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CASE STUDY.

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THE EMERGENCE OF A DRAMATURGIC MODEL: A CASE STUDY

by

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faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment  
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## PREFACE

This is essentially an exploratory study in the sociology of drama. Since this is a field which has received relatively little attention, a few introductory comments may be useful, especially since this study deals with a recent, continually experimental, and constantly evolving aspect of drama.

The methodology employed was not, of course, the only one available. Action at the level of performance is the basic frame of reference, a point of view which stems from Max Weber. Another possible frame of reference might have been the Durkheim-Mauss school of thought.<sup>1</sup> The stress on ritual process and flow as this theme has developed in the work of Harrison<sup>2</sup> and Turner,<sup>3</sup> among others, would have led deep into the world of meaning contained in the "cosmos" of the ritualistic play which is central to this report. It would have required a more speculative approach than seemed appropriate in a dissertation. In the future I hope that pursuit of this trend will yield alternative insights into the ritualistic theatre and other art forms.

Published work in the sociology of drama as such is relatively rare although sociologically relevant material is

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1. Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Trans. Joseph Ward Swain, (New York: The Free Press, 1965, c. 1915).

2. Jane E. Harrison, Ancient Art and Ritual (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1913).

3. Victor Turner, The Drums of Affliction (Oxford: Clarendon Press and the International African Institute, 1968).



plentiful in fields like criticism, philosophy, and anthropology. Georg Lukacs is probably the most prolific and well known sociologically oriented contributor to the field.<sup>4</sup> In the United States, Benjamin Nelson has explored many aspects of the subject.<sup>5</sup> In addition ethnographic studies of ritual often merge with the study of certain elements of dramatic performance. Studies such as Arnold Hauser's The Social History of Art, if not strictly sociological in orientation, illuminate some of the relationships between drama and the social context in which it is created and performed.<sup>6</sup>

The current state of the field is illustrated by the article on "Drama" in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.<sup>7</sup> The author cites ten references, none of them sociological.<sup>8</sup> A survey of Sociological Abstracts reveals a similar situation. In the average issue, the relevant section usually covers less than three pages, and often less than one. Most entries are concerned with films and

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4. Georg Lukacs, "The Sociology of Modern Drama," The Tulane Drama Review, Summer, 1965, pp. 146-170.

5. Benjamin Nelson, "Avant-Garde Dramatists from Ibsen to Ionesco," The Psychoanalytic Review, Vol. 55, No. 3, 1968, pp. 505-511.

6. Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art (New York: Vintage Books, no date given). "The Second Defeat of Chivalry," Vol. 2, pp. 144-172 is especially relevant here.

7. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, David L. Sills ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1968). The article referred to is Faubion Bowers, "Drama," Vol. 4, pp. 256-258.

8. Nine of them are general works on the Oriental Theatre, and the tenth is on the Russian theatre.

popular and classical music. Only rarely is an article on drama cited, and it is likely to be a description of drama as literature.<sup>9</sup> Even Sorokin, in his monumental socio-cultural analysis of art, does not include drama.<sup>10</sup>

A related aspect of sociological work may be found in the concept of symbolic interaction which originates with George Herbert Mead and may be traced through the "dramatistic" theory of Kenneth Burke.<sup>11</sup> This trend has been continued by sociologists such as Goffman<sup>12</sup> and Duncan.<sup>13</sup> In this context "...drama is employed, not as a metaphor, but as a fixed form that helps us to discover what the implications of the term 'act' and 'person' really are."<sup>14</sup> (emphasis in original) This involves, for Burke, a theory of terminology or nomenclature, and the study which follows might be viewed as a

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9. In this paper I take the point of view first put forth by Artaud that drama is not literature, see below pages 52-58.

10. Pitirim A. Sorokin, Social and Cultural Dynamics, Vol. I, Fluctuations of Forms of Art (New York, The Bedminster Press, 1962, c. 1937-41). The major emphasis is on painting, but Sorokin also covers music, literature, architecture, criticism, and sculpture.

11. See below, page 32.

12. The dramaturgic model developed by Goffman is the major realistic model to which the ritualistic model is compared, see Chapter IX, "Comparison of Action in Emergence and in Realistic and Ritualistic Dramaturgic Models," pp. 252-261.

13. In addition to the evidence of Duncan's own work the close connection between himself and Burke may be seen in his introduction to the second revised edition of Permanence and Change by Kenneth Burke (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc. 1954), p. xiii-xliv.

14. Kenneth Burke, "Interaction: Dramatism," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, op.cit., Vol. 7, p. 448.

departure from this tradition inasmuch as it seeks to explore action within a category of drama which negates a theory of symbolic interaction based on the "act" as Mead and others have defined it.<sup>15</sup>

In studying theatre or any other art, one is struck by the rapid series of reforms or revolutions that have taken place during the twentieth century. Painting, for example, after Impressionism and other movements of the last century, has experienced an almost constant evolution of forms. Among them there have been Expressionism, Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Abstraction of various categories, Pop, Op, and Minimal, to name only the major movements. Other arts, some of them to a lesser extent, have gone through similar changes. Drama has had an equally radical or startling series of changes. In this study the focus is on the most current form of drama; which is characterized herein as "ritualistic." The development of this genre is briefly traced below.<sup>16</sup> Art has a history which is intricately bound up with the history of society, so at this point an impressionistic view of the social factors which appear to be important in the development of the form and the selection of themes in ritualistic drama will be briefly mentioned.

It seems to be generally accepted that the insights of artists provide a glimpse, however brief, into the order that

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15. George H. Mead, Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist, ed. Charles W. Morris, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books edition, 1967, c. 1934), pp. 6,7, 185.

16. See below, pp. 43-58.

flows beneath the apparent chaos of everyday life. The "rationalistic realism" of Chekhov, Ibsen, Strindberg, and others does not in any way deny the non-rational. The non-rational is in fact an integral element in the personality and interaction of each character in the work of these men. In their plays there is an assumption that, with luck, people may somehow muddle through and overcome the subterranean elements of existence. People may reach a compromise with it. In the play studied in this project, as with the plays of the Theatre of the Absurd, characters no longer resist or battle the darker and little understood elements. Rather, they go with them, exhibit them, enhance them, and endow them as a new or alternative reality.

During a period when the world is increasingly dominated by bureaucratic "rational" organizations, art forms and products have seemingly progressed in the opposite direction.

Viewed sociologically, artists seem to have responded to the higher irrationality of formal organizations, and, psychologically, to the lower, inner irrationality of the psyche set adrift in an existential world. Loneliness, isolation, alienation, or anomie are inherent in an urban environment. These elements have been recognized by and incorporated in the work of artists of various schools.

The higher irrationality of rational, bureaucratically organized nation states precipitating periodic total wars of mass annihilation, problems of environmental control and pollution which are only now becoming evident and which carry the potential for ecological death, the easy discovery of in-

justice as a result of improved communications, combined with the erosion in the quality of personal relationships in a megalopolitan setting have made new perspectives and subject matter available to artists. Such elements have become increasingly recognizable in artistic products, e.g., minimal sculpture, Cage's music, and the Living Theatre.

Similar elements are incipiently manifest in certain contradictory social phenomena. In politics, for example, an anti-bureaucratic strain toward a form of participatory democracy and concomitant demands for the immediate satisfaction of grievances are quite clear. This includes the obvious element involved in the partial disappearance of lines clearly demarcating the division between various categories of activities. In some cases politics becomes performance or demonstration, sex may be considered as a political act, art is often politics, and life styles may become The Revolution. In "The Second Coming," which was written more than fifty years ago, Yeats seems to forecast the situation of an artist enmeshed in a world perceived from and within the above situation.

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.

Within the frame of reference of action, the play studied in this project is the logical working out of this "manifesto," both in terms of content and form. The theme of death which dominates the play represents a selection from forces and events

in which the artists are enmeshed. It is clear also that they exist in a society in which there are few if any meaningful rituals and ideologies which explain the fact of death.

If bureaucratic functioning is taken as the model of rational social processes, the ritualistic play must be considered the polar opposite. On the empirical level, the play promulgates a general rule of incongruity as the basis for social relationships. The alternative cosmos of the play is one in which space, time, and identity are disjointed and fractured. The social world of the play is based on a different order than the normal everyday social one. The normal flow and connections between time, space, and identity are not possible in the order which forms the basis of social interaction in the play. The coincidence of opposites<sup>17</sup> is the norm, and elements usually considered as beyond comprehension are designated as reality. Reality and illusion merge, diverge, and co-exist at the same time. Neither is understandable with or without the other, and incongruity leads inevitably to mystery: mystery being the ultimate version of reality within the play. The order of this world is promulgated as an alternative order. The norm of incongruity leads into the central problems of Western reality.

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17. This phrase was used in a different context by Benjamin Nelson, "The Balcony and Parisian Existentialism," Tulane Drama Review, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 60.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All projects require aid, advice, encouragement, and cooperation from numerous quarters. This one is no exception to this general rule. This inquiry would have foundered rather early if it had not been for the help I received from many individuals. This is especially true of the group which I observed, and which must be nameless here. Nevertheless, my gratitude to them is not less sincere because of their anonymity. They permitted my somewhat benign presence over a period of many months when they were doing serious and emotionally exhausting work. Many elements of their work, especially the backstage work, leaves them vulnerable. Highly personal emotions are often exposed. While observing them and while writing this report I have made every attempt to respect them and to withhold negative "backstairs" information which was not pertinent to the inquiry. My hope is that I did not interfere with or hinder their work in any way by my presence.

As originally conceived this project was somewhat out of bounds for a dissertation in sociology. Only the patient encouragement of Professor Charles Winick made it possible to begin it and to carry it through to completion. I am conscious of my indebtedness to him for the continuing encouragement he gave me, and for advice and criticism during the period of observation as well as during the writing. Professors Joseph Bensman and Peter McHugh conscientiously reviewed the work. Their penetrating criticism has immeas-

urably improved the final result. In addition to this I have received advice from former teachers and friends. The many shortcomings which inevitably remain are solely my responsibility.

New York, New York  
January, 1971

R.E.B.



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## CHAPTER I -- INTRODUCTION -- DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

This study is concerned with the activities of an experimental theatre group. The major focus of this study will be on the process of emergence of a play, and on the description of a dramaturgic model based on nonrealistic theatre. The model to be developed here will be compared to one based on realistic theatre, a model which has been employed in the analysis of microsocial interaction situations. Comparison and contrast will be based on the rationality and linearity of action, or the lack thereof during performance. A similar comparison will be made in relation to the emergent cycle and the non-realistic dramaturgic model.

The most notable sociological use of a dramaturgic model to date has been by Goffman in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.<sup>1</sup> Theatre, considered purely as performance, offers an analogy to everyday life considered as performance. The analogy is utilized by Goffman for the analysis of microsocial interaction situations in which action is social, rational, and lineal.

The traditional model of theatrical performance involves characters onstage interacting with each other in a situation in which each character understands, albeit imperfectly, the general context of the situation and his place within the situation. Each character has goals within the context of the play. As a personality he mobilizes resources in expectation

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1. Irving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959).

of achieving those goals. Other characters with competing or corresponding goals attempt to either frustrate or further his and their actions. Unanticipated circumstances may and usually do arise. Tension and conflict results from this. Each character is forced to alter his goals, or else he pursues them on different levels while using altered means. Some characters are frustrated completely and give up their original goals. At other times compromises are made. Heightened drama arises in the resolution or attempted resolution of these situations. Performance is staged in terms of certain theatrical conventions and within the confines of a scripted play.

All actors on the stage form a collusive group vis-a-vis the audience. Information of various kinds is withheld from the audience and known only to those onstage. Weeks or months of backstage activity involving rehearsal and ancillary activities are hidden. During the actual performance a considerable amount of backstage activity continues and is also, usually, concealed from the audience. Performers employ training, directorial guidance, and various techniques of stagecraft in order to present a version, or illusion, of reality onstage. If performance is successful the projected reality is accepted by the audience. It is of course necessary that the audience suspend belief for the duration of performance in order to accept, for the moment, the illusion being created onstage. Characters engage in social behavior. Action is rational and the plot develops lineally in this type of performance.

Performance in everyday social life may be viewed as analogous to this category of drama. The staging of high tea, a poker game, the oral defense of a Ph.D. dissertation, or almost any other social interaction situation includes elements similar to those that are found in theatrical performance. As performers in a social interaction each participant is assigned or assumes a role. Each individual knows the way in which his role is usually defined, and there is at least some degree of agreement on a "script." At a minimum certain topics of discussion and ways of behaving are agreed upon as acceptable within a given situation. Other topics and types of behavior are excluded as are preparations for the interaction. Each participant attempts to create, convey, and maintain an impression of himself which he feels will further his several projects. He also attempts to manipulate the situation to the extent that this is possible within the agreed upon ground rules of the interaction. This does not exclude the possibility that, as in theatrical performance, unforeseen circumstances or out-of-character behavior may arise as a result of individual idiosyncrasy, misunderstanding, conflicting goals, or other causes. As much as possible the interaction is staged so as to avoid such surprises.

Social performance is staged in terms of rational conduct, and action develops lineally. In the typical case each actor is able to predict the general behavior of other actors in the interaction with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Sequences of interaction and the eventual dissolution of the interaction unit are similarly predictable since all actors

are normally familiar with the rules of social conduct which apply in any particular situation.

In contrast to this theatrical tradition and the analogous social conduct, much activity in theatre and in day to day life may not and probably does not conform to the general category of rational action and lineal development. Such conduct is usually conceptualized as a limiting or discrepant case of interaction and assigned to the residual category of collective behavior. Such conduct has traditionally not been subject to analysis in terms of dramaturgic models. This project involves an attempt to develop an alternative dramaturgic model for the analysis of behavior that is neither rational nor lineal. The model to be developed here will be based on a contemporary form of experimental drama.

In this project there will be two major tasks. Exploration of a specific case of nonrealistic drama will be the first. In this case forms of action other than social or rational forms will be employed in performance. The investigation will include the development or emergence of the play as the second task. It is expected that the emergence of the play will involve a cycle of work in which rational and lineal action predominates. A series of programed activities will be undertaken within a workshop context in a manner similar to the application of the experimental method. At certain stages of development nonrational techniques will be employed as a means to the end, but these techniques will ultimately be controlled by the rational process of editing. A play involving nonrational forms of action should evolve from

this predominantly rational conduct. Action in both the finished play and the emergent cycle will be described and analyzed.

For purposes of this project traditional theatre involving rational action on the part of characters will be labeled "realistic."<sup>2</sup> Less conventional drama involving nonrational action will be referred to as "ritualistic."<sup>3</sup>

Ritualistic theatre in its current state of evolution will involve performance in which there are no characters in any conventional sense. Realistic theatre, from one point

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2. Selection of this term represents a compromise. In some cases the term denotes meanings which are not intended here. Categories of literary and dramatic criticism usually separate realism, naturalism, epic, romantic, and other types of novels and plays. These are based on literary criteria rather than performance criteria. As the term is used in this report it refers simply to the fact that performance attempts to replicate reality or create an illusion of reality in terms of action. Performance technique and plot development contribute to this end. This category might have been labeled lineal.

3. The term ritualistic was selected from among a variety of available terms beginning with the general term avant-garde and continuing through more specific ones such as environmental, poor theatre, theatre of cruelty, and others. Selection of this term was meant to emphasize the fact that normal performance techniques, plot devices, linearity, etc. have been eliminated. Performers are free to construct pure ritual without being constrained by most literary and theatrical conventions. All of the terms mentioned here have been used to designate this type of theatre performance, but many of them have taken on specific meanings which emphasize a certain aspect of performance or theory. Many of them are also associated with specific theatrical groups. The term ritual has not been restricted to any specific group and therefore seems more appropriate than the others mentioned. A term which does not normally designate a category of performance such as non-lineal might have served as well as ritual. The specific meaning of ritual within a theatrical setting will be further developed later in this report.

of view, involves performance as a form of spoken literature or poetry. In ritualistic theatre scripts are of relatively little importance. In some cases written scripts do not exist. Performance will not be a transposition of a literary form. There will be relatively little emphasis on words. Rather, seemingly random images, scenes, and experiential states will be presented that involve themes and variations on themes. Performance technique will be largely in terms of chants, non-dance movement, stylized gesture, and non-verbal patterns of sound. In contrast to this, realistic theatre performance includes conversation and the exploration of meaning in terms of events and character motivation. Ritualistic drama presents physicalized feeling states instead of an impression of reality or heightened reality.

The model based on ritualistic theatrical performance may provide a frame of reference or tool for the analysis of certain forms of nonrational action in social life. It is expected that the type of action in the play, in combination with performance techniques, will be analogous to social life in several areas where a realistic model does not seem applicable. It is hoped that a ritualistic model will offer a starting point for the analysis of action in situations such as those usually categorized as collective behavior since this type of theatrical performance shares crucial similarities to some of these social situations.

Significant differences between the two models should be found in the rationality or lack of rationality of action in each. Propositions will be presented regarding the nature

of action in realistic and ritualistic models. The basis for differentiating action will also be explored. This will be followed by an examination of the realistic model developed by Goffman. After this there will be a description of the group studied, the play devised by them, and the emergent process by which the play evolved. This will be followed by a comparison of the categories of action in the realistic model, the ritualistic model, and in emergence of the ritualistic play. The concluding chapter will briefly mention some potential applications of the ritualistic model to social phenomena.



## CHAPTER II -- DEFINITION OF DRAMA, THEORY OF ACTION, AND PROPOSITIONS REGARDING THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

As previously stated the major emphasis in this study will be on the differentiation of action found in realistic and ritualistic theatre. Performance will be considered as a bounded, segregated unit to the extent that this is possible. Performance and production will be stressed to the relative exclusion of audience-actor relationships. Prior to proceeding to the actual study it will be necessary to clarify 1) the definition of drama to be used in this report; 2) concepts of rational and social action; and 3) propositions regarding the expected findings.

### A. DEFINITION OF DRAMA

Since this project is concerned with selected aspects of dramatic art it seems necessary to define rather precisely the nature of drama considered as action. This will not necessarily involve all aspects of drama, e.g., elements such as artistic quality and plot content, though of great importance in certain contexts, will be of little importance here. Rather there will be an attempt to delineate criteria that define the limits of drama.

For purposes of this report drama may be defined as the performance and witnessing of a secular ritual.<sup>1</sup> Performance

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1. According to Langer ritual is the formalization of overt behavior in the presence of sacred objects. Also, "Ritual begins in motor attitudes, which, however personal, are at once externalized and so made public." In terms of drama in general it is the formal and public aspects of ritual which are important. Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Act (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1942),

is by specialists in expressive functions, and occurs in the physical presence of the witnesses. In this view performance itself constitutes the dramatic work of art. Drama is differentiated from other performing arts inasmuch as performance must be predominantly vocal, although not necessarily verbal, and gestural. It may and usually does include rhythmical or stylized movement, but at the point where such movement becomes the sole or even the predominant method of performance the presentation ceases to be drama and becomes dance, a happening, or some other phenomenon. There are four elements of drama. (1) Role and status differentiation exists between performers and audience members. (2) The performance is of a secular ritual performed by specialists in expressive tasks. (3) Performance is constituted of a combination of vocal sounds which are not necessarily musical or verbal, and physical movement and gestures that are non-dance in character. (4) Performance occurs in the physical presence of an audience whose members are not specialists as occupants of that status.<sup>2</sup>

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pp. 153 & 171. In relation to ritualistic theatre the "motor attitudes" are more explicit than is the case with conventional theatre. Also according to Langer, p. 130, ritual is perhaps connotative, but not denotative. In realistic performance the content of the ritual is denotative, but in ritualistic theatre there is little if any denotative quality.

2. There is no precise derivation from this definition. It is based on the reading and witnessing of numerous plays, on theatre theory, and on technique and theory of acting. It would appear that all culturally variable categories of drama are within this general definition. Oscar G. Brockett, History of Theatre (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1967), and Phyllis Hartnell, The Concise History of Theatre (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1968).

Dramatic art from this point of view is an enterprise which does not exist outside the sphere of interaction. It is not always necessary, however, that the action of the ritual itself be of a social nature. Mechanical-electrical reproduction of performance, and the witnessing of that performance, by this definition, is a phenomenon excluded from the category of dramatic art. Drama is an existential event created and constituted in interaction.

Closet drama, i.e., drama written not to be performed, represents a contradiction in terms. This is not the appropriate place to discuss the literary experience except to say that it is usually a solitary one. As a result the quality of the experience and its structure and process are quite different than that of an interaction situation such as drama. Drama is an event separate from and different than literature.<sup>3</sup> Since drama is social in nature the experience of it is not necessarily identical among all participants even though they generate, sustain, and create it by participating in the interaction which brings it into existence. The dramatic event arises from and in interaction and depends on the uninterrupted participation of the individuals involved for its continuance. Role performers in both statuses that are a part of the dramatic event may be substituted during a

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3. This point of view was stressed by Antonin Artaud, The Theatre and its Double, Mary Caroline Richards, Trans. (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1958, c. 1938). See Chapter VI, "No More Masterpieces," pp. 74-83. It has been recently emphasized by writers such as Richard Schechner, Public Domain: Essays on the Theatre (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1959).

particular performance, but this is unusual. This definition of drama is based on the tradition of the Occident, but it is sufficiently broad to include the elements of Oriental drama as well.<sup>4</sup>

The professional actor's role is usually considered to be that of an initiator of action. The label itself is one implying active and leading participation. Audience members, in contrast, are usually considered as an assembly of listeners, a passive group of indeterminate size who sit without overtly participating in the ongoing action to which they are expected to be, for the most part, silent witnesses. This involves a degree of misconception in regard to both roles. It seems to be based on an implicit belief that action is almost exclusively oral, or, more specifically, verbal. According to the definition being developed here drama is viewed as a unit of interaction. Interaction includes not only speaking and movement through space, but also listening, visual observation, gesture, subverbal vocal response, laughter, and general projection of attitudes and presentation of self by means of physical demeanor. Concentration on active behavior as an indicator of action tends to ignore one major constituent element of the interaction.

As noted, drama occurs where actor and audience roles are performed simultaneously in face-to-face interaction in accordance with a prearranged secular ritual. The simple social structure outlined here should be applicable to dramatic

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4. Brockett, op. cit.

art regardless of cultural variations. Differences of considerable magnitude have been and continue to be a part of drama. Obvious empirical differences exist in the contemporary and historical drama of Europe, India, Japan, China, Africa, and the United States. In addition each national variety of drama has experienced evolutionary and revolutionary changes during various historical periods. Nevertheless, these culturally classifiable differences can all be subsumed under the basic social structure briefly described here.

This definition has been concentrated on the basic structure of the dramatic situation or event. In order to complete the definition the elements of form, content and action must be mentioned in addition to a word about values which serve to differentiate drama from other similar events.

Form refers to the locus of interaction which occurs in the dramatic situation in three distinct spheres. There is potentially interaction between actors onstage, between actors and audience, and between members of the audience. Dramatic art normally does not occur unless there is interaction of a social or nonsocial character in all three spheres.<sup>5</sup> Interaction between members of the audience, and, in certain plays, between characters onstage may not be on a social level. Close physical proximity does not constitute social interaction, although it usually presupposes interaction at some level.

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5. The limiting cases in which there is only one character in a play or a single member of the audience are not of importance in this report. These cases are found only rarely in the practical world of theatrical performance.

Content refers to the behavior of performers, including psychological elements of such behavior. It includes in one category techniques of performance, and, in another, the subject matter of the play. It is this latter aspect which is the predominant but not the sole concern of critics and historians of the theatre. One result of this emphasis is that drama has often been considered as a special branch of spoken literature.

Action, at this point, for purposes of simplification will be considered simply as lineal or non-lineal. It may develop according to a certain logic in terms of the overt circumstances of a play, or it may not develop at all as in scripts from the Theatre of the Absurd.<sup>6</sup> In some cases action may develop improvisationally and partially at random within overall guidelines established by the ritual. This is true in certain experimental theatrical performances.<sup>7</sup>

Discussion of the dramatic event requires a  
cognizance of the nature of action within the plays them-

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6. The definitive work on this category of performance is The Theatre of the Absurd by Martin Esslin (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961).

7. Probably the outer boundary of dramatic performance was arrived at in the Living Theatre's production of Paradise Now. If the ritual were any more improvisatory the production would probably not be contained within the basic structure of dramatic art outlined above. Comments on this play are in Richard Schechner, "An Interview With the Becks," pp. 24-44, and the evolutionary development of the play is impressionistically traced in The Living Theatre, "Paradise Now Notes," pp. 90-107, both in The Drama Review, Spring, 1969.

selves.<sup>8</sup> Content, form, and action may be located along an axis between these two poles. In discussing the ritualistic play and the model based on it major focus will be on only one of the three aspects of form, i.e., on the interaction between characters onstage. Initially internal conformance of action, content, and form will be the concern rather than the relationship of performance to larger projects. Later on in tracing the emergence of the play the larger project will become the center of discussion. Dramatic performance is concerned with a goal that is independent of the category of conduct employed in the attainment of that goal, i.e., the creation of an artistic experience. In this report performance will be analyzed rather than ultimate objectives and values such as the artistic.

Thus far nothing has been mentioned regarding theatre buildings, stage sets, lighting, costuming, and other elements of stagecraft which are usually associated with drama. The reason for this is that as illustrated by Hauger, among others, such elements are not an integral element of the dramatic event.<sup>9</sup> Nor has mention been made of elements

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8. It seems important to point out that there is a distinction between non-rational and irrational. Conduct within a ritualistic play, it will be shown, fails to conform to rational modes of behavior. However, the poverty of concepts available for the analysis of conduct that is other than rational would not justify including insanity and action in a ritualistic play in the same category.

9. George Hauger, Theatre -- General and Particular (London: Michael Joseph, 1966), Chapter I, "Theatre in General," pp. 14-47.

such as dramatic climax, resolution of crises, heightened effects, generation of tension and tension release through progressive unfolding of plot and exploration of character. These are often considered to be the significant and defining elements of drama. It is suggested here that these are culturally variable elements of content. Further, they are largely dependent on literary techniques and Western dramatic conventions. Even in the West experimental theatre groups have consciously examined and rejected many or most of these elements. Such things may contribute to or create a system of meanings for Western theatre audiences. In many cases they make the dramatic event coherent, but they are not necessary elements of drama. They seem to constitute, instead, a specific type of content.

In concluding this section one final item must be mentioned. That is the differentiation between dramatic performance and other events that are often similar to it. It would be possible to include under the definition given certain political events such as rallies and news conferences, military ceremonies, religious rituals, and other similar public performances. Drama may be distinguished from these events since they are normally instrumental and drama is expressive.<sup>10</sup> Such events are staged with a definite purpose in mind. Ultimate objectives may be as remote as eventual

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10. This does not exclude the possibility that both individual actors and theatrical companies may participate professionally in instrumental activity. One motivation for public performance is obviously economic in origin. Direct propaganda and other instrumental ends may also be involved in performance.



entrance into heaven. Or they may include more direct goals such as increasing the morale of a military unit or influencing the election or reelection of a specific politician.

In this connection another essential difference between drama and other staged public events is a product of the subjective evaluation of events by the participants. This is tantamount to saying that values determine the nature of the event. Street actions motivated by political or social conditions and activities such as "Be-ins," in many instances, if not always, have a structure, form, content, and action similar to if not identical with dramatic presentations by experimental theatre groups. In other instances theatrical groups such as the Bread and Puppet Theatre of New York City participate in social actions as well as performing street theatre.<sup>11</sup> In these cases the dividing line between political or social activity and dramatic presentation is obscure. Empirical referents may be identical in both cases. In such situations what Burke called "Orientation" may be the only determining factor.<sup>12</sup> In border line instances it is only the evaluation of participants that makes it possible to classify activity either as dramatic performance or political activity.

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11. This organization often performs at various rallies for political and social programs. They also routinely perform free theatre in the streets as they did during their European tour in 1969.

12. Kenneth Burke, Permanence and Change (Indianapolis, New York, Kansas City: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1954), Chapter I, "Orientation," pp. 5-18

This definition of drama is, of course, not exhaustive. It is introduced at this point for heuristic purposes only. Complete definition, along with supporting data, would be a project in itself. However, it is hoped that with this definition as introduction the nature of the phenomena under study here will be clear, as will their classification as dramatic activity.

## B. THEORY OF ACTION

Definitions of social action and social relationships as conceptualized by Weber will be utilized in this report.<sup>13</sup> These terms and definitions do not, as pointed out by Parsons,<sup>14</sup> and as acknowledged by Weber,<sup>15</sup> form logically exclusive or inclusive categories. Nevertheless, the categories developed by Weber, if they are broadened somewhat, appear to be sufficient for purposes of this report.

Conduct, according to Weber, if it is to be considered social, must take account of the behavior of another individual

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13. Most citations here will be in Max Weber, Basic Concepts in Sociology, trans. H.P. Secher (New York: Citadel Press, 1964, c. 1962). The same material also constitutes the first chapter, "The Fundamental Concepts of Sociology," pp. 87-157 in Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, trans. A.M. Henderson, trans. and ed. Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1964, c. 1947). Further discussion may be found in Theodore Abel, Systematic Sociology in Germany (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), pp. 116-156; H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958, c. 1946), pp. 55-61; Julien Freund, The Sociology of Max Weber, Mary Illford trans. (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 37-86; and Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1949, c. 1937), pp. 579-658.

14. Parsons, Structure, op. cit., pp. 640-649.

15. Weber, Concepts, op. cit., p. 62.

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and be oriented accordingly.<sup>16</sup> The subjective orientation is the determining criterion in any classification of conduct as social or not. This component may be understood, i.e., its meaning imputed, in terms of either empirical or explanatory understanding, or both.<sup>17</sup> It is the ability to understand conduct in relation to the orientation of acting individuals that is crucial. Not all conduct in face-to-face relationships is subject to an imputation of orientation in a manner which is understandable on the part of an observing individual. Conduct which does not contain a subjectively intelligible orientation, from a sociological point of view, become mere, "conditions, stimuli, inhibiting or encouraging the environment in which behavior occurs."<sup>18</sup> Conduct such as this forms a residual category composed of collective behavior.<sup>19</sup> This category may and probably does include several subcategories. There is no basis for considering this conduct as social since it is not meaningfully oriented to the conduct of others. There does not appear to be a means-ends scheme involved in such behavior.

Social conduct may be separated into four categories. It is possible that these categories also apply to forms of conduct other than the social. The categories of action are:

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16. ibid., p. 29.

17. ibid., pp. 34-5.

18. ibid., p. 41.

19. ibid., p. 56.

(1) goal-oriented, (2) value-related, (3) affectual, and (4) traditional.<sup>20</sup> Only the first two categories contain rational conduct according to the perspective from which Weber views them.<sup>21</sup> Empirical conduct often or usually contains elements from more than one category although conduct of one particular type would usually be expected to predominate in a specific relationship.

This concept of rational social action is somewhat narrower than the concept to be used in this report. It seems possible to have rational action in any one of the four categories. Action is rational when it is understandable by an outside observer on a level of meaningful adequacy in accordance with a means-ends scheme. The classification of only the first two categories as rational appears to reflect a classification of means rather than ends.<sup>22</sup> It seems to refer to motivation rather than empirical action. Conduct in any category may be understood on a meaningfully adequate level, and may be oriented toward and take account of the conduct of other individuals.

Love relationships would normally be categorized as affectual and considered as something other than rational. However, given the motivation or ends provided by romantic love, it is possible to understand the action of an infatuated female toward a particular male and vice versa. The end may

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20. ibid., p. 59.

21. Weber, Theory, op.cit., Parson's introduction pp. 13-14.

22. It is quite probable that ends or the selection of ends from among several alternatives is never rational.

not be rational, but an elaborate ritual of personal adornment, deviously arranged "accidental" encounters, suppression of any behavior the other might consider less than charming, and other tactics conforming to an overall and ongoing strategy become understandable. That is to say, they become rational in terms of orientation and it is possible to impute subjective components. This is equally apparent in regard to such phenomena as religious conduct or the activities of a fanatic.

In other words, it seems that motivation may be categorized as nonrational, but it appears possible to understand specific conduct as meaningful in spite of this. Action then becomes rational in accordance with the conceptions outlined above. From this perspective, action inasmuch as it is social may be considered to be rational, at least for purposes of this report. This broader concept of rational conduct will facilitate the differentiation of the two dramaturgic models in terms of form, content, and action.

Classification of conduct as rational does not imply that there is necessarily a carefully calculated evaluation of all possible alternatives by individuals in any specific situation. Nor does it imply that selection is necessarily careful, precise, accurate, or adequate. It means simply that whichever alternatives are eventually selected by acting individuals and manifested in the conduct of those individuals are selected according to an understandable "system" of selection. A competent outside observer should be able to understand the selection, the process by which it was arrived at, its

relationship to empirical means, and how it is expected to aid in the attainment of certain ends. It is obviously not necessary that the most efficient, logical, or desirable alternative be selected. Neither is error in selection nor accident and miscalculation precluded. What is necessary is that the subjective orientation of the individual can be imputed relative to his empirical conduct and his orientation to others within the social context in which action occurs.

It is obvious that according to this interpretation rationally oriented social conduct must occur within a normative order to which all participants give a least a minimum of loyalty. Without this it would not be possible to create and sustain social conduct. Reciprocity is an essential element of social conduct, but this is not present or possible without a normative order. The degree of commitment to a normative order and the symmetry of orientation to a social relationship on the part of the individuals involved need not be identical, but both must exist to a certain degree if social relationships are to exist.

This brief summary will be used in the subsequent section of this chapter, and in later portions of this report.

### C. PROPOSITIONS REGARDING EXPECTED FINDINGS

In this section the procedure will be to outline a realistic dramaturgic model and to take note of the conception of theatre implicit in it, and then to describe briefly the process of emergence developed and applied by Mead.<sup>23</sup> This

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23. The process of emergence relative to the development of self is most clearly illustrated in George H. Mead,

model and process will form the sociological frame of reference within which the project develops. They will be the bases upon which propositions regarding both the ritualistic model and emergence of the play are based.

An abstract of Goffman's realistic model would include the following elements:

1. Interaction is meaningful and is the result of a rational calculus, i.e., it is social.
2. Social action is logical and rational in terms of an empirical means-ends schema and subjective motive.
3. Social action is performed by individuals playing roles which embody the attributes and characteristics of what Mead defined as a self.
4. Reality, or the definition of a situation, is created by individuals participating in a dramaturgic performance in which the performer(s) edit the information available to the audience. Successful control of information, expertise in performance techniques, and careful preparation of the setting tend to insure that the definition of a situation held by those staging the performance will be accepted by all participants, including the audience.

This model of social action is analogous to a specific category of theatrical performance. However, this form is largely implicit and is not described by Goffman.<sup>24</sup> In this type of theatre the creation of an illusion of reality onstage is seen as a major performance objective. At this point the type of drama that underlies the realistic model will be briefly described. The vast majority of dramatic products

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Mind, Self, and Society, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967, c. 1934).

24. It is quite probable that Goffman's work is rooted in the work of Kenneth Burke and other analysts of symbolic interaction rather than being based on observation of actual theatrical activities.

and performances in the Western tradition from the late nineteenth century up to and including the present probably should be included in this category.

Within the context of a play action is lineal. It is rational from the perspective of the viewer and the performer when the performer is considered as a character.<sup>25</sup> Elaborate stage settings, props, lighting, costuming, make-up, and other elements of stagecraft are employed to further and help create an illusion of reality. Plots of plays dictate production and performance techniques. Elements of stagecraft are selected on the basis of the demands of the script. The viewer is limited only to what he sees and hears while sitting in a darkened auditorium. Conditions are created that make possible an almost total control of information. Extraneous information as well as information which might tend to discredit or destroy the illusion of reality is eliminated as much as possible. Such information is presented backstage only. Viewers are usually segregated from performers by the proscenium arch, but a thrust or other type of stage may be used. When a mishap occurs and backstage activity occurs in the presence of the audience there is an attempt to incorporate it into the natural flow of events so the audience will be

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25. This does not preclude the introduction of obviously irrational or insane behavior on the part of characters any more than similar behavior is excluded from everyday social life. Such behavior may be and often is included in realistic dramatic performance. Irrationality or insanity on the part of a character may be considered as a deviation from the point of view of both a viewer and that of other characters.



unaware that the illusion of reality has been broken.<sup>26</sup> This type of drama conforms to Stanislavski's conception of the invisible fourth wall.<sup>27</sup>

The conduct of characters onstage usually replicates that found in everyday life. The difference is that it takes place in a room open to view because one wall of the room in which it occurs has been removed. Verbal communication constitutes the major performance technique, but it is supplemented by carefully controlled gestures, movement, "expressions given off," and directorial guidance.

Speech follows a rigid script. The script is a special form of literature, and drama may be considered, from one

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26. An example of this, among numerous examples which might be mentioned, occurred in a production of Shaw's Saint Joan at the Alley Theatre in Houston, Texas. The content of Scene IV is a conversation between Warwick and Cauchon which takes place in a military tent. A bear skin rug is on the floor of the tent. Scene V is placed in the Cathedral at Rheims. A conversation between Joan and Dunois is seen. Between scenes those responsible for clearing the stage left the rug on the floor. It was incongruous in a cathedral so the actor playing Dunois picked it up to use as a wrapper or comforter. He then handed it to a page who carried it off stage as the scene continued. The action was natural and those not familiar with the production probably did not notice that backstage business was taking place onstage. This type of incorporation of error is common.

27. This is one element of the performance situation that is integrated into the "Stanislavski System" or "Method" of actor training and performance theory and practice. This system embodies a theory of performance which is similar, if not identical, to that found in Goffman's work. Constantin Stanislavski, An Actor Prepares, trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1936). A good critique of the evolution and application of the Stanislavski System in the United States is contained in two special issues of Tulane Drama Review, T25 and T26, Vol. 9, Nos. 1 and 2, 1964. These volumes are composed of a series of interviews with leading directors, actors, teachers, and producers who have been responsible for the evolution and application of Stanislavski's techniques in the United States.

point of view, as spoken literature.<sup>28</sup> Audience members are able to identify with characters who create and participate in the lineally developing action of the play. The viewer could, possibly, take the role of the actor onstage since the character usually participates in behavior similar to that experienced, sometimes vicariously and at other times actually, by the viewer. This is true in regard to categories of action rather than specific content.

The theatrical performance outlined here is only one of many categories that may be classified as dramatic art. Alternative categories of drama may provide the basis for the formulation of alternative models. It is expected that a dramaturgic model based on ritualistic theatre will reverse the conception of social action found in Goffman's model. Dramatic performance in ritualistic theatre is expected to vary considerably in terms of form, content, and action when compared to realistic theatre, but it will still conform to the basic structure of drama.

The following propositions regarding a ritualistic model reverse the items which compose the model developed by Goffman:

1. Action does not occur as a result of a rational calculus. Action occurs along a perception-action axis rather than inhering in a social act involving perception, cognition, and then action or reaction.

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28. Artaud, op. cit. As previously noted this is the conception of theatre against which Artaud directed his polemical attacks. Many experimental theatrical groups agree with Artaud regarding the unwarranted position of literature in drama. This is probably true of most such groups, however, Artaud left no program or system as an alternative in performance.

2. Action does not develop lineally, but is the result of the juxtaposition of isolated images and scenes that are unrelated sequentially. Each represents a variation on a single or multiple themes.
3. Individual performers will not play roles, but will present experiential states. An individual actor during the course of a single performance will usually present numerous such states or images, none of which will be identified with a role or character as these are normally thought of. They will be isolated in terms of content and action.
4. An illusion or replication of reality will not be created during performance. The simultaneous presence of the above conditions, in conjunction with reactions created by individual audience members will be the objective of performance. The definition of the situation will not be a task for performers, but will depend on audience perception and experience rather than on the ability to manage impressions on the part of performers.

Since there is no effort to create an illusion of reality in this type of performance most elements of conventional stagecraft will be considerably reduced, altered, or eliminated.<sup>29</sup> Dialogue similar to that of a scripted play may be used from time to time, but it is of considerably less importance than in realistic plays. Methods of communication other than speech will be employed. Verbal and non-verbal sound in the form of chants, quotations, and random sounds will be more important than dialogue. Rhythmic and non-rhythmic incongruous non-dance movement, gesture, stylized music, and other artificially created sounds all contribute to the performance. There will be no need for a proscenium

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29. The clearest exposition of the reasons for the elimination of these elements is in Jerzy Grotowski, Towards a Poor Theatre (Holstebro, Denmark: Odin Teatret Forlag, 1968). The first Chapter, "Towards a Poor Theatre," pp. 15-25 explores in part the technological obsolescence of conventional performance.

arch, nor will a thrust or other conventional stage be necessary. Physical boundries and structures normally serve as a partial definition of space, but in ritualistic theatre behavior will define space for the most part. An actor may, in this situation, go "backstage" while remaining physically present onstage and in full view of the audience.<sup>30</sup>

After describing the ritualistic play and the model based on it a detailed discussion of the emergence of the play will be undertaken. In terms of actual sequence it would of course be natural to study emergence and then the product of emergence. However, in discussing emergence it will often be necessary to refer to elements of the finished play as the genesis and maturation of these elements are traced. The process itself should be more easily understood if the play is known beforehand.

The study of emergence will be based on the process described by Mead in relation to the self.<sup>31</sup> Mead's process of emergence may be summarized as follows:<sup>32</sup>

1. Behavior precedes self consciousness and helps to create it, i.e., the self emerges through experience.
2. Gesture and communication are prior to mind or self. Action determines mind rather than, as in instinct

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30. This is clearly illustrated in the Living Theatre's production of Paradise Now. Another example may be found in the Open Theatre production of Jean Claude van Itallie's The Serpent: A Ceremony in 13 Sections (New York: Athenium, 1969).

31. Mead, op. cit.

32. This summary is based on Paul Pfuetze's analysis of Mead's work, Self, Society, Existence (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 57.

psychology, mind determining action. As the self develops action and mind become reciprocally causal.

3. The past conditions the present and determines the future.
4. The process of emergence is temporal and it involves continual reformulation of the object (the self) as a result of reality testing.
5. There is no end point in this process; no ultimate stage at which point the object attains its final form.

This pattern will be the scheme according to which propositions will be formulated regarding the emergence of the ritualistic play.

In ritualistic theatre the objective involves the creation of an artistic product which is nonrational. Form, content, and action in the play do not conform to the conception of rational or social action being used in this report. In spite of this there is reason to expect that the process of emergence will be a rational process participated in by rational individuals. The following propositions regarding the emergence of the play are patterned on those used to describe the emergence of self:

1. Behavior antecedent to the project itself will determine the proposed course of future development. This includes the individual experience of project directors and actors, and their mutual experience in previous projects, plus influences from the theatrical tradition in which they work.<sup>33</sup>

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33. This tradition is short, but is found in the work of Grotowski, Schechner, Chaikin, the Becks, Artaud, et. al. See also George Wellwarth, The Theatre of Protest and Paradox: Developments in the Avant-Garde Drama (New York: New York University Press, 1967); Mordecai Gorelik, New Theatres for Old (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1962, c. 1940), pp. 335-350; Nikolai Gorchakov, The Vakhtangov School of Stage Art (Moscow: Moscow Foreign Languages Publishing House). There are also elements of Oriental theatre in this tradition.

