INVESTIGATION INTO DIFFERING VOCAL REACTIONS OF YOUNG ACTORS TO A TEXT

by

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ABSTRACT

A universally observed problem in acting is the inability of some actors in some roles to sound convincing when they speak. Instead, they sound as if they were reading aloud, although they have already learned their lines. This deficiency is usually referred to as a 'reading' or 'liney' quality in vocal delivery. A kindred fault, common in more experienced actors, is falling into exaggerated modulations seldom met with off stage; this is vulgarly known as 'ham'. When these faults are present in a performance, the audience has a powerful impression of inauthenticity or untruth. In a satisfactory performance, the voice sounds spontaneous and free, conveying the truth of the character.

The object of the project described in this thesis was to investigate these phenomena more critically, with the aim of discovering possible causes other than innate talent or its absence in the actor. The method adopted in this pilot study involved observation of a small group of volunteer students, whose vocal delivery in different acting exercises could be assessed and compared. The project, which lasted for a Winter session, was set up somewhat similarly to an acting course. The students were given various acting exercises including concentration exercises, Sound and Movement, improvisations, oral readings, and work on one act of a play, necessitating a rehearsal period of four-and-a-half weeks. Potentially significant passages in some of these exercises were
recorded on cassette tapes: these tapes appear as appendices to the present thesis.

Voices were compared in all the situations provided by the different exercises, but the basic contrast lay between the same voice using improvised words, and using words invented by another. Each student was assessed in these groups of exercises. In the oral readings and the study of the play they were considered under different headings, some of which dealt with technical proficiency, while others were concerned with imagination in the creation of a role, and the resulting success or failure in projecting a character; the assessment laid emphasis on the quality of the vocal delivery.

Three causes were found to be significant in examining an unsatisfactory delivery. The first of these was connected with resistance to playing a particular kind of part. In two cases, a character in a play appeared to threaten the actor, possibly by its destructiveness and violence. In these cases the actors responded with unconvincing voices and a marked tendency to adopt a set of inflections which became unalterable, and thus quite unspontaneous. The second cause lay in a fundamental attitude to the text as such. A text apparently constituted itself as an authority for some actors, an external authority whose power they were unable to transfer to themselves. This created a 'reading' quality in the voice and a similar lack of spontaneity. The third significant area concerned the use of the imagination in building up a role. Where the actor had failed to ask himself the question, "What would I do if I were in this situation?" there was a thinness in the presentation of the character, which showed in
under- or over-emphasis in the voice. Furthermore, where the techniques for enabling an actor to believe in his role as a specific character were ignored, the actor tended to approach the emotional demands of the part with a direct attack; discouraging results ensued. This lack of imaginative preparation manifested itself in an exaggerated and strained delivery.

Finally, there are some comments on feeling, intuition and intellect, and how these bear on the problems of student actors, who have been trained in other disciplines to use their brains first and foremost, and their intuitions rather less.
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Introduction

What happens when an actor confronts a text? Why do people so often, when using words not their own, sound unreal or exaggerated or even meaningless, whereas in ordinary life they can converse and say what they mean with clear communication? Why does the voice behave more naturally and predictably when we improvise? What comes between the actor and convincing utterance, particularly in the early stages of his career? Although, as an actor gets older, he may find that there are many things he can do with his voice, yet he may still block off meaning and direct communication. This is usually recognisable by other actors and the more alert members of an audience. In fact, the problem is both obvious and far-reaching, and has been explored in many ways from Stanislavski onwards. Yet it crops up for everyone in training for the stage, and has to be confronted by each generation. But because it is obvious it is often ignored.

In order to discover some answers, or at least to isolate the phenomena and describe them, a project was set up which became the laboratory work for this thesis. Eight students were kind enough to volunteer for it, and the work is narrated in detail in the next two chapters. I have drawn also on my own experience of acting, and of teaching drama in High School. The task was to find out what lies behind an unnatural and 'liney' delivery of a text, and the contrast between this and ordinary speech or improvisation. It was noticeable that one or two actors in plays I had directed, as well as those who took part in the project, had made real progress towards an unforced delivery of lines, while the majority
remained stuck with an awkward 'reading' quality, and often with a set of inflections that remained unalterable. Any attempt to jolt the actor out of this rigid, chosen group of sounds met with strong though unconscious opposition. Even if an actor, at a rehearsal, was directed in such a way that he began to feel something, or to approach a stale unit in a fresh way so that something new began to happen, in spite of this, the old, rigid pattern would return and assert itself at the next rehearsal, and the director was faced with the choice of starting again or settling for cliche. Actors, especially those who want to become professional, naturally become aware of their vocal problems early on in their careers, particularly their technical problems. Sometimes the sound of their own voice begins to irritate. And yet the way out of the unnatural sounds, wrongly placed emphases, phoney cadences, is not clear. And this can continue on into professional life. There are surprising examples of this. A film was made of the Abbey Theatre (Dublin) production of The Playboy of the Western World with the Irish actress Siobhan McKenna playing Pegeen Mike, a character she projected with great conviction as far as gesture, movement and physical intensity went. It was a truthful portrayal of Synge's heroine. So what went wrong? Why did one feel dissatisfied? Somehow the text had not been assimilated. It is a difficult one from the actor's viewpoint, since it is written in a heightened, often lyrical, prose, full of references to natural beauty, such as most English-speaking people do not use

1The Playboy of the Western World by J. M. Synge, screen play by Brian Hurst, directed by Brian Hurst, Janus Films, 1963.
in conversation. (Synge claimed that Irish peasants did speak like that, and that he had listened to them through cracks in floorboards.) Apparently in order to overcome these difficulties, the actress spoke in a curious flat chant, and at other times, with intense and inflated cadences. Pegeen is a character invested with strong and elemental feelings; these were blocked by the voice, though not by the body. The synthesis of voice, character and bodily action had not taken place, although the performance was potentially excellent.

Another example of a sense of strain with a text is to be found in Laurence Harvey's narration of the Mystery play, The Flood. If Laurence Harvey were not already well-known, both as an actor of classical roles, and as a movie star, his performance in this recording would be less surprising. All that the text requires is telling the story. The actor evidently feels that this is not enough, and embellishes his task with all kinds of vocal decoration; an over-precision with consonants, a thrilling undertone of intensity, and a drawing out of vowel sounds. These vocal flourishes cannot be performed without considerable and well-developed skill in vocal technique. This is not the temptation of the young actors to whom attention has already been drawn, but it is related to their difficulties. These two professional actors have been mentioned because they epitomize what can happen to the problem at a later stage of development.

One could say, then, that there are two phases. In the first, the voice will not obey the will of the actor, and the text is expressed with monotony, emphases are wrongly placed; there are

\[^{2}\text{The Flood with music by Igor Stravinsky, Columbia Records Stereo M9 6357, 1962.}\]
hesitations, muttering or shouting or a tendency to get fixed in an immovable set of inflections. There is also the beginning of the tendency to acquire a special 'stage' voice. This is hard to pinpoint, as it differs with different people. But when that voice is used, the listener always knows that the actor is using words that are not his own. His everyday voice is switched off.

There is the later phase, when the more elementary problems have been overcome, but the tendency to get stuck in a fixed set of inflections remains, though taking a rather more subtle form, and the special 'stage' voice is well-developed.

It is, on the whole, the first phase that was studied in the project.

Stanislavski has some pertinent comments in a chapter called Faith and Sense of Truth:

This sense (of truth) must penetrate and check everything that the actor does and the spectator sees. Every little exercise, whether internal or external, must be done under its supervision and approval.

