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THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN HOMECOMER PLAY

City University of New York PH.D. 1983

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THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN HOMECOMER PLAY

by

Michael L. Counts

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Theatre
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

1983

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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Abstract

The Twentieth-Century American Homecomer Play

by

Michael L. Counts

Advisor: Professor Daniel Gerould

This dissertation examines twentieth-century American plays depicting the return of the soldier. A selective history of the homecomer play, beginning with Aeschylus's Oresteia and concluding with the twentieth century, is given. An appendix lists several foreign homecomer plays for possible further studies on the subject.

The major portion of the dissertation is an analysis of the American homecomer play. The analysis consists of seven major themes found in the homecomer plays spanning wars and genres: 1. Adjustment to Society; 2. Physical/Mental Handicaps; 3. Altered Perception of Society; 4. Society's Reception of the Homecomer; 5. Spouse, Fiancée, Loved One; 6. Homecomer as Ghost/Spirit; 7. Homecomers From More Than One War.

The analysis draws specific conclusions about the American homecomer play, offering new insights into American theatre and its playwrights. The American homecomer play is revealed as a particular type found in several periods, several genres, and written by a diverse group of playwrights.

A new perspective on the role of the black man in American theatre and dramatic literature is offered. O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra is shown in a different light when examined as a homecomer play. The homecomer play is revealed as an important part of American dramatic literature.

I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Daniel Gerould for providing the inspiration and guidance for this dissertation. I am grateful to Professors Stanley Waren and Edwin Wilson for their helpful comments and suggestions. I am pleased that Professor Vera Mowry Roberts, who has been there since I began my Odyssey through graduate-land, will be a witness to the completion of my journey.

I am deeply grateful that I have had, and continue to have, the indispensable moral support from my daughter Chanda and my parents Alice and Clifford, which I so desperately needed. Their constant concern, their gentle, but firm, prodding kept me on the track. I dedicate this dissertation to them.

Michael L. Counts

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Introduction

I have never fought in a war, but I did spend a brief period in the army between the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Men were able to avoid being drafted for several years' service by enlisting in the army reserves. I went through a brief training period and then was obligated to attend regular reserve meetings. My sergeant had fought in the Korean War, and my company commander had fought in World War II and the Korean War. I served with several men who had fought in either or both wars. My experiences with them and my feelings about my return from basic training provide me with an understanding of the homecoming experience. I understand the camaraderie one feels with those who shared a similar hardship. I felt, for a brief time, apart from those around me who had not gone through this experience. It is by magnifying my own experience that I can better appreciate the homecomer's problems.

My army experience plays a part in my interest in the topic of the homecomer play. I had read Bertolt Brecht's Drums in the Night (1922) for a seminar. During the discussion, the term homecomer play was introduced, which for me was a new term. The homecomer play was then defined as one

in which the returning soldier is central. Wolfgang Borchert's The Outsider (1947) was recommended as another interesting example of the homecomer play.

I read Borchert's play and decided to write a paper on the subject of the homecomer play. I chose The Outsider, Ernst Toller's Hinkemann (1922), Ödön von Horvath's Don Juan comes back from the war [sic] (1937), and David Rabe's Sticks and Bones (1972) for my paper. I found similar themes running through these four plays from three wars, two nations and different genres. In each play a homecomer: returns with a physical handicap; has an altered perception of his society; finds that his society has lower moral values; and fails to continue his love relationship.

These similarities convinced me that I had a topic for a dissertation, and I proceeded to establish originality. My research led me to one unpublished study on the subject of the homecomer. It is a Ph.D. dissertation concentrated on the German homecomer play, "Der Heimkehrer aus Zwei Weltkriegen Im Deutschen Drama" (William Anders, University of Pennsylvania, 1951). There are a few chapters in published works, again concentrated on the German homecomer play. The homecomer play is mentioned briefly in other

books. I was unable to locate anything on the American homecomer play.

My original topic was to begin with Aeschylus's Agamemnon (458 B.C.) and conclude with the homecomer play today. I quickly exhausted what little material there was on the subject. Cross references soon disappeared and my research became a random study of volume after volume of critical works, histories, and dramatic encyclopedias. A work here and there referred me to others, but for the most part I poured through card catalogues and scanned the open shelves. However, I soon learned to look for key words (soldier, war, return, etc.). Then I would look for further reference on a play or, not finding it, proceed to read it. Thus, I had to read many plays which were not homecomer plays.

The number of homecomer plays, which I had read or found references to, became quite large. Indications were that the list was going to continue to expand. My area of concentration needed to be narrowed at this point. The decision was to concentrate on twentieth-century homecomer plays, but this area became too large as well.

In addition, there was the problem of translation.

The German language alone accounts for over thirty untranslated homecomer plays. At this point, I had located over fifty untranslated homecomer plays from a variety of nations. Briefly, I considered concentrating on a select group of homecomer plays in English and English translations. However, as I examined my file cards, a significant number of American homecomer plays appeared.

The twentieth-century American homecomer play thus becomes my final choice for a dissertation topic. There was no study on the subject, so I began to read volumes of twentieth-century American dramatic criticism, histories, and dramatic encyclopedias. Early in my research, Edwin Bronner's The Encyclopedia of American Theatre 1900-1975 was published and it proved to be a valuable source. Garff B. Wilson's Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre and Burns Mantle's Best Plays of 1919-1980 were also quite helpful. The play descriptions in Samuel French and Dramatists Play Service Catalogues led me to a few plays not found in other sources. Play reviews in the collections at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts and the Museum of the City of New York led me to homecomer plays.

This dissertation examines fifty-five American plays written and produced during the twentieth century. They represent the plays which I was able to locate in manuscript. No important American homecomer play is omitted from my dissertation, and, in fact, several plays of minor significance are included. Plays which are not homecomer plays are included, because the homecomer theme is present in them. Forty-four of the fifty-five plays in this study are homecomer plays.

The dissertation is divided into six sections:

I. A select history of the homecomer play

II. Background on the wars which produced the plays

III. An analysis of the plays.

IV. Conclusion

V. Appendix

VI. Bibliography

Section one provides a few definitions of the homecomer play. A select history, based upon my initial research, is included. It is intended as an indication of the enormity and scope of the subject, not as a comprehensive history.

Section two provides historical material on the wars from which the homecomers in these plays returned. The aftermath of each war is provided, including its impact upon the homecomer. Included with each war are the plays from that war with production dates, theater, type of production, playwright's war experience, if any, and other relevant material.

Section three is the main body of the dissertation. The plays are analyzed for common thematic concerns and grouped accordingly. The analysis consists of seven segments:

1. Adjustment to Society
   1A. Uniforms and Medals
2. Physical/Mental Handicaps
3. Altered Perception of Society
4. Society's Reception of the Homecomer
5. Spouse, Fiancée, Loved One
6. Homecomer as Ghost/Spirit
7. Homecomers From More Than One War

The opening segment analyzes the problems which face the homecomer when he attempts to adjust to postwar life. The second part of this segment examines homecomers who use

their uniforms and medals as part of their adjustment.

The second segment explores the difficulties encountered by homecomers who return with physical or mental wounds.

The third segment examines the way combat alters the perceptions of homecomers toward their society.

Segment four analyzes the varied receptions received by the homecomer, as a result of public opinion surrounding each war.

The fifth segment examines the problems experienced by the homecomer with his loved one.

The sixth segment provides examples of homecomers who are literally or figuratively ghosts or spirits.

The last segment details homecomers who have returned from more than one war.

My conclusion is the fourth section of the dissertation. I arrive at conclusions for each segment of the analysis and then compile a general conclusion. I close with a proposal for the American homecomer play to be listed as a subgenre.

The fifth section is an appendix including a list of plays located in my initial research, which are not part of

this dissertation. It is meant to be an aid for scholars who may wish to research this area.

The last section is my bibliography which includes only references directly used in this study.

CHAPTER I

THE HOMECOMER PLAY

This chapter is a selective history of the homecomer play compiled from my initial research. The material indicates the importance of the homecomer theme in dramatic literature. Themes can be traced from homecomer plays of the past to those of the present. This history begins with the German homecomer play of World War I, because it represents the single largest group from any war and introduces the word homecomer as the name for these plays.

During World War I a young German soldier, Hans José Rehfisch, wrote a homecomer play. When the war ended in 1918, Rehfisch's Heimkehr* (Homecoming), was produced. This play was soon followed by a number of German homecomer plays reflecting upon the life of the returning soldier in postwar Germany. H. F. Garten characterizes the thematic similarity

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* Titles appearing in language of origin are plays not translated into English.

of these plays:

> Frequently the German post-war world was seen through the eyes of a returning soldier who felt unable to adjust himself to civilian life. This theme of the Heimkehrer [Homecomer] recurred in a long succession of plays extending from the end of the First World War right down to the rise of National Socialism. The general pattern remained unchanged throughout: the returning soldier contrasted the suffering and sacrifice of the war with the demoralization surrounding him at home.[1]

The German defeat in World War I, followed by severe economic and political unrest, created the climate for German playwrights to examine the returning soldier and his plight. The plot of one of the better German homecomer plays, Bertolt Brecht's Drums in the Night (1922) reveals the basic themes found in these plays.

The homecomer Kragler returns to find his homeland in political and economic turmoil. He has been reported killed in action and finds his fiancée engaged to a war profiteer. Kragler had expected a warm greeting from proud loved ones. Instead, he is met with indifference and some hostility. He is called a ghost and told to leave.

The disillusioned Kragler flees from his fiancée and

[1]H.F. Garten, Modern German Drama (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1959), p. 178.

family. He then becomes involved with a group of revolutionaries who plan to exploit his veteran status. Kragler will serve as a figurehead leading the Spartacus uprising against the government. Here Brecht swerves from the course of the majority of German homecomer plays, as Kragler rejects the revolutionaries and walks off into the night with his fiancée, who has returned to him. The homecomer is reunited with his loved one and is not exploited by the Spartacists; in the majority of the plays the homecomer loses his love and is exploited or rejected by society.

Another excellent example of the German homecomer play is Ernst Toller's Hinkemann (1922). Garten's description of the play can be used as a general definition for all homecomer plays. He states that "this belonged to a type of play much in vogue in the immediate post-war years, the so-called Heimkehrer drama, depicting the return of the soldier from the war and his inability to adjust himself to Civilian life."[2]

The Germans produced more First World War homecomer plays than any single nation. The majority of these plays

[2]Ibid., p. 143.

are unimportant. However, there are a few others which deserve mention, in addition to Brecht's and Toller's.

Leonhard Frank's Karl and Anna (1930) has a theme common to homecomer plays; the husband, believed killed in action, returns unexpectedly. In this domestic drama two German soldiers are Russian prisoners. Richard is married and describes his wife to the other one, Karl. They attempt to escape and Karl believes that his friend is killed. He then makes his way to the friend's home, where he convinces the man's wife that he, Karl, is her husband. The real husband returns, but the wife decides to leave with her new love.

Arnolt Bronner's Kalalaunische Schlact (1924) (The Catalaunian Battle) and Hans Chlumberg's Miracle at Verdun (1931) employ a theme found in several homecomer plays, the battle-slain soldier who returns as a ghost or spirit. In Bronner's play, according to Garten, "the title alludes to the legendary battle of Attila where, it is said, the spirits of the slain fought side by side with the living."[3] In Kalalaunische Schlact the spirit of the dead soldier

[3]Garten, Modern German Drama, p. 179.

haunts his wife; and she, unable to free herself from him, commits suicide.

Chlumberg saw the next war coming and, prophetically set Miracle at Verdun in 1939. In his play the corpses of French and German soldiers killed in World War I rise from their graves to protest the impending war. The homecomer as ghost is also employed by Gerhard Menzel in his play Toboggan (1928). The homecomer, given up as dead, returns to his family which rejects him. Treated as a ghost by his loved ones, the homecomer commits suicide by allowing himself to be buried by a snowfall. Ödön von Horvath uses this ending, also, in Don Juan comes back from the war (1937). The legendary seducer is here a young German soldier morally reformed because of his war experience. Don Juan returns to a morally corrupt Germany, where he is unable to adjust.

Every major nation engaged in fighting World War I produced homecomer plays. Several important, or once popular playwrights, include a homecomer play among their works. French playwrights Jean Giraudoux, Siegfried (1928), and Jean Anouilh, Traveller Without Luggage (1937), portray the homecomer as amnesiac. In England, Somerset Maugham wrote a

comedy, Too Many Husbands (1919), depicting the missing-in-action husband returning after the war. He also wrote a more serious play, For Services Rendered (1932), portraying the effects of the war on a single family. John Van Druten's The Return of the Soldier (1928), an adaptation of a Rebecca West novel, presents still another amnesiac homecomer. A. A. Milne's The Boy Comes Home (1920) is another example of a comic treatment of the homecomer. A ghost homecomer is depicted in James M. Barrie's A Well-Remembered Voice (1925).

Two expressionistic plays from this period present the stages in the life of a young man as he progresses from idealistic youth to soldier to embittered homecomer. The earliest is from Germany, Ernst Toller's Transfiguration (1918). The Irish playwright Sean O'Casey utilizes a group protagonist in The Silver Tassie (1928).

The homecomer play was by no means a new genre arising from the experience of World War I. However, the volume of plays produced from this war and the use of Heimkehr as a title by Rehfisch placed focus on the genre. The homecomer play has always been a part of dramatic literature, even though it may not have been defined as

such. Since man began fighting wars and writing plays the genre has existed. The homecomer play can be traced back to the roots of Western drama; as Peter Bauland writes, "the Heimkehrer play is the natural product of all wars since the Trojan, the drama of the returning soldier."[4]

The Trojan wars were a rich, dramatic source for Classical Greek dramatists. The first extant homecomer play is Aeschylus's Agamemnon, part of his trilogy The Oresteia (458 B.C.). The play offers themes found in subsequent homecomer plays.

Agamemnon has been fighting the Trojans for ten years. He returns victorious to his wife Clytemnestra, who has taken a lover. Agamemnon has returned with his mistress, Cassandra. His victory alters the homecomer's perceptions as he returns vainglorious. Clytemnestra plots to assassinate him, but Agamemnon's inflated sense of self-importance blinds him to his wife's intentions. Agamemnon's arrogance costs him his life.

The homecomer play is not confined to Western drama. Fourteenth-century Japanese dramatists wrote Nō plays which

[4]Peter Bauland, The Hooded Eagle/Modern German Drama on the New York Stage (Syracuse University Press, 1968), p. 98.

featured the homecomer as a ghost warrior. The most popular and most prolific of them is Seami Motokiyo (1363-1444 A.D.). Known as Seami, he wrote several Nō homecomer plays employing the ghost of the warrior Atsumori, who is slain in battle.

The tenets of Buddhism pervade the Nō drama. Thus the warrior's ghost wanders the earth because a wrong has been committed against him, or by him. This wrong must be absolved before the ghost homecomer can cease wandering.

A sample of titles are Seami's Atsumori and Tsunemasa (1363-1444) and Zembo Motoyasu's Ikuta (1453-1532).

The Renaissance period also produced some homecomer plays. One early example is Angelo Beolco's one-act comedy, Ruzzante Returns From The Wars (1522 or 23). This play, set in Venice, shows the influence of Renaissance humanism in its depiction of war and its aftermath.

Ruzzante returns from battle to find that his wife has disappeared. He meets a friend who fails to recognize the homecomer, although he has been at war a mere four months. Ruzzante, however, has been reduced to skin and bones in this short time. It is not clear whether the war

is over or Ruzzante is a deserter. However, one thing is certain: the homecomer is sick of war (all four months' worth). He insists that he will never serve again.

Ruzzante feels that he did get something positive from the experience. He brags that he has grown from his travels around the world. The homecomer has been fighting the French and demonstrates how worldly-wise he has become by spouting pidgin French. This is a comic exaggeration, but homecomers have grown from their contacts with different cultures and from their travels as soldiers.

In Beolco's play we are provided with insights into the conduct of European wars during the early sixteenth century. Obviously, the armies were ill-trained, ill-fed, and ill-clothed. Ruzzante paints this portrait as he recounts his war exploits:

> I was a corporal in charge of a squad. I had to stay in the rear. Well, the line up front would suddenly turn tail and come charging back, helter-skelter, so there wasn't much sense in me doing anything different, no matter how much courage I had.[5]

Elizabethan drama contains a large number of plays depicting war and its aftermath. Shakespeare's plays abound

[5]Beolco, Angelo, Ruzzante Returns From The Wars in The Classic Theatre-Volume One, Eric Bentley, ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1958), p. 66.

with homecomers. Othello (1602), while not a homecomer play, uses the theme. Othello is a mercenary in the hire of the government of Venice. He has returned from the defense of his adopted homeland and is attempting to adjust. However, he is an outsider and a black man.

The difficulty in adjusting to social relationships after a lifetime of warfare is revealed by Othello's speech to the Senate. He confesses to them that he is married to Desdemona. Knowing little but war and travel, Othello spoke to the innocent girl of his adventures. He explains to the Senate:

> Rude am I in my speech,
> And little blest with the soft phrase of peace.
> For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith
> Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
> Their dearest action in the tented field.
> And little of this great world can I speak,
> More than pertains to feats of broil and battle,[6]

A picture of the contemporary Elizabethan homecomer is provided by Thomas Dekker's The Shoemaker's Holiday (1599). The homecomer theme is present in a subplot. The shoemaker's journeyman, Rafe Damport, is conscripted to fight the French. He returns from war with the lower part

[6]William Shakespeare, Othello in Shakespeare: The Complete Works, G. B. Harrison, ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952), p. 1064 (ll. 81-87).

of his leg amputated, an early example of a common element found in homecomer plays. Rafe also finds his wife has disappeared. She believes he is dead and has gone to begin a new life.

A series of homecomer comedies were written in Poland between the second half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century by anonymous playwrights. The protagonist is Albertus, who is patterned upon the braggart soldier from Roman comedies, Miles Gloriosus.

Albertus is the leader of a band of marauding homecomers who roam the Polish countryside foraging for food and sleeping in barns. The brave band routinely engages the local chickens and geese in battle. In Komedia Rybałtowska Nowa (1615) (New Ribald Comedy) Albertus is shown wandering the countryside begging the peasants to feed him. This play reflects the political climate of the time, as Czeslaw Milosz explains; "a heated political dispute arises which betrays a thorough understanding of the political problems of the day."[7]

[7]Czeslaw Milosz, The History of Polish Literature (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), p. 103.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Minna Von Barnhelm (1767) is another homecomer play which reveals the political climate of its period. In this comedy two homecomers from the Seven Years War are unhappy with civilian life. One of them, Major von Tellheim, laments; "I am a Tellheim discharged, a Tellheim wounded in honour, a cripple and a beggar."[8] The other homecomer, von Tellheim's former Segeant-Major Paul Werner, wants to fight again, so that he can continue to plunder.

Political overtones appear in Act II, Scene II as the landlord of the inn where Minna Von Barnhelm is staying questions her for his records. His questions become more and more prying and Von Barnhelm suspects him of being a police spy. Von Barnhelm and the Major, each from opposing political sides, begin a stormy courtship. They are united at the end of the play. Lessing is suggesting the course his divided country should take.

The homecomer play appears during the birth of Western dramatic literature. The homecomer play is also a part of Eastern dramatic literature. It appears regularly

[8]Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Minna Von Barnhelm, translated by Anthony Dent in Lacoön/Nathan The Wise/Minna Von Barnhelm, ed. William A. Steel (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. - New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1961), p. 248.

throughout dramatic history. In the twentieth century every major nation produced homecomer plays. The homecomer play is an important part of dramatic literature, as the significant number of American plays, fifty-five, in my dissertation indicates, the homecomer is an important part of American dramatic literature.

Themes which I explore in my analysis of the American homecomer play can be found in these plays from other periods and other cultures. Agamemnon returns with his mistress and meets with a violent death. The Nō dramas depict ghost homecomers. Ruzzante feels that his war experience had a positive effect upon him. Othello is a black homecomer. Rafe Damport and Major von Tellheim are physically disabled homecomers. Politics found in Komedia Rybałtowska and Minna Von Barnhelm is a theme in some of the American homecomer plays. Kragler cannot adjust to his postwar German society. The connections which unite these early plays to the American homecomer plays also connect the American homecomer plays to each other, as my analysis demonstrates.

CHAPTER II

THE WARS

The plays in this dissertation reflect the aftermath of war. War is the unseen, but strongly felt, presence in each play. The analysis of the homecomer plays will be more clearly understood if information regarding each war is provided. The following descriptions of each war are a concise history of the war and its impact on American society.

The histories reflect themes which appear in the homecomer plays. Sociological and political circumstances which arise from a war are included because of their influence upon the homecomer. Descriptions of the average soldier are included, so that fact and fiction may be compared. Class and racial compositions of the troops are included, because some of the plays are based upon these two categories.

Public support of the war is examined. Duration of the war and conduct of the war are discussed because of

their effect upon the homecomer. I have included all information which is crucial to a better understanding of the homecomer and his problems. Two plays were written in the twentieth century but are set post-Civil War, therefore I included the Civil War in my history.

The history of each war is followed by a list of homecomer plays from that war. Information on each play includes production dates, theater (Broadway unless indicated otherwise), length of run, author's war or military experience (if any), genre, awards, and any other pertinent information.

The Civil War

Begun on April 12, 1861 and ended on April 9, 1865, the Civil War pitted the free states of the North against the slave states of the South. This war was responsible for the deaths of more American soldiers than any war in American history.

When war was declared, volunteers on both sides rushed to join the army, their patriotism fueled by enlistment bonuses. The average Civil War soldier was a farm boy between the ages of eighteen and thirty, poorly educated and poorly trained (more guerilla fighter than soldier). Volun-

teers became scarce as the war dragged on and conscription had to be enacted.

The draft led to riots, and several blacks were lynched in New York City in 1863. Draftees came from the lower classes, since a conscripted male could pay someone to take his place. The majority of deserters in the latter part of the war were from this group. Black troops were used by the Union army in segregated companies led by white officers. The Confederates, fearful of insurrection and believing blacks incapable of responsibility, never used black troops.

The Confederate homecomer returned to a farm or hometown which had suffered severe damage. The South was the scene of most of the fighting and sustained more damage than did the North. Ida M. Tarbell writes of a Southern homecomer returning after four years of war; he left "a farm of several hundred acres, with handsome buildings, fine stock, and 150 Negroes."[9] When he returned he found almost every tree on his property cut down by the Union army, a shell where his home was, and two former slaves remaining.

Although his Union counterpart did not return, by

[9]Benjamin Albert Botkin, ed. A Civil War Treasury of Tales, Legends, and Folklore (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 558.

and large, to such a scene of devastation, he carried the experience of this devastating war home with him. The Civil War, which had literally pitted brother against brother, was to remain in the American psyche for years. Robert J. Parish writes that "it took more lives than any other American war, and it left more scars upon the survivors and their environment."[10]

Civil War Homecomer Plays

Mourning Becomes Electra, Eugene O'Neill--modern tragedy--Orestian trilogy source--10/26/31 (158 performances) Theatre Guild.

The Survivors, Peter Viertel and Irwin Shaw--world peace--1/19/48 (8 performances) Playhouse. Irwin Shaw served in World War II.

[10]Robert J. Parish, The American Civil War (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishing, Inc., 1976), p. 625.

World War I

This first war in modern history to engage the great powers of the world lasted from 1914 to 1918, with American involvement coming in 1917. America emerged from World War I as a major power for the first time in its history.

Unlike the Civil War, young men responding at first to this war came largely from the upper classes. Many of them spurred on by visions of glory, joined European armies before American involvement. David M. Kennedy comments on this phenomenon; as he observes that it was "the nation's most carefully cultivated youth, the privileged recipients of the finest education, steeped in the values of the genteel tradition, who most believed the archaic doctrines about war's noble and heroic possibilities."[11]

A draft was enacted and soon Americans from all classes joined the army. Black troops were once again segregated, but eventually were scattered among white troops in carefully measured numbers. The segregation of army troops was not ended during World War I, as Kennedy explains, "only one of every five black men sent to France saw combat, while in the AEF [American Expeditionary Forces]

[11]David M. Kennedy, Over Here/The First World War and American Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 180.

as a whole two out of three soldiers took part in battle."[12]

The American combat soldier did not suffer to the degree that his European counterpart did. Most Americans were in combat less than a year, and only a small number engaged in sustained or repeated fighting. None of the American troops fought the major defensive battles of the war.

The major adjustment for the American homecomer was for him to reconcile the loss of the ideal of the romantic nineteenth century with the harsh reality of the twentieth century. Alfred Kazin explains, "it was Europe that had suffered the war, where Americans had merely participated in it, it was Europe that now lay paralytic after four shattering years, while Americans were merely disillusioned by the aftermath."[13]

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[12]Ibid., p. 162.

[13]Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1942), p. 190.

World War I Homecomer Plays

Civilian Clothes, Thompson Buchanan--domestic comedy--9/12/19 (150 performances) Morosco.
Buchanan served in the Puerto Rican campaign and World War I.

The Wooden Soldier, Alexander Carr--comedy--6/22/31 (32 performances) Biltmore.

"Everyday", Rachel Crothers--romantic comedy--11/16/21 (30 performances) Bijou.
Crothers created the Stage Women's War Relief to help needy families of World War I armed forces personnel.

Achilles Had a Heel, Martin Flavin--black homecomer--10/13/35 (8 performances) 44th Street.

Tapestry in Gray, Martin Flavin--psychological drama--12/27/35 (24 performances) Shubert.

The Famous Mrs. Fair, James Forbes--domestic comedy--woman homecomer--12/22/19 (343 performances) Henry Miller.
Forbes went to France during World War I to entertain troops.

Johnny Johnson, Paul Green--musical--world peace--11/19/36 (68 performances) Forty-Fourth Street (The Group Theatre).
Green served in World War I.

The Valiant, Holworthy Hall & Robert Middlemass--criminal homecomer--written for and produced by various members of the Little Theatre movement.
Hall served as a Captain in the Army Air Service during World War I.

Hell-Bent Fer Heaven, Hatcher Hughes--comedy--1/4/24 (128 performances) Klaw--Pulitzer Price.
Hughes was a Captain in the Army during World War I.

The Oldest Living Graduate, Preston Jones--comedy--homecomer from three wars--9/23/76-10/31/76 (40 performances) Broadhurst. One play from the trilogy, A Texas Trilogy.

Thin Ice, Percival Knight--comedy of manners--9/30/22 (105 performances) Comedy Theatre.

Rendezvous, Barton MacLane--criminal homecomer--10/12/32 (21 performances) Broadhurst.

