appetite. Its feeding hours are from early morning till late at night. Its diet consists of scenery, costumes, lights, make-up, music, choreography, sound, and words. And the greatest of these is words. And not just words compounded out of thin air or lame brain, but words which have been scrupulously prepared and seasoned, and fed to those who inhabit this new box of magic week after week.[3]

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1 "Comparative Network TV Showsheet," Broadcasting-Telecasting, (May 4, 1953), pp. 98-99.

2 These figures are based upon an estimated time length for the average Broadway play of two hours and one-half, and an estimated time length for the average motion picture of ninety minutes.

3 Goodman Ace, "Ghost Writers In The Sky," Saturday Review of Literature, (April 26, 1952), p. 31.

Because the amount of dramatic material produced for television each week is so great, it has been found difficult to supply the needed material entirely from original sources. The amount of time needed to write an original drama for television is one reason for this difficulty. As was noted by Stasheff and Bretz, the writing of full hour television dramas, for example, requires "almost as much investment of time and effort on the part of the writer as three act plays."[4] In consequence of this fact, many television producers have relied heavily on television adaptations of short stories, novels and stage plays for their program needs. Many of the better-known dramatic programs on television have followed this policy, including The Kraft Television Theatre,[5] Studio One, The Philco Television Playhouse, Robert Montgomery Presents, and the dramatic portion of the Omnibus program. Studio One, for example, has over the past few seasons presented in adapted form, Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Henry IV, Taming of the Shrew, and Coriolanus, as well as Minotte's The Medium, Hawthorn's The Scarlet Letter, Henry James' The Ambassadors, L. May Alcott's Little Women and George Orwell's 1984.

The contribution made by the adaptation to the television medium has been of major importance to the furthering of the medium's programming function, for the adaptation has presented an easily accessible

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4 Edward Stasheff and Rudy Bretz, The Television Program, (New York: A. A. Wyn, 1951), p. 171.

5 For a discussion on the role of the adaptation in the history of the Kraft Television Theatre, see, "Kraft Theatre, A Television Epic," Broadcasting-Telecasting, (June 15, 1953), p. 90.

source of program material at a saving of time and talent. Also, as one can see from the above-listed credits for the Studio One program alone, the adaptation has served the important cultural function of bringing the best of the literature of the world to the home viewer in a dramatic form. Television's reputation as an important cultural force has been built in no small part by the adaptation.

A Review of the Literature. In view of the fact that the adaptation has proven its importance as (1) a practical source of programming material, and (2) an important cultural force, it is significant to note that little study has been made of the actual process of making a television adaptation or of the problems involved. Although many fine books on television writing have appeared, little consideration has been shown the adaptation as such. Robert S. Greene's Television Writing is one such book.[6] Gilbert Seldes' Writing for Television is another.[7] As far as either one of these two publications has gone, they are excellent. They cover, in effect, the entire field of writing for television. However, they do so in a very general manner. They both find it difficult to give a comprehensive treatment to each and every aspect of television writing within the space that they have to devote to the subject. Because of this, the specific problems that the individual television writer might face have at times been neglected or generalized. This is particularly true of the problems involved in making the television adaptation.

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6 Robert S. Greene, Television Writing, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952).

7 Gilbert Seldes, Writing for Television, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1952).

Of the other books in the field of television writing, The TV Writer's Guide by Margaret R. Weiss should also be mentioned.[8] In her work, Miss Weiss attempts to accomplish the same purpose as Greene and Seldes, to introduce the writer to the overall field of television writing. However, Miss Weiss' work is too general to be of great value to the television adaptor. The merit of The TV Writer's Guide, therefore, lies principally in its presentation of television scripts and its practical information on the subject of television markets. Max Wylie's Radio and Television Writing,[9] another important work in the field, also fails to suit the specific needs of the television adaptor. Although the work contains many pages of excellent material on the problems of adapting material to radio, Wylie's book is vague and general concerning the same problem on television. Other books, such as Bretz and Stasheff's Television Scripts[10] and William I. Kaufman's The Best Television Plays of the Year[11] contain actual production scripts, many of them adaptations, but they contain little information of material value on writing the television adaptation itself. Books by Hoyland Bettinger,[12] Murray Belen,[13] Louis A.

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8 Margaret R. Weiss, The TV Writer's Guide, (New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1952).

9 Max Wylie, Radio and Television Writing, (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1950).

10 Rudy Bretz and Edward Stasheff, Television Scripts, (New York: A. A. Wyn, 1953.)

11 William I. Kaufman, ed., The Best Television Plays of the Year, (New York: Merlin Press, 1950).

12 Hoyland Bettinger, Television Techniques, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947).

13 Murray Belen, Fundamentals of Television, (Hollywood: Hollywood Radio Publishers, 1950).

Spoon,[14] William C. Eddy,[15] Richard Hubbell,[16] and John H. Battison[17] have treated most effectively various aspects of the television medium, including problems of writing, production, programming and engineering. However, few of the books mentioned contain more than an occasional reference to the problem of writing the television adaptation; most of them do not contain any information on this subject at all.

In the field of unpublished material, two studies have been made which pertain to the problem under consideration. Jean Marguerite Longwith's study of The Adaptation and Direction of Three Short Stories for Television is one.[18] William Tomlinson's An Analysis of Techniques Used in Directing Emlyn Williams' The Corn Is Green for the Arena Theatre and for Television is the other.[19] Both Miss Longwith and Mr. Tomlinson have treated particular aspects of the problem, but they have done so only in relation to other problems more particularly their own. Mr. Tomlinson, for example, was basically concerned with a comparative study of the arena stage and the television medium, and with the

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14 Louis A. Spoon, Television Primer of Production and Direction, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1947).

15 William C. Eddy, Television, The Eyes of Tomorrow, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1945).

16 Richard Hubbell, Television Programming and Production, (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1950).

17 John H. Battison, Movies for TV, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950).

18 Jean Marguerite Longwith, The Adaptation and Direction of Three Short Stories for Television, (unpublished Master's Thesis: State University of Iowa: Iowa City, 1950).

19 William Henry Tomlinson, An Analysis of Techniques Used In Directing Emlyn Williams' The Corn Is Green for the Arena Theatre and for Television, (unpublished Master's Thesis, Michigan State College, East Lansing, 1952).

differences involved in directing the same play for both. The problems of adapting to television Emlyn Williams' The Corn Is Green were therefore generalized by Mr. Tomlinson in order to conform with his principal purpose. Miss Longwith's primary purpose was to treat the problem of producing for television three of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's popular short stories, involving the adventures of Sherlock Holmes. The problems encountered by Miss Longwith in making the television adaptations of Doyle's short stories were, therefore, neglected in favor of a concentration on the production problems.

Although each of the works mentioned above has contributed information toward the solution of the problems of making a television adaptation, it was believed that a more specific treatment of some of the more important problems in this field could be valuable.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem. Because there appeared to be a need for an analysis of the problems involved in making an adaptation for television, it was the purpose of this project to make such a study. It was also the purpose of this project to set up, insofar as possible, criteria for the judicious selection of material for other adaptations. This implied that certain standards could be established to determine a material's suitability to the television medium.

In view of the above objectives, the nature of the thesis problem was three-fold: First, the selection of a work for adaptation, second, a study of the work as it was originally conceived by its author, third, a study of the problems involved in making the adaptation for television and an evaluation of the degree of success with which the work selected was adapted.

Importance of the Study. An analysis of the problems encountered in making an actual adaptation will be helpful in contemplating the future work in the field. Knowing in part what he will face in translating a work from one medium to another, a writer will be more careful, (1) in the selection of his material, and (2) in the treatment of his material. If the writer knows beforehand that a particular problem exists, he will make a study of the work he is considering in terms of that problem. Consequently, he will be able to avoid the difficulties that may develop from the problem when the show is in either the writing or the production stage. Lastly, if criteria can be established which will aid the writer in the selection of materials suitable for television adaptation, the writer's problem can be further simplified. If the writer can be guided at first to a work which will lend itself well to the television medium, he would be spared a substantial waste of time and effort. It must be emphasized, however, that many rules are made to be broken, and that most standards will hold true only so long as they are observed in practice.[20] Therefore, the work which on first examination appears to be unsuitable for television might, in the hands of an experienced and skilled adapter, be molded into a suitable form. With ingenuity and patience, even the greatest problems are capable of solution.[21]

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20 Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 158.

21 Loc. cit.

Definition of the Term "Adaptation." The only term used in this study which might be considered controversial is the term "adaptation." This study recognized that, "an adaptation can never be a literal re-creation of the original material..."[22] As the term is used in this study, an adaptation is a translation, not a transference, of material from one medium to another. The process calls for rearrangement, alteration or limitation of the text of the original material in consideration of the potentialities and the limitations of the medium to which the material is being adapted.

Limitations of the Study

In order to make a concentrated study of the problems involved in making a television adaptation, it was found advisable to treat only a particular aspect of the general problem. Therefore, the study was limited to a treatment of the problems encountered in making a television adaptation of a three-act stage play. For reasons which will be discussed later in the study, August Strindberg's The Father was subsequently selected as the play to be adapted.

In spite of the above limitation, it is hoped that much of the information gained from the study will be pertinent to forms other than stage drama. Because many of the problems faced in making the adaptation are problems common to the television medium in general, they are problems to be encountered in adapting short stories, novels, or biographical material to television as well.

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22 Green, op. cit., p. 142.

A second limitation placed upon this study concerns the television production of the adaptation. Although the finished adaptation was produced over the television system of Michigan State College, the consideration of the production problems in this study has been limited to the problem of writing for a particular production style. The study does not, then, treat to any extent the technical details of the production itself, i.e., the problems involved in actually producing the drama before the cameras. The determination of such factors as picture composition, camera angles, camera movement or placement, lighting, sound perspective and other such matters are problems that were handled by the technical crew under the supervision of a technical director. Therefore, it was deemed advisable not to include them within the range of this study.

Methods of Procedure

The adaptation and production of August Strindberg's The Father for television was made possible in the six steps which follow:

1. A study was made of the television medium in order to determine its characteristics, potentialities and limitations.

2. A drama was selected which appeared to be suited to the television medium.

3. A careful and complete study of the play and of its author's concept was made.

4. The adaptation of the play was made, utilizing the acquired background information on both the play and the television medium, in order to adjust the author's concept of the play to the needs of the television medium and the nature of the television audience.

5. The play was produced before the television cameras in the form of a one-hour video drama.

6. An analysis of the results of the study was made and the conclusions noted.

Coincident with the methods of procedure outlined above, the remainder of this thesis has been organized in six chapters. Chapter Two of the study concerns the television medium itself, its potentialities as a dramatic medium, and its limitations. Chapter Three concerns the selection of the play for television. Chapter Four is devoted to an analysis of the play selected, its style, type, theme, characters, and construction. Chapter Five is concerned with the adaptation problems encountered, and their solution. Chapter Six contains the completed script as it was adapted to television, and Chapter Seven, the last chapter, contains the conclusions of the study and the writer's recommendations for further work in the area.

CHAPTER II

THE TELEVISION MEDIUM, ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND LIMITATIONS

CHAPTER II

THE TELEVISION MEDIUM, ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND LIMITATIONS

The Characteristics of the Television Medium

Although this study does not treat, to any extent, the technical aspect of television, the means used in reproducing the television picture, the adaptor of The Father found it necessary to note some of the medium's special characteristics, particularly those which affected the selection of the play and the treatment of the play.

Characteristics of Performance. The television performance of a drama is continuous in nature, i.e., it starts at a particular time and runs without interruption through to its conclusion.[1] An exception to this rule occurs only when the drama is interrupted to give time for either the sponsor's commercials or for the station identification breaks. On occasion, too, a dramatic program will be carried in segments, one portion being shown one day or week, and another the following day or week.[2]

Because the television drama is continuous in its performance, the television actor must commit his lines to memory in advance, and

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1 This statement does not, of course, take into consideration those television plays which are produced first on film and then shown over the television system. For the purposes of this discussion, the characteristics of the television medium will be considered only as they describe the "live" television drama, i.e., the transmission of the actual event as it takes place.

2 Gilbert Seldes, Writing for Television, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1952), p. 104.

sustain his character and performance throughout the running time of the show. In this respect, the television actor holds a position much the same as the stage actor. He does not read from a script, as does the radio actor, and he does not memorize separate shots, or sequences, as does the motion picture actor.

The fact that a television performance is sustained also carries certain implications for the television writer. Whether he is writing an original play or making an adaptation, the writer must foresee the physical limitations imposed on his script by the nature of its production. Once started, the television drama cannot stop for new set-ups or retakes. Therefore, the writer must be careful to allow sufficient time in the course of his script for the movement of cameras from one set-up to the next, and for the shifting of scenery, properties, microphones, and lights. He must also be careful to allow enough time for the actor to change his costume or his make-up, when needed, and to move from one set to another between scenes.[3]

Another characteristic of the television performance is the fact that it is complete in itself. The television drama is only performed once, except when a delayed showing by means of a film is made over those stations not serviced by the network line. In the motion pictures, if a "shot" is not acceptable, it can be redone until such time as it is acceptable. On stage, if an actor fails to give a creditable performance one night, he has the opportunity to make up for it by giving a

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3 Edward Stasheff and Rudy Bretz, The Television Program, (New York: A.A. Wyn, 1951), p. 39.

better performance the following night. On television, however, there can be no second performances. Each night that a program goes on the air, a television play receives its opening and closing night in one.

Television's Combination of Picture and Sound. The television medium is characterized by its combination and integration of both aural and visual elements. The use of both sound and picture also forms the medium's principal attraction. As Bettinger has pointed out, the fact that the medium requires the simultaneous use of the two primary senses of sight and hearing creates "a double impact."[4] Because of this, television has double effectiveness as an entertainment, advertising, and educational medium. However, as Bettinger further points out, television's dual appeal of sight and sound can also become a weakness, if proper control is not exercised over the attention balance of the two senses.

> The human mind can concentrate on only one thing at a time. It cannot concentrate with the eyes and ears simultaneously... Consequently, if the attention of the television audience is to be held, the focus of attention must be shifted back and forth between picture and sound.[5]

The force of the television drama will, then, be carried at one time or another by both picture and sound, but on rare occasions only will picture and sound be of equal importance.

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4 Bettinger, op. cit., p. 12.

5 Loc. cit.

Although television has been termed a "visual" medium,[6] therefore, it is really visual only in the sense that "pictures supply that portion of the effect which can best be produced by visual means."[7] The dual nature of television means, then, that picture and sound must complement each other. Each must contribute to the overall effect that "something" which is found lacking in the other.

To achieve the most effective use of both picture and sound, certain rules have been established. For example, in stimulating the imagination and in establishing a mood, the ear is most effective, while in the exchange of information or in the transfer of knowledge, the eye is the more potent organ. Also, in carrying conviction, the picture does the better job, while in the association of ideas, sound is more important than the picture.[8]

Monocular Vision. Normal human vision is binocular, i.e., seeing with two eyes. Television, however, is monocular, i.e., seeing with only one eye, the single eye of the camera. The disadvantage of television's system of sight is the fact that with only one eye it is impossible to perceive distance or depth with any accuracy, except by

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6 Television has been termed a "visual" medium because, as Richard Hubbell pointed out, "of the 98 per cent. of our knowledge which we acquire through our eyes and ears, roughly 90 per cent. is learned through seeing---only 8 per cent. by hearing." If this holds true in television, the picture should be about eighty per cent. more potent than the sound; as the old adage states, "one picture is worth ten thousand words." Hubbell, op. cit., p. 13.

7 Bettinger, op. cit., p. 87.

8 Ibid., p. 13.

one object's relative vertical or horizontal position in relation to another's. The linear perspective of the reproduced television picture is, consequently, out of balance. The picture is reproduced on a flat, two-dimensional surface. Naturally, this fact makes it difficult to show proper spatial proportion. Hoyland Bettinger has graphically noted a common oddity which can result from this limitation. His comment follows:

> Perhaps you have taken a photograph of someone stretched out on the beach, the feet---by accident or intent---were toward the camera and near to it. The feet, you will recall, came out size twenty---six and the head the size of a peanut.[9]

Because such distortion can often develop through the use of a monocular system, it is not always possible for the television director to get the exact shot he wants and might need in a particular sequence. Because the television performance is continuous, therefore the shot normally has to be eliminated. In the motion pictures, this is not always the case, for in Hollywood the camera can always be set up at the most advantageous angle <u>before</u> the action is started.

<u>Monaural Hearing</u>. Television is <u>monaural</u> as well as monocular, i.e., it functions with a single sound system; it hears with one ear, in effect, whereas the human system hears with two. As a result of this fact, it is impossible for television to focus on a particular sound source, determining its horizontal and vertical position. It can, however, determine the relative distance of a sound source from the listener, or the microphone.

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9 Bettinger, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 15.

Monochromatic Sight. The television picture, at present, is reproduced in variations of but one color, the color gray. The color response of the television system differs, then, from the human eye, which sees multichromatically, i.e., in variations of many colors. the psychological use of color, commonly employed in the theatre, is not, then, possible on television. This fact also, however, has not proved a serious handicap in television production, due partly to the fact that the public has long been accustomed to watching "black and white" motion pictures. Also, when colored television is made available to the general public, in another few years, this limitation will no longer be felt.[10]

Television's Mobility. Unlike the audience in the theatre, the television audience watches from myriad, moving viewpoints. "The whole effect is (further) enhanced by the techniques of montage, visual effects, and regulated sound."[11] By a process of intercutting between persons, objects, or sets, the television director is able to move his audience at will, in an effort to better tell his story for their benefit. This is one of the great advantages of the television medium, the ability to quickly transfer the viewer from one vantage point to another, always looking for the one point of view which seems best suited to the understanding of the drama. Because of the television camera's mobility, details can be emphasized, associations can be made and psychological effects can be produced which will aid the

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10 Hubbell, op. cit., p. 19.

11 Ibid., p. 28.

writer in the expression of his ideas. Having a flexible medium to work with, the writer has, then, greater opportunity for self-expression and more potential for creativity.

The Television Audience. The television audience is primarily a home audience. Consequently, the television audience is heterogeneous. It is made up of different age, political, religious, and social groups, and composed of small family circles and individuals with varying intellectual capacities and contrasting economic standings. Reaching into private homes in the same manner as radio, the television program consequently crosses all social, racial, and economic barriers. One network program therefore can be viewed by as many as forty million people at the same time. Also to be taken into consideration is the fact that each member of this vast audience will bring to bear on the program his own individual tastes, prejudices, beliefs, likes, and dislikes.

Because of the mixed nature of the television audience, the following problem is presented to both the television writer and the television producer: Should the program being written or produced attempt to please all facets of the television audience, or should the program be directed to a particular portion of that audience? Upon the answer to this question is largely based the question of the selection of material for adaptation, and the treatment of that material. As Gilbert Seldes emphasized, "the writers, directors, technicians and actors... are employed by the sender, but their first, constant obligation is to the audience."[12]

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12 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 16.

Several other factors are involved in the consideration of the television audience. One such factor involves a consideration of the conditions under which the program is viewed by the audience. Because the television drama is viewed largely by small family groups, in the privacy of their own homes, the television writer must take into consideration the numerous little distractions which can interfere with the audience's attention to the program.[13] Also, the writer of the television drama must remember that the members of his audience have the power of selection over the programs they view. If the attention of the viewer is not captured immediately, therefore, and if his interest is not sustained, he has the ability to select a different program, or to turn his set off entirely. In order to compensate for this factor, the television writer must hope to capture the immediate attention of his viewer and to sustain that attention, regardless of any distractions that might develop in the home. To do this the writer is often forced to unfold his drama at a much faster pace than might be needed in the theatre. Besides imposing a faster pace on his play, the television writer has often been obliged to assume a greater amount of clarity in his dramatic construction. He has had to over-emphasize, in many instances, the important elements of plot and thought. Because of the necessity for repeated emphasis, the television drama has developed e more obvious type of dramatic construction

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13 Hubbell, op. cit., p. 28.

14 Bettinger, op. cit., p. 14.

than that assumed by the stage play.[15] As Hoyland Bettinger has pointed out, because of the conditions of the television medium, "limitations in plot development, exposition, characterization, and picturization," are often believed necessary in order to assure that the information that is given will be picked up and understood at once.[16]

Another factor which must be considered in a discussion of the television audience has to do with subject content. The individual television viewer has tastes which vary with the conditions under which he views a program. What might be considered acceptable entertainment in a theatre might not be so considered in the home. Recognizing this, the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters, the NARTB, has adopted a basic policy of self-censorship which confines material consideration within the limits of good taste and decency.[17] As Bretz and Stasheff have noted:

> Television is faced... by the problems of both radio and film. It is broadcast into the home, and so must follow at least the minimum requirements of the network policy books. But it is a visual medium, and so must worry not only about offensive language and subject matter, but must also concern itself with such unpredictable items as the plunging necklines of feminine guests and the questionable gestures or ad-libbed double entendres of night club comedians...[18]

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15 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 39.

16 Bettinger, op. cit., p. 14.

17 It is not the purpose of this study to treat in detail the various provisions of this code, except as may be touched upon in the chapters dealing with the selection of the play for television and the adaptation problems of the play. Almost any standard book on broadcasting will contain a copy of the code. The copy refered to by the adapter of The Father can be found in Edward Stasheff and Rudy Bretz's The Television Program, op. cit., pp. 70-75.

18 Ibid., p. 71.

Unless proper care is taken in the selection of subject matter for adaptation, and in the treatment of that subject matter, the television drama may, then, be looked upon as an intruder in the home rather than a welcome and entertaining visitor.

A final factor to consider concerning the television audience also has to do with its nature as a home audience. Although little is actually known about the viewing reaction of the home audience to the television drama, it is safe to assume that the members of that audience do not react under the psychological crowd factor which holds true of audiences in either the legitimate theatre or in motion picture houses. There is, for example, a lack of the "'electric' give-and-take," the bond which is built up between an actor and his audience in "live" theatres.[19] Also, there is apparently no feeling of group participation, the feeling which holds a theatre audience together as one unit. In a theatre audience, each member may lose his self-identity and conform to the group's reaction. The individual in a theatre audience may, in effect, identify himself with the crowd, and hence become a part of the crowd. The direct opposite may be true of the television viewer. Maintaining, as he does, freedom of action in his own home, the television viewer reacts in accordance to his individual characteristics, or with the reactions of a small, select group. Whether or not his individual reactions are more or less inhibited than his responses while in a group situation, however, is a matter for conjecture which is not within the bounds of this study. Indeed, much study has

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19 Hubbell, op. cit., p. 27.

yet to be made of this problem. There are certain characteristics of the television medium itself, however, which directly affect the nature of the audience response gained from watching a television drama. These characteristics are recognized in part today, and they should be considered by the television writer. Richard Hubbell refers to these characteristics as the medium's potential "feelings" of immediacy and intimacy.[20]

Sense of Immediacy. One of the fundamental characteristics of the television medium is the literal re-statement of what the camera sees. Except for such special effects as can be inserted into the drama, optical illusions, visual distortions, fades and dissolves, what the audience sees on its television receiver is the transmission of actuality.[21] What is being viewed on television is actually taking place while it is being viewed, hundreds or even thousands of miles away from the viewer. Psychologically, as Hubbell also points out:

> [television]... is an extension of seeing and hearing over great distances... and because the process of visual-aural extension is instantaneous, television can achieve the effect of making you feel that you are in two or more places at one time...[22]

The effect that Hubbell describes is the feeling of "immediacy," the feeling of actuality. As a result of this feeling, a viewer's reaction

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20 Ibid., p. 24.

21 Ibid., p. 23.

22 Ibid., p. 12.

to a successful program often takes one of two forms. These reactions are:[23]

1. The effect of "looking in" on the program from the sidelines, without actually taking part in it.

2. The effect of not only "looking in" on the program, wherever it may be, but of actually taking part in it.

Although the "give-and-take" reaction between actor and audience, and the feeling of group participation is lost to the television drama, then, the feeling of immediacy and the transmission of actuality, feelings which create a greater feeling of personal or individual participation on the part of the viewer, lessen the effect of their absence.

Sense of Intimacy. Because of the proximity of the viewer to his receiver, located in his own home, and because of the ability of the television director to bring objects and persons close to that receiver in close-up detail, there appears to be a lack of "distance" in television. The viewer apparently fails to recognize the difference between the actual show itself, and the picture on his receiver. The "presence" of the television performer is therefore "felt" to a great extent. "The reviewer feels that people in the program are right there with him as they look him in the eye. He can reach out and seem almost to touch them."[24] This is the feeling of intimacy, a feeling of close association and personal communication.

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23 Loc. cit.

24 Ibid., p. 24

In many cases the feeling of intimacy is brought on not only by the conditions under which the viewer is witnessing the program, but also by the physical limitations of the medium itself. Because of the space limitations existing in most studios, and because of the small size of the television screen, physical action in the television drama is in most cases cut to a minimum. This fact consequently forces the major emphasis of the drama to be on character. This was recognized by Gilbert Seldes, when he wrote as follows:

> ... because a long shot on the TV screen fatally reduces the stature of people to inches, the medium and close shots are the most effective and these are the shots telling us what people are more than what they do; we see the expression of emotion more clearly than the action that causes emotion or results from it.[25]

Television is consequently a medium where the projection of personality counts. As a result, "the person or persons on the program seem to step into your living room and converse with you..."[26] In consequence of these factors, the television audience experiences a feeling of "intense intimacy far greater than is obtained in motion pictures or the legitimate theatre."[27] The television drama offers, then, an attraction for an audience that is unattainable in any other medium.

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25 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 152.

26 Hubbell, op. cit., p. 12.

27 Ibid., p. 24.

The Limitations of the Television Medium

As has been previously stated in the study, the writer preparing to make a television adaptation must first consider the limitations under which he will be working. Unless the writer realizes what may or may not be done on television, the possibility of his construction of a successful television script would be remote. As Hoyland Bettinger has pointed out, the limitations of the television medium are not in themselves serious. "They become so only when they are not recognized and when intelligent steps are not taken to circumvent them."[28]

Limitation of Time

In his book Writing for Television, Gilbert Seldes writes as follows:

> ... one general statement applies to the whole of television production, to every department and every detail: there isn't enough time. No matter when you start on a show, you are late already. More than lack of space or money, the limitation of time haunts the television studios...[29]

Total Time. Television, like radio, arbitrarily imposes a time limit on the program which must be met to the split second. The longest regular dramatic programs on television run for an hour, less commercials and station identification. This means, in practice, about fifty minutes of playing time, "and this is the shortest duration for drama in any medium, being about one-half the time of a dramatic movie and considerably less than one-half of the actual playing time of a contemporary three-act play."[30] Other dramatic programs on television

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28 Bettinger, op. cit., p. 13.

29 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 35.

30 Ibid., p. 37.

run for one-half hour, and some run for as little as fifteen minutes, less the standard thirty seconds for the Federal Communication Commission's required station identification and the sponsor's commercials.

Because the program length of a drama on television is, therefore, considerably less than that enjoyed by any other medium, except radio, the television writer has been forced to simplify his dramatic form. In many cases limitations are imposed upon the action of a work being adapted to the medium. In order to fit his material into such a rigid time unit, the television writer is often "forced to take short cuts, to use familiar phrases and gestures which identify his characters immediately to the audience, and to simplify his plot while he reduces his characters often to stereotyped figures with little of the richness of human personality left."[31]

The television writer is not the only one faced with the segment of time to which the drama <u>must</u> be fitted. The television director is also concerned with this problem; for it is in his responsibility to see that the program comes out on time. Because many things can happen on the air to alter the pace and tempo of the drama, the director will perceive at times that the program is running either ahead or behind schedule. His problem, consequently, is how to sacrifice material without weakening the overall effect, or how to pad without diluting. These are decisions that must be made while the program is on the air, and many directors have failed to find solutions to problems less difficult.[32]

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31 Seldes, <u>Writing for Television</u>, p. 37.

32 Bettinger, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 14.

Rehearsal Time. A second limitation of time usually imposed by the television medium concerns the specific time allowed the director to prepare the drama for production. Because the television program is produced weekly, this means that in most cases the director has but one week, or at the most two weeks, if two directors are used, in which to rehearse. This is from two to four weeks' less time than that allowed the stage drama for rehearsal. As Seldes has pointed out:

> ...no matter how well organized a production may be, no matter how smoothly it runs, another hour or day and sometimes another week would have helped, especially to give the production the glossy finish of the movies, which are not so beset by time, or the solid certainty of the play, which has rehearsed for weeks and played on the road and comes to New York a finished product...[33]

In view of the limited amount of rehearsal time available for the television drama, it becomes the writer's responsibility to offer a script for production which can be done within the limits mentioned. "To gain the confidence of producers or story editors, a writer will not, [therefore], offer a script demanding five days of rehearsal with full facilities (lights, sound, cameras, etc.) for a program budgeted at two days; recognition of the fixed time limit should become as automatic as acceptance of the other limitations..."[34]

The Sustained Performance.[35] Although the limitations imposed on the television writer because of the nature of the drama's performance have been mentioned previously in this chapter, it was felt that

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33 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 35.

34 Loc. cit.

35 See p.12.

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additional mention of them should be made in this section. The one rule that the television writer must remember when faced with the problem of a sustained performance is that he must be careful to allow sufficient time during the course of his script for physical movement and changes while a program is on the air.

Time to Capture Attention.[36] As was previously mentioned in this chapter, the television audience has the power of program selection. This means that the writer of a television drama is obliged to capture the immediate attention of his audience if he expects them to remain through to the conclusion of his drama. Seldes refers to the time which the audience allows the writer to do this as "a matter of minutes."[37] The problem faced by the writer because of this fact is this: in order to capture the attention of his audience in such a short period of time, the television writer is often forced to rush through his exposition and to limit his initial consideration of character. The "sense we often have, when watching a TV play, that things are happening too artificially,"[38] results in part from this characteristic of television, and it does so because, as writers of stage plays have long known, in the exposition is rooted the motivation of character and actions. It is the lack of motivation which is most often damaging to the television drama.[39]

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36 See page 19.

37 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 34.

38 Ibid., p. 39.

39 Ibid.,

Picturization and Stage Business. Because television is a visual medium, it is dependent to a large extent upon action. However, picturized action consumes an amount of time that is not always in proportion to the contribution which the action makes to the total effect. As Bettinger pointed out, "a bit of stage business is frequently time-consuming but difficult to eliminate."[40] On stage this factor is not serious, but on television it is, because the television writer has such a short period of time in which to develop his story. Therefore, if it takes an actor a minute to do a bit of business, the writer must realize that one minute can be as much as two per cent. of the total time of the show.

Limitation of Space

Studio Size. As Stasheff and Bretz have pointed out, "most of the nation's television studios ... were not built or designed for video production."[41] As a consequence, actual floor space in a television studio is at a minimum. For the television writer, this limitation means a restriction upon the number of sets and upon the type of sets that can be used in the television drama. The television dramatist, for example, who has at his disposal a studio measuring only sixty by forty feet would find it difficult to write his play in more than two, or at the most three, sets. Also, unless on a system of rear-screen projection is to be used in the production, the television dramatist should not expect a director to produce in such a small space exterior scenes of an extensive character, viz., shots of crowded streets,

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40 Bettinger, op. cit., p. 14.

41 Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 40.

river boats, or moving autos. Scenes, or sets, such as those mentioned can at best only be suggested on television. For example, a lamp post set next to a plain drop will at times be used to represent a street corner, and a single bush or tree an entire forest.

A second consideration the writer must give to the size of his studio must be the fact that a large portion of it must be reserved for the studio equipment, cameras, microphone booms, dollies, lighting stands, prop tables, sound wagons, floor monitors, title rollers or stands, cue sheets and cables. The writer must also be aware of the fact that technicians must be given sufficient room to operate such equipment. A cameraman, for example, must have room to maneuver his camera into a favorable position for his shot, and the boom operator must be able to place his boom in a position which will assure a proper sound pick-up.

Picture Size. The limited size of the television screen on the home receiver, which averages from fourteen to twenty-one inches, means a definite limitation in the type of program material which can be presented with effectiveness on television. With such a small field of vision, for example, it is virtually impossible to discern small details and expressions, unless they are shown in close-up. Crowd scenes, therefore, such as those commonly employed in motion pictures by Cecil B. DeMille, are most ineffective on television, because in such scenes it is impossible to see facial expressions or small setting details.

Limitation of Budget

With the possible exception of time, perhaps the greatest single limitation faced by the television writer is the limitation on budget.

The cost of producing the television drama in the past has been exceedingly high, and unless new methods of production are devised future television adaptors will have to take this fact into consideration both in selecting material and in treating material.[42] As conditions are at present, the program budgets of most programs, though seemingly high, are very inadequate. As Bretz and Stasheff point out, "there will probably never be enough money to do a show as well as the director would like to see it done."[43] The implication of such a statement is obvious. Production demands must be kept at a minimum, and outside of the producer, the television writer is the one person on the "TV team" who has the power to keep costs down. By utilization of a limited number of sets and a limited number of actors, and by being reasonable in his demands for special effects, music, art work, film inserts, costumes, and set pieces, the writer can cut production costs before the drama ever reaches the production stage.

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42 It has been noted, for example, that when the Kraft Television Theatre first went on the air in 1947, air time for the program cost the sponsor one hundred dollars (on WNBT-TV, New York), while today the air time cost for the program, over the forty-eight station NBC-TV network, is listed as forty thousand dollars. With production and talent cost per program as twenty thousand dollars, the total cost per week for this popular one-hour dramatic production is, therefore, sixty thousand dollars. (Bruce Robertson, op. cit., p. 88.)

In comparison to these figures, Gilbert Seldes notes that a theatre film of comparable length of time, about fifty minutes, would have cost nearly one million dollars. (Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 31.)

What is most interesting to note concerning the cost of the Kraft Television Theatre is the fact that two-thirds of the cost is for air time, and only one-third is actually spent on talent and production. The cost for a motion picture, on the other hand, is taken up entirely by talent and production costs.

43 Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 38.

The Limitation of the Sponsor

Not only must the television writer realize that production costs are high in the industry, he must also realize that television lacks a "box office." In simple terms, this fact means that short of subscription television, there is no possible means for television drama to realize a profit. The reason for this is also simple. Television, following in the footsteps of its sister medium, radio, has come to be regarded in the United States as a means of providing "free" entertainment in the home. The method used to overcome the cost factor is "commercialism." Commercialism means that television stations, and networks, retail available air time to commercial organizations who are willing to purchase such air time, and to pay the program's cost in return for the right to advertise their products.

The commercialized nature of the television medium, while allowing the industry to profit, has resulted in a strict limitation to the television writer, the least bothersome of which is the time that must be taken away from the play for the sake of the commercials. What is most important is the fact that a sponsor of a program, in return for his money, usually demands the right to pass on the acceptability of the program he sponsors. Because he wishes to attract as large an audience as possible, in order to sell as much of his product as possible, a sponsor often demands that story content be held to the largest possible common denominator, material which will appeal to a "mass audience." The accepted standard for a television drama is, consequently, that it must have wide, popular appeal and that it must adhere to

accepted or proven patterns, formulas believed to guarantee success. This belief has led to a quality of sameness in many television dramas, as most dramas are directed to the same audience. Margaret R. Weiss, for example, mentioned one commonly accepted "standard" for story content when she wrote:

> ... mass audiences like to take their tragedy "weak and with a little sugar, please;" horror must never be too terrifying, nor terror too horrible to watch in action. Crime must always be "paid for;" violent methods of killing or torture not actually shown; a generally happy outcome to your story at least implied.[44]

This belief that all television dramas should be watered down to produce a minimum shock, and that all endings should be happy, is a common one. It is a belief that has been propagated by the men who believe in the idea of the "mass audience."[45] Such an attitude has been fostered mainly by sponsors, whose fear for their investments has led them to believe that only the popular formula-type program can hope for success on television. Because of this attitude, many great plays are believed to be unacceptable on television because they are felt to be too tragic or too morbid or too deep. Such an attitude has been expressed, for example, by Ed Roberts, television script editor for Armstrong's Circle Theatre. Various portions of Mr. Roberts' specifications for story content are reproduced below.

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44 Margaret R. Weiss, op. cit., p. 25.