2. The play itself is analogous to the evolving self, and the project will involve "programed" sequences of events leading to the goal. It is not possible to define the goal in detail prior to the achievement of it.
3. Considering the project as a whole, it is expected that both successful and unsuccessful progressive experience will determine the course of the ongoing action.
4. In one restricted sense the objective, i.e., the construction of the play, will remain constant. However, the specific content of that objective will be continually reformulated in a search for performable, artistically valid images that conform to the general category of ritualistic drama.
5. At some point the object will be considered complete. This point will be postponed as long as possible. Even at this point it will be recognized that the object has not reached its most desirable state. It will be, in one sense, perpetually unfinished, but the objective will have been attained as far as possible within the limits of the time available to and the talents possessed by project members.

It is expected that the process of emergence will be a rational means-ends procedure. It will involve training and the application of appropriate techniques to a series of specific problems in a sequence similar to that briefly described by Grotowski relative to a similar project.<sup>34</sup> As a total project action should develop lineally and conform to rational models. Ends are selected and various means to achieve those ends are then employed. On the other hand, the bases for formulation and selection of specific activities ultimately included in the finished product are not rational but expressive. These will depend on highly subjective and uncategorized

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<sup>34</sup>. "Program Notes," for the production of Apocalypsis Cum Figuris by the Theatre Laboratory: Wroclaw, Poland.

artistic criteria. The process of social action involved in the evolution of the play will contrast sharply with those evidenced in the finished play.

It is expected that comparison of realistic and ritualistic dramaturgic models will reveal that each is uniquely applicable to certain micro- and macrosocial events and processes. In the realistic model developed by Goffman individuals or teams carefully and rationally plan performance in accordance with predetermined goals. The management of impression and the resulting definition of the situation, if performance is successful, serve to accomplish these goals. It is suggested that this model is applicable to the analysis of conduct in carefully controlled situations and in traditional societies where it is relatively easy to make allowances in performance for most potential contingencies. Social situations such as these often include misunderstanding asymmetrical commitment, failure of role performance and other elements that may prove disconcerting to the actors involved. Staging of performance is, in part, an effort to reduce or eliminate such factors.

It is proposed that in situations such as riot, emergencies, and natural disasters, when these events are treated dramaturgically, a realistic model has little utility. Similarly, as spacial mobility increases and as the temporal dimension is introduced and extended an individual or team would be expected to progressively lose control of some of the elements necessary for the successful staging of performances in accordance with a realistic model. Under these circumstances, and

in other social situations and conditions, if conduct is to be analyzed as performance, it seems necessary to develop and apply alternative dramaturgic models.

Performance of a riot considered dramaturgically and including communication by contagion, appears to conform more to a ritualistic than a realistic model. In a similar manner it might be expected that continuous changes in status in a ritualistic model on the part of actors will be analogous to the serial occupation of statuses and performance of roles in the day-to-day life of a spacially mobile individual in an urban setting. With a realistic model each change in status is considered as an isolated performance. From this point of view all other statuses, even though they constitute performances as well, are considered analytically as backstage preparation for the particular performance being staged or analyzed at any moment.<sup>35</sup> It is expected that circumstances such as this may be analyzed as ongoing contiguous events forming larger wholes when a ritualistic model is employed.

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35. Realistic theatre, as distinguished from the dramaturgical model which is analogous to it, obviously encompasses changes in status within the context of a single play. Characters move from one status to another and present alternative fronts in a manner similar to that found in everyday social life.



### CHAPTER III -- A REALISTIC DRAMATURGIC MODEL OF ACTION

As stated previously, in this report Goffman's model will serve as the basis for comparison of realistic and ritualistic models. Other models such as the dramatistic conception developed by Burke might have been used.<sup>1</sup> Sociologists such as Duncan have this symbolic interaction perspective as the basis for the study of social interaction.<sup>2</sup> In his dramatistic exposition Burke is concerned primarily with motives and the explanation of behavior in terms of symbols, including how symbols "acquire" meaning and determine action. The dramatistic act consists of five parts: the act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose.<sup>3</sup> Even though symbolic behavior is grounded ultimately in empirical conditions, it appears to be an autonomous or semi-autonomous sphere.<sup>4</sup> Since Goffman's formulation is more directly analogous to theatrical performance Goffman will serve as the realistic example. It is quite probable that Goffman's work is based on Burke more than on any other source. Goffman, however, discusses dramaturgy in an empirical and structural manner.

Goffman begins by defining interaction as the "...reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's action when

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1. Burke, op. cit., Appendix, "On Human Behavior, Considered 'Dramatistically'," pp. 274-294.

2. Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Symbols in Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968). Also, Duncan's introduction to the second revised edition of Permanence and Change.

3. Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), p. xv.

4. Burke, Permanence, op. cit., pp. 274-5.

in one another's immediate physical presence."<sup>5</sup> According to a strict construction this definition might include almost any behavior of two or more individuals in a face-to-face situation. That is to say, behavior not usually considered as social would be included in the definition. It seems clear from all of Goffman's examples and from his discussion that this unrestricted interpretation of the term interaction was not what was intended. The term appears to have been broadly defined so as to insure that all expression by actors would be considered as communication rather than merely considering verbal content as the medium of interaction.<sup>6</sup> All the examples cited by Goffman involve social interaction, and none include collective behavior. The most frequent citations are from a study of a traditional society undertaken by Goffman and reported in his Ph.D. dissertation.<sup>7</sup>

Individuals plan action to accomplish predetermined goals. A discoverable and understandable means-ends scheme is adhered to by all participants in an interaction sequence.<sup>8</sup> Rationality is internal to the situation in which actors find themselves. Goals are designated, and the means selected to achieve those goals may be expected to be reasonably successful.

In Goffman's model individuals portray characters. They perform roles as these characters. Action is initiated after

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5. Goffman, op. cit., p. 15.

6. ibid., p. 2.

7. ibid., p. xi1

8. ibid., p. 29.

weighing alternatives and estimating probable results. Much of this may be done out of consciousness as a routine series of actions in the ongoing life of each actor. It occurs unnoticed, or almost so, within an intricate web of reciprocal and routinized social relationships. The type of individual who performs in the dramaturgical social action of a realistic model conforms to Mead's conception of the self.<sup>9</sup>

Using analogy Goffman describes social action as dramatic performance. A group of people, i.e., a group of professional stage actors or individuals interacting in everyday social life, control performance by their overall and ongoing ability to edit what becomes known to those they are interacting with or performing for. The creation of reality or an illusion of reality that will be accepted by all participants is the function of the actors performing as characters. Activities onstage are initiated and sustained with this objective in mind. Backstage areas are provided where performances are rehearsed and mutual agreement on meanings to be conveyed and impressions to be created is made. Goffman writes, "If an individual is to give expression to ideal standards during his performance, then he will have to forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with these standards."<sup>10</sup> Mistakes, incongruent and incompatible behavior, and other discrepant activity is noted and eliminated to the extent that this is possible. When a performance is considered to be sufficiently perfected it is brought onstage and performed for the viewing

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9. Mead, op. cit.

10. Goffman, op. cit., p. 41.

audience. Performance must be believable, consistent, and as nearly faultless as possible. Moment to moment individual needs must be subordinated to the needs of performance:<sup>11</sup>

"The expressive coherence that is required in performances points out a crucial discrepancy between our all-too-human selves and our socialized selves. As human beings we are presumably creatures of variable impulse with moods and energies that change from one moment to the next. As characters put on for an audience, however, we must not be subject to ups and downs...A certain bureaucratization of the spirit is expected so that we can be relied upon to give a perfectly homogeneous performance at every appointed time."

In the phrase of Thomas, the performers attempt to manipulate and control the definition of the situation.<sup>12</sup> When an individual appears before others he usually has some interest in controlling their behavior vis-a-vis himself, and this may be done by mobilizing his resources to create a definition of the situation favorable to himself and his ends.<sup>13</sup> "While in the presence of others, the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure."<sup>14</sup> Individually and collectively performers attempt to continually construct and reconstruct reality in terms of their own objectives. In social life actors alternate as audience members. Goffman views this necessary interchange of

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11. ibid., p. 56.

12. W.I. Thomas, On Social Organization and Social Personality, ed. Morris Janowitz (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), Section III, "Social Personality: The Definition of the Situation," pp. 117-191.

13. Goffman, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

14. ibid., p. 30.

statuses as one of the major deficiencies of a dramaturgic model.<sup>15</sup> It is never possible for performers to have absolute editorial control, but the situation is structured so as to make it difficult and embarrassing for others to introduce alternative definitions of the situation. The task of performers is eased somewhat by the moral claim they have. Both performers and audiences bring certain expectations to the interaction. These facilitate the creation of a desired definition of the situation.<sup>16</sup>

"In stressing the fact that the initial definition of the situation projected by an individual tends to provide a plan for the co-operative activity that follows -- in stressing this action point of view -- we must not overlook the crucial fact that any projected definition of the situation also has a distinctive moral character. It is this moral character of projections that will chiefly concern us in this report. Society is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will value and treat him in an appropriate way. Connected with this principle is a second, namely that an individual who implicitly or explicitly signifies that he has certain social characteristics ought in fact to be what he claims he is. In consequence, when an individual projects a definition of the situation and thereby makes an implicit or explicit claim to be a person of a particular kind, he automatically exerts a moral demand upon others, obliging them to value and treat him in the manner that persons of his kind have a right to expect."

In theatre and in social life performance is facilitated by the use of stage technique, signs, symbols, and other equipment. These tend to increase both information control and consensus regarding the definition being fostered. The effect created is further enhanced by a form of ritual puri-

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15. ibid., p. ix.

16. ibid., pp. 12-13.

fication of performers by limiting out-of-character contacts with audiences.<sup>17</sup> This also prevents detection of the fact that, "when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does his behavior as a whole."<sup>18</sup>

Performers arrange, to the best of their ability, the physical surroundings, time of performance, the "script," duration of performance, and cues which determine the development of the performance. As a result of this what is seen and can become known to the audience is largely predetermined. Information control is as nearly total as possible.

At the level of performance each performer has a restricted view of the total activity. Hence each has or may have slightly different versions of the total performance, of the meaning of the lineally developing action. Performance is therefore always and unavoidably ambiguous from the point of view of each actor. The various interpretations of the meaning of ongoing action are usually somewhat contradictory and separate but usually only to a slight degree. The meaning for each actor coincides to a large degree with the meaning held by each other actor and ambiguity is peripheral.

Goffman defines performance as, "...all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants."<sup>19</sup> In other

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17. ibid., p. 67.

18. ibid., p. 35.

19. ibid., p. 15. This definition is almost precisely

words performance and interaction are identical. The influence of any actor is enhanced by the fact that each participant presents a front which signals other actors regarding how he should be treated. Front is made to seem authentic by concealment of errors, drudgery, dirty work, and other similarly negatively evaluated and discrepancy producing elements.<sup>20</sup> Performers foster the impression that their current routine is the only, or the most important one in which they participate.<sup>21</sup> This includes the impression that the current relationship to the immediate audience is unique as well as the fact that the current performance is the only one that counts.<sup>22</sup> Performance involves dramatically inflated actions, counter-actions, and terminating replies.<sup>23</sup> Unity must be maintained between performers in order to obscure the fact that performance is always false in some sense. Performance may involve a thorough script, but the "...vast part involving 'expression given off' is often determined by meagre stage directions."<sup>24</sup> Elements of "expressions given off" are difficult to describe specifically either in theatre or everyday life, but they are an important component of performance. As with other elements of performance, they are controlled as much as possible by the performers.

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the same as the definition of interaction which was quoted previously.

20. ibid., p. 43.

21. ibid., p. 48.

22. ibid., p. 47.

23. ibid., p. 72.

24. ibid., p. 73.

It was mentioned that performance is always false in some manner. Audiences and actors seem to involve themselves in a collusive act. Once a performer signifies an intention to convey a certain impression the others usually act as if such an impression had been conveyed. There is an implicit intention to avoid open conflict regarding the definition of the situation, so a working consensus is established and re-enforced by the "as if." This is not as cynical as it sounds since performers, having assumed certain masks, come to believe in and integrate into their own personality the role being performed.<sup>25</sup>

In theatrical terms Goffman's model involves two or more actors performing a scripted, plotted, and thoroughly rehearsed play. Inherent in the drama performed is an effort to create an illusion of reality onstage. Action within the context of the dramatic event conforms to the conception of meaningful and rational social conduct.<sup>26</sup> Within the circumstances of the play actor A as character X makes a statement or performs an activity of some sort. Actor B as character Y reacts to the action initiated by X. Reaction is in conformance with the circumstances of the play and the writing of the script. Any number of additional actions may be begun, and additional actors may be introduced as characters. Each will contribute to the furtherance of the lineal plot and the solution of dramatic problems. Action develops sequentially in a rational

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25. ibid., p. 19.

26. This is true in relation to the definition given in the previous chapter.



fashion, though not necessarily in a logical manner.<sup>27</sup>

When the realistic model is applied to social life it is not always clear who the audience is. At times each performer is treated as audience to the momentary performer. Individuals alternate between the two statuses. Normal social interaction obviously conforms to this type of serial substitution. At other times it seems to be implicitly assumed that there is in actuality an audience analogous to the one found in a theatre auditorium. In either case there is meaningful social interaction between individuals employing verbal, gestural, and "expressions given off" methods of communication.

Performance may be by individuals, or in some cases by teams.<sup>28</sup> Performers form one team and the audience is the other team. The essentials of performance are not altered in everyday life whether a team or an individual occupies each status.

A final aspect of the realistic model should be mentioned at this point. In the social application of this model interaction is conceptualized in terms of scenes rather than completed plays.<sup>29</sup> The model therefore has a static quality.

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27. Linear development of a play may be determined by insane or illogical conduct on the part of characters. Attributing logic to behavior would involve economy of action and faultless evaluation or selection of alternatives according to a norm of efficiency. The category of rational conduct is much more inclusive than this.

28. Goffman, op. cit., Chapter II, "Teams," pp. 77-105. The inclusion of teams is implicit in the discussion to this point. The structure of the performance unit and the process of performance as described by Goffman are not altered if either teams or individuals occupy the statuses of performer and audience.

29. ibid., p. 72.

The method is to abstract a scene from life, a small unit of interaction, and treat it dramaturgically. Previous statuses, usually the one immediately prior to the one being analyzed, are considered as backstage, rehearsal, or discrepant conduct rather than as statuses and performances in and of themselves. The model cannot be used to analyze dramatically an integrated series of interaction situations.

This discussion of Goffman's model makes it apparent that the model conforms to the four points mentioned in the abstract of the model. Action is meaningful and develops lineally. Performers interact as selves. They arrange performances in order to create a desired definition of the situation or version of reality.

The dramaturgic model of social interaction is analogous to specific categories of dramatic performance. Realistic and naturalistic plays which are literary and "psychological" are comparable to the model. Playwrights such as Chekhov, among others, wrote plays which are similar to the outline of Goffman's model. In terms of acting or performance technique and directorial principles the model closely conforms to the Stanislavski System or "The Method" as it is popularly known in the United States.<sup>30</sup>

An accurate replication of the realistic model in an actual theatrical situation may be found in Stanislavski's notes for the production of The Seagull.<sup>31</sup> These notes give

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30. See footnote "27" Chapter II.

31. The Seagull Produced by Stanislavsky, production score by K.S. Stanislavsky, ed. Professor S.D. Balukhaty,

a detailed description of the Moscow Art Theatre production of the play. The performance and staging techniques mentioned by Goffman are in evidence.

Goffman's model conforms to a conventional and extant category of theatre. This type of drama is less than a century old although there are continuities between it and previous dramatic conventions. Since the invention of this type of drama several other theatrical forms have come into existence. Many of these do not incorporate rational action in performance, and they vary in other respects from more realistic categories of drama. In the next chapter a non-realistic play which is typical of one of these newer forms will be summarized. The play will serve as a basis for the development of an alternative dramaturgical model.

## CHAPTER IV -- A RITUALISTIC PLAY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO DRAMA

### A. CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES BETWEEN VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE

Theatrical performance analogous to that of a realistic model has been the overwhelmingly preponderant type of performance in Western theatre during the present century. This type of performance may be considered as historically unique. It is contended here that if everyday life in society is analogous to dramatic performance there is no reason to assume that only one specific type of dramatic performance is applicable in sociological analysis. If life imitates art, or conversely if art mirrors life, an endless controversy with which we need not concern ourselves here, then it would be reasonable to expect dramatic performance to vary as forms of interaction vary from one society to another, from one historical period to another, and between different classes or institutional spheres of activity within a given society.

A multitude of variations would not eliminate the possibility of discovering a structure of interaction that is spacio-temporally constant.<sup>1</sup> However, techniques and strategies of performance might be expected to vary considerably, even within a single society. Different performance techniques might be found in, say, a du Pont mansion and a commune inhabited by drug using members of a youth subculture. Rigid

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1. Parameters such as emergence and relativity, as defining criteria in an interaction, may lead to the discovery of constant structures of interaction. Peter McHugh, Defining the Situation, (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1968).

segregation of backstage and onstage conduct probably would not be similar in both cases. Enforcement and clarity of performance rules could be expected to vary considerably. It is no doubt true that in both situations individuals and teams would stage performances in their respective settings, but the differences in these performances might be greater than their similarities.

It may be assumed, for present purposes, that the artistic experience as such is constant over time within any particular field of art. Analysis of such assumptions is not within the conceptual frame of reference of an empirically grounded field such as sociology. The quality of the experience of the viewer and creator of art objects produced during various historical periods may, hypothetically, be considered as similar or identical. Empirical artifacts might be analyzed from many varying perspectives without touching on the subjective and ultimate experience of art.

Dramatists as disparate as Shakespeare, Chekhov, and Beckett may share certain goals. Yet the form, content, and action which inhere in the works of art of each obviously differ considerably. In drama as in other arts there are continuities that are easily ignored, partially because they are so obvious. Basic structures that are not historically specific may be discerned in art products of great empirical divergence. These are in addition to such absolutes as artistic or aesthetic qualities. Painters by definition traditionally apply paint to canvas or some other, usually

flat, surface. It is assumed that they somehow share in and create a common artistic experience. Discontinuities may be found primarily in the elements of form and content. These are elements which, if artistic models are analogous to social life, would reflect the social context in which the artist is immersed, and they would be historically specific. In relation to the three dramatists mentioned earlier, it is apparent that each uses the same materials and structure. In each case form, content, and action are dissimilar. Analysis of continuities and discontinuities is beyond the scope of this project, however, in relation to the implicit assumptions of the realistic model a few of the broader elements must be briefly noted.

Goffman's model is compatible with the theatrical conventions of men such as Chekhov. In this category of performance actors onstage interact in a socially meaningful manner. By control of setting and through the application of performance technique there is an attempt to control the definition of the situation that is accepted by all who are present. Audience members do not interact overtly and directly with each other in the sense that they take account of each other as audience members, but they do share certain collective characteristics.<sup>2</sup> As a team those onstage take account of the audience.

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2. Herbert Blumer, "Collective Behavior," contains the basic definitions and descriptions of collective behavior, Principles of Sociology, ed. Alfred McClung Lee, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., Revised edition, 1951), Part Four, pp. 167-222.

Performance of the work of the three men mentioned previously involves the shared convention of segregated audience and performance teams. Performance is based on a script in all three cases. Various categories of form, content, and action are present within these shared conventions.

As mentioned previously Chekhov conforms closely to Goffman's model. Plots in Chekhov involve characters engaged in realistic conversation. They participate in ongoing lineal proceedings entailing conflict and tension and leading to release or resolution in terms of existential and psychological conditions. Attention to detail is of great importance in serving to create an illusion of reality or heightened reality. Audience members may empathetically participate and identify with characters, but they are expected not to comment verbally. Stanislavski's conception of the invisible fourth wall serves to characterize this type of theatre. According to this conception of performance the stage is a "real" place, a room or garden where real people interact. One wall of the room is raised to permit the audience to view the lives of these particular individuals during specific moments of their lives.<sup>3</sup> The audience is outside looking in or eavesdropping. A major

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3. The recognition of the removal of the fourth wall is not new. In the first professionally produced play by an American playwright a country bumpkin, Jonathan, views a play without realizing it. He watches the play within the play while under the impression that he is overhearing someone in the next building. He demands his money back because there has been no show, no jugglers, etc. This eighteenth century comedy of manners opened on April 16, 1787 at the John Street Playhouse in New York. Royall Tyler, *The Contrast*, in *American Drama*, ed., Alan S. Downer, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1960), pp. 13-47.

problem of performance is to create a version of reality that tends to negate the fact that the fourth wall has been removed. It is specific to this type of performance that large dramatic actions are deemphasized. As a corollary of minimal dramatic action in the plot, the circumstances of the play are contingent upon the exploration of character.

Shakespeare preceded the dramatic convention of creating an illusion of reality onstage. The structure of the dramatic situation is similar to that employed by Chekhov, but form and content vary while action remains remarkably similar. Action is lineal and cumulative. Plot proceeds in terms of sequence and dramatized historical event, but the major strategy does not involve an attempt to create a replica of reality. A banner carried by a page may serve to indicate a battlefield, or a line of dialogue introduces the location of action.<sup>4</sup> Spacio-temporal continuity is not maintained. Richard II, for example arrives on the coast of Wales, as if returning by magic to his kingdom (Act II, Scene II). His armies have

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4. This is somewhat similar to performance technique in some Oriental theatres. In such cases a chair may become a mountain, or a ladder an ascent to heaven. Conventional signs such as a red veil for a bride, a chalk white face for a villan, or strips of paper hanging from the ear of a character to indicate he is someone who has died and returned to earth serve as familiar indicators of circumstances and characters. Stylized ritualistic pantomime which is elaborately formal serves the same purpose in Kabuki theatre. In a similar manner in Noh a simple tap on the knee may indicate great excitement, and an all purpose fan may be manipulated in a formal manner to indicate any number of moods or actions.

The appearance of a prop man dressed in black so as to be "invisible," the relative paucity of props, the use of stylized gesture, and other elements parallel the ritualistic theatrical performance in the West.



vanished, his allies are dead, defeated, gone over to the other side or are engaged elsewhere, and he begins the journey to his inevitable disgrace and death. There is little explanation of how he got there. He is suddenly faced with a formidable and undefeatable foe. Some of these things are stated, others simply ignored. He is given a long speech in which he reviews his present state and accurately forecasts his dismal future. The important thing is to get on with the action, to his loss of the throne and eventual death. Lukacs has suggested that Shakespeare is concerned with exploration of historic event as propaganda in contrast with the exploration of character in playwrights of the industrial societies.<sup>5</sup> This appears to be true of the histories, comedies, problem plays and most others with the possible exception of such tragedies as Hamlet and King Lear. Realistic dialogue is interspersed with speeches made directly to the audience to inform them of mental states of characters, to establish continuity or set action. Audiences participate directly by commenting freely on the plays while they are in progress.<sup>6</sup> The vaguest of props may symbolize a banquet hall or dungeon. The creation of an illusion of reality in comedies, tragedies and histories is not entirely absent, but is not a necessary element of performance.

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5. Georg Lukacs, "The Sociology of Modern Drama," Tulane Drama Review, Summer, 1965, p. 146.

6. Harbage dissents from this view in his Shakespeare's Audience (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941). His view is that Shakespeare's audience has been unjustly accused of being literally and figuratively "groundlings." The worst of them were, largely, skilled craftsmen with the rudiments of an education. They could and did appreciate the poetry of Shakespeare.

Henry V arrives in France and is spirited about the country as if by magic. He is a hero king who fights the victorious battle of Harfleur at the beginning of Act II. Most of Act IV is taken up with Agincourt where ten thousand French and only twenty-nine English are killed (Act IV, Scene VIII). Military struggle, political maneuver, and historical sequence carries the action rather than exploration of character and the minute creation or replication of everyday social reality. This is a matter of emphasis and perspective since there is obviously exploration of character also. Henry V is developed as Prince Henry, Prince of Wales throughout Henry IV, Parts I and II. This exploration continues into Henry V, but the emphasis is on political, historical sequences. The plays are plotted and lineal, but direct overt verbal and gestural communication occurs not only between actors, but between actors and audience and between individuals within the audience.

Both Shakespeare and Chekhov as representative dramatists of different periods, may be considered as literary figures. In the plays of both action is social and rational within the conception of these categories being employed here. The poetry of Shakespeare and the prose of Chekhov achieve their full potential only when performed on a stage, however as purely literary pieces they make sense. They may be read as is a novel, poem or essay. Beckett, on the other hand, represents a non-literary tradition and is, dramatically considered, a non-literary man.<sup>7</sup> In spite of this he utilizes

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7. Plays such as Endgame and Waiting for Godot, and

the raw material of performance common to the other two men. That is to say, his work remains within the basic structure of drama. He writes scripted plays that approach pure ritual. They make little sense if read. Beckett's plays are in a tradition that varies considerably from realistic drama. It is doubtful if his plays contain characters that constitute selves, and they probably do not participate in ongoing projects involving social interaction.

The plays of Beckett abandon realism in terms of content, form, and action. Esslin has traced this tradition in his definitive study of the Theatre of the Absurd. His discussion makes clear the cleavage in terms of form, content, and action between Beckett on the one hand, and the more traditional or classical dramatists on the other.<sup>8</sup>

"Because the Theatre of the Absurd projects its author's personal world, it lacks objectively valid characters. It cannot show the clash of opposing temperaments or study human passions locked in conflict, and is therefore not dramatic in the accepted sense of the term. Nor is it concerned with telling a story in order to communicate some moral or social lesson ...The action in a play...is not intended to tell a story but to communicate a pattern of poetic images...The whole play Waiting for Godot is a complex poetic image made up of a complicated pattern of subsidiary images and themes, which are interwoven like the themes of a musical composition, not, as in most

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Beckett's other plays have been published. They can therefore be read, but not in the conventional sense. They have little meaning in this form. They are vehicles for performance only. Other playwrights such as Peter Weiss, Harold Pinter, Jean-Claude van Itallie also have their plays published, but most of them do not thereby become literature.

8. Martin Esslin, The Theatre of the Absurd (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), p. 294

well-made plays, to present a line of development, but to make in the spectator's mind a total, complex impression of a basic, and static, situation.

"The Theatre of the Absurd, however, in abandoning psychology, subtlety of characterization, and plot in the conventional sense, gives the poetical element an incomparably greater emphasis. While the play with a linear plot describes a development in time, in a dramatic form that presents a concertized poetic image the play's extension in time is purely incidental. Expressing an intuition in depth, it should ideally be apprehended in a single moment, and only because it is physically impossible to present so complex an image in an instant does it have to be spread over a period of time. The formal structure of a play is therefore, merely a device to express a complex total image by unfolding it in a sequence of interacting elements. (Emphasis in the original).

In these plays there is interaction between characters while onstage which conforms to the definition of that term given by Goffman. However, this interaction is not of a social character, or at least only intermittently so. It cannot be understood on a level of meaningful adequacy as interaction. Conversation does not include a subjectively meaningful element in many, if not most, cases. It is the conversation of dream or madness wherein statement and counter-statement may not be related to each other or to the contingencies and exigencies of the empirical circumstances in which the characters find themselves.

Action is not sequential or rational, but random. There is no accumulative psychological element, no taking account of the other. Conduct is related or oriented to a sort of free association technique. It occurs in an undefined location for an unknown purpose, and both location and purpose are irrelevant. The plot proceeds as if it involved normal, every-

day conduct composed of the conversation which takes place between individuals in social interaction. Actually the disposition or probable disposition of the other character is not taken into account. Interaction between those onstage and in the auditorium and among those in the auditorium conforms to the pattern discernable during a Chekhovian performance. The content of understanding on the part of observers varies since it is not on the basis of rationality, but empathy or contagion. Performance is pure stimuli.

The category of theatre labeled "ritualistic" shares certain elements with absurd theatre. However, the tendencies of the latter are extended and performance technique is considerably altered. Ritualistic theatre in its current direction of development began with Artaud, although as noted below there are other antecedents.<sup>9</sup>

Artaud developed his concept of "Theatre of Cruelty" as a result of what he saw as the shortcomings of drama based on words.<sup>10</sup> In his view words as indicators of human states cover and conceal basic elements. The mystery of the human psyche or soul is hidden. Dark, dangerous, and glorious secrets are hidden there because they are too much for the

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9. This does not mean that there is unanimity regarding Artaud among directors in the ritualistic theatre. The Becks seem to agree with him, while Chaikin and Grotowski, each for different reasons, reject him in part. All, however, seem to agree with Artaud regarding the place of words in performance.

10. In discussing Artaud's interpretations and ideas it is impossible to ignore the fact that he was certified as insane and spent various periods in asylums. It is not possible to determine what portion of his work is an expression of artistic feelings or the ravings of a maniac.

human being to stand. This region is the seat of contradictions, impulses, and realities almost too terrible to face. Such things are not capable of being expressed in a literary form. Words conceal rather than reveal. The cruelty of the Theatre of Cruelty involved making these heretofore hidden elements manifest. Cruelty does not involve flagellation, torture, misery, poverty, or pain, but confrontation of the secrets of man hidden within him. These secrets are the essence of social and psychological life. According to Artaud theatre should force one to face these hidden things. Man has always avoided this terrible confrontation with himself by inventing subterfuges which were accepted as insights but which were actually camouflage. Men used words to attempt to get at something which could not be revealed by words.

Artaud did not develop a program for the implementation of his insight into the function of words in drama. He advocated spectacle and mystery without specifying how these elements were to be developed or used. He mentioned certain Oriental and primitive forms of performance as possible models.

Numerous theatrical groups in the United States and Europe followed Artaud's original insight. Various programs for training and performance have been invented. Some of the practitioners of this type of theatre reject Artaud as a precedent, but they perform the type of drama he advocated. The category of ritualistic theatre, in general, conforms to Artaud's insight. In most cases each individual theatre group has formulated a specific rationale.

Ritualistic theatre parallels in some ways the Theatre of the Absurd. This is true relative to the categories of action found within the plays, however, form and content vary considerably. There is also a tendency to deviate from the basic structure of drama, but this is not evident in the play described below. In some ritualistic plays the dividing line between dramatic performance and a happening is approached.<sup>11</sup> The relationship between performers and audiences, the spacial and status segregation may be reduced, or in some cases, almost eliminated. Many of the performance groups working in the ritualistic tradition have defined the status of the audience as that of co-creator, or co-participant in the ritual of performance. This tendency, to date, has been most extreme in such productions as Paradise Now, but it is evident in performances of Dionysus in 69, and the Firehouse Theatre production of Faust.<sup>12</sup> Performance of Paradise Now obliterates

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11. The happening as defined by Hansen differs from drama: "I would accept as a concise definition of happenings the fact that they are theatre pieces in the manner of collage and that each action or situation or event that occurs within their framework is related in the same way as each part of an abstract expressionist painting, i.e., not that it depicts a tree or nature or a brook or a famous event in history, but that this paint is doing this at this time, at this place. The happening is a collage of situations and events occurring over a period of time in space." Al Hansen, A Primer of Happenings & Time/Space Art (New York, Paris, Cologne: Something Else Press, Inc., 1965), p. 24. The happening may contain many elements of ritualistic performance in terms of technique, but it often lacks a theme and an audience. It is not performance so much as deliberately created experience.

12. Dionysus in 69 was presented by the Performance Group in New York City. Audiences participated in the action as is the case in their current production, Commune. At the beginning of the Firehouse Theatre's production of Faust each member of the audience as he enters the theatre is asked if

the segregation of performers and audience. Actors perform on the stage and in the house. Audiences sit in the house as well as onstage and backstage. There is, in fact, almost no backstage as such. The audience is free to go into dressing rooms and other areas normally considered as backstage. There is slight information control. Performance is fluid enough to permit spontaneous performance by outside groups or individual members of the audience.<sup>13</sup>

Ritualistic theatre relies heavily on rhythm, chants, stylized movement and gesture in performance. Little dialogue is used, and when it is an element of performance, it is often stylized. In contrast to the Theatre of the Absurd, in terms of performance technique, dialogue is not so much nonsensical as nonexistent. Other theatrical practitioners such as Meyerhold<sup>14</sup> and Vakhtangov<sup>15</sup> in Russia, and Brecht in Germany<sup>16</sup>

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he wants to see Faust or be Faust, i.e., observe or participate.

13. At one performance of Paradise Now at the Brooklyn Academy of Music a group of outside performers, the Pageant Players, took over the performance. They presented a play concerned with the killing of a military prisoner at the Persidio. They then solicited funds from the audience for the legal defense of other prisoners who had staged a sit-down strike. After this play within a play was concluded the performance of Paradise Now continued.

14. Gorelik, op. cit., pp. 335-350. Also, Norris Houghton, Moscow Rehearsals (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1962, c. 1936).

15. Gorchakov, op. cit.

16. In Epic theatre which was invented by Brecht and Piscator the audience is consciously alienated. They are at all times aware that they are in a theatre watching a performance rather than being drawn into empathetic participation. They are not supposed to witness an illusion of reality onstage.



have used some performance techniques which are similar to those of the ritualistic theatre. Social action within the plays produced by these men tended to be realistic and performances were at least semi-realistic. Plots developed through accumulated action to conflict and resolution, sometimes relying on parable as in The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui and The Caucasian Chalk Circle. Rational components were not dropped. Whatever the experience of the audience, there were elements of cognitive reflection and rational reasoning that contributed to their participation in the ongoing action of the performance.

Numerous theatrical groups presently perform what may be categorized as ritualistic theatre. Each of these groups differs sharply in terms of their rationale of performance. Some, such as the Living Theatre, view theatrical performance largely as a political act and are little concerned with theatre as art.<sup>17</sup> The Becks, founders of The Living Theatre, acknowledge their debt to Artaud. The Theatre Laboratory of Wroclaw, Poland which is the most widely known and imitated experimental theatre in the world at the present time is not overtly concerned with politics, preferring to concentrate exclusively on problems of art.<sup>18</sup> Artaud is rejected by the director, Grotowski, as impractical since he left no specific program of training and performance. Audiences are rigidly

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17. This is exemplified in the "Avignon Statement" issued on July 28, 1968 and published in The Drama Review, Spring, 1969, p. 45.

18. "External Order, Internal Intimacy," an interview

segregated, and limited to a specific number, but this policy seems to be under review.<sup>19</sup> The Open Theatre of New York City takes a middle position on these issues.<sup>20</sup> Audiences are encouraged to contribute to performances by the first group where little segregation is seen, they are considered as witnesses and assigned a specific role by the second group, and the third group appears to be somewhat undecided about the overt participation of the audience.<sup>21</sup> The first group has not worked out a rigid artistic manifesto and training program, the second has although these change as their experimentation continues, and the third group seems to be evolving them after several years of exploration. Content, in terms of performance technique, and action serves to unite these otherwise disparate groups.

These seminal groups have spawned numerous off-shoots and imitators.<sup>22</sup> Each group traces their roots to different

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with Jerzy Grotowski by Marc Fumaroli, The Drama Review, Fall, 1969, p. 172. Grotowski's views were further explored in "An Interview With Grotowski," The Drama Review, Fall, 1968, pp. 30-45.

19. Arthur Sainer, "The Metamorphosis of Grotowski," the village Voice, December 31, 1970, pp. 34, 51.

20. This view also seems to be changing, Margaret Croyden, "Burning Bridges is Natural," The New York Times, March 29, 1970, Sec. 2, pp. 1, 3.

21. The function of the audience is a source of controversy in current theatre. Maruice Blanc, "Participations and Responses," the village Voice, January 30, 1969, p. 43. Richard F. Shepard, "Not on Marquee, but in Spotlight: The Audience," The New York Times, February 7, 1969, p. 32. Walter Kerr, "If we Act, Shouldn't our Names be Listed, Too?" The New York Times, April 6, 1969, Equity, January, 1969, p. 15.

22. The Performance Group of New York City and Odin

sources: the Living Theatre to Artaud, the Theatre Laboratory to Stanislavski, Oriental Theatre and various elements from the history of traditional Western Theatre; and the Open Theatre to the Living Theatre to a limited extent, to Stanislavski, and a synthesis of various acting styles and psychological theories.

Almost none of their plays are published. They do not rely primarily on words, so there is little to publish. Based on newspaper accounts of performances, and viewing of the work of all three groups, there appears to be a similarity between their work in terms of content and action. All vary considerably from realistic models and from such non-realistic models as the Theatre of the Absurd. All utilize elements mentioned previously regarding ritualistic theatre, but each tends to emphasize different aspect of them. All have abandoned realistic theatre, and they have separated themselves from traditional theatre even more than have previous Western non-realistic theatrical groups.

#### B. A RITUALISTIC PLAY

The play to be summarized here opened officially on April 13, 1970 at the American Place Theatre in New York City. It has not yet been published. It is likely that the play

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Teatret of Holstebro, Denmark, among numerous other groups in the United States and Europe acknowledge Grotowski as the major influence on them. The Living Theatre has spawned many splinter groups and imitators in Europe. The Open Theatre was originally formed by former members of the Living Theatre. In its turn the Open Theatre has served as an influence on such theatres as the Firehouse theatre in Minneapolis which was formed by a former member.

will change slightly. A few images may be changed or eliminated.<sup>23</sup> At each performance there are minor variations in wording and the number of repetitions of certain words and phrases changes with each performance, depending on the feeling of the actors during any particular performance. The play usually has a running time of from sixty-five to seventy minutes. For purposes of convenience the sections and images have been numbered here. The same numbering sequence will be referred to in later chapters.

The subject of the play is death. Death is a theme uniting various images and scenes. For present purposes the play will simply be described as briefly as possible, and in the next chapter it will be analyzed. In addition, in the chapter on emergence, some of the images and speeches will be described in more detail. There are three major sections to the play, as follows: I -- The Dance on the Graves of the Dead, II -- The Pregnant Dying, and III -- The State of the Dying. The major sections are performed as complete sections composed of a series of images or scenes, but elements from Section I are interspersed throughout the play in the form of dead people being called up and possessing the living as a result of the dance on the graves of the dead. Subsections

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23. "The Initiation" was added at the second performance. Later a song was added to the first embalming. It is a song of farewell to the dead based on a Negro Spiritual, but sung in a sing-song, fractured version. It is possible that other changes will occur. All changes so far have involved inclusion of elements that were previously worked out in workshops, discarded, and then later included in the play.

of the major sections may be only momentary images, or more elaborate scenes. Between each major section and usually between subsections an actor announces the title of the next thing to be performed.

Prior to describing the play itself it should be noted that it is not possible to convey the richness of the images in a lineal medium. Empirical description of them is necessarily inadequate. Many images contain a multitude of details that are related directly or tangentially to the image itself and to the larger theme or subject of the play. There is no attempt here to include all details. Rather, the intention is to reproduce only sufficient detail for purposes of further discussion.

At the beginning of the play the stage is set with three "beds" upstage right, one parallel with the back of the stage, and one upstage left. These beds are simple pieces of plywood covered with white cloth and with two inch pipe for legs. They are homemade, and there is no attempt to conceal the crude workmanship. They are of various heights. Some of them are inclined rather than being parallel with the floor. Their placement is approximate since there are no marks on the stage to indicate their proper positioning. Downstage at either side there is a portable spotlight to be used in some scenes and operated by actors rather than being controlled by the light man in his booth at the back of the auditorium. On each side of the stage there are five or six three-legged stools. These are in full view of the audience, but they are considered as off-stage. Each actor, when not participating in a scene

simply goes over and sits down to await his next turn to go onstage.

Each actor has a few individual props for which he is responsible. Harmonicas and other instruments for the procession and other "musical" segments of the play are stored under the stools. When they are needed actors simply walk over and get them; they go out of "character" for this. They are simply, in effect, stagehands at these times.

The sets are relatively simple. Two wheeled-tables are used at various times. The canopy used at the opening of the play is propped up at the back of the stage until it is needed for the last scene. In the subsection "The Dying Imagine Their Judgement" the actors use a step ladder, a chair with arms, and a typewriter. Properly speaking these are not sets at all, but a series of props. When a piece of furniture is needed for a scene or image, it is brought on by the actors who use it, or by others who have been assigned the task since they are not participating in the action at that time. This is done with the lights on and in full view of the audience.

The costumes for all actors are white or off-white. They are pajama like concoctions. There is no uniformity. Some are similar to bandage wrappings or mummies shrouds, others are net and others simply cotton. In one scene, "The Interview" three actors change into street clothes immediately prior to the scene. They wear in the performance whatever clothes they happened to be wearing that day.

There is a microphone and loud speaker system for the announcements of the scenes. Prior to the initial performance there was no amplification used. Two actors and two actresses make the announcements.

The sequence of the scenes has been constantly changed during rehearsals, public run throughs, and subsequent public performances. The sequence at a particular performance is written on a piece of paper taped to the floor at the side of the stage. Actors refer to it whenever necessary. It is in full view of the audience, but probably unnoticed by them. Also, several speeches have been changed, and one of the speeches of the dead who come through was new for opening night. The actor who did this speech had it written out and referred to the paper from time to time since the speech was imperfectly memorized due to the shortage of time.

Each scene or image is cued by actors assigned this duty. Others pick up the cue from him, and the light board operator also follows him. With few exceptions the description of the play does not include cues or light changes.

When the play begins the auditorium is dark, the stage lit. One actor is onstage, and the remainder are at the back of the auditorium. There is a blast from a horn at the back of the auditorium. The actor onstage announces the first section.

#### I. "The Dance on the Graves of the Dead."

A. A procession of thirteen actors begins at the back of the auditorium. Six of them carry a canopy of bright red cloth, and all play a simple song on harmonicas and other similar

instruments. This song recurs at various places in the play. The procession reaches the stage. The actors face the audience. The canopy is removed upstage by three actors.

B. An actor steps forward and makes the following speech:

"We come among the dying to call upon the dead.  
There are graves beneath this floor -- we call upon the dead  
Let them take my body and use my tongue.  
(At this point the music stops.)  
There are bones beneath this floor -- we call upon the dead.  
Let the dead come through -- and let it begin with me."

While this speech is done the other actors move to the sides of the stage and sit on the stools. They retrieve sticks they will need later in the scene. The actor repeats the speech several times and individual actors join him until everyone is back onstage. As the other actors come on they repeat a line or two of the speech, move at random, stop facing in any direction, and repeat a sentence or phrase or word. All actors participate. Some stand on the beds, jump off, face the audience or the sides or the back of the stage. From time to time an actor or two lies down, i.e., gets in the last known position of the dead so the dead will be more likely to come through. This represents verbal variations on a theme analogous to the manner in which jazz musicians may work. "Jamming" in a manner such as this recurs throughout the play and is an important performance technique.

