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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EIGHT SELECTED  
PLAYS OF SIDNEY KINGSLEY.

The City University of New York  
Ph.D., 1976  
Theater

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EIGHT SELECTED

PLAYS OF SIDNEY KINGSLEY

by

RICHARD M. CLARK

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate  
Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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1976

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

American drama, as John Gassner noted, came of age only in the 1920's but by 1933 the golden era seemed ended and Broadway was in the doldrums of theatrical activity.<sup>1</sup> The desperate state of the Broadway theatre in 1933 is underscored by this comment from Burns Mantle:

This particular season [1933-34] was begun in the very depths of a depression that had continued for the better part of five years. There was little hope for the theatre even among the more optimistic of its followers. Its leading producers had lost all their money. Its more dependable angels were in a state of bankruptcy. Its better playwrights and its better actors had deserted to the motion pictures. Its theatre properties were, for the most part, in the hands of mortgagor bankers who could not, for the life of them, think of anything to do with them.<sup>2</sup>

The playwrights of social reform, those vanguards of the leftist theatre who had survived the era of Harding prosperity to have their vision of the collapse of capitalism seemingly realized in the Great Depression, were experiencing difficulty in adjusting themselves and their art to the theatrical requirements brought about by this new climate in American life. The early disciples of social reform who were writing in the Twenties--Elmer Rice,

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<sup>1</sup>John Gassner, Masters of the Drama (New York: Dover Publications, 1945), p. 629.

<sup>2</sup>Burns Mantle, ed., The Best Plays of 1933-34 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1934), p. 3.

John Howard Lawson, and John Dos Passos--used Expressionism as a weapon to attack formal ideas of art and the existing social structure. They were generally far more successful in their artistic statement than they were in their social comment. The artistic experiments of the Twenties in Expressionism and Symbolism could not survive the shock of the Great Depression; they were no longer functional in a world that called for direct action. "Expressionism and fantasy had been ideal for plays whose sweep took in the whole of humanity and history, but they were unable to do justice to the here and now."<sup>3</sup> The problems created by the Great Depression were quite specific and required specific answers. "When the radical drama arose from the backwash of the depression it was in realistic propaganda form."<sup>4</sup>

Sidney Kingsley was one of the first of the playwrights of the Thirties to effectively master the technique of realistically expressing social concerns--a style which was to characterize the drama of the decade. With his first play, Men in White, the then twenty-seven year old Kingsley rescued the failing fortunes of the Group Theatre, won the Pulitzer Prize, and "restored a measure of hope and confidence in the power and magic of the theatre at a time when America was in the depths of The Great

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<sup>3</sup>Bamber Gascoigne, Twentieth-Century Drama (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1962), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>Edmond M. Gagey, Revolution in American Drama (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), p. 154.

Depression."<sup>5</sup> The social concerns of Men in White and its effective linking of morality and melodrama in a realistic framework made this play and Kingsley's next play, Dead End, models for the social drama of the Thirties.

But Kingsley should not be considered simply a playwright of the Thirties--his active career spanned many years. Bamber Gascoigne, while running the risk "of taking pigeon-holing to the high extremes of a bureaucrat," characterizes the theatre essentials of these several decades thus:

. . . the thirties produced a theatre calling for action, the forties concentrated on the individual caught up in the action, and the post-war theatre was left with the emphasis on the individual because the action, and the need for it, had passed. . . . The individual's problem was now that of inaction. With no "good, brave causes left" as a simple outlet for him, he is now pictured by the playwright as a creature heavily pressed upon by family ties, by broad social forces and by a nagging sense of futility.<sup>6</sup>

Kingsley's continuing success as a playwright was founded basically on his ability to capture the hopes and fears of the American public at a particular moment of its national life. If he is not a playwright for all times, he is most surely a writer of his own time. In each of his plays, he crystalized the mood of his countrymen in arresting detail and with impressive theatrical technique. It is, therefore, not surprising that his plays conform precisely to Gascoigne's generalizations. His works of the Thirties were calls to action and expressed the

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Mersand, preface to Men in White by Sidney Kingsley, in Three Plays About Doctors, ed. by Joseph Mersand (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1961), p. 96.

<sup>6</sup> Gascoigne, Twentieth-Century Drama, p. 48.

major concerns of that era: the social and economic concerns of the Depression in Men in White and Dead End, fear of war in Ten Million Ghosts, and fear of the rise of Fascism in The World We Make. In The Patriots, written in the desperate days of World War II, Kingsley used the history play form to portray the founding fathers embroiled in the tumult of creating our Republic. It is both an unabashed tribute to democracy and a glowing appeal for national unity. Both Detective Story and Darkness at Noon recognize the postwar era's loss of "good" causes and the seeming futility of individual action. In his last play, Night Life, Kingsley, the playwright, found himself trapped in the morass of social uncertainty which marked the early 1960's.

Of the nine plays which Sidney Kingsley has produced for the New York stage to date (Men in White, Dead End, Ten Million Ghosts, The World We Make, The Patriots, Detective Story, Darkness at Noon, Lunatics and Lovers, and Night Life), four of them (Men in White, The Patriots, Detective Story, and Darkness at Noon) have been award-winning dramas and only two of his plays (Ten Million Ghosts and Night Life) have failed to achieve success. Two of his plays were adapted from non-dramatic sources: The World We Make from Millen Brand's novel The Outward Room and Darkness at Noon from the novel of the same title by Arthur Koestler.

Although ranked among the best half-dozen playwrights of

the Thirties<sup>7</sup> and one of the most consistently successful and theatrically inventive of his generation of American playwrights, there has been no definitive critical analysis of Kingsley's work. In light of his distinguished career in the theatre, it seems appropriate that such an evaluation be made.

Writing in 1949, Joseph Wood Krutch noted, "I know no contemporary American who can take a topic--slum children in 'Dead End' or doctors and nurses in 'Men in White'--and turn out a more stageworthy piece, full of shrewd . . . observation crisply and humorously embodied in recognizable types."<sup>8</sup> Harold Clurman echoed this observation when he said, "Kingsley has a gift for making theatre out of local color and documentation."<sup>9</sup> It is generally conceded that Kingsley is a master of the big city melodrama. His work is, in the main, distinguished by his urban world-view and by his expert use of urban locales, character types, and language. In using this particular milieu, Kingsley is clearly in a tradition of urban American drama which dates back to The Poor of New York (1857) by Dion Boucicault and the work of Edward Harrigan. What distinguishes Kingsley from these playwrights and the superficial realism they and Clyde Fitch embraced is his perception of the theatre as a forum for the

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<sup>7</sup>Barnard Hewitt, Theatre U.S.A. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), p. 424.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph Wood Krutch, review of Detective Story, The Nation, CLXIII, No. 15 (1951), 425.

<sup>9</sup>Harold Clurman, review of Darkness at Noon, The New Republic, CXXIV, No. 6 (1951), 23.

presentation of a particular social point of view. His plays are, therefore, consistently distinguished by a high moral tone and the presentation of propaganda through effective theatrical means. His choice of a realistic style in the presentation of this milieu was not designed simply to shock or to fascinate. Each of his environments has specific relationships to the overall purpose of the given play.

The criteria to be used in critically evaluating and analyzing Kingsley's plays are those popular since the time of Aristotle. The elements of plot, setting and style, characterization, dialogue, and thought will be examined in detail in the following chapters. Within each of these categories, the considerations of various theatre critics and theorists will be presented as further clarification of the specific manner of analysis.

The plays to be analyzed are those plays produced on Broadway with the exception of Ten Million Ghosts. This play is unpublished and unavailable for examination. The other play excluded is Wonder-Dark Epilogue, an allegorical one-act play written while Kingsley was a student at Cornell. This early effort with its theme of the misunderstood and dying artist, un-individualized characters--Old Man, Boy, Girl, Young Man, etc.--and typically Symbolist lack of action is clearly not representative of his mature work.

In gathering the critical commentary and other materials contained in this analysis, all available indices at the Research Library for Performing Arts at Lincoln Center and the Main Library

of the New York City Public Library were used. The major portion of the commentary so obtained came from periodicals and newspapers. However, the author has also made extensive use of the published works of critics, histories of the theatre, and play anthologies.

Since the unifying force in Kingsley's drama was the illumination of a particular political or social point of view and since such concepts are derived in large part from the life of the artist, the following biographical material on Sidney Kingsley is a necessary preface to the body of this work.

Born in 1906 in New York City of solidly middle-class parents, Sidney Kingsley is a New Yorker born and bred. He attended the highly selective Townsend Harris Hall school in New York and won a state scholarship to Cornell University.<sup>10</sup> While at Cornell, Kingsley worked with Professor A. M. Drummond and the Cornell Dramatic Club, appearing in The Critic with his classmate, Franchot Tone. In addition to his acting assignments, he won Professor Drummond's annual one-act play award with Wonder-Dark Epilogue and another first prize for a Miltonian Masque. Following his graduation, Kingsley worked for a time as an actor, first with the Tremont Theatre stock company in the Bronx and then in a small role in Subway Express on Broadway. By this time (1930) his first professional play, Men in White, then called Crisis, was making the rounds of producers. On the strength of

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<sup>10</sup>Jean Gould, Modern American Playwrights (New York: Dodd Mead & Co., 1966), p. 189.

this script, Kingsley spent a brief stint writing scenarios and reading scripts for Columbia Pictures but they failed to renew his contract. Since launching his career with Men in White, his life has been completely involved with the Broadway theatre. Even while serving with the Army during World War II he wrote and rewrote The Patriots.<sup>11</sup> Starting with his second play, Dead End, Kingsley directed all of his own plays with the exception of The Patriots. In 1939 he married the actress Madge Evans, whisking her away from a summer stock engagement in a story-book romance that has apparently lasted to this day. While serving in the U.S. Army, Kingsley rose from the rank of Private to Lieutenant and served with distinction. Upon his return to civilian life, Kingsley found himself short of funds and quickly remedied that situation by doing a couple of scripts for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer: Homecoming and Cass Timberlane.<sup>12</sup>

Kingsley's return to the New York stage with Detective Story in 1949 marked a period of intense theatrical activity for him with Darkness at Noon and Lunatics and Lovers, his only comedy, following in rapid succession. During the period 1955-1960, Kingsley was under contract to Columbia Broadcasting System and adapted Detective Story for television production while continuing to work on other projects. Since the failure of Night Life in 1962, Kingsley has not presented another play. Although

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<sup>11</sup>Edward Reed, "Roster of New Faces," Theatre Arts Monthly, XVIII, No. 1 (1934), 58.

<sup>12</sup>"A Slow Painstaking Worker," Time, April 4, 1949, p. 76.

Detective Story was scheduled for revival in the season of 1973-74, it was cancelled in its out of town tryouts. Almost yearly, however, news items appear indicating that Kingsley is still active and working on various projects.

In addition to his theatrical activities, Kingsley has been most active in the Dramatists Guild, serving first as Vice President and then as President of the Guild.<sup>13</sup> He continues to sit on many committees to encourage the arts and is, at the time of this writing, National Judge for the American Theatre Association's annual playwriting contest.

Kingsley's liberal political sentiments are evident in his plays. He once described himself as "a liberal with left-wing tendencies," going on to say that he is "content to be a Red when I'm with the Bourbons, and a Bourbon when I'm with Reds."<sup>14</sup>

When writing one of his plays, Kingsley immerses himself in research and careful documentation. He spent three years, including much time in hospitals with interns, researching and writing Men in White. Dead End was extensively researched in the slums of New York. The Patriots was in rewrite for three years and for Detective Story Kingsley spent two years haunting a Manhattan detective squad room, the District Attorney's office, judges' chambers, and a month on 24-hour-call with the Homicide Squad.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>"Kingsley Heads DG," Variety, December 16, 1964, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup>E. Reed, "Personae Gratae," Theatre Arts Monthly, XX, No. 1 (1936), 50.

<sup>15</sup>Time, April 4, 1949, p. 76.

In considering this background, it not surprising to discover that Kingsley's most successful plays enjoyed a New York City locale; that was the environment in which he has spent most of his life and in which he has found the most stimulation. It is also a career and a life which demonstrate a remarkable sense of optimism and a willingness to work toward a single goal with undiminished discipline and dedication. It is, above all, a life which is indicative of an artist's desire to master all of the crafts of the theatre and to become--in the fullest sense--a man of the theatre. No other modern American playwright has sustained such a successful career as playwright, director, and producer and few can boast of as long a career of total immersion in the theatre--Kingsley has worked consistently in the professional theatre since 1928. Basically liberal, his life seems to bear out his belief in the work ethic and the American ideal. His works have, therefore, tended to challenge America's economic system, capitalism, while confirming his belief in the tenets of democracy.

Kingsley's success in the theatre is unquestionable. In a forty-seven year career of acting, writing, directing, and producing he has fashioned five major successes, two plays of moderate success, and only two failures. His mastery of the dramatic, reportorial style of writing, his keen ability to select the proper environments for his plays, and, most importantly, his genius for expressing themes of current significance are the keys to his success. Although his basic strength as a writer lies in

his knowledge of the machinery and techniques of the theatre, Kingsley remains a playwright of enormous conscience. It is this sense of purpose, this conscience, which flashes without compromise from his works and the intensity of his commitment, which he never fails to demonstrate in theatrically effective terms, that raises his plays out of the category of simply entertaining melodramas and makes them meaningful theatre.

## CHAPTER II

### PLOT

Critical opinion as to the importance of plot varies. Aristotle referred to it as the "soul" of the drama and gave it primary consideration, while disciples of surrealism and theatre of the absurd rate plot very low on their scale of values. The position of relative importance which plot occupies seems to vary with the playwright's artistic means. To those playwrights dedicated to realism, to logical causality, to theatre as a social document, story seems to be an all important means of communicating thought and feeling. To playwrights who choose to communicate through more subjective means--the dream, the hallucination, or other nonrealistic techniques--story is of little importance. Kingsley's commitment is to social documentation and the use of a basically realistic technique to "tell" a story in dramatically effective terms. He affirmed the primacy of plot in his creative process by stating:

I admire much of the avant-garde work. . . . But the trouble with it is it's so tangential. It doesn't really grapple with the large issues. I believe in story-telling on the stage. I think the play should tell a story, and a big story. I'd like to bring story-telling back to the stage.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>As quoted in Stuart W. Little, "Kingsley Finishes First New Play in Eight Years," New York Herald Tribune, May 14, 1962, p. 12.

The method by which the artist arrives at a unified plot action may also be used as an indication of the relative importance which he accords the various parts of the play. Using Bergson's Mind Energy as his inspiration, Eric Bentley has described a process which seems especially descriptive of Kingsley's work:

Applying Bergsonian views to the drama, we would postulate a process in four stages: first, the author's creative emotion; second, his hazy yet at the same time tenacious general idea or "dynamic schema"; third, his Action, which is an imitation, objectification, and elaboration of the dynamic schema; and fourth, the completed play, or Action fitted out with characters, dialogue, and spectacle.<sup>2</sup>

Kingsley's summation of his creative approach echoes this process in which idea finds its image in plot and all the other elements of the play fall into place around this unified action:

Basically, an idea for a play comes to me from the outside. . . . I may carry an idea around in my head a long time and then a background begins to appear that gives the idea form . . . . There is the idea, there is the growing background and then people begin to appear and take shape and grow, so that the whole thing--all its parts--fuses into a whole.<sup>3</sup>

That idea precedes creation and that plot provides Kingsley with the primary vehicle for conveying his ideas is further confirmed by his remarks regarding the creation of Darkness at Noon:

As soon as I read Koestler's book, I knew I had found just the story that I wanted. . . . I had been looking for some plot that I could use as a vehicle for an idea I had, an

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<sup>2</sup>Eric Bentley, The Life of the Drama (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>As quoted in John Ferris, "Kingsley's Protest Against His Ignorance," New York World-Telegram and Sun, November 10, 1962, Section 2, p. 14.

idea that was very important to me, the most important idea, I think, in the world at the moment.<sup>4</sup>

Given Kingsley's commitment to liberal ideals, his reformer's temperament, and his talent for careful documentation, his choice of a plot containing a strong story line is understandable. And while the story line itself is often not original, the plotting usually is. For while it is true that Kingsley's plays feature a rather conventional story line, it is also true that the method of developing or plotting these stories is different in each play, and that Kingsley has displayed a continuing interest in exploring different modes of story telling. It is also evident that Kingsley relished the challenge of solving the technical problems of plotting in ways that were, for him at least, new. While he made many public statements regarding his flexible use of form, his artistic self-image is amply reflected in the following statement:

I'll always be an experimentalist in every respect. . . . I once said that when I reached the age of 45 I'd settle down to one style. I'm 48 now. The two plays I've already started--both of them are serious, very serious--are as completely different as anything I've ever done.<sup>5</sup>

For the purpose of this study, plot will be understood to include both story and dramatic structure; as George Pierce Baker has pointed out, the story is simply a synopsis of the action, but "plot is story proportioned and emphasized so as to accomplish,

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<sup>4</sup>As quoted in John Keating, "Darkness at Noon," Cue, January 6, 1951, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>As quoted in Murray Schumach, "Explaining a New Type of Farce," New York Times, December 12, 1954, Section 2, p. 3.

under the conditions of the theatre, the purposes of the dramatist."<sup>6</sup> As an aid to analysis here, the synopses that precede each discussion will be detailed and broken down into acts and scenes so that the function of each unit within the whole may be clearly discernible.

Sidney Kingsley's first professional play, Men in White,<sup>7</sup> opened at the Broadhurst Theatre in New York City on September 26, 1933, and closed on July 28, 1934, running a total of 351 performances. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the Theatre Club award. Kingsley's premiere effort was a highly original excursion into the action-filled environment of a big city hospital.

Act I, scene 1:

In the library of St. George's Hospital, interns and resident doctors meet to exchange information on patients and the latest in medical research. The entrance of Dr. Hochberg causes a flurry of activity as several doctors converge on him to seek medical advice. It is clear in his responses and the respect shown him that Dr. Hochberg is the eminent surgeon at St. George's. Hochberg interrupts his conversations to confer with a young intern, Dr. Ferguson. Ferguson has been singled out by Hochberg to share a research project with him and is slated to do further

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<sup>6</sup>George Pierce Baker, Dramatic Technique (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), p. 59.

<sup>7</sup>Sidney Kingsley, Men in White, in Three Plays About Doctors, ed. by Mersand, pp. 101-183.

work with a distinguished surgeon in Vienna. Their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of Dr. Levine. Levine, it is obvious, has fallen on hard times since being a favored intern at St. George's. He is ill, too poor to have his microscope fixed, and fears that his wife may have contracted tuberculosis. Hochberg and Ferguson agree to have his wife's X-rays and sputum specimen examined, and Levine leaves after reminiscing with Ferguson for a moment--Levine, too, studied with Hochberg and as an intern occupied the same room which Ferguson now has. Ferguson plans to spend the evening with his fiancée, Laura Hudson, but he is ordered to stand by to administer a particularly difficult blood transfusion. The scene concludes with the hospital intercom urgently paging him to the emergency room.

Act I, scene 2:

From his private hospital room, Laura's wealthy father continues to negotiate business deals, many of which are less than ethical. Mr. Hudson's wheeling and dealing is suspended when Dr. Hochberg enters and warns Hudson that he is endangering his recovery by this business activity. Laura enters, breathless with the excitement of her coming marriage and her plans for the evening. Laura and Mr. Hudson take Dr. Hochberg to task for working Ferguson so hard, expressing their lack of understanding as to why Ferguson stays on for so little money. Dr. Hochberg's explanation falls on deaf ears. Ferguson enters and he and Laura are left alone. She urges him to leave the hospital and go into private practice--her father will set him up with an office

and equipment. Although he wavers, Ferguson insists that he must stay on and prepare for his career as a surgeon. Laura's threats that she cannot take much more neglect become direct as Ferguson tells her he cannot leave the hospital to be with her that evening. Finally, as he is summoned to an emergency, Laura warns him that he must choose between his medical career and her.

Act I, scene 3:

Ferguson arrives at his emergency case just in time to prevent an incompetent society doctor from administering a fatal dose of insulin to a sick child. The doctor threatens to have Ferguson thrown out of the hospital for insubordination, but, as Ferguson's treatment saves the child, decides to "give him one more chance." Barbara Dennin, the student nurse who assisted Ferguson in the treatment, attempts to compliment him, but, worn out from his battle over the child's treatment and depressed by the fact that he must stay on duty another night, Ferguson lashes out at her. Seeing he has hurt her feelings and recognizing his own weakness, he apologizes, compliments her, and offers to let her use some of his notes for a medical exam she has the next day.

Act I, scene 4:

As the other interns prepare for their night off, Ferguson studies in his room. Discovering that the patient to whom he was to give the transfusion has died, Ferguson telephones Laura to tell her that now he can join her. Still upset over his inability to choose between her and medicine, Laura refuses to see

him until he has made his decision. She then hangs up on him. Dr. Levine returns for the results of his wife's tests and as the two wait, they discuss the demands of their profession. Levine lost his chance for a career and advanced study when he married a gentile and was disowned by his rich mother. Ferguson shares his troubles with Levine but concludes, "We can't allow outside forces, or things, or people to interfere with us. . . . We can't! And if they do, we've got to bar them out . . . even if we have to tear out our hearts to do it." They are interrupted by the arrival of the test reports which confirm that Levine's wife has tuberculosis and little chance for recovery. Heartbroken, Levine departs. Barbara Dennin arrives and finds Ferguson near the breaking point. As the two share their despair, they are brought closer and closer until they kiss. Bound together in their moment of loneliness, they spend the night in Ferguson's room.

Act II, scene 1:

Three months have passed, and the Board of Trustees and the hospital's senior doctors are meeting to grapple with a most urgent problem--the hospital's deficit cannot be met by the Board of Trustees. A stormy argument erupts when it is made known that Mr. Hudson will accept a position on the Board and pay off the hospital deficit if Ferguson, who soon is to marry his daughter, is made an associate. Hochberg argues that Ferguson is not ready but is overruled by the others who feel it is the only way to save the hospital. Hochberg is shocked and hurt to discover that

Ferguson has apparently agreed to the plan and will give up his studies to enter private practice.

Act II, scene 2:

Ferguson and Laura return to the hospital, still flushed with the excitement of their wedding rehearsal. Ferguson is apparently taking more and more time out of his hospital schedule --a development reflected in his discussion of tennis and his jokes with the other interns about dining out at fashionable restaurants. In order to gain this leisure time, he has neglected certain hospital duties which he considers minor. The celebration is interrupted by the arrival of Dr. Hochberg. Ferguson tells Dr. Hochberg that he does not intend to continue his studies following his year abroad but will go into private practice so that he and Laura may spend more time together. Dr. Hochberg, concealing his disappointment, wishes them well and asks Ferguson to assist in an operation--Barbara Dennin has been brought into the hospital suffering from the effects of a septic abortion. As they are about to leave, Dr. Hochberg discovers Ferguson has committed a serious error in treating a patient--an error caused by his hasty departure for the wedding rehearsal. Laura's attempts to defend the contrite Dr. Ferguson only reveal her total lack of understanding of his medical duties. Dr. Hochberg dares her to observe Ferguson at work in the operating room. She accepts and Dr. Hochberg rushes off to prepare for the operation.

Act II, scene 3:

Ferguson learns from a nurse that Barbara's abortion was a result of their brief affair.

Act II, scene 4:

Laura watches as the operating team prepares for surgery. The entire team--doctors, sterile nurses, and unsterile nurses--go through the eight-minute scrub-up procedure in complete silence. As Barbara is wheeled into the operating room, Laura learns of her affair with Ferguson. She attempts to get Ferguson to explain, but once the surgical procedure has begun, it cannot be interrupted. She runs from the operating room as Ferguson joins the tableau of the surgical team and the operation begins.

Act III, scene 1:

Ferguson, beset by guilt, vows to Dr. Hochberg that he will leave the hospital to take care of Barbara. Laura returns, ostensibly to say goodbye to Dr. Hochberg before her departure for Europe. After a brief confrontation with Ferguson, she joins Dr. Hochberg's attempts to dissuade Ferguson. Dr. Hochberg leaves the two alone. Both admit that their love was an unrealistic one--Ferguson wanting to continue his studies, Laura too selfish to let him, and their compromises never would have worked. Hochberg returns with the news that Barbara has died. Laura, full of compassion for Ferguson, makes a final effort to get him to forget and leave with her, but Barbara's death has served to strengthen his resolve and Ferguson elects to stay and immerse

himself in study and work. Laura departs as a heartbroken but resolute Ferguson returns to his duties.

While all the major critics of the day received the play with accolades, most tempered their praise with variations on a theme which John Mason Brown sounded. He said that it was the production of the Group Theatre which lent the play its distinction and not the plot, which Brown found "piffling, mildewed in its hokum. . . . a five finger exercise in the tricks of production."<sup>8</sup> Harry Hansen of the New York World-Telegram and Brooks Atkinson of the New York Times,<sup>9</sup> while not as disparaging as Brown, whose basic criticism was that such "clinical matters" were "inartistic," concurred in the belief that the plotting was trite and hackneyed. Such criticism must be weighed, however, against the judgment of two of the outstanding critics of the American theatre: Joseph Wood Krutch and Stark Young. Both noted that the plot, while it made use of conventional playwriting devices, made uncommonly expert use of them. As Stark Young said, "The distribution of the stresses is admirable, the progression of interest, almost a suspense, is unbroken, and good images are found for the dramatic expression of the points to be made."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> John Mason Brown, review of Men in White, New York Evening Post, October 7, 1933, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> Harry Hansen, review of Men in White, New York World-Telegram, December 11, 1933; Brooks Atkinson, review of Men in White, New York Times, October 1, 1933, Section 9, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Stark Young, review of Men in White, The New Republic, LXXVI (October, 1933), 241.

Joseph Wood Krutch summed up the effective functioning of the plot perhaps best of all:

Where the machinery of [other similarly constructed plays] whirred and creaked and groaned, this play moves with a seemingly effortless inevitability. The final result is that one is left, not in a state of vague exasperation, but merely with the sense of having passed through a vivid self-justifying experience. Doubtless this effect is made possible by the fact that Sidney Kingsley, an author hitherto unknown to Broadway, has realized the necessity of resolving the emotional discords and has made the audience feel that the tragic triumph of his hero is worth his struggles and his partial defeat. But it is due also to a production in which competence and fire are combined to an extent perhaps possible only to an organization which has enough experience to know what it is doing but not so much as to have lost the enthusiasm of youth. . . . To say that it is by far the best thing which has appeared this season would be praise far too faint. . . . It furnishes an experience which is thrilling and absorbing, genuine and complete.<sup>11</sup>

Robert Garland concurred when he observed, "If it is true that the successful production . . . is the production that utilizes all the arts of the theatre and blends them into one harmonious whole, then Men in White is the new season's most successful offering."<sup>12</sup>

While the structure of Kingsley's plot may have been familiar, the story which it utilized was unique and effective in many ways. Men in White was the first of what has become a ubiquitous form: the big city hospital drama. Prior to Kingsley's play, the theatrical idea of the doctor was often comic,

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph Wood Krutch, review of Men in White, The Nation, CXXXVII, No. 3562 (1933), 419-420.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Garland, review of Men in White, New York Telegram, September 27, 1933, p. 18.

as in Shaw's The Doctor's Dilemma, Moliere's Doctor in Spite of Himself, or Jules Romains' Dr. Knock. The doctor was portrayed as either a quack or a kindly soul who carried his little leather bag through the darkest night to minister to the needs of his patients. Plays of this second type, such as Schnitzler's Dr. Bernhardt or, in contrast, Ibsen's An Enemy of the People, dealt more with the physician's personal life than they did with research or the practice of medicine. An exception is another type of medical play produced in the same season as Men in White, Sidney Howard's Yellowjack. In Yellowjack, however, the subjects of the experiment and the success of the experiment itself replace the physician in the practice of medicine as the central element in the play.

The attractions of the Men in White plot are many: the father-son relationship between the older, knowledgeable doctor-teacher and the young, impetuous intern is an archetypal pattern herein given scientific validity; the young intern's final decision to sacrifice his own personal desires in a commitment to his patients is a modern version of kingly sacrifice so common in classical drama. Finally, in Men in White Kingsley struck upon a plot which held forth an ideal of fulfillment in duty, sacrifice, and hard work which was an inspiration to a nation wracked by severe economic depression.

Having chosen his plot so effectively, Kingsley missed no opportunity to develop it theatrically. From the opening scene in the hospital library in which the clubby atmosphere of the Doctor's

meeting place forms a dramatic counterpoint with the constant flow of humanity streaming through the corridor at the rear of the set, the constant ringing of telephones, and the insistent paging of doctors, the audience is plunged into the atmosphere of a metropolitan hospital and held there, moving rapidly from one area to the next. The exposition contained in the first two scenes clearly defines the characters, their backgrounds and goals. The central conflict between love and duty is established and the sub-plot concerning Dr. Levine, whose career parallels that of Ferguson, is introduced. Ferguson's choice to remain on duty rather than spend the evening with Laura is the incident which establishes the central conflict. In scenes three and four, incidents are introduced which demonstrate the pressure under which Ferguson must function. Laura's rejection of his last minute attempt to see her places Ferguson dangerously near his breaking point. Finally, having to tell the pathetic Dr. Levine that his wife is almost certainly terminally ill, brings Ferguson to a crisis and in his depression, he turns to Barbara Dennin. The dramatic effect in this act is based on contrast and compression. The action moves from library, to expensive private hospital room, to ward, to Ferguson's cell-like room--each set smaller than the preceding one and each in sharp contrast to the previous set. Throughout this act Ferguson is placed under increasing pressure to choose between love and duty. This compression is mirrored in the ever-shrinking playing area and reinforced by the impersonal loudspeaker driving Ferguson from one locale to

another. These devices accelerate the action of Act I to its climactic conclusion.

Act II, rather than continuing this pattern, achieves its effect through a sudden and dramatic shift in action and locale. In Act II, scene 1, a new element is introduced into the basic conflict when Mr. Hudson's appointment to the hospital board provides the means for Ferguson's entering private practice as an associate of the hospital. Tension surrounding the central conflict grows as it becomes apparent that Ferguson has chosen Laura over his career. The reintroduction of the Barbara Dennin subplot suddenly reverses the play's action and sets the stage for the climax of the play--the operating room scene. There, surrounded by the potent images of his profession, Ferguson's dedication is visibly renewed in the ritual of surgery.

Act III, consisting of only one scene, is roughly one third as long as Act I and is devoted to resolving the action. Given Ferguson's devotion to medicine, this resolution or denouement is an inevitable result of the preceding action.

Structurally, Men in White differs from the well-made play in that its plot is accretive rather than the unfolding plot usual to the form. It does, however, exhibit the withheld secret which reverses the hero's fortunes, namely, Barbara's pregnancy. It clearly has exposition, ever rising action, sudden reversal in action followed by a climactic obligatory scene, logical and credible denouement, and the microcosmic repetition of overall structural pattern in each act which characterize the well-made play.

If Kingsley was not innovative in the structuring of his plot, he was, as Krutch and other critics noted, uncommonly skillful in using the proven techniques of the well-made play. And, through the masterful use of innovative subject matter, he created a work which had substantial impact on our popular theatre.

True to his artist's urge to experiment, Kingsley's next play was radically different in both story and structure from Men in White. Dead End<sup>13</sup> opened at the Belasco Theatre in New York City on October 28, 1935, and closed on June 10, 1937, running a total of 684 performances and winning The Theatre Club Award. In this play Kingsley utilized an environment which embodied the conflict between wealth and poverty in order to indict the social and economic causes of slums and crime.

Act I:

A large group of street-wise urchins play, pitch pennies, and swim in the filth of the East River. They pause to watch a rich, elderly couple emerge from the walled-in garden of the luxury apartment which abuts their squalid tenement--the street in front of the luxury building is being repaired and its occupants, to their discomfort, must use the rear exit. The boys continue their gang activities: smoking cigarette butts, cursing one another, searching for food, and bullying other children who are not members of their gang.

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<sup>13</sup>Sidney Kingsley, Dead End, in Twenty Best Plays of the American Theatre, ed. by John Gassner (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1939), pp. 681-738.

A wanted murderer, "Baby-Face" Martin, and his henchman watch the boys with amusement and recognition--Martin grew up in this slum. In spite of his recent plastic surgery, "Baby-Face" is recognized by Gimpty, an old childhood friend of his who is now an impoverished architect. Gimpty, true to the old gang code, agrees not to "squeal" on Martin. Martin, who is a successful gangster, compares his luxurious life with Gimpty's life of hard work, study, and poverty. Martin intends to stay in the old neighborhood only long enough to see his mother and his ex-girl friend--Francy.

As Martin leaves in search of Francy, Drina joins Gimpty and they discuss the difficulties of a decent life in the slums. She is trying to raise her brother, Tommy, but as the leader of the gang of boys, he seems destined to follow in Martin's footsteps and enter a life of crime. Drina and Gimpty are joined by Kay, an attractive young woman who lives in the nearby luxury apartments and is the mistress of a wealthy man. She and Gimpty have become friends. As Drina leaves in search of Tommy and the kerosene with which to de-louse him, Gimpty and Kay discuss their seemingly hopeless situation. It is obvious that she is attracted to Gimpty but hesitates to leave her "man" for fear of a life of poverty. She must, however, decide soon for she is scheduled to leave the next night on a three-month trip. Finding it impossible to have any privacy in the street, Kay and Gimpty decide to go to his apartment. Once again the young boys dominate the

action as they plot to "get" a rich kid who has taunted them with his wealth and education.

Act II:

The boys' plans to rough up the rich kid are soon realized. Pretending friendship, they lure him into a dark hallway, steal his watch, pull down his pants, and rub dirt in his crotch. As the gang flees the scene, Kay joins Gimpty. After seeing the squalor of his apartment, she is convinced that she must stay with her rich friend and leave Gimpty. Martin taunts Gimpty over the loss of Kay but stops when his mother arrives. Their reunion is a cruel mockery of traditional sentiment--Martin's mother despises and rejects him. As she leaves, the rich boy's father apprehends Tommy. In his struggle to escape, Tommy stabs the man and then flees. Although not seriously wounded, the man demands Tommy be arrested and the police set off in pursuit. Drina returns from a picket line, having been beaten by a policeman. She immediately sets out to find Tommy.

Martin's reunion with Francy is another bitter disappointment--his childhood sweetheart is now a diseased prostitute. Francy leaves and Martin, deciding to make some profit from his visit, plots to kidnap a child from the nearby luxury apartment building. Before his plan can take shape, the police, tipped off by Gimpty, kill Martin in a hail of gunfire. In the ensuing confusion, one of Tommy's gang, Spit, is recognized and taken in for questioning. Gimpty, shocked at the violence of

Martin's death, stands numbly by the crumpled body unable even to collect his reward money.

Act III:

The gang sits around a small fire, roasting stolen potatoes and reliving the excitement of the day. Tommy has eluded the police and is looking for the kid who "squealed" on him. While the kids speculate on all the great things Tommy will learn in reform school, Kay joins Gimpty for a final farewell. As Kay departs Tommy discovers the boy who turned him in, Spit, and threatens to scar him with a knife. Drina stops Tommy just in time and Spit is freed. Rather than be a runaway, Tommy gives himself up to the police. Gimpty, who has in the meantime collected his reward, joins Drina in defense of Tommy and the two leave to retain a lawyer to defend him. As the boys speculate on Tommy's life in reform school, life in the slums resumes its pattern as though nothing had happened.

Critical acclaim for Dead End was almost unanimous. Robert Coleman found the flow of life which Kingsley brought to the stage most rewarding. "Dead End is in no wise what may be termed a well-made play. For the power to move that is truth, Dead End rejects neat plotting and mechanical motivation."<sup>14</sup> Most critics, however, agreed that while it was a powerful play, it was marred by a gratuitous and overly sentimental love story

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<sup>14</sup>Robert Coleman, review of Dead End, New York Daily Mirror, October 29, 1935, p. 20.

which clashed with the harsh portrayal of slum life. Joseph Wood Krutch, while he admired the play, lamented that it had been unable to rise to greater heights, saying:

Without being false it lacks either that originality of incident or that freshness of feeling at least one or the other of which is necessary to make a play great. Its quality varies from the sleazy cheapness of its conventional love story to what seems to me the one touch of near-greatness in the scene between the mature gangster and his mother.<sup>15</sup>

Of those critics whose aesthetic sensibilities were offended by the play's realism, Grenville Vernon is typical:

Mr. Kingsley has been a singularly fortunate young man. The inability of the jury to differentiate between a play and its acting and direction resulted two years ago in the award of the Pulitzer Prize to "Men in White." "Men in White" was far from an outstanding play in itself, but it was magnificently produced. Though "Dead End" is on the whole a better play than its predecessor, it is, when all is said and done, simply extremely shrewd photography.<sup>16</sup>

There are two interesting points here. First, Vernon attempts to dismiss Men in White because it enjoyed a fine production and in doing so makes a distinction between play and production that, in modern critical terms, seems petty. Secondly, he rejects the piece on the basis of the style used to develop its idea, a rather arbitrary esthetic judgment. As Edmond Gagey points out, Kingsley's realism is carefully selected and structured for effect:

In the same manner sordid pictures of city life might range from the purely photographic to careful slanting for a social

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<sup>15</sup> Joseph Wood Krutch, review of Dead End, The Nation, CXLI, No. 3671 (1935), 575.

<sup>16</sup> Granville Vernon, review of Dead End, The Commonweal, XXIII, No. 18 (1935), 48.

message. The contrast is well illustrated in two plays of New York life--Elmer Rice's "Street Scene" (1929), a Pulitzer Prize winner, and Sidney Kingsley's "Dead End" (1935). The former--a masterpiece of objective realism--was the first to record city noises and amplify them throughout the performance to add to the verisimilitude. . . . In the play the Jewish radical makes scattered comments about capitalism and the stagehand's wife wonders why people can't live in amity without perpetually trying to hurt one another, but the author remains in the background and ventures no explicit thesis or propaganda. Not so with "Dead End," written in the height of the depression, which marshals its realism for an attack against slums and the social order. . . . The tenements lining the street are filthy and run down; because there is no upkeep, the owners are making large profits. The tough city kids meet at the river, build fires to bake potatoes they have stolen, jump naked into the grimy waters, organize street battles with other gangs. They learn cruelty, stealing, extortion, and other vices; when they are caught and sent to reform school, their criminal education is complete. For the ambitious boy, the natural leader, material success can come only through crime. In the character Baby-Face Martin we have the full-fledged gangster and in the street kid Tommy the potential one. Of the girls, some sink to prostitution, others rise to the opulence of kept womanhood. The one person who has had the stamina and character to rise above his environment cannot secure employment and is, ironically, on relief. . . . While "Street Scene" merely depicts and the tragedy is mainly a personal one, "Dead End"--less perfect and convincing as a play--has greater direction as a social indictment.<sup>17</sup>

Dead End's effectiveness as a social document may also be demonstrated by the Wagner committee's use of passages from the play to help them achieve slum-clearance legislation under the New Deal.<sup>18</sup> John Gassner noted that Kingsley had utilized ". . . the three main pillars of the younger militant drama-- exposition of social evil, economic determinism, and stress upon

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<sup>17</sup> Gagey, Revolution in American Drama, pp. 148-149.

<sup>18</sup> John Gassner, introduction to Men in White, Best American Plays, Supplementary Volume 1918-1958, ed. by John Gassner (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1961), p. 412.

the struggle of the classes,"<sup>19</sup> and that the play was all the more remarkable in that it covered all of these areas effortlessly.

Some critical opinion held that Kingsley was far too concerned with his dramatic schema; that his plot and its action were too thoroughly committed to his single ideal to let the action develop at will. But, contrary to Mr. Coleman's observation that Dead End is not a well-made play, it is, in fact, quite neatly plotted.

Kingsley himself answered those critics who maintained the play had no plot, saying:

It has never occurred to them that it may be more important for the Idea to have the prescribed magnitude and the necessary beginning, middle, and end: that the "plot" may be one of idea; that the people in a play, as in life, may have no beginning except in birth, and no end except in death; that the crises leading to a great crisis may be subordinated at the moment to unimportant events, and yet, the Idea inherent in the things and the people may develop with progressive clarity and excitement.<sup>20</sup>

Kingsley chose to develop his Idea through three stories: "Baby-Face" Martin's, Gimpty's, and that of the street kids. The same basic conflict--the individual versus a hostile environment--unifies each of the three stories. If there is no single, dominant story which sets forth this conflict in specific terms, the collective effect of all of the stories is to clearly define the

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<sup>19</sup> John Gassner, Masters of the Drama (3rd ed.; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., ca. 1955), p. 688.

<sup>20</sup> Sidney Kingsley, "It Often Pays to Take a Walk Along the East River," New York Times, November 10, 1935, Section 9, p. 1.

struggle of persons attempting to escape their crippling social environment.

The plot derives its structure from the repetition of patterns within each of the three stories. In analyzing these patterns, it is useful to title the play's three acts: Act I--"The Search"; Act II--"Finding and Losing"; Act III--"Adjusting." In Act I "Baby-Face" Martin searches for loved ones from his childhood--his mother and his girl friend, Gimpty searches for his first romance, and the boys search for a means of proving their superiority over the rich kid. In Act II "Baby-Face" Martin finds his childhood loves and discovers that they have disintegrated and disappeared with age, the consummation of Gimpty's romance results in its termination as Kay decides she cannot risk staying in the slums with him, and the boys succeed in humiliating the rich kid at the cost of Tommy's and, to an extent, their freedom. Martin's killing is, of course, the climax of the play and is the result of Gimpty's disappointment. In Act III the pattern of adjustment is repeated in the two remaining sub-plots. Gimpty, realizing his reward money is merely a temporary bonus and not enough for a new life, settles for a relationship with another slum dweller, Drina. Tommy surrenders to his fate by turning himself in to the police.

In all of the stories the characters are unable to achieve their desires because of obstacles inherent in their environment. "Baby-Face" Martin cannot rediscover his youthful loves and senses that just as his repeatedly destroyed

fingerprints reappear on his fingers, he cannot escape what he is and must ultimately face destruction by the society which created him. Gimpty loses his girl to a wealthy man and in a final desperate attempt to recover her, betrays his boyhood idol to the police for a reward. The character who has struggled all his life to rise above poverty and failed must become a traitor to his old friends in order to survive. Finally, the previously discussed parallels between "Baby-Face" Martin and Tommy, the young gang leader, are closely drawn and complete in their effect. Each individual story has its own crisis and they all climax in the shooting of "Baby-Face" Martin. To say that a plot such as this, for all its surface realism, is "merely clever photography" is to refuse to recognize the deliberate structuring and patterning of events which Kingsley devised to indict a social system and to delineate economic causes of social ills.

Glowing with the success of his first two plays, Kingsley next attacked the munitions industry which he saw pushing the world toward war just as it had, in his estimation, done in World War I. Ten Million Ghosts opened at the St. James Theatre in New York City on October 23, 1936, and closed on November 2, 1936--a run of only eleven performances. As has been mentioned elsewhere in this work, Ten Million Ghosts was not published and is, therefore, not available for inspection and analysis. This author did, however, have the opportunity to read the typescript which was, until its loss, available in the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, and I must agree with the critics who, to a

man, found the play to be an unsuccessful treatment of an unbelievable subject. Land of Variety summed up the production well saying, ". . . it seems a case of a playwright rich enough to indulge in a crusade, gifted enough to dress the crusade up with trappings of effective theatre, but not superman enough to overcome the inevitable odds stacked against sermons at \$3.30 per pew."<sup>21</sup> The entire production aimed for an epic quality featuring projections and live actors, a technique which had been utilized by the Theatre Union in Brecht's play, Mother, presented in the Fourteenth Street Theatre the previous year.<sup>22</sup> And while Donald Oenslager's sets were cited as the best feature of the production, it ended more as a lecture than as theatre.

Following the failure of Ten Million Ghosts, Kingsley returned to a familiar milieu, a New York City tenement, and a much smaller and more personal story. The World We Make<sup>23</sup> is an adaptation of the novel The Outward Room<sup>24</sup> by Millen Brand. It opened at the Guild Theatre in New York City on November 20, 1939, and closed on January 27, 1940, running a total of 80 performances. In this play Kingsley found a story which ran counter

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<sup>21</sup>Land, review of Ten Million Ghosts, Variety, October 28, 1936, p. 56.

<sup>22</sup>Robert Coleman, review of Ten Million Ghosts, New York Daily Mirror, October 24, 1936, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup>Sidney Kingsley, The World We Make, based on the novel by Millen Brand; MSS available for inspection through Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.

<sup>24</sup>Millen Brand, The Outward Room (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937).

to the tradition of the corrupting influence of big city life, a tradition which he had followed in Dead End. Here we see another face of city life and the swarm of tenement life becomes a healing force for a soul in torment.

Act I:

Virginia McKay has been confined to Greendale Sanitarium for several years. On the morning of one of her parents' infrequent visits, she confers with her psychiatrist, the eminent Dr. Schiller. While she admits that she is still not cured and irrationally blames her mother and father for the death of her brother, Virginia longs for the reality of the world outside the sanitarium--a world to which Dr. Schiller believes she cannot adjust.

Virginia's meeting with her wealthy, selfish parents is a disaster and ends in an argument filled with bitter accusations. Virginia, left alone by Dr. Schiller, steals his keys and escapes to search for the "real" world she desires so desperately.

Act I, scene 1:

Having made her way to the city, Virginia enters a cheap, second-rate steam laundry in search of a job. The laundry is in full operation--steam billows from the washers, the machinery clangs, and the workers, trapped in the rhythm of their work, shout to one another. Virginia gets the job--"35¢ an hour and a half hour off for lunch." It is brutal, exhausting work and by the end of the day, the half-starved young woman can hardly stand.

John, the shop foreman, discovering that she has no place to stay, agrees to let her come home with him.

Act I, scene 2:

John and Virginia, who now calls herself Harriet Hope, arrive at his cold water flat. She has tried to eat but became sick from starvation and exhaustion. John makes her as comfortable as possible in the dirty, run-down apartment and following a brief visit from a neighbor--a lonely Italian man and his dog-- Harriet falls asleep in John's bed. John makes a bed on the floor and soon both are asleep.

Act I, scene 3:

There is no dialogue in this scene--only pantomimic dramatization: John awakens to the early morning sounds of the city; shuts off the alarm before it can awaken Harriet; fixes his breakfast while he watches the sleeping woman; leaves food, money, and a note for her; then goes to work. A moment later Harriet awakens. After a minute of panic, she realizes that it is too late for her to make it to work and settles down to eat the breakfast which John has left for her. As she eats she looks out the window and sees other women in their apartments go about their daily chores. Harriet prepares to leave but sees a neighbor, Mrs. Zubriski, on her hands and knees scrubbing her floor. Harriet watches for a moment, fascinated, then returns to John's apartment and begins scrubbing the floor. As she scrubs she gains confidence in her ability and gradually finds the rhythm of life around her and merges with it.