45 Seldes, The Great Audience, (New York: The Viking Press, 1950), p. 296.

> Within the limitations of our possible subject material, we want fine dramas; romances; plays strong in suspense; sport stories; adventure stories. We are reaching out for serious plays with great impact, presenting personal problems of a universal nature involving ethics, spirituality (but no denominational elements), faith, good will, awareness of present-day problems, justice, man's relation with other men and with the universe. We will not, however, present plays of a controversial nature.
>
> "Believability" is a one-word description of our kind of materials---characters that are quickly and easily identifiable---stories that "might happen to you." ...
>
> Our best plays are those in which the situation is set up very fast usually the single strong situation on which the plot will develop ...
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> . . . . . .
>
> ... We usually want a happy ending, either accomplished or implied; stories with tragic overtones may be used, if there is a happy ending, or, at least, a morally satisfying ending in sight at the end of the play.[46]

The student of drama will note, particularly in these statements in italics, that the descriptions offered by Mr. Roberts are not necessarily descriptions of the best in story content. Some of the greatest plays written, for example, have been plays "of a controversial nature." These plays have also presented complex characters, rather than "characters that are quickly and easily identifiable," in stories with "tragic overtones." Unhappy endings have also been as common as they have been necessary. The limitations such ideas place upon the television writer, in the selection and treatment of adapted material, are obvious. Some of the world's greatest dramas can be

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46 Weiss, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

withheld from the medium because they do not necessarily conform to commercial standards or because they do not adhere to the sponsor's idea of the "mass audience." Ibsen's A Doll's House, for example, exposes the emptiness of a conventional marriage and expounds woman's right to responsibility and self-expression. Ibsen's theme is noble, but it can be construed as an attack upon the sanctity of marriage, and this is a cardinal sin in television.[47] John Galsworthy's Strife is a study of the clash of interests between labor and capital. The play is excellent, but the theme might offend the interest of capital or of labor, or of both. Therefore, an adaptation of Galsworthy's play might be frowned upon by a sponsor for fear of offending certain portions of his audience, all potential buyers of the product. The television writer must face the problem of "taboo" subjects on television, and he must live with it if he is to be successful. However, in the meantime, he can take hope from the following statement by Gilbert Seldes:

> We are being suffocated with sameness, and should be grateful for every indication that the wants of the average man are not entirely satisfied by those exploiters who think of him as part of a mass.
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> . . . . . .
>
> There are prophets who say we have already passed the golden era of television, that everything first-rate will go down within a year or two and we will have nothing but the crudest forms of entertainment ... Against this despair I have noted the relative success of TV programs that are true to the characteristics of the medium, the arrival of reasonable characters, and of plays based on character, the failure ... of some of the efforts to reduce television to illustrations of bad radio programs.[48]

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47 NBC's Working Manual for Continuity Acceptance reads, in part, as follows: "Marriage and the Home. In the treatment of these themes, respect for the sanctity of marriage and the home must be maintained..." (Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 74.)

48 Seldes, The Great Audience, pp. 296-297.

CHAPTER III

SELECTING THE PLAY FOR TELEVISION

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Having made a study of the television medium, the next problem faced by the writer was that of selecting the play for adaptation. Three basic factors influenced this selection. They were (1) that the play selected would offer materials capable of production within the characteristic limitations of the medium, (2) that the play selected should benefit from a transferrence to the medium, and (3) that the play selected should be of sufficient dramatic importance to make a production on television worthwhile. This chapter is to be devoted to a consideration of why the writer felt that Strindberg's *The Father* fulfilled these requirements. A consideration of the actual adaptation problems, which are often recognized in the script before it is selected, will not be treated in detail at this time. They will be described in a separate section to follow.

How *The Father* Was Found to Fit Within the Characteristics of the Television Medium

The Television Audience. Of major importance in the selection of the play for television was the question of how that play might be received by the television audience. Before selecting *The Father*, therefore, this question was considered very carefully. It was realized that the play might not appeal to a wide, general audience, that type of audience sought by commercial sponsors. In fact, it was realized that a family audience, or at least portions of it, might be offended

by Strindberg's theme, concerned as it is with the basic problem of paternity and the struggle between the sexes.

Believing this to be the case, it was yet recognized that The Father's theme was an intellectually stimulating subject, and, as it is presented, a highly interesting one. It was recognized too that, philosophically speaking, the theme was a valid one, worthy of consideration, not only in Strindberg's time but in the present age as well. To be sure, not many people are aware of this fact, but that does not diminish the importance of it. The knowledge that one out of every three marriages today end in some form of marital difficulty, either separation or divorce, with a corresponding hardship to the offspring of such marriages, points at least to some basis for Strindberg's concern over questions of family relationships even at so early a date as 1887. The relationship between the growing independence of womankind in the last part of the nineteenth century, a movement which resulted in the virtual emancipation of that sex, and the gradual breakdown of the family structure in the twentieth century has yet to be made. Yet some relationship must be there, and Strindberg explored to some extent its early beginnings.

The problem faced by Laura and the Captain was simply the problem of arriving at some mutual agreement as to their respective positions in their marriage. The fact that they could not, or, indeed, would not, was at the very root of their conflict, and the very cause of their tragedy. The importance of this problem can, then, hardly be put aside as being a taboo subject, for those watching such a tragedy from the privacy of their own living rooms might well reflect upon such

questions as were raised over seventy-five years ago by the Swedish playwright, August Strindberg. Such questions can certainly find application to today's society, just as they found application to Strindberg's.

The problem of presenting The Father on television was resolved, in part, by the existence of a precedent. The writer was aware that, in spite of the objections raised against certain particular themes of a like nature to Strindberg's, such themes have been presented on television with remarkable success. Hawthorn's The Scarlet Letter, a story built upon the problem of adultery, has been done, as has Shakespeare's Othello, a play which revolves around the question of jealousy and supposed infidelity, as well as the problem of interracial marriage. Luigi Pirandello's Six Characters In Search Of An Author, a study of the grotesqueness of human suffering and the question of the sense of guilt which results from the knowledge of original sin and the sexual heritage of birth, has also been done. It was believed that if these particular plays were found acceptable for production on television, then Strindberg's The Father might also be found acceptable, with but slight thematic adjustment.[1]

The fact that The Father has, over the years, attained an almost classic stature was also a consideration in the selection of the play for the television medium. As was noted in the introduction to this

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1 The problem of adjusting Strindberg's theme, when necessary, to the conditions of the television medium will be considered as an adaptation problem in Chapter Five.

study, the adaptation of important pieces of literature serves a significant cultural and educational function on television, a function which might be furthered with the presentation of Strindberg's play. Also, it was believed that people will often tend to accept, from an author of Strindberg's reputation, ideas and situations which they normally might find repulsive, out of respedt for his fame and recognized greatness.

The final selection of The Father in spite of its theme, or, indeed, because of it, was based upon yet another consideration. It was believed that all too often genuinely great plays have been put aside in favor of others less great, because of the fear that the better play might offend certain portions of the "mass" audience. It was believed at the outset of this study that this policy was not necessarily a rightful one. To attempt to satisfy every element of such an audience was deemed impossible, for no matter what play might eventually be selected, someone, somewhere, would be dissatisfied, with the play's theme, its plot, its style, or with some other consideration. As Elliot Lewis has noted:

> The mediocrity of most television programs today springs from the sponsor's and the network's desire to reach all of the audience. They don't want to offend anyone, so they keep eliminating all the conflict inherent in any good story. After all of this super distillation, the TV men finally reach a group of viewers who are not offended, but become bored to death and quit watching anyway.[2]

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2 Elliot Lewis as quoted by Hal Humphrey, "Radio Freed From Chains," Detroit Free Press, Sunday ed., (February 7, 1954).

Character Concentration. As a playwright, August Strindberg's chief interest was in character, his chief concern, character motivation. In the preface to his published edition of the play, "Miss Julie," he wrote on this subject as follows:

> I believe I have noticed that the psychological processes are what interests the people of our day more than anything else. Our souls, so eager for knowledge, cannot be satisfied with seeing what happens, but must also learn how it comes to happen ...[3]

This principle in the dramatic theory of Strindberg was found to be in perfect accord with television dramatic theory. As was noted by Gilbert Seldes, "the programs that have impressed people more ... have again and again been triumphs of character."[4] Because television is a medium where what people are is often much more important that what people do, the selection of the play on this point was of primary consequence. The only question which presented itself in this regard was the matter of time. Strindberg had over two hours to present his characters upon the stage. It was therefore expedient to ask, could those same characters be presented in less than half the time taken by the original author? Whether this could or could not be done was a definite consideration in the adaptation of the play, and one which will be discussed at greater length later in the study.

In consideration of the characters of Strindberg's drama another determining factor of the play The Father was the concentration upon a very small number of characters. Brets and Stasheff have noted that:

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3 Strindberg, Easter and Other Days, J. G. Robertson, ed., (New York: J. Cape and H. Smith, 1939), p. 111.

4 Gilbert Seldes, The Great Audience, (New York: The Viking Press, 1950), p. 188.

> ... the size of the television screen and the brevity of the drama itself make it difficult for the audience to feel truly familiar with more than half a dozen personalities.[5]

It is significant to note in this regard that The Father has a cast list of only eight persons, and only three of these can be considered major.

The Continuous Performance Problem. Having been originally conceived in terms of a medium which, like television, utilizes the continuous performance as a basis of production, an analysis of The Father showed that the play offered few problems that could not be met satisfactorily in this regard. August Strindberg, as a dramatist, sought to comply, more or less, with Greek classical structure in his adherence to the unity of time and action, qualities which Edmond Rice, for one, considers essential to television drama.[6] In the practical vein, it can be noted that because The Father's action takes place in a time period of less than twenty-four hours, there were no demands for costume changes, make-up changes, or set changes. A further advantage was the fact that the play was a compact, single plot, which followed a well-defined conflict through to a decisive conclusion without any needless complexities.

Strindberg's Space Limitations. Since Strindberg confined the action of his play to one set, the living room of the Captain's home,

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5 Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 162.

6 Mr. Edmund C. Rice, script editor for the Kraft Television Theatre, has mentioned that the chief reason the Kraft Theatre uses the adapted stage play so much in its programming is the fact that the dramatic unities are contained in the original material and are, therefore, more easily transferred to the television medium. (Rice, op. cit., p. 90.)

the problem of space was considerably reduced. This was a major consideration because of the writer's intention of presenting the finished adaptation before the cameras of the Television Development Department of Michigan State College. The studio dimensions of this department in March, 1953, were quite small, measuring only twenty by forty feet. Naturally, knowledge of the actual physical limitations of the producing organization affected the selection of the play, as it affected the treatment of the play.

The Time Limitation Problem. The limitation of time was of major concern to the writer, also. The question was, could The Father be presented in a form which would require no more than sixty minutes' playing time? Although it was known that Strindberg constantly strove as a writer for complete unity, keeping in his plays only those elements of plot, character, and thought which he deemed absolutely necessary to the development of his theme and the progression of his action, it was felt that in this particular case he had overwritten his material. Great portions of Strindberg's play dwell upon questions concerning his own life,[8] and could, consequently, be eliminated.

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7 Inasmuch as The Father was to be presented over a closed circuit network on the campus of Michigan State College, the writer was not presented with the additional problem of alloting time to commercials.

8 Professor J. G. Robertson has written that, "as in dreams the dreamer is always in the centre of the picture, so Strindberg's dreams, whatever their content or costume, are all slices of his own life, often naked, unassimilated, undigested, dwelt on with the persistence of a monomaniac, but never without redeeming touches of imaginative greatness and flashes of intuitive genius which threw new light on the relation of man to man." (Robertson, J. G., ed., Easter and Other Plays by August Strindberg, (New York: 1939), p. 6.)

Because of this, it was believed that the major portion of the drama could be presented, within a limited playing time, without material damage to the main plot line or the major characters. It was recognized, however, that this end could only be realized through a very careful analysis of the relative importance of each portion of the drama, a process discussed in the section of this study treating the adaptation problems themselves.

Television as a Combination of Both Picture and Sound. The writer realized that he faced one of his greatest adaptation problems in equalizing the relative importance of sound and picture in his television adaptation of The Father. As Richard Hubbell has written, "the fundamental sensory appeal of a stage play is aural, the spoken word comes first," while the fundamental appeal of a television program is visual.[9] The problem faced by the writer, then, was how to shift the emphasis from aural to visual. It must be remembered, however, that this is a problem that would be faced with the adaptation of any stage play to the television medium, and is not one limited to Strindberg's play alone. Therefore, the fact that this problem existed did not prevent the selection of The Father. Because the play was so rich in character, it was believed strong enough to overcome this handicap.[10]

Television's System of Monochromatic Sight. One of the obvious differences in presenting a drama on stage and on television is, as yet, the question of color. Television drama is presented in variations of

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9 Hubbell, op. cit., p. 27.

10 This problem will be discussed in the chapter dealing with adaptation problems.

gray values only. This factor was considered in the selection of Strindberg's drama, but it was not considered to be a handicap. It was believed that in the production of The Father such a color system would actually add to, rather than detract from the play. The Father, as will be explained in the following chapter, is of a tragic nature. Consequently, dark tones of the television picture, if used well, could heighten the overall dramatic effect of the play. The writer was aware of Sir Lawrence Olivier's decision to present his motion picture production of Hamlet in black and white film rather than in color, as he did his production of Henry V, for just such a reason.

The Conditions of Viewing. The viewing conditions of television demand that the play presented capture the immediate attention of the audience. The Father, it was believed, would be able to meet this requirement, with only a slight revision in its opening scene.[11] As an author, Strindberg believed that the first four acts of the typical five-act play of his day, those acts which contain all of the exposition and most of the build-up, were merely the "scaffolding" for the essential drama actually found in its climatic form in the fifth act.[12] His idea was to construct a type of drama which could dispense with the necessity of so much background, getting at the heart of the story as soon as possible. He therefore developed a technique of opening his plays after the crisis, which is to form his story, had been allowed

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11 The question of the television opening will be discussed as an adaptation problem in a later chapter.

12 Eric Bentley, The Playwright as Thinker, (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1946), p. 203.

to form and mature. The result of his theory is a drama of climax, where the passions of the characters have been roused and the conflict has been formed at the open of the first act. Strindberg's plays usually start on a high note, therefore, an argument or a point of difference which places immediate emphasis upon the question of problem solution.

Another factor which influenced the selection of The Father was that Strindberg's plays are also "highly Sensational," in that they are fast-moving and follow the development of a sharply defined conflict between two strong-willed individuals, caught in the web of exceptional circumstances.[13] The result of Strindberg's sensationalism is a type of action which is almost gripping in its intensity. It was believed that this type of drama would be effective on television, for as Robert S. Greene has written:

> Because of the time limit, and because of the need to establish immediate viewer interest, those scripts which begin with a crisis are apt to be the most successful. Such stories begin at a moment of pressure instead of showing that pressure develop.[14]

Television as a Realistic Medium. As pointed out earlier in this study, the television medium is a realistic medium, one which can most effectively present actual events as they occur. This characteristic has had an effect upon dramatic productions in the following manner. Commonly used stage techniques, techniques based largely upon exaggerated movement, expression and projection, often appear ludicrous on television.

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13 Frank W. Chandler, Modern Continental Playwrights, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 29.

14 Greene, op. cit., p. 71.

So too do dramas which display exaggerated characters (except in comedy), settings, and situations.[15] Naturalness in acting, writing and designing has become the general rule in television. The commonly accepted theory is that the drama should be presented as a real event and not as a staged event of make-believe, as is characteristic of the theatre. Consequently, such a play as The Father, which depends upon the acceptance of reality, has a much better chance for success on television. The Father is a naturalistic play, depending upon the audience's belief in the characters as actual people for its primary effect. Strindberg, the author, was first above all a naturalistic playwright, believing as did Zola that all art must have a solid foundation in life as it was actually lived.[16] This artistic principle of Strindberg's is one with which the television theorist Hoyland Bettinger would readily agree.[17]

How The Father Might Be Expected to Benefit from a Transference to the Television Medium

Strindberg once wrote that, "in modern psychological drama ... the subtlest movements of the soul are to be reflected in the face rather than by gestures and noise..."[18] In the theatre this is not always possible, but it is possible on television. In selecting the play The Father for television, therefore, it was believed that something could

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15 Bettinger, op. cit., p. 88.

16 Jameson, op. cit., p. 28.

17 Bettinger, op. cit., p. 87. "... Television in the home must be colored more truthfully with reality."

18 Strindberg, Easter and Other Plays, op. cit., p. 115.

be achieved with the play that was impossible in the theatre. Subtleties of characterization could be captured in detail with the close-up lens. Small objects could be isolated and given dramatic and symbolic importance, and the viewer's attention could be directed to elements of character reaction, as well as character action.

The possible use of the close-up camera, which results in a more effective presentation of character, was but one advantage to adapting The Father to television. A second advantage was to be found in the play's reputation as a subjective piece of literature. Strindberg sought in his writing to better present the underlying motivations of character through a process of psychoanalysis, a process which demands a concentration of intellect and a deep personal interest in human psychology. To achieve the greatest effect of the play, therefore, the viewer should not be forced to view it objectively with a sense of detachment, as is necessary in the theatre. Rather, the viewer should be given an entrance into the play, a method of viewing which demands participation. It was recognized that this method of viewing the play could be gained on television by virtue of the medium's great sense of intimacy (a feeling discussed in the preceding chapter), and its characteristic mobility.

Strindberg, himself, believed that a feeling of intimacy was needed to view his plays properly. That is why in his later years he established his Theatre Intima, where his plays could be produced before a small audience with a minimum of aesthetic distance.[19] On

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19 Elizabeth Sprigge, The Strange Life of August Strindberg, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1949), p. 214.

On television the feeling which Strindberg experimented with in his "little" theatre has been realized, much to the eventual benefit of his plays, The Father included.

It was further believed that The Father would benefit from a transference to the television medium for yet another reason. John Gassner, for one, has written that Strindberg's drama suffers from melodramatic action by driving its point too hard.[20] This criticism is due, in no small measure, to the need, in the theatre, of projecting the character and theme great distances. It was felt that the play would benefit to a large extent, therefore, by the elimination of such projection through a television production.[21] In order to take advantage of the medium's sense of intimacy, it is necessary to tone down and underplay the dramatic work. In the theatre, however, it is usually necessary to overplay. Another consideration, one which might also benefit the play, was the fact that television sound is picked up by a microphone, a very subjective and intimate instrument. Because there would be no need to project, the play might well be toned down and made more personal and natural.

A final consideration given The Father in its selection was the possibility inherent in the script for the use of special effects which could be achieved through the television medium. The use of

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20 John Gassner, "Theatre Arts," Forum, (January, 1950), p. 26.

21 As was noted by Gilbert Seldes, "The style of acting on television is determined by the conditions of reception; there is simply no room for the florid gestures, the overprojection of emotion, the exaggeration of voice or grimace of movement, inside the average American living room." (Seldes, The Great Audience, p. 299.)

music, for example, could be made to add tremendously to the overall effect of the drama. Used properly, it could underscore the essential conflict between the characters, and reinforce the overall mood of the production. The use of a sound motif, such as the ticking of a clock, could also be used to build suspense and heighten dramatic interest.

In closing this section, one note by Elizabeth Sprigge will serve to emphasize the writer's position on the possible use of Strindberg's The Father on television.

> Not a single one of Strindberg's plays is a period piece; neither subject, situation nor language is dated. He wrote of all time, and was always struggling to break through into further knowledge and new ways of expression. Strindberg should therefore never be imprisoned between the dates of his birth and his death, but given every advantage of modern and experimental theatre.[22]

The Dramatic Importance of The Father

Critical Recognition. August Strindberg has long been considered one of the world's great dramatists.[23 - 24] According to Eric

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22 Sprigge, op. cit., p. 227.

23 Sean O'Casey, the Irish playwright, has been quoted as follows: "Strindberg, Strindberg, Strindberg, the greatest of them all! Barrie mumbling as he silvers his little model stars and gilds his little model suns, while Strindberg shakes flame from the living planets and the fixed stars. Ibsen can sit serenely in his Doll's House, while Strindberg is battling with his heaven and hell." (As quoted by Sprigge, Ibid., p. 229.)

24 To Eugene O'Neill, Strindberg was, "... the greatest interpreter in the theatre of the characteristic spiritual conflicts which constitute the drama---the blood---of our lives today." (As quoted by Bentley, op. cit., p. 195.)

Bentley, his influence as a writer is perhaps unparalleled in modern theatre history, for, to Bentley, it was Strindberg more than anyone else who was responsible for the spirit and form taken by modern drama since the turn of the century.[25]

With knowledge of Strindberg's importance as a writer, it was not by chance that a play of his was considered for this study, and as he himself called The Father "the realization of modern drama,"[26] it was not by chance that this play was considered first. John Gassner has written that The Father "is indisputably a tragedy of deep insight and social significance, besides being a model of dramatic construction,"[27] and Emile Zola, the father of naturalism, has observed that the "piece is one of the few dramatic works which have moved me profoundly."[28]

The Significance of Strindberg's Theme. As was earlier related at some length, one of the most important considerations given The Father in its selection for this study was the significance of its theme. In this work, Strindberg has given an imaginative and powerful expression to a system of social philosophy that is as controversial as it is interesting. Strindberg has not necessarily been original in his use of idea, but he has been extremely creative in

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25 Bentley, op. cit., p. 203.

26 Bentley, Ibid., p. 203.

27 John Gassner, A Treasury of the Theatre, (New York: The Dryden Press, 1940), p. 800.

28 Zola, as quoted by Bentley, op. cit., p. 317.

his treatment, and in his delineation of character, his construction of dialogue and in his selection of circumstances. The idea that the sucdess of marriage depends upon the understanding and appreciation of one member of a family for another is not new, nor is the problem of paternity and the longing of the parent for a continued existence through the person of the child. Yet the problem has seldom received such dramatic expression as given to it by Strindberg. The belief in a sub-nature struggle between the sexes for control and power has also received philosophical consideration down through the years, yet it remained for Strindberg to give the idea creative existence through a universal application. Strindberg's play is, then, a plea for understanding and sincerity in love and marriage as well as an attack upon the romantic conventions which subject the honest expression of affection beneath a false code of behavior.

Summary

The selection of The Father for this study was based upon a careful consideration of both the play and the television medium. The play offered materials suitable for production within the medium's characteristic limitations of time and place, and was selected because of its concentration upon character and its practicality in terms of the conditions of a continuous dramatic performance. It was also believed that The Father might benefit from television production, because of the possible use of the close-up camera and because of the medium's fine sense of intimacy and subjectivity. Lastly, The Father was selected for this study because of the significance of its theme and its reputation as an important and well-known piece of dramatic literature.

CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF *THE FATHER*

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Introduction. No writer can hope to make a satisfactory adaptation of another author's work without acquiring a complete understanding of that work and of its author. As Robert S. Greene has written:

> Since your adaptation cannot be literal, the more familiar you are with the material, the more creatively will you be able to handle it with the better chance that your finished work will capture the spirit and the excellence of the original.[1]

In order to achieve such an understanding of Strindberg's The Father, this chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the play's style, dramatic type, thought, character conception, and plot construction.

Determination of Style. As was noted in the preceding chapter, The Father has been recognized, basically, as a naturalistic work, depending upon the illusion of reality for its chief effect. The play is also characterized by its concentration on the psychological details of character, rather than upon physical action or heavy plot. As a result of this latter characteristic, The Father cannot be termed wholly naturalistic, because it is not wholly objective. The utilization of subjective as well as objective techniques of story-telling was indicative of Strindberg's dramatic theory. Mainly, his purpose was to attain a higher degree of naturalism than was previously known or thought possible. In effect, Strindberg thought to create a method of dramatic expression where both the inner and the outer experiences

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1 Greene, op. cit., p. 146.

of character could combine for the ultimate in realistic effect.[2]

Determination of Dramatic Type. The Father has been classified as a tragedy,[3] but it is not a tragedy in the Aristotelian meaning of that word. Unlike classic tragedy, the play does not excite the well-known emotions of fear and pity. Unlike classic tragedy the play's protagonist cannot be considered a great hero, for upon him does not rest the social welfare of the state. Unlike classic tragedy, the play does not produce, in conclusion, a meaningful and instructive catastrophe. The Captain's destruction is not brought about by his own actions, and consequently there is no feeling of justice in his fate. His destruction is as truly meaningless and as futile as the chance destruction of a soldier in war.

It might be maintained that if The Father is not a tragedy, it must then be a melodrama, for surely it is not a comedy. This conception of Strindberg's play is also false, however, even though much of the action of the play is melodramatic. Melodrama defines that type of action which follows two opposing lines of dramatic activity, one good and the other bad, through to two different conclusions. At the conclusion of a typical melodrama, justice is rather arbitrarily handed out to all of the participants in the drama. The hero usually gets that which has been withheld from him through most of the play, and the villain gets his well-deserved punishment. Considering,

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2 Chandler, op. cit., p. 29.

3 Ibid., p. 24.

then, the nature of The Father's conclusion, the death of the hero and the complete victory of the villainess, the play cannot be classified as a melodrama. The problem is not that simple.

The true key to the classification of Strindberg's play is to be found in the nature of his dramatic theory. It is to be found in his purpose and main interest, psychology. Not adhering to any conscious type, Strindberg constructed what has since become known as the psychological drama, the drama of motivation rather than action, the drama of souls in conflict. Actually, The Father can, perhaps, be best classed as a tragedy of the mind, because Strindberg's main purpose, the psychological penetration of character, takes precedence over both the physical action and the plot of the play.

Determination of the Theme of The Father. The Father has been recognized as Strindberg's "supreme effort to symbolize the life-and-death struggle between man and woman for such immortality as may be offered them by the child."[4] The conflict between Laura and the Captain, then, is a meaningful one. It does not serve merely to illustrate the Nietzchean theory that "love between the sexes is strife." This idea forms, instead, a simple yet important foundation for a whole system of philosophy built upon the general relations between man and woman, particularly as those relations have been conditioned by the trends of modern thought.

When Ibsen's A Doll's House first appeared, Strindberg attacked it violently, not as a reactionary critic, who regarded it as an

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4 Edwin A. Bjorkman, Voices of Tomorrow, (New York: M. Kennenley and Co., 1913), p. 57.

onslaught upon marriage only, but as the philosopher, "who saw in it the first signs of the rise of feminism and the degradation of man."[5] As the Swedish critic Gustaf Uddgren explained, Strindberg believed that there must be a difference between men and women, for if all humanity should become masculine, such a state of affairs could have but one consequence, the downfall of the human race. "If," Uddgren wrote, "woman did not wish to submit to motherhood, the human race naturally could not continue."[6] Feeling, then, that women were forsaking the privileges and the obligations of their sex, Strindberg turned upon them bitterly and fought them with every drop of energy he had. As Bjorkman relates: "It was fear of the mother's unworthiness as mother that raised his anger to a greater degree of fierceness than anything else."[7]

Relating the above view to the play, the full significance of Strindberg's title, The Father, becomes more apparent. The play is meant more to explain the relationship of each parent to the child than to each other. As Archibald Henderson relates, the play is basically:

> ... the terrible plea of the elemental male for the rights of fatherhood, the patriarchal functions of man as ruler of the family, holding within his hand the directive control of the future of his posterity.[8]

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5 Ashley Dukes, Modern Dramatists, (Chicago: C. H. Sergel & Co., N.D.), p. 50.

6 Carl Gustaf Uddgren, Strindberg the Man, translated by A. J. Uppval, (Boston: The Four Seas Company, 1920), p. 26.

7 Bjorkman, op. cit., p. 35.

8 Archibald Henderson, European Dramatists, (Cincinnatti: Stewart & Kidd Company, 1913), p. 48.

In his eyes, Strindberg saw the child "as strongly and as inevitably tied to one parent as to the other. And beneath this tie he saw the individual's craving for continued existence in the child."[9] Therefore, one of the principal issues in the conflict between Laura and the Captain is the struggle of each to impress his or her conscious will upon the child, to the outright exclusion of the nature of the other. In this regard, one of the most significant statements in the play reads as follows:

> CAPT: ... I do not believe in a hereafter; the child was my future life, That was my conception of immortality, and perhaps the only one that has any analogy in reality. If you take that away from me, you cut off my life.

Holding as he did a patriarchal concept of nature, it was inevitable that Strindberg should seek in the female of the species a mother and a wife rather than a mistress. He was, therefore, continually attracted to that type of woman who, like his own mother, was meant to be worshipped and protected. His longing was for, as Uddgren put it,

> the love of a good, cheerful housewife, the object of the husband's and the children's love, a woman raised almost to the level of a madonna, but who, because of the treasure she possessed in the home, bows before the mate and supporter of the family.[10]

Strindberg's veneration of the woman as wife and mother was based upon the belief that she surpassed man in tenderness and in temperamental cleverness, and that she possessed a greater breadth of horizon and

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9 Bjorkman, op. cit., p. 37.

10 Uddgren, op. cit., p. 26.

wider humanitarian concern. She was to him, in fact, "the source of human energy," much as she was to Shaw, who saw in her the realization of a life force.[11]

With this conception of women, Strindberg approached marriage almost in a state of naivete, but his experience with Siri von Essen, his first wife, contributed a new facet to his philosophy. It was this fact that forms the core of his thesis in The Father. He grew to fear the "new woman," with whom he typed his wife, for he saw in her an attempt to grow masculine, hope to subjugate the male of the species as she herself had never been subjugated. This type of woman sought power over her mate for the sake of power, and Strindberg realized that this was only possible to the extent that the mate himself was weak. Therefore, he believed that man's only hope of salvation was to grow strong again.

> There could be no new age, no good future at all for the human race, until man learned once again to approach love honestly without the pipe-dream of false sentiment. He must discover in love a source of strength instead of allowing it to weaken him.[12]

In order the emphasize his conceptions of woman and of love in The Father, Strindberg deliberately constructed his Laura to represent the exact opposite of the ideal woman he believed in. Thus, Laura symbolized what to him woman should never be, rather than what she was, or, as the romanticist might have it, what she should be. In

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11 Henderson, op. cit., p. 55.

12 Sprigge, op. cit., p. 133.

this manner the problem of the masculine woman, forsaking her obligation of motherhood for the sake of power, was magnified and its importance shaped accordingly.

Determination of Character. In the following character analyses, three degrees of study were considered of prime consequence: (1) the contribution made by the character to the author's theme, (2) the part played by the character in furthering the plot or the story, and (3) the personal attributes of the character himself.

In making these analyses one striking fact presented itself, the tendency of the author to mold his characters according to two standards: (1) as an abstraction of an idea, contributing to the solution of an universal problem, and (2) as a representative of the character as he was taken directly from life, from the personal acquaintance of the author.

The character analyses which follow include the entire cast of The Father, with the exception of the minor character of the orderly. They are listed in the order of their importance, namely, the Captain, Laura, the Doctor, Old Margret, Bertha, the Pastor, and Nöjd.

The Character of Adolf. Adolf, the Captain, embodies two distinctly different combinations of character traits. On the one hand, he is the literary prototype of Strindberg himself, containing in his character make-up the various weaknesses and frustrations found existant in the author. On the other hand, he is symbolic, or at least symptomatic, of Strindberg's conception of the ideal modern man, a Neizchean type of superman.

As the prototype of the author, Adolf presents a rather definite psychological problem, one of sexual maladjustment. Having been born against the will of his parents, Adolf feels that he has been born incomplete. Robbed in his embryonic life of nourishment and will power, he became in life a weakling, a half-man. He felt, therefore, a strong need to complete himself. He leaned heavily on the women in his life, his mother, his sister, and his wife, Laura, to satisfy that need. He allowed them to lead and manage him in return for that which he felt would make him complete as a man, mother love, protection, and understanding. However, in order to receive from the women in his life those sought-after elements of female companionship, Adolf soon realized that he had first to give up his rights of manhood. As he grew older, he discovered that each woman in his life sapped from him his strength and his position, until he became a manchild in their eyes, rather than a man. Consequently, he came to regard them as his natural enemies. In his later life, therefore, Adolf began to fight to regain his negated masculinity and to overcome his natural weakness. He sought to exercise his prerogatives of manliness with a strong hand. Laura, his wife, soon learned to accept his newly-acquired virility as an open attack upon her own leadership and control of the family. Realizing that the Captain could grow strong in proportion to the degree to which she herself grew weak, she fought back in self-defense, and their marital problems began. Their union became, then, a battle of the sexes, as each openly attempted to conquer and subject the other to his or her will.

As the symbol of Strindberg's conception of the ideal modern man, Adolf comes close to being the fore-runner of Neizche's so-called "superman." He embodies in his spirit all of the basic philosophies and ideals of the modern age itself, even though he is, at heart, old-fashioned in his outlook toward the female sex. He is a highly intelligent man of science, known in intellectual circles for his excellent treatises on minerology. He is also a free-thinker, openminded and rational, disbelieving in any spiritual immortality or after-life. Lastly, he is a captain in the army, a strong man, in a word, able to enforce his will upon other men. In almost all respects, then, Adolf can be considered as a superior modern man, an ideal member of an ideal master race.

In his personal character, Adolf is also exceptional. Besides being an ideal father, capable of great love and devotion, he is a highly moral and honorable man. He is the only character in the drama who is given credit for having any rational insight or conscience. In these respects, too, he is Strindberg's conception of what the modern man should be.

Like most major dramatic heroes, Adolf has some very important weaknesses in his character. These personal flaws combine under the particular circumstances in the play to bring about his destruction. Ironically, several of Adolf's weaknesses are what could be considered under normal conditions as virtues. His strong sense of honor, for example, will not allow him to seek help from the Doctor or others in his conflict with his wife, nor will it allow him to take unfair

advantage of her. The fact that he loves his daughter dearly, and is concerned over her future welfare, also contributes to his downfall, for it makes him vulnerable to Laura's suggestion of the doubtfulness of paternity. The fact that he is an intelligent man helps to bring about his destruction, because his intelligence forces him to seek in logic an answer to his problem. In logic he is unable to find an answer, for the true solution to his difficulty can only be found in faith. Adolf's natural weakness of will, caused by the women in his life, also places him at a disadvantage in his struggles, for it went against a whole lifetime of training and habit for him to defend himself against Laura's attacks.

The Character of Laura. Laura, while being the most obvious, as well as the most powerful person in the drama, is yet the most difficult to describe. This is due partly to the lack of any given artistic direction to her character. Because Strindberg molded his conception of Laura in passion and vehemence rather than in reason, she becomes distorted and unnatural when held to the light of analysis.

The first problem one meets in ascertaining the nature of Laura's character is the fact that Strindberg, with diabolical intent, drew her from life, from the person of his first wife, Siri von Essen.[13] In doing so, Strindberg's own views concerning her character seeped into his artistic work, and the true portrait of Siri herself escaped him. Therefore, Laura is not Strindberg's wife, but rather his conception of and his reaction to his wife. Consequently, she is often distorted into unreality. "The dramatist is not then presenting

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13 A more complete record of Siri von Essen's character and the nature of Strindberg's relations with her is given by the author in his autobiographical novel, Confessions of a Fool, translated by Ellie Schleussner, (New York: The Viking Press, 1925), 372 pp.

other people's souls," wrote Dahlstrom, "but is objectifying what passes through his own soul."[14]

The second problem concerning Laura is the fact that Strindberg also wished to mold her character into the nature of a symbol, a symbol "not of every woman, the modern woman, but a personification of the final possibilities of wickedness in woman."[15] The character of Laura is, then, not of a universal nature but of a specific nature, the great exception to the general order of womankind. She is, then, but half woman, the rest being abstraction. It is basically in the abstraction itself that the full realization of her character is to be found. If the purely physical attributes of character can be removed from Strindberg's Laura, what will remain will be the idea, pure and unadorned, and that is what, in this case, interested Strindberg most.

As an abstraction, Laura has lost most, if not all, of these characteristics men find most dear in women. She is, in effect, almost masculine in appearance. In a sense, she is de-sexed, which accounts for her frigidity toward the Captain. Because she is remorseful and ashamed of all sexual acts, she hates her husband, believing him to be the cause of all her frustrations and discomforts. For this reason she is willing to mother the Captain and to care for him, but she wishes also to direct and control him.

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14 A more complete record of Siri von Essen's character and the nature of his relations with her is given by the author in his autobiographical novel, Confessions of a Fool, translated by Ellie Schleussner, (New York: The Viking Press, 1925), 372. pp.

15 Carl Dahlstrom, Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionism, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1930), p. 100.

16 Henderson, op. cit., p. 48.

Laura grew to enjoy the power she held over her family, and as long as she held that power she was satisfied and happy, and remained calm. When, however, the Captain grew tired of being a child in her eyes, and began to demand his natural but negated rights of manliness, Laura attacked him with every weapon at her command. From her position as master in the household, she was degraded to that of a mere housekeeper. Having lost her position, she also lost her civilized character and reverted to the animal stage, docile but dangerous. Lacking in both intelligence and honor, she was able to capitalize upon an inherent animal cunning to gain her own way. Not daring to attack her husband directly, she set about to undermine his position, to draw his friends away from him, to turn the servants against him, to hamper his work and frustrate his desires. Laura unscrupulously sought to regain her power and position at the cost even of the Captain's mental health, and she did so, in many cases, unconsciously. When, for example, she spoke with the Doctor early in the play concerning the state of her husband's mind, she used exaggerated claims in an attempt to prove the case of the Captain's insanity. Actually, the Captain was, at that point, on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Therefore, when this fact becomes known and the breakdown itself occurs, Laura was unwilling to accept the fact that she herself was the cause. In fact, she believed that she did all in her power to prevent it.

For all of this, it should be recognized that Laura has yet some qualities which soften her character. Without them, she would remain in literature a monster of treachery and deceit, such as Iago, her closest prototype. It is recognized, for example, that the other

members of the household, including old Margret, do not see in her character, to any great extent, the elements attributed to her by the Captain. It is recognized, also, that Laura can be soft and gentle when the need arises, such as it did in the second act, for example, when the Captain fell on his knees to cry like a child. In that instance she reverted to her natural state of motherhood in an attempt to calm him and to comfort him. Without this saving facet in her character, however, Laura would be beyond grace.