C. All actors stop this "jamming" simultaneously and flop over from the waist with arms extended and heads drooping loosely. This is one of several positions of praying or meditation. They are attempting to entice the dead to come through. At this point an actor goes to the side and starts



beating an American Indian drum. The rhythm is steady and continues through "E" below, growing louder as the scene progresses.

D. The actor who initiated the speech above, what is known as "The Calling," is a medium or guide. He begins tapping his foot in a regular rhythm in time with the drum, and all actors come upright and into a strut-dance. This is the dance on the graves of the dead. There are occasional words from the previous speech during the dance. In this dance there is a particular posture that is used for meditation and it recurs at random throughout the play whenever it is felt that the dead are near. In this posture one leg is extended forward, shoulders and head thrown back, upper arms extended parallel with the floor and bent upward at the elbows. This will be referred to as "the posture."

E. During the dance the Actors hold short sticks that they click together. Eventually the dance degenerates and the actors begin rapping rapidly on the floor, beds and walls. Random words from the speech are heard. The speech is really a chant which has become broken and fractured in the struggle between the living and the dead. The rapping on the graves is an attempt to revive the dead; to make contact with those buried beneath this floor. The drum grows louder along with the rapping and a din develops. This ends abruptly and the actors walk to the sides.

II. An actress announces, "The Pregnant Dying." At times this section is also called "The Last Biological Rites." Some-

times each subsection is announced; at other times only "F" is announced.

A. "The Pregnant Dying." At the extreme upstage end of the stage a woman with a swollen stomach lies on a bed. The bed has long legs, so she is three or four feet from the floor. She remains in this position until the beginning of the next major section and does not move during the next four images.<sup>24</sup>

B. "The Private Case." A man lies on a bed. He is alone with two attendants watching over him, taking his pulse, and generally pampering him. All the remaining actors are crowded onto three beds. There is no one to look after them. They are obviously uncomfortable, and probably suffering. The private case remains in this position through the next four images, usually with the two attendants taking special care of him.

C. "Motion." Three actors run in place, and a fourth attempts to do exercises near a bed. This and the next several images are concerned with staying alive even though close to death. The actors are patients in a stylized or abstract clinic. The clinic may be no more than a state of mind rather than a physically located place. As long as they maintain physical activity of some sort they have a better chance to stay alive.

D. "Taking In and Eliminating." Two actors downstage right defecate while the attendants force feed the private patient.

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<sup>24</sup>. Each image such as this has roots in myth, experience of actors, or other sources. Some images will be traced in the section on emergence. This one is based on an adaptation of an idea suggested by a myth connected with voodoo practices.

E. "Breathing." Three or four actors stand and attempt to breathe. The remainder are on three beds. The breathing is labored, wheezing, asthmatic. Each subsection in Section II to this point has been little more than a brief, momentary image. Combined the images are performed in two or three minutes.

F. "The Last Biological Rites." An actor stands facing the audience. The actress next to him says, "This is your last chance to use your eyes." He rolls his eyes, seeing what he can for the last time, and then puts black tape over both eyes. She says, "This is your last chance to use your voice." He struggles to bring out a sound, but only manages a brief, weak, high pitched scream. His mouth is taped shut. She says, "This is your last chance to use your legs." He attempts to take a few faltering steps. They are the steps of an invalid. He then kneels on a low, wheeled platform that she has placed in front of him.

I. An actress comes on the empty stage and says, "Let the dead come though -- let it begin with me." She repeats this and other sections of the speech. Other actors come on-stage, some using the meditative posture, and all using lines or words from the speech. A slight jamming begins, but is cut short by the announcement of the next section.

III. "The State of the Dying." This is announced, as is each subsection.

A. "The Embalming as Required by Law." An actor lying on a wheeled table is brought out by two people. They are the same

actors who attended the private case. The girl from this team makes the following speech while the man mimes the motions of a stylized embalming. The hand operated spotlights are used in this and the following scenes.

"We prepare the deceased for embalming. The body is washed with special attention to the orifices. A tube is inserted to drain the blood. Through another tube, embalming fluids are injected. As the fluid fills the veins, a flush appears on the face, the eyes flutter, and the chest rises and falls as if the deceased were breathing. This effect is only temporary, of course. An incision is made in the abdomen and the internal organs are removed and deposited in a bin to be burned later. The cavity is then filled with cotton batting similar to that used in upholstery to retain the original dimensions of the body. The skin is then sutured. Cosmetical procedures are then employed to improve the appearance of the deceased. First is the correction of lip-slip. Lip-slip occurs as fluids drain from the upper lip, causing it to recede forming a sneer. Because this is unsightly for those viewing the body we stitch the lips together into a more life-like, attractive expression. We cut out the swollen facial tissue, injecting massage creams to fill the sunken cheeks. We then apply conventional make-up, such as rouge and lipstick to create a natural, life-like appearance. The body is then dressed in burial garments. These are backless as the body will be viewed from above. The body is now ready to await funeral procedures in the freezer compartment of the morgue."

During this scene there is a rack of clothes upstage. The body is then wheeled off.<sup>25</sup>

B. "The Interview." During this sequence new people are initiated into the area where the dying exist. It may be only a state of mind, the place where Section II was located, or a "clinic" that is a cross between a rest home, nursing

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25. As noted in footnote 23 a song of farewell was inserted at this point.

home, and a hospital. There are four segments to the interview, which is also a processing or initiation and degradation ceremony.

1. At the first station an actress repeats the phrase "Next please" until an actor dressed in street clothes comes in. She does not greet him, but simply asks for his hat and coat. He gives them to her and is left there to discover the second step in the process.

2. The second team consists of two people, and they photograph the initiates. The dialogue is as follows:

TEAM: Hello, we're going to take your picture.

INITIATE: Why?

TEAM: To guide us in restoring the body after death. Your photograph is your assurance that you will look just as you did in life. Even better, perhaps.

INITIATE: I want to look as natural as possible.

TEAM: Naturally. (One team member takes the photograph as the other speaks.) In order to escape the natural process of decay, we encourage anyone who is dying to spend his last days with us so that, immediately after death, we can move the body from the bed to the embalming table, from the embalming table to the refrigerator, from the refrigerator to the coffin. Obviously we can preserve and beautify you more effectively the sooner you come to us. You can rest assured that, after death, you will appear familiar and life-like to your friends and family.

3. He then moves to the third station where two team members measure him with a rope, possibly so that funeral garments can be ordered as well as a coffin. There is also a degradation ceremony at this station. It is as follows:

TEAM: Please stand still while your measurements are being taken. Is there anything you need?

INITIATE: Yes. I need to be in a bed near a window.

TEAM: You don't need a window. Nobody needs a window.

INITIATE: I need fresh air. I'd like a window near my bed.

TEAM: We know what you need. That's what we're here for.

INITIATE: Couldn't you arrange it?

TEAM: Of course. If you really need it.

INITIATE: I do.

TEAM: Fine. There is a bed near a window, but it's in a separate house. The house is a little far away from everything, but we'll be happy to arrange it for you if you really need it.

INITIATE: (pause) There's no one else there?

TEAM: No. None of our other people need a window.

INITIATE: Oh. Well then, I guess maybe I could do without it, too.

TEAM: But if you need it.

INITIATE: I wanted to be near a window, but I guess I don't really need it.

During this conversation one of the team members has measured him, using a rope. He is given the rope. At the time he reached the third station a second initiate was introduced at the first station. When the second actor moves on to the photographic station, a third person is brought on. By this time the first man has moved on to the fourth station. When the second initiate is introduced to the process a mock band starts playing music. It is the music from the procession that started the play, and it continues sporadically until the end of the scene. The "band" consists of four actors standing at the side of the stage playing harmonicas.

4. The first initiate moves on to the fourth team where he is instructed to strip. He resists, and is informed that those are the rules, "They come with the job, I didn't make them up." The music continues. He strips nude, and is given a pajama uniform which he puts on. He resists the disrobing process and is brusquely informed that it is necessary. He tries to keep something of his own, a comb, and is informed that he will not need it. The team knows best. He has accepted the degradation at the three previous steps, and this final step is not that much worse than the previous ones, so he does as instructed. He is subjected to an unfeeling bureaucratic machine and he ends by doing what he is told to do. The first initiate then leaves the stage to enter the world of the dying. The others continue to be processed until the second person reaches the fourth station. Then there is a short blackout, and in the darkness an actor announces the next section.

C. "The Dying Resist." During this and the next six subsections belonging to Section III the hand held spot lights are used. Prior to the start of this section two or three actors come onstage, assume the meditative posture, and repeat words and phrases from the speech that opens the play. This occurs intermitantly throughout the play.

All the actors, except two who are the team, form a circle. They walk in this circle with the team encouraging them. One member of the team keeps up a constant drone, saying "Nice. Very good. Nice. Very good," until the end of

the scene. Most of the time these words are unintelligible. The other team member repeats the following speech:

"Keep moving. Everyone is part of the circle. Everyone must keep the circle moving. Follow the instructions. Don't accelerate or slow up. Don't stop. Each of you are responsible for keeping the circle alive. Everyone is useful. You are each keeping the circle moving. Each and every one of you is useful and important."

Soon after the circle starts individual actors begin to drop out. Some of them stand in place, blocking the circle. Others stop at random anywhere on the stage. Those who drop out keep shouting "OUT -- OUT -- OUT," attempting to stop the circle. They are never successful. Any number of individuals may drop out, but usually six or eight out of the twelve people who form the circle do so. It is up to the individual whether he drops out or remains a part of the circle. Those who remain in the circle attempt to draw the drop-outs back into it, but never with any success.

D. An actor announces, "The Runner Who Never Gets Started." An actor is down in the ready position as at the start of a race. Another actor in the background runs in place, as if in the imagination of the one who cannot get started. The one who cannot get started stands up and breathes heavily and deeply as if trying to catch his breath after running a great distance. Then he gets back down in the ready position. Throughout this image one person stood on a bed in the meditative posture. This happens often, and there is no regularity from one performance to another. Sometimes two or more actors will stay on during an entire image, at other times



they will come on briefly at the beginning of the subsection and then leave.

E. An actor announces, "The Dying are Drugged." Several actors take grotesque postures on the beds and floor. Their faces are stretched out of shape and their eyes stare blankly. There is a vague wheezing, whistling sound of undetermined origin. During this image two people take the meditative posture upstage, and they repeat words and phrases from the calling. They feel that the dead are near.

I. An actress announces, "The Dead Come Through. Marie Leveau and The Soldier."

F. Various actors come onstage in the posture, some speaking broken lines from the calling. In this section two dead people come through. They speak through the dying from Section II. More than half of the first speech is done, then the second shorter speech is done, and the first one is then completed. Each speech by one of the dead is accompanied by unique gestures, and while one actor is doing his speech the other actor continues his own gestures in the background at low "wattage." This indicates that all the dead are near, that the meditation or seance is working. Other actors, who will later be possessed by the dead, also do the gestures from their speeches in the background. At this point contact has been made with the other world, and there is a general rising of the level of excitement. Most of the dead, for some reason, are not coming through clearly. Contact is partial, probably because the dead are resisting.

1. An actor is possessed by Marie Leveau, a Cajun voodoo practitioner, and the speech given below is accompanied by a frenzied dance. The man who does the speech shakes his hands and arms in rhythm with the words. Marie Leveau says:

Eh ye ye Mamzelle Marie<sup>26</sup>  
 Ye ye ye li konin tou  
 Gris gris  
 Li te kouri lekal, aver vieux kokodril  
 Oh oui ye Mamzell Marie.

This serves as a repeated chorus, and the actor continues:

Eh ye ye, my people come to me, they say:

Make that man poor so I grow rich  
 Make that one die so I can live  
 Kill my sister, kill my brother  
 And no-one know the other.  
 No-one see the other.<sup>27</sup>

Marie Leveau, she sees! Ooh. Ooh. See my people smile  
 and eat each other,  
 wipe blood from mouth with dainty cloth.

And my ocean stink with dead fish  
 And my trees are hurt and broken  
 And my fruit is sick and rotten  
 And my air is black with poison that my birds cannot breathe  
 And my people eat each other and my people live like slaves.

At this point the Soldier speech, see below, is inserted, and then the Marie Leveau speech continues.

I see the thief go into business  
 Now he can steal and not be caught  
 I see the killer become policeman  
 Now he can murder, that's his job.

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26. In this and other speeches the original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are followed.

27. During the initial performance this line was repeated twice, in the second performance once, and varying numbers of times in subsequent performances. The number of repetitions is not important. Certain phrases or words which are repeated form a rhythm and theme for the speech. The same is true of other speeches by the dead.

Eh ye ye, one hand holds the whip  
And one hand bleeds.

Marie Leveau, she sees! See my people smile, then eat  
each other, wipe blood from mouth with dainty cloth.

And my ocean stink with dead fish  
And my trees  
And my fruit  
And my air, and my birds  
And my people eat each other, and my people buy and sell,  
and my people live like slaves!

This speech, as is true of almost all speeches in the play, is not delivered in a realistic manner. Aside from the wild thrashing "dance" that accompanies it, words and phrases are broken, emphasis is changed from a naturalistic delivery, and it is as if the speech were delivered in a trance.

2. "The Soldier." This speech is done while the actor continually salutes with a violent jerk, and marches in place. The marching is stylized. The words are shouted out in a rhythm that matches the marching. He has been performing this rhythm in the background while Marie Leveau is performing, and as his time to be possessed approaches, he increases the volume and tempo of his marching.<sup>28</sup>

Yessir  
Yessir  
Yes when I want to say yes  
Yes when I want to say no  
Said yes  
Said yes  
Yessir, said yes  
And dead 'cause I said yes

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28. An example of repetition becoming a form of chant is the repetition of the word "Yessir." In the first public performance this was repeated fourteen times, in the second performance nineteen times. It was repeated many more times at low wattage in the background. The concluding phrase was used eight times at the first performance and six times at the second.

And dead 'cause you said yes  
 And dead 'cause I said yes  
 And dead 'cause you said yes  
 And dead before 'cause you never knew why  
 And dead before 'cause I never asked  
 Dead before and dead again 'cause I never knew  
 What the ---- I was saying yes to, yes to, yes to!

During these speeches, as in later speeches of the dead who come through, some actors onstage go with the rhythm of the speech being given. Others, who will themselves be possessed later, may do the rhythm of their own speeches at low volume. Still others assume the meditative posture.

III. An actor announces, "The Renovation." At times this is announced as "Cosmetics."

F. During this scene two actresses and an actor put on facial make-up. The make-up is slightly exaggerated and grotesque. One of them also puts on a wig. They are demonstrating the use of cosmetics after embalming so that, "the accumulated lines of life-time can be erased in less than an hour." An actress gives a speech detailing the use of cosmetics. The speech is a parody of a cosmetics demonstration spiel, and she explains the miracles that can be wrought. Faces that are not perfectly shaped may be corrected, hair that is dull and lifeless can be re-styled, eyes and mouths can be made more perfect. She ends with a recommendation that smiles and grimaces be avoided as much as possible during life so that there will be fewer lines to distort the perfect symmetry that should be obtained by the cosmetician working on the body after death.

G. An actor announces, "The Witnesses." Three people do the posture and four lie down, imitating the dead. They hope

thereby to entice the dead to come through. They stay in these positions until later in the scene when jamming starts similar to that which occurred earlier. Indications are that the dead are close. The "witnesses" are stories by or about the dead. Therefore the dead are near, and actors . . . meditate. Three actresses kneel at the front of the stage, facing the audience. The speeches are done in the following order:

1. Pa, why don't you do something?<sup>29</sup>  
 Oh, but I do.  
 I sleep and I go to work.  
 I get married and I get divorced.

Pa, why don't you do something?  
 Oh, but I do.  
 I invest money -- and make more money  
 I train people -- and they train people  
 I have children -- and they have children.

Pa, why don't you do something?  
 Oh, but I do.  
 I go from the bedroom to the kitchen  
 From the kitchen to the bathroom  
 From the bathroom to the bedroom.

This actress kneels with her arms crossed on her chest. When she finishes she repeats the speech at low volume while the next two women do their speeches.

2. Hi ma. I see you.  
 I don't see you dying.

The actress doing this speech gives a slight wave of her right hand as she does the first line. With the second line she turns away and covers her eyes. As with the first actress, she keeps repeating the speech while the third speech is done.

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29. This is a shorter version of this speech than was used during the opening performance. It is likely that this shorter version will become the standard one, and it is therefore included here.

3. He was lying there,  
Like this.

This actress starts from a sitting position. With the second part of the sentence she lies back on the floor, but keeps her head and shoulders from touching the floor.

After the third actress has finished, all three continue repeating their speeches, and the remaining actors come onstage and repeat whole speeches, sentences, fragments of sentences, or single words from these speeches. Each actor does which ever speech he feels like doing, and accompanies it with the gestures used by the woman who was the witness. After a while the words get fewer and fewer, and the actors simply repeat the gestures without speaking. The lines are carried into the gestures and "repeated" without speech.

As this is continuing a discordant sound is heard in the background. It starts as "u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-up, up, up in the morning." Occasionally the word "hit" is heard. Unless you are familiar with the play these words are unintelligible. They progress toward intelligibility as the witness scene ends. They are the first words from the next dead person to come through.

I. An actor announces, "The Dead Come Through. The one Who was Hit." Six actors assume the meditation posture.

G. The dead one, in this case possesses two people. They work together on the speech. They work independently during the first part, and then come together to do the last part while lying on the floor, as if in a grave. As they finish the speech they roll over each other toward the side of the

stage. During the first part they stiffen their bodies and jerk their heads as if they were literally being hit on the head. With this speech, as with others in which the dead possess the dying, the text is only approximate. Certain sentences or phrases may be repeated several times and inserted at random in any part of the speech. In the speech given below, for example, the line, "Up in the morning, hit on the head," is repeated many times. Sometimes only the last phrase is repeated. It thereby becomes a theme running through the speech. Also, this speech, as is the case with the others, is done to a unique rhythm. None of the speeches are recited in a realistic manner. Some people stay in the posture, others leave the stage, others do their own rhythm which will be emphasized when they are possessed. Others go with the rhythm of this speech. Some sit on the sides of the stage on stools.

Up in the morning hit on the head  
Up in the evening hit on the head  
Got up and hit.

Men have ways of breaking those they wish to break  
Hit on the head  
Men have ways and places  
Jails asylums ditches, up in the morning  
And  
hit.

And  
lying there  
like this  
lying there  
in the earth  
Got up  
and  
hit.

I knew who I was when your hatred set me free  
 Your hatred was your prison but your hatred set me free  
 And  
 lying there  
 like this  
 lying there beside you in the earth you wouldn't share  
 with me in life.

And over our heads, feet are walking.

You cannot kill the ocean like you killed me!

III. An actor announces, "The Dying Pray."

H. "The Dying Pray." This scene is a montage of separate images developed in workshops. Only one of them is related to conventional moods or words of prayer in Christian rituals. One actor whips himself with the ties from his pajama uniform. Several people bend at the waist with upper arms extended stiffly, and bent at the elbows. An actress takes another in her arms and recites fragments of the Twenty-third Psalm. Some people grasp their heads in both hands, or hit their heads with the palms of their hands. An indescribable sound of mourning or supplication arises.

In the middle of this an actor begins walking purposively from the back of the stage until he reaches the front edge, then he walks backwards until he reaches the back of the stage. He is beginning the possession that is the next scene.

I. An actor announces, "The Dead Come through. The Responsible One." This dead one also possess two people, an actress who stands to one side and repeats phrases from the speech, and the actor who began walking forward and backward during the previous image. He continues to repeat his walking routine through the speech. The girl sometimes anticipates



phrases that the man uses. At other times she repeats what he says, or repeats phrases that have been used earlier in the speech. The "background" of postures and low wattage possessions is the same here as in earlier sections where the dead come through.

H. "The Responsible One."

I was walking down the street. Cracks in the sidewalk.  
I saw a man. Cracks in his face -- what have I done?

I saw a child choking on air -- what have I done?  
Oceans rising -- what have I done? Buildings toppled --  
what have I done?

What was given me was impossible to work with.

I saw a woman, she had no teeth, nibbling at the pavement,  
chewing at the pavement, mouth full of stones -- what have  
I done? I saw snow falling, flakes of sky -- what have  
I done? 41 dead -- what have I done? I saw, I saw, I  
can't say I didn't -- what have I done?

Sitting. Standing. Sleeping. Sleepwalking. What was  
given me was impossible to work with.

Blood -- what have I done? Fire! A man lit a match, a  
man on fire -- what have I done? I saw a -- agh! what  
have I done? a -- ttttt! -- what have I done? A -- kkkk! --  
What have I done? ughhh! -- what have I done?

What was given me was impossible to work with.

III. An actor announces, "The Initiation."

I. "The Initiation." An actor is forced by four others to  
have sexual intercourse with a corpse. He is then stood up,  
and a girl stands in back of him with a club. He is inter-  
rogated by another man. He is repeatedly asked if he liked  
it. With each denial of enjoyment he is hit by the girl.  
Finally he admits that he liked it; because they want him to  
say so. That is not enough, and the questions and beating  
continue until he admits he liked it, "Because it was necessary

to like it." He is then congratulated by the others, admitted to their circle.

This scene is connected to "The Interview" mentioned earlier. It may be viewed as the continuation of the degradation process.

J. An actor announces, "The Embalming as Required by Law." The embalming table is rolled onstage as in the previous embalming. The same two actors act as the team, and the actress recites the same speech used earlier. During this embalming, however, the person being embalmed is not dead. He looks around frantically, makes noises, and generally resists. The vocal noises stop suddenly when his mouth is sutured during the correction of lip-slip. It is as if the scene had taken place in a dream.

I. An actor starts to do the "Executed Man" speech quoted below. He is possessed by the dead. After a few sentences an actor announces, "The Dead Come Through. The Executed Man, and The Song." General stage activity is similar to the previous occasions when someone was possessed.

I. 1. "The Executed Man."

My eyes, wide open. My head, full of imagination. Like when I was a kid, free in my head. Like me and my friend, Joel. We used to fish in a place called "the pit." The water there was so clear you could see the fish swimming -- big beautiful fish. Me and Joel, we'd cut off their heads and rip out their stomachs and tear the scales off 'em. Yeah, me and Joel we had fantastic imaginations!

I was sentenced just like you.

Warden! I know you got that noose ready for me, warden, but it's that noose that's set me free! A man who knows he's gonna die doesn't have anything

to be afraid of. My prison's made of steel, warden;  
but your's is in your head!

If someone came into our pit, me and Joel knew how  
to fix him! We'd take a wire and wind it 'round  
his ---- and we'd twist it and twist it, and twist  
it till that fella hollered...Maaaaa!

I was sentenced just like you.

But that warden, he gets up in the morning, he can  
look at himself in the mirror and say: what a nice  
man I am!

But me, I knew I'd end up with my head in a noose.  
That's why I could say:

Yes! I am a thief!

Yes! I am an addict!

Yes! I am a homosexual, a pimp, a rapist!

Yes! I am a murderer!

Everything I imagine is a part of me.

I was sentenced just like you.

Go on, warden, be good, be nice, do what you're told.  
You've been sentenced just like me but you're keeping  
that locked up too. My prison's made of steel warden;  
your's is in your head!

(At this point the song is inserted and then the  
warden speech continues.)

Just like that warden. He's keeping his mind locked  
up good and tight. And it's so safe in there and  
he's been living in there so long and it's so nice  
and safe that he don't even see that he's in jail.

So that he can get up in the morning, he can look  
at himself in the mirror and say: What a nice man  
I am!

Yes, I am a murderer!

And I've been sentenced just like you.

2. "The Song." The song is simply a phrase from a Jewish  
lament for the dead. It was sung often on the way to the con-  
centration camps during World War II. This phrase consisting  
of two words is repeated over and over, from twenty to twenty-  
five times.

The actress who sings the song uses one of the white beds,

stood on end, as a back drop. She rocks slowly from side to side, rocking the platform also. The platform hits the stage with a loud boom each time she rocks. She starts singing the phrase in a resonant, pure, unstrained voice. With each repetition it gets progressively more strained and throaty until it is little more than a croak. The vocal process is then reversed and it gets purer with each repetition.

K. An actor announces, "The Dying Imagine Their Judgement." Four or five actors on the side of the stage begin playing the song from the procession as the announcement is made. They continue playing for a short while after the judgement speech is begun. This scene has several elements.

1. It begins with an actor sitting, facing the audience, on a step ladder. He blows a horn, and begins reading from a book placed on the top step of the ladder. He punctuates the reading from time to time by blowing on the horn. He uses a megaphone part of the time so that as he continues his speech becomes less and less clear as the megaphone over heats and a high pitched whine is introduced. He continues the speech through "J" below, repeating portions of it several times. Eventually he falls asleep. As long as he speaks an actor sits at a typewriter on the side of the stage. This is similar to the situation of a court stenographer. Everything he says is recorded. An actress kneels beneath the ladder and he rests his feet on her. His speech consists of the following items:

- a. The judgement of your life is your life.
- b. You will finally possess the thing you wanted most

in life, and eternity will be that thing and that thing only.

- c. You saw, you saw, you can't say you didn't. (The judgement of your life is your life.)
- d. You are in the death of crowds. There are multitudes about you and they are, each one, yourself. There is not one other beside you; yet there are multitudes.
- e. There is a space between what was done and what could have been done and you are rooted in that space. (The judgement of your life is your life.)
- f. You are standing in a space filled with bodies and you watch their coupling and breathe their odors, but you cannot touch them and they will not reach out to you.
- g. You moved from the house to the office, from the office to the house; from sleep to waking; from waking to sleep; you moved from yesterday to today, from today to tomorrow -- and you will repeat that movement for eternity and the circle will not open.
- h. Did you sit upon another's head or were you sat upon? Either way, you will never be free of the one who is above or he who is below. (The judgement of your life is your life.)
- i. You are standing on a bridge, but you do not know it. All around you, the people come onto it and pass off of it, but you do not understand that all those who walk upon it at the same time are not strangers.
- j. You neither faced your death nor participated in your life, but straddled the line between one place and the other, longing for both.

2. Between "c" and "d" an actor lies toward the front of the stage and off to one side. Another actor and an actress perform a pseudo-embalming on him. They use phrases from the embalming speech quoted earlier, and lines quoted from an embalmer who came and talked to the group during two separate workshops. This pseudo-embalming is centered around the idea that an embalmer is often sexually attracted to the corpse. Both embalmers suffer from necrophilia. The scene is done

as in a dream, with random snatches of dialogue improvised by the actors. It ends with the male embalmer kissing the "corpse" on the mouth.

3. Simultaneous with the pseudo-embalming, two people carry out one of the platforms, which have been cleared for this scene, and there is a nude girl on it. The girl is dead. The attendants begin to scrub the floor, bed, and corpse with coarse scrub brushes. The attendants are maintenance personnel. The body is treated merely as another part of the inorganic environment.

4. As the voice from the ladder reaches the section of the speech where he says either sitting upon another or being sat upon are identical (h), two actors come onstage. One squats or sits on his heels and the other straddles him as if he is putting great weight on the one below.

5. At the same time as this image is presented, two actors roll out a clothes rack, bring it across stage, around the ladder, and back off-stage. Three bodies are hung from the rack, resembling slaughtered animals in a meat processing plant.

6. An actor climbs up the ladder and whispers alternately in each ear of the reader three or four times. The reader pays little attention to this intrusion. He continues reading, but once or twice he cocks his head in order to hear what is said.

7. At the time the rack was brought out an empty chair was placed near the right side of the stage. An actress began

pacing along beside the chair. She takes a few brisk steps, stops, glances sharply at the empty chair, and then walks backwards to the place where she originally started. At this point a man sits in the chair. The actress silently accuses him, and he screams. Two men come out and tie him to the chair, then gag him. Two more men come out to help them hoist him, bound to the chair, onto their shoulders. He is then paraded around the stage once and off. The prisoner strains to keep looking at the audience in a mute plea for help. Or it may be an accusation because of their silent complicity in the degradation he is experiencing.

8. The girl who has been kneeling under the ladder gets down on her stomach and begins to snake her way forward, out from under the ladder. Another actor grabs her around the thighs and joins her in trying to squirm out of the confines of the ladder. Several others join on, and a snake forms and moves forward. It is unending since as it begins to get out from under the ladder, others join in. Those who reach the front of the stage drop out, and rejoin the back of the line. This is accompanied by a chant that is a mixture of strained laughter, from an exercise known as "laughing without smiling," and a stylized repetition of an unrecognizable phrase from the Latin Catholic Mass. The judge has fallen asleep by this time. The typing continues, and the impression is that this chain of straining, chanting bodies will continue forever. There is a brief, total, blackout.

L. An actor announces "Presence and Absence." The lights

come on. Six actors bring the canopy from upstage, and all the actors line up under it near the front edge of the stage. One actor stands to the side and beats a drum. The remaining actors play the song from the procession. The drum cues the beginning and end of each phrase of the song. When the drum stops there is a long pause in the music which lasts until the drum starts again. It is at the discretion of the drummer how long the pauses and the music will last. While the music is being played the actors are "absent." That is to say, they stare vacantly, with no expression. It is as if the music were being played by mechanical reproduction. There is no person. They remove their instruments from their mouths. Their eyes focus. Slight smiles or other expressions come onto their faces. They become "present." This sequence is repeated three or four times, and there is a sudden blackout. The play is over.

All of the dialogue and most of the speeches of the play have been included in this description. Also many of the images, gestures, and sounds have been mentioned. In the case of this play, and others of a similar type, there are serious and insurmountable drawbacks in attempting to convey an impression of performance in a lineal medium. Words are of relatively little importance, as contrasted with a realistic play where words or "just talk" are of primary importance. They are the main means of expressing emotion and psychological states. Ritualistic theatre involves a greater emphasis on aural and visual images, some of which, e.g., the posture,



form recurring themes that act as transitions or bridges in maintaining whatever little continuity there is between one scene or image and another. It is expected that transitions and, hence, some continuity will take place on an individual level. Individual members of the audience will thus in actuality "create" a coherent experience from the disparate segments presented onstage. There is, therefore, little or no didactic or propagandistic content in individual scenes or images. If performance is successful, however, individuals in the audience will be enabled to and will actually form total impressions of the experience in terms of their individual biographies and the experiences, memories, dreams, reveries, fantasies and factual information they bring to the performance.

The play is informed by a relatively coherent view of the subject held mutually by the writer, directors and actors. This is not to say that the play is a dogmatic or literal translation of this view. Rather, the attempt is to find allegories, similes, metaphors and symbols for dying and the actual state of death; preparation for death or the lack of preparation. Figures created from dreams, memories, etc., chance juxtaposition, and serial presentation are not meant to be interpreted logically and rationally. A search for their meaning is fruitless. They have no meaning in terms of rational action internal to performance. Individual images, scenes, and the performance as a whole do not have a denotation. They are meant to be stimuli in a manner similar to the notes of a musical score. Description of the play is analogous to the notation of a dance.

## CHAPTER V -- A RITUALISTIC MODEL OF ACTION

Obvious and significant contrasts exist between the play just discussed and the type of theatre which is analogous to the realistic model described earlier. In Fergusson's words, though he applied them in a completely different context, the latter type of theatre might be thought of as "drama as imitation, and of the human reality as somehow perceptible apart from the closed world of our own feeling."<sup>1</sup> The ritualistic play, "accepts the full implication of art as the expression of emotion."<sup>2</sup> An alternative conception might be drama as behavior and drama as experience in the sense that these terms are utilized by Laing.<sup>3</sup> In an interview regarding Stanislavski and a realistic play which he was directing at the time Kazan stated:<sup>4</sup>

"The life of a play is in behavior. Generalizations are always dangerous. But if you say that part of the job of directing is to convert psychology into behavior, you have to find the unique way of behaving for all the characters."

His remarks characterize realistic performance and may be applied to a realistic model of social action.

An element which seems to characterize a ritualistic play is what Blackmur refers to as gesture. His primary concern

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1. Francis Fergusson, The Idea of a Theater (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949), p. 103.

2. ibid., p. 103.

3. R. D. Laing, The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1967), Chapter I, "Persons and Experience," pp. 15-38.

4. "Look, There's the American Theatre," an interview with Elia Kazan, Tulane Drama Review, Winter, 1964, p. 74.

is with gesture in language, but what he says applies to a ritualistic play. In a certain sense the ritualistic play might be thought of as pure gesture.<sup>5</sup>

"Gesture...is the outward and dramatic play of inward and imagined meaning. It is the play of meaningfulness among words which cannot be defined in their use together; gesture is that meaningfulness which is moving, in every sense of that word; what moves the words and what moves us."

Blackmur's concern is with the implications of gesture in language, but he asserts its presence in all artistic work. It does not violate his meaning to say that ritualistic theatre involves an attempt to make gesture empirical without the denotative implications of words. Ritualistic performance, for the most part, is in terms of symbols which are not definable in terms of words, and are analogous to music.<sup>6</sup>

The ritualistic play described above contains realistic elements, but these are of minor importance both in terms of the proportion of the play taken up with them and in terms of the meaning of the realistic fragments and the play as a whole. It is possible to attempt to relate sections of the play to literary points of reference. For example, in Section III, G., the actor reading the imagined judgement says, "Did you sit upon another's head or were you sat upon? Either way, you will never be free of the one who is above or he who is

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5. R.P. Blackmur, Language as Gesture, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935), p. 4.

6. Langer, op. cit., Chapter VIII, "On Significance in Music." pp. 204-245. Music and, possibly, other arts are analyzable in terms of systems of symbols. Such systems are based on symbolic methods of communication, but these are not related to systems which eventuate in language.

below." In Civil Disobedience," Thoreau writes, "If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too."<sup>7</sup> (Emphasis added.) During Section III, B. of the play, "The Interview," at the third station the initiate is measured for some apparently inane reason. Laing quotes a psychotic patient reacting in similar circumstances, "I tell you who is being measured and is measured and shall be measured."<sup>8</sup> Later he mentions a schizophrenic patient who, "could not begin to work through the issues of presence and absence."<sup>9</sup> (Emphasis added.) "Presence and Absence" is the last section of the play. The issues are ambiguous; it is not possible to "work through the issues," to determine which is which or what each means.<sup>10</sup>

It would be possible to ferret out similar allusions, or apparent allusions, that may apply to specific sections of the play. There is no way of knowing whether those mentioned above are of any relevance or not. Members of the group are familiar with the work of both Laing and Thoreau. However,

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7. Carl Bode, ed., The Portable Thoreau (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), p. 117.

8. R.D. Laing, The Divided Self, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965, c. 1959), p. 29.

9. ibid., p. 186.

10. At one performance a member of the audience responded vocally by answering "present." Several members of the cast dropped focus and responded to her, and two went offstage to embrace her. The individual in the audience appeared to be confused as to which attitude was presence and which absence.

these images arose spontaneously in the workshops with no overt or covert reference to the two authors mentioned. There is no method of determining the exact source of the images used in the play. Neither is there reason nor necessity to assume that members of the audience would be aware of such allusions. Such connections are not necessary for an "understanding" of the play. Such tracing would probably be the normal method of analysis of a literary work. Even in terms of some poems, e.g., The Waste Land,<sup>11</sup> such connections may be a beginning toward eventual understanding, but in relation to a ritualistic play this type of analysis is of little significance.

Conventional methods of analysis and discussion have little applicability, if any, when examining a ritualistic play. The play does not seem to be subject to interpretation in the usual manner.<sup>12</sup> Without in any way implying that the play embodies or represents "sick" behavior, it is possible to quote Laing's description of a schizophrenic as an empirical description of the play.<sup>13</sup>

"[I]ntonations, gestures, mannerisms, changed their character from moment to moment. One may begin to recognize patches of speech, or fragments of behavior cropping up at different times, which seem to belong together by reason of similarities of intonation, the vocabulary, syntax,

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11. These notes are printed in the poem in The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1964), pp. 50-55. In some printings of the poem they are not included and in others they are. Eliot was apparently undecided about their value.

12. Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation, and Other Essays (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966).

13. Laing, Self, op. cit., p. 196.

the preoccupations in the utterance or to cohere as behavior by reason of certain stereotyped gestures or mannerisms. It seemed therefore that one was in the presence of various fragments, or incomplete elements, of different 'personalities' in operation at one time. It would seem to be the result of a number of quasi-autonomous partial systems striving to give expression to themselves out of the same mouth at the same time."

This description of a schizophrenic seems to describe the action of the play. The play will be discussed in terms of the propositions mentioned in Chapter II. Concentration will be on the lack of rationality in action, "random" presentation rather than lineal development, the almost total absence of role or character in performance, the fact that the creation of an illusion of reality is not a performance objective.

Discussion of each of these elements is obviously a violation of the reality situation. All of these elements are interdependent and occur simultaneously. In ritualistic theatre, as in the Theatre of the Absurd, performance is conceived as a totality. Since there is no lineal development, all the images might be performed in a single moment. In this situation the isolation of elements for purposes of clarity in discussion tends to introduce distortion to a much greater extent than is true when dealing with realistic theatre.

In this chapter the attempt will not be to discuss every detail of the play. The procedure will be to select specific representative examples to illustrate points. Derivation of material, in some cases, will be discussed later when the

process of emergence is described. Where it appears that derivation will aid in clarification, it will be briefly summarized. Specific examples cited here were not selected for their uniqueness, but for their representativeness. Almost any segment of the play might have been utilized to illustrate any of the points mentioned above.

The theory of action inherent in and a major component of ritualistic theatre may be characterized as one in which there is a predominance of the "I."<sup>14</sup> Realistic theatre is dominated by action having its source in the "Me," the socialized self. Ritualistic theatrical performances juxtapose incongruent or unrelated scenes or images. Any single image is not a response to what occurred immediately prior to it, nor does it lead logically to what follows it. Certain blocks of material are presented in a series of sequential but unrelated images. This is true of sections such as "The Pregnant Dying," or "The State of the Dying." Each segment or subsection of these larger sections is autonomous. They are more similar to dominoes selected at random and placed side by side than interlocking bricks which form a structured whole. Segments of one section, since they are autonomous, are sometimes interspersed with segments of action from other

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14. This term is used here in the sense that Mead employed it in Mind, Self and Society. Grotowski has said that an American director worked on the "I" while he Grotowski, worked on the "self." He did not elaborate except to say that the work of the American relies too superficially on social stereotypes. An interview with Margaret Croyden, "Notes From the Temple: A Grotowski Seminar," The Drama Review, Fall, 1969, p. 182. In Mead's sense they both work on the "I" but take different approaches.

sections. The "logic" of each section does not lead to the next one.

Within certain sections action takes place, at least in part on a cognitive level. This is true of "The Embalming," "The Renovation," "The Initiation," and is especially prominent in "The Interview." In the latter case the actor asks why he is being photographed. The reason is explained, and he accepts it. He requests a bed in a certain area and is convinced not to pursue his request. At other times he is treated brusquely or rudely in a manner similar to the treatment of clients in official bureaucracies such as welfare departments, motor vehicle license bureaus or unemployment insurance offices. He is finally told to remove all his clothes, to divest himself of any marks of individual personality, and he resists until convinced of the necessity.

Action in a sequence such as this obviously has many of the characteristics of social conduct, and it involves cognitive elements. Activity on the part of the initiate follows instructions and questioning of those instructions. He weighs alternatives and briefly evaluates instructions before either questioning them or concurring. Concurrence is not automatic. The process itself is rationally arranged. A series of graduated steps, each slightly more degrading than the previous step, is arranged. At each point he could, conceivably, renounce his goal of being accepted after considering alternatives. He reasons on the basis of the circumstances of his own biography and the value of acceptance



into this establishment. Even though nothing is known of him by the audience prior to the time he enters the initiation process, he is a recognizable person. The same is true of the bureaucratic functionaries who supervise his initiation. No background is given for any of the people involved. Neither is the nature of the place to which the person is being initiated defined.

Action includes a cognitive element in terms of the individuals participating in it. Sketchily defined characters emerge briefly. These characters are not developed; they do not have any through line in relation to the play. They are merely created momentarily, injected into the play, and then permitted to disappear. Even such elusive characters are present in only a small proportion of the play.

Most of the play does not contain any element resembling character. The play opens with a dance on the graves of the dead. This is a stylized version of a seance or meditation which, it is hoped, will be conducive to contact with the dead. It fails initially. Later dead individuals do come through. Elements of the meditation and the call to the dead are more or less continuous. There are various times when it is evident, in the background of whatever action is occurring, that the dead are near, that their emergence is immanent. Individuals are eventually possessed by the dead. There is a suspension of cognitive reality similar to insanity, possibly indicating schizophrenia. Scenes of possession happen at random intervals. A Cajun voodoo woman, a soldier and an

executed man, among others, possess an actor or actress and speak through him or her. In two cases, "The One Who Was Hit," and "The Responsible One," the dead individual or spirit is strong enough to possess two living people. At various intervals these and other dead ones appear, usually in the background, to be taking control of an individual actor; not necessarily the one who is eventually possessed. Suspension of cognitive faculties is essential for this to happen. Possession often begins while another unrelated image is being performed. There are no means of explaining the meaning of conduct in terms of its orientation to others or to the one performing.

In a similar fashion, where the dying resist, all actors walk in a circle. Some drop out of the circle and begin repeatedly shouting "OUT." There is no indication of what the circle means, nor of why some people should remain in the circle and others drop out. There are no apparent rewards or sanctions for either alternative. No reference points are given which would make it possible to determine rationally why any particular individual should do one thing or another since neither alternative has apparent meaning.

As with other images, this one is similar to a dream image and follows the logic of the dream. When the circle was initially invented in a workshop, at the suggestion of an actor, individual actors, as actors, developed transient loyalty to which ever alternative they selected. They did not develop such loyalty as characters. The image was repeated

several times, and different actors elected to drop out each time, just as different actors drop out during each public performance. No matter which alternative any individual selected during any particular repetition, he stated that there was a strong compulsion during the exercise to stay with that alternative. No one ever dropped out and then re-joined the circle.

There is no agreement as to what the circle means and so there can be no agreement as to what dropping out means. It is possible that the people in the circle are merely resisting rules and regulations imposed on those inhabiting the "state" of the dying. This state may or may not be the place to which the initiates are going. On the other hand, it may be a physical place. Those in the circle may be resisting either life or death. Dropping out may be equal to dying, or it may mean that those who drop out have selected life by refusing to go into death with those who remain in the circle. It may be related to the resistance to initiation exhibited briefly during the interview and more strongly during the initiation. Surrealistic worlds such as this permit no bases for introduction of cognitive elements. Those onstage are physically recognizable as human individuals, but behaviorally they are amorphous, unrecognizable, and not understandable. Situations and participants are not defined by the action. As a result of this almost any interpretation of the meanings of activities may be equally right or wrong.

