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## ABSTRACT

### THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE: A TWO-ACT PLAY

By William Boleslaus Sakalauskas

This thesis consists of an original two-act play plus a preface and a postscript. The plot of the play centers around a theme of revenge resulting from the murder of a young Korean woman. An American soldier who loved the woman returns home to carry out his promise to kill her murderer. The plot development is written realistically, but a contextual abstract scene is interposed in both acts.

The preface gives the background of the development and writing of the play. The play is experimental in that it utilizes two unrealistic scenes presented and described from a non-psychological and non-sociological view of human behavior. The scenes were written in the context of the role theory of human behavior developed by certain social-psychologists. This aspect of the play is discussed in more detail in the preface.

Some ideas about theatre which grew out of writing the play but do not pertain to the play are included in the postscript. These ideas concern the use of the concepts of social-psychology to effect a



better understanding of the process of theatre.

The play is intended as drama for an audience. It should communicate the story, the theme, the conflict, and its resolution as viewed by the playwright, but more importantly, it should hold the audience and make them feel their time has been well spent. To that end, the author relinquishes the play to the director and actors.

Approved

James T. Gordon

**THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE**

**A TWO-ACT PLAY**

**By**

**William Boleslaus Sakalauskas**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted to  
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Other Side of Silence was conceived as a dramatic situation; however, the central character existed in my mind several years prior to the conception of the play. Apparently, the play grew out of the character. I found what I believed to be the right dramatic situation for that character.

The first synopsis of the plot and its resolution was completely realistic and very unsatisfactory to me. Characters took form and scenes were written, but attempts to write the play as a whole were unsuccessful and kept leading to an intense desire to utilize something beyond literalism. I had an idea for an unrealistic element in the play, but was unable to describe my intention. The solution was to write it and seek an explanation later.

In writing the unrealistic scenes, I found myself thinking in the role-theory terminology social-psychologists use in describing human behavior. This is not a pedantic approach; all writers write from some view point, whether eclectic or systematic.

In the next to the last draft, the introduction to the unrealistic scenes was criticized as not being lucid. I had merely stated my role theory name for the

scenes and then had given general suggestions as to how the scene should be played. Subsequently, I surveyed several social-psychology texts in an attempt to define clearly my conception of the scenes. This proved impractical since it would have entailed presenting an entire view of role theory in order to explain the concept used to label the scenes.

Since there was no intent to proselytize a theory, I decided to explain in general terms what happens in the scenes and then to emphasize and expand on how the scenes should be played.

The director and actors should not probe for some mysterious meaning to the abstract scenes. The scenes have no literal meaning; they are merely theatrical devices which, hopefully, will add to the overall effect of the play. Furthermore, the rightful concern of the audience is the playing of the scene and not an explanation of it. My concept of the scene is stated in specific terms in the script for academic purposes. I request that in production there be no program notes or other publicity attempting to explain these scenes to the audience.

I have given attention to a particular problem encountered in writing this play. This should not be construed as meaning that I place more importance on the two unrealistic scenes in the play than on the rest of it.

In fact, the realistic scenes are the substance of the play, and the unrealistic scenes are meant to provide them with further substance. However, the problems I encountered writing the realistic portions of the play were familiar ones and require no comment.

Also, there is no judgment or opinion I can make about the intent and possible effectiveness of the overall script. The process of writing a play creates meanings apart from the interest of production; my thoughts of the play concern how it was written.

The play is intended as drama for an audience. Hopefully, it will convey the story, the theme, the conflict and its resolution as I have conceived and felt them to be, but more importantly, it should hold the audience and make them feel their time has been well spent. To that end, I relinquish the play to the director and actors.

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**THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE**

**A TWO-ACT PLAY**

The title of this play is taken from  
Lawrence Ferlinghetti's A Coney Island  
of the Mind. It is used out of context  
but expresses my feeling of the play  
-- man beyond his words.

## CHARACTERS

Carl Jensen

John Jensen

Marge Jensen

Susan Jensen

Jim Pelton

Frank Pelton

A room in the one-hundred-year-old Jensen home. It was once a dining room, but was changed to a sitting room when a large, harmonious addition was added to the original structure. The room has been redecorated in "Good Housekeeping" taste; the colors are new, the flavor old. The room has a small fireplace stage left, books, TV, a small liquor cabinet-bar, and soft, comfortable furniture. There are French doors up center leading to a patio. A large, square-cornered opening right leads to a vestibule which in turn leads to the main entrance of the home, the living room, Mr. Jensen's home office, and upper bedrooms. A doorway at upper left leads to the new addition to the home which includes the kitchen, dining area, a guest room, and upper bedrooms.

## ACT I

Carl is standing with a drink in his hand staring through the curtains of the French doors. He is wearing chino pants and a T-shirt. He is worried and tense. He crosses to a chair down right and sits. He crosses to a chair down right and sits. He takes a sip of the drink, sees the glass is empty, rises and crosses to the liquor cabinet. He starts to pour another drink, hesitates, then puts the top back on the bottle. He is replacing the bottle when John enters from the left.

John is a genteel, slight man in his mid-fifties. His voice is slightly breathy and he speaks with a not fully acquired upper American accent. He has a habit of grimacing as he talks as though it were part of the accent.

JOHN

I didn't expect you up this early.

CARL

Where is everyone?

JOHN

Well, we thought you'd sleep 'til at least noon or so. We went in to do some shopping. Your mother and Sue are in the kitchen putting things away.

(Crosses to center.)

CARL

Oh.

JOHN

Say, it's a bit early in the day to be . . . oh, well, I could probably use one myself. Settle the nerves a bit. Pour one for me, too, would you?

(Carl lifts the bottle toward John.)

Ah, yes, just straight, no mix.

(Carl pours two drinks.)

Well, did you get a good rest?

CARL

All right -- yes.

JOHN

Ahem. We didn't get a chance to talk much last night; your mother and Sue were as excited as a couple of school girls. Why didn't you let us know you were coming in?

(Carl hands John his drink.)

CARL

I didn't want to bother anyone.

JOHN

It wouldn't have been a bother.

CARL

At three o'clock in the morning?

JOHN

Well, it isn't every day, you know. They would've enjoyed meeting you at the airport. Taking a cab in was rather ridiculous.

CARL

I'm here now, so it doesn't matter.

JOHN

No, I guess not. (Pause. Searching for conversation.) Well, how does it feel to be a civilian again?

CARL

I don't know. It hasn't been very long -- couple of days.

JOHN

Yes. Well, you'll be able to take it easy for a while. You can relax and think about what you want to do. Whatever you decide, we'll try to work it out. Of course, you know I'd probably like to see you . . .

CARL

Look, Dad, if you don't mind, I've been home -- awake -- for (Checks his watch.) about one hour or so.

JOHN

I said there's no rush about anything. You don't have to take offense. I didn't mean you had to decide.

(Sue enters from up left. She is in her early twenties and is attractive and vivacious.)

SUE

Carl! (Crosses to him.) So you're really home? It's really you?

CARL

(Looks at himself and squeezes his arm in a couple of places.) Near as I can tell.

SUE

I kept telling Mom and Dad I dreamt you came home last night, and they kept insisting you did. I guess I never got fully awake. (Smiles.) Or I guess I thought it was just too good to be true.

CARL

I don't know about that.

SUE

Well, it isn't every day my favorite brother comes home from the service.

CARL

Favorite brother? What kind of a compliment is that?

SUE

Well, just because you're my only brother, it doesn't mean you can't be my favorite one.

CARL

(Chuckles.) All right.

SUE

Well, I'd better get back and help Mom. We've got a busy day today.

CARL

Busy?

SUE

Yes, didn't Dad tell you? We're having company about noon. You'll have to put on a shirt and tie.

CARL

(Mock enthusiasm.) Oh, great. Who's the company?

SUE

(On exit.) Jim and his dad.

CARL

Jim? (To John, in a frightened voice.) Jim . . . Who?

JOHN

(Laughs lightly.) Jim Pelton. Surprise you? You two should have a lot to talk about. We didn't expect you today, you know, but it works out fine.

(Carl is stunned by the information that Jim Pelton is coming over. He is almost visibly shaken, but controls himself to find out more. He turns away from John to hide his reaction.)

CARL

What . . . ah . . . why are they coming?

JOHN

Well, Frank Pelton and I have been discussing a possible business deal. It's looking pretty good, too. Thinking about buying some of our land.



CARL

What land?

JOHN

Next to their supermarket. You remember. They want to develop a shopping center.

CARL

I thought that fell through long ago.

(Carl crosses to the liquor cabinet and pours himself a drink.)

JOHN

No, it's a good site. Well, it's true Frank Pelton turned it down a few years ago. I told him then it was a good site. Well, I'm glad he wasn't interested. Property's worth a lot more now, a lot more. This tentative offer is . . . well, it's . . . it's a small fortune, Carl.

CARL

How did you sell him on it?

JOHN

Well, Jim contacted me a couple of months ago, right after he got back from Korea. He's been a real whirlwind for his father. They've got about half-dozen supermarkets, you know, and Jim's been planning on opening at least two more, plus this other development.

CARL

Didn't they have a study made or something that showed

it wasn't a very good location?

JOHN

What does a study show? You don't build and expand by studying a bunch of charts. You've got to create the business. That's what I told them. Say, Carl, they're due here about any time. You ought to be going up to change.

CARL

Well, I wasn't planning on any company today.

JOHN

You said you had a good rest.

CARL

It isn't that. I mean I don't feel like seeing a lot of people today.

JOHN

A lot of people? Jim and his dad -- that's all.

CARL

I'd rather beg off. I don't feel very sociable, I'm . . . I'll go into town. I've got some things to square away.

JOHN

Now don't be ridiculous. Besides, I think Sue would be kind of hurt if you weren't here.

CARL

Sue? What's she got to do with it?

JOHN

What has she . . . ? Oh, yes, we have to bring you up to date on a lot of things. She and Jim have been seeing quite a bit of each other.

CARL

(Furious.) Seeing each other?

JOHN

Yes, I think she'll want you to be here.

CARL

You mean they've been . . . dating?

JOHN

Why, yes, of course. They've been going out quite a bit. They seem to have hit it off quite well.

CARL

They're serious about each other?

JOHN

Well, I think so. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't be surprised if they . . . I'm just speculating, of course . . . but they do make a nice couple.

CARL

(Flaring.) What the hell do you mean "nice couple"?

JOHN

Well, I didn't say they were . . . Carl, what in God's name is the matter with you?

CARL

Why wasn't I told? No one wrote about it.

JOHN

(Perplexed.) I'm telling you right now. There was no reason to write about it -- Sue's dated a lot of young men. What are you getting so damned huffy about?

CARL

Jim's only been home about three months.

JOHN

Well, I'm sure they've gotten to know each other well. They've been together every day for the past month or so.

CARL

Is that breaking your heart?

JOHN

What do you mean?

CARL

I mean did you encourage her before he made the offer on the property or afterward?

JOHN

Carl, I don't like your insinuation one bit! Not one damned bit! What Sue does is her business. Jim made a strong play for her and I have no objections to that. Jim's a fine young man. The offer for the property hasn't got a damned thing to do with her, nothing! She's perfectly free to do what she wants. Well, she happens to want him, and I'm sure as hell not going to stop her.

(During this speech, after "Jim made a strong play for her," Carl looks away, frowning.)

CARL

(Absently.) No, I don't suppose you are.

JOHN

Damn it, Carl! You've got no right to talk like that!

CARL

I'm sorry, I didn't mean anything by that. I mean you didn't encourage her then?

JOHN

I most certainly did not. I was aware of the rather . . . obvious situation and, if you must know, I made a point of telling her that she didn't have to play up to him. She laughed at me -- there was no question of keeping him away or keeping them apart.

(Carl has turned away from him, lost in thought. Marge enters from up left. She has on a dainty apron. She is a warm, fun-loving person who behaves in a very correct and almost coldly efficient manner because of John's expectations. Still, she conveys the impression that she would like to kick off her shoes and sit on the floor at a party . . . but she never will.)

MARGE

Carl! I thought you'd be up changing. She said she told you we were having company.

CARL

Well, Mother, I . . . I was just telling Dad that . . .

JOHN

Talk to him, will you, Marge. (Carl turns away from him again.) He says he's going into town, he can't meet "a lot of people" today. I told him . . . ah . . . (Waves his hand in disgust.)

MARGE

(Lightly.) Carl, it's just Jim and his father. We've got a nice lunch. You'll get a chance to talk to Jim. (Marge motions for John to leave. He shrugs and exits up left.) Carl, I know, it's a bit hectic for your first day home. (Slight pause.) Look, I'm sure you'd rather lounge around, but it won't hurt you.

CARL

No, it isn't that. It's . . .

MARGE

(Crossing to Carl . . . seriously.) Carl, I think I know what's bothering you. It's the girl, isn't it?

(Carl looks up at her, but makes no attempt to speak.)

I didn't mean to slight the way you must still feel about her death. I wanted to say something as soon as you got home, but last night didn't seem quite appropriate and today's been . . .

CARL

That's all right, Mother. You don't have to . . .

MARGE

Well, it hasn't been a long time, and maybe you're not up to partying, but it would make things a lot nicer today if . . .

CARL

No, it isn't that, Mother. I . . . just . . . well, it's just my first day. I haven't had a chance to get my bearings. (With levity.) You know, like in the movies -- the returning veteran has to readjust to being a civilian. Has to . . . ah . . . get rid of four-letter words from his vocabulary. Has to stop saying "darn."

MARGE

(Mock horror.) Carl, don't you dare use that word in this house! (Both laugh.) Now, will you please be a good readjusting veteran and change. A sport shirt and slacks will be fine.

CARL

(Pause.) Well . . . all right.

(Carl gives Marge a light kiss on the cheek, crosses to pick up his empty glass to take it to the kitchen. John enters from up left checking his watch.)

MARGE

(To Carl.) I'll take care of that.

(Carl hands the glass to her and crosses right.)  
They'll be here soon, so don't take too long getting

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. . . readjusted.

CARL

(Over his shoulder.) Yes sir! I mean ma'am. Is that an order?

MARGE

You're darned right!

CARL

(Shaking his head on exit right.) Mother! For shame! My own mother!

JOHN

Readjusted? Shame? What's all that about?

MARGE

Oh, just a little joke, nothing.

JOHN

Well, did you get some sense into his head?

MARGE

John . . . please. He's gone up to change; he'll be right down.

JOHN

Well, my God, you'd think I asked him to climb Mt. Everest or something. The simplest little thing -- change your clothes --

MARGE

He just got home and besides, I think he's still quite . . . oh, quite depressed about the girl.

JOHN

The girl? Why, that's been months.

MARGE

Well, he took it hard. You know how he sounded in his letter. It seemed like the end of the world to him.

JOHN

Yes, I know, but he ought to be over it. A lot of people have losses. He's not any . . .

(Sue enters from up left.)