The Character of the Doctor. The Doctor is drawn, as are all of the characters in the drama other than Laura and the Captain, as a subordinate figure. He is meant to play a part in the action of the play, but not as an individual. Consequently, his conversation and his character are almost entirely confined to those aspects of the drama which concern the state of the Captain's mental health. Not once, except perhaps in the play's final scene, does he become anything but an impersonal and detached element in the drama. As a dramatic instrument, his position might very well be compared to that of the chemical catalyst. His presence causes definite reaction in the other characters, yet he himself is not in turn acted upon. Significantly, he appears upon the scene just as the conflict between Laura and the Captain has reached an unbearable stage, due to the question of Bertha's education. Significantly, too, he furnishes Laura with the very weapon she needs to complete her web of destruction. The weapon is the power of mental suggestion, which Laura uses with such devastating effect.

Even though nothing definite can be determined about the Doctor's character, and he remains to the last a sort of mystery man, certain inferences can be drawn which enable a student of the drama to reconstruct at least the shell of his character. It is obvious, for example, that he is a highly intelligent and well-educated man. As a country physician, he seems unusually well informed upon the nature and treatment of mental problems. He also has apparently read the Captain's treatises on minerology, showing his interest in science in general. Then, too, in the second act, he finds occasion to mention Goethe with some degree of familiarity.

Beyond his possession of scientific and philosophic knowledge, it is also known that the Doctor, like many of his contemporaries, is a freethinker. Several times in the final act he shows almost a contempt for the Pastor's "higher matters," and in the final scene he makes the following character-defining statement:

> No judgment, and no accusations; you who believe that a God shapes Man's destiny must go to him about this.

It is apparent, too, that the Doctor is a shrewd and discerning individual. He sees and realizes the nature of the circumstances of the Captain's trouble, and truly wishes to help, but he is unable to, basically because the Captain refuses to help himself. Without the complete cooperation of his patient, the medical powers of the Doctor are useless. His efforts are further hampered by social conformity and family secrets. Honor will not allow the Captain to tell all, and professional ethics will not allow the Doctor to inquire.

> "Yes, yes, yes. This is a story that has deep roots and the sanctity of family life--and so on--of course I cannot ask about everything but must limit myself to appearances. What is done can't be undone, more's the pity, yet the remedy should be based upon the past."

When, therefore, the Doctor bows before circumstance, and withdraws from the case, it is not because he has accepted Laura's word for the Captain's insanity, but because from his own investigations he has proven to himself that the Captain does possess a mental problem. Further, the Doctor perceives that the problem is one which he cannot cure, and since the Captain will not accept a cure, therefore he must, according to the conventions of his day, be committed to an institution. Although the Doctor lacks, then, what might be called a recognizable dramatic personality, it is obvious that he is a sympathetic and understandable individual.

The Character of Margret. Probably one of the most interesting and significant characters in the drama is that of Margret, the old nurse-maid. In her, Strindberg embodied his impression of what women should be and had been, as contrasted to what they are and should not be, as shown by Laura.

Margret is the personification of that type of woman which today is considered by many "old-fashioned." She is the spirit of the loving and comforting protector, the mother-spirit, in a word, simple and endearing. Even when she at last turns upon the Captain, and tricks him into the strait jacket, her motivation is governed by the highest intentions. She does after once refusing, in order that the Captain shall not be hurt by the rough handling of others.

Her whole life is motivated by two strong urges, or instincts, religion and love. She takes comfort in the fact that she has found her milieu in God, and consequently she has no fear for the future. The Captain, on the other hand, does fear the future, for all his protestations to the contrary. Not having the faith of Margret, he is forced to build for himself a personal salvation, which, when lost to him, is one of the causes for his final breakdown.

Margret is also the spirit of moderation, because she seeks always for some method of drawing Laura and the Captain together. Several times during the play, she makes an attempt to get the Captain to compromise in the best interests of all concerned. She fails to do so, however, due to the Captain's inherent obstinacy.

One final thought should be considered when dealing with the character of Margret, the fact that she exists in the play as a constant physical reminder of the Captain's former dependence upon womenfolk. Continually, she addresses him in terms normally reserved for children or adult incompetents. To her, the Captain shall always be a simple, loving child and never a grown man or rough soldier.

Beyond this, Margret stands also in physical contrast to Laura. She is old and weak, whereas Laura is young and strong. Margret, the kindly spirit of mother love, has had her day, while Laura, the vampire spirit of female degeneracy, is but coming into her own.

<u>The Character of Bertha</u>. As is the case with so many unhappy marriages, the person who actually suffers most is the child. Bertha, unfortunately, is in such a position, for although she is basically a sweet and tender teen-ager, she has not been accorded the love and

security which most young girls enjoy and need. She has, rather, been confused and distraught over the continual conflict between her mother and father. She is confused because she cannot understand why her parents cannot, or will not, get along together. She is confused, too, because everyone in the household, including her grandmother, wishes to teach her in their own manner beliefs and philosophies which, in many cases, are opposing. She is distraught because she is continually being asked to choose between the love she bears her mother and the loyalty she feels for her father. By the opening of the drama, therefore, the struggle within her has reached such a state that she has become almost a neurotic as a result. Of all the characters in the drama, then, it is she, perhaps, who most deserves sympathy, because it is she who is most innocent.

Sympathy for Bertha is not only felt because of the state of her personality, but also because of the fact that it is through her and over her that the battle between Laura and the Captain rages. She is literally both the object and the instrument of the struggle, for it is in her name that both Laura and the Captain justify their actions. The Captain takes up arms for the sake of forwarding what he feels to be her best interests, a practical education away from the madhouse he calls home, and Laura fights back for the simple purpose of control, control over her daughter, and thereby her husband. As an instrument, as well as an object, Bertha is used basically by Laura. By suggesting to the Captain that he is not "the father" and therefore does not have the power to fight in Bertha's interest, she succeeds in driving the man to his death.

Beyond existing as a dramatic symbol of the struggle between Laura and the Captain and as the object of that struggle, Bertha appears also as the personification of the irritating "link" which binds the two of them together in marriage. It is for her sake that they did not and, indeed, could not separate, and it is because they did not separate "in time" that they now find themselves enmeshed in the particular circumstances of the drama.

Philosophically, Bertha exists also as the personification of the Captain's spiritual immortality. Because he does not believe with Margret in a religious salvation and after-life, the Captain has determined that he shall pass his soul down to future generations through the soul of his daughter. This is the reason he attempted to fashion Bertha in his own image, and it is also the reason he felt so strongly the need, regardless of the cost, to know whether he was actually "the father." If he was not, as he grew to suspect, then his spiritual immortality would be lost, and the entire meaning of his life, that for which he lived and worked, would be destroyed.

Although Bertha appears only briefly, then, she should not be considered a minor character in the drama, for her name and spirit continually permeate it. Strindberg was obviously concerned over the welfare of such a child in such a marriage.

<u>The Character of Jonas</u>. The character of Jonas is significant. Basically, he represents two strong social forces, each diametrically opposed to the Captain, family and religion. In his position as the community pastor, Jonas, a fundamentalist, naturally is opposed to the freethinking philosophies of Adolf and in his position as Laura's brother he is strongly sympathetic to her cause.

As a representative church man, Jonas is an arch-conservative and is completely conventional in his views and opinions. Also, he feels little need to defend his position, relying entirely upon blind faith rather than, as Adolf does, upon reason and logic. His stand is basically determined by doctrine and not understanding.

As a representative of the family circle, he holds closely to Laura although he professes friendship for the Captain. Even though he knows of the role played by Laura in her husband's mental collapse, he will not speak out against her. With the good name of the family at stake, nothing else need be considered. In this manner, also, he proves himself to be strongly conscious of public opinion and social conformity.

On a personal basis, Jonas is perhaps best characterized by his social irresponsibility. Even though he is a member of the clergy, he will not involve himself in the problems of his fellow man. Therefore, he continually makes the expedient choice and takes the course of least resistance. He would not, for example, argue with Nöjd, or attempt to judge his case. Instead, he dismissed the affair as merely some "stupid business." He refused to argue with Adolf in the matter pertaining to Bertha's confirmation, and, of course, he refused to intervene in the basic conflict of the drama itself, the conflict which eventually lead to the mental breakdown of the Captain. "I shan't say anything," he says. "After all, blood is thicker than water."

<u>The Character of Nöjd</u>. In <u>The Father</u>, Nöjd serves two very important dramatic functions. First, he introduces the basic question of paternity, the question which eventually engrosses and destroys

the Captain. Consequently, he is an important and, indeed, a necessary dramatic instrument, minor character though he is. Second, because he himself is involved with the question of paternity, Nöjd reinforces, dramatically, the Captain's position. Through Nöjd, Strindberg is thus able to relate the problem of paternity to the social order outside of the Captain's own home. Therefore, the problem becomes one of universal significance, and the Captain's struggle for a personal solution in his own particular and exceptional circumstances becomes, on another level, an universal struggle. There is irony, however, in Nöjd's relationship to the problem of paternity. Because he is a simple and unthinking common soldier, he does not become involved in the philosophic significance of spiritual immortality. Consequently, he is able to avoid the pitfalls of mental depression which trap and destroy the Captain, a man of much more superior intelligence. There is irony, too, in the fact that Nöjd has reasonable justification for his doubts, whereas the Captain has not. It is the Captain who is destroyed by his doubts, and it is Nöjd who is unaffected.

The second function served by Nöjd in the play is his existence as a symbol of the traditional attitude toward women, that is, the romantic belief that they constitute a "weaker sex." Toward the conclusion of the third act, the Captain, languishing in a strait jacket, demands that Nöjd come to his aid by turning on the women who have brought him low. Nöjd refuses, saying:

> ...it's queer, but one never wants to lay hands on a woman.

The Captain answers:

> Why not? Haven't they laid hands on me?

And Nöjd retorts:

> Yes, but I can't, Captain. It's just as if you asked me to strike the Pastor. It's second nature, like religion. I can't!

Through Nöjd, therefore, Strindberg attacks the conventional, and romantic, concept of the "weaker sex." It is precisely because of this concept, and the chivalrous men like Nöjd who foster it, that Laura is able to strike down the Captain.

Determination of Plot Construction. Conceived on a plane of mental and moral suggestion, the emphasis of The Father is, consequently, upon the psychological struggle between Laura and the Captain. The primary effect of the play depends, then, upon the viewer's emotional and psychological participation. The viewer must be caught up and carried along with the thought expression of the drama, as well as the outward manifestation of that thought as it might be seen in action.

The structure of the play itself is characterized by a circumspect directness which never for a moment leaves the question of motive in doubt. It is characterized also by a stark simplicity, where nothing is irrelevant and only the bare essentials of dramatic construction exist.

The play is noted also for its strong adherence to the tight unities of time, place, and action. So tightly does the play adhere to these unities, in fact, that is often able to pass beyond them. The physical limitations of the time and place become relatively unimportant as a consequence, and the author is able to concentrate his

energy wholly upon the moral and psychological problem of paternity in its purest state, that of idea. This is evidenced by the lack of any definite social setting to the play or any orientation to the physical world beyond the walls of the living room. It is evidenced also by the fact that time as such is virtually dispensed with. While it is stated that the action of The Father takes place in twenty-four hours, the action is so compressed that it could well have taken much longer.

The Father exists, then, almost in a psycho-state of abstract idea and the physical action is underplayed to this exact extent. The plot, therefore, is better expressed in terms of ideas and in the relationship of persons to ideas rather than in terms of action. It is basically because of this high degree of concentration and mental activity that the play is able to create such a high degree of emotional tension in the audience. It is because of this, too, that critical reaction to the drama has usually been expressed in terms of thought and theme rather than in terms of the story or plot.

The actual story of The Father is simply stated. It deals with the openly bitter conflict between an army captain and his wife over the sole right to determine the future of their only child, a daughter named Bertha. When the Captain, exercising his legal rights as the master of the household, makes known his intention of sending the child away from home to study under a friend in town, thus removing her from the influence of her mother, his wife retorts by arousing his suspicions as to whether or not he is truly the father of the child. Haunted by his suspicions concerning the doubtfulness of paternity, the Captain experiences a mental collapse and expires at the

last in a strait jacket, leaving his wife in complete control of the child.

Determination of Scene Construction: In his play Strindberg has followed almost completely the classical method of plot construction. This method is characterized not only by the close adherence to the three unities, explained above, but also by its adherence to the classical method of scene construction. This method, used primarily during the period of the French Renaissance and the age of the "Neo-classicists," is characterized by having each new scene start with the arrival on stage of a third person. Thus, the "scene" between the Doctor and Laura in the first act concludes itself when the Captain enters. Laura forthwith leaves the stage, and the "scene" between the Doctor and the Captain commences. The plot is progressed by having one of the characters present in the first scene, in this case the Doctor, remain to converse with the character who has entered, in this case the Captain, while the second person in the first scene, Laura, exits. Carrying on in this manner, the nurse enters just at the conclusion of the scene between the Captain and the Doctor. The Doctor therefore exits, and the nurse remains to carry on her scene with the Captain. This method of progression, scene by scene, is used with rare exception by the author throughout the play. Thus, each act is made up of certain component parts, each of which contribute to the overall effect of the drama.

Determination of Dramatic Weaknesses. An analysis of a drama would be incomplete without regarding, in some detail, its recognized

or supposed dramatic weaknesses.[17] To the would-be adaptor, this recognition is of particular importance. The weaknesses, imperfections and flaws in The Father have been grouped under three major classifications, those of character, thought, and plot.

Character Weaknesses. The fact that Laura is really a representation of Strindberg's reaction to his first wife contributes greatly to a weakening of the effectiveness of her character. Archibald Henderson writes on this subject as follows:

> Here is revealed the fundamental weakness of the thesis-drama; for we cannot accept as representatively human a character reproduced with diabolic exactitude from a real person, who was certainly degenerate and whom Strindberg hated as the incarnation of all that the woman, the ideal woman, should not be.[18]

The extent, unfortunately, to which Laura becomes a truly representative human being, capable of rousing the interest and at times the sympathy of an audience, depends all too much upon the interpretation of her character by a skilled actress. In all likelihood, this problem could have been lessened with a more objective approach to her character on the part of the author.

A second character weakness, pointed out by Ashley Dukes, is the fact that Strindberg's characters have not only their own troubles to fight, but those of their author as well.[19] The play suffers somewhat

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17 This section of the analysis treats the various criticisms brought against Strindberg's play. In most cases the writer has not evaluated the justice of the attacks made. As a writer, he believed it necessary to understand the nature of the criticisms, but did not feel he was under any obligation to accept them or to base his adaptation upon them.

18 Henderson, op. cit., p. 47.

19 Dukes, op. cit., p. 58.

from an intrusion of the author upon the dramatic scene. An audience is all too able to see by the manner in which the characters are treated the self-pity of the dishonored dramatist himself. Very few works in the history of literature have attained the peak of greatness while so hampered by the personal motivation of their author.

A third character weakness in the play concerns the Captain. In order to compensate for the extremeness of Laura, Adolf should be a person with whom the audience could sympathize. Perhaps because he partially blamed himself for the failure of his own marriage, Strindberg does not wholeheartedly meet that expectation. Barrett H. Clark, for example, found this aspect of the drama extremely disquieting. "The Father," he wrote, "though he ought to be an object of compassion, is so brutal, so uncompromising, whatever the reason, that we can have little sympathy for him."[20]

This last character weakness in the play is the "characterless form" given to the minor persons, the Doctor, the Pastor, and Nöjd. Strindberg, in many instances, stripped these characters of all humanistic elements save those alone which contribute directly to the drama's theme. Subsequently they live in the play not as human beings, but as one-dimensional objectifications, or abstractions, of Strindberg's thought. They are used simply for purposes of plot manipulation, and their actions, in many cases, have no other motivation.

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20 Barrett H. Clark, The Continental Drama of Today, (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1914), p. 252.

Thought Weaknesses. There are three basic criticisms of the thematic treatment of the drama. First of all it has been stated that Strindberg's attack on feminism loses all proportion and subsequently effectiveness, by the nature of its exaggeration.[21] The author has over-emphasized the nature of the problem according to this belief, by distorting the characters and the reactions of the characters when confronted with the problem.

The second major criticism of the play's theme is in the fact that the drama is extremely one-sided. Strindberg stacks the cards, in a manner of speaking, against Laura and in favor of the Captain. He goes to such great lengths to discredit the female and uphold the male that the drama reverts almost to pure melodrama, pure black against pure white. Such is not a truthful presentation of the problem, nor is it a truthful presentation of the characters involved.

Lastly, Strindberg frequently erred in mistaking a truth for the truth. In this manner, he allowed his personal grievance against his wife to color his outlook upon women in general. He mistook the individual for the type, and the type for the species. As Bjorkman pointed out, "When he thought himself arraigning women, his charges were in reality directed against a woman, his wife."[22]

Plot Weaknesses. Strindberg was very proficient in matters of plot construction, and although he erred occasionally, the tight unity of The Father is, on the whole, excellently conceived and executed.

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21 Storm Jameson, Modern Drama in Europe, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), p. 32.

22 Bjorkman, op. cit., p. 30.

However, the few times he did err need to be considered, for upon them are based a few important dramatic questions. It can be noted, for instance, that several times during the course of the action, Strindberg included material which seems extraneous or out of place. In most cases this material is contrary to character and to the basic order of time. For example, early in the second act the Captain suddenly makes reference to the fact that old Margret has had an illegitimate child, and that the father of that child was forced to marry her. This information was obviously inserted into the play to substantiate the Captain's preoccupation over questions of fatherhood, and to give some justification to his assertion that infidelity was natural to all women. Such a purpose, however, goes against the character of Margret that the audience had previously pictured, and it plays no important part in the action otherwise. Another example of the same type of reference can be found in the Captain's remarks to the Doctor in the third act. His account of a certain young lieutenant in the Doctor's household is similarly out of place, and has been included for the same purpose as the one made to Margret. At no time, it must be emphasized, did the Captain have an opportunity to come by such information, having just met the Doctor and having known nothing concerning him personally previous to the time of the meeting.

Another criticism of The Father is based upon the lack of probability concerning the Captain's insanity and the Doctor's acceptance of that insanity on the basis of only one day's observation and the word of the Captain's wife.[23] The fact that the entire action of the drama

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23 Jameson, op. cit., p. 36.

takes place in less than twenty-four hours adds weight to this criticism, for Strindberg does strain the imagination by compressing his drama in so short a period of time. It seems improbable that so strong a man as the Captain could become mentally unbalanced within a matter of hours.

The last criticism brought against The Father is one which is usually brought against Strindberg's work in general. It is a theoretical criticism, concerning the purpose of art. Both Lewisohn and Jameson have been outspoken in this matter, even though both have otherwise given Strindberg his just due. Lewisohn first makes the following statement:

> There is no lifting of the soul to a larger vision from the bondage of immediate pain. That is his limitation. It may be urged, on the other hand, that the pain is so keen and absorbing that it gives his characters no chance to fight their way to the breathing of ampler air. And that, too, is life.[24]

Jameson describes this aspect of Strindberg's work in a similar manner:

> Art must make life better than it is: Strindberg makes it worse. But at the same time he makes it greater, and here is the saving quality that allows his darkest dramas to be his finest.[25]

In effect, then, both Lewisohn and Jameson were concerned over Strindberg's morbidness, an aspect of his art which Edwin Bjorkman defended when he wrote:

> If he dwelt on our unlovely sides of character and manners with rather "morbid preoccupation," he did so because he thought us sick, dead, damned souls which needed light.[26]

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24 Ludwig Lewisohn, The Modern Drama, (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1915), p. 28.

25 Jameson, op. cit., p. 62.

26 Bjorkman, op. cit., p. 78.

Summary. The process of play analysis, as related in this chapter, was believed by the writer to be an essential part of the adaptation procedure. Indeed, it was believed that the more familiar the writer was with his material, the more likely would be his chances of producing a script in keeping with the spirit and character of the original. Therefore, having made as complete an analysis of The Father as possible, the writer was prepared to utilize his findings in the television adaptation. The procedures and methods used as well as the problems encountered in the actual process of adapting the play will be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

ADAPTATION PROBLEMS

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Principles of Adaptation

In making the television adaptation of Strindberg's The Father, the writer conceived of three principles: (1) that the writer should strive to present on television, to the best of his ability, the essentials of the drama as Strindberg conceived it, (2) that the writer should seek to construct an adaptation that would be in keeping with the principles of television production theory and practice, and (3) that the writer should be aware of the fact that a television adaptation can never be a literal re-creation of the original material, but is, rather, an assimilation of that material in form suitable for the television medium.

It is to be recognized that each of the above principles entails an understanding of certain particular areas of information. The first demands that the writer be aware of what constitutes the essentials of the original material. This necessitates a study of the play, its plot, its characters and its theme, a process related in the previous chapter. The second demands that the writer be aware of the nature of the television medium, with its limitations, its potentials, its conditions of reception, and the tools utilized in achieving its primary effects. This problem was one of the first considered in this study. The third demands a knowledge of writing in general. It often requires an ability to restate, or reform, ideas and actions in a manner different from the original, perhaps, in order to give emphasis and form to them through the utilization of the tools of a medium quite

foreign to their nature. As Robert S. Greene has wisely noted, the television writer often runs into a seeming paradox, "That to give the spirit of the original you [often] have to change the original."[1]

Procedure

The actual adaptation of The Father followed a predetermined pattern. Because of the essential differences between the mediums of stage and television, it was first realized that the writer would have to come to some understanding of the basic components of drama in both mediums. Drama in the theatre is the result of over two thousand years of practice and theory. Consequently, it has arrived at a practical form which is characteristic of its nature as a live presentation on a stage, before an audience gathered together in a theatre. Drama on television, while its history has been brief, has also arrived at a certain state of development which can be characterized by its conditions of production and reception. The problem faced by the writer was, then, to determine the differences and similarities of dramatic expression between the two mediums and then to use that information as a practical basis for the adaptation to follow, capitalizing on the similarities between the two mediums, and then adjusting the essential differences.

In following the above process, it was first recognized that both the drama on a stage and the drama before the camera could be characterized as having the same basic elements of workmanship. They are

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1 Greene, op. cit., p. 143.

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both meant to tell a story in terms of action and dialogue, they are both meant to display character, having people act out the story, and the both, to be effective, must present a conflict or an opposition of wills.[2] Further, it was noted that the two forms lack meaning, except for that which can be supplied through either action or dialogue.[3] Also, as in the time of Aristotle, the dramatic form, whether on stage or television, must utilize for its effect the basic elements of plot, character, thought, spectacle, music and speech.

The structural characteristics of both stage and television drama are also similar. For example, it is essential for the playwright in either of the two mediums to supply at the beginning of his action certain elements of exposition in order to explain the background of his story and to orient the audience to it and to the characters involved.[4] It is also essential for the playwright to focus his attention upon a "point of attack," that place in the dramatic structure where the audience is made to become aware of the nature of the conflict and the particular forces or persons affected by it. It is normal, too, for the playwright to involve his characters in a series of difficulties or complications, meant to give rise to dramatic questions concerning the outcome of the conflict, a process which normally involves a

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2 John Howard Lawson, Theory and Technique of Playwriting and Screenwriting, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1949), p. 163.

3 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 144.

4 G. P. Baker, Dramatic Techniques, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), p. 182.

degree of suspense or a feeling of expectation. In furthering his drama, by developing his conflict and involving his characters, the playwright in either of the mediums will usually direct his efforts toward a final climax. In the final climax the parties to the conflict reach a point of no return. They thus involve their respective faiths with the determination of the outcome of the conflict. This element of dramatic structure is particularly important. As John Howard Lawson has stated:

> The climax is the concrete realization of the theme in terms of an event. In practical playwriting, this means that the climax is the point of reference by which the validity of every element of the structure can be determined.[5]

In furthering the progression of his drama, the playwright will also direct his action toward a particular point, which Lawson terms "the obligatory scene," in which the expectations of the audience are fulfilled and the set of circumstances which have been constructed reach their inevitable conclusion.[6] Lastly, the playwright must determine the results of his actions by presenting a set of resolutions to his complications and by answering the previously unanswered dramatic questions. As Aristotle has stated, then, a drama is, essentially, "the imitation of an action that is complete and whole and of a certain magnitude ... having a beginning, a middle, and an end."[7-8]

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5 Lawson, op. cit., p. 178.

6 Ibid., p. 267.

7 Ibid., p. 3.

8 An all-inclusive review and analysis of the elements of dramatic construction, theory and technique, does not fall within the limitations of this particular study. However, to an interested reader, the two works listed under the names of John Howard Lawson and George Pierce Baken in the biblography will present a more than adequate definition of the overall problem.

While noting certain similarities between the structural aspects of stage drama and television drama, the writer also noted certain differences. The differences are, basically, the result of medium characteristics and are directed, in the case of television writing particularly, to the fulfillment of certain needs in the medium.

One of the more obvious differences in the structure of a stage drama and a television drama is to be seen in the very first scene of each.[9] On television, for example, it is absolutely essential that the opening of the drama be constructed in such a manner as to capture the immediate attention of the viewer. This does not mean that the playwright in the theatre does not need to capture the attention of his audience. He does, as George Pierce Baker has noted.[10] But drama in the theatre is basically non-competitive. The audience arrives at the theatre prepared to give its undivided attention to the performance. If, therefore, the play in the theatre fails, it is usually because the writer has allowed the interest and attention of his audience to wane, rather than because he has failed to capture it. On television, the matter is quite different. On any night of the week the audience at home has the selection of several programs. The television play is only one of these. If, therefore, the viewer's attention is not captured at once and held at the expense of the competition, the viewer might well switch to another station or turn his set off

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9 The adaptation problem of opening the television production of The Father has been treated in more detail under separate heading.

10 Baker, op. cit., p. 16.

entirely, which is a far more easy process than getting up in the dark and stumbling for a theatre exit. Also to be taken into account is the fact that the theatre audience must pay an admission price and is usually determined to get its money's worth, while the television drama is offered free to the public. People in general, it is believed, are far more appreciative (and critical) of things they have paid for.

Because the television play is contained in a unit of time less than half that of the average stage play, the opening must be developed much more quickly. Exposition must, on the average, be limited to the essentials. Characters must be quickly introduced and identified. The television audience is unwilling to accept in an hour drama, for example, a five-minute scene between two maids discussing the affairs of the dramatic principals. Rather, the principals themselves must usually present their own exposition and begin to involve themselves before the eyes of the audience. When the drama is but to last a matter of sixty minutes, or less, it would also appear a dramatic waste to hold the appearance of a major character until the second act, a technique that was accomplished most recently by Arthur Miller in his stage play The Crucible.

A second structural difference between the stage play and the television play relates to the question of conflict. Gilbert Seldes has written that, "the motive power for forward movement is supplied by conflict."[11] That is to say, the play may not progress to any

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11 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 157.

degree until the conflict has been established and the point of attack given dramatic expression. Lasting interest in a drama, either on stage or television, cannot be assured unless the viewer is brought to a point where he can literally question the outcome of a conflict. This being the case, it is of the utmost importance on television that the play begin its development at as early a stage as possible, that the conflict be identified and explained, and that the character's relationship to the conflict be made known. In the theatre, on the other hand, it is not at all uncommon for the playwright to hold his point of attack until the termination of the first act. Some have even maintained, for example, that the first act of a three-act stage play should be reserved for exposition, the second, development, and the third, resolution. While this might appear a reasonable dramatic division in the theatre, on television it would be inadequate in the measure of the time limitation and the competitive nature of the medium itself.

Another structural difference between the drama for stage and television involves the question of plot progression. A television drama is usually a sponsored program. Consequently time must be allowed for the sponsor's commercials. This necessitates at least one, and more likely two, breaks in the dramatic action, lasting between one and three minutes each. To accomplish these breaks with the least amount of difficulty, the television writer will usually construct his drama in such a manner as to reach two high points of interest, one-third and two-thirds of the way along. This allows for a certain measure of suspense to hold the audience through the sponsor's message

until the re-introduction of the dramatic action.[12] Also, following the commercial, the television writer will find that he must (1) re-orient the audience to the action, (2) re-establish the mood, and (3) pick up the action promptly, and progress the plot at once.[13] This method of plot construction is contrary to the normal form used in the theatre. In the theatre, a play will usually build in a steady progression from the point of attack toward one final climax. It may be argued that the act divisions in the theatre are similar to the television medium's breaks for commercials. In practice, however, this is not the case, for while pulling the curtain in the theatre does break the dramatic action, it is usually done in order to provide some method of changing time. Also, the intermission in the theatre is meant as a rest period, so that the returning audience will be more attentive to the next unit of dramatic action. It is doubtful if the television commercial can be termed a "rest period."

A last major difference in dramatic structure between the two mediums has to do with the conclusion of the drama. On television it has become expedient to relate the climax of the play to the final scene.[14] Time is usually the dictator in this matter, as is the sponsor's desire to maintain enough dramatic interest to insure an audience for the final commercial. Thus the television writer will usually find

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12 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 147.

13 Ibid., p. 162.

14 Ibid., p. 163.

it necessary to relate his resolutions to the final climax. This, of course, usually means in practice a simple solution to the dramatic action rather than a complex one. On the stage the matter is quite different. As John Howard Lawson has seen fit to state:

> ... the assumption that the final scene is the climax is contradicted by a large body of technical theory. It is customary to place the climax at the beginning---not the end---of the final cycle of activity; it presumably occurs at the end of the second act of a three-act play, and may frequently be identified with the event which I have defined as the obligatory scene.[15]

Charting the Adaptation

As Bretz and Stasheff have indicated, "one good method in adaptation is for the adapter to sit down with the original work and lay out the 'scenes' into which his script will be divided..."[16] This was a process followed by Joseph Cochran in his television adaptation of Henry James' novel, The American,[17] and it was the one utilized in making the adaptation of The Father. Therefore, following the general analysis of the form and structure of stage and television drama, the writer began a process which he termed the problem of charting the adaptation. This entailed (1) a structural breakdown of the play as Strindberg conceived it, in order to determine the essentials of its dramatic composition, and (2) a process of selection and compression,

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15 Lawson, op. cit., p. 267.

16 Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 173.

17 Weise, op. cit., p. 41.

utilized to organize and adjust those elements to the television medium's chief limitation, that of time. The problem of charting the adaptation followed the pattern of laying the work out in its several parts and then the analysis of those parts to determine their relationship to the dramatic structure as a whole.

Because it was decided to retain Strindberg's concept of character in its essential form, only aspects of plot and theme were detailed in the scene analysis. With such a chart as indicated, the writer had, in effect, a guide to be used in making the adaptation itself. Such a guide was almost essential, for in making an adaptation it is always necessary for the writer to keep in mind the whole of a drama's structure as well as its respective parts, in order that the essentials of the drama as a whole can be best fitted into the characteristic time limitation of sixty minutes.

Following the breakdown of the play into a scene-by-scene chart, or outline, the writer began a process of selection and compression of the essential elements of the drama. By selecting certain of the important elements to be retained in their entirety and by compressing still others, it was believed that the major portion of the drama could thus be incorporated into the television script.

Inasmuch as the completed adaptation would have to be contained in a unity of sixty minutes' time, this process naturally called for an elimination of the less important scenes, to be determined by (1) the purposes to be fulfilled by the adaptation in regard to theme and plot, namely a concentration upon the main action between Laura and the Captain and the subject of paternity; and (2) the amount of time

taken by the particular scene or action in relation to its ultimate effect upon the main action of the play as a whole.

The process of compression and selection also called for an elimination, or at least a modification, of excessive dialogue. This was deemed necessary not only because of the time limitation, but because of two tendencies on the part of the original author. Strindberg tended first of all to step out of the dramatic action at times, to "preach" the ideas about which he felt so strongly. This tendency might be tolerated in the theatre, with its limits of aesthetic distance, but few television viewers would tolerate it in their own homes. Second, Strindberg often tended to build relatively long speeches around single ideas, elaborating at times when such elaboration was unnecessary. This also is frowned upon in television production, where the simple statement is deemed a writing virtue.[18]

The third aspect of selection concerned an elimination of the unimportant characters in the drama, or a lessening of their dramatic importance. This is normal procedure in making an adaptation, because of the cost of actors and because of the time needed to identify and develop each additional character in the drama. This problem was not, however, of major consideration in the television adaptation of <u>The Father</u>, because of the play's concentration upon such a small number of people. Therefore, the only character actually deleted from the completed script was the relatively unimportant figure of the orderly, who

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18 The problem of television dialogue has been given more detailed treatment in a special section which follows.

appears for a brief period only in the first and last acts of the play. The characters of Nöjd, Margret and the Doctor were, however, while retained, lessened in their dramatic importance.

The last step in charting the adaptation was the construction of a comparative chart showing the outline of the drama as it would be adapted. This second chart, in its essence, could be compared to a television scenario, inasmuch as it outlined the respective units of action and was used as the basis for the final adaptation.

As can be seen, then, the television adaptation of The Father actually evolved from a process of analysis, selection and compression as well as creation. The entire problem can, perhaps, best be illustrated through a reproduction of the scene chart mentioned, showing the play as Strindberg conceived it and a discussion of the play as it was adapted. The first portion of this related discussion will show a scene analysis of the play as related to the two important elements of theme and action. The second portion will be concerned with the presentation of a discussion of each scene, showing (1) why the scene was either retained or deleted from the script, and (2) what changes were found to be necessary. Following the presentation of the scene chart and the related discussion, the more general adaptation problems, such as dialogue and theme, will then be treated in greater detail.

The actual structural breakdown of Strindberg's play was based upon a consideration of his method of plot construction. As was noted in the analysis of the play, Strindberg followed almost completely a

classical method of construction, composing his action in terms of small dramatic units involving only two or three characters at a time. Following this method of construction, Strindberg usually began a new unit of action with the arrival on stage of a new character. As this appeared to be the most convenient method of analyzing the structure and content of the drama, the writer used as a basis for his adaptation the compositional units constructed by Strindberg himself.

Scene Breakdown and Analysis

In the breakdown of the structure of The Father, the writer indicated two important elements. First, it was important to understand the contribution made to the play's theme by the individual scene, that is, the ideas, thoughts or impressions contained in the particular dramatic unit which either relate to the author's major thematic premise or aid in the understanding of the nature of the conflict. Each unit of dramatic structure normally contains some such idea as the basis for its inclusion in the drama. Second, it was important to understand the contribution made by the individual scene to the play's action or main conflict. It was important, also, to understand those aspects of the scene which cause major concern and interest and further the movement of the action toward its conclusion.

ACT I

Scene 1. The Orderly, the Captain, Nöjd and the Pastor.

A. THEME: This scene introduces rather innocently the idea that the man can never be sure of the fatherhood of his child. The basic question of paternity is therefore raised.

B. ACTION: The question of Nöjd's relationship to Emma provides an important complimentary situation to the Captain's yet to be expressed problem over Bertha. The scene is also important for its exposition concerning the Captain's official position. Interest is aroused at first over Nöjd's problem, but the interest is quickly shifted to the Captain when it is later discovered that he has a similar problem.

Strindberg's conception of the opening of The Father was found inadequate for television production. The first and perhaps major reason for this fact was the knowledge that Strindberg did not at once make his conflict clear and definite, nor did he immediately introduce the respective parties to the conflict. Rather, he introduced a sub-plot element concerning the character Nöjd, who had become involved in a paternity dispute. The problem faced by the adaptor, therefore, was one of clarification, the problem of remolding the introduction of the play in terms suitable to television theory and practice. This was accomplished by writing into the drama two short scenes at the beginning of the action. The first, that between Laura and the Nurse, served to focus attention on the problem concerning Nöjd, and it also pointed up the Captain's relationship to that problem, as well as suggesting the general relationship between Laura and the Captain. The scene also served to introduce the character of Laura, at a much earlier time than she was introduced in the original, and gave some hint as to her character. Therefore, when at a later time the Captain and the Pastor made Laura the subject of conversation, the audience had an indication as to what they were talking about.

The scene between the Pastor and Laura served to strengthen the audience's conception of the relationship between Laura and the Captain, as well as to introduce the question concerning Bertha. Thus the principal issue in the drama, that of the conflict between Laura and the Captain over Bertha, was pointed up and given emphasis. With this background, even though brief, it was believed that the audience would be more in a mind to accept and listen to the scene between the Pastor and the Captain concerning the state of affairs in the Captain's household. This later scene, then, became in the adaptation one of development and clarification rather than an introduction and exposition of the conflict. As to Nöjd: by having the Nurse introduce his exxential difficulties, his position was relegated to its proper perspective, that of secondary importance.

The subject of Nöjd posed a second problem to the adaptation not clarified above. In the original, his problem is left hanging without a solution, even to the end of the drama. This occurs regardless of the fact that he later appeared in the third act of the play. It was believed advisable, therefore, in ever so slight a degree, to offer some solution to his difficulties. This was important also because of the nature of his difficulties. He could not be allowed to go free, being the cause of such distress to the servant girl. In the original, Emma was given the primary blame for the incident, and Nöjd allowed to go free. Not so in the adaptation. In the adaptation, Nöjd was placed under restriction, and offered to the courts for justice, and the biased remarks against the female sex and against Emma were eliminated.