Goin' Home, Ransom Rideout--black homecomer--8/23/28 (77 performances) Hudson.

The Spanish Civil War

On July 17, 1936 Francisco Franco, a Spanish general, led his followers, the Nationalists, in revolt against the government. The Nationalists defeated the government troops, the Loyalists, and took power on March 28, 1939. The war drew world-wide interest and fascist and communist powers took sides in the war.

The United States held no official position on the war. However, individual citizens joined the Lincoln Brigade, a part of the International Brigade, formed to fight for the Loyalists. The majority of these men were committed politically to left or radical causes and many were members of the American Communist Party. Robert A. Rosenstone describes the average Lincoln Brigade member as: "Between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-seven who lived in an industrial, urban center where labor unions and radical political parties were most active. . . . If he did not work in a factory or on the docks, he might very well be a seaman, struggling to organize a union, or a college student active in the League Against War and Fascism."[14]

[14]Robert A. Rosenstone, Crusade of the Left (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 98.

The concessions granted to Hitler at the Munich Conference in 1938 led to the withdrawal of the Lincoln Brigade from the Spanish Civil War. The faint hope of aid from other nations was gone, and the possibility of victory with it. The Americans returned home to avoid capture and imprisonment, which might prevent them from fighting the fascists in the impending world war.

The American homecomer from the Spanish Civil War returned with a sense of futility; not only did the Loyalists lose, but fascism had a new ally. Jobs were scarce in depression-deep America. However, his strong political commitment sustained the homecomer's morale as he joined the political fray once more.

It was not until the post-World War II era that this homecomer was to have his most difficult time. The Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States began. This created a political climate hostile to all Americans in any way tainted with Communism. Many of the Lincoln Brigade members, even though they may have fought in the Second World War, were dismissed from jobs and, in some cases, jailed.

Spanish Civil War Homecomer Play

Key Largo, Maxwell Anderson--verse drama--11/27/39 (105 performances) Barrymore.

World War II

In 1939 the major powers again fought a world war. America, once again, was in an isolationist mood as Ralph G. Martin explains; "British soldiers were fighting the Germans at some place called Tobruk and Nazi troops had pushed into the outskirts of Moscow, but most Americans saw the whole thing as somebody else's war."[15]

On December 7, 1941 Japanese airplanes bombed the American territory of Hawaii and America was forced to declare war. American involvement ended four years later with the dropping of atomic bombs in mainland Japan. This was the most destructive war in modern history with estimates of total military and civilian deaths as high as forty million.

American enlistments were brisk as the public regarded the war as a war of democracy versus fascism. The draft was enacted without any serious opposition. America sent a true citizen's army into World War II, as men of varied ages and backgrounds enlisted or were drafted. The average age of draftees, late twenties, was the highest for

[15]Ralph G. Martin, The G I War 1941-1945 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), p. 8.

any American war. Blacks were segregated at first, but again integrated into companies in measured numbers by war's end.

The homecomer from the Second World War returned to an enthusiastic America, which welcomed him with brass bands, victory parades, speeches, and the like. He was provided with a G.I. Bill of Rights enabling him to attend college. The unemployed homecomer was the beneficiary of "52-20" legislation providing him with unemployment benefits for a full year. Special housing was built and employers were required by law to rehire former employees returning from the war.

However, homecoming was not smooth or easy for all. Bill Mauldin writes of the difficulties facing many student homecomers: "Two great problems beset the veterans who went back to school: money, because the G.I. Bill of Rights provided them with a sum that fell pitifully short of the amount required for the barest necessities; and housing."[16]

Employers found ways of bypassing the guaranteed job legislation. Homecomers' medical needs were not always

[16]Bill Mauldin, Back Home (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1947), p. 61.

given the best attention. Amputees were fitted with prosthetic devices designed during World War I. By and large, however, the homecomer from World War II received better treatment from a grateful public than the homecomers from the two wars yet to come.

Truckline Café, Maxwell Anderson--2/27/46 (13 performances) Belasco.

Jeb, Robert Ardrey--black homecomer--2/21/46 (9 performances) Martin Beck.

Foolish Notion, Philip Barry--comedy--3/13/45 (103 performances) Martin Beck.

Sundown Beach, Bessie Breuer--psychological drama--9/7/48 (7 performances) Belasco (Actors Studio production).
Breuer worked with the Office of War Information during World War II.

Deep Are The Roots, Arnaud D'Usseau and James Gow--black homecomer--9/26/45 (477 performances) Fulton.
D'Usseau and Gow served in World War II.

Soldier's Wife, Rose Franken--domestic comedy--10/4/44 (255 performances) Golden.

The Subject Was Roses, Frank Gilroy--5/25/64 (832 performances) Royale--Pulitzer Prize, New York Drama Critics Circle Award, Antoinette Perry.
Gilroy served in the army during World War II.

Who'll Save The Plowboy?, Frank Gilroy--1/19/62 (56 performances) Phoenix (Off-Broadway).

The Searching Wind, Lillian Hellman--homecomer partial theme--4/12/44 (326 performances) Fulton.

Dear Ruth, Norman Krasna--comedy--12/13/44 (683 performances) Henry Miller.
Krasna was a Major in the air force during World War II.

John Loves Mary, Norman Krasna--comedy--2/4/47 (423 performances) Booth.

All My Sons, Arthur Miller--homecomer co-theme--1/29/47 (328 performances) Coronet--New York Drama Critics Circle Award.

The Wind Is Ninety, Ralph Nelson--fantasy--spirit homecomer--6/21/45 (108 performances) Booth.
Nelson wrote this play while serving in World War II.

Forward the Heart, Bernard Reines--blind homecomer--1/28/49 (19 performances) 48th Street.

Love Among the Ruins, Elmer Rice--homecomer minor theme--turned down by commercial producers, the play was produced by the University of Rochester on May 3, 1950.

Foxhole in the Parlor, Elsa Shelly--psychological drama--5/23/45 (45 performances) Booth.

Snafu, Louis Solomon and Harold Buchman--comedy--underage homecomer--10/25/44 (156 performances) Hudson.

The Korean War

On June 25, 1950 North Korean troops invaded South Korea, and the United States, with troops stationed there, became instantly involved. Member nations of the newly-formed United Nations sent troops in support of South Korea, but America was to bear the brunt of the war.

This was a war never officially declared a war, so the American troops were under strict orders to engage the enemy only within Korean borders. This order was given with full knowledge that Chinese Communist troops were crossing the Korean borders. A trained force stationed in the Pacific kept the enemy engaged until enlisted personnel, World War II reservists, and draftees could join them. Some black companies still existed, but such segregation ended quickly as blacks were drafted or enlisted and placed in integrated companies.

The American public became disenchanted with this undeclared war in which no towns or cities were captured, and no fixed goals were announced. They became even more apathetic as the negotiations for the armistice, which had dragged on for a year and one-half, was announced as a virtual stalement. Rutherford M. Poats describes the reaction

of the American public at the end of the Korean War: "Never has the end of a major war been greeted with less enthusiasm. There was no dancing in the streets. . .most people could not feel a sense of climax or accomplishment in the armistice."[17]

The Korean War homecomer returned confused and disillusioned, with a feeling of having failed and of having been let down by his government. Ordinary adjustment problems were heightened by the lack of a feeling of a job well-done and by of a sense of time wasted. In addition, a group of homecomers returned with a problem unique to this war. While imprisoned by the enemy, they had been subjected to psychological torture (brainwashing) and faced court-martial for confessing to war crimes, which they publicly alleged their government had forced them to commit.

Brainwashing was a new war strategy. American military personnel were almost completely unprepared for this new technique. Virginia Pasley explains the easy success of this Communist innovation:

> Certainly American prisoners of war were not prepared sufficiently for the psychological strains

[17]Rutherford M. Poats, Decision In Korea (New York: The McBridge Company, 1954), p. 282.

they were to bear. The six hours of classes in psychological warfare and Communism scheduled for every G.I. are obviously ineffective; most prisoners of war do not recall ever hearing anything about Communism in their army training.[18]

Korean War Homecomer Plays

A Very Special Baby, Robert Alan Aurthur--homecomers from two wars--11/14/56 (5 performances) Playhouse.
Aurthur served in World War II as a Marine Combat correspondent.

Time Limit!, Henry Denker and Ralph Berkey--brainwashing--homecomer from two wars--1/24/56 (127 performances) Booth.

A Hatful of Rain, Michael V. Gazzo--drug addicted homecomer --11/9/55 (398 performances) Lyceum.

Try! Try!, Frank O'Hara--non-realistic, blank verse--February 1953, Artists' Theatre (Off-Broadway).

P.S. 193, David Rayfiel--10/3/62-- (7 weeks) The Writers' Stage (Off-Broadway).
Rayfiel served in the army during World War II and Korea.

Period of Adjustment, Tennessee Williams--comedy--homecomers from two wars--11/10/60 (132 performances) Hayes.

[18]Virginia Pasley, 21 Stayed (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1955), p. 237.

The Vietnam War

Fixed dates are difficult to arrive at since the war was begun in secret sometime in the early 1960s, but by 1965 a fullscale movement of American troops was underway. Clouded issues similar to the Korean War continued through this one. Officially, however, the United States was protecting South Vietnam from invasion by North Vietnam. This war, the longest foreign war in American history, officially ended in 1975.

During this, the most divisive war since the Civil War, significant numbers of Americans questioned the need or reason for American involvement. Large numbers of Americans took to the streets to demonstrate against the war. For the first time in American history, large numbers of homecomers publicly questioned the reasons for, and conduct of, a war still being waged. In April of 1971 thousands of Vietnam veterans demonstrated against the war in their nation's capital.

The last years of the war were fought by some troops under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Many men were discharged as alcoholics or addicts. A "heroin epidemic" affected American troops during the final years of the war.

There was disobedience of direct orders; as Peter Goldman reports, "there were numberless small acts of disobedience in a war in which career soldiers conditioned to obey orders were outnumbered by draftees who routinely questioned them, and once the men refused en masse to go out on a night operation and got away with it."[19]

As in the Civil War, many draftees were poor and uneducated. The average age of the Vietnam War draftee was younger than his counterpart in any other American war. Blacks were not only integrated into units, but constituted a larger percentage than their representation in the general population. The recruit was not trained to fight in a unit which was then sent to battle, but instead placed into a company when needed. Military strategy did not lead to occupation of enemy territory. There was a macabre policy known as the body count. Success was measured by the number of dead bodies a company could produce. There was falsification of figures; but a massacre of civilians led to the most publicized scandal of the war, the mass murder of 347 Vietnamese men, women and children at My Lai in 1969.

[19]Peter Goldman, Newsweek, December 24, 1981, p. 70.

The homecomer from Vietnam did not return to marching bands, cheering throngs or patriotic speechmakers. Instead, he was met with embarrassed silence or open hostility.

The adjustment problems facing the Vietnam War homecomer were, and still are, generally more acute than those suffered by his predecessors. Significant numbers returned with drug or alcohol dependencies acquired during combat. Robert J. Lifton writes of a problem unique to this homecomer: "The nagging question, both psychological and political, of how long one was to remain primarily an antiwar veteran, or veteran at all--as opposed to moving beyond that identity into a post-war and post-veteran relationship to American society."[20]

It is nine years since the last American combat soldier returned from Vietnam and a sizeable percentage of homecomers remain unadjusted to post-war life. The problem has just recently been identified by psychiatrists as post-traumatic stress disorder. The symptoms are, as Peter Goldman reports, "nightmares, flashbacks, rages, binges,

[20]Robert J. Lifton, Home From The War (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 301.

panics, melancholic silences, numbed feelings, guilt at having survived and at what survival sometimes required."[21]

These are not symptoms confined only to the Vietnam veterans, but they appear to occur more frequently among these homecomers than among those from other wars. A government study published in March of 1981 examines the adjustment problems still plaguing America's last homecomers. A statement from the study points out that:

> Nearly a fourth of the veterans who saw heavy combat were later arrested for criminal offense, and of the 70 percent who returned to school, few finished. Compared with the rest of the population, unemployment is higher, occupational attainment lower, and drug and alcohol abuse more prevalent. The incidence of suicide is considerable.[22]

Vietnam War Homecomer Plays

Medal of Honor Rag, Tom Cole--psychological drama--3/28/76-5/2/76 (40 performances) Theater de Lys (Off-Broadway).

The Vietnamization of New Jersey, Christopher Durang--parody --blind homecomer--1/28/77, Yale Repertory Theatre (regional).

The Watering Place, Lyle Kessler--symbolic--3/12/69 (1 performance) Music Box.

Rib Cage, Larry Ketron--5/17/78, Manhattan Theatre Club (Off-Off-Broadway).

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[21]Goldman, Newsweek, p. 49.

[22]Douglas Martin, The New York Times, July 16, 1981, p. A13.

Still Life, Emily Mann--docudrama--2/19/81 (limited run) American Place theatre (Off-Broadway).

Bringing It All Back Home, Terrence McNally--satire--ghost homecomer--1969, La Mama (Off-Off Broadway).

The Shortchanged Review, Michael Dorn Moody--1/22/76-2/29/76, Mitzi Newhouse Theatre at Lincoln Center (Off-Broadway).

Lone Star, James McLure--comedy--6/7/79, Century Theatre (Off-Broadway).

Pvt. Wars, James McLure--comedy--hospitalized homecomers--6/7/79, Century Theatre (Off-Broadway).

Kennedy's Children, Robert Patrick--presentational (monologues)--addicted homecomer--11/3/75-1/4/76 (72 performances) John Golden.
Patrick served in the air force during the Vietnam War, but did not engage in combat.

Sticks and Bones, David Rabe--neo-expressionistic--blind homecomer--11/7/71 (121 performances) Anspacher (Off-Broadway) moved to Broadway 3/1/72 (245 performances) John Golden--Antoinette Perry, New York Drama Critics Circle Award.
Rabe served in the army during the Vietnam War.

The Orphan, David Rabe--non-realistic--homecomer theme minor--based on The Oresteian Trilogy--4/18/73-5/13/73 (28 performances) New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre (Off-Broadway).

The Happiness Cage, Dennis J. Reardon--hospitalized homecomers--10/4/70, New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre (Off-Broadway).
Reardon served in the Marines during Vietnam, but did not engage in combat.

5th of July, Lanford Wilson--comedy--amputee homecomer--4/27/78 (168 performances) Circle Repertory Company (Off-Broadway).

Fictional War

The Skin of Our Teeth, Thornton Wilder--comedy--homecomer partial theme--11/18/42 (355 performances) Plymouth--Pulitzer Prize.
Wilder served in the army during World War I and in the air force during World War II.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE PLAYS

1. Adjustment to Society

This section examines the most common problem facing the homecomer. Forty of the fifty-five plays in this study depict his reentry into society. Several genres are present: drama, comedy, domestic and romantic comedy, comedy of manners, farce, parody, docudrama, neo-expressionism, modern tragedy, allegory and verse drama. Two Vietnam War homecomer plays, Still Life and Sticks and Bones begin the analysis because the theme is dominant in both. A First World War homecomer who never adjusts provides a contrast (The Oldest Living Graduate).

A group of plays joined by common factors or genres follows. The subdivisions include the violent homecomer (The Shortchanged Review, P.S. 193), the abberant or criminal (The Valiant, Rendezvous, A Hatful of Rain, Kennedy's Children, Time Limit!), misfits (Achilles Had A Heel, Who'll

Save The Plowboy?, A Very Special Baby, Rib Cage), minorities (The Famous Mrs. Fair, Goin' Home, Achilles Had A Heel, Deep Are The Roots, Jeb, Medal of Honor Rag), comedies ("Everyday," Soldier's Wife, The Wooden Soldier, Snafu, Period of Adjustment, Lone Star, Pvt. Wars, The Vietnamization of New Jersey).

A final group of plays in this section are joined for their unique qualities. The first is a modern tragedy, Mourning Becomes Electra. The second is an allegory, The Skin of Our Teeth. Three plays use the homecomer theme as part of a larger theme (All My Sons, Johnny Johnson, The Survivors). The last two plays employ non-realistic dialogue (Key Largo, The Watering Place).

A subsection, 1A, Uniforms and Medals, follows with a study of homecomers who employ their uniforms and medals in an attempt to adjust to society. The first unit of plays depicts homecomers in full uniform (Clarence, Key Largo, The Famous Mrs. Fair, The Searching Wind, Snafu, The Watering Place). The next group includes homecomers who wear parts of their uniform (The Oldest Living Graduate, Sundown Beach), Truckline Café). A single play follows (Sticks and Bones) because it contrasts these two groups.

A group of plays depicts homecomers who use their uniforms and medals as talismans (Achilles Had A Heel, Jeb, Deep Are The Roots, The Survivors). Three plays present homecomers eager to shed their uniforms and medals (Hell-Bent Fer Heaven, John Loves Mary, Medal of Honor Rag).

The most common problem facing the homecomer is his readjustment to society. His war experiences have changed him. The society has evolved during his absence. Thus, the two are strangers on first encounter. The homecomer has been living as a transient in a temporary society created to meet the demands of combat. He returns to a society, perhaps altered by the war, but enduring. It is encumbent upon the homecomer that he rejoin his permanent society, if he wishes to become a useful member once again.

The problem of adjustment can be found in the homecomer plays of all American wars, but it is the dominant theme in the plays of the Vietnam War. The latest play in this study, Emily Mann's Still Life (1981), provides an excellent example. Mann describes her play as "documentary"[23] and "hyper-real"[24] and, "for the most part these

[23]Emily Mann, Still Life (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1982), p. 7.

[24]Ibid.

are the people's own words told to the author."[25] The play explores the problem of post-traumatic stress disorder hindering the homecomer's adjustment. Mann's play is the first to tackle this theme.

The homecomer Mark is never able to make the adjustment to society and commits suicide ten years after his return from combat. The characters do not interact with one another but instead address the audience in a presentational style.

Mark arrives home a drunkard and picks fights with strangers in bars and on the street; because "I thought about killing people when I got back."[26] He cannot adjust to the fact that he no longer carries a rifle. Ten years after his homecoming Mark can't sleep alone in the dark, can't watch war movies or drive a car. Mark freely admits to his adjustment difficulties: "Certain things I can't deal with. She [Nadine] has to deal with the situation, us sitting around, a car backfires, and I hit the deck . . . I'm shellshocked."[27]

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[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., p. 29.

[27]Ibid., p. 47.

On the surface, Mark appears to be adjusting. He is a functioning member of society with a career in photography. He appears friendly and sociable. He has a wife, a lover, and friends. However, as Michael Feingold observes:

> Granted he takes photographs that tend to feature people smeared with stage blood and stuck with prop weapons; say he's working out his Vietnam trauma. . . . He's still a nice guy. So why does he pound the table that way, and give his wife threatening looks? Why is he getting up menacingly and coming toward us?[28]

Mark's failure to adjust costs him his life. Cheryl tells us that he put a gun to his head and blew his brains out. This, of course, is the extreme example of a failure to adjust by the homecomer.

A play produced almost ten years earlier than Still Life, David Rabe's Sticks and Bones (1972) also portrays a homecomer whose failure to adjust costs him his life. Rabe's play uses the television situation comedy in a neo-expressionist style. The play is obviously about Vietnam but the country is never mentioned.

David, the homecomer, is brought home blinded from combat. Led to the family home by a Sergeant Major, the

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[28]Michael Feingold, New York The Village Voice, February 25-March 3, 1981, p. 75.

blinded homecomer reacts immediately to the surroundings as unfriendly. The home is a symbol for society at large. David cannot adjust to his home (society) and also ends a suicide.

The homecomer turns to his fellow soldier for comfort and reassurance. David insists that this is not his home, that it doesn't feel right or smell right and these people are strangers to him. Henry Hewes observes that "David intuitively senses that his home is foul, but he is forced to stay."[29]

David does attempt to adjust but is met with misunderstanding and, eventually, hostility from his family. They feel that he is too slow in his attempt to resume a normal life. The blinded homecomer, fresh from combat, insists instead upon lying in bed with his door closed. He does not dress properly but pads about in pajamas and slippers. David, who has not done so for a year in combat, does not take regular meals nor bathe regularly.

David's blindness and the combat nightmares he carries within him preclude a quick return to normalcy. He

[29]Henry Hewes, Saturday Review, November 27, 1971, p. 70.

attempts to communicate this to his family, but they cannot grasp the magnitude of the horrors he has experienced. David's mother Harriet voices her concern over her son's eccentricities: "Ozzie, he won't eat. He just lays there. There's something wrong with David. He's been home days and days and still he speaks only when spoken to."[30] This inability of David and his family to communicate with one another is the major obstacle to the homecomer's adjustment.

Preston Jones's The Oldest Living Graduate (1976) produced after the war in Vietnam and set in 1962, just before the war began, portrays a World War I homecomer unable to adjust. Colonel J. C. Kinkaid returned from World War I a shellshock victim, as Mark describes himself in Still Life. Kinkaid does not commit suicide but he never recovers and never adjusts to society. Kinkaid, as described by Julius Novick, is "a senile military grouch, now confined to a wheelchair, who has never gotten over the horrors of World War I."[31]

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[30]David Rabe, Sticks and Bones (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1977), p. 19.

[31]Julius Novick New York The Village Voice, October 4, 1976, p. 115.

The homecomer who can't cope, but instead resorts to violence, is portrayed in a play from the Vietnam War and one from the Korean War.

Mark in Still Life, may speak of his desire to kill someone upon his homecoming, but Darrell Shannigan, his fellow Vietnam homecomer in Michael Dorn Moody's The Shortchanged Review (1975) actually does so. Shannigan is a career marine whose wounds force him home. His adjustment is compounded by the fact that he is completely out of touch with the rapidly evolving society of the 1970's America.

Darrell Shannigan is twenty-five but has nothing in common with the young people he encounters. His civilian clothing belongs to an earlier decade and brands him an outsider to his style-conscious contemporaries. Shannigan has not written to his family for years and thus arrives a virtual stranger. Shannigan is truly a stranger in a strange land.

Shannigan, also, does little more than lie in bed all day. He reads smut magazines. He has had little experience with women, mainly with prostitutes patronized while he was in the service. In addition, he keeps a machine gun under his bed, brought back from combat. His

war experiences continue to haunt him; one memory is especially painful. His best friend stepped on a land mine and had both legs blown off, lying there he screamed for Shanniyan to kill him. Shannigan forced himself to do it and now questions his adjustment to civilian life; "maybe all I know is hurtin' and fuckin' and killin'."[32]

The homecomer soon moves from reflections to actions as he batters his stepsister, rapes his stepmother, and shoots an army deserter. The gunblast ends the play. So, while Shannigan's fate is not certain, it can be assumed that he will not adjust to civilian life.

David Rayfiel's play, P.S. 193 (1962) also depicts a homecomer unable to adjust who turns to hostility towards society. Mario Saccone is a former career soldier who returns from the Korean War. He is a part-time student with no career goal. Neither student nor civilian, he refers to himself as a veteran. Saccone is a loner who resists the attempts of fellow students to befriend him.

Mario Saccone becomes a student merely to exact revenge. He is enrolled in a philosophy class because he

[32]Michael Dorn Moody, The Shortchanged Review (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1976), p. 77.

blames the death of a wartime buddy on the professor. The homecomer believes that the professor's goading forced the impressionable student to enlist and then to take foolhardy risks in battle, which caused his death. Saccone plans to force the man of words into becoming a man of action. He tells Professor White: "You made war! But you don't go! . . . I've never seen one of you die."[33]

His all-consuming desire for revenge warps Saccone's mind and turns him into a sociopath. The homecomer has no chance of adjustment. His plans reach no further than his revenge. P.S. 193 ascends to a horrible climax as Saccone beats and rapes White's wife to force him to action. The play ends as Saccone confronts White.

Several homecomer plays from other wars feature protagonists with aberrant or criminal behavior. Two World War I homecomer plays depict men who cannot adjust to civilian life and become criminals, Holworthy Hall and Robert Middlemass's The Valiant (1920) and Barton MacLane's Rendezvous (1932).

The Valiant is a one-act play set in a state penitentiary in Connecticut. James Doyle, a mysterious taciturn

[33]David Rayfiel, P.S. 193 (unpublished manuscript: Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 4-10.

homecomer, is about to be executed for murder. He served in the First World War and received an honorable discharge. The circumstances surrounding his crime are not explained, but it is suggested that he murdered for reasons of honor. The reasons are somehow part of a moral code he acquired while in combat.

Thus, Doyle is unable to adjust because of his war experience. He is not able to accept the fact that murder is not acceptable in civilian society. In the trenches one could kill the enemy, it was acceptable behavior. Doyle goes to his death clinging to his beliefs.

Rendezvous is another play presenting a homecomer turned criminal. The homecomer Oakley returns from World War I and becomes a bootlegger. He employs only fellow homecomers in his illegal business. Oakley does not feel guilty, nor do any of his employees. Oakley explains: "some of us couldn't find work, or else our chances were shot, or maybe we couldn't shake down into an ordinary job after the war."[34] He sees his bootlegging as an acceptable mode of behavior arising from circumstances created by society.

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[34]Barton MacLane, Rendezvous (unpublished manuscript: Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 1-7.

Oakley operates his bootleg business as if it were an army combat command post. He and his employees are all armed, as is the "army" of the competition. The two sides frequently wound or kill each other in a competition they refer to as "war." Oakley's men live in a barracks and are referred to as his "soldiers."

Rendezvous presents a sympathetic portrayal of the homecomer as a criminal. The homecomers adhere to a moral code of their own. For example, Oakley and his men become outraged when a rival gang kills a policeman. This is a violation of the rules of war to which they have agreed. It is World War I which is the true culprit. It is directly responsible for their difficulties. Robert Garland captures the essence of the play's message: "War breeds excitement, and, once the war is over, the excitement--or the yearning for it--lingers on, breeding racketeers."[35]

Michael V. Gazzo's A Hatful of Rain (1955) is the first homecomer play to treat the theme of drug addiction. This play opens with Johnny Pope home from Korea with an addiction to heroin. The addiction is a direct result of Pope's war experience. Wounded in battle, and then tortured

[35]Robert Garland, New York World Telegram, October 13, 1932, no page given (all reviews with missing information are from collections in Lincoln Center Library).

by the enemy, Pope spent time in a military hospital recovering. While there he was given regular injections of morphine to relieve his pain. He returned home a decorated but addicted war hero. Pope describes his path to addiction: "the nurse came, and the doctor—they roll up your sleeve, one—then two, then another.[36]

Johnny Pope's adjustment problems are intensified as he attempts to cope with society and the secretive, illegal life of the addict. All his time and energy are spent on the search for drugs. William Hawkins explains Pope's dilemma: "A young man's terrible war injuries have made him rely on dope. His wife is pregnant, and he is unable to keep jobs."[37]

Mark in Robert Patrick's Kennedy's Children (1975) is also a drug-addicted homecomer. The play is written in a series of monologues delivered by a group of young people reflecting upon life in the turbulent 1960s. Mark combines Johnny Pope's drug addiction with the murderous impulses of

[36]Michael V. Gazzo, A Hatful of Rain (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1956), p. 51.