Lunch ready, Sue?

SUE

Yes, it looks good. We just have to put the rolls in the oven.

MARGE

We'll have to whip the cream yet, too.

SUE

No, I'll do it just before dessert.

MARGE

(Smiles.) So it'll be just perfect.

SUE

Yes, perfect.

(Whirls around gaily.)

Oh, Mother, I'm so glad you're going to meet Mr. Pelton. I know you'll love him. He's such a dear.

MARGE

I'm sure I will.

JOHN

Yes, he's quite a genial man, all right. Of course, I've only talked with him a couple of times when we discussed the property, but he seemed very likeable, outgoing . . .

SUE

He has quite a thing about his name. I think he'd still like to go by "Paluczak." He has a slight, accent, you know, and he says no one ever said anything when he was called "Paluczak." But now when he meets someone, they get curious and want to know what nationality the name "Pelton" is. So, he tells them it's imitation American.

(John smiles and Marge laughs.)

(JOHN

Well, I do think it was a good thing -- changing the name. "Pelton" is certainly more manageable than "Paluczak" -- especially as a name for supermarkets.

SUE

It was Jim's idea -- way back in high school. I guess he had quite a time convincing his dad, too. Jim said you'd have thought he was asking him to cut off his arm. He said his dad told him he would rather . . .

(Door chimes.)

Oh, that must be them!

JOHN

I'll check. (John exits right.)

(Sue follows John through the doorway. Marge takes off her apron and places it out of the way.)

JOHN

(Offstage.) They're here, Marge.

(Marge checks her appearance and crosses center.)

(Still offstage. Jovial.) Come in. Come in.

(John guides Frank Pelton into the room.)

It's good to see you again, Mr. Pelton. Welcome to the Jensen home.

(Frank Pelton is in his late sixties. He has worked hard much of his life and has become quite wealthy in the last few years. He wears his relatively new affluence quite well and is not uncomfortable with it. He speaks with a slight Slavic accent.)

FRANK

Thank you. It's nice to be here.

(Jim and Sue enter with their arms around each other. Jim is in his late twenties. He is handsome and self-assured.)

JIM

Hello, everyone.

MARGE

Hello, Jim.

JOHN

Marge, I'd like you to meet Jim's father, Mr. Pelton.

Mr. Pelton, my wife.

(Marge offers her hand and Frank shakes it slightly and then holds it in both his hands.)

FRANK

So this is the lovely girl's mother. I'm very pleased to meet you, Mrs. Jensen.

MARGE

(Brightly.) Thank you.

FRANK

I don't know, Jim. I think you've got your eyes on the wrong one.

(Let's go of Marge's hand abruptly.)

Oops, excuse me, Mr. Jensen.)

(The rest chuckle politely.)

SUE

(Mock sarcasm.) Well, thank you very much, Mr. Pelton.

FRANK

Oh, don't worry, Susan, second best is not bad.

(A more sincere chuckle from the group.)

SUE

Oh, you terrible man!

MARGE

(A jovial reprimand.) Susan!

FRANK

Not so terrible, Susan. It would be terrible if I went around telling young girls how beautiful they are --



especially in front of their mothers.

(This time, there is a hearty, sincere laugh  
from the rest.)

Later. Later, Susan, I'll tell you how beautiful you  
are.

JIM

Why you old sheep in wolves' clothing.

FRANK

Old sheep, huh?

(Pats Jim's head.)

Then you are the baby lamb, right?

SUE

Touche! Give up, Jim. You can't keep up with him.

JOHN

Mr. Pelton, I won't be able to live with these women  
after your compliments.

(Looks about.)

Well, let's not stand here. Sit down, Mr. Pelton, sit  
down.

(Frank gestures for the women to sit and they  
do. Then Frank and Jim sit. John is still  
standing.)

Well, I think a drink would be in order, a toast to  
our . . . ah . . . gathering here.

FRANK

Ah, that sounds good.

JIM

Sure.

(Marge starts to rise, but Sue rises and stops her.)

SUE

No, Mother. Jim and I can get them. What'll it be?

(Jim rises.)

JOHN

(Sitting down.) It's a bit early, but how about Scotch?

FRANK

Find, fine.

JIM

All right by me.

MARGE

Easy on mine, Sue.

SUE

Mine, too.

(Jim and Sue exit up left.)

FRANK

(Looking about.) Well, you have a very nice home, Mrs. Jensen. Driving up to it is like a picture.

JOHN

You'll have to see the rest of it . . . and the grounds, too. This room is part of the original Jensen home. The whole east wing (motions left) was added on -- in keeping with the architecture, of course.



FRANK

Yes, it looks good, you can't tell the difference.

JOHN

Well, it's a heritage, you know. We didn't want to spoil the appearance. The Jensen family has been here close to one hundred years.

FRANK

That's a long time. Speaking about heritage, where is your son. He's going to be here?

MARGE

Yes, he'll be down soon. Oh, how did you . . .

FRANK

Jim called Sue this morning. She told him Carl was home already.

MARGE

Yes, he got in about three this morning.

FRANK

You didn't expect him?

MARGE

Well, we knew it would be within a few days.

FRANK

Well, that was a wonderful surprise.

(Marge rises and crosses right to the hall.)

MARGE

Yes, it was. (Loudly.) Carl, everyone's here.

FRANK

(Interrupts on "Carl.") No, no, Mrs. Jensen. Please.  
Don't rush him. There's no hurry.

MARGE

(Smiles and crosses back.) All right.

FRANK

Rush, everything is rush. I thought when I got older I would slow down. But that son of mine, he wants us to expand like a balloon . . . buy this . . . expand that . . . develop . . .

JOHN

Well, I think you're fortunate. Jim's a sharp young man.

FRANK

Oh, I can't complain, really. The money's fine. I like the comforts. I get to travel quite a bit -- it helps not to be lonely since the wife died. But sometimes I'm lonely for the little grocery store, you know, where I knew all the customers.

(Jim and Sue enter with a tray of glasses and a bucket of ice. They set the tray on the liquor cabinet and fix the drinks.)

It was a pretty decent living . . . but all that's gone . . . old fashioned, I know.

JOHN

Well, we've got to progress and keep up with the times.

FRANK

Yes, I know.

JIM

Is he putting on his apron again?

FRANK

That apron got us lots of things. It put you through college.

SUE

That's right, Jim.

JIM

Sure, I know. But you're a heck of a lot better off now. You can relax, do what you want.

FRANK

Sure, relax. I was just telling them about all the rushing, all the running around . . .

JIM

Yes, but you take off when you want to. You don't put in twelve hours a day like you used to. (Smiles.) Besides, you can return anytime you want to.

FRANK

(A little flustered.) Yes, maybe, maybe, but I like to keep my fingers in the pie. I wore the apron all those years, not you.

JIM

I know. And now I want you to get something out of it.

FRANK

Well, we've done pretty good . . .

JIM

No, I mean something special. Let's see . . . in deep appreciation to the founder of the Pelton Markets, we present this ah . . . genuine Irish linen apron . . .

FRANK

(Mock gratitude.) Oh, thank you very much.

JIM

And a permanent place behind the meat counter of his choice.

FRANK

Oh, it's too much, I'm going to cry. (Broadly.) Good morning, good morning, Mrs. Jensen. Can I interest you in a nice roast today? (A quick pause.) Yes? Well, it's all in plastic over there. Go help yourself.

(Laughter. Carl enters from the right. Jim rises and crosses toward Carl with his hand extended. Carl stops on seeing Jim. Carl stares soberly at Jim and his hands are at his sides. On his cross, Jim notices Carl's reaction to him and smoothly puts his extended hand on Carl's shoulder.)

JIM

Welcome back, Carl. Join the civilians.

(Carl does not respond to Jim's greeting. He

merely stares at him. Frank has risen. Carl's reactions to Jim and Jim's covering are subtle. They occur quickly and are barely noticeable.)

FRANK

Good to see you, Carl.

(Carl crosses to Frank.)

CARL

It's good to see you again, Mr. Pelton.

(They shake hands.)

FRANK

It's been a long time. Let's see . . . it was when you and Jim were home together at the same time -- on leave. That was, well . . . about three years ago or more.

CARL

It's been a while. You're looking good.

FRANK

Ah, thank you. And you, you look, oh, older maybe, but more like a man.

MARGE

Sue, a drink for Carl?

JIM

I'll get it.

(Crosses to liquor cabinet.)

We're having Scotch.

CARL

Ah, yes. Just ice.



FRANK

I know there were some bad times over there, Carl. Jim has told me some. But it's something you have to forget.

JOHN

Jim, while you're up, we could use a touch more.

JIM

Sure.

(Sue rises and takes John's and Frank's glasses to Jim for refills. Marge waves Sue off. Frank turns Carl away from the rest for a personal remark, not to be unheard, but to add closeness to his comment.)

FRANK

Carl, I understand you had such a bad loss in Korea. I was very sorry to hear about that.

JIM

(Over his shoulder.) Dad, I don't think Carl wants to talk about that. Can't you be more cheery?

(Frank waves him off.)

FRANK

(To Jim.) Never mind. I just want a moment. (To Carl.) You were planning to marry the girl?

CARL

Yes . . . I was.

FRANK

(Shaking his head.) It's too bad war doesn't separate

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...



the bad from the good. (Nodding.) It's a terrible thing.

JOHN

Well, we all have our losses and I'm sure Carl will be able to handle his. Things like that fade away, you know. It's been quite a while already.

CARL

Four months.

(Carl and Frank remain standing.)

JOHN

Anyway, from what I hear at the club, there are plenty of members' daughters who would like to meet you.

CARL

I'm not interested.

MARGE

John, I don't think that's the point.

JOHN

Well, I mean there are plenty of girls around who . . .

CARL

I said I'm not interested.

JOHN

I was just going to say there are plenty of girls who would like to have the Jensen name.

CARL

(Matter of fact.) Screw the Jensen name.

JOHN

I won't have that!

SUE

Carl! Please!

FRANK

Now, now, that's my fault. Carl, I didn't mean to upset you about the girl . . .

JOHN

I think the apology is the wrong way around . . .

CARL

I'm sorry, Mr. Pelton. I'm just a little edgy, I guess.

JIM

Ah, come on, come on. To heck with all the apologies.

(Hands drinks to Carl and Frank and then to John. Sits.)

FRANK

Just one thing, Carl, if you don't mind, I want to tell your parents. OK? And I know Jim won't mind my saying so. (To John and Marge.) You know, Jim was not . . . well, he was not very settled when he got home.

JIM

Now, Dad. Don't rehash . . .

FRANK

No, it's true. So, there were some arguments. Out all the time. Drinking. A bum, I kept calling him. A bum.

Then, all of a sudden, he was working day and night.  
Found a nice girl. So we were fighting for nothing.  
Just a little time, take it from me. Don't rush. Let  
him look around; everything will settle out.

MARGE

I'm sure you're right, Mr. Pelton.

JOHN

Marge, how about you and Sue serving up the lunch?  
(Rises.) I'd like to show Mr. Pelton the old wing of  
the house . . . my office, the den, and the rest.

FRANK

I'd like to see it.

JOHN

Fine, we can take our drinks with us.

(The rest rise. John, Frank and Jim start to  
cross right.)

MARGE

Now, don't take too long. We'll have everything ready  
in just a few minutes.

(Marge and Sue exit up left.)

JIM

Coming, Carl?

CARL

I thought you and I might have a chance to . . . talk.  
You've seen the house, haven't you?

(John frowns.)



JIM

Yes, but I . . . well, all right, sure.

FRANK

Why, of course, Jim. You can catch up on old times.

(John gives Carl a concerned look and then  
leads Frank off right.)

JIM

Well, how's it going, Carl?

CARL

(In a monotone, away from Jim.) It won't work, Jim.

JIM

What's that?

CARL

(Turns.) Get off it.

JIM

I don't follow you.

CARL

Don't play games, Jim. You think you're off the hook  
because you've moved in on Sue and the old man?

JIM

(Amazed.) Carl, are you still . . . ? I thought that  
would be all cleared up by now.

CARL

(Glaring at him and moving toward him.) It isn't cleared  
up. I haven't finished what I started.

JIM

Carl, you beat the hell out of me -- you made a mistake -- I thought you would know. I figured things like that happen . . . especially at a time like that. I don't even hold a grudge.

CARL

(Furious. Grabs Jim's shirt.) Not hold a grudge! You murdering son-of-a-bitch.

JIM

(Grabs Carl's arm.) Carl, I did not kill her. I wanted to talk to you. I didn't get a chance. But, anyway, the inquiry explained everything. It was all cleared up.

CARL

(Releases Jim.) Inquiry? A couple of your friends checking you out.

JIM

Carl, use your head. You don't know who killed her. You're still trying to find out. I don't blame you for . . .

CARL

Don't blame me? Listen to me. I swore I'd kill the bastard who murdered her. Well, I tried. And I would have, too, if those ROKS hadn't pulled me off you.

JIM

Jesus, Carl. I know how you feel. Yongnan was a beautiful girl and probably a wonderful person, I don't know. But I'm sure I'd feel the same way you do. But we were friends, Carl. Before we went in we . . .

CARL

We weren't friends.

JIM

All right. We were . . . acquaintances -- whatever. But it's still a crazy idea. Why don't you drop it . . . try to get over it.

CARL

You've got more guts than brains, Jim.

JIM

What do you mean?

CARL

You didn't kill Yongnan?

JIM

No, I told you that before and I'll . . .

CARL

But I believed you did and I tried to kill you.

JIM

Well, I wouldn't say you actually . . .

CARL

How long were you in the hospital? I heard it was two weeks.

JIM

No, just a few days . . . maybe a week.

CARL

Two weeks?

JIM

About . . . I guess.

CARL

It was pretty bad, wasn't it.

JIM

Well, yes, but I . . .

CARL

You didn't tell anyone about it?

JIM

No, why should I?

CARL

You didn't tell anyone about that crazy Jensen guy and what he tried to do?

JIM

No, I mean, what would I gain? You made a mistake; I thought you would realize it. There was no reason to upset everyone.

CARL

No, instead you got an opportunity to move in and you took it.

JIM

Move in?



CARL

Yes! You gave Sue the rush and now you're trying to sew up the old man.

JIM

I don't know what . . .

CARL

You've offered him a better deal on that property than he'd ever get. Move in close. Become part of the family. Make them love you, need you.

JIM

Carl, what the hell are you talking about?

CARL

Did you plan every step or did you just luck out?

JIM

Look, if you need a map, I'll draw it for you. We're trying to develop a shopping center. We'd just as soon tie it in with one of our supermarkets. Well, your dad offered his property before -- you know that. We went to see him about it. That's how I met Sue again. I asked her for a date. We started going together. We've . . . look, maybe I'm trying to give your dad a good deal because of Sue. So what's wrong with that?