Scene 2. The Pastor and the Captain.

A. THEME: The problem of the struggle between the sexes is here introduced, along with the question of "woman's rights."

B. ACTION: The scene contains important elements of exposition concerning the Captain's relationship to the women in his household, particularly his wife. It also introduces the basic conflict between the Captain and his wife Laura over the education of their daughter, Bertha. The expectation of an open conflict is felt and interest is captured from it. Lastly, the scene makes known the Captain's expectation of a new Doctor. The expectation of characters is also something to arouse interest.

After the exit of Nöjd, the adaptation followed the original quite closely. This was permissible because of the essential elements of exposition contained in the scene between the Captain and the Pastor. The only elements altered in the scene concerned a general condemnation of the female sex, in the person of Emma. Such remarks were usually removed from the adaptation because of their complete unreasonableness and their controversial content. Some speeches were also trimmed to a more appropriate dramatic length, and others were given a more natural form, but on the whole the scene remained the same, thus serving the purpose of reinforcing the elements of conflict introduced earlier in the scene between Laura, the Nurse, and the Pastor.

Scene 3. Laura and the Captain.

A. THEME: The legal position of the man as the master of the household is presented. Also, the Captain substantiates Nojd's assertion of the doubtfulness of paternity.

B. ACTION: The immediate recourse to argument between Laura and the Captain over the accounts serves to point up their relationship. The direct conflict between them is sharpened over the question of Bertha's education, and the threat of Laura to fight the Captain's decision on this question and prevent the child leaving home sharpens the audience interest in the play.

During the scene between Laura and the Captain, Strindberg had introduced certain business concerning the Captain's accounts. The subject occasioned an argument between the two, which tended to intensify their struggle concerning the education of Bertha. This action in the adaptation was changed for two reasons. First, if there was to be an argument, which was reasonable under the conditions of the conflict, it appeared more natural to have it over the subject of Bertha's education to begin with, since, after all, the immediate difference between the two was over this subject. Second, this argument introduced the subject of a roomer in the Captain's house, one who was never otherwise identified in the action. The subject of such a roomer might, it was believed, tend to sidetrack the audience into an unimportant detail. Therefore, it was deemed advisable to eliminate it. Beyond this, the scene could be retained with its basic elements. This was done because of the important references to Nöjd, which serve as the foundation of the problem of paternity, so important to the later development of the main action.

Following the scene, the writer faced the problem of a time transition. It was of course possible to have the Doctor enter conveniently after the exit of the Captain, in the manner indicated on stage, but this was believed to be too obvious. Therefore, in order to be more exactly true to life, an indication of a slight time lapse was in order.

Scene 4. Laura and the Doctor.

A. THEME: The basic idea of the power of mental suggestion is here introduced.

B. ACTION: Important exposition concerning the Captain's avocation of science is brought out in this scene, as is the information of the doubtfulness of his sanity. The Doctor's innocent warning to Laura to avoid arousing unnecessarily the Captain's suspicions provides her with the key to her husband's eventual destruction.

The scene between the Doctor and Laura was retained with but slight alteration in some of the more involved speeches. This was done because of the scene's importance as introduction of a substantial threat to the position of the Captain, the subject of his mental condition. At the conclusion of the scene, however, the writer decided to introduce a second set location, that of the Captain's study. This new setting was introduced for two reasons. First, it was considered an important method of explaining visually the nature of the Captain's work, thus contradicting Laura on the subject; second, the writer wanted to take advantage of the television medium's potential of intercutting between scenes. By having two sets in which to play the action of the drama, the writer could introduce visual variety, and eliminate the normal need for transitions between scenes, those portions of the action devoted on stage to motivating the characters to and from the living room for their respective scenes. Watching a play in one set only was also believed contrary to the normal viewing habit of the television audience, an audience used to the technique of switching between actions.

Scene 5. The Docter and the Captain.

A. THEME: The picture of the modern scientific investigator is drawn clearly in this scene.

B. ACTION: The information concerning the exact nature of the Captain's work, not only clears up, for the moment, the question of his mental health, but in so doing it points up the doubtfulness of Laura's motive. The question the audience now asks is what motive did Laura have in casting such doubts? Where will the conflict between the Captain and Laura lead, and what part will the Doctor play in it?

The scene between the Captain and the Doctor, it was believed, was an important scene. Because of the Doctor's conversation with Laura, it was considered important for him to have time to observe the Captain's reactions. Not only would the Doctor be watching for signs of mental instability, but the audience would be also. Therefore, time had to be allowed for such observations to take place.

Scene 6. The Captain and the Nurse.

A. THEME: The introduction of the Captain's belief in Bertha as his only hope of immortality is carried out, thus emphasizing the importance of fatherhood to the Captain. This scene also points up the fact that the Captain is a freethinker and that he does not believe in religion as a solution to a problem. The rights of a father as against the rights of a mother are also presented.

B. ACTION: This scene shows clearly the uncompromising nature of the Captain and also his lack of faith. It shows, too, his distrust of the motives of others, including Margret and the new Doctor. The fear of developing a persecution complex causes some concern. Also, by the manner in which Margret acknowledged the existence of a problem, the conflict receives additional emphasis. The suspense caused by the feeling in the characters themselves that something is about to happen between Laura and the Captain causes a like suspense in the audience. Expectation is therefore at somewhat of a high point.

This short scene was eliminated from the adaptation, partly because its essential information could be carried in other scenes and by a compression of dialogue, and partly because of the Captain's

attitude toward religion. For example, half way through the scene, the Captain makes the following statement:

> CAPT: It's a strange thing that no sooner do you speak of God and love than your voice becomes hard and your eyes fill with hate. No, Margret, surely you have not the true faith.

Such a statement and others like it, while being important to the definition of the Captain's character, might be considered offensive by a large segment of the television audience, and rightly so. Therefore, the root of the statement was taken from the script. The loss of the material itself was not believed substantial, however. Strindberg frequently made such attacks upon religion, and during the course of the play, he did so in such a manner as was considered immaterial to the statement of the play's theme or its conflict. Inasmuch as the test of a material's value was believed to be in its relation to either the subject of paternity or to the conflict between Laura and the Captain, the reference above and others like it were eliminated from the adaptation. They were deleted because they had no reference to the major or minor conflict. Those aspects of this scene believed of sufficient importance to the conflict or theme were retained, but in a different context. A change was indicated in the action, motivating the Captain to his study desk where he proceeded to write in his diary suspicions and fears concerning the outcome of his struggle with his wife. Over the silent scene, the desired information was heard in the Captain's own voice. Thus, while the scene was eliminated, the information was retained, and at a great saving in time.

Scene 7. Bertha and the Captain.

A. THEME: Graphically presents the conflict between science and superstition.

B. ACTION: This scene introduces the result of the Captain's struggle with his wife, the child's hysteria. Also, the scene points up the Captain's sincere concern over the child's welfare and the actual need for her leaving home. Audience sympathy is thus allied through the girl to her father. Again, it is seen that the Captain is unwilling to compromise his position as a father. The fear of further conflict and of eventual disaster for either himself or his wife is thus strengthened.

The scene between Bertha and the Captain was considered one of the most important in the drama. Consequently, the main substance of the action in the scene was retained unaltered. The reason for the scene's importance lies in the fact that Bertha represents the focal point of the main conflict within the drama, for it is in her name that both Laura and the Captain justify their actions.[19] As a result of being pulled first this way and then that, Bertha is in a highly emotional, almost neurotic state by the time of her first entrance into the play. The subsequent scene, revolving as it did around the question of the grandmother's teaching and the Captain's decision to send her away from home, tends to direct the action to a head, and emphasize the importance of a resolution to that action.

Insofar as the scene was important thematically, it was also important for its shock value and its purely physical action. As was recognized, Strindberg's play does not contain a great amount of

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19 The character analysis of Bertha in the preceding chapter shows how the action of the drama is reflected in the character of Bertha herself.

physical action and, as physical action is considered important on television, the writer thought it wise to retain these elements as are present in the play, in their essential state. The variety in pitch and mood offered by this particular scene was considered important in the overall structure of the television adaptation.

Scene 8. The Captain and Laura.

A. THEME: The bitter struggle between man and woman for the right to control the child is given strong emphasis; also, the power of suggestion is first used in the combat and the feeling that the woman actually feels herself to be superior to the male is presented.

B. ACTION: The point of attack is reached and the audience is now sure that one or the other must win out with a complete victory. The fact that Laura has used underhanded means to gain for herself an advantage sways the audience to take the Captain's part in the sex duel. The fact, however, that Laura succeeded in ascertaining the nature of the Captain's weakness shows, too, that she has an advantage. It appears that the Captain is hopelessly upset over her suggestion that he might not be the father of her child. Now he not only has the question of the child's future to consider, but also he must be concerned over the salvation of his looked-for immortality through the child and questions of personal honor.

The scene between the Captain and Laura that follows the declaration of Bertha's willingness to leave her home for further study in town crystallized the play's main conflict and theme in a brief but dramatically effective manner. The action was between the play's two dramatic principals, who could be seen once more in open opposition to one another's wishes. The dramatic importance of both theme and action at this point in Strindberg's structure was considered too great to be tampered with. Consequently, little alteration in the essential character of the scene was indicated.

Scene 9. The Captain and the Nurse.

A. THEME: This scene represents repeated emphasis on the question of paternity. The Captain shows his need for a child, and his concern over Laura's assertion that he may not be Bertha's father.

B. ACTION: The action of this scene concerns itself chiefly with the Captain's reaction to Laura's statement concerning paternity. By the manner in which he reacts, the audience can see the importance of his knowing the truth of the matter, and the probability of his defeat.

In order to emphasize the effect of Laura's statement concerning the legitimacy of Bertha upon the Captain, this scene from the original play was retained. However, certain changes were made. It was considered important at this point, for example, to emphasize the fact that the Captain was actually troubled over the possible truthfulness of Laura's statement. In the original, the Captain's reaction was limited to a display of temper. To fulfill a different aim, however, the writer inserted several short lines of conversation between the Captain and the Nurse, as well as certain business concerning a picture of Bertha. By so doing, the Captain's preoccupation with the subject of paternity could be foreshadowed and the scenes concerning this problem in the second act could ultimately be strengthened.

Two other modifications were made in this scene. The first concerned the subject of dinner. To motivate the Nurse's entrance in the original, Strindberg had her enter and announce dinner. In the television adaptation the Nurse is drawn to the acting area by the sounds of argument, which seemed more natural and in keeping with the nature of the scene. The second change concerned the character of Svärd, who enters when the Captain calls to order his sleigh. As the orderly,

Sverd, was eliminated from the script, so too was the business concerning the sleigh.

Normally, the structure of the television play demands that each act end upon a note of high suspense, so that the commercial can safely be incorporated into the program. The problem of commercial breaks was not faced in this particular adaptation, however, and therefore the writer tended to think in terms of one overall dramatic unit. This was because the writer, in this case, was able to continue his action without interruption. Therefore, the time difference between acts one and two was bridged by a transition and the action was immediately picked up and continued.

ACT II

Scene 1. The Doctor and Laura.

A. THEME: The idea that women are both cold and calculating receives strong emphasis. Here, the power of mental suggestion is also referred to.

B. ACTION: Laura's interference in the Captain's affairs is seen as a threat to his mental health, along with the idea that he is not the father of his child. Also, an important plot element is introduced, in the form of a Certificate in Lunacy. It is recognized that this instrument could be the means of Laura's gaining control of Bertha. To further heighten the fear of the Captain's safety, there is a re-emphasis of the threat of the will with a recurrence of suspicion or frustration. A medical explanation strengthens the probability of action. The danger to the Captain's mental stability is now recognized to be great, and the expository information given in the scene that the Captain himself once feared for his reason shows a medical history to his case. The web of circumstance is drawn tighter around him, with the knowledge of a letter as incriminating evidence against him, that is still in existence.

Again, the writer was able to retain most of this scene in its original form. Exceptions to this occurred only in the beginning and conclusion of the scene. At the beginning, it was necessary to provide a transition from nothingness to action. Since there was a certain lapse in time between acts, the writer relied for this need upon the time-honored device of the grandfather clock. By framing the clock at the opening, the time could be established. By simply dollying the camera back from the clock, an entry could be gained into the action. Thereafter, the scene closely followed the original, with only some modification in the stiffness of certain lines, making them more natural. For the conclusion of the scene, additional changes were believed necessary. First of all, it must be stated that the writer attempted in his adaptation a certain modification in the character of Laura, because the original character was believed too strong for probability. It was not a major change, to be sure, but it was a departure from Strindberg's text. It was decided to attempt a slight softening of Laura's character by the introduction of an element of remorse or sorrow on her part for the Captain. This element was not emphasized, but it did tend to give her character more depth. In this particular scene, for example, the writer, on Laura's exit, had her turn to the Doctor and exchange the following words with him:

LAURA: (TURNING) Doctor?

DOCTOR: Yes?

LAURA: (SINCERELY) Please help him.

DOCTOR: Of course. Of course.

This exchange, simple though it is, also tended to introduce a feeling of the inevitable, as if the forces in the play were at last out of control. It tended to give the impression that even Laura was unwilling to have happen what was bound to happen.

A second departure from the original text in this scene concerned the character of the Nurse. Strindberg related a scene between the Nurse and Bertha following, to the scene between Laura and the Doctor, by having the Nurse come into the scene to wait the Captain's return. In order to broaden the scope of the play and yet lessen the dramatic demands on time, this scene was removed from the main action and a third location was established, the Nurse's room. In the adaptation, therefore, the scene was concluded between Laura and the Doctor, and a transition was used to connect the concluded action with the new action. The writer indicated a dissolve from the one location to the other. By so doing, it was also possible for him to remove the dialogue motivation for the Nurse's entrance, and the reason for her waiting up for the Captain. It is not convenient on stage to move from one location to another, because of the time involved in setting the new scene, but in television the shift can be made quickly and effectively, and at a saving of time.

Scene 2. Margret and Bertha.

A. THEME: This scene reveals through Margret the protecting comfort of religion, a peaceful haven in an otherwise frightful household.

B. ACTION: As a transitional scene, its main purpose is to strengthen the foreboding mood of the inevitable catastrophe. Even the mystical presence of the spirits reveal this feeling. The scene's only

> importance, otherwise, is to be found in the information that Margret considers the Captain "ill" and this points up the belief that the Captain's insanity is recognized by some as a thing that has already occurred, rather than something that has yet to happen. Thus, the feeling of inevitability is further strengthened, and there is a foreshadowing of impending doom.

As was noted earlier, the location for this scene was shifted from the living room to the Nurse's own room. This shift served two purposes. First, it saved time, as noted. Second, the resulting transitions to and from the scene allowed for a camera rhythm which could build, along with music, a definite mood, a feeling of impending catastrophe. In this manner the writer hoped to vary the pace of the drama sufficiently so as to make more effective the build toward the climax at the conclusion of the act. The writer has noted from observation that most playwrights will tend to alter a fast-paced show so that when the need arises for a quickening of the pace, a surge of strong emotion, for example, that surge will be all the more effective. This scene, through its isolation from the main action itself, was intended for just that purpose.

As to the transitions themselves, the two separate actions were connected first by a dissolve and second by unit identification. By unit identification, the writer implies that the two scenes were joined visually by placing emphasis on a similar object in both scenes, in this case a book, and dissolving away from the one object and opening upon the other.

Scene 3. The Captain and Margret.

A. THEME: The idea that all women are basically false here receives some emphasis.

B. ACTION: This scene is actually a continuation of the one which preceeds it, in that Margret remains on stage to serve as a transition to the next unit of action. The major concentration is upon the revelation that the Nurse has had an illegitimate child. This fact tends to focus attention upon the Captain's concern over the problem of paternity.

Because the location of the Nurse-Bertha scene was shifted away from the main action, it was no longer necessary to view a meeting between the Captain and the Nurse. Therefore, that action was dispensed with, at some saving of time. Also, consideration was given the fact that this short scene included certain pieces of information that were considered by the writer as extraneous to the main development of the action and the proper delineation of the character of the Nurse.[20] In this scene the Captain made known the fact that old Margret had an illegitimate child, and that the father of that child was forced to marry her. As this information served little purpose except, possibly, to reinforce the Captain's belief in the idea that all women are by their nature false, it was considered desirable to dispense with it. Another reason for the diminution of the scene was occasioned by its subject matter. Needless to say, the subject of the infidelity of women was considered too indelicate for home consumption. Perhaps there are those who would agree with Strindberg on this subject, but the writer felt that such a group would be by far in the minority.

Scene 4. The Doctor and the Captain.

A. THEME: This scene builds up the belief that all women are faithless, thus substantiating the Captain's suspicions concerning the doubtfulness of paternity.

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20 This subject was treated earlier in the consideration of Strindberg's dramatic weaknesses.

Also, the obsession of the Captain proves the potency of the power of suggestion. The fact, too, of the Captain's mental balance having been so completely undermined, due to the suggestion that he might not be Bertha's father, shows graphically the need of the male for fatherhood and for continuing existence through his child.

B. ACTION: The audience, along with the Doctor, has by now virtually given up hope for the salvation of the Captain, inasmuch as the Captain now refuses to help himself. His obsession with the idea of the doubtfulness of paternity has grown to dangerous proportions. Needless to say, because of this, suspense has reached an extremely high state.

Although, technically, this scene was retained in its proper relationship to Strindberg's structure, in the adaptation the pattern of the scene was altered considerably. The writer had two reasons for his changes. First, he wanted to concentrate his attention upon the action and by-play between Laura and the Captain in the scene to follow. Second, he wanted to eliminate Strindberg's thematic emphasis upon the untrustworthiness of women, a subject, as mentioned previously, that could be well considered too indelicate for television.

Following the elimination of the Captain's references to his "winter fly" with a married woman, the writer found that he had remaining two sections of dialogue, the one concerning striped foals and zebras and the subject of paternity, with which Strindberg opened the scene, and the other concerning the Captain's refusal to accept the Doctor's offer of assistance. The writer reversed the natural order of these dialogue units, and connected the scene itself to the preceding action by means of new dialogue. It is difficult to state why the writer considered a reversal of the units in the scene necessary. As the scene stood in its altered form it held together very nicely,

even with the elimination of substantial portions of the material contained. It is believed that sometimes a writer will make a change or a modification in a script by ear, often altering, selecting or adding to a scene on the basis of what might be considered his intuitive understanding of or feeling for the material. Perhaps the treatment of this particular scene can be justified on these grounds. Whatever the cause, however, the problem was the proper selection of material and the cause was one of time consideration. The solution to that problem was the reversal of the scene's order, thereby building toward the discussion of paternity, rather than opening on it and building toward a consideration of the infidelity of womankind.

Scene 5. Laura and the Captain.

A. THEME: The idea of the battle between the sexes here receives its most complete expression. The idea of the father's immortality through the child is also presented and clarified along with the contention that the woman fights for power alone, and that power determines right. The belief, new to the play, that in the sexual act there is both attraction and repulsion takes form in this scene, along with the expression that there is a split consciousness in the female, between a mother's instinct and a vampire personality.

B. ACTION: This scene is to all intents and purposes the heart and soul of the drama for the primary drives of motivation, for both thought and character receive their most complete expression. The build to this scene and the fall away from it is basic to the overall effectiveness of the drama as a whole. What, perhaps, is most important in this scene is the expressed self-analysis of the characters, which shows in Laura, for example, certain characteristics of sexual repression and mother instinct not before felt or implied. The final cry of the dishonored father for a personal immortality is presented most effectively. As the only two means of achieving that immortality, through his work or through his daughter, have been blocked by the female, he has nothing more to live

> for. Consequently, his will and his mind break down completely under the strain placed upon them. The pitifulness of his defeat, however, is effective only to the extent of the realization of the importance of his desire for such an immortality. In matters of plot progression, now that the looked-for destruction of the male under the evil attack of the female is completed, the play is carried forward by the wish to see the results of that crash and its effects upon the various participants in the drama.

As this scene was considered the climax of the play, as well as the central core of its theme, the writer naturally wished to emphasize its importance by alloting to it as much time as was needed to convey its purpose. However, the writer was aware also of the need to adjust the scene as originally written to a proper proportion in the adaptation, so that it would not out-balance the remaining parts of the dramatic structure. As a result of the two aims, one to retain the essentials of the scene as written and the other to adjust those essentials to a more desirable time unit, the writer faced problems of selection, proportion, and emphasis.

The first problem concerned in the scene was that of selecting those elements considered essential to the overall understanding of the play. Basically, this problem involved a question of a critical analysis of the content of the scene. In so doing, the writer noticed two elements, one natural to the play, the other related although unnatural. The second element was that which Strindberg wrote into the play partially to explain the failure of his own marriage to Siri von Essen. Such lines as the following emphasize this aspect of the scene:

> CAPT: Yes, that's how it was. My father's and my mother's will was against my coming into the world, and consequently I was born without a will. I thought I was completing myself when you and I became one...

Much of Strindberg's self-analysis was deleted from the final adaptation because it tended to detract from what the writer considered the primary reason for the failure of the Captain's marriage, a reason not out of line with Strindberg's own personal conception, that of Laura's personality - a personality split between the mother spirit and the female degenerate.

The second problem met in this scene concerned that of the proper proportion of material. The primary characteristic of this scene is that is is one of discussion, and, as John Jeward Lawson has pointed out, an idea is essentially undramatic,[21] even though it can be stimulating. Therefore, to make the scene palpable in terms of television production, a certain proportional relationship had to be maintained between action and discussion. By this the writer does not mean to imply that speech is itself undramatic or actionless, for "speech is a kind of action, a compression and extension of action."[22] But speech as used in discussion or analysis is, essentially, abstract and therefore it requires a closer concentration from the viewer. Too great a concentration upon the ear alone would, it was believed, do more harm than good to both the scene and the adaptation. Therefore, to lessen the danger of the unproportioned scene, the writer attempted to direct his selection, modification, elimination and creation of dialogue along lines more suitable to a direct by-play between the two characters rather than a monopolization of sound by either the one or the other.

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21 Lawson, op. cit., p. 176.

22 Ibid., p. 288.

The third problem faced with the action of this scene was the problem of emphasis. The writer was faced with the question of whether to emphasize the past relationships of the two characters or their present predicament. In actuality, the two elements cannot be separated. Yet the limitation of time demanded that the emphasis be placed upon either the one or the other. A decision was made, therefore, to concentrate as much as possible upon the present conflict, and to utilize past relationships only so far as the time limitation itself would allow. The reason for this decision lies primarily in the fact that the plot itself is concerned basically with the immediate problem, even though that problem is based upon past differences.

Outside of the normal construction of the scene, one addition to the script was made at the conclusion of the scene. Although it later became apparent that the addition was impractical in terms of the limited space available to the production of the script, it was still made part of the adaptation. The addition called for a special combination of visual and aural effects, intended to convey an impression of the mental anguish of the Captain at the moment he threw the lighted lamp at Laura to climax the play. In tune to an increased volume of music, the writer inserted in quick order several key speeches taken from the context of the preceding action. These speeches all revolved around the problem of paternity, and related to the Captain's need for a child to carry on his own spirit through time immemorial. With the speeches sounding subjectively in the Captain's ears, as the camera focuses in and out at an increased rate, the effect was

intended to heighten the climax of the Captain's breakdown by conveying the impression of the troubled and confused nature of his mind. As often happens, however, although the idea was basically sound, the potential high, the actual conditions on the production floor dictated last-minute changes in the form and content of the adapted script. The effect was ultimately eliminated, therefore, although its presence could have added immeasurably to the scene and the transition that followed.

ACT III

Scene 1. Laura, Nöjd, Margret, and the Pastor.

A. THEME: Objectively, Strindberg illustrates in this scene that woman shall rule where the man is so weak that he cannot. Each member of the household, including the Pastor, bows to Laura's superiority. Another idea treated in this scene is the superficiality of morality. The Pastor, a moral man in the eyes of society, refuses to accuse Laura of the guilt he knows she bears, because of a feeling of family loyalty. Another idea is the belief that the female strikes down the male unconsciously, not even daring to analyze her own motives.

B. ACTION: The fact that the Captain is still active, although deranged, poses a definite threat to the security of Laura's position. Therefore, the question is what will be the final disposition of the case as regards the Captain and Laura. Suspense again begins to build, this time in a different manner. The question is not, now, will the Captain become mad, but now that he is mad, what will he do?

The opening portion of this scene was not included in the adapted script for two important reasons. First, as the climax of the play had technically been reached, it was decided to hasten along the ending of the drama in a manner more in keeping with the principle of

television production.[23] Secondly, the scene involved certain business concerning the Captain's desk, his property and affairs, objects which were removed to the Captain's study when that new location was incorporated into the script. A third, and perhaps more dramatically significant reason, was the desire of the writer to more closely associate the lamp-throwing scene with the immediate result of that scene, which is best illustrated in the scene between Laura and the Pastor. Therefore, following the lamp-throwing incident, the writer indicated a transition that would return to the action by cutting into a scene already in progress, thereby overlapping the one action onto the other. The essential information included in the opening of the third act, the information that the Captain had indeed gone mad, included also in this scene, was more explicitly stated.

In the scene between Laura and the Pastor, placed immediately at the beginning of the third act, certain changes were also indicated in order to conserve time. The changes that were made were minor, however. For example, rather than have the Pastor enter the scene, and thereby involve him in a process of introduction, the writer merely began the scene with the Pastor already present. A second minor change concerned the elimination of references to preceding actions which were not included in the adaptation. Other references altered included those concerning the strange noises off-stage, or off-camera. While it was recognized that such sounds in a theatre could be taken for granted as indications of a threat to Laura's position, it was believed that their presence in the television adaptation would tend to

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23 See pages 87-88.

distract the viewer from the scene in progress for two reasons. First, the television audience would be unaware of the entire set of the play at any one time. Viewer concentration is therefore concentrated upon the characters only, as played in but a small portion of that set. Also, on television there could be no indication of the placement of the sounds, or of their possible significance, without taking time to identify and locate each sound as it occurred. Secondly, the television viewer is aware of the medium's potential for switching from the one action to the other, and more or less expects it whenever an unidentified sound, such as the ones noted, occurs. Although this was considered inconvenient at this time, however, the motivation for the eventual switch from the living room to the Captain's study was based upon one such noise, a process explained later.

Scene 2. Laura, the Pastor, the Doctor, and later Margret and Nöjd.

A. THEME: The family is regarded above the interest of any individual, and the social opinion is shown to be of more concern than the health and welfare of the Captain.

B. ACTION: The scene's primary importance is to show that family, social, and economic considerations can interfere with humanitarian concerns. However, the scene also excellently serves to reveal character. The plot itself is progressed upon the question: Will Nurse Margret succeed in placing the strait-jacket on the Captain? If not, what will be the outcome of the Captain's rage? Will he be able to get at Laura? If he does, what will happen to her?

This scene was incorporated into the adaptation with but slight modification and change. It was retained because of the necessity to learn of the possible disposition of the Captain's case. The only logical way of doing this was through the character of the Doctor, as

this was his primary function in the drama. The changes that were indicated in the script were at the conclusion of the scene, where the characters of the Nurse and Nojd were once more removed from the action. As it was determined that the Nurse should be asked to fit the Captain into the strait jacket, it was not considered necessary to include that action in the adaptation. This was particularly true, since it was decided to dispense with the following scene between the Captain, the Pastor, and the Doctor.

Scene 3. The Captain, the Pastor, and the Doctor.

A. THEME: Complete emphatic expression is given to the problem of paternity and the universality of wickedness in women.

B. ACTION: The Captain's mind is shown to be completely lost. Nothing is left for him now but degradation and sorrow. The audience is led to pity this man now, and to wonder over his future.

This scene was cut in its entirety from the adaptation, and a direct transition was made between the action preceding it in the structure of the drama and the action following it. The question of time was not alone involved in the decision to cut the action at this point in the progression of the play. The writer believed, rather, that the Captain's mental suffering could just as effectively be presented without the use of an excessive amount of dialogue, as indicated in the stage version. The essential idea, that of the problem of paternity, as expressed through the Captain's suffering, could be stated through the use of the camera just after the transition, and before the scene between the Captain and Bertha.

Another consideration involved in the decision not to incorporate this particular scene into the adaptation was the subject matter of the scene itself. As was noted earlier, the writer made the decision to dispense with that portion of Strindberg's theme which states that all women are faithless, and that the problem of the degenerate woman is universal. This subject forms the backbone of the scene deleted. Further, it was believed that the main conflict could be shown to better advantage, and without undue prejudice, if the conflict concerning Laura and the Captain was recognized as a specific, rather than a general case.

By elimination of this scene, the writer also avoided another example of what he termed Strindberg's including of extraneous material. In this case that material took the form of the Captain's reference to a possible affair between the Doctor's wife and a certain young lieutenant in the Doctor's house.

By eliminating this particular scene, too, the writer avoided reference to such ideas as follows, ideas which most certainly would be considered by the NARTB as being in violation of the network standards of good taste:

> CAPT: ... Do you know what we would have to do to make sure? First, one should marry to get the respect of society, then be divorced soon after and become lovers, and finally adopt the children. Then one would at least be sure that they were one's adopted children.

Such a remark as the one above could also be inferred as an intrusion of the author, Strindberg, into the dramatic scene. Considering the state of Strindberg's own marriage at the time of his writing <u>The Father</u>,

his bitterness toward his wife, Siri, and his fear that his son was not his own, the idea might be considered a personal reference rather than one organically related to the thematic framework of the drama itself.

Because the writer decided to eliminate this scene, he faced a problem of placement. If the Captain was not to break into the living room, then his scene with Bertha would have to be placed elsewhere, and a transition indicated to connect the two different actions. The logical placement of the following action was the Captain's study. The logical transition was a dissolve. To make a dissolve effective, however, motivation must be indicated prior to its taking place. As Hoyland Bettinger has indicated, each picture or sound must be a preparation of the one to follow.[24] This principle is actually one of continuity, the problem of connecting the several parts in such a manner as to construct a unified and articulate whole. It was to provide this needed motivation that the writer relied upon the off-stage noise referred to earlier in the act. By providing a sudden and unexpected sound, a crash possibly, the action between Laura, the Doctor and the Pastor would necessarily be interrupted, and a transition between the scenes could be achieved in a logical manner, also making for a connection between the sound as heard in the one scene and the cause of the sound, as seen in the other.

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24 Bettinger, op. cit., p. 90.

Scene 4. Bertha and the Captain.

A. THEME: This scene presents dramatically the longing of the father for an immortality of his self in his child. The scene also touches upon the question of the vampire personality, here called "cannibal," which asserts that some women drain their mates of all their strength and give nothing in return.

B. ACTION: The Captain is perceived to be still dangerous, and suspense is renewed over the situation's final outcome.

Although this scene was shifted from its original location, for reasons noted above, its essential character was retained as written with but one exception. The only change indicated concerned the business of the Captain taking his gun from the wall and attempting to kill his daughter. Because the information concerning the fact that the bullets had been removed from the gun had been eliminated along with a previous scene, this business was also eliminated. Yet, the attempt on Bertha's life was significant in the light of the scene's action. To resolve this difficulty, the writer indicated that the Captain should attempt to strangle his daughter, or at least appear to approach her in a threatening manner. By incorporating this change in business into the scene, thus eliminating the need for a gun, the writer could also compose a scene that could be played within a tight grouping.

Scene 5. The Captain and Margret.

A. THEME: The end result of the theme is that man is helpless before the female of the species, beacuse of her trickery and deceit, regardless of motive.

B. ACTION: The final catastrophe has arrived. The Captain is trapped. The woman has conquered.

In its essence, this scene comprises the final catastrophe of the play. Consequently, it was retained in the adaptation. Also, it was played closely to the original because of the time needed to pursue the business of tricking the Captain into the straight jacket. Following the trapping of the Captain, the catastrophe was, to all intents and purposes, accomplished. Therefore, the writer resolved to conclude the drama in as fast a manner as possible. The business concerning the entrance of Nojd was therefore eliminated, and Laura was brought onto the scene earlier than usual to introduce the final, closing scene.

Scene 6. The Captain, Margret, Laura, the Pastor, and the Doctor.

A. THEME: The basic contention that the future belongs to the woman because the children belong to her receives its final expression. The denial by the Captain and the Doctor that these events have happened because of the will of God leaves the belief that in the end the torment of man is caused by himself.

B. ACTION: The conclusion of the play finds Laura in absolute control over her daughter and over her own household, while the Captain expires in madness. It is evident, however, that though the Captain no longer stands in the way of Laura's will, she will not be happy. At the conclusion of the drama, she herself is an emotionally shipwrecked woman.

Because the climax had been reached and the catastrophe virtually accomplished, the writer decided to conclude the action of the drama at once, rather than hold a dramatic post-mortem in the manner indicated by Strindberg. This decision was fully in accord with the variation of television dramatic construction from that of stage drama, and it was used even though the writer did not face the need of holding interest for a closing commercial.[25]

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25 See pp. 87-88.

The two factors considered by the writer at this point in his adaptation were, (1) to provide enough time following the strait jacket incident to make valid the Captain's eventual expiration, and (2) to introduce once more an element of remorse on the part of Laura, indicating that the outcome of the conflict was not entirely of her choosing. The latter factor was introduced in the drama not so much to draw sympathy to the character of Laura as to introduce an element of retribution. It was intended to show that while Laura received that which she was fighting for, the control of Bertha, she might not be happy with the means of that achievement.

Other factors considered in the alteration of the final scene were that the idea of woman's control of the children could be shown rather than stated, and that the Doctor's remarks upon the value of religion would be inappropriate to the nature of the television medium. Both factors were, therefore, eliminated from dialogue consideration.

General Adaptation Problems

The Problem of Strindberg's Theme. As was related in the chapter treating the selection of the play for television, the principal adaptation problem concerning Strindberg's theme was one of adjustment. The theme had to be adjusted to the time limitation of sixty minutes, and according to the conditions of reception, i.e., the nature of the medium and the nature of the audience.

The problem of adjusting Strindberg's theme to the time limits of production was one, basically, of selection and compression, a problem referred to earlier in this study. Because the playwright in the theatre has more time available for the development of his theme than

does the television writer, he normally elaborates upon his major thematic premise, that is, he involves in his work as many variations of thought as he considers wise, according to the nature of his subject. It is not unnatural, also, for the playwright in the theatre to incorporate into his drama ideas or impressions which, while related to his major premise, are not absolutely necessary to its understanding. Such secondary lines of thought might be considered sub-themes, in the manner in which secondary plot elements are spoken of as sub-plots.

The use of sub-themes was a particular writing characteristic of Strindberg. Therefore, in The Father, the major theme of which is the problem of paternity and the struggle between the sexes, Strindberg also treated with varying degrees of emphasis such ideas as, (1) the intrinsic superiority of the male over the female, (2) the inadequacies of religion, (3) the instinctiveness of female treachery, (4) the potency of the power of suggestion, and (5) the artificiality of morality. While it is true that most of the above ideas are related to Strindberg's main theme, by being related to his characters, it is also true that their presentation does not affect, to any major extent, the nature of that theme. Therefore, as time did not allow a complete treatment of the entire thought content of the play, the writer faced in many instances the necessity of selecting units of action or dialogue that related to the major idea, as opposed to certain units that did not. In each case the ideas considered were weighed against their importance to an understanding either of the problem of paternity or the struggle between the sexes.

The second thematic problem faced in making the television adaptation, one which was of major importance, was that presented by the conditions of the medium itself, other than that of its time limitation. As was emphasized by Margaret Weiss, the presentation of controversial subject material on television must be handled with the utmost care and delicacy. The writer must keep in mind at all times standards of continuity acceptance, good taste, and decency.[26] Because the television program is received in the home, the television writer must concern himself with the problem of suitability. In writing an original television play, the writer can adjust the concept of his material to suit the nature of these standards, but in making an adaptation this is not generally possible; consequently, the television adapter must consider the problem of continuity acceptance _before_ selecting the play for treatment. This was a problem considered at some length in the chapter on selecting the play for television.[27] At that time it was noted that the importance of Strindberg's theme was such as to warrant its production on television. Although this was basically true, there were yet some adjustments needed in accordance with the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcaster's television code. In that code, for example, the following statement appears from the section treating the acceptability of program material:

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26 Weiss, _op. cit._, p. 24.

27 The reader may refer to Chapter III, "Selecting the Play for Television," pp. 35-50.

b. (i) Attacks on religion and religious faiths are not allowed.

(ii) Reverence is to mark any mention of the name of God, His attributes and powers.[28]

In accordance with this rule of acceptance, certain portions of Strindberg's theme had to be either adjusted or deleted. In the scene between Margret and the Captain in the first act, for example, the following lines appear:

NURSE: Oh, Mr. Adolf, you believe evil about everybody. But you see it's because you haven't the true faith, that's just what it is.

CAPT: Yes, you and the Baptists have found the only true faith. You are indeed lucky!

In the context of these lines, and others, the Captain is made to sneer at the thought of any religious blessing. Such an attitude was not considered of absolute necessity to an understanding of the play, and, as its presence would be a violation of the television material acceptance standards, it was subsequently deleted from the adaptation.