[37]William Hawkins, New York World-Telegram and Sun, November 10, 1956, p. 26.

Mark in Still Life. He epitomizes the stereotype of the Vietnam homecomer as a drug-crazed killer primed to explode at any second.

Mark faces the same difficulty experienced by David in Sticks and Bones; he cannot adjust to a society which is unwilling to face the reality of the war in Vietnam. When Mark went to Vietnam he was an all-American boy loaded with the ideals and images of military glory. Introduced to drugs while in combat, Mark's ideals soon crumbled. The combination of drugs and the insanity of war return Mark to society with little chance for adjustment.

Mark, in a drug-crazed state, murdered his best friend while in Vietnam. The homecomer's words leave little doubt that it will only be a matter of time before he kills again. Martin Gottfried points to the unlikelihood of Mark's adjusting to society; "a Vietnam G.I. begins by struggling to rationalize the war and concludes by returning to America a murderous junkie."[38]

Henry Denker and Ralph Berkey's Time Limit! (1956) presents an alleged criminal homecomer from the Korean War.

[38]Martin Gottfried, New York Post, November 4, 1975, p. 13.

Major Harry Cargill is awaiting courtmartial for collaborating with the enemy. He refuses to speak in his own defense and in fact insists that he is guilty, wishing only to be punished for his crime. He will not speak with fellow homecomers who wish to help him. It is only through the persistence of his army attorney that the truth is revealed in a melodramatic climax.

While the play is structured melodramatically, it manages to avoid a right versus wrong format. Cargill did collaborate with the enemy, but he did so under duress and to save the lives of fellow prisoners. He has been subjected to brainwashing, which has driven the justification for his act deeply into his subconscious, and as far as Cargill is concerned he is guilty as charged. Even if found innocent of the charges, this homecomer's adjustment to society will be very difficult. Cargill voices his confusion: "How many lies for a man's life? I don't know. I just gave them everything they wanted."[39]

The enemy has broken the rules of the game by introducing the new technique of brainwashing. The characters in

[39]Henry Denker and Ralph Berkey, Time Limit! (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1956), p. 79.

Time Limit! inhabit a gray area. Cargill confesses that he does not know the new rules. His superior officers are confused as are his fellow homecomers. The issue of guilt versus innocence is not resolved in the play. This dilemma will complicate Cargill's adjustment to postwar life.

Cargill's defense will be innocence due to extenuating circumstances (brainwashing). However, the success of his defense is left unresolved, as the following dialogue between his attorney, Lieutenant Colonel Edwards, and Major General Connors indicates:

> General: No man's exempt. Not my son—no one. Because after you'd said everything that could be said, the fact would remain—he did help the enemy.
>
> Edwards: This is a new kind of enemy, sir. The code isn't equipped to deal with them.[40]

So, Cargill may be found innocent of the charges, but he will be subject to lingering doubt, by others as well as himself. People in military life, and civilian life, will be suspicious of him. How will this homecomer adjust to such a situation?

The following four homecomer plays portray men who are misfits, failing in their adjustment to civilian life.

[40]Ibid., pp. 79-80.

It is suggested in each play that each might have been a failure regardless, but the war experience intensified the problem. The plays span the four wars in which America has been engaged during the twentieth century.

World War I is represented by Martin Flavin's Achilles Had a Heel (1935). It is somewhat reminiscent of O'Neill's The Emperor Jones. Structured episodically, it too depicts the disintegration of a black protagonist, but is not as overtly expressionistic, employing only expressionistic overtones. Flavin's play features two homecomers, one black, one white. It is the white antagonist, Slats, who is the misfit who cannot adjust. Slats was a captain in the army in command of a black company. Now he is the keeper of the monkey house in a city zoo (the racial implications are not spelled out but are there).

Slats is an object of derision to zoo visitors. It is not only his position, but his demeanor. The homecomer wears a torn, dirty uniform and drinks heavily. He is consumed with hatred. His fellow homecomer, Jumbo, was a sergeant under his command and is now the keeper of a huge elephant, the zoo's star attraction. Slats' hatred, fueled by bigotry, rules his life. He has one concern only, to

plot Iago-fashion the downfall of his proud, black former sergeant.

Frank Gilroy's Who'll Save the Plowboy? (1962) is a drama of two homecomers from the Second World War. Albert Cobb and Larry Doyle, misfits who have failed to adjust to postwar life, meet again fifteen years after the armistice. War has traumatized these homecomers, who have not been able to establish any pattern of stability in career or personal life. Cobb and Doyle have corresponded through the years writing lie after lie to cover their bleak, failed lives.

The eponymous Albert Cobb acquired his sobriquet because of his oft-stated intentions of buying a farm after the war. His comrades were not aware that it was an idle boast and Doyle, in particular, urged him on. The plowboy bought his farm, and never having farmed in his life, was doomed to failure. He then drifted from job to job.

Doyle feels responsible for Cobb's life, since he saved the plowboy from certain death in combat. This is the one positive act in Doyle's life and it has sustained him through the years. This failed homecomer, dying from the after effects of the wounds sustained while engaging in his act of heroism, visits the man he saved so that he may wit-

ness the fruits of his labor before dying. For fifteen years Doyle has borne a double burden of responsibility for Cobb's life and a responsibility for his own failed life. Doyle's mother explains; "he never said, but I think it was to convince himself that he had not sacrificed his life for nothing."[41]

Robert Alan Aurthur's A Very Special Baby (1956) depicts a Korean War homecomer's failure to adjust, as John McLain illustrates; "the story concerns a 34-year old son of a wealthy immigrant who has failed to adjust himself to a career after service in the wars."[42] However, Joey is sustained by the dream of a better life. He has plans to open a business with his war buddy, Carmen Russo. Joey and Carmen went through two wars discussing the planned business. Unlike Casale, Russo has been employed steadily since his homecoming; but the pay is low and he has a family to support.

Joey Casale is well aware that his life is a

[41]Frank D. Gilroy, Who'll Save the Plowboy? (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1962), p. 40.

[42]John McLain, New York Journal American, November 15, 1956, p. 24.

failure. He is the baby of the family and is treated accordingly. His father is a self-made man and his older brothers are professionals. Casale is frightened at the thought of remaining dependent on the family wealth. Desperate, he contacts Carmen Russo, who offers the last chance for Casale to make something of his postwar life.

Larry Ketron's Rib Cage (1978) is a starkly naturalistic portrayal of another failed homecomer. Hodge returned from Vietnam but failed to establish himself in any type of steady occupation. He uses his war experience as a crutch to sustain his failure. It offers him a convenient excuse for not attempting to adjust. Hodge has no friends and abuses the woman he lives with. He is excited at the impending arrival of his combat buddy, Ricky Morrell. Hodge wants to relive the good old days in combat, the last, and only, exciting time in his miserable life.

Morrell quickly brings Hodge to reality. He looks with utter contempt upon his fellow homecomer's attempt to hold on to the past. Morrell is adjusting to society. He has begun a literary career. He deflates Hodge's expectations by revealing that he has not come to visit his fellow homecomer but to gather material for a book. Morrell

puts an end to Hodge's attempts to relive the past as he tells him: "I'm not the bastard who sat around with you at Cam Rahn Bay . . . and talked about tits. I've progressed . . . You went backwards . . . I never went back."[43]

The minority group homecomer faces additional problems. He is treated as an inferior and as someone who is different. He goes to war and is given more responsibility and experiences more freedom. The minority homecomer returns to a society which insists upon treating him as if nothing has changed. The following six homecomer plays address the adjustment problems faced by members of a minority. Five of the six depict the problems of black homecomers. One play has a woman homecomer as protagonist. The plays encompass three of the wars.

Women served at the front during World War I, not as soldiers, but as ambulance drivers. They experienced the same mixture of horror and excitement which the front-line soldiers experienced. James Forbes portrays one of these women homecomers in his domestic comedy The Famous Mrs. Fair

[43]Larry Ketron, Rib Cage (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1978), p. 52.

(1919).

Nancy Fair returns from France, where she commanded an ambulance squadron. She is met by her son Alan, also a homecomer, who warns her of the adjustment problems she faces:

> You are going to find it awfully flat. Take it from me. I've been through it. You're going to miss the something—I don't know what it is—but life over there gets you. . . . You find yourself thinking more about the people you left over there than your old friends here.[44]

This warning is soon repeated as Nancy Fair is visited by the former members of her squadron. They returned before Fair and have begun to experience problems. Chief among them is boredom. These women spent years at the front as independent, decisive women experiencing danger and excitement. One of them, Mrs. Wynne, speaks for the group; "after being on the hop, skip, and jump for four years, it's the very devil to sit around 'Bla'."[45]

Society demands that these homecomers adjust to a

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[44]James Forbes, The Famous Mrs. Fair in Representative American Dramas National and Local, Montrose J. Moses, ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1929), pp. 387-388.

[45]Ibid., p. 393.

life of domesticity. The vital, complex life they led at the front makes it very difficult for them to take up their former existence. These women experienced carnage every day for four years and are now expected to settle for a life devoid of challenge. The boredom they see in the role of housewife is, and will continue, causing these women problems.

This complaint is valid within the context of Forbes's play. However, it contrasts sharply with the general nature of complaints voiced by most homecomers. Forbes's audiences must have been in tune with this attempt at social comedy, since the play ran close to one year on Broadway.

The First World War produced two plays with black homecomers, Ransom Rideout's Goin' Home (1928) and Flavin's Achilles Had a Heel. Rideout's play may not be considered a homecomer play since the protagonist prepares to return home at the denouement. However, the play successfully explores the problems unique to the black homecomer.

Israel du Bois left America and joined the French Foreign Legion at the outbreak of World War I. Honorably discharged and married to a Frenchwoman, he runs her suc-

cessful café business. Armistice is declared and du Bois is faced with a problem. Should he leave his racial freedom in France to return to his segregated homeland?

This black American, for the first time in his life, is living a comfortable, bourgeois life. However, fellow black Americans arrive at the café and begin to talk of life in America. Their reminiscences and their relaxed camaraderie begin to have an effect on du Bois. He soon longs for his homeland, despite the problems he will face.

The play does not show du Bois resolving his dilemma. This happens through the machinations of a white officer, du Bois' former employer. A melodramatic climax leaves du Bois with no alternative but to return home. The homecoming does not need to be shown, as Gilbert W. Gilbert suggests:

> It is the tale of a negro veteran of the Foreign Legion, married to a money-grubbing Frenchgirl, loving her humbly, longing for home, despised, bullied by the arrival of colored American troops and their Southern commander, pulled back at last across the Atlantic at the end of a rope of tragedy.[46]

[46]Gilbert W. Gilbert, New York Sun, August 24, 1928, no page given.

Achilles Had a Heel does not explore the adjustment problems of the black homecomer to the degree that Goin' Home does. The homecomer Jumbo's problems are due more to the scheming of Slats. However, a revealing moment occurs as Jumbo speaks to his beloved elephant, who is chained and caged:

> I knows jest how you feels. I git dat way myse'f sometimes, a wanting to ra'r up and plow through everything. De wah was pretty good for dat. Dey kinda knock de chains off den and leave a fella loose. . . . I sho' had a right good time in dat ol' wah.[47]

Jumbo, chained and caged within a racist society, identifies with the elephant. The freedom he experienced as a combat soldier is revealed. He has returned to the closed life of a black man in the segregated America of post-World War I, as Israel du Bois is fated to do. Jumbo's feelings somewhat parallel those of the women homecomers in The Famous Mrs. Fair, for each is confined to the role dictated by society, although the women enjoy relative freedom and comfort.

Arnaud D'Usseau and James Gow's Deep Are The Roots (1945) and Robert Ardrey's Jeb (1946) are two homecomer

[47]Martin Flavin, Achilles Had a Heel (unpublished manuscript: Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 1-27 & 1-28.

plays from World War II about the black homecomer. In both plays a black soldier returns to his segregated, Southern hometown after experiencing a freer life overseas. The black homecomers from World War II tell of their freedom to socialize with whites, especially the women, and of their ability to move with greater freedom within the European society.

The protagonist of Deep Are The Roots, Brett Charles, is unique among the black homecomers because he was an officer. Charles speaks of the kind, respectful treatment which he received from whites in Europe. He returns a decorated war hero to a society whose segregated ways have not been affected by the war. Wilella Waldorf says of the play that it is:

> A serious and on the whole intelligent attempt to deal with a timely subject-the imminent return to this country of Negro soliders, some of whom have been officers and almost all of whom have had an opportunity to see that their black skins are not looked upon in other parts of the world as they are in the deep South.[48]

Charles finds it difficult to adjust to the old ways

[48]Wilella Waldorf, New York Post, September 27, 1945, no page given.

after his homecoming. The difficulties mount as he resists the efforts of his white benefactors to plot his future. He announces that he intends to become principal of the black school. The whites are suspicious that Charles will put revolutionary ideas into the heads of the children.

His problems continue to mount. Charles has returned to a society which treats the decorated, former army officer as if he were a boy. He "forgets" his place by failing to address a white man as sir. Charles is threatened by the man and finally voices his resentment: "In Italy I was an American officer. Here I'm a nigger. I had forgotten some of the things that means."[49]

Brett Charles cannot adjust to a life of segregation. He is falsely accused of theft and beaten and jailed. He escapes and is nearly beaten to death by a lynch mob. Charles finally realizes that he can no longer buck the code of the South. The defeated homecomer decides to flee north.

Ardrey's Jeb explores these same issues. As Howard Barnes explains: Jeb Turner is "a Negro war hero, who tries to fit himself into a society which has been pleased to have

[49]Arnaud D'Usseau and James Gow, Deep Are The Roots (New York; Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1946), p. 46.

him fight against intolerance, but treats him with savage bigotry."[50]

Turner and his wartime friend Hazy Johnson were enlisted men in World War II. Their treatment in Europe may not have been as exalted as that of the officer Brett Charles, but they make it quite clear that they were exposed to enough freedom to make a return to segregation difficult. Jeb Turner is also determined to scale the barriers erected between blacks and whites in his small Southern town.

As is Brett Charles, Turner is defeated, physically and mentally, for his failure to adjust to segregation. He flees north to rejoin Hazy Johnson. It is this war buddy who expresses the anger and frustration echoed by other black homecomers:

> Why'd the war ever have to get over? Why'd we ever have to come home? When do you go out of your mind? Huh? When do you just run down the street, slug folks in all directions, take leave of your senses-"[51]

Tom Cole's Medal of Honor Rag (1975), based on a

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[50]Howard Barnes, New York Herald Tribune, February 22, 1946, no page given.

[51]Robert Ardrey, Jeb in Plays of Three Decades (New York: Atheneum, 1968), p. 164.

true story as is Mann's Still Life, portrays a black homecomer whose failure to adjust also costs him his life. Dale Jackson returns from combat in Vietnam and attempts to adjust to postwar life. He visits the local bars with friends, sees his girlfriend, and "shoots baskets" with the kids on the block. He tries to reestablish his former life, but as Jackson reveals "it didn't last."[52] Paralleling other homecomers, he confesses that he ended up in his room lying on his bed "staring at the ceiling."[53]

Any hope that Jackson may have for adjusting to society is destroyed when the government selects him to receive the Medal of Honor. The government needs heroes because support for the war is lagging and a black recipient might increase ghetto enlistments and lessen criticism. The recipients are taken on a public relations tour, during which Jackson becomes aware of the duplicity surrounding his honor.

Dale Jackson's already fragile psyche cannot support this new burden. He commits himself to a psychiatric hospi-

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[52]Tom Cole, Medal of Honor Rag (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1977). p. 33.

[53]Ibid.

tal, but soon leaves and ends a suicide. Jackson enters a grocery store, ostensibly to commit a holdup, but stands still without firing a shot as the manager empties his gun into the defeated homecomer.

Not all playwrights treat the homecomer theme tragically. Several employ comedy, romantic comedy, farce, and parody. There are light comedies among the plays of the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War. The Vietnam homecomer comedies, however, are more savage and bitter.

Two female playwrights offer romantic comedies, Rachel Crothers's "Everyday" (1921) from World War I and Rose Franken's Soldier's Wife (1944) from World War II. Both plays depict homecomers of the upper-middle class who return to waiting careers.

Crothers's homecomer John McFarlan returns to work for a successful politician. He has social status, good pay and plenty of opportunity for advancement. Despite this, McFarlan is unhappy and is finding adjusting to civilian life difficult.

There were long periods of inaction during the trench warfare and McFarlan spent this time sketching. A commanding officer told McFarlan that he had talent and

should continue after his discharge. The homecomer continues to sketch, but secretly. He is unaware that his difficulty lies in the fact that he is not doing what he really wants to do with his life. Thus, it is McFarlan's war experience which revealed his hidden talent to him but now plagues him.

Soldier's Wife is also a romantic comedy. John Rogers is wounded while in combat in World War II, honorably discharged and sent home while the war is still being fought. He returns to find his job open and a loving wife and new child, born while he was away. It would appear that he should have little difficulty in adjusting. However, Rogers feels that he is shirking his duty. He confesses to his wife Kate that: "While men are dying, I don't want to be lying in a soft bed, eating good food—I can't get used to being a civilian yet."[54]

Alexander Carr's The Wooden Soldier (1931) offers a light look at a serious problem. The eponymous David Kaufmann is shellshocked in World War I and spends his post-war years wandering aimlessly. He makes do with donations

[54]Rose Franken, Soldier's Wife (New York: Samuel French, 1945), p. 66.

he receives from the crowds he entertains with his performance of a wooden soldier. A reviewer for The New York Times informs us of this comedy's serious undertones: "David, the hobo, has never been quite right since the war. A sacrifice to democracy's cause."[55]

Louis Solomon and Harold Buchman's Snafu (1944) is a farce whose protagonist is a unique homecomer. Ronald Stevens lied about his age (fifteen) and enlisted in the army during World War II. The play's action begins after his parents have discovered what he has done and have informed the army of their son's true age. Ronald is discharged and returns home.

Before the deception is discovered, Ronald Stevens manages to spend a year in combat. His exploits in battle earned him a field rank of sergeant. The battle-hardened sergeant, still a teenager, returns to his family facing obvious adjustment difficulties. Stevens has spent the past year posing as, and living as, a young adult. However, he is returning to a society which regards him legally and socially as a minor.

[55]J.B. [sic] The New York Times, June 23, 1931, no page given.

Thus, a serious theme is present, as Robert Coleman observes; Snafu "deals with the problem of the returned soldier's adjustment to civilian life, particularly the underaged soldier."[56] However, the play is pure farce and ignores the serious problems inherent in this situation. It is replete with mistaken identity, sight gags and outrageous situations: Ronald is approached from behind by a visitor who then taps the unsuspecting homecomer on the shoulder. Ronald flips the poor man over his shoulder; then cautions him against such behavior, since Stevens has not left the battlefield behind him as of yet. The homecomer cannot adjust to his family's habit of sleeping late (7:30 a.m.), so he blows reveille before sunrise. When an airplane flies over the house, Ronald grabs his girlfriend and throws her to the floor with him to take cover.

Tennessee Williams offers a whimsical look at two homecomers attempting to adjust to civilian life after service in Korea in his domestic comedy Period of Adjustment (1960). The title carries a double meaning, since the pair of homecomers are also having marital problems. It is the

[56]Robert Coleman, New York Daily Mirror, October 26, 1944, no page given.

domestic problems which provide the comedy with its major theme.

Ralph Bates and George Haverstick have gone through a succession of jobs since their discharge. The action begins as newlywed George pays a visit to his war buddy Ralph. Once again, both homecomers are out of work. George has arrived with a vague notion of restructuring his life by beginning a business partnership with Ralph. (This is a parallel situation to that of Joey and Carmen in A Very Special Baby). George reasons that since they were so successful as partners in combat, it follows that a peacetime partnership will also be successful. (Joey employs the same reasoning with Carmen). George reminds Ralph; "remember how we talked about going into something together when we got out of the service?"[57]

Comedies featuring Vietnam War homecomers have darker overtones. Two examples are James McLure's one-acts Lone Star (1979) and Pvt. Wars (1979). In the former, Roy returns from Vietnam where he promised himself his first homecoming act would be to go to the local tavern, buy beer

[57]Tennessee Williams, Period of Adjustment (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1961), p. 39.

and snacks and lie down under the desert sky and watch life go by. He is made cognizant of the fact, by his brother Ray, that this is all he has been doing for the two years since his homecoming.

Roy is having problems adjusting to society as Brendan Gill explains; "having returned two years earlier from combat in Vietnam, Roy has been trying to find his way back into the daily life of the little town of Maynard, Texas."[58] This serious theme has an overlay of comedy as McLure employs the shaggy dog story technique to describe events central to Roy's life. Punchlines come frequently but there are poignant lines to reflect the adjustment problems of the homecomer. One of Roy's simple statements suggests the darker nature of this comedy. Roy tells his brother, "I can't seem to get nothing started no more."[59]

Pvt. Wars is an even darker comedy, as pointed out by Terry Curtis Fox who says the play "is a description of three misfits in the army veteran's hospital who, while ostensibly free to leave, have no hope of reentering

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[58]Brendan Gill, New Yorker, June 18, 1979, p. 96.

[59]James McLure, Lone Star (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1980), p. 30.

society."[60] Gately, Silvio and Natwick are Vietnam veterans under psychiatric care for combat traumas. Each one attempts to cope with civilian life. They are free to leave at any time, but they are fearful of fleeing the security of the hospital. Silvio is the only one of the three to have made the attempt, but he has come back.

A dialogue is repeated, with slight variations, throughout the play which illustrates the dilemma of the three homecomers:

> Natwick: Gately . . . suppose I can't cope with the world when they let me out of here.
>
> Gately: You can get out any time you want to.[61]

The three take turns reversing their roles in the dialogue. Each expresses the desire to leave the hospital and return to society. However, it is only the prospect of freedom, not the reality, that each can cope with. Silvio begins elaborate preparations for his second return to society. It is the outrageousness of his preparations which

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[60]Terry Curtis Fox, New York The Village Voice, June 18, 1979, p. 98.

[61]James McLure, Pvt. Wars (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1980), p. 16.

foreshadow his failure to leave. The three remain in the hospital, and the play suggests quite strongly that they will remain there. Pvt. Wars is a comedy, but a comedy with a subtext of deep despair.

Christopher Durang's parody The Vietnamization of New Jersey (1977) targets Rabe's Sticks and Bones. Robert Brustein says of the initial production of this play that Durang "declared a separate peace, and, as far as American theatre was concerned, finally managed to bring the Vietnam War to an end."[62] This was a truly ambitious, but ultimately unrealized, goal since plays concerning the War in Vietnam continue to be produced.

Durang's David suffers a much longer period of adjustment than does Rabe's David. Three years elapse between act one and act two and he is still doing little more than sitting silently at home. However, David assures his mother that he has not been idle for he has been thinking. This David also evokes hostility from his family. They refuse to accept the reality of the Vietnam War and reject the homecomer son.

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[62]Robert Brustein, Making Scenes (New York: Random House, 1981), p. 240.

David cannot adjust to a society which he believes to be responsible for war crimes and, as a protest, sets himself on fire. This death is much more horrible than the death in Rabe's play but the horror is lessened by the fact that it occurs off stage, while Rabe kept his dying homecomer on stage. The family watches the son burning to death and does nothing more than comment on the beauty of the flames which consume David's body. Durang is attacking the apathy of the American public which sat and watched the Vietnam carnage projected daily upon their television screens.

The remaining plays in this section are grouped loosely. There are some similarities among them, but they are grouped together mainly because each play is unique. The first play is a modern tragedy, followed by an allegory. Then three plays follow which employ the homecomer as part of a larger theme, with two plays concerned with world peace. The last two plays are a verse drama and a symbolic drama.

The first of this group is Eugene O'Neill's trilogy Mourning Becomes Electra (1931), comprising Homecoming, The

Hunted and The Haunted. This trilogy is a modern tragedy set in the period immediately following the Civil War. It is a modernization of Aeschylus's The Oresteia, as Brooks Atkinson explains; "the Civil War from which Ezra Mannon is returning is the Trojan War from which Agamemnon came wearily home."[63] David Rabe attempts another modernization of The Oresteia in his confusing, muddled play The Orphan (1973). The homecoming theme is very minor and unclear in this version.

In Homecoming Ezra Mannon returns from four years at war and displays difficulties in adjusting to civilian life. He reaches home and stops in the shadows staring at the home as if at a strange sight. It is this physical act which reveals the emotional hesitancy Mannon feels at resuming his former life.

Four years of war have taken their toll. He confesses his difficulty at adjusting to his homecoming to his wife Christine (Clytemnestra). Mannon tells her: "I can't get used to home yet. It's so lonely. I've got used to the feel of camps with thousands of men around me at night."[64]

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[63]Brooks Atkinson, The New York Times, November 1, 1931, no page given.

[64]Eugene O'Neill, Mourning Becomes Electra in Nine Plays (New York: The Modern Library (Random House), 1959), p. 737.

Thorton Wilder's allegorical comedy of a modern Everyman The Skin of Our Teeth (1942) was produced one year after the United States entered World War II. Wilder is addressing the larger theme of the indomitability of mankind. The play is structured in three acts with the last act devoted to the homecomer, an indication of the importance of this theme. Wilder's play which attempts to span the history of mankind, devotes a third of its thematic concerns to the homecomer.

While the play does not make direct reference to the Second World War, it is apparent that Wilder intended audiences attending the first production to make the connection. A reviewer makes this quite clear as he describes the following; "the son, a vicious kid addicted to sling-shot assaults, appears as a tattered Nazi soldier, typifying the ruthless Huns who aim to hog the world."[65]

The action begins in Act III with George Antrobus returning from the unspecified war. He declares that he will put the war-torn world back in order. However, his intentions are stalled because of his inability to adjust to

[65]Ibee [sic] New York Variety, November 19, 1942, no page given.

his society. Antrobus soon becomes depressed over his fading desire to rebuild his savaged world. He struggles and, in this comedy, wins. Antrobus makes the adjustment and proceeds with the rebuilding.

Arthur Miller's All My Sons (1947) tackles the theme of individual responsibility. The homecomer theme occupies an important part in the play. Chris Keller seems to have adjusted well to his homecoming from World War II. He has an important position in his father's successful business. However, he is really struggling.