CARL

You're a diabolical bastard, Jim, but it won't work. What you did to Yongnan . . . to me, you'll pay for



JIM

You're out of your mind, Carl. You've got yourself convinced of something that never happened. Now you get off it! I don't like it. I don't like it one damn bit.

CARL

You should have thought of that four months ago.

JIM

For Christ's sake, Carl, use your head. You're talking about killing someone.

CARL

Someone?

JIM

All right, me. But it might as well be someone, anyone . . . just so you can get it out of your system.

CARL

I didn't pick you. You picked yourself.

JIM

You're really convinced, aren't you? Look, Carl, I know you'll come to your senses. I know you will. Maybe, if we went out and had a couple of drinks, a few kicks or something, you'd snap out of it.

CARL

To hell with your kicks.

(Faces him fully.)

You know what Yongnan looked like when you left her?

Well, I saw her too, remember? I saw her. That's about

all I've been able to see. I can't close my eyes without seeing her that way. I don't know if I'll ever get any kicks again. Sometime, maybe. But not until I . . .

(Turns, sobs slightly.)

God, I loved that woman. God, how I loved her . . . she was hoping . . . we were both . . . I . . . I wanted . . .

(Jim looks toward both doors, then puts his hand on Carl's shoulder.)

JIM

Jesus, Carl, take it easy . . .

(Carl pushes Jim's hand away.)

CARL

Get your hand off me, you . . . I don't know what to call you. I don't know what you are.

JIM

(Calmly.) Carl, I'm someone who's been accused of something terrible -- something I didn't do. Can't you see that? I wish I could tell you something, anything, to make you feel better.

(Voices of John and Frank off right.)

Look, I'll go and keep Sue and your mother occupied. Try to straighten up a bit, huh?

(Carl doesn't answer.)

We'll get together soon and talk some more if you like, OK?

(Jim crosses left.)

Take it easy, Carl. Just take it easy.

(Exits left.)

CARL

(Ironically.) Take it easy. Easy.

(He goes to the table and gets his drink and gulps it down. Crosses to liquor cabinet and refills his glass. John and Frank enter from right.)

JOHN

Yes, there's quite a bit of history in that part of the house, Frank, nearly a hundred years. It's our foundation you might say . . . where it all got started.

(To Carl.) Where's Jim?

CARL

Oh, he . . . went to the kitchen to . . . ah . . . to help out.

JOHN

Well, we've got a bartender. What do you say we have one more before lunch? I wonder how they're coming along.

FRANK

Oh, I think maybe I'll pass this time.

JOHN

Oh, now, just a small one. Good for your appetite.

FRANK

Well, all right.

(Hands glass to John. Sits. John crosses to Carl.)

Carl, you heard your father. No more for me, just one for my appetite.

(Despite his rage against Jim, Carl does not transfer his hatred to Frank. He is, in fact, rather taken by him and he smiles at his remark.)

JOHN

And he's got a big appetite, I'm sure, Carl.

(Crosses to up left.)

Be right back. (On exit.) Marge, you about ready?

FRANK

Yes, it's a very nice house here.

(Carl is finishing fixing Frank's drink.)

CARL

It's quite comfortable.

FRANK

Goes back a long way like your father says. (Muses.)

We don't go back as far, I guess. I came here as a young man, you know.

(Carl brings the drink to Frank.)

CARL

Doesn't everyone go back as far as everyone else?

(Carl sits.)

FRANK

(Chuckles.) Yes, that's true, very true. But your

home, your family, like your father says, has a long tradition, a foundation.

CARL

Mr. Pelton, I'll let you in on a family secret.

(Frank leans forward. Carl, mocking seriousness.)

You want a long tradition and a good foundation . . . just sit on your ass for a hundred years.

(Frank is taken aback for a second, then guffaws and raises his finger to his lips.)

FRANK

Shh. Shh. Don't let your father hear you talk like that.

(Frank shakes his head and clucks his tongue, then laughs heartily again. John enters from up left.)

Shh. Shh. That's pretty good, Carl. I'll have to remember that one.

JOHN

Well, you better let me in on it, if it's that good.

FRANK

(Embarrassed.) Oh! It's just a . . . nothing, nothing.

(Clears his throat.) Just too much Scotch, I guess.

You're behind, Mr. Jensen, drink up. (Lifts his glass.)

(Carl rises and crosses down right.)

JOHN

Yes, thank you. Well, lunch is about ready. They're





taking it out on the patio so we can enjoy some fresh air.

FRANK

Ah, that sounds good.

(Marge enters from up left. Frank rises, then John.)

MARGE

Well, we're all set. We're just having a light lunch. We'll save our big appetites for tonight.

CARL

Tonight?

MARGE

Yes, we're going to the club for dinner.

(John and Frank go through the French doors to the patio. Marge starts to follow. Jim and Sue are already out there.)

Coming, Carl?

CARL

In a minute.

(Marge sees the rest have gone to the patio and she crosses to Carl.)

MARGE

Carl, were you and Jim arguing about something?

CARL

No, it was nothing.

MARGE

Well, he seemed sort of flustered when he came to the kitchen and I thought . . .

CARL

No, Mother, we were just talking about some of our experiences . . . rehashing some old differences. It was nothing important.

SUE

(Leans through patio door.) Mother! Carl! Come on, we're waiting.

MARGE

We'll be right there.

SUE

All right, hurry up.

MARGE

Carl, what's wrong? (Pause.) Listen, after lunch, do what you want, all right?

(Carl hasn't been hearing her.)

Carl, what's the matter with you?

CARL

What? Oh, nothing, I'm . . . I must have had too much Scotch. What did you say about after lunch?

MARGE

I said . . . never mind, let's go eat.

(She takes his arm.)

CARL

All right.

(They exit through the French doors. One door is left ajar. Voices and laughter on the patio. Then Sue's voice is heard.)

SUE

All right, quiet everyone! Jim has something special to say.

JIM

Sue, I thought we were going to wait until the dinner tonight.

SUE

I'm too excited . . .

JIM

All right. Are you sure?

SUE

Yes, tell them now.

JIM

Well, the big speech is just that Sue and I have decided to get married.

(The congratulations and best wishes are heard intermingled.)

JOHN

Congratulations, Jim! I think Sue will make an excellent wife. Of course, I'm a bit prejudiced.

MARGE

Oh, Sue, I'm so happy for you . . . Jim, I want you to know I'm very pleased . . .

FRANK

Congratulations, Jim, congratulations. She's a beautiful girl. You're too lucky, I think.

(The voices mingle and there is the sound of warmth and laughter. The lights dim simultaneously on the patio and upstage area, leaving the downstage area lighted. In a few moments, the characters enter from down right and down left. First Frank enters from down left, followed by Sue. As Sue enters, Carl, Marge, and Jim enter from down right, then John from down left.

The scene that follows is an abstraction of the characters. The scene might be thought of, in the terminology of social psychology, as a confrontation of self-roles or self-conceptions; in a theatrical sense, it is an interplay between soliloquies.

Although the author conceives of this scene generally from the role theory view of human behavior as developed by social psychologists, particularly symbolic interactionists, there is no need for the director or actors to embroil

themselves in the terminology of that viewpoint. In fact, the writer has utilized this role theory in a fanciful way for artistic purpose: a social psychologist would not speak of a "confrontation of self-conceptions." A few, brief explanations are necessary, but most important is how the scene should be played.

The scene is, first and foremost, unrealistic; it does not occur, and it could not occur. The writer has taken what is going on in the conscious minds of the characters and then allowed these thoughts to interplay. The dialogue occurs between the thoughts and not the characters -- the thoughts talk to each other. The dialogue, then, is pure conjecture and is not in the minds of the characters. Theatrically, the dialogue might be thought of as the chorus of the play.

The most important element of staging this scene is to eliminate all eye contact. The characters should not appear to relate to each other. A speech can be addressed toward a character, but not to him; the character being addressed should not look at the speaker. Replies are delivered away from the questioner. Whenever possible, each character should appear

to be speaking to himself and should portray a sense of being alone.

There is movement and rhythm to the scene, but it is as though it were turned inside out, as though we were watching a bass drummer slowly bring the drumstick to the drum surface and then rapidly withdraw it. Or, it might be thought of as syncopated movement and rhythm -- reactions on the offbeat.

The intent is to have the audience aware of the total unreality of the scene. And the director should use whatever theatrical devices he feels are necessary to keep the scene bizarre rather than ethereal, lest it be construed as some sort of dream sequence.)

CARL

Go on! Sit there! Have a good time. Why don't you tell funny stories? Make them laugh. Isn't that what you want to do? Make Jim feel at home? No! You set one goal, remember? To get back and kill that bastard. Nothing else is supposed to matter. Nothing. (Pause.) Jesus, take it easy! Take it easy. You can't kill him right here, right now. He's thrown you off balance with Sue and the property deal. You can't think about that. That doesn't change anything. They don't know! What are you? A veteran, just home . . . mixed up . . .



trying hard to be nice. They don't know.

(Looks toward Jim.)

Except for him . . . yes. I think he's afraid of me. He'd like me to forget . . . somehow. But I won't. No, I'll just keep thinking of Yongnan, of what happened to her. I don't want to think of it, but I have to.

(Pause.) Think of what happened and what's going to happen.

JIM

(Nervously.) Nothing's going to happen. Nothing at all. Keep him talking and keep talking to him. Talk to him about anything. Just keep him occupied. But don't let him talk to you alone again! He's still shaky. Keep thinking. Think how insane his idea is. Jim, a murderer? No! How ridiculous. I'm not that way. I'm not that way at all. Ask anyone! I just want things to be good for Sue and me . . . and everyone around us. There's nothing wrong with that, is there? (Pause.) No, there's nothing wrong with that.

CARL

No, not the way it sounds, but it's a lie. That's not what you're doing, that's not what you are.

JIM

A lie? How can that be a lie? If I'm doing that, then that's what I am.



CARL

No, you're twisting it around. You're trying to lie to yourself, but you haven't succeeded. You haven't forgotten. You remember killing Yongnan, don't you?

JIM

A lot of bad things happened in Korea. Horrible things happen in a war. But I don't think anything like that ever happened.

CARL

Nothing happened? No one killed Yongnan?

JIM

Oh, no, no. That probably happened. But if it did . . .

CARL

If it did! How in hell can you forget what she . . .

JIM

There is nothing to forget! Oh, sure, the whole mess of the war. I mean it's all right to forget that. It's best to forget that. It really is. Ask anyone. Go ahead!

(Notices others and gestures at them.)

Go ahead, ask them!

MARGE

(Crosses toward Carl.) I do want you to forget about . . . the war. I think it would be good for you . . . and I'd be happier.

SUE

Yes, it would be much better.

JIM

There you are.

CARL

It has nothing to do with that. (Toward Marge.) Can't you tell what's wrong? Can't you feel it?

MARGE

(Frowns.) I . . . I think there's something more than . . . I . . . I just don't know. I try hard to understand, but . . . well, I'm sure you'll get over it.

CARL

No, I can't. You know that.

MARGE

I think I do. But I don't know why.

CARL

Because I . . . aren't you curious to find out what's wrong? What's bothering me! You've noticed it. Why don't you ask someone? Why don't you ask him? (Points to Jim.)

MARGE

That hadn't occurred to me. I don't think I'd have any reason to do that.

JOHN

Sure, don't you see? It's a simple situation. (Toward Jim.) He's everything (Toward Carl.) that he's not.

(Toward Jim, beaming.) He's someone a man could be proud to have as a son. He came back with a good record. He was a good soldier. He's everything . . . everything except my son. I have to accept that, I guess. (Toward Carl.) I suppose I can rely on him to carry on the Jensen name. And that's important, as far as it goes. (Toward Jim again.) But as far as . . . well . . .

JIM

As far as the future goes . . .

JOHN

(Smiles.) Yes, I suppose you could say that. You know I was getting quite worried. I've had some unfortunate business transactions in the last . . . oh, few years. I've always looked for opportunities, but there haven't been too many, you know. Of course, there were other commitments -- the family name to keep up, a lot of social commitments, club activities, hunting, various . . . duties. Contacts. They're very important. Well, at any rate, we had to live in proper style and that takes a certain amount of resources. So, whenever I couldn't increase the holdings of the Jensen estate, I was forced to sell. And that happened quite often. Too often, I'm afraid. I think it's time to build, to change course, so to speak. Susan has made a wise choice for a husband.

SUE

That's a wonderful thing for you to say.

JOHN

Well, no father likes to give his daughter away. You mean a lot to me. You're valuable to me and your mother -- too valuable to just give away.

SUE

Of course I am. And I think I'm too valuable to give myself away. (Dances and twirls into Jim's arms.) Am I worth it?

JIM

(Walking away from Sue.) Of course you are. Name your price.

FRANK

Thirty years! Thirty years, I wore that apron. For what? To buy him a girl? Like buying a . . . a whore?

(Protest from John and Jim, shock from Marge. They do not look at Frank for their protest or shock.)

SUE

(Sassily in front of Frank.) Every woman's a whore. (Snaps her fingers in Frank's face.) Only some are smarter than others. Don't get me wrong. I do love Jim. I love him very much. I just want you to know that as far as I'm concerned . . .

FRANK

(Walking away.) All right. All right. I understand.  
I want to be modern, up to date.

SUE

Well, I'm an old-fashioned girl, making a sensible  
marriage.

FRANK

(Toward Jim.) If that's the way it is, that's the way  
it is. But can't you find a cheaper whorehouse?

JIM

No, no one else will do. Sue is exactly what I want.

MARGE

Sue's choice seems to be a good one. I think it might  
be a good marriage. But love is important . . . and  
making love.

SUE

Well, there's no worry about that. Isn't it obvious . . .  
I mean about Jim and me . . .

MARGE

I don't really know about Jim and you. Now, yes, it  
might be nice. But later, I worry about later when  
you've been married as long as your father and I. I  
hope it's different for you.

SUE

I never think of my mother in those terms. Never!

MARGE

Your father is supposed to be my husband, a man to me, but he doesn't seem to . . . to care.

JOHN

Care! Care! What does a man care about? I care about things a man should care about!

SUE

Yes, of course you do. (Toward Marge.) When you talk that way, you sound like an old slut.

MARGE

No, you mean whore, don't you?

SUE

No. Whores don't give it away.

FRANK

Boy, oh boy. It's really something to be modern, huh?

CARL

(Nodding.) In more ways than one.

FRANK

I never knew in my life how many things were to worry about -- all the problems. I missed out on so many. (Toward Carl.) You like to be modern?

CARL

Modern? I don't know. Sometimes I want to be old fashioned, I guess.

FRANK

I do. Yes, for me, it's better. But a young man? Why should he want to be old-fashioned?

CARL

Well, you see, I was in love and . . .

FRANK

(Pause.) That's not old fashioned.

CARL

Well, I mean what happened, what I wanted to do . . . you don't know what I mean, do you?

FRANK

No, but I would like to know.