The play has no plot, but only a theme. No effort is made to explain death. Neither realistic criteria nor any

known religious point of view is introduced to impart meaning to the images as a connected series. Dying people are presented in several images, but some of them seem to be remarkably healthy. They may be near death, or they may be at any stage of the cycle of decay which will eventually bring death to them. Death may be a physical fact, a social process, or a political act.

No accumulation of facts or conjectures is supplied that might be useful in explaining death. There are some repeated pieces of stage business that recur in the play. There are "patches of speech, or fragments of behavior" which seem to cohere. However, it is never certain if they do or not. Some of these will be discussed in order to illustrate the absence of lineal development. Included among these are the embalmings, recurrent phrases, the possessions, and the sequential structure of the play.

Two embalmings and a pseudo-embalming are performed. The first precedes the interview to which it is related only incidentally. Later there is a stylized renovation which explains and parodies a section of the embalming. Various scenes touch upon similar events, but there is no through line between them. Several scenes after the first embalming a second, dream-like embalming is performed. This includes the full speech from the first embalming, explaining the procedure to be followed. This procedure, as in the first embalming, is mimed by an actor. The dream embalming partially destroys the credibility of the first embalming.

In the second from last section of the play a pseudo-embalming is inserted which further parodies and discredits the first two embalmings. But this is only a segment of an imagined judgement that may occur in the world of the dead. The three embalmings are related to each other, but the relationship is tenuous. They concern the same material and present three views of it, but there is no development from one to another. None of them is more true or factual than the other two, nor do they present different points of view regarding the procedure. They do not progressively provide a means whereby one might determine what an embalming actually is. Even though embalming is further explored in the renovation, there is still no accumulation of information. Isolated facts are all that come into view, and these may not even be facts. Each version is a separate unit of action, an isolated fragment.

The embalming is based, in actuality, on discussions with an embalmer. He instructed the group on the procedures used in embalming, and discussed subjective aspects of it such as the necrophilia which occurs in the pseudo-embalming. It was his belief that this attraction was probably widespread among embalmers, and they therefore made it a practice to leave the door of the embalming room ajar so any passerby could see that no disrespect was being shown to the corpse. His account of the embalming process was transformed; emphases were changed so that it became something other than a realistic embalming. Repetition of it fails to develop lineally.

In sections of the play phrases recur that have been used previously. This is a technique of performance more than an attempt to develop plot. "Resonance" is increased by such repetition. Words as gesture, in Blackmur's sense, are heightened. For example, in "The Witness" the phrase "He was lying there, like this" is repeated several times. In "The One Who Was Hit" the phrase has become transformed to, "And lying there like this, lying there in the earth." "The Responsible One" uses a theme of "I saw -- What have I done?" One of the witnesses tells a story about a man who moves from the house to the office. Both of these recur in an altered form in the speech during the imagined judgement. In these three instances repeated phrases do not logically or rationally connect with the previous use of the same phrases. Again, there is no development from one to the other.

Throughout the play the dead successfully possess the living and speak through them. Actors constantly repeat the meditative posture and fragments of the speech calling upon the dead. This speech takes on the aspects of a chant or prayer. Activity aimed at contacting the dead is continuous, but it is intensified at certain points. Intensified activity occurs in isolated segments rather than sequentially developing in a linear fashion. Almost random selection operates in presentation of these thematically connected elements. Conventional meditative or spiritualist behavior is avoided. At no point is the realistic atmosphere of a seance created. Various images of the dead coming through are presented as in

an unedited motion picture where the projector is turned on and off arbitrarily over a period of time. The order of possession can be changed since none develops from the other, nor does any depend on a preceding or following speech.

Major segments of the play can be interspersed in almost any order. Beginning with Section III the order is III-A, III-B, III-C, III-D, III-E, I-F, III-F, III-G, I-G, III-H, I-H, III-I, III-J, I-I, III-K, and III-L. Scenes are arranged in a certain order to achieve an overall effect rather than to develop a lineal plot. Elements which recur in various sections of the play, such as those noted above, do not develop with each repetition.

It is true that during the development of the play lineal action was present and predominant. A series of activities was planned and carried out with a goal in mind. Ultimately the arrangement of images was nonrational. The final sequence is no more logical than is the placing of paint on canvas to create an abstract work of art. Painters questioned about painting may describe aspects of how they work, where, and possibly some of the influences on their work.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, questions of a "why" nature are seemingly unanswerable, and may be interpreted only by the application of psychoanalytical concepts.

Modern rituals such as a Nazi political rally or a New Year's Eve celebration may be planned rationally to achieve

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15. Bernard Rosenberg and Norris Fliegel, The Vanguard Artist: Portrait and Self-Portrait (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965).

a desired effect. In such cases the desired ends which may be manipulation, euphoria, a desired impression, or whatever are known, as are means. Planners may refer directly to experience and procedures which have worked in the past and be reasonably sure of success if they possess a sufficient degree of expertise. When the ritual is a work of art participants cannot rely fully on past experience in regard to either means or ends. New means may have to be invented and ends are notoriously undefineable.

Spectators are not expected to analyze the development of the play to find meaning in it in terms of symbolic or metaphorical referants. Such referants may exist, but many of them are private. Attempts to interpret the play from this perspective are fruitless. Any view of the play which attempts to construct a plot or see the play as a structured entity exhibiting a development from one scene to the next is false. Connections between scenes do not exist in terms of lineal action. Sequences of scenes and the meaning of scenes or images follow the illogic of the dream which often leaves feelings of unlocalized dread, fear, joy, or whatever. Dreams develop by juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated experiences.<sup>16</sup> Rational meaning and overt content of a particular segment or episode does not determine the individual psychic response. The same is true of the play.

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16. From the perspective of this paper it is assumed that dreams do not have structure, regularity, or meaning such as that imputed to them by Freud. Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1960).



Actors in realistic theatre perform roles that are constant throughout the course of the performance. As characters they go through the events of life while on stage. Each actor in the typical case becomes identified as a character and maintains this character. Performers create selves for the people they portray, and do not resume their own identity in the presence of the audience until the final curtain. Backstage, between acts or scenes in which a particular actor does not appear, he may assume his real self. Some so-called method actors continue to maintain the life of the character even while backstage. Ritualistic theatre is diametrically opposed to this method of creating life on a stage through realistic characterization. Actors do not create character, except for momentary scenes. In almost all scenes there are no characters as such.

In the play under discussion here no actor maintains a character or creates a role in the traditional sense. Each presents a variety of activities none of which are specific to a particular character with a through line. One actor, for example, is possessed by the soldier, is the first applicant interviewed and initiated, is the corpse during the pseudo-embalming, plays the drum during the initial sequence of images, and is the runner who never gets started. He also participates in many other scenes or images as a member of the ensemble. Among others, these include the private patient, the dying resist, and the "snake" which is formed during the imagined judgement. With the exception of the interview, which

contains the only costume change in the play, all scenes are done without benefit of costume changes or make-up. Another performer, an actress, is the initial team during the interview, is one of the three witnesses, one of the two people possessed by the responsible one, and she is one of the people who put on make-up during the renovation. She also serves as announcer for many scenes and participates in most ensemble scenes

The two examples given are typical of all performers. No one is identified, except momentarily, with a recognizable character. Various experiential states are assumed or participated in serially rather than sequentially developed as a character in interaction with other characters. There is no through line for any actor to assume and pursue in terms of character or plot development.<sup>17</sup> Each actor must relate performance in any specific segment to the play as a whole, to the theme of the play as it relates to his own personality and subjective interpretation of the play.

Social reality is not created by the action of the play. Performers shift suddenly from one state of existence to another. Action is discontinuous, fragmented and incongruous. Motivation in terms of psychological or sociological contingencies is not apparent. The world in which performance exists is not explored. It is never made clear if the action of performance takes place in a dream or in reality. If it is

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17. According to one version of the "Stanislavski System" each character has a major objective within the play. Minor objectives may enter along the way, but the major objective provides the psychological motivation for action. It is never lost sight of. It informs all activity in which the actor participate

in a dream or fantasy, the social, political or historical terrain is not mentioned. In addition to this, there is little editing of the information available to the audience. Isolation of onstage from backstage areas is partial and of relatively little importance.

Definitions of space are largely in terms of behavior rather than physical boundaries. Between scenes and in scenes in which they do not participate, actors sit on stools placed along either side of the stage. These stools are backstage, but in full view of the audience. In effect, performers not participating in a particular scene become a part of the audience. Performers sit quietly, waiting until they go onstage again. There is no attempt to maintain the fiction that their lives as participants in the play, as characters, are continuing. They play the role of themselves in these situations. Characters in realistic theatre, it is assumed, continue to exist even when not onstage. Since there is neither an illusion of reality nor character as such in ritualistic theatre performers may be viewed as real people by the audience without effecting the sequence of action that is the center of attention.

The state of the actor onstage differs significantly from that of his everyday social self. Assumption of this state involves complicated psycho-biological alterations. For present purposes it can simply be said that the actor, while acting, assumes focus. He brings into existence certain aspects of himself and makes them manifest; aspects that are

not normally part of his everyday self. The assumption of focus involves the substitution of a "vocabulary" of gesture, demeanor, facial expression, and alteration of the eyes for those used in everyday life. These elements may become routinized. The change is accomplished, ideally, by creating an altered psychic state. In a later chapter workshop exercises are described in detail, and some of the aspects of focus should become clearer at that point.

At the ends of scenes and at other times actors do not maintain focus in ritualistic theatre. They present what must be presented, and when the performance of a segment is concluded focus is dropped. The actor walks off naturalistically, having re-assumed his own self. There is no illusion that the ongoing action of the stage continues as in the real world. In contrast to this, realistic theatre demands that actors maintain focus while leaving stage and until they are out of sight of the audience.

What happens in ritualistic theatre should become clear from a few examples. As the procession which opens the play comes to its conclusion, the music stops and the canopy is taken upstage as an actor begins the speech calling upon the dead. At this point all other actors drop focus and walk to the sides of the stage as themselves. They sit and wait, as themselves in full view of the audience, until they feel the impulse to join the action that develops. When they decide to join the jamming, they assume focus and begin to participate. The change in their behavior determines if they are on the

stage or off. Most scenes end in the same manner as the procession.

Actors are not always stationary and sitting on the stools on the sides of the stage when they are off-stage. For example, during the judgement the man who does the typing is needed for the parade of the prisoner. An actress sitting on the right side of the stage simply walks across the stage, through the ongoing action of the scene, to where he is sitting typing. She does this as herself. She then takes over the typing, i.e., she assumes focus, begins acting, and becomes a part of the scene. Another example took place during the dying resist image on opening night. When the scene was approximately half over an actor left the scene, walked to the side of the stage, and referred to some notes. He was to announce the next scene, and the sequence had been changed often. Such a thing in a realistic play, if done in an undisguised manner, would destroy the sense of the ongoing reality.

Hand held spotlights are utilized in a sequence of scenes. There are two of them and they are manipulated by various performers. This is done in full view of the audience with no attempt to disguise what is being done. Some of the props used are deliberately handmade and crude. The bed-platforms are not real beds. Set changes are not elaborate, but they are accomplished with no attempt to disguise what is happening. Props are brought on and off with the lights on. Props do not realistically recreate furnishings. The embalming table, for example, is simply a dolly with a piece of plywood attached

to serve as a table top. The ladder used by the man reading the judgement is simply a ladder. In contrast to this, scene changes in realistic theatre are usually accomplished in the dark or between acts so the audience is presented with a scene in existence that was created as if by magic. The audience is prevented from viewing the placement of the set and the fact that it is purely facade. They are asked to accept the reality of the world in which the set exists. The set for the ritualistic play makes no such demand of the audience.

In the production under discussion here the audience and spectators may or may not be spatially segregated as in realistic theatre. The initial performance was given in a conventional theatre with a stage, but subsequent performances have been staged in a loft where there was no stage as such except for a line on the floor. Behavior more than spatial demarcation determines the segregation, but this still constitutes considerable isolation. This isolation may be broken however. During the "Presence and Absence" sequence an audience member responded vocally by saying "present." Several actors then deviated from the scene by responding to her. The scene then continued to its conclusion after this unscheduled interruption.

This group has not elaborated a special role for the audience as active participant in the ritual, as have others who perform ritualistic theatre. In a previous play this group did include a segment in which the audience participated when performers went into the house to, benignly, confront audience members. Also, in an earlier version of the present play there

was a segment which was performed in the house. This segment was later dropped. The general feeling seems to be that the theatre building is the actor's territory. He knows what is going to happen next even if performance is partially improvisatory. The actor has been through it before. As initiator of action he has a specific response in mind from the audience, and is therefore at an unfair advantage over the audience member. Confrontation in this context does not seem to work. In attempting to move the individual audience member, in forcing him to respond emotionally by confronting him very little is accomplished. Usually he will simply be embarrassed or ashamed, or, if he does what is wanted, gives the correct response, it does not spring from any individual commitment or motivation. Individuals in the audience will react in the hoped for manner because they are easily manipulated when face to face with an actor.

Spacial segregation between audience members and performers is maintained in this play, but it is not the rigid and total segregation of a realistic play. Audience members routinely see performers out of character or backstage since such behavior is not hidden. The spacial separation that continues to exist does not seem to contribute to an illusion of reality since there is little effort to edit behavior in order to control the availability of information. As has been noted previously, the reaction of each spectator to each image of the play and his intra-psychically created connections between sections creates the reality of the play. In a sense, then,

the stage does not create any reality or illusion of reality, the spectator does.

It is apparent that ritualistic theatre is diametrically opposed, on all four points, to the realistic theatrical convention of performance. The form, content and action of each genre are incompatible. In both cases it has been assumed that there are objectives beyond the physical performance itself, i.e., there are artistic goals which may or may not be identical in both categories of performance. Realistic theatre involves the re-creation of physical and psychological reality in minute detail as a means to an end. That end is an artistic experience and it can be evaluated, if at all, only by criteria that are outside the bounds of an empirically grounded discipline. These criteria may be systematic and universal, or specific. Whatever may be said of the ultimate objectives of realistic theatre can also be said of ritualistic theatre. It is apparent only that means to this artistic end, and it is means that have been discussed here, vary considerably. They are analyzable in terms of empirical criteria.

Ritualistic theatre is less directly propagandistic, at least in this play, than is realistic theatre. Individual segments and the production as a whole are meaningless in terms of rational criteria. As pointed out previously such elements as "The Dying Resist," are ambiguous in their setting, process and meaning. The same is true of almost all segments of the play. The judgement conforms to no known religious or secular myth of the after-life, nor is it the basis for a new myth.



It might possibly be considered a form of anti-myth, which is, in effect, a new myth. Since it is not a judgement, but an imagined judgement, it would be possible to construct a myth of ritualistic free association as the basis of judgement appropriate to an advanced industrial society. Such speculative and dogmatic myth making is foreign to the objectives of performance. It appeals to logic and reasoning rather than to total and unreflective experience. According to the view of myth held by Campbell, it would not be possible to construct, consciously, a myth.<sup>18</sup> If performance is successful, and it appears to be,<sup>19</sup> it leads in the opposite direction.

Performance and witnessing are a total experience similar to immersion. The appeal is directly to an out-of-awareness area of the personality; to the spontaneous "I" rather than the rational "me." If the segments are analyzed, if literary and religious symbols are searched for and found, and if "connections" between segments are ferreted out during performance, then the experience is lost. Connections do not exist on a conscious or rational level. Lacking lineal development, as in a well-made play, it is hoped that the performance as a totality will go directly to the "I".

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18. Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1956, c. 1949). According to Campbell a myth is not consciously created as a myth. It grows from the social situation and psychological condition peculiar to a particular society at a particular time. It is perspectivist in origin. This would seem to agree with Jung and be compatible with Durkheim.

19. Daily and weekly reviews are not the criteria of success within the group. They try consciously to avoid being influenced by them, however, this is not entirely possible. Of the four such reviews of the play which I have seen all were favorable.

Analysis is impossible at the time of performance because analysis can be based only on current socially constructed biases that are components of individual psychic structures.

The creators of the play, individually and as a group, have a fairly unified impression regarding the treatment of death, the experience of it as a recurrent and common phenomena in everyday social life in contemporary United States society. But there is less agreement as to what any single section of the play, or the play as a totality, presents. Elements of the underlying point of view inevitably are a major component of the play. Since reality or an illusion of reality is not created onstage, nor is an alternate reality presented, the way is left open for the audience members as individuals to create whatever reality they want, with the play acting as non-directive stimulus. It is much easier in this type of situation for individual personality traits to inform reaction than in the case of realistic theatre. In the ritualistic play the spectator "imputes" meaning to the play and reacts to it in terms of his own personality structure. In a realistic play, psychological and sociological meaning is created and presented to him. This is done in a manner so that audience members will understand the action on a level of adequate meaning. This does not mean that ambiguity ceases to exist. Ambiguity exists in terms of motivation of characters, interpretation, emotional reactions, and other elements, but on the level of action there may be a high degree of consensus.

Empirical description of the play appears to confirm the propositions set forth in Chapter II relative to a ritualistic dramaturgical model. Both the realistic and ritualistic models are based on extant theatrical conventions. They are grounded in empirical reality and it is on this basis that the analogy between them and everyday social life is drawn. Relating them to everyday social life may be considered adequate if such reasoning satisfies the standards for adequacy in explanation in the social sciences as delineated by Weber.

Discussion of the model will be concluded at this point. In the next three chapters the emergence of the ritualistic play will be traced.

## CHAPTER VI -- THE BACKGROUND AND GOALS OF THE GROUP

The artistic, political, and social guidelines within which the group works will be briefly summarized in this chapter.

The workshop group with which we are concerned here consisted of fourteen actors, a director, assistant director, and a stage manager. The number of actors varied from approximately twenty down to fourteen.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the above mentioned personnel, there were four writers at various times, a costume maker, a business agent, a secretary, a lighting technician and a specialist in bruitage. Occasionally there was also a musician present to work on specific problems in the play.

Organizationally, this group is part of a larger theatre group consisting of additional directors, writers, workshop leaders and a few additional actors, but for all practical purposes the workshop group which I observed is the entire organization. It is the principle creative unit, and its members constitute the governing board of the organization. Other workshops are concerned primarily with teaching, or the production of more conventional plays. Administratively, the organization is governed by the director of the workshop I observed. He is one of three founding directors of the group, and the major artistic innovator and guide. He is advised

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1. Of the fourteen actors in the play on opening night thirteen had been with the project since its inception. Six other actors worked with the project at various times, but left prior to the first public performance. Eight out of the final fourteen individuals had been with the group for a number of years.

on policy matters by a committee of four or five actors, two additional directors, the stage manager, plus the organizational secretary and the business agent.

At the present time the group has been in continuous existence for six years. As noted, it was founded by the director, and originally consisted of approximately thirty actors, directors, critics, and playwrights. From time to time playwrights have come into and left the group; usually being attached to the group for the development of a specific play, and departing when work was finished on that play.

All of the founding and early members of the group were trained in various versions of the Stanislavski System of acting. It was at least partially in reaction to this training that the group was formed. It was felt then, and continues to be felt now, that the so-called "Method" was an inadequate training and performance program. The Stanislavski System of training deals with human behavior in terms of psychological motivation and realistic physical activity. These are the bases for action and it is hoped that through them deeper meanings will become manifest. Within the group it is felt that these techniques not only fail to penetrate deeper, but actually block the attempt. Also, as mentioned elsewhere, the creation of reality or an illusion of reality onstage is artistically uninteresting.<sup>2</sup> The group came together to per-

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2. The reasons for this are not understood by group members or the director. The director was trained in the Stanislavski techniques and began his artistic career in the realistic theatre. For him it is no longer possible to watch a realistic play and suspend belief or enter the reality being created.

form a radical critique of the accepted methods and to search for or invent alternative training methods and theories of performance: methods and theories which it was hoped would carry performance beyond a behavioristic or an instinctive psychological approach to technical problems.

Through the years since the founding of the group both training and performance have evolved to the point at which they are today. The current stage of development is evidenced in the ritualistic play outlined previously and in the workshops to be described in the next two chapters.

The work is conducted in a workshop context and was and continues to be consciously experimental. Completion of the work which I observed marked an advance in the work, but in no sense has a plateau, solution, or end point been reached. With each project as the work deepens it becomes evident that new problems must be solved, or that old solutions previously accepted require re-examination. The director stated that often the easy way out has been taken. Clowning, comedy, or satire which "work" in performance have been substituted for a direct approach to certain problems. The project under discussion in this report, even though it was a distinct bounded unit of successfully completed work resulting in a performable play, must be considered as a small segment of the larger ongoing work of the group.<sup>3</sup>

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He is constantly aware of the fact that actors are onstage acting, that the make believe situation is just make believe, and that the events of the play fall far short of what they should be.

3. This dissatisfaction with past work and awareness of

The original plan was that each individual in the group would support himself financially by means other than the work within the group. There is little or no possibility of earning money from a program of self training and experimentation. In the past few years grants from foundations and governmental agencies in addition to public performance of works developed in workshops have alleviated financial strains somewhat. During the earlier years the major emphasis and almost sole activity of the group was experimentation. In the past few years or so performance as a group has become of increasing importance. Performance seems to serve two functions. First, experimentation and development cannot continue indefinitely in isolation. It is necessary to perform publicly as a testing of theory and application of technique. Since drama is, after all, an interaction sequence which includes the audience, it is never possible to completely evaluate the results of any line of investigation in the isolation of workshops. Second, performance, combined with funds from foundation grants and unemployment insurance payments, have made it possible for most members of the group to devote full time to the ensemble without the necessity of seeking an outside source of income. Outside work, though some continue to pursue it, drains energy from the work at hand. It would be possible for the group to perform almost continuously if they chose to do so since bookings are almost always available. This would turn the

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remaining problems is not unlike certain aspects of the spirit of scientific inquiry. In both cases it is known that no ultimate truth will be discovered, no final end point reached.

group away from its primary task of experimentation, and would involve it in performance for types of audiences which they have no interest in performing for.

As an integral segment of the work that I observed there are often long discussions regarding either problems about the specific play being worked on, or more generally, about acting and performance techniques. During the course of many such discussions it is often mentioned that disagreement on a particular point arises because of the great diversity of personality types within the group. This variety is more apparent than real to an outside observer.

Confirming personality tests would be necessary to verify the unity of type found in the group. In the absence of such tests it is safe to say only that considerable differences in intelligence, articulateness and talent may exist among the several individuals in the group, but they are remarkably similar in many ways. Almost without exception they are introverted, and many seem to lack self confidence. There is also a unity of social and political persuasion.

Inevitably during discussions personal political views were mentioned in addition to drugs, sex, food, clothing, social problems, and other subjects. Some diversity of views was evidenced, but the unity of views was much greater than might be expected. It can be said that the group is generally pacifist and passive. They are not drug oriented, but almost all use drugs from time to time. Anti-capitalism is probably universal. Racial issues elicit support for more radical



groups such as the Black Panther party. Artistic and spiritual values are positively sanctioned while commercial and materialistic ideas and life styles are dismissed. They view themselves and are viewed by others as outsiders.

The unity of views was sharply outlined on one occasion when two businessmen were invited to the loft. The intent was to use them for purposes of character study. They were both conventionally successful and were thought to be typical of their class. They sat on chairs in front of the group and answered questions regarding their emotional and sex lives, economic views, politics, origins, religious beliefs, and other personal matters. In this situation the group visibly drew together to confront the "enemy."

Statement of the "group" position and outlook does not mean that there are no group members who might deviate on any one of these items.<sup>4</sup> What it does mean is that the outlook implied by these and other views is predominant among individual members. Further, these views guide the work of the group.

These and other issues and positions are closely connected with the work of the group. They form the social outlook of the group and influence the ongoing work. The artistic work cannot be separated from issues such as these. Most members of the group see themselves as politically active, and the group as a whole as a political theatre. This is becoming increasingly true. Active participation as a group in anti-

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4. Political opinion ranged from far left liberal to Marxists or anarchist.

war and other activities is taking an increasing portion of the time available to the group.<sup>5</sup> This aspect of the work, plus the artistic orientation will be briefly outlined below. These are interwoven elements in the activities which I observed.

The group feels, individually and collectively, alienated from American Society. Many major American values, e.g., success as measured in terms of material achievement, are consciously discounted.<sup>6</sup> For a time during the spring of 1969 there was serious consideration given to removing the group to Amsterdam where, it was felt, a more congenial social milieu existed. The projected move was not consummated, partially because of the illness of the director. Abhorrence of major American values is combined with a basic recognition or belief in culturally or socially grounded determination of behavior. This belief, or feeling, is not articulated in a sophisticated and systematic manner, a factor which many group members appear to be aware of, but it forms the basis of the political, artistic, social frame of reference within which the group

5. The group as a group participated in numerous anti-war street demonstrations in the first half of 1970. In one instance in March, 1970 six members were arrested at the Varick Street Draft Board for non-violent civil disobedience. Some of them participate in draft counseling and work at the Village Peace Center. Also, the group gives numerous public performances as benefits for various causes such as The Resistance. The opening night performance was a benefit for the Black Panther Legal Defense Fund.

6. Of the eight generalized values or value orientations mentioned by Williams it is probable that most members of the group do not subscribe to more than half of them. Most members would not confirm a belief in active mastery, the external world rather than inner experience, rationalism, or orderliness. Robin M. Williams, Jr., American Society: A Sociological Interpretation (2nd ed., rev., New York: Knopf, 1960), pp. 469-70.

operates. They see themselves as operating outside "the system" as much as possible, and the irony of accepting money from foundations while operating with this view is not lost on them.

Social and cultural structures determine behavior in large part. They also determine, therefore, the art produced within any particular society. In the view of the group the failure to deal with social determinants in dramatic art in American society has resulted in inferior drama, or no drama at all. Rather than a theatre in which artistic values predominate and artistic projects are consummated, American theatre has become entertainment. The Broadway Business, seen as corrupt and sterile, is the theatre appropriate to a business culture. Regional professional theatre, with its ostentatious buildings and slavish presentation of classics is seen as no better. The reason for its existence is not to create dramatic art. Theatre in such a society becomes escapism, delusion and tinsel. It becomes competitive rather than creative. Art is impossible or nearly impossible under such conditions. It is evaluated according to the measures of success appropriate to a business culture. In such a theatre the "best" art is the art which shows the greatest profit. The people involved in this are not seen as evil per se, but given the system in which they live, they could do no other.

Operating with a view of the interrelationships between society and art, it is felt that awareness of social influences, the mechanisms of social determinism, must be a basic point

of departure in the creative work. Without such a point, one is unavoidably enmeshed in a trap similar to the one described by Mannheim.<sup>7</sup> Recognition that there is a "they," a negatively evaluated establishment or corporate-capitalist system, and a "we" group of outsiders is an important first step. It makes accepted certainties problematical. There is also the possibility of acceptance of new, equally perspectivist certainties, but at least the way is opened for experimentation and investigation. It should be emphasized that the accuracy, knowledgeableness, or even consistency of the artistic, political or social views briefly mentioned here is not the point. What is of importance is that these views are operative in the form described and, as such, influence the ongoing work.

As mentioned previously, the original members of the group had had extensive acting training with various method teachers. Originally the purpose of the group was stated to be to perform a radical and comprehensive critique of the Method in order to go beyond what were seen as the limiting psychological factors inherent in that type of training. In addition, this training resulted in a type of theatrical performance that was the natural outcome of such training and the tenents upon which it was based. The Stanislavski System was based originally on a behavioristic psychological model, and transformed from that to an instinctive, Freudian based

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7. Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, trans. Lewis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1936).

psychology by American acting teachers.<sup>8</sup>

The Stanislavski System involved, roughly, an introspective approach. The actor was instructed to look inward, inside himself in search of emotion. Once he found the appropriate emotion that corresponded to a particular moment in a play, it would be externalized in performance. Reality would be created by a basic psychological motivation. Transfer of this to instinct psychology meant that the ultimate source of the emotion was "deeper." The process remained the same.

The creation of an illusion of reality was rejected by the group as a false goal. It was not viable any longer in a mature industrial society. The underlying reasons for this are not clear, but in part they correspond to Grotowski's idea of the theatre being technologically obsolescent.<sup>9</sup> This is not incompatible with the view held by McLuhan regarding television.<sup>10</sup> In an interview the director stated that realism seemed to work in films, but not on stage any more. The rea-

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8. The most obvious example of this is Lee Strasberg and his followers and co-members of the Actor's Studio in New York City. Other practitioners of the Stanislavski System have rejected this approach. They start with physical action as the basis for building motivation and emotion in the actor. The circumstances of a situation are more important for them, as a starting point, than is the unconscious of the character.

9. Grotowski, op. cit., Poor Theatre, pp. 19-20. The creation of an illusion of reality can be done more effectively in films and television than on a stage. What was previously thought to be a major performance goal has become, according to this view, technologically superceded. Therefore, drama if it is to continue to be effective must address itself to new tasks.

10. Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: Signet Books, The New American Library, Inc., 1966, c. 1964), Part I.

son was unknown, but it simply meant that once stage performance was viewed with a new optic, the creation of the illusion of reality no longer worked. The "optic" was of unknown origin. In rejecting the psychological approach and realism the group wanted the eyes of the actor to be focused outward toward society. Looking inward was seen as a dead end. Rather than create an illusion of reality the actor should attempt to create a theatre of illusion, of mystery, or of pure ritual. In doing so he creates art unmediated by cognitive elements.<sup>11</sup> In a sense he goes deeper into himself by permitting experiential states to become directly manifest, and if this is successful he "disappears" onstage as a self. He becomes no longer a person as such, but an outward manifestation of states of being that precede cognitive awareness. This meeting of opposites, the deepest inner and the pure outer, has no relation to psychology as that is normally thought of. It is an altered psychic state in which normal psychic mechanisms and processes are suspended.

At this point artistic, political and social philosophy merge. The actor attempts to become, in Mannheim's phrase, a "free floating intellectual."<sup>12</sup> Ideologically he is severed from society by a conscious effort and this is combined with his negative political evaluation of that society. He is

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11. This same point was made relative to the poetry of Allen Ginsberg. Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter Culture (Garden City: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 128-9.

12. Mannheim, op. cit., "The Sociological Problem of the Intelligensia," pp. 153-164.

aware of and can guard against the social controls normally a part of the behavior of the individual. With this knowledge he is then in a position to implement or articulate, in his artistic work, his political goals. Also, he has artistic training that aids him in this endeavor.

Experimental theatre, as practiced by this group, involves an attempt to discard inherited practices and conventions that are no longer of any use. Every attempt is made to be selective in this process, to save any technique or approach from the past that is still of potential value. Some techniques may be altered and reapplied.<sup>13</sup> In place of the discarded methods new ones are invented which will be more adequate to the performance of theatrical works related to the situation of an urban twentieth century audience.

Many exercises are designed to reduce or eliminate the cognitive aspects of acting, to break down artificial barriers that exist both within the actor and between himself and the audience. Similar barriers exist between events and linear time sequences. These too are eliminated if possible. This includes a conscious effort on the one hand to remove social and psychological censoring processes, and, on the other, to eliminate the time delay between perception and action. At least in the initial stages of the work cycle to be described below spontaneous action may become the source of creation and energy. Each actor is encouraged and permitted to produce any reaction in a specific situation, and any reaction

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13. For example, the honesty of emotion and action which Stanislavski stressed.

is as good as any other so far as subject matter or topical reference is concerned. The honesty and directness of the action in terms of personal motivation become the criteria of evaluation rather than the empirical quality or appropriateness. Later in the work cycle editing occurs; reactions are selected that fit the overall scheme of the play. This point is put off as long as possible so that, as the director has said, "no doors are closed," until the last possible moment. Examples of the use of spontaneity and subsequent editing may be found in the chapter on emergence.

In such a situation replication of earlier actions is very difficult. Performance becomes difficult since there is no play, no script. There is no blueprint to guide the actor in recapturing the original impulse and its' motivation. Conventional situations provide the actor with a script to guide him through rehearsal. It is then relatively easy to re-create specific pieces of business and provide the psychological motivation for them in terms of the empirical situation in the play.

Performance of a formal, realistic play requires that the actor, guided by the director, begin censoring spontaneous reactions fairly early on in the rehearsal cycle. This is done only after they have been fully exposed and explored. Actor's reactions become practically limited when the script is introduced, and what he can say becomes absolutely limited at that time. In experimental work such as that observed and described later, the "Script" is kept flexible until the time of performance. Changes can easily be made if an actor invents



something superior to or in addition to the already accepted sequence. Scenes and images previously worked out and discarded may be re-introduced with little trouble since, for the most part, they do not affect directly the other segments of the play. Also, the script itself is developed or devised by playwrights who observe the workshops. They write in accordance with improvisatory scenes that occur during this observation. Often the finalized script is little more than a transcribed version of what was spoken improvisationally. There is close collaboration on the part of the writers, actors and directors so that it is relatively easy to add new material.

Traditional acting technique and theatrical production procedures involve an actor who is presented with a script which rigidly limits what he can do. The words are the starting point from which he works. He may devise small actions and objectives that will be the building blocks of his finished performance. Through a familiar internalization process he searches for and finds acceptable interpretations of the script and all its various minute segments. These are in turn brought out and presented as a final performance. Group techniques attempt to reverse this process. The words are the last thing added, and are the least important element in performance. Plays are invented and structured by means of improvisation within an ensemble. In a sense, theatre and play at theatre games eventually become the play.

The director of the group acknowledges the debt owed to

Stanislavski and the Becks.<sup>14</sup> The work is designed in part to overcome or go beyond the limitations of these roots, especially those that can be traced to Stanislavski. Acceptance of a psychological basis for interpreting behavior involves a definite world view, a way of seeing events, and a means of interpreting those events. The position itself is viewed as limiting, and there is a search for a new way of "seeing" in artistic work based on the frame of reference given in this brief chapter. This new way of seeing, in part mystical in origin, has never been clearly articulated, nor can it be. It is the search for it that underlies many of the daily exercises of the group, and also, ultimately, the public performance techniques used in the group's work.

Social, artistic and political points of view within the group are not claimed, here, to be necessarily well thought out. Nor are they in all details mutually compatible and consistently applied. Nevertheless, they do form the framework within which the group functions, and it is not possible to understand the work of the group without having this framework in mind. Without it much of the work of the group would be meaningless. Ordinary social life within American society generally, and New York City in particular,

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14. The debt owed to the Becks, founders of the Living Theatre, is not so much in political outlook or theatrical technique as in a more general approach to the work. From the beginning of their theatre the Becks have produced plays which they felt should be done and in a manner that they felt was appropriate. They paid little attention, if any, to the commercial feasibility of their projects. This involves an absolute commitment to the work as such. It is this attitude toward the work which makes experimental work possible in American theatre where subsidies are rare.

is viewed as debilitating. Artistic impulse and the possibility of doing creatively meaningful work are all but closed off and made nearly impossible by the day to day routine of existence. Most of the harrying and harassing effects of everyday life must be dealt with prior to commencing each days' work. Attempts to neutralize these effects are the starting point of each daily work cyle, a description of which will be given in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII -- ROUTINIZED TRAINING IN THE GROUP

Workshops were scheduled for four hours per day, four days each week. Each days' routine was roughly as follows: (1) the first ninety minute period was for individual physical and vocal warm-up; (2) the next half hour was devoted to development and practice of acting exercises; (3) a lunch break was scheduled for the next half hour; and (4) the remaining two hours of work were applied directly to the play. No day conformed exactly to this schedule, nor was there a posted or announced schedule. Timing was flexible and dictated by the work rather than formal schedules. The first two periods of work will be discussed in this chapter since they were applied both in the emergence and performance of the play. The work cycle of the play was connected with specialized vocal, physical, and acting exercises. Experiments were invented as a means to facilitate improvisation and development of material for specific segments of the play. These connections at times are direct and obvious, at other times obscure.

The physical exercise period was time consuming, and, from one point of view, inefficient and wasteful. From an alternative point of view it was valuable and contributed substantially to the development of the play and the ongoing experimental work of the group. From purposes of convenience and clarity it will be useful to employ the concept of manifest and latent functions in this section and in relation

to some of the subjects discussed later.<sup>1</sup>

From the description of the play it is obvious that a degree of physical and vocal expertise and conditioning are necessary for actors. Performance techniques which are a component of ritualistic theatre require it. Equally important however are the latent functions of daily initiation or purification, and development of individual initiative. These latter functions will be discussed prior to description of the exercise period.

As pointed out in Chapter VI workshop members evaluate contemporary American society in negative terms. This is true of generalized problems such as racial oppression and military and economic imperialism. In relation to personal consequences, a capitalist society offers few rewards, material or otherwise, to artists who are unable or unwilling to compete for economic or prestige goals. As a result of this the artist must live physically and/or psychologically in a ghetto with its familiar attendant problems of slumlords, crime,<sup>2</sup> filth, and general physical decay. In their daily lives they must live with and participate in the physical decay and emotional consequences of ghetto life while being aware of the affluence of the larger society.<sup>3</sup> For the artist there is obviously psychic income

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1. Robert Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (New York: Free Press, Rev. & Enl. ed., 1957).

2. This aspect of the personal lives of group members was exemplified during work on the play. In one phase of the work members told stories about death. A particular actor lived in a high crime area, and he related a story about a murder he witnessed in front of the building in which he lived.

3. In recent months several group members have moved into

not available to other ghetto residents. Nevertheless, it would require a form of schizophrenia to separate and nullify the effects of physical and social environments on the work in progress.

On another level, it is felt that a mass society dominated by consumption values and pervaded by mis-education is inevitably a source of values inimical to artistic or creative work. Members of the group, immersed in this social and physical environment, if they are to do creative work, feel they must somehow neutralize its effects. Socially induced physical and emotional tension must be eliminated if the individual is to be freed to proceed with the creative work at hand. The physical exercise period provides a passage from the hostile society to a creative environment.

A second important latent function is the development of individual initiative. There is little direction given during this period. Each actor arrives at the loft and begins to work when he feels like it. From time to time the director mentions tardiness and laziness as factors inhibiting the progress of the work. These reminders have little effect. Promptness is not stressed because it is felt that any work of real value must spring from individual sources.

This does not represent an acceptance of American values of individualism. It is connected with the view of the artist as an individual functioning in the world of art, and with the

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a low rent artist's housing project, Westbeth in Greenwich Village. This has offered at least a temporary respite from the onerous conditions of ghetto living for these members.

sources of artistic impulse. Briefly, the view is that artistic impulse at its source cannot be a matter of compulsion or coercion. Teaching and criticism are valuable only after the original impulse is invented. Direct intervention from the outside is impossible. Intra-individual conditions are what is of importance. Individual exercise of a non-compulsive, non-directed and non-coerced nature tends to create the habit of individual enterprise. Much of the later work on the play embodies an effort to meld individual impulses in ensemble work without destroying the original impetus to action.<sup>4</sup>

Most physical and vocal warm-up is individual. The body and voice in combination constitute the empirical tools of the actor. They are the conduits by which performance and the states underlying it become manifest. This period was designed specifically for the purpose of preparation of these tools for the work to be done each day. As with most activities in workshop, individual initiative determined who participated, how fully they worked, and for how long. There was every attempt made to let each actor determine when he would begin

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4. It is likely that this group and the Polish Laboratory Theatre strive to activate the same impulses. The Polish group, however, approaches the problem in a diametrically opposed manner. Rigid discipline is combined with rigorous physical activity until each actor is brought to a point of exhaustion. It is felt that the inability to perform certain activities, to reach certain emotional and physical states on the way to creativity is caused primarily by personal, unconsciously motivated, resistance. Grotowski states that the actor must exhaust himself, reach a point of pain and then go beyond it. He must achieve a state where his own resistance is broken by himself. Then he is free to fulfill his potential. Grotowski's position is explained in Jerzy Grotowski, "Interview," The Drama Review, Fall, 1968, pp. 30-45. This interview was conducted by a panel and edited by Richard Schechner and Jacques Chevat.

work each day, and relatively little persuasion in an attempt to make people start on time. Certain actors habitually came late. Others usually arrived on time, but often did not start working for a half hour or more after arriving. Simply being in the physical presence of others who are working obviously creates social pressure, whether desired or not, on all the actors to work, but this was seldom reinforced by verbal instructions to start working. Remonstrances in any event were unavailing.

Each actor seemed to have his individual routine, which would be followed with only slight variation each day. Arrival would be at the same time and the routine for each after arrival would vary little from the pattern of the particular individual. Most of the women would change immediately from street clothes into leotards and tights with shirts, sweaters or tee shirts. They usually costumed themselves for work immediately, and many went to work as soon as dressed. Some would routinely talk with the director for a few minutes, others would have coffee or read the newspaper before going to work. Some wandered around, read the notices on the bulletin board, and generally procrastinated. Others would go into the work space and sit, talking in groups of two or three before commencing work. Most of the men changed from street clothes into cut off chino pants and an assortment of shirts and sweaters. Some simply wore street clothes or sweat shirts. Each followed his own routine. Men usually began working more directly than women.



Physical exercises preceded voice work. Each person did whatever exercises he felt like doing. One man usually started in the yoga lotus position, then did a series of head stands, shoulder stands, and back bends before beginning the voice work. Exercises were taken from yoga, calisthenics, gymnastics, Oriental exercise systems, modern dance, and variations of physical routines developed by the Polish Laboratory Theatre. Headstands, shoulder stands, and back bends and other stretching movements predominated. During the individual warm-up the director would occasionally enter the work space and give individual instruction to an actor, but for the most part there was individual selection and execution. Occasionally two actors would work together when one was trying something new or difficult. The exercises chosen usually did not involve violent exertion, with the exception of one man, a muscular former college football player who usually did strenuous gymnastic exercises. A few of the other men did rather active exercises, but most of them along with the women, with one or two exceptions, did not.<sup>5</sup>

Considered only as physical training this daily period consumed considerable time while achieving relatively few results. Although some members worked hard and were in good physical condition as a result, for the majority it was not a period of serious or hard work. The period was generally in-

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5. This routine may be contrasted with experimental groups such as Plexus, which is a constituent group of La Mama E.T.C. Plexus actors do a series of exhausting physical exercises during each workshop. This group is influenced by Grotowski.

efficient and failed at least partially in its stated purpose. Merely because such an inordinate amount of time was spent on physical work, and even though not much hard work was done, the company was probably better trained physically than most actors working in the commercial theatre, but less so than they could have been and less so than many other experimental groups.<sup>6</sup> Goals or functions other than the development of fine physical specimens, as mentioned earlier, were involved in this work.

A segment of the physical work included a vocal warm-up. In addition to the daily vocal work, the group had a voice and speech teacher who conducted regular classes outside workshop hours. During the daily vocal warm-up period the director would become more active. He would go into the work space to instruct individuals, and at times to conduct exercises for the whole group.