Act II, scene 1:

Having cleaned the apartment, Harriet meets the Zubriskis: Mr. Zubriski is despondent over being out of work; Anna, their daughter, wants to get married but, as she supports the entire family, cannot; Mrs. Zubriski is faced with the task of holding the household together. John arrives home just as they are leaving. Harriet has tried, with Mrs. Zubriski's help, to make spaghetti but, being unsure of herself, fails. As she reveals some of her doubts and insecurities to John, Harriet realizes that her experience with the Zubriski family has taught her that others are also lost and confused. As the scene ends Harriet says that she wants to stay with John in the safety and security of his apartment.

Act II, scene 2:

Life with John has settled into a happy routine for Harriet and she rushes to greet him as he and his brother, Jim, come in from work. Jim, who also works at the laundry, is sporting a black eye--the result of a political argument with a pro-Nazi truckdriver. Fortunately, John had arrived in time to save his brother. Jim tries to convince John that the United States should get involved in the war in Europe. John, always the peacemaker, only laughs.

John reveals that he has a job at the laundry for Mr. Zubriski and the family is elated. Anna's plans to get married immediately precipitate a crisis: John asks Harriet to marry him and she refuses. Harriet, under pressure from John, reveals to

him that she cannot marry him because she is insane and an escapee from a mental institution. Having revealed this, Harriet attempts to leave. John stops her and convinces her that he needs her and they should try to work out their problems together.

Act II, scene 3:

The neighbors and Jim's family have gathered at Harriet and John's for dinner. Jim's obsession with radio reports of the invasion of Poland and the political arguments between the neighbors finally drive Harriet to distraction. It is the anniversary of her brother's death and Harriet feels she is on the verge of a relapse. Realizing they have carried their arguments too far and that Harriet is upset, the guests chat for a moment and then leave. John warns his brother, whose health has been failing, to get some rest and a new doctor. Once they are alone, John reprimands Harriet for venting her feelings on their guests. He refuses to accept her explanation that she is not feeling well, saying that her responses are childish. He goes for a walk and Harriet lapses into near hysteria.

Act III, scene 1:

Anna visits Harriet and reveals that she is going to have a baby. This news further depresses Harriet who wants to have children but fears doing so because of her insanity. Anna calls Dr. Schiller at Harriet's request and he agrees to meet Harriet that evening. John and the neighbors arrive and begin to celebrate Anna's pregnancy. The party is cut short by the arrival of

Jim's neighbor. Jim has been taken to Bellevue Hospital with internal bleeding. John bolts from the room and Harriet rushes after him.

Act III, scene 2:

It is late the same night and Dr. Schiller, who has come to see Harriet, has joined the neighbors in awaiting Harriet's return. He discusses her current life with the neighbors while they wait. John and Harriet arrive with the news that Jim is dead. John, full of remorse, rejects all help and shuts himself up in his room. Harriet turns to Dr. Schiller and asks him to help John. Dr. Schiller convinces her that she is fully cured and the only person who can help John. As she and Dr. Schiller continue to talk, they conclude that with all the despair and unhappiness in the world, faith in people and the desire to help those in need is the motive force for mankind. Harriet returns to John who, after first rejecting her, breaks down and cries on her shoulder. Their union is now cemented by mutual need and interdependence and Harriet accepts her new life.

While not the enormous popular success of Dead End or Men in White, The World We Make enjoyed a moderately successful run and was greeted by generally favorable critical comment. John Gassner, maintaining that the play was greatly under-rated, found it "evocative and compassionate."<sup>25</sup> Brooks Atkinson said it was ". . . brave, original, and fervent in conviction, and an

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<sup>25</sup>Gassner, Masters of the Drama, p. 688.

ornament to our theatre."<sup>26</sup> The play caused quite a stir in critical circles as it brought to the boiling point a controversy which had been simmering for some time between various critics and Kingsley over his use of realism.<sup>27</sup> While the entire question of style will be covered in a subsequent chapter, it is worth noting in connection with plot that these critics found the realistic technique employed by Kingsley to be inadequate as a means of exploring a character's psychology. While it is certainly valid for a critic to favor and cultivate certain types of dramatic presentation, it does seem a bit snobbish for a critic like Brown to dismiss realism altogether with the following comment:

There is a certain passing nursery delight to be had in toys of this realistic kind, and that the toys in question are indisputably ingenious, is not to be denied. Yet when once they have afforded their quick pleasures of recognition, they exhaust themselves for those who are esthetically unwilling to stay in the nursery.<sup>28</sup>

This sort of patronizing statement reveals an esthetic prejudice as narrow as William Winter's moral prejudice and is so biased that a good deal of Mr. Brown's criticism of Kingsley's work must be held in question. More objective and to the point is Arthur Pollock's criticism that "Mr. Kingsley cannot find the words to

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<sup>26</sup>Brooks Atkinson, review of The World We Make, New York Times, November 21, 1939, p. 17.

<sup>27</sup>Sidney B. Whipple, review of The World We Make, New York World-Telegram, November 21, 1939, p. 12; John Mason Brown, review of The World We Make, New York Post, November 21, 1939, p. 8; George Jean Nathan, review of The World We Make, Newsweek, December 4, 1939, p. 39.

<sup>28</sup>Brown, New York Post, November 21, 1939.

make her [Virginia's] metamorphosis as thrilling to us as it is to her. After he stops being real with scenery and properties he cannot transfer the reality to words, and his play becomes humdrum. It is all over when it is just beginning."<sup>29</sup> As an observation on a limitation or convention of the realistically plotted play, this comment is entirely valid. Once committed to the realistic play with its everyday dialogue and illusionistic scenery, the playwright does indeed have difficulty in exposing inner states of being. As most people are, in reality, reluctant to reveal their true feelings, this is as it should be. The tool of the realistic playwright is, however, often not dialogue but action and action may be used effectively, as Kingsley used it in this play, to show inner states of being--for the character who is unable to express feelings or reluctant to do so may be best revealed through what he does and not what he says. In The World We Make changing emotional states are revealed through the manner in which the everyday activities of life are performed. For instance, Kingsley provided three lengthy scenes without dialogue in which the central character, Virginia, reveals her psychology through pantomimic dramatization: her escape from the sterile unreality of the sanitarium reveals her intense desire to contact the reality of life--to feel again; the chaotic scene in the commercial laundry demonstrates that she is truly unable to cope with the mechanical impersonality of life; the early morning

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<sup>29</sup> Arthur Pollock, "Playthings," Brooklyn Daily Eagle, November 26, 1939, Trend Section, p. 7.

tenement scene shows Virginia finding her salvation in the simple tasks of housework. Each of these situations allows Virginia to reveal her inner states by the physical actions she performs in relation to each environment. Kingsley, therefore, substituted visualization for the inner dialogues so readily available in nonrealistic plays or the novel.

In answering his fellow critics on this issue of realism, Brooks Atkinson said:

On opening night it [the realistic laundry scene] also threw most of the critics off balance. The next day most of them groaned about the scenery as though Mr. Kingsley had personally put them through the mangle, which might not be a bad idea at that. For the rest of the eight scenes are intelligently staged in a style of meticulous realism that is admirably suited to the theme.<sup>30</sup>

Joseph Wood Krutch found much good in the play but faulted the play's "chronicle" structure. He felt that Kingsley had inherited this organization from the novel and not successfully replaced it by one "more suitable to the theatre."<sup>31</sup>

Actually, Kingsley made substantial changes in the story which he adapted. Only Act I, scene 2, and part of Act I, scene 3, are to be found in the novel, all the other scenes are Kingsley's creation: Virginia is from a poor family in the novel and a rich one in the play; the neighbors who are so helpful to Harriet are not present in the novel; John's brother and family

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<sup>30</sup>Brooks Atkinson, Broadway Scrapbook (New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1947), p. 141.

<sup>31</sup>Joseph Wood Krutch, review of The World We Make, The Nation, CIL (December, 1939), 267.

do not appear in the novel but have an important function in the play; references to the war in Europe have been added to the stage version. What emerged as a result of these changes was substantially a new work with a much expanded point of view in that Harriet is seen in a social and political context not present in the novel. The changes were extensive enough to warrant the appellation "based on" rather than "adapted from" the novel by Millen Brand.

Kingsley's alterations to the novel were designed to externalize Harriet's inner conflicts and to strengthen the play's central conflict by providing, in characters and situations, concrete obstacles for her to overcome. These new situations and secondary characters serve to place stresses on Harriet, stresses which in the novel come solely from her tormented mind. In making these changes, Kingsley altered the essentially retrospective point of view of the novel, transferring it into the present tense which is theatre.

Krutch's observation regarding the play's structure is quite accurate, for despite substantial changes in the story, the play does have a chronological structure. Here again, Kingsley used a plot structure which he had not used before. While the plot is accretive as is that of Men in White and Dead End and does have the exposition, rising action, climax, and denouement utilized in Men in White, there are generally direct causal relationships between scenes in The World We Make which are not present in the other plays.

The chronicle structure seems both functionally and traditionally suited to this play which George Jean Nathan correctly labeled a "drama of regeneration." This form of drama, he observed, has three categories: first, physical-bodily recovery through faith; second, a return to faith of those who have lost their faith; and third, salvation through a return to simple folk.<sup>32</sup> Kingsley's plot is quite notable, according to Mr. Nathan, because it manages to fall into all three categories at once.

Its chronological structure is, moreover, typical of the morality play, which is also based on the journey or quest motif. In this instance, Harriet's quest is for sanity. In the prologue we discover who Virginia/Harriet is, what her problem is, and what she wants. At the end of this scene, Virginia/Harriet begins her journey by escaping from the hospital. On beginning her quest, she assumes the allegorical name, Harriet Hope. In Act I, scene 1, Harriet meets her first obstacle--the impersonal mechanized machine of city life--and survives it, but not without great loss of strength. The next four scenes establish a pattern of rising hopes as Harriet overcomes a series of obstacles: finding refuge, joining the life around her, making a home for John and herself, and, finally, sharing the secret of her supposed insanity with an understanding partner. As Harriet overcomes these obstacles, the perspective of the play is expansive and outward

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<sup>32</sup>Nathan, Newsweek, December 4, 1939, p. 39.

reaching. The turning point or climax of the play occurs in Act II, scene 3, when Harriet, rejected by John, appears to be lapsing into insanity again. At this point advance turns into retreat under the successive blows of the announcement of Anna's pregnancy and Jim's death. The key to the play's resolution occurs at the end of Act III, scene 1, when Harriet rushes out of the apartment after John. At that moment the reinstatement of the quest is signified in physical action--suddenly Harriet reaches out again. The denouement is a function of the previous action and is, in fact, such a logical extension of the action as to be predictable. Harriet has made far too much progress for one to lose hope for her.

Far from being awkward, this chronological, life-cycle ordering seems most appropriate to a "drama of regeneration."

Having explored the possibilities of chronological ordering in The World We Make, Kingsley turned to the history play structure for his next play, The Patriots.<sup>33</sup> The Patriots opened at the National Theatre in New York on January 29, 1943, and closed on June 26, 1943, running a total of 173 performances and winning the Drama Critics Circle Award, The Newspaper Guild Front Page Award, and The Theatre Club Award. Torn by doubts as to the outcome of World War II and wrenched by internal political differences, the American audience of 1943 welcomed the plea for national unity presented by The Patriots.

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<sup>33</sup>Sidney Kingsley, The Patriots, in Best Plays of the Modern American Theatre, ed. by John Gassner (New York: Crown Publishers, 1947), pp. 683-724.

Prologue:

Thomas Jefferson, returning to America from his post as Ambassador to France, leans against the ship's rail and relives scenes from his past: his wedding night with his beloved Martha at Monticello, his battle for the Declaration of Independence, and finally, his moments of guilt at the suffering his public duty has caused his family. The reverie is broken by the helmsman's cry, "Land ho!"

Act I, scene 1:

Jefferson is welcomed home by Washington who seeks his services as Secretary of State. Jefferson refuses, seeking to return to his family at Monticello but upon hearing of the desperate, anarchic condition of the Republic, agrees to accept the appointment. Washington exits to greet an ambassador and Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, solicits Jefferson's support for his controversial Treasury Bill. Jefferson agrees to bring about informal discussions of the bill with his friends. Left alone, Jefferson and Washington, weary of affairs of state, slip out the back door to go fishing.

Act I, scene 2:

Jefferson, Monroe, and Madison encounter Hamilton at an inn where he is celebrating the passage of his Treasury Bill. Hamilton states his personal opinion that the Republic will not last five years and that his bill is designed to create a monied aristocracy. Already shaken by the effect money speculations

have had on the average citizen, Jefferson begins to consider a battle for political power with Hamilton chiefly because Hamilton's bill has stabilized the economy at the expense of the average citizen.

Act II, scene 1:

Hamilton's dinner conversation bemoaning the fall of the French monarchy is interrupted by the arrival of James Monroe. Monroe, acting on his own, has decided to confront Hamilton with papers which indicate that he has misused public funds. While the accusation has no effect on Hamilton's public life, the papers force Hamilton to admit that he has been paying money to a blackmailer in order to conceal his affair with another man's wife. Naturally, this revelation has a severe impact on Hamilton's marriage. Convinced that Jefferson is behind a plot to discredit him and that Jefferson's ideal of individual liberty and the common man will lead to bloodshed and revolution, Hamilton vows to drive Jefferson from office.

Act II, scene 2:

It is the summer of 1793 and while a yellow fever epidemic rages in Philadelphia, riots between political factions rage in the streets. Jefferson, under attack from Hamilton, disillusioned by attacks on President Washington, and lonely for home, decides to resign his office and return to Monticello and his family.

Act II, scene 3:

Jefferson's packing for departure is interrupted by the arrival of Hamilton and Washington. The President attempts to persuade the two men to patch up their differences and refuses to accept Jefferson's resignation. As it becomes evident that his mission is to fail, Washington, now old and ill, surrenders to Jefferson's will and leaves. Hamilton taunts Jefferson for giving up his fight. Stinging from Hamilton's attack and afraid the Republic will not survive Washington's death, Jefferson decides to stay in government and to organize another political party to oppose Hamilton.

Act III, scene 1:

Jefferson, his family and friends await the returns from the election of 1801. Congress must decide on the presidency and they are deadlocked between Burr and Jefferson. The general populace and Jefferson's important friends fear the Federalist-controlled Congress may attempt to put aside the election. In this event the Constitution would be lost. The state militias of Pennsylvania and Virginia have pledged to march on Washington in defense of Jefferson and the Constitution. Hamilton visits Jefferson and attempts to avert civil war and a Constitutional crisis through compromise, but Jefferson will not accept his demands. Hamilton threatens to support Burr even though Burr allegedly has Napoleon Bonaparte's backing and his victory will surely mean the demise of democracy. Hamilton wavers only when

he sees that Jefferson is willing to bring about civil war to re-establish the Republic. Jefferson convinces Hamilton that the real pathway to national greatness lies not in tyrants or monarchs but in maximizing individual freedom, for having sampled freedom, no citizen would allow tyranny to take root in government.

Act III, scene 2:

The final scene consists of Jefferson's inaugural address. The keynote of his speech is:

This is the sum of good government. Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, a jealous care of the right of election, absolute acquiescence to the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of republics, from which there is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and parent of despotism. . . .<sup>34</sup>

He further urges Americans to hold fast to their ideals against "the present throes and convulsions of the ancient world. . . ." in the firm belief that "this government is the world's best hope."

While Norman Cousins and John Corbin complained that Kingsley had not been altogether fair in his characterization of Alexander Hamilton<sup>35</sup> and George Jean Nathan growled that Kingsley had made Hamilton "indistinguishable from the conventional melodramatic stage villain," most critics believed that The Patriots was, as Nathan went on to say:

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<sup>34</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, pp. 723-724.

<sup>35</sup>Norman Cousins, "The Patriots," The Saturday Review, XXVI (April, 1943), p. 45; John Corbin, "Patriots All, but--," New York Herald-Tribune, February 11, 1943, p. 22.

So honest . . . at bottom, so unostentatious in its deeper dramatic current, so intelligently in general handled, and so genuinely stirring in its overtones and after-image that it amounts in sum not only to the most critically acceptable full-length offering of the season but to the most skillful historical-biographical play our American theatre has shown.<sup>36</sup>

In giving his reasons for writing The Patriots, Kingsley said:

Four years ago when this study first began, I knew very little about Jefferson or the other great men of our early history. I had just come back from Europe. I had seen democracy vilified and spat upon. I determined to find out the meaning of democracy for myself--to find it out from the men who made it, who pledged--and frequently paid--their fortunes and their lives to preserve it.

The Patriots was the result of this attempt to cleave through post-World War No. I skepticism on the one hand and Fourth of July Fustian on the other; to rediscover in all its purity the American faith.<sup>37</sup>

Given this motivation, it is not surprising that Kingsley chose the history play form, for this genre has traditionally been used by playwrights to present a proven historical pattern to validate a political concept.

The Reader's Encyclopedia of World Drama offers a concise and workable definition of a chronicle play:

Chronicle plays are plays drawn from historical sources in which important issues of public welfare are emphasized. In addition, a chronicle play deals with the historical, as opposed to the legendary, past of the nation to which it is addressed and for whose contemporary problems it cites the past as example or warning.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> George Jean Nathan, review of The Patriots, The American Mercury, LVI (April, 1943), 486-487.

<sup>37</sup> As quoted in "Kingsley 'Patriots' Praised in Congress," Variety, April 21, 1943, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Robert E. Lynch, "Chronicle Play," The Reader's Encyclopedia of World Drama, ed. by John Gassner and Edward Quinn (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969), p. 131.

The Patriots clearly meets the above criteria and also displays the other main characteristics of this genre: a strong, single, unifying character and panoramic structure. Kingsley not only mastered a plot structure and genre which he had not previously used but gave the American stage one of its outstanding examples of a history play.

Although the title of the play is in the plural and characterizations of several others of the founding fathers are offered, the central character is Thomas Jefferson and the action of the play is presented from his point of view only. In each moment of crisis which marks the play, Jefferson must surrender more and more of his private life in order to serve the Republic and finally becomes the mythic hero who has surrendered all personal ambition in the interest of his country. The parallels between the patterns which create the hero in this play and in Men in White are obvious and stem from the fact that the basic conflict is the same in both plays--a conflict between love and duty. Both plots present the hero in moments of crisis and the hero resolves the crisis by surrendering to duty. In each instance he gives up private desire for public responsibility.

In choosing Jefferson over the two other character choices popular with writers of American history plays--Lincoln and Washington--Kingsley freed himself from the ready-made myth and the personal correspondences implicit in these two giants of American history. His choice of Jefferson allowed him to avoid legend in favor of fact which then could be utilized to prove

his own view of the historical significance of Jefferson's actions.

As the plot summary indicates, The Patriots is panoramic in structure. Its view of history is selective and the moments presented are often widely separated in time and space. The scenes are, therefore, unified only by their relationship to the central conflict. Kingsley selected scenes which demonstrate Jefferson's unflinching belief in the "common man" and his determination to stay in office in order to preserve his ideal of the Republic. The personal conflict between Hamilton and Jefferson depicted in the play, a personal animosity which apparently did not exist historically, is, therefore, a structural device used to propel the action of the play and to present the growing domestic crisis in human terms. The prologue is used to establish Jefferson's desires for home and family. The next four scenes are devoted to precipitating the clash between Hamilton and Jefferson. Act I, scene 1, initiates the conflict over the Treasury Bill which culminates in Act I, scene 2. In Act II, scene 1, Hamilton is placed on the offensive and after establishing Jefferson's desire to return home in Act II, scene 2, Jefferson responds to Hamilton's attack in Act II, scene 3. In Act III, scene 1, the face to face confrontation of Jefferson and Hamilton and Hamilton's surrender provides the climax of the play as both Jefferson and his ideal of government triumph. The conciliatory tone of Jefferson's inaugural address provides the play with a fitting denouement.

As the critic for The Commonweal pointed out, "The incidents making the story of the play are not important because they simply symbolize a struggle . . . [their importance] transcends particular happenings. . . . Disregard questions of historicity in this play. It is exact enough to be dramatically true."<sup>39</sup> In spite of some criticism of his use of history, The Patriots, like most of Kingsley's plays, was carefully researched over a period of years--in this case, four--and his accuracy in event and in spirit, if not in detail, is substantial. Samuel Eliot Morison's evaluation of Hamilton's Treasury Bill, for example, is in complete agreement with Kingsley's:

. . . the great mass of the American people was untouched, either in imagination or in pocket, by Hamilton's policy. It would have been otherwise had the public debt remained in the hands of its original possessors. But farmers, discharged soldiers, small shopkeepers, and the like who held government securities . . . had been forced to part with them at a ruinous discount. . . . By 1789 the bulk of the public debt was in the hands of the "right people" at Philadelphia, New York, Charleston, and Boston; and the nation was taxed to pay off at par, securities which they had purchased at a few cents on the dollar.<sup>40</sup>

His characterization of Hamilton and Jefferson, moreover, agrees completely with that of Kingsley's:

Hamilton wished to concentrate power; Jefferson to diffuse power. Hamilton feared anarchy and thought in terms of order; Jefferson feared tyranny and thought in terms of liberty. Hamilton believed republican government could only succeed if directed by a governing elite; Jefferson that a republic must be based on an agrarian democracy. The people,

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<sup>39</sup> James N. Vaughan, review of The Patriots, The Commonweal, XXXVII (February, 1943), 423.

<sup>40</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 326.

according to Jefferson, were the safest and most virtuous, though not always the most wise, depository of power, and education would perfect their wisdom.<sup>41</sup>

And while there is no history of a meeting between Jefferson and Hamilton on the eve of the 1801 election, the facts of the election and the threatened civil war are as Kingsley outlined them.<sup>42</sup>

With Detective Story<sup>43</sup> Kingsley returned to a method of plotting which he had perfected in Dead End and once again proved himself a master of the reportorial style. Detective Story opened on March 23, 1949, at the Hudson Theatre in New York City and closed on August 10, 1950, running a total of 581 performances and winning the Edgar Allen Poe Award. In this play Kingsley constructed a powerful drama from the vigorous patterns of police life.

Act I:

It is a quiet evening in the Detective Squad Room of the 21st Precinct Police Station, New York City: a whining female shoplifter is booked, an elderly eccentric demands protection from her foreign neighbors who, she says, blow atomic vapor through the walls at her, and the detectives munch their evening sandwiches as they answer the telephones and file reports. Joe Feinson, a police reporter, stops by to see if there are any stories brewing. He stays even though it's a slow night.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 356.

<sup>43</sup> Sidney Kingsley, Detective Story, in A Modern Repertory, ed. by Harlan Hatcher (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1953), pp. 464-561.

A prosperous looking lawyer enters the squad room and introduces himself as Kurt Schneider's lawyer--a warrant is out for Schneider's arrest and he is willing to surrender. The lawyer warns the police that he has nude photos of Schneider which show no bruises or marks and that is the way he wants Schneider returned. Schneider is Jim McLeod's case and McLeod is known to be a rough cop with a grudge against Schneider, an accused abortionist. McLeod enters with a prisoner, a handsome young man named Arthur Kindred. McLeod asks the lawyer to wait while he attends to a few matters. McLeod checks in with the Lieutenant--whom he regards as being too soft on criminals, jokes with the reporter, and calls his wife, Mary. McLeod is all tenderness and affection with his wife and is as warm to her as he is cold to those he considers criminals. McLeod then turns to the lawyer for whom he has nothing but contempt. Lawyers, he feels, are simply an obstacle to effective law enforcement. The lawyer hints that there are personal reasons for McLeod's persecution of Schneider. McLeod scoffs at this accusation and turns his attention to Arthur.

As McLeod questions Arthur, the shoplifter calls her brother-in-law who is a lawyer and Joe, the reporter, "fixes" a traffic ticket for one of the cops. As he says:

A free press is the tocsin of a free people. The law keeps you in line, we keep the law in line, the people keep us in line, you keep the people in line. Everybody kicks everybody else in the ass! That way nobody gets too big for his britches. That's democracy!<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 479.

Arthur reveals he has spent the \$480.00 he took from his employer but refuses to talk about it. McLeod is following up his investigation by telephone when the squad room erupts into activity. A policeman brings in two burglars, Charles Gennini and Lewis Abbot, who are raising a ruckus proclaiming their innocence. The policemen place their pistols out of the criminals' reach and begin questioning the suspects. Kurt Schneider arrives with his lawyer who leaves him in McLeod's custody. Lewis discovers that Charles has cheated him and agrees to show the police where he hid the loot. Lt. Monoghan arrives. He is tough and quite upset with McLeod over the Schneider case. Monoghan warns McLeod not to be so fanatic and to follow procedures. McLeod says he will but that the procedures stink and he knows Schneider is a butcher.

As McLeod leaves the Lieutenant, he meets Susan Carmichael, a friend of Arthur's. She reveals that Arthur is a veteran, hard working, was cited by the Navy four times for bravery, and is the holder of a Silver Star. When confronted with Susan, Arthur is upset that she had been dragged into his mess. McLeod turns to questioning Schneider as his partner, Brody, strikes up a conversation with Arthur. Brody's son, who was about Arthur's age, had also been in the Navy but had been killed in action.

McLeod puts Schneider in a line-up for identification by a witness. When the witness arrives she is wearing a new fur stole and suddenly cannot recognize Schneider. Since she has previously identified a photo of Schneider, McLeod accuses her of

selling out for the fur. Their argument is interrupted by the news that the only other witness has just died from the effects of her abortion. McLeod is bitterly disappointed and tells the reporter that he does not need judges and courts--he can smell evil. McLeod's father, he reveals, was a cruel tyrant who drove his mother into an insane asylum. Whenever he looks at a criminal, McLeod says, he sees his father's face. In his anger McLeod turns on Schneider and roughs him up, hitting him in the abdomen. Schneider clutches his stomach, falls to the floor, and passes out--but not before he mentions Tami Giacoppetti in the same breath with McLeod's name. Monoghan demands to know what McLeod's association is with Giacoppetti, a known underworld figure. McLeod denies any knowledge of the man. An ambulance is summoned for Schneider and Monoghan sends a detective to pick up Giacoppetti for questioning.

Act II:

It is a few moments later and things have returned to normal in the squad room. In Monoghan's office Schneider's lawyer is attacking McLeod. If Monoghan really wants to know what is going on, the lawyer says, he should talk to McLeod's wife. The lawyer leaves for the hospital to see his client and Monoghan calls Mrs. McLeod. The shoplifter, a first offender, apologizes for being so much trouble. The detectives return with Charley and the loot. Charley unsuccessfully tries to blame his stupid partner, Lewis, but no one believes him.

Mr. Pritchett, Arthur's employer, arrives to file charges. Susan returns with some money and it seems for a moment that Pritchett will drop the charges against Arthur. Arthur explains that the war separated him from his girl and while he was gone, she became a successful model. When he came back he could not catch up with life, could not make enough money to keep his girl so he took the money for one last try at keeping her. He lost her anyway and the girl, Susan's sister, now obsessed with wealth, is going to marry a rich man. Pritchett, touched by Arthur's story, is about to relent when McLeod returns and, in a righteous frenzy, warns Pritchett that Arthur is a born criminal and that if he has to, he will subpoena Pritchett in order to get a conviction.

Meanwhile, McLeod's wife has arrived at Monaghan's office. At first she denies any knowledge of Schneider or Giacoppetti but breaks down when Giacoppetti, a slick Mafia type, enters the room. Giacoppetti, who is really a very gentle man, and Mary had an affair many years ago when she first came to the city. Giacoppetti, married but with no children, wanted the child but Mary left him and got an abortion from Schneider. But, Mary protests, McLeod knows nothing of this. Monaghan calls McLeod into his office and confronts him with the story. He had not known the story and now McLeod, left alone with Mary, flies into a rage, calling her a whore. Having placed her on a pedestal, McLeod cannot and will not forgive her for failing to live up to his ideal of her. Cursing her, McLeod leaves her--stunned into silence, sitting alone in Monaghan's office.

Act III:

The squad room is full of people identifying Charley's loot. Lewis is upset that the loot was worth \$30,000.00 and all he got was \$400.00. Their conviction assured, Charley satisfies him with an offer of \$1400.00 which Lewis stupidly accepts. McLeod is booking Arthur but leaves him alone with Susan for a few moments. The shoplifter leaves for night court, cheerily waving to everyone and thanking them for their kindness.

Arthur discovers Susan loves him and admits that he loves her too. Brody, alone with McLeod, begs him to free Arthur. McLeod refuses, saying that unlike other people, he cannot compromise. After some coaxing, McLeod agrees to try to make it up with Mary. Mary arrives and they seem to have patched things up. McLeod asks her to wait while he gets rid of Schneider's lawyer. The lawyer says Schneider is all right and that McLeod is lucky he is not facing a murder charge. Finally, the lawyer taunts McLeod, saying that if he really is bent on getting Schneider, he should call his own wife as witness. McLeod, unable to control the insane turbulence inside himself, begins to question Mary again. "You're a cruel and vengeful man. You're everything you've always said you hated in your own father," she tells him. And with that she leaves him. McLeod, dazed and tormented by guilt, returns to his desk.

Capitalizing on a detective's carelessness, Charley seizes a gun and tries to escape. Charley is a four time loser and more than willing to kill if he has to. Knowing this, the

suicidal McLeod confronts him and is shot three times. As he dies, he tears up the charges against Arthur and begs the forgiveness of his wife.

Detective Story is an outstanding example of realism in the American theatre and was greeted with almost universal popular and critical acclaim. While mentioning the similarity in plot technique between Detective Story and The Front Page, Richard Watts, Jr., Hobe of Variety, and William Hawkins,<sup>45</sup> voiced a majority opinion when they praised Kingsley's ability to weave a tight-paced plot out of numerous individual stories. Kingsley had always had a tendency to introduce a "love angle." Some critics had found this annoying in Men in White and in Dead End, and the same criticism was expressed toward Detective Story by Wolcott Gibbs and William Byer.<sup>46</sup>

In the opinion of nearly all the critics, the play's outstanding attribute was Kingsley's creation of a striking and effective environment for his action. Harold Clurman summed up this opinion when he said, ". . . what makes Detective Story enjoyable is its detail. Most of us are unacquainted with detective bureaus, and to see such a place in all its particulars is

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<sup>45</sup> Richard Watts, Jr., review of Detective Story, New York Post, April 3, 1949, Magazine Section, p. 7; Hobe, review of Detective Story, Variety, March 30, 1949, p. 52; William Hawkins, review of Detective Story, New York World-Telegram, March 24, 1949, p. 28.

<sup>46</sup> Wolcott Gibbs, review of Detective Story, The New Yorker, XXV (April, 1949), 50; William Beyer, review of Detective Story, School and Society, LXX (December, 1949), 363.

fascinating."<sup>47</sup> Many critics, including Howard Barnes and Harold Clurman,<sup>48</sup> found Detective Story disappointing because Kingsley's realistic, multi-character plot was overly contrived and failed to resolve its weighty theme. Kingsley himself later admitted that "the idea was smothered in the melodrama."<sup>49</sup>

In analyzing the plot structure of Detective Story, it is useful to take the title itself as a "clue." A detective story may be divided into three parts, just as the play is. In the first part we know that a crime has been committed--we know that, in this instance, from the setting. We are then confronted with a generous number of confusing details--four or five possible stories which may figure importantly in the resolution of the play. Accusations are made and facts are collected but not connected. In the second part of a detective story, the salient facts emerge, stories are connected, and the "criminal" stands convicted. In the third section, the guilty are brought to justice. This is precisely the pattern Detective Story follows. And, as this play is developed in much the same manner as Dead End, for the purpose of analysis, it is helpful to give titles to acts based upon the function which that act performs. Thus the acts may be titled as follows: Act I--"Arrest and Investigation";

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<sup>47</sup>Harold Clurman, review of Detective Story, The New Republic, CXX (April, 1949), 25.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.; Howard Barnes, review of Detective Story, New York Herald Tribune, March 27, 1949, Section 5, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup>As quoted in John Keating, "Darkness at Noon," Cue, January 6, 1951, p. 12.

Act II--"Solution and Conviction"; Act III--"The Sentence."

Within this pattern the forward movement of the play is sustained through a technique of alternating the various stories. The first act is, as the title implies, pure exposition and the central conflict of the play is not actually initiated until Act II. Exposition is generally effected through the interrogation process. In Act II the two stories involving McLeod, Mary, and Schneider and Arthur and McLeod, emerge as the dominant stories. More time is devoted to these two stories and the incidence of alternation between the other stories is reduced by half. This restructuring of stresses effectively compresses the action and propels the play toward its climax. In Act III justice is dispensed as McLeod pays with his life for his obsession and Arthur is freed. It should be noted that McLeod's fate is sealed at the climactic ending of Act II when he is unable to forgive Mary and that his actions subsequent to that decision conform to the position of total inflexibility taken at that moment.

While Kingsley's plot makes classical use of time and place, the action of the play is diffuse. McLeod's absolute determination to find the "facts" and to expose corruption is the play's central action. While Kingsley's preoccupation was with the Oedipus-like character of McLeod and the parallels between the two stories are many, the method of plot development is, of course, entirely different. Within the formal construction of Oedipus, the "coincidences" of convenient arrivals and departures, disclosures, and secrets are an accepted convention. Kingsley,

using a "slice-of-life" technique, was called upon to use all of his theatrical know-how to achieve the same gradual and sometimes fortuitous-seeming unraveling of fact. That he does succeed in designing a consistently exciting play is a tribute to his technique. It is, ultimately, the richness of its environment and the human interest of its individual stories that give Detective Story's plot the qualities which made it a successful play. For in production the events, complex as they may be, move with such speed and offer such dramatic contrasts that the "contrivances" which are, in fact, conventions of the realistic form that Kingsley utilizes, are hardly noticeable.

It is also worth noting that the plot of Detective Story is substantially different from its predecessors in the "police drama" genre. Whereas plays like The Racket by Bartlett Cormack, The Third Degree by Charles Klein, and even Earl Carroll and Rufus King's Murder at the Vanities concentrated on super-sleuths and dumb cops, criminals and crime, the trend subsequent to Detective Story was to focus on actual police procedures and language, the detective as an anti-heroic public servant, and police life as a social environment. Kingsley's innovative treatment would seem to have been instrumental in giving this popular genre new life.

Kingsley found the plot for his next play in the novel by Arthur Koestler--Darkness at Noon.<sup>50</sup> Kingsley had, of course,

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<sup>50</sup>Sidney Kingsley, Darkness at Noon (New York: Samuel French, 1952).

previously based a play on a novel of mental torment in The World We Make and, while Darkness at Noon posed new problems in the use of time and space, the experience with the earlier work served him well. Darkness at Noon opened at the Alvin Theatre in New York on January 13, 1951, and closed on June 23, 1951, running a total of 186 performances and winning the New York Drama Critics Circle Award and the Donaldson Award. In this play Kingsley provided the American public with a chilling view of repression in Stalin's Russia.

Act I:

Nicolai Semonovich Rubasov, ex-Commissar of the People, ex-Member of the Central Committee, ex-General of the Red Army, Bearer of the Order of the Red Banner, has been arrested for political crimes and placed in solitary confinement in a cave-like Russian prison. He soon learns the prison code and joins the other prisoners in tapping messages through the rock walls. One of his interrogators, the fanatic, robot-like Gletkin, makes it clear to Rubashov that for all practical purposes, his crimes are a proven fact and his execution imminent.

Left alone in his cell, Rubashov relives scenes from his life and career: scenes of tenderness with Luba Loshenko, scenes from his political triumphs, and bitter memories of the betrayal of comrades in the interest of the party. "My debt will be paid," he murmurs to himself as, tormented by the pain from his abscessed tooth, he sinks to his straw cot.

Rubashov's reverie is broken by the arrival of guards who take him to see his primary interrogator, Ivanoff--an old friend. Rubashov will admit no traitorous associations or acts but he does reveal his bitter conviction that the Revolution has been strangled, put to the use of one man, The Boss, and turned against the people. Ivanoff attempts to save his old comrade: they will concoct a confession in which Rubashov admits his guilt and names his associates--all of whom have already been executed for other "crimes" against the state. Rubashov refuses and is returned to his cell.

Ivanoff and Gletkin confer. Gletkin wants to use physical torture but Ivanoff is convinced that if left alone, Rubashov will torment himself mentally to the point of confession. Rubashov, alone in his cell, pledges to the other prisoners that he will die in silence.

#### Act II:

Rubashov has been alone in his cell for five weeks and is beginning to doubt his right to decide what actions are correct to insure the survival of the Revolution. He has, after all, eliminated many good people in the name of the Revolution. His mind wanders to Luba, their reunion after the war and her subsequent arrest--an arrest and execution which he did not oppose for fear of losing his own life. He remembers the Communist dock workers of Marseille who idealistically opposed the loading of Fascist ships. As it was in the interest of the Communist party

to have the ships loaded and the union leaders opposed the will of Moscow, Rubashov had them--staunch Communists all--eliminated. His dream is broken by the screams of another comrade being dragged off to execution calling Rubashov's name. Rubashov faints. When he awakens, Ivanoff is by his side. The two old soldiers talk, and Ivanoff succeeds in convincing him that it is important to the Revolution that men like Rubashov survive in order to counterbalance the cruelty and mindlessness of men like Gletkin and The Boss. Ivanoff leaves convinced that Rubashov will confess.

Act III:

Left alone in his cell, Rubashov has written his confession and is looking forward to meeting Ivanoff to work out its final draft. When he is taken to the interrogation room, he discovers Ivanoff has been eliminated and Gletkin is his replacement. Gletkin will accept only the confession which has been prepared by his superiors for Rubashov--a confession which demands the death penalty. A nonstop questioning complete with false witnesses and glaring lights goes on hour after hour. Rubashov reaches his breaking point when confronted with the transcript of Luba's interrogation. At this moment the full impact of his betrayal becomes apparent to him. Finally, exhausted and filled with revulsion, Rubashov confesses. He is led to death by Gletkin--the end product of a regime that makes no allowances for the human soul--"The means have become the end; and darkness has come over the land."

Critical reaction to this play at a time in our national life when many in this country were fascinated by the prospect of ferreting out Communists in all areas of our government and were pervaded by a gnawing fear of a political system whose workings were only dimly perceived, was most favorable. John Chapman found it "stirring" and praised Kingsley's expert adaptation of Koestler's novel into theatrical terms.<sup>51</sup> Richard Watts, Jr., commented on the high quality of the play and the fact that Kingsley had not stooped to a "rabble rousing" anti-Communist play, but had caught the tragic moment of the collapse of the dreams and ideals of the revolution mirrored in the collapse of Rubashov.<sup>52</sup> John Mason Brown, modifying his previous opinion of Kingsley, joined in the unanimous praise of the novel and summed up the opinion of those who felt Kingsley had done an admirable job of adapting it by saying:

. . . to a degree I would have thought impossible, Mr. Kingsley has succeeded in both his production and his dramatization in turning a fine book into an exciting and distinguished evening in the theatre. Mr. Koestler may be a man of genius and Mr. Kingsley a man of ingenuity. But in the world behind the footlights Mr. Kingsley's ingenuity is not to be underestimated. He is a technician of outstanding abilities. His instinct for the stage is keen, his mastery of its means genuine. . . .<sup>53</sup>

Both the Newsweek critic and Gerald Weales joined Brown in

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<sup>51</sup>John Chapman, review of Darkness at Noon, New York Daily News, January 28, 1951, p. C18.

<sup>52</sup>Richard Watts, Jr., review of Darkness at Noon, New York Post, January 28, 1951, p. 12.

<sup>53</sup>John Mason Brown, "The Iron Transparency," Dramatic Personae (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963), p. 330.

commenting on the degree to which Kingsley had been successful "in making dramatic sense of a book that is as much philosophical discussion as it is novel. . . ." <sup>54</sup> Brooks Atkinson quite accurately observed that:

Mr. Koestler's novel is subjective. Mr. Kingsley's theatre style is objective. This difference is especially important because the subjectivity of Mr. Koestler's novel is brilliant. . . . The story of Rubashov is less a record of diabolical prison techniques than the pitiless study of a keen and rational mind that follows its own ruthless logic to destruction.<sup>55</sup>

This comment suggests the compromise necessary in bringing a highly intellectual and subjective novel to terms with the theatre and some of the values which were sacrificed in the process.

Darkness at Noon is a part of the sizable body of drama in which the plot is structured around a series of flashbacks which demonstrate how the principal character came to his present condition. While this technique is more familiar in the cinema, it is, nonetheless, an oft-used one in the theatre. The action of the play is largely retrospective: throughout the first two acts, Rubashov reflects on his past life in the Communist party. These remembrances are usually triggered by interrogation sequences which further serve to link the scenes and to suggest a causality between past events and current ones. Rubashov's life, therefore, forms the framework for the plot and the scenes which

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<sup>54</sup> Darkness at Noon, Newsweek, January 22, 1951, p. 80; Gerald Weales, American Drama Since World War II (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., 1962), p. 94.

<sup>55</sup> Brooks Atkinson, review of Darkness at Noon, New York Times, January 21, 1951, Section 2, p. 1.

are selected to depict his rise and fall generally follow in chronological order.

The flashbacks serve to goad Rubashov into current action based on reliving his past experiences. His memories in Act I are basically expository--they tell us who he is and what services he performed for the Party. Additionally, these scenes illustrate his smug confidence in the Revolution. This confidence is made manifest in his declaration that he will not confess. The flashbacks of Act II are radically different in character. Here scenes of defeat and betrayal dominate the action and at the end of the act, his confidence shaken by bitter memories, Rubashov agrees to confess. In Act III the flashback technique moves the event which triggers Rubashov's confession--Luba's interrogation--into the present as Gletkin, reading the transcript of Luba's questioning to Rubashov, is joined by the image of Luba answering the questions. This "memory" is too potent for Rubashov to withstand and drives him to his confession.

Kingsley's use of the flashback technique is an effective means of making Rubashov's mental anguish visible and linking his breakdown to his inner doubts--a necessary step in changing the novel into a play. In order to compress and accelerate the play's action, the order of the flashbacks is changed from that in the novel. For example, the episode with the dock workers is shifted to later in the play than it appears in the novel, its locale is changed from Belgium to Marseilles, and the scenes with Luba are shifted and enlarged. Although the basic relationship

between Luba and Rubashov is the same as in the novel, her character has been strengthened. "She stands for that missing element, call it spirituality, or belief in the individual."<sup>56</sup> The relationship is, therefore, much more romantic in the play than in the novel. While more of the novel is incorporated into this play than was the case in The World We Make, Kingsley maintained, "It would be more precise to say it is based on the book."<sup>57</sup> In terms of plotting and structuring, Kingsley's main contribution was in reordering and tightening scenes. Rubashov's presentation to the dock workers is, for example, much longer and more convoluted in the novel than in the play. The same is true of the flashbacks in Act I.

Kingsley further strengthened the play's impact by introducing a strong, even melodramatic conflict between the interrogator, the robot-like Gletkin, and the old-guard intellectual, Rubashov. This change effectively established Gletkin as a product of the system which created him--Kingsley eliminated Koestler's vague references to place and located the action in Russia. This conflict has additional resonances in that it formalizes the traditional and dramatic conflict between generations. More importantly, this conflict made concrete the turning of the "People's Revolution" into a totalitarian regime. Rubashov goes to his death knowing that his actions have helped create a world of

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<sup>56</sup>Keating, Cue, January 6, 1951, p. 12.

<sup>57</sup>As quoted in Keating, ibid.

Gletkins and that he and his country are now paying the price for their ruthless suppression of individual liberty. Like McLeod in Detective Story, Rubashov is "hoist by his own petard."

While the play's mixture of retrospective and present action creates problems in integrating its dramatic action, Kingsley's skill in melding these diverse elements and in maintaining a constant flow of action has succeeded in creating a dramatically effective play which communicates the aura of menace central to the novel and its theme.

The post-World War II period had been very rewarding and productive for Kingsley. After a lapse of a few years which he spent writing screen plays in Hollywood, he had returned to the Broadway stage with two highly successful dramas--Detective Story and Darkness at Noon. Then, in a sudden shift of focus, he decided to experiment with comedy--a genre which he had not used previously in his work. The result was Lunatics and Lovers, a very popular comedy written, as Kingsley said, "to escape from myself and the burden of the times."<sup>58</sup> Lunatics and Lovers<sup>59</sup> opened at the Broadhurst Theatre in New York on December 13, 1954, and closed on October 8, 1955, running a total of 344 performances. Kingsley's escape was to a third-rate hotel filled with Broadway cuties and Forty-second Street "con" men.

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<sup>58</sup> As quoted in Murray Schumach, "Explaining a New Type of Farce," New York Times, December 12, 1954, Section 2, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Sidney Kingsley, Lunatics and Lovers, unpublished play-script available for inspection at The Library for Performing Arts, Lincoln Center of the New York Public Library.

Act I, scene 1:

Dan Cupid, "con" artist, gambler, and part-time "match-maker," has troubles--the Internal Revenue Service wants him to pay taxes and has subpoenaed him. No reputable lawyer will help him "beat the rap" so Cupid calls on an old drinking buddy, an ex-judge. The Judge is, however, too lovesick to help Cupid. His lady-love, Désirée, is engaged to a dentist, Will, and they are to be married as soon as Will can shed his current wife. Cupid attempts to distract the Judge with Sable who just happens to be immersed in a bubble bath in Cupid's bathroom. However, the Judge only gets his feet wet and chats with Sable about Désirée. Cupid, desperate to solve the Judge's problems so that the Judge can solve his, calls Désirée on the telephone and suggests she come down from the penthouse for a visit. She accepts, but brings her "fiancé" with her.

Cupid's attempts to re-match the Judge and Désirée fail and his difficulties appear to be compounded by the unexpected arrival of the dentist's wife, Marian. Marian confronts Désirée, accusing her of being a very expensive "cheap affair." Désirée throws her fur and jewels out the window to prove her "virtue." Will rushes out, trying to catch them before they reach the ground. Désirée leaves. The Judge has been impressed by Marian's courage and her "classy" manners. Cupid, taking advantage of the situation, begins to maneuver the Judge and Marian together.

Act I, scene 2:

While the men have a drink in the living room, Sable and

Marian retire to the bathroom to wash the tearful Marian's face. Sable advises Marian to take her husband back, knowing that she could if she wanted to. Marian, however, wants revenge. They rejoin the men and Cupid suggests that having an affair with someone would be a great way for Marian to get revenge. Marian demurs but does agree to go out to dinner with the Judge. Fortified by several drinks, she asks to be taken to some real dives. Cupid joyfully acquiesces to her desires.