CARL

Well, I was very much in love. Her name was Yongnan . . . Kim Yongnan. It's funny, but before I left, I never thought much about loving someone. There were a lot of girls around, but I never cared more about one over another. They were a convenience and love was something that would occur at an appropriate time. Later, in Korea, I knew that I could never marry a convenience. I didn't know that, though, until I met Yongnan. Does that make any sense? Does that mean anything? (Toward Marge.) Did that mean anything to you?

MARGE

It meant a great deal to me. Your letters . . . (Begins to cry.) They were so filled with love. I was so

happy for you. (Sobs quietly.)

SUE

I knew you were in love, too. I really did. Maybe you think I didn't care, much, but I did. I was happy for you. But then . . . after . . . I couldn't . . . well I just couldn't think about that. I don't see how anyone could think about anything like that. I can't. I'm probably too young, wouldn't you say? Oh, I know I may have to think about things like that later. But I don't want to think about that, either.

JOHN

I think being in love is a very fine thing, of course. But love encompasses a great deal more than just love. Love is made of many, many elements. And when they fall together the right way, I think we feel good and we call that love. I don't think you can simply say you loved someone. I think you have to talk about all the factors.

FRANK

He's right that love is maybe more than love. But I think it's the other way around. I think you love someone and then the factors, as he calls them, seem good.

CARL

The girl I loved was killed.

MARGE

Yes, in the war. It was terrible.



CARL

No, not in the war, during the war. She was killed by a person.

MARGE

I wondered . . . I was afraid to ask . . .

JOHN

(Matter of fact.) Well, of course a person did it. Someone always pulls a trigger, drops a bomb or whatever, but I think it's generally accurate to say an individual was killed in a war.

CARL

But one single person killed her.

JOHN

Oh, I suppose one could split hairs and think of it in those terms, but it wouldn't fit in well at all. No, not at all. You see, the important thing is Sue's wedding.

SUE

That's right. It's too horrible to think of it that way.

MARGE

I know it must be hard to forget, but it isn't necessary to sit around and think that somewhere there is one person who actually caused her death.

FRANK

Me? (Pause. Shrugs.) I don't see what difference it makes. He shouldn't torture himself. The girl is dead.

He should forget it. (Toward Carl.) You were saying you wanted to be old-fashioned.

CARL

Sometimes. Sometimes, I think I'd like to be.

FRANK

It's nice to see a young man feel that way. Why do you feel that way?

CARL

Well, you see, I was in love with a girl . . .

FRANK

Yes, we know, we know. It was terrible, what happened. I told you how sorry I was to hear that. But enough is enough. You should forget about the war -- get over it.

CARL

It would seem that way, wouldn't it? But Yongnan didn't die because of the war. She was murdered.

(The group, except for Jim, is shocked.)

MARGE

Dear God!

SUE

Oh, how awful! Did Jim know about it?

JIM

Yes, I did. But of course, it was up to Carl to say anything.

JOHN

That was a terrible thing. But I think one must realize things of that type are expected when there is a war and . . .

FRANK

(Interrupts.) Well, war or no war, it doesn't make it any better.

MARGE

What happened?

CARL

(Pause.) Well, you see, this man tried to . . . to make love to Yongnan. She refused. But he beat her. He beat her badly until she couldn't resist. (Pause.) She died from the beating.

(Sue and Marge gasp. She runs to Carl, crying. She throws her arms around his neck and buries her face in his chest. Carl takes her arms down gently and turns away.)

Don't cry. I just wanted you to know. I don't want you to cry.

FRANK

I don't want to seem without sympathy, but even though the death was very bad, it doesn't change what I said. The girl is dead. Dead is dead. You can't change it, you can't do anything about it. If you had known who it was . . . maybe . . .

CARL

But I did know!

JOHN

Well, why didn't you do something! What kind of a man are you? Do you always stand by and let things happen?

CARL

No! I tried! I tried to get him, but I couldn't.

(John crosses to behind Carl.)

JOHN

Listen, I don't know how to say this and it may sound wrong, somehow. But I want you to be a man. And you can't be a man and let things like that happen. Now, if . . . if you feel you have to do something . . . anything at all, well, you can count on me. Damn it! You know that. I don't like to think of a Jensen letting a thing like that pass.

(Marge comes running to John and Carl, screaming.)

MARGE

No! No!

(She pushes John away.)

No, Carl! Nothing! You mustn't! Say you won't, dear God, please say you won't!

(Carl opens his mouth but is speechless.)

FRANK

I'm not much for speeches, but I would like to say that

I feel like your father. On something like this, I think with my feelings. If something like this had ever happened to my wife . . . I don't like to think of it . . . nobody, nobody would have stopped me. I know how you feel.

(Jim crosses toward Carl, smiling.)

JIM

Beautiful, beautiful. Three out of four. That's pretty good. But didn't you forget something? Like who you think did it? Why don't you try it again? Tell them who you think it was.

(Carl shakes his head "no." Carl bites his lip and frowns.)

SUE

I don't like to think about any of this. I don't want to know what happened. It isn't fair. I want to be happy about my plans and my life.

JOHN

Yes, yes, that's true. Sue's marriage is what counts, now.

(Sue exits down left.)

These things have to be viewed in proper perspective -- the past versus the future. Regardless of what I said, I do believe these past . . . ah . . . unfortunate events, in view of present circumstances, are probably best forgotten. The future is what counts. And, it is

a pleasant outlook.

(Exits down right.)

FRANK

I hope that pleasant outlook doesn't cost me too much.  
(Slight pause.) Ah, what's the difference. If there wasn't much money, maybe I would complain. Maybe I wouldn't allow it. I don't know. But he's my son. He loves the girl. So, I'll argue with him about what price we should offer for the property. I'll bring him down a little, just for the principle . . . yes, the principle of wearing an apron thirty years. (Turns, glances at Carl.) It's funny. I've seen the Jensen boy before, but never for long. He never said much to me. Not today, either, really. But I feel like . . . like he wants me to know him . . . to like him. Something. (Shrugs, toward Marge.) I don't know.

(Exits down right.)

MARGE

I don't either. I felt something like that, too. But he wouldn't say anything. He's always talked to me. I thought maybe it was the girl, but I know he wouldn't show it. It isn't his way. Oh, I suppose I should think about Sue. I really should.

(Exits down left.)

CARL

My father . . . what did he say? Something about we all

have our losses . . . and they fade away. Maybe, it's true, I don't know. Maybe, if Yongnan had died some other way, I might try to . . . to forget. No! I'm sorry, Yongnan. I didn't mean it that way. But it's not the loss now. (Toward Jim.) It's him. He's a living fact, not a loss. And he's not fading away.

(Carl exits down right.)

JIM

(Watching Carl exit.) How can I tell you? How can I explain it to you? (Swings his hand in disgust.) Ah! Well, just keep things moving. Don't let him think about it.

(Exits down left.)

Voices are heard on the patio. The lights come up on the patio and upstage area. The voices become clear.)

FRANK

Thank you, Mrs. Jensen. It was a wonderful lunch.

MARGE

Oh, you're welcome, it was nothing, really.

JIM

Here, let me get that.

MARGE

No, Sue and I can clear this away. You men can go about your business.

JIM

Well, we can all grab something and . . .

SUE

No, go ahead, Jim. No arguments, now.

JOHN

Good heavens, Jim! Don't argue about that. You spoil her now, and you'll be cleaning up the rest of your life. Well, let's leave them alone.

(Jim and Carl enter from the patio. Frank and John follow, but John stops Frank at the door.)

JOHN

Say, Frank, are you about ready for a little walk?

FRANK

Sure, if you like . . .

JOHN

I thought we could look over the grounds, the garden and all.

JIM

That sounds good. Come on, Carl, we'll get a little exercise.

CARL

No, I don't think so.

(Carl crosses to pour a drink.)

FRANK

Jim, I would like a chance to talk to, ah . . . John. You know, the fathers have some private things to say,



and this is a good time.

JIM

(Smiles.) Well, all right.

(John and Frank exit through the patio doors.)

Say, would you mind pouring two while you're at it?

(Carl glances over his shoulder.)

The same . . . just ice.

(Carl pours a drink for Jim. Jim crosses to Carl and picks up the drink. Carl moves away.

Jim sloshes the drink a moment.)

Well, the folks seemed quite happy about Sue and me, wouldn't you say? It's kind of nice to have the parents all for it. It should be one hell of a wedding. Carl, how about a toast to the bride-to-be.

CARL

(Faces Jim.) What bride?

JIM

(Bewildered a moment.) Ah, come on, Carl. You're not still thinking that . . .

CARL

Still? What the hell do you mean? Do you think everything's changed now? Do you think I'm going to forget because of you and Sue?

JIM

No, that's not what I meant. I thought you were just playing a hunch earlier -- trying to feel me out on the

off chance I . . . I might have been guilty. Well, you tested your hunch, and you found out you were wrong. That's all. Now, how about that drink to Sue.

CARL

You can stop your act, Jim . . .

JIM

What act?

CARL

I don't want to hear it! I thought I wanted to watch you, to see how far you could pretend, so I could hate you more. But I can't stand it. I want to look at you, I just want to see your face when you tell me . . .

JIM

(Nervously.) There's nothing to tell . . .

CARL

Then I'll tell you. Yongnan was alive when I got to her . . . she told me what happened. (Jim is stunned.) "Jim, your friend, Jim. Get him . . . please, Carl. So much hurt." I said, "Jim? Jim who, Yongnan? Tell me." She said, "Pelton . . . Pelton . . . you know, Jim."

(Jim is stunned and stares blankly.)

JIM

You can't prove I did it. No one will believe you. No one!

CARL

No one? How about you, Jim? Do you believe it now?

CURTAIN

## ACT II

Same scene: late afternoon

Carl is sitting with his face buried in his hands. He wears the same clothes as before. He drops his hands and stares out for a moment. He looks at his glass on the table next to him and notices it is empty. He rises, picks up the glass and crosses to the liquor cabinet. He straightens, puts the glass down rather hard with disgust and crosses to the French doors. He stares out a moment and then crosses to the fireplace and leans on the mantel. He takes out his wallet and removes a picture. He crosses back to the chair, sits, puts his elbows on his knees and holds the picture in both hands.

Marge enters. She is wearing a housecoat. As soon as Carl notices her enter, he rises quickly, palms the picture in the hand away from her and slips it into his front pocket.

CARL

Well, aren't you going to be a hit at the club tonight. Is that some new fashion that started while I was gone?

MARGE

(Glances down at her housecoat.) Oh, Carl, honestly. Carl, Sue is very upset. She seems to think . . . well,

she seems to think that you don't want anything to do with Jim -- that you don't like the idea of their getting married.

CARL

(Pauses.) She's old enough to make up her own mind.

MARGE

But you didn't join the men to go look at the property, and you . . .

CARL

Mother, I've seen that property hundreds of times. They've all seen it. They just wanted something to do. They'll walk around and Dad'll go through the whole history of the Jensen family and how much it . . .

MARGE

Oh, I know, I know. But you're not planning on going to the club with us tonight, either.

CARL

I told you, I just don't care to go.

MARGE

Well, I wish you'd explain it to Sue . . .

CARL

There's nothing to explain. I don't care to go. It's that simple.

MARGE

Will you talk to her?

CARL

About what?

MARGE

Just talk to her, Carl. Please.

CARL

(Frowns.) There's nothing to say . . .

MARGE

Just tell her that everything's all right. That there's nothing to be concerned about.

(Carl gestures futility and nods agreement.)

Carl, what were you looking at?

CARL

When?

MARGE

When I walked in, you were looking at something . . .

CARL

Oh, I was just . . . oh . . . rummaging through my wallet.

MARGE

Was it . . . her picture?

CARL

(Pauses.) Well, I . . . I do have one, yes.

MARGE

May I see it? You never sent any pictures of her, you know, and I wanted . . .

CARL

Well, I didn't think Dad would want to be reminded that strongly that the Jensens were going to be half Korean.

MARGE

Carl, please, I know . . . but may I see it, please.

(He hands the picture to her and she sits  
before looking at it.)

MARGE

She's beautiful, Carl.

CARL

(Slowly.) She was.

MARGE

I'm sorry, I didn't mean . . .

CARL

I know you didn't.

MARGE

I wish I could have met her. I loved her, too, Carl.  
Just from the way you wrote about her, if only . . .  
(Tearfully.) Oh, it's so unfair, Carl . . .

CARL

Yes, I know . . .

MARGE

I would have been so proud, so happy to have the two  
of you here.

(She rises and crosses to the fireplace mantel.)

Let's put her picture here.

(Holds picture on mantel.)

CARL

I don't think that would be a good idea . . .

MARGE

I just want her to be remembered, Carl. Will it bother you to have her picture out?

CARL

No, it isn't that . . .

MARGE

Oh, I don't mean permanently, Carl . . . just for a time. Here, we'll slip it in this frame.

(She slides the backing out of a small frame and puts the picture in.)

All the time we knew about her, we never had her picture, and it just seems right that we should have one, at least now, for a little while.

(Sets frame on mantel.)

There. (Steps back.) Oh, Carl, it's beautiful. Look.

CARL

(Crosses closer.) Yes, it is.

(Sue enters from stage right.)

SUE

(With feigned lightness.) Well, I hope I'm not going alone.

MARGE

(Flustered.) Oh, Sue, they'll be back soon. There's



plenty of time. It'll just take me a minute to slip on my dress. I think you're just a little bit anxious to flash that diamond in front of a few faces at the club.

SUE

(Looking at her hand.) Well, who wouldn't be.

MARGE

Yes, it is lovely. Well, I'd better get ready. We can leave as soon as they get back. (Crosses right.) Oh, Sue, now don't walk with your hand out in front of you tonight. (Exits.)

SUE

Oh, Mother. (Marge exits.) Carl?

CARL

Yes.

SUE

Carl, why aren't you coming with us tonight?

CARL

I just got home, Sue. I just want some peace and quiet, that's all. There's nothing to be upset about.

SUE

Does it . . . is it something to do with Jim?

CARL

With Jim? No. Why? Did he . . . say something?

SUE

No, but you haven't exactly acted like a long-lost brother.



CARL

Well, I'm not. We've never been close friends or anything.

SUE

I guess I expect everyone to whoop and holler just because I feel that way, or at least I'm trying to. I thought that you'd be happy for me, too.

CARL

I'm sorry, Sue, I didn't mean to . . .

SUE

I know, but you could at least try. After all, I am going to marry him. And you can't go to the dinner with us tonight? Is that asking so much?

CARL

I've explained to you why I'm not going.

SUE

Mother said that you're still bothered by the girl, Yongnan, that you . . .

CARL

I haven't forgotten her, if that's what you mean.

SUE

No, I don't mean that . . . I . . . oh, I don't know what I mean. I know it must be awful to have something like that happen. No, I guess I don't really know that. I can't imagine what it would be like to . . . to be planning to marry someone and have them die . . . or be

killed. I hate to think of it. (Pause.) I suppose it is difficult for you to watch Jim and me . . . happy . . . going ahead with our plans . . .