In article (a) of the television code, broadcasters are forbidden the use of "profanity, obscenity, smut and vulgarity."[29] While this ruling is open to considerable debate regarding interpretation, the writer did believe it necessary to alter the nature of the television script to a certain degree in accordance with standards of good taste. It was, for example, decided that such references to sex relations and sex acts as were contained in Strindberg's play would not be contained in the adaptation. In the second act, for instance, the

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28 NARTB, The Television Code, p. 2.

29 Ibid., p. 2.

Captain relates the history of an affair in these terms:

> Once when I was making a trip on a steamer and sitting with a few friends in the saloon, the young stewardess came and flung herself down by me, burst into tears, and told us that her sweetheart had drowned. We sympathized with her, and I ordered champagne. After the second glass I touched her feet; after the fourth her knee, and before morning I had consoled her.

Again, in the third act, the Captain speaks as follows:

> The first woman I embraced was my enemy, for she gave me ten years of illness in return for the love I gave her.

Although both of the above statements contribute to an understanding of the Captain's character and to his belief in the untrustworthiness of all women, neither can be said to be of such importance as to affect the nature of the main theme. Therefore, their presence in the adaptation was not missed.

The final consideration given the treatment of Strindberg's theme evolved around the nature of the action of his play, and the conflict between Laura and the Captain. It is to be noted that the presentation of theme is not limited to dialogue, as might have been gathered from the above discussion. Theme is also emphasized in the nature of a play's action and the nature of its characters.[30] Not only was it important for the writer to select for his adaptation those elements of dialogue which contribute to an understanding of the play's theme, but

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30 Here it should be pointed out that because theme is directly related to action, the original theme of an author cannot be altered in its basic sense. To do this would necessitate a complete change in action and character. Therefore, the writer is more or less obligated to accept a particular theme at the time he selects a particular play. If the nature of the theme is such as to be wholly unsuited to the television medium, the nature of the action of the play will also be unsuited to the medium.

it was also important for him to consider the significance of each involvement of character in action. It was necessary for the writer to select certain units of action, to emphasize others, and to alter still others, in accordance with the demands of the drama's main theme. As Charles Adams has indicated,

> With a theme every action and line of every character will have a basic relationship to the theme of the play and will advance the solution of it.[31]

In accordance with this fact, the adaptation problem faced by the writer was once more one of selection and emphasis. The problem of selection of action according to the dictates of the major theme involved a selection of those units of action which related directly to the principal conflict between Laura and the Captain, thus emphasizing by example or inference the struggle between the sexes. The problem of emphasis was faced in the writer's decision to focus statements of theme in dialogue upon the problem of paternity, at the expense, possibly, of secondary elements concerning the relationships between the sexes.

Beyond the problems discussed above, the writer also faced a problem of theme clarification. Because the adaptation represented a considerable reduction in time, the writer felt the need of a strong emphasis on the important problem of theme, thus insuring, as much as possible, an understanding of the drama in the light of its philosophical framework. In the opening of the drama itself, it may be recalled,

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31 Charles Adams, Production and Direction for Television, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1953), p. 221.

the writer inserted two statements, one visually and the other aurally, which were intended as a clarification of theme and conflict. It was believed that the two statements referred to would tend to focus attention upon the essential nature and cause of the struggle between Laura and the Captain about the control of Bertha. Other thematic references could then be explained in the context of this understanding.

In summary of this consideration of theme problems, it can be stated that the theme of The Father was shown in the adaptation in two manners. First, theme was stated, through character, by means of dialogue, or what people say. The problem of paternity was expounded basically by this method. Secondly, theme was stated, or inferred, by means of action, or what people do. The problem of the struggle between the sexes was stated my this method. Other secondary problems and ideas were then either related to the two above conceptions, or eliminated from consideration either because of the medium's reception, in accordance with the NARTB's standards of continuity acceptance, on matters of good taste and decency, or because of the time limitation.

The Problem of Opening the Television Play. The method employed to open the television play is one of the most important problems faced by a writer, for unless the opening catches the immediate attention and interest of the audience, the entire play may suffer. This problem is further complicated by the two needs (1) to begin the action as soon as possible, and yet (2) to pause long enough to orientate the audience to the play by means of exposition. In any dramatic form it is always

necessary to convey to the audience four important pieces of information. As noted by John Howard Lawson, the playwright in any medium

> ... is writing supposedly for people who, except on a few historical subjects, know nothing of his material. If so, as soon as possible, he must make them understand: (1) who his people are, (2) where his people are; (3) the time of the play, and (4) what in the present and past relations of his characters causes the story.[32]

In the theatre, playwrights are allowed by tradition a certain amount of time to accomplish this necessity. But on television, as noted earlier, this must be done almost at once. This is usually managed by starting the action of the story as near as possible to the focal point of the conflict, thus moving the play forward almost immediately.[33] This is necessary, too, because of the limited time alloted to the television playwright to tell his story. The question naturally arises how, then, can the playwright dispose of his exposition while at the same time starting his action? The answer to this question, one supplied by Stasheff and Bretz,[34] is that the writer for television must supply exposition in terms of action, action which will present and define a clear-cut conflict, "which may be man against man, man against circumstance, man against Fate, man against himself."[35]

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32 Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 182.

33 Adams, op. cit., p. 221.

34 Stasheff and Bretz have written that, "... it seems quite evident that television drama requires a combination of exposition with action at the beginning, and additional exposition, if needed, as the following action progresses." (The Television Program, p. 184.)

35 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 157.

In adapting The Father, it was noted that Strindberg opens his stage play on a point of difference between the Captain and Nojd, concerning Nojd's relationship to the servant girl, Emma, now with child. This scene serves to introduce to the theatre audience the problem of paternity, but it does not sufficiently explain the relationships between the characters involved or point up what will be the true nature of the conflict. Further, it focuses attention upon Nojd and his problem, rather than upon the Captain. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to fit the time limitation of the television medium by altering Strindberg's first scene in order to (1) introduce all of the major characters and explain their relationships as soon as possible, and (2) to point out in advance the tension which exists between the Captain and his wife, thus making more clear the focal point of the major conflict.

The techniques used to capture viewer interest and to explain the relationship between the Captain and his wife were (1) interest to be captured by billing and opening the drama, (2) relationships to be established by adding a scene to the beginning of the drama.

The Use of Title Cards. In television, as in motion pictures, it is necessary that the program to follow be identified for the audience. There are various methods in use for accomplishing this need, but the most commonly employed is that of the use of title cards printed with the necessary information.[36] The purpose of the

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36 W. C. Eddy, op. cit., p. 189.

title card is twofold; (1) to give the necessary information concerning the name of the play, the author, the program, and the sponser, if any, and (2) to properly orientate the audience to the mood of the drama to follow.

The method used to bill The Father was intended to fulfill both of these purposes. The use of a heavy music theme, backing the printed titles, was a device intended to strengthen and build the mood of the drama. Combined with the music was the symbolic representation of a tragic mask, displayed on a dark field, a device not uncommon to the medium, but nonetheless effective. The association of the music with the symbolic mask was meant as a psychological mood-building device, to prepare the audience for the play to follow and to forewarn them of the nature of the play. Next, the title-cards, noting the producing organization and the name of the play, were superimposed over the tragic mask, thus continuing the suggestion of program content. The name of August Strindberg was used with the title of his play for obvious reasons, because it is a well-known name, one which could be counted on to capture interest, and because of the association of a certain type of drama with his name.

After the title cards were displayed, a third card was brought in, a card containing a quotation from one of Strindberg's works. This is a device which is sometimes employed in motion pictures. Not only does it force viewer interest and concentration, but it forms a focal point for the program to follow. It gives the audience a particular foundation or reference, to be used in the better understanding of the motivating forces which will control the actions of the author's

characters. In a recent motion picture, for example, The Men of the Fighting Lady, (an MGM release) this technique was employed through the use of a quotation from the writing of John Donne, the famous "for whom the bell tolls" line. The quotation served effectively to underline the theme and meaning for the entire motion picture.

Following the use of the quotation, the television screen was taken "to black," a device not unlike the lowering of the house lights in a theatre, a traditional effect used to announce the fact that the play is about to begin.

The play itself was then opened on a photograph of the Captain, Laura, his wife, and Bertha, his daughter. By framing on the picture, the audience was visually introduced at once to the three principals of the drama. The audience was also told by the fact that the costumes worn in the picture were of the late nineteenth century, what the general setting would be and the time in which the drama would take place. Over the picture, an off-camera voice was used to speak a few simple lines concerning the nature of the drama to be unfolded. This technique is open to criticism, but it was believed that such a reference over such a picture would create an image in the minds of the audience which would hold through any additional introduction of exposition. Also, it was believed that such a reference would create a certain amount of interest by making known that the play would be concerned with a most unusual type of conflict. The lure of the unusual or the exceptional, it was believed, is one which is fascinating to most people.

While the lines were to be spoken, it was deemed advisable to dolly the camera slowly back away from the picture, in a movement reminiscent of the opening of a traveler curtain in the theatre, thus placing the picture in a social perspective, the setting of the drama. By so doing the audience would become aware visually of certain selected properties meant to set the drama, an oil-lamp, a book, a pipe, a table, and a room furnished appropriately in the style of the times.

The Point of Attack, the Opening Scene. The opening scene between Laura and Margret served two purposes, (1) to introduce character and character reference, and (2) to introduce expository information concerning the conflict, then forming. The fact that their argument revolved around a problem, that of Nöjd, gave emphasis to the need of a problem solution, one which the audience would be interested in seeing answered. Therefore, a dramatic question was immediately formed which gave rise to an element of suspense at the very beginning of the drama. The fact that the question concerning Nöjd could only be solved by the Captain served also to help define the characters of both Laura and the Nurse, thus introducing them to the audience at a much earlier time than they were in the original play.

The problem faced by the writer, and solved in part by the introduction of the new material, was one of clarification. In Strindberg's play, the major conflict between Laura and the Captain is not established until midway through the first act, which is contrary to the principle of television production. Also, the introduction of a major party to that conflict, Laura, is reserved until the exit of the Pastor and the conclusion of the business concerning Nöjd. The writer of the

adaptation, on the other hand, was under the impression that the scene between the Captain and the Pastor could be made more effective if Laura were introduced at an earlier time. By this means, the audience would have an indication as to the character of Laura before the two men began to discuss her and her difficulties with the Captain. This purpose was also behind the inclusion of the scene between the Pastor and Laura before the entrance of the Captain.

The Problem of Visual Emphasis. As was noted previously in this study, the visual image is a far more important factor in television writing than its aural counterpart.[37] To the extent that this is true, the television writer must, therefore, write or think in terms of pictures. This does not, however, mean that dialogue must be neglected in order to give visual emphasis to the television play. It must not be, for as Gilbert Seldes has pointed out, it is the spoken word that determines what image the audience shall see.[38] What it really means is that the television writer should, when possible, visualize an action or an idea rather than describe that action or idea.[39] According to Robert S. Greene, this can be done through the proper use of three visual writing tools, (1) the set and the details of the set, (2) actions, expressions and stage business, and (3) camera usage.[40]

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37 See Chapter II, p. 14.

38 Seldes, Writing for Television, p. 53.

39 The television writer must beware of underrating the importance of dialogue. The fact is that the basic tool used between humans for communication is speech. When a person wishes something, or wishes someone to know what he intends to do, he usually communicates that knowledge by means of the spoken word. And when a person wishes someone to understand the nature of his feelings, he usually speaks of those feelings in as effective a manner as possible.

40 Greene, op. cit., p. 6.

In adapting The Father to television, the writer noted first of all the virtual lack of overt physical action in the play as Strindberg conceived it. With the exception of Bertha's entrance in the first act, the lamp-throwing incident and the Captain's attempt on Bertha's life in the final act, the action of The Father is mostly of a limited type. However, it was noted also that Strindberg's play did contain other elements of visual expression which were of equal importance, and which could be effectively presented on television. The play contains an abundance of character material, the picture of human beings mentally struggling against each other as they are drawn closer and closer toward an inevitable catastrophe. In view of the possible effectiveness of facial expressions and character reaction,[41] it was believed that The Father would play very well on television in spite of its lack of physical activity. This belief, of course, recognizes that action differs in kind and degree, and as The Father contained a good amount of the one kind of action, its lack of the other was not regarded as a severe handicap.

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41 As was stated by Hoyland Bettinger,

> One of the most dramatically powerful techniques on television ... is the juxtaposition of action and reaction. ... In a dramatic sense, the audience is much more interested in what results from action, than in the action itself.

Bettinger, op. cit., p. 92.

Because the visual impact of reaction and expression in The Father was potentially quite high, the problem faced by the adaptor of the stage play, therefore, was to describe the reactions of character in such a manner as to point up their importance to the television director.[42] In the television script such descriptions are usually far more explicit than in the same script as written for the theatre. This is due primarily to the fact that the playwright in the theatre usually thinks in terms of an entire action, an action which fills the entire stage and is visible to an entire theatre, whereas on television the writer must write in terms of limited actions, as seen by the television camera only.

Whether he thinks in terms of shots or in terms of scenes, the television writer must describe his action in such a manner as to indicate what the camera should be concentrating upon at any particular moment in his play. That concentration may be upon a group of characters, or upon one character out of a group. It may be upon a character reading a book, or upon the book only. In any case, important elements of the scene, those elements the writer wishes to emphasize, must be made clear in the script.

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42 Needless to say, the dramatic situations themselves would have to be built in such a manner as to imply the need for reaction shots. As this was the type of writing done by Strindberg himself, however, the television writer did not face the construction problem to any great degree.

The third tool utilized by the television writer is, then, the element of camera usage. As Robert Greene wrote,

> The writer is not responsible for everything that is done; camera angles, on the whole, are not in his province, nor is he asked to anticipate conditions on the floor when he is writing the script.[43]

However, the writer is asked to indicate where the important elements of drama are to be found. He is asked to remember that the television camera is flexible and mobile, and can see various details of an overall stage picture. Therefore, the writer is asked to direct the camera to those elements of dramatic action and reaction in the overall picture which will best emphasize the point his play is to make. For example, early in the action of The Father, at the conclusion of the scene between Laura and the Pastor, the writer indicated the following:

> LAURA: Then if it is nothing, you won't mind if I leave you. I have some things to attend to in the kitchen.
>
> PASTOR: No, no, sister. Of course not.
>
> LAURA EXITS. LET OUT LAURA AND REMAIN FRAMED ON THE PASTOR. HE SITS IN A CHAIR NEXT TO THE GREAT CLOCK AND SADLY SHAKES HIS HEAD.
>
> CAPT: (VOICE OFF CAMERA, AGITATED AND IN ANGER) Nöjd! Nöjd!
>
> THE PASTOR LOOKS UP SHARPLY IN THE DIRECTION OF THE VOICE. CUT TO THE ENTRANCE WAY RIGHT, AS THE CAPTAIN COMES STORMING IN, A CRUMPLED SHEET OF PAPER IN HIS HAND. FOLLOW THE CAPTAIN.

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43 Greene, op. cit., p. 10.

CAPT: Blast that stupid fellow! Oh, hello, Jonas. Here already, eh? Good, good.

THE CAPTAIN CROSSES TO THE ARCHWAY.

CAPT: Nöjd! Nöjd! (HE TURNS) Confound that blasted jack-an-apes!

The action described here served two purposes. Like the stage directions in a stage play, it indicated to the actors where, in general, they were to be played. And it indicated to the television director the general type of camera work demanded on the action. First, the writer asked for a reaction shot of the Pastor. Then, at the sound of the Captain's voice, he indicated by the movement of the Pastor's head what the following shot should be, and then he asked that that shot be taken in order to bring the Captain into the scene. It was not necessary for the writer in this case to call for a specific shot, viz., a med. L.S., for in order for the director to frame his camera on the Captain's entrance in such a manner as to give him leeway to pan with the Captain's cross, such a shot would be inevitable, and the director would be well aware of that fact.

A second example of the camera usage described in the script indicated the following transition between scenes:

LAURA: But why don't you do it yourself, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Because the patient distrusts me. You, madam, would seem to be the logical one to do it, but I fear he distrusts even you.

LAURA FLUSHES AT THE DOCTOR'S REMARK. SHE STARTS TO SPEAK, BUT BEFORE SHE CAN, THEY ALL ARE STARTLED BY A LOUD CRASH FROM ABOVE. THEY ALL LOOK UP, AND THE CAMERA PANS WITH THEIR LOOKS. AS IT PANS, <u>DISSOLVE</u> TO A

> CAMERA IN THE CAPTAIN'S STUDY. THE SECOND CAMERA IS FOLLOWING A MOVEMENT SIMILAR TO THE FIRST. IT MOVES ACROSS THE SCENE OF THE CAPTAIN'S ROOM. THE ROOM IS A MESS OF DESTRUCTION, BOOKS SCATTERED ABOUT THE FLOOR, A CHAIR OVERTURNED, SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS SHATTERED, NOTES TORN FROM THEIR BINDINGS. THE CAPTAIN IS SEATED AT HIS DESK, HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. AFTER A SECOND, HE LOOKS UP AND STARES AT A PICTURE OF LAURA AND BERTHA IN A FRAME ON THE DESK BEFORE HIM. HIS FACE IS CONTORTED WITH PAIN AND SUFFERING. THEN, IN A FIT OF SUDDEN ANGER, HE REACHES OUT ONE ARM AND BRUSHES THE PICTURE AND BOOKS FROM THE DESK TOP. THEY LAND WITH A CRASH ON THE FLOOR. THE CAMERA MOVES DOWN TO FRAME ON THE BROKEN PICTURE.

In this instance, the camera has been given story-telling power. By moving from a scene where the subject had been the question of the Captain's insanity, to a scene of wanton destruction, the audience is led to a confirmation of its suspicions regarding the actuality of that insanity. And by framing upon the tortured figure of the Captain and his reaction to the picture of his wife and child, the source of that insanity is clearly pointed up.

In both of the illustrations above, it is to be noted, the camera was asked to take the position of the audience, to move from scene to scene or person to person, in such a manner as to tell the story as clearly as possible. In neither case could the effect called for have been duplicated in the theatre. This, by its nature, then, is the true essence of the visualization process of making the television adaptation, to tell the story in such a manner as to utilize those techniques of television production to effectively picture a story intended for another medium.

Another visual tool utilized in television writing is that of writing in terms of the set and the details of the set. As can be seen above, this is usually accomplished in terms of either the action or camera usage. The writer notes in his stage directions that the Captain is to cross from an entrance right to an archway left. Therefore, by describing that action, he is also writing in terms of the set. The writer describes a particular camera sequence, such as the pan across the Captain's room, and by so doing he also describes the elements of the set as seen by the camera. Or he utilizes certain objects within the set, such as the picture, to create a certain visual emphasis on an idea, in this case the cause of the Captain's suffering.

Earlier in this chapter a description was offered of the opening of the television adaptation. This description, it is to be remembered, contained elements of all three visual tools; (1) the set and the details of the set were used to describe the photograph and the objects on the table, (2) actions, expressions, and stage business were used in describing the entrance of Laura, the Nurse, and the Pastor, and in the scene which followed, (3) camera usage was utilized by indicating the dolly away from the table and the pick-up of certain elements of the action.

By visualizing the television adaptation in such a manner as indicated above, the writer was aware that his problem was primarily one of translation, that of taking material intended for one medium and translating it in a suitable form to another. In most cases, the original material itself offered the writer the basis for his

translation, in picture terms. For example, the first scene of the third act, a scene not included in the finished adaptation, concerned in part the noises which were heard coming from the Captain's room upstairs. These noises were interpreted into the picture of the destruction in the Captain's room. Also, in the stage version, the Captain enters the scene in the last act in a state of mind indicating his preoccupation over the problems of paternity. Although this scene was also deleted from the finished adaptation, the same impression was gained from the picturization of the Captain's suffering and his reaction to the photograph of his wife Laura and his daughter Bertha. It was found, then, in preparing the adaptation of material for the television medium, that quite often the writer can take the germ of ideas communicated in several long speeches, in the stage version, and translate those ideas into a visual impression in a matter of seconds by means of the television camera. In its essence, this is one of the fundamental techniques to be used in making the adaptation.[44]

The Problem of Television Dialogue. In general, the functions of dialogue are the same in any medium of dramatic expression. They are (1) to give information, (2) to characterize, (3) to convey emotion, and (4) to further the dramatic action. The characteristics of dialogue

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44 It is recognized, of course, that the technique of picturization, as used to interpret ideas or impressions, can also be used for purposes of shortening the running time of a dramatic sequence, identifying characters without the use of dialogue, gaining emotional effects, and providing relationships between characters, objects, or places.

do, however, vary between the mediums. A speech which seeks, for example, to further the action of a play may be written in one manner for the theatre and another manner for television. The reason for such a change lies not so much in the nature of the speech content, or in the amount of it, as in the nature of the two mediums themselves. Both television and the theatre have stabilized conventions of expression, which differ. Because the writer in the theatre has upwards of twice as much time to develop his story, his dialogue usually contains much more substance. The same dialogue on television would, consequently, have to be compressed in order to achieve the same effect. Likewise, because the theatre audience is accustomed to listening more keenly to a stage play, the writer for the theatre usually places greater emphasis on speech than on action. On television the reverse is usually true. The television writer places more emphasis on picturization, but uses sound to interpret the visual image. Because the audience in the theatre is accustomed to "stage diction" and to dramatic effect, the writer for the theatre will often use an euphemistic or epigramatical style. Whereas, on television, the audience is used to less talk and, except in rare cases of historical dramas, it expects the characters in the television drama to speak in a life-like manner, avoiding affectations deemed "theatrical."

In general, therefore, because of the distinctive features of the television medium, television dialogue can be characterized as follows:

1. It is unusually clear, direct, and to the point, being in a vocabulary that is easily understood by the average viewer.

2. It is usually written in short speeches, thrown back and forth between two or three characters. The monologue, or long single speech, is most often avoided.

3. It usually serves to emphasize the meaning of the visual image.

Because of the characteristic differences between stage diction and television dialogue, certain changes were made in The Father. It was recognized, for example, that Strindberg was an extremely verbose playwright, basically because he used the spoken word as a tool for an analysis of the character. Consequently, some of his speeches, particularly in the second act, ran uninterrupted for as long as twenty or thirty lines. As Bretz and Stasheff have observed, this type of dialogue becomes oppressive on television, a medium where brevity is essential.

> ... the long, sustained speech of a dozen printed lines in the book will seem twice as long in the TV script, and three times as long on the screen. Shorter speeches, thrown back and forth between two or three characters, will convey the same thoughts and promote the same dramatic action.[45]

In most cases, therefore, Strindberg's longer speeches were either trimmed to a more appropriate length, broken up with additional lines of dialogue from other characters, or eliminated entirely.

Another technique common to the television medium, one often applied in making an adaptation, is to state an idea in visual terms rather than aural. This is a technique termed the "use of the charade" by Robert Greene.

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45 Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 174.

> The key to visual writing is the charade. A charade is simply this: Through symbolic representation, an idea is communicated. The idea may originally have been stated in words, but the charade translates it into a symbolic picture language which stands for the same thing.[46]

One example of this type of writing has already been described in the section treating the problem of visual emphasis. Another appeared in the first act, as follows:

> DISSOLVE TO THE CAPTAIN'S STUDY. THE CAPTAIN IS DISCOVERED AT HIS STUDY TABLE, LOOKING THROUGH A SPECTROSCOPE. HE CHECKS A MINERAL SPECIMEN AGAINST A CHART, AND SEEMS PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS. THEN HE JOTS DOWN A BRIEF NOTE IN A BOOK AND TURNS TO PICK UP A LARGE VOLUME NEXT TO HIM. HE SEARCHES THROUGH THE BOOK IN VAIN FOR THE INFORMATION HE NEEDS. HE CLOSES THE BOOK IN DISGUST, RIPS HIS NOTE FROM THE PAD AND TEARS IT UP, THEN RE-EXAMINES THE MINERAL SPECIMEN UNDER THE SPECTROSCOPE. HE IS OCCUPIED THUS AS THE DOCTOR AND LAURA ENTER.

The above charade communicates two basic ideas to the television audience; (1) the knowledge of the nature of the Captain's scientific experiments, and (2) the fact that his work is not going as well as expected.

<u>The Technique of Dialogue Compression</u>. Often, in making an adaptation, the writer is faced with the problem of retaining certain pieces of information from a scene which he wishes to eliminate from the final script. This problem was faced, for example, when the writer discarded the scene between the Nurse and the Captain early in the first act. The scene was eliminated for two reasons: (1) because of the

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46 Greene, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 23.

Captain's remarks concerning religion, and (2) because it was deemed advisable to have the Nurse accompany the Doctor to his new quarters. After the scene was dropped, however, the writer still felt the need to express the Captain's troubled mind concerning his conflict with Laura and his suspicions concerning the new Doctor, elements of dialogue contained in the scene eliminated. The method used in this case was what might be considered a compression of dialogue. Both of the ideas were retained in a short "thought" speech, which the writer composed. The Captain's thoughts were to be recorded and played "over frame" while he reacted to them as he wrote of his fears in his personal record.

> MARGRET AND THE DOCTOR EXIT. THE CAPTAIN STANDS FOR A SECOND, LOOKING AFTER THEM, A PUZZLED EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE. THEN HE CROSSES TO HIS DESK, PICKS UP A MINERAL SPECIMEN, STUDIES IT AND LAYS IT ASIDE. HE SITS FOR A SECOND, THEN OPENS THE DESK AND DRAWS FORTH A DIARY. HE BEGINS TO WRITE. A RECORD OF HIS VOICE PLAYS OVER THE FRAME AS HE WRITES.

CAPT'S VOICE: Things are not good in this house tonight. They are all turning against me in this fuss about Bertha. Even the new Doctor is against me. Why, I do not know, but I feel as if something must happen soon to break the struggle between Laura and myself. What it is, I don't know, yet. But I am sure that something evil is on the way ...

<u>The Technique of Dialogue Imitation</u>. Still another problem faced by an adaptor is one of imitation. "Any additional dialogue written by the adaptor will try to keep the style and feeling of the original."[47]

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47 Stasheff and Bretz, <u>The Television Program</u>, p. 174

Several times the writer felt the need to include speeches in his adaptation of The Father that were not contained in the original. This necessitated an understanding of and a feeling for the original material.

After a careful study, it was found that Strindberg's dialogue, in most instances, followed one of two patterns. It was either sharp and piercing, coming in quick thrusts and pointed phrases, or it was long and easy, stylized in the manner of poetic diction. The scene between Laura and the Captain in the second act contains elements of both. By far the more commonly used style is the former, however, because it suited the strong nature of Strindberg's theme and because it was the more natural of the two. Consequently, in most cases, additional dialogue was included in the script in this fashion. For the opening scene, for example, the writer wrote the following lines.

NURSE: Mistress?

LAURA: Yes, Margret?

NURSE: Mistress Laura, there is a great sin in this house.

LAURA: Are you speaking of the servant girl's child, old woman?

NURSE: Yes, I am speaking of the child.

LAURA: And what do you expect me to do about it?

NURSE: You must ask Master Adolf to do what is right. Nöjd must be forced to marry the poor girl.

In tone and style, this dialogue exchange is quite similar to the one utilized by Strindberg in the scene between Laura and the Captain, as reproduced below.

LAURA: What do you mean to say by all this?

CAPT: I feel that one of us must go under in this struggle.

LAURA: Which?

CAPT: The weaker, of course.

LAURA: And the stronger will be in the right?

CAPT: Always, since he has the power.

LAURA: Then I am in the right.

In the last analysis, one fact was made clear to the writer in making his adaptation. Much more of the original dialogue must be retained in the adaptation of a stage play than in either the adaptation of a short story or of a novel. This is true, basically, because the writer of a stage play will usually take pains to make clear, through his dialogue, such dramatic elements as character motivation and thought, both of which are essential to the television form as well. Therefore, the writer of the television adaptation of Strindberg's play found the problem of dialogue less troublesome than the problem of time. As a result, he was led to believe, as Robert Greene stated, that the fundamental problem of adaptation "is one of selection and compression."[48]

The Problem of Transition. In adapting The Father to television, two additional locations were indicated for the action and several jumps in time were found necessary. Because of this, some method had to be found to join the various segments of action together. This is

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48 Greene, op. cit., p. 141.

the function served by the transition, a device used to bridge the gap between two actions separated by either time or space.

As was noted by Bretz and Stasheff:

> The best transition is the one that is best suited to that which has gone before, and that which is to come, and which leads us gently but inevitably on to the next scene.[49]

This means, in effect, that a transition must appear to grow out of one scene and into another in such a manner as to maintain a continuity between the two actions. In order to accomplish this, the transition must (1) be motivated, i.e., some cause for its being must be shown either in the action or the dialogue, (2) it must serve its purpose by orientating the viewer at once to the new action or time, and (3) it must establish the dramatic relationship between the two consecutive actions.[50]

In making the adaptation of The Father it was decided that relatively simple transitional devices should be employed because of the lack of production facilities. For example, to bridge the time between the Captain's exit and the Doctor's entrance in the first act, the following directions were indicated:

> THE CAPTAIN EXITS TO THE HALL. THE CAMERA HOLDS ON LAURA AND DOLLYS IN FOR A C.U. REACTION SHOT, THEN PANS DOWN TO HER HANDS. SHE IS WRENCHING THE WEDDING BAND ON HER FINGER, TRYING TO FREE IT. GO TO BLACK. COME UP ON LAURA'S HAND, EXTENDED.

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49 Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 204.

50 Greene, op. cit., p. 94.

LAURA: Doctor Ostermark? (OVER FRAME)

DOLLY BACK ON SAME SCENE AS BEFORE.
THE DOCTOR ADVANCES TO TAKE LAURA'S
OFFERED HAND IN A GESTURE OF FRIENDSHIP.

This transition sequence accomplished three purposes. First, by going "to black," thus interrupting the action entirely, the time difference between the two scenes was bridged. Because the amount of time was insignificant in this case, it was not believed necessary to state it. Secondly, by matching both the preceding action and the following action on the same pictorial detail, Laura's hand, a degree of visual continuity was established. The third purpose of the sequence was incidental to the transition itself. The concentration upon Laura's hand was symbolic and thus served a dramatic function. As Laura wrenches at her wedding band, she emphasized her distaste for the vows that bind her to her husband, and as she extends her hand to the Doctor, it is suspected that she seeks an ally.

One of the problems faced by the television writer, and solved in part by the transition, is the problem of continuous action. When, for example, it becomes necessary to move a character from one set to another, the writer must pad his action for a time sufficient for the character to make his move between sets. This problem arose when it was decided to move the scene between the Captain and the Doctor in the first act from the living room to the Captain's study. The transitional device employed in this instance had to be of such a nature as to connect the two different locations in a continuous action, and yet to allow the Doctor and Laura time to make the change between sets. It was decided to dissolve between the two actions, and to supply the

Captain with a piece of business with which he might occupy himself until such time as the Doctor and his wife would appear. The dissolve is most often called for, in a case such as this, when a connection is wanted between two actions occuring at the same time, but separated by distance. This is true because the dissolve actually connects the two different pictures, by bringing one out and the other in at the same time, thus superimposing for a time one action on top of the other. The action supplied the Captain in this case was in the nature of a charade, and has been described in the section treating with the problem of dialogue. The charade referred to set the scene for the actions to follow, by emphasizing the nature of the dialogue content to follow.

Another transitional device used in the adaptation, one which is quite familiar to the average viewer, was that of using a clock to symbolize a passage of time. There is, for example, a difference of some five hours between the first and second acts. Some method was therefore needed to convey this passage of time to the viewer. The method used was to open on the face of the grandfather clock in the living room, and to dolly out on the scene between the Doctor and Laura. This same technique was later utilized as a continuity device between the first and second scenes of the second act. The directions which follow indicate how this was accomplished.

> AFTER LAURA'S EXIT THE CAMERA FRAMES ON THE DOCTOR. DOLLY IN FOR A C.U. REACTION SHOT OF HIS TROUBLED FACE. DISSOLVE TO THE FACE OF A RICHLY CARVED WALL CLOCK. THE TIME IS NOW TWELVE THIRTY. THE SOUND OF THE CLOCK'S SWINGING PENDULUM IS HEARD CLEARLY. DOLLY

> BACK FROM THE CLOCK TO THE FIGURE OF THE NURSE, SEATED IN A ROCKING CHAIR, KNITTING. THE SOUND OF THE CREAKING CHAIR OVERCOMES THAT OF THE CLOCK.

A different type of device from the one above was used to move from the Nurse's room back to the main action in the living room. The method used was that of selecting a similar prop in both sets and then using that prop as a basis for the continuity between the two scenes. This is a device which Robert Greene, for one, considers most effective, for it creates a feeling of anticipation in the second action.[51] A description of the use of this device follows:

> BERTHA RISES TO EXIT. LET HER OUT AND REMAIN FRAMED ON THE NURSE. SHE LOOKS AFTER BERTHA, A SAD EXPRESSION ON HER FACE. THEN SHE PICKS UP HER GLASSES, PUTS THEM ON AND REACHES FOR HER BIBLE, AT REST ON A SMALL TABLE BESIDE HER. SHE READS ALOUD.
>
> NURSE: The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want... etc.
>
> AS SHE READS, DOLLY IN ON THE BIBLE. AS THE BIBLE IS FRAMED IN C.U. DISSOLVE TO AN OPEN BOOK ON A MAN'S LAP (THE DOCTOR'S), A LISTLESS HAND LAID ACROSS IT. DOLLY OUT TO REVEAL THE DOCTOR SEATED IN A CHAIR BESIDE THE CLOCK. HE IS ASLEEP. THE CLOCK READS AT ONE.

As can be gathered by the simple nature of the above transitions, The Father offered no great problems in regard to changing locations and time. This was true, basically, because of the play's tight adherence to the unities of time, place, and action. In a manner of speaking, the chief transitional problem faced was really not a transitional

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51 Greene, op. cit., p. 100.

problem at all. It was the problem of arranging the action of the play in such a manner as to take advantage of the characteristics of the transition. It is to be recalled that Strindberg's action was originally laid out in one set only. This immediately eliminated all transitions, except those of time, and placed a degree of visual sameness on the television adaptation. Consequently, in order to take advantage of the medium's potentials of mobility and flexibility, the writer decided to shift portions of the drama to different locations, as indicated above. This allowed him to utilize the ability to intercut between scenes and actions, thus enhancing the visualness of the play by breaking up the static effect of one location. By so doing, the transition became a much more effective writing tool in the adaptation, and the finished script was more in keeping with the demands of the medium to which the transfer was made.

The Problem of Determining the Production Style. Another reason for selecting The Father for television, one not particularly connected with the play's merit, was the fact that it offered possibilities of being produced in a suggestive manner. As was noted by Bretz and Stasheff:

> Certain promising trends have been seen ... which indicate that television can go far in suggesting complex settings through a few set pieces and the proper lighting. Various dramatic series, such as DuMont's Hands of Mystery, used simple suggestive backgrounds; NBC's Cameo Theatre pioneered in telling a story with simple close-up shots against a pure black background.[52]

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52 Stasheff and Bretz, The Television Program, p. 67.

Although the actual problem of physical production is one which rests primarily with the producing organization, the television writer does have the responsibility of selecting a play and preparing a script which is workable in terms of the limitations of such an organization. Because the selected play was to be presented under less than average conditions, within a less than average production budget, it was particularly important that the writer select a play for this study that could be adapted along simple and practical lines. Such potentials, normal to the commercial field, as film clips, rear-screen projection, special effects and realistic-type settings, were mostly beyond the means of the Television Development Department of Michigan State College, and the budget limitations of the production.

While it was realized that Strindberg's The Father was a naturalistic play, it was also noted that its life-like nature was due not so much to its setting as to its theme and its characters. The actual setting of the play is almost immaterial, serving only as a method of containing the action of the play within the bounds of a stage. If the setting were to be suggested rather than stated, therefore, the play would not be handicapped. Its story and its message could still be presented. In fact, the possibility existed that the story could be told in a more forceful manner by the elimination of the physical setting. Such an elimination would concentrate attention much more closely upon character and theme.

It was decided, then, that The Father would be produced suggestively, against a black background, with the action contained within a minimum amount of space, as determined by set pieces to be utilized as

boundaries. Such a style might not be appropriate for comedy, but it seemed ideal for tragedy and for the psychological development of character. The dark background combined with low-key lighting would heighten the mood of the drama, and the use of the close-up camera would concentrate the attention of the audience on character.

Such a production style would also be in keeping with the best interests of the television medium. It would take particular advantage of the medium's sense of intimacy, for it would call upon the use of the audience's imagination. It would emphasize the character-displaying potential of the medium, because it would utilize character as the main instrument in the telling of the story. It would be economical to produce and would thus hold within the limits of a nominal budget.

Such a dramatic production style would also be particularly in keeping with the production means of the educational outlet of Michigan State College, and it would present a method whereby the very best in literature could be produced within a limited space and a limited budget.