There is in actuality no formal division between vocal and body work. Vocal production is considered to be organic and grows from a natural extension of physical work. Usually one or two actors would begin making sounds integrated with physical movements. Once someone broke the sound barrier all actors, by a process of contagion, would pick it up and go into voice work. Vocal work consisted of manipulation of muscles to produce sound naturally. Much stress was put on finding and developing resonators in various parts of the body other

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6. The example of Plexus has been mentioned. The original Performance Group, and Grotowski's actors might also be cited.

than the usual chest and head ones. Most sounds produced were nonsensical. Production of pure sound without worrying about speech was the initial phase. There is no more cognitive aspect to voice production than there is to any other physical activity. Toward the end of the warm-up each day the director usually instructed the actors to concentrate on consonants or tongue twisters.

In this work the director attempted to develop new approaches to the use of vocal sounds in dramatic presentation. Proper coordination of the diaphragm in conjunction with regulation of the breath, throat, mouth, and tongue will produce a deep and resonant sound. This results in the typical actor's projection, and is relatively easy to attain. Beyond this, it is felt, the voice should be used for a wide range of possible effects, not just the easy resonating of conventional actors.

At times the voice should be forced. It should squeak, shrill, squack, and be either focused or diffuse. The voice should be used and controlled in its full range of possibilities. After the elementary step of good projection is accomplished, the important question becomes: What happens to the voice in space? It is the control exercised after the voice is produced that is the major vocal problem investigated by the group. The director said, "[A director and a voice teacher], all of them on voice are wrong. The voice isn't in the body. It only begins there. The voice is in space."

Actors were encouraged to "send" their voices to a wall of the loft or to a building across the street, and then bring

it back. This can be done as if the voice were going along a narrow tube or through a huge megaphone. Actors have tried sending vocal noises that take a shape in space, and the remainder of the actors try to distinguish the shape of the sound. The basic questions being investigated revolve around the possibility that sound has shape, and how to control that shape. In one exercise the actors stood around the loft, against the walls and as far away from each other as was possible. They then took turns saying something to someone else in the room, speaking only to one other actor and verbalizing something rather than just sending sound. It was intended that only the person spoken to, even though he might be farther away than other people, would hear what was said. Sometimes it was permissible to look at the person spoken to, sometimes not. The results of this exercise were mixed. In some cases it seemed successful and in others not. Aside from the fact that the right person might hear, the exercise served to develop a new manner of viewing the use of the voice in a theatrical situation. It may sometime add a degree of specificity that will be useful in a performance situation. This "experiment" as with many others could not be evaluated as successful or unsuccessful. Considered as an isolated unit it was probably a failure, but within the ongoing work of the group it may not be so considered. It was viewed simply as something that was attempted and then became an item in the shared inventory of experience in the group. It may be forgotten and never used, or at some future point it may be tried

again either in its original form or as the basis for a new exercise.

The division between the vocal work and the work on acting exercises is vague. Often vocal exercises are a part of the acting exercises just as the vocal are a segment of the physical. Constant feedback occurs between them so that at times it would be difficult to assign a specific exercise to either the vocal or acting category, or to say in which category a specific exercise originated. As the voice work ended work began on specific acting exercises. These were usually supervised, and effort was extended in a search for new exercises to solve problems as they arose during the course of the work on the play. Rather than briefly describe each exercise that was worked on, one exercise will be concentrated on and described in detail.

The major acting exercise that was developed during work on the play about death was one in which the actors attempted to express the essence of behavior physically by eliminating cognitive reflection or interpretation of that behavior. Most behavior in everyday life is overlaid with restrictions and taboos. Behavior is censored and patterned according to custom and social context. Normal social and psychological processes originate in and serve to perpetuate these restrictions on the free expression of emotion. Interaction is modulated and made possible by the restrictions imposed by these processes. As a result of this act of mediation interaction does not take place between two people, but between two presentations that two or more people mutually project for the benefit of the other.

Behavior manifested in everyday life may serve to disguise those elements of the individual which are of most importance to him. For example, a pregnant unwed girl may be experiencing sleepless, anxiety ridden nights in a futile search for a solution to her problem, but, in the morning if she is a secretary she is expected to and will smile pleasantly at her employer without evidencing the least sign of that which is of primary importance to her. Innumerable actual examples of this sort of thing could be drawn from everyday life. Those who drop the mask and act out their inner feelings would be quickly judged either as eccentric or insane.

Repression of individual feeling states to accommodate social interaction situations is severely aggravated by a society in which other-directed behavior predominates.<sup>7</sup> A lifetime of training often makes it impossible for the individual to act upon or even be aware of genuine individual needs underlying behavior. It is in part the other-directed behavior syndrome that is being explored in this exercise. Other-directed behavior represents a situation in which personal need, felt emotion, is subordinated to the perceived or misperceived expectation of the other. Patterned behavior is learned and subsequently presented to accord with the expectations of the other. The components of conduct are constructed in this manner.

In each interaction situation, considered as a distinct

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7. David Riesman, et. al., The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, abridged paperback edition, 1961).

unit of behavior, there are few if any visible clues that intra-individual contradictory behavior is occurring. Similarly, from the point of view of the individual there may be little awareness of the socially induced and socially necessary duplicity involved. Whether the overt content of behavior is contradictory or consistent within the life pattern of the individual, in all probability he will still be forced to repress or otherwise neutralize the fact that social structure and his various positions in that structure requires behavior that at times may be inconsistent with his needs and feelings. Gratification is usually not simply deferred, but is permanently postponed. After a while the resulting deprivation is no longer noticed, and the individual comes to be known as a mature adult capable of accepting responsibility.

An actor portraying a character, if he is to do it with reasonable effectiveness and with adequate and full content, must investigate not only the overt content of behavior and the mechanisms that produce it, but also the subterranean satisfied and unsatisfied needs. This is true regardless if the character would be aware of these needs or not. In realistic theatre this is usually done, in the United States, by applying Freudian or post-Freudian psychoanalytic concepts to the character in his situation within the play. The problem is then to incorporate these insights into the observable behavior of the character. In ritualistic theatre such usually unseen behavior may become an overt component of performance.

Within the group there is a feeling that this fails to

touch or illuminate the elusive essence of the character, and it is theatrically limited since performance merely duplicates the misconceptions of everyday social life. The exercise under discussion here is designed to probe to a more elemental level; to make that level meaningful in terms of the actor's reality, and to devise methods for incorporation of it in performance.

Prior to description of the exercise it should be repeated that there is no pass or fail when each actor does the exercise. Neither is the exercise as a whole considered on this basis. It merely represents a possibility for the furtherance of the work; an avenue which is explored. There may be direct results, long term indirect results, or no results at all that are noticeable. This exercise was expanded and used during development and performance of the play, and will be mentioned in that context later.

Physical relaxation is a prerequisite for the successful completion of the exercise. Usually the individual warm-up is sufficient to bring the actor to the proper physical state. On a number of occasions when the warm-up period was shortened or when the director felt that it was inadequate he would start the exercise by having all the actors lie flat on the floor and go through a relaxation procedure.

The exercise would begin by the director doing it or a small segment of it as illustration. Sometimes he would begin by giving a brief resume of his day. This might include an argument with his landlord, an ugly incident he witnessed on



the street, something interesting that had happened, an accidental meeting with an old friend, or whatever. These things would be brought into the exercise and made a part of it along with emotional and biological states. Politeness and obligation to be nice or friendly were dropped along with the will to impress people for any reason. The unvarnished, uncensored inner condition of each actor should be allowed to come through and be expressed physically. Vocal, but not verbal sounds, might or might not be a part of it. There was no thought or desire to act or present for anyone else. Total physicalization of the "I" without cognitive or social restraints was the sole objective.

In this exercise as in the physical warm-up and in most other exercises, each actor tended to establish individual patterns that were persistent over time. Peculiarities of physical movement and individually specific sound patterns developed. These acted to establish an out-of-awareness general theme around which each actor worked each day. In order to describe the exercise the physical patterns of two actors will be discussed below.

One man typically walked stiff-legged with feet apart, and took small steps with long pauses between steps. His upper body and arms were rigid, but his head rolled on his neck. It was not unusual for small vibrations similar to those found in the disease known as St. Vitas dance to go through his body. Though his usual pattern showed small variations on this general physical behavior, occasionally he might vary it. On a

few occasions he exhibited an extremely relaxed demeanor, with loose joints and freely swinging arms. One day this man, rather than exhibiting the physical rigidity which he usually produced, went to the opposite extreme. He walked nonchalantly around the room with one hand behind his back. The other arm swung freely. He stopped from time to time, stood erect but not stiffly, and remained perfectly still even though others were participating in frantic activity all around him.

A girl who exhibited extraordinarily rigid patterning usually took short steps with constant spastic jerking of her legs and body. Her arms would flail about, and the muscles of her face were in constant motion. She often looked as if she were doing an American Indian dance. She emitted constantly repeated, frantic sounds. Sometimes they were whispered, at other times voiced, but always at low volume.

Other individuals exhibited more controlled behavior that at times seemed choreographed. From fifteen to eighteen actors would participate in this exercise simultaneously, and the ensemble effect of their wild gyrations, jerking, thrashing, and noise was similar to the bedlam of the violent ward of a mental hospital.

The tendency to develop individual patterns is not indicative either of success or failure in the exercise. These patterns may indicate that each individual actor was stable over time, which would account for the patterning. Stability does not necessarily imply calmness, but only that conditions did not change. Stability might have indicated constant rage. In contrast to this, it may mean that an individual actor was

unstable but lacked the perceptiveness or ability to distinguish the fact that patterned behavior was being manifested. There might have been resistance to allowing changing internal states to become observable. On a pragmatic basis, i.e., is the exercise applicable to and useable within the context of the play being developed, it is possible to judge the efficacy of the exercise. On this basis alone, as will be illustrated later, the exercise may be judged a success.

The exercise is expanded in two dimensions and applied in the work on the play. Each actor begins by working only on himself and the expression of what he feels is his inner experiential state. The physicalization of this state is the sole objective of the exercise up to this point. With fifteen or more actors doing the exercise simultaneously in an ample but bounded space, it is possible to create visual tableaux that may appear to have the characteristics of an insane asylum or a New York City subway platform during a weekday rush hour. Even though each actor is working individually it is not unusual for a general aura to come into existence that may carry what are initially unintended implications of a religious ceremony at one time, or of impending and immanent violence and disaster at another.

These ensemble effects are unintended and appear to be manifestations of a collective or contagious nature rather than social behavior as such. Sometimes these unintended creations are useful. More often it is necessary to carry the exercise, consciously, a step beyond the random and selfish activities of individuals in order that some concert between

disparate activities may be created. Individual activity must be molded into ensemble activity if it is to be theatrically useful in ritualistic theatre. A delicate balance between individuals must be achieved if this is to be done successfully. If two or more individuals are to come together within the confines of the exercise they must both compromise to a limited extent, but not go beyond the boundary which would separate each from their respective individual expression of feeling states. If one is stronger in his activity and leads, the other becomes simply a follower rather than a co-creator. He is no longer a participant, but simply any person willing to be led by social forces. On the other hand, if both remain stubbornly and tenaciously within their individual frameworks, it is not possible for them to interact. All that is possible here is the achievement of close physical proximity.

It is necessary for the actor to transpose the work from himself as the object of his performance to the ensemble. When explaining this phase of the work to the group the director said that they, "Should deal with recognition of the other within movement. It can be incorporated by sound or whatever. Don't stop and consciously register. [An actresse's] face is there all the time. My recognition of it changes it, makes it something new. With a movement such as this, recognition is registered." As an illustration he does "himself" with loose shoulders and arms moving stiffly in circles. The recognition and incorporation of the other is registered by a stiff-armed clap that does not interfere with nor halt the motion and rhythm of what he had been doing and continues to

do after acknowledging the presence and inclusion of the other. Both he and the other participate in an interaction at the simplest level while maintaining their own states of being. Neither one impinges on the other.

The example given here is an over simplified one used for purposes of illustration only. Usually the merging of individuals will be sustained longer than this and involves a more total integration of physical activity. For example, in the case of the frantic activity of the girl described previously, she may continue her rhythm until she recognizes and is recognized by someone else whose rhythm is similar to hers. If the contact is accepted, both may modify their respective rhythms slightly to bring them into harmony with each other. She may not find anyone who matches her, but someone whose movements may serve as a counterpoint to her own. Interaction on this elemental level usually involved only two or three people, but it might include five or more.

This exercise and many others are based on the supposition that everyday life involves the serial presentation of masks that disguise the basic feelings and censor the impulses of the individual. Elimination of the masks represents, in part, a return to childhood. The actor reacts to his internal state directly, as he did before he learned the conventional subterfuges deemed appropriate as camouflage in any social situation. After he has successfully stripped the masks for himself he attempts to join his behavior with that of other actors. Each individual as an individual serves as his own object initially. When and if the individual exercise becomes inte-

grated with the ensemble in performance impulses will be selected; censoring and ordering are reintroduced, but its basis is artistic rather than the necessity of social interaction.

Since drama is not about actors, but about people played by actors, it is necessary to transpose the work from the individual as object. Rather than personal states the feeling states of some other, eventually that of an individual in a play must be used. The third phase of the exercise is interposed between this final phase and the phase at which the individual merges his activity with that of other actors. The intermediate or transitional phase involves the use of real people with whom the actor is acquainted. Physicalization of the private moment to moment reality of such people is attempted.

At times each actor selected someone he knew personally, either a friend, relative or acquaintance. Strangers seen momentarily on the street or subway were used at other times. On several occasions special people known to all actors were selected. Work on the play required the group to invite a federal judge to the loft during one workshop session. This judge was questioned by the members as were two businessmen who had been guests earlier in the work cycle. The judge and the businessmen were characters frequently used in this segment of the exercise. Using someone such as this presented special problems. Members of the group had opinions, largely negative and freely expressed, regarding these men. Each actor therefore had to make a special effort to suspend his

private judgements which were extraneous to this type of work. It was necessary for each actor to imagine the inner, hidden reality of these men, and then to find the physical correlates of this reality. Comment influenced by the private opinion of the actor would have turned the exercise into parody or caricature.

In most cases the individual patterns noted earlier carried through to this phase of the work. It is impossible to generalize about this however since a few actors seemed to be capable of breaking their previously established patterns. Some could do this consistently while working on other people, others only intermitantly or not at all. For example, one girl who usually physicalized herself in a manner somewhat similar to that of the girl previously described did the judge as follows: She bent forward from the waist, and with knees slightly flexed she walked slowly and calmly in a circle with her head held erect. Her hands were behind her and clasped high up on her back. Her face was expressionless with eyes blank and unseeing. Contagion seemed operative at times like this. When doing the judge, for example, there was little sound used. Most people exhibited a certain stiffness. Such stereotyping could have been the result of individual judgement and observation, but its generality would seem to indicate that it was transfered from one actor to another.

This particular exercise is discussed here at length because it was the major one which occupied the group during the work on play. Variations of it and information and experience derived from it were applied in the development and

performance of the play. It was worked on approximately every other day, and some weeks even more frequently.

Performance technique and this exercise are closely linked. In a sense, many of the people who appear in the play, e.g., the dead who come through and the judge, are not realistic people. What is exhibited during performance is the experiential state of these people. The vocal and movement rhythms of the dead ones are each unique. They are a presentation of the physical aspects of the internal feeling states. Therefore speech is sometimes random. Internal states which are seen as more truly representative of the person being portrayed, are presented as performance. It is an attempt to get at the essence of the person when social and psychological masks are taken away. This is the same thing as is done to the self in the exercise, and the exercise acts as training for the finished performance. It also aids the actor in finding the feeling states to be presented during performance, and practice in exercise sessions enables him to recapture and re-create the state at each performance.

Numerous other acting and vocal exercises were developed and worked on during this period. Many of these were involved with techniques the group had previously developed and used. Others were new. Some were mere fragments or beginnings which were not followed through. Some of them will undoubtedly be re-worked later, and others will never be revived. Some were acting exercises and others more directly related to performance and the role of the audience in performance.



Completion of the exercise period marked the major division of the work day. It was followed by a break of approximately thirty minutes. Usually the group members were free to do what they wanted during this period. Most ate lunch. Many participated in conversation in groups numbering three or four persons. Some left the loft for coffee, and others lounged around or read the newspaper.

Following the lunch break work on the play began. Each day a specific problem would be worked on, or an aspect of a problem. Work on the play included several distinct types of activity that formed a series of progressive steps leading eventually to the goal in mind. This chapter will be ended here, and we will turn to the discussion of the play from the perspective of emergence.

## CHAPTER VIII -- EMERGENCE OF THE PLAY

Description of the emergence of the play has been considerably complicated by the fact that the group radically altered the plan for finishing the play. This happened when the work cycle was already well advanced. Originally it was hoped that the play would be evolved or invented and then rehearsed between February and October or, at the latest, November. This period would represent a bounded unit of completed work, except for minor changes during performance. A finished, performable dramatic work would be developed, and the group, after finishing a series of public performances, would proceed to other artistic projects. During the nine or ten month period of work techniques such as story telling, improvisation and other elements to be discussed below would be employed. Work on the play would represent a linear development cycle. It was necessary to make advance commitments for a fall tour sometime during the summer so that satisfactory bookings could be obtained, but it became apparent by September or October that the play would not be completed in its most desirable form by the time the tour began. Therefore a play, or, more accurately, a provisional and uncompleted play, was constructed which could be and was performed in several European countries between November and January. This was more a work-in-progress than a finished play. The emergent cycle that constituted the development of this play will be described here. It is the same in all essentials as it would have been if the work-in-progress were the actual finished play.

After and during the tour it was recognized that this play, as it had been performed, had several serious flaws and shortcomings. A period of work was begun that lasted for approximately three additional months before the play was completed. At this point the play was brought to its final form.

In certain respects this period constituted a miniaturized version of the previous work cycle. Similar techniques were often employed. More importantly, and perhaps more accurately, this was a period of editing. Material formerly discarded was re-worked, but the plan was to introduce little completely new material. Only a small portion of the material introduced during the first ten months of work had actually been used in performance, so there was a reservoir or inventory of potentially useful material that could be drawn on. The three month period consisted largely of more careful selection of material from this inventory, and this work was combined with a process of refinement of previously developed material. Some of this material had been used in performances during the European tour, but much of it was work that had been discarded for various reasons. All material that had been a part of public performances was also reviewed. After the larger emergent cycle is described, this shorter editing process will be discussed in a brief separate section of this chapter. It constituted an extension of the original cycle, but was separated from it by the period of performance.

In this chapter the concern will be solely with the workshops. Considerable work was carried on outside the workshops. Playwrights attended the workshops, but they necessarily did

most of their work outside the workshop context. Also various story conferences between director, playwrights, stage managers and actors were informally scheduled at various random times. In addition telephone and face to face communication outside workshops was more or less continuous. The major focus and context of the work was the workshops. Most of the creative work was done there, and most decisions were openly arrived at within the workshops. Doubtless, lack of access to and the physical impossibility of covering these outside relationships resulted in the loss of some data. This loss, however, is not considered serious since the results of these outside communications, if they were pertinent, became known within the workshops.

The emergent cycle will be discussed according to the following categories of activity: (A) group discussions; (B) lectures and demonstrations by outside experts; (C) emblems and stories which contributed certain elements to the final play, such as "The Witnesses," and formed the basis for some of the speeches of the dead who come through; (D) improvisations; (E) rehearsals; (F) editing; and (G) a brief summary. These types of activity in the order listed correspond roughly to the emergent cycle. They will be discussed in the same order as they are listed.

A short aside must be interposed at this point prior to proceeding to the discussion of the emergence of the play. This concerns the underlying reasons for working on a play about death. Some aspects of the original motivation for the work became relatively clear during workshops and conversations

with group members. These elements serve to reinforce the social, political, economic and artistic ideologies within which the group functions.

It was the director who articulated the ideas and motivations which underlay the choice of subject and general approach taken. These may be considered to be a result of his personal health and political position. He has suffered from a serious heart disease since the age of three or four. This probably contributed as much as anything else to the choice of subject, and his Marxist political outlook largely determined his and the group's view of the social treatment of death.

He stated in an interview that the initial idea of constructing a play about death was the result of a visit to a friend who was a monk in a Tibetan monastery. The views of death and reincarnation adhered to by the monks contrasted sharply with those prevalent in the United States. It was the contrast which was of interest to him. Since his own health was precarious at best, death had been a subject that occupied him often and in very personal terms.

As a Marxist he interpreted the American view of and reaction to death as a political phenomenon. In his view death is a subject that is deliberately ignored. A materialistic capitalistic culture perpetuates itself politically by supplying an endless stream of manufactured products. All individuals are manipulated by the cultural apparatus so that they feel they must have each new product. In a sense the self becomes identified and defined by a series of products.

The individual becomes convinced of his need for ever more products and devotes the majority of his waking hours to attaining them. He is diverted from political activity and questioning. One of the areas affected by this is death. Serious thought concerning death would undermine unthinking pursuit of physical objects. The recognition of death in any serious and life involving way would be a political act which would be dangerous to the system in its present form. As a result death is treated as something unreal. Professional stage managers and technical experts such as embalmers who allay grief and costume the dead so as to deny the fact of deadness are only the visible and slightly ridiculous eunuchs of the system.

This simplified summary of his attitudes is compatible with performance techniques that are seen as furthering this view. Conventional performance creates an illusion of time. Shakespeare's kings, Odet's activists, or Shaw's eccentrics exist in a specific time which is re-created onstage. The audience is expected to suspend belief and accept this purely imaginary or specific historical period. It is felt that since the time re-created is not real time, it is only partly serious. It does not involve the spectator nor induce a sense of immediacy regarding the events onstage. Since time onstage is conventionally imaginary time it does not force the spectator to confront the facts of his own time and life. It is easily converted into a harmless escape from the present. This may be a pleasant emotional and intellectual experience but it facilitates the escape from the experience of any particular

moment in the life of the individual as it is being lived.

Within the dramatic framework it is impossible to escape the necessity of illusion entirely. Events in a play are obviously constructed on or exist in illusion. This is unavoidable since the actors cannot really die at each performance except under rare circumstances such as the Roman spectacles. In the play developed by the group illusory dead people must be called up if any dead ones are to appear at all. An aspect of illusion may be eliminated. That is the illusion that a play exists in some past or imaginary, more or less remote and therefore harmless time. Rhythm bears a relationship to time that is analogous to the relationship of motion to space, and it is hoped that through rhythm it will be possible for the play to exist only in the present time. In this regard the director said:

"Here we create illusion, but it is happening now, not re-creating a happening from some imaginary time. As motion cuts space, rhythm cuts time. Cognizance of it is recognition of what's happening. Not that it hasn't happened before, but for the first time there is recognition of what's happening. Rhythm creates it."

Content, i.e., death and rhythm in this case, serves a unified purpose. This unity is not irrational nor arbitrary, but the result of conscious reflection and a program of experimentation. Also, these elements as manifested in the emergent cycle and the final play are informed by and consistent with the socio-political views that predominate within the group.

The attitudes toward death which are briefly outlined here constitute a body of knowledge and a shared set of attitudes that group members brought to the work. They combined with or supplemented various political and social attitudes mentioned previously. This combination constitutes the base from which it was possible to permit the play to emerge. It also served to determine in part the general nature of the final content of the play.

#### A. GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Discussions are difficult to evaluate as a method of attempting to develop dramatically usable material and ideas. At first glance they appear to be an unwieldy and inefficient technique. Almost as great a portion of time was taken up with discussion as with any other activity, but the direct benefits are more difficult to discern than is the case with any other technique used by the group. In addition to any direct benefits there appear to be some latent functions which are of significance. In reference to the discussions three factors will be discussed as follows: (1) the actual process of discussion; (2) some of the manifest and latent functions; and (3) the results in terms of material in the final play that had its origins in group discussions.

(1) Discussions were, above all, informal in manner and unstructured in form. At the beginning of any discussion all the actors usually sat in a group on the floor or on benches, but before the proceeding had been concluded many of the participants would leave the group to wander around the loft. Some of these would return to the discussion, contribute some-



thing, and either leave again or remain for a while. Others would seldom if ever return once they left. Still others never left the discussions until they were over. As the major discussion continued one or more small splinter groups of three or four revolving members would carry on small discussions within the context of the larger ongoing discussion. Occasionally the major discussion would disappear all together as four or five small groups formed spontaneously and proceeded with individual discussions with only the director, associate director and one or two actors attempting to continue the major discussion. Usually, but not always, the splinter discussions would be related to the major topic.

Typically discussions would begin by the director calling the group together and announcing that they should talk about whatever the topic happened to be that he had in mind. When the group settled down, which was sometimes immediately but more often ten or fifteen minutes after the announcement, the director would read a few statements from his notebook. These notes ranged from definite proposals for a segment of the play, aspects of the general subject of death, artistic problem in general, or political statements relevant to the artistic work. These statements were seldom dogmatic, but more usually were tentative proposals that, it was hoped, would serve as a catalyst to discussion.

There was no member of the group who did not participate at one time or another, but the frequency of participation varied considerably. The director and associate director

always participated actively, as did six actors.<sup>1</sup> Generally these actors had been in the group the longest. According to the evaluation of the director four of these individuals were among the most talented actors in the group. There was another group of five actors who seldom participated. One of these was the newest member of the group, another was frequently absent. A third usually left the group and wandered around the loft, taking little interest in the discussion after she contributed a few remarks at the outset of each discussion. Another covertly and overtly made known his opinion that the discussion process was of little value. The remaining person in this category was perhaps the most physical and least cerebral member of the group. None of the actors in this group participated actively in the discussions as a general rule, however, they all made infrequent contributions to discussions. The last three mentioned, when they did participate, usually directed themselves to the core of the question being considered. The five remaining actors constituted a group of medium participants. Most of these had been in a separate workshop before joining this larger one, and they exhibited common attitudes and a generally similar manner of interacting. At least three of these were considered to be highly talented.

Some of the more frequent contributors evidenced interest in esoteria that partially concealed reactions by the group

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1. At this time there were sixteen actors in the group, the director and associate director, and a stage manager. All participated in the discussions. At various times three or four writers were connected with the project. Whenever they attended workshops they also participated in the discussions

and director indicated were of dubious value and little or no relevance. On the other hand, as previously noted, at least three of the five people in the lowest category, when they participated at all, contributed insightful and valuable opinions or information. In the middle category at least two people and possibly a third almost always exhibited a thorough understanding of the issues under discussion. They seemed to have more balanced judgements and carefully reasoned arguments to support their points of view than was the case with other participants. In the more active category at least two actresses usually contributed highly emotional, sometimes tangential material. Three of the others in this category appeared to be the most highly trained and/or talented people in the group. The director attempted to eliminate competitive situations and invidious comparisons. Nevertheless, there were considerable differences in talent that were recognized by both actors and directors. Contributions to the discussions by the more talented individuals usually had a definite theatrical authenticity and they evoked deference from other group members.

(2) The ostensible purpose of the discussions was to develop ideas for the play. On the whole it seems that the discussions were not useful in developing the play in terms of direct connections that can be traced from discussion sessions to the final play.<sup>2</sup> The diffuse nature of the discussions, the

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2. It is not, of course, possible to trace the path of sporadic, random thoughts generated during discussions that may eventually have triggered other ideas that were found useful. The direct connections, however, seem to be few.

intermittant and irregular participation by many members, in combination with the tendency to lose focus as far as topic was concerned all served to mitigate the effectiveness or potential effectiveness of these sessions. No major segment of the final play may be said to have originated in these discussions, and the same is true in relation to specific areas of content. Many of the elements of the play were discussed, but they did not develop from or in the discussions. Rather, they were introduced by the director reading from his notebooks. The discussions were not a source of original ideas, but a forum for partial and unorganized criticism of ideas introduced from sources exterior to the discussions themselves.

Almost without exception discussion topics and ideas were introduced exclusively by the director. Once an original idea was introduced little observable progression could be seen. The ending of any specific discussion was normally vague. Summing up was neither necessary nor possible. Often at the end of a discussion less than half the actors would be physically present in the area where it was held. In terms of useful results the discussions were non-productive within the workshop context, as least to the extent that they may be considered as a generative, creative activity.

Discussions were considered by most group members to be of considerable importance. It would seem that even though discussion as a technique was not accomplishing the objective which it was designed for, it was serving some purpose. It is suggested here that functions served by discussion were largely latent. At least three such functions appear to be served

It was essential that the form, content, and action of play be kept open as long as possible. This is analogous to rewriting, and is of significance in a social interaction creative project. When there is social pressure to do so there seems to be a tendency to retain material even though it may subsequently prove to be inadequate. An actor that has worked on a monologue will resist attempts to cut it. Or material may be admired by the group beyond any intrinsic merit in it as a result of familiarity. Such material may be meaningless to an audience. Experience has shown that in the development of a play the group tends to do the easy thing first. Parody and comedy are easy to arrive at and accept. It is considered necessary to avoid such tricks if they do not correspond with the deepest possibilities of the play. In order to avoid this every effort is made to keep as many aspects of the play open as long as possible.

An example of this came up during the last week of rehearsal prior to leaving for Europe. The subject of judgement was re-introduced at this point. Introduction of this topic at this time, after it had been exhaustively gone into previously effectively required a re-examination of almost every section of the play. It made the actors aware that in spite of the fact that there would be only one or two more workshops before the first public performance there was still no obstacle to further evolution of the play. The quest for new ideas and basic approaches to performance and the possible alteration of already set material was to be carried into the performance itself. Evolution of a play that was merely per-

formable was not the major objective. Rather, the objective was to invent the best possible play, and this would require that work on the play continue after performances started. Discussion served to keep the form and content of the play open.

A second latent function of discussion involves a common aspect of conversation in everyday life. That is, the validation of self or of ones' own position through confirmatory interaction. This process is difficult to validate empirically, and it may operate counter to the overt, stated, and conscious wishes of those involved. Also, it is not possible to determine ultimately whether the process is really in operation, or if one or more actors are resorting to subterfuge and conscious manipulation. Even such obvious practitioners of this sort of interaction as "yes men" cannot easily be categorized as fakes without abandoning the concept that social structure and position determine behavior and serve to validate meanings for the individual involved. In the end it is not usually possible to determine with certainty if one is dealing with a process of confirmation or conscious manipulation. It is an area in which judgement prevails in the absence of social scientific tools or concepts for measurement and analysis.

It would seem that discussion provided confirmatory interaction in support of the director and his ideas. They were designed to generate ideas, but they served primarily to evaluate them. This does not mean nor imply that group members automatically and unanimously accepted ideas offered by the director. Discussion did not constitute a rubber stamp. It

did give him a wider perspective and provided a critical review.

There is no method of determining the original genesis of the proposals or ideas discussed, at least not within the frame of reference of sociology and the methodology of this project. Suffice to say, they were generated outside the workshop context, submitted to examination and evaluation, and then re-evaluated privately by the director. Eventually much of the material mentioned initially by the director appeared in the final play, but the material did not originate in these discussions.

One further aspect of the discussions should be noted prior to examining the material results of them. This involves the functions served from the point of view of the members of the group. There seem to be at least two elements of interest in this regard. If we evaluate the discussions in terms of a continuum such as Parson's instrumental-expressive axis,<sup>3</sup> we could say that discussion was designed for and failed to fulfill an instrumental objective. On the other hand, discussion did seem to satisfy certain expressive functions. Each member was free to and in fact encouraged to, state his opinions openly at all times, no matter how atypical or idiosyncratic. Within the structure of group norms each individual was expected not to evidence hostility or make invidious comparisons. Competitive attitudes were discouraged. The trap of such permissiveness is that even these simple rules could be

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3. Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1951), pp. 79-88.

and sometimes were ignored. Except for these simple rules, it was hoped that comments would refer to the subject at hand. Even this general guideline was not followed with any degree of regularity since it was felt that spontaneous free association of ideas had potential value. Discussions did not resemble group therapy, but they did provide a forum for self expression.

Expression of opinion served to perpetuate a sense of participation in the process of construction of the play. Group solidarity was also furthered by the free expression of opinion. References were frequent relative to such subjects as "the system," them, the commercial theatre, and other categories of clearly defined, in terms of group norms, out-group types. Social, political and artistic ideology and practice were often reinforced and contrasted with conflicting views and organizations, thereby promoting and furthering or reconfirming the groups' own theory, practice and way of life.

(3) In terms of the direct generation of material and usable ideas the results of the discussions were slight at best. Early in the work cycle most discussions were concerned with the development of an overall structure of the play and a search for major themes that would constitute an outline of the eventual content of the piece. Gradually the focus shifted to the development of specific pieces of material and techniques. Both the value of discussion as a method and its place in the overall work cycle may be illustrated by tracing an idea from its original germinal state as introduced in discussion to the final form it took in the play prior to the first public



performance during the European tour. This may be done by tracing the threads of discussion concerned with the idea of a clinic. This same subject will be discussed later in relation to improvisatory work. It should be pointed out that in the original version of the play the clinic varied considerably from the form it took in the play discussed in a previous chapter. In the original version it was a unit of activity similar to an act in a conventional play. The place of the dying was more recognizable as a clinic than was the case later. In tracing the development of this element as it was manifested in discussions it will be convenient to note the dates of some discussion in parenthesis.

In a discussion on the reports from the dead it was proposed that they might be made through a pregnant woman who was dying. (5/5/69) She would be the last member of her tribe and if the culture of the tribe was to continue it would be necessary to keep her alive. A clinic or other locale would have to be a part of the play for this purpose. This appears to be the germinal point for the clinic which formed the major initial section of the play in its original form. The clinic in the final form of the play became "The State of the Dying." In this version it was of considerably less importance than in the original version of the play. The idea of the pregnant dying became a single, momentary image in the final version of the play.

Within a few days of this discussion an outside expert on voodoo came to the loft to conduct dances and chants. She also told stories and answered questions regarding her beliefs.

One of the legends of her religion involved the ability of a priest to transfer disease from a sick person to a tree. The tree takes over the disease and must be maintained alive if the person who had the disease is to continue alive and in good health. A week after the discussion mentioned above (on 5/14/69) the director introduced the possibility of having a major section of the play based on a clinic as such which would combine the idea the group had previously been exposed to and the transference myth of the voodoo cult. Action would be placed within a clinic where diseased organs or more abstract maladies such as anxieties or neuroses might be transferred to animals, undesirables such as criminals, or unjustly accused and convicted persons. Form and content were uncertain at this time. All that was clear was that certain fortunate people, either deserving or undeserving, would be able to rid themselves of painful and undesirable psychic or organic malfunctions by the simple device of transfer. The recipients would be kept alive within the clinic to insure the continued life and good health of the donors. The donors would achieve a measure of immortality.

Several actors resisted the idea because of the literal similarity to medically feasible and already accomplished heart and other organ transplants. Except for this objection the idea was not developed during the discussion. Members were encouraged to volunteer ideas and counter proposals no matter how inappropriate they might seem. The director stated that less than ten per cent of all material introduced would eventually be used. It seemed necessary to include cliches,

corny and banal material at this point. Discussion of this type of material, it was felt, would have two beneficial effects. Certain stereotyped material might contain some dramatically usable fragments that could be extracted, changed and used. Secondly, such commonplace material, if discussed openly and then consciously eliminated, would be less likely to insinuate itself unnoticed into later performance material. The invitation to introduce any proposals which occurred to members had little or no effect in eliciting ideas.

A week after this discussion (5/21/69) the director attempted to clarify the concept of the clinic. He felt that a sterile, elaborate medical clinic would constitute an overt and easy attack on or parody of the medical profession; a profession viewed from a negative position by the group. The clinic would have more of the horror or surrealism of a Calagari situation than a medical clinic. According to the director there were three important problems with the clinic. First, decisions would have to be made regarding what to transfer and the techniques of transfer. Second, and most important, was the problem of judgement: who deserved to be relieved of their maladies and who should be sentenced to receive them? Should the criteria be rational and logical in terms of Christian ethics or Western legal norms, or should victims be selected arbitrarily? Third, character and motivational problems existed in terms of the recipients: Why should they put up with it? Unless the clinic was to be at least in part a prison it would be necessary to invent a social system that would motivate certain individuals to be-

come recipients. Numerous historical parallels exist for each of these problems or situations, and it would be necessary to be conscious of them and avoid direct transfer of them to the play. These points were introduced, but not developed. It was more as if the director was using the discussion format to voice his views so that he could better evaluate them or convince himself of their value.

During this discussion the director also noted the imminent need to decide on a general form for the play. He favored a through line or myth with interpolated scenes. Individual scenes, some of which would be little more than images, would not be connected in a sequential manner. Each would refer back to the central myth, which would be the only connection between individual scenes. It had been suggested previously on several occasions that the physical embodiment of the myth might be either a court stenographer or a mechanically manipulated typewriter. In either case the stenographer or typewriter would be onstage during the entire performance; impartially recording everything what went on.

A week later the director began a discussion of the whole play. (5/26/69) The idea of the clinic was..."Intriguing. It is not great, not a bright idea, but seems to be something that can be used as a beginning form for the piece." Repeated mention of the idea in various forms seems to have resulted in its being more or less accepted as an element of the play. There was never an overt conclusion of this. Over a period of weeks the cumulative effect seems to have forced a conclusion that this element would be included in the play.

At about this stage of development in the work cycle there was frequent mention made of the fact that further discussion was fruitless. Discussion had served as a technique, but through discussion an impasse had been reached. It had become a technique to facilitate the avoidance of further work, a crutch which prevented going further. Among some members of the group there was a feeling that it was time to stop talking and start doing. Translating talk into action is hard work. Continued discussion served to avoid the time when this hard work would have to be done. It encouraged thinking about death as something happening out there, as something happening to "them" which was unconnected with the personal lives of individuals in the group. It was something not a part of the consciousness of each individual. In actual fact, death was a process in which every person in the group participated through slow physical decay and mental deterioration. According to a cliché actors are non-intellectual, physical people. Intellectualizing the subject by continuing discussion prevented the personalizing process that is necessary for ideas to become viable in acting terms. Underlying this discussion, which was one of the few genuine discussions of the work cycle, was the sometimes explicitly stated, sometimes implicitly agreed upon idea that the subject of two sections of the play were set. The clinic and the reports from the dead were introduced to discussion so often that gradually they were considered as parts of the play. It was acknowledged and generally agreed that there was a need to move the work on to a new level.

During the next week (6/4/69) the director mentioned that the selection of themes was imminent. Again in two subsequent discussions (6/10/69 and 6/12/69) the whole form and content of the play was discussed. There was emphasis on the need to stop intellectualizing and start following impulses in improvisations focused on the major themes of a clinic and reports from the dead. These, among other elements, were accepted in discussion as definite sections of the piece. There was never a definite decision as to this. They were commonly accepted through a process of metamorphosis. During the course of the discussions they were originally referred to as ideas or possibilities. Gradually they began to be known as sections of the play. Rather than continuing to refer to the idea of the clinic, actors began speaking of how it would be done, or of including or excluding something when they performed the clinic. The director appears to have been conscious of this process because he said, "Maybe the clinic is just three minutes; maybe the whole structure. The piece should be so that you go through discovery every performance, not just act it out. The sense should be: You are more alive if you are aware of your own finiteness...The thing is in the event, not words. We should do the clinic ten times, re-do stories, or whatever until we find something that unites... When you seize on a form, you get stuck with it, can't violate it."

The discussions mentioned thus far are only a small portion of those which occurred prior to the summer vacation. They were cited because they were concerned with a persistent

theme which eventually resulted in a major segment of the play. After the summer vacation there were approximately a dozen major discussions regarding the play which was rapidly evolving at that time. These discussions were concerned mainly with the content of each major section of the play. During the vacation the director and one of the writers had determined, provisionally, the major outline of the play and the content of each section. The first section was to be a presentation of the clinic, the second was to consist of reports from the dead in conjunction with a seance, and the third section would be a montage of sounds and images presented improvisationally from the mass of material available.

From this point on discussion as a technique of developing the play became of relatively minor importance, and improvisation on the themes mentioned became of increasing importance. The transformation from one type of activity to the other was not sharp and clear. In two of the last three workshops before leaving for Europe extensive discussions were held on the political-social implications of death and the personal relationship of death to those present; the problem of judgement and the frame of reference from which judgement would be meaningful; and the narrative of the play and the view of life that the dead might have. Also, throughout the last two months of work, as various improvisations were tried, their success or failure would be discussed along with possible alternatives. This will become clearer as a representative series of improvisations is described below.

In summing up the place of discussion as a rational technique for furthering the creative work of the group, it should be noted again that they were not a source of generative or original ideas. Discussion was not a creative process for the development of dramatically usable material. In spite of this, discussion as a process and segment of the work contributed significantly to the end product. Certain relevant latent and expressive functions were apparently fulfilled during the discussions. More direct contributions were made by the fact that discussion served as a method of introducing and evaluating the director's ideas in regard to form, content and action. As a corollary to this, successive re-introduction of ideas served as a surrogate decision process.

Perhaps a clue to the reason the process of discussion failed in its overt and stated objectives may be found in the situation and training of the actor as an actor. In a sense the occupation of the actor involves a trained incapacity in regard to certain abstract, speculative processes. The work itself implies action or overt activity rather than reasoning and intellectual pursuits. The occupation of the actor involves the application of technique within very special, confined and specific circumstances. A very large part of his task is to isolate this specific quality and use his talent and ability to select relevant detail in performance in accordance with the wishes of a director. In other words, his profession requires and involves processes diametrically opposed to those involved in free form discussion. Performance technique involves isolation and extreme emphasis of cer-



tain character traits to the exclusion of other possible traits. The creation of character fails unless the actor, at some point, closes off possibilities and concentrates on certain elements. The character as a character may have vague and unclear traits, but it is necessary for the actor as an actor portraying a character to be extremely clear about these elements.

#### (B) OUTSIDE EXPERTS AND ADVISERS

As discussion and other activities continued a number of experts were invited to address the group regarding various aspects of the subject of death. Among the first of these experts was Professor Joseph Campbell of Sarah Lawrence College. Campbell is familiar with and has written on various myths of death and reincarnation.<sup>4</sup> At the point where he spoke to the group, very early in the work cycle, the group was searching for a general myth around which the play might be constructed. All that had been previously decided was that the general subject of death would be the major preoccupation of the play.

Professor Campbell mentioned numerous myths that might be of use, but concentrated on four of them and the criteria of judgement in each. These included an Egyptian myth from the twenty-third century B.C., Dante's Inferno, a yoga system of seven steps leading to oneness with God, and the four stages of death in the Tibetan Book of the Dead.<sup>5</sup>

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4. Campbell, op. cit.

5. This particular myth was known to many group members. It enjoys considerable popularity among those interested in

Several other myths were mentioned briefly. Myths generally follow a typical cycle. After death there is an underground journey, various tests and trials that are met and overcome, judgement as a result of the outcome of these trials, and eventual resurrection. The hero returns and he and others benefit from his trials and tribulations. Each myth follows a typical cycle, but the content of each myth varies in accordance with the social conditions of the society in which it occurs. All the myths discussed by Professor Campbell were myths of other societies and other times. In summary, he felt it would be more appropriate to invent a myth based on the experience of contemporary life, possibly using the classical elements of a voyage and judgement, rather than attempting to turn an older myth to contemporary usage.