He stressed that an actor must possess both a sense of truth and its opposite: a sense of what is false. In working on the project, the question was: how to raise this sense of awareness in relation to the voice. How do actors know when they sound untruthful, or without meaning or intention? Perhaps they do know, but feel unable to do anything about it because they cannot pinpoint the obstacle that is coming between themselves and the text. In any case, an actor is not a wandering voice, and it could reasonably be argued that vocal difficulties are only part

of a much larger whole, which is the use of the actor's body as the total instrument of his art. The obstacles that impede the whole physique from expressing the character implicit in a given text provoked Stanislavski to an all-out attack on them, the result of which is well-known. His solutions have found an enormous response among actors on this continent as well as in Europe (though much less in the professional organization of the theatre). He showed how it was possible both to assume the mask or persona of another, and at the same time to feel the appropriate emotions of that character. He does not disregard the necessity of technical equipment (witness his views on this in his second book) but the methods he advocates for truthful acting are primarily psychological and involve the whole person: body, voice, mind and the silent monitor within. It is, therefore, somewhat artificial to separate the voice from the rest; the subject under consideration could not be extracted and studied in total isolation. Other aspects of acting were thus taken into account as well, and are looked at in detail also. But it was the application of Stanislavski's 'sense of truth' to the voice that was the focal point. (It is worth noting in parenthesis, however, that many actors do have difficulties in one area rather than another. Stanislavski, while relating the story of his own problems, lays more stress on his physical tension and clenched muscles than on vocal strain. So it is not wholly artificial to concentrate on this particular aspect.)

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Since the actors working on the project were mostly inexperienced, a question arose as to whether the vocal problems under observation were a result of their lack of technical proficiency. Was there a connection between an inability to project the voice clearly, and producing unnatural or insincere speech? It did not seem to follow necessarily. Everyone on stage must obviously know how to project his voice. But the ability to do this is not a guarantee of anything else. Everyone who has been a member of an audience has had the experience at some time of hearing a beautifully produced voice ringing with insincerity.

If an actor speaks without conviction at a moment where the text calls for deeply felt emotion, the result is more objectionable than the blurring of a line where there is profound feeling. (Cf. the performance of Nicol Williamson as Hamlet, where his terror on seeing his father's ghost was so great, some lines were lost through shivering and stammering.\(^6\) Frederick Valk's Othello\(^7\) became slightly inaudible during his rage of remorse\(^8\) after the death of Desdemona. The rage expressed itself in a spasmodic way that recalled the earlier fit or seizure in the presence of Iago in Act IV Sc. 1.)

Since, therefore, it is possible for artificiality to exist side by side with technical proficiency, the work of the project was not aimed at the removal of technical faults as such, unless these either impeded seriously the expression of meaning (like

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\(^7\)Othello, directed by Julius Gellner, Old Vic, London, 1942.

\(^8\)Othello, Act V, Sc. 11, especially lines 276-280.
inaudibility) or seemed to arise from something more than a mere lack of technique. For example, an actor's voice may sound strained or inaudible because he has not arrived at the truth of what he is doing. He has no conviction about it so he drops (or raises) his voice to hide the fact. If speaking on stage is a kind of action, an actor, particularly an inexperienced one, may not be able to make his vocal gesture effective if he has no belief. He will be heard in a literal sense, but his intention will not be conveyed.

The stage actor, unlike the movie actor, always has to be aware that he is speaking to a lot of people in a large place. This necessitates the powerful projection of the voice in situations where it would be natural, in everyday life, to speak gently. In the theatre, Othello has an easier time (vocally) when he wishes to be 'washed in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire'\(^9\) than do Gwendolen and Cicely when they talk over the tea-cups.\(^10\) Which is another way of saying that since Zola, Antoine, Ibsen and the whole realistic school, the theatre makes demands which in a more declamatory and verse-speaking age it did not — the demand that an actor looks as if he is talking quietly and easily when he must at the same time be audible at the back of the gallery. There are great masters of this art. John Gielgud comes to mind at once. This additional factor affects the actors much less in a small theatre, and it was never consciously worked on in the project. It is mentioned here only in answer to a probable

\(^9\)Shakespeare, Othello, Act V, Sc. 11, l. 279.

query from a reader. Out of the actors whose work is considered in detail here, only one might have had serious problems of audibility in a larger theatre.

The questions behind the work were not primarily, therefore, of a technical kind. They touched on more subjective areas of imagination, belief and relationship with others. For example, why is the voice usually more natural and simple in improvisations than when speaking the words of a text? Is it easier to believe in an improvised situation than one arising from a printed text? How much does belief in a situation have to do with vocal problems? Does an objective of the kind elaborated by Stanislavski\textsuperscript{11} help people to speak without a reading quality or stage voice? Do people react to the text itself emotionally, for example with fear, hostility, submissiveness or rebellion? What stops commitment or belief in a given stage situation?

Developments in the work were suggestive, and such conclusions as were reached are to be found in the last chapter. They are not definitive and are included to show some lines that might be followed up in work on this area of acting.

\textsuperscript{11}Stanislavski, \textit{An Actor Prepares}, p. 105.
Chapter 1. The Project and its Problems, and the Work of the First Term

Not all the questions asked at the end of the Introduction had neatly posed themselves before the work began. Some arose during the process of working. One assumption, however, was made, a very simple one: that any vocal peculiarity — unnaturalness, wrong emphasis, 'reading' quality or insincerity — had a cause, or a variety of causes. It might be difficult to arrive at the cause, but it existed. It was not by accident that an actor would improvise with a natural voice and easy manner and yet become vocally strained and physically wooden when faced with a text. Out of this assumption, then, the questions arose. And in order to find, or at least search for, answers, a project was devised which required the cooperation of a small number of students, willing to work on it for one academic year. The students would undertake different kinds of acting exercise, and conclude with the performance of a play. Their responses to these differing situations would be noted, and where suitable, recorded on tape. There was an element of trial and error in establishing the exercises and other material. I wanted to establish a set of acting exercises that had some sort of interior development and which also necessitated contrasting ways of using the voice.

Three groups of activities were eventually decided upon. In the first, the use of non-verbal noises was the most important element in the exercise, known as Sound and Movement; this exercise has already been established as a useful tool for drama students. The second group involved the use of improvisations necessitating the use of words. The last group required working
with texts, specifically scenes from plays, and also oral readings of short passages taken from differing kinds of literature.

The contrasts between these three modes of expression were always clearer than the likenesses. In ordinary life a person does not tick like a clock or growl like a bear, as the students did in the Sound and Movement; on the other hand he may scream or grunt or groan, and these are all human noises, though animals may make them too. So this first exercise varied between human and non-human sounds. There was a little hesitation or hiatus before the non-human could be assumed - a pause for an effort to imagine what it is like to be a horse and neigh. No similar effort was required to shout. This is a human response known to everyone. A group of primitive noises also emerged, intensely rhythmic, like drumming - Bim-bam, bim-bam, bim-bam.

The human noises like shouting were, of course, nearer to speech than the primitive and non-human, because language is a distinctively human accomplishment. The narrative type of improvisations that were done next, moved near to conversation and often turned into it, sometimes with a quite extensive exploration of a dispute or discussion. It required a higher degree of skill and education than the previous exercise, but also less disinhibition.

The third stage brought about an even greater contrast with the previous ones. It was a much bigger step into sophistication in human activity. Animals only act under compulsion from men, and then not very well. The wonder is that they do it at all. The step that the actor has to take, is into the mind of another person, the mind of the playwright, and it requires a profound
decision on the part of the actor to do that, using whatever means he can to help him. These three groups of activities, then, formed a basis on which to compare and contrast the vocal problems of the participants in the project.

In the first term these exercises were so arranged that the students began with the Sound and Movement exercises, and then moved on into improvisations, mostly of a narrative kind. (At the same time some limbering-up exercises were also undertaken, which were usually silent and not directly relevant to the thesis. They were undertaken rather as aids to the work than as the work itself. The students had a particular interest in the Trust exercises\(^1\) that some of them had previously experienced. We tried a few of these and their comments are recorded.)

Short scenes from plays completed the work of the first term.

During the next term, the focus shifted to the use of texts: the students undertook two sets of oral readings, and rehearsed for a performance of the first act of \textit{The Sport of My Mad Mother}\(^2\). These rehearsals lasted four-and-a-half weeks. Finally, I asked each of the participants a set of questions ranging over their individual response to different aspects of the project.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Two examples of Trust exercises which were undertaken:

a) Two students stand face-to-face and put their hands together, palm to palm. Without releasing the hands they explore the space available in the area immediately surrounding them.

b) Groups of three students. One of them lets himself relax and falls flat from a standing position. The other two catch him to prevent him from hitting the floor.