Keller bears a burden of guilt, the major reason for his adjustment problems. He was in command of a company and most of his men were killed in battle. Chris Keller blames himself for the deaths.

Richard Watts, Jr. points out the importance of the homecomer theme in Miller's play as he states that: "It is a bitter, intense and purposely violent study of postwar disillusionment and despair. . . . Specifically, it is the story of young Chris Keller, who comes back from the war."[66]

Two plays use the homecomer theme as part of a

[66]Richard Watts, Jr., New York Post, January 30, 1947, no page given.

larger theme of world peace, Paul Green's Johnny Johnson (1936) and Peter Viertel and Irwin Shaw's The Survivors (1948).

Johnny Johnson, music by Kurt Weill, begins immediately before World War I, depicting the war and concludes several years after. Johnny Johnson's commitment to peace is challenged when war is declared. The pacifist is reluctantly drawn into enlisting by the exhortations of his girlfriend Minnie Belle and her grandfather Joe, a Civil War veteran. Johnson fights in the war, attempts to bring an end to the fighting, but fails.

The play concludes with Johnson standing on a street corner several years after the war has ended. He has just been released from a mental institution and is dressed in shabby clothing and is peddling toys. He resolutely refuses to sell any toy soldiers or play guns. Johnny Johnson stands there a pitiful, rejected misfit, a pacifist returned to a society excitedly preparing for another war.

The Survivors uses the aftermath of the Civil War as a setting. Produced three years after the end of the Second World War, this play calls for an end to the spreading hostilities among the postwar nations. The homecomer theme is part of a larger canvas as Thomas R. Dash explains:

> The authors employ a post Civil War setting in Missouri, but the story they are telling and the moral they are pointing to have their points of reference in the lot of the returned soldier and the state of the world today, several years after the recent international holocaust.[67]

The Civil War homecomer did not fight on foreign soil, but he did fight in places distant from his home. There are several homecomers in The Survivors, but the protagonists are Stephen and Morgan Decker. The brothers return from four war years spent in a Confederate prison camp to a western frontier changed by a series of range wars.

The Deckers are determined to leave the war behind and begin their adjustment to civilian life. However, they are quickly importuned by feuding ranchers to join them as hired guns. The brothers leave one war behind only to run headlong into another.

The last two plays in this grouping feature a mysterious protagonist and employ non-realistic dialogue. They are Maxwell Anderson's Key Largo (1939) and Lyle

[67]Thomas R. Dash, New York Women's Wear Daily, January 20, 1948, no page given.

Kessler's The Watering Place (1969), the first about a homecomer from the Spanish Civil War and the second about a homecomer from Vietnam.

Anderson's play, written in blank verse, depicts a politically committed American who joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to fight on the side of the Loyalists. A prologue shows King McCloud in combat along with seven men under his command. He tries to convince them that the war is over and that they should flee to safety. They decide to remain; McCloud leaves, and all seven are killed in combat.

McCloud returns to America convinced of his responsibility for their deaths, as does Chris Keller in All My Sons for the deaths of his men. This guilt makes the homecomer's adjustment impossible. Instead, McCloud wanders by foot across America searching for the families of his dead comrades. He hopes to atone by confessing his guilt to the families of the dead soldiers. The guilt is intensified by the fact that McCloud joined the enemy in order to save his life.

The mystical homecomer walks the countryside seemingly oblivious to the needs of the ordinary man, food, shelter and money. Asked why he chooses to live as he does,

McCloud replies: "I came because there's little that's worth doing/in the world we live in now—and to say a last word/ for certain gallant men who died gallantly/in an unselfish cause seems to make more sense/than merely to earn a living."[68]

Kessler's The Watering Place was produced during the height of the war in Vietnam. The play is stylistically similar to the works of Harold Pinter as it employs menace, dread and mystery with a hyper-realistic dialogue touched by poetry. Vietnam is not mentioned, as is the case with Rabe's Sticks and Bones, but it instead contains references to fighting "Chinks" in a tropical climate.

The mysterious homecomer Sonny is an unexpected visitor to the home of his dead comrade Ronald. Both were prisoners-of-war but Ronald did not survive. Sonny has vague plans to replace Ronald as son and husband. He feels obligated to do so, because of the dying Ronald's plea. Sonny thus attempts to adjust to Ronald's society. He paints the family home, plays ball with Ronald's father, and courts the widowed Janet.

However, Sonny finds adjustment difficult. His

[68]Maxwell Anderson, Key Largo in Eleven Verse Plays (New York; Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), pp. 54-55.

attempt is complicated by the hostility displayed by Ronald's father. A contest for supremacy begins in the household as the two men square off. Father represents the American society which is hostile to the Vietnam homecomer. Sonny prevails, however, and the parents and widow become receptive to the idea of his replacing Ronald.

Finally, it is the homecomer who cannot adjust. Sonny lacks any feeling of commitment, a representative of the men in combat in Vietnam whose only commitment was to individual survival. Sonny has no plans for his future. He hints at reenlistment, vacillates, but ultimately realizes that he cannot adjust to civilian life.

Sonny decides to return to his war. For him there will always be a war someplace: "I'm just beginning. I have my wars ahead of me. I have a lifetime ahead of me."[69]

[69]Lyle Kessler, The Watering Place, unpublished manuscript, 3-29.

1A. Uniforms and Medals

By wearing his uniform, parts of it or his medals, the homecomer often postpones his adjustment to society or at least cushions the shock. The uniform and the medals take on magical properties, serving to protect him from the harsh realities of civilian life. The uniform is a visible sign which announces to the civilian population that the homecomer has made a sacrifice; and it serves also to shame his peers who stayed at home. It is comforting to the homecomer to wear pieces of his uniform or a medal as he begins his adjustment.

The first World War produced a comedy whose theme is central to the subject of the homecomer in uniform. Booth Tarkington's Clarence (1919) has a protagonist who does not command respect or attention when out of uniform. Haywood Broun explains: "Clarence in his uniform is a gangling, awkward figure, interesting only as a repository of confidences pressed upon him with the explanation, 'You've been in the army, so you know.'"[70]

The comedy is heightened by the fact that Clarence

[70]Heywood Broun, New York Tribune, September 22, 1919, no page given.

has not been in combat, in fact has not even left the United States. He spent the war at an army training base in Texas. Clarence is not attempting to deceive anyone and tries to clear the confusion regarding his homecomer status, but the patriotic civilians are too blinded by his uniform to listen. The man in uniform is an object, a symbol of military glory, and a purveyor of wisdom gained on the field of battle.

Clarence is the uniform and the uniform is Clarence. There is additional visual comic effect because the uniform, so blindly idealized by the adoring civilians, is faded, shabby and ill-fitting. Tarkington is employing a twist on the emperor's new clothes. Once Clarence sheds his uniform and begins his adjustment to civilian life, he is no longer recognized by those who idolized him. The homecomer, once out of uniform, may no longer command respect.

Clarence must now earn respect on his own merits, as any other civilian must. Ironically, he is more accomplished as a civilian than as a soldier. In the army, Clarence was a bungler and a misfit. He has no difficulty in adjusting to civilian life, unlike most homecomers.

Tarkington wrote Clarence with the intention of

amusing a Broadway audience, not to arouse serious concern over the homecoming experience. Maxwell Anderson wrote Key Largo intending to stir the Broadway audience to concern over the plight of the tragic homecomer. Anderson's play ran for one third the performances of Tarkington's three hundred. This contrast is reflected in the reception each uniformed homecomer receives.

In Key Largo, King McCloud returns from Spain wearing his officer's uniform and sidearm as he wanders in search of his atonement. His uniform stands a visual reminder of his penance, as he guiltily carries his self-proclaimed cowardice along the roads he travels. Just as he cannot shed the war experience, McCloud cannot shed the uniform.

McCloud, unlike Clarence, achieves a mystical status. The uniform is not American, so it produces a strange, unsettling effect on those he encounters. He, unlike Clarence, alienates those around him. McCloud is deliberately seeking this response, since it serves his penance.

Several of the homecomers wear uniforms and medals or parts of uniforms as conscious or unconscious signs announcing their failure to adjust completely to civilian

life. Nancy Fair in Forbes's The Famous Mrs. Fair represents both an unconscious and a conscious example of this behavior. She returns from France wearing her full dress uniform embellished with the Croix de Guerre. Fair is established as unique and glamorous by her uniform. The medal indicates an exciting and dangerous past.

It is soon established that Fair is reluctant to shed her military past and return to domesticity. The uniform allows her to hold on to her glorious military life. The conscious and unconscious are brought together as Forbes's stage directions indicate that this "arresting figure"[71] clashes with the genteel, middle class surroundings she must now stand in.

The adjustment problems facing Nancy Fair are echoed by the arrival of her former squadron members. These women, all home from war before Fair, appear before her in full dress uniform.

Sam Hazen, Lillian Hellman's Second World War homecomer in The Searching Wind (1944), wears his uniform with a Purple Heart conspicuously in place. Hazen wears his medal

[71]Moses, Representative American Drama National and Local, p. 386.

for a double purpose, to constantly remind civilians of his sacrifice to democracy and to goad those whom he feels aren't as firm in their opposition to fascism as he. The uniform announces to those around him that Sam Hazen is resisting adjustment to civilian life.

Ronald Stevens, the homecomer from World War II in Solomon and Buchman's Snafu, is withdrawn from combat. He returns in full uniform adorned with medals as a reminder to those around him that he refuses to adjust to a soft civilian life. Stevens is the comic underside to Hellmann's bitter homecomer.

Sonny, in Kessler's The Watering Place, returns from Vietnam wearing a combat uniform and carrying a duffel bag loaded with military gear. He never takes off his uniform, even though offered the dead Ronald's clothing by his mother. The combat uniform is symbolic. Sonny engages in combat with Father and he never accepts peace. Sonny is the eternal soldier and the constant picture of him in combat uniform foreshadows his return to combat.

Other homecomers retain parts of their uniforms as symbols of their failure to adjust completely. The most extreme example is provided by Colonel J. C. Kinkaid of

Jones's The Oldest Living Graduate who wears his officer's tunic forty-four years after his homecoming from World War I. Kinkaid is a comic figure who moves about in his wheelchair barking orders at everyone.

Two homecomer plays from the Second World War present men hanging on to parts of their uniform. In Bessie Breuer's Sundown Beach (1948) Merle wears his leather air force squadron jacket as he tends bar. He has not adjusted completely and regards non-homecomers with a bit of contempt. Anderson's Truckline Café portrays three homecomers who retain parts of their uniform. Mort Carruth wears his officer's shoes with his civilian clothing. Hutch and Matt wear respectively, an army shirt and army pants, Anderson doesn't specify who wears what.

In Rabe's Sticks and Bones, David returns in dress uniform but sheds it as he attempts to adjust. At the climax of the play, when he realizes that his adjustment is impossible, he once again adorns a uniform. It is his combat uniform, for he is literally going into battle against his family. David experiences an epiphany; he must make his family face the truth which he now sees.

Four of the plays feature homecomers who wear their

uniforms or medals as talismans. Three of them are black homecomers. The World War I homecomer Jumbo in Flavin's Achilles Had a Heel proudly displays his Croix de Guerre on his zookeeper's uniform. It helps him to retain his one moment of glory. The medal also stands as a subtle, but effective, statement to zoo visitors that they are looking at a man who is more than a lowly, black zookeeper. Jumbo refuses to let go of his glorious military past and be treated as a mere nigger.

Two black homecomers from World War II retain their uniforms in order to state their worth as human beings, and also to prevent trouble with white society. In Ardrey's Jeb, Jeb Turner wears his uniform as he is returning home. On the way, he stops at a bar with a friend and becomes involved in an altercation. It is the uniform which keeps the homecomer from being arrested as another troublesome nigger. Jeb is given knockout drops and has his Purple Heart and Silver Star medals stolen.

Turner returns to his southern hometown and fails to adjust. The white community is preparing to lynch him, and the homecomer is ready to begin flight. In true melodramatic fashion the medals arrive by mail just at this precise

moment. They have been sent by a prostitute, with a heart of gold, who was involved in the theft. Jeb's mother pins the medals on her fearful son and at once his courage and determination return, and the homecomer prepares to face the mob. The medals won on the field of battle here take on magical properties.

In D'Usseau and Gow's Deep Are The Roots Brett Charles is reluctant to shed his World War II officer's uniform upon his homecoming to his segregated society. He is well aware that the uniform offers him more freedom of movement and protection from hostile whites. The bigoted whites may not respect or fear the nigger Charles, but their tradition gives them a feeling of awe and reverence for a military uniform.

In Viertel and Shaw's The Survivors Thomas Cameron wears his Civil War medals and his saber on his civilian clothing. He is well aware that they make him a figure of admiration with the local women. Cameron is also well aware that they offer a certain amount of protection in this region beset by feuding ranchers.

Three homecomers display an eagerness to shed their military past by shedding their uniforms and medals. Sid

Hunt, Hatcher Hughes's World War I homecomer in Hell-Bent Fer Heaven (1924), reveals his willingness to adjust to his rural life by his complete disregard for the symbolic power of his uniform. Hunt finds nothing magical, exciting or glamorous in his uniform or his medals. He utilizes them for their worth as articles of clothing.

Hunt returns wearing his army cap and jacket mixed with civilian clothing, because he does not have a civilian cap or jacket. His family is excited about Hunt's medal and they ask to see it. This homecomer deflates all their notions of honor and glory as he tells them: "I cain't show it to you now. I busted the last button offen my drawers while ago an' I got 'em pinned up with it."[72]

The difficulties of adjustment are not treated seriously in this Pulitzer Prize winning comedy, although Hughes intended that the Broadway audience accept his play as a realistic look at rural life. Hunt is obviously going to adjust easily, as his practical application of military uniform and medal suggest.

Another comedy taking a light look at the adjustment problems of the homecomer is Norman Krasna's John Loves Mary

[72]Hatcher Hughes, Hell Bent Fer Heaven in The Pulitzer Prize Plays, ed., Cathryn Coe & William H. Cordell (New York: Random House, 1935), p. 238.

(1947).

It was a hit with Broadway audiences and ran for 423 performances. Peter Bauland suggests a possible reason for the popularity of this and other homecomer comedies; "with few exceptions, the commercial plays of the first few post-war years [World War II] concerning the readjustment of the homecomer soldier were comedies or farces, but this phenomenon may well have been nothing more than one of the spoils of victory."[73]

John Lawrence and Fred Taylor return from World War II displaying absolutely no problems at adjustment. Fred, newly arrived and already out of uniform, tells John that; "I changed into my civvies in the men's room of the Washington Station."[74]

John contacts Fred as soon as his homecoming ship docks and implores his fellow homecomer to buy him a suit. He wishes to rid himself of his uniform and his war experience at once. Both homecomers are more than willing

[73]Bauland, The Hooded Eagle/Modern German Drama on the New York Stage, p.158.

[74]Norman Krasna, John Loves Mary (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1947), p. 10.

to assume full civilian status once again.

In Cole's Medal of Honor Rag, Dale Jackson is given a Medal of Honor which he does not feel he deserves and does not want. This homecomer is already having problems adjusting and this only compounds the problem. Jackson knows that he is being used for propaganda purposes by his government. He tells his psychiatrist that "without that medal I'd be just another invisible Nigger."[75]

The notoriety has proved too much for the confused homecomer who commits himself to a military hospital. Jackson would like to throw the medal away in hopes that his problems would disappear along with it. However, he can't bring himself to get rid of it. Both homecomer and doctor come to the realization that his adjustment is stalled because of the medal.

Howard Kissel reveals the dilemma: "Ultimately the psychiatrist realizes—and so does the soldier—that the medal of honor is a sort of ironic albatross . . . it entitles him to 'special treatment' from the white America he knows is hypocritical and unjust."[76]

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[75]Cole, Medal of Honor Rag, p. 42.

[76]Howard Kissel, New York Women's Wear Daily, March 29, 1976, p. 14.

2. Physical/Mental Handicaps

In this section I examine the difficulties encountered by the homecomer who returns with a physical or mental handicap. There are twenty-eight plays included from the following genres, drama, comedy, romantic comedy, modern tragedy, neo-expressionism, allegory, symbolism, presentational monologues, and a musical. The Spanish Civil War is not represented in this section.

The first part of this section is a group of plays including homecomers with physical and mental handicaps, Mourning Becomes Electra, 5th of July, Pvt. Wars, Who'll Save the Plowboy?, and The Survivors. The next group links homecomers according to a particular handicap, blindness (Forward the Heart and Sticks and Bones), and loss of limb (Achilles Had a Heel, The Searching Wind, P.S. 193, and Jeb).

Three plays from the First World War contrast the homecomer's adjustment to combat wounds, Tapestry in Gray, Rendezvous, and "Everyday." The Shortchanged Review follows in order to compare a Vietnam homecomer to the World War I homecomers. The next group depicts homecomers whose combat wounds create no problems, Clarence, The Skin of Our

Teeth, Deep Are The Roots, and The Watering Place.

The final group of plays portrays the mentally disturbed homecomer. The first plays depict homecomers with severe mental illness, Sundown Beach, Kennedy's Children, and Medal of Honor Rag. The next group presents homecomers who are not as severely disturbed, Johnny Johnson, Foxhole in the Parlor, and Achilles Had a Heel. Comic portrayals of the mentally disturbed homecomer comprise the last unit, The Wooden Soldier, The Oldest Living Graduate, and Period of Adjustment. A unique play, The Happiness Cage, closes out the section.

The problems facing the homecomer are increased when he returns with a physical or mental handicap. The homecomer who returns minus a limb, or with a paralyzed body part, or sightless eyes or any combination of physical impairments is branded as different. The internal differences produced by his war experience are now externalized as well.

The wounded soldier must spend time recuperating in a hospital separated from his family and friends. This is lost time, time which could be used adjusting to society. The homecomer returns to his family, noticeably different,

and the adjustment period is lengthened as family and friends must learn to cope with this change.

Some veterans never return to society because of incurable psychological problems incurred during combat. The veterans discharged from military hospitals return to society with severe adjustment problems. Often, the problems faced by these homecomers are greater than those faced by the homecomers who are physically maimed.

In his study of a group of World War II homecomers Dr. George K. Pratt writes: "For the returned soldier who is discharged because of a psychiatric handicap the problems of community adjustment are somewhat different. He has no visible wound or injury to explain why he is back home while his buddies are still at war."[77]

Some homecomers bear the double burden of physical and mental wounds. The horrors of war tear through their psyches while bullets and bombs rend their flesh. This homecomer provides the dramatist with a complex protagonist, and five have written homecomer plays on this subject.

In The Hunted, the second play of O'Neill's Civil War trilogy, Orin (Orestes) Mannon returns from a military

[77]George K. Pratt, M.D., Soldier to Civilian (New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1944), p. 135.

hospital with a bandaged head wound. He has been sent home even though his wound is not completely healed, and despite the fact that he suffers from a nervous condition. His mental suffering manifests itself in the nervous condition.

In his modern version of The Oresteia , O'Neill provides Orin with a mental disorder as a mitigating circumstnace for his act of murder. Since a modern audience is not as willing to accept pure revenge as a motive, the homecomer's combat experience takes much of the responsibility when he shoots his mother's lover. Richard Lockridge comments: "there the boy, who had been turned to a bitter man by his suffering in the war, killed his mother's lover and gloated over the body."[78]

Orin Mannon never makes the adjustment to civilian life. In the last play of the trilogy, The Haunted, Orin and his sister Lavinia (Electra) return from a trip to the South Seas where Orin attempted to recover from his war damage and the horror of the homicide. Orin's physical bearing points to the failure of the therapy. This homecomer has not been able to put the war behind him, as

[78]Richard Lockridge, New York Sun, October 27, 1931, no page given.

O'Neill's stage directions state that Orin "carries himself woodenly erect now like a soldier."[79]

Orin Mannon puts a pistol to his head in an offstage suicide. The modern furies of the battlefield, which drove Orin to homicide, now drive him to self-destruction. The furies are invisible wounds inside the homecomer's head. The pistol is aimed at the head to rid the tormented Mannon of his furies.

Lanford Wilson's Vietnam homecomer in 5th of July (1978), Ken Talley, returns with the combination of visible and invisible wound, both contributing to his inability to adjust. Talley lost both legs in combat and has erected a facade of indifference to hide his mental anguish. The missing limbs serve as a constant reminder of the war. The action of the play begins several years after Talley's homecoming and he still must take medication and physical therapy.

Before the war Talley was a dedicated, committed teacher. He has not resumed his former career, but instead declares that he no longer desires to teach. In reality, he

[79]O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 824.

is fearful of the reaction when he confronts the students. Convinced by the local principal to accept a contract, Talley visits the students. The visit is a disaster as the legless homecomer is wheeled from classroom to classroom. His attempt to resume his former role in society is a failure as Talley explains: "I just wasn't quite ready for them; or they certainly weren't ready for me."[80]

The resumption of his former career is a necessary step in Talley's adjustment. He has a sexual relationship with the young man who is his nurse, but will not commit himself emotionally. Talley not only refuses to admit his emotional need for the man, but even jokes about their sexual relationship.

Talley has withdrawn from life. The memories of his combat mutilation remain. In Wilson's dark comedy his homecomer has one commitment and that a negative one. A reviewer explains: "A young homosexual maimed and crippled by the war, wants to sell the old family house to escape his own memories."[81]

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[80]Lanford Wilson, 5th of July (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1978), p. 52.

[81]_____ _____, New York Daily News, May 3, 1978, p. 66 (reviewer's name not given).

Two of the Vietnam War homecomers, Silvio and Natwick, in McLure's Pvt. Wars suffer from the combination of physical and psychological wounds. This combination creates the fear each has of leaving the security of the hospital. Each homecomer has a physical wound which provokes shame; and this shame contributes to the psychological handicap.

Silvio, as is Ernst Toller's World War I German homecomer in Hinkemann, is castrated by grenade shrapnel. This wound is shameful and emotionally painful to any man, but unbearable to this man imbued with machismo. Silvio manifests his shame and outrage at this loss of manhood by frequently exposing himself to the nurses. Silvio tried, but failed, to adjust to a society which ridiculed him. He fled back to the hospital in fear and chagrin.

Natwick's combat wounds require that he spend the remainder of his life wearing a urine bag strapped to his side. He is ashamed and embarrassed by this encumbrance. The mere thought of leaving the hospital causes him to suffer stress.

Both homecomers speak frequently of leaving the hospital, but it is a charade. Silvio and Natwick need this

pretense to maintain their sanity, a tenuous sanity at best. Neither homecomer will ever be able to adjust to society because of his physical and mental handicap.

Larry Doyle, in Gilroy's Who'll Save the Plowboy?, suffers severe wounds in World War II combat which affect the remainder of his life. He endured a protracted convalescence and was released from a military hospital apparently recovered. However, complications developed in a few years and he has been a semi-invalid since.

Doyle remains a man with no purpose to his life. The play's action begins fifteen years after the war with the lingering complications from his war wounds about to cause Doyle's premature death. He visits Albert Cobb, his fellow homecomer whose life Doyle saved and for whom he sustained his deadly wounds. Doyle explains to Cobb's wife the reason for this first visit in fifteen years: "Had the wild idea . . . was going to prove I hadn't wasted my life. . . . Was going to find a nice family and console myself that I was responsible for its existence."[82]

Larry Doyle is desperate now that time is running

[82]Gilroy, Who'll Save the Plowboy?, p. 58.

out for him. His physical and mental problems suffered in combat have never allowed him to adjust to civilian life. Now he needs proof that he has performed one positive act in his lifetime. Doyle's life may have been wasted but he at least can end it with one accomplishment. Judith Christ explains: "Larry, doomed by the wounds he suffered, is seeking to justify his own sacrifice by discovering the other's happiness."[83]

In Viertel and Shaw's The Survivors Morgan Decker returns from the Civil War suffering physically and mentally. He was severely beaten while imprisoned in the South, and subsequently cracked under the pressures of confinement. Decker collapses as soon as he returns and is confined to bed. For the few remaining hours of his life he is a raving madman. If Morgan Decker had survived his physical wounds, most likely he would have remained mentally disturbed for the remainder of his life.

There is a variety of physical handicaps inflicted upon homecomers in American drama. Some of the men live

[83]Judith Christ, New York Herald Tribune, January 10, 1962, no page given.

their lives affected by the handicap, others suffer injuries with little lasting effect. While it is certainly difficult to place a value judgment upon the severity of an individual's handicap, blindness is certainly a severe one. There are two homecomers sharing this handicap, both named David, both lose the woman they love and both commit suicide.

The first is David Gibbs in Bernard Reines's romantic play Forward the Heart (1949). He is blinded in combat in the Second World War and is not adjusting well to his homecoming. Gibbs speaks of the doubts he first felt during his convalescence: "At the hospital, they kept telling me the sooner I wanted to do things, the sooner I'd be able to do them . . . I decided I had to come home and find out whether there was any point to . . . going on."[84]

Gibbs faces the double burden of adjusting to society and adjusting to sightlessness. He attempts to become self-sufficient, an important, necessary part of his adjustment, but is stymied by his overbearing mother. She refuses to allow her son to do anything for himself and he becomes totally dependent.

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[84]Bernard Reines, Forward the Heart (unpublished manuscript #497146B in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 1-1-14.

David Gibbs abandons all attempts at adjustment and, as Ward Morehouse observes, reaches "something of an agonized state about his unfitness for life."[85] It is at this point in his life that David meets, and eventually falls in love with, the new maid unaware that she is black. This relationship helps the blind homecomer to begin the ascent to a life of independence. When David learns of her color, his ingrained prejudice causes him to reject her at first. However, his blindness makes him realize how trivial skin color is, and he rejects the bigotry he has been taught.

This awareness speeds Gibbs' development and prepares him to join the world outside his sightless haven. However, his marriage plans are destroyed by the manipulations of his mother. The distraught Gibbs cannot overcome this setback and shoots himself.

The second David, in Rabe's Sticks and Bones, is blinded during combat in Vietnam. The homecomer is delivered to his family home as if he were a parcel. The Sergeant Major who delivers David is in a hurry; he has trucks loaded with battle-maimed homecomers to deliver to

[85]Ward Morehouse, New York Sun, January 29, 1946, no page given.

other families. He must hurry with this convoy because more handicapped homecomers are waiting to be loaded onto the trucks. The outburst by the Sergeant Major to describe the waiting homecomers could be applied to all wars: "Laying there in pieces all over the grass, their backs been broken, their brains jellied, their insides turned into garbage. No-legged boys and one-legged boys."[86]

David's family is also overly protective towards the homecomer. His blindness confuses them and makes them uncomfortable and the family members commit several faux pas in their attempts to adjust to this change in David even though the blinded homecomer quickly begins to find his own way around the home and takes care of himself. David takes delight in the efforts of his family, as they desperately attempt to cope with his handicap. Walter Kerr writes of this situation: "David is the returned, maimed soldier, silent behind his dark glasses, a threat to their peace of mind with his omnipresent, tapping stick."[87]

The loss of a limb is a severe handicap. There is

[86]Rabe, Sticks and Bones, p. 14.