Quite early in the work cycle a young woman spoke with the group about the ideas and life of the American mystic Edgar Cayce.<sup>6</sup> This session proved to be fruitless since it ended in argument and indignation. According to the speaker, Cayce felt that life on earth is, for each individual, only one in a series of incarnations. Each new life must atone for the errors of the past lives of the individual. All of us are merely living out the consequences of the past. There is little reason to express compassion for those who appear to be suffering in life. From this point of view the several million

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Eastern religious phenomena.

6. Many books by and about Cayce are currently in print. Edgar Cayce's Story of Jesus, ed. Jeffrey Furst (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1968). Karmon H. Bro, Edgar Cayce on Dreams (New York: Paperback Library, 1968).

Jews exterminated by the Nazi were not victims. They were each punished not as Jews, but as individuals who in some previous incarnation, in which they may or may not have been Jews, had committed acts for which they justly deserved punishment.

As might be expected in a socially conscious and activist group, violent exception was taken to this interpretation of Cayce and this version of recent history. Indignation was universal and rather violent argument broke out. The director terminated the session ahead of time as a result. There was always considerable effort to avoid acrimonious disputes within the group. Rational discussion and quiet, friendly debate were encouraged and practiced. It was felt that violent argument was too similar to life outside the group. It brought negatively valuated elements of society into the work sphere; elements which the group consciously attempted to negate.

Within a few weeks of this episode two other guests came to the loft to talk with the actors. One was a professional hypno-therapist who hypnotized a member of the group. The hypnotic state was used as a parallel to the altered psychic state of someone possessed by a demon or spirit.

The other guest at this time was an expert on the poetry of Rilke. She talked with the group concerning Rilke's conception of death. At this point there was no form for the play. The purpose of these sessions was to become familiar with the subject of death. Little is known about the state of being dead, and nothing is known first hand by direct ex-

perience. What knowledge does exist comes from those who claim to be conscious of having lived other lives and those who have had some variety of extra sensory communication or illumination on the subject. The group wanted several versions of death myths from which to make a choice. It was hoped that by absorbing what little was known, or what had been thought about by various perceptive people, ideas would be generated within the group that would be dramatically useful.

When the major form of the play was decided on later some of the information mentioned during this period was found to be very useful. Certain information was directly applicable to the play, but most of the material could not be used directly. This woman spoke about Rilke's conception that there are various stages of death. To the living all the dead are in one category even though they may be assigned to various states such as heaven or hell. There are no stages of death. Once biological functions cease the person is considered as dead. According to the Rilke conception, to the dead there are stages of death or deadness. Once one is no longer living he, in effect, learns how to be dead by going through various levels. There is something similar to the socialization process among the dead just as there is in life.

This conception served partly to rationalize the section where the mediums call up the dead. The dead express themselves through the bodies of seriously ill patients in a ward, but there was a problem regarding who the dead were that could be called up. Were all people who had ever died waiting anxiously to return and make contact with the living? Were

only some of them available, and, if so, which ones? What criteria were applied to decide who would be called up? Why did they want to get in contact with the living? These and other questions regarding the availability of the dead were answered in part by the Rilke conception of stages of death. That is to say, only the dead who had not gone beyond certain stages of the progress toward total deadness were available to the mediums. Only those in certain stages of the process of socialization of the dead had any interest in contacting the living. This did not necessarily involve only the recently dead. Many of those who had died at any time might be unable to go beyond a certain stage for some reason and would therefore be available. Their position is analogous to the mentally retarded who are unable to learn to be fully alive.

Throughout the entire work cycle as the play emerged there was almost continuous concern with the basis for judgement in the other world, the world of the dead. Legal judgement is based on a system of law and attempts, no matter how inadequately, to equate severity of punishment with the seriousness of the crime. Judgements are based on a theory of equity.

The concepts used and the techniques that implement the process of judgement are man made, at least from the point of view of nonbelievers. They are socially generated and can, ultimately, have no empirical source other than a social one. Judgement after death is usually assumed to be at least in rough accord with the criteria for judgement in life. Each

individual case is judged on how well the individual succeeded in living his life in accordance with supernatural strictures. Western tradition is pervaded by this conception of the relation of life and death as crime and punishment. In the last analysis there is no history, experience, or data which supports such an assumption. As of yet there have been no verified cases in which individuals have come back after death to make a report, so conceptions of judgement in the other world are necessarily based on the probably inaccurate extension of judgement as it is known in this life. Unless life and death are coextensive and essentially identical, and it is assumed that they are not, there is no basis for equating the two systems of judgement. It is quite possible that in the world of the dead, if such a world does in fact exist, the fate of the individual is determined in a manner that we the living would consider as completely irrelevant. Factors such as color of eyes, height, date of birth or death, random selection or any other such criteria may be used to assign individuals to heaven or hell. Or individuals may be doomed to reincarnation simply because in some scheme of celestial bookkeeping more Jews, black people, sex symbols such as Marlyin Monroe, or charismatic leaders such as Martin Luther King are needed by a particular society. The problem of using inapplicable life experience projected upon the world of the dead, a world for which there is no experience, arose in relation to many aspects of the play other than judgement. This was especially true during the improvisation phase of the work.

In order to understand the problem of judgement as it is manifested in an earthly context a federal judge from New Jersey came and spoke with the group. He answered questions from the group pertaining to his experience in deciding sentences and other matters. The discussion was not profitable, and not used in the final play. In order to understand the judgement process better one member of the group, the director, attended a session of the U.S. Supreme Court during the arguments on the case of an army officer who had refused to perform his military duties in protest against the war in Viet Nam. This experience was reported to the group. Of special interest was the apparent disinterest of the judges. While oral statements by defense and government lawyers were being made, clerks brought books and other reading material to the justices. While some justices read others interested themselves with various other things, but none seemed to pay particular attention to the case being argued at the moment. Some seemed to doze off. Also, the entire atmosphere seemed somewhat ethereal. An almost constant stream of tourists filed through the courtroom, but these, combined with scurrying law clerks and others seemed to make no sound. There was constant physical activity but almost total silence except for the oral arguments of the lawyers. Aside from this report and the interview with the judge, each member of the group was asked to attend at least one session of night court in New York City in order to observe the process of judgement at work.

The problem of judgement was of considerable importance in the play. It indicated a larger and recurring problem, i.e., the complete lack of knowledge on which the activities of the dead would inevitably be based in the final play. This problem recurred continuously during the discussions, improvisations and final rehearsals.

Toward the end of the pre-vacation period two sections of the play had been provisionally decided upon. It was thought that at least one section would present the clinic or ward. The exact nature of this ward was vague. All that was known about it was that it would be a place occupied by people near death whose unspecified diseases were irreversible. They may or may not be transplant recipients. They would come to the ward specifically to die. During the scene some of them would actually die and be embalmed. The second proposed section involved the calling up of the dead by a group of mediums. It was not known what these dead would do other than that they would talk about their lives, and possibly about the condition of being dead. Relative to these two sections of the play an embalmer and a girl who practices voodoo were invited to the loft.

The embalmer demonstrated his technique, using an actress as the corpse. He had her lie on a table, and placed her head in a foam rubber holder. There was a detailed explanation of draining the blood and body fluids through tubes, injecting embalming fluid, washing the body, removal of internal organs, and stuffing the body to prevent a deflated look. After the embalming proper cosmetics are applied and various beautifying



procedures are followed to make the body life-like and attractive for viewers, and the body is dressed in special funeral garments. Much of what the embalmer said was quoted directly in the play during the embalmings. The actress who played the corpse during the demonstration spoke the speech explaining the embalming in the play.

The other pre-vacation expert was a white girl who practiced voodoo. She must be considered within the context of the ongoing work as a technical expert skilled in communications techniques relevant to contact with the dead. This girl appeared to be in her early twenties. She was personally calm, shy, nonflamboyant, and reluctant to make extravagant claims regarding her beliefs and the practices of the cult to which she belonged. She seemed to have no missionary zeal, but possessed a quiet confidence regarding the things she believed.

This girl came to the loft three times. The first time, on a Monday morning, she was exhausted from having participated in religious ceremonies for the past two days. It had been hoped that she would conduct a ceremony, but instead she simply answered questions about herself, how and when she practiced the rituals, and what her views were regarding death and reincarnation. She also mentioned that she was a Jewish girl from New York whose family had lived in Brazil for several years. Her first contact with voodoo came through a family servant.

Her second two visits were taken up with further questioning, plus elementary instruction in the chants and dances

used in her cult. She had a receptive audience in the group. When the businessmen and the judge talked with the group the actors exhibited overt and covert hostility. There was clearly a feeling that these gentlemen were out-group representatives. They exhibited life styles and values foreign to most members of the group. The girl who practiced voodoo, on the other hand, was accepted by the group as an in-group member with whom they shared many similar values.

During the questioning and discussion the girl stated that with ~~the aid of mescaline~~ and under the guidance of a high priest she experienced several of her previous incarnations. She had been, according to her testimony, an Arab woman in a desert at an unspecified time, an alchemist during the Christian Crusades to the Holy Land, and in a prehistoric period a priestess in a cave. An actor asked if she had always been a woman, and another questioned whether or not in every previous life she had been human. She stated that she had always been a female, but that this was not necessarily true of all people. She stated further that she once had been an Egyptian cat, but had not mentioned this until questioned about it since people usually thought she was insane when she mentioned it. During the journey through her previous incarnations she also had had a glimpse of her next life. According to her beliefs the signs were good regarding the next life. In it she will be a farmer, probably a subsistence farmer. She will have little attachment to the things of this world, to material goods. This was taken as a good sign that she

was reaching the end of her time on earth. If she attains this status it will be her last life.

Within the group there was special interest regarding sickness and death. She related how sick people are treated according to the rituals of her cult. Chants and incantations using magical formulae are invoked to entice a man's sickness out of him and into a four legged animal. After being slaughtered the animal who receives the disease is buried under the roots of a large tree. Clothing belonging to the sick man is put into the grave of the animal and sealed along with personal objects. All holes in the tree are sealed to prevent the escape of the disease. From that point on the former sick man's destiny is connected with and dependent upon that of the tree. If the tree dies, so does he. He is vulnerable to enemies also, since in order to kill him they simply have to cut the tree down. This myth was of considerable interest and was introduced into many discussions with some variations.

Considerable interest was evidenced in the discussion of voodoo, and the myth of transference was of importance regarding the clinic. Another major consequence of her visits were the two sessions she conducted that involved chants and dancing. Prior to scheduling them most members wanted to prepare. She said there was little or nothing in English which they could read to prepare themselves. The only thing necessary was to come to the sessions with an open mind. Anyone who had doubts or misgivings about these things was asked to stay away because their negative thoughts could make it

impossible for the thing to work. It was not necessary for people to believe in the ritual and dogma of her cult, but it was absolutely essential that they maintain an open mind about the possibilities.

Chants were primarily made up of African tribal languages combined with Portuguese. Little was known about the actual origins of the chants themselves. A few actors were assigned to beat drums in time to the chants. After they were introduced and briefly rehearsed the girl did a repetitive dance in time with them that carried her around the loft in a large circle. The dance step was simple and endlessly repeated. It did not contain the violent sudden gestures and foot movements usually associated with African dance.<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, the dance was graceful and smooth. All of the actors joined in, singing the chants and following the dance. The impression was that the rhythm of the chant and the dance were in time with the human heart beat. Both were repetitive and hypnotic in addition to being highly contagious. Approximately twenty people danced and chanted, with four or five beating drums and clapping hands. After some twenty minutes all but four of the dancers dropped out. Those that dropped out continued the chant and clapped their hands to the rhythm. The four who continued dancing lost the exact step of the dance and began to whirl while following a large circular route around the loft. Even in the whirling they maintained the rhythm which was reinforced by all the spectators. The

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7. It was smooth and calm and contrasted sharply with the frenetic dancing of a group such as the African Ballet.

dancers' movements were smooth, flowing and graceful with little or no tension. After another ten minutes the girl stopped it. One of the four actors said he had never lost consciousness. He was always aware of what was happening, but it was almost as if someone else was doing it.<sup>8</sup> Considering that he had done thirty minutes of strenuous exercise his breathing was remarkably regular, and there was little physical evidence of exertion.

Several people were "possessed" during these sessions. One actress, who on numerous occasions expressed a belief in demons and spirits of various sorts, rolled on the floor shaking violently. The voodoo girl shook the actress from the back after securing a variation of the half nelson wrestling hold, and then rubbed her vigorously to exorcise the spirit. After the chant and dance ended she was siezed in the same manner again. These paroxysms were taken care of in the same manner. The girl told the group that sometimes when the spirit was a bad one, it might take several days to get rid of it completely. Others were possessed and exorcism sometimes consisted of rubbing the body, i.e., rubbing the spirit out, or of taking both hands of the victim and shaking them violently.

These voodoo sessions were viewed by the group as a rich and enriching experience. Nothing was taken from them directly for the play in its final form. No text in the play can be

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8. Apparently he was in a state of altered consciousness similar to that found in hypnosis. Leslie M. LeCron and Jean Bordeauz, Hypnotism Today (Hollywood: Wilshire Book Company, 1947). This state is also similar to some experiences in Zen.

cited as having its source in these sessions. On the other hand, these sessions were the topics of many discussions, and there was serious consideration of structuring one section of the play around the legend of transference of sickness. Also, the experience was useful inasmuch as the chants were in and of themselves, aside from the religious connotations, a form of ritualized theatre. The chants and dancing were performed in a darkened room, and the rhythm was magnetic. An environment was created into which individuals were drawn, and they participated in an experience once they were drawn in. It was not dramatically adequate simply to repeat these same chants as public performance, but similar effect was the objective and similar techniques were utilized in the play.

Prior to concluding the discussion of informants the related subject of outside research should be briefly mentioned. This involved activities outside the workshops, and therefore is not strictly speaking within the purview of this paper. However, the subject should at least be mentioned. It has already been noted that one member attended a session of the United States Supreme Court, and all members were instructed to attend night court. Some actors, dressed as staff, visited hospitals and emergency wards to observe treatment procedures and, more importantly, staff attitudes towards patients, especially patients near death. There was concern with these matters in relation to the clinic. All actors were asked to see the motion picture Titicut Follies<sup>9</sup> in relation to the

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9. This film was made in a Massachusetts state mental hospital and recorded the routine treatment and condition of

clinic in the play.

In addition to this type of more active outside research, there was a considerable quantity of reading. A wide range of subjects related to death and speculation about death was covered. There was no organized reading program, nor regular reporting of readings. These things would sometimes be mentioned in discussions. Visionary accounts of death and speculation about death and reincarnation seemed to predominate, along with concentration on oriental religion and the myths they have regarding the treatment of the dead.

Most of the guests, outside research, and reading was undertaken during the exploratory phase of the work. At this time the form of the play was undecided. Almost none of this work was profitable in the sense that it can be shown as the roots of specific sections of the play or of specific images. Direct transfers were the exception rather than the rule. In many cases direct transfer was not the intention. There was, instead, an attempt to create an environment or atmosphere that would permeate and penetrate the working lives of the actors. They were often told to dream about the play. It was hoped that a mass of information would inundate their lives, and from this mass of ideas and information, reflections, insights and spontaneous connections would come forth that would serve as the basis for the play.

Approaching the work from this point of view and in this

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patients. It became a source of controversy between the film makers and state officials who thought it unfairly emphasized cruel and inhuman treatment and conditions.

manner does not involve any idea of efficiency. The mere accumulation of as many facts about death as possible was not intended. It was hoped that subjects would be dealt with in such a manner so as to have individual meaning to each actor in terms of his individual biography. Information was not presented or accumulated primarily for intellectual effects, but for emotional responses and chains of responses that it might trigger. In this sense the outside guests served the purpose intended.

### (C) STORIES AND EMBLEMS

Stories about death probably consumed more time than did any other single workshop activity during the emergence of the play.<sup>10</sup> During the first presentation of most stories they were related by individual actors. Later as many as ten actors might join a story to help carry its rhythm and refine the story itself. Emblems evolved from repeated stories. In this section the method of story telling will be outlined, the reasons for the stories mentioned, and a few examples of the stories will be given.

All of the stories were concerned with some aspect of death. Usually the subject was the death of a parent, grandparent, child, friend, or acquaintance. In addition a few stories were concerned with the death of an animal, a prehuman, i.e., a fetus by abortion, and spiritual death or the knowledge

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10. Approximately eighty different stories were related. On the day a particular story was told for the first time it might be gone over several times. In addition twenty-nine of the stories were repeated later. Often a story would be repeated on more than one occasion, and some were repeated six or more times.



and acceptance of personal death while under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs.

The initial presentation of a particular story was often a straight narrative. Sometimes this preliminary step was omitted and the first presentation would constitute a performance of the story. In telling a story, as in singing a song or speaking lines from a play, the effort was directed toward eliciting the content underneath the words.<sup>11</sup> Words connote and denote meanings, but these are usually only partial or intellectually shaded meanings. It is felt within the group that there is an essence of experience which cannot be expressed in words. Lineal structure along with rules of grammar and syntax describe but fail to re-create experience. Emotionally charged words carry strong meanings which may strike responsive chords. More often they are mere labels that serve to mask or prevent the expression of an experience. Words are seen as an intellectual shorthand which is inherently incapable of the full description of the multiple facets of experience. When used in a conventional manner words impose severe limitations on the dramatic possibilities of a story.

It is not possible to fully re-create the situation of a story, but it is possible to go considerably beyond the usual techniques. Realistic techniques which rely primarily on words are viewed as either intentional or unintentional mechanisms which ignore the deeper content of dramatic material.

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11. This technique was developed in part in a separate workshop which I observed for a period of two months.

Myriad meanings are possible, but these are ignored if experience is performed in terms of words.

Rules of language were completely discarded in telling stories. Sentence structure was fractured, and often all but disappeared. Either in isolation or in the middle of sentences single words or phrases might be repeated over and over a dozen or more times. A word might be enormously slurred and last for several seconds, or be shortened and shouted. Conversely the word might be whispered repeatedly, or the accent changed. Extreme vocal variations in rhythm, timbre, volume, or pitch were employed. By the time they were repeated the second or third time most stories developed distinct and unique rhythms that were embryonic chants or incantations.

Stories were expanded beyond vocal presentation as rhythm and body movement were incorporated into them. Rhythm might be introduced merely by rapping on the floor in unison with repeated or extended words or phrases, or the entire body might move in place to the rhythm. The person telling the story might move about the room, throwing his or her body on-to the floor, against a wall, or up and down on a chair in synchronization with the story or as emphasis at any point. There was no formal dance movement in these supplements to the words. Use of such techniques, including modern dance, would involve accepted, known, and, to an extent, routinized gestural vocabularies that were seen as limitations in the same manner as words were.

Most stories developed a definite and unique rhythm. If possible this rhythm was picked up and sustained by the audience.

Voiced and unvoiced sounds, rapping, or foot tapping were used. The audience always took the rhythm from the narrator rather than attempting to impose a rhythm on the story. On some occasions they would start and stop the rhythms at the same time as the story teller. At other times the audience would sustain it throughout the story, maintaining an underlying beat that acted as a theme around which the story was told. The narrator would go into and out of the rhythm as the story progressed.

There was a threefold purpose in relating these stories. First, the story telling was to serve as training in acting and performance techniques. Second, it was hoped that the stories would develop for each individual actor, on a level of meaning that was personally relevant, a sense of death, or an immersion in and preoccupation with the subject. Third, the objective was, if possible, to develop elements of content that would be useful in the proposed play. It was hoped that the actors would relate stories that might evolve into dramatically useful segments of dialogue.

An exercise in which the self was physicalized was described earlier. There is a definite continuity between that exercise and the stories under discussion here. In the exercise the objective was to physically embody the essence of internal feeling states. Story telling utilized and advanced this technique by applying it to dramatic or potentially dramatic material

Considered as training in technique the stories enable the actors to develop a technical skill that should lead to

the exploration of less personal and more unfamiliar material. In the plays done by the group there is a tendency for the technique of the exercise to become the technique of performance. The spectator is invited to experience the total complex of behavior which goes into performance. There is no need to construct a facade that tends to disguise the "real" work that has been done. Exercises are exposed during public performance. This is not unlike the practice in painting since Impressionism where the painter in many cases does not feel any need to obliterate the evidence of his brush strokes.

Judged as performance the stories were of an uneven quality. Spontaneous actions by individual actors formed the basis of the exercise. Eventually choices had to be made between them. Acceptance or rejection was according to directorial concepts. In the end dramatic imperatives determined which stories were finally selected and included in the play, but all actors received acting and performing training by relating personal stories or repeating stories of others. This training was applied in at least two ways in the play.

By virtue of their subject matter the stories served a purpose similar to that of the outside experts who talked with the group. That is to say, the stories helped to create, or at least contributed toward creating, a general atmosphere or awareness of death; an immersion in the subject matter of the proposed play. Each story was a highly personal account of death. This had the effect of transferring the subject from the level of general abstraction to that of the personal and professional lives of the actors. To the extent that this

was effective, work on the play ceased to be a purely intellectual or occupational pursuit and became instead a project of personal involvement. Something that might be characterized as a collective aperceptive mass was created which was a part of the individual consciousness of each and of which each was a part. This served to reinforce the admonition to dream about the play. Dream and revery, it was hoped, might be the catalytic agent; the vague, elusive and transitory source providing momentary insight and inspiration that would provide content for the play.

Solutions to problems in everyday life are often arrived at by a sudden and unexpected insight. It is a common experience shared by many individuals. After attempting to apply all logical, possible, or known alternatives to answer a question, and after having given up in despair, the answer to a question is arrived at while involved in a completely unrelated activity. One suddenly sees the answer. Upon waking in the morning one often "knows" the answer to a question or solution to a problem that has been worked on unsuccessfully for days or weeks. Within the workshops there was a conscious attempt to use the stories and other materials in a manner analogous to such insightful situations and processes. It was planned that from the mass of material and shared experience, from inundation and immersion, dramatically useful form and content would emerge. This objective was fulfilled more effectively in terms of content than it was relative to form. For the most part the form of the play was invented by the director, with some contribution by the actors, and con-

siderable collaboration by the playwrights. Certain content or editorial material in the play was taken directly from the stories. This is especially true of the emblems discussed below. At least two of the speeches of the dead who come through had their origins in actor's stories.

Most of the stories were obviously not used directly in the play. Nevertheless, the technique was judged as successful by the director and most of the actors. Approximately two hours per day, three or four days a week for more than four months was taken up with story telling. Yet, the material for less than ten minutes of playing time originated directly in them. On the other hand, one whole section of the play, the major activity of the dead coming through, employed the narrative experiential method developed for the most part during the story telling sessions. This, plus the accumulated general knowledge about death, was the basis for rating the stories as successful.

One story told by an actress early in the work cycle resulted eventually in one of the emblems used in the play. In the second version of the play these emblems were re-named as "The Witnesses." This particular emblem was performed in both versions of the play. Initially the story was long and diffuse. She was concerned with her anxiety about the story, about her inability to develop an interesting story. She had seldom known dead or dying people. In the past she had seen dead lambs occasionally, and once death had somehow become real for her when she saw her father bury a dead sheep. This

material was part of the story during the first telling of it, but was almost immediately eliminated. From this she went into a report about her mother who developed cancer of the brain and died after a long illness.

During the period of terminal illness the actress was not able to make what she felt to be meaningful contact with her mother regarding her mother's condition, and her (the actress') relationship to her in light of this condition. She cannot say, "Mother, you are dying and we are here, and this is what happens." In their contacts with each other the reality of the situation is ignored in accordance with an unvoiced agreement. The agreement does not constitute a "contract" since a contract by definition involves a mutual meeting of the minds of the two parties who enter into it. The actress feels that the avoidance of the major subject, the subject foremost in her mind at least, is wrong. The mother's will prevails and no mention is made of the actual circumstances under which they see each other. During the story she repeats the quoted line at intervals along with the line, "Ma, I see you. But I don't see you dying." The first sentence of this line is accompanied by a hesitant waving gesture with one hand so that it is difficult to tell if she is waving in greeting or to say good-bye to her mother. She has a sister who seems able to accept the silent agreement imposed by the mother and to establish a meaningful relationship with their mother on this basis. They seem to agree that what is happening is not really happening. The actress in question is not able to do this. She feels shut out, alone and inadequate.

During the initial performance of the story the girl knelt in front of the group. She bounced up and down frantically from time to time. Words followed the rhythm of this bouncing. Voiced and unvoiced repetitions of words accompanied this. The rest of the group joined in the rhythm and by vocal and physical means supported it. The story had a frantic rhythm which was later eliminated.

Fragments of this story were repeated three times by other actors. At each repetition several additional actors joined in the story in front of the group. On the first repetition the entire initial section of the story about the anxiety and the sheep was dropped. Only the section concerned with the mother's death was related. This concentrated on the repetition of the line, "Ma, I see you," accompanied by the hesitant gesture. The first time the story was repeated two actors told most of it. These two then repeated it several times and spontaneously edited and re-edited it until only the hesitant waving gesture was left. The story continued in silence, with only the gesture, before it ended. This silence was not simply the absence of vocal production, but the actual extension of the story. The feeling of impotence and sadness originating in the inability to make contact on a meaningful level found its natural, logical conclusion in silence and the repetition of the gesture.

Again a week later the story was repeated by another actress. She was joined by five people, including the actress who had originally told the story. Approximately a week later it was repeated by yet another actress. In each repetition of



the story there was no attempt to repeat the story verbatim. The exact words and incidents used the first time were not of importance. The object was to recapture the essence of the story, the core of experiential meaning it contained, and for each participating actor to establish within himself and on his own terms the same or similar experiences that the actress originally had when she told the story. Each time the story was repeated certain ideas and elements such as the phrases previously quoted and the gesture were used. Eventually the line, "Ma, don't die. I don't see you dying," became a permanent part of the story. It became a sort of summary of the entire experience.

Each time someone told the story he was joined by others who helped the story along on the basis of their own experience of it. None of the participants told the story fully in a narrative sense. They added lines at random. The quoted line might be used, or "I came into your room [In the hospital]," or "You just lie there, " both of which are from the original story. Lines were made up and added. They introduced phrases and feelings and movements or gestures seemingly at random. There was an attempt to create a situation analogous to that of jazz musicians who improvise around a theme, who "jam" and follow individual inspirations within the general framework of a guiding musical theme. This technique is used often throughout the second version of the play, e.g., immediately after the procession that opens the play.

The story was compressed until all essential elements of it, after having been repeated over and over in numerous

variations, became manifest in the jamming technique. A few phrases repeated at random by several actors became the emblem of the entire story. It was hoped that all the original elements of the story, the feeling for the mother, the fear of her death, the embarrassment and frustration at being unable to make meaningful personal contact with her, the inability to face the terror involved with the death of a loved one, the envy of the sister who can confront and overcome these things, and all the other emotional elements of the original story will be contained in a few brief spoken lines. These lines are a condensed, poeticized version of the original story. They are pure gesture in the sense that Blackmur employs that term.<sup>12</sup>

The actors are both subject and object in this process. Communication by contagion occurs as noises, gestures, and rhythms permeate the group. As actors become actively involved there is a rough measurement of the story. Individually and collectively they see how much "catches on," how much "resonance" the story and performance have. The same technique is carried into performance where scenes or images grow as if by contagion. In addition it is expected that the audience will have similar reactions, but, at least in this play, not participate overtly in the sustaining of the chant.

In the original version of the play the actress who related the story kneels on a bed and says, "Hi ma. Hi ma. I see you ma. I don't see you dying." As in the final version

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12. Blackmur, op. cit.

where the story is called a "witness" she has a bright forced smile on her face during the first part of the speech, and makes the futile waving gesture with her right hand. She then puts her right arm across her chest, sinks to her haunches and turns her face to the left while covering her face with her left hand. She repeats this sequence over and over and other actors join in with the gestures and lines or fragments of the lines. Eventually the vocal elements of the image fade. It continues with only the gestures and movements. This is almost identical to what is done in the final version of the play.

Selection of stories for the final play was not based on elaborate, orderly or logical criteria. Some stories were told once and never repeated. Others were told and re-told as many as six or more times before being discarded. No discoverable objective criteria were employed. In many story sessions the director simply said that anyone could tell any other actor's story that he felt like telling. No story was told and then checked off as unusable. They were eliminated and forgotten as actors failed to re-tell them. Problems relative to artistic criteria for selection have been mentioned previously in other contexts. Successful and repeated performance of a story within the workshop seemed to determine which stories were retained. A group consensus regarding the fertility of certain material was arrived at. Having said this one has not described which stories should be selected according to logical criteria, nor what the subjective or objective criteria were that were operative. A few general

rules were known and stated. Most of these are negative in character. There should be no overt propagandizing. No direct transformations from other areas of life such as the religious or political should be used although material with sources in such areas may be included in a transformed state. Direct editorializing and presentation of factual information and logical argument, except under unusual circumstances, is counter productive from an artistic point of view. The use of stereotypes is usually prohibited.

These and other prohibitive guidelines are known and it would be possible to organize, at best, a partial set of rules on the basis of them. Certain blocks of material could be rejected out of hand on this basis. With such a set of rules, however, there would be no method of determining what would be retained. Some material, such as the story to be described below, avoids these proscriptions. Yet, such material is eventually rejected because it does not "work " or is too "easy." Ultimately stories and other seemingly useful material were rejected on the basis of unspecified and, probably, unspecifiable criteria.

Positive criteria for selection are even vaguer than are the negative ones mentioned. Material ultimately used is said either to have resonance, or to "work." Elusive elements in the material strike responsive chords, and the director knows it is right, that it should be included in the play. Within the group there is seldom if ever unanimity in regard to the acceptance or rejection of a single piece of material. On the other hand, a majority usually concurs on the inclusion

or exclusion of a specific story. It is quite possible that in these situations there is covert, perspectivist, conscious or unconscious social pressure to conform. In view of the general atmosphere of permissiveness and the positive encouragement to dissent as an element of the creative process, this would seem to be a minor factor. The ultimate reasons for rejection of the story described below, and for acceptance of those previously described, are probably not susceptible to rational analysis within the frame of reference of sociology or any other empirically grounded intellectual tradition.

At this point a sample story will be summarized. It was told by an actor, repeated and re-worked by others later, and eventually dropped. The story was influential, well performed, imitated, but eventually found to be unsuitable. This was the fate of the vast majority of the stories told in workshops. The particular story to be discussed here is as nearly representative of the rejected stories as is possible.

This story was originally told by an actor, repeated later by another actor, and repeated again in a few weeks by an actress. There seemed to be no conscious rejection of it. It was not assigned to a category of useless material, but during the spontaneous re-telling of others' stories, it simply never came up again.

As with most stories, this one was highly personal. The actor was originally reluctant to start. He knelt on the floor in front of the group, and after some hesitation and several false starts he began the story. Throughout it there was little active involvement on the part of the audience. For

the most part the story was related in a straight narrative fashion, with little of the repetition of words and phrases and development of rhythmical correlatives that characterized many of the successful stories.

At one period of his life the actor had been employed at two different full-time jobs simultaneously. The one day or night of the week he did not work was Sunday. He felt constrained and short of time, deadened emotionally as a result of the fact that he had little or no time for himself. He was unable to pursue what he perceived as his own most vital interests. During this period he had given up acting as a result of financial problems. In order to take the fullest possible advantage of what little time he had available, he took LSD every Sunday. On Easter Sunday he planned on going to a "Be-in" in Central Park. For some reason he woke at six A.M. in a state of agitation and in need of physical activity of some variety. He started cleaning his apartment, working frantically and completely absorbed in his work. Before he realized it, it was four P.M., and too late to go to Central Park. So, rather than leave the apartment, he and his wife "dropped the acid."

On this occasion the hallucinogenic experience was different than it had ever been before. It involved a religious-spiritual episode. He felt himself becoming Christ-like or pure Being. A plateau or state of consciousness was reached in which absolute serenity prevailed. This was a conflictless state of nothingness and totalness in which opposites converged and existed in harmony. There was no need to move

beyond since he felt there was no other place or state in which an equally satisfying experience could be attained. While in this state either personal death or continued life were equally attractive. Little green beings welcomed him to a place or state of being beyond life, but even though it was a land of the dead, it was not in any sense a place to be feared or avoided. He started to go with them, or was willing to because it did not matter either way. During the experience he was conscious and aware of what other people in the room were doing. He decided to accept his own death and go with the guides. He "died" volitionally. Then things changed in some manner. The effect of the drug wore off, and he came back to life consciously. This was equally acceptable, but no more so than the other alternative.

The story ended with a silent, repeated gesture. Both of his hands came together, parted, came together, etc. One hand was Being or the state he had experienced. The other was reality, life. One was physical and the other spiritual. They came together, merged into one, parted and then re-merged over and over again. He had arrived emotionally at a psychic state of absolute peace and accepted death, his own death, at that moment. The fact that death did not actually occur was neither fortunate nor unfortunate in his view. Dichotomous categories of experience and emotion did not apply or even exist in the state which he achieved. They were outside the realm of the "reality" which he inhabited. His frame of reference was beyond such distinctions, which belong to the rational, intellectual, time-bound world of behavior according to psychic,

social and physical rules. All things were one and equally valued. The silent gesture continued for approximately a minute after he stopped speaking, and the gesture was an integral segment of the story.

This story, because of the subject matter, met with understanding and positive identification on the part of the audience of actors. The audience was visibly moved by it. Most, if not all, of them had had previous experience with LSD, but probably none of them attained this highly valued and sought after state, i.e., highly valued according to group norms. This story elicited two subsequent stories on the same subject within the next two weeks, in one of which the actor achieved or nearly achieved the state described in this story. This "trip" had occurred within less than a week of the story told in the workshop. Also, a former member of the group who left shortly after the beginning of this project reported frequent mystical experiences similar to the one described.

The subject of the story was of interest to the group. It was effectively presented, repeated later by other actors, imitated in the sense that the subject was used by others who acknowledged the origins of their own stories, and the subject was applicable to death and reincarnation. It also helped to create a contemporary myth of death and the journey to the other world. In spite of these positive credits, the story was eventually eliminated. Group members exhibited great interest in the story and the subject, but it seems to have been too literal in one sense and not literal enough in another. It was a direct comment on death from a personal point of view



that coincided with that of a large number of hippies and other cultists. On the other hand, this comment was necessarily made from within the frame of reference of the living. It did not literally transcend life and speak from the point of view of the dead. A literal report from there would have been of inestimable value. The English language and categories of thought implicit in this or any other language were necessary to make the story intelligible, and the story was necessarily constructed within these limits.

In the final version of the play the three "Witnesses" came directly from stories told by actors in workshop. Two sections of "The Dead Come Through," "The Executed Man" and "The Song," are both based on material originally generated during the story telling sessions. In addition to this, as mentioned previously, the story telling gave the actors training, contributed to a fund of knowledge about death, and served to involve each actor in the subject on a personal, emotional level. Considerable direct and indirect dramatically usable material was generated or created during these sessions. They were considered successful by the participants.

#### (D) IMPROVISATIONS

This section will contain a brief discussion of the place of improvisation in the overall work cycle and the general objectives of this type of activity. Following this some sample improvisations will be described. An early improvisation of an idea, later discarded, will be discussed as will a series of improvisations. The latter will deal with the evolution of the clinic through various stages until it attained

a form considered to be satisfactory for the original version of the play. These descriptions are representative of this type of activity, but obviously do not cover the wide range of subjects and numerous individual or series improvisations that contributed to the construction of the play. As with the stories these improvisations were selected on the basis of their representativeness.

Conventional theatre practice incorporates improvisation as an element of both training and rehearsal. Within the rehearsal process the director and actor normally start from a scripted play. Words on paper, or a special form of literature, are the starting point. Words embody relationships between characters in addition to ideas, psychological motivations, historical referents, and other items of information. These elements are often subtle or unclear. Performance entails investing words on paper with meaning when they are transposed to another medium and presented onstage by live actors. The problem for the actor is to discover the meanings in the text and his relationship as a character to other characters. In addition he must discover reasons motivations, for doing what he does as a character. It is often useful to explore the multiple relationships and meanings of the text in terms of impulse and spontaneous interaction without submitting to the absolute tyranny of the author's words. Nuances of relationships or new conceptions of character and meanings of words may sometimes thus be discovered. Improvisation is rooted in the circumstances of the script. These circumstances are explored by the actors acting them out on a personal level

under the guidance of a director. Useful discoveries, if any, may be applied directly or indirectly to performance. This description somewhat oversimplifies the process and objectives, but will serve sufficiently for the purposes of this paper.

Within the group improvisation is employed in this narrow manner at times when there is a script or segment of a script available. Usually the technique is expanded in both directions from merely being a rehearsal tool. Prior to the development of a script it is used as a technique for generating and exploring the dramatic possibilities of ideas and proposals. This applies both to concrete, elaborate proposals, and to more speculative ones. At the other end of the scale, beyond rehearsal, improvisation is a technique employed in performance, as in the third section of the initial version of the play. The initial two sections are fairly rigid, but even there where there are episodic images, apparently random ordering, and susceptibility to change, some elements of improvisation are retained. Performance itself in both the early and the mature versions of the play may be viewed as at least partly improvisatory. The actors and director play certain scenes in front of an audience to see the effect they have. Elements are then recombined in different sequences, edited, or expanded, depending on the subjective or interpretative understanding of the director.

Improvisation was probably the single most important tool available to the group in their attempt to evolve a play. It is the method whereby the original idea for a play, which may

be easily stated in one sentence, is expanded into a meaningful work of art. Improvisational work tends to accomplish the functions that discussion is designed for. Drama as an art form occurs only at the moment of presentation. It might more properly be termed a moment of presentation-creation. Discussions of ideas and descriptions of plays or proposed plays do not constitute the art of drama, nor does a simple reading of a play. Improvisation provides the means by which proposals are objectified so that artistic decisions on their value may be made. Improvisation tends to rationalize conduct while at the same time it presents and creates material that may eventually prove to be dramatically useful. Improvisation is a creative tool which performs the function that discussion fails to.

Given the method by which the group works, this tool is indispensable. It is analogous to but not identical with the process by which a writer rejects material, re-writes and refines finished material which does not further his artistic or intellectual purposes. Improvisation objectifies the problems of the playwright. Ordinarily the playwright must visualize in his mind's eye the physical experience of a play or a scene. In drama where literary values are not of great importance this empiricizing is essential. The problem of conceptualization in this case is similar to that of the choreographer. He might conceivably note the pattern of the dance before hand, but this gives at best a distilled and highly inadequate impression of the visual reality he is trying to create. His work has meaning only when physically performed.

Improvisation, as the term implies, is spontaneous and may be ephemeral. A major problem for the actor relative to this phase of the work is to re-create or transfer the same, or nearly the same, elements that are invented during improvisational work to a finished performance. Translation of one to the other is difficult. In conventional realistic theatre the problem is somewhat mitigated by the fact that the actor may refer to the text to discover the specific circumstances from which or within which the original impulse to act originated. These circumstances, combined with whatever associations from his personal past that may have entered in, make it quite likely that he will be able to re-create within the context of the play the useful elements of improvisation.

Almost none of the improvisatory work within the group can be said to have similar aids to replication. Usually there is no text to refer to, no characters as such, no socio-psychological and rational relationships with others onstage. In this situation the director may say to an actor or group of actors, "You are now dead. What do you want to tell us about your life?" Or he may establish the surrounding circumstances of a scene a little more precisely relative to, for example, the last surviving female member of a tribe. Five or six actors, in one instance, were told that the culture of the tribe and indeed the physical survival of the tribe depend on the continued life and hoped for pregnancy of a particular very sick woman. These circumstances fail to establish relationships between the actors, nor do they provide motivations for the individual actors as characters. Neither do they furnish a

historical context. The actors may be wandering medicine men who have never seen the woman before, or they may be members of her tribe who are life-long friends, acquaintances or relatives. She may be dying of a malignant cancer or a shaministically induced curse. The action could take place in any historical period in the western United States, or in the Australian bush. These facts are considered peripheral and are never established. In traditional realistic theatre such facts would be of central importance. The only facts of importance for the group are those mentioned by the director. On this basis a ritual impregnation and life sustaining procedures should evolve on the basis of spontaneous impulse and interaction processes. In this case during several improvisations various means of solving the problem were introduced. At one time the actors had a "meeting" as characters to select the one most likely to impregnate the woman. An actor was selected and a ritualized impregnation was performed. Another version involved all the actors having intercourse with the woman in the hope that any one of them would be successful. On another occasion magical incantations were used to induce pregnancy. In all these versions various life sustaining procedures were improvised to supplement the impregnation.

History, everyday social reality, and the motivations and processes rooted in and partaking of them, are of little importance here. Most members of the group share a large body of knowledge on death and ritual based on previous work together, a collective aperceptive mass which was, in part, consciously created. As Americans of roughly the same age

they also share certain socially constructed attitudes and knowledge in addition to other individual or personal facts about death, disease, procreation and other relevant topics. Technical elements of their art are also mutually shared. In these circumstances, in an improvisation with unspecified relationships to each other and to the social context, actors introduce vagrant, elusive and random impulses whose sources are difficult if not impossible to trace.

Exact replication of empirical behavior and re-creation of the impulse motivating it is extremely difficult under these circumstances. Importance therefore is not attached to translating psychic states and motivations into physical action according to the "rational" techniques of realistic theatre. Emphasis within the group is placed on re-creating at the moment of performance the intra- and inter-personal experiential states that were present at the time of improvisation. Empirical action in performance may vary within limits as long as action is consonant with and embodies the original experiential state. The precise form and process of a particular piece of behavior is of secondary importance. Logical or rationally understandable action is displaced by the existence of experiential states and criteria. Honesty of action, i.e., the correlation of intra-personal states and the corresponding empirical behavior, is one of the major continuities between the realistic theatre, or that portion of it influenced directly or indirectly by Stanislavski, and the group. The criteria in both cases are analogous if not identical. Major differences

are found relative to the need or lack of need for rational forms in empirical manifestations of behavior.

The acting exercise mentioned in a previous chapter, the attempt to physicalize the self, may be viewed from one perspective as a technique for the development of skill in improvisation. Repeated exercises such as this one give the actor expertise in the expression of experiential states, which is one of the requisites for successful improvisation. This is another instance in which segments of the daily work cycle, including general training in acting, are interrelated in an obviously rational manner with the emergent cycle of the play.

Prior to the time when there was a proposed form or content for the play the associate director suggested a general outline that a segment of the play might take. This improvisation was a result of the concept that there are stages of deadness such as those suggested by the woman who discussed the poetry of Rilke. Several groups of two or three actors each were positioned around the stage. A "body" was to be passed from one group to the next. Each group was to represent a stage of the process of becoming dead, and each group could do whatever they wanted to in order to initiate the newly dead person into the world of the dead. They were told that they might comfort the body, make an environment for it, dismember it, or whatever they wanted.