Act II, scene 1:

The revelers return to Cupid's hotel room. Marian has had more than enough to drink and seems sufficiently pliable, so Cupid hustles everyone but her and the Judge out of the room. Sable, ever the romantic, is determined to reunite the dentist and his wife and calls him on the house phone, advising him to rescue his wife from a "rape artist." Marian is fending off the Judge's ardent advances when Désirée and Will burst into the room, popping flash bulbs and taking photos of the entangled pair. Marian, angered at the threat of blackmail and tired of Will's hypocrisy, agrees to a divorce and promises to go ahead and have an affair with the Judge. A suddenly jealous Wil' attacks the Judge and they lurch about the room until the Judge sinks to the floor, unconscious. Sable defends her action in trying to thwart Cupid's plan, saying she loves him and wants him to "think right." Cupid, shocked at the mention of love, regards Sable with horror. Sable attempts to revive the Judge, cannot, and concludes that he is dead. The house detective is called.

Act II, scene 2:

The Judge, it turns out, isn't dead but merely drunk. He soon revives and protests that he and Marian were innocently discussing her marital problems when Will and Désirée attacked them. A squabble erupts and Désirée attempts to leave and to take Will with her. Will refuses to leave Marian alone with the Judge, admitting that he still loves his wife. Will and Marian work out their differences, are reunited, and leave. Making the best of matters, Désirée returns to the Judge. Only Cupid's problem remains--he owes the government \$17,000. Sable's offer to lend him the money convinces Cupid that she is an unusual woman and worthy of his love. They become engaged. All the happy couples join a wedding party which is in progress in the hotel ballroom.

In describing the creative process from which evolved Lunatics and Lovers, Kingsley outlined a procedure different from any used in his other plays.<sup>60</sup> This time he began with the characters--raffish rejects from other plays and remembrances of his growing up in Manhattan. As he became involved with these characters in what began as an amoral satire, he grew to love them and under this influence, changed forms in mid-writing. His characters begin by sharing bathtubs and beds in the amoral environment of farce and end by defending home and family in the familiar territory of domestic comedy. While Kingsley defended this blending of two essentially different kinds of comic plots

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<sup>60</sup>Schumach, New York Times, December 12, 1954, Section 2, p. 3.

as "a new type of farce," many critics singled out the combination as the major fault in the plot. Walter Kerr said, "Too bad that the author has cheated on his jaundiced point of view--mixing the sly and the soft-hearted in a single brew--because it conventionalizes his people and his materials."<sup>61</sup> This conventionalization of plot and character resulted in a staleness of plot which Wolcott Gibbs deplored saying, "He isn't . . . capable of the sort of sustained comic invention that gave us such tangled masterpieces as Room Service and Three Men on a Horse."<sup>62</sup> Maurice Zolotow felt that Kingsley "tried to intoxicate himself with the wine of Bacchus, but his sobriety . . . conquered all. . . . The lunatic, the lover, and the poet are of imagination all compact, but the social realist is excluded from the wild company."<sup>63</sup> Harold Clurman chided Kingsley for switching attitudes in mid-play and for failing to deal honestly with the essentially "dirty" situation of the play. "Mr. Kingsley is slumming here. . . . One has to have bad morals or some moral point of view. Mr. Kingsley seems to be experimenting, putting his foot rather gingerly into the muck--an embarrassing gesture."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Walter Kerr, review of Lunatics and Lovers, New York Herald Tribune, December 14, 1954, p. 24.

<sup>62</sup> Wolcott Gibbs, review of Lunatics and Lovers, The New Yorker, December 25, 1954, p. 44.

<sup>63</sup> Maurice Zolotow, review of Lunatics and Lovers, Theatre Arts Illustrated, XXXIX (February, 1955), 90.

<sup>64</sup> Harold Clurman, review of Lunatics and Lovers, The Nation, CXXC (January, 1955), 18.

In the main, Kingsley was unsuccessful in creating an effective plot because, having established a situation complicated enough to be farcical, he was not able to introduce the number of comic complications required by the form. Whereas farce devolves from a basic situation which becomes zanier and zanier, Lunatics and Lovers begins with a zany situation that becomes more predictable as it develops. Knowing that it is a comedy, one expects that boy will get girl. What is disappointing is that in spite of all the racy dialogue, the speed and the noise, the couples all return to their original pairings and the promisingly promiscuous and satirical initial action is replaced by the cute "will she or won't she" suspense of domestic comedy. As it is possible as early as Act II to see where Kingsley is going with the plot, it needs more physical action and diversion than he has been able to provide. Additional complications would serve to hide the obvious seams in the play's plot.

If the plot of Lunatics and Lovers is flawed, it well may be because comedy, as a genre, most often challenges conventional morality and Lunatics and Lovers confirms conventional morality at every turn. The central conflict of the play revolves around the Judge's attempted seduction of the dentist's estranged wife-- a fine conflict for farce or satire. What emerges from this conflict is a sort of comic melodrama in which the inept but outwardly suave villain, the Judge, attempts to seduce the innocent housewife and is foiled at the last minute by the forces of home and family. Even this situation could have been satirized, but

Kingsley has chosen to treat it quite seriously and in a sentimental vein.

One cannot, however, minimize Kingsley's technical accomplishment in writing a popular comedy--whatever its structural incongruities. But in the overview of the man's creative work which is characterized by a strong moral, social, and political point of view, Lunatics and Lovers cannot be valued as highly as Kingsley's other plays nor taken with a degree of seriousness for which it does not ask.

Kingsley returned to Broadway eight years later with a play he hoped would "fuse the 'romantic form' . . . with the classically constructed play. . . ." <sup>65</sup> Night Life was the result of this ambitious effort. The play opened at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on October 23, 1962, and closed on December 15, 1962, running a total of 63 performances. Disillusioned by the lack of idealism he perceived in the art and literature of the "beat" generation, Kingsley endeavored to stimulate his audience to action in Night Life. <sup>66</sup>

Act I:

Neil Bennett, a young lawyer, opens the play with a monologue describing his inability as "a nineteenth century humanist" to function in the twentieth century. He has been through wars,

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<sup>65</sup> As quoted in Thomas Lask, "Kingsley's Return," New York Times, October 21, 1962, Section 2, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Sidney Kingsley, Night Life (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1966).

sees ghosts, and believes it is best to remain uninvolved--to "cool it."

The action in the late night "key club" grows and fills the stage. A meeting between some underworld characters and labor leaders takes place. Lew and Ceil, a well-to-do middle-aged couple, come to the club in search of excitement. Lew is a would-be poet who is in the furniture business, "a curiously touching man, in spite of his pretensions and his clichés." Ceil is "desperately fighting a losing battle against age and ennui." Will Kazar joins the labor-gangster meeting. He is determined to seize control of the entire labor movement and anxious to eliminate his opposition--Sam Dubrowsky. The other men feel Dubrowsky will retain control but Kazar tells them he has a plan to insure his victory.

The piano plays as more customers arrive, lovers meet, deals are made, a comic makes sick jokes, Neil sits alone at the bar, and Lew and Ceil touch the painful memory of their dead child. This simultaneous action is interrupted by the arrival of Gia, Neil's old girlfriend and a folksinger at the club. As she and Neil begin to talk, Anna Brenn--a very famous, sexy, suicidal movie star who is also Neil's employer--arrives. She refuses to honor a contract to do a film in Italy and has come to the club to retrieve Neil and to get drunk. For a moment the action swirls about Anna--drinks are ordered, autographs signed, Lew, who "oohs and ahhs" over her, is ridiculed. Anna senses a previous relationship between Gia and Neil and makes it clear that

she considers Neil her personal property. Kazar comes down the stairs from a private room. Upon seeing Gia, he becomes considerate and gentlemanly in contrast to his usual bullying manner. After a few moments Kazar leaves, warning Neil that Gia is now his girl. Kazar returns to the gangsters who have apparently rejected a deal with him. Kazar dismisses them saying that time has run out and that they "blew" it.

Gia begins to sing and as she sings, time is suspended. Kazar begins to count off the seconds on his watch, anticipating the moment his secret plan will go into effect. Within this time span of supposedly sixty seconds, Ceil reveals the inner agonies of growing old, Lew expresses his pity for Ceil and his sense of rootlessness, Anna expresses her loathing for her sexual ambiguities, and Gia and Neil enact a fantasy love scene from their past in which they realize that their love could never work. In all of these scenes, none of the other characters are aware of what the others say--the presentation is dreamlike and directly to the audience. The moment is climaxed by Kazar's countdown to zero. He has had Dubrowsky murdered and relives the experience in his mind's eye. The action returns to the present tense as Gia finishes her song. Secretly elated, Kazar calls Gia to his table ostensibly to share his grief over his murdered friend. The act concludes as he reveals to her that he has just learned of Dubrowsky's death.

Act II:

The erratic pulse of the club's life beats on. The comic

continues his sick jokes which Lew finds disgusting and symptomatic of a general decay in society and the arts. Kazar accepts the homage of the gangsters who now join forces with him. Lew tries to reason with Kazar and set him on the "right track" with his remembrances of Sam Dubrowsky. Angered, Kazar threatens to kill Lew. The frightened Lew cannot get Ceil to leave and his panic furnishes a great deal of amusement for the other customers, Kazar leading their mocking laughter.

Neil and Anna claw at one another--she trying to acquire him as a sexual trophy, he trying to preserve his self respect. As Neil sees it they will end by being "bloated, empty, useless. . . liquor rots our brains, sex becomes a disgusting ritual, not of love, but of hate." Their only alternative is to work, to use up what talent they have--to try. Anna rejects this viewpoint and goes off to drink alone. Neil tries to show Gia what a cruel person Kazar is, but she refuses to see the truth so Neil returns to Anna. As Neil leaves to prepare to move into Anna's hotel room, Anna begins to dance. Lew and Ceil accuse each other of being responsible for their son's death. Ceil believes it was Lew's philosophy of love of mankind which caused their son's death--the boy drowned while trying to save some other children, "foreigners," as Ceil says. She cannot forgive Lew. Lew protests that it was he who learned of love from the child. Anna, having danced until she is in a sexual frenzy, disappears upstairs with an attractive young girl. Everyone but Lew joins in the wild dancing.

Act III:

It is almost dawn and the customers of the club begin to leave, weary of their own dissipation. Lew discovers that Kazar knew of Dubrowsky's death hours before the police did and accuses Kazar of murder. Lew is struck by one of Kazar's henchmen and this draws Gia to Lew's defense. As Kazar and Gia argue, Lew tells Neil what has transpired and that, since Gia knows the facts, he fears for the girl's life. Neil then sheds Anna and confronts Kazar, Gia sees Kazar's true nature and decides to leave with Neil. Kazar becomes enraged with jealousy and fear and attacks Neil and Gia with a knife. Lew jumps to their defense, is stabbed, and dies, happy in the knowledge that his sacrifice has stopped the evil which Kazar represents.

Night Life was the last of Kingsley's plays to be produced on Broadway at the time of this writing. It received almost universally unfavorable reviews.

True to his word, Kingsley attempted to fuse the play's melodramatic happenings in a form that would combine the objective and subjective, the present and the past, the real and the unreal. As the Newsday critic said:

The handsome set by Albert Johnson is built on two levels and so is Mr. Kingsley's play. First floor--soliloquies, turgid philosophizing, comments on the sorry state of our times, shock techniques from the collection of Tennessee Williams. Second floor--lurid melodrama, mock heroics, mayhem and other items, many of them from the notions counter of another day.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>George Oppenheimer, "The Key Club," Newsday, October 31, 1962, p. 3c.

Other critics, Walter Kerr and The Christian Science Monitor critic, observed the same problem when they noted more simply that the play never meshes into a "single tide" of action.<sup>68</sup>

In Night Life Kingsley maintained that he was attempting a "new form" which would involve "a free and new use of . . . verbal imagery . . . [and] the stream of consciousness technique."<sup>69</sup> Kingsley attempted to accomplish this form through theatrical techniques: at some moment in the play each major character interrupts the action, takes the spotlight, and tells his or her story while the other characters on stage "freeze." These moments fail to contribute to the flow of the action for several reasons: the action of the play has already clearly defined the characters' personalities and, as Howard Taubman said, ". . . the soliloquies are in character; unhappily, the characters are not absorbing."<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the inner reflections of the characters, rather than giving fresh insights into motivations, confirm preconceived ideas of character. Additionally, all of the stream-of-consciousness dialogue dwells on past events and instead of adding impetus to the forward movement of the plot, hopelessly interrupts it and impedes its progress.

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<sup>68</sup> Melvin Maddocks, review of Night Life, Christian Science Monitor, October 27, 1962, p. 4; Walter Kerr, review of Night Life, New York Herald Tribune, October 24, 1962, p. 18.

<sup>69</sup> As quoted in Milton Esterow, "News of the Rialto," New York Times, August 19, 1962, Section 2, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Howard Taubman, review of Night Life, New York Times, October 24, 1962, p. 44.

A similar division exists in the play's major conflict. Kazar, the labor boss, and the young lawyer, Neil, are at odds over Gia. This romance hopelessly clouds any philosophical implications of the conflict. The lawyer may be a man of ideals adrift in a world devoid of morals. In existential fashion, he may be afraid to act for fear of the consequences of his actions. Kazar may be an international gangster who is all too ready to act with no consideration of consequences. The conflict between the indecisive democrat and the ruthless dictator is, however, fortuitously resolved by a blundering third party--the furniture salesman. So Lew takes the knife instead of Neil--an accident. Although one could conclude from this action that chance has a way of protecting the poor fumbling liberal, the occurrence is a most undynamic way of stating a need for action which is ostensibly extolled throughout the play.

It is likely that Kingsley could not fuse his fractured plot for two reasons: artistically he could not master the play's form and ideologically he could not unify its action. No matter how earnestly he may have desired to write a play which would bring together the romantic and the realistic, the romantic devices which he employs--direct address to the audience, narration, visualization of thoughts--remain outside of and impede the already halting forward movement of the plot. Secondly, the multiple stories and their possible implications are so diverse and unresolved that unity of action is impossible to achieve. In structure the plot, with its utilization of a number of story

lines, most closely resembles the technique which Kingsley used so effectively in Detective Story. In Night Life as in Detective Story, strict unity of time and place contrasts with the use of multiple actions. It is in the structuring of these individual stories that the play is most deeply flawed. In Detective Story the stories were of persons--both good and evil--struggling to survive, locked in conflict. In Night Life the stories drift; the characters have no will but are resigned, compromised; no forward action occurs. Only the vicious labor leader displays a will to achieve and since he is unopposed until the final moments of the play, a conflict sufficient to move the entire play cannot develop. It would seem that in creating his image of the social malaise of the early sixties, Kingsley fell victim to his own creation. If he chides his characters for being aimless and ideologically barren, his absorption in their petty depravities clouds his own point of view.

#### Summary

Kingsley's plays are characterized by a plot containing several stories all of which, through whatever technique may be used in their development, revolve around a strong central character. In his best plays, it is this central character's conflict which unifies the play's action. All the minor stories are linked to the central character and serve to illuminate his or her dilemma from different perspectives. Additionally, the minor stories serve to create the play's specific milieu.

In all of Kingsley's plays the central conflict is linked to the concept of hard-work, duty, and service to others: in Men in White Ferguson's choice is between love and duty; in Dead End Gimpty and his slum companions are disadvantaged through lack of work and the opportunity to serve; in The World We Make Harriet finds her salvation in being allowed to work; in The Patriots Jefferson's anguish arises, as does Ferguson's, from his choice of duty over love; in Detective Story McLeod sacrifices his life to a false ideal of duty precisely because he shuns feeling for his fellow man in favor of service; Rubashov's dilemma in Darkness at Noon is the same as McLeod's; in Kingsley's only comedy, Cupid triumphs because he chooses love, or anything resembling love, over duty--an apt reversal; Neil in Night Life rejects Anna's offer of the "soft life" in favor of work. It is, then, the central character's struggle in adjusting to this concept of service which provides the motive force in Kingsley's plays. It is also true that in Kingsley's most powerful plays, the antagonist is an agent of those forces which act upon the hero's struggle in resolving his service conflict. Thus, Laura attempts to distract Ferguson from his career, "Baby-Face" Martin flaunts the benefits of non-work--crime, Hamilton forces Jefferson to surrender his home life in favor of duty, Schneider pushes McLeod to excesses of duty, and Gletkin embodies the horrible results of Rubashov's labors. As duty and service are social concepts, the plays invariably address themselves to social or political problems.

All of Kingsley's plots, as has been noted, contain multiple stories and all of the stories are developed through a series of exciting incidents which result from direct confrontations. The nature of the central conflict is, therefore, often melodramatic in its simplicity and involves representatives of good and evil. This conflict is resolved through action in a highly theatrical climactic moment.

With only two exceptions, The World We Make and The Patriots, none of the plays considered has more than a single environment: Men in White moves from place to place but always stays within the hospital, Darkness at Noon has dreamlike flashbacks but the setting is always the prison, and the other plays have but one setting. While the environment of the plays will be considered fully in a subsequent chapter, it is worth noting here that this commitment to a single locale is most effective in cementing bonds between the characters and their environment. As the stories and their environments are developed with reportorial attention to detail, they have an exceptional appearance of factuality. This illusion of truth is most useful in that it makes even the most melodramatic of happenings seem plausible within the specific environment.

While Kingsley referred to his "free" use of time in Darkness at Noon and Night Life,<sup>71</sup> his plays invariably develop in chronological order. The events which do take place out of

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<sup>71</sup>Esterow, New York Times, August 19, 1962, Section 2, p. 1.

the normal time frame are flashbacks in Darkness at Noon and soliloquies in Night Life. In both cases these are technical devices for disclosing memories. These remembrances serve to explain current happenings without themselves becoming a part of the action of the play. Consequently, these scenes suspend the action of the play, freezing rather than expanding its time frame. Kingsley's plays, therefore, feature a compressed use of time and, while the action may actually occur over a period of months or in the case of The Patriots, years, the action appears to take place within a very short period of time.

While uniqueness of story was not of primary importance to Kingsley, he has made a number of original contributions to the American theatre. Dead End is in a long tradition of slum dramas but its story is original and its structure a model of the naturalistic style. The Patriots is the only American drama featuring Jefferson as a major character and probably is the best example of a true history play in the American repertoire. Through his creative and original use of subject matter in Men in White and Detective Story, Kingsley created new forms of popular entertainment. If the plots of Detective Story and Men in White seem familiar now it is only because Kingsley developed the possibilities of both genres so fully. It is, moreover, essential to note that Kingsley painstakingly researched his plays and in those instances where the story he used had theatrical antecedents, his research and documentation connected these stories with their nontheatrical sources, thereby giving them the power of truth.

These plots indicate a superb craftsman and an artist of conscience who is skilled in the arts of the theatre and extremely sensitive to his social environment: Kingsley displays a genius for responding to his society with stories which have a high degree of contemporary significance. The conflict which unifies the action is usually emblematic of a current social or political issue. The plot is designed to address this problem, and in Kingsley's best plays, suggest a remedy. In his effort to achieve the desired audience response to his perception, Kingsley appeals as much to emotions as to intellect.

## CHAPTER III

### SETTING AND STYLE

As Kingsley's previously cited comments regarding the conceptualization of his plays indicate, his idea of environment seems to develop concurrently with that of plot. Add to this the fact that Kingsley once stated that as a very young man he wanted to be a set designer<sup>1</sup> and one must conclude that as a playwright he had a strong visual concept of the environment within which the action of his plays would develop. Kingsley was, moreover, director (with the previously noted exception of Men in White and The Patriots) and producer or co-producer of most of his works; thus he was in an excellent position to see that his "playwright's setting" was realized in the scene design. These comments regarding the staging of Darkness at Noon are indicative of the control which Kingsley exercised over design:

Early in his plotting of Darkness at Noon, Kingsley began devising a stage setting which would allow for many quick changing scenes without the use of cumbersome, time-consuming turntables. He made cardboard models and maneuvered them for many weeks. When Darkness at Noon was ready for production, several scene designers were approached, and they expressed doubt that the scheme would work. . . . Finally the stage artist Frederick Fox agreed that Kingsley's notion might be made to work. Fox did make

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<sup>1</sup>John Ferris, New York World-Telegram, November 10, 1962, Section 2, p. 14.

it work, and his settings were among the best of a stage season that was scenically notable.<sup>2</sup>

Critical comments regarding the effectiveness of stage settings as environments and textual descriptions of settings are, therefore, more meaningful for Kingsley's plays than for those of most playwrights.

That Kingsley was concerned with specific environments is apparent in his work--his settings are almost always unique and intimately connected with his subject matter. The function of this chapter will be to examine the environments which Kingsley chose for his plays, to explore in what manner they establish a stylistic approach to his subject matter, and to assess the success of each setting as a visual statement of the dramatic conflicts contained within the play.

For the purpose of this analysis, the playwright's setting will be understood to include the environmental factors of: geographical location, time, and political and social conditions contained within the play.<sup>3</sup> References to descriptions of scenic investiture will be made whenever they may be expressive of the artist's style and purpose.

In Men in White Kingsley sought to create the total

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<sup>2</sup>John Chapman, introduction to The Best Plays of 1950-1951, ed. by John Chapman (New York and Toronto: Dodd Mead and Co., 1951), p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>Francis Hodge, Play Directing: Analysis, Communication, and Style (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), pp. 21-27. The method used in analyzing playwright's setting is in large measure derived from this excellent work.

environment of a large metropolitan hospital. The action, therefore, moves swiftly through the following scenes:

Act I, scene 1: The hospital library. A large comfortable room, lined with bookcases stuffed full of heavy tomes, a long table heaped with medical pamphlets dominates the center of the room. The calm of the library is in marked contrast to the constant flow of doctors and nurses, paging of loud speakers, and ringing of telephones which characterizes the corridor outside its quiet confines.

Act I, scene 2: Mr. Hudson's luxurious private hospital room.

Act I, scene 3: A screened-off bed in the children's ward.

Act I, scene 4: Ferguson's tiny, austere, cell-like room in the interns' quarters.

Act II, scene 1: The hospital's mahogany-paneled, plush-draped board room.

Act II, scene 2: The hospital library.

Act II, scene 3: The chaotic hospital corridor.

Act II, scene 4: The gleaming chrome and white of the operating room.

Act III, scene 1: Ferguson's room.

In addition to these visualized locales, pathology labs, student nurses' quarters, and research labs are referred to and figure importantly in the play's action.

It is, therefore, obvious that St. George's is a huge institution. The multiple settings and their diversity give an impression of enormous size and complexity. The steady flow of traffic outside the confines of the various rooms creates an impression of isolated pockets of tranquility within a sea of organized chaos. The piles of books, stacks of pamphlets, constant paging and activity accent the hectic pace of a doctor's

life at St. George's where simply keeping up with medical research and hospital routine is a monumental effort.

It is spring at the beginning of the play, the time is the early to mid-1930's, and the action covers a span of three months. Times are difficult. Doctors are finding it impossible to study in Europe because of growing political unrest there, the hospital is in severe financial difficulty, and as Dr. Levine complains:

A doctor shouldn't have to worry about money . . . ! It either corrupts him or it destroys him (He sighs.) Well . . . maybe some day the State will take over medicine.

To this Ferguson replies, "Before we let the State control medicine, we'd have to put every politician on the operating table and cut out his acquisitive instincts."<sup>4</sup> The only doctor in the St. George's community who appears to have a lot of money is Dr. Cunningham, the incompetent society doctor. Clearly, the idealistic world of medicine is not insulated from the political and economic difficulties of the world in which it must exist. There is no mention of religion: science is the god which is worshiped here.

Kingsley was deemed very fortunate to have Mordecai Gorelik as designer of the production--and no doubt he was--because Gorelik's brand of selective realism was ideally suited to the combination of specific locale and rapid movement which the play requires. Gorelik's philosophy was:

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<sup>4</sup>Kingsley, Men in White, p. 137.

. . . that the mere reproduction of familiar scenes on a stage is as unnecessary as it is essentially untheatrical: the point is to create an illusion, and if this illusion can be achieved with one or two objects and a fall of light, why set about the wearing and expensive task of solid construction?<sup>5</sup>

When completed, the set was composed of a permanent backdrop which looked like a long, endless corridor and the small rooms were rolled in from the sides and center. As for the operating room:

. . . its specific contents [were] so slight as to be almost negligible. . . . A couple of white tables with shining instruments offer the materials for action. The only other realistic contributions are the longish washstands and the rinsing bowls.<sup>6</sup>

But what an impact this visual image had! The critics and audiences agreed with George Brandt that it was "staged with almost diabolically photographic skill."<sup>7</sup>

Men in White had the impact of truth because Gorelik, in his design, and the Group, in their inspired staging, had captured both the essence and the specifics of Kingsley's environment: it is, ultimately, the medical procedures--scrubbing up and preparation for surgery, patient care, emergency revival techniques--which Kingsley had spent years researching and so skillfully incorporated into this play that complete its illusion of reality.

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<sup>5</sup>"New Drama Uses Representative, Not Realistic Sets," New York Herald Tribune, January 14, 1934, Section V, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>George Brandt, review of Men in White, Review of Reviews, LXXXIX, No. 2 (1934), p. 39.

One example of creative structural use of setting has been mentioned previously--the use of the shrinking playing area to place stress on the hero. Another is worthy of specific mention--the use of the operating room for the play's climax. This arena of life or death fulfills our expectations of the hospital setting just as Ferguson's confrontation with Laura and Barbara fulfills our plot expectations. The obligatory scene and the obligatory setting are thus combined.

As an environment, the hospital exists to serve--it has no other function. As an organism, it is composed of many units: some living--doctors and nurses--and some mechanical--X-ray machines and microscopes; but all its units exist in interdependence for one purpose--to save and preserve life. This service is accomplished through the calm impersonality of science. There may appear to be chaos in the corridor but it is made clear that this area is an intermediate zone between the anarchy of life outside the hospital and the islands of tranquility which are at its heart--the labs, the library, and the operating room.

The playwright's setting is, therefore, a visualization of the dramatic action. A doctor must emulate the hospital itself. He, like the hospital, must be designed for and sworn to duty because there is literally no space for the individual within this scientific community.

Kingsley developed his illustration of the rigors of medical life in a style which was to prove typical of his work--realism. John Gassner defines this style as follows:

They [the realists] were confident that they could know virtually everything that needed to be known about man, society, and life, and they appeared to believe that all they needed-- all that humanity ever needed-- was the will to discover the truth and to put rational policies into operation.<sup>8</sup>

In this style it is essential that the pattern of behavior or action which is offered as example have the illusion of truth so that the audience may reach the conclusions advocated by the playwright.

The environment of Kingsley's next play was as dramatically potent as Men in White's sterile operating room but radically different. In Men in White the stage was filled with disciplined activity, seemed to be permeated by the faint smell of iodoform, and glistened with hospital cleanliness. Dead End assaulted the audience with the filth, noise, and seemingly pointless action of slum life.

The physical environment of Dead End is generally well known. Norman Bel Geddes' set so perfectly captured its image that it has become a benchmark of realistic scene design and appears in many histories of the theatre. Kingsley's description of the locale is as follows:

"Dead End" of a New York street, ending in a wharf over the East River. To the left is a high terrace and a white iron gate leading to the back of the exclusive East River Terrace Apartments. Hugging the terrace and filling up the street are a series of squalid tenement houses.

Beyond the wharf is the East River, covered by a swirling scum an inch thick. A brown river, mucky with floating refuse and offal. . . . And here on the shore, along the Fifties is a strange sight. Set plumb down in the midst of

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<sup>8</sup> John Gassner, Form and Idea in Modern Theatre (New York: The Dryden Press, 1956), p. 81.

slums, antique warehouses, discarded breweries, slaughter houses, electrical works, gas tanks, loading cranes, coal-chutes, the very wealthy have begun to establish their city residence in huge, new, palatial apartments. The East River Terrace is one of these. Looking up this street from the vantage of the River, we see only a small portion of the back terrace and gate; but they are enough to suggest the towering magnificence of the whole structure. . . . Through the gateway is a catwalk which leads to a floating dock where the inhabitants of this apartment moor their boats and yachts.

Contrasting sharply with all this richness is the mis-eased street below, filthy, strewn with torn newspapers and garbage from the tenements. The tenement houses are close, dark, and crumbling. They crowd each other. Where there are curtains in the windows, they are streaked and faded; where there are none, we see through to hideous, water stained, peeling wall-paper, and old broken-down furniture. The fire escapes are cluttered with gutted mattresses and quilts, old clothes, bread boxes, milk bottles, a canary cage, an occasional potted plant struggling for life.

To the right is a huge, red sand hopper standing on stilts of heavy timber several stories tall. Up the street, blocking the view, is a caterpillar steam shovel. Beyond it, way over to the west, are the sky-scraping parallelepipeds of Radio City. An alleyway between two tenements, tied together by drooping lines of wash, gives us a distant glimpse of the mighty Empire State Building rearing its useless mooring tower a quarter of a mile into the clouds.

At the juncture of tenement house and terrace is a police call-box; at the juncture of the street and wharf is a police stanchion bearing the warning "Dead End." . . . The sunlight tossed from the waves dances across the piles to the musical lap of the water. Other river sounds counter-point the orchestration: the bells and the whistle, the clink and the chug of passing boats.<sup>9</sup>

The length and detail of this description is in itself indicative of the importance which Kingsley accorded this environment. Nor was he satisfied with mere description--all of these environmental elements are further developed in the play's action: the boys dive into the river, swim, and emerge to pick filth from their bodies; they roast potatoes in a small fire,

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<sup>9</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 682.

climb the coal chute to taunt one another, and through their puny attack on the rich kid, mount an assault on the nearby fortress of wealth; sirens wail, the river laps against the wharf, policemen use the callbox, and people leave their apartments on errands known only to themselves--the illusion is of complete, unstructured reality.

Although the aimless patterns of the characters' activities have clearly established a hopeless social environment and the visual impact of the decaying slums jammed up against luxury has strengthened this image, Kingsley reinforces his environmental statement in dialogue. Two habitués of the luxury apartments comment on the slums which they discover at their back door:

Philip's Father: Hm! Whose property is this?

Jones: I think J. and J. I'm not sure, Griswald.

Griswald: Why don't they keep it in repair?

Jones: What for? It's valuable stuff as it is. No upkeep.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the economic foundation of slums is explained. Gimpty, having worked, studied, and sacrificed to become an architect, receives no reward for his labors but unemployment. The fault lies with the wealthy for "they," according to Gimpty, control our lives:

It's not right that anybody should live like that, but a couple of million of us do. . . . Yeah, right here in New York . . . New York with its famous skyline . . . its Empire State, the biggest God-damned building in the world. The biggest tombstone in the world! They wanted to build a monument to the times. Well, there it is, bigger than the

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<sup>10</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 692.

pyramids and just as many tenants . . . I wonder when they'll let us build houses for men to live in?<sup>11</sup>

It is, moreover, a society which will pay large rewards for criminals and yet deprive its needy citizens.

Kingsley's careful arrangement of the "stuff" of life in Dead End's plot has been noted. Similarly, Norman Bel Geddes recognized that his problem as a designer was:

. . . to raise the actual scene, with all its actual details and surface facts, to a plane where it begins to be art, to heighten, eliminate and stress so that in the whole result we have what we did not have before.<sup>12</sup>

The design clearly reflected Kingsley's intent which was voiced in his defense of the realistic technique, "These are hard real times and, therefore perhaps best expressed in hard real terms." Then, in what was probably a criticism of the season's other "slum drama," Winter set, he went on to say:

Romanticism is a nostalgic evasion, mysticism a beclouded one. Go to reality . . . ! Literally hold up a mirror to the times. . . . Why not go to the prime source--the corporate world, the solid dimensions about us?<sup>13</sup>

The title page of Dead End bears the following quotation from Thomas Paine: "The contrast of affluence and wretchedness is like dead and living bodies chained together." Kingsley's choice of physical environment was, therefore, critical to the conflicts embodied in this play. As in Men in White, his choice

<sup>11</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 709.

<sup>12</sup>Stark Young, "Mr. Norman Bel Geddes," The New Republic, XXCV (November, 1935), 21.

<sup>13</sup>Kingsley, New York Times, November 10, 1935, Section 9, p. 1.

was brilliant in that the environment was far more than a visualization of the play's conflict--it was the source of the conflict. Kingsley's admonition to "go to reality," his vigorous attack on romanticism, and his documentary technique for social purpose define once again the style and philosophy of a socially concerned realist.

After a brief and unsuccessful attempt at combining Realism and Impressionism in Ten Million Ghosts, Kingsley turned once again to social realism in his next play, The World We Make. Virginia's life with her wealthy parents has been full of material things but devoid of emotional attachment; the sterility of her social environment has, in fact, caused her mental illness. In Kingsley's creation she is a product of her environment as surely as the street urchins of Dead End are of theirs.

Kingsley utilizes three distinct physical environments in The World We Make. The action of the play begins in the Green-dale Hospital for the Insane. The shadowy movement of inmates shuffling through the halls may be seen through the translucent rear wall; a nurse, carrying a large ring of keys, unlocks the door to Dr. Schiller's office, enters, and locks the door behind her. This bleak opening sequence quickly defines this particular hospital's environment. In contrast to the electric excitement of St. George's, it is a sterile "dead end," a semi-prison for hopeless cases. Virginia's escape takes her to the "Sunbright Laundry" in search of work. Here is Kingsley's description of this setting:

A cheap, second rate steam laundry. On the ground floor the drivers bring in the bundles. One man weighs and marks the soiled laundry. Another sorts them, separating the white from the colored pieces. They are then put into fishnet bags and slid through a chute into the "Kitchen." Here, against the raw background of the cellar, the clothes are washed.

The air is thick with heavy clouds of steam and the reek of chemicals: the floor is flooded with slippery suds, the wet heat is almost unbearable, the walls and the ceilings, the machines and the humans, black and white, glisten constant dribblets of sweat streaming off them. Here, clad in high rubber boots and aprons, is the most skilled laborer, the "Washer." He dumps the fishnet loads into the swirling washing machines. Mixes the chemicals,--soap and bleach and acid, varying the formula for colored, heavy and light linens. After the machines finish macerating the clothes, the "Washer" rinses them--first in hot water, then in cold.

Now the "Puller." As he pulls out the clothes, bending deep into the hole of the machine, it deliberately sloshes water over his head. He hugs the dripping clothes and tosses them into a cart, which he pushes over to the "extractor," a huge, drum-like machine. "The Wringer Man" places the clothes in the "extractor," touches a lever, and there is a roar as the machine whirls around with terrific velocity.

Kingsley then goes on to describe the actions of the other workers in the laundry and the dance-like movement of their tasks.

He then concludes with a "note to scene designer":

Since the actual elements of this scene are human beings, wash and machines; this is essentially a simple set. . . . The preceding description is intended only to create the feeling of the absolute steaming, sweating reality of the laundry as compared to the weird, tenuous unreality of the hospital.<sup>14</sup>

Virginia, now Harriet Hope, joins the mechanical ballet of work, and the heat of the room and the discomfort of the water-flooded floor bear mercilessly on her frail being. She and her fellow workers are trapped in a socio-economic backwash as literal as the water which floods the floor--paid enough to sustain life but

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<sup>14</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, pp. 1-1-1 ff.

not enough to improve their lot. As one of the characters indicates:

. . . Everytime I say to my mother, "Ma, I'm goin' out with a girl," she begins to cry, "I want you to be happy, my son. We ain't got enough for rent . . . but don't mind that, Morris. . . . You deserve some pleasure . . . as for me . . . I'll kill myself" . . . So I don't sleep all night . . . feelin' like a rat.<sup>15</sup>

John, although he is foreman, lives in a cold water flat and Anna can't get married until her father gets a job.

The main action of the play transpires in John's tenement apartment. John must heat water in a tub for a bath, the "El" roars by, and the room is cluttered with the accumulation of dirt, papers, tin cans, and unwashed dishes which characterize the dwelling of a man too burdened with work to maintain his living space. In scene 3, the morning scene, the physical environment opens up to include the nearby apartments. Harriet is surrounded and enveloped by the rhythms of life around her. Although John's rooms remain the physical environment for the rest of the play, Harriet transforms them over the three months which the play spans. The rooms' cleaning and refurbishing coincides with and parallels Harriet's emotional recovery.

As Harriet's physical environment is expanded, so is her social milieu. Her contacts with an ethnic cross section do much to broaden her understanding of others and ultimately figure largely in her own recovery. Moreover, in Act II, scene 3, radio reports of the war in Europe and the fall of Poland are brought

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<sup>15</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, p. 1-1-14.

into the play and contribute to Harriet's relapse. At the same time that the facts of world political instability are being related on the radio, they are being mirrored in Harriet's mental instability.

As was mentioned in Chapter II of this study, Kingsley's use of realism in this production loosed a torrent of criticism. The operating room of Men in White and Dead End's waterfront were remembered by critics with even more realistic detail than the sets had actually possessed. Kingsley was accused of selecting his environments simply for shock value and of using realistic detail for its own sake.

John Anderson's comments were typical:

To my way of thinking [The World We Make] completely confuses a psychological theme by its creaking stageful of realistic settings. This is no complaint against Harry Horner's settings which are cleverly literal enough even for Mr. Kingsley. Steam swirls . . . the gas stove lights . . . a can of [real] tomatoes is opened . . . who cares . . . ? That method simply cheapens the senses.

Perception in the theatre is a matter of the imagination. Literal duplicates have nothing to do with it.<sup>16</sup>

Kingsley's response to this criticism is most significant in that it indicates his understanding of the style and technique which he used:

Is "The World We Make" realistic? Well, its settings have no ceilings; the activity of a hospital is suggested by shadowy figures seen through walls that are as translucent as a sheet of tissue; three floors of a laundry are telescoped into one; the walls of a tenement are torn away to reveal life flowing out into other rooms and into a fragment of the house beyond. So much for the realism of the settings.

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<sup>16</sup> John Anderson, review of The World We Make, New York Journal-American, November 6, 1939.

A character in the play has been seriously noted by the reviewer as having carried Belasco realism to an extreme by opening a real can of tomato paste and using real soap. The truth is, no such can ever appears and the soap is actually a bar of painted wood.

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 We were not contriving rhinestone curtains and elaborate gadgets, real or fake, with which to delight ourselves or bedazzle the audience. We were not performing the cheap miracle of putting a photo on the stage. We were interested only in creating the effect of this Reality and that effect we found could best be achieved by the highly selective method known as Impressionism.

Perhaps we succeeded too well. Perhaps those who found it realistic simply meant that it was real in its effect rather than in its method. The Idea of the Real, however, is the substance of the play and to have missed that in production would have seriously detracted from the meaning of the play itself.

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 Mr. Horner's scene designs . . . serve the play and they blend with it. Each night his sets are greeted with tremendous applause. This is no petty tribute to a candid-camera shot. These audiences are rising spontaneously to salute the truth--that even in its rawest and humblest aspects you can extract from life the distillate of pure beauty. And that, after all, is what the play says.<sup>17</sup>

In this response Kingsley "bends" the term Impressionism which is usually understood to be much more selective than his interpretation. His defense, however, does indicate his sincerity and belief in his particular style of realism and there can be no question that Kingsley's realistic effects are designed to support the play and not to "decorate" it. In each scene of the play, environment is selected to visualize Harriet's conflicts: the hospital embodies the insulated, sterile life which Harriet is seeking to escape; the steam laundry signifies her sudden clash with the harsh realities of modern life; John's room, with all

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<sup>17</sup> Sidney Kingsley, "Realism and 'The World We Make'," New York Times, December 17, 1939, Section 9, Part II, p. 3.

its surface clutter and dirt, offers her a challenge she can meet and at last wraps her in warmth and security, friends and family--an existence which her previous material wealth did not afford her.

While he was critical of American political, economic, and social systems in these first plays, Kingsley, unlike some of his contemporaries, remained confident that the American system of government could and would respond to the needs of its citizenry. No matter how exhausted his characters may be, their faith in America and the belief that hard work will be rewarded is undaunted. As Jim says:

Christ, John, it took all history to get guys like us out of hock. Liberty isn't just a statue in New York Harbour important only because three men can stand in the thumb. I'm for democracy. That's my meat. That's me. Any guy that wants to take it away from me does it over my dead body.<sup>18</sup>

In an even more direct political vein, whereas Ten Million Ghosts had been isolationist in tone, The World We Make favored not only involvement but intervention in the war in Europe.

Politics and national unity became all the more important to Kingsley and the United States with the outbreak of World War II and Kingsley responded with his patriotic history play, The Patriots.

While political and social motives are as pronounced in The Patriots as in Kingsley's other plays, it stands outside the mainstream of his work in its use of style and setting. In none

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<sup>18</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, p. 2-2-17.

other of Kingsley's plays are the characters less connected with their physical environments. Jefferson and Hamilton are men of their time and it is the environment of time which is critical to The Patriots. Hamilton and Jefferson's actions are seen, therefore, as a result of the age in which they live.

Kingsley decided to dramatize the period 1790-1801 rather than the Revolutionary period because what was critical to him at this time was not the United States' separation from England but the creation and preservation of democracy. Eliot Morison's comments are useful in grasping just how feeble the American government was at the beginning of this period:

This new government had to create its own machinery. Every revolutionary regime of Europe and Asia, and most of those in Africa, took over a corps of officials, an administrative system, and a treasury; but the American Confederation left nothing but a dozen clerks with their pay in arrears, an empty treasury, and a burden of debt. The American army consisted of 672 officers and men; the navy had ceased to exist. . . . There were no taxes or requisitions coming in, and no machinery for collecting taxes.<sup>19</sup>

Although deeply concerned with the era in which The Patriots is set, Kingsley did not neglect the use of physical environment to reinforce his ideas. Act I of The Patriots is devoted to examining the economic questions which faced the young Republic and developing Hamilton's plan for fiscal responsibility. The action moves from Washington's Spartan study in the presidential mansion to the smithy of a village inn just outside New York City. The contrast between the two settings is significant.

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<sup>19</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People, pp. 317-318.

Washington's quarters, although well furnished, are designed to "protect" the president and effectively isolate him from his constituency. He and Jefferson must actually escape from the mansion's confines for a moment of quiet relaxation. This closed environment fosters the economic compromise which sacrifices the fortunes of the "common man." The openness of the smithy with its workaday atmosphere and its continuous flow of activity stands in direct contrast to the prison-like atmosphere of Washington's study. Within the narrow and cloistered atmosphere of the presidential mansion, Jefferson's preceptions have become distorted. The vitality and earthiness of the smithy serve to restore his political perspective, to return him to a healthy mental outlook, and, consequently, to move him closer to his conflict with Hamilton.

In Act II the conflict between Jefferson and Hamilton deepens and Kingsley initiates a pattern which contrasts Hamilton's sumptuous life style with the steady decline of Jefferson's fortunes. In both Acts I and II, Jefferson is warned by his family that his land, which he has been forced to leave in the hands of others, is not being managed well and that, consequently, he is becoming poorer and poorer. His declining financial situation is reflected in his cluttered rented rooms in Act II and in his semi-private quarters in a boarding house in Act III--scarcely the rooms one would expect the president-elect to inhabit. Hamilton, in direct contrast, lives in luxury. His rooms are furnished in the height of fashion and his needs attended to by a

host of servants. Additionally, Jefferson's impoverished surroundings provide a dramatic contrast to the grandeur of the setting of Act III, scene 2--the inaugural address. This contrast further emphasizes the sudden reversal of the hero's fortunes.

Act II also raises the possibility of an American counter-revolution inspired by the French Revolution. Kingsley mirrors this danger to the Republic in the threat of yellow fever which is raging through Philadelphia. As the Republic is ailing, so are its people and the threat of contagion and death is present both for the Republic and its citizens. In Act III the Republic regains its health with the election of Jefferson, and the elimination of the plague.

Act III, scene 1, takes place on the eve of the election of 1800 in Jefferson's rooms at a boarding house in the new capital of Washington. Having weathered the economic storms of the postwar period and the upheavals which followed the French Revolution, it now appears that Congress and the electoral system will be the instrument which destroys the "American experiment." Jefferson's boarding house is jammed with his supporters. Messengers shove their way through the crowd to deliver letters of support and the latest election news from a deadlocked Congress. As Jefferson and Hamilton retire to private quarters to achieve their compromise, the tumult outside continues to accent the importance of their agreement.

Throughout the play Kingsley reinforces his dramatic

contrasts through setting: a closed political atmosphere in conflict with an open and generous populace, a rich and Royalist Hamilton in conflict with a poor and Populist Jefferson, and an ailing and vulnerable Republic surrounded by chaos and contagion. All of these environments had resonances within the national and international climate of war-time America and contributed substantially to the play's effectiveness. The real hero in this play is America as it demonstrates Jefferson's concept of government and Kingsley chose a time period which chronicles the survival of Jefferson's idea of democracy against foreign, domestic, and economic threats. Kingsley's purpose is, therefore, well served by his environmental choices.

The style of presentation and writing within The Patriots' panoramic structure remains basically realistic. The expository flashback sequences of the prologue are the most nonillusionistic of the play's scenes but once the transition to these scenes is accomplished through lighting changes, their development is realistic. The second of these sequences seems to be an exception to Kingsley's realistic method for here Jefferson's opponent is heard only and is not seen. The scene, nevertheless, has the ring of truth because the words used are direct quotations from Jefferson's works--a documentary technique which Kingsley used repeatedly in this play. Thus, while the form of the play differs from his other plays, Kingsley continued his customary use of realistic social documentation.

Kingsley was not quite as concerned with specific physical

environment in The Patriots as he was in his other plays for yet another reason: the average American theatregoer, through reading and education, was generally familiar with this time period and these characters. In his next play, however, Kingsley presented an unfamiliar environment--the squad room of Detective Story--and returned to the detailed presentation of physical environment. Director-playwright Kingsley was thoroughly informed on his subject, having spent several years haunting police stations and he was quite specific about the required setting:

The 21st Detective Squad, second floor of the 21st Precinct Police Station, New York City. The major area of the stage is occupied by the squad-room; to the right separated by a door and an invisible wall we glimpse a fragment of the LIEUTENANT's office. Severe, nakedly institutional, ghost-ridden, these rooms are shabby, three-quarters of a century old, with an effluvium of their own anguish, despair, passion, rage, terror and violent death. The walls are olive green to the waist and light green above. In the wall upstage, two ceiling-high windows guarded by iron-grill work. The entrance, stage left, is surrounded by an iron railing with a swinging gate. Tacked to the wall, a height chart; next to it a folding fingerprint shelf; above that a green-shaded light. Adjoining, a bulletin board upon which are tacked several notices and photographs of criminals, etc. In the center of the room is the phone desk, on which are two phones. Downstage left is another desk, on it a typewriter. High on the main wall a large electric clock, beneath it a duty board with replaceable celluloid letters, reading "On Duty--DET. GALLAGHER, DET. DAKIS, LT. MONOGHAN." In the segment of the LIEUTENANT's office, a desk, a swivel chair, several small chairs, some files, a water-cooler, a coat-rack, etc. A small window in the LIEUTENANT's office looks out upon an air shaft. Through it we catch a glimpse of the window of the wash-room, the door to which is upstage right.