[87]Walter Kerr, The New York Times, November 14, 1971, section 2, p. 1.

the visible proof that the homecomer is different. Jumbo, the black homecomer in Flavin's Achilles Had a Heel, returns from the First World War wearing a prosthesis. Flavin's stage directions state that "his right arm gone from the elbow hangs at his side and ends in a stiff black glove."[88] Jumbo, in the public eye as zookeeper, provokes stares and comments which keeps his sacrifice fresh in his mind. The use of the black glove on the prosthesis, instead of a matching pair, suggests defiance or bitterness. Jumbo appears to be calling attention to his missing limb. The choice of black suggests that the homecomer may be in mourning for the body part lost in combat.

Hellman's World War II homecomer, Sam Hazen in The Searching Wind, returns from combat with a maimed leg. He is able to do little more than lie at home recuperating. The leg does not heal and must be amputated. Hazen is bitter and assails his family, blaming them for his sacrifice. Hazen questions their commitment to democracy, as Arthur Pollock states: "he has lost a leg fighting in the war they had not the courage or integrity to prevent, a war

[88]Flavin, Achilles Had a Heel, 1-2.

that is the result of their not being sure that they wanted to stop Fascism."[89]

Mario Saccone, Rayfiel's Korean War homecomer in P.S. 193, also is bitter over loss of the use of a limb. He could have been spared this disability if he had received adequate medical treatment. Hit in the shoulder by a bullet, Saccone was left unattended for some time because no medical personnel were available. He did not lose the right arm but it is disabled, as he explains: "The arm's more for appearance than for what it can do. Better than pinning up a sleeve."[90]

Saccone feels betrayed by his society, which he feels failed to support the war, as evidenced by the inadequate medical help. His useless arm makes him different and will constantly remind him of his sacrifice.

Jeb Turner, the black homecomer in Ardrey's Jeb, returns from the Second World War with an aluminum prosthesis in place of the leg lost to a landmine. Jeb, however, expresses no bitterness over his loss. In fact, he refuses

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[89]Arthur Pollock, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, April 13, 1944, no page given.

[90]Rayfiel, P.S. 193, 8-14.

to accept pity from his family, exhibiting his new leg with pride. A difficult moment is dissolved into humor when Turner's young brothers climb under the table to inspect his artificial leg. The homecomer calmly hands one of them a spoon, so that he may tap it to prove the leg is not wooden.

Homecomers return with their limbs intact and working, but bear wounds affecting their daily existence. The wounds can brand them as different or affect their behavior significantly enough to single them out.

Three homecomer plays from World War I show the different ways of adjustment to combat wounds. Martin Flavin's second homecomer play Tapestry in Gray (1935) is a psychological drama structured cinematically with brief scenes ending with stage directions such as dissolve, fade and cut.

Stephen, one of two homecomers in the play, returns home bearing a disfiguring wound which causes him to withdraw from society. He makes no attempt to adjust to a normal role in society. Stephen feels that his wound, described in stage directions as a "livid and disfiguring scar on the left side of his face from the corner of his mouth into his hair,"[91] makes him repugnant, especially to

[91]Martin Flavin, Tapestry in Gray (unpublished manuscript #555892B in The Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 1-20.

women. Stephen decides to devote his life to medical research as a way to hide from society. He goes to the Amazon, where he will spend years on his research, a positive alternative choice.

Oakley, MacLane's homecomer in Rendezvous, is severely wounded fighting in the trenches. His wounds, in his words, left him "pretty much of a wreck."[92] Oakley is sent to a military hospital, never fully recovers, and leaves over the objections of his doctors.

Oakley returns bitter because of his weakened heart, which prevents any physical strain by him. He refuses to adjust to society, preferring to remain outside the law as a bootlegger. Oakley, representative of the romantic, tough-guy gangster, jokes about his disability, however, as he describes his life: "I sit around the desk here a lot and I hafta be careful to drink a little more regular."[93]

John McFarlan, Crothers's homecomer in "Everyday," also receives a disabling wound. He, too, spends time recuperating in a hospital. McFarlan lightly refers to his

[92]MacLane, Rendezvous, 1-27.

[93]Ibid.

disability as a "bum leg and a bum arm."[94] He accepts his fate stoically, and decides since he can't perform physical labor, he will work at an occupation which utilizes his mind.

Another homecomer who is bitter about his war wound is Darrell Shannigan in Moody's The Shortchanged Review. Part of his stomach is blown away in combat in Vietnam, which while not causing him undue hardship does force moderation in food and drink. For a former career marine used to a life of excessive drinking, this does cause adjustment problems.

In the society of the professional soldier a man is sometimes measured by the amount of alcohol which he can consume. Shannigan's enforced moderation will effect his feelings of manhood. He will be constantly reminded of his disability. Since he can't get drunk whenever he feels like doing so, Shannigan's adjustment will be more difficult.

Homecomers return with wounds which are not serious and don't affect their adjustment to any great degree. However, they do serve as reminders of the war experience.

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[94]Rachel Crothers, "Everyday" (New York: Co-National Plays, Inc., 1930), p. 34.

Booth Tarkington uses a war-related wound for comic effect in Clarence. The ersatz homecomer is shot in the liver during target practice in Texas, where he spent his World War I army service. The decidedly unheroic placement of the wound is made funnier by the pathetic figure of Clarence, whom everyone assumes has been wounded in battle.

The stage directions reveal the intended comic effect; as Clarence "stoops, not only at the shoulders, but from the waist, sagging forward, and, for a time, to the left side, then, for a time, to the right, his legs 'give' slightly at the knees, and he limps, somewhat vaguely."[95] The comic effect is heightened by the rapid recovery of Clarence once he is employed.

In Wilder's The Skin of Our Teeth Antrobus "bears a number of scars, front and back"[96] from the several wars in which he engaged. They serve to remind Antrobus of his many sacrifices and are also his badges of honor as a frequent homecomer. Wilder intends these scars to serve as symbols

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[95]Booth Tarkington, Clarence (New York: Samuel French, 1921), p. 17.

[96]Thornton Wilder, The Skin of Our Teeth (New York: Samuel French, 1944), p. 9.

of the countless number of wars man has fought through the ages.

Antrobus returns from his latest war limping noticeably. It is an old wound reinjured in this war. The wound adds to the homecomer's ennui as he encounters difficulties in this latest homecoming. However, neither the wound nor the ennui last as Antrobus begins to rebuild his life once again.

Brett Charles, D'Usseau and Gow's black homecomer in Deep Are The Roots, returns from the Second World War with pieces of shrapnel remaining in his leg. Charles says that the wound is not disabling and he does not limp. The wound does not figure in any of the play's action and does not affect the homecomer's adjustment.

In Kessler's The Watering Place Sonny returns from imprisonment by the unnamed enemy (North Vietnam). He has been starved and tortured and collapses soon after his homecoming. Sonny recovers his health quickly and suffers no lingering effects. He returns to combat.

Several homecomers return bearing the invisible wounds of psychological origins. Breuer's Sundown Beach

portrays World War II airforce personnel recuperating from battle psychoses. This play is set in a military hospital disguised as a hotel by the military, so that the public will not be alarmed. Here the battle-shocked men are treated, returned to combat if cured, discharged if not.

The play depicts a group of homecomers in various stages of adjustment. Major Walters, the most obvious, and the most hopeless case, has cracked from the strain of too many bombing missions. This prematurely white-haired combat victim roams the grounds of the sultry Florida retreat adorned in full dress winter uniform. Accompanied by a male nurse, Walters wanders the grounds of the retreat spouting hyperbole like a mad chorus chanting the horrors of war.

Walters is the extreme example, a homecomer who will never return to society or to combat. Two other homecomers in Breuer's play suffer psychiatric problems which lead to their discharges. The first, Otis, has flown his quota of missions and could have been discharged and returned to society. However, he is placed under psychiatric care, because as his friend Grits explains: "Last night he threw a shoe through the window. Said the waves were coming at him with teeth . . . He's been real sick lately."[97]

[97]Bessie Breuer, Sundown Beach (unpublished manuscript

Arthur Bond has also flown sufficient missions to earn his discharge. However, he wants to return to combat. Bond feels that the war experience rescued him from the life of a bum and made him a man (a feeling shared by other homecomers). However, his request is denied and he is discharged as completely disabled because of a nervous condition. This homecomer, suffering from the invisible wound will have trouble with his homecoming. It will be even more difficult as he attempts to explain his civilian status while the war is still being waged.

Mark, Patrick's Vietnam War homecomer in Kennedy's Children, is another severely disturbed homecomer. However, unlike Major Walters, Mark is returned to society. This homecomer acquired a drug addiction in combat and began losing his sanity from a combination of drugs and war. Mark's monologue in the play comes from the reading of a diary he kept while in Vietnam. His insanity is slowly revealed, Marjorie Gunner oberves, as Mark continues "reading from his diary as if it were the only reality like some travellers snapping pictures, never viewing the

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#482822B in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 3-11.

landscape."[98]

His mad ravings include drug-induced hallucinations in which Viet Cong soldiers rise from the sea and exchange drugs with him. Mark imagines his best friends have become secret agents and the crazed soldier murders his closest army friend as a result of his delusions. The deed is covered up by the military and Mark is discharged. He agrees to treatment in a methadone clinic as a condition of discharge, because in Mark's drug-filled fantasies he knows that: "Then I will be coming home again, to make the world a better place to live in. Now, I know how."[99]

He is not going to adjust to society. It is obvious that he will engage in some kind of violent act. Mark will most likely kill or be killed, or at the very least end in prison. He offers a sharp contrast to the noble murderer in Hall and Middlemass's The Valiant.

Another severely disturbed homecomer is Dale Jackson in Cole's Medal of Honor Rag. Jackson suffers deeply from

[98]Marjorie Gunner New York The Record, November 14, 1975, p. 10.

[99]Robert Patrick, Kennedy's Children (New York: Samuel French Inc., 1976), p. 46.

the nightmare of war. This black youth, taught the virtues of pacificism by his mother, engages in single-handed combat and kills several of the enemy. Jackson cannot rid himself of the trauma caused by this violation of his moral code.

The homecomer commits himself to a military hospital, but goes absent-without-leave (AWOL) on several occasions. He also refuses to cooperate with the doctors attempting to help him. Jackson's psychiatric treatment is a failure. He goes AWOL one final time as he meets with death.

Two homecomers are considered mentally disturbed because they propose plans to end the fighting. The plays are from the two World Wars, Green's Johnny Johnson from the first and Elsa Shelly's Foxhole in the Parlor (1945) from the second.

Johnny Johnson enlists a German soldier as an ally in his peace campaign. They will spread the call to lay down arms in their respective countries. Johnson is shot in the backside and sent to a military hospital. While recuperating, he discovers that laughing gas brings feelings of peace and love to those inhaling it. Johnson, in his hospital pajamas, interrupts a meeting of the Allied Commanders

in order to present his peace plan. Facing imminent arrest, Johnson sprays the assembly with laughing gas. His plan is about to work when the gas wears off and Johnson is hauled away.

Johnson is discharged and brought home under arrest for his troubles. Since he committed such an obviously insane act, Johnson is placed in a mental institution. He remains there for several years and is reluctant to be discharged. Johnson tells the attendant who brings him news of his release: "all—my friends—are here—my work too."[100]

Foxhole in the Parlor deals with a similar theme. The pressure of performing the role of a combat litter bearer during World War II proves too much for Dennis Patterson. Sent to a military hospital for treatment of a nervous disorder, Patterson is unable to overcome the invisible wound, and is discharged. He suffers from severe trembling at times after his homecoming.

Patterson elaborately plans his formula for world peace as the war continues. He is patronized by family and friends who regard him as still suffering from shellshock.

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[100]Paul Green, Johnny Johnson (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1971), p. 117.

Unlike Johnny Johnson, Patterson merely plans to convene a meeting of world leaders in order to promote his peace plan.

Patterson is more naive than insane; his plan is harmless. His nervous disorder shames him, plus the negative reception given his plan, blocks any progress. Patterson's sister plots to commit him, but his friends manage to stop her. As the play concludes this homecomer shows signs of adjusting.

One final homecoming play dealing seriously with a disturbed homecomer is Flavin's Achilles Had a Heel. Slats' vengeful behavior towards the black homecomer Jumbo is given a hint of motivation. Slats reveals that he served as a Captain in World War I: "Till I got sick—you get sick or get shot. It's one thing or another."[101] Flavin leaves it unclear whether or not Slats is emotionally disturbed or making excuses for his inability to adjust.

Three comedies depict homecomers suffering from mental disorders. Two, David Kaufmann in Carr's The Wooden Soldier and Colonel J.C. Kinkaid in Jones's The Oldest Living Graduate, return from the First World War suffering

[101]Flavin, Achilles Had a Heel, 1-4.

from shellshock. Neither homecomer is able to make the adjustment to society. Both are regarded as harmless eccentrics. Each carries the war in his mind as if it were a present reality.

David Kaufmann earns a meager living performing a street burlesque of his combat experience. He alternates between sanity and delusion. His offstage act is described in the following dialogue. Bennie: "Yes—I've seen you. You're that crazy fellow that marches in the street like a wooden soldier. David: "Like a wooden soldier? My boy, I am a wooden soldier."[102]

In Jones's play the First World War ended 44 years before the action begins, but Colonel Kinkaid is still living his days of combat. He still addresses comrades long departed and often mistakes family members for fellow soldiers. When awakened from a nap by his daughter, Kinkaid asks: "Is it my turn on guard again? Hell's fire, ah jest turned in."[103]

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[102]Alexander Carr, The Wooden Soldier (unpublished manuscript #555892B in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), p. 120.

[103]Preston Jones, The Oldest Living Graduate (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1976), p. 38.

Kinkaid has wealth and power and is cared for by the family. He does not have to beg for a living, nor will he be institutionalized even though he will never recover from his battle psychosis. He will live out the remainder of his days as he has been doing.

Williams's Period of Adjustment depicts another homecomer with a nervous disorder. George Haverstick returns from Korea with a psychological problem which manifests itself in a tremor. It is a significant factor in his failure to adjust to postwar life.

Haverstick developed the tremor while flying combat missions. Military doctors could not diagnose the causes of his tremor and suggested psychiatric treatment. Haverstick refused the treatment and received a medical discharge with its resultant social stigma.

Whenever the tremor appears, Haverstick quits his job and moves on. This has been the rootless pattern of his life since his homecoming. Unless, and until, he seeks help the homecomer will continue in this fashion.

A final play stands unique among those in this section, Dennis Reardon's The Happiness Cage (1970). The play is set in a military hospital for homecomers with terminal

cancer. The play is eerily prescient, albeit unwittingly, since neither my research on the play, nor the play itself, suggests awareness of the effects of defoliants being sprayed on American troops fighting in Vietnam. These defoliants, with various code names such as Agent Orange, Agent White and Agent Blue, are now believed by many doctors to have caused future cancers in veterans.

The matter is still being debated, but sterility, mental disorders, skin diseases and other side effects are also blamed on the defoliants. The cancer patients in Reardon's play could possibly be suffering from the effects of the spray. Ironically, the patients are used as guinea pigs for medical research.

3. Altered Perception of Society

This section is comprised of plays which portray homecomers whose views concerning society have been changed because of their war experience. There are eighteen plays in this section representing drama, comedy, comedy of manners, domestic comedy, neo-expressionism, modern tragedy, allegory, and presentational monologues. Each of the American wars is included.

The first group of plays depicts homecomers whose religious beliefs have changed, Sticks and Bones, Mourning Becomes Electra, The Survivors, The Subject Was Roses, and Hell-Bent Fer Heaven. The next group of plays shows homecomers questioning the system of values taught them by their families, Sticks and Bones, The Searching Wind, The Skin of Our Teeth, and The Subject Was Roses. Next come homecomers disillusioned with society, All My Sons, Lone Star, and Mourning Becomes Electra.

Three plays are grouped which depict homecomers who feel that war had a positive effect upon them, A Very Special Baby, Kennedy's Children, and Thin Ice. Contrast is provided with Soldier's Wife, in which the homecomer doesn't realize that he has changed. The last group includes black

homecomers and their special problems, Medal of Honor Rag, Goin' Home, Deep Are The Roots, and Jeb.

In some instances a young soldier goes to war indoctrinated with a set of values, religious training, and an idealized view of the society for which he is fighting. The shock of combat challenges his values, his religious beliefs, and his idealism. Death is now a constant factor in his life, as he witnesses and participates in the often senseless, wholesale destruction. Fear, to a degree never before experienced, begins to shake his convictions.

The combatant begins doubting the absolutes he carried off to war. The society he is defending no longer seems to be ideal. The impressionable youngster is forced to engage in an amoral daily struggle for survival, if he is to survive the harsh realities of war. The soldier becomes a realist and often a cynic.

The realist returns to his society. His perceptions of his society are altered by war. In addition, he views life from a different perspective than do those who remained behind. Several of the homecomers in the plays in this study are former idealists turned realists.

Rabe's Sticks and Bones is a particularly acerbic

depiction of a homecomer who rejects his religion. David returns from Vietnam to not only reject his Catholicism, but to attack it as well. He does so figuratively and literally. Harriet, worried over her son's strange behavior, summons the family priest, Father Donald.

The priest doesn't really listen to David. Instead, he belabors the disturbed homecomer with platitudes. David rejects the insufferable Father Donald, orders the priest to leave and strikes the man with his cane. The priest refuses to accept this blasphemy. It is inconceivable to Father Donald that David can reject him and the religion he represents. The befuddled Father Donald also does not understand the homecomer's needs. Henry Hewes writes that: "David's war experience has changed him in ways they are not prepared to accept."[104]

Father Donald refuses to leave the room despite David's repeated commands to do so. The priest insists upon giving the resistant homecomer holy blessings. Driven to desperation, David yells at the bumbling priest: "Get out, I'm sick of you. You've been in one Goddamn corner or

[104]Henry Hewes, Saturday Review, November 27, 1971, p. 70.

another of the room all my life making signs at me, whispering, wanting to splash me with water or mark me with oil . . . Now get the fuck out of here."[105] David finally rids himself of the insensitive priest by striking him repeatedly with his cane.

David not only rejects his religion, he attacks it verbally and physically. Father Donald represents a religion which no longer holds any value for the homecomer. David has been trained to kill the enemy in order that he may survive combat. Father Donald is an enemy attacking David's sense of well-being, which the homecomer needs in order to survive. His final thrust at the still hesitant priest makes this quite clear, as David tells him: "you get the fuck out of here before I kill you."[106]

Ezra Mannon returns from the Civil War in O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra rejecting the religious teachings he carried to battle. Mannon was a believer of the tenets of a fundamentalist Protestant religion. The religious instruction taught him to regard life as little more than

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[105]Rabe, Sticks and Bones, p. 57.

[106]Ibid., p. 60.

preparation for death.

Mannon's daily exposure to death during four years of battle challenges this belief. He now believes that mortal life is too dear to spend merely in preparation for life after death. Mannon bitterly attacks his former beliefs: "That white meeting-house . . . a temple of death! But in the war I've seen too many white walls splattered with blood . . . That made the white meeting-house seem meaningless—making so much fuss over death."[107]

Another Civil War homecomer who returns rejecting his religious beliefs is Stephen Decker in Viertel and Shaw's The Survivors. His four years in a Confederate prisoner-of-war camp have made him cynical. Decker rejects attempts by his minister to restore his lost faith. Unlike Father Donald, this man of religion does not argue with the homecomer nor does he express surprise or dismay over Decker's changed attitude. The minister has experienced this before. He tells Decker: "The war, Son, the war. I understand. Many of the boys have returned leaving their religion behind them."[108]

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[107]O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 738.

[108]Peter Viertel and Irwin Shaw, The Survivors (unpublished manuscript in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 2-12.

Frank Gilroy's The Subject Was Roses (1964), his second homecomer play, depicts a homecomer who renounces his Catholicism. Timothy Cleary is not as strident as David in rejecting Catholicism. He returns from World War II and casually discloses the fact that he has been wavering in his beliefs for several years. It was the war experience which provided the catalyst.

Cleary's decision was not easy nor was the announcement to his Irish Catholic father. In fact, he was forced into this position. John Cleary urges his son to hurry or he will be late for Mass. This forces Timothy Cleary to reply: "I haven't considered myself a Catholic for quite a while."[109] Tim Cleary is not bitter nor hostile towards his family religion. When the senior Cleary stalks out hurt and angered by this revelation, Timothy decides to follow and attend church with his father.

Tim Cleary is more agnostic than atheist. He left for battle questioning the tenets of his religion, but not rejecting them. He spends four years in combat with death and destruction. The questions turn to doubts and the home-

[109]Frank D. Gilroy, The Subject Was Roses (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1962), p. 46.

comer returns to give up his formal religious beliefs.

A comical portrayal of the homecomer questioning his religious beliefs appears in Hughes's Hell-Bent Fer Heaven. Sid Hunt returns from the First World War possessing a cynical attitude towards his religion. He was raised as a Baptist, but no longer feels that his membership has much influence on his life or death. His once strong belief has been tempered by his daily contact with death in the trenches. Hunt has been forced to kill in order to survive.

The homecomer is greeted by family members, who assure him that he is alive because of his privileged status as a Baptist. Hunt replies, "God generally sides 'ith [sic] the feller that shoots the straightest."[110] The idealistic Baptist youth has been converted, by war, into a cynic.

In this comedy there is no suggestion that Hunt rejects his religion outright. However, there is a hint of doubt in the value of formal religious belief. The homecomer implies that he controls his own destiny. Hughes does not go into greater detail, leaving Hunt's beliefs subject to interpretation, though it is certain that Hunt will no longer be a strict Baptist.

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[110]Coe & Cordell, The Pulitzer Prize Plays, p. 241.

Several homecomers return questioning other values of their upbringing. Their perception is so altered that they have become hostile.

In Rabe's Sticks and Bones, David attacks not only his religion, but the entire set of values with which his parents imbued him. David is a changed man from the moment he steps across the family threshold. Rabe uses perception as a central metaphor, as the homecomer's view of reality collides with that of his family, with the family serving as a microcosm of American society. The sightless homecomer is led by the Sergeant Major into his once-familiar environment now become strange. David cries out: "Sergeant, you said 'home.' I don't think so. . . It doesn't feel right . . . there's something wrong . . . I don't know these people!"[111]

Rabe uses the word "see" frequently, as well as frequent visual images and metaphors of sight, in order to delineate diverging perceptions of reality. David wears opaque glasses to hide his deformed eyes, eyes which are the mirror of the soul. Ozzie and Harriet, confused by their son's demeanor, ask David to remove the glasses. The

[111]Rabe, Sticks and Bones, pp. 13,14.

parents feel that David's soul will thus be revealed to them.

The irony lies in the fact that it is the blinded homecomer who can truly see. David understands his family for what they are, not for what they believe themselves to be. War has altered his sense of perception and raised him to a different level of vision. T.E. Kalem writes of the perceptive David: "Sightless, he suddenly sees the members of his family for what they are, characters out of an adman's superdreams, puppets dangling from dentifrices, automobiles and cellophane, living on packaged illusion and self-destructive myths."[112]

David shows a home movie which he shot in Vietnam. During the viewing the conflicting perceptions of reality in the play sharply collide. Rabe's stage directions indicate that the film shows nothing more than a green haze. The family, and the audience, see no images. However, David proceeds to narrate the scenes of the film. He speaks of atrocities committed against Vietnamese civilians.

The assembled family members try to tell David that

[112]T.E. Kalem, Time, November 22, 1971, p. 93.

there are no images on the film. He becomes agitated, commanding them to "look," as the sightless homecomer points to images he alone sees. David is viewing images indelibly imprinted on his mind. He tries to make his family see the horrible truth of the war the country is waging. David's perception of reality has been altered by his experience in the war, and he cannot accept the falsehoods to which his family clings.

Hellman's The Searching Wind portrays another homecomer at odds with his family. This play jumps back and forth to depict the rise of fascism leading to World War II. The play's action is set during the war and opens with Sam Hazen home from the front because of a disabling wound. Unlike some of the other homecomers, combat instills in Hazen an idealized concept of right versus wrong. His idealism allows for no gray area.

While in combat Hazen learns that his parents are treading a path between the two extremes. One of his fellow soldiers shows Hazen a newspaper article reporting the presence of his mother at a dinner party attended by Nazi sympathizers and war slackers. She is there with the full knowledge of her husband, who works for the government. The

men in Hazen's company bitterly question what it is they are fighting for.

Hazen is chagrined by the article. The embarrassment soon turns to anger as his comrades die in defense of a democracy he believes tainted. Upon his homecoming Hazen confronts his parents: "I don't want any more fancy fooling around with it [democracy]. I don't want any more of Father's mistakes, for any reason, good or bad, or yours, Mother, because I think they do it harm. I was ashamed of that clipping."[113]

This homecomer's sense of right (democracy) versus wrong (fascism) does not allow for a society in which people steer a middle course between the two. Hazen believes that those who fail to oppose fascism help it. He believes that fence straddling prolongs the war.

The idealistic soldier becomes an embittered homecomer. Hazen, as does David in Sticks and Bones, attacks the facade his family has erected as its sense of truth. E.C. Sherburne explains: "It is their son, Samuel, invalided home from war service in Italy, who finally forces them to realize that they have always been trying to hold on to a

[113]Lillian Hellman, The Searching Wind in The Collected Plays (Garden City, New York: International Collectors Library, 1971), p. 337.

world which he, who has been under fire, does not believe worth preserving."[114]

In Wilder's The Skin of Our Teeth, Henry Antrobus returns from seven years at war to renounce his family. Furthermore, he intends to commit patricide. Henry has tired of taking orders, especially from his father. The embittered homecomer declares that he intends to control his own destiny. (Wilder is obviously alluding to the German government which voiced the same sentiment after World War I; and at the time of this production had begun another World War.) Henry confronts the senior Antrobus, but cannot bring himself to kill his father. Henry resolves the oedipal conflict by banishing himself from his society.