At the initial stage the body was plucked and ceremonial clucking sounds were made over it as it lay on the floor. At a later stage her hair was combed slowly and lovingly before being passed on to the next group. At the next station she



was stood on her feet, embraced, and attempts were made to make the body stand up without support. It was as if they were denying her death; putting her in a vertical position so as to give the impression she was still alive, somewhat in the manner of a child who will attempt to make something stand up after it has been broken. Later another group shook and rubbed her as if exorcising evil spirits in the manner of the girl who practiced voodoo.

This improvisational attempt was staged relatively early in the emergent cycle. The objective was to find a loose or provisional form based on the idea of a journey in the other world. According to Professor Campbell myths of death and reincarnation usually have the element of the journey as one of the principal components. Here was an attempt to introduce this classical conception by the use of improvisation. This small scene contained elements of the address by Professor Campbell, the woman who discussed Rilke's poetry, and the girl who practiced voodoo. It represents the cross fertilization that occurs between various types of activities, and how they come together in the attempt to evolve a play. At the time this improvisation was attempted it was expected that it more than likely would not be used in the play. It was felt that the idea was somewhat stereotyped and did not lend itself readily to genuine ritualization. It seemed to be a procedure rather than an organic process. The procedure as such dominated the content rather than vice versa. The procedure became the content, which would be acceptable, except that the procedure as a procedure lacked interest. In addition, it

dealt with material in a realm in which the actors had no applicable frame of reference. That is to say, it raised the familiar problem of having only the point of view and categories of the living socio-psychological beings and systems which are foreign to the frame of reference probably found in the world of the dead. Both the actors and directors were unsatisfied with this improvisation, and it was repeated only once before being rejected.

Criteria for rejection were never specifically stated. They were artistic in nature. The idea was never overtly rejected. It was just not interesting enough for anyone to bring it up again later. All present, including an objective observer, knew it was not interesting. The actors were not enthusiastic. The individual incidents of the journey seemed false and fabricated.

As with other segments of work, even though this attempt was rejected after being repeated only once, the experiment was not a total failure. It was viewed as a necessary and important step for two reasons. When the work cycle was begun it was known that numerous such minor projects would be done and not used. Cliches and boring material, it was felt, must be gone through. A sort of cathartic effect results. Mundane preconceptions and "easy" material is objectified, making it easier to do the difficult work of evolving original and dramatically usable material. The second manner in which it was useful involved a cumulative effect. As numerous routine images were worked over and discarded, each successive one should be an improvement, even if only in a minor and not

always obvious way. The images finally selected should contain the resonance of all those which have been discarded. Eventually the discarded cliché is completely eliminated in terms of explicit or implicit reference, yet it is a component of the final image since it has entered into the experience of the actors who participated in the original discarded image. It is a process similar to the life cycle of socialization in which innumerable and often unnoticed incidents become a part of the biography of the individual. Occurrences of childhood and adolescence contribute to and partly determine the ongoing life of the individual even though such incidents are out of consciousness and are not recognizable in the current behavior of the individual. This cumulative effect, analogous to socialization, was often mentioned and referred to as resonance. It should be noted that this was only one of two different meanings implied by the word resonance. Often the word was used also to designate the artistic quality or possibility of a particular idea, story, or other component of the play.

Numerous other improvisations of this nature were performed and then rejected in whole or in part. These included, among others, a service for the dead, having each actor imagine and relate the last five minutes of life on earth, several versions of a judgement, and a nightmarish co-existence of human beings and animals in a confined space where both were attempting to avoid death. Rather than describe these and numerous other single and series improvisations, the process by which the clinic evolved will be gone into in some detail in order to clearly illustrate the use of improvisation. The

process as described here will appear to be more rational than it actually was. Nonetheless, even in the real situation, it appears to be a rational process, using irrational impulse to arrive at a goal. In other words, according to means-ends schema, it is entirely rational even though irrational techniques are employed.

The clinic or ward evolved through a series of improvisations over a two month period. During this time there were seventeen day of work devoted to it, and on many days two, three or more variations were attempted. On some days the entire clinic would be worked on, and at other times a particular segment would be worked and re-worked several times. Each repetition involved minor adjustments of some sort. The scene as a whole underwent three major revisions before attaining a final form less than a week prior to the end of the workshops. Even this form was not really final. It was a provisional one arrived at as an expedient because it was necessary to begin public performances as a result of previous commitments.

Each day that the clinic was improvised a general routine was followed. The director usually gave a brief oral outline of the work to be done, and at the same time he would assign actors to be patients, attendants, or applicants. Each actor would then invent a "character" for his function, and dialogue would spontaneously emerge as the scene progressed according to the outline given by the director. The three revisions of the clinic will be described below, and examples of the actors' work in each version will be mentioned. The dynamic, emergent process of this segment of the play and the place of improvisa-

tion in it should thereby become clear. It should be emphasized that all other segments of the play were evolved and improvised in a similar manner so the description given below is only one example of the improvisatory work by the group.

As the clinic was originally conceived it was an environment of last resort. The people in the clinic all suffered from various terminal illnesses, and they were admitted to the clinic for the specific purpose of dying. It was assumed that vast crowds of people were outside waiting to get in, and those already permitted to come there to die were among the privileged few. There was a team who managed the clinic and ministered to the needs of the patients. Members of this team were purposely not clearly defined. They might be doctors, nurses, attendants, orderlies, or guards. Each day different actors were assigned to each of the three major categories of characters.

In the initial version of the clinic it was determined that the scene would open during a pre-dawn period. A daily routine would then be followed. It would be a depersonalized, bureaucratic and automatic process. Patients were to be awakened by the team, washed, fed, groomed and prepared for the doctor-inspector who would be played by a team member. The patients would each be visited by this individual. Later a number of patients would die and be embalmed. New applicants would be interviewed and admitted to replace those who died. Regular activities would be scheduled for the patients. They would have a period for motion, comfort, and other activities.

Actors who were to portray patients worked on physical manifestations of disease. Some included horrible coughing fits, gasping, regurgitation, incontinence, feebleness, and other forms of physical deterioration. Each actor developed his own disease, and determined what manifestations there would be. In most instances these were not based on specific, known diseases. Team members developed routines for waking patients, conducting the doctor on his inspection tour of the ward, interviewing new applicants, and other activities. The team constantly imposed and re-imposed order as quarrelsome, irritated, debilitated patients, some of whom were senile, destroyed the smooth functioning of the ward. There were constant shouted complaints, coughing, screams and other noises from the patients. A relatively strong patient might sexually assault another, weaker patient. Fights would break out if one patient opened a window and another closed it. Contagion would spread any disturbance throughout the entire ward. At regular intervals one patient might cough, wheeze and expectorate into a metal container on the floor. This very conspicuous activity would remind other patients of their own disabilities and major or minor complaints. Each outburst would bring the team onstage to restore order by commands, threats, tender loving care, or injections of tranquilizing drugs.

After several improvisations the team developed a regular series of activities. The day would begin with a waking up of the patients which was stylized and followed by information gathering for charts. Next the patients were washed, fed,

and elimination was taken care of. Next the "doctor" made his rounds. After this there were regular periods for each patient to say good-bye to his self. All patients participated in comfort and motion sessions. One patient died and was embalmed while a new patient was interviewed and introduced to the ward. At any time patients might resist and bedlam would break out while the team energetically restored order so that their routine could be completed. The smoothness of the routine became the major concern of the ward. Usually the outbreaks were spontaneous, but from time to time the director inserted them. For example, on one occasion he told the patients, "Two hours have passed, and no nurses have been around in the ward. When an emergency happens let it spread contagiously." Almost immediately an actor shouted for a nurse and pandemonium broke out. Finally the team returned and gave injections to each patient.

Actors who played patients continued to work on physical manifestations of their disease as the series of improvisations continued. Team members attempted to refine and develop their routine. Actors were switched to different roles as each improvisation was done. All of them aided contagion of sounds and feeling states so that at various times the ward was filled with energy. There was an attempt to develop dynamic qualities to characterize the patients in the ward. As each repetition and alteration was tried both directors would go onstage as the scene progressed and give private instructions to various actors. Also, each time an improvisation was done new elements were added and old ones dropped. For example, in view of the

horror of the clinic it did not seem logical that vast crowds should be outside trying to get in. Each actor was asked to solve this paradox from himself during one improvisation. An actor in these circumstances might decide that mere proximity to an embalmer, who through his craft will continue the physical appearance of life in death, may make this a desirable place to die since one must die anyway. At another time actors playing patients might be asked to modulate their behavior, to cooperate with the team as much as possible within the confines of their particular illness since, if they did not, there was some danger that they might be discharged. At one time two teams were introduced so patients could receive adequate personal attention. At another time a private patient was placed in the ward, thereby complicating the routine of the team. Numerous variations of the ward routine were performed. The sequence of events was changed often and elements such as those mentioned and many others were introduced and eliminated or retained. Such elements might be introduced and immediately dropped only to be introduced again later, or they might be retained for a period and ultimately cut.

Approximately a month after the initial improvisation of the clinic provisional casting was decided upon. From this point on actors were assigned either as team members, patients, or applicants. Some minor changes were later made, one of them necessitated by the resignation of an actress less than a week prior to the end of the workshops. Specific pieces of stage business were assigned and re-assigned within the major casting units, but no significant casting changes were made later. From



this point on dialogue used by the team tended to solidify and remained fairly constant during each succeeding improvisation. Bed-platforms and an office constituted the set, but the arrangement of these continued to change.

Attempts to establish rituals for each activity were begun at this point. This may be illustrated by the problem presented in waking up the patients. A mundane, functional activity such as this, unless it is ritualized, may become boring to watch and tedious for the actors. Routines were established and gone over many times, and after many repetitions and revisions, it was decided that each member of the three actor team would go through the ward three times. The first time through it was dark, and they spoke plainly, "Wake up now. Time to get up." Each member of the team was actually checking each patient to see if any of them had died during the night. Patients snored, coughed and made various indefinable noises. The second time through the ward the vocal element of the team's lines disintegrated, but it was still recognizable. At the beginning of the third round the lights of the ward were turned on and the team proceeded through the ward shouting their repetitious lines to each patient, but the lines were no longer recognizable. Dialogue had become chant; pure sound which substituted for and extended the meanings of the words. Connotations of boredom and routinization, dehumanization and inexorableness not in the words themselves were included in this banal daily greeting to the patients.

After more or less permanent routines were decided upon each section of activity was re-worked and polished. As the

clinic evolved and took on a stable form some workshops were devoted to the seance which was the primary activity of the second major section of the play. Several mediums were to appear in the ward at night. Series of dead people were to be called up by them, and the dead were to make reports to the living in the form of ritualized speeches. Rather than being inserted at random as in the final version of the play, these speeches, in the initial version done in Europe, constituted a solid block of material. Some of the patients became mediums in the second section, others remained as patients who were to be possessed.

Shortly after the major casting was done there was a run through of the clinic and the seance. The clinic routine was as follows: wake up, motion, taking in and eliminating, a patient dies, embalming, interview and introduction of a new patient, recreation, and comfort. The run through was followed by a long and penetrating discussion which resulted in the first major revision of the clinic. Problems perceived at the time were (1) Is the clinic an indicator of society, of the everyday life in society, or is it merely a specific, limited diatribe directed toward a single institution in society? At this point the clinic was the major section of the play, but it was asked, (2) Should it be retained at all, and, if so, what can be done technically to make it interesting to watch? Routines followed by the team and the progress of the day in the ward were slow and dull. Activities of the patients were not interesting to watch. Spectators were bored and uninvolved in the activities. A genuine discussion developed

centered on these two points. Almost all actors contributed, and few left the discussion area. Among other things, premises underlying the clinic were clarified. All agreed that, even though it appeared to be, it was not a direct and limited attack on the medical profession as such. Nor was it concerned primarily with specific institutions such as nursing homes and other establishments conventionally involved with the dead and dying. Empirical routines which had evolved and made up the then current performance contravened the underlying intent.

Consensus was attained regarding several factors. As the clinic had evolved up to this point it was uninteresting to watch. It was too matter of fact. Major concentration had been on developing activities and routines for the team. Bureaucrats dominated the scene and their procedures were inherently uninteresting as theatre. What the ward was supposed to represent and how to make this clear had been largely ignored. No dynamic development nor rhythm for the work existed which might serve to draw the spectator into an active emotional involvement. There was no basis for participation. All the elements and activities were too nearly identical in terms of energy levels and rhythms. Originally it was hoped that this monotony would convey the inexorable quality of the place and what happened there, in addition to illustrating how the clinic involved the lives of every member of society. According to the director, what should happen was, "As you watch it, you should feel these sections as my life. [A] terminal ward is in some sense, or at least should be seen as, part of my life. Periods and sections of it are the same as my life. Society

is oriented so that this is how you want to die. The audience should say: 'Why'?" The clinic failed to convey this. All that seemed evident was the horror of the place, the meanness and narrowness of the team of bureaucratic functionaries. Without the implication of wider applicability to the personal lives of audience members, without the sense of the clinic as metaphor, there was no reason for, nor mechanism by which, the audience might be drawn into the play.

During another discussion a few days later an actress made the suggestion that many or most of the activities of the ward should be retained, but they should be performed as a series of functions at different stations. Patients might move from one station to the next. Continuous and monotonous routines which had dominated the previous version of the clinic would be eliminated. The clinic would become a place of movement. Patients would be mobile. Figuratively, it would become a railroad station where patients were shuttled about. Some would "get off" at some point and do motion, and at another point others would stop for taking in and eliminating. In this manner much of the static quality of the clinic would be eliminated. This idea seemed to have merit and the following four improvisational sessions were devoted to it.

Bed-platforms were moved to the extreme upstage area, and three areas were marked on the floor of the stage with tape; one each for the activities of motion, recreation, and elimination. The system of the ward was broken, and all activities took place at random, depending on the inclination of each individual patient. Some patients were almost immobile, others

completely ambulatory. Eight actors began as patients. Almost immediately one fell out of bed and two others helped him get back into bed. At the same time another patient was eliminating and then he moved to the recreation area where he and two others embraced feebly. An actress, as if she were a very old woman, dragged herself around the motion area. An actor who could barely walk and had the additional handicap of a paralyzed arm also tried to stay in motion. As long as motion continues there is evidence of life. When the patient no longer participates in it he is likely to be mistaken for dead and taken away for embalming. Some of the people in the recreation area went back to bed. An actress who had not left her bed died quietly. Two people from the team tied her hands and feet together and placed her on the wheeled table for embalming.<sup>13</sup> An interview started at about the same time. Two more people entered the recreation area and embraced. The corpse was wheeled forward and embalmed as the interview was completed. Two more people entered the recreation area and embraced. They left it and two more took their place. These latter two stared dreamily into space. In the meantime others were in bed, eliminating, or in motion. The embalming ended and the new applicant was admitted to the ward.

This improvisation was repeated three days later with nine patients, four applicants, and three members of the super-

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13. This was a technique which was mentioned by a nurse who explained the handling of the dead and dying in a hospital. The corpse is tied up to make a more convenient package that will be easy to handle.

vising team. A song of farewell was added. This was later cut, and later still it was included in the final version of the play. Whenever anyone was embalmed and wheeled away to the freezer compartment of the morgue the remaining patients would attempt to move to the recreation area to sing the song to him. Three people died and were embalmed during this improvisation. Other activities of the ward were continued as previously. Embalming became more stylized, and the girl who aids in it recited her speech each time. She composed it as she did it. Each activity of the ward was defined a little more precisely, e.g., the method of introducing the new patients. They are brought singly to the middle of the ward and left standing there with their backs to the audience. It was up to the individual patient to begin to participate in the life of the ward. Another activity was added for the patients. This involved saying good-by to the self. Each patient did it when he wanted to. This evolved into the section of the final play called, "The Last Biological Rites."

There were only seven working days left prior to leaving for Europe the next time the ward was performed. Ward routines continued approximately the same as on the previous few days. At the end of it each patient told his background in a very short verbal portrait. One said, "I worked in my family's store. When they died I took over the store, and, ah, the store is closed now." Another said, "I disowned my daughter because she had a baby without being married." This had been done in a short improvisation suggested by a playwright prior to inserting it into the ward. Each actor composed a few lines

to summarize his life. His life was at an end and he was ready to die. In addition to this a set speech was added for the interview and the introduction of each of the three new patients. These were the same speeches used at the photographic section and the section for measuring the applicant in the final version of the play.

This version of the clinic appeared to satisfy the director. He seemed reasonably assured that it was performable, and stated that it would probably be used during the performances in Europe. Three days later, however, he changed his mind and the ward was once again revised. He decided that the patients were not sick when they were admitted to the ward. In fact they were not patients and the place they came to was not a ward or clinic. Rather, it was a place to which people came for the sole purpose of dying. People would go through the stages of dying in this location. Life processes were to be summarized in the experience of each individual within this location. This location would thereby become a miniature of the larger society. It would be a microcosm. In effect, this made the new environment more of an allegory than a metaphor.

Five bed-platforms were placed on the stage, as if each were a stop on an assembly line. Each actor is to be healthy when he enters. Upon entering he is to take the first bed. Slowly he will progress through the stages of life toward death. Each bed will represent a different stage in the process. Each actor will be forced to move on to the next stage because new applicants are to be continually admitted, and they have the right to the first bed. Previous ward activities such as

motion, recreation, elimination and saying good-by to the self will be incorporated. As each patient dies he will be embalmed and taken off. There will be a reception area where four or five actors will apply for admission. At all times this area will be filled with people trying to get in.

The scene was then improvised in the manner described. Some people resisted moving on to the next stage and were forced to do so. The previous ward activities were done at random. During the second improvisation of this version each bed or station was assigned a task. The first bed was for self expression where various actors sang songs, did dances or little tricks, made speeches or told stories. Comfort was performed at the next station, and this was followed by bodily functions. The fourth station was for taking in and eliminating and the final station was for meditation on your own death. Each actor said good-by to his self at the fifth station. At each stage on this foreshortened journey to death each individual actor improvised what he wanted to do in each section.

At the next workshop an outside expert in bruitage attended and helped the actors invent sounds for the crowd in the reception area. Both the actors and the directors felt that the clinic had developed considerably since the initial uninteresting routine, but, at least on the part of the directors, there was a feeling that it was still not adequate. It was more interesting than it had been previously. It was performable, but it still lacked a certain undefined dramatic quality. There was virtually no time left, but it was decided to revise it again anyway.



All of the old elements or activities were retained, but the linearity of the scene was obliterated in the next version. A series of images with blackouts between each image was tried. The idea of a clinic or ward had previously been eliminated, and now the notion of consecutive, seried activities was also done away with. A series of disconnected, fragmented, and often uncompleted images was improvised. According to the director, they should fit together like a puzzle. Each person in the audience could put them together in his own way. Connections would no longer be supplied by the actors. Didactic content would be eliminated and to the extent that each audience member participated emotionally and experientially, he would "create" a meaning from the disparate images. The images themselves were no longer meaningful, but they were open for the imputation of meaning by each spectator. Images would not serve as a guide. All instructional purpose was subtracted from them and they became pure stimulus. The opposite extreme from the original realistic or semi-realistic clinic had been reached.

The following is a sample of the images, with a blackout between each:

1. A pregnant lady walks across the stage/
2. Four patients run in place/
3. The four patients continue to run in place/
4. A patient is placed on the embalming table/
5. A patient reads obituaries from the New York Times/

This continues until approximately thirty images are performed. During blackouts all the actors who will not participate in the next image become members of the crowd in the reception area. Various orchestrated moaning sounds are heard from the

crowd. The girl reading the obituaries continues to read whenever the lights are up. This was cut during the next improvisation. Identical images are repeated and completed later in the series. For example, the patient who is placed on the embalming table is in two later images during which the embalming is completed. These are not consecutive images. People in the ward, prior to the completion of the embalming, sing a song of farewell to the deceased. Images are presented completely at random. During each blackout the director calls out the next image to be presented.

At the end of the day there was a general feeling that, with this final revision, the ward had become performable. An adequate artistic state had been attained through improvisation and numerous revisions of the major outline of the scene. The procedure to be followed was available in outline form. Which images would be included and their ordering was not decided upon. This was not of much importance since it could be varied at each performance. During the initial improvisations the ward had begun as a realistic or semi-realistic clinic with a lineal development which followed the course of a single day. It started in a pre-dawn period, progressed through the morning and the day until nightfall when the second segment of the play was to be performed within the same clinic. This was replaced by a montage of fractured, fragment images. Little or no resemblance to the original version remained. If successful it would represent a poeticized metaphor of the condition of the individual in society and of society as a whole. Elements from the previous improvised versions were retained in the

images, but the meanings of the images were altered by being placed within a new context.

Prior to leaving for Europe this version was repeated once in a workshop and performed for an invited audience. There are twenty-four images in this section of the play, but the number could be easily expanded or contracted. All images were from the earlier realistic clinic, but they were no longer organically connected one to the other. Even though the clinic was not recognizable as a clinic, the images were, hopefully, invested with the energy of the previous versions. Every step in the emergent process contributed to the final product, and the drudgery of the earlier versions was viewed as a preparation for the final version.

Most of the contributions of the individual actors are, unfortunately, obscured in the description of the improvisation and evolution of this major section of the play. During each day of work on the clinic the actors each attempted new approaches to character, new "private" procedures that they would follow as patients and later as image makers. Literally hundreds of small pieces of stage business were tried and then abandoned. Much of the work seemed to have been useless since it never overtly appeared again, but the work of each day contributed something to the knowledge and experience of each actor that would be retained and covertly utilized later. Each orchestrated his own work with that of the ensemble so that all would fit into any of the succeeding versions of the clinic. Elements from each stage of the evolution appear in the final version of the play, and in the version performed during the European tour.

## (E) REHEARSAL

Rehearsal was an activity which was difficult to discern. The line between it and improvisation was not finely drawn. At all times until the very end of workshops the material content of the play was unsettled and subject to change. Even speeches that seemed to be finalized were changed. Rehearsal implies a series of repetitive and exploratory private run throughs prior to public performance. With the work of this group very few segments of the play were sufficiently stable for there to be any repetition prior to public performance. While the clinic was being developed a particular procedure might be agreed upon and remain so for a week or even two, but then it would be changed. As a specific version of the clinic or other segment of the play was repeated the workshops would take on aspects of a rehearsal, but then the entire concept of the performance would be rejected and the process of improvisation would be begun again.

In one sense improvisatory work has aspects of and was a substitute for rehearsal. Constant re-working and re-ordering of the elements of the clinic served to keep the entire clinic in a state of flux. On the other hand, the elements of the clinic, the basic images and pieces of stage business were often retained through several versions of it. Specific images were perfected through repetition even though the sequence of the images and their cumulative meaning varied. Each image which appeared in the final version had been repeated numerous times in the previous versions of the clinic; they were rehearsed in a sense.

As noted previously the second section of the play involved a seance which was to be conducted in the clinic during the night. A group of mediums moved among the patients calling upon the dead. Twelve speeches from the dead were included. This section evolved through several versions in a manner similar to that of the clinic. Some of the speeches remained constant, and others changed. Others, after intense work over a period of weeks, were cut. Rehearsal in a conventional sense was utilized during the work on the seance more so than in any other segment of the play. During the various phases of the seance, as a procedure was invented, work continued on the speeches of the dead. A distinctive character and rhythm was invented and heightened for each speech. Mechanisms for transition from one speech to the next were evolved. In addition to general workshops the directors and playwrights often scheduled private workshops with each of the actors who were to do the speeches.

Speeches were clarified and performance techniques were refined during these private sessions. Questions were explored relative to the reasons for the individual dead person coming through, the circumstances of his life, and what he really wanted to say to the living. It was assumed that the dead normally communicated by means other than words, and it was necessary for them to reduce their normal means to this level in order to be understood. Rhythm and movement were explored with each actor. In some cases the living resisted possession by the dead, and the effects of this on the performance of a particular speech were explored. If the one to be possessed

was weak and near death the struggle would be less than if the living person was relatively strong. At times the writing of a speech was gone into and revisions were made during these private rehearsals. When two speeches were to be performed simultaneously it was necessary for the actors to agree on which should predominate at what time, and how transitions from one to the other should be made.

For purposes of illustrating the work on the speeches we may take the speech quoted below. It originated in an anthology of the writing of Artaud.<sup>14</sup> It was re-written by a playwright, and then performed. Later it was re-written again, and finally in the last version of the play it was combined with another speech. The anthology piece which served as the basis for the speech, and two versions of the speech will be quoted here. The final version appeared in the play and was quoted there. The anthology piece was as follows:

"Things are bad because the sick conscience never has a vital interest in not getting over its sickness.

"So a sick society invented psychiatrists to defend itself against the investigations of certain visionaries whose faculties of divination disturb it.

"Gerard de Neval was not mad, but he was accused of being so, in order to discredit certain vital revelations he was about to make, and besides being so accused, he was hit on the head, physically hit on the head one night, to make him forget the monstrous facts which he was going to reveal and which, by this blow, were pushed back within him, onto the the supernatural plane; because all of society, secretly united against his consciousness, was at

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14. Antonin Artaud, Antonin Artaud Anthology, ed. Jack Hirschman (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1965). The speech originated with material from page 135, but includes phrases from other pages.

that moment strong enough to make him forget its reality.

"I am witness, I am the only witness myself. This crust of words -- these imperceptible transformations of my thought whispers, this small part of my thought which I had already formulated and which has miscarried... inside, like the decomposing of my vital sustenance."

This material was written into a speech as follows:

"I was hit on the head, physically hit on the head. I was hit on the head. I was accused of being mad in order to discredit the vital revelations that I was about to make. I was not mad, I was accused of being so. Besides being so accused I was hit, physically hit on the head one night to make me forget the monstrous facts which I was going to reveal. Under this crust of bone and skin which is my head there is a constant anguish, like the loss of a vital substance. All of society is sick, so a sick society invented psychiatrists to defend itself against the investigations of certain visionaries whose faculties of divination disturbed it."

As used in the play this speech is not a report from the dead Artaud. It is a report from anyone who has consciously or unconsciously experienced similar events. None of the speeches were meant to be reports from any historical figure.

During the rehearsal of the speech it was gone over line by line. The word "hit" was always emphasized, elongated and repeated many times, as was the phrase "physically hit on the head." This word and this phrase became the vital center of the speech. They dominated the physical rhythm and vocal delivery. The director instructed the actor to make the sense of the hit more physical, sudden, as if he was actually hit on the head every time he repeats the word. Every time he repeated the word or phrase the actor stiffened his body and staggered back as if from a physical blow on the head. The accusation was also emphasized vocally. The director instructed

the actor to deepen the feeling of the accusation. It is a specific accusation, a finger pointing episode, and this should be realized by the audience. This, as with the hit, is irrational and unexpected. It is as if one were suddenly hit on the street for no reason. The rest of the speech, according to the director, is explanation of the monstrous fact of the irrational punishment by society. During the remainder of the speech the actor stood relatively quiet and with his hands folded or fluttering in front of him. The speech was gone over several times during the rehearsal period in order to deepen the effect of the hit. Each time he repeated the word hit the actor stretched out, stood on his tip-toes, and he jerked his head.

Shortly before the end of the workshops the speech was revised and reduced to the following:

"Hit. I was hit; I was hit on the head. Hit on the head. Hit, and I was accused. I was accused. Hit. I was hit on the head."

The word "hit" and the phrase "I was accused" are repeated as many as a dozen times. They are exaggerated. The hit is all that is left and the entire explanation of why it happened has been cut. This explanatory material was not necessary. The hit and the accusation were the important thing, and they could happen to anyone at any time for any reason. The irrationality of the episode is sufficiently clear from the actor's behavior.

This shorter version of the speech was included in the play as it was performed in Europe. Later it was again revised and combined with another speech and became "The One Who Was



Hit," in the final version of the play. The original quotation is almost indiscernible in the final version of the speech. Only the word "hit" survives, and the phrase "I was accused."

Rehearsal in general consisted of such private work with individual actors on specific speeches. Much the same work was often done during regular full workshop sessions when the seance was improvised.

The various workshop activities, combined with the work of the playwrights, resulted in a performable play that was in three sections at the time that it was taken to Europe. The first was the series of images and blackouts which had formerly been the realistic clinic. The second section involved the seance and the dead coming through. The third section was a montage of images, postures, fragments of speeches, and other elements. It was improvised and changed at every performance. Segments of this section included parts of stories told in workshops, sounds and movements, the "Witness," and various meditative or praying postures. In this form the play was performed in Europe. It evolved somewhat during performance, but it was difficult to invent new procedures as a result of performance and travel schedules. There was little time for major revision of the play during this period. Most major revisions were done in the workshops scheduled after the group returned from Europe. These workshops will be briefly discussed in the following section.

#### (F) FINAL EDITING

After returning from Europe there were thirty-one meetings between the end of January and the first half of April prior

to the official opening of the play. These included eleven rehearsals or general inventories of images available for inclusion in the various segments of the play. There were ten major discussions of various aspects of the play, three outside guest speakers, and more than fifteen improvisational sessions. The following summary of images and sections of the play illustrates those which were invented during these months - "New," those held over intact from the original version of the play - "Old," and those revised from the old play:

### New

The Procession  
 The Dying Resist  
 The Renovation  
 The Initiation  
 The Dying Imagine Their Judgement  
 Presence and Absence

### Old

The Pregnant Dying  
 The Private Case  
 Motion  
 Taking In and Eliminating  
 Breathing  
 The Last Biological Rites  
 The Embalming as Required by Law  
 The Runner Who Never Gets Started  
 The Dying are Drugged  
 The Witness (two sections not changed)  
 The Dead Come Through: The Song

### Revised

The Calling  
 The Dance  
 The Interview  
 The Dead Come Through: Marie Laveau and The Soldier  
 The Witness (one section)  
 The Dead Come Through: The One Who was Hit  
 The Dying Pray  
 The Dead Come Through: The Responsible One  
 The Dead Come Through: The Executed Man.

The major new blocks of material evolved during this period were the imagined judgement and "The Dying Resist." "The

Renovation" and "The Initiation" were extensions, respectively, of "The Embalming" and the revised "Interview." Both "The Procession" and "Presence and Absence" as the first and last sections of the play served to bound it as a unit; to introduce it and to end it with some recognizable ending. They were connected vocally and visually since the same elements were employed in both.

Considerable time was also spent in revision of the first section of the play, "The Dance on the Graves of the Dead." This was altered from a seance composing a solid block of material in which speeches were made by the dead in a consecutive series to a theme which dominates the first section of the play and then comes to fruition intermittently during the third section. In effect, this served to lessen the importance of the dead coming through. When these speeches were a solid block of material it seemed as if the whole first section was merely a preparation for the arrival of the dead at night in the ward; as if the dead coming through was the point of the whole play, which was not the case. With these speeches spread out and interspersed with other material, they recur as a theme of the play, but do not appear to be the sole objective of it. The entire second section, "The Pregnant Dying," and much of the third section, "The State of the Dying," with the exception of the four times that the dead come through, represents a slightly revised version of the original ward or clinic described above in the section on improvisation. There was virtually nothing new about many of the images in these sections. The order in which they were presented was all that was changed.

During this approximately three months of work the effort was more concentrated on specific items than had previously been the case. Performance of the play intermittently in Europe over a two month period had revealed specific weaknesses and areas of misunderstanding. Most of the images from the previous work were acceptable, but their ordering needed to be changed. Revision of many of the speeches of the dead coming through was work done by a playwright. This was, of course, done outside the regular workshops. As a result of the experience of performance workshops were focused on development of specific segments of the play rather than on diffuse efforts and searching for form and content as had been the case previously. At this time the need was to develop specific content in terms of subject matter to fill gaps. Also, it was necessary to re-arrange or edit previous images. This was analogous to film editing. Numerous images were available. Many of them were to be included, but the exact number and order in which they were to be done was still in doubt so that at each run through of the play the order was changed. Minor elements were added or left out at each succeeding run through.

"The Procession" which opens the play serves to set the atmosphere, and provides a musical "theme" which recurs at various times in the play and at the very end of it. This music was included for the first time in the second from last run through. In the third from last run through both "Presence and Absence" and "The Dying Imagine Their Judgement" were included for the first time. Numerous images for the judgement

had been improvised since the second session after returning from Europe. They had been repeated and refined during five other workshops until finally they were edited and the ones to be used were selected. In the meantime a speech had been written to unify them.

This period of intensive work was essentially a telescoped version of the longer emergent process. The groundwork had been laid previously. Focus on specific problems was sharper than before, and this was the major difference. Problems such as that of judgement were more sharply delineated, but the work process was in most respects the same as it had been previously. In regard to judgement, which had been a major problem throughout the longer series of workshops, certain basic assumptions were agreed upon which enabled the work to be carried forward. The basis for judgement in the other world, the world of the dead, had prevented the invention of a satisfactory section dealing with it. In spite of this it was felt that it was an important subject which should be included in any play purportedly dealing with death. The total lack of knowledge of the state of the dead, the necessity of viewing the world of the dead from the perspective of a living human being had prevented the selection of criteria which would permit the development of this crucial section of the play. Therefore, early on in the second series of workshops it was decided that the judgement would be an imagined judgement. Fears and hopes of the dying in relation to their judgement would determine the content of the section. This was a compromise solution to a difficult problem, but the only one

with which the group felt any satisfaction. Attempts to invent a system of judgement for the world of the dead were always unsatisfactory because they retained vestiges of religious, legal, humanist and other systems of justice which may be completely unrealistic in terms of the criteria of judgement in the other world. In any event, they always tended to become didactic or propagandistic.

When it was decided that the judgement would be an imagined judgement the images composing it could be based on fantasy, dream, nightmare, or other sources. It was possible to allow the horror of impending death to color the images. Random images using simile and analogy as well as completely unrelated visual and oral elements were applicable. Numerous such images were invented by the actors during improvisational sessions. Finally, a speech was written to unify them. This speech drew on disparate sources such as the talk given by Professor Campbell, stories told in earlier workshops by the actors, improvisational images, and other sources. The judgement emerged in the same manner as the clinic had, and little would be gained in tracing this development in detail.

Workshops, as before, included a period of physical warm up. A dance teacher conducted the physical sections of the workshops for a time, and much of the physical movement of "The Dance on the Graves of the Dead," plus the recurring meditative gesture came from this work. At the time this work was introduced it was purely for physical training, but later it was stylized and it became usable as performance. Various

techniques such as the use of hand held spotlights were tried and retained for certain sections of the play.

Following performance during the European tour the play had a basic content which was retained. This did not significantly alter the method of work. Since the play is non-linear, it was possible to work on each section as an isolated unit. This was true not only of the latter series of workshops, but also of the earlier. At any time it was possible to abstract a section of the play, work on it, and re-insert it into the play without affecting the segments adjacent to it. Events and images did not flow from one to the other, but represented isolated units of activity. Therefore, even when certain sections of the play were set it was still possible to work on and completely change other sections in the same manner as had previously been done.

#### (G) SUMMARY

Written description tends to obscure the progressive growth of the play. Dynamic processes become static through the necessity of imposing order on disparate trends of behavior. Multi-linear reciprocally influential aspects of action are unavoidably reduced to separate unilinear lines of development. Various strands that appear, disappear, and later reappear in slightly altered form are obscured. The material itself as it is empirically and momentarily extant and as it flows is novelistic in form. Even in the form of a novel the dialectical process of emergence would be difficult to trace in its many simultaneous dimensions and cross influences. A brief discussion of the propositions given previously (Chapter II) re-

garding the emergence of the play in conjunction with the descriptive material of this chapter should serve to clarify somewhat the emergent process in spite of the inherent shortcomings mentioned here.

Behavior antecedent to the project itself served to determine the general course of the project to a limited extent. Many members of the group had been working together for six years or more and had participated in previous projects of this type. A fund of shared knowledge, experience, training, and technique served to orient their behavior relative to this project both as individuals and as a group. This shared past acted as a basic platform, a common ground from which the project grew. In large part this substructure predetermined the general categories of form, content, in terms of performance technique, and action in the final play. Categories were thus largely predetermined, but specifics emerged only as the project developed.

Content, in terms of specific subject matter, emerged entirely during the work cycle. Most of the early work, i.e., outside guests, actor's stories, and general discussions, straddles the categories of antecedent behavior and emergent cycle. These activities in conjunction with later improvisations, created an existing body of knowledge from which the play might be constructed. They created a fertile environment and common, shared experience from which actors could draw material for later improvisations, playwrights could find ideas and images, and directors could requisition images and pieces of stage business. This early work is not unsimilar to the environment of



language and behavior surrounding a child; an environment from which as he grows he progressively requisitions words and specific behavior adapted to his existential situation and the individual goals he progressively establishes during each day. A major difference in the two processes, of course, is that in the case of the group the creation of this environment is a conscious project, but in both cases elements of this social context are eventually internalized and later made manifest in behavior.

Rational sequences of behavior exemplified by the categories of activities described above led to a desired goal which was not definitively defined beforehand. An example of this might be the progressive stages of the clinic as these were improvised and then edited into the final version of the play. All that was defined in the initial stages was the desire to have a section of the play that would embody the state of the dying. It was known that the segment would not be realistic, and it became clear that it was not an overt attack on a specific institution or complex of institutions in contemporary society. Only later was it fully realized that the state of the dying was a visual metaphor of the condition of man in society and that it represented a state of mind rather than a physical location. This state of mind was itself socially generated and internalized through pressure developed and administered by the forms of social interaction in society. Mechanisms were utilized that made this metaphorical state of mind "necessary" for survival. These elements emerged as the effort to attain the not rigorously defined goal con-

tinued and as successive attempts proved to be of little use in terms of performance and dramatically invalid according to undefined artistic criteria.

Progressive experience, both successful and unsuccessful, determined the course of the ongoing project. For example, the clinic in the earlier versions was not successful as a total conception. However, within this unsuccessful work, almost from the very beginning of the improvisations, there were successful images and sequences of action. The combination of successful and unsuccessful elements determined in large part the continuing course of action as a means was sought to incorporate successful elements into new versions of the clinic as it evolved through the stages described earlier.

Reformulation of the project was almost continuous up until the last rehearsal or run through prior to the European tour. Again, prior to the official opening in New York City, the same thing was true. In fact, it was reformulated so frequently that there was no proper rehearsal as such. It was necessary for the stage manager to post lists onstage so that the actors would know which images were to be performed in what order. The play had actually not been completely run through in the same order as the first public performance in Europe prior to that performance. For the opening in New York a new speech was added for the dead who came through. This was a revised version of a speech that had previously been included and then cut, and it was not included in the dress rehearsals or run throughs. At all times, until the last possible moment, the content of the play was in a state of flux.

The object as such, i.e., the play, was never really finished. It was seen as imperfect and unfinished at the end of the series of public performances, and this is its permanent state. Development was stopped at a certain point because previous commitments, made well in advance, required that the group perform in Europe. The play developed in this series of workshops was only one of four plays to be done in repertory. On several occasions the director stated that the play was unfinished, but developed to a point where they would at least have something to perform in Europe. It should be emphasized that scheduling determined the beginning of performance rather than the attainment of the work goal.

Again, when the play opened in New York, scheduling largely determined when workshops would end and performance begin. Certain performance commitments had been made for a short tour of colleges beginning in the last half of April. Also, the group became committed to do a series of benefits for a legal defense fund for the so-called "Panther 21". From a purely economic point of view, it was felt that a benefit performance of a new play would be more successful than a benefit performance of a play from the repertory. As a result it was decided to perform this play in its then present state. The workshops were therefore ended; the play was considered as complete.

More than fifteen months had passed since the beginning of workshops, which were originally planned to last only from six to eight months. Completion of the play was continually

postponed and even at the end of this extended period the director expressed disappointment over the final version of the play. Many things should be re-worked and deepened in his opinion. He was personally very ill and did not have the energy to continue; to open and revise major segments of the play again. There was not time for further work immediately because of performance commitments and other projects to which the group had been committed long in advance.

The play was imperfect at the end of public performances which lasted approximately six weeks. It did not change significantly from the end of workshops until the end of public performances. In the end the play conformed to the ritualistic model outlined in pervious chapters. At the beginning only general categories of form, content and action were known. The empirical structure of the play was completely unpredictable at the beginning. This emerged as progressive work continued. Ongoing action determined and was itself reciprocally determined according to an emergent dialectic process. The course of the work and the subsequent shape of the play produced feedback processes as the work progressed toward the final, ultimately artistically unsatisfactory version of the perpetually unfinished play.<sup>15</sup>

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15. It is possible that the play will be revised again later. The group is being divided into smaller groups, and one group of about eight actors will continue to work with the director of this project. This group is short of funds. Unless foundation grants or other sources of financial aid are found they will revise this play so that fewer actors can perform it.

## CHAPTER IX -- COMPARISON OF ACTION IN EMERGENCE, AND IN REALISTIC AND RITUALISTIC DRAMATURGIC MODELS

In this chapter there will be three major concerns. The nature of action during the emergent cycle of the ritualistic play will be discussed. Following this there will be a comparison of action during emergence and that found in the final play on the one hand, and, on the other, between the two models discussed previously.

An attempt to discuss action and its rational or non-rational character during emergence must clearly distinguish between two separate levels. On the one level there is the conduct of individual group members who interact with each other in daily face-to-face relationships within the context of their involvement with their mutual work. Clearly separate from this is the level of the project itself considered as a linear or dialectic process with an emergent character which eventually results in the ritualistic play. This differentiation of levels is for purposes of discussion only. It is obvious that the data for each level of discussion are identical. These data are the myriad small activities of all group members within the workshops. Point of view is the determining factor in the separation of the two levels for purposes of discussion.

Conduct of individuals within the workshops during the emergent cycle must be considered as rational on both levels. In order to be considered social and rational the conduct of individuals in everyday social performance should conform to the outline of a realistic dramaturgic model. Conduct of individuals during the workshop sessions appears to have met

this stipulation as is clear from the discussion of emergence in the previous chapter. Designated roles such as that of actor, director, or writer were performed by individuals who oriented their conduct to the conduct of others in an ongoing, goal-oriented project. Behavior was monitored by each and continually modulated or regulated in terms of the behavior of others in conformance with the needs of the project at any particular stage of development. Social action characterized and permeated the work. Conduct was predictable prior to or understandable subsequent to performance in regard to the empirical circumstances of each situation. Activities were scheduled and different approaches to problems were attempted which conform to a rational means-ends scheme. This would have been possible only if members participated in rational action. In conformance with Goffman's realistic model the members arranged setting and staging of performances. The activity involved with such social performance was the staging of performance rather than the staging of a lunch in the Shetland Isle Hotel or some other similar activity. Yet the editing of information and other components of performance were similar.