CHAPTER VI

THE TELEVISION SCRIPT

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The television script included in this study is, with two exceptions, a copy of the one used in the production of The Father as presented over the Michigan State College television system, March 7, 1953.[1] The first exception in the script's reproduction is the fact that it does not contain the technical directions used at the time of its presentation. These are not included in the script because they do not reflect upon the nature of the study. The second exception concerns the nature of the form followed. In writing the adaptation, the NBC standard format was utilized. This form is characterized by having all directions for both picture and sound located on the left-hand margin of the page.[2] For purposes of conserving space, this format has not been followed in the reproduction of the television script which follows.

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1 As seems true with so many writers, the adapter of Strindberg's play was gifted with a certain measure of hindsight. Upon viewing the production of his adaptation, therefore, he perceived elements in the drama which could have been improved upon and which, if he were to repeat the adaptation process, would be treated in a different manner. The writer's suggestions for revision, while not important to the nature of this study, have nonetheless been included in the following script, in the form of footnotes.

2 Greene, op. cit., p. 19.

THE FATHER

ACT I

MUSIC: MOOD OVERTONES, UP HEAVY.

COME FROM BLACK TO OPEN ON A DARK TITLE CARD WITH A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF TRAGIC AND COMIC MASKS ON THE LEFT SIDE.

SUPER IN OVER THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE CARD THE TITLE: "The Michigan State College Television Players Present"

DISSOLVE TO: "The Father by August Strindberg"

DISSOLVE TO: "Hatred and love! All is one, the same source of energy, sometimes positive, sometimes negative. But one and the same..."

GO TO BLACK:

MUSIC: UP FULL. USE TO BRIDGE TRANSITION TO THE PLAY. HOLD UNDER NARRATION FOLLOWING.

THE CAMERA OPENS ON A PHOTOGRAPH SET INTO AN ANTIQUE IRON FRAME. THE PICTURE IS OF A FAMILY GROUP, POSED IN A STIFF, FORMAL MANNER. THE THREE PERSONS IN THE PICTURE ARE LAURA, BERTHA, AND THE CAPTAIN. BY THE DRESS OF EACH IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS THAT THE TIME OF THE PLAY IS IN THE LATTER PART OF THE LAST CENTURY.

VOICE: (OVER FRAME) This is the story of a man and a woman. The man, a respected Army officer and scientist; the woman, his wife. Happily married, once, there grew between them a bitter hate, and over the soul of their only child they fought like the jungle beasts... for their very existence.

AS THE VOICE SPEAKS OVER THE PICTURE, PULL AWAY FROM THE PHOTOGRAPH, REVEALING A NINETEENTH-CENTURY TABLE, MARBLE TOPPED, WITH A CHINA-COVERED OIL LAMP, A FEW BOOKS, A PIPE AND TOBACCO HUMIDOR. PULL BACK FAR ENOUGH TO REVEAL THE ACTION AS IT BEGINS. LAURA ENTERS THE SCENE FROM THE COVERED ENTRANCE WAY LEFT OF FRAME. SHE IS STOPPED BY THE NURSE, MARGRET, WHO ENTERS CLOSE BEHIND.

NURSE: Mistress?

LAURA: (TURNING) Yes, Margret?

NURSE: Mistress Laura, there is a great sin in this house.

LAURA: Are you speaking of the servant girl's child, old woman?

NURSE: Yes. I am speaking of the child.

LAURA: And what do you expect me to do about it?

NURSE: You must ask Master Adolf to do what is right. Nójd must be forced to marry the poor girl.

LAURA: I'm sorry, Margret. Truly I am, but you know how things are in this house. You know that the Captain will never willingly do anything that I suggest.

NURSE: But this time he must. The girl cannot be left without a husband. It isn't right.

LAURA: That's for the Captain to decide, Margret.

NURSE: Then I must go to him myself.

MARGRET ATTEMPTS TO PASS. LAURA STEPS BETWEEN HER AND THE DOOR, HOWEVER, HER ASPECT CHANGED TO SLIGHT ANGER.

LAURA: (TAKING HOLD OF HER) You may not! You know that the Captain will not abide any interference in his affairs.

NURSE: (FREEING HERSELF) Yes, Ma'am, I know that well enough, but it's made little difference before, when something was wanted in this house.

LAURA: (DISTURBED) What do you mean by that?

NURSE: Well Ma'am, not that I mean to talk none, but you've always managed to get your own way in matters concerning yourself.

LAURA: (STIFFLY) That will do, Margret. Leave me, or I shall be provoked.

NURSE: Very well, Ma'am, but remember. . . God does not smile on a sinful house.

THE NURSE TURNS WITH A HUFF AND EXITS. LET HER OUT AND REMAIN FRAMED ON LAURA. SHE LOOKS AFTER MARGRET CONTEMPTUOUSLY.

LAURA: Foolish old woman. I wonder I stand her about. Her, and her self-righteousness.

AT THIS MOMENT THE PASTOR ENTERS FROM BEHIND.

PASTOR: Good evening, sister.

LAURA: (TURNING TO GREET HIM AFFECTIONATELY, WITH A GREAT SMILE) Jonas! But this is a surprise. (SHE GOES TO MEET HIM)

PASTOR: (HE TAKES OFF HIS COAT, BRUSHES IT, AND PLACES IT ON THE RACK BESIDE THE DOOR) Not much of one, I trust, sister.

LAURA: Why do you say that?

PASTOR: (TURNING TO HER) You mean to say that Adolf hasn't told you?

LAURA: Told me what?

PASTOR: (IN DISBELIEF) Why, that he's finally consented to Bertha's confirmation, of course.

LAURA: Has he? (SHE TURNS FROM HIM, OBVIOUSLY SO THAT HE WILL NOT SEE THE EFFECT OF THIS NEWS UPON HER) That is interesting.

PASTOR: (COMING UP CLOSE BEHIND HER) Well, he didn't come right out with it, of course, but he did ask me over this evening to discuss the matter.

LAURA: I see.

PASTOR: But surely, he must have told you about it. You're the girl's mother.

LAURA: No, he didn't. But, then, my good husband has not seen fit to talk with me of late about matters concerning my child. Would you believe it, Jonas, I have to actually force him into conversation these days. He's so taken up with those foolish experiments of his.

PASTOR: (SITTING) I see. Same old trouble, eh? And after twenty years being married.

LAURA: (SHARPLY) How do you mean that?

PASTOR: (BRUSHING IT OFF) Oh, it's nothing, nothing at all. Just talk.

LAURA: Then if it's nothing, you won't mind if I leave you? I have some things to attend to in the kitchen.

PASTOR: No, no, sister, of course not.[3]

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3 Upon reflection, the writer realized that the scene between Laura and the Pastor is dissassociated with the scene which directly precedes it. A possible revision of the scene would, therefore, maintain the subject of Nojd through this action by involving the Pastor in its consideration.

LAURA EXITS. DET HER OUT AND FRAME THE PASTOR. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY.

CAPTAIN: (VOICE OFF CAMERA, AGITATED AND IN ANGER) Nöjd! Nöjd!

THE PASTOR GLANCES OFF QUICKLY IN THE DIRECTION OF THE VOICE. CUT TO THE SIDE DOOR AS THE CAPTAIN COMES STORMING IN, A PIECE OF CRUMPLED PAPER IN HIS HAND. FOLLOW THE CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN: Blast that stupid fellow! Oh, hello, Jonas. Here already, eh? Good, good. (THE CAPTAIN CROSSES TO THE CENTER ARCHWAY AND CALLS LOUDLY ONCE MORE) Nöjd! Nöjd! (HE TURNS IN) Confound that blasted jack-an-apes!

PASTOR: Adolf, about Bertha's confirmation. . .

CAPTAIN: (WAVING HIM OFF) Later, Jonas. I've some official business to attend to, first.

PASTOR: Nöjd?

CAPTAIN: Yes, Nöjd. That stupid little orderly of mine.

PASTOR: I see, and what has he been up to now?

CAPTAIN: What has he been up to, you ask? Here, read this. (HE HANDS THE PASTOR THE PAPER HE HOLDS IN HIS HAND) It seems that Nöjd has been cutting up with one of the servant girls again - only this time he's gone <u>too</u> far.

PASTOR: (LOOKING UP WITH DEEP CONCERN) When did you learn of this?

CAPTAIN: Just this minute. I dare say the whole village has heard of it by now. They call it official channels. That letter is from the magistrate. He asks what action I intend to take in the matter.

PASTOR: And just what are you going to do? As his commanding officer, you really should do something, you know.

CAPTAIN: Don't you suppose I know that? I've sworn at him and flogged him, and it hasn't had the least effect. As you're here, won't you be good enough to give him a talking-to? You're his pastor. Perhaps you can make some impression on him. After all, he should marry the girl.

PASTOR: (UNEASY) I see. In other words, you want me to preach to him.

CAPTAIN: If you wish to put it that way. Yes.

PASTOR: And what effect do you suppose the word of God would have on him?

CAPTAIN: I don't know, but promise me you'll try it anyway. Promise?

PASTOR: We'll see.

NÖJD ENTERS FROM BEHIND AND STANDS AT ATTENTION. HIS FACE IS EXPRESSIONLESS, ALTHOUGH HE APPEARS OTHERWISE QUITE NERVOUS.

NÖJD: Ahem!

CAPTAIN: (TURNING ON HIM IN A HARSH MANNER) Oh, so you're here, now, eh?

NÖJD: Did the Captain call, sir?

CAPTAIN: Of course I called, you numbskull. I've heard a few words about you, concerning the girl Emma.

NÖJD: Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN: What have you got to say for yourself?

NÖJD: Bless me, Captain, but I couldn't talk about it with the Pastor himself here.

PASTOR: (FLATTERED BY THE REFERENCE) Now, now, don't be afraid of me, my boy. I won't hurt you.

CAPTAIN: Come now, Nöjd, you had best confess. You know what will happen if you don't.

NÖJD: Yes, sir. You see, sir, it was like this, sir. Ludwig and I were at a dance at Gabriel's when . . .

CAPTAIN: Ludwig? What has Ludwig got to do with it? Stick to the truth.

NÖJD: Yes, sir. And then Emma said . . .

CAPTAIN: (IN THE MANNER OF A PROSECUTOR) Oh, so it was Emma who led you astray, was it? Is that what you're saying?

NÖJD: Well, not far from it, Captain. You know yourself that unless the girl's willing.....

CAPTAIN: (SHOUTING) I know myself, do I?

NÖJD: Well, now, I didn't mean <u>that</u>, Captain, but . . .

CAPTAIN: Oh, hang the story, man. I've had enough of your stories. Come out with it straight. Are you responsible for Emma's child, or not? (PAUSE) Well?

NÖJD: (SIMPLY) Who knows?

CAPTAIN: (SOMEWHAT PERPLEXED) Eh? What's that? Don't you know?

NÖJD: Why, no, Captain, that is, you never can be sure, now, can you?

CAPTAIN: Now, what do you mean by that, eh? (HE SPEAKS TO THE PASTOR) This is terrible, isn't it?

PASTOR: It's the same old story over again. See here, Nojd, you surely ought to know whether or not you are the father of Emma's child?

NÖJD: (DROPPING HIS EYES) Begging the Pastor's pardon, sir, but who's to say?

CAPTAIN: (BREAKING IN) Are you trying to put the blame on Ludwig? Is that what you're up to?

NÖJD: Well, now, Captain, sir. It's not easy to say who's to blame.

NÖJD, HIS EYES CAST DOWNWARD, BEGINS TO TWITCH HIS HAT IN HIS HANDS AND SHIFT FROM FOOT TO FOOT. HIS DISCOMFORT, HOWEVER, IS QUITE EQUALED BY THE CAPTAIN'S, WHO CAN SEE NO WAY OUT OF THE DIFFICULTY AT ALL. SEEING NONE, HIS ANGER SEEMS TO GET THE BEST OF HIM.

CAPTAIN: Baaa! I can't ferret out the truth of all this, nor is it to my liking. It's a case for the courts, pure and simple. (TO NÖJD) And you can consider yourself under restriction until the magistrate calls. And if I see you outside your quarters during the next forty-eight hours, I'll have you before the review board as well. Now be off. I'm sick of looking at you.

NÖJD:[4] (ONLY TOO HAPPY TO ESCAPE) God save you, Captain. And you, too, Pastor. (HE EXITS IN HASTE)

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4 If a revision of the adaptation were to be made, it is believed that Nöjd would be eliminated from the action entirely, although his problem would be retained on a discussion basis.

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CAPTAIN: (HE TURNS TO THE PASTOR, SLIGHTLY PUT OUT BECAUSE THE PASTOR DID NOT COME TO HIS ASSISTANCE) Now, why didn't you get after him, eh? You only sat there and mumbled something or other.

PASTOR: To tell the truth, I didn't know what to say. It's a pity about the girl, yes, but more a pity about the lad. His future may be ruined if he is dismissed from the regiment.

CAPTAIN: And what about the girl's future, eh? (THE PASTOR OFFERS A SLIGHT SHRUG) Hump! Upon my soul, I should like to be in the magistrate's position and judge this case. (THE CAPTAIN CROSSES TO A SMALL SIDEBOARD AND POURS HIMSELF A GLASS OF WINE)

PASTOR: (RISING AND FOLLOWING) Well, well, I judge no one. (HE REFUSES THE CAPTAIN'S GESTURE OF A GLASS) But what about Bertha's confirmation? You asked to see me about it, didn't you?

CAPTAIN: (RECALLING) Oh, yes, so I did. But it was not in particular about her confirmation that I asked you to come by this evening.

PASTOR: Really? Why did you ask me, then?

CAPTAIN: Well, it's about Bertha, at least. But it's about her whole future welfare. This house is full of women who all want to have their say about my child's education. My mother-in-law wants to make a Spiritualist of her. Laura wants her to be an Artist. The governess wants her to join the Salvation Army, and old Margret wants her to become a Baptist, like yourself.[5]

PASTOR: (BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND) I see.

CAPTAIN: I am being constantly opposed in my efforts to develop the child's character. Therefore, I have decided to send her away from home.

PASTOR: (SITTING ONCE AGAIN) You have too many women trying to run this house, Adolf.

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5 In a revision the element of conflict between the Captain and the members of his household would be limited, to emphasize the conflict between him and Laura only.

CAPTAIN: (MOVING IN TO EMPHASIZE HIS POINT) You're right! You're right, Jonas. It's like going into a cage full of tigers, and if I didn't hold a red-hot iron under their noses they would tear me to pieces any moment. (THE PASTOR FINDS THIS COMPARISON AMUSING) And you laugh, you rascal. Wasn't it enough that I married your sister, without your palming off your old step-mother on me?

PASTOR: But, good heavens, one can't have step-mothers about one's house. It isn't natural.

CAPTAIN: No, you think it's better to have mothers-in-law about someone else's.

PASTOR: Well, we all have some burden in life . . .

CAPTAIN: But mine is certainly too heavy. I have my old nurse into the bargain, who treats me as if I ought still to wear a bib.

PASTOR: (POINTING A WARNING FINGER) You must keep a tight rein on the women folk. You let them run things too much.

CAPTAIN: Now, will you please inform me how I'm to keep order among the women folk. I can manage the men in the barracks with no trouble, but women are beyond me.

PASTOR: Well, Laura was brought up with a firm hand, but although she is my own sister, I must admit she <u>was</u> pretty troublesome. Sorry I can't give you any advice on that.

CAPTAIN: Laura certainly has her faults, but with her it isn't so serious.

PASTOR: No, no, my dear fellow. She is the one who really wears on you most. Tell the truth, now.

CAPTAIN: (UPSET NOW) Good heavens, man, won't you understand the seriousness of the situation, must you treat everything with levity? Laura won't let Bertha leave her, and I feel she can't be allowed to remain in this house any longer.

PASTOR: Oh, so Laura won't let Bertha leave her, eh? Well, then, you are in for trouble. Laura had a strange trait as a child. She had to have her own way, and she wouldn't let up until she got it.

CAPTAIN: Don't you think I've seen that trait often enough since we've been married?

PASTOR: I suppose so. But can't you compromise? What do you want to do with Bertha that's so unpardonable?

CAPTAIN: (SITTING) You mustn't think I want to make a prodigy of her, or an image of myself. I don't want to educate her exclusively for matrimony, as is the custom, for if she were left unmarried she might fall upon hard times. On the other hand, I don't want to influence her toward a career that would require a long course of training which would be entirely thrown away if she should marry.

PASTOR: What do you want, then?

CAPTAIN: I want her to be a teacher. If she remains unmarried, she will be able to support herself. And if she marries, she can use her knowledge in the education of her children. Now, am I not right?

PASTOR: Yes, I would say you were quite right. But on the other hand, hasn't she shown a great talent for painting? It would be a pity to waste it.

CAPTAIN: Talent, you say? (HE RISES AND CROSSES TO A HIGHBOY, WHERE HE PICKS UP A FOLIO OF PAINTINGS) Here, look at these. (RETURNING) They are the sort of thing any school girl can do.

PASTOR: Hmm. I see. They are rather poor, aren't they?

THE CAPTAIN PLACES THEM BACK IN THE FOLIO AND PLACES THE FOLIO ON THE TABLE.

CAPTAIN: Then you see what I mean?

PASTOR: Yes, but from what Laura said, I gathered the girl had truly a great talent.

CAPTAIN: Laura is given to exaggeration, when it suits her purpose.

PASTOR: Well, then, I can see no hope for you, old man. This situation could become very serious, indeed. And, of course, Laura has her supporters . . .?

CAPTAIN: Yes, you may be sure of that. The whole house is already up in arms over the prospect of Bertha's leaving. And between ourselves, it is not exactly a noble conflict that is being waged from that quarter.

PASTOR: What do you mean?

CAPTAIN: They all hint that men had better be careful, because women can do this or that nowadays. All day long, incessantly, it is a conflict between man and woman.

PASTOR: Ah, yes, the eternal struggle.

SOUND: THE CLOCK STRIKES SIX.

PASTOR: Hm. (HE CHECKS HIS WATCH) Six o'clock. (HE RISES) I really must be off.

CAPTAIN: What, leaving so soon? No, stay, please do. You know I'm expecting that new doctor. Have you seen him?

PASTOR: (CROSSES TO COAT RACK) Oh, I caught a glimpse of him as I came along. He looked pleasant and reliable . . . should be an excellent replacement for old Doctor Norling.

CAPTAIN: That's good. Do you think it possible that he may become my ally? I could use a good friend in the house with this fuss over Bertha.

PASTOR: Who can tell? It depends on how much he has been among women. That's the question, you know.

CAPTAIN: Here, let me help you with that.

THE CAPTAIN HELPS THE PASTOR ON WITH HIS COAT.

PASTOR: Thank you. (AS HE STARTS TO GO, HE STOPS WITH A SECOND THOUGHT) You know, Adolf, I've been rather concerned about you, of late.

CAPTAIN: Concerned?

PASTOR: Yes, you must take better care of your health. You seem nervous. Perhaps if you had a talk with the new Doctor . . .

CAPTAIN: Has Laura put that idea into your head? For the past twenty years she has treated me as if I were on the point of death.

PASTOR: Laura? No. You make me uneasy about yourself. You're spending too much time with those scientific experiments of yours. You don't get any proper rest. Take care of yourself, that's my advice. And don't worry so much. Half the troubles in the world are caused by worry. Good bye, and good luck. Oh, but didn't you want to talk about the confirmation?

CAPTAIN: Not at all, for now. I assure you that matter will have to take its course in the ordinary way, at the cost of the clerical conscience.

PASTOR: Humm. I see, then I won't trouble you about it again. Good bye. Love to Laura.

THE PASTOR EXITS. FRAME ON THE CAPTAIN, WHO TURNS WITH A SERIOUS EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE. HE CROSSES TO THE CENTER TABLE, WHERE HE STANDS FOR A MOMENT LOOKING AT THE FAMILY GROUP PICTURE. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD AND REACHES FOR HIS PIPE. THIS HE FILLS AND LIGHTS; AT THAT MOMENT LAURA ENTERS FROM BEHIND.

LAURA: Am I disturbing you?

CAPTAIN: (LOOKING AROUND) Oh, Laura. No, not at all. What did you want?

LAURA: (IN AN EVEN TONE) I wanted to talk to you about Bertha.

CAPTAIN: (UNEASY) What about Bertha?

LAURA: You haven't hired the tutor I asked you to, for her art lessons.

CAPTAIN: I don't think that will be necessary, now.

LAURA: And why won't it?

CAPTAIN: Because Bertha is going to boarding school in town. She starts in two weeks.

LAURA: And that is the decision you and my brother arrived at tonight?

CAPTAIN: No, I had already come to that decision, and therefore it only remained for me to talk it over with the one friend I and the family have in common. Bertha is . . .

LAURA: . . . to go to boarding school in town. To which boarding school, if I may venture to ask?

CAPTAIN: (HE PICKS UP A BOOK FROM THE TABLE AND CROSSES TO A CHAIR) Professor Safburg's.

LAURA: Professor Safburg. That free thinker? (SHE CROSSES AFTER HIM, VERY ANGRY NOW AND DETERMINED TO FIGHT FOR WHAT SHE CONSIDERS HER RIGHT)

CAPTAIN: (SITTING) According to the law, children are to be brought up in their father's faith.

LAURA: And the mother has no voice in the matter?

CAPTAIN: None whatever.

LAURA: That is to say, then, she has no rights concerning her child.

CAPTAIN: No, none at all. She has sold her birthright by a legal transaction. When she marries, she forfeits her rights in return for the man's responsibility of caring for her and her children.

LAURA: But if both father and mother should agree?

CAPTAIN: (RISING) Do you seriously believe that could ever happen? I want Bertha to live in town, to study something useful. You want her to stay at home and play around with a lot of foolishness. The arithmetical result would be that she remain at the railway station midway between town and home. This is a knot that cannot be untied, you see. (HE TURNS TO EXIT FROM THE ROOM)

LAURA: (TURNING AWAY FROM HIM, IN A VOICE ALMOST TO HERSELF) Then it must be broken. (ALOUD) What did Nöjd want here?

CAPTAIN: (STOPPING AT THE DOOR) That is an official secret.

LAURA: Which the whole kitchen knows.

CAPTAIN: (ANGRY NOW, HE MOVES TOWARD HER IN STAGES, THE BETTER TO EMPHASIZE EACH OF HIS LINES) Good, then you must know it, too.

LAURA: I do know it.

CAPTAIN: And have your judgment ready-made?

LAURA: My judgment is the judgment of the law.

CAPTAIN: But it is not written in the law who the father of the child is.

LAURA: (MATTER-OF-FACTLY) No, but one usually knows that.

CAPTAIN: Wise minds claim that one can never know for certain about such matters.

LAURA: (PAUSE, IN REACTION: CUT TO LAURA ALONE) That's strange. Can one never know who the father of a child is?

CAPTAIN: (OVER FRAME) No, so they claim.

LAURA: (HER HEAD COMES UP IN A STRANGE MANNER, INDICATING THE NATURE OF THE THOUGHT WHICH HAS JUST OCCURRED TO HER) How extraordinary. How can the father have such control over the children, then?

CAPTAIN: (CUT TO TWO SHOT) He has control only when he has assumed the responsibilities of the child. But, then, in wedlock, there is no doubt about the fatherhood.

LAURA: (TURNING SLOWLY AROUND TO FACE THE CAPTAIN) There can be no doubts then?

CAPTAIN: Well, I should hope not.

LAURA: (IN MEASURED TONES) But if the wife had been unfaithful?

CAPTAIN: (DISMISSING THIS STATEMENT) That's another matter. Was there anything else you wanted to say?

LAURA: (TURNING ONCE MORE AWAY FROM HIM) (COOLY) Nothing.

CAPTAIN: (BEHIND HER) Then I shall go up to my room, and perhaps you will be kind enough to let me know when the new Doctor arrives. He may want to let Doctor Norling's old rooms.

LAURA: Certainly.

CAPTAIN: (HE STARTS TO MOVE TOWARD THE DOOR) As soon as he comes, you understand, for I don't want to seem rude to him.

LAURA: (SOFTLY) I understand.

THE CAPTAIN EXITS. THE CAMERA HOLDS ON LAURA AND DOLLYS IN FOR A C.U. REACTION SHOT, THEN PANS DOWN TO HER HANDS. SHE IS WRENCHING THE WEDDING BAND ON HER FINGER, TRYING TO FREE IT.

<u>GO TO BLACK</u>.

COME UP ON LAURA'S HAND, EXTENDED.

LAURA: (OVER FRAME) Doctor Ostermark?

DOLLY BACK ON SAME SCENE AS BEFORE. THE DOCTOR ADVANCES FROM THE DOORWAY TO TAKE LAURA'S OFFERED HAND IN A GESTURE OF FRIENDSHIP.

DOCTOR: Madam.

LAURA: Welcome, Doctor, you are heartily welcome. The Captain is out but he will be back soon. Please let me take your things.

DOCTOR: (REMOVING HIS COAT) Thank you. I hope you will excuse my coming so late, but I have already been called upon to pay some professional visits.

LAURA: (HANGING THE COAT) Not at all. Sit down, won't you?

DOCTOR: (SITTING) Thank you, the trip has been tiring.

LAURA: (GOING TO SIDEBOARD) Perhaps you would care for a glass of wine? I have no doubt but that you are thirsty from your journey.

DOCTOR: You are really most kind. Thank you.

LAURA POURS THE WINE. AS SHE POURS, THE CAMERA FRAMES ON HER. HER FACE REVEALS THE NATURE OF HER THOUGHTS, CALCULATING AND CRAFTY.

LAURA: (FROM THE SIDEBOARD) As you mentioned it, Doctor, there is a great deal of illness in the neighborhood now.

DOCTOR: Nothing serious, I trust.

LAURA: (RETURNING WITH THE GLASS) Oh, no, no, but then I do hope you will find it pleasant here. So many doctors haven't.

DOCTOR: (TAKING THE GLASS) Indeed?

LAURA: (SITTING BESIDE HIM) But none of that now. I'm so happy that it's you that has come to us. For us simple country people, it is of such great comfort to find a doctor who is interested in his patients, and I just know that the pleasantest relations will exist between us.

DOCTOR: You are indeed kind, and for your sake I hope that my visits with your family will not be caused too often by necessity.

LAURA: And I, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Yet, as a newly-arrived physician to this area, I should acquaint myself with its problems. Your family is, I believe, in good health as a rule?

LAURA: Fortunately, we have been spared acute illnesses . . .

DOCTOR: Fine. I thought as much.

LAURA: But still, things are not altogether as they should be.

DOCTOR: (HE SETS HIS DRINK ON THE TABLE) Indeed?

LAURA: Heaven knows, things are not as might be wished.

DOCTOR: Really, but now you begin to alarm me.

LAURA: (RISING, WITH HER HANDS FOLDED IN FRONT OF HER AS IF EXTREMELY NERVOUS) There are some circumstances in a family which through honor and conscience one is forced to conceal from the whole world . . .

DOCTOR: (BECOMING INTERESTED) Excepting the doctor, of course.

LAURA: (QUICKLY SEIZING HIS POINT) Exactly. Therefore, I feel I should tell you the whole truth immediately. Perhaps you can help us, and we do so need help.

DOCTOR: (RISING) Shouldn't we postpone this conference until I have had the honor of being introduced to the Captain? If the problem is this serious . . .

LAURA: (INTERUPTING) No. You must hear me before seeing him.

DOCTOR: (UNDERSTANDING) It relates to the Captain, then?

LAURA: (TURNING AWAY HER FACE) Yes, it relates to him, my poor, dear husband.

DOCTOR: But what is it? Really, madam, you begin to alarm me indeed.

LAURA: It is not easy for me to tell you this, even though you are the doctor.

DOCTOR: (ATTEMPTING TO HURRY HER STORY) Of course, of course.

LAURA: (TAKING OUT HER HANDKERCHIEF) Doctor, I fear that my husband's mind is affected. (SHE TURNS FROM HIM) Now, you know all, and may judge for yourself when you see him.

DOCTOR: (INCREDULOUS) Surely, Madam, you must be mistaken. I've read the Captain's excellent treatises on mineralogy, with nothing but admiration, and have found that they display a clear and powerful intellect.

LAURA: Really? Oh, how happy I should be if we should all prove to be mistaken.

DOCTOR: You say, 'we.' There are others, then, who have noticed this illness?

LAURA: Of course. Old Doctor Norling himself knew of it, as does the Captain's commanding officer, the Colonel, and his friends.

DOCTOR: Humm. Then it is possible that his mind might be affected in other directions.

LAURA: (SITTING) Yes, that is just what we fear, too. You see, he has sometimes the most extraordinary ideas which, of course, one might expect in a learned man, if they did not have a disastrous effect on the welfare of his family.

DOCTOR: (IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER) What sort of ideas?

LAURA: For instance, one of his whims is buying all kinds of things.

DOCTOR: Really? But what does he buy?

LAURA: Whole boxes of books that he never reads.

DOCTOR: There is nothing strange about a scholar's buying books. I myself have in excess of two thousand volumes.

LAURA: You don't believe what I am saying?

DOCTOR: (OBSERVING HER CLOSELY) Well, Madam, I am convinced that you believe what you are saying.

LAURA: (PAUSES FOR A SECOND, AND THEN LOOKS UP AT THE DOCTOR) Tell me, then, Doctor, is it reasonable to believe that one can see what is happening on another planet by looking through a microscope?

DOCTOR: (PROFOUNDLY INTERESTED) Does he say he can do that?

LAURA: Through a microscope, yes.

DOCTOR: This is serious, if it is so.

LAURA: If it is so! Then you have no faith in me, Doctor, and here I sit confiding the family secret to . . .

DOCTOR: (DRAWING IN TOWARD HER) Indeed, Madam, I am honored by your confidence, but as a physician I must investigate and observe before giving an opinion. Now, then, has the Captain shown any symptoms of indecision or instability of will?

LAURA: Has he! We have been married twenty years, and he has never yet made a decision without changing his mind afterward.

DOCTOR: Is he obstinate?

LAURA: He always insists on having his own way, but then, once he has got it, he drops the whole matter and asks me to decide.

DOCTOR: Hmmm. This does demand close observation. The will, you see, is the mainspring of the mind, and if it is affected the whole mind goes to pieces.

LAURA: Heaven knows that I have taught myself to humor his wishes through all these long years. Oh, if you knew what a life I have endured with him, Doctor, if you only knew. (SHE CRIES)

DOCTOR: Your misfortune touches me deeply, Madam, and I promise to see what can be done. But after what you have told me, I must ask you to avoid suggesting any ideas that might make a deep impression on the patient, for in a weak mind they develop rapidly and quickly turn to monomania or fixed ideas.

LAURA: (LOOKING UP FROM HER HANDKERCHIEF, A STRANGE LOOK, AS IF AN IDEA HAS JUST OCCURED TO HER) You mean to avoid arousing his suspicions, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Exactly. One can make the insane believe anything, just because they are receptive to everything.

LAURA: Indeed? (SHE RISES) Ah, then, I understand. Yes, yes, you can count on my cooperation, Doctor, but now you must meet your patient. He is in his study.

DOCTOR: (SURPRISED) In his study? But I thought you said he was out . . .

LAURA: (INNOCENTLY) Did I say that? Oh, surely you must have misunderstood, Doctor. (SHE POINTS THE WAY) Will you follow me?

THE DOCTOR STANDS WITH A CURIOUS EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE, AS IF HE DOESN'T QUITE KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF THIS SITUATION. DISSOLVE TO THE CAPTAIN'S STUDY. THE CAPTAIN IS DISCOVERED AT HIS STUDY TABLE, LOOKING THROUGH A SPECTROSCOPE. HE CHECKS MINERAL SPECIMEN AGAINST A CHART, AND SEEMS PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS. THEN HE JOTS DOWN A BRIEF NOTE IN A BOOK AND TURNS TO PICK UP A LARGE VOLUME NEXT TO HIM. HE SEARCHES THROUGH THE BOOK IN VAIN FOR THE INFORMATION HE NEEDS, SOON CLOSING IT IN DISGUST. HE RIPS HIS NOTE FROM THE PAD AND TEARS IT UP, THEN RE-EXAMINES THE MINERAL SPECIMEN UNDER THE SPECTROSCOPE. HE IS OCCUPIED THUS AS THE DOCTOR AND LAURA ENTER THE ROOM.

LAURA: (FROM THE DOORWAY) Adolf, I've brought the new Doctor, as you requested.

CAPTAIN: (RISING) Oh, here already, Doctor? You are very welcome. (HE REACHES OUT TO TAKE THE DOCTOR'S HAND)

LAURA EXITS, CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND HER.

DOCTOR: (TAKING THE CAPTAIN'S HAND) Captain, it is a very great pleasure for me to make the acquaintance of so celebrated a man of science.

CAPTAIN: (BRUSHING ASIDE THE COMPLIMENT, BUT SEEMING PLEASED NONETHELESS) Oh, I beg of you. The duties of service do not allow me to make any very profound investigations. However, I do believe I am really on the track of a discovery now.

DOCTOR: (OBVIOUSLY REMEMBERING HIS CONVERSATION WITH LAURA) Indeed?

CAPTAIN: Yes. Come here a moment, won't you? (HE MOVES THE DOCTOR TO HIS STUDY TABLE TO SEE HIS WORK) You see, I have submitted meteoric rocks to spectrum analysis with the result that I have found carbon, or at least I believe I have.

DOCTOR: Carbon?

CAPTAIN: Surely you know what that means, Doctor? Carbon, a clear trace of the existence of organic life on other planets. What do you say to that, eh?

DOCTOR: (NOT TRULY IMPRESSED) And can you see that with a microscope?

CAPTAIN: Oh, Heavens, no, Doctor, with the spectroscope. You see, I merely place the specimen so that the light or flame shall heat it sufficiently to emit its characteristic spectrum. Then I analyze the spectrum to determine its chemical composition. Simple, eh?

DOCTOR: Very. Pardon, then you will soon be able to tell us what is happening on Jupiter.

CAPTAIN: Really, Doctor. Not what <u>is</u> happening, but what <u>has</u> happened. That is, if those confounded book dealers in Paris would send me the books that I need.

DOCTOR: Books?

CAPTAIN: Yes. You see, Doctor, relatively little is known as yet in the area of spectrology, with the result that few works are available on the subject. I've tried to locate the ones that are, but they never seem to arrive in time for my work. I am coming to the conclusion that all the book dealers in the universe are conspiring against me. Think of it, for the past two months not a single one of them has even answered my communications. (HE SLAMS HIS FIST ONTO ONE OF THE BOOKS ON THE TABLE) I shall go mad over it. I know I shall, and I can't imagine what's the matter.

DOCTOR: Oh, I suppose it's the usual carelessness. You mustn't let it vex you so.

CAPTAIN: You don't seem to understand, Doctor. The devil of it is that I shall not get my treatise done in time. If what I believe is true, it shall revolutionize the thinking of the world, and I know they are working along the same lines in Berlin. Oh, but then, we shouldn't be talking about this, but about you. Sit down, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Thank you. (HE SITS)

CAPTAIN: Now, then, being newly arrived to the country, you cannot have found suitable quarters as yet. Now, if you care to live here, we have rooms for you in the wing, that's where old Doctor Norling lived; but, then, perhaps you would rather live in the village?

DOCTOR: Just as you like, Captain.

CAPTAIN: NO, as you like. Which is it to be?

DOCTOR: You must decide that, Captain.

CAPTAIN: No, it's not for me to decide where you should live. You must say which you prefer. I have no preference in the matter, none at all.

DOCTOR: (PRESSING THE CAPTAIN STILL FURTHER) Oh, but I really cannot decide.

CAPTAIN: For heaven's sake, Doctor, say which you prefer. I have no choice in the matter, no opinion, no wishes. Haven't you the character to know what you want? Answer me!

DOCTOR: (SIMPLY) Very well, if it rests with me, I prefer to live here.

CAPTAIN: Thank you. (HE CROSSES TO THE DOOR, THERE HE RINGS A SMALL BELL LOCATED AT THE SIDE) I rang for the Nurse to show you to your rooms. (RETURNING) You must forgive me, Doctor, but nothing annoys me so much as to see people undecided about anything.

DOCTOR: Of course.

MARGRET ENTERS THE ROOM.

CAPTAIN: (MEETING HER AT THE DOOR) Oh, there you are, Margret. Do you happen to know whether the rooms in the wing are in order for the new Doctor?

NURSE: Yes, sir, they are.

CAPTAIN: (MOVING BACK TO THE DOCTOR) Very well. Then I won't detain you, Doctor. You must be tired. Good night, and welcome once more.

DOCTOR: (RISING) Good evening, Captain. (THEY SHAKE HANDS)

THE DOCTOR STARTS TO EXIT, BUT IS STOPPED BY A FURTHER WORD FROM THE CAPTAIN. THE NURSE REMAINS AT THE DOOR WAITING FOR HIM. SHE SEEMS, HOWEVER, TO BE PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO THE CAPTAIN THAN TO THE DOCTOR.

CAPTAIN: (AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT) Oh, I daresay that my wife explained conditions here to you a little, so that you have some idea how the land lies, eh?

DOCTOR: (NOW AT THE DOOR) Yes, Captain, your excellent wife has given me a few hints about this and that, such as were necessary to a stranger. That's all. Good evening, Captain. (HE AND THE NURSE EXIT.)

<u>MUSIC</u>: MOOD. SNEAK INTO BACKGROUND.