Henry Antrobus has returned from war with his perceptions altered drastically. The homecomer realizes that to remain probably will lead to violence on his part. Henry tells his father: "I'm not going to be a part of any peacetime of yours. I'm going a long way from here and make my own world that's fit for a man to live in."[115]

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[114]E.C. Sherburne, Boston Christian Science Monitor, April 13, 1944, no page given.

[115]Wilder, The Skin of Our Teeth, p. 112.

In Gilroy's The Subject Was Roses, Timothy Cleary returns with a new sense of awareness which allows him to view his parents as fallible. The play depicts the homecomer's new relationship with his parents. Martin Gottfried explains: "Timothy Cleary has returned from World War II to his middle-class Bronx Irish-Catholic home determined to love the father he has always detested, and to toughen up toward the mother he always embraced."[116]

Tim Cleary realizes that he must leave his mother and father. He must begin to live his own life. Unlike Henry Antrobus's self-exile, Cleary's move stems from positive, mature motives.

Chris Keller, in Miller's All My Sons, is a bitter, disillusioned homecomer. He feels society is insensitive to the sacrifice he and others have made. He has returned from World War II, joined his father in business, and is pursuing a normal middle-class life. But his adjustment is all surface.

Keller remains apart from the upwardly mobile,

[116]Martin Gottfried, New York Women's Wear Daily, May 26, 1964, no page given.

materialistic middle-class society in which he moves. He is ashamed of his participation in this life and of his society. Keller believes that friends, neighbors and co-workers have too soon forgotten the horrors of the recent war.

Chris Keller has managed to suppress these beliefs until the woman he has loved for years comes to visit the family. Ann Deever senses Keller's shame and questions him. The homecomer finally releases the pent-up feelings he has carried since his return, as he tells her:

> I came home and it was incredible. I . . . there was no meaning in it here; the whole thing to them was a kind of a—bus accident. I went to work with Dad, and that rat-race again. I felt . . . what you said . . . ashamed somehow. Because nobody was changed at all. It seemed to make suckers out of a lot of guys. I felt wrong to be alive, to open the bank-book, to drive the new car, to see the new refrigerator. I mean you can take those things out of a war, but . . . you've got to be a little better because of that.[117]

In McLure's Lone Star Roy returns bitter and disillusioned from Vietnam. He has been changed by the War, but soon realizes that the society he has returned to remains

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[117]Arthur Miller, All My Sons (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1947), p. 31.

virtually untouched. Roy buries his feelings. Two years after his homecoming he finally speaks out: "The thing is . . . nothing has been the same since I came back. Things I see . . . people I see . . . it's like they never was."[118]

The eponymous homecomer in Green's Johnny Johnson returns from World War I bitter and disillusioned. In a brief scene the once-idealistic soldier is arrested and sent to a military institution. Green's stage directions state: "Johnny is sitting at the rail of a passenger ship with his back to the statue [Statue of Liberty] and staring straight before him. An armed, uniformed Guard is at his side. The guard salutes and touches Johnny on the shoulder and points to the statue. But Johnny keeps staring ahead of him."[119]

Johnson has turned his back on society. His idealism has vanished. He no longer believes that democratic countries really desire peace, because of the failure of his peace plan. Johnson's altered perceptions will not allow him to adjust to a society which he feels has betrayed him.

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[118]McLure, Lone Star, p. 30.

[119]Green, Johnny Johnson, pp. 96, 97.

Orin Mannon returns from the Civil War, in O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra, at odds with the mores of his society. The homecomer's casual acceptance of his father's death appalls his sister Lavinia. Orin explains that years of combat have hardened his attitude towards death. Orin speaks to his father's corpse: "Who are you? Another corpse! You and I have seen fields and hillsides sown with them—and they meant nothing."[120]

In addition, Orin Mannon considers chivalry an outmoded concept. The idealistic youth went off to battle imagining himself a knight in shining armor, and returns a battle-toughened realist. Mannon is resentful that the young men were sent off to fight and die, while the young women remained behind waving handkerchiefs. He is particularly upset when he realizes that nothing has changed and that the young women would willingly wave Orin and his friends off to another war.

Orin attacks this convention as he castigates Hazel Niles:

> Do you remember how you waved your handkerchief, Hazel, the day I set off to become a hero? I thought

[120]O'Neill, Nine Plays, pp. 779-780.

> you would sprain your wrist! And all the mothers and wives and sisters and girls did the same! Sometime in war they ought to make the women take the men's place for a month or so. Give them a taste of murder! . . . Let them batter each other's brains out with rifle butts and rap each other's guts with bayonets. After that, maybe they'd stop waving handkerchiefs and gabbing about heroes.[121]

Some homecomers believe that their combat experience has matured them and changed negative traits to positive ones. In Aurthur's A Very Special Baby, his description of Carmen Russo reflects this opinion. Carmen, who fought in World War II and Korea, is described as having been: "Rootless and rebellious, a man without goal or ambition. The experience of war, falling in love and getting married, worked a minor miracle in Carmen, and now he is a man thoroughly aware and dedicated to his responsibilities."[122]

Mark, the Vietnam War homecomer in Patrick's Kennedy's Children, believes that his combat experience has made him more perceptive. Mark is convinced that civilian life could not have provided him the same opportunity for developing self-awareness. He has been plunged into

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[121]Ibid., p. 768.

[122]Robert Alan Aurthur, A Very Special Baby (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1957), p. 23.

insanity, marked by delusions; but as is the case with all madmen, Mark believes himself to be perfectly sane. He has recorded his combat experiences in a diary. Home, Mark reads aloud from it, "I seem to be becoming aware, to be recognizing some of the influences in my life, to understand myself."[123]

In Kessler's The Watering Place, Sonny echoes similar feelings. He views his Vietnam combat experience as a positive influence in his maturation process. He states firmly: "I grew up in the army . . . That's where I came into my own."[124]

World War I had a levelling effect on class barriers in American society. In his biography of Harry Crosby, Geoffrey Wolff writes: "As Harry and his chums never tired of repeating, there would be only two classes of men in America after the war: those who went, and those who did not."[125]

Percival Knight addresses this theme in his World War I comedy of manners, Thin Ice (1922). James Burbridge is an

[123]Kennedy, Patrick's Children, p. 10.

[124]Kessler, The Watering Place, 2-1-7, 2-1-8.

[125]Geoffrey Wolff, Black Sun/The Brief Transit and Violent Eclipse of Harry Crosby (New York: Random House, 1976), p. 50.

English nobleman come to America to seek employment. He does not wish to embarrass his peers by performing menial labor in England, so he comes to the less rigidly class-structured United States.

Burbridge's war experience has altered his perceptions of class structure; he no longer believes one class of men superior to another. However, he admits that the thought of being butler to his tailor is difficult to handle. Burbridge believes that living in America will make it easier to accept life as a menial laborer. His changed attitude is reflected in his comments to Edith Satterly, a member of the household he now buttles for: "We were all friends out there [combat] miss. Duke's sons and bargees—millicnaires and butlers."[126]

John Rogers, Franken's homecomer in Soldier's Wife, is changed in ways he has yet to realize. He returns from World War II thinking he is the same as when he left. His wife Katherine tells Rogers that he has not changed. However, she admits to her sister Florence: "His eyes hurt me. They're all going to come home with that look of having

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[126]Percival Knight, Thin Ice (unpublished manuscript in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts), 2-13.

been through things we don't know anything about."[127]

Rogers' perceptions have been altered, but as of now the changes lie deep inside his psyche. The eyes reveal to his mate what he is unconsciously feeling. John Rogers will have to come to grips with these changes soon, when they enter his conscious mind.

Plays depicting black homecomers portray men whose perceptions of their white-ruled society are permanently altered by their war experience. These homecomers reject and often challenge the values imposed upon them by white society. It is very difficult for a black homecomer to return to a subservient role after the independence and responsibility he experiences on the battlefield.

Dale Jackson, the Vietnam homecomer in Cole's Medal Of Honor Rag, returns with his values towards society permanently altered. The confusion, resentment and anger towards society is slowly and painfully revealed in psychiatric treatment. The doctor reveals to Jackson the source for his altered perceptions of society. "So, your mother was hugging you, in the White House, for doing what

[127]Franken, Soldier's Wife, p. 27.

she had trained you all your life not to do--for being a killer. And everybody was celebrating you for that."[128]

In Rideout's Goin' Home Israel DuBois is at odds with a segregated society. He leaves the segregated World War I New Orleans and joins the French Army. DuBois becomes a member of a new society, one which does not treat him as an inferior being. His once servile nature changes, as revealed when he tells a white American officer who threatens him: "Keep away, Major. I've got a gun. And your war taught me how to use it. I've killed white men."[129]

DuBois sees the First World War as a white man's war. He feels exploited by white society which needed him for a dirty job and now expects him to return to his former status. Defiance of the white officer, a member of New Orleans society, suggests that DuBois' war experience has brought him to a sense of equality.

World War II offers two plays with black homecomers returning with a new awareness. Brett Charles in D'Usseau and Gow's Deep Are the Roots and Jeb Turner in Ardrey's Jeb

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[128]Cole, Medal of Honor Rag, p. 38.

[129]Ransom Rideout, Goin' Home (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928), p. 44.

reject the code of segregation and challenge the conventions of their Southern society.

Brett Charles left for war a naive young man accepting the role thrust upon him by white society. He returns home to reject that role. Charles' perceptions have been permanently changed. He explains: "In the army I had a chance to see things—do things. The army gave me privileges I never had before."[130]

Charles, unlike Dale Jackson or Israel DuBois, is not bitter. He is idealistic, possessing a vision of a new society which he intends to help build. Charles' ideas are not radical; he only wishes to run the local black school. Thus, he may educate the children to the possibilities which life can hold for them. Charles feels an obligation to do so, because he told his black troops that they were fighting to make a better world.

Brett Charles believes that a better world is possible, and it is his responsibility to do his part in creating it. His war experience led him to this conclusion. Charles was billeted by a white family while stationed in

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[130]D'Usseau and Gow, Deep Are The Roots, p. 26.

England, and he came to love them, as they did him. The naive black officer was able to dance with white women for the first time. Charles' best army friend was white. Charles assures his worried mother: "Things are changing, Mama . . . No more humbleness . . . and we'll make it so white and black can live together."[131]

Jeb Turner returns sharing the belief that black and white societies can live together. He admonishes a younger brother who voices racial hatred: "I've seen too many hating people . . . I buried too many white boys . . . black boys beside them. I'm home. This here's a time for peace, and general forgiveness."[132]

Turner has returned to challenge a tradition of his segregated society, which relegates jobs according to skin color. He left for combat as a field hand, but learned a skill in the army. Turner learned to operate an adding machine and plans to take "a white man's job"[133] in the payroll office of a local business.

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[131]Ibid., p. 32.

[132]Ardrey, Plays of Three Decades, p. 119.

[133]Ibid., p. 111.

Deep Are The Roots and Jeb depict the change in values of black homecomers as they reassess their roles in white society. In Jeb, written a decade before the civil rights struggle was to begin in the South, a white character, Paul Devour reflects upon the permanently altered perceptions of these black homecomers. He tells a group of local whites: "There's been a war . . . They took our boys away. Now they're coming home. If you think Jeb's the only colored boy that's learning something, then you're very wrong . . . We'll never keep them in their place the old way, never again."[134]

[134]Ibid., p. 134.

4. Society's Reception of the Homecomer

In this section, I examine the ways in which the homecomer is treated by society. The reception, as a rule, varies from war to war, but exceptions are noted. There are sixteen plays in this section including drama, comedy, farce, domestic comedy, neo-expressionism, symbolism, docu-drama, and modern tragedy. Each of the American wars is included.

Since the Vietnam War produced the most homecomer plays in this section, and because of the poor treatment the homecomers receive, these plays are examined first, Sticks and Bones, Bringing It All Back Home, The Shortchanged Review, Medal of Honor Rag, 5th of July, Still Life, and The Watering Place. Three homecomers from other wars who complain of a poor reception are portrayed in Rendezvous, The Oldest Living Graduate, and Period of Adjustment. The last group depicts homecomers who receive a good receiption, Mourning Becomes Electra, Clarence, Deep Are The Roots, Jeb, Soldier's Wife, and The Famous Mrs. Fair.

George K. Pratt writes of the difficulty those at home have adjusting to the homecomer:

> The soldier home from the war will seem a curious bundle of contradictions to his family. In some areas of his life military experience will have matured him. In other areas he will appear downright childish. He will want freedom from military discipline and at the same time feel bewildered to know what to do with his new civilian liberty. He will express a wish for social activities and yet feel uneasy when these are provided. He will talk much of craving to settle down into humdrum routine and security and yet in a few weeks yearn restlessly for a change and to be more on the go. Most of all, however, the returned soldier will be 'different'--different in hundreds of little ways from the man his family knew before he went away; different in his likes and dislikes. In brief, he is apt to seem for a time almost a stranger to his puzzled family.[135]

Thus, the homecomer and his family approach each other with a mutual wariness. The homecomer's adjustment can become particularly difficult if he feels that his sacrifice is not fully appreciated. Geoffrey Wolff writes of Harry Crosby: "That his generation considered itself betrayed by the aftermath of World War I is one of the most often-told tales of American social history. F. Scott Fitzgerald's characters are forever complaining that the homeland repudiated them by refusing to stand at moral attention for them after the war."[136]

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[135]Pratt, Soldier To Civilian, p. 7.

[136]Wolff, Black Sun/The Brief Transit and Violent Eclipse of Harry Crosby, p. 88.

Thus, a victorious homecomer can feel acutely sensitive towards his reception, with or without justification. The homecomer plays from the Vietnam War, a war which the United States did not win, portray homecomers who are repudiated by a large segment of society. The war was unpopular at home and the homecomers returned to families who were confused and ashamed.

Rabe's Sticks and Bones depicts a family which rejects the Vietnam homecomer. David returns a stranger to his family which ultimately turns on him. The setting foreshadows the reception which the homecomer will receive. David returns home on a rainy evening. The black night, made even blacker by the overcast sky, creates an image of the homecomer sneaking home from this unpopular war.

Ozzie refuses to acknowledge the blind homecomer as his son, David. The Sergeant Major insists: "I have papers, pictures, prints. I know your blood and his. This is the right address."[137] The Sergeant is prepared for this refusal, therefore he must have experienced it at other times. He does not express surprise at Ozzie's attitude.

[137]Rabe, Sticks and Bones, p. 12.

Ozzie finally recognizes David and accepts him as his son. Rabe's stage directions state that the Sergeant "will sit the boy down like a parcel."[138] He then insists upon receiving a signature on his voucher now that he has delivered the homecomer. The symbolism is shocking. David's homecoming is little more than the delivery of some long-forgotten merchandise.

Ozzie and Harriet do not want to speak with David about his war experience. They want things back to normal as quickly as possible, as they fumble with David's homecoming. The homecomer does not make it easy for his parents, since he does not conform to their expected pattern of behavior. The family refuses to accept the fact that David has been through a horrible experience which has changed him.

The impatient family grows hostile as they tire of waiting for the homecomer to become his former self. The obdurate son insists that the family face reality and realize that he has changed. This dilemma leads, as John Simon explains, to a situation where: "The family finds it

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[138]Ibid., p. 12.

virtually impossible to accept a David who hardly seems to be their son; he cannot accept them at all."[139]

David's prodding, figuratively and literally (he pokes them with his cane), forces each family member to shed his apathy. The homecomer's adjustment problems are looked upon as nothing more than bad conduct, deliberately designed to bring the family grief. Younger brother Rick impatiently asks him: "How you feelin' anyway, Dave? I mean, honest to God, I'm hoping you get better."[140] Ozzie berates his son: "I'm tired of hearing you and your cry-baby voice and your cry-baby stories."[141] Harriet asks: "Who are you? I don't even know who you are."[142]

The doubts, accusations and fears mount, forcing the family to isolate and then attack the homecomer. The defeated, broken David is easily led to suicide by the family. Each insists that it is the only way for things to return to normal. The suicide is really an act of murder,

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[139]John Simon, New York (November 22, 1971), p. 76.

[140]Rabe, Sticks and Bones, p. 46.

[141]Ibid., p. 48.

[142]Ibid., p. 79.

as Rick assists the passive David in the act of slashing his wrists.

In Terrence McNally's one-act satire, Bringing It All Back Home (1970), Jimmy is killed in Vietnam. He is able to address the audience, but does not speak to the other characters. This homecomer is literally delivered to his family, as two delivery men deposit his coffin in the living room. Jimmy, as is David, is signed for as a delivery man brandishes a receipt.

The action literally revolves about the body of the homecomer in his coffin, placed squarely in the center of the living room, while the family attends to their mundane daily life. Jimmy, killed in action fighting for his country, receives only apathy or resentment from his family. His younger brother resents not being able to see his girlfriend because he must wait for the arrival of the remains. As the coffin is delivered Jimmy's mother is busy drying her hair; she will see her son's body when she has time.

McNally's target is an American society treating the Vietnam War as little more than inconvenience. A newscaster arrives at the home to interview the grief-stricken family.

She asks how their life has been affected by the death of Jimmy. The younger son replies, "It hasn't."[143]

Moody's The Shortchanged Review also reflects this apathy. Darrell Shannigan returns from Vietnam to a family concerned only with its own desires. The war is being fought in a distant land and does not touch their lives. The homecomer connects his reception to society-at-large as he wonders: "doesn't anybody care about nothing anymore?"[144]

Moody examines the split in American society during the Vietnam War, as the pro-war Shannigan meets an anti-war army deserter. The deserter is representative of the youth who refused to serve in the war, as Shannigan is representative of the youth who felt it their duty to do so. The play thus presents the three prevailing attitudes towards the war, apathy, anti-war and pro-war. Shannigan's scenes with the characters holding these attitudes reflect the different receptions experienced by the Vietnam homecomer.

Cole's Medal of Honor Rag also presents three receptions awaiting the Vietnam War homecomer. Dale Jackson

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[143]Terrence McNally, ¡Cuba Sí!/Bringing It All Back Home/Last Gasps (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1970), p. 38.

[144]Moody, The Shortchanged Review, p. 39.

explains to his psychiatrist that when he flew home from Vietnam he found nobody waiting for him at the airport. The psychiatrist then tells a story of the reception given to a homecomer by the pro and anti-war factions: "I had a patient who told me he got spat on, at the Seattle airport . . . For not winning the war . . . Then, inside the Terminal, there was a group of young people screaming insults."[145]

Wilson's 5th of July touches upon the shifting conscience of American society, as its feelings changed from pride to shame at the continuing war in Vietnam. Ken Talley is reminded of the pride his mother exhibited when he left for combat. The legless homecomer replies, "and ashamed that I came back."[146] She is ashamed that her son returned legless from an inglorious war. Wilson does not offer much detail regarding Talley's reception by his family. However, Talley's terse comment offers an insight, as he says: "the family disappointed me deeply."[147]

Mann's Still Life reflects these same attitudes to

[145]Cole, Medal of Honor Rag, p. 24.

[146]Wilson, 5th of July, p. 55.

[147]Ibid., p. 56.

the Vietnam war homecomer's return. Mark complains that nobody would talk about Vietnam when he returned: "I came home from a war, walked in the door, they don't say anything. I asked for a cup of coffee and my mother starts bitching at me about drinking coffee."[148]

Marks' father is another ashamed parent. He pushed his son into enlistment. Now, as Mark's lover Nadine explains: "When you let your son go to war for all the wrong reasons, you can't face your son."[149]

In Kessler's The Watering Place Sonny returns from Vietnam to find the streets deserted. He has problems finding the home because there is nobody from whom he can ask directions. Everyone remains inside behind locked doors and shuttered windows. Sonny tells the family: "I know it's hard to believe but out there, right beyond the city, a storm is raging."[150] In this heavily symbolic play the storm is Vietnam, a war which they are trying to ignore.

Sonny does not find apathy, but fear and hostility

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[148]Mann, Still Life, p. 14.

[149]Ibid., p. 37.

[150]Kessler, The Watering Place, 1-2-12.

instead. His dead comrade's father states: "I don't trust him. Who's to say the moment our backs are turned he won't cut our throats and rob us?"[151] Father reflects the popular notion of the Vietnam homecomer as crazed killer.

Poor receptions for the homecomer are not confined to Vietnam-era plays, but they exist in lesser numbers. Two World War One homecomers complain of their poor reception.

Oakley, MacLane's homecomer in Rendezvous, complains about society's failure to provide him with a job. This is his reason for turning to bootlegging. In Jones's The Oldest Living Graduate Colonel Kinkaid complains of similar treatment: "Treated us doughboys like dirt after we got home. Cut off all the goddammed whiskey and took away all the jobs. Whipped the Hun for 'em and they turned on us."[152]

Ralph Bates in Williams's Period of Adjustment resents the lack of support from two homecomings, World War II and Korea. His lament: "Who remembers two wars? Or even one, after some years. There's great public amnesia about a former war hero."[153]

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[151]Ibid., 1-2-18.

[152]Jones, The Oldest Living Graduate, p. 39.

[153]Williams, Period of Adjustment, p. 41.

In general, homecomers returning from the wars preceding Korea and Vietnam were welcomed by society for a job well done. In O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra Ezra Mannon returns from the Civil War to be greeted by cannon salute celebrating his victory.

In Tarkington's Clarence the eponymous First World War homecomer is ushered into the office of the president of a large corporation, even though he has no appointment. The president explains to Clarence that he is being given this special treatment because, "we want to show consideration to any soldier."[154]

Parades greet World War II homecomers Brett Charles (D'Usseau and Gow's Deep Are The Roots) and Jeb Turner (Ardrey's Jeb). In Franken's Soldier's Wife, John Rogers would have been greeted by a huge parade down Fifth Avenue if he had arrived a bit sooner.

Nancy Fair returns from World War I to a proud family in Forbes's The Famous Mrs. Fair. Their pride in their homecomer is represented by "a floral piece fashioned of laurel and red, white and blue flowers, in the centre the

[154]Tarkington, Clarence, p. 18.

words 'Welcome Home Our Heroine.'"[155]

[155]Moses, Representative American Dramas National and Local, p. 383.

5. Spouse, Fiancée, Loved One

This section examines the problems the homecomer experiences with his love relationship. The twenty-three plays include drama, comedy, domestic comedy, farce, romantic comedy, parody, modern tragedy, docudrama, verse drama, neo-expressionism, and symbolism. Wilder's fictional war is not represented.

The problems between homecomer and spouse is a major theme in two plays which begin this section, The Famous Mrs. Fair and Soldier's Wife. Adultery is also a theme in both plays and this groups them with Mourning Becomes Electra, Truckline Café, Try! Try!, Love Among the Ruins, and The Survivors. The next group portrays marriages and engagements dissolved or troubled because of the war, Sundown Beach, Time Limit!, A Hatful of Rain, Still Life, Forward the Heart, and Medal of Honor Rag.

Three plays depict the anxieties of women awaiting the return of the soldier, John Loves Mary, Jeb, and Foolish Notion. The glorified soldier returned to civilian status and his problems with his relationship are present in a group of four plays, Civilian Clothes, Snafu, Dear Ruth, and Key Largo. Three plays portray homecomers returning with a

wife or lover, John Loves Mary, Sticks and Bones, and The Vietnamization of New Jersey. The Watering Place offers a unique treatment of the theme.

War forces men to separate from the women they love. The length of separation and the war experience bring about changes in each partner. Pratt writes of this problem: "Perhaps the greatest difficulty in relationships that confront the returned serviceman and his wife is the subtlest of all. This arises when one of the two grows more rapidly in his emotional development during the husband's absence than the other."[156]

Several homecomer plays utilize this theme; but two plays use it as a major theme, Forbes's The Famous Mrs. Fair and Franken's Soldier's Wife. These two comedies from both world wars explore problems arising from the emotional developmental gap, and the difficulty each husband finds adjusting to his wife's sudden fame.

In Forbes's play Nancy Fair returns from World War I front line duty where she commanded an ambulance corps. Fair returns relieved to be home and anxious to reunite with

[156]Pratt, Soldier to Civilian, p. 181.

her husband and children. However, as Alexander Woolcott points out, Fair faces a dilemma: "She has come home yearning for a sight of her family, expecting to buy a lot of fluffy, unregulation gowns, see all her old friends, and sort of snuggle back into the old existence. But she finds it no longer appeals to her."[157]

Fair is soon presented with a way out of her dilemma. She received the Croix de Guerre for heroic action and distinguished service in combat. Fair begins to attract attention in the press. Soon, she is in great demand on the lecture circuit. Thus Fair finds the way out of her dilemma by lecturing. Her marriage, facing problems is denied the time needed to begin the adjustment.

Jeffrey Fair is at first proud of his wife. However, he soon becomes jealous of the attention she is receiving in the press and from her adoring public. Jeffrey Fair's dissatisfaction becomes intensified as his wife is away for longer and longer periods of time. He resents "being merely the husband of Major Fair."[158]

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[157]Alexander Woolcott, The New York Times, December 23, 1919, no page given.

[158]Moses, Representative American Dramas National and Local, p. 397.

Jeffrey Fair believes that woman's place is in the home. The latest separation proves too much and he demands that Nancy give up the lecture tour. However, her war experience has changed Major Fair's feelings about her role in society. She has grown emotionally and intellectually and tells her unenlightened husband: "Well, this war has settled one thing definitly. A woman's work counts for just as much as a man's."[159]

In addition, Nancy Fair learns that her husband was adulterous while she was overseas. The promising dramatic conflict from these two situations is resolved weakly by use of a subplot involving the daughter and a cad. Nancy Fair has grown from her war experience, while her husband has remained at home and unchanging in his thinking.

In Soldier's Wife John Rogers returns after two years in combat during World War II. His arrival is unexpected, which makes the adjustment for him and his wife more difficult. Katherine Rogers has no time to prepare for her husband's arrival. She explains the awkwardness of the situation to her sister: "He came in here as if he didn't

[159]Ibid., p. 404.

belong, as if he weren't sure. Florence, we were tongue-tied, we couldn't seem to say anything."[160]

John Rogers learns that Katherine has grown in his absence. The once helpless wife who couldn't change a light bulb is now repairing lamps. Rogers feels threatened somewhat by his wife's self-sufficiency. Arthur Pollock writes of the problems Soldier's Wife explores: "What is happening and will happen to marriages when young husbands come home from fighting the war? And, particularly, how do and will things work out when the husbands finds [sic] that the wife has learned to take care of herself."[161]

Rogers is somewhat in the mold of Jeffrey Fair and views his role as that of the protective male. His traditional role is threatened by the additional news that Katherine withheld the news of the death of John's brother-in-law. She explains to her confused husband that she did not wish to burden him with the news while he was in combat. Katherine Rogers is no longer a helpless woman.