\(^3\) See Appendix A, p. 131
The work should not be considered as divided between two terms, with the improvisations and other forms of spontaneous expression in the first, and the work on texts in the second, though there was a greater emphasis on the text in that term. We continued to improvise right through the project, and to use improvisational techniques as an aid to rehearsals. We had also used texts in a small way during the first term. The real division fell between words made up spontaneously by the students, and words made up by another, and written down. Bearing in mind this difference between the spontaneous and the written word, I listened many times to the voices of the same group of people in performing different vocal exercises. During the second term, I tape-recorded various stages of the work so that I could listen with greater accuracy to, and gain a firmer impression of, the problems and successes. The tapes are appended to the thesis and include an improvisation, the two oral readings, three stages of rehearsing the play with individual speeches from it, and interviews with each student. This should also help the reader to clarify the vocal quality of each actor, and to verify points made about individuals, particularly in the third chapter where the work of the principal actors is considered in detail.

The Students Who Took Part in the Project

Auditions were held in order to choose the participants and seventeen people presented themselves. From these, eight were chosen. Their names were Anne, Rob, Daniel, Jan, Jeanine, Mike, Dan, and Gillian (Jill).

The students saw the project as a mini-course in drama. They
were not told what specific area was under observation in case this should create self-consciousness about their voice or utterance, and so interfere with the information. They were all first year students except two.

Individual attitudes to the project varied. Rob, who had more experience in drama than anyone else, regarded it as a method of gaining acting experience and learning from it. Anne was also seriously interested in acting, and like Rob, had some thoughts about becoming professional. Jan, who was not concerned about a career as an actress, was nonetheless pleased to have an opportunity to act and to become involved with a play and to learn more about theatre. Jeanine saw it more as a simple opportunity to act, which was her main interest. She, too, had been considering the stage as a career, and was more interested in theatre than in the University. Daniel also wanted acting experience, and was concerned as well to find out more about plays and their structure. Dan (to be distinguished from Daniel) had some not clearly formulated hopes of a professional career. He regarded the project as an extension of his acting experiences at school. Mike, who was a third year student, had not thought of a career on stage but saw the project as a means of discovering what acting was like, whether he could act and would want to pursue it further. Jill, who was also a third year student, had become interested in acting through the drama course she had already begun in the Theatre Department. She had no previous acting experience, so that for her and Mike the project was a step in a new direction.
The Position of the Investigator

From the start my own role in the project seemed confused. On the one hand there was the position of a teacher undertaking what, to the students at least, appeared to be a drama course. On the other, there was the role of the observer, taking notes and recording what was happening, and eventually drawing conclusions from it. One role was active, requiring initiative, the other more passive, requiring receptivity. In rehearsal, the two roles might come into conflict, the passive giving way to the active. The rehearsal itself, I was afraid, might begin to function in two different ways: it would serve its normal function as the preparation time for the performance - its back region, to use the term of Ervine Goffman, but it would also have to function in an unusual way as an end in itself. It would, in this second function, become the place where development or non-development was observed and recorded and where any example of the problems pertaining to the thesis would be investigated. The actors would probably remain ignorant of this second function, but the investigator would have to be anything but ignorant. The double purpose of the rehearsal would have to be held constantly in mind.

I took this problem to Dr. Martin Meissner, a member of the Sociology Department, and he showed how the position could be defined, and how in practise it would be less complicated than it might seem in preparation, since the students would relate to me in a role already familiar, namely that of teacher. It was more

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important to ask the right questions as the observer of the work, than to worry about the position. The aim of the project was to obtain uncontaminated information. In the event this turned out to be broadly correct, though there was some degree of tension at times between the two roles. This arose principally where the role of observer became neglected for the immediate demands of directing the play, and insufficient notice was taken of the problems peculiar to the project of the thesis. However, I do not think I could claim to be completely successful in obtaining uncontaminated information.

Where a particular vocal weakness became obvious, it was not always possible to say that it was due to this cause rather than that, though sometimes a particular cause would appear very suggestive. To rule out all possible alternative causes would have required a kind of total knowledge about the actor that was both unobtainable and undesirable.

Statistical information of the type where one group of answers to questions is compared with another or others, was not possible, as this would have necessitated working over a much longer period with successive groups of different students.

The most important consideration was to ensure that the questions I wanted to ask were not leading ones, and that the student should be left as free as possible to form his own judgments about his own problems, and about the material used in the project. This would apply especially to the questions asked before and after the auditions, and in the interviews when the work was concluded.\(^5\) It was also important, as has already been

\(^5\)See Appendix A, p. 131.
noted, not to reveal the area of concern in case this conditioned the students to become unduly conscious of their voice, with undesirable results, such as listening to themselves, or trying to bring themselves into line with an imagined concept of what they thought the thesis was about. It was eventually found that simple, rather obvious questions evoked the most interesting and informative answers, though there were some difficulties with individuals who found it hard and unfamiliar to evaluate their own experience in words.

The Auditions

These were set up in the usual way, based on a search for people of acting ability. Care was taken, however, to look out for some examples of the 'reading' quality problem. Each audition lasted about half an hour, and each individual was auditioned twice. There was a gap of about five days between the two auditions. The reason for this was to highlight the vocal response to the text. This response became clearer in the second audition. A further consideration was to allow sufficient time for a proper study of the text, and to see how much effort the student was prepared to put into working for the second audition.

No one but the student and myself was present during the auditions unless someone extra was needed to read a part in dialogue. Questions were asked before and after the first audition, and after the second one. Every effort was made to establish an informal and non-threatening atmosphere. Auditions vary enormously in this respect and depend a great deal on the attitude of
the person conducting them. If he or she is nervous or tense, this will be communicated to the actors trying out for the part. If the actor is inexperienced, he may stumble or make slips that would not occur if the environment were more friendly. Sometimes an even more unusual event may result: the actor, feeling under strain, may give an excellent performance of an actor giving an audition. He presents himself in two parts simultaneously, the one he is playing in the audition, and a projection of himself as an actor auditioning. This leads to an indirect and unconvincing confrontation with the text. Some people will do this anyway, either through some instinct for acting on all occasions, whether on stage or off, or because they are always nervous at auditions even where the atmosphere is quite encouraging; it is hard to assess their talent until they are working directly on a part. This consideration also led to the setting up of fairly long auditions. By allowing sufficient time for the student to get absorbed in the text, especially at the second audition, it was hoped that he would forget any nervous feelings he might have and become concerned with the demands of the playwright.

The playwrights in question, Shakespeare and Thornton Wilder, were chosen for contrast. There were in fact several contrasts; those relevant to the audition were between verse and prose, period style and modern style, formality and informality, a public manner and a private manner. There were also contrasted characters: George and the Stage Manager (Our Town)⁶, and Brutus in Julius Caesar; Emily in Our Town and Constance in King John.

Our Town was written in a recent though not a completely modern idiom, and its sentence structure is colloquial and simple. With regard to the male students, the text was chosen with another consideration in mind, namely that the Stage Manager has to address the audience directly, in casual and informal speech. (This was also true of two characters in the play I had begun to think of for performance at the end of the project.) This was a further extension of the problem of unspontaneous speech: would the 'liney' delivery also manifest itself when a student actor addressed an audience directly?

The two Shakespeare speeches, though written in an unfamiliar idiom, were not hard to understand, either grammatically or emotionally. One other contrast seemed important — Constance and Brutus are both in a more authoritative and commanding position, psychologically, than Emily or George. It could be useful for casting purposes to see which of these positions was easier for each actor to assume.

The texts, then, were:

Our Town, by Thornton Wilder. The men read the Stage Manager's speech on p. 70, who throughout the play explains the developing events in the town, and what happens as time passes. He acts as compère to the show. They also read George in the scene which follows, where he is confused by the bewildering behaviour of Emily. The girls read Emily, who is trying, in this scene, to extract from George, not very happily, some indication of his

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7 Typescript of the texts is to be found in Appendix B on p. 165.
feeling for her.

**Julius Caesar.** The men read Brutus' speech, in which he justifies the political murder of Caesar.

**King John.** The girls read a speech of Constance, where she reacts with anger, suspicion and self-pity, to some bad news which affects her son's political future.

As I have said, the students were not chosen because of vocal skills as such, although the project was concerned primarily with the voice. The choice was determined, as it usually is, by the ability to communicate with the whole person, to make some kind of impact. For example, in Daniel's audition, audibility was not continuous. His voice was very soft in any case, yet he managed to give the impression of the characters, though on a small scale. Would he be able to overcome this inaudibility? Would he become more distinct when (or if) he was projecting the character he was playing on a larger scale. Did this depend on knowing lines? Would he be more audible in an improvisation? Was the inaudibility due to the audition situation?