CARL

You mean am I jealous because I lost out?

SUE

No, not exactly . . .

CARL

Well, I'm not. I just . . . I just think that you ought to know what you're doing.

SUE

About what?

CARL

About getting married. (Slight pause.) Sue, don't you . . . aren't you curious about why, all of a sudden, you're planning to marry Jim . . . and Dad is involved in a big deal with Jim and his father?

. SUE

What is there to be curious about? And it wasn't all of a sudden.

CARL

I mean, the way both things happened . . . together.

SUE

Oh, now, look, Carl. I think I know what you're driving at. If you think my falling for Jim has anything to do with that property deal, you're wrong. Dad came

up with the same thing. He thought I was playing up to Jim to . . . help him out. But it's not true.

CARL

I wasn't thinking of that.

SUE

Well, it's not true the other way around, either. Jim isn't buying the property to make sure he gets me. We've talked about it. He was embarrassed -- he wanted to be sure that I really wanted him regardless of anything else. Well, I do. They could squelch the whole thing tomorrow . . . today . . . for all I care. It wouldn't make a bit of difference. Do you understand?

CARL

Yes, I think I do . . . I'm sure I do.

SUE

Look, Carl, I'm not angry or anything. I can understand how you might have thought that -- Dad thought the same thing. If that's what's been bothering you, forget it. Look, why don't you come to dinner with us and just be yourself and . . . and just try to accept the situation for what it is.

CARL

(Pause. Nods and speaks in a musing manner.) All right . . . yes . . . I think I will.

SUE

(Smiles.) I'm glad we had a chance to talk. I really

was kind of angry with you before; I didn't know what was wrong.

(Marge enters, wearing a party dress.)

Why Mother, you look lovely. And guess what? Carl has decided to come with us.

MARGE

(Looks at both of them. Smiles.) I'm sure he did.

CARL

(On exit right.) I'll be down in a few minutes.

MARGE

I hope you didn't twist his arm, Sue.

SUE

No, he just had a misunderstanding about Jim and me.

MARGE

What do you mean?

SUE

Oh, the same thing that Dad thought -- you know, the property --

(Somehow, this doesn't ring true with Marge.)

MARGE

Oh. Well, I'm glad you got it straightened out. (Pause.) I thought he was just depressed.

SUE

You mean about the girl, Yongnan?

MARGE

Yes.

SUE

Well, he is, but I don't think it's that bad.

MARGE

When I came down before he was sitting and staring at her picture.

SUE

What picture?

MARGE

Didn't he show it to you?

SUE

No.

MARGE

It's right over there on the mantel.

SUE

(Crosses to mantel.) He didn't say anything about it.

(Sue reaches the picture and stares. She is solemn as though viewing a corpse. She backs away before speaking to Marge in a near whisper.)  
Mother, she . . . she's so beautiful and . . . something.

(She folds her arms as though cold.)

I had no idea, I just hadn't given any thought to what she might look like.

MARGE

It's a beautiful picture.

SUE

She seems to be happy and sad, it's kind of eery.

MARGE

I'm sure there was more than enough grief for most people there. I think that always shows through.

SUE

When did he put this here?

MARGE

He didn't, I did.

SUE

Why?

MARGE

Well, partly because I . . . because I want it there . . . for a time. She was going to be part of the family, and because of the way Carl was sitting and staring at it. I thought it might be better to just have it out in the open. I imagine coming home has reminded him of how it might have been. She might have returned with him, you know.

SUE

It's too morbid for me. I don't like to think about it.

MARGE

Well, you don't have to dwell on it, but you can keep it in mind if you want to know how he feels.

SUE

Well, I'll try, but I'm not going to let it ruin the way I feel. I told him it was an exciting and happy time for me and I'm sure he doesn't expect me to be sad.



(John, Frank and Jim are entering into the hall stage right.)

MARGE

No, I don't think he does, but, still, you can . . .

SUE

(Crossing right quickly.) Oh, here they are!

(John and Frank enter, followed by Jim. They are dressed in suits and ties.)

Hi! We've been waiting for you.

FRANK

Hello.

JIM

Hi!

JOHN

Well, are you all set?

SUE

Yes, you can all turn right around and march back out.

FRANK

My goodness! You both look so lovely I don't know which to compliment without offending the other.

MARGE

Thank you.

SUE

I think you've managed quite well.

MARGE

Did you enjoy yourselves?

JOHN

Yes, we had the grand tour. I filled in some of the background of the one section of the estate, one thing led to another, and we went around all of it. Well, I hope it wasn't too boring.

FRANK

No, it was interesting to hear.

JIM

Well, are we all set?

MARGE

We can make ourselves comfortable here for a while. There's no great rush.

SUE

No, Mother, I'm too anxious and I just can't sit and wait.

MARGE

Well, Carl isn't ready yet.

SUE

Oh, that's right.

JOHN

We can all fit in one car. I'll drive and . . .

MARGE

Well, Sue, you can go ahead with Jim and . . .

JOHN

No, you can all go ahead and I'll wait for Carl . . .

SUE

No, Dad, you should come with Mother . . .

FRANK

My goodness! Such confusion. You would think we were running the government. Let's make it simple, just very simple. The two couples go now and leave the two bachelors. Carl and I will come along in Jim's car. Now, how is that?

MARGE

(Pauses. Smiles.) That's fine.

(General agreement.)

JOHN

Well, Frank, how about a drink while you're waiting?

FRANK

Yes, that's fine, but you go ahead. If it's all right, I'll fix it myself.

JOHN

Yes, help yourself.

(Jim and Sue, John and Marge exit right.)

SUE

See you at the club.

FRANK

All right. Goodbye.

(The rest say goodbye and Frank waves goodbye.

Frank crosses to the liquor cabinet and pours a drink. He walks about a bit and then crosses to

the mantel and notices the picture of Yongnan. He picks it up and holds it out, nodding his head. He replaces the picture. Carl enters with his suitcoat over his arm. His cuffs are undone and his tie is untied.)

CARL

Oh, I just heard the car drive off. I wondered if I'd been deserted.

FRANK

Oh, no, no, Carl. Susan was so excited to get going. So I told them to go on and the two bachelors would follow.

CARL

Oh, I see.

FRANK

I just poured this drink. Would you like to have one with me?

CARL

Ah . . . yes, all right.

(During the following, Frank pours a drink for Carl. Carl is finishing his tie and cuffs. Frank brings the drink to Carl and then sits.)

FRANK

Well, it's been a very pleasant day so far, I've enjoyed it.

(Carl smiles at him.)

Susan and Jim make a very nice couple, don't you think?

CARL

Yes, I . . . I guess they do.

FRANK

She's a pretty girl, of course, but she's also so full of life and a . . . a lots of fun to be around.

CARL

Yes, she can be quite a cut-up.

FRANK

Just before you came down, I was looking at those pictures over there and I saw one of a young woman . . . is that . . .

CARL

Yes. My . . . ah . . . my mother asked if she could put it up and . . . (Carl sits.)

FRANK

Well, it's good she wants it there. I know from this morning you don't want to talk about the girl, but don't be angry if I tell you how I felt when I looked at that picture . . .

CARL

No, I didn't mean . . .

FRANK

I know, I know. Well, a picture isn't everything, but that one, Carl, it isn't enough to say she looks beautiful. There are so many beautiful girls. But that one is

like a madonna. She is oriental, but she reminds me of when my wife was a young woman. It's something different from here, I don't know just what . . .

CARL

I think I know what you mean.

FRANK

Today . . . here, there is so much paint. No, it's not just the paint, it's something different. It's . . . well, you don't see . . . what? Love, huh. You don't see love in the face. Instead, you see look-at-me, love-me, buy-for-me. It shows, don't you think?

CARL

I never thought of it that way . . .

FRANK

(Nodding.) Yes, that's what it is. They are buy-for-me faces, beautiful buy-for-me faces.

(Carl smiles. There is a pause.)

Carl, how do you feel about Sue and Jim?

CARL

You mean about their getting married?

FRANK

Yes.

CARL

Well, I . . . it's their decision. I'm sure they've thought it through.

FRANK

But you're not pleased by it.

CARL

I didn't say that.

FRANK

But that is what you think.

CARL

No, I just haven't thought that much about it and I . . .

FRANK

That's all right; you don't have to explain. I've seen it all day today.

CARL

You've seen what?

FRANK

That there is something wrong between you and Jim.

CARL

No, you . . . you must be mistaken.

FRANK

No, I don't think so, Carl.

CARL

Was it something somebody said, or what? I know I haven't been very sociable today.

FRANK

No, it isn't the words, Carl. I see it, I don't hear it. It's the face, the hands, the little things I watch.

CARL

No, I think you're . . . you're just reading things into something. That's all.

FRANK

Listen to me. For forty years I watched people. I had to watch them because they all say the same things. Words don't mean anything. Every fruit peddler, every wholesaler, they all have the best there is for the lowest price. Ask them, they'll tell you. Every man is doing you the biggest favor. You have to see the difference. (Pause.) I see the difference between the nice words from you and Jim today and what you feel.

CARL

There haven't been many nice words and, besides, I'm kind of high strung and tense. You probably just misinterpreted the way I was acting.

FRANK

I wasn't talking about you, Carl, I was talking about Jim. I don't know you well; I was watching Jim today, not you.

(Carl freezes. There is a pause.)

Is it something about Jim and Sue?

CARL

It's nothing I know about.

FRANK

Was it something to do with . . . ah . . . (Waves his hands



slightly, palms out.)

CARL

(Perturbed.) I don't know what's wrong with him.

Why don't you ask him?

(Frank frowns, then smiles.)

FRANK

Well, maybe we better drink up. (Lifts his glass.)

(Carl lifts his glass. They drink up and put their glasses down.)

I'm sorry I made such a big point of all that. I get an idea in my head and I can't get rid of it.

CARL

That's all right. Forget it.

(They start exit right.)

FRANK

Here, would you like to drive. (Hands keys to Carl.)

CARL

Oh . . . sure. (Takes keys.)

(They exit right.)

The lights dim on the scene and come up on the downstage area. The characters enter from down right and down left in another confrontation. Sue enters from down left. John enters from down right, followed by Carl. Marge enters from down left, followed by Frank. Jim enters from down right. The scene is played in the

same manner as before.)

JOHN

Things are picking up, there's no question about it. I knew I was right about that property years ago. You have to implant an idea in the right places . . . like a seed -- that's all. Then, nurture it, watch it grow. Eventually it blossoms and bears fruit. Now the adjoining property will become more valuable. There's no telling where it will end.

FRANK

Well, it won't lead to disaster. It's not the best location. I know it. But if it doesn't make it, we can always write most of it off on taxes. It won't be too bad a loss. We can stand it . . . if it should happen. Ah, who cares right now? I look at those two young men . . . my son . . . Carl . . . and I know. I know something. I swear it. I can almost put it in words. The rest think about crazy nonsense. What do they know? Nothing! They listen. They don't watch.

SUE

I hear . . . wedding bells . . . music . . . "Will you take this man to be your lawful bedded husband?" Mrs. Pelton, our buyer has just returned from New York with our fall collection. Do you wish to make an appointment for this week? Oh, I do. Yes, I do, do, do.

(Marge crosses to John and addresses him. His

back is three-quarters toward her and she is slightly upstage of him.)

MARGE

It's foolish, but I'd like to ask you if you have the same feeling I do about Sue. I get the feeling that we need money and that . . . that we're . . . well, that we're selling her. I'd like to ask you that. (Drops her eyes.) I would like to, but I can't. (Walks away from him.) Oh, I don't know. Maybe it's because of Carl. It's heartbreaking to see him faced with all the joy and excitement of a wedding so soon after . . . Maybe that's why I feel so cold about Sue and Jim. I'm probably judging unfairly.

CARL

No, your judgment is right. You feel cold because you sense guilt and death.

JOHN

(Toward Marge.) Of course, it's unfair to put his feelings first. You're twisting something good into something terrible.

MARGE

(Toward Carl.) Why would I be cold about guilt and death? I don't understand.

JIM

(Toward Carl.) Yes, why don't you tell them . . . tell them what you think. Go ahead!

CARL

It's . . . it's his guilt that you feel.

SUE

What do you mean "his guilt"? What are you talking about?

MARGE

Please explain.

CARL

Well, I . . . ah . . .

JOHN

Now just a minute here. Are you accusing him of something?

CARL

Yes, I am.

JOHN

Well, if there's anything to be said, I think the accused should do the explaining.

CARL

But I haven't said yet what I . . .

SUE

No! Wait! You said "guilt and death." Well, I don't want to hear anything about that from you. (Toward Jim.) Do you know what he's talking about?

JIM

Yes, I've heard it all from him.

SUE

Well, then you tell us what it is.

MARGE

I do think that would be more fair.

FRANK

We could just listen to both of them and then . . .

SUE

Why should we listen to his . . . his accusations?

JIM

No, go ahead. Listen to him. Let him talk.

JOHN

No. We only need to hear the truth once. We're not going to listen to any unfounded accusations. We don't have to weigh anything here. (Toward Jim.) Just explain what this is all about and we can drop the whole thing.

JIM

Well, I . . . I just as soon you listen to him . . .

JOHN

That isn't necessary. Just tell us what this is all about. (Toward Carl.) We're not going to listen to any fancy imaginings. (Back to Jim.) Just tell us exactly what this is all about, that's all.

JIM

Well . . . I . . . (Hesitates.)

SUE

Go ahead, please. He's trying to hurt you. I don't care if he is my brother. Whatever you've got to say

about him, I want to hear it! Tell us why he's doing that.

(There is a long pause. Jim looks about with a pained expression.)

SUE

Please tell us.

JIM

Well, you see, I . . . ah . . . I knew the girl that Carl planned to marry. Her name was Yongnan. When I first met her she was a . . . a prostitute.

FRANK

(Embarrassed.) Jim, please . . . you don't have to . . .

JOHN

(Toward Carl.) Is that true?

CARL

(Pause.) Yes.

JOHN

(Toward Jim.) Go on.

JIM

Well, I . . . I don't think you can say she was actually a prostitute because . . . well . . . it was really a matter of survival. It was that or starve, I suppose. I went to see her a few times. She was a beautiful woman. Then I was transferred near the front. I was there for quite a while. And all the time I was there I had a . . . a terrible desire for her. I wanted any

woman, yes, but I wanted her especially. I had to have her again. If you saw her, you . . . you wouldn't think of her as a . . . a prostitute. When I came back I called on her. (Pause.) She . . . refused me. She said she was in love and was going to be married. I laughed. I had a few drinks before I got there and I brought a bottle with me. I said "Congratulations. Who's the lucky guy?" I didn't expect an answer, but she said, "He's your friend, your friend Carl." I laughed again and said "He may be your number-one customer, but he sure as hell isn't going to marry you." She shouted, "You lie." I kidded her and said that Carl told me he was keeping her for himself and me because I was his friend. I told her Carl said it was perfectly all right for me to have her, too. She became angry, furious, and started pushing me. (Pause.) I had to have her. I had to. I hit her and pushed her down. She screamed and fought back and I hit her again and again until she was quiet. And then I . . . I made love . . . no . . . I raped her. She . . . died later . . . from the beating. I killed her.