This discovery frightens John Rogers. He reveals his

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[160]Franken, Soldier's Wife, p. 27.

[161]Arthur Pollock, Brooklyn Eagle, October 5, 1944, no page given.

fears to Katherine: "It scares the bejesus out a man. We're coming home to women who've gone through their own kind of hell and who can take it the same as we have. Suppose I don't go back to fight? What do you need me for? The war's made a man of you."[162]

As in Forbes's play, a further conflict arises when Katherine Rogers acquires sudden fame. The letters she wrote to her husband overseas have been published as a book. The war is still on, so the book becomes an instant success. Katherine Rogers' fame and wealth soon change John Rogers' pride to resentment.

The new career makes demands on Katherine's time and she and John are separated frequently. The marital strains are increased by a hint of adultery. Their conflicts are resolved in this comedy by Katherine's sudden pregnancy.

Several homecomer plays use the theme of adultery. Two of them, O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra and Anderson's Truckline Café, depict war-related adulteries leading to tragic resolutions.

Homecoming, the first play of O'Neill's trilogy, pre-

[162]Franken, Soldier's Wife, p. 45.

sents Christine Mannon involved in an affair which began while her husband was at war. Ezra Mannon, unaware of his wife's infidelity, returns from the Civil War determined to revitalize the marriage. He admits to his wife that he spent long periods of time, while at war, thinking about his marriage. Ezra Mannon is determined to change the emotionally barren pre-war marriage into a healthy, loving one.

Christine Mannon does not share her husband's desire. Ezra Mannon tells her; "I had hoped my homecoming would mark a new beginning-new love between us."[163] The adulterous wife mocks her husband and hurls the news of her adultery in his face. Ezra Mannon's war-weakened heart cannot stand the shock and he suffers a seizure. Christine gives him a poisoned pill instead of his heart medicine and Ezra dies.

In Truckline Café Sage Macrae returns from World War II suspecting his wife's infidelity. While in combat he met a soldier who told him of an affair he had with a woman named Tory, Macrae's wife's name, and described in great dfetail the cabin which they shared. Macrae is obsessed with the idea of his wife's unfaithfulness, and he brings

[163]O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 746.

her to the same cabin to shock her into telling the truth.

The scene is not portrayed, but narrated by Macrae. Tory confesses her infidelity and Sage shoots her with his army pistol and carries her body into the sea. The contrite homecomer describes his deed: "I looked at her—and saw she was guilty. Then I took out the pistol and shot her. Ten times. Five—and then five... But I wish I hadn't. I wish she were here."[164]

Adultery is the main theme of Frank O'Hara's Try! Try! (1953). This one-act, non-realistic Korean War homecomer play is written, as Herbert Machiz explains in his introduction, in the poetic style of the beat generation. The names of the three characters suggest the symbolic nature of the play.

Jack is a common nickname for John, which suggests the two male characters are flip sides of the same man. Jack the homecomer represents the warrior nature of man and John, who stayed at home, represents the pacifist nature of man. Violet is a beautiful wild flower, which can be picked by anyone. Thus, the wife is available to anyone.

Jack returns unexpectedly and discovers Violet and

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[164]Maxwell Anderson, Truckline Café (unpublished manuscript #418439B in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 3-20.

John together. The husband home from an unpopular war receives a cool welcome from Violet. The two lovers, representatives of society, display no concern for Jack's sacrifice. They are more concerned with their own immediate desires.

John does not react violently, as does the earlier homecomer Sage Macrae. He simply dismisses the infidelity and leaves the home. Jack realizes, as Machiz points out: "There is really no place for him among the immediate egoists who now confront him. Too late to talk of morality, of patriotism, or what-did-you-do-in-the-last-war Daddy."[165]

Try! Try! touches upon the problem of growth facing the separated soldier and his wife. Jack and Violet have developed in ways which the homecomer doesn't realize. Jack returns expecting everything to be the same. However, Violet quickly dispatches this notion as she asks: "Do you think everything can stay the same/like a photograph?"[166]

Elmer Rice does not use the homecomer as a major theme in his play Love Among the Ruins (1950). However, his

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[165]Frank O'Hara, Try! Try! in Artists' Theatre/Four Plays, Herbert Machiz, ed., (New York: Grove Press, 1960), pp. 9, 10.

[166]Ibid., p. 41.

homecomer Neil Davis has two marriages end because of his war experience. The first is dissolved during World War II because of his adultery. He marries the woman he was adulterous with, but the strains of his homecoming end this marriage as well.

The action begins with the wandering homecomer seeking his first wife, Suzanne. Davis wants her back, though she has remarried. Unsuccessful, the homecomer attempts to convince his former wife that it was the experience of war which caused his unfaithfulness. Davis explains to Suzanne: "I wish I could make you see it for what it was—just a thing that happened to me, as it happened to thousands of others under the strain of war."[167]

An engagement is broken in Viertel and Shaw's The Survivors because of infidelity during war time. Steve Decker returns from his Confederate imprisonment anxious to see his fiancée. The guilt-ridden Lucy returns her ring, but does not confess her indiscretion. She explains to the confused homecomer that she will not "foreclose on a four year old mortgage."[168]

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[167]Elmer Rice, Love Among The Ruins (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1963), p. 48.

[168]Viertel and Shaw, The Survivors, 1-21.

The metaphor suggests ownership. Lucy feels that she, the merchandise, is damaged. It would not be honorable for her to present herself as the same woman Steve Decker left behind. In addition, the two are awkward and unsure with one another. Lucy's gesture suggests a possibility for a new beginning, but it must come from Decker.

Roy, the Vietnam homecomer in McLure's Lone Star, learns that his wife was unfaithful while he was in combat. There are overtones of incest because his brother, Ray, was the lover. It was a brief affair which ended before Roy's homecoming. The homecomer is not too distraught by the news because he and his wife have not had sex together since his return.

Their relationship has disintegrated since Roy spends his time drinking in bars without his wife. The marriage was healthy before Roy left for combat. He tells his brother "see, me and Elizabeth we were real close once."[169]

In Anderson's Truckline Café the marriage of Anne and Mort Carruth is dissolved because of war. They joined the English armed forces when World War II began. Anne,

[169]McLure, Lone Star, p. 31.

believing her husband killed in action, becomes a drunk and is discharged. She begins living with another man, learns her husband is alive, and flees guilt-ridden to California.

The action begins with Mort Carruth searching for Anne. He locates her and wants to resume the war-torn marriage. Anne hesitates because she feels her experiences have altered her too drastically for the marriage to work. Anne confesses her doubts to a mutual friend: "Nothing could possibly come out of it... It's been five years since he went. The whole world's different,, inside and out. And I'm different. I'm not the same person."[170]

Anne Carruth expresses feelings echoed by many homecomers. However, her husband, who also experiences this feeling accepts it and wishes to start anew. Mort tells Anne: "You want things back the way they were... but the whole world's changed, for everybody, and nobody's going to get it back the way it was."[171]

Set in a military hospital, Breuer's Sundown Beach, as Thomas Dash explains: "Describes the snarled love lives

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[170]Anderson, Truckline Café, 2-16.

[171]Ibid., 3-24, 3-25.

of these mentally disabled fighters and the scars and traumas that war pressures have opened up to make most of them misfits not only for further Civilian duty but even for the normal affections of family life."[172]

One of the patients, George, is visited by his wife, Muriel. He is recuperating from psychological problems sustained during World War II. The war has separated the couple for several years. George senses the change in his wife. Muriel is indifferent and frequently complains about his behavior.

George notices that Muriel is not wearing the special bracelet which he had made from his Distinguished Flying Cross. Muriel has not forgotten the bracelet, the omission is deliberate. She reveals to the homecomer that she has filed for divorce. Muriel cannot bear the changes in her husband brought on by the war. She will not share his suffering. Muriel tells George: "That night I found you on the bathroom floor, and when you were so sick—wiping the slobber from your lips . . . all the horrible things you say in your sleep... and the way you hold me—as if you were

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[172]Thomas R. Dash, New York Women's Wear Daily, September 8, 1948.

pressing all the horrors into me so I would share them."[173]

In two Korean War homecomer plays, Denker and Berkey's Time Limit! and Gazzo's A Hatful of Rain, wives attempt to communicate with their husbands suffering the effects of imprisonment. In the former, Major Harry Cargil returns labeled a traitor for aiding the enemy. He confides in no one, not even his wife.

The Cargills have always had a loving, open marriage in which they shared their innermost thoughts. Cargill returned from World War II and told his wife of his war experiences. However, the Korean War experience changes him. Mary Cargill explains: "We used to share things . . . But something happened to him in that prison camp. Now I don't think he can share anything."[174] The sexual relationship of this couple is affected by war also, as Mary reveals: "He's been home five months now . . . and in all that time we have never even been to bed together."[175]

In A Hatful of Rain Johnny Pope is withdrawn from his

[173]Breuer, Sundown Beach, 2-7.

[174]Denker and Berkey, Time Limit!, p. 41.

[175]Ibid., pp. 43, 44.

wife and leads a secret life. Pope also hides the facts of his war experience from his wife, Celia. Because of his imprisonment, Pope was hospitalized and became addicted to heroin. His wife is unaware of his problem. The Popes have been married for four years, but together only one because of the war and his recovery.

The marriage reaches a crisis when the pregnant Celia suspects her secretive husband of being unfaithful. His addiction takes away his sex drive, so that they have had no sex for months. The crisis is resolved when Celia learns her homecomer husband's horrible secret.

Mann's Still Life depicts a marriage deeply affected by the post-traumatic stress disorder prevalent among Vietnam War homecomers. Mark meets, and marries, Cheryl after his homecoming. The effects of his combat experience are still present, and begin to destroy his marriage. Mark quite simply, and quite matter-of-factly, says: "I see the war now through my wife. . . The war busted me up, I busted up my wife."[176]

The marriage is virtually ended as the play opens.

[176]Mann, Still Life, p. 20.

Mark has a mistress and spends a great deal of time with her. He has returned from the war full of violent rages. Mark beats Cheryl and forces her into sadomasochistic practices. Cheryl says she won't divorce Mark, but does hint at the possibility.

Two homecomers return to waiting fiancées, but break off their engagements. The first, David Gibbs, returns from World War II in Reines's Forward the Heart. He is blind and will not allow his fiancée to visit him. Gibbs maintains that the blindness is the reason for breaking his engagement.

However, the blindness serves as an excuse, rather than reason. The homecomer realizes that he has changed considerably and has no desire to marry the girl. His war experience has made them incompatible. Gibbs explains to his worried mother: "I've grown up. It's five years, Mother."[177]

Dale Jackson in Cole's Medal of Honor Rag returns from Vietnam to a loving, receptive fiancée. However, he is unable to respond to her love. His fiancée is patient, but

[177]Reines, Forward the Heart, 1-1-10.

Jackson is unable to resume sexual relations with her.

War proves too much for Dale Jackson. Even though he loves Bea, he is unable to continue the relationship. Jackson confesses to the doctor; "I sometimes began to suspect that my girl, Bea, might just prefer a man what can see and hear and think and feel things."[178]

There are three plays which depict the difficulties experienced by the woman awaiting the return of her homecomer. Krasna's John Loves Mary offers a comic approach to the situation. The lovers have been separated for three years by World War II. Mary learns of John's homecoming and is concerned about the effects of the long separation on their engagement. She is afraid that "three years apart is awful long for people in love."[179]

In this romantic comedy Mary's doubts and fears are soon conquered. The very real problem of a long separation by war is glossed over. Arthur Pollock explains: "The soldier comes home from the war, still ardently in love with the girl he left behind him three years ago. And she as

[178]Cole, Medal of Honor Rag, p. 33.

[179]Krasna, John Loves Mary, p. 7.

ardently is waiting for him."[180]

Ardrey's Jeb presents another fiancée concerned over the arrival of her long-absent homecomer. Libby George wonders about her feelings for Jeb Turner, who has been in World War II combat for four years. She no longer carries a strong image of her fiancée, as she confesses to Jeb's mother; "I don't hardly know what he looks like."[181] Libby feels that this means that she no longer loves Jeb.

The thought that Jeb will return too sophisticated for Libby worries her as well. The lovers grew together in the rural South, but Jeb has now seen a large part of the world. He has fought in a war, experienced, and observed things which Libby can't even begin to imagine. These very real concerns are dealt with superficially in the play.

Philip Barry's Foolish Notion (1945) is a whimsical, romantic comedy depicting the fears of a wife at the impending arrival of her husband. Jim Hapgood deserted his wife and daughter just before World War II began. At the outbreak of war he joined a Scottish regiment and was

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[180]Arthur Pollock, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, February 5, 1945, no page given.

[181]Ardrey, Plays of Three Decades, p. 116.

reported missing-in-action. The action begins six years after his reported death, and Hapgood is returning to a wife planning to remarry.

The play affords a light view of a serious problem. Jim Hapgood's homecoming is imagined in a series of scenes by his wife, his daughter, his former mistress, and the wife's fiancé. The complications inherent in this situation are easily resolved. When Hapgood finally arrives he states that he no longer loves his wife and she is free to remarry.

Four homecomer plays explore what happens when the homecomer has been glorified as a heroic figure. A review of Thompson Buchanan's Civilian Clothes (1919) examines this theme: "The soldier deified in the eyes of a woman by heroic deeds in battle, whom the days of peace must rob of his mantle of glory and reveal to her as only a mortal afflicted with the disillusioning human characteristics that no mortal can escape--here is a subject which should offer the greatest possibilities either for serious drama or farce."[182]

[182]Dramatic Scrapbook Collection Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts. (Author, date, publication not given).

In Buchanan's domestic comedy Sam McGinnis, an army captain, and Florence Lanham, a Red Cross nurse, meet and marry in World War I France. Lanham must return to the States because of the marriage. While at home, she receives news that McGinnis has been killed in action. The dashing Captain is then elevated to the role of fallen warrior.

Florence's romantic image of Sam is quickly destroyed when he shows up alive and in civilian clothing. She is horrified as the homecomer stands before his wife attired in a loud, ill-fitting, ready-made suit topped by a bad hair-cut. The class-conscious Florence, much to her chagrin, also learns that she has married a raucous, vulgar Irishman (a low comic figure in plays of this period).

Florence Lanham explains her dilemma to the confused Sam McGinnis: "You were glorious then in your Captain's uniform, with your Croix de Guerre and double citation and everybody crazy about you and the things you had done—you were glorious—then."[183] However, once again love soon conquers all.

Ronald Stevens, Solomon and Buchman's underage homecomer in Snafu, returns from World War II a hero in the

[183]Thompson Buchanan, Civilian Clothes (unpublished manuscript #97191B in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 1-41.

adoring eyes of his teenage girlfriend. His glorification is possible because Stevens returns in full combat uniform. Ronald's girlfriend sees him as a sophisticated, older man because of his war experience.

Ronald strives valiantly to live up to the role now thrust upon him, as he suggests they progress to a more adult relationship. Ronald's girlfriend is quite willing to do so. However, in this farce neither one has the slightest idea what such a relationship entails.

The other two plays present the glorifiction of the homecomer as established through letters. The first is another World War II homecomer comedy by Norman Krasna, Dear Ruth (1944). This Broadway success ran for 683 performances.

A teenager, Miriam Wilkins, writes letters to a young officer overseas. She fills the letters with lines from romantic poems. Miriam leads the young man to believe that he is receiving letters from an older woman, her older sister Ruth.

The play's action begins as the love-smitten Lieutenant Seawright is granted leave to return home and marry Ruth. The patriotic woman does not reveal the decep-

tion, as she allows the homecomer to court her. Ruth is engaged to a civilian, who is understandably upset. She explains to Albert that she mustn't damage the officer's morale, causing him to complain: "Damn it, what about my morale! Aren't civilians human too?"[184] To his dismay Albert learns that the soldier outranks the civilian in wartime.

Anderson's Key Largo offers a more serious look at a similar situation. Victor d'Alcala writes to his sister Alegre glorifying his Spanish Civil War comrade King McCloud. She also receives a picture of the soldier. Alegre thus falls in love with the words and the picture of the glorified hero.

McCloud returns in uniform, which adds to the romantic image. The homecomer feels unworthy of the adoration, but Alegre is certain that she loves him. The promise which their relationship begins to show is ended by McCloud's death.

There are three homecomer plays portraying homecomers who return with a wife or lover. The first, Krasna's John Loves Mary, does so in a subplot. John's best friend Fred

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[184]Norman Krasna, Dear Ruth (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1945) p. 50.

Taylor became engaged to an English girl, but they were separated and he was forced to return without her.

John then marries the girl, so that she may enter the United States. He will then divorce her and she and Fred can then marry. Complications, in a comedy of course, arise, but are smoothed out. John Loves Mary is a light look at the very real problem of homecomers returning with war brides.

Rabe's Sticks and Bones presents the other side of this theme. David, the blind homecomer, is joined by the spirit of his Vietnamese lover, Zung. She is an invisible presence silently drifting through (figuratively and literally) the family home. David soon becomes aware of her presence. He had left her in Vietnam fearful of bringing her to his bigoted family. It is only when David acknowledges his cowardly act that he is able to communicate with Zung. The lovers are reunited and live in David's room when he admits: "I discarded you. Forgive me."[185]

Zung is also the spirit of the many Vietnamese civilians murdered in acts of atrocity. David may possibly have

[185]Rabe, Sticks and Bones, p.49.

been involved in some of these murders. He implies as much when he tells his mother: "Because I talk of certain things. . . , don't think I did them. Murderers don't even know that murder happens."[186]

The spirit of Zung, representing the spirit of Vietnam, is exorcised by Ozzie, who strangles her when she speaks for the first time in the play. She has broken the code and brought the reality of the war into the family home. The murdered spirit is then hidden, out of sight and therefore out of mind; just as the civilian murders are erased from the consciousness of the American public.

In Durang's satire of the play, The Vietnamization of New Jersey, David returns with a live Vietnamese wife, Liat. She is really an American, Maureen O'Hara from Schenectady. She was stranded in Vietnam and the blind, and unaware, David offered a quick way home.

Durang's play, written after American withdrawal from Vietnam, offers Liat-Maureen as a symbol of American personnel in Vietnam during the withdrawal. They employed all possible means to flee to safety during the fall of Saigon

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[186]Ibid., p. 38.

to Communist troops. Liat-Maureen merely deceives a blind soldier in order to get to safety.

Kessler's The Watering Place gives a unique twist to the theme of the homecomer and his loved one. Sonny returns from Vietnam to court a woman he hasn't even met. He promised his dying buddy that he would take his place as husband.

Sonny knows Janet in a figurative sense. He and Ronald would indulge in sexual fantasies while imprisoned in North Vietnam. Ronald described the most intimate sexual details of Janet to Sonny. Thus, the homecomer returns as surrogate husband.

Sonny's adjustment to Janet is difficult, because while he may think he knows her, they are strangers. The courtship proceeds slowly, hindered by Janet's pregnancy. Sonny confronts her with the notion of infidelity because Ronald has been away too long. Janet, however, is faking pregnancy in order to placate Ronald's emotionally distraught mother.

Finally, Janet rips the pillow, representing her pregnancy, from beneath her dress and stands willing. Sonny has difficulty responding. The homecomer tells Janet:

"Do you know how long it's been since I've been alone with a girl. I mean a woman. I don't know how to behave."[187] Sonny has been indulging in fantasies and now is faced with reality.

[187]Kessler, The Watering Place, 1-3-34.

6. Homecomer as Ghost/Spirit

The plays in this section depict a ghost or spirit homecomer. There are six plays, drama, satire, fantasy, verse drama, docudrama, and modern tragedy. The Korean War is not represented. The first two plays depict a spirit and a ghost homecomer, and also contrast the differences in public support between World War II and the Vietnam War, The Wind Is Ninety and Bringing It All Back Home. The remaining plays use ghost metaphor, Key Largo, Mourning Becomes Electra, Rendezvous, and Still Life.

Legends and folk tales dating from pre-literate cultures speak of the wandering dead. The dead wanderers are ghosts or spirits of those who died suddenly, usually violently, while away from their tribe or homeland. They are condemned to roam the earth until they have righted a wrong they have committed or fulfilled an unrealized goal. Examples of these ghosts or spirits are found in American homecomer plays.

Ralph Nelson's The Wind Is Ninety (1945) employs the spirit homecomer as main theme. In this fantasy Captain Don Ritchie is killed in action during World War II. However, before ascending to heaven, Ritchie is brought to his family

by a spirit guide, so that he may instill an image of him in the memories of his family. The homecomer is an invisible, but felt, presence in the home, much like Zung in Sticks and Bones.

Ritchie is slain far from home and cannot go to his final resting before accomplishing his goal. Nelson has taken the ancient legend and applied it to the twentieth century as Arthur Pollock explains: "In his play, 'The Wind Is Ninety', Capt. Ralph Nelson tries to say in terms of compassion that the men who have lost their lives in this war and the other one before are not dead so long as they live on in the minds of those they left behind and affect the lives of their parents, their wives and their children."[188]

Capt. Ritchie reaches his family before the news of his death reaches them. This is important because it means that he will not have to try to reach them through a cloud of grief, which would impair their receptiveness. Nelson utilizes a common dramatic convention as he presents Ritchie as a character visible and audible to the audience, who speaks to a family unaware of the homecomer's presence. He

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[188]Arthur Pollock, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, June 22, 1945, no page given.

urgently attempts to reach each family member before they hear of his death and is ultimately successful. One of the first is Ritchie's daughter who consoles her worried younger brother: "I was thinking . . . about Daddy . . . It was like he was talking to me."[189]

Since Capt. Ritchie accomplishes his goal, his spirit can go to its final resting place. His spirit guide is not so fortunate. This character, Soldier, is the spirit of the Unknown Soldier from World War I. Soldier is condemned to serve as a spirit guide for those killed in combat. He cannot rest because his memory does not live on with his loved ones. Soldier fathered a son, but was killed in action before the child was born.

Before Ritchie is successful in his attempt, his determination falters. However, Soldier, well aware of the consequences of failure, urges him on. Soldier tells the despairing Ritchie: "Don, why do you suppose I brought you here? Why do you suppose all of them come back? To have what you never had. Don't have that eternal loneliness, Don. There's your family. Keep yourself alive in them."[190]

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[189]Ralph Nelson, The Wind is Ninety (unpublished manuscript #330303B in The Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts), 2-21.

[190]Ibid., 3-29.

McNally's satiric treatment of this theme in Bringing It All Back Home stands in sharp contrast to Nelson's patriotic depiction. Jimmy is a corpse returned from Vietnam in a coffin and functions dramatically in the same way as Ritchie. However, unlike his World War II counterpart, he cannot reach his uncaring family. Therefore, Jimmy breaks the fourth wall and takes the audience into his confidence. Jimmy questions his sacrifice in this unpopular war as he tells them "the main reason I wish I was alive is so I could figure out why I was dead."[191]

This spirit homecomer has little hope of keeping alive his memory in the hearts and minds of a family whose members can't even agree on his hair and eye colors. The family also argue about the nature of Jimmy's personality. Jimmy then rises from his coffin to inform the audience that the family carries a distorted image of him. McNally here is satirizing the divisiveness in America concerning the reasons and conduct of the Vietnam War.

Nelson's spirit homecomer is a noble sacrifice in a war which received overwhelming public support. McNally's

[191]McNally, Cuba Si!/Bringing It All Back Home/Last Gasps, p.42.

spirit homecomer is an ignoble sacrifice to a war which divided the public. McNally is savage in his attack upon the largely selfish American populace. He does so through the words of Jimmy's sister who explains the reasons for her brother's sacrifice: "So we could go to school and football games and dances in the gym just like he did. So we could have color TV and our own rooms and live in a nice house."[192]

King McCloud, Anderson's homecomer in Key Largo, returns alive but bearing a ghostly aura. Commenting on this aspect of the play, Brooks Atkinson writes that; "This is the story of a young idealist who threw his honor away and saved his life in the spanish Civil War and walks the earth like a dead man."[193]

The fact that McCloud is thought to have been killed in combat serves to add to his ghostliness. He seems to appear suddenly out of nowhere at the home of a dead comrade. McCloud converses with the sister, Allegre, of the dead soldier, and then just as suddenly disappears. The startled woman is firmly convinced that she has indeed seen

[192]Ibid., p. 39.

[193]Brooks Atkinson, The New York Times, November 28, 1939, no page given.

a ghost.

Anderson uses ghost imagery throughout, as he depicts the other characters reacting to McCloud with superstitious fear. The homecomer does nothing to dispel their fears as he speaks frequently of ghosts and uses ghost imagery when referring to himself. McCloud explains to Allegre that he roams the country haunted by the memory of his dead comrades: "Till I look at a bed with horror, as a place/where a man can't sleep, and look at a road with horror/as something I must walk along forever/followed by the dead."[194]

McCloud has condemned himself to roaming the earth as a ghost homecomer because he feels responsible for the deaths of his comrades. He speaks of walking along "forever," implying that he is immortal. McCloud continues identifying himself as one of the dead. He is threatened with death by the gangster Murillo who warns McCloud: "In my game/you learn that there are just two kinds of men/those who are not afraid to die, and those/who are."[195] To which

[194]Anderson, Eleven Verse Plays, p. 59.

[195]Ibid., p. 71.

the homecomer replies: "But there are more than two kinds of men/and I belong to a kind you haven't met/and wouldn't know about."[196] McCloud is being deliberately vague here in suggesting that he may not be mortal.

The title of the last play in O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra trilogy, The Haunted, indicates the use of ghost imagery for the Civil War homecomer, Orin Mannon. the play begins with a chorus of village men arguing over the existence of ghosts in the empty Mannon home. The ghosts are those of the murdered homecomer Ezra Mannon and his wife Christine, who commited suicide.

Orin and Lavinia Mannon return to the empty, lifeless house. Orin continues to be haunted by the memory of his parents. He now resembles his dead father, as he moves with the stiff, military posture of Ezra Mannon. O'Neill is suggesting that the spirit of the dead man now inhabits the body of his son.

Orin Mannon, as does King McCloud, becomes a walking dead man. He, too, employs ghost imagery in speaking of himself. Orin tells Lavinia: "The Orin you loved was killed

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[196]Ibid., p. 72.

in the war. Remember only that dead hero and not his rotting ghost."[197] Orin completes his self-condemnation by putting a pistol to his head.

MacLane's Rendezvous utilizes a ghost imagery for the homecomer also. Vincent, another homecomer thought to have been killed in action, returns unexpectedly to visit his fellow First World War homecomers. He remains unseen as a gang member, Stull, backs into the room where the others are. The frightened gangster stammers: "There's a ---. There's a ---. Christ, I don't mind dead men, but he ---. There's a Goddam ghost out there.."[198] In addition, Oakley, the protagonist, suffered heart damage in the war and considers himself a walking dead man.