As well as this quietness on Daniel's part, there were some examples of a 'reading' or 'liney' quality: Dan and Jan both showed an intelligent grasp of the characters that they were portraying, but both in the second audition displayed a marked lack

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8 Appendix C, p. 172. This appendix gives an individual account of each student's audition, from notes taken at the time.


of spontaneity. Anne\textsuperscript{11} had a connected tendency, though not quite similar, to use a special stage voice. Rob\textsuperscript{12} showed some tendency to shout or overact. His vocal difficulties were more like those of experienced actors, i.e. there was no problem with voice production but from time to time a phoney and insincere inflection crept into his tones. Mike's\textsuperscript{13} lack of experience and therefore of confidence was somewhat similar to Daniel's, although he was much more audible. His voice was level and monotonous, especially at the first audition, where his reading was forced and unnatural; physically he seemed relaxed and he moved easily. He approached the text intellectually. Jill\textsuperscript{14} gave a more intuitive and vivid rendering at the first audition than the second, when too much thought seemed to create a block to spontaneity. She had a voice of unusual quality and a wide range of tone. Jeanine\textsuperscript{15} had a strong audible voice. As Constance she was vocally too slight, though she made a good attempt at Emily, and conveyed the freshness of the character. A 'liney' quality was not apparent.

These eight students participated in the work of the first term. Jeanine and Anne both left the project after this for different reasons, and the remainder, in the following term, recorded two oral readings and took part in the first act of \textit{The Sport of My Mad Mother}. Anne returned briefly to take part in the oral readings.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid}, p. 183.
\item \textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid}, p. 173.
\item \textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid}, p. 178.
\item \textsuperscript{14}\textit{Appendix C}, p. 185.
\item \textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid}, p. 189.
\end{itemize}
Work Done in the First Term

Sound and Movement

This exercise met with positive response from everyone. The intention initially was to see how easily (or not) the students would produce non-verbal noises with accompanying gestures, what they would make of them, and whether the kind of problem that can suddenly show up when a text is being read or rehearsed would manifest itself in this exercise as well, particularly in the area of responding to, and giving to, others. Would the sounds emerge in a half-hearted, unfinished way? For in this sort of exercise there is only success or failure and nothing in between, presumably because there is no text or improvisational narrative to rely on. It would also be instructive to see how quickly and exactly they could pick up the sound and movement from each other - a point that will become clearer when the exercise has been described, and whether the sound offered would be accepted or resisted.

The exercise was taught to the group by a Vancouver actress, Helen Bouvier, who had in turn learned it from a theatre group in California, who used it frequently as a pre-rehearsal warm-up. The students in the project learned it at the same time that we began the improvisations, and we often used it as a method for leading into them.

In this exercise, the group began as a small, tight circle facing outward. They began to chant on a single note for a few seconds, then they sang the ascending scale from that note, with increasing energy, at the same time walking outward. They turned
round when they reached the top of the octave, so that they were then formed into a large circle facing inward. Someone (anyone) starts to make a sound with an accompanying movement; the sound can be anything except an actual word, and it does not have to be vocal or human, though this is more usual. He repeats the sound a few times then passes it to someone else in the circle whom he fixes with his eye. That person repeats, as precisely as he can, the sound and movement that was sent to him; then he changes it a little, so that it is similar to, but not identical with, the sound and movement he received. Then, in turn, he transmits the new one, which again is picked up, slightly altered and sent on. This continues until someone gets tired of it. When this happens, that person accepts the sound and movement sent to him and repeats it a few times, as before, but changes it into what he feels is its direct opposite. This is called the move into counterpoint. It is carried on until the group wants to finish the exercise, or the action comes to a natural conclusion. This conclusion seems to come about like the accepted end of a dance when the music stops. For example, one of the men led away a heavily breathing horse on one occasion, the man supplying both the movement of leading away and the breathing. Normally it is desirable that each person maintains his position in the circle, as movement towards another, or into the middle, creates a break in the pattern of the circle, and concentration drops.

Some students were inclined at first to be noisy and aggressive when working on this exercise, while others responded to this by becoming victimized; the rest tended to drift into one or other of these two attitudes. This set a monotonous tone, particularly
in the counterpoint when loud tones would simply follow low tones. In order to get away from these two moods, and to gain greater variation, we decided to eliminate the expression of aggression or victimization, and then see what would happen. This led to an increase of inventiveness on everyone’s part, and they began to experiment with non-emotional sounds, like eating bubble-gum. Some people tried out various kind of mime, as well as the abstract noises and movements of machinery. People imitated such things as the pendulum of a clock, or the handling of a heavy, viscous substance.

This exercise was found to have several benefits, but it was inadvisable to let it go on for a long time as it took up a good deal of energy. The comments of the students can be found in their interviews. It helped them to become alert, and also speeded up thought and initiative and put them in touch with each other. It worked best when the speed was kept to a vigorous level. It has many possibilities for the imagination, since the sounds could range over a variety of categories: animal, bird, machinery, human, as well as phenomena like wind or sea sounds. It worked quite well as an introductory to material for The Sport of My Mad Mother, since this play was full of noises, verbal and non-verbal, and nonsense, as well as singing and movement.

Helen Bouvier said that the aim of the exercise was to create a group out of a set of individuals, who would be mutually supportive and would acquire, through practise, a knowledge of each other’s capabilities. To some extent it had that effect. But I was more

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16See Appendix A, p. 131.
interested in the questions that began to arise as the exercise got under way. Was it really as much a group activity as Helen felt? Didn't the onus of response fall heavily on the individual as, in a play, the onus falls on the individual actors whose inter-relationship make up the action of the whole? In this way it was a different type of exercise altogether from the so-called Trust exercises which do not require individual skill as such. As in a play, also, this exercise required a mixture of letting-go and control, possibly a higher degree of disinhibition than most plays require. Do people mind uttering gibberish? Are they embarrassed by it? Was it really gibberish, anyway, or were they making sense through it? Is this kind of noise utterance a descent into chaos and non-communication, as at the end of Ionesco's frightening play, Jacques, ou la Soumission?¹⁷

Some answers were forthcoming at once. Obviously they did not mind uttering gibberish, nor was it embarrassing, unless a particular sound was particularly difficult to imitate. The sounds were never completely meaningless. An attempt to communicate something commonly known and recognizable underlay them. It was nearly always possible to tell what it was. The exercise did not descend into chaos, mostly because of the tight situation of the circle and the rule that kept the participants confined to the same spot. On the whole, these spontaneous and unprogrammed sounds came without effort, especially when a certain technique had been acquired. It became something of a party game, a more sophisticated one than might appear on the surface, and

although at times they resorted to animal noises, it required human observation to do this successfully. Most of the students found it very much easier to make excursions into the nonsensical and bizarre, than to read aloud a series of short passages in the oral reading, as they did later.

Some problems did arise, though, that also occurred later and in other circumstances. A student would resist a sound and movement, when apparently he found it alien, that is when it was something he would not have thought of initiating himself. In this case it would fall flat, and be poorly passed on to the next participant. There was sometimes a period of getting into a particular sound and movement where it was possible to observe a kind of transference of authority taking place: the recipient of the sound slightly resisted the outside authority of the giver of the sound, until he had transferred the power right into his own imagination, so that the noise was now his own. This would appear, in retrospect, to connect with the resistance to a text and the authority of the writer, which was discovered in another context. But in general the participants in this exercise had little difficulty in producing a variety of sounds with considerable energy and spontaneity.

**Improvisations**

The improvisations were undertaken in order to listen to any differences in vocal quality between this form of expression and working with a text, whether reading aloud or rehearsing a play.

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18 See Chapter 3, pp. 64-66.
Was the vocal quality in an improvisation more or less spontaneous and sincere? Did it have a greater clarity of diction or meaning? Did a student ever sound forced or phoney while improvising? Did the improvisations sound like normal conversation? Did the improvised speech convey the feeling required by the situation?

There were roughly two types of improvisation, though they occasionally overlapped. The first group necessitated an inward-turning attitude, concentrating the mind upon an imagined object or situation—handling things, looking at pictures in an Art Gallery, or at artefacts in a museum, using a hammer and nails, or painting a wall. They were mostly done as preparation for the next group, in the hope that they would enable the student to feel quieter inside and therefore freer to express himself in the more outward-turning, and vocally more demanding exercises that were to follow. A few of the Trust exercises were included at this point, partly because the students had a particular interest in them. Their comments on these are included in their interviews.