The light is fading. It is late afternoon, five-twenty by the clock on the wall. Through the main windows a magnificent view of the city and its towering skyscrapers; dominating the panorama are a General Motors sign, a church spire and a cross.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 465.

The set, designed by Boris Aronson, was another masterpiece of realism and Kingsley's action utilized it fully: telephones ring; detectives file reports; policemen wander in, pick up forms and leave; stolen goods are identified; fingerprints are taken; poster boards are updated; prisoners come and go, are questioned and booked; forms are filled out in triplicate. Just as in Men in White, procedures and place reinforce one another and the illusion of reality is complete.

Critical arguments over Kingsley's use of realism largely seem to have disappeared by the late 1940's. The setting was, in fact, cited as being a major attribute of the play. As Harold Clurman said:

Its entertainment value derives from factors that are barely related either to the play's theme or story. . . . What makes Detective Story enjoyable is its detail. . . . To see such a place in all its particulars is fascinating.<sup>21</sup>

Brooks Atkinson credited the setting with "going beyond literal realism . . . a beautiful setting with space, height and color enough to capture the thoughtful tone of the play."<sup>22</sup>

While it is true that Detective Story's environmental details may be appreciated even if isolated from the play's story, it is equally true that Detective Story's plot is inextricably linked with this environment and that this detailed setting is functional to the plot on several levels. It stands, first of

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<sup>21</sup>Harold Clurman, The New Republic, CXX (April, 1949), 25.

<sup>22</sup>Brooks Atkinson, review of Detective Story, New York Times, March 24, 1949, p. 34.

all, as a visual justification for McLeod's behavior. Given the shabbiness of his work environment, the objective inhumanity of the procedures which he is required to follow, and his constant contact with the worst elements of society, it is easy to understand how he could become callous and vicious. The setting, therefore, provides a wealth of expository information. Additionally, the squad room is the "front line of defense" in the criminal justice system, the locus of initial conflict between the criminal and the dispensation of justice. It is this sense of being in the front ranks--in combat--which encourages McLeod to become overzealous in the pursuit of his duties. In marked contrast to The Patriots and his other plays, time period is of very little environmental importance in this play. There are few direct references to political or social happenings beyond the environs of the play--Arthur's war record being the single exception. The squad room with its timeless rituals of police life, therefore, appears to be suspended in time, fighting a lonely battle for "law and order," and basically ignored by society at large. The police are almost as effectively separated from society as the criminals they arrest. In choosing this use of environment, Kingsley reinforced McLeod's feelings of isolation. This isolation, as Kingsley illustrates, is both dangerous and inevitable. Using McLeod as an example, Kingsley shows how separation can lead to unaccountability and authoritarian behavior. Thus, McLeod, in his isolation, decides that everyone who does not agree with him is against him and that he alone is fit to

decide guilt or innocence. The sense of isolation from the rest of society which the environment establishes is, therefore, central to the conflict of the play.

And, finally, Kingsley saw the police station environment as a reproduction in miniature of a police state. As he said:

I have tried to write a play that stirs people to feel the necessity for keeping public control over the police power [and by extension all other branches of government]. When I made my police station the Twenty-first Precinct I hoped some of the audience might ask themselves whether we will be living in a police state in the twenty-first century or whether we will be getting the protection of the police in accord with the rules of a free society.<sup>23</sup>

In this play, as in Men in White and Dead End, the setting is so evocative of the play's central conflict that it becomes itself a participant in the action.

If Detective Story's precinct house had been a somewhat obscure image of a police state, Darkness at Noon's ominous prison of concrete and iron was readily identified with Stalin's mysterious and monolithic Soviet Union. In establishing his setting, Kingsley was determined to contain the action of the entire play within the single environment of the prison:

Rubashov's body must remain inside the granite and iron of the prison. He's in prison two ways, really, because he's in a mental prison as a believer in the so-called scientific materialism of the Communists. Yet his mind breaches the walls and he experiences sensations of beauty and feels the appeals to his humanity.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Harry Gilroy, "The Play That Was Born in a Speech," New York Times, March 20, 1949, Section 2, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> As quoted by Harry Gilroy, "Anti-Communist Novel Dramatized," New York Times, January 7, 1951, Section 2, p. 1.

Kingsley accomplished his desired effect with a single set representing the prison. As required by the flashback scenes, the walls of Rubashov's cell become transparent, revealing the various locales so that these separate scenes become extensions of the prison environment.

The environment of the flashback scenes--a bedroom, an office, a room in a museum, a tavern--all are suggested with minimal set pieces. A desk, a chair, and a few graphs define the office; Titian's "Christ Crowned With Thorns," the museum room. The technique here and in the larger set is far more impressionistic than in Kingsley's previous work. Kingsley's description is as follows:

Concrete and iron! The dim outline of a modern prison cell-block, and a section of the long corridor lit by the dim yellow light of naked bulbs. A low moan of a human soul in anguish crying, "God! God!" rises and falls.<sup>25</sup>

He specifies significantly fewer details than usual in his description of settings. The pieces specified, however, are real and the technique is much the same as the selective realism employed in Men in White.

The prison does, however, like most of Kingsley's settings, seem to have a life of its own. While night and day may pass unnoticed within its dark recesses, its life--marked by prison routine--beats on: prisoners tap messages to one another, doors clang, iron bolts thud into place, and moans and muffled screams echo from unseen cells. Both prisoners and guards are trapped within its walls, the difference between the two being

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<sup>25</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, p. 6.

simply a matter of which side of the door they are on.

Kingsley's imaginative use of these materials to create the climate of terror and suppressed anxiety which permeates the prison is demonstrated in the following sequence from the play:

Along the corridor comes the low sound of subdued drumming. It is not tapping nor hammering. The men in the cells who form the acoustic chain stand behind their doors like a guard of honor in the dark, bringing out a deceptive resemblance to the muffled solemn sound of a roll of drums, carried by the wind from the distance. At the far end of the corridor, the GRINDING of iron doors becomes louder. A bunch of KEYS jangle. The iron DOOR is shut again. The drumming to the Left rises in a wave, a steady muffled crescendo. Sliding and squealing SOUNDS approach quickly, a moaning and whimpering like the whimpering of a child is heard. The three or four cells that we see--the men, drumming on the doors. Shadowy FIGURES enter the field of vision. . . . As they turn the corner of the corridor, Bogrov bellows out loudly.

Bogrov: R-U-B-A-S-H-O-V. Rubashov. Rubashov, Rubashov, Rubashov!

(. . . There is a long silence.)

Rubashov: Mischa, Mischa, Mischa.

202: (Taps) Arise ye Wretched of the Earth!<sup>26</sup>

The prison exists within a system based on fear and repression: one of the prisoners tells Rubashov that there are thousands within the prison's walls; the prisoners are, moreover, of all political persuasions from counterrevolutionary Tzarists to yesterday's radicals. Not only is the regime repressive, it is capricious. Rubashov notes the lighter squares on the walls of Ivanov's office where pictures of yesterday's heroes hung such a short time before and soon Ivanov himself disappears--no reason

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<sup>26</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, pp. 61-62.

given, no explanation offered. Like lightning, there is no predicting where the terror will strike next.

The social result of this terror is an "ant hill" society devoid of personal freedom:

Rubashov: To meet the Five Year Plan we must step up our tempo--a twelve-hour day is necessary. Tempo! Tempo! Tempo! The Unions will dismiss workers who come late and deprive all laggards of their food cards. In the building of a new, hitherto undreamt of Communist state, we must be guided by one rule, dash--The end justifies the means-- Exclamation point. Relentlessly. Period.<sup>27</sup>

Thus does Rubashov's zealotry eventually design an inhuman political machine--a machine in which the pronoun "I" becomes a "grammatical fiction."

The social benefits of the Party's efforts have been paltry indeed. After years of work, sacrifice, and brutal suppression, Rubashov says:

Our standard of living is lower than the most backward country in Europe. Labor conditions are harder--discipline's more inhuman--our country is run by the police. We've torn the living skin off our people and left them standing with bare tissues, muscles and nerves quivering.<sup>28</sup>

The Revolution, Rubashov says, has become "functional" but it has achieved bitter results at great cost:

In taking the land, in one year, we let five million farmers and their families die of starvation! Deliberately. So functional--in freeing the people from industrial exploitation we send ten million of them to forced labor under worse conditions than galley slaves--So functional--to settle a difference of opinion, the omnipotent Leader knows only one argument--Death!--Whether it's a matter of submarines, manure, or the Party-line in Indo China--Death!<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, pp. 11-12. <sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>29</sup> Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, p. 65.

The image of prison life is thereby extended beyond the prison to all of Russia.

Kingsley, being thoroughly a man of the theatre and suspicious of an audience's ability to grasp an idea unless hit at a "gut level," pulled no punches in his use of melo-dramatic devices--screams, mysterious echoings, noises from shadowy corridors--in creating his environment. Most critics agreed with Brooks Atkinson that in stressing these shock elements, Kingsley had damaged the effectiveness of the story. "The story of Rubashov," Atkinson said, "is less a record of diabolical prison technique than the pitiless study of a keen and rational mind that follows its own ruthless logic to destruction."<sup>30</sup> While generally praising the production, John Mason Brown suggested:

. . . a little more imagination, a bolder use of suggestion, and less devotion to the Belasco trappings would no doubt have heightened Mr. Kingsley's production and made it theatrically more arresting. . . . Mr. Kingsley's direction is incisive and contributive throughout, and rises to haunting climaxes in those scenes when all the prisoners start beating upon their cell walls at once and their despairing protests find an eloquent release.<sup>31</sup>

In attempting to describe his technique in this play, Kingsley said:

I'm trying to develop a new technique, highly experimental, with this new play. It will be an experiment of oscillation in time as well as in space. . . . It will show the past,

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<sup>30</sup> Atkinson, New York Times, January 21, 1951, Section 2, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> John Mason Brown, review of Darkness at Noon, The Saturday Review of Literature, XXXIV (February, 1951), 23-24.

present and future almost simultaneously while the present reality goes on. There'll be fantasy and a realistic level.<sup>32</sup>

William Beyer found Kingsley's manipulation of time and space similar to scene-to-scene dissolves in the cinema--a technique which he felt worked with film but not on stage where the illusion was an objective one as opposed to the camera's subjective illusion.<sup>33</sup> The Newsweek critic, however, found it "remarkable" in its "almost cinematic flow of action from present to remembered past."<sup>34</sup>

While Kingsley's "experimental technique" did not result in a new style, it did represent a significant modification of style for him. The modification is largely one of degree because Kingsley was far more selective in detail in Darkness at Noon than in many of his previous plays. He did, however, still utilize essentially realistic scenes to demonstrate the terrible consequences of a particular philosophy, effectively showing us how Rubashov's "means become the end."

In adapting Koestler's novel, Kingsley "inherited" the prison environment--doubtless it was one of the book's features which appealed to him most. Koestler's prison is, however, whitewashed and gleams with cold efficiency while

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<sup>32</sup>As quoted in Ward Morehouse, "Broadway After Dark," World-Telegram and Sun, September 12, 1950, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup>William Beyer, review of Darkness at Noon, School and Society, LXXIII (February, 1951), 106.

<sup>34</sup>Newsweek, January 22, 1951, p. 80.

Kingsley's is shrouded in gloomy mystery. It is this dark and violent prison atmosphere which most effectively defines the environment of the play. Although Rubashov speaks of the suffering of the Russian people, we do not see that in the action of the play--it remains narrative. What we do see is the organized brutality of the prison. Gletkin, unthinking and unfeeling, is a logical extension of the system which produced him and the prison is a powerful visualization of that system.

When Kingsley turned from serious drama to comedy, he abandoned imposing and exotic settings for the familiar. Time referred to the setting for Lunatics and Lovers as "a farce-hallowed Broadway hotel suite."<sup>35</sup> Dan Cupid's run-down rooms in the seedy neon and chrome grandeur of a third-rate hotel are reminiscent of the settings of numerous farces. In this comedy of character, it was the characters who first interested Kingsley.<sup>36</sup> Originality of setting was unimportant. That the setting was vaguely familiar was, in fact, an aid to the audience's immediate recognition and acceptance.

The environment of Lunatics and Lovers serves primarily to place the characters within a social context in which their actions may be judged and/or explained. And, fittingly enough, it is the character's social conduct which, in large measure,

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<sup>35</sup> "Lunatics and Lovers," Time, December 27, 1954, p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> Murray Schumach, New York Times, December 12, 1954, Section 2, p. 3.

defines the setting: Dan Cupid hates the daylight because it "boins" his eyes, eats room service breakfasts at 8:00 p.m., and "manufactures" perfume under the names Lanvin and Guerlain in his hotel room; hotel cuties pop in to take bubble baths; assignations are arranged; Broadway characters pass through; parties go on all night. The hotel's milieu is timeless and its location could be only New York City. Cupid likes it there because, "One ting, you lay inna gutter, you can't fall down." The setting is a purely theatrical contrivance which exists to serve the needs of its characters. It is an amoral, party-time place for transient and aging adolescents.

Harold Clurman believed that Kingsley's selection of setting contributed to his inability to resolve the play's comic form. "His play," Clurman said, "conveys the uneasy sense of a man who does not know how to behave in an environment toward which he has no real attitude."<sup>37</sup>

Kingsley's compromise between satire and farce resulted in a social comedy of family and interpersonal relationships which is dominated by character types. In this genre the situations should, as Vera Mowry Roberts says, "expose selected characters to situations which would throw into relief their peculiarities and demonstrate their ridiculous incongruity with sane social standards." Roberts then goes on to note: "Nothing is necessary for these plays but the people in them. . . .

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<sup>37</sup> Harold Clurman, The Nation, CXXC (January, 1955), 18.

Scenery is detachable and unimportant."<sup>38</sup> Such is the case with Lunatics and Lovers. Audiences know this setting well through the works of Damon Runyon and others. While it does not become part of the action as the settings of farces frequently do, it serves the action of the comedy well. It is convenient--convenient because it is an environment within which these people could come together and these things could happen. The setting is amoral enough to allow its characters to operate on the principle of laissez faire. It is, however, significant that when normalcy is reestablished between Marian and Will they return to home and family in the suburbs. One can also assume that Cupid and Sable will leave this artificial environment once they are married.

Kingsley returned to another familiar theatrical environment for Night Life. The attractions of the bar setting are many: it's a logical gathering place for many different types of people, there are opportunities for floor-show type entertainments which may be used to change the pace of the play, and, finally, characters under the influence of alcohol may say things--true or poetic--which they might not say if sober. For these reasons and many others having to do with mood and atmosphere, lounges and nightclubs have long been a favorite setting of playwrights. In developing the setting for Night Life, Kingsley used all the technical skill which

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<sup>38</sup>Vera Mowry Roberts, The Nature of Theatre (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 200.

he had acquired through his previous experience with realistic plays:

New York. Early morning. The curtain rises on the Key Club, seen hazily through a gauze scrim. The room is filled with assorted types of night people, some in evening dress. They are singing, swinging, dancing. A wild "Dolce Vita" spirit prevails. Jimmy, a Negro with dark glasses and a beatnik beard, is pounding away at the piano and belting out a song of the thirties. There is a buzz of talk which rises and falls in waves, punctuated by bursts of demoniac, drunken laughter.

This was once a beautiful private home, but that was long ago. Now it is a so-called "bottle club," catering to a wide assortment of nocturnals. The walls are skeletal, relieved by patches of red and gold flecked paper, well antiqued. A small piano-bar stands at the foot of the staircase to one side. Dangling over it is a huge gold key. Clustered around the piano-bar are stools. Several steps of a staircase rise from the audience pit to this floor, presumably from the ground floor below. On the left in the rear, a graceful staircase winds up to another floor which continues as a balcony overlooking the main room. . . . At the top of the stairs rear of the balcony, is an elaborately carved Palladian door, the extreme right of the balcony bellies out into the room forming a semi-circular area which was once a musicians' gallery. . . . To the extreme right, set in space is a tall, double window surmounted by a pseudo-classical pediment. The window is heavily draped to shut out all light and noise. The rear walls are transparent and behind them we see the silhouette of the sleeping city. The moody lighting, the distorted shadows, the convulsive movement of the people, the scrim casting a haze over the scene lend it a bizarre, somnanbulistic quality.<sup>39</sup>

Within this environment on a foggy morning in early February or March between 1:00 a.m. and dawn, a veritable "side-show" collection of Broadway types--a foppish interior decorator, a faded dowager, an ancient judge, a "sick" comic, gangsters, movie stars, homosexuals, showgirls, drunks, and a

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<sup>39</sup>Kingsley, Night Life, pp. 7-8.

few ordinary folk--gather, drink, dance, dream, curse, and love one another. Throughout the morning the piano plays, Gia or the piano player sings old show tunes, and the life of the club wanders in a seemingly aimless pattern through and around the play's individual stories.

The Key Club exudes the easy ambience of affluence--Lew has "made it big" in the furniture business, Anna is certainly well-to-do, and the other patrons seem equally wealthy. It is, in fact, this general sense of well-being on which Kazar capitalizes. Times are good, the money is rolling in, and society is doing too well to worry about "politics":

Neil: Do you know who Kazar is?

Anna: Hand me my purse darling. A monster?

Neil: Yes. Possibly the most dangerous man in America.

Anna: I couldn't care less.<sup>40</sup>

They are, moreover, too morally exhausted to try:

Anna: . . . The world is going to blow itself to pieces. No matter how tight you hold it in your sweaty little hand its going to blow itself up. You go back to the U. N. and try again, and I promise you, you'll be so frustrated, one fine morning just about this time . . . you'll float yourself down the Loire River alone. . . . My way is best, Neil. Come with me. We'll eat, drink, swim, lie in the clean sun, fornicate, and to hell with them all.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the Key Club's atmosphere of ennui, there hangs over the gathering an ominous, even satanic aura: Kazar's death threat to Lew includes graphic descriptions of

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<sup>40</sup>Kingsley, Night Life, p. 46.

<sup>41</sup>Kingsley, Night Life, pp. 50-51.

hell and he indicates that he has the power to transform Lew's nightmares into reality; Sonny, the comic, and his cohorts enter screaming like banshees and wearing "demonic rubber masks"; Neil believes he has seen the ghost of a Communist soldier he killed in Korea; Lew, in his moment of death, sees his dead son, Dubowsky, and "tall, beautiful, golden" people; the frenzied dancing and shrill, mocking laughter of the bar's customers occasionally takes on the quality of ritual--a witches' Sabbath.

Many critics readily grasped Kingsley's imagery. As Richard Watts said:

Although Sidney Kingsley's new play is on the surface a melodrama set in a nightclub, the author has a larger purpose in view. In Night Life . . . he is using a plush drinking spot as a microcosm of the contemporary world of violence, ruthless leadership in high places, sexual disorder, disillusioned youth, and tired, ineffectual liberalism.<sup>42</sup>

And Howard Taubman's comments are typical of those who noted Kingsley's use of realistic detail:

Sidney Kingsley has few peers in the craft of summoning up the theatre arts to conjure up a realistic atmosphere. In "Night Life" he has turned the stage of the Brooks Atkinson Theatre into a key club saturated with drink, throbbing with music and noisome with troubled or noxious people.<sup>43</sup>

In an interview prior to the opening of Night Life, Kingsley stated that he was seeking a "new form" which would manifest itself, as he said:

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<sup>42</sup>Richard Watts, Jr., review of Night Life, New York Post, October 24, 1962, p. 77.

<sup>43</sup>Howard Taubman, New York Times, October 24, 1962, p. 44.

In a free and new use of what I call verbal imagery and in a new use of the stream-of-consciousness technique. . . . It seems to me that what the theatre must reach for is to reveal the human spirit. The realistic form, which tends to cloak the human being, has to be stripped away. . . . Dramaturgically, I'm advancing in an area in which I've worked in the past--the fragmented play which reflects our time, a fragmented time.<sup>44</sup>

While his artistic philosophy may have altered radically from his "Go to Reality" of Dead End days, Kingsley's artistic means had not truly changed--he remained a realist. In Night Life the only nonillusionistic technique used with any consistency is that of the character's soliloquies--soliloquies which bear a close resemblance to O'Neil's "inner dialogues" of Strange Interlude. While some of these pieces are woefully overwritten, as will be discussed later in this work, they are often hauntingly effective in showing us interpretations of situations from a character's unique point of view. At these "private moments" the speaking character was spotlighted and all other characters "frozen" in attitudes. The bulk of Kingsley's effects were, however, achieved through realistic techniques. In spite of the isolated soliloquies, the characters danced, drank, went to the bathroom, and behaved as though they were in a real key club. Kingsley's attempts at a non-illusionistic style, while occasionally effective in themselves, remain unintegrated into the play's action essentially because the play's technique continues the basic pretense that what is happening on the stage is real.

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<sup>44</sup>As quoted in Milton Esterow, New York Times, August 19, 1962, Section 2, p. 1.

If Kingsley could not fully integrate the realistic and romantic as he had attempted, his try was a rich and bold one and his attempt to galvanize what he saw as a drifting, morally bankrupt society into positive action was both ambitious and praiseworthy. Kingsley's setting in Night Life was a powerful metaphor for the phony exclusiveness, the smug complacency, and the pragmatic tolerance of evil which he saw in society. It is, moreover, seemingly inevitable that his idealistic protagonists--Lew and Neil--will come into conflict with the club's somnambulant habitués. As a setting Night Life's key club was a potent visual warning of the malignant nature of unopposed evil.

#### Summary

Kingsley's social philosophy that man and environment are inextricably bound together either by choice as in Men in White, Detective Story, Lunatics and Lovers, Night Life, and to an extent, The World We Make or by socio-political forces as in Dead End and Darkness at Noon is a guiding principle which seems apparent in all of his work. In all of the above plays, the characters are severely affected by their environments while they have little or no effect on their milieu.

Almost all of Kingsley's plays are developed within one specific setting--the exceptions being The World We Make and The Patriots. The other possible exception, Men in White, utilized multiple sets but since all the action takes place

within the confines of St. George's Hospital, it is possible to consider this a single environment. As a design concept, this single setting philosophy is functional in several ways: it, through its simple continuing presence, serves to unify Kingsley's usually fragmented plot structure; it encourages the action of the play to move swiftly without pausing for scene shifts and curtains; by concentrating on one setting, the playwright may develop it with more meticulous attention to detail.

Kingsley's style in developing the setting is invariably realistic. His attempt in all of his plays was to capture the life of his settings. This desire for an illusion of reality was not the showman's yearning for the spectacular but an artist's means of utilizing one of the tools of his art in expressing the tensions and conflicts contained within his creation. As he once said:

From first to last, you see, I am trying to give the audience an impression of looking at a slice of life--tragic and comic, brainless and thoughtful, ribald and innocent. . . .<sup>45</sup>

Kingsley's settings are, therefore, with the exception of Lunatics and Lovers, not merely convenient places for the action to transpire but are in themselves extensions of the play's dramatic action. And, as he indicated in a conversation with Harry Gilroy, Kingsley considered the visual statement made

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<sup>45</sup>As quoted in Gilroy, "The Play That Was Born a Speech," New York Times, March 20, 1949, Section 2, p. 1.

by the setting of the utmost importance to his plays. Speaking of Detective Story, he said:

Does the audience feel it has seen the life in a police station . . . that's essential. An audience doesn't go to the theatre to be preached to. They go for a hell of a good time. If you can give people in two hours the emotions of a lifetime, you are doing your job. I'm trying, of course, to evoke a germinal idea. But I want to evoke the idea, rather than to state it.<sup>46</sup>

The setting was, then, of major importance in evoking the "germinal idea." The reality of this life could be utilized as warning or example of the results of certain patterns or ideals of social behavior. Thus, for example, in Darkness at Noon the prison for the individual, which Rubashov's philosophy and social behavior has created, is manifested in concrete terms in the prison and its dehumanized procedures. Additionally, the reality of these settings, by extension, lends the same illusion of truth to the play's action which the setting itself possesses.

The successful creation of this illusion of truth was no accident--the two years spent researching police life for Detective Story<sup>47</sup> is typical of the preparation Kingsley did for all his plays. Given the background information which this immersion in environment provided him, Kingsley was able to create settings for his plays which had an aura of authenticity and surpassed simple theatricality. Thus, while his police

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Time, April 4, 1949, p. 76.

station or slum might seem a familiar environment--we know there are such places--Kingsley, through his use of everyday routine and his careful documentation, brought the impact of the real, specific, and quite unfamiliar life of his particular environments to the stage. So distinctive is the environment created by Kingsley's technique that each play's characters and its language seem inextricably bound to its setting.

## CHAPTER IV

### CHARACTER

As the previously mentioned links between setting and character indicate, Kingsley's characters were invariably an outgrowth of the environment within which he chose to develop his play. As he said: "There is the idea, there is the growing background and then people begin to appear and take shape and grow."<sup>1</sup> In this consideration of character, it is important once again to remember that Kingsley was usually director of his own plays. His desire to create a fine, complete, and "actable" role is indicated by his willingness to rewrite to suit the capabilities of a specific actor:

Having found the people for our company . . . one more creative process was called for; one which requires the fortuitous combination of director-playwright. Finding an actor with qualities enabling him to meet the role half-way is in itself a great victory. It then becomes our function to make the part meet the actor half-way; to adjust the original concept to the capabilities and potential of the individual actor.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this continuing emphasis on character by playwright-director Kingsley can have been only to create a more effective, a more believable character since Kingsley's goals in

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<sup>1</sup>As quoted in John Ferris, New York World-Telegram, November 10, 1962, Section 2, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Sidney Kingsley, "Sidney Kingsley Discusses Art of Casting," New York Journal-American, July 5, 1949, p. 16.

character development were defined by his determination to create an absolutely believable environment for his play's action. If the action and its setting are to be believable, so must be the agents of the action, the characters.

Many critics and theorists of the theatre have discussed character believability in terms of consistency of behavior but Vera Roberts' criteria for believability is particularly suited to a consideration of Kingsley's method of character development:

Audiences usually demand of chief characters--those central to the dramatic action--that they are believable; i.e., that what they are and what they do is a logical extension of human experience. Given the circumstances of the dramatic action, does the behavior of the characters in the play conform to the human impulses and reactions of the audience under comparable circumstances. Selection is the key. We do not expect to see Orgon washing his face, nor Kate Hardcastle making beds since neither of these actions (though germane to the humanness of the characters) have anything to do with what is going on in the play. Goals define actions; actions for goals define character.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, it is the specific nature of character action, its amount and suitability, which lends richness to character.

This chapter will be concerned with an analysis of the chief characters in each of Kingsley's plays--their goals and the actions performed in the pursuit of those goals. In addition to this qualitative analysis, the character's function within the overall structure of the play will be discussed. Here the term protagonist will be understood to mean the primary agent of the play's action and the antagonist as the obstacle to this forward movement.

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<sup>3</sup>Vera Mowry Roberts, The Nature of Theatre, p. 65.

Since it is the progress of the protagonist toward his or her goal which constitutes the play's dramatic action, the protagonist's function in the play also will be considered in terms of the shift in "polar attitude" which transpires within this character. The nature of this change is often most helpful in understanding both the character and his or her contribution in shaping or clarifying the playwright's idea. Francis Hodge defines this concept of polar attitudes as follows:

Most plays show radical shifts in the attitudes of the principal characters from the positions they held at the beginnings to those they hold at the ends. A philosophical way of expressing this shift is to say that a character moves from ignorance to knowledge: he sees the world in which he lives more and more clearly, after the actions he has been forced to take, than he did before.<sup>4</sup>

While contemporary criticism in the area of character is often not helpful to play analysis inasmuch as it frequently confuses character and performance, such criticism will be included in this analysis whenever it is judged beneficial to the analytical process.

Although some critics commented that the protagonist of Men in White is actually the hospital as an instrument of medical science,<sup>5</sup> what Kingsley had actually done in his play was to humanize medical science in the struggle of two of its practitioners--Drs. Ferguson and Hochberg.

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<sup>4</sup> Francis Hodge, Play Directing, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Eugene Burr, review of Men in White, Billboard, October 7, 1933, p. 16; and unsigned review of Men in White, The Stage, II (November, 1933), 13.

Dr. Ferguson is the protagonist of the play: his struggle to reconcile private interest and public responsibility defines the dramatic action of the play. He is bright, young, and idealistic but worn thin with the rigors of working his way through both college and medical school--a herculean effort. He wants to be an accomplished surgeon, possibly a neurosurgeon. This goal will take years of study to achieve and he has foregone all luxuries and personal relationships, save Laura who is apparently a very recent acquisition, in the pursuit of this goal. His only close acquaintances are doctors with whom he discusses medicine. He is quite apart from the other interns. As his actions with the society doctor indicate, he is uncompromising and sure of his abilities--abilities which are, according to Dr. Hochberg, exceptional. Ferguson is humanized through his attraction to Laura and and later to Barbara, his gentle and considerate treatment of patients, and his pride in his own ability.

Laura Hudson is socially and emotionally Ferguson's direct opposite. She is rich, spoiled, and inconsiderate. She has watched her father devote himself to business, drive himself to the point of having a heart attack, and is, therefore, determined to prove that there is more to life than hard work. She wants Ferguson for her husband because he is handsome, considerate, and "respectable," i.e., socially acceptable. Her attraction is not explained beyond these surface details. Laura's redeeming virtues are that she is, in spite of her selfishness, unimpressed with titles and self-important people, unabashedly sensual and

direct, bold and honest. Laura is concerned with life and with living, with springtime which lies outside the hospital and she enters its sterile walls like a breath of fresh air.

Dr. Hochberg is, through his stern example, the catalyst which ignites the conflict between Ferguson and Laura. He is a brilliant surgeon, soft spoken, understanding but demanding. Dr. Hochberg has absolutely no ego--he exists only to serve medicine. In his worship of medicine, Dr. Hochberg has foregone marriage: St. George's is his home and family. He is, moreover, absolutely at one with his environment--an extension of the hospital and its procedures.

At the beginning of the dramatic action, Ferguson believes that he can attain his goal with no further sacrifice--that he can pursue his studies in Vienna and later with Dr. Hochberg and that Laura will support his efforts. Laura, however, has been forsaken for work by one man, her father, and has no intention of sharing her husband. She, therefore, tempts him with the security and material rewards which her father can provide. Ferguson compromises: he will study in Vienna but give up the demanding Dr. Hochberg. Barbara's death reawakens Ferguson's dormant sense of responsibility. His first reaction to Barbara's plight is honest and decent--he proposes to marry her. Hochberg labels this gesture, quite correctly, as "Mid-Victorian idealism." There are other ways, he suggests, to help Barbara. Barbara's death saves the well-intentioned Ferguson from making a foolish gesture. Under the double shock of giving up Laura for Barbara and then

losing Barbara, Ferguson realizes that for him there is only one choice--to rededicate himself to the service of medicine. The dream that he could have both the rewards of his profession and the joys of private life was simply an illusion. There is no room in his life for anyone--only for service. Even Laura's money cannot alter that fact.

The seduction scene is, of course, critical to the play's action. Brooks Atkinson felt this scene forced Ferguson out of character and was, therefore, unbelievable.<sup>6</sup> Eugene Burr, on the other hand, believed that Ferguson's turning to another woman was an instinctive reaction to Laura's stepping between him and his work and a moment in which the play reached "its finest psychological heights."<sup>7</sup> Ferguson's response at this moment is certainly an emotional and somewhat illogical one. But viewed within the context of the play, Ferguson's moment with Barbara is completely understandable. He was tired, disoriented, and rejected by Laura. Barbara was there, understood what he was going through, was sympathetic, and needed him. Their affair, under the circumstances, seems thoroughly plausible.

Structurally, Laura must be considered the antagonist in this play. Given her wealth, she could have supported Ferguson's career. She, however, believed she could turn Ferguson away from his duty and transform him into a docile and attentive husband.

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<sup>6</sup>Brooks Atkinson, New York Times, October 1, 1933, Section 9, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>Burr, Billboard October 7, 1933, p. 16.

She uses her charms and her money to attempt to accomplish this goal. She cannot, however, be wholly condemned for her actions. There is nothing inherently wrong in desiring a happily married life. Society as a whole is dedicated to the proposition that such a marriage is a desirable goal. It is only when Ferguson's value to all of society is weighed against his value to Laura that her goals seem petty and shallow. That her desires are emblematic of the goals of society only serves to strengthen the play's central conflict because these are the very rewards Ferguson must surrender in order to achieve his own goals.

Ferguson's character is enriched by the fact that he is also in conflict with himself. If he cannot gain Laura's understanding of the value of his career, it is partially because he does not want to. There is a part of him that would welcome giving up the struggle--he is tired of sacrifice and would like to have some pleasure from life. He has human weaknesses.

Dr. Hochberg has cleansed himself of all such weakness. One may get the impression from his halting attempts to join a colleague for a beer that he enjoys companionship but Hochberg has made his choice long ago:

Hochberg: . . . there's so much to be done. And so little time in which to do it . . . that one life is never long enough . . . (He sighs.) It's not easy for any of us. But in the end our reward is something richer than just living. Maybe it's a kind of success that world out there can't measure . . . maybe it's a kind of glory, George. . . . Yes, question as much as we will--when the test comes we know--don't we George?<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Kingsley, Men in White, p. 182.

Winifred Dusenbury categorizes Ferguson as a mythic "savior-hero."<sup>9</sup> Dusenbury notes that Ferguson has no obsessive ambition to be recognized or glorified for his duty yet his society does deify him in recognition of his sacrifice for them. This would be the "glory" of which Dr. Hochberg speaks. This deification results in Ferguson's separation from society:

Obviously the hero is not intended to lead a rich, full life, but to devote himself to what he conceives to be his duty. . . . Thus, although he suffers from the recognition of the loneliness to come, he receives compensation for his heroic abnegation of happiness in service to mankind.<sup>10</sup>

In the nobility of his cause, his sacrifice of self for duty, and his self-imposed exile, Ferguson does achieve stature as a tragic hero. This heroic image is further strengthened by Ferguson's relationship with Barbara. The tragic hero is allowed no respite from duty--no human weakness. His affair with Barbara is Ferguson's unthinking attempt to escape from the rigors of his profession. His poor judgement in this situation brings disaster to Barbara and causes Ferguson to realize that, for him, there can be no escape from responsibility. Having achieved this knowledge, Ferguson stands purged of human desires.

Kingsley makes no attempt to explain either Ferguson's or Dr. Hochberg's psychological motivation for being a doctor, thereby strengthening them as archetypal figures. If we knew, for example, that Ferguson chose to be a doctor because as a child he had seen his father die, we might care more for Ferguson

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<sup>9</sup>Winifred Dusenbury, The Theme of Loneliness in American Drama (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1960), pp. 179-196.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

the man, but his struggle, his heroic quest, would have been explained away, the mystery of his quest removed, and his sacrifice minimized. As a savior-hero of medicine, Ferguson is far more powerful as Kingsley has created him. It is true that these characters are types defined more by their functions than by psychological motivation but their actions have such a semblance of truth and Kingsley, as Edith Isaacs commented, developed "everyone so carefully that each is sharply individual enough to enlist our sympathies."<sup>11</sup>

While Ferguson is connected to his environment by choice and it is this choice which ennobles him, Gimpty, the protagonist of Dead End, is trapped by his environment and ennobled by his struggle to escape it.

Gimpty is intelligent, sensitive, determined, and strong in character and spirit if not in body. As his nickname implies, Gimpty is crippled--his rickets-twisted legs are a visible inheritance of life in the slums. His goal in life is to design houses--not office buildings, but houses for people to live in. To attain his goal, Gimpty has somehow worked his way through six years of college and even now--through his sketching--continues to train himself to be an architect. But due to economic forces beyond his control, Gimpty finds he is unable to achieve his goal. A secondary goal which would follow his getting work as an architect would be his escape from the slums. Gimpty's relationship

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<sup>11</sup>Edith J. R. Isaacs, review of Men in White, Theatre Arts Monthly, XVII (December, 1933), 915.

with Kay is symbolic of this desire to escape, to attain the finer things of life. It is his desire to attain money--money for his escape from the slums with Kay--which impels Gimpty to turn in "Baby-Face" Martin. As this action is not directly connected to his work, his career, the reward is only temporary. Had he been able to get a job, things might have ended quite differently for Gimpty. At the end of the play it is apparent that Gimpty has achieved none of his goals. He has tried and failed.

Standing in opposition to Gimpty is "Baby-Face" Martin. Martin is set forward as a typical product of the slums, more successful than most of his contemporaries but a murderer and gangster nonetheless. His apparent needs are purely material: cars, money, women. He has taken the most direct route to attaining his goals, crime. As we see him in the play's present action, Martin is a ruthless murderer. But Kingsley makes it clear through parallels with the young gang leader, Tommy, that Martin was once no worse than the boy. For those slum kids with strength, intelligence, and leadership ability, crime is an attractive way of life and seemingly the only way out of the slums. Yet it is apparent that Martin has found his goals wanting: he has returned to the slum in search of the emotional rewards of love, rewards which his antisocial behavior has denied him. This secondary goal escapes him when both his mother and ex-girlfriend reject him.

While there are several other characters who figure importantly in the play's action, it is Kay's influence that causes

the play's major climax. Kay is intelligent, graceful, and charming. She is compassionate and responds to Gimpty with warmth and affection. Having been raised in poverty, Kay has no intention of returning to life in the slums. She wants material comfort--new clothes, yacht trips, a lovely home--and, through her affair with a rich man, has attained her desires. For a moment with Gimpty she wavers; she loves him as much as she will allow herself to love anyone but reason stays her from going with him:

Kay: It's not all selfishness, Pete [Gimpty]. I'm thinking of you too. I could do this. I could go and live with you and be happy--(And she means it.)--and then when poverty comes . . . and we begin to torture each other, what would happen? I'd leave you and go back to Jack. . . . That sounds pretty bitchy, I suppose.

Gimpty: No . . . no. it's quite right. I didn't see things as clearly as you did. It's just that I've been such a dope.

Kay: No! It's just that we can't have everything . . . ever.<sup>12</sup>

Like Martin, Kay is a realist and she is willing to capitalize on whatever she has in order to get a comfortable life. Kay's "crime," prostitution, is simply less violent and antisocial than Martin's. However, she has, like Martin, bought material wealth at the cost of love.

Initially, Gimpty proceeds on the assumption that virtue is its own reward. Although disappointed by the "raw deal" life has given him, he feels apart from and morally superior to the other slum dwellers. He believes that his idealism and good

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<sup>12</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 730.

intentions are enough, that Kay will choose him and somehow--he never copes with the realities of his situation with Kay--love will solve all his problems. Gimpty is, after all, an artist. Kingsley made him an architect and not an engineer. Practical matters are not his forte: he is a dreamer. Kay's decision to stay with her rich friend shatters Gimpty's dream. He compromises his slum ethics, misguided as they may be, and turns in his old friend, Martin. Knowing in his heart that the reward will not give him enough money, Gimpty, nonetheless, feels he must try. He ends saying, "I never honestly expected anything. I didn't. It was really just a whimsey I played on myself."<sup>13</sup> Gimpty must give up his dreams and realize that economics determine his situation, not ideals.

Martin too has his expectations. He returns to the slum, believing his wealth and reputation will bring him a measure of the affection he had as a child. He is rejected by his mother, mocked by his ex-girlfriend, and ultimately betrayed by one of his old followers. He discovers that he truly has exiled himself from society and surrendered even his right to expect love.

As has been discussed, Dead End's structure involves a series of repeated conflicts on similar themes rather than the simple conflict between two individuals. "Baby-Face" Martin does represent the worst aspects of slum life and his actions provoke Gimpty into turning him in. But the real antagonist in this

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<sup>13</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 731.

play--the agent which blocks each character, good or bad, from the attainment of his or her goal--is the environment. The slum is literally the "villain" of this play. It has deprived and crippled Gimpty, forced Martin to a life of crime, and driven Kay to prostitution.

The same pattern of repeated parallel actions which characterizes Dead End's plot may be found in its character development. Martin stands as an example of what will happen to Tommy if he is sent to reform school--the parallels in their development are commented on by both Gimpty and Martin. Drina could compromise her ideals and leave her job for a rich man as Kay has done. She, however, will not surrender and Gimpty's departure with her at the end of the play is at least an indication that through her steadfastness she may attain his love.

While they are not central to Dead End's action, the street kids, later called the "Dead End Kids," do deserve special mention. These characters were created by Kingsley in bold, sure strokes. Their names--T.B., Dippy, Angel, and Spit--speak volumes. Each is named for his outstanding characteristic: T.B.'s badge of individuality is his disease and he proudly coughs blood to the awe of his companions; Dippy is ingenuous but not quite bright; Angel is innocent enough to try to roll cigarettes from "hawse-balls," he is a lovely dark-eyed Italian child; Spit is Tommy's rival for leadership of the gang, an arrogant bully who delights in spitting in the other kids' eyes, ears, or belly buttons. Stark Young's comment is typical of those who were

impressed with the believability of these characters. He found their playing "astonishing beyond words. The sounds and movements identical with the real thing, the varieties exhibited, and the projection are all beyond praise."<sup>14</sup> It was upon these characters who were unobligated to the play's action that Kingsley was able to lavish his skills as a realist. Their games, arguments, and battles create an illusion of reality difficult for the play's chief characters to match. Yet within the given circumstances of the play, each of the character's actions seem logical and completely believable. While many solid citizens did come from those slums, they also bred their share of criminals. And if "Baby-Face" Martin's execution seems melodramatic, one should remember that just a few months more than a year before Dead End opened Public Enemy No. 1, John Dillinger, was gunned down by a group of Federal Agents in front of a movie theatre in Chicago. Kingsley was also on the side of truth and honesty when he characterized Martin as a brutal animal instead of in the more popular "Robin Hood" image of the criminal. And the bitterness and sense of betrayal which Gimpty expresses were felt by millions of unemployed. Drina's comments on the strike at her shop rang a truthful note for a contemporary audience since employment began to increase in the mid-30's and strikes became much more common than they had been.

Only Gimpty's romance with Kay seems to ring a bit false.

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<sup>14</sup>Stark Young, review of Dead End, The New Republic, XXCV, No. 21 (1935), 49.

Why, one has to wonder, would a girl like Kay wander out the back door of her luxurious apartment into a filthy slum and strike up a friendship with a strange man? The coincidence is great, a bit too much for credibility, but it is so surrounded by what appears to be authentic that the contrivance is soon forgotten. Additionally, once the relationship is established, it is developed with truthfulness and insight.

Once again there is little psychological motivation present in the character development. The cause of physical deformity and antisocial behavior is the same--economic deprivation. The lack of work gives rise to a sense of despair and futility.

If his characters could find employment at a living wage and under decent working conditions, their problems, Kingsley proposes, would disappear. This concept of salvation in work continued to form the core of action in Kingsley's next successful play, The World We Make.

The heroine of this drama is, of course, Virginia McKay who later assumes the name Harriet Hope. Harriet, as she will be called throughout this analysis, is frail, insecure, and most uncertain of herself. Traumatized by the death of her brother, Harriet has withdrawn into her own world--her emotional and intellectual development frozen at the time of her brother's death. Overriding her fears and anxieties is, however, her intense desire to leave the hospital and join the "real" world. She wants to regain her sanity, to live and feel again, to be a whole person. Doctors and years of treatment have not cured her, have

given her no means by which to cope with her problem. In her desperation she escapes--not knowing where to go or how to achieve her goal but feeling intuitively that if she can join the real world, it will be her salvation. Harriet's attempt to cope with life at its harshest--in the steam laundry--is a near disaster but she sees it through with a determination that bodes well for her future. It is, however, in the simpler and more human tasks of housework that Harriet finds her salvation. She stays with John, learning to give and take criticism, to love and to accept love, and to cope with fear in others as well as in herself. Tasks which she performed with temerity--cooking, cleaning, shopping--she eventually performs with grace and assurance, thus demonstrating in action her emotional maturity.

It is through her relationship with John that Harriet surmounts her own problems. John is a large, generous, easygoing man made physically tough by his youth in the coal mines and given an inheritance of sensitivity by his mother. He reads Dickens because, as he says, "He gets inside people. He laughs with them, and cries for them."<sup>15</sup> John undoubtedly desires this ability to "get inside people" for while he may not always understand why people do the things they do, instinctively he knows that people have their own reasons for their behavior and be they German truckdriver or Harriet, he respects their individuality. John's goal is agonizingly simple--he wants a home and family.

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<sup>15</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, p. 1-2-29.

Until meeting Harriet, John had no real hope of realizing his desire. He is attracted to sensitive, vulnerable people and he undoubtedly does not meet many young ladies of that description at the steam laundry. His instinct to shelter and protect is reflected in his relationship with Harriet, his concern for his brother, and his understanding of Rocco, his volatile Italian neighbor. Having found Harriet, John gives her security, love, and understanding. The only time he displays any impatience toward her is when Harriet attacks Jim for his incessant listening to the war news.

Also important to the play's dramatic action is John's brother, Jim. While John is pragmatic and understanding, Jim is volatile, quick to anger, and impetuous. Jim sees the injustices which John accepts as "the way things are" and rebels against them. Whereas John was strengthened by the coal mines, Jim's health has been destroyed. Jim refuses to accept his physical limitations and drives his frail body beyond its limits in the steaming heat of the laundry. Although two years younger than John, Jim is married and the father of two boys. He meets his responsibilities fearlessly, certain in his mind that he can overcome any obstacle. His goal is a version of the American Dream--that his hard work and sacrifice will build a better and freer life for his children. Jim is a poet and dreamer who is willing to work or fight for his own ideal of personal liberty.

John and Jim have a rather obvious allegorical function in the play. John is essentially representative of the American

character as Kingsley perceived it in 1939--passive, isolationary, and far too ignorant of politics. Jim is politically aware and ready to defend liberty wherever he sees it being violated. John, Kingsley implies, could use some of Jim's vision, boldness, and imagination because it will take Jim's brand of idealism to save democracy from the growing threat of war and dictatorship, a threat which the war in Europe poses.

Additionally, Jim's love for life, his idealism, serves as an example to Harriet and John:

John: . . . And tonight, lying there . . . so white . . . fighting for every single breath . . . to turn to me and say. "I can't quit now. I got too much to do." How do you like that? That little runt couldn't hold his own life in . . . wantin' to go out and save the world. It's almost funny isn't it?