THE CAPTAIN STANDS FOR A SECOND LOOKING AFTER THEM, A PUZZLED EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE. THEN HE CROSSES TO HIS DESK, PICKS UP A MINERAL SPECIMEN, STUDIES IT, AND LAYS IT ASIDE. HE SITS FOR A SECOND, THINKING, THE PICTURE OF BERTHA AND LAURA BEFORE HIM. THEN HE OPENS THE DESK AND DRAWS FORTH A DIARY. HE BEGINS TO WRITE. AS HE DOES SO, A RECORD OF HIS VOICE PLAYS OVER THE FRAME. DOLLY IN FOR A C.U. OF THE CAPTAIN.

VOICE: "Things are not good in this house tonight. They are all turning against me in this fuss about Bertha. Even the new Doctor is against me, why, I do not know . . . but I feel that something must happen soon to break the struggle between Laura and myself. What it is, I don't know, yet. But I am sure that something evil is on the way . . ."

BERTHA: (A LOUD SCREAM OFF CAMERA, FROM THE HALL)

MUSIC: REACHES A HIGH PITCH AND CUTS COLD.

THE CAPTAIN REACTS WITH A START AT THE SOUND OF BERTHA'S SCREAM. HE STARTS TO RISE, AND AS HE DOES SO BERTHA COMES RUSHING INTO THE ROOM IN TEARS. SHE FALLS INTO HIS ARMS, ON HER KNEES BEFORE HIM.

BERTHA: Father! Father! Oh, Father! (SHE BREAKS OFF IN SOBS)

CAPTAIN: (ATTEMPTING TO COMFORT HER) My child, what is it? Speak, girl, what's happened?

BERTHA: (ALMOST HYSTERICAL) Help me, she wants to hurt me.

CAPTAIN: Who wants to hurt you? Tell me.

BERTHA: Grandmother.

CAPTAIN: What? How?

BERTHA: No, you mustn't be angry. It's my fault, really, for I deceived her.

CAPTAIN: You deceived her?

BERTHA: Yes, but you mustn't say anything about it. Promise me you won't.

CAPTAIN: Tell me what it is, then.

BERTHA: In the evening she generally turns the lamp down, and then she makes me sit at a table holding a pen over a piece of paper. And then she says that the spirits are to write . . .

CAPTAIN: What's all this, and you have never told me about it?

BERTHA: Forgive me, Father, I dared not, for Grandmother says that the spirits take revenge if one talks about them.

CAPTAIN: Go on.

BERTHA: (IN C.U.) And then the pen writes, but I don't know whether I'm doing it or not. Sometimes it goes well, but sometimes it won't go at all, and when I'm tired nothing comes, but then she wants it to come just the same. And tonight I thought I was writing beautifully, but then Grandmother said it was all from Stagnelius and that I had deceived her, and then she got terribly angry.

CAPTAIN: (IN TWO SHOT, TIGHT) (HE LIFTS HER CHIN WITH HIS HAND AND LOOKS HER IN THE EYES) Do you believe that there are spirits?

BERTHA: I don't know! I don't know!

CAPTAIN: But I know that there are none.

BERTHA: But Grandmother says that you don't understand, Father, and that you do much worse things, you can see other planets.

CAPTAIN: (TAKING HOLD OF BERTHA, TIGHTLY, FORCING HER TO HER FEET) Does she say that? Does she say that? And what else does she say?

BERTHA: (FRIGHTENED) She says that you can't work witchery.

CAPTAIN: (CALMING HIMSELF) Child, I never said that I could. Now listen. You know what meteoric rocks are, rocks that fall from other heavenly bodies. I can examine them, and learn whether they contain the same elements as our own world, That's all that I can tell, all anyone can tell.

BERTHA: But Grandmother says that there are things that she can see which you cannot see.

CAPTAIN: Then she lies.

BERTHA: (STANDING UP TO HIM) Grandmother doesn't tell lies.

BERTHA: Because if Grandmother tells lies, then Mother must lie, too.

CAPTAIN: I see.

BERTHA: And if you say that Mother tells lies, I can never believe in you again.

CAPTAIN: I have not said so, and so you must believe in me now, when I say that it is for your future good that you should leave home, leave your Grandmother, leave your Mother, and your Father, and go to town to learn something useful. Will you? Will you do that for your Father?

BERTHA: Oh, yes, yes! I should love that, to go to town, away from here, anywhere. If I can only see you sometimes, often. May I? It's so gloomy and awful here all the time, like a winter night, and then when you come, Father, it's like a new world.

CAPTAIN: (TAKING HER IN HIS ARMS) My child, my dear child.

THE CAMERA PULLS AWAY FROM THE COUPLE TO LET IN LAURA, STANDING BEHIND IN THE DOORWAY. CUT TO A MED. SHOT OF LAURA ALONE. HER FACE CONTORTS IN HATE. HER EYES SEEM SHARP. THEN, AFTER A SECOND, HER ASPECT CHANGES. SHE RELAXES, EVEN SMILES.

LAURA: Oh, so Bertha is here. Then perhaps we may have her own opinion as to how the question of her future is to be decided.

THE CAPTAIN PULLS AWAY FROM BERTHA, MOVING THE GIRL TO ONE SIDE, IN A MANNER AS IF TO PROTECT HER FROM SOME ANIMAL OR OTHER FORM OF DANGER.

CAPTAIN: (ANTAGONISTICALLY) The child can hardly have any well-grounded opinion about what a young girl's life is likely to be, while we, on the contrary, can more easily estimate what it might be, as we have seen so many young girls grow up.

LAURA: (ADVANCING INTO THE ROOM) But as we are of different opinions, Bertha must be the one to decide.

CAPTAIN: No! I let no one usurp my rights of fatherhood, neither women nor children. Bertha, leave us.

BERTHA CROSSES THE ROOM AND TURNS AT THE DOOR, TO LOOK UPON BOTH OF HER PARENTS. SHE IS HURT AND CONFUSED, NOT KNOWING WHY THEY CANNOT AGREE. SUDDENLY, SHE IS OVERCOME ONCE MORE. SHE LEAVES THE ROOM IN TEARS.[6]

LAURA: (TURNING FROM WATCHING BERTHA'S EXIT) You were afraid of hearing her opinion, because you thought it might be to my advantage.

CAPTAIN: I know that Bertha wishes to go away from home to learn, but I also know that you possess the power of changing her mind to suit your own pleasure, even before my own eyes.

LAURA: Oh, and am I really so powerful, then?

CAPTAIN: Yes, you have an almost fiendish power of getting your own way. But, then, so has anyone who does not scruple about the way in which it is accomplished.

LAURA: I see . . . and Bertha is to leave now, is that right?

CAPTAIN: Yes. I shall make arrangements for her to start within two weeks.

LAURA: That is your final decision?

CAPTAIN: Yes.

LAURA: (ALMOST LIGHTLY) Then I must try to prevent it.

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6. As an afterthought, it is now believed that Bertha's scene with the Captain should be altered considerably. As it stands, it hinders rather than clarifies the nature of the conflict, because it introduces the question of Bertha's Grandmother, a person not shown, and mentioned only one other time. If the adaptation were revised, therefore, some other method would be found to convey the impression of the emotional strain on the girl caused by the nature of the play's conflict.

CAPTAIN: You cannot.

LAURA: (VICIOUSLY) Can't I? Do you really think that I will trust my daughter to wicked people, to have her taught that everything her mother has implanted in her child is mere foolishness? Why, afterward she would despise me all the rest of her life!

CAPTAIN: And do you think that a father should allow ignorant and conceited women to teach his daughter that he is a charlatan?

LAURA: (SIMPLY) It means less to the father.

CAPTAIN: Why so?

LAURA: Because the mother is closer to the child . . . as it has been discovered that no one can tell for a certainty who the father of a child really is.

CAPTAIN: (WARILY) How does that apply to this case?

LAURA: You do not know whether you are Bertha's father.

CAPTAIN: (INCREDULOUSLY) I do not know?

LAURA: No. What no one knows, you surely cannot know. You said as much yourself. Do you remember? I believe you were speaking of Nöjd at the time.

CAPTAIN: Are you joking?

LAURA: No. I am only making use of your own teaching . . . the teaching you find in all of these great books of yours . . . For that matter, how do you know that I have not been unfaithful to you? I have had the opportunity!

CAPTAIN: (WAVERING) I believe you capable of almost anything, but not that; nor do I believe you would talk about it if it were true.

LAURA: Suppose, then, just suppose that I was prepared to bear anything, even to being despised and driven out, everything for the sake of being able to keep and to control my child. Would you believe that? And would you then believe that I am being truthful when I declare that Bertha is my child, but not yours? Suppose . . .

CAPTAIN: Stop . . .

LAURA: Just suppose all this. In that case, your power over Bertha and me would be at an end, wouldn't it?

CAPTAIN: When you had proven that I was not the father?

LAURA: That would not be difficult. Would you like me to do so?

CAPTAIN: Stop . . . Please stop! (HE TRIES TO STOP HIS EARS)

LAURA: (MOVING IN SHARPLY, HITTING EVEN HARDER) Of course, I need only to declare the name of the real father . . .

CAPTAIN: Stop now, or else . . .

LAURA: Or else what? Shall we stop now? Think carefully about all you do or say, and whatever you do, don't make yourself ridiculous. I can't stand that.

CAPTAIN: (SITTING, EXHAUSTED) I consider all this most lamentable.

LAURA: Which makes you all the more ridiculous.

CAPTAIN: And you?

LAURA: Oh, but we women are really too clever.

CAPTAIN: That's why one cannot contend with you.

LAURA: (MATTER-OF-FACTLY) Then why provoke contests with a superior enemy?

CAPTAIN: Superior?

LAURA: Yes, it's strange, but I have never looked at a man without knowing myself to be his superior.

CAPTAIN: (TAKING HEART, HE RISES) Then you shall be made to see your superior for once and for all, and so that you shall never forget him!

LAURA: (IN A SNEER) That will be interesting.

CAPTAIN: Get out! Get out of my sight, you devil!

LAURA SMILES COOLLY AT HER HUSBAND, TURNS AROUND AND WALKS OUT, LEAVING THE CAPTAIN A BROKEN MAN, HURT TO THE HEART. HE RUNS HIS HAND THROUGH HIS HAIR, TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF HER WORDS. HE SITS, NOW, WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. THE NURSE ENTERS, GLANCING BACK AFTER THE DEPARTED LAURA. SHE SENSES THE TROUBLE IN THE HOUSEHOLD, BUT IS UNABLE TO PREVENT THE CONFLICT. SHE CROSSES TO THE CAPTAIN, PLACING HER HAND ON HIS ARM.

NURSE: Master Adolf! What has happened? What's wrong?

CAPTAIN: (LOOKING UP, A PAINED EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE) I don't know what it is. I can't say. But can you explain to me why it is that you women treat an old man as if he were still a child?

NURSE: That I can't answer, but it must be that all you men, great and small, are women's children, every one of you.

CAPTAIN: (RISING) Margret, Margret, you have the soul of a philosopher. Old kind heart. (HE CROSSES TO THE DESK AND PICKS UP THE PICTURE OF BERTHA AND LAURA. HE LOOKS AT THE GIRL'S LIKENESS KEENLY. THEN HE TURNS TO A MIRROR THAT IS HANGING NEARBY AND LOOKS AT HIS OWN IMAGE.)

NURSE: (MOVING TO HIM) Master Adolf, can't you speak with old Margret? Man and boy, I've looked after you, cared for you as if I were your own mother. Do you remember, as a child, how you used to turn to me for help when you found a problem you could not solve?

CAPTAIN: Yes, Margret, I remember. But that's over now. It was written somewhere that when a man becomes a man, he must put away childish things. I don't remember now where I read that, but the thought is good.

NURSE: It's from the Bible. I read it to you often.

CAPTAIN: Yes, I seem to recall, now. So much has happened since then. Margret, do you think that Bertha looks like me?

MARGRET: Why, of course! You are like as two peas. Why do you ask?

CAPTAIN: But you said that no child is born of man, and yet I am Bertha's father, am I not? You believe that, don't you, Margret? You do believe that I am Bertha's father, don't you?

NURSE: Lord, how silly can a man get. And at your age. Of course, you are Bertha's father. Now don't fret so.

MARGRET PLACES HER HAND ON THE CAPTAIN'S ARM AND ATTEMPTS TO CALM HIM. HE IS, HOWEVER, BEYOND THE STATE OF CALM. NOW HIS ANGER AGAINST HIS WIFE TAKES HOLD ONCE MORE, AND HE PUSHES THE OLD WOMAN ASIDE.

CAPTAIN: Leave off! You women are all alike. You all seek to take hold of a man. Away with all hags!

THE CAPTAIN RUSHES TO THE COAT RACK ON THE WALL BESIDE THE ENTRANCE DOOR. THERE HE PUTS ON HIS COAT, A GREAT ARMY COAT WHICH COMES ALMOST TO THE FLOOR.

NURSE: Master Adolf, listen to me . . .

CAPTAIN: No. I'm through listening to you women.

NURSE: But where are you going? It's late now, and the weather looks like a storm.

CAPTAIN: Where I'm going is no concern of yours!

HE STORMS FROM THE ROOM, SLAMMING THE DOOR BEHIND. AS HE EXITS, THE CAMERA SHOULD FRAME UPON OLD MARGRET. HER BODY GOES LIMP, AND SHE SITS WEARILY IN THE CAPTAIN'S OLD CHAIR. HER FACE IS SAD, FOR SHE TOO SUFFERS, BUT FOR A DIFFERENT REASON.

NURSE: (SADLY) Lord preserve us. Whatever will be the end of this?

MUSIC: COMES UP FROM AN UNDER SNEAK. IT SHOULD BE SAD AND OF A FOREBODING NATURE. UP FULL.

GO TO BLACK:

HOLD THE MUSIC UP FOR THE TRANSITION.

END ACT I

ACT II

MUSIC: SEGUE FROM THE OVERTONES UP CLEAR ON BLACK TRANSITION TO A SORT OF HAUNTING TIME REFRAIN, THE MUSIC SHOULD TRY TO SYMBOLIZE THE PASSING OF TIME.

COME FROM BLACK UP ON A CLOSE PICTURE OF A SWINGING CLOCK PENDULUM. HOLD ON THE PENDULUM FOR A FULL SECOND IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE EFFECT OF THE OVER FRAME MUSIC. DISSOLVE SLOWLY THROUGH TO THE FACE OF THE GRANDFATHER CLOCK. IT NOW READS MIDNIGHT. PULL AWAY FROM THE CLOCK TO REVEAL LAURA STANDING BESIDE THE CLOCK, HER FACE FULL OF CONCERN.

MUSIC: HOLD IN BACKGROUND FOR A FEW SECONDS INTO THE SCENE, THEN SNEAK OUT.

SOUND: THE CLOCK STRIKES TWELVE.

LAURA: Midnight, and he hasn't come home yet. (SHE TURNS TO THE DOCTOR, WHO IS STANDING OFF TO ONE SIDE.) Now we may fear the worst. (THE CAMERA HAS BY NOW REACHED A POINT WHERE BOTH LAURA AND THE DOCTOR ARE VISIBLE)

DOCTOR: I understand your apprehension, Madam, yet from what I gathered during my conversation with him the case is not fully proven to me. Do you remember, you said that he had arrived at these astonishing results about other heavenly bodies by means of a microscope. But now that I have learned that it was a spectroscope, he is not only cleared of any suspicion of insanity, but has rendered a great service to science.

LAURA: (MOVING AWAY FROM HIM) Yes, but I did not say that. You must have misunderstood.

DOCTOR: Madam, I made careful notes of our conversation, and I remember asking about this point because I did think I had misunderstood you. One must be careful about such accusations, when a Certificate in Lunacy is in question.

LAURA: (STOPPING) A Certificate in Lunacy, did you say?

DOCTOR: (COMING UP BEHIND) Yes, you must surely know that an insane person loses both civil and family rights.

LAURA: (TURNING SLOWLY AND SITTING) Why, no, Doctor, I did not know that.

DOCTOR: There was another matter that seemed to me suspicious. He spoke of his communications to his book dealers being unanswered. Permit me to ask, if I may, if you, through motives of mistaken kindness, no doubt, have intercepted them?

LAURA: Yes, I have. It was my duty, Doctor, to guard the interests of the family. I could not let him ruin us all, without some intervention.

DOCTOR: Pardon me, but I think you cannot have considered the consequences of such an act. If he discovers your secret interference in his affairs, he will have some grounds for suspicions, and they will grow like an avalanche. In doing this you have thwarted his will and irritated him still more. (HE SITS BESIDE HER) Now, then, if I am to help him at all, you must tell me what actually happened this evening after I left. I must know everything.

LAURA: (TAKING ON THE APPEARANCE OF A WEAK FEMALE) Oh, Doctor, it was terrible. He raved in the wildest way, and had the strangest ideas. He . . . he even believes that he is not the father of his own child.

DOCTOR: Wh . . . but that is strange. How did such an idea ever come into his head?

LAURA: (INNOCENTLY) I really can't imagine.

DOCTOR: But this cannot go on. Tell me, has the Captain ever had such delusions before?

LAURA: Yes. Six years ago things were in the same state, and then he, himself, confessed in his own letter to the doctor that he feared for his reason.

DOCTOR: (RISING, HIS FACE TROUBLED) Yes, I see now. This is a story that has deep roots that must be uncovered. Tell me, where do you think he is now?

LAURA: I have no idea. He has such wild streaks.

DOCTOR: Would you like to have me stay until he returns?

LAURA: Yes, yes, please do. Don't leave us, Doctor. If you only knew how troubled I am! If you only knew . . . (SHE CRIES, HER FACE COVERED)

DOCTOR: (CROSSES TO HER) I understand, Madam, and believe me, I sympathyze with you. But now, don't you think you had best retire? I'm sure you must be tired. This has been a trying evening.

LAURA: (RISING) Yes, perhaps you are right, Doctor. Good night. (SHE SHAKES HIS HAND AND MOVES TO THE DOORWAY)

DOCTOR: Good night, Madam. (HE TURNS, RUBBING HIS CHIN IN DEEP THOUGHT AS HE MOVES TOWARD THE CAMERA)

MUSIC: TIME THEME: SNEAK INTO BACKGROUND.

LAURA: (TURNING AT DOORWAY) Doctor?

DOCTOR: Yes?

LAURA: Please help him.

DOCTOR: Of course.

LAURA EXITS. AFTER HER EXIT THE CAMERA FRAMES UPON THE DOCTOR. DOLLY IN FOR A C.U. REACTION SHOT OF HIS TROUBLED FACE.

MUSIC: UP FULL.

DISSOLVE TO THE FACE OF A RICHLY CARVED WALL CLOCK OF THE CUCKOO VARIETY, WITH A SWINGING PENDULUM BELOW. THE TIME IS NOW TWELVE THIRTY. THE SOUND OF THE CLOCK'S PENDULUM IS HEARD NOW ABOVE THE MUSIC. DOLLY BACK FROM THE CLOCK TO THE FIGURE OF THE NURSE, SEATED IN A ROCKING CHAIR, KNITTING. THE SOUND OF THE CREAKING CHAIR OVERCOMES THAT OF THE CLOCK.

MUSIC: SEGUE FROM TIME THEME TO MOOD OVERTONES. HOLD MOOD MUSIC IN BACKGROUND FOR THE ENTIRE SCENE TO FOLLOW.

AFTER A SECOND OR TWO, BERTHA ENTERS THE SCENE, TO SIT ON A SMALL STOOL AT OLD MARGRET'S FEET. THE NURSE LOOKS UP AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE GIRL, SURPRISED TO FIND HER STILL UP.

BERTHA: Margret, may I sit with you? It's so frightfully lonely in my room.

NURSE: For goodness' sake, are you still up, Bertha? But bless my soul, this won't do. You must be up in the morning, and it's after midnight now.

BERTHA: (LEANING HER HEAD ONTO MARGRET'S LAP) What does it matter? I don't dare sit up alone, I believe the spirits are at work tonight.

MARGRET: (STROKING THE GIRL'S HEAD) There, there, you see, just what I've said. Mark my words, this house was not built on a lucky spot. What did you hear?

BERTHA: (SITTING UP) Think of it. I heard someone singing up in the attic.

NURSE: In the attic? At this hour?

BERTHA: Yes, and it was such a sorrowful, melancholy song. I never heard anything like it. It sounded as if it came from the store-room, you know, where the old cradle stands, the one that was used for Father when he was a child.

NURSE: Dear me, dear me. And such a fearful night, too. Ah, dear child, may God have mercy on us poor sinners.

BERTHA: Margret, is it true that Father is ill?

NURSE: (SADLY) Yes, child, I'm afraid he is.

BERTHA: But how can he be up and around if he is ill?

NURSE: Now, then, never you mind about that, dear. You just run along up to bed, and old Margret will be in soon to see you to sleep.

BERTHA: Good night, Margret. (SHE RISES AND LEANS OVER TO KISS THE OLD WOMAN GOOD NIGHT)

NURSE: (HOLDING THE GIRL FOR A MOMENT) Good night, my child. God bless you. (THERE ARE TEARS IN THE OLD WOMAN'S EYES AS SHE BIDS THE GIRL TO SLEEP)

BERTHA EXITS. LET HER OUT AND REMAIN FRAMED ON THE NURSE. SHE LOOKS AFTER BERTHA, A SAD EXPRESSION ON HER FACE. THEN SHE PICKS UP HER GLASSES, PUTS THEM ON, AND REACHES FOR HER BIBLE, AT REST ON A SMALL TABLE BESIDE HER. SHE READS ALOUD, IN A CALM, CLEAR VOICE.

NURSE: The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want . . . etc.

AS SHE READS, THE CAMERA DOLLYS IN ON HER BIBLE. AS THE BIBLE IS FRAMED IN A C.U. DISSOLVE TO AN OPEN BOOK ON A MAN'S LAP (THE DOCTOR'S), A LISTLESS HAND LAID ACROSS IT. DOLLY OUT TO REVEAL THE DOCTOR SEATED IN A CHAIR BESIDE THE CLOCK. HE IS ASLEEP. THE CLOCK READS AT ONE.

MUSIC: THE TIME THEME COMES THROUGH THE MOOD MUSIC IN THE BACKGROUND TO CREATE A HAUNTING IMPRESSION FOR JUST ONE MOMENT, THEN DRIFTS AWAY. THE MOOD REMAINS NOW, AS BEFORE, IN BACKGROUND. HOLD INTO SCENE, THEN SNEAK OUT.

THE CAPTAIN ENTERS THE SCENE, HIS COAT HANGING LOOSE, HIS TUNIC UNBUTTONED. HE REMOVES THE COAT AND HANGS IT ON THE RACK AND TURNS TO THE DOCTOR. BY HIS WHOLE APPEARANCE, HE IS SUFFERING FROM NERVOUS STRAIN. HE CROSSES TO THE DOCTOR, AND STANDS OVER HIM, OBSERVING HIM CLOSELY, HIS EYES NARROWED. CUT TO A MED. U.V. OF THE DOCTOR. IN HIS SLEEP HE SEEMS TO SENSE THE PRESENCE OF THE CAPTAIN. HE BEGINS TO STIR FROM HIS SLUMBERS.

DOCTOR: Wh . . . Oh, Captain.

CAPTAIN: (SUSPICIOUSLY) Waiting up for me, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Why, no, Captain. I, ah, must have fallen asleep while reading.

CAPTAIN: I see. I thought perhaps you were here for professional reasons.

DOCTOR: Professional reasons, Captain?

CAPTAIN: Yes. You need not deny that you are here to watch me, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Watch you?

CAPTAIN: Yes, and if I were not a man, I should have the right to make accusations, or complaints, as they are so cleverly called. Perhaps I might even be able to give you the whole diagnosis of my case, and, what is more, its history. (HE TURNS AWAY) But, unfortunately, I <u>am</u> a man.

DOCTOR: (RISING) Captain, if you are ill, it will certainly not reflect upon your honor as a man to tell me all. In fact, I ought to hear the other side.

CAPTAIN: (FACING HIM) You have had enough in hearing the one, I imagine, Doctor. So, good night.

DOCTOR: (FEELING AT A LOSS) Good night, then, Captain. I'm afraid I can be of no further use in this case. (HE TURNS TO EXIT, BUT IS STOPPED BY A WORD FROM THE CAPTAIN)

CAPTAIN: Are we enemies?

DOCTOR: Far from it. But it is too bad that we cannot be friends. Good night.

CAPTAIN: Oh, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Yes?

CAPTAIN: Is it true that you can obtain striped foals if you cross a mare with a zebra?

DOCTOR: (ASTONISHED) Why, yes, perfectly true.

CAPTAIN: Is it true, too, that the foals continue to be striped if the breed is continued with a stallion?

DOCTOR: (WONDERINGLY) Yes, that is true, also.

CAPTAIN: (MOVING IN) That is to say, then, that under certain conditions, a stallion can be sire to striped foals, or the opposite?

DOCTOR: So it seems. But what does this mean?

CAPTAIN: Therefore, an offspring's likeness to the father proves nothing?

DOCTOR: Well, I . . .

CAPTAIN: That is to say, then, that paternity cannot be proven.

DOCTOR: Captain, I believe it was Goethe who said a man must take his children on good faith.

CAPTAIN: Oh, but it's risky to take anything on good faith where a woman is concerned.

DOCTOR: There are many kinds of women, Captain, good and bad.

CAPTAIN: You mistake yourself there, Doctor! Modern investigations have pronounced that there is only one kind!

DOCTOR: Captain, your thoughts are taking a morbid turn. You ought to control them.

CAPTAIN: You must not use the term morbid, Doctor. Steam boilers, as you know, explode at a certain pressure, but the same pressure is not needed for all boiler explosions. Do you understand?

DOCTOR: I understand, Captain. Good night.

CAPTAIN: Good night, then, Doctor, and you needn't fear. I'm not ready to leave the battlefield yet. I'm too much of a soldier for that.

THE DOCTOR EXITS WITH BUT A PARTING LOOK, ONE OF DEEP CONCERN. AFTER HIS EXIT THE CAPTAIN GOES DIRECTLY TO THE SIDE DOORWAY AND PULLS BACK ITS COVER, TO REVEAL LAURA, PARTIALLY CONCEALED IN THE SHADOWS. A SHAFT OF LIGHT FALLS ACROSS HER FACE, A FACE THAT IS NOW HARD AND BITTER.

CAPTAIN: (MATTER-OF-FACTLY) Come in, and we'll talk. I heard you out there listening. It is late, but we must come to some decision. (LAURA ENTERS THE ROOM, WARY OF SOME TRICKERY. SHE GLANCES QUICKLY AROUND) He's gone. You have nothing to fear. Sid down. (SHE DOES SO, HER FACE EXPRESSIONLESS, HER ASPECT COLD) I have been to the post office, late though it is, to get my letters. (LAURA GIVES A SLIGHT START) From theme (HE PRODUCES THE LETTERS) it appears that you have been keeping back my mail, both coming and going. The consequence is that the loss of time has as good as destroyed the result that I had expected from my work.

LAURA: It was an act of kindness on my part, as you neglected the service for this other work.

CAPTAIN: (HE STIFFENS AT THIS PRONOUNCEMENT, BUT CONTINUES) It was hardly kindness, for you were quite sure that some day I should win more honor from that than from the service. But you were particularly anxious that I should not win such honors, for fear that your own insignificance would be emphasized by it.

LAURA: My insignificance?

CAPTAIN: (IGNORING HER COMMENT) In consequence of all this, I have also intercepted certain letters addressed to you.

LAURA: That was a noble act.

CAPTAIN: It appears from these letters that for some time past you have been arraying my old friends against me, by spreading reports about my mental condition. And you have succeeded in your efforts, for now, not one person exists from the Colonel down to the cook who believes that I am sane.

LAURA: And are you so sure of your sanity?

CAPTAIN: No, not now. You have succeeded in undermining my will to such an extent that the whole works may go smash any time. Therefore, I will not now appeal to your feelings, for you have none . . . that is your strength. But I will appeal to your better interests.

LAURA: I'm listening.

CAPTAIN: You have succeeded in arousing my suspicions to such an extent that my mind is no longer clear, and my thoughts begin to wander. This is the approaching insanity that you are waiting for, which will leave you in absolute control of the household. So you are face to face with the question whether it is more to your interest that I should be sane or insane.

LAURA: More to my interest? I don't understand. If I should have what I want . . .

CAPTAIN: Consider this, then. If I go under, I shall lose the service, and where will you be then? If I die, of course, my life insurance will fall to you. But if I take my own life, you will get nothing. Consequently, it is to your interest that I should live out my life.

LAURA: You say that you will kill yourself? You won't do that.

CAPTAIN: Are you so sure? Do you think a man can live, when he has nothing and no one to live for?

LAURA: You surrender, then?

CAPTAIN: No, I offer peace.

LAURA: The conditions?

CAPTAIN: That I may keep my reason and finish my work. Free me from my suspicions and I give up the conflict.

LAURA: What suspicions?

CAPTAIN: About Bertha's origin.

LAURA: Are there any doubts about that?

CAPTAIN: Yes, I have doubts, and you have awakened them.

LAURA: I?

CAPTAIN: Yes, or have you so soon forgotten your statements of earlier this evening? Laura, free me from the uncertainty. Tell me outright that it is true, and I will forgive you beforehand.

LAURA: How can I acknowledge a sin that I have not committed?

CAPTAIN: What does it matter, when you know that I shall not divulge it? A man does not so easily throw his own honor about.

LAURA: If I say it isn't true, you won't be convinced. But if I say it is, then you will be convinced. You seem to hope it is true.

CAPTAIN: Yes, strangely enough. It must be, because the first supposition can't be proven. The latter can be.

LAURA: (RISING) I believe you want to prove me guilty so that you can get rid of me and then have absolute control over the child. But you won't catch me in any such snare.

CAPTAIN: (HE TAKES HOLD OF HER, FORCING HER CLOSER TO HIM) Laura, save me and my reason. You don't seem to understand what I say. If the child is not mine, I have no control over her, and don't want to have, and that is precisely what you do want, isn't it? (HE DRAWS AWAY FROM HER) But, perhaps, you want even more . . . to have power over the child, but still have me to support you.

LAURA: (BREAKING WITH HIM ENTIRELY) Power, yes! Power! What has this whole life and death struggle been for, but power? (SHE MOVES TO THE COUCH AND STANDS FROZEN IN POSITION, HER HANDS TIGHTLY CLENCHED IN FRONT OF HER)

CAPTAIN: To me, it has meant more. I do not believe in a life, for me, after death. The child was my future life. She was for me a conception of immortality, and perhaps the only one that has any analogy in reality. If you take that away from me, you cut off my life.

LAURA: (SINKING TO THE COUCH) Oh, why didn't we separate in time?

CAPTAIN: We couldn't. The child bound us together like a link. And then the link became a chain that grew so tight we couldn't move . . .

LAURA: Adolf. I will swear by all that I hold sacred that you are Bertha's father.

CAPTAIN: What use is that, when you yourself have often said that a mother can and ought to commit any crime for her child?

LAURA: You misunderstood . . .

CAPTAIN: I understood perfectly. Laura, I implore you, as a wounded man begs for a death-blow, please tell me the truth. (HE KNEELS BEFORE HER) Don't you see I'm as helpless as a child? Don't you hear me complaining as to a mother? Won't you forget for one moment that I am a man, that I am a soldier? Like a sick man, I ask only for compassion. I lay down the tokens of my power, and implore you to have mercy on my life. (HE REMOVES HIS RANK AND INSIGNIA FROM HIS TUNIC AND PLACES THEM IN HER LAP. THEN HE TAKES HOLD OF HER AND PLACES HIS HEAD ON HER BREAST AND CRIES)

LAURA: (SURPRISED, SHE SOFTENS) What! Are you crying, man?

CAPTAIN: Yes, I am crying, although I am a man. But, then, has not a man eyes? Has not a man hands, limbs, senses, thoughts, passions? Is he not fed with the same food, hurt by the same weapons, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter as a woman? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? And if you poison us, do we not die? Why shouldn't a man complain, a soldier weep? Because it is unmanly? Why is it unmanly?

LAURA: (SHE RUNS HER HAND THROUGH HIS HAIR) Weep, then, my child, as if you were with your mother once more. Do you remember, Adolf, when I first came into your life, I was like a second mother to you.

CAPTAIN: Yes, I remember, and because you were so you were allowed to rule; and I, the commander at the barracks and before the troops, became obedient to you, grew through you, looked up to you as to a more highly-gifted being, listened to you as if I had been your undeveloped child.

LAURA: And for that, I loved you, as a mother loves a child.

CAPTAIN: But then I grew tired of being a child in your eyes, for I believed you despised me for my unmanliness, and I resolved to win you as a woman by being a man.

LAURA: (RETURNING TO HERSELF) Yes, but that was your mistake. The mother was your friend, you see, but the woman was your enemy, and love between the sexes is strife. Do not think that I gave myself to you. I did not give, but I took, what I wanted. But you had one advantage. I felt that, and I wanted you to feel it.

CAPTAIN: (DRAWING AWAY FROM HER) You always had the advantage. You could hypnotize me when I was wide awake, so that I neither saw nor heard, but merely obeyed. You could give me a raw potato and make me imagine it was a peach. You could force me to admire your foolish caprices as though they were strokes of genius. You could have influenced me to crime, yes even to mean, paltry deeds, because I was living in a dream. I loved you, once, but when I at last awoke from my dream, I realized that my honor had been corrupted, and a man cannot live without honor.

LAURA: (RISING) But a woman?

CAPTAIN: (FRAME ON THE CAPTAIN, DOLLY IN FOR A C.U.) Yes, yes, a woman can, for she has her children, which he has not. But, like the rest of mankind, we lived our lives unconscious as children, full of imagination, ideals, and illusions, and then we awoke; it was all over. But we awoke with our feet

Captain: on the pillow, and he who waked us was himself a sleep-walker. When women grew old and cease to be women, they get beards on their chins; I wonder what men get, when they grow old and cease to be men.

LAURA: Do you know, you should have been a poet.

CAPTAIN: (RISING) Who knows.

LAURA: Now, I am sleepy, so if you have any more fantastic visions, keep them till tomorrow. (SHE STARTS TO EXIT)

CAPTAIN: (STOPPING HER) First, a word more about realities. Do you hate me?

LAURA: Yes, sometimes. When you are a man.

CAPTAIN: This is like race hatred. If it is true that we are decended from monkeys, at least it must be two separate species. We are certainly not like one another, are we?

LAURA: What do you mean to say by all this?

CAPTAIN: I feel that one of us must go under in this struggle.

LAURA: To be sure, but which?

CAPTAIN: The weaker, of course.

LAURA: And the stronger will be in the right?

CAPTAIN: Always, since he has the power.

LAURA: Then I am in the right.

CAPTAIN: Have you the power already, then?

LAURA: Yes, and a legal power with which I shall put you under the control of a guardian.

CAPTAIN: Under a guardian?

LAURA: And then I shall educate my child without listening to your fantastic notions.

CAPTAIN: How can you have me put under a guardian?

LAURA: (TAKES OUT LETTER) With this letter, of which an attested copy is already in the hands of the Board of Lunacy.

CAPTAIN: What letter?

LAURA: (BACKING AWAY TOWARD THE DOORWAY) Yours! The declaration you made to Doctor Norling that you were insane. Now you have fulfilled your function as an unfortunately necessary father and breadwinner, you are not needed any longer and you must go. You must go, since you have realized that my intellect is as strong as my will, and since you will not stay and acknowledge it.

THE CAPTAIN, BROKEN BY THE STRAIN, SUDDENLY SEIZES THE LIGHTED LAMP FROM THE TABLE AND RAISES IT ABOVE HIS HEAD, A WILD LOOK UPON HIS FACE. LAURA SCREAMS AS HE THROWS THE LAMP, BARELY MISSING HER. SHE STANDS PETRIFIED, A LOOK OF FROZEN HORROR UPON HER FACE.

MUSIC: WHAT WAS A CALM, MOOD BACKGROUND, COMES UP FULL NOW AS A STRONG CRASHING CONFLICT THEME, BREAKING OVER THE ACTION.

CUT AWAY FROM LAURA AND TO THE CAPTAIN. MOVE IN TOWARD HIM FOR A C.U. REACTION, FOCUS IN AND OUT AS THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED.

VOICES: FADE IN AND OUT WITH FOCUS, IN A MANNER TO INDICATE THE FORCEFUL THOUGHTS WHICH ARE PASSING THROUGH THE CAPTAIN'S MIND.

LAURA: "You do not know that you are Bertha's father. You do not know. You do not know that you are Bertha's father."

BERTHA: "Father, Father, Father!"

NURSE: "Why, Master Adolf, of course you are Bertha's father, of course, of course, you are Bertha's father."

LAURA: "How do you know that I have not been unfaithful to you? How do you know? How do you know?"

BERTHA: "Father, Father, Father!"

THE CAPTAIN PLACES HIS HANDS OVER HIS EARS IN ORDER TO SHUT OUT THE CONFLICTING SOUNDS FROM HIS MIND. HIS FACE IS DISTORTED WITH PAIN AND SUFFERING.