The second group of exercises, which brought about much more group inter-action, involved the use of language. They began with simple effects like calling out to attract someone's attention, forcing someone to listen who is bored or impatient, telling someone what you intend to do, and that you won't take 'No' for an answer. In the early stages these improvisations were frequently done in pairs, and the students invented situations themselves. We moved on into larger group improvisations which necessitated some talk from everybody—sometimes rather sporadic, as in a peaceful and happy situation, or noisy and rapid as in an exciting or alarming scene.

While work was being done on these improvisations which
involved the use of talk and conversation, it was noted that two different kinds of demand were being made upon the student: in one type of improvisation he was performing as himself, with others also performing as themselves, and using the kind of language that he was accustomed to use in everyday life; while in the second kind he was performing a definite character, other than himself, with others who were doing the same, and using conversation that did not belong to their everyday life. The first kind requires the player's normal social sense, and his own response to the environment, even if it is one that he has not encountered in his ordinary life. The role of everyday life is needed, and therefore the voice of everyday, though this is a somewhat over-simplified view of what actually happens. The actor, in fact, becomes himself at play, -- "I am not really cooking bacon over a campfire. I am playing at being myself cooking bacon over a campfire." And this is not difficult, because we are much more used to performing roles in everyday life than we are to the art of mimesis. It was noted, in this type of improvisation, that the voices of the students sounded the same as they did when they were talking to each other before or after a rehearsal. There was no artificiality or odd inflections, and they were rarely gravelled for lack of matter. This did occasionally happen when they ran out of arguments in a dispute, but then that happens in real life too. Sometimes a lack of conviction at the beginning of a scene would cause the flow to stop temporarily.

The second type is much harder. Suddenly a player has to
become a weighty father or a middle-aged aunt. Response to others has to be in character, the voice modified and adapted to specifications of age and distinctive traits. Feelings have to be those appropriate to such a person. The rhythm of movement that the part requires may be quite different from one's own rhythm, and so on.

The students were not unnaturally more at ease with the first type of improvisation, and generated a lot of spontaneous feeling. In this simple sort of narrative no demands were made except emotional response and a certain amount of quick-wittedness; they could laugh easily and form casual relationships, particularly where the group was large. They enjoyed some situations very much, such as sharing a student commune and planning Christmas, or drawing together against the complaints of a landlord, or sharing a summer cabin. Such settings generated new ideas or events and individuals would give little twists to the story or mood. Usually there was a flow of easy speech, unless, as has been noted, any lack of conviction crept in.

The effect of improvising in character was at times liberating; that is, it released at times a vivid talent for impersonation. Sometimes a student might go further than this and explore the character in more subtle ways. At other times the effect of taking on a role would limit the response. A student would look awkward and become silent in the part, or look for things to say in a conscious way. Narrative improvisations with broadly funny characters usually went well. An improvisation based on the story of Cinderella was done; the Ugly Sisters and the Father and Mother
were performed energetically, almost violently and with considerable inventiveness of speech in the case of the Ugly Sisters. But the Prince and Cinderella were often stuck for words, and it was clearly harder to be a good, 'nice' person and keep going at this, than to quarrel ferociously, or flirt outrageously with the Prince, as the Sisters did. The voices of the 'nice' sank almost out of hearing. A melodrama was undertaken too, in which everyone had parts which avoided 'niceness', including the hero and heroine. It was done in imitation of early movie melodrama, where the traits of all the characters, their gestures and speech, were exaggerated, father, mother, hero, heroine, and villain and villain's friend. The imitation occurred spontaneously -- no one had suggested the movie version as a model. Here there was no vocal problem or drying up. This raised questions too, questions of belief. It was not the melodramatic situation that was believed in; perhaps belief is a misleading word at this point. It was a jointly experienced pleasure in sending up what was phony, especially role playing.

Looking back at the questions asked at the beginning of this section, I did not hear insincerity in the voice as long as the situation carried conviction. But there was quite often a loss of verbal clarity particularly in the scenes where the students were not playing parts in character. They took on so many aspects of everyday life that the volume often dropped to that required by a small room, where people know each other well and communicate by other means than the voice. In this way, they often sounded completely natural but without the projection necessary for an auditorium.
A sense of strain was apparent at times in the improvisations which required the playing of definite parts; situations seemed forced, especially with those who played 'nice' or 'straight' parts. They ran out of words or looked embarrassed. Again this appeared to be due to lack of conviction, not so much about the setting, but about who they were.

The improvisation that we tape-recorded required the students to play definite parts, but the parts were within fairly easy range. They were supposed to be student members of an F.L.Q. cell in Montreal, under suspicion of conspiring against the government. In this particular improvisation there were no problems of belief, and they created and sustained an atmosphere of tension, fear and ragged nerves, that communicated with conviction, and the speech of all members of the group conveyed the feeling appropriate to the setting.

Scenes From Plays

These scenes were all chosen and directed by the students themselves. It was the first time, apart from the auditions, that they had worked with a written text. The scenes lasted about ten to fifteen minutes, and were all dialogues. I went to one rehearsal and saw the final version, and they all saw each other's work and offered comment. It was important to note all the problems that arose in rehearsing these short scenes, and not to narrow down the research merely to looking for the way in which the words were spoken. What follows is an account which includes the observations made at the time, and the students' own
comment on their work.

Excerpt From *The Rainmaker*, by N. Richard Nash

Rob and Anne

This play is written in a somewhat lyrical style, particularly the speeches of the Rainmaker himself. The scene that Rob and Anne chose is one where a stronger person attempts to persuade another to alter her most basic attitudes to her existence. The man tries to shake the woman out of a depressed and subservient view of herself; and the means by which he exercises this persuasion is a very powerful command of words which contrasts sharply with her country simplicity and inarticulateness. Her reaction to him is a mixture of resistance and attraction.

The text was not well-digested by either of the actors. Rob's voice showed a marked 'stagey' quality which was in contrast with his work in the improvisations. In the Introduction to this thesis, two phases of an unnatural delivery of lines were noted: the first phase, where the actor is less competent exhibiting itself in a 'reading' quality; and the second phase, where he has learned to use his voice with skill, but in a decorated, unrealistic way. Rob had advanced a little into this second phase, the only person in the group who had. As far as one could tell, he was only likely to fall into this 'phony' habit when he was unconvinced of the situation he was supposed to be in, or the kind of character he was playing. Anne was less troubled by the

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text in this way, possibly because the style of her lines was less ornate and elaborate, and the sentences were shorter.

This raised an important point in the total consideration of a 'reading' or 'stagey' quality. It may be harder to avoid this quality in some plays than in others, and in fact some styles of writing may promote a 'lineny' or 'ham' delivery in the actor. Rob said later that he responded immediately to the words, but what this response actually was he did not make clear. It is possible, with a wordy and decorated text, to become mildly drunk on the style. The students also said, though they seemed unaware of the inconsistency, that they did not think much about the language they were using, but only about the emotional pattern of the scene and its development. In contrasting Rob's work in the auditions and later in _The Sport of My Mad Mother_, with his work in _The Rainmaker_, it was significant that in the latter he was much less sincere and more 'stagey'. So it is possible for a text, as well as a voice, to be inauthentic.

The difference between texts at this point is not the difference between a literary, period style (though this may pose technical difficulties for the actor) and a contemporary idiomatic style. The real contrast is between an author who writes with truth at the level of experience and imagination, and one who doesn't, who himself gets drunk on words yet falls into various traps too numerous to elucidate here, whose net result is inauthenticity. For example, any actress who has tried to invest with authenticity the last speech of St. Joan in Shaw's _Saint Joan_, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England, 1966, p. 137.
play, where she repudiates her recantation and by doing so faces death by fire, will know what it is to struggle with words that do not seem true to the experience. It may be lese-majesté to suggest that Shaw ever wrote inauthentically, particularly in one of his greatest plays, but any one who examines, and still more reads aloud, these final words will find a curious change in the speech. Elsewhere in the play Joan talks vigorously and simply, with a suggestion of a rural accent. At the end she is abruptly endowed with an educated and literary eloquence. There seems to be no good reason for this; that it seemed in performance to ring true, must have been due to the gifts of the creator of the role, Sybil Thorndike. The struggle with a text, then, may sometimes be aggravated by the way it is written.