Harriet: But that was Jim . . . that's what made him . . .

John: He never stopped taking a licking. Not for a minute. Never had a damn thing out of it. Nothing! Wasted!

Harriet: That's not true, John. He had a great deal. His life was full. He felt so deeply. He had love, not only for Sally and the baby and you, but for people, for everyone that suffered.<sup>16</sup>

Jim was unafraid where Harriet was frightened, and imaginative where John was timid. While his early death was tragic, his was the way to live life.

At the beginning of the play, Harriet believes that there must be a richness to life which she had not discovered in her repressive home life. Her fear, however, is that she will discover in life outside the hospital the same confusion

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<sup>16</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, p. 3-2-24.

and coldness she knew in her parents' home and that this discovery will drive her further into insanity. Through her encounters with the Zubriskis, Rocco, Jim and his family, and her love affair with John, Harriet discovers that the world is full of compassionate, loving, caring individuals and that these people more than compensate for the chaos and confusion of modern life.

Kingsley discovered how effective a collection of "local color" characters could be in Dead End and he included several in The World We Make: Rocco with his aging pet dog, his endless stories of working on a street repair gang, and his poignant aura of loneliness; the Zubriskis with their family quarrels and affection, their intense desire for the respectability which work will bring, and their yearning to belong to their new land--all bring a delightful richness to the play's texture.

As in Dead End there is no antagonist in this play. Harriet's problem and its solution lie solely within her own being. The World We Make is basically a character study focusing on Harriet's growth.

In developing Harriet's character, Kingsley added certain social and political overtones to her motivations which in the novel were purely psychological. Thus, Dr. Schiller warns her:

Adaptation to your parents is child's play compared to the conflicts and the harshness of the world today. Even a normal world would be terribly difficult for a young girl--alone. And today--the world is in transition. New

conflicts and problems are piling up. You'd run up against them every day . . . reflected in everybody you'd meet. No, you're not strong enough yet.<sup>17</sup>

It is the tension in this world--reflected in the radio broadcasts--which drives Harriet to hysteria. Conflicts in society become directly responsible for her near breakdown. Additionally, Harriet believes her parents neglected her and her brother because of their wealth: they were too busy making and spending money to pay any attention to their children. The introduction of these social and economic themes suggests Harriet's mental imbalance is a function of her environment and that her neurosis is a result of material as much as psychological causes.

Joseph Wood Krutch voiced a minority opinion when he declared Harriet's neighbors "almost too uniformly kindly brave and generous to achieve the effect of realism at which the play obviously aims."<sup>18</sup> More typical is Richard Watts, Jr.'s, comment:

His laundries, tenements and hospitals are three-dimensional and convincing, but so are his neurotic young women, his comic Italians, his harassed Polish families, his upright liberal workingmen and his earnest psychiatrists. Their parties, their amours, their talks about life and love and the state of the world are as believably and completely presented as the radios they listen to, the fires they light, the beds they make and the water they turn on.<sup>19</sup>

Part of Kingsley's success in creating such believable characters from tenement types may have been his experience in

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<sup>17</sup> Kingsley, The World We Make, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Wood Krutch, The Nation, CIL (December, 1939), 268.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Watts, Jr., review of The World We Make, New York Herald Tribune, November 21, 1939, p. 18.

Dead End but he also owed a debt to the many films and plays which have, over the years, made these characters familiar to a great number of people. Such was not the case with his next play, The Patriots. The characters of Hamilton and Jefferson, while well known from history books, have not been popular figures on the American stage. Personages like Washington, Hamilton, and Jefferson pose additional problems for playwrights because history books and portraits have given us formidable impressions of these giants of American history. Kingsley's task in humanizing these individuals and making them believable was considerable.

Jefferson is the protagonist of the play. He is humble, he never seeks high office; generous, he attempts to free his own slaves; and forgiving, he seeks a resolution to political quarrels. His greatest desire is to see America realize the ideals of personal freedom and liberty which he espoused in The Declaration of Independence. To secure this goal, Jefferson accepts public duties which he does not want: he becomes Secretary of State, founds the Republican party after declaring his loathing for party politics, and finally becomes President of the United States in order to see his ideal of government realized. The goal is secured but at great personal cost: his wife dead from the task of having to manage his estate and care for his children while his duties kept him from home, his estate gone to ruin from the mismanagement of overseers, and his dream of spending his old age with his grandchildren at Monticello lost forever.

Set against Jefferson is Alexander Hamilton, the "Little Lion." In dramatic contrast to Jefferson, Hamilton is arrogant, threatening to resign office every time his will is opposed; selfish, seeking to establish an aristocracy of wealth at the expense of the average citizen; and ambitious, envisioning the conversion of the United States into a monarchy. Moreover, whereas Kingsley's Jefferson is a model of moral rectitude, Hamilton is forced to confess to an adulterous affair. While he does not hold Jefferson's affection for the common man, which he refers to as that "great beast," Hamilton also wants to see a strong, independent United States. Hamilton's ideal, however, tends rather toward a monarchy or fascist state. To attain his goal Hamilton attempts to shift control of government to a wealthy ruling class, defames Jefferson's name, and undermines liberal legislation. Whereas Jefferson loses his fortune in the battle, Hamilton prospers. Hamilton sees his goal realized inasmuch as his capitulation to Jefferson strengthens the Republic but he loses because the Republic so created is far from the one he had envisioned.

George Washington is seen by Kingsley as a tired, aging philosopher-soldier who staunchly resists attempts to turn the United States into a monarchy and him into its king. It's a human portrait Kingsley draws. Washington doesn't know whether to be angered or amused by his bumbling aide's attempts to get him to behave like a king. He removes his hot, heavy wig at the first opportunity and gratefully accepts Jefferson's proposal

that they leave weighty affairs of state and go fishing. Since he is only human, Washington is eventually worn down by the rigors of office, by the burden of maintaining an even hand and avoiding all precipitous action. He dies without seeing his dream of a stable, unified government achieved.

At the beginning of the play, Jefferson, returning from five years at the court of France, believes that the benefits of his concept of democracy are widely shared by those in government and that its blessings are so obvious as to need no defense. He quickly discovers this is not the case at all. Although he wants desperately to return to his home, he stays on with Washington, certain that Hamilton and his followers have the best interests of the people at heart. When he sees the results of Hamilton's Treasury Bill, he realizes that even this assumption was not correct and that only by starting another political party and opposing the Federalists can he insure his concept of democracy. Jefferson founds the Republican party and opposes Hamilton, realizing that in doing so he has surrendered his last hope of returning to Monticello. At the end of the play Jefferson's faith in his concept of democracy remains unshaken and unchanged. He realizes, however, that it requires constant vigilance and sacrifice to maintain the freedom which it promises.

Hamilton initially believes that the democratic concept will not work, that the people are a mob, and that the Constitution cannot survive five years. He sees the Republic weather

economic problems, foreign threats, and domestic difficulties and emerge stronger with each crisis. In the end Hamilton must confess that he has "never properly estimated the character of the American people and still [doesn't] understand them," saying, "I find myself lost here. Day to day, I am becoming more foreign to this land."<sup>20</sup> Hamilton must face the fact that he has misjudged the people and their will. He concedes the victory to Jefferson.

Hamilton, then, stands as antagonist to Jefferson, opposing his reforms at every turn. Hamilton is, however, scrupulously honest and opposes Jefferson because of a sincere political disagreement. Hamilton, furthermore, shows his basic loyalty to his country by refusing to drive it to civil war or to turn it over to Napoleon's agent, Aaron Burr.

Kingsley took many liberties in developing Hamilton's character and in so doing stirred up a huge debate. Hamilton's defenders maintained that Kingsley had smeared the name of a great patriot. It was pointed out that Hamilton's "Bill of Assumption"--the Treasury Bill of which Kingsley writes--painful as it was, saved the American government from ruin and that historians generally concede the necessity of Hamilton's procedure. Also, even Jefferson's most partial biographers have to admit that Jefferson was old and wise enough to foresee the results of this bill. It was also pointed out that Jefferson

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<sup>20</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, pp. 722-723.

opposed Hamilton on the loose construction theory of the Constitution yet when it suited his purpose, as with the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson became a loose constructionist. There were those who maintained that Jefferson's insistence on States' rights ultimately resulted in the Civil War and if Hamilton had been heeded, the country would have been spared that agony.<sup>21</sup> Kingsley responded, citing Hamilton's letters proving that he had no faith in the Constitution and bringing forth details about Hamilton's affair with Mrs. Reynolds.<sup>22</sup>

It must be conceded that Kingsley did slant his characterizations--Jefferson had his doubts about the Constitution too--making Jefferson an extremely respectable Republican and Hamilton a rather tainted Tory. This is, of course, the artist's option. Kingsley used facts in both cases: he merely chose them very carefully to prove his political point--an accepted procedure in the creation of a history play. The conflict is one of principles of government and Jefferson and Hamilton were the most dynamic spokesmen for each side. It suits both the truth and dramatic necessity to make Hamilton the antagonist.

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<sup>21</sup>For the most concise defense of Hamilton see Hattie May Pavlo's letter to the Drama Editor, "The Drama Mailbag," New York Times, April 4, 1943, Section 2, p. 2. Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People, p. 323 ff., supports Ms. Pavlo's argument.

<sup>22</sup>Sidney Kingsley, "World Conflict Set Off in '76, Says Kingsley," Chicago Sun Times, February 13, 1944, located in Kingsley Clipping file, Lincoln Center Research Library for the Performing Arts.

Jefferson's character is further enriched by his personal, inner conflict. His wife's death while he was away from home in the service of his country left Jefferson with a deep feeling of guilt. It was this sense of guilt that Jefferson had to overcome before he could devote his full energies to his duty. Kingsley saw in Jefferson's conflict "the story of every citizen-soldier, everywhere, who yearns in his heart for home and freedom. . . ." <sup>23</sup> In shaping Jefferson's character, Kingsley followed the same pattern he had used in Men in White. Jefferson is presented as a man with no personal ambition, who actually does not want greatness but who is deified by his surrender of private desire for public need. He emerges alone at the end of the play, the "savior-hero."

Kingsley made excellent use of historical fact in lending his characters authenticity. He further strengthened their believability by endowing them with individualized behavior patterns. Thus, Jefferson is seen puttering with several of his many inventions; discussing social and economic matters with his slave, Jupiter, and the smithy, Jacob; playing with his grandchildren. Hamilton's wit, his charming banter, his quick resort to dueling, his ready admission of personal vanity, his final humble concession to Jefferson create an intriguing and believable portrait of a dynamic and contradictory character.

By translating political difference into personal conflict, Kingsley avoided the posture and cant of "history."

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<sup>23</sup> Kingsley, Chicago Sun Times, February 13, 1944.

His characterizations, therefore, possess the force of history and the energy of the men who shaped it.

While The Patriots was peopled with heroes, Kingsley's next play, Detective Story, had none--yet it is from its gallery of striking characters that Detective Story acquires its particular strength.

Jim McLeod, psychologically damaged by his sadistic father, has but one goal in life--to strike down evil wherever he may find it. While his goal is honorable, McLeod's methods are not. Firm in the belief that he is on the side of truth and justice, he is willing to lie, cheat, and murder to accomplish "justice." He assaults Schneider, attempts to trick Arthur and his girl into making false and incriminating statements, and promises to murder Schneider if he does not get out of town. These methods are, after all, those of the enemy, the criminals. Why should he not be allowed to use them also, he reasons.

Only with his wife does McLeod show his other side, the tender side. Most of the time McLeod is, as Joe, the reporter, says:

The mortal God--McLeod! Captain Ahab pursuing the great grey Leviathan! A fox with rabies bit him in the ass when he was two years old, and neither of them recovered. Don't throw water on him. He goes rabid.<sup>24</sup>

McLeod's colleagues and superiors on the police force find his methods excessive and dangerous. The Lieutenant calls McLeod

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<sup>24</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 474.

into his office several times and warns him not to take things so "poisonal":

Lieutenant: Your moral indignation is beginning to give me a quick pain in the butt. You got a Messianic complex. You want to be the judge and the jury too. Well, you can't do it. It says so in the book. I don't like lawyers coming in here with photos. It marks my squad lousy. I don't like it--and I won't have it. You understand?<sup>25</sup>

In his quest to rid society of evil, McLeod ultimately becomes the thing he is supposedly fighting.

Initially McLeod is absolutely certain that he can detect evil--can "smell it." In his opinion lawyers, judges, and the entire jurisprudence system are his obstacles. If they were not in his way, if he had absolute authority, crime would soon be eliminated from his district. For the first half of the play's action, events tend to confirm his infallibility: Schneider is obviously guilty of committing illegal abortions but because of the death of one witness and the apparent suborning of another, he will go free; Arthur confesses his guilt; McLeod's intuition regarding the burglars, Charley and Arthur, is correct--they are hardened criminals and they are guilty. It is when he learns of Mary's abortion that McLeod's assurance crumbles. He lives with Mary and loves her yet she has been guilty of adultery and the murder of her unborn child. If he had believed her perfect, and she is so imperfect, of what use is his judgment regarding criminals. Even worse, he cannot forgive Mary for not having the perfection with which he endowed

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<sup>25</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 492.

her and yet he cannot stop loving her. He realizes that he has no automatic perception of evil. Unable to resolve his inner conflicts, McLeod causes himself to be killed.

While McLeod is the protagonist of the play, Detective Story has only a token protagonist-antagonist conflict. Rather than place McLeod in opposition to a single character, Kingsley develops three diverse situations: Schneider, Charley and Lewis, and Arthur. Schneider is clever and since the victims of his crime seek him out and solicit his services, very difficult to prosecute. His racket may be bloody but he is a rather sophisticated criminal. Charley and Lewis are socio-pathic mental incompetents. Both have spent their adult lives in crime and penal institutions. Being sent back to prison is like going home to them. They do not know the difference between right and wrong, truth and untruth, nor do they care to learn. They are violent "bottom of the line" hoods. Then there is Arthur Kindred, first time offender and war hero whose crime was as much an act of defiance against a society which he felt had cheated him of his youth as it was for his personal gain. Kingsley's choice of the surname "Kindred" is an indication of how he wishes us to view Arthur--as our son or brother, fallible but deserving of our compassion and understanding. These three cases are representative of what McLeod must deal with on a daily basis and allow us to see how his "justice" functions. McLeod employs the same relentless, brutal tactics in each case and in so doing displays his psychosis.

Harold Clurman, John Mason Brown, and Howard Barnes

noted that Kingsley had much more success in creating believability in the many smaller character roles than he did with McLeod.<sup>26</sup> "The people who whirl through Kingsley's detective squad room," said Clurman, "have an ugly raciness that, seen with the amoral eye of the curious bystander, lends them a certain comic crackle."<sup>27</sup> It is these characters that give the play its aura of truth. The shoplifter is:

. . . a shapeless moronic little creature with a Bronx accent. Her voice is the blat of a moose-calf, and, in spite of her avowed guilt, she has all the innocence of ignorance.<sup>28</sup>

The cause of her crime is an age old complaint--loneliness.

As she reassures Arthur's girlfriend that his being fingerprinted will not hurt, she says:

It don't hurt. You roll it. (Demonstrates.) Like that. It just gets your hands a little dirty. It washes right off. It's nothing. (Susan crumples into a chair.) What's a matter? Did I say something? (Susan shakes her head.) Are you married? (Susan shakes her head.) Me neither. Everybody tells you why don't you get married. You should get married. My mother, my father, my sisters, my brother-- "Get married!" As if I didn't want to get married. Where do you find a man. Get me a man, I'll marry him. Anything! As long as its got pants. Big, little, fat, thin . . . I'll marry him. You think I'd be here? For a lousy crocodile bag? I'd be home, cooking him such a meal. Get married! It's easy to talk!<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Harold Clurman, The New Republic CXX (April, 1949), 25; John Mason Brown, review of Detective Story, The Saturday Review, XXXII (April, 1949), 51; Howard Barnes, review of Detective Story, New York Herald Tribune, March 24, 1949, p. 20.

<sup>27</sup>Clurman, The New Republic, CXX (April, 1949), 25.

<sup>28</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 466.

<sup>29</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 542.

Charley weeps as he protests his innocence, wraps himself in righteous indignation, and then laughs maniacally as McLeod reads his "rap sheet":

. . . Burglary, eight arrests. Five assaults. Seven muggings. Three rapes. Two arrests for murder. Six extortions. Three jail sentences. One prison break! Nice little sheet, Charley? (to Barnes) He's a four time loser. You have a club. If he makes one false move--you know what to do with it--hit him over the head.<sup>30</sup>

But Charley even enjoys being beaten so there's no real punishment for him there either. Willy is the cleaning man who wanders in and out sweeping, mopping, emptying wastepaper baskets, and muttering to himself all the while: "Look at this room, will you? Wouldn't think I cleaned up an hour ago! Detectives! The brains of the department? ! Ha ! Couldn't find a Chinaman on Mott Street." Mrs. Farragut is convinced she has "electronic vision" and that the end of the world is near. Lieutenant Monaghan is businesslike, alert, imbedded in police routine, sane because he separates his private life from police life and remains "impoisonal." Patrolman Gus Keogh enters, picks up his paperwork and exits singing an aria from "I Pagliacci" the whole time. Joe, the reporter, has a very "New York" blend of cynicism and optimism. Detective Brody, an alcoholic since the loss of his sailor son, is a weeper and a dreamer. Detective Dakis is on the make while on the job. There are thirty-four roles listed in the playscript and each one of them is given a character trait which instantly stamps

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<sup>30</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 532.

their individuality. William Hawkins summed up these characters' effectiveness very well:

The play is studded with authentic performances as the large cast moves in and out of the station. Ralph Bellamy is utterly uncompromising as McLeod, and makes him a tower of misguided conviction. Meg Mundy acts with taut and tragic impact, and illustrates a life story in her brief impassioned scenes.

Of the others on the Force, Horace McMahon stands out as the stern but human lieutenant, and James Westerfield is moving as a slightly boozy compassionate detective.

Among the figures being charged, Joseph Wiseman [Charley] adds a truly extraordinary picture of a fourth time offender, who grows slowly from what seems a merely stupid burglar into a vicious, degenerate, scorpion of evil.<sup>31</sup>

One could call these characters stereotypes. True, all the detectives behave conventionally, the hoodlums are suitably slimy, and the young lovers are united. But they are so accurately drawn and the detail which shapes their character so carefully selected that they hardly seem to be "types." This is no mere mob of bit players designed to hasten along the action of the play but an orchestration of characterization designed to create the action of the play.

In Detective Story Kingsley had demonstrated how a man dedicated to a false ideal could devise his own ruin. He had hoped to make a strong statement regarding the dangers of totalitarianism in this play and conceded that Detective Story's melodrama had overwhelmed his purpose.<sup>32</sup> He sought to correct

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<sup>31</sup>William Hawkins, New York World-Telegram, March 24, 1949, p. 28.

<sup>32</sup>John Keating, Cue, January 6, 1951, p. 12.

this weakness in Darkness at Noon. In this play he proposed that a dedicated man in the service of a false ideal could contribute to the corruption of a nation and the enslavement of its people.

Rubashov is a totally dedicated member of the Communist party. He has proved his loyalty to the cause by working tirelessly as a soldier and a spy during wartime and a bureaucrat in peacetime. He has, moreover, suffered torture and imprisonment in foreign lands many times and never betrayed his trust. He has never married nor had any friends or acquaintances outside the Party. He is a hero of the Revolution. Now at age fifty he finds that he, a few party "prostitutes," and the Leader are the only ones of the "old guard" left in the wake of a series of purges. Nonetheless, his faith in the ultimate success of the Revolution remains unshaken.

Rubashov has had only one goal in life--to see the Communist party thrive and extend its power. To accomplish this end, Rubashov has enslaved his fellow workers in order to meet production quotas, he has betrayed his fellow Communists, and, to the best of his ability, he has avoided all emotionalism in the execution of his duty. For emotion, as Ivanoff points out, is a vice no true revolutionary can afford:

Ivanoff: . . . you're making the world a metaphysical brothel for your emotions. What have the shape of Luba Loshenko's breasts--or Bogrov's whimperings to do with the new world we're creating.

Rubashov: Bogrov's dead--she's dead. You can afford a little pity.

Ivanoff: I have many vices--I drink--for a time, as you know, I took drugs!--But so far I've avoided the vice of pity--one drop of that and a Revolutionary's lost.<sup>33</sup>

Until this moment Rubashov has pursued his goal without emotion and without conscience. Like the other dedicated men of which Kingsley has written, he has no personal ambition. He exists only to serve the needs of the Party. Rubashov has lived to see his goal nearly fulfilled: there is no domestic opposition to speak of and the implication is clear that the Party is beginning a phase of international development. It is when he realizes the cost of the Party's "success" that Rubashov's ideal begins to crumble. In their ruthless purging of all dissidents, they have destroyed individuality, creativity, and love of beauty. The idealism of the People's Revolution has been replaced by a one man reign of terror.

At the beginning of the play, Rubashov believes he will die--execution is the most logical way to eliminate persons of questionable loyalty to the Leader. Rubashov believes, however, that he can die without confessing to any crimes. His confession would strengthen the political position of the Leader and Rubashov wants to withhold the indirect support that his confession would lend to the regime. As he relives his past sacrifices and those of others, he begins to have doubts. The Revolution, he still believes, was basically good. Someday the Leader will die and at that time the Communist party may revitalize itself. Ivanoff convinces Rubashov that his withholding

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<sup>33</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, p. 65.

of a confession will make him the tool of Christian democracies-- they will seize upon this act of defiance as signifying a split in the Party. Wishing to avoid being used by the foreign press, Rubashov agrees to a limited confession. Having taken this one step toward surrender, Rubashov collapses under Gletkin's brutal questioning and confesses to all accusations. The execution of Luba Loshenko is the event which breaks Rubashov's will. He sees in her destruction the death of all that is tender and forgiving in his people and he prefers death to living in the wasteland he has helped to create.

Rubashov also realizes that his complete dedication to the Communist party required that he relinquish the right to decide between right and wrong, good and evil and that he surrendered the right to decide his own fate when he gave up his individual right to moral and ethical judgments in favor of carrying out the will of the Party.

Ivanoff tries to secure Rubashov's confession because he has been ordered to do so. Drained by years of service, made callous by his years in the penal system, and anesthetized by his alcoholism, Ivanoff does not care. He prosecutes whomever he must. In an attempt to pay off an old debt--Rubashov once prevented him from committing suicide--Ivanoff offers Rubashov an alternative to execution and is himself eliminated. Ivanoff has no apparent goals other than the immediate--Rubashov's confession. Knowing how Rubashov's mind works, Ivanoff realizes that all he has to do to gain the confession is to leave the old

Bolshevik alone: Rubashov's intellect and his built-in desire to serve will force him to confess. As Ivanoff's means are too subtle to get the desired results--Rubashov's total collapse--Ivanoff is eliminated.

It is in Gletkin that the play's protagonist, Rubashov, meets his true opponent or antagonist. Gletkin is determined that Rubashov will confess on the Leader's terms and be thoroughly discredited and destroyed. As a product of the "new order," Gletkin is devoid of all conscience or ethics. Ivanoff describes him as follows:

--The Neanderthal man! He came after the flood. He had no umbilical cord to the past. He was born without a navel. He doesn't approve of us old apes in general--and of you in particular.<sup>34</sup>

Gletkin's objections to Rubashov are an indication of the Leader's success in establishing his leadership and his version of history. Gletkin tells Rubashov:

You washed out, disgusting, rotten old man! You didn't make the Revolution--the Revolution made you. You adventurers rode along--scum on the flood of the people's uprising. But don't make any mistake our Leader knew it. You never fooled him--He used you because they had to use whatever was at hand--But he knew you were defective.<sup>35</sup>

Gletkin is also personally angry with Rubashov because the wily old Revolutionary thwarted his plans to arrest him quietly and secretly. Rubashov forced his arresting officers to shoot the lock off his door and carry him howling from his apartment, thereby embarrassing Gletkin.

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<sup>34</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, p. 64.

<sup>35</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, p. 80.

While the critics lauded the acting of Claude Rains as Rubashov, Jack Palance as Gletkin, and Kim Hunter as Luba, the consensus was that the characters were generally shallow and one dimensional.

Margaret Marshall maintained that the novel's strength originated in its clash of three strong personalities--Rubashov, Ivanoff, and Gletkin--each representative of a strong point of view:

The prime weakness of Sidney Kingsley's dramatization . . . is that only Rubashov is allowed full stature as a personality. Ivanoff is portrayed as a rather cynical but amiable old timer. . . . As for Gletkin, he emerges in the play as a sort of simple-minded gangster, American style, who has conceived a grudge against Rubashov.<sup>36</sup>

In Ms. Marshall's opinion, the failure to bring out Gletkin's motives was the play's most damaging simplification of the novel.

The characters of Darkness at Noon are more emblematic than human. This effect was in large measure intentional. In speaking of these characters, Kingsley maintained that Koestler's Rubashov was based on a real-life character like Bukharin. Kingsley altered this character saying:

I tried to give him some of Lenin's intellectuality and purity of mind, Trotsky's arrogance and flamboyance, Bukharin's gentleness.

I did that not only to make the character more typical but also to add to his theatrical effectiveness.<sup>37</sup>

Of Luba, Kingsley said, "She stands for that missing element, call it spirituality or belief in the individual." He made

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<sup>36</sup> Margaret Marshall, review of Darkness at Noon, The Nation, CLXXII (January, 1951), 92-93.

<sup>37</sup> As quoted in Keating, Cue, January 6, 1951, p. 12.

Gletkin "more definitely a product of the new order, a completely Stalin-trained young Bolshevik."<sup>38</sup>

Feeling that the idea or "message" of Detective Story had gotten lost in the clutter of personal stories, Kingsley consciously chose to make the characters of Darkness at Noon less human and more representative. Rubashov stands for the idealism and the liberalism of the Revolution. The scenes from his life demonstrate how easily the liberal intellectual can be made to serve an evil cause and how, having been tricked into serving a tyrant, he will be discarded when his usefulness has ended. Gletkin stands as the end product of a heartless regime. He is a ruthless, mindless machine of destruction, the personification of an evil system--Communism. Luba is the innocent victim of the struggle between Rubashov and Gletkin. In her destruction Kingsley's Rubashov sees the persecution and enslavement of the Russian people:

Luba: What are you doing to us? What are you doing to us? We're not stones--we're not machines. We're human beings. We feel, we think, we see--we dream--we're a part of God-- Why have you done this to us? You say God is dead--but you've made your own God. Out of darkness--out of misery-- lies--pain--Why? Why are you doing this to us?

Rubashov: This was not the way it was to be.

Luba: You've made a prison--out of our wonderful country-- a prison.

Rubashov: We wanted to build a new and better world.

Luba: You've put chains on our people. Chains. In their hearts--Inside their skulls--Why? Why?<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, p. 89.

While the dramatic element of thought will be discussed in detail in a later chapter, Kingsley's purpose in writing this anti-Communist play is clear. In order to make his statement as powerful as possible, Kingsley created characters which are totally a function of the play's thought. Characters so obligated can be credible only within the structure of the play. This limited development of character does not inhibit their effectiveness but rather it strengthens their function within a play which contains many elements of the dream in its retrospective action sequences and imagery. If Rubashov's character is more fully developed, it is because he is the dreamer. The action of the play is seen largely from his point of view. The other characters are simple in the manner in which characters in a dream or nightmare are stylized. They embody Rubashov's fears and apprehensions. Gletkin is a frightening monster, a "bogeyman," but there is enough truth in his image to make him a spectre capable of frightening adults. Rubashov is a puppet manipulated by forces we do not see and that he does not fully understand, but what happens to him because of his complicity is horrible. And when the play is over there can be no question that Gletkin and the system he personifies are dangerous and ruthless. The characters are, therefore, extremely effective theatrically precisely because they do not surprise but confirm the fears and anxieties of the audience.

In both his post-World War II plays, Detective Story and Darkness at Noon, Kingsley's protagonist had been destroyed by an

obsessive drive to fulfill his duty. Weary of the destruction that such obsessed men had created, Kingsley turned to comedy--a genre in which the avoidance of work or duty is often a prime motive force. In comedy the character, such as Alceste in Le Misanthrope, who desires to change the nature of his society is an exception. More often, the comic protagonist is in the tradition of the wily slave of New Comedy--a character who knows the foibles of his society and does not seek to change them but to exploit them to achieve his own desires.

In Lunatics and Lovers Dan Cupid lives as he pleases, eating breakfast in the evening and never going out by day. He steals, lies, cheats, and is a panderer. Yet he is appealing and likable because of his healthy cynicism. Cupid has no pretenses: he sees people as they are and makes no judgments. There is no chance of this character's destroying anyone or anything in the name of truth and duty:

Sable: . . . you don't want me to flatter you alla time. You want me to be sincere, don't ya? Ya want me to tell de truth, don't ya?

Cupid: No! Soitenly not! Flatter me! Lie! Lie like hell, but flatter me. Sincere people? Buncha butchers. Dey pin on a pair of home-made wings and hit ya over de head with a meat cleaver--for "Your own good." Tree more sincere people in dis city de streets'd be running wit' blood.<sup>40</sup>

Cupid's goal in the play is to avoid paying his debts--his income taxes. To secure this goal, he elicits the help of his learned friend, the Judge. To gain this aid he provides the Judge with

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<sup>40</sup>Kingsley, Lunatics and Lovers, II, 1.

wine, women, and entertainment. Because the Judge and Cupid live by the same amoral code, the Judge takes all of Cupid's offerings and then announces there is no way to avoid the debt. Cupid is "saved" by Sable's offer of marriage--an offer which includes paying off his debt.

Cupid begins by believing that marriage is for "de boids." His cleverness will save him from jail. All of his maneuvering, however, comes to nothing. Cupid is impressed by Sable's staunch defense of Will and Marian's marriage and the virtue of her loyalty. In accepting Sable, Cupid acknowledges the virtues of sentiment. Cleverness and self-interest cannot solve all of one's problems--loyalty and love are necessary ingredients for true happiness.

The Judge's surname is Sullivan and he is a charming, lecherous, Irish drunk. Although he is an ex-judge, there is very little to indicate that he is active in the practice of law. It is much more likely that the Judge is involved in party politics and that most of his income is derived from "fixing" other people's problems. The Judge wants to get back his old girl friend, Désirée. If he cannot get Désirée, he will take Marian. The Judge is obviously quite fond of casual sex. To seduce Marian he plays on her sympathy by sharing his desolation over his loss of Désirée, consoles her on losing Will, attempts to get her drunk, and finally locks the door and pursues her about the room. He is nothing if not determined. What saves the Judge from being simply obscene is the fact that he is an incurable

romantic. He loves being in love and is genuinely attentive toward and fond of his paramours.

As their names and activities indicate, the characters of Lunatics and Lovers are essentially caricatures. As conflict plays only a marginal role in developing this plot--Cupid and the Judge are delayed from achieving their goals more through confusion than conflict--it is more helpful to study these characters in terms of their dominant character trait and plot function than by conflict and action and to judge them in terms of their comic effectiveness rather than their believability.

The comic characters of Lunatics and Lovers are as familiar as those from Roman Comedy: the lecherous nobleman, the Judge; the wily servant, Cupid; the prostitute with the heart of gold, Sable; the conniving courtesan, Désirée; the young innocent wife, Marian; the earnest husband, Will. Their names describe their dominant character trait. The Judge has a title rather than a name, "put on" genteel airs and exquisite manners. Dan Cupid is in the service of romance and supposedly immune to love. Sable is, like the little animal for which she is named, warm and cuddly. Désirée is exotic, the femme fatale. Marian is married, the virtuous homemaker. Will is an earnest if errant husband.

The play's title is, of course, derived from A Midsummer Night's Dream and the tenuous connection between the two plays lies in the characters' functions.

The Judge and Désirée are the two powerful and knowing inhabitants of this Broadway never-never land--the Judge because

of his intellect, Désirée because of her sexuality. In order to amuse themselves, they both confuse the "normals," Marian and Will, and thereby disrupt these poor mortals' love life. They are aided and abetted in this activity by an amoral and rather mischievous being, Cupid. It is only when Will and Marian achieve self-knowledge through their discovery that they are pawns, that they can escape to the real world--suburbia. With the return to normalcy which Marian and Will's reunion signifies, all the characters return to their original pairings.

Kingsley's character choices have served many a comedy and are basically sound. He goes astray in manipulating his characters when he fails to properly develop and utilize Dan Cupid. Here is a rich character possessed of a unique and distinctive vocabulary, the rascal's wonderfully amoral understanding of human nature, and an ability to thrust directly through falsehood and pretense. This is the character who should control the play's action, manipulate the other characters, and maintain a steady flow of plot and counterplot. Instead Cupid drops out of the play's action and becomes little more than a leering bystander to the Judge's attempted seduction of Marian. In spite of this weakness, the characters' basically comic qualities and their imaginative use of language make Lunatics and Lovers an amusing diversion.

The playwright who, like Kingsley, chooses his characters to serve plot functions must richly endow them with humanizing features and exercise great skill in disguising their structural

function. If he does not, the characters usually become transparent agents of the playwright's purpose--caricatures in the worst sense. While caricatures may serve a useful purpose in comedy, they are anathema to serious drama. Kingsley's skillful use of character types had avoided this pitfall--until Night Life. Here the aforementioned lack of focus in conflict which weakened the plot carried over into character. The three most dynamic characters in the play are Neil, Lew, and Kazar. The most interesting character is, however, Anna.

Neil is a man who has fought freedom's war in Korea. He has, through his study of law, seen the growing menace of corruption, and has decided that passiveness is the best defense against the insanity of the atomic age.

It is difficult to discern Neil's attitude at the beginning of the play because Kingsley has put forth several possibilities. The most logical choice is that Neil believes he can remain outside the conflicts of his environment, that his passivity will be an adequate defense. Then he meets his old lover, Gia. He is distressed to see that she has fallen in love with a ruthless and sadistic man, Kazar. This discovery rekindles a protective impulse in him. He rejects Anna's offer for a life of dissipation, an offer which he would accept if he were truly committed to noninvolvement, and elects to stay in New York and work. After being misled for a time, Gia discovers Kazar's true nature and asks for Neil's help. Neil cannot resist her invitation and risks Kazar's wrath to protect the innocent girl. In performing

this act, he realizes that he cannot remain uninvolved and must help those who ask his assistance.

Lew is related in character to Neil--both are liberals. Neil has gone to the defense of his ideals, and fears that the cost of the violence was greater than the value of his ideals. Lew has never had his ideals tested and doubts his ability to defend them. He glorifies his son's death in the service of others and is not certain he could equal the child's strength and dedication. Lew is a buffoon, a comically generous man whose clumsy jokes hide a tender and loving heart--the sad clown. He is a would-be poet with the soul of a businessman--sensitive without being creative.

Lew initially believes that people are basically good and generous and desire the best for one another. His encounter with Kazar shakes his faith but he is unable to take action. His leap to protect the unwary Neil and Gia is an impulse born of his liberal sentiments but not a rational extension of his ideals--it is an unthinking reaction. Sacrifice is thrust upon the unsuspecting Lew. He dies with his basic attitudes unchanged.

Kazar is a deceitful, immoral, ruthless animal. He wants to achieve control of an international labor organization. Having gained this control, he would in effect be a dictator, a czar with enormous and possibly absolute power. In order to achieve this goal, he murders his opponent and makes it clear he will destroy anyone who opposes him. He bribes government officials and forms an alliance with the criminal segment of society.

Kazar is obsessed and his maniacal reaction to Lew's pathetic appeal for generosity reveals that he is insane. The disparity between his gentle treatment of Gia, his ruthless destruction of others, and his hallucinations of destruction, indicate a schizophrenic personality.

At the beginning of the play's action, Kazar is certain of his victory. Nothing that happens within the course of the action alters this conviction. Until the final moments of the play when Gia refuses to substantiate his story and sides with Neil, Kazar appears unstoppable. Kazar's act at this moment is as irrational as Lew's defense and it results in his destruction. Kazar is stopped but his attitudes have not changed--he has achieved no self-knowledge.

The antagonist/protagonist conflict in this play is enacted by Kazar and Neil. It is, as has been mentioned, a very weak and underdeveloped conflict. Neil's opposition to Kazar is over a matter which has no connection with the play's thought--Neil opposes Kazar not to stem the tide of evil but to get his girl back.

Anna is interesting as a character because she embodies the myth of the Hollywood sex-goddess. Images of Monroe and Harlow come to mind. Although familiar, the character has fascination because she apparently has everything--beauty, wealth, romance--all the accoutrements of "the good life" but remains tormented, alone, and unhappy. How, one wonders, can someone have so much and be so unhappy? It is a potentially fascinating

question but Kingsley does not provide any answers. Perhaps Anna is ashamed of being a sex object and is tormented by the extension of her public image into her private life. Also, she might believe that the films she makes are trash or perhaps she is ashamed of wasting her talent. Both possibilities are proposed by Kingsley and both are left unresolved. This character, however, remains effective because of her ambiguity.

In this play Kingsley hoped to embody his theme in "archetypal figures, rather than singular or idiosyncratic characters."<sup>41</sup> Archetypal figures perform their actions within the context of myth and ritual--the reenactment of powerful legend based on shared cultural experience. No such ritual pattern appears to be in operation in Night Life. There might be something of the Cyclops legend here--the subduing of monstrous and evil forces--but it is left undeveloped. Nor are the characters Kingsley has chosen, with the exception of Kazar, suitable for elevation from the category of type to archetype. As a result of their lack of connection to the action of the story, the characters emerge as cardboard mouthpieces for Kingsley's opinions.

The characters, moreover, lack the singleness of purpose which characterizes archetypes and are riddled with inconsistencies. Neil is, for example, a simple character. He should know what he wants. Yet we see from his actions that he does not. He begins by saying that nothing is worth fighting or

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<sup>41</sup>Thomas Lask, New York Times, October 21, 1962, Section 2, p 3.

working for--the best thing to do is "cool it"--but before his character undergoes any change due to stress, he tells Anna that work is the only salvation for their otherwise aimless lives. Lew appears to be a fatuous business man--a caricature of a Shriner--yet we must also see him as a haunted, sensitive artist. It is not that it is impossible to make characters so divided effective and believable but their contradictions must be shown in action. It simply is not enough for Lew to soliloquize about his aspirations as a poet and his suffering: we must see the life of this complex person enacted. We do not.

These characters are, moreover, almost universally disagreeable. Lew is a rather pompous bore much of the time, his wife is a harridan, Neil is full of self-pity, Anna is a suicidal wreck, Kazar is a monster, and the background characters are sinister and bizarre. They are basically an assemblage of grotesques and it is difficult, if not impossible, to generate sympathy for such characters. The balance of good and evil, funny and sad, pathetic and charming which enlivens the characters of his other plays is not present in the one-dimensional characters of Night Life. Moreover, in none of his other plays are the characters so banal. Kazar and "Baby-Face" Martin have a lot in common but Martin is human, his goals are understandable while Kazar is inhuman. And the possibility of one man achieving the power he desires through the means he proposes--control of labor on an international scale--is so unbelievable that Kazar as a character has no foundation in fact. Gia is so simple--Kazar's

evil is obvious to everyone else--that she is unbelievable. Anna, while interesting, is obviously a broadly drawn type. Lew promises a certain sweetness but remains undeveloped and his philosophy as he presents it is so banal that one must agree with another character who labels it "Chicken Fat."

Kingsley's intentions in Night Life were of the highest order and the fears he expressed were, at a time when the government was heavily involved in investigating the labor movement, reasonable. Kingsley's desire to make a strong statement, however, overwhelmed his art and left him with a collection of wooden, unbelievable characters.

#### Summary

The protagonists of Kingsley's plays are usually ambitious, driven men. Their desire is not to further their own career but to excel at their work so that society might be benefited. Ferguson, Jefferson, McLeod, Rubashov, and although frustrated in his efforts, Gimpty, fit into this pattern. In the plays written prior to World War II the goals which these characters pursue are exemplary and would or do produce demonstrably beneficial results. Ferguson's pursuit of excellence in medicine, Gimpty's desire to design and build functional housing to replace slums, Jefferson's sacrifices to stabilize democracy--all are notable endeavors. Kingsley's protagonists undergo a radical change in the post-World War II period. Both McLeod and Rubashov are obsessed men in the service of ideals which pose a

threat to the survival of individual freedom. In his only comedy, Cupid is a man with no ideals who suspects anyone with beliefs. Kingsley had become suspicious of heroes.

As might be expected, the protagonists of the pre-World War II period are all involved in work situations which do not require them to destroy or threaten the lives of others. Not so post-World War II--McLeod and Rubashov ruthlessly eliminate those who oppose their views. Moreover, they exist in an environment which is charged with violence. Cupid may be excluded from this pattern since this comedy, as most, does not deal with life and death situations.

In three of these characters--Ferguson, Jefferson, and McLeod--Kingsley created heroes of considerable strength and tragic proportions. In these characters the ideal which they serve is noble and of sufficient magnitude, and the hero's sacrifice is great enough to raise them above the usual hero of melodrama. In all of these cases, the protagonist is either exiled from the body of society because of his duty, as are Ferguson and Jefferson, or is executed as in McLeod's case. Ferguson and Jefferson's duties are exalted enough to warrant admiration which approaches worship. In each case the protagonists demonstrate dedication and drive which appear to be beyond the capabilities of most men. They have an abnormal singleness of purpose.

Just as the protagonists of Kingsley's best plays exemplify or represent a concept of service or duty, the antagonists of Kingsley's plays are those forces which deter these men from

the performance of their concept of duty. Often this blocking force is represented by a single character who is emblematic of these forces: Laura in Men in White, Hamilton in The Patriots, Gletkin in Darkness at Noon, and Kazar in Night Life. In Dead End and Detective Story this antagonistic function is not embodied in a character but exists mainly in the play's environment. Thus, while the protagonist of these plays is the individual struggling for the benefit of humanity, the antagonist, even if represented by a character, is actually a grouping of elements of society or environment which would distract or prevent the protagonist from the performance of his duty. This blocking agent is usually representative of the "establishment" which bases its values on materialistic considerations.

Whether the slum kids of Dead End or the bizarre types of Night Life, Kingsley's characters are organically attached to their environment. Throughout Kingsley's work the characters are seen as products of their environment with only limited ability to effect change in their surroundings: Ferguson becomes an extension of the hospital, Gimpty is deprived because of his slum existence, Harriet is saved through her contact with environment, McLeod's obsession is the result of a stance taken against an element of society, Rubashov is destroyed by a system he helped shape, Cupid lives off the foibles of his society, Neil's disillusionment is a response to a weak and vacillating society. Jefferson stands outside this pattern since he is a protagonist who is capable of shaping his environment. The others simply reach an adjustment to their environment.

Kingsley's plays usually have a large number of characters, thirty or more on the average. In all of these plays, the minor characters are so much a part of their surroundings--nurses and doctors, gangsters and slum dwellers, workingmen and immigrants, guards and prisoners, hoodlums and policemen--as to be environment in themselves. In this function the characters become a human reflection of physical environment. In Dead End and Detective Story, these characters multiply the protagonists' collisions with his milieu, thus more sharply defining his conflict with these forces. For example, where there is no single antagonist in Detective Story the large number of petty thieves, clever lawyers, and procedure-following policemen combine to make McLeod's obstacle.

Kingsley's characters are a function of plot. They contain no surprises but exist to demonstrate the value or truth of Kingsley's ideal, the play's reason for being. To get his message across with maximum effectiveness, Kingsley created characters that could be easily identified and understood--characters whose behavior was typical and representative of their environmental situation. In this respect his characters are types. We know little about the character's life before the action of the play and what we do learn is directly connected with present action. We do not need a lot of background information. We see the specific environment and anticipate behavior based on that environment. Kingsley was regularly criticized for using types--the idea that a character could be both a type and individualized

was not generally recognized. Eric Bentley's chapter on Character in The Life of the Drama is particularly helpful in exploring the balance between type and individualism in character development. As Bentley points out:

The point of any myth [character or narrative] is to provide a known element as a starting point and preserve us from the vacuum of absolute novelty. Art is a matter of satisfying certain expectations, and myth sets up expectations with a minimum of fuss. Art is also, as I was saying in the previous chapter, a matter, not of cognition, but of re-cognition: it does not tell you anything you didn't know . . . , it tells you something you "know" and makes you realize. . . . But many people are far too busy chattering about individuals to notice what can be done with types.<sup>42</sup>

Kingsley's characters, although types, are richly endowed with all manner of humanizing detail. These characters must ultimately be judged as one judges social acquaintances in life--by their behavior in adjusting or failing to adjust to their environment. This manner of character development is, in fact, rather imposed by the nature of the plays Kingsley wrote. There are so many characters, action moves so swiftly from story to story that there is very little time to perceive the character's nature. The impression must be made quickly and sharply. Additionally, Kingsley wanted the characters to support and not distract from his central purpose in writing the play. In speaking of rewriting the characters in Detective Story he said:

Some of the loveliest bits were off the point, so they had to go in the ash can along with those great speeches. . . . You see, I have four or five stories going in this play, and

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<sup>42</sup>Eric Bentley, The Life of the Drama, pp. 53-54.

I must not divert the audience so much that they lose the various threads.<sup>43</sup>

Kingsley occasionally strained the believability of his chief characters by causing them to voice his opinions in dialogue that was just barely in character. It is often the "minor" characters in his plays that are the most affecting and believable. These characters are so effective because they are connected primarily to the activities of the environment and only secondarily to the action of the play. There are lengthy segments in Men in White, Dead End, The World We Make, and Detective Story where groups of people--minor characters--simply behave as though they were in the environment described by the play: the street kids swim and fight, the doctors and nurses perform hospital routine, the laundry workers work, and the detectives and policemen go about their everyday duties. Kingsley had studied these environments in detail and provided his characters with activities that were true to life. The illusion of reality, so created, reinforces the believability of the major characters and blends with the general atmosphere of believability which Kingsley's plays create.

Using the criterion set forth at the beginning of this chapter, we find only one play in which Kingsley created unbelievable characters, Night Life. In Kingsley's other plays his characters have reasonable goals and perform logical actions

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<sup>43</sup>As quoted in Henry Gilroy, New York Times, March 20, 1949, Section 2, p. 1.

to achieve them. In Night Life the characters' goals are either unclear, nonexistent, or unrealistic, hence the unbelievability of the characterizations.

## CHAPTER V

### DIALOGUE

Good dialogue is inevitably an extension of character. The characters in a play must express themselves in a manner which seems both reasonable and possible within the context of the play. Ideally, the words which the playwright provides will be not only suitable for the character, but personalized--unique to that character so that he is marked as individual and distinctive. The characters' thoughts and expressions will thereby become their own: they will not exist as mere persona utilized to voice the playwright's intent.