MARGE

(She is scared and shaking.) Carl, if my judgment means anything to you, then, if I say he's guilty, you'll be guilty of what you'll do. If I condemn him, I'll be condemning you in advance. (Pauses.) I won't do that

to you. (Looks at Jim.) I don't believe you. (Crosses down left.)

## JOHN

There is really no point in believing something like that. Look at the overall picture. You can't just talk about one incident. You have to ask how many lives did he save by being over there? He took only one life in return. No, he didn't take. He was pushed into it . . . provoked. The circumstances were extenuating. Whatever guilt remains is belied, is . . . is cancelled by what he is now, by what he means to . . . to various people. I don't believe that happened. (Crosses down left.)

## SUE

I won't say he's a liar, but his story is very conflicting. He said you couldn't really call the woman a prostitute because it was a matter of survival. Well, staying alive is a matter of survival, isn't it? I've said that all women are whores, only some are smarter than the rest. Well, she didn't have to die. After all, she wasn't exactly sweet innocence itself, was she? What did she have to lose except her life? What did she die for? (Pause.) For love? Defending one four-letter word against another one that was much more familiar to her? She didn't die; she killed herself. He wasn't responsible for her ignorance. His story





doesn't ring true.

FRANK

(Does not look at Jim.) I am always saying that to judge people it is important to watch them, to look at them, that what they say is not so important. It may seem that I am wrong. They did not pay attention to what you said. They looked at you. But they saw only themselves. (Pause, then slowly, quietly and nodding.) I listened . . . I understood . . . and I believed what you said. I believed it because I have seen those words on your face. I have seen them in a thousand very small things since you came home. (His voice begins to break.) My eyes have known you from a baby. (Turns his head toward Jim, speaks in a husky voice.) And now . . . they see . . . a murderer! (Turns his head away.) I wish I were blind!! (Lifts his head and yells.) God damn my eyes!!! (Drops his head and sobs.)

(Sue exits down right.)

CARL

(Pause.) You do believe him, then?

FRANK

(Quietly.) He is my son. How can I say that? No. No, I don't believe him. He is innocent . . . an innocent murderer.

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CARL

But you heard him admit it! You're just as builty! All of you!

JOHN

As guilty? Guilty of what?

CARL

It doesn't matter. He's pleaded guilty anyway.

JIM

No! I admitted killing the girl, but I didn't plead guilty to anything. How can I, when it's unbelievable?

FRANK

Carl, I don't know how to ask you this, but maybe it is possible, somehow, to find forgiveness.

CARL

I . . .

JIM

(Angrily.) To forgive what? What is he supposed to forgive?

FRANK

Why, the . . . the . . .

JIM

The what?

FRANK

The . . . nothing. Nothing. (Exits down right.)

(John exits down left. Marge stays down left.)

CARL

What they say doesn't matter. They believe the truth  
. . . they know what it is.

JIM

People believe what they can imagine. I should have  
known that. Present them with something unimaginable,  
give them proof, all the evidence in the world, and  
they'll never believe it.

CARL

I don't care what they believe! I know the truth! I  
know what happened!

JIM

You know the truth? (Points at stage.) Then act on  
it! Go on, make me guilty there! Get your revenge!  
(Pause.) I'll be the innocent victim of a deranged  
personality. (Exits down right.)

CARL

That's not true! Listen to me, all of you! (Looks both  
ways.) Where are you? (Yells.) He's not innocent!  
Do you hear?

(Marge crosses to Carl and takes him by the arm.  
She leads him off down right. Voices are heard  
off right. The group is returning from the dinner  
party. The lights dim on the downstage area. The  
right hall light comes on followed by the lights  
on stage. There is no light behind the French

doors.

Marge enters, followed by Frank and John, Jim and Sue, and Carl.)

FRANK

(Pats his stomach.) Ah, it was a wonderful dinner. But so much food . . . too much.

JIM

Well, you didn't seem to have any trouble packing it away.

SUE

Look who's talking.

JOHN

I'm sure we all had more than our share.

MARGE

Would anyone care for just some coffee or anything?

(Everyone shakes his head "no.")

FRANK

Thank you, Mrs. Jensen, but I don't think I could have one drop.

JOHN

How about a nightcap?

FRANK

(Waves his hand.) No, thank you. Nothing. (Checks his watch.) And it's getting pretty late . . . almost one o'clock.

MARGE

Yes, I'm really quite exhausted. I think I'm ready to

give up for tonight.

SUE

I'm bushed, too. I'm so tired, I'm dizzy.

JIM

I don't think that's just from being tired, Sue. You never told me you had a problem . . .

SUE

(Laughing.) Oh, shut up.

JOHN

I think we've all had a pretty full day. Well, we can sleep in tomorrow.

SUE

I hope no one's getting up before noon.

MARGE

No, Sue, we'll let everyone sleep as long as they like. You and I can start a big breakfast going about eight or so in case anyone . . .

SUE

Mother! (The rest laugh.) I better get going before she finds something for me to do now.

(Sue crosses to Jim and gives him a light kiss.)

Good night.

JIM

Good night, Sue.

SUE

Good night, everyone.

(Sue exits right as the rest say "Good night"  
or "Good night, Sue.")

MARGE

Well, I think I'll say good night, too.

FRANK

Good night, Mrs. Jensen, and thank you, (Looks at John.)  
both of you, for the wonderful time.

MARGE

Oh, you're welcome. You'll find everything right  
upstairs?

FRANK

Oh, yes. Don't worry.

(Marge exits right.)

JOHN

Good night, Frank. (Shakes Frank's hand.)

FRANK

Good night.

(John exits stage right. Jim starts to exit  
right.)

JIM

Coming, Dad?

FRANK

In a minute, Jim. Go on up. I'll find everything.

(Jim hesitates a moment and looks from one to  
the other.)

JIM

All right. You better get some rest. You know you don't sleep very late.

FRANK

I'll be all right, don't worry.

(Jim exits right.)

FRANK

Well, everybody is celebrating today for Jim and Sue. But it is your homecoming, too, and I would like to celebrate that with just one drink anyway, huh? Will you have one with me . . . a toast to your safe return?

(Carl looks at him a moment.)

CARL

You don't have to, Mr. Pelton. I heard you say you didn't care for any more.

FRANK

Oh, I have room for one, don't worry. And please, just "Frank" is fine, huh?

(Carl crosses to the liquor cabinet and pours two drinks.)

CARL

All right, "Frank," look, if you're tired . . .

FRANK

No, I just wanted a little quiet before going to bed. It's been a busy day. It's nice to relax without everyone talking at once. Oh, it's not the people, don't get



me wrong.

(Carl gives a drink to Frank.)

(Holds his glass up.) Well, it's a little late, but welcome home, Carl. To your safe return.

CARL

Thank you.

(They take a sip of their drinks. Frank sits.)

FRANK

Sit down, Carl.

(Carl sits. They are silent a moment.)

So you're home now. You haven't had a chance to talk about your plans for the future, what you are going to do . . .

CARL

I hadn't really thought about it. I . . . ah . . .

FRANK

Well, there's no rush, of course. Oh, I'm sorry. Earlier I told your parents not to rush you and now I'm doing the same thing.

CARL

That's all right. I just haven't thought about it.

(To the end of the scene, Frank has difficulty in expressing himself.)

FRANK

Yes. Well, there is lots of time. Carl, today I was thinking about different things. I had lots of time to

think. The rest are worried about their . . . their plans and, ah . . . everything. I don't have much to worry about and so I was just thinking about, oh, some little things that are not too important. Some small things. Oh, I talked all day long, yes. But that's not the kind of talk you have to concentrate about. Just a lot of nice words and pleasant . . . ah . . . pleasant exchanges.

CARL

Yes, it's true it doesn't take much effort, but I don't know what . . .

(Frank rises and crosses to the mantel near the picture of Yongnan.)

FRANK

Yes, that's right. And that's why I was, like I said, I was just putting together some of . . . oh, of my thoughts. (He leans on the mantel and drops his head.)

CARL

Is something wrong? Can I . . .

FRANK

(Nervously, over his shoulder.) No, no. Please. Please. Carl, just listen for a minute. Don't say anything. Please.

CARL

Look if it's about what you were talking about earlier, I'm afraid I can't help you.

FRANK

No, Carl, the thoughts I had . . . I can't explain. They were like a puzzle -- you know, the pieces of a picture puzzle. I began to see what it was -- it was a terrible picture. I thought it must be my imagination; I must have a crazy imagination. But I am not . . . what is the word? . . . senile . . . I am not senile. And I know it was my imagination that was making these crazy pieces fit together. (Pause.) I don't want to see the rest of it. It's too clear now.

(Crosses to the right. Carl rises and follows.)

CARL

Mr. Pelton, I don't know what you mean, but you shouldn't . . .

FRANK

Oh, you know, you know. But don't say anything. Please. Don't tell me anything. I'm so ashamed. I know what it is! I don't want to see it.

(He turns, drops his head and sobs quietly for just a moment. Then he lifts his head.)

Carl, I am an old man and I don't have very much. Oh, I have money, yes, but I mean I have only . . . I have only my family like anyone. My wife is dead so there is only my . . . my son. Carl, I can't say anything to him. I can't. I haven't got the courage, the strength. (Moves away.) Carl, I can't talk to you straight about



this. I can't do anything to you . . . I wouldn't be able, not even to have someone else. And I can't buy you, I know that. (Pause.) So, there is nothing to do, nothing to offer you . . . nothing. (Looks at his hands and shrugs.) Nothing. (Pause, then desperately and tearfully.) I would be grateful . . . I would have love in my heart for you. Ha, ha . . . my love . . . compared to . . . (Gestures with one hand toward the mantel. Strikes the palm of that hand with his fist.) Nothing. Just nothing. (Walks behind Carl.) I guess I'm saying you should forget because an old man asked you. It's not much. (Crosses right, stops and turns.) Good night.

(Carl does not turn or answer. Frank turns and exits right. Carl stands for a moment. He crosses to the liquor cabinet and pours a drink and gulps it down. He pours another and then takes the bottle with him to a large chair. He puts the bottle on a table next to the chair. He takes a small sip of the drink and then puts it on the table. He rises and slowly crosses to the mantel. He stares at Yongnan's picture and then picks it up and crosses back to the chair. He stares at the picture and the lights dim out. In a moment, dawn lights come up slowly beyond the French doors. The room becomes dimly

lighted and Carl is seen asleep in the chair. The bottle is seen plainly on the table and it is nearly full. Carl stirs, opens his eyes, and sits up. He looks at the dawn light. He glances at the picture on the mantel. He rises, crosses to the French doors and looks out. Frank enters from right. He is wearing a robe. He notices Carl and stops.)

FRANK

Carl?

CARL

Yes.

(Frank crosses to him.)

FRANK

You haven't slept?

CARL

Yes, I dozed off for a while.

FRANK

I never sleep late. I get up when it's light. I tried to be quiet. I didn't wake you, did I?

CARL

No . . . no, I was up. I . . .

FRANK

Well, I thought I would come down and make some coffee. Would you like some?

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CARL

Ah . . . yes, I'm not . . . I just woke up.

FRANK

Well, I'll go fix it. (Crosses left.)

CARL

Do you know where the coffee and . . .

FRANK

I'll find everything, don't worry.

CARL

The coffee's in a cannister and the pot's right on the counter.

FRANK

All right. (Exits left.)

(Carl stares after him. He crosses down and looks at the picture on the mantel. He turns his head away as though unable to look at it. He notices the bottle and crosses to the table. He picks up the glass and bottle and takes them to the liquor cabinet. He crosses down again but away from the mantel. He turns and looks toward the mantel, then walks slowly to it.)

CARL

I can't keep my promise, Yongnan. Try to understand. It isn't fear for me or anyone else. It isn't pity, either. And God knows, it's not forgiveness. I don't know the reason exactly. (Pause.) Say it's for an

old man's love. And say that his love is yours . . .  
and mine.

(He picks up the picture and looks at it a  
moment.)

I can't have you in my eyes and on my lips, Yongnan. I  
loved you too much for that.

(He takes the picture out of the frame. He puts  
the frame on the mantel and picks up a box of  
matches. He kneels on one knee, strikes a match,  
sets fire to the picture and places it on the  
grate. He bites his fist as he watches it  
burn. He rises and crosses to the French  
doors. He looks out a moment and turns.)

Goodbye, Yongnan. Goodbye. (He exits left.)

CURTAIN



## POSTSCRIPT

The problem of writing and explaining the unrealistic scenes of The Other Side of Silence has had a heuristic value. It has generated a curiosity about the effectiveness of different theories of human behavior and their respective terminologies as they are or could be used as the basis of investigation and communication in the area of theatre. This postscript is disputative and cursory. There is no intent to hypothesize, but merely to raise questions and suggest further investigation.

The influence of terminology on theatre is undeniable. There seems to be a nearly ubiquitous use of psychological and psychoanalytical thought in the discussion of human behavior aspects of acting, directing, dramatic criticism, etc. Indeed, much of this terminology has become a part of our everyday speech. But the fact that such terminology is prevalent does not prove it is efficacious.

The influence of psychology on theatre has been decried in the past and is decried in some quarters today. In 1940, Mordecai Gorelik stated in New Theatres for Old:

In today's theatre "psychology" tends to crowd out every other science necessary for the investigation of human life and environment. Few of our dramatists know any other method of analysis. The psychological method is held to be the most truthful, the most penetrating, the only dramatically valid method. Yet, this "method" is so undetermined that each playwright feels he can invent his own version of human psychology on the spur of the moment.

Overtones of profundity and nobility accompany the use of the psychological method. Yet quite often the particular psychologies which dramatists invent rest on the merest assumptions or superstitions: primeval guilt, reincarnation, racial theories, death-wishes, incest-wishes. To these psychological systems all the findings of the sciences, all the precision of the technologies, are subordinated.

The "survival of the fittest" psychology is gravely accepted on the stage although there is no proof that it can be applied to social relationships.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, Robert Corrigan complained:

Now, there is no denying that the increased concern for psychology on the part of our dramatists has had salutary effects on the theatre. But it has gotten to the point where every so-called serious play has become a clinical case history, and this is more detrimental than beneficial.

To begin with, it is a severely limited view of man. When all human actions are explainable in terms of some kind of psychological cause and effect, the possibility of deliberative and moral choice is dissolved. There is an old saw about no man being a hero to his valet. The same is true of his psychoanalyst. And ultimately, the same is true of the dramatic artist. For example, as David Daiches has suggested, Oedipus remains a hero with great stature so long as he is not suffering from an Oedipus complex.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mordecai Gorelik, New Theatres for Old (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1962), p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Robert W. Corrigan, ed., Theatre in the Twentieth Century (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1963), pp. 16-17.