In answer to questions about how they had directed the scene, the two students said that they had shared this task. Anne said that she worked out the units of action on paper, while Rob said he was less interested in this approach, and had worked more through his imagination, visualizing the sequence of events as he studied the text. They tried spontaneous blocking, but this became dull and repetitive; when asked whether it would have helped with the blocking to have a director, Anne said that she would have preferred this, but Rob said no, he became uneasy if someone was always there, telling him where to go.

They instituted line rehearsals in order to memorize. Anne said that if she played a part which came to her easily as a character, she scarcely had to learn the lines at all. But if there was some difficulty which blocked the realization of a character, then she always had trouble memorizing, and had to do
so by repeating the words over and over. The lines of this play came without much effort. Rob, on the other hand, had memorized his part by repeating the lines at home. (He had, in fact, much longer speeches in the scene than Anne.)

It became clear, both from conversation and witnessing the performance, that Rob had found his part much harder than Anne had found hers, and that they had approached their work in widely differing ways. Anne approached the character of Lizzy with the use of Stanislavski techniques. She built up her background: where she lived, her daily routine, how she reacted to others, what her objective in life was. Rob (who did, in fact, know something of the work of Stanislavski and claimed to use it in The Sport of My Mad Mother) said that he responded immediately to the words, and what was happening in the present in the actual scene, and that he was interested in exploring the use of silence and pauses. To the spectator, his performance came over as insubstantial, because he was enjoying the wordy, romantic prose, savouring it uncritically, without building up the person who was doing all the talking. He did not really know who he was, or believe in the situation he was in, and therefore a theatrical element crept in, and he was unconsciously imitating the work of other actors, rather than taking a look at the reality of the part. It would have helped him to consider the language more critically and the problems it presented. Anne, having dug much more deeply into her own imagination and experience, came up with a much more solid, at times, moving performance.
The Applicant, by Harold Pinter

Jeanine and Dan

This is a short sketch, complete in about ten minutes. It is a frightening scene in which the symbolic destruction or castration of a male by a female takes place. The setting is the interview of an applicant for a job. And the style is not naturalistic but derives from the Theatre of the Absurd. The instrument of destruction is the language: words are used by the woman with increasing speed and volume, coupled with a sinister piece of machinery in which the applicant is encased. The climax comes as the horror of the man mounts, ending on a kind of scream, and it is followed by a very slight dénouement.

In conversation about the piece, both Jeanine and Dan resisted its fundamental unpleasantness. Jeanine carried her resistance further in the performance, rejecting the total destructiveness of the role she was playing. As her victim, Dan did not have that particular difficulty, but neither set about the scene with a clear conviction of the writer's intention. They built up the speed and volume, but rather mechanistically. There was no rising intensity of menace on the part of the persecutor, nor fear on the part of the persecuted; when their voices became powerful, they also became special stage voices. There was no problem here of writing as in The Rainmaker. Pinter's dialogue was simple and direct. Why, then, the special stage voice? Was this voice being used to replace genuine feeling,

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and if so, why?

A hint of the direction in which to look for an answer appeared in talking with them. I asked how they had directed the play. Dan said that they had directed each other, and had also relied individually on an inner interpretation. They had invited Rob in to give them a little extra direction, and he told them bluntly that the man in the sketch was being put through the machinery and destroyed, and that the woman was doing this. It was hard to believe that they could have failed to grasp this. Dan was more inclined to accept this view than Jeanine, who tried to interpret her role in a naturalistic way appropriate to a play by Ibsen. She said that the woman was 'a person', not necessarily so aggressive as Rob thought. She was business-like, but not totally without feeling. Dan, on the other hand, saw the scene as an interview in which the applicant views the interrogator with mounting terror; he felt confronted with a ruthless system. A disagreement between Dan and Jeanine on basic interpretation began to appear. It seemed strange, too, that Jeanine had missed the element of monstrosity and caricature in her part. Were her stage voice and rather lifeless inflections connected with this?

I felt that a powerful resistance was operating towards the idea of playing somebody totally destructive, a castrating bitch, in fact. Such a resistance is highly understandable since practically everyone is aware of their own destructive power and fears it. The fear of presenting oneself on stage as a thoroughly nasty person does prevent some actors from playing such parts as Richard III or Lady Macbeth, while others seem able to tolerate
themselves in such roles without worry. Stanislavski has some interesting remarks in *My Life In Art* in connection with this problem:

On the other hand there are actors who are ashamed to show themselves. In playing a good or kind man it seems immodest to them to don those good qualities as their own. Playing evil, debauched or dishonest men, they are ashamed to make their own the qualities the portrayal calls for. But having masked themselves, they are no longer afraid to show their faults and their virtues and can speak and say what they could never afford to do in their own person and without a mask. 22

Jeanine, at least in this part, was unable to assume the necessary destructive qualities, even with the mask, and this resistance appeared to account for her view of the role, as well as for the false and lifeless tone of her voice.

Excerpt from *Picnic*, by William Inge23

Mike and Jill

The dialogue of this play, unlike that of the Pinter sketch, was written in a naturalistic way. The scene was played, in its final version, with real feeling. Mike moved in a relaxed way on stage, and could stand still without looking wooden. Neither used a 'reading' quality or special stage voice, and both showed a grasp of character. While Mike had no serious speech problem, he did occasionally become monotonous. Jill's voice was much more lively and she used a wide range of tone. She was vigorous and attacked the part with energy, sometimes with rather more than


the part required. She did not always seem to grasp the emotional level of the sub-text.

They directed the scene by mutual criticism, and had come to an agreement about its interpretation which was genuine, and not superficial or merely apparent. In rehearsal they said that they had changed the blocking frequently, and it reached its final form by trial and error. They doubted if they knew exactly where the units came, though they were aware of the scene's mood changes. They made suggestions to each other about the characters, and how they would react to each other.

Jill found the lines easy to learn, and absorbed them in rehearsal. Mike memorized longer passages at home, but said he found that he imagined the scene and the other person so intensely when working on his own, that he felt surprised and psychically dislocated when confronted with the rehearsal room and Jill playing the part. He therefore found it wise to do as much work as possible in a strictly rehearsal environment.

In approaching her part, Jill imagined the situation as concretely as she could, building up the background in the same way that Anne had in The Rainmaker. She established how old she was, what kind of social background she possessed, how much money, and so on. Mike went through his part in a similar way and created an individual history for it. He invented actual happenings connected with the character's part and environment, on the basis of hints thrown out by the text.

Jill and Mike did not display a tendency to use any special kind of voice in this scene, and it was worthwhile to see if one could discover why. One consideration concerned the written style
of the play. It was near to their own everyday speech, since the author is a contemporary North American. Although not precisely the same as the speech of Canadians, its idiom would not present any problems of unfamiliarity or accent to anyone raised on this continent. This is no explanation of their success, however, since actors can be 'liney' in a perfectly familiar idiom. The most probable explanation of their success would appear to be their method of working as individuals, and the fact already noted, that they arrived at a genuine agreement on the interpretation of the scene. Jill displayed throughout the project an outstanding capacity for unselfconscious behaviour on stage, which was evident in this scene, though more obvious in her Sound and Movement activities and in her part (Dodo) in The Sport of My Mad Mother.

No other couple who undertook these scenes came to so close an agreement on interpretation or employed such similar methods of working on their parts. There were individuals who achieved an individual success, but Mike and Jill achieved a joint one.

Excerpt from The Dutchman, by Leroi Jones

Jan and Daniel

Jan and Daniel performed the first half of this short play. Both had studied it during the first year Theatre course and been impressed with it, though it was a hard choice for their age and experience.

They said that they would have been helped by having a

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director. Jan particularly felt this. Since the scene takes place in a subway train, movement was necessarily limited, and the conversation taking place between the two characters was unaccompanied by physical action, except for gestures. She thought a director would have been helpful at this point.

The part Jan tackled is a challenge to an actress. It represents more than an individual. This white woman, to the author, is a symbol of white America, and her fearful energy and noisy extroversion cover a fundamentally murderous attitude. Jan tackled the part vigorously, moved with a swagger and talked with a loud, sarcastic voice which had a cutting edge. Her variation in mood and pitch of voice was not great, and having established the sarcastic tone, she tended to stay with it. The intensity and initiative that the part needed began to flag as the scene progressed.