Additionally, the dialogue must be speakable. The playwright's technique requires that dialogue not be envisioned as patterns on a page, a literary concept, "but as speeches from the mouth of some character or other. This is the one important distinction between the playwright and another kind of writer: he does not see a line in his mind's eye, he hears it in his mind's ear."<sup>1</sup> Dialogue is, however, more than conversation. As Francis Hodge points out:

Dialogue is not merely a verbal interchange between characters but an artificial, highly economical, and symbolic

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<sup>1</sup>Gerald Weales, A Play and Its Parts (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1964), p. 47.

intercommunication of actions between characters, in which they force their wants and needs on one another. . . . Dialogue is the covering, the clothing of the dramatic action. From an outside view, it is the text of the play; but its basic function is to contain the heart and soul of the play--the subtext or dramatic action.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond his obligations to the character's individuality of speech and function within the construct of the play's action, the playwright usually strives to find a special and intriguing quality or "sound" for the dialogue. This quality lends both interest and style to the language of the play. George Pierce Baker summed up these essentials of dialogue as "clearness, helping the onward movement of the story, and doing all this in character. Dialogue," he went on to say, "is, naturally, still better if it possesses charm, grace, wit, irony, or beauty of its own."<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will examine the techniques which Kingsley used in constructing his dialogue and its effectiveness in communicating individuality, action, and style.

In Men in White Kingsley developed an environment which had its own particular vocabulary--the hospital and its language of medicine. So unfamiliar were most of these terms to a general audience that programs used in the production contained a glossary of medical terms. For example, in discussing medical treatment with a nurse, Ferguson says:

Ferguson: If we used Dakin tubes it might help. . . .

Wren: They're worth a trial!

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<sup>2</sup>Francis Hodge, Play Directing, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>George Pierce Baker, Dramatic Technique, p. 407.

Ferguson: And this afternoon, first chance I have, I'll take him up to the O.R. and debride all that dead tissue.

And later in a critical scene with Dr. Cunningham, a crisis arises over a patient's treatment:

Cunningham: Prepare some insulin! At once . . . forty units . . . with fifty grams of glucose.

Barbara: But, sir, Dr. Ferguson advised against insulin. . . .

Cunningham: Ferguson? You please take your orders from me . . . forty units! Quick!

Barbara: Yes sir. (Ferguson enters the room. Dr. Cunningham glances at him, nods curtly, and turns to Barbara.)

Cunningham: Please hurry that!

Ferguson (looking at the patient, shaking his head): I was afraid of shock!

Cunningham: This isn't shock! It's diabetic coma!

Ferguson (looking at patient again): Her temperature's subnormal?

Cunningham (impatiently): Yes! (To Barbara) Is that insulin ready yet?

Ferguson: I beg your pardon, Doctor, but isn't insulin contra-indicated here?

Cunningham: No. It's our last chance.

(Ferguson bites his lips to restrain himself. Cunningham takes the hypo from Barbara and presses out the air bubbles.)

Ferguson: Doctor, I mean no offense, but I've studied this case history, and it looks like shock . . . not coma!

Cunningham: No . . . no . . .

Ferguson: But, the clinical picture is so clear-cut. . . . Look at the patient! She's pale, cold, clammy, temperature subnormal. She's complained of hunger! Sudden onset!

Cunningham (angrily): Suppose you let me handle this case, young man. (To Barbara) Prepare that arm!

(Barbara swabs the arm. Cunningham leans over the patient. Ferguson hesitates a moment, then goes to Cunningham, puts his hand on Cunningham's arm.)

Ferguson: Please, Doctor! Call in one of the other men!  
 . . . Ask them! Anybody!

Cunningham: There's no time! Take your hand off!

Ferguson: That insulin's going to prove fatal.

Cunningham (wavering a moment, uncertain, hesitant, then turning on Ferguson): Get out of here will you? I don't want any interruption while I'm treating my patient! (He hesitates a moment, then straightens up. Ferguson, with sudden resolve, takes the hypo from Cunningham's fingers and squirts out the insulin.) Here! What are you? . . . Why did you do that, you fool?

Ferguson (ignoring him, to Barbara, his voice crisp and cool): Shock position! (Barbara goes to the foot of the bed, turns the ratchet to elevate the foot. Ferguson dashes to the door, looks out, calls down the corridor.) Nurse! Nurse!

Nurse (answering from down the corridor): Yes, sir?

Ferguson: Sterile glucose! Quick! And a thirty cc syringe.

Barbara: Some glucose here, sir, all ready!

Ferguson: How much?

Barbara: Fifty grams!

Ferguson: Good! Half of that will do! Apply a tourniquet . . . right arm.

Barbara: Yes, sir!

Ferguson (calling down the corridor): Never mind the glucose--a hypo of adrenalin!

Nurse: Yes, sir.

Ferguson: Nurse, nurse! Some hot packs . . . and blankets! Quick . . . come on . . . hurry!

. . . . .

Ferguson (quickly): Let's have that glucose. (Barbara gives it to him.) Swab that arm! Never mind the iodine! Just the

alcohol! Thank God! A good vein! (He administers the hypo.)<sup>4</sup>

These quotations reveal several of the basic characteristics of the dialogue of Men in White. The use of technical medical terms is instrumental in creating the play's special world. These alien words have a mysterious and even magical quality and since they are offered without explanation or definition, they further strengthen the play's realistic style. The scene with Dr. Cunningham also reveals the dialogue's strong melodramatic flavor. The lines are compact, urgent, and force the action of the play along at a rapid pace.

In delineating Ferguson's struggle to become a surgeon, Kingsley created three powerful characterizations. First there is brilliant, disciplined, yet warmly human Dr. Hochberg. Opposing Dr. Hochberg for Ferguson's attentions is pert and vivacious Laura Hudson. Finally, there is the play's anguished protagonist, Dr. Ferguson.

Dr. Hochberg is originally from Germany and although he has been in the United States for over twenty years, traces of the old accent still remain. The dialect is contained in sentence construction and rhythm of speech rather than in a pronounced accent. This dialect aids enormously in humanizing Dr. Hochberg:

Gordon: I hear you've some interesting cases at your clinic.

Hochberg: Yes, yes--er--suppose you have dinner with me tonight. We'll talk, hm? I discovered a little place on

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<sup>4</sup>Kingsley, Men in White, pp. 126-128.

Eighty-fourth Street where they serve the most delicious schnitzel and a glass of beer (measuring it with his hands) --that high! . . . But beer!<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, Dr. Hochberg's language communicates authority, dignity, and purpose:

Michaelson (entering): That D'Andrea fellow is still unconscious. Seems to be something the matter with his lower jaw. . . .

Hochberg: What!

Michaelson: Protruding--somewhat rigid. Thought it might be tetanus.

Hochberg: No! Not so soon! Anyway, you gave him antitoxin, didn't you?

Michaelson: Why--er . . . (He shoots a quick glance at Ferguson.) No!

Hochberg: What? (angrily) Don't you know yet that T.A.T. is routine in this hospital?

Michaelson: Yes, sir. . . . But I thought--(to Ferguson) You didn't tell me. I thought you gave it!

Hochberg (to Ferguson): Dr. Ferguson!

Ferguson: I intended to . . . mention it to him. I guess--I--forgot. . . .

Hochberg: Forgot? Is that a thing to forget? You should have given the antitoxin yourself!

Laura: It's my fault, Hocky, I dragged him away--we were late.

Hochberg: That's no excuse. He's not supposed to leave the house at all! And a very sick house too. You know that, Dr. Ferguson!

Ferguson: Yes, sir! (He goes.)

Laura: Oh, Hocky--it was important! Terribly important! It was a rehearsal of our wedding.

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<sup>5</sup>Kingsley, Men in White, p. 103.

Hochberg: A rehearsal? Yes, Laura, that's nice. A rehearsal of your wedding. But, do you realize, upstairs, there is a boy all smashed to bits. There'll be no wedding for him, if he develops tetanus. Dr. Ferguson! Inject that antitoxin at once!<sup>6</sup>

Although their speech is not characterized by any dialect, references within the dialogue make it clear that Laura and Ferguson have very different social points of view. Laura's conversation is sprinkled with references to parties, clothes, and travel:

Laura: And what a night we're going to have! Doris asked us over there, but I want you to myself. I want to go to that cute little roadhouse where the food and the music were so good--then a long drive up the Hudson--and, darling, there's a full moon tonight.<sup>7</sup>

The life which she has planned for Ferguson and herself is uncluttered by work and duty:

Laura (impatiently): The important man, George, is the man who knows how to live. I love Hocky, I think an awful lot of him. But he's like my father. They have no outside interests at all. They're flat--they're colorless. They're not men--they're caricatures. Oh, don't become like them, George! Don't be an important man and crack up at forty-five. I want our lives together to be full and rich and beautiful! I want it so much.<sup>8</sup>

Ferguson's dialogue is consistently laced with references to sacrifice, work, and duty:

Ferguson: I don't know. I often wonder, myself, whether it was worth the grind of working my way through college and med school. . . .

Levine: Med school too?

Ferguson: Yes.

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<sup>6</sup>Kingsley, Men in White, pp. 160-161.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

Levine: I don't see how you kept up with classes.

Ferguson: I managed.

Levine: Terrific grind!

Ferguson: It wasn't much fun . . . but still . . . I guess it's the only thing I really want to do. . . . My dad used to say "Above all is humanity!" He was a fine man--my dad. A small-town physician--upstate. When I was about thirteen, he came to my room one night and apologized because he was going to die. His heart had gone bad on him. He knew if he gave up medicine and took it easy he could live for twenty years. But he wanted to go right on, wanted to die in harness. . . . And he did. . . . Above all else is humanity--that's a big thought. So big that alongside of it you and I don't really matter very much. That's why we do it. I guess.<sup>9</sup>

The contrast between the indecisive quality of this personal, introspective passage and Ferguson's dynamic assurance in the emergency scene quoted earlier add depth and interest to his character. The contrast between Laura's expression of her goals and Drs. Hochberg and Ferguson's is equally extreme. Such contrasts are instrumental in effecting the forward thrust of the play and developing character.

Brooks Atkinson found Men in White "needlessly chilled by medical terminology,"<sup>10</sup> a criticism which seems rather curious inasmuch as the terminology is such an integral part of the play's machinery. Without the atmosphere of scientific validity which this language creates, a great deal of the play's authenticity would have been sacrificed and many of the medical procedures so important to the play would be lost. On the positive side, the

<sup>9</sup>Kingsley, Men in White, pp. 136-137.

<sup>10</sup>Brooks Atkinson, New York Times, October 1, 1933, Section 9, p. 1.

Esquire critic compared Kingsley to O'Neill and insisted that Kingsley had "captured a humanity, a poetry, a sympathy, and a richness of dialogue, which lifts his play . . . to inspiring, glowing, heights."<sup>11</sup> By modern standards Kingsley's pioneering use of medical terminology is not only acceptable but rather spare. Over the years audiences have become more and more familiar with medical terms until today's medical dramas use a level of technical language which makes Men in White, in retrospect, seem almost rudimentary.

Granted, the dialogue of Men in White is often sentimental but the sentiment is honest and spoken with a directness which lends it dignity and authority. And it should be remembered that if Kingsley's dialogue, in the scene with Dr. Cunningham, for example, seems trite, it is in large measure because the scene has been repeated and rewritten by so many subsequent playwrights. Viewed within this context, the dialogue of Men in White is direct, forceful, and charged with energy and clarity of purpose. Additionally, each of the characters is well endowed with an individual manner of speaking which marks them as persons capable of voicing the thoughts and emotions which Kingsley has given them.

While it is technically true that Kingsley broke no new ground in the language of Dead End--there had been many dramas of slum life written in dialect--it is also true that Kingsley set

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<sup>11</sup>John V. A. Weaver, review of Men in White, Esquire, January, 1934, p. 131.

new standards of truth and honesty with Dead End's raw and, until the authorities stepped in, uncompromising use of language. The ever ready watchdogs of public morality acted swiftly to have the language of Kingsley's street kids toned down. Both John Mason Brown and the Catholic World critic noted with satisfaction that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children stepped in following opening night to censor the children's language.<sup>12</sup>

In Dead End Kingsley was once again working within an environment which had its own vocabulary--the slums of New York City. This vernacular in its purest and most potent form was expressed in the language of his street kids:

Dippy: Shat ap, will ya, Spit!

Spit (spitting through his teeth at Dippy, who is stripping his jersey over his head): Right inna belly-button! (Laughs and climbs onto the wharf to sprawl next to Tommy. Dippy mumbles and wipes out his navel with his finger.)

Tommy: Lay off 'im, why doncha?

Spit: I'll knock 'im innis eye!

Tommy: Wassamattuh? Yuh a wise guy er a boy scout? C'mon in, Dippy!

Angel: Howza wawda, Tommy?

Tommy: Boy! Duh nuts!

Spit: Geeze, great!

Angel: Cold?

Tommy: Nah. Swell. Jus' right. (Wiping off some of the

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<sup>12</sup>John Mason Brown, "Two on the Aisle," New York Post, December 19, 1935, p. 12; Euphemia Van Rensselaer Wyatt, review of Dead End, Catholic World, CXLII (December, 1935), 339.

river filth that has clung to him.) Boy, deah's a lot a junk inna wawda tuhday!

Dippy (pointing to some dirt on Spit's back): Wat's at? (He touches Spit, smells his finger and makes a wry face.) Pee-ew, whadda stink! (Spit plucks off a huge gob of filth and throws it at Dippy. Dippy whines.) What yuh wanna do dat fuh?

Spit: Aw, I'll mobilize yuh!

Tommy: Leave 'im alone! (To Dippy) Whyn't yuh keep yuh trap shut, huh?

Dippy: He trew dat crap on me! I wuz . . .

Tommy: O.K. O.K. O.K. . . .<sup>13</sup>  
 . . . . .

Tommy: How wuzat swan-dive?

Dippy: He sez it wuz lousy.

Tommy (climbing over the parapet and crossing to Philip, belligerently): Oh, yeah? What wuz a mattuh wid it? Kin yew do betta?

Philip: A trillion times.

Tommy: Awright. Lessee yuh.

Philip: Where?

Tommy: Heah!

Philip: Here?

Tommy: Yeah, heah. Yew hoid me. Yew ain' deaf. (Turns to the others.) His eahs ovuhlap, dat's it! (They roar with laughter.)

Philip: I wouldn't swim here.

T.B.: He's yelluh, dat's what! Dat's what! He's godda yelluh streak up 'is back a mile wide.

Philip: It's dirty here.

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<sup>13</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 683.

Dippy (shocked): Doity!

T.B. (very indignant): Doity! He sez doity. He sez it's doity! I'll sock 'im!

Angel: Lil fairy!

Spit: Wassamattuh? Yuh sca'd yuh git a lil doit on yuh?

Philip: Besides, I haven't got my suit.

Tommy: Well, go in bareass.

T.B.: Yeah, wassamattuh wid bareass?

Philip: And besides, I'm not allowed to.

Dippy (sing-song): Sissy, sissy, sucks his mamma's titty!<sup>14</sup>

This dialogue is rich with intriguing rhythms and inventive use of language and dialect. In their games and childhood chants, the boys add a poetic value to the scoring of the dialogue.

Martin, a product of the slums, shares the gang's language. Initially, his dialect seems less pronounced than theirs:

Martin: Yuh don' say! What do yuh know! Little Gimpty, an' look at 'im! An architect! Well, I always knew yuh'd come trew. Yuh had somethin' here, kid! (Taps his head.) Yep. Well, I'm glad tuh see yuh doin' O.K., Gimpty. Not like dese udder slobs. Yuh must be in a big dough, huh?<sup>15</sup>

But as he is placed under more pressure, his dialect slips closer to that of the gang of boys:

Martin: . . . Don' gimme any a dat crap! What ta hell did yuh tink I wuz gonna do, hang aroun' 'is dump waitin' fer Santa Claus tuh take care a me, fer Chris' sake? Looka yew! What a yew got? Six years yuh went thu college and what da hell a yuh got? A lousy handout a thoity bucks a month! Not fer me! I yain't like yew punks . . . starvin' and freezin' . . . fuh what? Peanuts? Coffe an'? Yeah, I got mine, but I took it. Look! (Pulls at his shirt.) Silk. Twenty bucks. Look a dis. (Pulls at his jacket.) Custom tailored--a hundred an' fifty bucks. Da fat a da land I live off of. An'

<sup>14</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, pp. 686-687.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 693.

I got a flock a dames at'd make yew guys water at da mout'.  
At'd make yew slobs run off in a dark corner when yuh see  
dere pichure an' play pocket-pool.<sup>16</sup>

Although Drina, Tommy's sister, speaks a dialect which expresses some of the toughness of the street, her language has been tempered by a desire to educate herself:

Gimpty (to Drina): Hey, what's the matter with your head?

Drina (looking at the Policeman and raising her voice): We were picketing the store, an' some lousy cop hit me.

Policeman (wheels around, insulted): What's that?

Drina (deliberately): One a you lousy cops hit me.

Policeman: You better watch your language or you'll get another clout!

Drina: Go on and try it!

Gimpty (urging discretion): Sh!

Policeman: Listen! I'm in no mood to be tampered with. I'm in no mood! . . . Not by a lousy Red.

Drina (quietly): I ain't no Red.

Policeman (thick-skulled): Well, you talk like one.

Drina: Aw nuts!

Policeman: You were strikin', weren't you?

Drina: Sure. Because I want a few bucks more a week so's I can live decent. God knows I earn it!

Policeman (who has had enough): Aw, go on home! . . .

Drina (to Gimpty): We were only picketing. We got a right to picket. They charged us. They hit us right and left. Three of the girls were hurt bad.<sup>17</sup>

It is Kingsley's spokesman, Gimpty, who seems out of tune

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<sup>16</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 694.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 715.

in this play. True, Kingsley has established the reasons for Gimpty's use of a different vernacular: a high school education, six years of college, and an artistic temperament. Gimpty is, in a sense, out of place--with his background he should not be in the slum. But even if one makes allowances for Gimpty's background, his sentimentality and romantic temperament seem jarringly out of place in this harsh environment. In one of his homilies to the boys, Gimpty mixes science and religion, logic and emotion, fact and faith. In paralleling life in the slums with the entire process of evolution, Kingsley overextends his statement and reduces its effectiveness:

Gimpty: . . . "Now men," says Evolution, "now men"--(nods to Drina, acknowledging her contribution)--"and women . . . I made you walk straight, I gave you feeling, I gave you reason, I gave you dignity, I gave you a sense of beauty, I planted a God in your heart. Now let's see what you're going to do with them. An' if you can't do anything with them, then I'll take 'em all away. Yeah, I'll take away your reason as sure as I took away the head of the oyster, and your sense of beauty as I took away the flight of the ostrich, and men will crawl on their bellies on the ground like snakes . . . or die off altogether like the dinosaur.<sup>18</sup>

Here the dialogue is acceptable because it is a parable for children. On the other hand, Gimpty's talk is unsuccessful when he is obviously a mouthpiece for Kingsley's philosophy:

Gimpty: . . . the thing I did, Griswald, was nothing compared to what you're doing. . . . Yeah . . . Martin was a killer, he was bad, he deserved to die, true! But I knew him when we were kids. He had a lot of fine stuff. He was strong. He had courage. He was a born leader. He even had a sense of fair play. But living in the streets kept making him bad. . . . Then he was sent to reform school. Well, they reformed him all right! They taught him the ropes. He came

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<sup>18</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 698.

out tough and hard and mean, with all the tricks of the trade.<sup>19</sup>

The statement is overly simplistic and we have already seen the pattern stated effectively in the action of the play. But Gimpty's dialogue is at its worst when he breaks into self-pitying, pseudo-poetic language:

Gimpty (Stares down at the black water swirling under him. He begins to talk, faster and faster, trying to push back into his unconscious the terror that haunts him, to forget that afternoon if only for a few seconds.): It reminds me of something. . . . What is it? . . . Oh, yeah . . . when I was a kid. In the spring the sudden sun showers used to flood the gutters. The other kids used to race boats down the street. Little boats: straws, matches, lollipop-sticks. I couldn't run after them, so I guarded the sewer and caught the boats to keep them from tumbling in. Near the sewer . . . sometimes, I remember . . . a whirlpool would form. . . . Dirt and oil from the street would break into rainbow colors . . . iridescent. . . . (For a moment he does escape.) Beautiful, I think . . . a marvel of color out of dirty water. I can't take my eyes off it. And suddenly a boat in danger. (The terror in him rises again.) I try to stop it. . . . Too late! It shoots into the black hole of the sewer. I used to dream about falling into it myself. The river reminds me of that. . . . Death must be like this . . . like the river at night.<sup>20</sup>

The lines simply will not bear the weight of the emotion with which Kingsley loads them and the childhood fears which he expresses seem inappropriate to the idealistic and determined character which Kingsley has established for Gimpty.

Almost all critics noted Kingsley's effective use of the street boys' language. Grenville Vernon is typical of those who found the language excessive:

The moral and esthetic limits permissible to language in the theatre have never been definitely defined, but it is certain

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<sup>19</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 736.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 730

that some such limit should be fixed. . . . Undoubtedly slum children speak exactly as do these children . . . but whether it is permissible to make them talk with the realism they display at the Belasco Theatre is another matter. . . . Enough is heard to cause the goose-flesh to rise on any normal man or woman. Even leaving aside any moral considerations, do not these expressions by this very quality of shock take away from the complete picture? After all, art is a matter of selection. To say all is to say too much. . . .<sup>21</sup>

Kelcey Allen stated the dialogue was the "most striking aspect of Dead End" and went on to say, "It is the most profane gutter language I have heard in a quarter century of play reviewing. The argot of What Price Glory is a church hymn by comparison. . . ."<sup>22</sup> But Arthur Pollock felt the play owed a greater part of its success to its young actors and "a splendid job in the matter of the accurate reporting of natural talk."<sup>23</sup>

In Dead End Kingsley made excellent use of the colorful, sometimes brutally shocking language of the slums. Even those who criticized this vernacular had to admit that it was used honestly. Each of the boy's dialogue remains consistent with his character: Tommy, the leader, arbitrates squabbles; Spit, the bully, continually intimidates the other, weaker boys; Dippy, the dimwit, whines excuses for himself; Angel, the innocent, blithely relates the horrors of his home-life.

Kingsley is not, however, so successful in handling

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<sup>21</sup>Grenville Vernon, The Commonweal, XXIII (November, 1935), 76.

<sup>22</sup>Kelcey Allen, review of Dead End, Women's Wear Daily, October 29, 1935, p. 29.

<sup>23</sup>Arthur Pollock, review of Dead End, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, October 29, 1935, p. 11.

moments of sentiment. The romantic sequences with Kay are marred by dialogue which borders on the banal:

Kay: I've known what it means to scrimp and worry and never be sure from one minute to the next. I've had enough of that . . . for one lifetime.

Gimpy (intensely): But Kay, not to look forward to love . . . God, that's not living at all!

Kay (not quite convincing): I can do without it.

Gimpy: That's not true. It isn't is it?

Kay (smiles wryly): Of course not.<sup>24</sup>

It is Kingsley's tendency to hammer his message home--to have Gimpy restate and sentimentalize ideas which the play's actions state forcefully--that occasionally mars the dialogue. In these passages the dialogue is ineffective because it does not contain the action of the play but simply comments on it.

Having found the sounds of slum language particularly rewarding, Kingsley returned to the tenement environment in The World We Make. Whereas Dead End dealt with the harshness of street life, The World We Make treats the positive qualities of family life in the slums. Its language is consequently more restrained and the topics of conversation are not "dames" and money but children and work.

In this play foreign dialects replace domestic slang and provide a special color for the dialogue. Since the characters are divided into ethnic groups, they maintain their individuality as much by accent as by any other means.

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<sup>24</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 701.

Rocco, an older Italian gentleman, lives alone upstairs with his dog. His occasional visits add warmth and humor to the play's intensely personal drama:

Rocco: Oh! Excuse a me Johnny. I no know you gotta company.

John: Come on in, Rocky. Come in. This is Miss Hope.

Rocco: I'm a very good to meet you.  
(He takes John aside.)  
Why you no tella me? I no bust in.

John: Forget it! Sit down. How's everything Rocky?

Rocco: Everything stinken all right. Pizon, he's nota so happy. Eh, Pizon? What a you say?

John: What's a matter?

Rocco: He's a Goddam fleas ees a bite like hell. Eh, Pizon? (He scratches his head.) Eesa bite a me, too. Goddam! (Mutters in Italian . . . then, to the dog) You no sleep a in my bed tonight. Oh, no! (laughs) Looka him! He feel sad a now. All righta, Pizon. You sleep a in my bed tonight. (He waves a wrapped up bottle.) We gotta something give a dat flea a bad a bellyache, eh?

John (S.L. gets candy, returns): Here's a piece of candy for him. (Gives it to dog.)

Rocco (looks at Harriet): She's a nice pretty girl. Son of a witch . . . he's about time you gotta girl.  
. . . . .

Rocco: I tella John all a time, why you no get a dog? He sit a here, smokin' a pipe a, all alone, isa not good. I tell him, get a dog, if you can no getta dog, getta woman, getta something. A dog isa better, but the woman isa all right too. (He laughs, looks around. There is a silence for a moment. He realizes he ought to go, but it's too lonely upstairs. There's a silence.)

John: How's your job coming?

Rocco: My job? Oh, today we breaka up forty nine street. Tomorrow we fixa up hundred-two three street; next a week we fixa up forty nine street, breaka up hundred two-three street. Goddam! This city never gonna get finish. It's allright, is a make a plenty work for W.P.U. I no kick. (Silence.)

John: Yeah, that's the way it goes.

Rocco: Yeah, that's the way it. . . .<sup>25</sup>

The scene also demonstrates John's compassionate nature: he would like to be alone with Harriet but he cannot ask the lonely old man to leave.

In keeping with the play's realistic style and construction, moments of intense personal despair are communicated through dialogue and situation that touch the problem tangentially and reveal it in human terms:

Mrs. Zubriski: Er . . . Stashu . . .

Mr. Zubriski: What is? What me wrong say now?

Mrs. Z: Nothing.

Mr. Z: Me say something bad? (to Mrs. Z) Now you tell . . . come . . .

Mrs. Z: It's nothing. Me just . . . it's nothing.

Mr. Z: That's the way they pick me on.

Mrs. Z: Stashu, darling, nobody's picking.

Mr. Z: Me wake night think-something with me wrong? Must got work, otherwise family no respect.

Anna: We respect you, Poppa.

Mr. Z: You think me no know. Anna darling, it breakin' my heart takin' pennies you savin'.

Anna: It's all right, Poppa. . . .

Mr. Z: Poor old yellow horse across way . . . no can work . . . they him shoot. . . ."

Anna: Pa. . . .

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<sup>25</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, pp. 1-2-24, 1-2-25.

Mr. Z: Dead he be some good. Dog meat. Can they me make dog meat out?

Anna: Pa. . . .

Mr. Z: Dead that horse is better man from me . . .

Anna: Pa. . . .

Mr. Z: Some day me gonna jump in front truck.

Anna: Pappa, what are you talking about.

Mr. Z: Askin' mother . . . askin' mother . . . always pickin' front in people.

Mrs. Z (begins to cry): Who's pickin', Stashu?

Mr. Z (angrily): Then what for did me wrong? What me say. (shouts) What was? Come. Talkin'. You startin' to tellin' so tellin'.

Mrs. Z (in small sad voice): Me only trying to let you know Stashu you pants is unbuttoned.

Mr. Z (His jaw drops. He glances down at his trousers, then smiles feebly, embarrassed, apologetic, putting his hands in front of his open fly.): Excuse me. (He heaves a huge sigh, shamefaced without looking at anyone, all his animation gone, he mumbles.) Me go helpin' Mary settin' table. (He shuffles out.)

Mrs. Z: My poor man. He forgettin' tings all time now. . . . You him see two years ago . . . Angel . . . All time pinchy me and makin' me laughin'. (She exits.)<sup>26</sup>

Moments of triumph are measured in similar terms:

Harriet: Oh, Mrs. Zubriski . . .

Mrs. Z (offstage): What is? What you want?

Harriet: . . . John got a job for him.

Mrs. Z: What? (screams) Stashu! Stashu! . . . Oh, Mrs. Kohler. Oh, Mrs. Kohler . . . me dying!

Mr. Z (coming to the door): What's the matter? What's the matter?

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<sup>26</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, pp. 2-1-7, 2-1-8.

Harriet: John got a job for you at his place.

Mrs. Z: Oh, Stashu! Mrs. Kohler! Me dying!

Mr. Z: Chiko, Kasia . . . stop dying . . . (overcome).  
That be very nice. (Mrs. Zubriski tries to kiss Harriet's hand.)

Harriet: No . . . you mustn't . . .

Mr. Z: No, Kasia. Mustn't kiss it hand.  
(He shakes hands with Harriet.)  
You life saver, Mrs. Kohler. Thanks.

Harriet: Oh, that's all right, Mr. Zubriski . . .

Mr. Z: Sometime you needin' my heart's blood . . . takin'  
it . . . it's yours . . . (The tears come trickling out.)

Mrs. Z: Don't cry, Stashu. Better days here is.

Mr. Z (gruffly): Who cryin'? Me no cryin'! Mommusha. Me  
sitting by window looking it out . . . leely bugs flyin' in  
face, catchin' in eyes . . . (He starts to sob and goes  
inside.)

Mrs. Z: For two years he no me call Mommusha. (She takes  
Harriet's hands.) Mrs. Kohler, God blessin' you.

Harriet: He has already, Mommusha. . . .<sup>27</sup>

As this dialogue indicates, Kingsley is not dealing with problems of epic proportions but with the survival of the often helpless individual within the complex structure of modern life. Offering Stashu his job is an enormously rewarding and emotional experience for Harriet. This scene, in fact, represents her moment of greatest stability and personal satisfaction.

Kingsley utilized his immigrant characters to discuss the causes and effects of war:

Mr. Z: Mussolini he leely bit to blame.

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<sup>27</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, pp. 2-2-19, 2-2-20.

Rocco: Please. Leave a out Mussolini.

Mr. Z: What for? He stickin' up with Axis.

Rocco: That wrong talk about Mussolini. He'sa wanta peace.

Mr. Z: He wantin' peace a France, piece on Africa . . .  
piece a South America . . .

Rocco: Dat's a different. You no understand. Dat's a politics. I explain a this. He's only one thing wrong. Duce he'sa bad arithmetic. Isa like dis. Firsta Duce he say we make a lot bambinos. Isa good! Everybody get busy. Lot a bambinos. My fadder is a eight-one--July is make a bambino. Is a fifteen bambinos . . . my fadder . . . Isa Duce give a him a medal. Isa Duce say . . . "Good work". . . . Den a Duce he say "Holy Smoke"! Isa no to eat . . . we gotta too damn many bambinos. Isa not room. Musta take a odder country. Dat's a all. Is a no good figure . . . is a add up too much . . . Isa crowded over.

Mr. Z: Kasia, me, and my kids . . . we're crowded over, too. You got it room upstairs. Dan why we not just broke in, kickin' you out, and taken it.

Rocco: Dat's different.

Mr. Z: No.

Rocco: Yes.

Mr. Z: No.

Rocco (Laughs, turns to Jim.): He no understanda.

Jim: How's it different.

Rocco: Hm?

Jim: How.

Rocco: Don' a push please. I no know- right away- quick.<sup>28</sup>

Kingsley also used extremely economical dialogue to establish dramatic contrasts--contrasts which allow the action of a scene to flow smoothly:

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<sup>28</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, pp. 2-3-36, 2-3-37.

Al: Sh! Quiet everybody . . . (points to Harriet) You're next, Harriet. (to the others) She's next. She's next. (to Harriet) You gotta have a baby.

Mr. Zubriski: Yeah. No excuse now.

Harriet (laughing hysterically, falls on bed): No. No. excuse. . . .

(They all laugh. Harriet's laughter grows, becomes hysterical, gets out of control.)

Mr. Z: Look! She's got drunk already.

Rocco: Eesa strong, I tell you.

(They laugh at Harriet's hysterical laughter.)

Al: One drink and she's cockeyed.

John: Hey!

Harriet: I can't stop. I can't stop.

(The doorbell rings, Al goes to the door. A man stands there.)

Man: Is Mr. Kohler here?

Al: Yeah . . . John!

(John Xes to door.)

Man: Mr. Kohler, remember me? I'm your brother's next door neighbor.

John: Oh, yeah . . . come in.

Man: His wife ast me to get you. You better come over quick. He's in a bad way.

John: What?

(The laughter dies down.)

Man: They took him to Bellevue hospital.

John: My brother?

Man: Yeah. He's bleeding from the nose. They got a pipe

in. I never saw anything like it. You better hurry. The doctor says he's very bad.<sup>29</sup>

John and his brother, Jim, are not native New Yorkers and no accent is indicated for them. Their dialogue is serviceable if not inspired and Jim's passionate and poetic bent is effectively contrasted with the more complacent John:

Harriet: Aren't these lovely leaves?

Jim: A leaf is no less than the journey work of the stars. Do you know Whitman?

Harriet: No.

Jim: No? Oh, he's terrific. . . . He writes like a house afire. (takes a book out of his pocket) Read it. The guy's a Cosmos. Says so himself. (Jim turns and Harriet sees his black eye.)

Harriet: Jim! What's that?

Jim: What? What are you talking about?

Harriet: Your eye. (John and Harriet burst out laughing. John pushes Jim to the mirror.)

John: Look!

Jim (looks in mirror): Gee, it's beginning to blossom.

Harriet: What happened?

John: Fritz the truck driver and Jim had a political discussion.

Jim: Never mind, if this damn pain in my back hadn't paralyzed me, I'd liquidated him without you.

Harriet: You too, John?

John: Yeah. I guess I lost my temper a little.

Jim: A little? Ben Ahdam here carved the Bill of Rights all over Fritz's puss. . . .

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<sup>29</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, pp. 3-1-12, 3-1-13.

John: Naw, I shouldn't have hit him. The hell! He doesn't know any better. You oughta get your pants kicked for starting a rumpus at the place.<sup>30</sup>

Harriet's growing strength may be demonstrated by contrasting her dialogue at the beginning of the play with her final speech:

John: As soon as you're ready, we'll go out for some supper.

Harriet: I was making some spaghetti . . .

John: Ever make it before?

Harriet: No. . . . It'll probably be bad.

John: Why should it? There's nothing to it . . . anybody can make it. (Harriet goes into the kitchen, turns off the gas, puts the pot on the sink, returns.) What's the idea?

Harriet: It's no good. I can't do it. I can't do anything right. I didn't waste much.<sup>31</sup>

. . . . .

Harriet: Oh, my darling, cry . . . cry! Let it all come out! All the heartache . . . all the bitterness. I know, my darling, I know. Cry for Jim, but be glad for him too. It's not dying that's so terrible, Johnny, it's failing to live. My brother's life was wasted. . . . He died empty-poor. Jim went away rich. He carried a dream with him. He was triumphant. He never surrendered. And we won't either, will we, darling. We have so much to live for . . . so much to fight for.<sup>32</sup>

Once again, it is Kingsley's tendency to overstate, to comment on the play's action through dialogue, which mars the dialogue's effectiveness. The final scene between Harriet and Dr. Schiller is an example of this pattern:

Harriet: How can any one go on then? What gives us the courage to go on?

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<sup>30</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, pp. 2-2-16, 2-2-17.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 2-1-11.      <sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 3-2-25.

Dr. Schiller: Faith in people . . . in their good instinct . . . in a world which after all we make. And a compulsion to help those who need us. That's a great satisfaction, my dear. Believe me.

Harriet: No, you don't understand. You keep the world away. You don't let anything touch you. If you could only know how it can cut and tear you.

Dr. Schiller: Why do you say that? What do you know of me? Only the doctor. I am a human being as well. You know in Vienna I had my own hospital. I was doing new work. "Great! Important!" some said. Perhaps,--Then suddenly they came. Wanted me to subscribe to their inhumanity . . . I couldn't . . . they took my hospital . . . destroyed my records. Ten years of work. They didn't destroy me. I came here. I had to start over again. That's all right. We all have our problems. We're very lucky to be in a country where the human spirit is free.

Harriet: All the time you were helping me . . . you were suffering too?

Dr. Schiller: At this moment my mother is in Poland. I don't know whether she is dead or alive. You called me. I came. I'm doing my job as best I can. That's what we must all do. Never surrender.<sup>33</sup>

While the scene is sufficiently motivated, it simply restates a demonstrated action and is more lecture than dialogue.

Although critical reception of the play was generally satisfactory, even some of those who liked the play faulted Kingsley's dialogue. Richard Watts, Jr., said:

If, then, I am not as content with the dramatic activities of "The World We Make" as I should be, it is because of the Kingsley dialogue, in its determination to be realistic, seems to be lacking in the emotional power, the tragic intensity and the imaginative skill that would have made a believable story a properly moving one. It is, I am afraid, typical that the best scene in the play is one in which no word is spoken.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Kingsley, The World We Make, p. 3-2-22.

<sup>34</sup>Richard Watts, Jr., New York Herald Tribune, November 21, 1939, p. 18.

Brooks Atkinson, however, felt Kingsley had created:

. . . a cheerful, merry and also poignant drama of a part of life that is usually sacrificed to political causes in modern writing. Although Mr. Kingsley talks a little too much in his last scene, most of his writing admirably understates the meaning and some of it he has the courage to leave to pantomime.<sup>35</sup>

While one may agree with the criticism of the final scene, it must be noted that this use of dialogue is an exception. In the other scenes the dialogue is clear, compact, and in character. In addition, the dialogue skillfully contains and maintains the movement of the play's dramatic action. As in Men in White its sentimentality is honest and its characters, "small" as they may be, are enobled by their ideals and their humanity.

If the poor immigrants and workingmen and women of The World We Make sang the praises of America in their small voices, the same hymn found its full expression in the voices of Jefferson, Hamilton, and Washington in The Patriots. As has been mentioned, this play was written as an unabashed tribute to American democracy. Kingsley skillfully wove the writings of these statesmen into the language of his play, thereby reaching a level of eloquence not previously present in his dialogue. And what material he had! Here were men of high principle who knew the English language and how to use it with purpose:

Jefferson: . . . There is not a man in the whole empire who wished conciliation more than I. But, by the God that made me, I would have sooner ceased to exist than yield my freedom. And, in this, I know I speak for America. I am sorry to find a bloody campaign is decided on. But, since it is

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<sup>35</sup> Atkinson, New York Times, November 21, 1939, p. 17.

forced on us, we must drub the enemy and drub him soundly. We must teach the sceptered tyrant we are not brutes to kiss the hand that scourges us. But this is not enough. We are now deciding everlastingly our future and the future of our innocent posterity. Our people have already been fighting a year--for what? (He picks up the document.) For this. Let us give it to them--in writing--now. Now is the time to buttress the liberty we're fighting for. It can't be too strongly emphasized! Now, while men are bleeding and dying. Tomorrow they may grow tired and careless, and a new despot may find in the old laws an instrument to rob their liberty again. Now is the time to build a free society. Now! Not later.<sup>36</sup>

The dialogue also makes clear distinctions between characters. While the writing style of the eighteenth century might tend to make the characters' sentiments sound alike, there is no mistaking the thought processes which cause Hamilton and Jefferson to express themselves so differently. Jefferson, for example, seeks advice on the Treasury Bill from an ordinary citizen, Jacob, the blacksmith:

Jefferson: Jacob!

Jacob (intent on his work): Yes?

Jefferson: I need your advice.

Jacob: What about?

Jefferson: This money bill we've just passed.

Jacob: Oh! (Looks up for a moment.)

Jefferson: What do you think of it?

Jacob: Don't like it much.

Jefferson: You don't?

Jacob: Nope. (Frowns, hammers the shoe.)

Jefferson: Because of the speculators?

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<sup>36</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, pp. 687-688.

Jacob: Yep.

Jefferson: I see. Still, it's done the country considerable good?

Jacob: Mebbe.

Jefferson: What do your friends think of it, generally?

Jacob: Don't like it much.

Jefferson: I see.

(Potboy pokes in his head.)

Ned: Saddled yet? He's waitin'!

Jacob: Tell Mr. Jefferson, Ned. He's askin' about the money bill.

Ned: A blood-sucking swindle, Mr. Jefferson. (He is suddenly all aflame.) Look at my sister! Her husband was killed at the battle of Saratoga. Left her two little ones and some paper money they paid him. She's been savin' that for years. Two months ago the speculators told her it would be years more before she got anything on it, if ever. Got her to sell it for forty dollars. Six hundred dollars' worth! 'N they got Jacob's savin's.

(Mat enters.)

Jefferson: They did?

Jacob: Nine hundred.

Ned: From the Revolution. His pay.

Jacob: That ain't what we fit the Revolution fer.<sup>37</sup>

But Hamilton spends his time discussing politics with his upper-class, Royalist friends:

Knox: Yes. The Chief made an army out of a rabble, all right. There's no doubt of that.

Hamilton: Ah! But to accomplish it, even he had to resort

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<sup>37</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, pp. 697-698.

to the gallows and the lash. As with an army, so with a nation. You need one strong man.

Knox: The Chief's getting old though.

Hamilton: Exactly. Sometimes I lay awake nights wondering how we can ever hold this country together, when he's gone.

Knox: Personally, I think it's his character alone that does it. I wouldn't give a penny for the Constitution without him.

Hamilton (sits): Well, it's real value is as a stepping stone. (purring over his cigar) Wonderful flavor?

Knox: Mm!

Humphreys (wryly): A bit strongish. (They laugh. He disposes of his cigar in tray beside chair.) I agree with Alec. A monarchy would have been our best salvation.

Mrs. Hamilton: Only today I was talking to some of the ladies of our court on this subject. You go out in the streets. It's frightening. We're all agreed, the time is ripening for us to have a real king.

Butler (entering): Senator Monroe is calling, sir.

Hamilton: Monroe? What's he want? (rises) Show him in.

Butler: Yes, sir. (Butler exits.)

Humphreys (rises): Now, there's a country bumpkin! James Monroe. Pas d'elegance!

Knox: He's a good soldier! Fought in almost every important battle of the war.

Hamilton: The soul of a clerk, though. I can't abide that.<sup>38</sup>

Their different characters bring Jefferson and Hamilton to divergent conclusions regarding the destiny of American democracy:

Jefferson: There must have been a means to avert this speculation.

Hamilton: Look here--I don't quite understand your attitude. (Burst of laughter, offstage.) If we want to develop this

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<sup>38</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, p. 701.

country we've got to create great personal fortunes. Those men out there are building manufactories and industry. They're building America!

Jefferson: Good. Let's encourage them! But not at the expense of the people!

Hamilton: You and Madison! The people whisper--you tremble.  
(Monroe and Madison enter, stand silently listening.)

Jefferson: That's as it should be, isn't it?

Hamilton: I am determined this country's happiness shall be established on a firm basis. I think its only hope now lies in a moneyed aristocracy to protect it from the indiscretions of the people.

Jefferson: I see. And this bill is to lay the foundation for such an aristocracy?

Hamilton: Exactly.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, Kingsley clearly and concisely defines the full nature of Hamilton and Jefferson's political conflict.

Having established the nature of the conflict between Hamilton and Jefferson, Kingsley places both men in stress situations and by showing how each of them reacts to criticism, examines their judgment and leadership abilities. Jefferson is patient and slow to anger:

Jefferson: . . . (Turns, sees her with the newspaper.)  
Oh! You don't want to read that! (Crosses to take it from her.)

Patsy: Oh, my God!

Jefferson: Now don't get upset, dear!

Patsy: What sort of newspaper is this?

Jefferson: The "court" journal. The snobs nibble it for breakfast. Here, drink your sherry.

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<sup>39</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, p. 698.

Patsy: I'd heard what they were doing to you here, but this is worse than I could have possibly imagined.

Jefferson: It's very flattering. Especially that bit about the harem! A harem! At my age! Pretty good. . . .

Patsy: I don't see any humor in it! You'll answer these charges?

Jefferson: Answer one lie, they print twenty new ones.

Patsy: What are you going to do?

Jefferson: Let's ignore it, dear, hm?

Patsy: . . . You must enjoy being Secretary of State very much to put up with such abuse.

Jefferson: It's my job, dear.<sup>40</sup>

But Hamilton is as wild and aggressive as a hawk:

Monroe: . . . I have some papers I intend to submit to the President. I wanted to give you a chance to explain.

Hamilton: Give me a chance to . . . ? I don't like your tone. I don't like it at all.

Monroe: I think you should be informed. There have been charges leveled against you.

Hamilton: What charges?

Monroe: Of appropriating treasury funds.

Hamilton: What? (Moves toward Monroe.) You dare come into my house and accuse me of . . . ?

Monroe: I'm not accusing you. I'm inquiring into the facts.

Hamilton: General Knox, will you act as my second.

Knox: Your servant.

Hamilton: Sir, you will name your friend to this gentleman. They can arrange weapons, time, and place. Good night.

Monroe: I'll be very happy to oblige you.

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<sup>40</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, p. 708.

Hamilton (to servant): Show him out.<sup>41</sup>

But the title of the play is The Patriots and in its final scene we see Hamilton as a strong but flawed man who quite literally sacrifices his life for his country:

Hamilton (wavering): I wish I had such faith. (Shakes his head.) I don't know. I frankly don't know. I find myself lost here. Day by day, I am becoming more foreign to this land.

Jefferson: Yet you helped build it.

Hamilton: There is a tide here that sweeps men to the fashioning of some strange destiny, even against their will. I never believed in this--and yet, as you say, I helped build it. Every inch of it. (Pause. He rises.) And still, I must admit it has worked better than I thought. If it could survive--if . . .

Jefferson: It can. And it will. This tide is irresistible. You cannot hold it back. This is the rising flood of man's long lost freedom. Try as you will, you cannot stop it. . . . I shall not compromise, General Hamilton. You do whatever you choose. I cannot compromise on this.

Hamilton (Holds out his hand. It is shaky.): Since the fever took me, I can't hit the side of a barn with a pistol. Burr is cool as a snake, and one of the best shots in America. I've fought him for five years now. If I cross him in this--he will challenge me. I have no doubt of that. I am a dead man already. But at least you are honest. I shall urge my friends to break the deadlock. You will be President. Your victory is complete.<sup>42</sup>

While the dialogue of The Patriots is usually eloquent, it is occasionally marred by a forcing of emotion which causes it to become melodramatic. Washington's final plea to Jefferson, for example, descends from eloquence to ordinary theatrics:

Washington: . . . I'm getting old, and I catch myself dreaming of the Potomac and Mount Vernon. (He almost shouts.) Don't you think I yearn for the peace of my own farm? Don't

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<sup>41</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, p. 702.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 723.

you think all this--all this . . . (Controls himself. There is a long silence. He murmurs.) Peace in our life? Where . . . ? (His memories turn back as he searches for the phrase.) Oh, yes . . . Paine wrote it. Was it in "The Crisis"? "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink. . . ."