Mann employs photographs as ghost metaphors in Still Life. Mark took photographs of his army buddies during combat in Vietnam. He shows slides of these photographs. The men viewed are all dead, killed in combat.

Many cultures believe that a photograph captures a man's soul. Mark has thus captured the souls of these men

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[197]O'Neill, Nine Plays, p. 852.

[198]MacLane, Rendezvous, 1-20.

in his photographs. They are dead; he has trapped their souls forever in his slides. The title, Still Life which employs the painting term to refer to Mark's photographs of inanimate objects, can also mean that the photographs still have life. Mark has thus brought back several ghost homecomers from Vietnam.

7. Homecomers From More Than One War

This section consists of plays with homecomers who have returned from more than one war. There are nine plays, drama, comedy, domestic comedy, allegory, symbolism, and modern tragedy. The Spanish Civil War and the Vietnam War are not represented.

Time Limit! is first because it contains a quote defining the homecomer in this section. Two Civil War plays follow to show that this phenomenon is not confined to the twentieth century, Mourning Becomes Electra and The Survivors. Two plays, The Oldest Living Graduate and The Watering Place, are linked because they are unique representations of this phenomenon.

The Korean War produced the most plays in this section, P.S. 193, Period of Adjustment, and A Very Special Baby. The Skin of Our Teeth ends this section, and the analysis, because the play comments upon the fact that men have been returning from multiple wars since time began.

The twentieth century is truly a century of war. This is reflected in American homecomer plays, as several contain homecomers who have returned from more than one war. From the Civil War to the Korean War one finds homecomers

who have to adjust at least twice to civilian life. No play actually depicts this double adjustment, but several refer to it.

Major Harry Cargill in Denker and Berkey's Time Limit! served in World War II and Korea. Cargill is not portrayed returning from both wars, and he does not comment on this experience. It is Mary Cargill, while attempting to reveal more of her secretive husband, who points out the terrible sacrifice her husband has made. She reads from a letter Cargill sent her while in Korea:

> If I die here in Korea and there is an afterplace like Heaven or Hell and they ask me what I was here on earth, I will have to say, a Warrior of the Twentieth Century, because of the last eleven years, I have spent seven and a half in the fighting of wars. I am a Bachelor of Arts — But a Master of War.[199]

The twentieth century is by no means unique in its involvement with war as two Civil War homecomer plays show. The victorious Union general Ezra Mannon, O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra, also served as a junior officer in the war against Mexico almost twenty years earlier. Vincent Keyes

[199]Denker and Berkey, Time Limit!, p. 42.

in Viertel and Shaw's The Survivors returned from both of these wars, also. Keyes' comments on his war service reflect the war-fatigue expressed by Cargill. He explains: "I fought against the Mexicans. I fought against the Rebels. God, the times I've left home with a rifle on my back."[200]

Colonel Kinkaid, Jones's homecomer in The Oldest Living Graduate, stands alone among these homecomers. He has returned from three wars, all served under one officer John J. Pershing. Kinkaid's experience offers an historical footnote to the early years of this century in America. This homecomer has returned from a war in the Phillipines, another war with Mexico, and World WarI.

In Kessler's The Watering Place Father reveals that he was a homecomer from both World Wars. This is unusual because the wars were separated by twenty-three years. Father explains how he was able to accomplish this feat: "I was hardly out of knickers. I lied about my age."[201]

It is not unusual to find a homecomer from both World War II and Korea, since they are a mere five years apart.

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[200]Viertel and Shaw, The Survivors, 3-22.

[201]Kessler, The Watering Place, 1-2-21.

The playwright, David Rayfiel, fought in both wars. His homecomer Mario Saccone in P.S. 193, fought in World War II and remained in the army. Thus, he never had to adjust twice to civilian life. However, this makes his adjustment after Korea more difficult. Saccone returns after ten years of military life to adjust to an America quite unfamiliar to him.

Two of the plays present a pair of homecomers who have had to adjust twice to a homecoming. In William's Period of Adjustment Ralph Bates and George Haverstick were fighter pilots in World War II and Korea. The play depicts the adjustment from the Korean War homecoming. Ralph Bates explains that the homecoming is more difficult because of double war duty: "We both of us died in two wars, repeatedly died in two wars and were buried in suburbs."[202]

Carmen Russo and Joey Casale, Aurthur's A Very Special Baby, were enlisted men in the Second World War and the Korean War. Casale, the eponymous protogonist, resents his current status. His family regards him as little more than a fool, who must be looked after. Casale has endured

[202]Williams, Period of Adjustment, p. 62.

this treatment since his last homecoming and finally explodes at his domineering father: "Quit it!! I'm thirty-four years old, I'm getting a bald head and I was in two wars. I'm no baby."[203]

The proliferation of war is a theme in Wilder's The Skin of Our Teeth. Antrobus, as Wilder's stage directions indicate, is "a veteran of foreign wars."[204] During the play another war is declared. Antrobus once again leaves for war and returns from war.

The play is not specifically set in the twentieth century, as it contains references and images from several time periods. However, Wilder certainly meant his World War II audience to make the connections to the wars of this century. Antrobus is both the Everyman involved in war since time began, and a man of the twentieth century continually embroiled in war.

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[203]Aurthur, A Very Special Baby, p. 69.

[204]Wilder, The Skin of Our Teeth, p. 9.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

1. Adjustment to Society

This section analyzes the most common problem encountered by the homecomer. Forty-one of the fifty-five plays in this study address this theme, and a few depict more than one aspect of this problem. The total number of examples in this section is fifty-two.

Each war in this study is represented. Several genres are included, drama, comedy, domestic and romantic comedy, comedy of manners, farce, parody, docudrama, neo-expressionism, modern tragedy, allegory, and verse drama. There are plays grouped together to explore a particular aspect of the theme, which include several genres. There are serious and comic portrayals, as well as plays touching lightly upon the theme of adjustment.

The First World War and the Vietnam War each account

for eleven plays in this section. The Second World War accounts for ten plays and the Korean War five plays. The two plays from the Civil War and the single plays from the Spanish Civil War and fictional war are present.

Comparing and contrasting homecomer plays from different wars is revealing. Since the First World War and the Vietnam War produced an equal number of plays found in this section, I will begin with them. There are six homecomer comedies from World War I and three from the Vietnam War. Thus, in this section, the First World War produced twice as many homecomer comedies as did the War in Vietnam.

The numbers indicate, but do not tell, the entire story. The nature and intent of the comedies provides the contrasts. From the first war, Crothers's "Everyday," Hughes's Hell-Bent Fer Heaven, Forbes's The Famous Mrs. Fair, and Tarkington's Clarence are entertainments depicting homecomers who have no difficulty adjusting. Carr's The Wooden Soldier and Jones's The Oldest Living Graduate (produced in the Vietnam era) portray homecomers with serious problems, but they are comic figures. Kinkaid, Jones's homecomer, expresses bitterness, but its effect is diluted by his cantankerousness.

Bitterness pervades the three Vietnam War homecomer comedies. In McLure's Lone Star, the homecomer's life and marriage are disintegrating. His Pvt. Wars is a study in futility. The homecomer is an object of scorn in Durang's parody, The Vietnamization of New Jersey.

The comedies from World War II, Krasna's Dear Ruth and John Loves Mary, Barry's Foolish Notion and Solomon and Buchman's Snafu are entertainments whose protagonists encounter no serious problems in adjusting. Franken's Soldier's Wife provides an attempt at serious depiction of a homecomer adjusting, but fails to follow through.

Homecomer dramas from each war treat the theme of adjustment with seriousness. However, it is important to note that the two plays in this section which depict the theme as a major one are Vietnam homecomer plays.

Comparisons of the black homecomer plays from each war is also revealing. From World War I, Flavin's Achilles Had a Heel and Rideout's Goin' Home do not provide much detail. Ardrey's Jeb and D'Usseau and Gow's Deep Are The Roots present a vivid picture of their Second World War black homecomers struggling to adjust. These struggles end in death with the Vietnam War black homecomer in Cole's Medal of Honor Rag.

1A. Uniforms and Medals

In this section which represents a particular aspect of the problem of adjustment, the Korean War is not represented. Drama, comedy, domestic and romantic comedy, verse drama, and neo-expressionism are present.

Comparisons of the homecomer plays from war to war in this subsection shows similarities with the main section. Four of the five World War I homecomer plays are comedies, and the one serious play does not explore this theme in depth. The serious plays outnumber the comedies when we move to World War II. One, Ardrey' Jeb, makes some attempt at exploring the theme in detail.

The Vietnam War homecomer plays are each serious depictions of the theme. Each play explores this theme in detail. Two of the plays, Rabe's Sticks and Bones and Cole's Medal of Honor Rag, end tragically. Cole's play, as the title suggests, is centered around this theme.

2. Physical/Mental Handicaps

This section is comprised of twenty-eight plays, representing half of the total number of plays in this study. The genres include drama, comedy, romantic and domestic comedy, musical, allegory, neo-expressionism, and modern tragedy. The one play from the Spanish Civil War is not present.

The First World War and the Vietnam War each have eight plays in this section. Four comedies and a musical are part of the World War I group. Two of the comedies, Tarkington's Clarence and Crothers's "Everyday," are amusements touching lightly on the subject. Carr's The Wooden Soldier and Jones's The Oldest Living Graduate present homecomers with serious mental problems, but they are comic figures. The musical, Green's Johnny Johnson, depicts a homecomer who elicits pathos. Of the three serious plays, only Flavin's Tapestry in Gray probes this theme with depth.

Two of the Vietnam War plays are homecomer comedies. Both, McLure's Pvt. Wars and Wilson's 5th of July, are dark comedies with protagonists suffering from both handicaps. The six serious treatments of this theme are all complex studies. Violence is present in four of the plays, with

three of them resolved by deaths, Cole's Medal of Honor Rag, Moody's The Shortchanged Review, and Rabe's Sticks and Bones.

World War II is represented by six homecomer plays, none of which is a comedy. The blind homecomer, Reines's Forward the Heart, makes his first appearance with this war. These plays all explore the theme in depth. Two, Shelly's Foxhole in the Parlor and Breuer's Sundown Beach, are the first plays to provide a complex depiction of the psychiatric problems of the homecomer.

3. Altered Perception of Society

The nineteen plays in this section represent each of the American wars. The plays include comedy, drama, modern tragedy, neo-expressionism, allegory, presentational monologues, and comedy of manners. Here, the Second World War leads with six plays followed by the Vietnam War with five.

Two of the three World War I plays are comedies. Although the two, Hughes's Hell-Bent Fer Heaven and Knight's Thin Ice, have serious themes (religion and class barriers), they treat them lightly. The serious play, Rideout's Goin' Home, does not depict the black homecomer back in his

society, but alludes to his problems.

Only one Second World War homecomer play in this section is a comedy. The play, Franken's Soldier's Wife, does not develop this theme. The dramas offer a more thorough examination of the theme. Two, Hellman's The Searching Wind and Miller's All My Sons, depict two homecomers who are harsh in their criticisms of what they see as uncaring civilians. D'Usseau and Gow's Deep Are The Roots suggests the changes to come now that black homecomers have been exposed to other ways of life.

The one comedy from the Vietnam War in this section, McLure's Lone Star, portrays a homecomer bitter towards his apathic society. The Vietnam War homecomer dramas are all thorough studies of this theme. One of them, Rabe's Sticks and Bones, depicts a homecomer moving through a series of altered perceptions.

4. Society's Reception of the Homecomer

The seventeen plays in this section represent each of the American wars. Genres include drama, comedy, domestic comedy, satire, neo-expressionism, docudrama, and modern tragedy. The Vietnam War dominates this section with seven

plays, because of the sociological and political complexities arising from the war. The Vietnam homecomer, by and large, received a poor, apathetic, and sometimes hostile reception.

Two of the Vietnam War homecomer plays are comedies and each portrays the negative reception given these homecomers. One, McNally's Bringing It All Back Home, is a savage attack on the American apathy towards the homecomer. A total of three plays from other wars portray homecomers complaining of negative receptions, less than half the number of plays from the Vietnam War.

It is only the Vietnam War homecomer plays which explore this theme in depth. The others merely allude to it. The one exception, Tarkington's Clarence, does go into some detail. However, it is a comic representation of the problem which cannot be considered representative of the reception given World War I homecomers.

5. Spouse, Fiancée, Loved One

Twenty-three plays are in this section representing every war except the fictional. Genres include drama, comedy, domestic comedy, farce, parody, modern tragedy, verse drama, docudrama, and neo-expressionism. The Second World War accounts for nearly half of the total with ten plays evenly divided between drama and comedy. The Vietnam War is next with five plays. The two plays from World War One are both comedies.

The Second World War presents some in-depth portrayals of this theme in the dramas. Adultery, a comic theme in World War I, is depicted seriously in the Second World War plays and is resolved tragically in Anderson's Truckline Café. Unlike the previous war, in this war broken marriages are depicted.

Strained marriages are portrayed in the Korean War homecomer plays, but only one ends. Each of the five Vietnam War homecomer plays depicts a broken marriage or relationship, and four of them end in tragedy. The one comedy in this group is a parody, Durang's The Vietnamization of New Jersey, and it ends tragically just as its target does.

6. Homecomer as Ghost/Spirit

The six plays in this section cover five wars and represent different genres, drama, fantasy, satire, verse drama, docudrama, and modern tragedy. The small number of plays prevents much comparisons. However, the only comedy is from the Vietnam War. It is McNally's Bringing It All Back Home, a satire depicting a ghost homecomer denouncing his selfish family.

7. Homecomers From More Than One War

This section contains nine plays, with the Vietnam War unrepresented for the first time. Genres include drama, comedy, allegory, domestic comedy and modern tragedy. Here again, comparisons are not possible because of the small number of plays. The possibilities for comparison shrink even more because the Korean War dominates with four plays with the other wars represented by one or two plays.

The sections of this analysis of the American homecomer play include plays of several genres. The homecomer is portrayed in drama, comedy, domestic comedy, romantic comedy, comedy of manners, fantasy, farce, parody, docudrama, neo-expressionism, allegory, verse, presentational

monologues, and modern tragedy. These separate styles all share a common element, the homecomer. The homecomer is depicted in a serious and a superficial manner. Some playwrights mean to challenge audiences with thought provoking plays, while others are content to entertain.

Homecomers from each war share common problems. For example, in section one a group of plays focus on the problems of the minority homecomer. The six plays in this group are from three wars. Five plays from three wars portray the aberrant or criminal homecomer. In section one, also, is a group of comedies from four wars.

Groups of plays addressing similar themes include not only several wars, but several genres. In Section 1A is a group of plays portraying the homecomer in full uniform. The genres include comedy, domestic comedy, farce, drama, verse drama and symbolism. Section two contains a group of plays portraying homecomers with both physical and mental handicaps, and includes drama, comedy, and modern tragedy. Four different genres are present in a group of plays in section three depicting homecomers who alter their religious beliefs.

These examples are part of the whole which represent

the structure of the analysis. Each section of this analysis is comprised of groups of plays combining several genres and wars. Playwrights handle similar themes, but from the perspective of different eras and with different styles.

The depiction of the homecomer experience is contrasted from war to war. For example, more homecomer comedies were produced from the two world wars (eight from World War I, five from World War II) than from the Korean and Vietnam Wars (five from Vietnam and one from Korea). While these numbers indicate, they do not tell, the entire story.

In 1919, one year after the end of World War I, three homecomer comedies were produced on Broadway. Two years later another one was produced, and by 1924 a total of six homecomer comedies had been produced on Broadway. The only homecomer drama immediately following the war, Hall and Middlemass's The Valiant, was written in 1920 for the members of the Little Theatre movement. Broadway audiences did not see a serious depiction of the homecomer experience until Rideout's black homecomer was seen in Goin' Home in 1928. The remainder of the dramatic portrayals of the homecomer were produced on Broadway in the next decade.

This pattern was followed fairly closely for World War II. In the war year of 1944, three homecomer comedies were produced on Broadway. Another appeared one year later, with another following two years after that. Nelson's The Wind is Ninety is a fantasy produced during the war in 1945, and since it is a non-serious depiction of the homecomer experience, I include it. Thus, within two years after the end of the war five homecomer comedies and one fantasy had appeared on Broadway.

The Second World War breaks the pattern in the production of dramas. In the war year of 1944 a homecomer drama appeared on Broadway, and within four years after the war, seven dramas appeared. However, the fact remains that four homecomer comedies were produced on Broadway during the war, while only one drama appeared.

The Korean War brings about a complete change. There is only one comedy connected to this war and it appeared on Broadway seven years after it ended. The plays immediately following the war were all dramas.

Although the War in Vietnam produced the same number of comedies as World War II, the pattern of production is different. The Vietnam homecomer comedies, with one excep-

tion, were produced after the war. None of the comedies was written for a Broadway audience, although Wilson's 5th of July appeared on Broadway in a later production. The one comedy produced during the war was McNally's Bringing It All Back Home, produced at the Off-Off Broadway Café La Mama. This comedy is an attack upon the values held by many members of the Broadway audience.

The production of dramas separates the Vietnam War from the World Wars as well. Four homecomer dramas were produced while the war was still being waged, compared to none in the First World War and one during World War II. The dramas were not written for Broadway audiences, although Rabe's Sticks and Bones and Patrick's Kennedy's Children later moved there.

The Vietnam homecomer plays as a group, unlike their predecessors, attack the moral fiber of American society. Neither homecomer comedy, nor homecomer drama are content to merely amuse an audience. The plays question the wisdom of the elders in society. They question, as the war was being waged, the necessity for it. There are no homecomer plays from other wars which do this as the war is being waged, and very few question it after the war ends.

The homecomer plays produced immediately after World War I suggest that we had a bit of excitement, now let's get back to work. The homecomer plays from World War II focus on the individual homecomer and his plight. His problem arises from his participation in a noble cause and it is his to solve.

The Korean War homecomer plays begin to suggest a change in these attitudes. However, the Vietnam War homecomer plays declare a change. The homecomers in these plays demand to be heard. They are a more violent group than their predecessors. Four Vietnam homecomers die violent deaths, compared to three from the preceding wars. The Vietnam War homecomer plays, both drama and comedy, comprise a group of the most thorough and serious depictions of the homecomer experience than that from any other war.

By defining the homecomer play as a play which portrays the returning soldier and his problems as central to the theme, forty-four of the fifty-five plays in this study qualify as homecomer plays. The remaining plays use the homecomer as part of a larger theme. The homecomer plays include a variety of dramas, several types of comedies, two verse dramas, a docudrama, a parody, a satire, a

neo-expressionistic play, and a play structured in monologues.

The plays represent a cross section of twentieth-century American playwrighting. Important and influential playwrights such as Maxwell Anderson, Philip Barry, Rachel Crothers, Lillian Hellman, Arthur Miller, Eugene O'Neill, Thornton Wilder, and Tennessee Williams are included. A group of middle rank playwrights Frank Gilroy, Paul Green, Elmer Rice and Booth Tarkington are present. Younger playwrights currently active include Christopher Durang, Terrence McNally, Robert Patrick, David Rabe and Lanford Wilson. The remaining group includes once-popular, now obscure playwrights, playwrights with only one important work to their credit, and playwrights of no particular distinction.

Pulitzer Prize winning plays are present, Hell Bent Fer Heaven (1924) and The Subject Was Roses (1965). New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for best play went to All My Sons (1946-47), The Subject Was Roses (1964-65) and a special citation to Sticks and Bones (1971-72). The Antoinette Perry Award for best play was given to The Subject Was Roses (1965) and Sticks and Bones (1972).

The most important to the least significant names in American dramatic literature have written homecomer plays. The plays cross several dramatic genres. Prize committees have recognized some of the homecomer plays as important contributions to the American theatre. It would be impossible to prepare any general study of twentieth-century American dramatic literature without including the homecomer play.

New perspectives on the plays and on American theatre emerge when the homecomer theme is studied. The role of the black man in American dramatic literature is one example. It is somewhat surprising to note that two black homecomer plays emerged from World War I, also two from the Second World War, but only one has emerged so far from the Vietnam War.

My research uncovered some intriguing facts on the status of the black actor in American theatre history. The black homecomers of the First World War plays, Achilles Had A Heel and Goin' Home, were played by white actors in black-face. Martin Flavin had wanted Paul Robeson for Achilles Had A Heel but was unable to find a producer. In addition, the black-white romance was changed with a white actress

appearing in blackface.

The World War II black homecomers in Jeb and Deep Are The Roots were portrayed by black actors and the latter play shows a white woman in love with the black homecomer. In the Korean War homecomer play P.S. 193 the casting of the black actor comes full circle. James Earl Jones, a black actor, was cast as the homecomer in a role meant for a white man. He was cast because playwright and director considered him the best actor available.

O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra gains additional meaning when examined as a homecomer play. The play becomes more than an updating of a Greek tragedy, as O'Neill, through the words of his homecomers, challenges popularly held beliefs of the early 1930s. Still controversial are Ezra Mannon's attack on religion and Orin Mannon's suggestion that women be sent off to war. The pacificism running through the play provides me with new insight into O'Neill. Adding the homecomer experience to the marital difficulties moves the play beyond domestic tragedy.

I began my research with European World War I homecomer plays; therefore, I was surprised by the lack of substance and little concern for the homecomer's plight in

the American homecomer plays from that war. However, my research brought me to the realization that the plays were reflecting the popular attitudes of the period. The fact that the homecomer plays reflect a society's attitude towards a war is part of my study.

The American homecomer play is an important part of American dramatic literature. Changing patterns in American theatre history can be traced through these plays. I have gained new insights into American theatre because of my study of the homecomer play. Finally, I feel that I have provided material which opens up new areas of scholarly study.

V. APPENDIX

My initial research uncovered the following list of homecomer plays or plays with homecomer themes, which are not included in this study, because they are non-American. This is not meant to be a definitive listing, but may aid those researching this topic.

Abercrombie, Lascelles	The Deserter (1922).
Aitmatov, Chingiz & Mukhamedzhanov, Kaltoi	The Ascent of Mount Fuji (1973).
Arbuzov, Aleksei	Years of Wandering (1954).
Artsybashev, Michel	War (1915).
Bataille, Henry	La chair humaine (1922).
Becker, Julius Maria	Mann Nummer Soundsoviel (1931).
Bertin, Charles	Love In a Labyrinth (1950).
Bernard, Jean-Jacques	The Sulky Fire (1921).
Betti, Ugo	Crime On Goat Island (1950). The Gambler (1952).
Bolitho, William	Overture (1930).
Borberg, Svend	Ingen (1920).
Capek, Karl	The Mother (1938).
Chikao, Tanaka	Kumo No Hate (1947).
Chodorov, Edward	Decision (1943).

Coward, Noel	Cavalcade (1931).
Dane, Clemence	A Bill of Divorcement (1921).
De Filippo, Eduardo	Napoli milionaria (1945).
De Mont, Paul	Nuances (1922).
di San Secondo, Rosso	Stone and Monuments (1923).
Drda, Jan	Frolics with the Devil (1945).
Emory, Gilbert	The Hero (1921).
Euringer, Richard	Deutsche Passion (1933).
Frisch, Max	When the War Was Over (1949).
Fukada, Tsuneori	Kitty Taifū (1950).
Gladkov	Cement (?).
Gombrowicz, Witold	The Marriage (1964).
Graff, Sigmund	Die vier Musketiere (1932).
Hauptmann, Gerhart	Herbert Englemann (1952). Till Eulenspiegel (1927).
Hoffe, Monckton	The Faithful Heart (1921).
Kinoshita, Jungi	Between God and Man (1979).
Kirshon, Vladimir	Rust/or Red Rust (1929).
Klíma, Jaroslav	Na dosah ruky (1948).
Kohout, Pavel	The Third Sister (1960). They Called Me Comrade (1961).
Korneichuk, Alexander	Come to Zvonkovoe (1945).
Kundera, Ludvik	Total Cockcrow (1961).

Leonov, Leonid	The Invasion (1942).
Lopez, Sabatino	The Fledgling (1918).
Luntz, Lev	The City of Truth (1924).
Malleson, Miles	The Fanatics (1927).
Marcel, Gabriel	Le Mort de demain (1919-20). Regard neuf (1922).
Millar, Robins	Thunder in the Air (1928).
Milner, Roger	How's the World Treating You? (1966).
Möller, Eberhard	Douaumont, or the Return of the Soldier Odysseus (1929).
Monkhouse, Allan	The Conquering Hero (1923).
Mossinsohn, Igal	Casablan (1954).
Mueller-Schloesser, Hans	Die Laus im Pelze (1933).
Niccodemi, Dario	La Volata (1920).
O'Donnell, Frank Hugh	Anti-Christ (1925).
Pagnol, Marcel & Nivoix, Paul	Merchants of Glory (1925).
Pogodin, Nicolai Fedorovich	The Man With the Gun (1937). The Creation of the World (1945).
Printzlau, Olga	Back Here (1928).
Raynal, Paul	The Tomb Beneath the Arc de Triomphe or the Unknown Warrior (1924).

Rehfisch, Hans José	Wer weint um Juckenach (1924).
Rozov, Victor	The Reunion (1967).
Safránek, Otto	The Honor of Lieutenant Baker (1950).
Salynsky, Afanasy	The Long Awaited (?).
Sartre, Jean Paul	The Condemned of Altona (1960).
Schmidtbonn, Wilhelm	Der Geschlagene (1922).
Selvinsky, Ilya	The Commander of the Second Army (1929).
Sudermann, Hermann	Der Hasenfellhandler (1925).
Svetlov, Mikhail	The Brandenburg Gate (1945).
Tomelty, Joseph	Mugs and Money or Barnum Was Right? (?).
Trenev, Konstantin	Lubov Yarovaia (1926-27).
Trevelyan, H.B.	The Dark Angel (1925).
Vančura, Antonin	Heaven, Hell, Paradise (1919).
Van Druten, John	Flowers of the Forest (1935).
Vialar, Paul	Les Hommes (1931).
Vildrac, Charles	S.S.Tenacity (1922).
Whiting, John	Marching Song (1954).
Whittlinger, Karl	Do You Know the Milky Way? (1961).
Zavrel, Frantisek	The Return (1920).

For a complete listing of German homecomer plays refer to

the unpublished German Ph.D. dissertation of Anders, William, "Der Heimkehrer Aus Zwei Wellkriegen Im Deutschen Drama", Penn. 1951 (andewi - 51 -DHA).

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