While Gorelik questioned the validity of psychological theory, Corrigan, like most current critics, accepts the validity of the theory but is unhappy with its influence:

The playwright who has been influenced by a deterministic view of human nature is certain sooner or later to fail in distinguishing between the hero and the victim, Destiny and society. The consequence in the twentieth century has been a theatre of steadily diminishing stature. This is related to another aspect of psychology which has had even more profound effects on the drama. The modern playwright cannot help but have absorbed a great deal that psychology has made known. He knows all about the relationship of infantile frustration and adult neuroses; he has learned about the psychosomatic aspects of illness; and above all he knows that all human actions--even the greatest and most selfless of them--spring from some deep and hidden but nonetheless selfish motivation. Doesn't he feel that there is a danger in passing a moral judgment on individuals? In fact, how can there be a moral pattern to human experience in such a world?<sup>3</sup>

The acceptance of psychological theory as gospel is illustrated well by Martin Esslin in The Theatre of the Absurd. He correlates modern devaluation of language with the development of absurd theatre. In his discussion he says:

Language here belongs to the realm of the purely subjective, and is thus devoid of objective reality.

The same applies to modern depth psychology and psychoanalysis. Every child today knows that there is a vast gap between what is consciously thought and asserted and the psychological reality behind the words spoken. A son who tells his father that he loves and respects him is objectively bound to be, in fact, filled with the deepest Oedipal hatred of his father. He may not know it, but he means

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

the opposite of what he says. And the subconscious has a higher content of reality than the conscious utterance.<sup>4</sup>

This is not too surprising. Sociological terminology does not usually apply to the individual and interpersonal relationships. Further, the strongly deterministic view of man posited by sociology is considered anathema to the creation of drama. However, as Corrigan has noted, psychological theory ends in a deterministic view of the characters and the same dilemma. It seems that free will is essential to the characters or else how can they be responsible for their actions? We will return to this problem.

Further, theories of psychology cover a wide spectrum, some of which are at great variance with one another. Still, it is suggested that the terminology of individualistic psychology, whether of the behavioristic school (Watson, stimulus-response) or the mentalist school (Freud, biological needs, all behavior is motivated, etc.), dominates the discussion of human behavior in non-empirical studies and is generally used to discuss human behavior in the teaching and production of theatre.

All of this is not to suggest that no other theories and their terminologies, other than psycholo-

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<sup>4</sup>Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 297-298.



gical ones, are used to study various elements of theatre. Quantitative studies are being done utilizing statistical tools, experimental methods, and the concepts of psychology, sociology, communications, linguistics, psycho-linguistics, etc.

A view of human behavior which has had little direct influence on theatre is that put forth by social psychologists. The area has not been popularly defined as clearly as psychology and sociology, particularly in its most systematic approach, that of symbolic interactionism. Part of this is its relative newness and its development:

Some scientific theories are systematically stated and empirically buttressed by their innovators. Others grow creatively, and with an idea here, a magnificent but partial formulation there, a little study here, a program of specialized studies there. The interactionist theory in sociology and social psychology belongs in the latter category . . . .<sup>5</sup>

The academic place and purpose of social psychology is stated by Lindesmith and Strauss:

Social psychology, as the term suggests, is concerned with societies, institutions, and groups and with the behavior of individuals as well. It is focused, however, upon explaining the behavior of individuals as it is controlled, influenced, or limited by the social environment. Human beings are first of all biological organisms, as such they engage in behavior which is characteristic of living beings. The social psychologist is not

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<sup>5</sup>Arnold M. Rose, ed., Human Behavior and Social Processes, An Interactionist Approach (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1962), p. vii.

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primarily concerned with activity on this level, but deals instead with the distinctive aspects of human activity which set it apart from the behavior of lower forms of life. He is, in short, concerned with "social" behavior, or those aspects of human behavior which depend upon the existence of cultural phenomena such as institutions, customs, and beliefs. His problem is to explain how man has come to be an inherently social animal of whom it can be said that he has "society" within him.

Social psychology is sometimes conceived of as an independent discipline or is thought of as a part of psychology or sociology. It is also sometimes described as a meeting place where the interests of various social sciences merge. It has even been maintained that social psychology is, or ought to be, identical with psychology as such, except for that part of the latter which is biological in nature. Some writers have also leaned toward the position that social psychology is really the heart of sociology. It is not necessary or desirable to commit oneself finally to any of these views.

The idea that social psychology should be thought of as a relatively separate and independent field dates from about the turn of the century and reflects developments within the fields of psychology and sociology. Courses in social psychology are taught in both of these fields and, indeed, social psychology is sometimes thought of as a part of psychology or sociology. In psychology they reflect a growing appreciation of the importance of the social environment and the realization that the concept of "the isolated individual" is an abstraction of little significance or applicability. In sociology, the growing popularity of social psychology probably stems from dissatisfaction with the vague and abstract nature of generalizations which affirm the importance of institutional or cultural influences without relating them to the actions of individuals.<sup>6</sup>

He [the contemporary social psychologist] rejects the sharp separation of individual and society upon which the distinction between sociology and psychology was once believed to rest. . . . Whereas the older psychology stressed the individual and

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<sup>6</sup> Alfred R. Lindesmith and Anselm L. Strauss, Social Psychology, revised edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1949), pp. 3-4.

slighted the situation, sociology stressed the situation and slighted the individual. Social psychology seeks to bring these two rationales together in what may be called a situational approach. In this approach, psychological processes and the social environment are thought of as parts of an inseparable whole.<sup>7</sup>

Neo-Freudians such as Karen Horney have moved toward thinking of the individual in terms of interpersonal relations<sup>8</sup> as have the psychoanalytic theories of Harry Stack Sullivan.<sup>9</sup> Also, the recently popular book Games People Play by Eric Berne<sup>10</sup> illustrates an increasing emphasis on situational behavior with its theory of transactional analysis, although Berne's father, adult, child concepts are still somewhat analagous to the Freudian concepts of superego, ego, and id. Conversely, there has been an increasing concern by sociologists for individual behavior.

A general objection to sociological and psychological views was stated in the above quote from Lindesmith and Strauss. However, it might be useful to include some specific objections to those views, not for the purpose of refuting them, but to point out

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Paul E. Pfuetze, The Social Self (New York: Bookman Associates, 1954), p. 310.

<sup>9</sup>Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., pp. 560-574.

<sup>10</sup>Eric Berne, Games People Play (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964).

their limitations. The following are random quotes covering aspects of one or both of those views and are, of necessity, not comprehensive.

### Cultural determinism

. . . It has been argued that individual behavior is culturally determined, and that therefore explanations of behavior must not be sought in forces within the individual, but rather in forces in the social environment. This view of the individual as something of an automaton and of culture as something that "somehow hovers above the members of the society and pushes them around" is commonly called "cultural determinism." It obviously leaves little place for social psychology, and is open to question on other grounds as well. Two of the most serious criticisms are that it retains the dubious dichotomy of individual and society and repeats in reverse the error of individualistic psychology, which derives society from individual sources.<sup>11</sup>

### Instincts

Generally speaking, few or no contemporary psychologists and physiologists postulate a direct or automatic connection between biological conditions and complex human action. However, many laymen still do.<sup>12</sup>

Instinct as an explanatory concept has not only been virtually abandoned in the study of human beings, but it has also proved inadequate to account for the behavior of lower forms as well. It is meaningless to label behavior as instinctive if no biological structures or physiological conditions can be shown to be linked with it. Careful investigation of lower species, as we suggested earlier, indicates that their behavior is not nearly as mechanical or automatic as popularly believed, and that even so-called "instinctive patterns of reaction" are always related to and dependent upon the environment in which they occur. It has also been suggested that behavior sometimes believed to be rigidly determined by inherited mechanisms may in fact be the result

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<sup>11</sup>Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., pp. 508-509.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 273.



of early and rapid learning.<sup>13</sup>

### Needs

. . . psychologists do not ordinarily claim that there is a direct connection between physiological states and complex behavior. Nevertheless, they have been reluctant to abandon the conception that social behavior is somehow rooted in biological bases. The concept of need, or drive, may be taken as an illustration.<sup>14</sup>

No one denies that there are unlearned components in much human activity or that organisms must do certain things to survive. . . . Admitting the importance of biological survival and well being does not, however, justify the usual need psychology. Such terms as "primary" and "basic" are rhetorical devices for making human behavior seem to be grounded in a solid biological substratum. The intellectual security thus created is only an illusion which oversimplifies and misrepresents the nature of human goals.<sup>15</sup>

The concept of need as an explanatory device is hardly distinguishable from the old instinct schemes. However, it may confidently be predicted that this kind of explanation will be with us for many years to come, since the belief in the body's primacy is deeply rooted.<sup>16</sup>

### Freud-motives

Among the basic assumptions underlying the Freudian view of motivation are the ideas that all human behavior is motivated, that the explanation of any behavior requires that its motives be analyzed, that the energy sources of motives are biological in nature, that motives range from those which are entirely conscious to those which are altogether unconscious and that most important ones are either unconscious or partly so, and that

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 278.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 282.



the conflict of motivational forces plays a dominant role in personality development.<sup>17</sup>

Freudian emphasis on unconscious motives involves a corollary skepticism concerning the purposes which people consciously assign to their acts. Psychoanalysts believe that not only is there much duplicity and concealment about motives, but most persons actually know very little about their own motivations. They also point to the difficulty of assessing the motives of others because one's own repressions and motivations get in the way.<sup>18</sup>

. . . Freudian theory is an especially elaborate form of a modified biological determinism. Despite the ample allowance that contemporary analysts often make for social or cultural factors, the theoretical scheme still presents an extremely oversimplified view of the relationship of men to groups. This is perhaps to be expected from the fact that this body of theory arose from therapeutic practice with individual patients, and that its main focus is still perhaps on therapy.<sup>19</sup>

. . . the Freudian view of unconscious functioning is open to question on a number of points. First, it exaggerates the extent of unconscious motivation. A great deal of human behavior certainly appears to be routine, standardized, planned, or otherwise rational. The Freudians have been accused, we think altogether rightly, of taking a dim view of the rational processes and of tending to seek for motivational complexities where they do not exist. In the hands of a novice, or as a parlor game, this can be a form of "motive-mongering."<sup>20</sup>

Freudian theory is in many respects at the opposite pole from behaviorism and biological determinism. It makes no mention of the nervous system or of neural mechanisms as explanations of behavior. Neither is derived from study or observation of

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 283-284.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 287.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 291.





lower animals. The explanatory scheme of Freudian psychology relies primarily upon motives or desires as the forces that determine behavior. The criticism we have made--that reference to inner psychic forces does not yield causal explanations of behavior--is therefore especially applicable to their type of psychologizing.<sup>21</sup>

Freud's great informing invention for the recommending of a kindlier, more Christian rationalization was his doctrine of the six abnormal tendencies . . . autoeroticism, homosexuality, sadism, masochism, incest, and exhibitionism.

There were two extremely valuable aspects of this formula. In the first place, it is hard to imagine a single manifestation of human interests which could not be reduced to one of these six terms. A heterosexual interest, for instance, could be sadistic or masochistic, even down to the last subtle give-and-take of conversational repartee. And if one, at such a juncture, attempted to prove himself neither sadistic nor masochistic, by refraining from a retort of any kind, he was obviously open to the suspicion of an incipient autoeroticism, or perhaps a twisted kind of exhibitionism manifesting itself by blatant non-cooperation, or perhaps even a silently corroding incestuousness which was dragging his mind elsewhere. One can invent hypothetical cases at random, noting that the "six abnormals" will serve as well as any other terms to designate the underlying patterns of the mind. Such comprehensiveness of terminology, while offered under the guise of great specificity, had the signal virtue of catching all conduct in its net. Even a man who had been wholly bewildered by the "irrationality" of his conduct was given a scheme of motivations which promptly brought him back into the realm of "logic."<sup>22</sup>

### Psychoanalysis

The following statements on psychoanalysis were made by the English psychologist H. J. Eysenck:

. . . psychoanalysis . . . is trying to understand, rather than to explain; . . . consequently it is

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>22</sup>Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Chance (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1954), pp. 126-127.

essentially non-scientific and to be judged in terms of belief and faith, rather than in terms of proof and verification; and lastly . . . its great popularity among non-scientists derives precisely from its non-scientific nature, which makes it intelligible and immediately applicable to problems of understanding other people. . . . Religion and art are two other non-scientific disciplines which in spite of their lack of concern with scientific truths have contributed greatly to human happiness.<sup>23</sup>

Lindesmith and Strauss further summarize Eysenck:

(1) Psychoanalytic conclusions are based on unreliable clinical evidence selected from interviews with certain patients. (2) Material presented as evidence is usually an indeterminate mixture of raw data and interpretations. (3) Conclusions are over-generalized. (4) Principles are applied to general social phenomena such as war and industrial conflict without proof of their applicability. (5) Research guided by Freudian hypotheses is often simply illustrative of preconceptions rather than a crucial test of a theory. (6) Psychoanalytic factual arguments usually beg the question and are based on selected clinical anecdotes.<sup>24</sup>

The position of social psychologists, particularly symbolic interactionists, has already been touched on. A few quotes may help to clarify that position and differentiate from the general views of sociology and psychology. In their introduction to Social Psychology, Lindesmith and Strauss give a general idea of the rationale of their book:

The basic ideas developed in the chapters that follow are that the distinctive attributes of human behavior, which grow from man's immersion in a cultural environment, depend upon the existence of language behavior, or the creation and manipulation

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<sup>23</sup>Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 292.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

of high-order signs (symbols). Society means communication. Language is both the vehicle by means of which culture is transmitted from generation to generation and also an integral part of all aspects of culture. The features of human behavior which distinguish it from the behavior of other animals are derived from the fact that man is a symbol manipulator--the only symbol-manipulating animal. Complex forms of social organization, institutions, codes, beliefs, and customs--indeed all cultural phenomena--depend upon and are made possible by the prior evolution of language. Language behavior, epitomized in conversation, is a learned form of interaction which has its biological basis in the nature of the human brain. This book is designed to survey the rational grounds for these ideas and to trace some of their most important implications.<sup>25</sup>

Arnold Rose gives some characteristics of interactionist theory:

The first characteristic to be noted is the tendency to select behaviors, influences, structures, and variables for study on the level of common experience with them. That is, empirical research tends to use observations from a selected portion of "everyday" life; abstraction is left for conceptualization, analysis, and generalization. Thus, the research technique tends to be observation in some form, rather than--say--experimentation under artificially controlled conditions. . . . This emphasis upon observation distinguishes the researchers of the interactionists from those of most psychologists.