. . . . .  
Tom! The fabric is crumbling. Our Republic is dying. We must bolster it, somehow--some way. (Fiercely, a grim, stubborn warrior fighting a ghost. He pounds the table.) It must have a chance. It will, I say. It will, it will, it will! I'll defend its right to a chance with the last drop of my blood. . . .<sup>43</sup>

While most critics felt that Kingsley had handled his materials quite well, there were some who felt that his use of the character's actual words made the play rather weighty and stilted.<sup>44</sup> Kingsley's play is, however, as much of issues as it is of personalities, and he may have clung to the original language because it would be most difficult to express the issues in better form than did Jefferson, Hamilton, and Washington themselves. Also, Kingsley needed the documentary support of authentic language to substantiate the positions taken by his characters. His reaction to criticism regarding his use of history was, in fact, that Hamilton and Jefferson had actually said many of the controversial things included in the play.<sup>45</sup>

In The Patriots Kingsley utilized dialogue most effectively in presenting differing philosophical points of view. In

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<sup>43</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, p. 713.

<sup>44</sup>Rosamond Gilder, review of The Patriots, Theatre Arts Monthly, XXVII (April, 1943), 201; Stark Young, review of The Patriots, The New Republic, CVIII (February, 1943), 211.

<sup>45</sup>Kingsley, Chicago Sun Times, February 13, 1944.

Detective Story Kingsley returned to the type of crackling street jargon that he had used in Dead End. The environment is different--a squad room instead of a slum street--and the dialect softened, but the sounds of the city still echo in Detective Story. In this play Kingsley was most effective in using dialogue as a tool for delineating character and environment. If in The Patriots we are inspired by the words of great men, in Detective Story we are fascinated by a glimpse of bizarre personalities in an exotic setting. The attraction of each play is different but equally powerful.

In Detective Story, the dialogue is spiced with earthy humor and is used with great skill to quickly sketch in character while establishing a dramatic milieu:

Callahan (Tears off his jacket, revealing the full splendor of his polo shirt--Hawaiian in motif, with brilliant foliage woven into the pattern.): Hi, Tom, Nick, Joe! Phew, it's hot out! Sweat your kolonjas off!

Joe: What the hell are you dressed up for? Must be Halloween?

Call: I wonder what he means?

O'Brien: Saks-Fifth Avenue pays Mike to advertise their clothes.

Call: Gese, were we given a run around! We tailed a guy for two hours, from Fifty-thoid to Ninety-foist and back. I thought for sure, "This one belongs to us."

O'Brien: Looked like a good man.

Call: Then the jerko took a bus. (Glances at the schedule hanging on the wall.) Moider! Sunday again! What the hell am I?--a Sunday detective? My kids'll grow up, they won't even know me. (to Joe) Say, Joe there's a big story on Third Avenue. You get it? The brewery truck?

Joe: No, what about it?

Call: A brewery truck backed up into the sidewalk and a barrell of beer fell right out inna baby carriage.

Joe: Was the baby in it?

Call: Yeah.

Joe: Was it killed?

Call: No, it was light beer! Boyeeng! (He doubles over, holding his sides with laughter.) Ha, ha, ha!

Joe (groans and sinks back into his chair): You're a cute kid. What's your name, Berle?

(The shoplifter returns from the wash-room. As she crosses Callahan studies her face, squinting his eyes professionally.)

O'Brien: Busy day?

Gallagher: Quiet.

O'Brien: Good. (He knocks wood.)

Galla: Too quiet.

O'Brien: We're due. We're ripe for a homicide.

Galla: Ssh. Wait till I get out of here. (The desk phone rings, Gallagher groans.) Can't you keep your big mouth shut? (He picks up the receiver.) 21st Squad Detectives, Gallagher. Yes, Madame. That's right. Where? Now what is it you lost?

Joe: Her virginity.

Galla: In a taxicab?

Joe: Hell of a place!

Galla: Did you get his number? Can you describe it?

Joe: This is going to be educational.

Galla: What's your name? Address? Yes, Madame. I'll check that for you. Not at all.

Joe (simultaneously with Gallagher's last speech): I got a squeal for you. I lost something. My manhood.

Call: We don't take cases that old, Joe.

Galla (hanging up): Outlawed by the statute of limitations.<sup>46</sup>

The routine life of the squad room provides a dramatic contrast for moments of melodramatic excitement. Thus, the play's opening sequence establishes a normal rhythm with which other scenes in the play may be contrasted:

Dakis: Hair? (Squints at her frazzled hair.)

Shoplifter: Brown.

Dakis (typing, hunt and peck system): Brown. Eyes?

Shop: Blue.

Dakis: Blue.

(The phone rings. Gallagher picks up the receiver.)

Galla: 21st Squad Detectives, Gallagher. Yes, Madame, what is your name, please? (He reaches for a pencil and pad, glances at the clock, writes.) Address? Phone number? Plaza 9-1855 . . .

Dakis: Weight?

Galla (as the other desk phone rings): One second, please. (He picks up the other receiver, balancing the first on his shoulder.) 21st Squad Detectives, Gallagher.

Shop: 109, I think.

Dakis: 109 will do. . . . (He squints at her potato sack of a figure.) Height?

Shop: I don't know. About . . .

Dakis: Stand up against the wall! (He waves her to the height chart.) Over there.

Galla (on phone): Hello, Loot. No, nothing. A shoplifter. Best's. A pocketbook. (He calls to Dakis.) Hey, Nick, what was the price on that purse she lifted?

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<sup>46</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, pp. 470-471.

Shop (mournfully): Six dollars.

Dakis (to the Shoplifter): Five foot one. All right, come back. (The shoplifter returns to the desk.)

Galla (on the phone): Six bucks.

Dakis: Age?

Shop: Twenty-seven. (Corrects herself, quickly.) Twenty-two.

Dakis (squints at her, types): Twenty-seven.

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Dakis (Rises, crosses to fingerprint board, rolls ink on pad, beckons to the Shoplifter.): Come here! (The Shoplifter crosses to Dakis. He takes her hand. She stiffens. He reassures her gently--in the interests of efficiency.): Take it easy, girlie. Let me do the work. You just supply the finger.

Shop: Ooh!

Dakis: This finger. Relax, now. I'm not going to hurt you. Just r-r-r-roll it . . . (He presses her finger down on the on the sheet.)

Galla (Glances up, toward door into hallway at someone approaching.): Uh, uh! Here comes trouble. (to Dakis) Look at the calendar!

Dakis (Glances at the calendar on the wall.): A full moon tonight.

Galla: It never fails.<sup>47</sup>

Second only to his skillful use of dialogue in creating environment is Kingsley's use of language to establish character. McLeod's dialogue is, for example, relatively free of slang since he is, unlike the other detectives, a college graduate. While most of the detectives regard their job as routine, McLeod perceives the ironies of his work, sometimes with bitter amusement:

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<sup>47</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, pp. 467-468.

Brody: Oh, Jim, this is your squeal. (to Sims) This is Detective McLeod, Mr. Sims.

McLeod: How do you do, sir? (Takes out a handkerchief, mops his brow, wipes the sweat-band of his hat.)

Sims: How do you do?

Brody: Mr. Sims is an attorney.

McLeod: And very clever. I've seen him in court.

Sims: Thank you.

Brody: He's here for Kurt Schneider.

McLeod (the quick flicker of mockery in his eyes): Oh, yes. (to Sims) I had the pleasure of arresting your client a year ago.

Sims: So I am informed.

McLeod: He's changed his lawyer since, if not his business.

Sims: Kurt Schneider is a successful truck farmer from New Jersey.

McLeod: With a little abortion mill in New York for a sideline. Nothing fancy, just a quick ice-tong job. I've a considerable yen for your client.

Sims: I'm aware of that. (to Brody) Show him those pictures! (Brody hands the photographs to McLeod.)

McLeod (Looks at the pictures, grimaces.): There's no doubt the process of evolution is beginning to reverse itself.<sup>48</sup>

Other times he reacts with fury:

McLeod (His face goes black with anger. He roars at Arthur): Shut up! Sit down! (Arthur sits. McLeod controls himself, lights a cigarette, his hand trembling.) When you're dealing with the criminal mind, softness is dangerous, Mr. Pritchett.

Mr. Prit: But if it's a first offense.

McLeod: It's never a first offense: it's just the first time they get caught.

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<sup>48</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 473.

Susan: Why are you so vicious?

McLeod: I'm not vicious, young lady. I didn't steal this man's money. (Extinguishes the match violently and hurls it in Arthur's direction.) He did. (to Mr. Pritchett) This is a war, Mr. Pritchett. We know it, they know it, but you don't. We're your army. We're here to protect you. But you've got to cooperate. I'm sick and tired of massaging the complainant into doing his simple duty! You civilians are too lazy or too selfish or too scared or just too indifferent to even want to appear in court and see the charges through that you, yourselves, bring. That makes us--street-cleaners. They have a stick, sweep out the streets, we have a stick, sweep out the human garbage; they pile it in wagons, dump it in the East River, we pile it in wagons, dump it in the Tombs. And what happens?--The next day . . . all back again.<sup>49</sup>

Set against this image of a driven man is his relationship with his wife, Mary:

McLeod (on the phone): Hello, darling. (His voice at once takes on warmth and tenderness; his eyes, his smile, his whole being seem to undergo a metamorphosis.) What did the doctor say? . . . Thank God! Nothing organic? Sure, now, Mary? . . . How does he explain those palpitations? . . . Psychosomatic? Mm! And how does he explain that? . . . What tensions? (laughs) What'd he prescribe, short of a new world? Phenobarbital and Vitamin B-one? The history of our time. (He laughs.) Oh, Mary! You're wonderful! I love you! Of course, I was worried sick. Mm. Yes . . . Thank you, my angel. I'll call you later. Good-bye.<sup>50</sup>

While the dialogue is consistent and in character, it accurately creates the image of a deeply disturbed and divided individual. Additionally, Kingsley has skillfully utilized this brief telephone conversation to communicate a wealth of information about Mary and her relationship with McLeod.

At the other end of the scale from the granite hard McLeod is the gentle and forgiving Detective Brody:

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<sup>49</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 533.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 475.

Brody: My boy was in the Navy, too. The "Juneau." Know her?

Arthur: She was a cruiser.

Brody: Yeah.

Arthur: Didn't she go down with all hands? In the Pacific?

Brody: There were ten survivors. He wasn't one of them.

Arthur: Too bad.

Brody: Yeah! He was my only boy. It's something you never get over. You never believe it. You keep waiting for a bell to ring . . . phone . . . door. Sometimes I hear a voice on the street, or see a young fellow from the back, the set of his shoulders--like you--for a minute it's him. Your whole life becomes like a dream . . . a walking dream.

Arthur: Maybe he was one of the lucky ones.

Brody: Don't say that!

Arthur: Why not?

Brody: Because it wouldn't make sense then.

Arthur: Does it?

Brody (fiercely): Yes, damn it! Yes.<sup>51</sup>

. . . . .

Brody (pours himself a stiff one): Jim, I've been your partner for thirteen years. I ever ask you a favor?

McLeod (pressing his hand to his temples): What is it Lou?

Brody: That kid outside. (McLeod groans.) I want you to give him a break.

McLeod: You know better. I can't adjudicate this case.

Brody: And what the hell do you think you're doing.

McLeod: What makes him so special?

Brody: A lot. I think he's a good kid. He's got stuff on

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<sup>51</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, pp. 499-500.

the ball. Given another chance . . . (Pause.) Jim, he reminds me of my boy.

McLeod: Mike?--was a hero.

Brody: Why? Because he was killed? If Mike'd be alive today he'd have the same problems this kid has.<sup>52</sup>

The loss of his son, even in a good cause, has left Brody with an understanding and a tolerance denied McLeod.

Between the extremes of Brody and McLeod is the desirable mean--Lt. Monaghan. Moderate, businesslike, and clever, Monaghan is a near perfect cop:

Lieut: . . . On Schneider--what's your personal angle?

McLeod (subtly mimics the Lieutenant's speech): Personal angle! None. Why?

Lieut (looks up sharply): His mouthpiece hinted at something or other.

McLeod: Fishing expedition.

Lieut: You sure?

McLeod: Sure, I'm sure. . . .

Lieut: . . . What've you got?

McLeod: Girl--Miss Harris in the hospital. Critical. I called the D.A.'s office. I'm taking Schneider over to the hospital for a positive identification. I've got a corroborating witness. I phoned her. She's on her way over here. And I want to get a signed statement from Schneider.

Lieut: How?

McLeod: "Persuasion."

Lieut: Keep your big mitts off. That's an order.

McLeod: Yes, sir.

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<sup>52</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 548.

Lieut: Can't you say "yes, sir" without making it sound like an insult?

(Pause.)

McLeod (the sting still in his voice): Yes, sir.

Lieut (furious): You're too damn superior, that's your trouble. For the record, I don't like you any more'n you like me; but you got a value here and I need you on my squad. That's the only reason you're not wearing a white badge again.

McLeod (reaches in his pocket for his shield): You wouldn't want it back now, would you?

Lieut: When I do, I'll ask for it.

McLeod: Because you can have it--with instructions.

Lieut (controls himself): Get what you can out of Schneider, but no roughhouse! You know the policy of this administration.

McLeod: I don't hold with it.

Lieut: What the hell ice does that cut?

McLeod: I don't believe in coddling criminals.

Lieut: Who tells you to?

McLeod: You do. The whole damn system does.

Lieut: Sometimes, McLeod, you talk like a maniac.<sup>53</sup>

The most impressive bits of slime that pass through the squad room are the two burglars: Charley and his "girlfriend," Lewis. Charley progresses from a whining stupid hood to a truly destructive malevolent creature:

Charley (Pretends to play a violin, humming "Hearts and Flowers." Then he laughs raucously, nudging Lewis.): Hear that, Lewis? He's facin' five to ten? Wait'll the boys go to work on him. (Arthur and Susan look at him. To Susan.) What makes you think he'll want you then?

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<sup>53</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, pp. 491-492.

Susan: What?

Charley: A kid like this in jail. They toss for him.

Susan: What do you mean?

Charley: To see whose chicken he's gonna be!

Susan: What does he mean? What's he talking about?

Arthur: Don't listen to him. (to Charley) Shut up! Who asked you to . . .

Charley: After a while you get to like it. Lots a guys come out, they got no use for dames after that.

Arthur: Shut up!

Charley: Look at Lewis, there. He's more woman than man, ain't you, ain't you, Lewis? (Lewis grins.)<sup>54</sup>

Once again, as in Dead End and Men in White, the dialogue of the play's more romantic moments is often banal:

Arthur: . . . All I ever wanted was to live quietly in a small college town . . . to study and teach. No! (bitterly) This isn't a time for study and teachers . . . this is a time for generals.

Susan (passionately): I hate that kind of talk, Juggs. Everywhere I hear it. . . . I don't believe it. Whatever happens to you, you can still pick up and go on. If ever there was a time for students and teachers, this is it. I know you can still make whatever you choose of your life. (She pauses, aware of his black anguish.) Arthur! Do you want Joy? Would that help? Would you like to see her and talk to her?  
 . . . . .

Arthur: I don't want her, Suzy. I don't want Joy.

Susan: You're sure?

Arthur: Yes. (Pause.) For five years I've been in love with a girl that doesn't exist. I wouldn't know what to say to her now. (The noises of the city outside rise and fall.) That's finished. Washed up.

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<sup>54</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, pp. 546-547.

Susan: Oh, Arthur! Why couldn't you have fallen in love with me?<sup>55</sup>

This dialogue seems particularly weak when contrasted with the seamy reality of the cop's and criminal's dialogue.

Although Kingsley recognized some of the dangers inherent in using the reporter, Joe, as his mouthpiece, and cut most of his speeches because he was "preaching,"<sup>56</sup> some of the transparent lecturing shows through:

Joe: . . . I met Mary years before you did. The spring of '41--I was on the Newark Star. She didn't remember me. I never forgot her, though. It's one of those faces you don't forget. She's one in a million, your Mary. I know. She's a fine girl, Seamus. She could have had anything she wanted--materially--anything. She chose you instead. Why? What'd you have to offer her? Buttons! These crazy hours, this crazy life? She loves you. You don't know how lucky you are. I know. I'm little and ugly--and because I'm a lover of beauty I'm going to live and die alone. But you? . . . The jewel was placed in your hands. Don't throw it away. You'll never get it back again!<sup>57</sup>

The trite images and self-pitying tone of this speech clash with the harsh music of the rest of the play's dialogue.

These weaknesses are, however, the exception. Detective Story is characterized by what Harold Clurman calls "the kind of hot journalism--following 'The Front Page' tradition--in which the American stage excels."<sup>58</sup> As such, it is a dramatically effective drama, sparked by virile and forceful language.

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<sup>55</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, pp. 545-546.

<sup>56</sup>Harry Gilroy, New York Times, March 20, 1949, Section 2, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 550.

<sup>58</sup>Harold Clurman, The New Republic, CXX (April, 1949), 25.

The dialogue of Detective Story derives its particular power from the short, clipped language of the squad room-- dialogue which punches home the point of each line with force, clarity, and economy. The scene between McLeod and the Lieutenant is an especially fine example of this technique. The sentences are often no more than two words long and perfectly match the accelerated pace of the environment.

The dialogue of Darkness at Noon is even more powerful and emotion packed than that of Detective Story. The structure of the lines is, with the exception of the interrogation sequences, quite different since life in prison moves at a slower pace and there is time to collect thoughts into elaborate memories. The scene between the well-meaning liberal, Richard, and Rubashov is a good example:

Richard: Truda used to laugh at my stutter--She had a funny little laugh--  
(Richard sits. Also Rubashov.)  
If that's the party policy back there--then--in my opinion it's wrong.

Rubashov: The Party is never wrong! You and I can be wrong-- but not the Party! The Party is History. You must give me your promise to write only according to the lines laid down by the Comintern.

Richard: Understand one thing--Comrade--I'm a writer--that has been my art and profession since I've been a young man. Some of my colleagues write easily. I don't. I write out of torment--I write what I believe--and--feel--in here. I have no choice--I write what I must, because I must. Even if I'm wrong--that's how we arrive at the truth.

Rubashov: We have already arrived at the truth. Objective truth. And with us--art is its weapon. I'm amazed at you, Comrade Richard. You're seeking the truth for the sake of your own ego--? What kind of delusion is this? The individual is nothing--he doesn't matter. The Party is everything!

--and its policy as laid down by the Comintern must be like a block of polished granite. One conflicting idea is dangerous. Not one crack in its surface is to be tolerated. Nothing-- not a mustard seed must be allowed to sprout in it and split our solidarity! The me, the I is a grammatical fiction...<sup>59</sup>

This dialogue approaches being a "speech" but it is believable because of the circumstances established by the playwright. Additionally, since Rubashov has been presented as one of The Party's most eloquent spokesmen and finest minds, dialogue which would otherwise seem too well constructed is appropriate to Rubashov:

Rubashov (Rubashov, feverish, slowly paces to and fro. To himself while pacing.): What if he is right. In spite of everything. In spite of the dirt and blood and lies. Supposing the Leader is right. Supposing the true foundations of the future are being built here. History has always been an inhumane and scrupulous builder. Mixing its mortar of lies and blood and filth. Well, what of it, Rubashov? Be logical. Haven't you too always lived under the compulsion of working things out to their final conclusions? (Counting out the paces.) 1-2-3-4-5 and a half--1-2-3-4-5 and a half. (He shivers, takes his coat, wraps it around himself.)<sup>60</sup>

Such monologues offer direct insight into the processes of Rubashov's mind and since he has spent his mature life formulating Party policy, are perfectly in character. Moreover, they establish the motivation for his confession with clarity and dramatic force.

The contrast between the creative mind of Rubashov and Gletkin's programmed ignorance is eloquently demonstrated in the dialogue of their first encounter:

Rubashov: Why am I under arrest? Why have I been dragged out of a sickbed? Why have I been brought here?

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<sup>59</sup> Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, pp. 21-22.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 49-50.

Gletkin: If you wish to argue with me you'll have to stand up.

Rubashov: If you're not the Commandant, I haven't the slightest desire to argue with you--or even to speak to you for that matter.

Gletkin: Then don't bang on the door again--or the usual disciplinary measures will have to be applied. (Turns to the Guard.) When was the prisoner brought in?

Guard: Ten minutes ago.

Gletkin: His arrest was ordered for three A.M. sharp. What happened? (Makes notes in notebook.)

Guard: The car broke down.

Gletkin: That's inexcusable. It's the Commandant's new car--and it was in perfect condition. This looks very suspicious--(harshly). Send the driver up to my office at once!

Rubashov: It's not his fault. It wasn't sabotage.

Gletkin (turns to Rubashov): How do you know it wasn't?

Rubashov: Make allowances.

Gletkin: For what?

Rubashov: Our roads.

Gletkin: What's the matter with our roads?

Rubashov: They're primitive cow paths.

Gletkin: Very critical aren't you? I suppose the roads in the bourgeois countries are better--

Rubashov (looks at Gletkin searchingly): Young man, have you ever been outside of our country?

Gletkin: No. I don't have to--to know. And I don't want to hear any fairy tales.

.....

Rubashov: Tell your superior officer I want to talk to him and stop wasting my time!

Gletkin: Your time? Your time has run out, Rubashov! (Rubashov murmurs in French.) Speak in your own tongue!

Are you so gone you can't even think any longer except in a filthy foreign language?<sup>61</sup>

Gletkin's dialogue is accented by images of destruction, pain, and death:

Gletkin: Only, since this confession is so important to the Party--I consider your method wrong. This won't get you results. I know how to handle these old timers. They're all rotten at the core. They're all infected with the western leprosy. If you want a confession, turn him over to me.

Ivanoff (rises): You young people amuse me. You know everything don't you? The Nazis captured this man. Broke his leg, smashed his jaw, killed him and brought him to life again--I don't know how many times--but they couldn't extract one admission out of him. And finally--he escaped. And you're going to break him for me in three days? No! If he confesses it won't be out of cowardice. Your methods won't work with him. He's made out of a material, the more you hammer it, the tougher it gets.

Gletkin: I don't agree. (Ivanoff turns back.) My experience with these old counter-revolutionaries proves otherwise. The human nervous system at best can only stand so much--and when they have these bourgeois flaws in them--a little pressure--in the right places--and they split like rotten logs.

Ivanoff: I'd hate to fall into your hands.

Gletkin: It's my experience that every human nervous system has a breaking point under pain. It's only necessary to find the lever--the special pain--

Ivanoff (turns up): That'll do--

Gletkin: You asked me.<sup>62</sup>

These are images which fit Gletkin's mission and his beliefs stand in stark contrast to Rubashov's idealism.

The dialogue which Rubashov and 402 tap through their cell walls provide moments of sad humor and are quite effective in providing a sense of the isolation of prison life:

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<sup>61</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, pp. 16-18.      <sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39.

402 (Crosses to wall. Taps. Rubashov finally responds.):  
What day is it?

Rubashov: Lost track.

402 (taps): What you doing?

Rubashov (taps): Dreaming.

402 (taps): Sleeping?

Rubashov (taps): Waking.

402 (taps): Bad. What dreams.

Rubashov (taps): My life.

402 (taps): You won't confess?

Rubashov (taps): I told you no.

402 (taps): Die in silence--is best.

(Pause.)

Rubashov (to himself): Die in silence. Fade into darkness--  
Easily said. Die in silence. Vanish without a word. Easily  
said--

402 (taps): Walking?

Rubashov (taps): Yes.

402 (taps): Careful--Blisters--Walking dream bad feet. I  
walked twelve hours in cell once--Wore out shoes--Didn't mind.  
I was dreaming of women--Question--When is woman best?  
Answer--after hot bath--well soaped--all over--slippery--Ha!  
Ha!--What's matter? You didn't laugh--Joke!

Rubashov (taps): Ha! Ha!

402 (taps): Ha ha! Funny, ha?

Rubashov (taps): Funny--

402 (taps): How many women you love? (Pause.)  
How many? Answer?

Rubashov (taps): Never.

402 (taps): Why not?

Rubashov (taps): My work--No time.

402 (taps): You and Revolution. Some love affair! Don't you fellows have sex?

Rubashov (taps): Yes.

402 (taps): What you use it for? Write in snow? Ha ha-- Good joke?

Rubashov (taps): Not good.

402 (taps): No sense humor. No wonder. Your women. Half men! Your women, mustaches. You kill beauty our women. Son of bitch--Son of bitch--Son of bitch!<sup>63</sup>

The pathetic act of tapping laughter through the walls adds enormously to the pathos of these scenes.

The interrogation sequences with their dramatic, action-filled dialogue provide a forceful counterpoint to the play's generally retrospective structure:

Gletkin: Then admit your crimes and get it over with!  
(Crossing up Center, gets two more books from bookshelves.)

Rubashov: Admit to crimes I didn't commit? Even Danton in the French Revolution was allowed to defend himself.

Guard: . . . And what happened to the French Revolution?

Gletkin: . . . Powdered pigtails declaiming about personal honor?! All that mattered to Danton and Company was to go with a swan song. Is that what you want?

Rubashov: I certainly don't want to go howling like a wolf in the night.

Gletkin: Whether it does good or harm to the Cause--that doesn't matter?

Rubashov: My whole life has but a single purpose--to serve the Cause.

Gletkin: There's only one way you can serve it now. A full

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<sup>63</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, pp. 44-45.

confession in open court. A voluntary confession of all these crimes.

Rubashov: I've pleaded guilty to a false and harmful policy. Isn't that enough?

Gletkin: Our country today is the bastion of the new era. Everything depends on our keeping the bastion intact, keeping the country solidly united.

Rubashov: How does it unite the country--How does it serve the Party that her members have to grovel in the dust? The name N. S. Rubashov is a piece of Party history. By dragging me in the mud you besmirch the Revolution. I--

Gletkin: I--I--me--me--I (Picks up book.) Do you recognize this book.

Rubashov: Yes.

Gletkin: Who wrote it?

Rubashov: I did.

Gletkin (Opens the book and reads.): Quote--"For our purposes the individual doesn't exist. The I--the Me is a petty bourgeois concept--The I a grammatical fiction."

Rubashov: Yes. I am paying, Richard. Paying.

Gletkin: For what?

Rubashov: My guilt.

Gletkin (rises): You admit your guilt? Now we're getting somewhere.

Rubashov: What I mean by guilt and what you mean are two very different things.

Gletkin: Yet you did plant the seed in Joseph Kieffer's mind!

Rubashov: Yes.

Gletkin: He was young! Impressionable!

Rubashov: Yes.

Gletkin: "Eliminate the Leader" you said. Correct?

Rubashov: Yes.

Gletkin: So perhaps you are really guilty objectively.

Rubashov: Perhaps I am--<sup>64</sup>

The through line of the dialogue is absolutely clear. Rubashov is driven relentlessly to his confession by Gletkin's use of Rubashov's own words. Rubashov believes one of his weaknesses as a revolutionary is to look at events through the eyes of others--to see their point of view--and this tendency is precisely what forces him to confess.

Kingsley was far more successful in this play's romantic moments than in any of his other plays. The moment of Luba's departure corresponds to the end of her love affair with Rubashov and is constructed with restrained eloquence:

Luba: Oh! I didn't hear you come in. (She holds up some of the flowers.)

Rubashov: Beautiful! Where'd you find them?

Luba: I took a long walk this morning in the country. They were lying on the ground. The branch had broken off an old apple tree.

.....  
 We had some apple trees at home. On Sundays we'd help Father prune them. There was one huge old tree so gnarled and full of bumps. We had a special affection for that tree. Oh, the pains my father took to save it. We called it his patient. Such loving care he gave it. I remember one spring morning he took us out to look at the "patient." It was blossom time. The other apple trees didn't have many blossoms that year. But the "patient"--you've never seen so many blossoms on one tree--they covered it--big ones. It took your breath away. So beautiful--The tree was all covered with blooms like snow--pink snow. Then Father said, "I'm going to lose my patient."

Rubashov: Why'd he say that?

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<sup>64</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, pp. 82-84.

Luba: An apple tree puts out its most beautiful bloom just before it dies.<sup>65</sup>

This scene does not exist in the novel and is entirely Kingsley's contribution. None of his previous tendency to over-sentimentalize is present in this lovely parable which is rich with applications to several elements in the play--the end of their affair, the end of the Revolution, the end of Rubashov's career.

The eloquence of Rubashov's summation of his fatal weakness is also exceptional because he makes no excuse for his failure:

Rubashov: . . . All of you! My hundred eighty million fellow prisoners, what have I done to you? What have I created? If History is all calculations, Rubashov, give me the sum of a hundred eighty million nightmares. Quickly calculate me the pressure of a hundred eighty million cravings--Where in your mathematics, Rubashov, is the human soul? At the very beginning you forget what you were searching for?<sup>66</sup>

Some of the credit for Kingsley's exceptionally fine use of dialogue in this play must go to Koestler. Much of the dialogue between Rubashov and Ivanoff is derived from the novel and bits of the tapped conversation with 402 along with a sizable amount of Gletkin's final interrogation have been transferred whole into the play. But the novel's primary contribution was in disciplining Kingsley's talent and steering him away from the trap of sentiment. The basic tone of the play is quite different from that of the novel which eschews the dramatic, preferring to demonstrate how the revolutionary's cold logic will force his confession. The intellect portrayed in the novel is gem-like in

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<sup>65</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, p. 57.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

its brilliance but undramatic. Kingsley condensed the dialogue and gave it clarity, passion and eloquence.

Kingsley's dialogue for Lunatics and Lovers was not so distinguished. Dialect is used in this play primarily to define the two basic character groupings: the "normals," Will and Marian, speak a general American dialect; the other characters spout "Runyonese."

The Judge's "hammy" eloquence is, however, a delightful comic device and Kingsley uses it to good effect:

Cupid: Judgie, I got a little goil inside dyin' to meet ya. A little goil with little curls.

Judge (sits on stool): What a revolting picture! It's not right, not befitting.

Cupid: It befits ya like a goidle, willya?

Judge: No, no, Ex Nihilo, Non Est . . . From nothing, nothing comes. (Reaches and Cupid puts drink in his hand.) But she was a sweet child, Désirée. . . . That child had something here. (Taps breast.)

Cupid: Yeah! Rocks!

Judge: Heart, Kewpie! Heart! Heart! Heart! I could have made something out of that child.

Cupid (drinks): What? Put her onna turf?

Judge: Cupid, I've never met anyone quite like her. Per aspera ad aster, to the stars, the hard way. Your mind is always in the gutter.

Cupid (Puts glass down, laughs cheerfully.): Sure, it's my character, Judgie. One ting you lay inna gutter, you can't fall down. You, Judgie, you're alla time flyin' around on Cloud Number Naught. Life, Judgie, life! Not a pome. You're alla time lookin' at the woid true rose-colored eyeballs.

Judge: Rose-colored eyeballs? (Starts to laugh; Cupid laughs; laugh dies.) Ah, what's the use? (Looks at drink.)

My God, I am in a bad way. I can't even get drunk.

Cupid: Any man can't get drunk ain't tryin'.<sup>67</sup>

As is typical in this genre, wisecracks abound. "Sue me I'm a degenerate," Cupid wails. Désirée orders Sable from the room saying, "Back to your bathtub you two-bit Ondine." Speaking of Cupid, Sable moans, "Wit all his wonderful qualities, if he was only somebody else, he'd be poifect." Désirée finds Will in the bathroom with the bubble bathing Sable and quips, "Studying marine life, darling? . . . If there's one thing that nauseates me, it's one cheap peep-creep."

Kingsley also uses exaggeration to comic effect. For example, Marian relates the break up of her family to the fall of Western civilization:

Marian: You don't think, that's your trouble! There should be a law against women like you Miss del Marr. You're the most dangerous type criminal in our whole society.

Désirée: Now wait a minute--

Judge: I'll take the one in the red tights.

Marian: Don't you realize what it means to steal a father away from his children? To break up a happy home.

Désirée: I didn't!

Marian: Oh, yes, you did. And what is the result? The home goes to pieces. The children become neurotic. They turn into criminals and Communists. The country falls. Western civilization collapses! The whole world goes back to the Dark Ages! And it's all your fault, Miss del Marr!<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Kingsley, Lunatics and Lovers, I, 1.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

In presenting Cupid's cynical point of view, Kingsley uses language which is uncharacteristically harsh and unromantic:

Cupid: She was miserable to begin wit. She come in miserable, she'll go out miserable. So who'll know the difference?

Sable: She will.

Cupid: Look at her now. She's in dere tummelin' like dere's no tomorrow. One misery drives out de odder misery. Dis broad's okay now. Don't worry about her. You dramatize everything, Sugar--don't mean a thing. It's all inna mind.

Joe: It's a simple case of Judy O'Grady and de Colonel's lady. It's a scientific fact. Look underneath anybody's skin and whaddaya find? A bunch mollycules! See? So underneath everybody is exactly like everybody.

Sable: Yeah? So how come you're a boy and I'm a goil?

Joe (to Cupid): She don't get it.

Cupid (to Sable): It boils down to dis. Dis dame inside, she ain't gonna miss one slice off de loaf any more'n any odder dame.<sup>69</sup>

The racy unromantic dialogue is, however, in complete agreement with Cupid's character.

While the dialogue of Lunatics and Lovers is always clear and believable, it is not particularly distinguished nor typical of Kingsley's talent. Lunatics and Lovers is highly derivative and the play should probably be regarded as Kingsley's one therapeutic excursion into Broadway comedy.

Being an artist of great social conscience, Kingsley had a seemingly irresistible impulse to lecture from the stage. In most of his plays, either the subject matter or the play's environment aided him in controlling this propensity. In Ten Million

<sup>69</sup>Kingsley, Lunatics and Lovers, II, 1.

Ghosts, Kingsley gave full vent to his anti-war sentiments and damaged his play's effectiveness. Night Life suffered the same fate. Kingsley noted that in preparing this play he had been fighting a mental block for a long time.<sup>70</sup> He had not mentioned this difficulty before. Additionally, he abandoned his usual procedure of research and documentation--his preparation for this play was, as he said, "in the heart."<sup>71</sup> There can be no question of Kingsley's sincerity in this play. He wrote from a heartfelt anguish at what he saw happening to American culture in the early 1960's. But Kingsley, as can be noted in his previous works, is not at his best in dealing with emotional subjects in passionate terms. His technique is fundamentally objective and not subjective.

The previous discussions of plot and character have pointed out the weakness of the central conflict in Night Life. This lack manifests itself most noticeably in dialogue. Since the characters are only feebly forcing their will on one another, the dialogue has little action to contain and frequently what is normally subtext in a play emerges as dialogue. A somewhat lengthy scene between Anna and Neil serves as an example:

Anna: Neil, I love you.

Neil: Sure.

Anna: I do.

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<sup>70</sup>William Glover, "Sabbatical Over," Louisville Courier-Journal, September 9, 1962, located in Kingsley clipping file, Lincoln Center Research Library for the Performing Arts.

<sup>71</sup>Stuart W. Little, New York Herald Tribune, May 14, 1962, p. 12.

Neil: Anna, don't play games with me.

Anna: I know what you're afraid of. I wouldn't humiliate you. Ever.

Neil (laughs): Oh, Anna.

Anna: I'd be faithful.

Neil: I know, Anna. In your own way.

Anna: I mean it.

Neil: I know you do.

Anna: You don't believe me.

Neil: I believe this Anna means it, this second; but the other Anna, next second?

Anna (Plaintively, a little girl.): Neil, I'm not like that. I'm really very simple. My desires are really very simple. (Suddenly, fiercely.) What other Anna?

Neil: The one who couldn't care less. The one who's in love with death.

Anna: Don't be ridiculous.

Neil: Look at your hand, Anna!

Anna (fiercely): Look at yours!

Neil: Mine? (He glances at his hand. He is clutching his whiskey glass, his hand wrapped around it tightly.)

Anna: The way you're holding that glass! Clawfingered, curled in, spastic. The normal person holds it like this. (She holds up her glass.) You can take it easily out of his hand. You're clutching it as if you were afraid someone was going to take it away from you. That's the sign of an alcoholic.

Neil: You're reaching, Anna.

Anna: You can drown yourself in a glass as well as the Loire River. That glass oubliette is your way of doing this. (She holds up her bandaged hand.) Am I right? Slowly. Half measures. You won't make it, Neil. I know you. Those guilts. Oh, those guilts, hmmm? Eating us up. You want to go home again, don't you? Read Tom Wolfe! You can't. The world's

going to blow itself to pieces. No matter how tight you hold it in your sweaty little hand it's going to blow itself up. You go back to the U.N. and try again, and I promise you, you'll be so frustrated, one fine morning just about this time, four-thirty a.m., you'll be fed up with half measures and you'll do it big. You'll float yourself down the Loire River alone. (She holds up her bandaged wrist.) Take it from a girl who's been there. One word of advice: make sure the razor blade is clean. Mine was rusty. If they haul you out before you drown, you get a nasty infection. Takes ages to cure. My way is best, Neil. Come with me. We'll eat, drink, swim, lie in the clean sun, fornicate, and to hell with them all. . . . Neil! (She pinches him.) Neil! (He ignores it.) Stop looking at that damn glass! What do you see in it? (After a long pause, during which Neil sits there staring into his glass, he speaks very softly.)

Neil: Us. Bloated, empty, useless. The water chills us; the sun burns us; the liquor rots our brains; sex becomes a disgusting ritual, not of love, but of hate. We will become two loathsome, ugly people. Zombies, living only on our mutual loathing.<sup>72</sup>

This dialogue begins more dynamically than most in the play. Anna wants Neil for her lover but Neil does not want to occupy the position. Lust is a powerful motivation--one familiar to the drama--but for it to be truly dramatic, there should be a societal agent blocking the romance--a taboo. And there should be a psychological bond between the lovers--a shared need--which they may accept or reject. No such blocking agent or bond exists here. Anna wants Neil because he makes her "feel like a woman in and out of bed." Neil refuses because he fears Anna will embarrass him or damage his ego by indulging in lesbian affairs. These are not very powerful or dramatic objectives. As a result, the dialogue abandons dramatic action in favor of commentary.

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<sup>72</sup>Kingsley, Night Life, pp. 50-51.

The leap from the bedroom to the U.N. is too contrived to be acceptable.

A similar problem is evident in a scene between Neil and

Gia:

Gia: . . . I've grown up. My career? To be a good wife, a good mother, to build a home and an honest, solid life. That's my career. That's what I want and that's what Will wants; and that's what you don't want. Period!

Neil: You're wrong, Gia. I want it more than anything in the world.

Gia: Sure.

Neil: Wanting something isn't enough. One has to earn it. One has to be capable of honoring it. I was fighting my way out of some personal nightmare--I couldn't inflict it on you.

Gia: Why are we talking about this? It's past. It's over. Done with.

Neil: Is it?

Gia: Yes. You're worried about me now? Where were you then? When the long night fell, when the wolves came howling around and I almost didn't give a damn. Then was the time to worry, not now. If Will hadn't come along . . . I don't know. But he did and I thank God and he changed everything. He was gentle and kind and never tried to lay a hand on me. And, suddenly, men tipped their hats and talked soft and treated me like a lady again. And I felt clean, and respected, and wanted. I won't let you spoil this for me. I need him. I believe in him.<sup>73</sup>

Gia's terror on Neil's leaving--long nights falling and wolves howling--is most unconvincing. Of course she was lonely when Neil left her but unless a psychopathic fear of loneliness has been established (and it hasn't), the images are overdone and melodramatic. Additionally, to take refuge in being "respected," to slip easily from talking of Kazar to what her relationship

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<sup>73</sup>Kingsley, Night Life, pp. 54-55.

with him has "bought" her, does not add to her charm or validity as a character. And Neil's lapsing into third person indefinite does not reinforce the ardor of his pursuit.

Some of the play's most active and biting dialogue goes to a character for whom the playwright has nothing but contempt--the "sick" comic, Sonny Drake:

Sonny: Gung ho! Break up the joint! Smash. Kill. Burn. Rape. Fun! Fun! Fun!

Ceal (Suddenly excited, bounces up.): Sonny Drake! Lew! It's Sonny Drake! You remember the Copa, the Coconut Grove?

Lew: Yes. That's him.

Ceal: At last! A live one! I love you, Sonny. I've seen you fifty times. (laughs) Sonny! I want to adopt him, Lew! Let's adopt him.

Sonny: Adopt me? (He peers down her bosom.) Ooh! Vitamins! O.K., mommy! (Takes the cigar out of his mouth, holds it at arm's length, snaps his fingers.) Red! (The redhead takes the cigar from him.) Keep it lit. (She puts it in her mouth and puffs.) Dinner-time! (He pushes Ceal down, sits on her lap, buries his head in her bosom nibbling away.) Um, um, um.

Ceal (Squeals, tries to push him away.): Sonneee!

Lew (Rises, protesting.): Hey, hey! That's my wife. (Everybody laughs. Sonny suddenly becomes mock serious.)

Sonny: So what? You'll never miss a slice off the loaf. Pooh! (Pretends to spit in Lew's face. Lew recoils.) I'm only clowning, sir. I like you. I admire you. You're a man, sir, with a level head. Not like us--our heads are round. (He stares at Lew.) Who does your embalming? Get rid of him. You're breaking out in holes.<sup>74</sup>

Later in the play, Lew's commentary on the emptiness of our age is so vague and fatuous that it warrants Sonny's retort:

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<sup>74</sup>Kingsley, Night Life, pp. 18-19.

Neil: What do you do now?

Lew: Furniture. (Hands him a card.) If you or Miss Brenn need anything--chairs, couches, tables--I'd be proud.

Neil: Thank you.

Lew: At cost.

Anna: Antiques?

Lew (shame faced): Reproductions.

Anna: Shame.

Lew: We are born prisoners of our time. (He salutes.) But we have at the shop some genuine antique chairs we use for models. Exquisite lines. Beautiful. Signed pieces. What we in the trade call "documents." And there is about them--an aura. Men made them with their hands. Loving hands made them. The artist is long since dead, but he hovers over them. You can almost see him. Ghosts! I am a great believer in ghosts. (to Neil) You understand? We are simpatico.

Anna: What's this?

Lew: Tonight in the street. The ghost you saw. You did, didn't you?

Neil: How did you know?

Lew: Ah! (Taps his head.)

Gia: Our poet is extra-sensory.

Lew: Yes, I am. (He giggles.) Also I overheard. When you came in, breathless. You told the Maitre D'.

Neil: Yes, of course.

Lew: I don't scoff. We wear blinders. There are mysteries all around us, every moment, here this second. But we don't . . . That poet I quoted, Rilke, was wrong. The heavenly hosts are not deaf to us; we have become blind to them.

Sonny (Signals the piano player who plays softly as Sonny sings.): Te da da da chicken fat. (Ceil joins him.) Te da da da chicken fat.

Lew: Never mind! Laugh! Scoff! Everybody mocks. All around us, a battle of angels, and the good ones are made

helpless by our contempt. But we have to finally find some faith or . . . or . . .

Ceil: Tinker Bell . . .

Sonny: Stinker Bell.

Ceil: Will die.

Sonny: And smell. (Ceil and Sonny together: "Boc Hoo!" Then they roar with laughter. Others join them.)<sup>75</sup>

Kingsley had frequently created better dialogue for secondary characters than he had done for his major ones. This is true of both Dead End and Detective Story as well as this play. Ceil, bitterly resentful of growing old and losing her son, has a powerful and honest soliloquy:

Ceil (sighs heavily): Oh, dear. Ceil, you're being ridiculous! No, I am not. I'm not old, I'm not too old, I'm not too old. (She sighs heavily.) Oh, dear! (Lew reaches over and pats her hand. She recoils.) Don't touch me! Who are you? (She rises and moves away from him. Turns, appeals to the audience.) Who is this silly old man touching me? I don't know him. Where is the young poet I married? The football hero in the raccoon skin coat? That him? Impossible! (Suddenly, fiercely, she takes up the knife on the table, brandishes it.) Why don't you die? Die? (She stabs him several times.) Die! And free me! (Lew remains immobile, not a slightest response to her imaginary stabbing, a gentle smile fixed on his face, his hand poised in space where it was patting Ceil. Ceil throws down the knife.) No. I will be the one to die first! I'll dry up, wither away, and grow old and wrinkled and I'll die and you will still be sitting there at my bedside, patting my hand, that idiot smile on your stupid fat face! (She sits down and sighs.) Oh, dear. What thoughts!<sup>76</sup>

More frequently emotion and passion get overblown and are transformed into high sounding rhetoric:

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<sup>75</sup>Kingsley, Night Life, pp. 24-25.

<sup>76</sup>ibid., p. 30.

Neil: Don't push me, Kazar. I warn you.

Kazar: Push you! I'll . . . (He grabs Neil's throat.)

Neil (rips his hands away): Take your hands off!

Kazar (laughs wildly): Hands? (Wiggles his fingers in front of Neil's eyes.) What do you see? Five fingers? That's all. Not five little men standing on a rock looking up at a great fireball in the sky? Not snakes coming out of a woman's head--one look'll turn you to stone? Not the earth exploding in your face? Just a hand? Not the hand of a leader of men? Not the hand of history?<sup>77</sup>

In Night Life Kingsley failed in his attempt to create a blend of poetic and realistic language. But his failure was one worthy of an artist. If he had wanted to do so, Kingsley could have written another play in his successful reportorial style. Obviously that is not what he wanted to do. He strove to develop a new technique and he took the whole risk of doing so. He failed but not in half-measures. One must admire his courage and ideals if not the results of this experiment.

#### Summary

Kingsley's dialogue is a natural outgrowth of his technique as a social realist. He is at his very best when reproducing the speech of a particular environment as in Men in White, Dead End, The World We Make, and Detective Story or in using technical language to create mood and dramatic tension as he did in Men in White and Detective Story. Moreover, this use of dialogue is more than mere reporting. The words and phrases may be indigenous to the social environment in which the play is set, as

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<sup>77</sup>Kingsley, Night Life, p. 78.

are the games and rhymes of the street boys of Dead End, but it is reshaped and restructured to fulfill dramatic purposes. Additionally, the dialogue is designed to fit the personality of each character. Spit does not sound like Tommy, Ferguson is distinct from Dr. Hochberg, and Detective Brody is quite different from Detective Dakis. Kingsley frequently used foreign or regional dialects to further accent these character differences.