Daniel had an easier time as far as energy was concerned. He did not have to take the initiative and could sit back passively, accepting all that was being handed out to him. He displayed an unusual degree of vocal ease and casualness and this was true of his physical posture too. The performance was slight, and it was doubtful that he would have managed convincingly the huge retaliatory speech at the end, had they performed the whole play. His problems did not lie at all in the area of vocal strain or phoniness, and his voice was that of his everyday conversation. In fact, he made no attempt to reproduce the appropriate accent or mannerisms, but played the part as himself. In this way he gave the appearance of ease and relaxation. Jan, attempting to become this terrible and destructive female, very
much against the grain, sounded 'liney' and strained. The words were learned and unspontaneous. Her difficulties were very similar to those of Jeanine, and she seemed to feel the same reluctance to be thoroughly nasty, but she saw, unlike Jeanine, that destrutiveness was what the part required, and did not try to rationalize this away. Her work was highly organized and intelligent -- this was also true later in her work on The Sport of My Mad Mother. She had memorized her lines at home and she said that she liked to know all the lines well before the first rehearsal. Daniel was less highly organized and had learned his lines mostly at the rehearsals; all his work on the part was, in fact, done in rehearsal and not at home. Jan had worked on the part imaginatively outside the rehearsals in solitude, and found at the outset that this created a gap between her imagined scene and the reality of the rehearsal. As time went on, the work done in rehearsal closed the gap. Mike had had a similar difficulty in The Picnic. Jan had not worked at building up the background of the character, in fact, both of them looked for ways of finding the appropriate emotion rather by trying to imagine themselves in such a situation. Jan seemed to be simulating anger and never feeling it. It was a highly conscious and intelligent performance which did not operate at the intuitive or instinctive level. Daniel's did, but it was on a small scale and needed more work.

These scenes concluded the work of the first term. All the students had shown an ability to handle a text competently, though some were clearly more experienced than others. Problems had arisen, and some suggestions of a cause or causes had emerged. There were
far fewer purely vocal problems in the improvisations than in the scenes, a fact that was in itself suggestive.
Chapter 2. Work Done in the Second Term

During this term the emphasis fell more heavily on working with a text, though at the beginning we taped an improvisation. After that, we turned to oral reading, that is to the sight-reading of a text; and then to the first act of *The Sport of My Mad Mother*, which was rehearsed for four-and-a-half weeks. The two oral readings were taped, as well as three stages of the play. Individual responses to both these activities are considered in Chapter 4. Here it is necessary to say why we did them, and why these texts were chosen.

The oral readings were done in order to see whether any of the students had acquired sufficient skill to overcome a 'reading' or 'liney' quality in the practice of oral reading at sight. This is a demanding exercise, different in many ways from acting, although acting skill helps. It requires quick coordination between eye and tongue, an ability to scan the lines a little ahead of speaking them, and an extremely quick grasp of character in the case of narrative or dramatic material. It would be interesting to contrast and compare the findings, if any, with those arising from work on the play, noting, for example, whether the response of individuals was similar to or different from their response to the text of the play. This could be done by applying analytical categories to both sets of work. Necessary minor variations in these categories would not invalidate the comparison.

The one activity allowed for no development of the material, and could only depend on abilities already cultivated, while the
other had a future, so to speak, the material being developed over a long period.

1
The Oral Readings

The first of the oral readings was taped towards the beginning of this term, and the second towards the end, with the work on the play coming in between. This was done in order to see whether working intensively on the play would make any difference to the quality of the reading.

The students read the material of the oral readings silently to themselves, and then recorded it immediately. After the first reading I asked some questions and these, along with the replies, are included on the tape.

The texts for the first reading gave no indication as to what their sources were, nor whether the passages were taken from drama or literature. The student had to infer the nature of the text from its style. Three of the excerpts were not from drama at all. This was done in order to see whether the student would be able to reproduce the appropriate reading style for himself.

At the second reading they were given bound copies of the plays, so that there could be no doubt as to the nature or authorship of the material they were to read.

The passages used for the first reading consisted of:
1. a simple narrative, part of a children's story called The Flying Postman; it had a simple style which concentrated on events

1 Texts of these readings are to be found in Appendix D, p. 191
rather than subtleties of atmosphere;
2. a descriptive passage from *Jane Eyre*, which was elaborate and based on a difficult grammatical sentence structure;
3. two passages, one male and one female, from Shaw's *The Applecart*, — King Magnus' views on politics and politicians, and one of Orinthia's rhetorical speeches; and finally

The passages used in the second reading consisted of excerpts from:
1. *The Room*, by Harold Pinter, (women) and from
2. *A Slight Ache*, also by Pinter, (men);
3. a speech of Lysistrata, again from *The Applecart*, (women) and a speech of the Prime Minister, Proteus, from the same play, (men) and finally
4. two excerpts from plays by Bertold Brecht, a passage from *The Measures Taken*, partly in verse and partly in prose (men), and the opening section of Judith Klein's telephone conversation from *The Jewish Wife*.

The first group of readings required primarily an ability to adapt to different styles, to feel out the period vocally, as it were. In the second group, although the demands upon adaptability were less extreme, the emotional demands were greater. In *The Room*, Rose alternates between fear and anger; in the passage from *A Slight Ache*, the expression of fear and resentment builds up in a long crescendo. Proteus, in *The Applecart*, conceals his diplomatic triumph in a burst of sentimentality, while earlier, Lysistrata almost explodes with radical rage at the system which
is governing the country. Another kind of political commitment is expressed in *The Measures Taken*, a serious but not very hopeful one. In *The Jewish Wife*, deeply felt emotion is concealed behind a normal bright, everyday manner. These passages varied a good deal in the degree of openness of the emotion expressed. For instance, both Judith Klein and Proteus have their own very different reasons for concealing consciously their real feelings; while at the opposite end, Rose and Edward in the two Pinter plays cannot conceal their agitation at the presence of the stranger who turns up unexpectedly in their homes.

In general, the students found the first set of readings more difficult than the second; some of the reasons may be obvious, but are still worth looking at in relation to the project as a whole.

The most obvious fact that came to light was that their education in school had given them very little opportunity for reading aloud, or for any other forms of expression in speech (debating was sometimes undertaken in Grade 8 but usually not continued on into the higher grades). This can be inferred from the replies everyone gave at the end of their first readings, when questions about experience in reading aloud were put to them.

In Elementary School, a child begins to learn to read in Grade 1 at the age of six, and continues to learn up to Grade 4. During these three years he reads aloud from a simple reader, taking his turn, and he does this for at least three hours a week. But after these early years are over, reading aloud on any systematic basis disappears. What happens after this is up to the choice of the individual teacher. A new poem to be studied may be read
aloud by a student in the class. It will not be learned and recited. If Shakespeare or other classical plays are studied in High School, the students usually listen to a recording, rather than attempting to read the play aloud themselves. Generalizations are risky, since methods in education change frequently, but the basic aim in the teaching of reading appears to be to enable the student to read quickly to himself. So far as he is taught to express himself, it is through the written rather than the spoken word. The students thus educated come to dislike public speaking, when the occasion for it arises. This dislike would appear to be due to lack of practice; it is certainly not characteristic of all students at all times.

Somewhat less obviously, the students found the first oral reading harder than the second, because they were unused to stories and poems as material for reading aloud, whereas they had committed themselves seriously to drama, several of them in High School, in amateur dramatics and in the Theatre Department. The play, therefore, had become a familiar form of the spoken word, or at least a more familiar form than the other material. In the first set of passages the 'reading' quality was very marked, even allowing for the fact that this was sight reading. Little attempt was made to read as if communicating with others, and in some cases this was not even recognized as necessary. This was not so with the second group of passages, where the fact that they were all from drama made it obvious that communication must

be attempted.

In retrospect, the oral readings would appear to have been the most demanding and difficult of all the exercises undertaken, and those for which the students were least well equipped.

The Sport of My Mad Mother, Act 1, by Ann Jellicoe.