GO TO BLACK:

END ACT II

ACT III

MUSIC: ON BLACK SEGUE TO SOFT MOOD THEME. HOLD IN BACKGROUND INTO SCENE, THEN SNEAK OUT.

OPEN FROM BLACK ON A CLOSE TWO SHOT OF LAURA AND THE PASTOR NEAR THE GREAT CLOCK IN THE LIVING ROOM. IT IS THE AFTERNOON OF THE NEXT DAY. LAURA IS SEATED. THE PASTOR STANDS NEAR BY.

PASTOR: . . . And you say it all began with his wild idea of not being Bertha's father?

LAURA: Yes, and ended with his throwing the lighted lamp in my face.

PASTOR: Dreadful! Fully developed insanity . . . and what is to be done now?

LAURA: We must try to prevent further violence. The Doctor has gone to the hospital for a strait-jacket.

PASTOR: Deplorable, but I have always expected something of the sort. Fire and powder must end in an explosion. Now, tell me, Laura, are you entirely blameless in all this? (HE LEANS IN BEHIND HER CHAIR)

LAURA: (HER FACE TURNED AWAY FROM HIM) I? Why should I be to blame because a man goes out of his mind?

PASTOR: Well, well, I shan't say anything. After all, blood is thicker than water.

LAURA: (SHARPLY) What do you dare to intimate?

PASTOR: Now, listen.

LAURA: Yes?

PASTOR: You can hardly deny that it suits you pretty well to be able to educate your child as you wish?

LAURA: (INNOCENTLY) I don't understand.

PASTOR: Hump! How I admire you!

LAURA: Me? H'm.

PASTOR: And I am to be guardian of that free-thinker?

LAURA: Yes, as you are the closest male member of the family.

PASTOR: I can't say as I will relish that. Do you know, Laura, I have always looked on him as a weed in our garden. Even when I was closest to him.

LAURA: And you dare say that to me, his wife?

PASTOR: You're strong, Laura, incredibly strong. You're like a fox in a trap. You would rather gnaw off your own leg than let yourself be caught! Like a master thief, no accomplice, not even your own conscience. Here, let me look at your hand. (HE TAKES IT) Not a trace of the insidious poison! A little innocent murder that the law cannot reach, an unconscious crime. Unconscious! What a splendid idea! (LAURA WITHDRAWS HER HAND)

LAURA: (RISING) You talk too much. Accuse me, if you can.

PASTOR: (WITH A SHRUG) I cannot.

LAURA: You see! You cannot, and therefore I am innocent. You take care of your ward, dear brother, and I will take care of mine. (SHE TURNS AWAY FROM HIM JUST AS THE DOCTOR ENTERS THE ROOM. HE CARRIES A PAPER-WRAPPED BUNDLE, WHICH HE PLACES ON THE TABLE) Ah, good evening, Doctor. I wonder if you are convinced <u>now</u>?

DOCTOR: I am convinced, Madam, that an act of violence has been committed. The question now is whether that act of violence can be considered an outbreak of madness, or of passion.

PASTOR: But, surely, Doctor, apart from the actual outbreak, you must acknowledge that he has certain "fixed ideas."

DOCTOR: (COOLLY) I think that <u>your</u> ideas, Pastor, are much more fixed.

PASTOR: My settled views about the highest things are . . .

DOCTOR: We'll leave settled views out of this. (TO LAURA) Madam, it rests with you to decide whether your husband is guilty to the extent of imprisonment and fine, or should be put in an asylum! How do you class his behavior?

LAURA: (HESITANTLY) I cannot answer that now.

DOCTOR: (PRESSING HER) That is to say that you have no decided opinion as to what will be most advantageous to the interests of the family. What do you say, Pastor?

PASTOR: Well, there will be a scandal in either case. It is not easy to say.

LAURA: (NOW MAKING HER STAND FOR FEAR THAT THE CAPTAIN MIGHT YET ESCAPE HER) But if he is only sentenced to a fine for violence, Doctor, it is possible that he will repeat the violence.

DOCTOR: (UNDERSTANDING) And if he is sent to prison, he will be seen out again. Therefore, we consider it most advantageous for all parties concerned that the Captain be immediately treated as insane. (HE LOOKS CLOSELY TOWARD BOTH LAURA AND THE PASTOR, IN TURN) That is what you mean to say, is it not? (NEITHER PARTY ANSWERS) I see. Where is the Nurse?

LAURA: Why?

DOCTOR: She must put the strait-jacket on the patient. I have the garment here. (HE PRODUCES THE JACKET FROM THE BUNDLE)

LAURA: But why don't you do it yourself, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Because the patient distrusts me. You, Madam, would seem to be the logical one to do it, but I fear he distrusts even you.

LAURA FLUSHES AT THE DOCTOR'S REMARK. SHE STARTS TO SPEAK, BUT BEFORE SHE CAN THEY ARE ALL STARTLED BY A LOUD CRASH FROM ABOVE, AS IF SOMETHING HEAVY, SUCH AS A BOOKCASE, WERE PUSHED OVER. THEY LOOK QUICKLY UP IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SOUND. THE CAMERA PANS WITH THEIR LOOKS.

MUSIC: BRING IN FULL AND HOLD ACROSS TRANSITION. THEN SEGUE TO MOOD THEME OVER SCENE IN CAPTAIN'S STUDY.

DISSOLVE TO A CAMERA IN THE CAPTAIN'S STUDY. THE SECOND CAMERA IS FOLLOWING A MOVEMENT SIMILAR TO THE FIRST. IT MOVES ACROSS THE SCENE OF THE CAPTAIN'S ROOM. THE ROOM IS A MESS OF DESTRUCTION, BOOKS SCATTERED ABOUT THE FLOOR, A CHAIR OVERTURNED, SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS SHATTERED, NOTES TORN FROM THEIR BINDINGS. THE CAPTAIN IS SEATED AT HIS DESK, HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. AFTER A SECOND, AS THE CAMERA MOVES IN TOWARD HIM, HE LOOKS UP AND STARES AT THE PICTURE OF LAURA AND BERTHA ON THE DESK BEFORE HIM. HIS FACE IS CONTORTED WITH PAIN AND SUFFERING. SUDDENLY, IN A FIT OF ANGER, HE REACHES OUT ONE ARM AND BRUSHES THE PICTURE AND BOOKS FROM THE DESK TOP. THEY LAND WITH A CRASH ON THE FLOOR. THE CAMERA MOVES DOWN FROM THE CAPTAIN TO FRAME ON THE BROKEN PICTURE.

DISSOLVE TO A L.S. OF THE CAPTAIN'S STUDY, SHOWING THE DOOR ENTRANCE. THE HANDLE TURNS, THE DOOR MOVES. THE CAPTAIN TAKES NO NOTICE. HIS HEAD IS ONCE MORE IN HIS HANDS. BERTHA ENTERS THE ROOM. SHE SHUTS THE DOOR SOFTLY AND STANDS FOR A SECOND LISTENING. THEN SHE TURNS AND ADVANCES TO THE CAPTAIN. THERE SHE PLACES HER HAND LIGHTLY ON HIS SHOULDER.

BERTHA: Are you ill, Father?

CAPTAIN: (HE LOOKS UP WITH A DAZED EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE) I?

MUSIC: SNEAK OUT.

BERTHA: Do you know what you have done? Do you know that you threw the lamp at Mother?

CAPTAIN: Did I?

BERTHA: Yes, you did. Just think if she had been hurt.

CAPTAIN: Would that have mattered?

BERTHA: You're not my father when you talk like that.

CAPTAIN: (SUDDENLY JOLTED BACK INTO REALITY) What do you say? I am not your father? (HE TAKES HOLD OF HER HAND) How do you know that? Who told you that? Answer me! Who is your father, then, who?

BERTHA: (TERRING HERSELF AWAY) Not you, at any rate.

CAPTAIN: (RISING, HE TAKES HOLD OF HER ONCE MORE, FORCING HER TO TURN TO HIM) Still not I? Who, then? Who? You seem to be well informed. Who told you? That I should live to see my child come and tell me to my face that I am not her father! Don't you know that you disgrace your mother when you say that? Don't you know that it is to her shame if it is so?

BERTHA: (HER SPIRIT UP, SHE BREAKS AWAY, STANDING OFF IN ANGER) Don't you say anything bad about Mother. Do you hear?

CAPTAIN: No. You hold together, every one of you, against me. And you have always done so.

BERTHA: Oh, Father.

CAPTAIN: (SHOUTING) Don't use that word again!

BERTHA: (BEWILDERED) Father, what is it, Father?

CAPTAIN: (TAKING HER IN HIS ARMS) Bertha, Bertha. Dear, dear child, and you are my child. (HE HOLDS HER AT ARM'S LENGTH, LOOKING AT HER) Yes, yes, it cannot be otherwise. It is so. The other was only sickly thoughts that come with the wind, like pestilence and fever. Look at me, that I may see my soul in your eyes. Look at me.

(FROM THE CAPTAIN'S POSITION, THE CAMERA TAKES A CU. OF BERTHA. SUDDENLY, HOWEVER, A CHANGE TAKES PLACE. DISSOLVING THROUGH HER FEATURES IS THE FACE OF LAURA, SMILING AND CRAFTY.)

But I see her soul, too. You have two souls, and you love me with one and hate me with the other.

BERTHA BACKS AWAY FROM HIM IN FEAR. A STRANGENESS HAS COME OVER THE CAPTAIN. IN HIS MIND HE SEES LAURA IN BERTHA, AND HE WISHES TO KILL THE LAURA IN HER. HE MOVES AFTER HIS DAUGHTER, FORCING HER INTO A CORNER OF THE ROOM. HER HAND COMES UP TO HER MOUTH, HER EYES ARE FULL OF TERROR AS THE OLD MAN ADVANCES.

CAPTAIN: You must have only one mind, which is the child of my mind, and only one will, which is my will. You must have only one life, which is my life, and mine alone. Do you understand, my dear? You must have only one being, which is mine, mine!

THE CAPTAIN'S HANDS SLIP UP FROM THE GIRL'S SHOULDERS TO HER NECK. SHE STRUGGLES TO FREE HERSELF, AT LAST BEING ABLE TO EMIT A SCREAM. AS SHE SCREAMS, OLD MARGRET RUSHES INTO THE ROOM. SHE WEARS A LARGE SHAWL.

NURSE: Master Adolf! What are you doing?

CAPTAIN: (TURNING, A SICK MAN, HE LOOKS STRANGELY AT HIS HANDS.) Wh . . . I don't know, Margret . . .

NURSE: (KINDLY) Here, Master Adolf, you must come here. Do you understand?

CAPTAIN: (HE ALLOWS HER TO SIT HIM IN A CHAIR) Yes, Margret.

BERTHA WATCHES THE ACTION, TERROR-STRICKEN. OLD MARGRET REMOVES FROM UNDER HER SHAWL THE STRAIT-JACKET. SHE TAKES A POSITION BEHIND THE CAPTAIN'S CHAIR. BERTHA EXITS.

<u>MUSIC</u>: SNEAK IN MOOD OVERTONE. BACKGROUND.

NURSE: Master Adolf, do you remember when you were my dear little boy and I tucked you in at night, and used to repeat: "God who holds his children dear" to you, and do you remember how I used to get up in the night and give you a drink, how I would light the candle and tell you stories when you had dreams and couldn't sleep? (SHE STANDS BEHIND HIM, RUBBING HIS HEAD, CALMING HIS TATTERED NERVES)

CAPTAIN: Go on talking, Margret. It soothes my head so. Tell me some more.

NURSE: Oh, yes, but you must listen, then. Do you remember when you were little, and had to be dressed, and when you didn't want to, I had to dress you, and then how I had to coax you and say that you should have a coat of gold and be dressed like a little prince. And then I took your little blouse that was just made of green wool, and held it in front of you and said, in with both arms (THE CAPTAIN REACHES INTO THE JACKET), and then I said, "Now sit nice and still while I button it down the back," and then I said, "Get up, now, and let me see how it fits." (THE CAPTAIN STANDS) Now, walk across the floor, like a good boy, so nice. (THE CAPTAIN DOES AS DIRECTED) Now you look like such a little gentleman, so like a little gentleman. (THERE ARE TEARS IN HER EYES AS SHE SPEAKS) Now, then, do you remember when I said, "you must go to bed." There in front of you, the one that your own father made for you. (THE CAPTAIN SITS ON THE COUCH. MARGRET MOVES TO HIM AND BEGINS TO HELP HIM DOWN TO HIS BACK)

MUSIC: SNEAK OUT.

CAPTAIN: (HE STIRS HIMSELF TO REALITY) What did you say, Margret? Was I to go to bed when I was newly dressed? (HE SEES HIS POSITION AND TRIES TO FREE HIMSELF) Wh. . . Thunderation! What have you done to me? What have you done? Oh, you cunning devil of a woman! Who would have thought you had so much wit. Trapped, shorn, outwitted, like an animal, and not be able to die like a man.

NURSE: Forgive me, Master Adolf, forgive me. I wanted to keep you from hurting your child.

CAPTAIN: Why didn't you let me? You say that death is the kingdom of Heaven, and that children belong to Heaven.

NURSE: But who can say what comes after death?

CAPTAIN: But that is the only thing we do know. It is of life that we know nothing. Oh, (HE RELAXES TO THE COUCH) if one had only known that from the beginning!

LAURA ENTERS THE ROOM AND WAVES MARGRET TO ONE SIDE. SHE MOVES DIRECTLY TO THE CAPTAIN WITHOUT A WORD. SHE STANDS FOR A SECOND LOOKING DOWN AT HIM, AND THEN SHE REACHES OUT HER HAND AS IF TO TOUCH HIM. HE SHUDDERS IN REVULSION.

CAPTAIN: Witch! Witch! Don't touch me . . . don't!

LAURA: (REMOVING HER HAND) Adolf, listen to me. I don't know that I ever thought or even intended what you think I did. It may be that a desire to be rid of you as an obstacle to my course lay at the bottom of it, and if you see any design in my behavior, it is possible that it existed, although I was unconscious of it. I have never thought how it all came about, but it is the result of the course you yourself laid out. Of that I am certain, and before my God and my conscience I feel that I am innocent of any wrong, even if I am not.

CAPTAIN: All that sounds plausible. But how does it help me?

LAURA: I don't know.

CAPTAIN: And whose fault is it? Perhaps spiritual marriages! Yes! Formerly, you know, one married a wife, now one enters into partnership with a businesswoman, or lives with a friend, and then one ruins the partnership and dishonors the friend! What has become of love, Laura, strong, healthy love? Has it died in the transaction? And what is the result of this new love in shares, payable to the bearer without joint liability? Who is the bearer when the crash comes? Who is the father of the spiritual child, Laura, who?

LAURA: As for your suspicions about the child, Adolf, they are absolutely groundless.

CAPTAIN: Yes, I know that, now, and that's just what makes it all so horrible. If at least there were any grounds for my suspicions, it would have been something to get hold of, to cling to, to fight. A fatal reality would have called forth resistance, stirred life and soul to action.

LAURA: Adolf?

CAPTAIN: (TO HIMSELF) Now my thoughts dissolve into air, and my brain grinds a void until it is on fire . . . (HE SINKS INTO A SLUMBER)

THE DOCTOR AND THE PASTOR ENTER BEHIND. LAURA GOES TO MEET THEM. THEY STAND IN CONVERSATION FOR A MOMENT, THE TWO MEN TAKING OCCASIONAL GLANCES IN THE DIRECTION OF THE CAPTAIN. THE NURSE WEEPS TO HERSELF IN THE BACKGROUND.

MUSIC: SNEAK INTO BACKGROUND, SOFT MOOD. UNDERPLAY SCENE.

CAPTAIN: (WEAKLY) Laura? Where are you, Laura?

LAURA: (RETURNING TO THE CAPTAIN'S SIDE) Yes? I'm here.

CAPTAIN: Laura, do you remember when we were young and we walked in the birch woods, with the primroses and the thrushes? Glorious, glorious! Think how beautiful life was, and what it is now. You didn't want to have it like this, nor did I, and yet it happened. Why, Laura? Why did we let it happen like this?

LAURA FALLS DOWN BESIDE THE CAPTAIN, ON HER KNEES. SHE IS CRYING. IT IS ALMOST AS IF SHE WERE A DIFFERENT PERSON. PERHAPS SHE IS.

LAURA: I don't know. God help me, I don't know.

CAPTAIN: (HE STRAINS TO RISE) Don't cry, Laura. It's not your fault. You never really wanted it this way, not really. There's something evil in the world, and it's seized upon the souls of men . . . (HE FALLS BACK ON THE COUCH, HIS BREATHING HEAVY AND LABORED)

LAURA: (LOOKING UP) Adolf? Adolf? Doctor! Doctor, do something!

THE DOCTOR MOVES TO THE CAPTAIN, BENDS OVER AND RAISES HIS CLOSED EYELID. THE BREATHING HAS STOPPED. THE DOCTOR DRAWS THE QUILT FROM THE BACK OF THE COUCH AND COVERS THE CAPTAIN:

DOCTOR: (SIMPLY) I'm afraid that I can do no more. He's beyond my power. Perhaps the Pastor . . .

THE PASTOR PRAYS IN MUFFLED TONES IN THE BACKGROUND, HIS HEAD BOWED. OLD MARGRET'S WEEPING SEEMS LOUDER NOW.

BERTHA ENTERS THE ROOM, GLANCES QUICKLY AROUND AND MOVES DIRECTLY TO HER MOTHER.

BERTHA: Mother, oh, Mother! (SHE CRIES)

LAURA: (TAKING THE CHILD IN HER ARMS) My child, my very own child!

PASTOR: (ALOUD) Amen.

MUSIC: SWELL TO A CONCLUSION.

GO TO BLACK:

THE END

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

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As a result of this study, the writer arrived at three sets of conclusions. First, he was able to note the nature of the problems involved in making a television adaptation of a three-act stage play. Second, he arrived at some criteria for the selection of materials for television, that is, standards which might pre-determine a story's suitability to the nature of the medium. Third, he was able to establish a procedure which could be followed in the adaptation process.

The Problems

The actual problems involved in the adaptation of Strindberg's The Father for television fell within five general categories: (1) the problem of material selection, (2) the problem of procedure, (3) the problem of telling the story within the limited means of the television medium, (4) the problem of the utilization of the creative tools of the television medium, and (5) the problem of adjusting the author's concept, his theme and style, to the particular demands of the medium.

The Problem of Material Selection. In all likelihood, one of the most important problems faced by the writer was that of material selection. The selection of Strindberg's The Father was influenced by three factors, (1) because the play offered materials capable of production within the characteristic limitations of the television medium, (2) because the play could benefit from an adaptation to the medium, and (3) because the play was of sufficient dramatic importance

to make its production on television worthwhile. The actual problem of play selection, then, encompasses a consideration of the characteristics of the television medium and involves an analysis of the play to determine, insofar as possible, the suitability of its material and an understanding of its significance.

As a result of his study of the play and as a result of the adaptation process which followed, the writer arrived at the following conclusions in respect to the problem of play selection. First, it was noted that the stage play, using as it does the limited means of the theatre, was in terms of physical production very easily adapted to the television medium. Consequently, the selection of a stage play for the adaptation portion of this study appeared in many respects to be a practical one. However, during the course of this study it became apparent that the structure of the stage play tended to deprive the medium of a gread deal of its flexibility, one of the primary characteristics and potentialities of television drama. Because the action of the stage play was confined to one set at a time, and because the scene structure was built in a progressive order, the adaptor was often limited in his selection of possible means of expression. The only alternative to this portion of the problem would have resulted in the writer taking considerably more liberty with the nature of his material than was believed wise.

During the course of this study the writer also became aware of the fact that the playwright in the theatre depends to a large extent upon the spoken work for his dramatic effects. This is a characteristic of stage drama which differs greatly from the normal means of

expression utilized on television, where the picture is believed more important than the sound.

Because of the above discoveries, the writer was moved to conclude that while the theatre offers a practical source of programming material for television, the characteristic difference of dramatic construction and expression between the two media make it extremely difficult to construct an adaptation that does not take the appearance of a photographed stage play. Although this conclusion is strongly supported by the nature of the problems faced in the adaptation of Strindberg's play, however, it might not be borne out in all instances of application. Therefore, it is recommended that while the adaptor should consider the implications of this conclusion, he should not allow it to interfere with his material selection to any great extent.

The Problem of Procedure. After selecting his material for treatment in this study, the writer next was faced with the problem of procedure. The question was, what process should be followed in the adaptation of Strindberg's play? In seeking a solution to this problem, the writer became aware of a basic difference between the creation of an original television script and the writing of an adaptation. That difference was conceived as a matter of approach. In constructing an original television play, the writer is often able to form his ideas in such a manner as to satisfy the limitations of the medium and to take advantage of its creative tools of expression. In writing an original script, the playwright is thus able to adjust his story idea to the demans of the medium. In writing the

adaptation, however, the exact opposite is true. The adaptor must try to impose the limitations of his medium upon the material his work is treating. This being the case, it was found that the adaptor must, in many respects, possess a greater degree of familiarity with the tools and techniques of the television medium that the writer of an original script. This is true because the adaptor must find in the television medium method of expressing ideas and actions conceived for the conditions of a different medium. When, for example, the writer is faced with a particular problem created by his limitations, he must locate a manner of solving that problem through the utilization of the tools and techniques of the television medium. The original writer, on the other hand, can often avoid the problems imposed on the adaptor by the nature of his selected materials, because he has control over the creation of his own story elements.

A second aspect of procedure found important in adapting The Father to television was one which demands a great amount of understanding and appreciation on the part of the writer for his material. In order to fit the essentials of The Father into the pattern of television production, and in order to insure an honest treatment of Strindberg's conflict and theme, the writer found a complete analysis of the play to be absolutely necessary. This process involved a number of readings, a constant sifting of information, a minute examination of structure and dramatic purpose. It involved also a determination of the essential aspects of thought, character, and action and an evaluation of those aspects in accordance with the demands of the television medium.

The Problem of Telling the Story Within the Limited Means of the Television Medium. The problem of adapting The Father to the limited means of the television medium involved two basic considerations, (1) the magnitude of the script as related to the physical demands of production, and (2) the material demands which resulted from the conditions of reception. The first question involved primarily problems created by the limitations of time, space and budget. The second concerned those imposed upon the nature of the play by the characteristics of the viewing audience.

The solution to both problems involved, basically, a process of analysis, selection, and compression. First, it was found necessary to analyze and evaluate the relative importance of each aspect of Strindberg's drama, his statement of theme, his treatment of character, and his manner of plot progression. Second, a process of selection and compression was employed in order to adjust the important elements pf plot, character, and theme to the limitations of time and space. Third, it was necessary to arrange the selected elements of the play in an order of progression that would result in a proper proportion of the materials, and an emphasis upon the important aspects of conflict and theme.

It was also found necessary to modify the nature of the material in order to suit the characteristics of the viewing audience. Inasmuch as the television medium is primarily a means of providing information and entertainment for the home audience, certain aspects of Strindberg's theme had to be altered in accordance with standards of good taste and decency. Another problem created by the nature of the

viewing audience, as well as the characteristic time limitation imposed by the medium, was the necessity of capturing the immediate interest and attention of the viewer. The solution to this particular problem entailed the creation of additional dramatic material and the modification of certain of the structural characteristics of the original.

Pursuing the above process in the solution of the general problem of telling the story within the limited means of the television medium, the writer arrived at the conclusion that the primary problem of adapting the three-act stage play to television is one of selection and compression, the process of fitting or adjusting the dramatic elements of the original material to the characteristic limitations of the television medium.

The Problem of the Utilization of the Creative Tools of the Television Medium. Basically, the problem of the proper use of the creative tools of the television medium was determined by the nature of the writer's materials. As was noted earlier, the distinctive characteristic of the adaptation process was to be found in the nature of procedure. The writer had to start with his materials, and then seek the appropriate means of expressing those materials, means which included camera usage, video effects, sound, music, transitions, and charades, meaning the method of expressing ideas and impressions with action and business.

The problem of the use of the tools and techniques of the medium of television was, then, an interpretation problem. The adaptor conceived of himself as being an interpreter as well as a translator of

the original material. His job was to interpret August Strindberg's The Father, in a manner in keeping with the characteristics of the television medium. His problem began with the selection of the play for production and ended with the expression of the play in terms suitable to the medium. To accomplish his purpose, the television writer had first to recognize the essential elements of the original material, and second, to locate the means of expressing those elements. The means used to fulfill the writer's purpose were found in the nature of the medium itself. The television camera, for example, was one of the tools utilized in the interpretation of Strindberg's play. The writer found that he could use the camera in his adaptation by calling for close-up pictures or reaction shots, by asking for camera movement, and by playing the camera either objectively or subjectively as the nature of the material might demand. Video effects were inserted into the script in order to form actions, reactions and expressions into a unified visual continuity. Music also was integrated as a method of interpreting and reinforcing the play's conflict and theme. Transitions were employed to bridge the gaps in time and place, and charades were indicated to aid in the interpretation of character and action.

Because his was the role of an interpreter, the writer had to maintain a sincere feeling for his material and he had to select the proper tools for the expression of that material in a manner in keeping with its intent and purpose, and in a manner in keeping with the characteristics of the television medium.

The Problem of Adjusting the Author's Original Concept to the Nature of the Television Medium. One of the difficulties encountered in the adaptation of The Father involved the translation of Strindberg's dramatic concept into a form more suitable to television production. In general this problem encompasses everything written or concluded about the treatment of the adaptation to this point. More specifically, however, it concerns the adjustment of Strindberg's theme and conflict as well as his style to the demands of the television medium.

The major problem concerning Strindberg's dramatic concept pertained to his treatment of theme, his ideas relating to questions of paternity and the basic struggle between the sexes. In order to present Strindberg's concept, it was necessary to clarify and emphasize it. This was needed not so much because the author of The Father was unclear in his thinking, as because he had, in the theatre, approximately twice as much time for the development of his theme as was available to the adaptor. Once more, therefore, the television writer was faced with the question of selection and modification, and once more it was required that he exhibit a complete understanding of the nature of his materials. It was necessary for the writer to eliminate those aspects of Strindberg's thought which were unessential to the main theme, and those elements of thought which were considered too strong for treatment on television, in accordance with the standards of continuity acceptance outlined by the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters. Beyond this process, it was necessary, too, for the writer to give a greater amount of emphasis to

the treatment of theme than was employed by Strindberg. This was accomplished once more through a process of selection and compression, and be a re-statement of some of the more important elements of theme in a more obvious manner.

The problem of the statement of Strindberg's theme of conflict, also, involved a degree of clarification. To this end, the writer altered the opening scene of the play, in order to hasten the exposition and to speed the point of attack. This was done in order to capture more quickly the attention of the viewer, by stating at an earlier time the nature of the major conflict in the adaptation. The changes were necessary because of the limited time available to the writer to tell the story, and because of the competitive nature of the medium.

The question of Strindberg's style became a problem whenever it was necessary, for one reason or another, to alter, add to, or emphasize the essential nature of the play, a process which was often dictated by the nature of the time limitation. The problem in general involved an understanding of Strindberg's dramatic technique, and it resulted in no small degree in the evolution of the adaptor as an interpretive writer and as an imitator. To insure that all additions to Strindberg's drama would be in keeping with the original, it became necessary for the writer to consciously imitate the style and feeling of the original.

Summary. In general, it can be stated that the problems involved in adapting a three-act stage play to the television medium, were problems of analysis, selection and compression, as well as those involving the stylistic imitation of the original. As a result of these problems, it can be inferred that the adaptor of a stage play is not, to any great degree, an original dramatist, although he may be very original at times in his treatment of the play. Rather, it may be said that the adaptor is a translator, or an interpreter, who seeks to state in terms of the television medium what has, in most cases, been very effectively stated in the language of the theatre. The actual adaptation process demands, then, that the adaptor be extremely familiar with the nature and content of the original material, as well as the nature of the television medium itself. Further, it can be stated that the writer of the television adaptation is obliged to follow a procedure which is directly opposite that followed by an original writer. The adaptor must apply the tools and techniques of the television medium to the nature of his materials, and seek to find in the medium an effective method of expressing the inate ideas and actions of the material he means to translate or interpret.

Material Considerations

One of the principal objectives of this study was the wish to determine, insofar as possible, criteria for the selection of material suitable to the television medium. As a result of the problems encountered in the adaptation of The Father, it was decided that such criteria could be established to a reasonable degree. As a means of furthering this end the following check-list of material considerations has been created:

1. Can the story be told effectively within a limited time period of between fifty and sixty minutes (or less, as demanded)?

2. Is it possible for the story to be produced within the limited means of the television medium, or do the material demands make its production impractical in respect to the size and number of sets required, costume, setting, and talent costs and the nature of the action?

3. Is the story of a type and nature that can be effectively presented under the conditions of a continuous action, with limited demands in costume and make-up changes, shifts in time and place, and strenuous physical activity on the part of the actor?

4. Is the story of a nature suitable for viewing by a home audience? Is it in keeping with continuity standards of good taste and decency, or, if not, can it be adjusted to meet such demands?

5. Can the story be told by visual as well as aural means? The adaptor should remember that the primary appeal of television is to the sense of sight.

6. Does the story contain elements of both character and action? The adaptor should take into consideration the fact that the television medium's feelings of intimacy and immediacy are such as to produce an atmosphere highly suited to the effective presentation of character.

7. Is the story of a realistic nature? Does it depend on a feeling of actuality for its effect?[1]

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1 This is optional, inasmuch as the writer has found little on which to base his conclusion in this respect; but it is his qualified opinion, based on his experience with the medium, that extreme dramatic forms such as expressionism or symbolism would be difficult to present on TV, though several fantasies have been produced effectively in recent years.

8. Does the story contain potentialities for the effective utilization of the creative tools of the television medium, such as camera usage, lights, sound, music, video effects, transitions, and charades?

9. Does the story have genuine audience appeal and dramatic value?[2]

It may be recognized, in consideration of the above criteria, that the major concern of the writer is that of relating the nature of his material to the characteristics of his medium. Because his adaptation must be accomplished in terms of the television medium, the writer should be aware of the problems confronting him before he begins his work with the selected story.

Adaptation Procedure

As was related earlier, one of the first difficulties encountered in the television adaptation of The Father was the need to discover a method of approach which would facilitate the translation process. In

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2 This final consideration is basically subjective and is, therefore, difficult to measure. The adaptor will find, undoubtedly, that the question of a material's dramatic worth will be answered in terms of his personal experience and insight. If he has a sufficient critical appreciation of letters, dramatic or otherwise, and if he has an understanding of the possible likes and dislikes of people in general, he should be able to recognize quality and appeal in almost any form. However, the adaptor should beware of making his judgments on the basis of a pre-determined formula, such as that created by the concept of a "mass audience." (See pp. 17 - 20.)

3 It may be noted here that often the adaptor will be unable to answer satisfactorily some of the questions which relate to material considerations until he encounters them in the form of writing problems. This being true, he may at times select material for adaptation which he may later discover to be unsuited to the television medium.

view of the nature of the problems considered in the subsequent nature of treatment of Strindberg's play, the procedure established by the writer was found to be both practical and functional. Therefore, its continued use is recommended,[4] although some variation might be in order in accordance with the specific nature of the selected material.

1. Because the adaptation process requires the application of the limits of the television medium to the nature of the writing materials, the writer must first familiarize himself with the nature of the medium, its characteristics, its limitations, and its creative tools of expression.

2. Knowing the character of his medium of expression, the writer must select a story which, by its nature, is suitable to the demands of the medium and the nature of its audience.

3. Having selected a story, the writer should next consider the question of adaptation rights. If the material he wishes to adapt is not in public domain, the writer must gain the permission of its owner before he can seek to have it performed on television.[5]

4. If rights for the story selected are made available to the writer, he may begin the actual adaptation, the first step of which

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4 The one aspect of procedure which cannot be evaluated or stated in accordance with any formulated process is that of writing skill. It must be assumed that if the writer has the ability to express himself in a dramatic form, if he can use language properly, if he can describe actions, characters, and ideas in an effective manner, if he is gifted with sensitivity, understanding and imagination, then he may follow the procedure outlined for writing the adaptation and, most likely, produce a television drama that will be faithful to the original and yet take advantage of the characteristics of the medium to which it is being adapted.

5 Public domain may be generally defined as anything published more than fifty-six years ago. Permission for adaptation of the Edith and Warner Orland translation of The Father were obtained in writing from the John W. Luce Company of Boston, publishers of the play.

is the complete analysis of the story, in terms of thought, character, and plot.

5. Once aware of the nature of his material, the adaptor should determine the structural elements of the story and then analyze those elements in order to discover the relative importance of each unit in the overall statement of plot, character, and thought.

6. Following the structural breakdown of his material, the writer should instigate a process of selection and compression of the essential dramatic elements under consideration. This procedure involves a continuation of the process of analysis and evaluation begun earlier.

7. Having determined those aspects of his material to be used in the construction of the adaptation, the writer next faces the problem of expressing his material in a manner suitable to the television medium. The procedure followed at this point is that of applying the tools of the medium to the nature of the materials selected. In its essence, this portion of the adaptation process can be identified with the problem of interpretation.

8. After he has located the proper means of expressing his material, the writer should begin to chart his adaptation. The combination of the elements of thought and action selected from the original, with the means of expressing them, creates the final nature of the adaptation.

9. The final procedure involved in writing the adaptation is that of producing the television script. This basically involves a

question of form and style. The writer selects a physical format which appears suited to his needs, or the needs of the program for which he is writing, and proceeds to adjust his material to its nature.

Recommendations for Further Study

Because of the character of some of the problems encountered in this study, the writer found the need for additional work in the particular field covered and in its related subject areas.

Creative-type Studies. By its nature, this study has been an introduction to the problems and procedures involved in writing a television adaptation. The study was, however, limited to a consideration of the problems encountered in the adaptation of a three-act play. To test the validity of some of the conclusions drawn from this study, its character should be consequently expanded to include analysis of other adaptable materials, such as short stories, novels, motion pictures, radio dramas and biographies. It is believed that each literary and dramatic form will present individual problems of adaptation in keeping with its respective character. If a study were to be made of each of these forms, a whole body of information could be made available for the prospective television writer.

A second approach to this problem would be to make a study of available television scripts of adapted material in each of the different forms, and to arrive at some conclusions as to the nature of the writing problems and techniques to be found to exist.

There is room in the field of television writing, also, for various studies to be made covering the problems involved in writing the original television drama. The characteristic difference of approach between the original script and the adaptation was touched upon in this study, but additional work is needed. This is true also for the differences in the techniques of dramatic expression which exist between the theatre and television.

In conclusion, it can be stated that in the field of television writing there is a great lack of available material on specific writing problems. In an effort to cover the entire field, most works on the subject, including the good ones, have too often been confined to generalities.

Non-creative-type Studies. One of the most important problems faced in the adaptation of The Father was the consideration of the television audience and its possible reaction to the material. No conclusions could be drawn from this problem, however, for the simple reason that information of its type was not available. It would appear, then, that there is room for several basic undertakings in the area of audience research. There is, first of all, a strong need to determine, insofar as possible, the difference in reaction between the home viewer and his theatre counterpart. Undoubtedly, such a difference exists, but the degree to which this difference should affect the question of material selection has not, as yet, been investigated. This is true although it can be stated that this problem is one which must be considered both by the producer and the writer in the selection and production of the television adaptation.

It is also apparent that too much consideration has been shown by the television industry and by commercial sponsors for the views and opinions of individual pressure groups and for the idea of the "mass audience." Both of these factors have resulted in severe limitations in the field of dramatic literature on television, with the result that many television writers are presently being asked to create in accordance with pre-determined standards of material. In order that a play, for example, may attract a wide, general type of audience without being offensive to any portion of that audience, character conceptions are often made to adhere to some type of dramatic formula, as are plots, themes, and actions. This attitude is presently causing the television medium to lose much of the vitality of which it is capable. Consequently, if possible, it would be valuable in terms of the programming structure of the medium to determine whether or not the above factors involving material selection standards are valid in terms of the needs and wants of the television audience.

The second body of information which needs to be studied is the determination of the relative effectiveness of dramatic types of materials on television. At the present time, there is no definite method available to accomplish this purpose except by established means of coincidental audience surveys, a system which indicates only if a viewer is watching a particular type of program and not whether or not he is enjoying it. In this study, concern for this problem arose over the fact that the writer had no means of testing the effectiveness of Strindberg on television, or the effectiveness of his

particular type of psychological, analytical drama as exemplified by The Father.

In concluding this study, the writer is aware that he has been unable to cover sufficiantly the entire field of writing the television adaptation. Nonetheless, by analyzing the nature of some of the more important adaptation problems, as encountered in the treatment of a three-act stage play, by providing a means of selecting dramatic types of materials for television and by establishing a procedure which may be utilized in the adaptation process, he believes that he has been able to offer a practical introduction to that subject. Whether or not the writer's efforts in the field have been beneficial remains to be seen, but at least he has been able to point the way toward a better understanding of what has become one of the more prominent fields of modern writing. In so doing, he has been able to recognize the adaptation as a significant dramatic form, and the adaptor as an important figure in the media of communication.

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