In three of the plays--The World We Make, The Patriots, and Darkness at Noon--Kingsley made at least partial use of the words of others. The World We Make and Darkness at Noon are, of course, adaptations and The Patriots utilized quotations from Hamilton and Jefferson's writings. While Darkness at Noon uses an ample amount of Koestler's dialogue, it would be fair to say that The World We Make was "inspired" by Millen Brand's novel as very little of the dialogue of the original is carried over into the play. Generous portions of Hamilton and Jefferson's sentiments are effectively incorporated into the dramatic structure of The Patriots and serve to clarify the motivations of these two great statesmen. Contemporary criticism that this interpolation of historical material made the dialogue stilted may well have been because two of the leading roles, Washington and Jefferson, were played by radio actors rather than experienced stage actors. Such awkwardness is not discernible in the script. Koestler's dialogue in Darkness at Noon, in addition to clarifying ideology and motivation, effectively establishes the prison environment. As has been noted, Kingsley wanted to address himself to the

subject of totalitarianism and its repression of personal freedom. Lacking personal knowledge of Soviet Russia and Stalin's brand of Communism, Kingsley turned to Koestler's novel and found in it the first-hand information he needed. Much of this material, although restructured, simplified, and condensed, is carried into the play's dialogue. As a result of this creative use of authentic materials, the descriptions of prison life and the political dialogue of Rubashov and Ivanoff ring true.

Kingsley's dialogue is least distinguished when developing romantic relationships or striving for poetry. Frequently the characters in the romantic scenes merely mouth sentiments rather than contribute to the forward thrust of the dramatic action. Perhaps part of the weakness of Kingsley's romantic dialogue stems from the fact that the outcome of the relationships between his men and his women is so predictable. The relationships are familiar and so is the lover's language. The romantic relationships of The World We Make and Darkness at Noon are stronger than in his other plays because Kingsley was denied the usual and the sentimental by his inherited subject matter, both plays being adaptations. The rich girl, poor boy cliché of The World We Make is altered and made unique by Harriet's psychological problem--an inability to experience emotions. And Rubashov, the stern revolutionary, attempts to deny himself all emotional involvement.

While the dialogue of Lunatics and Lovers is clever and contains enough wisecracks to make it a successful comedy, its

debt to Damon Runyon is obvious and the play's language makes no original contribution.

Kingsley is much more effective in expressing his plays' themes or central ideas through action and environment than through dialogue. The "speeches" that his central characters sometimes make in the defense of their ideals are often far less eloquent than their lives as developed in the play's action. Consequently, Gimpty's attack on slums, Dr. Schiller's proposal for love and trust, Dr. Hochberg's appraisal of the rigors of medical life, and Lew and Neil's defense of liberalism seem redundant and outside of the play's main action. The concepts have been presented so aptly by the play's action that further defense is unnecessary. This tendency to overstate his case is present to some degree in all of Kingsley's work and seriously damages Night Life's effectiveness.

If upon a first reading some of Kingsley's dialogue seems trite, it should be remembered that communication in the theatre is instant. The audience has no time to reflect on the words. They must be able to grasp the meaning and intent of the dialogue immediately. Kingsley's concern with the actability of his dialogue encouraged him to keep his language simple and to communicate in terms that could be easily grasped by an audience. Additionally, dialogue which may seem indifferent on the printed page can assume strength and power when spoken by the living actor. Being a man of the theatre, Kingsley has a keen awareness of the sound of forceful, realistic dialogue and of its origins

in environment and character. In most cases Kingsley's talent for tough, simple dialogue was used well, faltering only in a tendency to overstate and oversentimentalize his thesis.

## CHAPTER VI

### THOUGHT

In true Aristotelian fashion, Kingsley's plays are unified by their thought. The incidents, actions, characters and their dialogue are all proportioned and conditioned by Kingsley's ideological purpose in writing the play. Since his social or political philosophy is the raison d'etre for his plays and since his technique is that of the social realist, it is not difficult to discern the themes or meanings of Kingsley's plays. As a propagandist Kingsley desired that his philosophy be readily apprehended. To this end Kingsley usually states his idea in the play's action, dialogue, and title.

A play's meaning is determined by the playwright's perception of his or her world. As Eric Bentley points out:

. . . a play presents a vision of life, and to the idea of vision the idea of wisdom naturally adheres. To share this vision and this wisdom--just as naturally--is not to receive information or counsel but rather to have a "momentous experience."<sup>1</sup>

Kingsley's concern for ideology was conditioned by the manner in which he believed the thought should be communicated. As he

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<sup>1</sup>Eric Bentley, The Life of Drama, p. 146.

once said, "People may know a thing intellectually, but they must get to know it emotionally."<sup>2</sup> Thus, there are usually strong elements of melodrama in Kingsley's plays and a hero who is unfairly tormented by forces beyond his or her control. This suffering is designed to elicit a sympathetic and compassionate response from the audience.

It would be fair to categorize Kingsley's plays as thesis plays. They present a particular ideology and often propose cures for society's ills. The dangers of writing a play to support a preconceived idea are many: plots may become overly contrived, characters may appear unreal, and dialogue may turn into rhetoric. Kingsley's talent for the theatre and his excellent craftsmanship aided him in avoiding most of these problems--his one area of weakness being his previously mentioned tendency to state his philosophy directly in dialogue.

While it has been impossible to discuss the other elements of Kingsley's plays without alluding to thought, this chapter is intended to clarify and analyze the ideas contained in the plays under consideration. Comments by the playwright and by critics will be included whenever they are of value in determining the play's thought or the effectiveness of the statement.

In his first professional play, Kingsley initiated a theme which was to characterize much of his work. Men in White

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<sup>2</sup>Sidney Kingsley as quoted by Florence Loeb, "S.R.O. for Tommy," Survey Graphic, XXV (January, 1936), 52.

is the story of a young man who discovers that true fulfillment may be achieved only through service to others and, additionally, that this service requires the sacrifice of all personal desires. The action of the play chronicles Ferguson's efforts to escape or compromise the demands of his profession through romance and closes with his eventual surrender to duty.

This major theme is accompanied by several subsidiary ideas which gave the play a mildly radical outlook for 1933.

Dr. Hochberg advocates socialized medicine:

Hochberg: . . . it's a social crime, gentlemen, that hospitals should depend on the charity of a few individuals . . . till hospitals are subsidized by the community and run by men in medicine, we'll continue to need our wealthy friends.

And he laments the lack of legalized abortion:

Hochberg: Tch! Poor girl! . . . Why do they go to butchers like that?

Wren: Well . . . she couldn't have come to us.

Hochberg: No . . . that's the shame! Ah, Wren, some of our laws belong to the Dark Ages! Why can't we help the poor and the ignorant? The others will always help themselves-- law or no law.<sup>3</sup>

But it is the major theme of sacrifice to duty summarized in the following dialogue between Drs. Levine and Ferguson which dominates the play:

Levine: . . . Burnt offerings! Jehovah and Aesculapius! They both demand their human sacrifice. . . . Medicine! Why do we kill ourselves for it?

Ferguson: I don't know. I often wonder, myself, whether it was worth the grind of working my way through college

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<sup>3</sup>Kingsley, Men in White, p. 148 and p. 164 f.

and med school. . . . It wasn't much fun . . . but still . . . I guess it's the only thing I really want to do. . . . My dad used to say "Above all is humanity !" . . . Above all else is humanity--that's a big thought. So big that alongside of it you and I don't really matter very much. That's why we do it, I guess.

Levine: You're right of course ! Ah . . . it's not good--too much suffering. . . .<sup>4</sup>

When the play was written in 1930, it was entitled Crisis. In changing the title to Men in White, Kingsley increased the play's significance and the title's connection to the action of the play. The action is concerned with much more than Ferguson's personal crisis. His dilemma is representative of a much larger body of men, an army in white uniforms, dedicated to a vision of service symbolized by medicine. The comment of the New York Medical Week correspondent extended this image of service to society as a whole:

The unrestricted "practicality" of commerce has reduced the nation and the world to unbounded misery. To raise this country out of its difficulties, the government has had to restrict industry by codes of conduct that are not entirely dissimilar from the ethical tenets by which physicians have voluntarily bound themselves from the time of Hippocrates. In other words, the despised idealism of other days is found to be a practical necessity.<sup>5</sup>

Dead End was, in turn, an indictment of a society which did not provide outlets in work and service for its citizens. The action of the play demonstrates how basically good persons are wasted. Gimpy, after years of sacrifice and study, can

<sup>4</sup>Kingsley, Men in White, pp. 136-137.

<sup>5</sup>Men in White, New York Medical Week, October 14, 1933, p. 4.

find no productive place in society; Martin has turned his talents to crime and Tommy will probably soon follow his pattern; Kay has become the mistress of a wealthy man; Drina is forced out on strike; Martin's childhood sweetheart has become a prostitute. The implication of the dramatic action is clear: as long as the hopeless slum environment is allowed to continue, potentially fine citizens will be destroyed. A second and supportive theme is that such slums are a breeding ground for crime and criminals. Martin and Kay demonstrate that the inhabitants of the slum cannot extricate themselves from their dilemma by legal, individual action. Individual action is hopeless because they are trapped by their environment. As Gimpty says:

. . . the place you live in is awfully important. It can give you a chance to grow, or it can twist you--(he twists an imaginary object with grim venom)--like that. When I was in school, they used to teach us that evolution made men out of animals. They forgot to tell us it can also make animals out of men.<sup>6</sup>

Set at the point of contact between the very rich and the very poor, Dead End implies that there is no avenue of escape for those in the slums. These unfortunates are at the end of their rope, their human resources expended, and their dreams destroyed. Society, Kingsley implies, must come to their aid or the mainstream of society will become an open sewer. Social injustice is implicit in the title for it is a basic tenet of democracy that everyone should have opportunity and freedom and that life is an open experience with no "dead ends."

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<sup>6</sup>Kingsley, Dead End, p. 697.

Kingsley retreated somewhat from this position in regard to slums in his next successful play, The World We Make. Through Harriet's struggle to find peace and fulfillment in a chaotic environment, Kingsley states his major theme--that it is only through caring for others that one may find fulfillment. Harriet finds stability and contentment only when she forsakes her concerns for her own sanity in favor of caring for John. The inclusion of current events extends the concept of caring for others to the world community. If Harriet can aid her Polish neighbors, it may be reasoned, then the United States should aid its European neighbors. Jim's passion for freedom makes him the spokesman for this ideal:

Jim: The world's going right back to the Dark Ages and Abou BenAhdam here wants me to relax. Too much relaxing. Somebody's got to do something about it before its too late. . . . If a house painter can start it, a puller in a laundry can stop it.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Schiller states a more personal interpretation of the same theme:

Dr. Schiller: Faith in people . . . in their good instinct . . . in a world which after all we make. And a compulsion to help those who need us. That's a great satisfaction, my dear. Believe me.<sup>8</sup>

With the world in turmoil, 1939 was a time for positive thinking. The working title of this play was Of Day and Night. In retitling the play Kingsley extended and sharpened its focus. While evocative, The Outward Room (the novel from which Kingsley

<sup>7</sup> Kingsley, The World We Make, p. 2-2-18.

<sup>8</sup> Kingsley, The World We Make, p. 3-2-22.

adapted the play) and Of Day and Night are undynamic and non-specific. The World We Make enlarges the philosophical scope of the play to include all of mankind and states, unlike Dead End, that it is we who through our lives and work shape the world in which we live--a dynamic and idealistic concept.

If The World We Make was a call to action, The Patriots was the call answered. Whereas The World We Make is only an optimistic statement, The Patriots is a glorification of American democracy. Returning to the plot pattern of Men in White, Kingsley states in this play that the salvation of others, of humanity, requires great personal sacrifice. In this case the object of the sacrifice, the preservation of democracy, is placed above personal happiness by the protagonist, Thomas Jefferson.

Written in 1943--a time of great national stress--the defense of democracy which The Patriots offers serves more to inspire and remind the audience of the virtues of democracy than to answer criticism of the democratic system. Political differences, however, do not cease in wartime and Kingsley's plea was also to follow Hamilton's example, to put such differences behind in time of crisis and defend the Republic. Since Jefferson is depicted as the most patriotic of patriots, it is clear that Kingsley believes his to be the most valid concept of democracy. While espousing this point of view, Kingsley acknowledges that anyone who gives up his personal views in favor of the survival of the Republic, as Hamilton does, is a patriot.

Kingsley utilizes Jefferson's inaugural address to affirm his belief in the strength of democracy:

I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republic cannot be strong, that this government is not strong enough. But would the honest patriot in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government which has so far kept us free and firm, on the theoretic fear that it may possibly want energy to preserve itself? I trust not. I believe this, on the contrary, the only government where every man would fly to the standard and meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. I believe this the strongest government on earth. I believe, indeed, I know, this government is the world's best hope.<sup>9</sup>

Kingsley's theme in The Patriots is, then, that American democracy is the form of government most sympathetic to the survival of individual freedom and personal growth and responsibility. As such, it is worthy of great sacrifice.

Kingsley said he intended Detective Story to continue in the vein of The Patriots and be an attack on totalitarianism:

My rough cop, McLeod [he said], thinks democracy is not efficient in its war against evil-doers. He wants to achieve efficiency by taking the law into his own hands. Of course, the inefficiency comes from our checks and balances, from the spirit of democracy that no man is to be trusted with absolute power. The answer to McLeod is that this inefficiency is really a higher efficiency since it permits the human spirit to breathe. McLeod has a medieval attitude--just as the Communists have--that he has a mission to make people abide by the right as he sees it, or personally bring them to account if they don't.<sup>10</sup>

While this theme is present in the play and is enacted in McLeod's rise and fall, it is only marginally effective. Too many other possible themes clutter Detective Story's action.

<sup>9</sup>Kingsley, The Patriots, p. 724.

<sup>10</sup>As quoted in Harry Gilroy, New York Times, March 20, 1949, Sec. 2, p. 1.

If the play explores the dangers of totalitarianism, it also examines the function of the police within a free society, the misuse of authority, and, through Arthur's story, society's right to punish crime without correcting its causes. The possible success of Kingsley's stated intent is further diminished when McLeod's downfall is brought about by a domestic problem--his inability to forgive his wife's "sin"--which is not connected to any of the play's possible themes. The play's ideological effectiveness is weakened not because any of these possible themes is unworthy of investigation--they are all pregnant with possibilities. It is, rather, that none of the themes are sufficiently developed or connected within the play's fragmentary structure to be as powerful as they might have been.

Kingsley's defense of democracy, with all its "inefficiencies," is contained in the following dialogue between Joe and McLeod:

McLeod: This is a phony. The thieves and murderers could have written the penal code themselves. Your democracy, Yussel, is a Rube Goldberg contraption. An elaborate machine a block long--you set it all in motion, 3,000 wheels turn, it goes "ping."

Joe: That's what's great about it. That's what I love. It's so confused, it's wonderful. (Crosses to McLeod.) After all, Seamus, guilt and innocence!--The epistemological question! Just the knowing . . . the mere knowing . . . Maybe he didn't do it. . . . How do you know?<sup>11</sup>

McLeod's misuse of authority is evidenced in many ways but the most telling example is his beating of Schneider. At

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<sup>11</sup>Kingsley, Detective Story, p. 503.

the time of the arrest, McLeod does not know that his wife has been a customer of Schneider's. McLeod the furious husband beating an abortionist would be an understandable action but McLeod the police officer beating a helpless suspect is unforgivable. McLeod's forgiveness of Arthur solves no problems nor suggests any cures for the penal system because to forgive all is not to correct anything; it is simply a sentimental gesture.

While the play may have lost some of its political punch in its welter of stories, McLeod's personal tragedy remains a powerful warning against judging others harshly and by unrealistic standards. It is the "judge not lest ye be judged" concept which ultimately dominates the play's action and while not the idea Kingsley meant to stress, it is a forceful and universally appealing myth which the play enacts.

Detective Story, therefore, best labels the play as the story of a detective gone wrong. It is in this capacity, the delineation of McLeod's corruption, that the play is most effective, because the play deals less with detection methods than with detectives as individuals.

Realizing that Detective Story had not been as ideologically successful as he had desired, Kingsley presented a more direct attack on totalitarianism in Darkness at Noon. Koestler once likened his experience in the Communist party to the Biblical story of Jacob and Leah. The hero of Darkness at Noon suffers a similar fate: after years of labor he finds the Revolution

is not a beautiful bride but an ugly hag. In this respect Darkness at Noon shows how easily idealists may be used by ruthless men of ambition. But while the play makes this general statement, its dialogue specifically attacks Stalinist Russia. Whereas Koestler in his novel condemns the kind of thinking which made the regime possible, Kingsley focuses on the regime itself. Rubashov expresses his despair over the loss of the dream of the Revolution in the following passage:

Gletkin: Enemy of the People--Nicolai Simonevitch Rubashov, before you are executed--Have you any last wish?

(A long pause. Rubashov studies him.)

Rubashov: One. If I could only make you understand where in the very beginning we failed.

Gletkin: These are your last words. Don't waste them.

Rubashov: You don't build a Paradise out of concrete. My son--

Gletkin: I am not your son.

Rubashov: Yes. Yes, you are. That's the horror. (Pause.) The means have become the end. And darkness has come over the land.<sup>12</sup>

The revolution failed in Russia and became tyranny when, unlike the American Revolution, it left out the human element. This omission, according to Kingsley, allowed the destruction of individual freedom: the tragedy which is discussed and demonstrated in the play.

The play's title provokes potent images which may be linked directly to the play's idea. The darkness exists in the

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<sup>12</sup>Kingsley, Darkness at Noon, p. 94.

prison environment and in the souls of Russia's eighty millions spoken of by Rubashov. This darkness or despair is even more acute since it corresponds with the zenith, the noonday of the Revolution for which so much was sacrificed.

Darkness at Noon is basically a propaganda play. Its message is that Communist Russia is a heartless, implacable foe dedicated to the destruction of those ideals of personal freedom most sacred to American democracy. Written in the midst of the Communist scares of the 1950's, this idea was a popular one and found wide acceptance.

Weary of weighty themes, Kingsley turned to comedy. Harold Clurman said that Lunatics and Lovers had "no theme or even a trace of social comment."<sup>13</sup> Richard Hayes found social comment in the play--the defense of home and marriage--a defense which Mr. Hayes believed unnecessary and tedious.<sup>14</sup> While it must be admitted that there is little of philosophical importance in Lunatics and Lovers, the play signals a decisive shift in thinking for Kingsley--he has lost his faith in heroes, however sincere they might be:

Cupid: . . . Sincere people? Buncha butchers. Dey pin on a pair a homemade wings and hit ya over de head with a meat cleaver--for "your own good." Tree more "sincere" people in dis city de streets'd be runnin' wit blood.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Harold Clurman, The Nation CXXC (January, 1955), 18.

<sup>14</sup>Richard Hayes, review of Lunatics and Lovers, The Commonweal, LXI (January, 1955), 406.

<sup>15</sup>Kingsley, Lunatics and Lovers, II, 1.

The belief that the dedicated man is "on the side of the angels" and can accomplish anything, appears to have lost its currency with Kingsley. Although Cupid takes Sable and marriage in the play's final moments, the overall mood of the play is neither romantic nor optimistic. Instead, the play embraces a point of view which rejects idealism in favor of Cupid's view from the gutter. His marriage to Sable will, after all, extract him from his difficulties with the Internal Revenue Service. Marriage, therefore, serves an end more practical than romantic.

Kingsley attempted a return to the virtues of idealism, service, and sacrifice in Night Life. In stating his theme, Kingsley said, "It is not enough to give lip service to an ideal. The great need in our time is to refashion--revitalize--the myths by which men live."<sup>16</sup> The ideals which motivated the creation of Night Life are valid and worthwhile. The action of the play shows how two liberals attempt to find a means of influencing those about them into giving up their pleasure seeking, their drifting, and take a hand in controlling their political destiny. If they do not take interest, the Kazars of the world will take control.

This theme is considerably weakened because Neil and Lew only voice their sentiments. They are both too weak and uncertain themselves to exercise any real force until the play's final moments. Even then, Neil opposes Kazar over Gia and not ideology

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<sup>16</sup>As quoted in Thomas Lask, New York Times, October 21, 1962, Section 2, p. 3.

and Lew's accidental death does nothing to establish him as a defender of humanitarian ideals. The victory of idealism over cynicism which Kingsley causes to be enacted remains, therefore, somewhat hollow.

Lew's plea for support in his opposition to Kazar capsulizes the play's message:

Neil: You're not hearing me. Christ! I can't get through to anyone. . . . I tell you it's no use. She won't listen. She's committed. That's her nature. Gia has to believe in somebody, something. . . .

Ceil: Stop noodging the poor boy, Lew. (to Neil) He can drive you out of your mind. (to Lew) You're talking like a fool.

Lew: That's because I am a fool. But for once I'll answer to myself for my foolishness. For once I must have the courage of my . . . idiocy.

Ceil: Two minutes ago you almost got yourself butchered.

Lew: It doesn't matter. (to Neil) We have to be men, finally. My life? A big deal? What would I lose? A few days? A couple of weeks--a couple of bad T.V. shows? To live in fear? That's not such a bargain. Death doesn't mean that much. What means something is what we do with our lives. (He stammers and sputters, in his emotion, his words and thoughts become jumbled and incoherent.) I had a little boy, his eleven years of life had more meaning than fifty-five of mine.<sup>17</sup>

While not an eloquent plea, the sentiments expressed are honest and fitting for the characters. Yet, even while advocating commitment, Kingsley's misgivings compel him to warn, through Gia's mindless love for Kazar, of the dangers of unthinking commitment.

In the final analysis, it is Night Life's characters and theatricalism which dominate the action of the play and overwhelm

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<sup>17</sup> Kingsley, Night Life, pp. 73-74.

Kingsley's half-hearted attempt to return to the virtues of another age.

#### Summary

Kingsley's plays may be placed in two categories with World War II as the dividing point. The themes of his pre-World War II plays are strikingly similar: one may find personal fulfillment only in service to mankind without interest in personal reward. Concomitant to this theme is the glorification of those who so commit themselves. Only Dead End stands outside this pattern and even here the implication is that society is blocking the normal operation of the pattern.

Kingsley's post-World War II plays display a mistrust, not present in his previous works, of the determined, zealous man. Reflecting modern philosophical uncertainty, Kingsley shows in Detective Story and in Darkness at Noon that the committed idealist can be a destructive force as easily as a creative one and may, in fact, destroy the very cause he has set out to defend. Night Life attempted to resurrect the image of the committed, virtuous idealist but failed--the image had lost its reality and was only a reflection of its former self.

The theme of misguided idealism was, however, forceful enough in Detective Story and Darkness at Noon to make them potent dramas. Additionally, Kingsley expressed a felt if unspoken consensus in these plays.

Of all the critics commenting on Kingsley, Joseph Wood

Krutch best describes his technique and his use of dramatic and thematic materials:

He likes to start with an idea rather than a situation, with something which suggests a thesis play, and then to build around it a sturdy,actable piece in which intellectuals may discover some lack but in which the general theater going audience finds something it likes very much--namely a message conveyed in simple dramatic terms. . . .<sup>18</sup>

With the sure instinct of the first-rate theatrical craftsman he . . . selects a theme which is genuinely significant but which has been treated often enough to be easily manageable in terms of various concrete situations whose effectiveness has already been demonstrated. Thus he himself is relieved of the necessity of working out either characters or predicaments which will serve as satisfactory symbols, and the audience is, at the same time, relieved of the necessity of discovering what their significance is. The author can devote himself to the expert manipulation of easily comprehensible material, and the spectator can surrender himself to a series of swift, colorful, clearly outlined incidents.<sup>19</sup>

Kingsley's plays have character and nobility because of the moral excellence of his themes. Even his two failures, Ten Million Ghosts and Night Life, are ennobled by their sentiment. His plays achieve success and sacrifice greatness essentially because his themes tell us things we already know: no thinking person is going to dispute the value of medicine or deny recognition to those who dedicate their lives in service to others; no one seriously questions that slums are often a crippling influence; unselfish love and concern for others is a noble mission; Jefferson's principles have given the citizens of the United States great personal freedom; tyranny destroys and suppresses

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<sup>18</sup>Joseph Wood Krutch, review of The Patriots, The Nation, CLVI (February, 1943), 248.

<sup>19</sup>Krutch, The Nation, CXLI (November, 1935), 575.

the individual; liberal ideals do require constant defense. Moreover, unlike great plays, Kingsley's plays are calculatedly direct in what they are "about." In discussing what makes plays classics, Vera Roberts points out:

A great play does not give up its Thought easily and on the first asking, although as more and more meanings become apparent, so too does the sensitive audience realize the oneness of all of them, the unity that vitalizes the whole, the singleness of vision.<sup>20</sup>

Obviously Kingsley's plays miss this mark. But a playwright cannot set out to write a "classic." The playwright must write honestly about his concerns and those of his society. This was Kingsley's approach. And in his concern he created a series of potent dramas, masterpieces of their type, each of which reflect the philosophy and concerns of the era for which they were created. What is astonishing about Kingsley is his talent for perceiving and dramatizing these themes. Of his generation only Lillian Hellman has had so long and distinguished a career and none have enjoyed more popular success than did Kingsley.

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<sup>20</sup>Vera Mowry Roberts, The Nature of Theatre, p. 53.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY

At a time when the New York theatre was attempting to throw off the effects of the Great Depression and its playwrights were struggling to discover a style for the presentation of themes suitable to the age, Kingsley revitalized the Broadway theatre and the fortunes of the most important theatre company of the decade, The Group Theatre, with his first play, Men in White. In addition to winning the Pulitzer Prize, it proved, as did his next play, Dead End, the continuing effectiveness of realism as a vehicle for social commentary. Without lapsing into propaganda, Kingsley's plays presented liberal sentiments within a format which made these ideals meaningful to a large number of people.

It is in his selection of the plots and environments of his plays that Kingsley's talent excels. His stories of sacrifice and dedication contained in Men in White, The World We Make, and The Patriots struck a responsive chord in his audience in a time when America desperately needed causes and heroes, while Detective Story and Darkness at Noon reflected a postwar suspicion of idealistic heroes. And Dead End was an effective enough social indictment to be instrumental in accomplishing much needed slum clearance.

All of these plots are characterized by strong and usually well developed conflicts which are emblematic of the

social problem under consideration. In several of the plays--Dead End, The World We Make, and, to an extent, Detective Story--the environment is the play's antagonist. In all of the plays, environment is so important as to be inseparable from plot. One simply cannot imagine Kingsley's plays taking place anywhere except within his chosen environment. His stories are usually a powerful vehicle for the communication of his chosen themes. Night Life is an exception and a failure because of a deeply flawed plot structure which fails to develop a unified action, conflict, or theme.

The realistic play requires considerable skill in the construction of its plot inasmuch as, ideally, all of the play's action and the character's activities must be logically motivated. Kingsley's plays--most especially Men in White, Dead End, The World We Make, Detective Story, and Darkness at Noon--exhibit enormous skill in the use of technique and Dead End is one of the most outstanding examples of realism which the American stage has produced.

The characters he created to enact his stories are most often strong and believable. Several of Kingsley's heroes are quite exceptional. Dr. Ferguson, Thomas Jefferson, and in another vein, Rubashov, offer models of dedication which raise them far above the usual heroes of melodrama. And McLeod, flawed as he is, also assumes tragic proportions as a character. These characters are usually types who confirm rather than challenge an audience's notion of behavior. Since he used recognizable

types, Kingsley was relieved of the necessity of psychological character development and could focus his talents on developing character as a function of plot or environment. In Dead End, The World We Make, Detective Story, and Night Life, the minor characters, whose function is largely devoted to environment, are among Kingsley's finest creations. At times the author's knowledge of what was "good theatre" seemed to color his handling of these characters but the dedicated doctors of Men in White, the street boys of Dead End, and the detectives and criminals of Detective Story remain among the most striking characters created for our stage.

The weak link in Kingsley's dramatic technique is the formulation of dialogue. Fortunately, while it is enormously gratifying to discover literary quality in a script, such quality is not required by the theatre. If this were not so, there would be very few good plays indeed. In most cases it is Kingsley's straining against the limitations of his realistic technique which leads him into language difficulties. He is at his very best in capturing the sounds and language of a particular environment. This talent is, moreover, far more than simply a reportorial one. The effectiveness of the dialogue in establishing a milieu and in creating dramatic builds indicate that a highly selective process is involved in their creation. It is when he attempts to become "poetic" that Kingsley experiences difficulty. At these moments he often becomes agonizingly sentimental and banal in his use of form and imagery. Realism,

as John Gassner has noted, actually denies the use of poetic dialogue, soliloquies, and asides and must limit itself to surfaces, to what may be observed by an outsider.<sup>1</sup> When Kingsley strains against this limitation of his chosen style his dialogue becomes forced and out of touch with its surroundings. Fortunately such moments are few and not typical of Kingsley's work. Most often Kingsley's plays display dialogue which is clear, forceful, and rich in the sounds of his locales. Kingsley's dialogue can, moreover, rise to inspired heights. His use of the street boys' dialect in Dead End reaches the level of poetry, Men in White and Detective Story's utilization of technical terms is extraordinarily effective, and his use of the words of others in The Patriots and Darkness at Noon is most impressive.

For his themes Kingsley chose topics of contemporary importance. These themes are most often well integrated with the action and the characters. Night Life is an exception. In this play characters and action remain unintegrated with a theme which is imposed upon the play. Kingsley's themes are occasionally weakened by a domestic or romantic relationship, which although not connected to the play's major theme, have an important function in the play's action. Such is the case with Detective Story, Night Life and, to a degree, Darkness at Noon.

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<sup>1</sup>John Gassner, The Theatre in Our Times (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1954), p. 16.

Kingsley's single comedy, although commercially successful, broke no new theatrical ground, leaning heavily on the work of Damon Runyon. It did, however, prove that Kingsley was master enough of his craft to succeed in creating an effective comedy.

As was mentioned previously, Sidney Kingsley has been ranked among the top six playwrights of his time.<sup>2</sup> He reached this point of critical approval not because of any great originality or creativeness in style or form. All of his plays use the tried and true style of realism and all are developed along conventional melodramatic lines. Kingsley gained his prominence as a playwright through his ability to express the liberal intellectualism of his time in inherently dramatic settings and action. While his settings and stories may have been vaguely familiar from other plays--slums, detective headquarters, hospitals, prisons, nightclubs--Kingsley's careful research and documentation enabled him to discover the truth behind the convention, return the image to the strength of its original source, and to create startlingly rich and original dramas. His Men in White established the hospital drama which, it appears, will always be with us and Detective Story inspired innumerable films and television series including a comedy burlesque of the form, Barney Miller.

Kingsley's plays are eminently stageworthy--masterpieces of the reportorial style of writing. They are, however, so much

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<sup>2</sup>Barnard Hewitt, Theatre U.S.A., p. 424.

a product of the age for which they were written that revivals of his plays will probably be rare. The most likely candidates for revival are The Patriots, which remains a fine patriotic play; Detective Story which, although marred by an overly sentimental ending, has meanings in any society threatened by authoritarianism; and, should the winds of détente shift, Darkness at Noon is still a powerful indictment of Communism. While his plays do not have the timeless quality of classics, there can be little question that Kingsley deserves to be rated among the best playwrights of his generation. His mastery of the tools of the theatre as producer, director, and playwright is unequalled by any of his contemporaries and his plays have consistently brought vitality and conviction to the American theatre.

APPENDIX  
PRODUCTION DATA

MEN IN WHITE

(351 performances)

A drama in three acts by Sidney S. Kingsley. Produced by The Group Theatre, Sidney Harmon and James R. Ullman at the Broadhurst Theatre, New York, September 26, 1933.

Cast of characters--

Dr. Gordon .....	Luther Adler
Dr. Hochberg .....	J. Edward Bromberg
Dr. Michaelson .....	William Challee
Dr. Vitale .....	Herbert Ratner
Dr. McCabe .....	Grover Burgess
Dr. Ferguson .....	Alexander Kirkland
Dr. Wren .....	Sanford Meisner
Dr. Otis (Shorty) .....	Bob Lewis
Dr. Levine .....	Morris Carnovsky
Dr. Bradley (Pete) .....	Walter Coy
Dr. Crawford (Mac) .....	Alan Baxter
Nurse Jamison .....	Eunice Stoddard
Mr. Hudson .....	Art Smith
James Mooney .....	Gerrit Kraber
Laura Hudson .....	Margaret Barker
Mr. Smith .....	Sanford Meisner
Mrs. Smith .....	Ruth Nelson
Dorothy Smith .....	Mab Maynard
Barbara Dennin .....	Phoebe Brand
Dr. Cunningham .....	Russell Collins
First Nurse .....	Paula Miller
Nurse Mary Ryan .....	Dorothy Patten
Orderly .....	Elia Kazan
Mr. Houghton .....	Clifford Odets
Mr. Spencer .....	Lewis Leverett
Mrs. D'Andrea .....	Mary Virginia Farmer
Second Nurse .....	Elena Karam

Act I: Scene 1--Staff Library, St. George's Hospital. 2--Mr. Hudson's Room. 3--Children's Ward. 4--George Ferguson's Room.

Act II: Scene 1--Board Room. 2--Staff Library. 3--Corridor.

Staged by Lee Strasberg; settings by Mordecai Gorelik.

DEAD END

(684 performances)

A drama in three acts by Sidney Kingsley. Produced by Norman Bel Geddes at the Belasco Theatre, New York, October 28, 1935.

Cast of characters--

Gimpty ..... Theodore Newton  
T. B. .... Gabriel Dell  
Tommy ..... Billy Halop  
Dippy ..... Huntz Hall  
Angel ..... Bobby Jordan  
Spit ..... Charles R. Duncan  
Doorman ..... George Cotton  
Old Lady ..... Marie R. Burke  
Old Gentleman ..... George N. Price  
Chauffeur ..... Charles Benjamin  
"Babyface" Martin ..... Joseph Downing  
Hunk ..... Martin Gabel  
Philip Griswald ..... Charles Bellin  
Governess ..... Sidonie Espero  
Milty ..... Bernard Punsly  
Drina ..... Elspeth Eric  
Mr. Griswald ..... Carroll Ashburn  
Mr. Jones ..... Louis Lord  
Kay ..... Margaret Mullen  
Jack Hilton ..... Cyril Gordon Weld  
Lady With Dog ..... Margaret Linden  
Three Small Boys ... Billy Winston, Joseph Taibi,  
Sidney Lumet  
Chauffeur ..... Richard Clark  
Second Avenue Boys .... David Gorcey, Leo Gorcey  
Mrs. Martin ..... Marjorie Main  
Patrolman Mulligan ..... Robert J. Mulligan  
Francey ..... Sheila Trent  
G-Men ..... Francis de Sales, Edward P. Goodnow  
and Dan Duryea  
Policemen .... Francis G. Cleveland, Willis Duncan  
Plainclothesman ..... Harry Selby  
Interne ..... Philip Bourneuf  
Medical Examiner ..... Lewis L. Russel  
Sailor ..... Bernard Zaneville  
Inhabitants of East River Terrace, Ambulance Men,  
etc.: Elizabeth Wragge, Drina Hill, Blossom  
MacDonald, Ethel Dell, William Toubin, Marc  
Daniels.

Acts I, II and III: East River Terrace, New York City.

Staged by Sidney Kingsley; setting by Norman Bel Geddes.

TEN MILLION GHOSTS

(11 performances)

A drama in three acts by Sidney Kingsley. Produced by the author at the St. James Theatre, New York, October 23, 1936.

Cast of characters--

Foreman .....	Howard Solness
Peter .....	Martin Gabel
Andre .....	Orson Welles
Ryan .....	Otto Hulett
Madeleine .....	Barbara O'Neil
German Worker .....	Joseph Singer
French Worker .....	David Leight
Zacharey .....	George Coulouris
Balkan .....	Lester Alden
Louis .....	Myles Geoffrey
Armed Guard .....	Felton Bickley
Francois de Kruif .....	Lee Baker
Otto von Kruif .....	Dodson L. Mitchell
Secretary .....	Meg Mundy
Dr. La Marr .....	John Walker
Messenger Boy .....	Charles Bowden
Messenger Boy .....	George Justin
Telegraph Boy .....	Peter Barry
General Louvet .....	J. Carroll Ashburn
Aide to Louvet .....	Myles Geoffrey
Orderly .....	John Harding
General Dumont .....	Russell Sage
Soldier .....	Stuart Ferguson
Butler .....	David Leight
Gabry .....	Ray Harper
Bonnard .....	Felton Bickley
Lessay .....	Philip Bourneuf
Intelligence Officer .....	Kurt Stall
Schmidt .....	Robert X. Williams
Muller .....	Alfred A. Hesse
Red Cross Sergeant .....	Bernard Lenrow
Shore .....	Stanley Jessup
Spewack .....	Dave Arthur
Anderson .....	James Sidney
Jones .....	Russell Sage
Roberts .....	John Walker
Thomas .....	David Merrill
Waiter .....	Lester Alden

Act I: Scene 1--Gun Works of Universal Forges, Inc. 2--Office of Francois de Kruif. 3--Paris Pension. Act II: Scene 1--Nissen Hut Back of French Lines, Briey Sector. 2--General Louvet's Headquarters. 3--The de Kruif Home, Paris. Act III: Scene 1--Nissen Hut. 2--Shack Behind German Lines. 3--France, Portugal, England. 4--Geneva. Ballroom of Hotel International.  
Staged by the author; settings by Donald Oenslager.

THE WORLD WE MAKE

(80 performances)

A drama in three acts by Sidney Kingsley based on Millen Brand's novel, "The Outward Room." Produced by Sidney Kingsley at the Guild Theatre, New York, November 20, 1939.

Cast of characters--

Dr. Schiller ..... Rudolph Forster  
Head Nurse ..... Louise Huntington  
Nurse Regis ..... Dagmar Hampf  
Virginia McKay ..... Margo  
Mrs. McKay ..... Zolya Talma  
First Laundry Truckman ..... Frank Richards  
Second Laundry Truckman ..... Erwin Edward  
Third Laundry Truckman ..... Jerome Thor  
Modesto ..... Nick Dennis  
Morris, the Marker ..... Solen Burry  
Cora ..... Bonnie Roberts  
Jim Kohler ..... Joseph Pevney  
John Kohler ..... Herbert Rudley  
Louis, the Foreman ..... Harold Gary  
Boss ..... Albert Vees  
Ruth ..... Ruth Sherrill  
Rosebud ..... Billie Haywood  
Pearl ..... Katherine Murphy  
Rocco ..... Tito Vuolo  
Mary ..... Daga Hammond  
Mrs. Zubriski ..... Kasia Orzaweski  
Mr. Zubriski ..... Harold Stone  
Anna ..... Thelma Schnee  
Neighbor ..... Louise Huntington  
Renting Agent ..... Lee Harrett  
Sally ..... Eve March  
Danny ..... Buddy Swan  
Janch ..... Eric Roberts  
Al ..... James O'Rear  
Neighbor ..... Randolph Preston  
Laundry Workers: Florence Redd, Eloise Bouldin,  
Mildred Truppo, May King, Dagmar Hampf.

Prologue: Greendale Sanitarium. Act I: Scene 1--World-Wide Laundry. 2 and 3--John Kohler's Flat. Acts II and III: John Kohler's Flat.

Staged by Sidney Kingsley; settings by Harry Horner.

THE PATRIOTS

(173 performances)

A drama in prologue and three acts by Sidney Kingsley. Produced by The Playwrights Company and Rowland Stebbins at the National Theatre, New York, January 29, 1943.

Cast of characters--

Captain ..... Byron Russell  
Thomas Jefferson ..... Raymond Edward Johnson  
Patsy ..... Madge Evans  
Martha ..... Frances Reid  
Doctor ..... Ross Matthew  
James Madison ..... John Souther  
Alexander Hamilton ..... House Jameson  
George Washington ..... Cecil Humphreys  
Sergeant ..... Victor Southwick  
Colonel Humphrey ..... Francis Compton  
Jacob ..... Thomas Dillon  
Ned ..... George Mitchell  
Mat ..... Philip White  
James Monroe ..... Judson Laire  
Mrs. Hamilton ..... Peg La Centra  
Henry Knox ..... Henry Mowbray  
Butler ..... Robert Lance  
Mr. Fenno ..... Roland Alexander  
Jupiter ..... Doe Doe Green  
Mrs. Conrad ..... Leslie Bingham  
Frontiersman ..... John Stephen  
Thomas Jefferson Randolph ..... Billy Nevard  
Anne Randolph ..... Hope Lange  
George Washington Lafayette ..... Jack Lloyd

Prologue: 1790. Deck of a schooner. Act I: Scene 1--The Presidential Mansion. 2--The Smithy of an Inn on the Outskirts of New York. Act II: Scene 1--Hamilton's Home, Philadelphia. 2 and 3--Jefferson's Rooms. Act III: Scene 1--Jefferson's Rooms at Conrad's Boarding House, Washington. 1800. 2--Interior of the Capitol.

Staged by Shepard Traube; settings by Howard Bay; costumes by Rose Bogdanoff and Toni Ward; lighting by Moe Hack.

DETECTIVE STORY

(581 performances)

Melodrama in three acts by Sidney Kingsley. Produced by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse at the Hudson Theatre, March 23, 1949.

Cast of characters--

Detective Dakis .....Robert Strauss  
Shoplifter ..... Lee Grant  
Detective Gallagher ..... Edward Binns  
Mrs. Farragut ..... Jean Adair  
Joe Feinson ..... Lou Gilbert  
Detective Callahan ..... Patrick McVey  
Detective O'Brien ..... John Boyd  
Detective Brody ..... James Westerfield  
Mr. Sims ..... Les Tremayne  
Detective McLeod ..... Ralph Bellamy  
Arthur Kindred ..... Warren Stevens  
Patrolman Barnes ..... Earl Sydnor  
1st burglar (Charlie) ..... Joseph Wiseman  
2nd burglar (Lewis) ..... Michael Strong  
Mrs. Bagatelle ..... Michele Burani  
Dr. Schneider ..... Harry Worth  
Lieut. Monaghan ..... Horace McMahon  
Susan Carmichael ..... Joan Copeland  
Patrolman Keogh ..... Byron C. Halstead  
Patrolman Baker ..... Joe Roberts  
Willy ..... Carl Griscom  
Miss Hatch ..... Maureen Stapleton  
Mrs. Feeney ..... Sarah Grable  
Mr. Feeney ..... Jim Flynn  
Crumb-Bum ..... Archie Benson  
Mr. Gallantz ..... Garney Wilson  
Mr. Pritchett ..... James Maloney  
Tami Giacoppetti ..... Alexander Scourby  
Photographer ..... Michael Lewin  
Lady ..... Ruth Storm  
Gentleman ..... John Alberts  
Mr. Bagatelle ..... Joseph Ancona  
Indignant citizen ..... Jacqueline Paige

Act I: 5:30 p.m. on a day in August in the detective squad room of a New York precinct police station. Act II: 7:30 p.m.  
Act III: 8:30 p.m.

Staged by Sidney Kingsley; setting by Boris Aronson; costume supervision by Millie Sutherland.

DARKNESS AT NOON

(186 performances)

Play in three acts by Sidney Kingsley, based on the novel by Arthur Koestler, produced by the Playwrights' Company at the Alvin Theatre, January 13, 1951.

Cast of characters--

Rubashov ..... Claude Rains  
Guard ..... Robert Keith, Jr.  
402 ..... Philip Coolidge  
302 ..... Richard Seff  
202 ..... Allan Rich  
Luba ..... Kim Hunter  
Gletkin ..... Walter J. Palance  
1st Storm Trooper ..... Adams MacDonald  
Richard ..... Herbert Ratner  
Young Girl ..... Virginia Howard  
2nd Storm Trooper ..... Johnson Hayes  
Ivanoff ..... Alexander Scourby  
Bogrov ..... Norman Roland  
Hrutsch ..... Robert Crozier  
Albert ..... Daniel Polis  
Luigi ..... Will Kuluva  
Pablo ..... Henry Beckman  
Andre ..... Geoffrey Barr  
Barkeeper ..... Tony Ancona  
Secretary ..... Lois Nettleton  
President ..... Maurice Gosfield  
Soldiers, Sailors, Judges and Jurors

Act I: A prison; March, 1937.  
Act II: The same; five weeks later.  
Act III: The same; one week later.

Staged by Sidney Kingsley; associate producer, May Kirshner;  
settings by Frederick Fox; costumes by Kenn Barr.

LUNATICS AND LOVERS

A comedy in two acts and four scenes by Sidney Kingsley. Presented by M. Kirshner at the Broadhurst Theatre, New York, December 13, 1954. (344 performances)

Cast of characters--

Dan Cupid .....	Buddy Hackett
Joe Gonz .....	Nat Cantor
Sable Wellington .....	Sheila Bond
Waiter .....	Maurice Brenner
Judge Sullivan .....	Dennis King
Désirée .....	Vicki Cummings
Will Harrison .....	Arthur O'Connell
Marian Harrison .....	Mary Anderson
Policeman .....	James Nolan
House Detective .....	George Lyne
Hotel Manager .....	Fairfax Burgher
Bellboy .....	Maurice Brenner
Bride .....	Lynn Merrill
Groom .....	Rex Partington
Bridesmaid .....	Donna Pearson

Staged by Sidney Kingsley; designed and lighted by Frederick Fox.

## NIGHT LIFE

A play in three acts by Sidney Kingsley, produced by Mr. Kingsley and M. Kirshner at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre, New York City, October 23, 1962. (63 performances)

### Cast of Characters--

Neil .....	Jack Kelly
Frenchy .....	Leonardo Cimino
Waiter .....	Raymond St. Jacques
Baron .....	Robert Dryden
Nick .....	Alan Bergmann
Red .....	Jock Livingston
Cracker .....	Victor Thorley
Cigarette Girl .....	Jessica Walter
Kazar .....	Neville Brand
Chinky .....	James Greene
Lew .....	Walter Abel
Ceil .....	Carmen Mathews
Jimmy .....	Bobby Short
Young Man .....	Mike Baseleon
Young Woman .....	Paula Wayne
Gigolo .....	Larry Farley
Woman .....	Elizabeth Moore
Sonny .....	Murray Roman
Woman .....	Kim Townsend
Boy .....	Joseph Mascolo
Woman .....	Alicia Townsend
Gia .....	Carol Lawrence
Young Man .....	Barry Newman
Girl .....	Cynthia McAdams
Anna .....	Salome Jens
Iggy .....	Robert Weil
Boy .....	Cal Bostic
Girl .....	Doris Chambers
Harry .....	Harrison Dowd
Harry's Girl .....	Marilyn Hanold

Staged by Sidney Kingsley; settings and lighting by Albert Johnson; costumes by Alice Gibson.

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