The second characteristic rests on the assumption that human behavior and social life are continually in flux. . . . Social life is assumed to be "in process" never "in equilibrium." The integration that is found in the individual or in society is assumed to be based on ever changing relationships, not on inherent tendencies of a homeostatic character. This emphasis on process distinguishes the thought and researches of the interactionists from those of most followers of "functional" theory in sociology. . . .

A third characteristic rests on the assumption

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

that all social objects of study (behaviors, influences, and the like) are "interpreted" by the individual and have social meaning. That is, they are never seen as physical "stimuli" but as "definitions of the situation." This arises from the assumption that man lives in a symbolic environment which mediates the relation of the physical environment to him. . . . When he is acting as a socialized creature (although it is recognized that man does not always act as a socialized creature), man is believed to select and interpret the environment toward which he is "responding." This assumption of the symbolic character of man's environment is largely what distinguishes the interactionists from most followers of "positivist" or "behaviorist" theory in sociology and psychology.<sup>26</sup>

Role theory is a major concept of symbolic interactionism.

The general idea of role is borrowed from the drama. Despite the fact that real-life situations are not worked out according to a script or other rigid prescription, human interaction may be conceived in terms of the dramatic model, with its accompanying notions of actors playing parts, of social situations or scenes, a plot, a script, or a prescription for concerned action, and a certain degree of improvisation that may take place within the parts.<sup>27</sup>

Role theory is defined several ways and some clarification is necessary.

Anthropologists and sociologists who have been interested in communication and the interrelationships of institutions have needed a term to indicate the relation of individual activities to the larger organization of society. Hence they have linked "role" with institutional terms like "status," "position," and "office."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Rose, op. cit., pp. ix-x.

<sup>27</sup>Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 372.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

In this view, the individual has secondary consideration. "Role-playing" as the basis of psychodramatic therapy and research was formulated by J. Moreno.<sup>29</sup> The concept of role used by interactionists, however, is distinct from the institutionalistic and other uses of the term. The interactionist theory of role stems from the writings of George Herbert Mead.<sup>30</sup> This concept of role attempts to develop a role theory which is neither individualistic nor supraindividualistic.

Unlike the institutionalists, Mead used "role" to describe the processes of cooperative behavior and of communication, not to illuminate the functioning of institutions.<sup>31</sup>

Their concept uses the terms "role-playing" and "role-taking." Space limitations prohibit outlining their theory, but a few quotes will help distinguish it from other theories.

The individual is rather continuously engaged in communication with himself as he enacts his roles. To begin with, he must know or try to figure out what his part in the situation is or should be. This involves making a self-identification, in terms of which particular responses are evoked or suppressed. . . . The individual's conception of his role has a controlling function over responses in that it determines which specific responses will be evoked. . . .

Since roles usually have considerable duration

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<sup>29</sup>J. Moreno, Psychodrama (Beacon, New York: Beacon House, Inc., 1946), Vol. I.

<sup>30</sup>George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

<sup>31</sup>Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., pp. 373-374.



in time, responses must be organized in sequences and phases. This requires a continuous reassessment of where the action stands, where it is leading, and its probable consequences. . . .

. . . . .  
 . . . role-playing occurs in episodes, scenes, or situations. These have to be organized, named, and catalogued by the individual in order that appropriate action may be taken. No two situations are ever exactly alike, but there is often enough resemblance between the present situation and one formerly encountered to permit it to be recognized and thus to give rise to orderly and regular behavior. . . . Many situations are problematic and subject to different interpretations. Definition of situations, both familiar and new, is the interpretation of a multitude of cues.<sup>32</sup>

Imaginatively assuming the position or point of view of another person will be spoken of here as "role-taking" to distinguish it from "role-playing," the larger organization of acts of which role-taking is an integral part. Taking the role of the other, as we have already indicated, is implicit in virtually all intercommunication on the symbolic level.<sup>33</sup>

Role-taking is considered the basic social process according to interactionist theory.

It may be useful to point out the different way "motives" are viewed in this theory:

"Motive," as we are using it, should not be confused with "cause." "Motive" has a forward reference in time. It is concerned with purpose and with the anticipated consequences of acts. Causation has a backward reference: it refers to antecedent conditions, i.e., those which immediately precede or accompany an event and which influence it decisively or determine it. Motives are in a sense personal and private, whereas causes are general and public. Causation applies to classes of events, and causal conditions are subject to

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 384-385.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 386.

public verification. The causation of human behavior is poorly understood, but it is known that much more than motives is involved.<sup>34</sup>

Since motives appear at the beginning of acts or in preparation for action, and since each individual feels his own motives in a direct way, it is easy to understand how they have come to be viewed as causes of the behavior of which they are a part, and indeed as "forces" which "make" the behavior occur. It was a common practice in the earlier years of this century for sociologists to explain institutional and other cultural behavior in terms of the operation of wishes, desires, interests, needs, and other "social forces." However, the idea of causation no longer includes the conception of force in this sense at all. There are many different ideas of causation in the philosophy of science, but on this particular point there is rather general agreement.

The scientific concept of causation is, of course, a general feature of many scientific fields in which no problem of motivation exists. Indeed, in view of the instability and variability of human purposes, and in view of the fact that purposes are really part of behavior rather than mysterious forces lying behind it, motives are not so much explanations of behavior as they are behavioral problems, themselves requiring analysis and explanation.<sup>35</sup>

Rejecting motives as an explanatory concept--that is, as causes--does not mean that it is unimportant to know the purposes which people have in mind. Knowledge of the motivation of other people and of ourselves is indeed, as we have said, a constant necessity in all social intercourse.<sup>36</sup>

Purposes, or motives, as we have said, are formulated. This means that they arise in communication and are either partially or fully stated in words. When thought of in this manner, motives do not exist in a mysterious nonverbal realm such as "the unconscious." As Mills says, "Motives are

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 300.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 301-302.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 304.



of no value apart from delimited societal situations for which they are appropriate vocabularies. They must be situated. . . . Motives vary in content and character with historical epochs and societal structures."<sup>37</sup>

. . . psychoanalysts have reinterpreted the private lives of famous persons such as St. Augustine and Leonardo da Vinci in terms of twentieth-century sexual symbols. They thus ignore the fact that these historical characters viewed the conduct of others and themselves in very different terms than do people of our own era. Such scholarly interpretation is equivalent to translating other rationalizations into our own. Since human beings are interested in the lives of past generations, such translating is inevitable. The only corrective to a superficial handling of the past is an adequate understanding of the period under consideration through exhaustive examination of historical sources. The accuracy of the account should rest upon an understanding of the actual symbols available to the historical personages; it should not rest upon the degree to which their motives appear plausible to us in the light of our own motives at the present time.<sup>38</sup>

The interactionists are concerned with roles in situational behavior. And, as noted previously, the individual interprets and defines these situations. It should be noted that this theory does not assume that all acts can be subsumed under role theory.

And finally, the view of the dichotomy between free will and determinism is discussed:

The popular conception of voluntary behavior is that it involves control of behavior by an internal psychological force called "will" or "will power." This force is not thought of as being dependent upon any specific biological or neurological struc-

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 307.



ture and is usually believed to be "free" and therefore essentially unpredictable. Its most typical manifestation is in choosing among alternatives.

The discerning student will recognize in this commonly held, but naive, view the same dualistic distinction that is generally made between thinking and language. Just as language supposedly expresses thinking and is its vehicle, so voluntary behavior is supposed to be merely an expression of the person's will.

A sounder, more scientific view is the conception of voluntary behavior as a type of activity which depends upon the internalization of language. We have noted that as one ascends the evolutionary scale from the simplest forms of life to man, the central nervous system assumes greater and greater dominance. Internal cortical processes are not solely determined by stimuli from outside the nervous system, but depend also upon stimuli which originate within the system. Voluntary behavior, from this point of view, depends upon the ability of people to initiate responses within themselves which in turn inhibit or facilitate other responses. These controlling responses are verbal in nature or are derived from verbal behavior.<sup>39</sup>

Like the notion of will itself, the idea of "freedom of will" is based upon a false view of symbolic behavior. As a corrective we may note several points. To begin with, "free will" is not entirely free, for it is bounded, restricted, and limited by the culture of the actor. Thus, it does not occur to the readers of this book to make choices involving the values of the Bantu, Japanese, or Balinese, nor to act like these people. This may appear to be a trite observation, but its truth is often ignored. It is, for example, commonplace to blame persons who, from an objective point of view, ought not to be blamed. Thus, children are often held responsible for stealing before they know what stealing really means. Our blaming rests upon the assumption that these persons know better and have a genuine choice of attitude and act. This assumption is often false. Whatever "will" may be, it cannot operate outside the confining limits of the actor's system of symbols.

Human social behavior is not mechanically deter-

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 443.

mined by the immediately given external events and situations. It is organized symbolically. Human freedom is thus a relative matter. Man is not entirely bound by the physical conditions of space and time, but he is enclosed within symbolic systems. The thoughts of the prisoner in solitary confinement cannot be controlled by his jailers, but they are controlled and limited by the social groups which have imposed their standards, their moral codes, their symbols, upon the prisoner.

One of the authors once listened to a passionate plea for individual freedom addressed to a class of several hundred students by one of its members. The speaker argued that "the individual" should free himself from all "heard" influences, from all groups and institutions; that he should think and act as a free individual. This view represents a logical consequence of the popular misconceptions of "freedom," "free will," and "individuality." Its essential absurdity will be clear to anyone who reflects upon it for a moment. In the first place, if this student desired to be free of all institutions, he obviously should not have learned English or any other language. He should not have attended a university, or spoken to a class as he did. The obvious implication of his view is that man can be free only if he avoids all human contact and civilization.<sup>40</sup>

Freedom of the individual . . . is itself a social product. Man, in contrast to lower animals, is free precisely because he is a social animal living primarily in a symbolic world. To this should be added a point which we have already made in another context, namely, that no two situations are ever completely identical: hence all behavior possesses some degree of novelty, and some of it requires genuine decisions. The discovery of values and the consequent organization of behavior along new lines free men from slavish obedience to tradition: at the same time, tradition enters into the organization of new as well as customary behavior.<sup>41</sup>

A succinct definition of "symbolic interaction" may help to coalesce the above thoughts:

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 445-446.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 447.

The term "symbolic interaction" refers, of course, to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or "define" each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their "response" is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. This mediation is equivalent to inserting a process of interpretation between stimulus and response in the case of human behavior.<sup>42</sup>

There is one final distinction that should be made between interactionist social-psychology and other views. The individual is viewed as an entity only as it is an animal organism. The individual is considered as emerging out of a social process and constantly developing and changing. While the individual has been studied well in childhood stages, the social psychologist feels that it has been ignored in its adult transformations, except for studies of deviant personalities. This distinction seems particularly important, since drama is also concerned with adult transformation. It might also be noted that much modern drama is concerned with adult transformation. It might also be noted that much modern drama is concerned with deviant personalities.<sup>43</sup>

There is, of course, a great deal more to the interactionist theory. The above quotes merely suggest

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<sup>42</sup>Rose, op. cit., p. 180.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 63.



some of the differences between interactionist theory and other theories. The purpose of presenting these quotes is not to defend interactionist theory as necessarily more astute and empirically verifiable than other theories, but to suggest that it may complement other theories. The following comments are to be taken as highly speculative.

An obvious application of the concepts of social-psychology would be in constructing hypotheses for empirical research in theatre--not as a substitute for statistical, psychological and sociological approaches, but, again, as a complement to them. Theatre, by its nature, involves human beings interacting in innumerable situations. The process of role-playing and role-taking by directors, actors and others in the production of theatre seems worthy of investigation.

The influence of psychology on playwrights and critics has been noted. It is possible that psychological language and concepts have other less obvious influences and, perhaps, limiting effects on other areas of theatre.<sup>44</sup> Consider this criticism of modern theatre:

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<sup>44</sup>The idea, here, that psychological language may affect and limit thought in theatre is predicated on the Whorf Thesis in linguistics. See Roger W. Brown and Eric H. Lenneberg, "A Study in Language and Cognition," Psycholinguistics, ed. Sol Saporta (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), pp. 480-482. Also see Tamotsu Shibutani, Society and Personality (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), pp. 122-125.





The trouble with so much of the modern theatre--particularly in this country--is that the playwright has come to assume that if he explains his characters, he has written a play. He has forgotten that a dramatic situation requires not that we should understand a character but simply that we should believe in him. Dramatic action always leads to a judgment; it requires that something shall happen to and through the characters; something that is embodied in the events of which the characters are a part. Whenever the personality of the character, rather than the action of which the character should be a part, becomes the playwright's chief concern, the range of the theatre is drastically reduced if not unalterably damaged.<sup>45</sup>

Would the same criticism not apply to acting?

The actor today, more often than not, learns to conceive a character with individualistic psychological concepts, primarily motivation, and, then, incongruously, is told to portray that character situationally and actively interacting with other characters.<sup>46</sup>

Motivation is necessary to understanding a character; the question is one of emphasis. As noted above, motives do not necessarily have to be thought of as a backward reference in time and as being a cause of behavior. If the character is "explained" in the actor's mind by a "motive," of what import is what happens in the play? Shouldn't what happens in the play "explain" much of the character? Believability of a character would seem to rest on more than acceptable

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<sup>45</sup>Corrigan, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>46</sup>See Charles McGaw, Acting Is Believing (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 87-91.



motivation.

If this distinction is somewhat blurred in reference to the more usually realistic play, where does the actor's method stand in relation to playwrights who reject the primacy of motive? For instance, ". . . the Theatre of the Absurd rejects the idea that it is possible to motivate all human behavior, or that the character is based on an immutable essence. . . ." <sup>47</sup>

Further, ". . . the Theatre of the Absurd is revolting against the kind of theatre in which all action is conceived in terms of psychological plausibility. . . ." <sup>48</sup>

The validity of conceiving a character primarily through motive in anything but modern psychological drama is questionable if we consider

. . . how mixed in thought all previous dramatic styles had been. None of these styles were completely objective. All were, in fact, typically compounded of objective and subjective thinking. As it was in dramatic thought, so it was with general thought.

. . . . .  
The average man of today lives with, and uses, both. He may often be aware of the inconsistency, but he accepts it as inevitable. In everyday life, therefore, this inconsistency is reconciled.

But it never becomes entirely reconciled in the more exact fields of thought--in art, science or philosophy. Instead the two currents of thought become more and more contradictory. A kind of intense rivalry develops, and any move made by one

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<sup>47</sup>Esslin, op. cit., p. 305.

<sup>48</sup>Corrigan, op. cit., p. 19.

line of thought is quickly checkmated by the other.<sup>49</sup>

The language of social-psychologists seems particularly applicable to the theatre process. It is ironic that much of their terminology was derived from theatrical concepts. Dramatistic concepts of man are also growing in the other social sciences as man has begun to be viewed in his situational and linguistic context rather than as a complete entity alone or as an insignificant part of a mass. It may be that theatre, by returning to its own ground, will find a greater effectiveness.

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<sup>49</sup>Gorelik, op. cit., p. 185.



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