As previously noted the object itself, the ritualistic play summarized in Chapter IV and discussed in Chapter V, if it is considered as a bounded unit of action during performance, did not conform to the criteria of social action. It did not develop lineally nor was the conduct of individuals within it oriented subjectively to the conduct of other participants. Considering the project as a whole it is safe to say that con-

duct was rational both in face-to-face relationships and in the emergent cycle. A loose plan was promulgated and followed. A series of specific activities was devised as a technique which was appropriate to the attainment of a goal. The group consciously created conditions which would tend to lead them to a desired end. The process was rational in this case, but the resulting product was not. This is true if we compare the emergent cycle to either the components of the play as separate units or to the play as a whole.

In this paper attention has been on process (emergence) and product (the play). The "direction" of rationality appears to be atypical in this case inasmuch as the non-rational product grew from the rational process. This is the reverse of what would be expected in many areas of social life. Intellectual work, individual maturation, educational procedures, the rational application of technique, and other social enterprises usually attempt to bring order from chaos; rationality from non-rationality. In this case the process was reversed, but this is true only because the final step is not included in the current discussion. Attention here is on levels of action. As an art product the ritualistic play has ramifications beyond this limited scope. The play contains an implicit interpretation or impression of society and death based on a certain world view. Beyond this specific content it may be judged according to artistic criteria which are outside the scope of the discussion here. If successful, the play aids the viewing audience in formulating or reformulating individual views of the subject of the play. An artistic communication

passes between performers and viewers, and it is this artistic "message" which is the final objective of the work of art. In this sense the play is a means to an end just as the emergent cycle was. Analysis of the play as means is the province of criticism, aesthetics, or philosophy.

It is not possible to contrast emergence in this case with emergence in the case of a realistic play. Very little is available about emergence in relation to a realistic play. In the latter case emergence includes both writing and rehearsal.<sup>1</sup> Rehearsal is the only empirical aspect of it, and at the beginning of rehearsal the object is already given in the words of the playwright. The meaning is also given although directorial decisions and some editing of the text may alter it to a limited extent. Interpretation of meanings may also vary. Actors creating roles within an overall directorial concept may further alter meanings. Plays from previous historical periods may be made to apply to current situations by the use of such processes and devices. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the rehearsal period the object is relatively static. The objective then becomes to transform the words, combined with physical setting and other elements of stagecraft, into an illusion of reality onstage. Since the object is given and relatively static much of the exploratory and creative work done by the group is precluded. Emergence in realistic theatre must be primarily concerned with meaning expressed by words invested with energy by live actors. During

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1. Insight into the rehearsal process may be gotten in David Magarshack, Stanislavsky on the Art of the Stage (New York: Hill and Wang, A Dramabook, 1962).



the rehearsal period it would be expected that conduct would be rational as was the case in the emergent cycle of the ritualistic play. This would not, of course exclude seemingly irrational behavior such as temper tantrums on the part of actors and others, nor non-rational behavior which might be employed as a technique in the exploration of the text.

In spite of the fact that conduct in both realistic and ritualist emergence seems to be rational, the nature of the plays differs considerably. Weber's four categories of conduct are useful in illuminating this difference. Both types of emergence are goal-oriented and value-related processes. The difference is in the work process itself, the content and technique. Realistic theatre is involved with tradition oriented conduct in large part. Established stage conventions partially limit the scope of behavior while allowing for the possibility of marginal differentiation in production and performance. In the case of ritualistic theatre affectual behavior seems to predominate. Little theatrical tradition exists which includes similar processes. Questioning the limitations of the free play of uninhibited interaction on a social as well as a non-social level is combined with a conscious commitment to experimentation. By being experimental the group partially conforms to scientific traditions, but the content of technique and object varies considerably from that of most scientific work. Behavior is considered to be a creative process which, ideally, should be unhindered by words or other pre-cast "moulds" into which it must be poured. The final product in either case seems to depend on basic assumptions

made during or prior to the beginning of the emergent process.

Drama based on and in literature begins with many elements already determined prior to the beginning of the rehearsal process. The number of characters, their relationships with each other, the activities they participate in, the story and its lineal development, and other items are given. Drama based on behavior rather than words begins with almost everything open except the general subject matter or theme of the play. Form, content, and action are undetermined, but it is known what general categories will be used. It is also known that the play will conform to the general structure of drama. Writing has traditionally been a solitary exercise, whereas ritualized conduct is exclusively social in nature. It does not seem possible to develop a play based on words by committee, whereas a play which is pure ritual seems possible only if it is developed by a committee. It is necessarily a shared experience and as a result of this it is not susceptible to reduction to the lineal forms of writers. Experience in such plays is not lineal, but plots by playwrights usually are. Action in emergence in both cases is social, but prior assumptions result in radically different processes and products.

Rational conduct during the emergence of a ritualistic play involves a series of goal oriented steps to be followed in order to attain an objective. Individuals within the group interacted on a social level. In many exercises and improvisations conduct was deliberately non-social in character. Experiential states were consciously cultivated and evaluated according to their effectiveness and eventual usability as

dramatic material. Non-rational conduct was thus informed and ultimately controlled by rational criteria.

In the ritualistic play itself conduct was under the control of participants. Fairly similar activity was repeated during each performance. Empirical behavior did not seem to evidence this control. The succession of disparate, random, and apparently unconnected images and scenes exhibited during performance make it necessary to conclude that behavior was non-rational. This is true since the point of view here is that of the level of performance and the internal evidence empirically available at that level. This conclusion is supported by the lack of lineal development in terms of action and the disjunctures in terms of subject matter, combined with a performance technique that serves to shatter any illusion of reality or similarity to social conduct. The actor as a technician is rational during performance. However, the discussion here is not concerned with the action of the actor but with the "character." In the case of the ritualistic play the "character" is usually only a contagious experiential state.

During emergence a definite goal is always kept in mind. Programed activity leads to this goal. In performance there is no goal internal to the process itself. Or rather, the goal is simply presentation itself from the point of view of the actor as an actor rather than a character. The state presented by the actor does not imply or lead to a goal internal to performance. How or if audience members fit the puzzle together is a matter of individual biography, insight, and

inclination. Lack of a goal in one instance and the existence of one in the other serves to differentiate performance and emergence in terms of social action. This is equally true when ritualistic and realistic performance are compared.

Within the performance of a realistic play action has consequences in subsequent sections of the play. For example, in The Seagull Masha witnesses a series of events in which she is emotionally involved. She plays only an inactive part in many of these events. Her life as a character is inextricably bound up with the lives of those around her. As a result of the events in the play she is forced to realistically change the orientation of her life. She takes certain steps. She abandons old projects and starts new ones. It is possible to impute a subjective component to her action, and to understand it on the basis of empirical contingencies. Her actions are oriented to others and are based, in part, on a calculation of their probable future actions in addition to an evaluation of their past actions. The same is true of the other characters. Their activities are understandable within the social context of middle-class later nineteenth century Russian culture. Characters interact socially. One event leads to another and then another as the plot develops. Action has consequences. Each event is the result of previous events. The lives of the characters, we are to understand, begin prior to the opening of the play and continue after it closes. In each case the action which issues from previous events is not the only possible one. The outcome could have been different. Characters could have selected different alternatives at various

points, in which case the subsequent action of other characters would also have been changed to account for the changed circumstances. Action is always understandable by an outside observer in terms of antecedent action in combination with personality and social context.

Previous discussion and description have made it clear that within ritualistic drama conditions are considerably different than those of a realistic play. Here no characters exist as recognizable entities through the course of the play. On rare occasions recognizable characters, such as the applicant at the clinic, might appear, but they are people without a past or future. Their action is not understandable in terms of subjective components and previous or future actions. Action has consequences only within the momentary scene or image and does not come from previous nor lead to future events. In most cases there is no social action as such. No subjective component can be imputed relative to the conduct of characters. Interaction with others is not along a linear axis, and in fact in most cases interaction does not exist except on a collective or contagious level. Momentary images appear which do not seem related to any web of social relationships. A series of activities is presented, but each has no roots in the past nor does it lead to the future. Action has no recognizable stimulus, nor does it represent response in any manner similar to that which flows from a social relationship. There is no overt connection in terms of content from one scene or image to the next.

A man is embalmed in one section of the play. Next someone is interviewed. People walk in a circle following the interview. Then a runner who cannot get started is seen on stage for a few seconds. The same actors participate in each image, but in each case they are different "characters." These four images might be presented in any order. Changes in order do not effect meanings because meanings do not result from consecutive presentation and development of various strands of behavior. Each scene is isolated in terms of subject, but performance technique may remain the same. Activities have no relationship to the empirical reality of the stage situation, nor to the next section or image.

In realistic theatre a reality is created onstage. The correspondence between this and social reality may be close if not exact. In ritualistic theatre no reality is created onstage in terms of social conduct. "Reality" is the creation of the audience member. Ritualistic theatre is pure performance. Its reality comes from presentation and witnessing and does not rely on context, social action, logical development or other such elements. Effect is not created by correspondences between stage activity and the understandable conduct of everyday social life. Performance departs from such correspondences and does not embody social action.

Realistic drama relies on subjective meaning and overt action to propel the performance towards its end. Problems are posed in one form or another, their consequences are explored, and the original problem solved or not. Ritualistic drama has no such motor to propel it. Performance is presented,

period. Although contagion may spread a feeling within a scene, nothing leads to what follows it. No dramatic problems are presented and solved. No suspenseful situations develop in which the audience member is able to empathetically participate in support of one protagonist or another. Intellectual, political, economic, romantic, and other themes are not presented. Performance does not replicate life. Almost nothing is left for the audience to identify with unless it is dreams and vague memories or vagrant correspondences with half forgotten emotional experiences.

## CHAPTER X -- POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS OF A RITUALISTIC DRAMATURGIC MODEL

Development of a ritualistic model would be a sterile intellectual exercise if it had no applicability to the analysis of social phenomena. Models as such are merely tools which if they are effective should provide an efficient method for analysis. A tool should embody a new means of conceptualizing problems and a new perspective from which data may be ordered for analysis. Elaboration of models is not a subject for idle interest, but must provide a means to the achievement of these goals. Therefore, in this chapter an extremely brief introductory presentation of three potential applications of a ritualistic model will be presented.

Certain situations in everyday life in a mature industrial society such as the United States do not appear to be subject to analysis in terms of the realistic model developed and applied by Goffman. It seems equally true that certain types of activity not specifically confined to mature industrial societies are also not within the confines of the analytical perspective inherent in a realistic model. The realistic model is analogous to a category of theatrical performance which has developed and matured through a period of more than seventy years. These seven decades were a period of extremely rapid historical change in which, in certain societies, processes begun at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution attained what may be considered as their mature state. As a productive activity agriculture declined relative to other economic pursuits. Full industrialization was accomplished and partial



automation initiated while urbanization, communication and other elements underwent what can only be classified as revolutionary changes in this relatively short period of time. The day to day life of most individuals, the activities individuals participate in and the social basis for the generation of the self, plus the place of the individual in the larger scheme, what might be called the individual's world view, must be assumed to have undergone similar changes.

Although it cannot be explored here, it seems safe to assume that artistic products are rooted in and reflect social form in some manner. This does not imply a direct, simple, unidimensional relationship in which Society A will always produce artistic forms categorized as "A" and Society B artistic forms "B." A multiplicity of causes would be expected to be reflected in the art of any given society during any given period. Art has a history just as does society, but these are not entirely autonomous. Influences from both, combined with individual talents, produce the art of a society. Form changes and new forms are created on the basis of past forms as well as political, social and economic influences. However, from a broad perspective the history of a particular artistic period is remarkably similar in form. For example, Elizabethan painters, architects, dramatists and poets shared many common perceptions which are reflected in the art works they produced, and the same is true of Classical Greece, Renaissance Italy, or Industrial America. Since art and society both go through progressive and largely corresponding changes, if art forms are to be used as sociological models, we would expect different models to be useful during different periods.

Goffman's model is based on an art form invented and developed to a high point of great art during the period of maturing industrialization. In the more industrially advanced societies problems of production and scarcity were largely solved during this period, and they were replaced by problems of abundance and consumption. The art forms, specifically in drama but less so in painting and other arts, of the early part of this period still survive and are used by some artists. However, as social form evolved new art forms did also. If the underlying assumption regarding the correspondence between artistic forms and social forms is valid, it could be expected that if artistic models are to be utilized for social analysis, revised models must be developed to analyze revised social realities.

A brief caveat should be entered at this point. Problems of social change are enormously complicated and a brief summary based on the change in emphasis from production to consumption is clearly inadequate. This shorthand is employed here merely as an indicator of widespread and deep, complicated changes ranging from those in the life of the individual to those which are macrosocial. Also ignored here are the complications involved in varying rates of change in different sectors of society, and the fact that change is not necessarily either sudden or total. In the economic sphere, for example, problems of production and distribution continue to exist in spite of the capacity and technical skill to produce society-wide abundance. Large scale industries have evolved purely to attempt to solve problems of distribution and encourage con-

sumption, but these are only partially effective and not wholly implemented. Economic determinism is not implied by such brief summaries as this. Economic terms and examples are merely convenient indicators of multitudinous changes.

With this all too brief introduction it is proposed to mention the potential application of the ritualistic model in three spheres of social life. First, and most obvious, the model will be used to characterize crowd behavior, especially behavior in acting crowds. Second, a few comments will be made regarding the correspondence between the ritualistic model and current youth subcultures. Third, the series performance of roles in a mature industrial society will be mentioned. In all three of these cases behavior may be treated dramaturgically and analyzed as performance. It is contended here that a realistic model has inherent shortcomings which prevent its use in the analysis and description of such situations.

Collective behavior is characterized by circular reaction rather than interpretative interaction.<sup>1</sup> Rather than conduct progressing and growing lineally as a result of reaction and continual adjustment to the reality situation, conduct becomes similar and repetitive on the part of all individuals present in a given physical location. Conduct on the part of one individual mirrors the conduct of the other, and all conduct becomes charged by socialized unrest. This occurs in many areas of contemporary society. Erratic, random behavior,

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1. The summary of collective behavior by Herbert Blumer will be cited here. It may be found in Alfred McClung Lee (ed.), Principles of Sociology, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., revised edition, 1951), pp. 167-220.

excited feelings, and extreme suggestability characterize activity. Blumer mentions four elementary mechanisms of collective behavior.<sup>2</sup>

1. Milling which is characterized by aimless movement. Individuals thereby become more sensitive and responsive to each other and open to suggestion.
2. Collective excitement. This is a heightened state of milling in which attention is drawn inward to the situation itself, emotions are aroused, and individuals are opened to act on impulse and unreflected action.
3. Social contagion. This "refers to the relatively rapid, unwitting, and nonrational dissemination of a mood, impulse, or form of conduct; it is well exemplified by the spread of crazes, manias and fads." It is a heightened form of social excitement dominated by unreflective response on the part of individuals involved. For dramatic purposes it should be emphasized that in this condition social resistance is lowered, self consciousness obliterated, and people are open to suggestion and impulse.
4. Stages of spontaneous behavior. The first three mechanisms operate to unite people, "on the most primitive level and so lay the basis for more enduring and substantial forms of unification.

A crowd is formed by a single exciting event, and as milling develops self-control dissipates. The acting crowd develops an image or goal or objective which channels its movement and energy. Attention becomes focused on a single object such as the original stimulating event. A shared impulse and intense collective feeling develops in this state of suspended reality, and the crowd is open to action of almost any type and in almost any direction as long as it is not directly contrary to the original impulse. Regular rules of behavior and mutual obligations are suspended. As control of

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2. ibid., pp. 174-177.

self diminishes and excitement increases the individual member in rapport with other crowd members is open to a great variety of suggestions. "In this sense, crowd behavior is a means by which the breakup of social organization and personal structure is brought about, and at the same time is a potential device for the emergence of new forms of conduct and personality."<sup>3</sup> This is possible as more nearly normal forms of social control are re-imposed on the random energy released by the initial crowd situation.

Considered as performance, conduct in this type of situation is not within the boundaries of a realistic dramatic model such as that of Goffman. Interaction is not meaningful in terms of interpretative understanding, nor is it logical and rational in any accepted meaning of those terms. The plot of a riot does not develop lineally, but follows the theme of the original excitatory event as in a ritualistic play. Character in the drama of the crowd is not composed of nor is it compatible with the elements of a self as described by Mead. Performers by their activity create the reality of the situation, but this reality does not depend on information control, conscious manipulation, and expertise of performance. In contrast to the situation of the realistic model, the context of action, the stage on which performance occurs, is not under the specific control of performers. It is not set beforehand. The script is not known. Decreased perceptive ability, the absence of analytical factors, and the inability to discriminate on the part of the collective members, in con-

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3. ibid., p. 185.

junction with random or accidental events, creates a reality.

Riot and other crowd actions do not develop according to a script as in a realistic dramaturgic performance. Action and reaction are not progressive and lineal. Action is not subject to prediction in terms of existential circumstances, nor is it interpretable in relation to subjective motive. Consequences of past action, except for the original excitatory event, are not accounted for in present behavior, nor are future implications considered or implied in present conduct. Non-rational and random conduct occurs to which it is impossible to impute subjective components as an explanation of action. Performance is an isolated event unrelated to the past or the future. It exists solely in the present as a momentary creation.

In attempting to understand the situation of performance in a riot the realistic model has a further shortcoming. This involves the fact that such a model seems to be particularly, perhaps exclusively, applicable only to very small groups in face-to-face interaction situations. When there are few individuals participating in the action it is possible to control information and to agree upon and impose mutually acceptable interpretations of the ongoing action. The situation of an acting crowd makes such consensus difficult if not impossible. Random action by large numbers of people, the absence of ground rules or a moral order, and the temporary inability to interpret ones' own behavior preclude the possibility of information control unless and until a crowd becomes organized by a leader. If this happens unreflective action

may be channeled and directed toward the achievement of a specific goal or series of goals over a period of time, and the situation of realistic performance may be imposed.

As noted face-to-face relationships within the crowd seem to mirror behavior rather than further or develop action. Cognitive awareness is eliminated so that even in the numerous small personal encounters within the crowd, performance does not appear to be compatible with that which conforms to a realistic dramaturgic model. Action appears to be almost wholly expressive, but realistic performance in everyday life almost always contains an instrumental element.

Crowd behavior generally, notably the behavior of the acting crowd such as the rioting crowd, appears to correspond to the elements of the ritualistic model. In the ritualistic model cognition within performance is an element of action. Action is not lineal. Performers embody experiential states rather than selves. It is quite likely that such states are similar to the condition of the individual in the rioting crowd. Performance is not related to outside contingencies, but performance itself becomes the goal. In many instances action is propelled by contagion. It begins small and gains momentum through dispersal of energy as when the dead come through in the play outlined previously. Events late in the play are not dependent upon those which occur earlier. They may be connected as is the case with the earlier dance and the later appearance of the dead, but the connections are not rational and direct, nor are they predictable on the basis of the action as the play proceeds. Relationships, if they exist

at all, are diffuse, indirect, and dependent on contagion rather than lineal development.

Ritualistic theatre cannot be characterized as a theatre of riot. It involves discipline, training and sustained effort. There are, however, crucial correspondences which would make it possible to consider riot behavior as performance and analyze it dramaturgically from the perspective of a ritualistic model.

A second area where analysis in terms of a ritualistic model appears to be possible is in relation to currently emerging youth subcultures. During approximately the past decade a new form of youth culture has come into existence in American society that is based on fundamental assumptions that are contrary to those which have governed most social conduct in Western societies since the inception of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions. This culture or subculture is not yet mature enough to have been fully analyzed and understood, but aspects of it have been written about by, among other, Roszak,<sup>4</sup> Brown,<sup>5</sup> Goodman,<sup>6</sup> Marcuse,<sup>7</sup> Laing,<sup>8</sup> and

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4. Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition, (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., Anchor Books, 1969).

5. Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History, (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1959), and Love's Body, (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1966).

6. Paul Goodman, Growing Up Absurd: Problems of Youth in Organized Society, (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1956), and New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative, (New York: Random House, 1970).

7. Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man: Studies in the



Watts.<sup>9</sup> Writers such as Margret Mead<sup>10</sup> and Roszak have attempted to analyze it, and the work of the others mentioned here form in outline the philosophical and "intellectual" schematic of this subculture. These are in addition to occult and mystical writings, mainly based in the Orient but often including Western mystics and drug influenced visionaries. Inart the subculture includes poets such as Ginsberg,<sup>11</sup> psychedelic painting, rock music, non-realistic theatre, and novels by men such as Burrows. Politically, to the extent that it is a politically involved culture, it is represented by such activist writers as Hoffman<sup>12</sup> and Rubin.<sup>13</sup>

Western cultures since the Renaissance have progressively applied intellect to a series of projects in an ever increasing number of areas. Rationality as Weber viewed it, and as it became manifest in increasing bureaucratization of life, spread

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Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

8. Laing, op. cit., Politics.

9. Alan W. Watts has written widely on Zen and is probably the most widely read Western writer on the subject, The Spirit of Zen: A Way of Life, Work, and Art in the Far East, (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1958), is a representative example of his books on this subject.

10. Margaret Mead, Culture and Commitment: A Study of the Generation Gap, (Garden City, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Natural History Press, 1970).

11. Ginsberg was originally a poet of the Beat Generation, but his espousal of Eastern religion has maintained the popularity he had previously attained. He seems to have transcended the gulf between that generation and the current youth culture.

12. Abbie Hoffman, Revolution for the Hell of It, (New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1968).

13. Jerry Rubin, Do It! Scenarios of the Revolution, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

and seemed to dominate many areas of social conduct not envisioned even by him. Technical development in related and interlocking institutional orders became complicated and widespread. Consonant but varying political structures and philosophies evolved. All were based upon and governed by the rational precepts of the post-feudal world view. Efficiency brought similarity. Rationality dictated uniformity. Technical means seemed to many to have become ends in themselves.

The youth culture characterized as "hippie" opposed this trend. It appeared at the point where full rationalization, as indicated by the maturity of industrialization, seemed to have been achieved. This is, of course, not the first such culture to appear in Western society during the past several centuries, but it is more widespread than others, and may be more persistent and durable. It is based on a conception of self in which mystical, occult and various other non-rational elements play a large, if not dominating part. Life styles are heterogeneous and based on the pursuit of ecstasy, which is to be achieved by a combination of religious-mystical and chemically induced experiences. It involves immediate gratification of transient moods and eschews planning or deferred gratification.

On the level of everyday conduct the nuclear family pattern is replaced by commune living or serial mating. Life is governed by esoteria such as the casting of the yarrow stalks and readings from the I Ching, astrological readings, visions, vague feelings, chance, or religious teachings drawn from Eastern religions, including adherence to dietary laws.

Special costuming is required, but it evolves as each new variation is taken up by conventional fashion manufacturers. Education is discarded in favor of inspiration. Politics in the conventional meaning is replaced by the Politics of Experience. Issues and problems which have dominated much of the life of individuals such as procreation, getting a living, nationalism and patriotism have little relevance. When such matters are considered relevant, the emphasis is changed. The meaning to be imputed to an activity is altered as is the means of solving problems. For example, getting a living normally involves a male attempting in a puritan tradition to earn as much money as possible for purposes of capital accumulation and as a means to maximum consumption. Subcultural values relegate making a living to the lowest possible priority. The emphasis is on living the moment to moment reality rather than making or getting a living. Occupational priority is often given to begging or part-time work, whichever demands the least time to supply the subsistence needs of the individual. Improvement of position does not involve increased income or progressive promotion to responsible positions in a hierarchy of statuses within an organization. Prestige is allocated on the basis of personal development in terms of subjective, often drug induced, experience.

Immediate antecedents for the current culture may be found in the Beat Generation of the post-World War II period, and possibly in the Lost Generation of 1920s at which time many of the underlying assumptions and major values of Western culture were questioned by various artists. Also, the drug

culture of the ghettos during the past quarter century bears crucial resemblances to certain aspects of the current youth culture. The alienated youth studied by Keniston illustrated many of the traits apparent in the later more fully developed youth culture.<sup>14</sup>

This is a culture which is militantly ahistorical. It values individual experience rather than inherited knowledge, impulse over technique. This includes a distrust of science and formal organizations, and faith in what Klapp called symbolic leaders.<sup>15</sup> Major American values are debunked, or the disparity between sanctioned values and empirical reality are pointed out.

The life style of the hippie, dominated by drugs and the search for what are felt to be adequate modes of relationship with self, others and environment, appears to be in the process of becoming a culture spread beyond the confines of enclaves of run away children. Costuming, drugs, temporary sexual arrangements, transient living in "crash pads," all to various degrees, have become increasingly common in other areas of society. Everyday interaction in these situations, considered as performance, is governed by a norm of expressiveness more similar to that of the life of the typical artist than it is to the staging of rational performances in a realistic setting.

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14. Kenneth Keniston, The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1960)

15. Orrin E. Klapp, Symbolic Leaders: Public Dramas and Public Men, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1964).

Ideally, performance is instant and spontaneous rather than scripted.<sup>16</sup> It serves to express momentary feeling or random impressions, and tends toward full disclosure of information rather than editing, ordering, or planning as is necessary when realistic performance is discussed from a dramaturgical point of view.

Life styles such as this are obviously in the minority even among the young, but they center in and dominate several locations where individuals from their early teen years to the late twenties gather. A similar life style informs, partially, the culture of the drug addict. Some join the culture on a full-time basis, others only as part-time participants, alternating between "straight" weekdays and "hip" weekends. Varieties of it are seen in a more institutional form in the rising popularity of "touch and feel" organizations which structure and partially bureaucratize elements of this life style for those who wish to participate on a part-time basis. The most well known of these is the Esalen Institute. It is similar to the life situation of many artists, would be artists, and artists' colonies. Reportedly certain milder forms of drug abuse are spreading into middle-class, middle-aged social contexts.<sup>17</sup> Recruitment, training and other processes, including possibly maturing out, are little known and poorly understood at the present time. For the purposes in mind here, the impor-

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16. It is likely that spontaneous reaction becomes quickly routinized. Therefore there is a continual need for new jargon.

17. Sam Blum, "Marijuana Clouds the Generation Gap," The New York Times Magazine, August 23, 1970, p. 28.

tant point is to indicate crudely the broad outlines of a "counter culture" and the fact that it does in fact exist. It varies considerably from the dominant culture, and is dramatically analyzable as performance utilizing a ritualistic model.

This counter culture is dominated by expressiveness. It features the emotions rather than the intellect, spontaneousness over planning. A series of events in everyday life may not be lineally connected. It is difficult to impute subjective meaning in terms of traditional categories to the successive activities of an individual undergoing the hallucinogenic process stimulated by lysergic acid and other drugs. Such life resembles a ritualistic play in its expressive quality, disjointed succession of images, absence of linear development, and lack of coherent content. It is aimless, meandering, meaningless, and static in purpose if considered as a realistic performance. Considered as ritualistic performance it seems to be dramaturgy whose "rules" might be formalized.

A perhaps somewhat wider application of a ritualistic model may be found in the general circumstances of urban man in an advanced industrial society. Spatial mobility and sequential role enactment are characteristic of this situation. A clue as to the situation here may be found in what Riesman categorized in his tripartite construct as the other-directed character type.<sup>18</sup>

Riesman has been much criticized. The controversy resulting from this criticism cannot be explored here other than

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18. Riesman, op. cit.

to say that the value of such constructs must ultimately be found in their usefulness for further study. They offer or may offer a reconceptualization from which further work may develop. It is relatively easy to refute a generalized categorization such as this one, much more difficult to synthesize more elaborate and fruitful ones. Such constructs are by their very nature provisional. They must be judged for their eventual richness in spawning other theoretical schemes and empirically grounded studies. Also, they are similar to Weber's study of the rise of capitalism.<sup>19</sup> This study does not "explain" the rise of capitalism, but rather explores one aspect of it. It isolates and emphasizes one crucial theme or trend which made the rise and extension of capitalism viable in certain Western societies. Other supplementary causes are not denied or excluded. A similar view of Riesman's categories serves to neutralize much of the criticism and facilitates their use in further analysis.

Riesman's other-directed type will be briefly summarized below. This will be followed by a hypothetical portrait of the daily life of an other-directed type. Finally, it will be explored to see whether or not such conduct may be analyzed dramaturgically, and, if so, if such performance is more properly considered as realistic or ritualistic. Riesman describes social character as follows:<sup>20</sup>

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19. See the forward by R.H. Tawney to Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Talcott Parsons (trans.) (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 1(a)-11.

20. Riesman, op. cit., p. 4.

"...Character, in this sense, is the more or less permanent socially and historically conditioned organization of an individual's drives and satisfactions -- the kind of "set" with which he approaches the world and people.

"Social Character" is that part of "character" which is shared among significant social groups and which, as most contemporary social scientists define it, is the product of experience of these groups."

It should be noted that this definition excludes inherited talents and biological and psychological elements that from the perspective taken by Riesman may be treated as constants in the behavior of the individual. The phrase "social character" is admitted, by Riesman, to be vague. It is, however, sufficiently specific for certain practical purposes.

The other-directed character type that is postulated as the prevalent type in contemporary society, or at least in urban areas of the middle-class, is defined in terms of the sources which guide behavior.<sup>21</sup>

"What is common to all the other-directed people is that their contemporaries are the source of direction for the individual -- either those known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media. This source is of course "internalized" in the sense that dependence on it for guidance in life is implanted early. The goals toward which the other-directed person strives shift with the guidance; it is only the process of striving itself and the process of paying close attention to the signals from others that remain unaltered throughout life."

Social character as described by Riesman is recognized as a 'pure type' with all the inherent deficiencies and strengths that are a part of that methodological tool. It is a character type that is in the process of formation and which is more prevalent in urban than in rural areas, in the

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21. ibid., p. 21.



middle-class than in upper or lower classes.

Everyday social life for the other-directed man involves him in a sequence of rapidly seried interaction situations in each of which he occupies a specific status and enacts appropriate role behavior. Most statuses are complementary or supplementary, but rigid social and geographic segregation of statuses enables the occupancy of contradictory statuses. A partial view of the typical day of a hypothetical man should illustrate this point. For this purpose we might select a corporate employee living in the suburbs.

At the beginning of a typical day the hypothetical suburban man might perform as husband, lover, and father prior to leaving for work in the city. While driving to the railroad station he may become a consumer at a gasoline station or by delivering clothing at a dry cleaners. Once on the train, which makes him a consumer of transportation services, he might perform as a bored commuter reading a newspaper, as a companion in a game of bridge, or as an employee taking care of paper work before arriving at work. While at the work place he becomes supervisor of his secretary, underling to those occupying higher statuses in the corporate hierachy, and co-worker with those on the same organizational level. At lunch he becomes a consumer and possibly host to customers or other business associates prior to resuming his various roles in the office. After work he may simply reverse the process of the morning. He may postpone this for a while by visiting his mistress and performing as a lover, or by seeing an old friend and performing supportive or recreational functions.

Alternatively he may go to a restruant and theatre with or without his wife or business acquaintances and thereby become a consumer, friend, chivalrous companion, or salesman.

Prescribed conduct prevails in each status and for the most part it is status specific. Physically the same individual occupies the several statuses, but behaviorally he constantly assumes new selves in accordance with the demands and contingencies of the situation and the personality resources he has available. He does not usually interject role behavior from one status into another. As a communter he is quite separate from the employee he becomes while addressing a vice president of his corporation. As boss to his secretary his conduct is quite different than as a lover, even though the same two individuals may be involved in both interaction situations. Conduct in one area may be mentioned in another area as when both employee and vice president are commuters delayed by the same railroad mishap, but their interaction is clearly designed for purposes other than discussion of their mutual commuting status. Clusters of roles such as the occupational ones may be performed in the same physical location, but there tends to be segregation of roles spacially as well as behaviorally. Rules of conduct are promulgated and disseminated for each status and role.

Under these circumstances one must search for the elusive self. It changes and shifts with each status change, and the velocity of status change increases with urbanization. Each interaction situation demands different qualities, appitudes and physical demeanor. The situation in large part determines

the appropriate conduct. In each situation the self must be established, but it is always a different self. Each interaction situation may be staged in terms of a realistic dramaturgic model with the power wielder setting the stage, editing information as much as possible, and generally acting as stage manager. Actors usually may be expected to agree on the "reality" of a particular situation and individually and collectively exhibit behavior that accords with and furthers this reality. Performance in each isolated status may be treated dramaturgically in conformance with the realistic model. Such analysis, however, would not appear to be capable of fully explaining the situation. The source of direction for each is the other within the context of the interaction situation. The ability of any to stage manage is difficult, especially where there are not clearly defined levels of power.

Realistic dramaturgic analysis would seem to be even less credible when a day, year, or lifetime is analyzed. Constantly changing scenes, and the character changes demanded by each scene change complicate the situation. The same individual plays various characters. Continuities between the various characters he plays are obviously discernible, but it would appear that increasingly discontinuities become prevalent. This would be the case as the velocity and range of serial status occupancy increases. It would become more difficult to develop and sustain a self in Mead's sense as this occurs. Role performance in the course of a day involves many selves or fragmented selves. For Mead as for Riesman the self is the

reflection of the other, but in the case of the former the other becomes a component of the self while for the latter the self becomes a mirror of the other. In the case of urban man the mirrors change in a rapid succession, and he becomes the reflection of whatever mirror is momentarily present. It is difficult to imagine the investment of self in dramaturgic performance in everyday life necessary for performance in accordance with the realistic model. On the other hand, the changing performances arranged in series and cycles represent the individual reflecting his social environment in a manner similar to that of an actor in a ritualistic play.

A single biological individual portrays all the parts of his life, but, as his life becomes less a part in the traditional sense and more a series of reflections, he becomes less a realistic character and more a representative of varying states. Circumstances, i.e., the ritual that is the life of the individual, propel the action. Realistic models make the individual the governor of action, but there appears to be less scope for individually initiated action as organizational imperatives increasingly govern wider and wider areas of everyday social life. Not only are strictly instrumental areas such as the occupational determined by organizational rules, but expressive areas as well. The rituals of life are pre-determined to an increasing extent and the character adapts to them rather than determining them.

Everyday life considered as isolated scenes seems to be analyzable only partially as realistic performance. Scenes considered as a series appear to conform more to a ritualistic

model. Individuals remain the same throughout but performance demands the assumption and discarding of numerous selves. A major goal of performance becomes performance itself as meaning is subtracted from activity, and life becomes ritual.

Three areas of potential application for a ritualistic model have been briefly mentioned. No attempt has been made to analyze these situations, but merely to indicate the potential usefulness of a ritualistic model in the analysis of social situations that appear to be outside the scope of a realistic model. The perspective has been one of microsocial analysis and the place of the individual in face-to-face situations of interaction. On this level the ritualistic model would seem useful. Transition to a macrosocial level, it would seem, should provide additional applications of such a dramaturgic model. Religious movements, political campaigns, mass and pop culture, and, in general, many activities in periods such as those categorized as ideational by Sorokin,<sup>22</sup> would be expected to conform more to ritualistic than to realistic models. The same is true of areas such as artistic creation and the life styles of artists.

Certain social situations appear to conform to realistic performance and others to ritualistic. A ritualistic model would therefore supplement rather than supplant a realistic one in the sociological analysis of phenomena.

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22. Pitirim A. Sorokin, Social and Cultural Dynamics, 4 vols., (New York: The Bedminster Press, 1962, c. 1937). Definitions are given in Vol I., Chapter Two, "Ideational, Sensate, Idealistic, and Mixed Systems of Culture," pp. 55-101.

## APPENDIX -- METHODOLOGY

Data for this project were gathered by observation of the activities of a professional theatrical group between February, 1969 and March, 1970. My research role during this period was that of non-participating observer.<sup>1</sup> Observation was restricted to workshop sessions which were scheduled four times per week, with each meeting lasting approximately four hours. Workshops were conducted in a large loft on the fifth floor of a building in Greenwich Village.

During each session I positioned myself in an area immediately adjacent to the major work space, usually against a wall, on the floor, or on huge wooden cubes that served as theatre seats or benches when the group performed in the loft. Every attempt was made to be self effacing. This was extremely difficult since the people being observed were, in effect, professional impression managers who in their work were routinely aware of the impression they were creating, and for whom. The actors were always aware of who was in the loft, as evidenced by casual remarks they made about visitors.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Raymond L. Gold, "Roles in Sociological Field Observations," Social Forces, 1958, pp. 217-223.

2. Approximately one month after I began working it was decided that no outside observers would be allowed to come to the loft. A series of media reporters, interested spectators and others had been coming to the loft and their presence tended to disrupt the sessions. At this time many of the people in the group were unaware of my exact purpose and role. The director held an informal meeting to request that I be allowed to continue my research. A vote was taken and I was formally introduced to the group. It was decided that no observers other than myself should be admitted. This restriction was later relaxed.

Each day I took notes and transcribed them shortly after the session ended. There was considerable resistance evidenced to the presence and use of mechanical recording devices. From time to time photographers, television crews, radio announcers and other media people worked in the loft for a day or two at a time. The actors were acutely aware of these activities and exhibited curiosity as to what exactly was deemed of sufficient interest and importance to warrant being recorded.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to uneasiness about recording, there seemed to be considerable awareness of any non-actor moving around while work was in progress, or of anyone either entering or leaving the loft during working hours. Therefore, I always arrived early, took my place, and moved around as little as possible during each four-hour session. It was sometimes necessary to move closer to the activity in order to hear, but as much as possible I tried to anticipate where any particular day's activity would occur, and positioned myself accordingly.

At the inception of this project it was felt that the construction of a dramaturgic model should be based on the situation found in actual day-to-day dramatic work. An experimental group was selected because, among other reasons,

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3. In my judgement a tape recorder would have represented an outside intrusion that could have significantly influenced my relationship to the group. During the first few weeks that I observed the group a representative of a local FM radio station also worked there, using a tape recorder. Several comments were made by the actors in reference to this, and they evidenced a degree of uneasiness and some curiosity as to the criteria for deciding what was important enough to record and what was not.

it seemed that such a group would yield more information than could be obtained from the study of a conventional theatrical enterprise.<sup>4</sup> It was assumed that in order to construct a model for use in sociological analysis it would be necessary to investigate the elementary structure, form, content, and action of a dramatic situation, performance, and product. Experimental groups, by definition, question, examine, and attempt to expand these basic elements of acting and drama as a part of their routine activities. Such questioning by theatre professionals seemed to offer the opportunity to an observer to examine the basic elements more thoroughly and with greater clarity than would be the case if one studied a conventional group. In the latter instance the emphasis is almost invariably on technical problems of production.<sup>5</sup>

The selection of the group to be studied presented problems in terms of established criteria for sample selection. The application of random or other sampling techniques was not possible since there is no clearly defined, orderly universe of theatre groups from which a sample group might be selected.

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4. In a related project I have observed the activities of two additional theatrical groups. My experience supports the conclusion reached here.

5. This is characteristic of commercial theatre in New York City, both on and Off-Broadway. Capital investment of a considerable magnitude, the "star system," the necessity of attracting an affluent audience, and other factors make it absolutely necessary that each venture is concentrated on becoming commercially successful. Informal conversations with actors and directors from subsidized regional repertory theatres gives the impression that this is equally true even where commercial pressures are somewhat lessened. In regional theatre the necessity of staging a certain number of productions within a limited season creates the need to concentrate



Nor did it seem possible to construct such a universe. As a result of this the selection was based on personal knowledge of the field, literature available in a few journals and periodicals,<sup>6</sup> and advice from individuals with relevant expert knowledge in the field.<sup>7</sup>

As an alternative to the case study of a single group I briefly examined and then rejected the possibility of constructing a dramaturgic model or models on the basis of library research. This did not seem feasible on the basis of conventional dramatic criticism, scholarship, or reviews. Most daily reviews of theatrical productions are concerned with performance quality and the estimate of the prospects of success of each production. More serious criticism and academic scholarship is preponderantly concerned with drama as literature. Usually the concentration is on artistic quality or the lack thereof in plays, i.e., emphasis is on content rather than basic structures and processes.<sup>8</sup> Neither

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on technical problems due to the pressures of time.

6. These included principally the village Voice, and The Drama Review (formerly the Tulane Drama Review).

7. These included three people active in experimental theatre. One of them is an actress, director, and playwright. Another is an actor and playwright, and the third is a director. The last two follow the theory and practice of Grotowski, and the first developed from the Theatre of the Absurd.

8. There are some exceptions to this generalization such as the work of Georg Lukacs, "The Sociology of Modern Drama," Tulane Drama Review, Summer, 1965, pp. 146-170. Also, in relation to films, George A. Huaco, The Sociology of Film Art, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1965).

conventional theatrical groups nor academicians seemed to concentrate their efforts on drama from the point of view of social action and process.

At approximately the same time that it was decided to study a single group intensively, it was necessary to determine the basic methodology of the project. The basic method was non-participant observation. The major alternative methodology which was considered and subsequently rejected involved the possibility of conducting periodic interviews with actors and directors during the course of the emergent cycle. This alternative was rejected on several counts.

Contamination is a potentially serious drawback when seried interviews are conducted with the same respondents.<sup>9</sup> The possibility of contamination seemed quite likely in relation to an artistic enterprise where subjective standards predominate, uncertainty is endemic, and other factors tend to keep the entire project in a state of flux.

In addition to the possibility of contamination, each actor-participant has, at best, a partial and biased perspective of the ongoing project. The major interest was in the project as a total project and it was felt that the potentially contradictory, confusing, and discrepant reports of participants would not, when accumulated and analyzed, give as clear a portrayal of the entire project as would a

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9. Charles Y. Glock, "Some Applications of the Panel Method to the Study of Change," The Language of Social Research, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Morris Rosenberg (eds.), (New York: The Free Press), pp. 242-249.

series of minute observations by an impartial observer.

A third reservation involved the professional characteristics of actors as reporters. That is to say, as professional actors, it is necessary to concentrate almost exclusively on personal performance. What is popularly conceived of as the egocentricity of performers is, as least in part, a necessary professional mechanism. Actors professionally concentrate on their own subjective and emotional responses. As a result, it would seem that the professional actor would make a poor respondent relative to the goals of this project.

On balance, it was felt that observation would yield more reliable data than interviews. This was true in spite of the fact that it was recognized that observation would inevitably miss or under emphasize certain data and over emphasize others. On the other hand, the observation could be and was planned and carried out within the guidelines of social, rational, and lineal action. This framework, if used with caution, imparted a certain regularity to the observation and recording without imposing an order on the data which did not previously exist in them. The decision was therefore made that observation rather than interviewing, library research, or other methods would be the most fruitful methodology for the study. This was done while bearing in mind Sjoberg and Nett's observation that every methodological and theoretical position involves assumptions regarding the data observed, their ordering and interpretation, and other sub-

stantive and theoretical considerations.<sup>10</sup> In their view, explicit and implicit assumptions involved in the selection of appropriate methodologies may, in large part, predetermine research results. Every attempt was made to heed this warning both during the selection of methodology and the analysis of the data.

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10. Gideon Sjoberg and Roger Nett, A Methodology for Social Research (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), pp. 58-69.

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