This play expresses movement rather than plot, activities rather than action. There is one large movement or recurring theme which builds to a climax in the last act: the expulsion or rejection of Cone by Greta, which also means his surrender of the leadership of the gang. The author has written in her preface to the play that the relationship between Greta and Cone was not the main point of emphasis in her original intention, but rather the conflict between the instinctive, violent Greta and the American liberal, Dean who feels responsible for putting things right in a terrible world, and protecting the under-privileged. In the first act this is lightly sketched in through his paternal attitude towards Dodo, but even here it is Cone's obsession with the as yet unseen Greta, that dominates the talk.

The title is taken from a Hindu proverb, 'All creation is the sport of my mad mother, Kali.' Greta is the incarnation of this amoral goddess who gives with one hand and destroys with the other, a sort of immortal castrating bitch. The activities of Cone, Fak, Patty, Dean and Dodo are, in miniature, the sport of Kali-Greta.

These characters talk themselves into various states of excitement and fear. They do not experience emotion at a profound level, but are in a constant state of flux, alternately exalted or depressed. They enjoy words and word-plays which they
use almost like drugs, creating ritual incantations out of them. These result in rhythmic chanting, and primitive dance, as well as plenty of noise.

A continuous motif throughout the play is the unseen, menacing and audible presence of the rival gang from Aldgate. In Act III this culminates in a powerful off-stage fight. The activities of the three principals, Cone, Fak and Patty are frequently brought to a halt, even at the point of frenzy, by sounds off-stage indicating the presence of the other gang. All respond to the threat, but Cone does so with peculiar intensity: the first act concludes with his call for protection from Greta. He cries her name aloud and then reverts to that other name, which indicates the underlying reality of their relationship, 'Mama! Mama!'

It was essential to avoid a literary or intellectual play whose style might render a reading quality more probable (see the remarks in the previous chapter on The Rainmaker, p.32). *The Sport of My Mad Mother* is written in short sentences in a colloquial idiom, though there are exceptions to this throughout. Although the English is as spoken in England, and furthermore, cockney, it proved quite translatable for North American students.

Its main interest with regard to the project was the wide variety of vocal demands it makes. First of all, there are the lengthy, casual comments about the show, directed to the audience by Steve acting as compère. He opens it, in fact, by telling the audience lightly his views on theatre and music. Dean also addresses the audience in this way, explaining how he feels and what is going on. The dialogue between the principals is informal and
slangy, leaving a lot to be understood by implication. As well as the short one-line dialogue, there are long, individual set pieces, likely to be an acid test both for a 'liney' delivery or a tendency to over-acting and unrestraint. Such pieces are Fak's Killer Song, his 'present' speech, and Patty's speech about Greta. While Fak's speech and song are successful as dramatic writing, Patty's lines about Greta are not. Even an experienced actress could have trouble with them. These lines try to convey information about Greta and her universal influence, but as the instrument of this communication, Patty has to come right out of character, and inevitably, become literary and heavy. It did not work, and we cut the speech a little.

There are also sections of noisy, angry, quick dialogue, varied with sharp drops into silence through fear. One of the rituals of the tribe is the verbal and sometimes physical bullying of a selected victim, taken up to a point of frenzy, followed by collapse through exhaustion or interruption. This leads to very close group vocal interaction, sometimes supported by the percussion instruments of Steve, the compère. Those who are teased in this way are Patty, Dean and Dodo. Patty is the victim of Fak and Cone; Dean of Cone, Fak and Patty, with Dodo protesting; and Dodo of the three principals again. This pattern produces differing sets of vocal sounds. And the ritual nature of the bullying leads to rhythmic chanting and intermittent singing. As well as these various forms of verbal expression, some

\[^{3}\text{The Sport of My Mad Mother, (Appendix E), p. 202.}\]
\[^{4}\text{Ibid., p. 33}\]
actors are required to produce non-verbal sounds and animal noises, not unlike the Sound and Movement exercises already practised by the group.

Casting was not difficult, except for the two female roles. Jeanine had left the group by the time we came to cast the play, leaving Jan and Jill. Jill had already shown herself inventive and unselfconscious in the improvisations, particularly in the Sound and Movement exercises, where she had produced impressive animal noises. She would obviously do well as Dodo who, on encountering the audience, desperately and pathetically tries to engage their attention with animal imitations. This left Jan for Patty which was not ideal, since she had shown some signs of strain in her scene from *The Dutchman* when expressing anger, one of Patty's readiest emotions. How this worked out is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. In general it is true to say that *The Sport of My Mad Mother* turned out to be a rewarding agent in bringing to the surface both strength and weakness in vocal difficulties.

Individual actors, whose work is studied in the next chapter

In the next chapter, the work of Rob, Jan and Daniel, who played the principal parts in the play is considered in detail, and that of Dan and Mike to a lesser extent. The interest in the case of the last two lay in the fact that they had to relate directly to an audience, and the possibility that this in itself might have significance for the central investigation of the project. The work of all these actors is studied in relation to
all the work done, and not simply to that undertaken in the play.

As individuals, Rob and Daniel contrasted strongly. Rob was both more extroverted than Daniel, and more experienced as an actor. Apart from heavy involvement in drama courses at school, he had taken courses from Holiday Theatre consistently for ten years, and at the age of twelve had taken part in a Canadian movie. He had played quite difficult roles, such as Jean in Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*\(^5\), which was performed by Point Grey High School in Vancouver, 1970. He set about a role with competence and confidence. The confidence may have been a surface phenomenon, as he stated several times that he was nervous on stage. If he was nervous he tended to bluster and lose restraint. He committed himself whole-heartedly both to the project and to acting in general. His interest in theatre lay primarily in the sphere of dramatic art, though he had some interest in directing. He was much less concerned with dramatic literature and the problems of the playwright or with the technical problems of scene design and lighting.

Daniel had a much quieter personality, and was more reflective. He had written a play while still at school and made a film which won second prize in the B. C. movie-making contest for High Schools, in 1969. He had studied with the Vancouver actress, Doris Chilcott, in drama courses which he took at school in grades 9 and 11. He had not made up his mind completely whether he would commit himself to a professional career on stage.

He was quiet in rehearsal and did not dispute suggestions made to him. He rarely invented any original touches of his own, but if he did, he introduced them without any previous discussion, and without apparently realizing that he was doing anything new. His rhythm of working was slower than Rob's and he did not pick up suggestions quickly, either in the improvisations or the play. He would work away at them slowly. Rob was much more verbal in rehearsal, and frequently put forward ideas and suggestions. In order to make an impact, Daniel had to draw himself out, with encouragement from others; while Rob, on the other hand, had to restrain an impact that became, at times, too forceful. In the oral reading Rob disliked the tape recorder, and when it was on, did not do himself justice. All were unused to being recorded in this way, and this came out in the first oral reading in particular. By the time the second one was taped, they had become used to it, as we taped several rehearsals of the play; this showed in the quality of Rob's reading very clearly, though other factors may have been at work as well. Daniel's first reading was very quiet and non-communicative. He seemed to hide himself vocally. Like Rob, he had greatly improved by the time the second one was recorded.

Jan did not have theatre in mind at all as a career, as has already been noted. Her main interests as a student lay in the field of sociology and education, at least in her first year. She was, however, very interested in theatre and acting and dramatic literature. At school she had played Olivia in Twelfth Night and had done two years of Holiday Theatre. Of the three so
far discussed, she had that quality I have called a 'reading' quality or 'liney' delivery most clearly marked. This revealed itself, to some extent in the Leroi Jones scene from The Dutchman\(^6\), but was more striking during her participation in The Sport of My Mad Mother. As a person, she was much less extroverted than Rob, but more so than Daniel. She gave the impression of being intensely interested in most areas of her work as a student, and in a fairly intellectual way. She was committed to the project and had well-organized habits of work; she was always well-prepared in any situation that needed preparation. She somewhat lacked the quick grasp of emotion that most potentially professional actors have, though she could always see with her intelligence what a particular scene or unit was about, and what the requisite feeling was. Although her voice does not show up very much in the recorded improvisation, she seemed to enjoy this kind of work more than any other. She became spontaneous, and did particularly well in cheerful or exciting scenes.

Mike did not have the same 'liney' quality that Jan often displayed, but he did have problems of monotony and audibility. A much quieter person than most, except Daniel, he worked from the inside outwards, and was interested in cultivating techniques for doing this. He was more of an intellectual than Rob or Daniel, had a quick grasp of ideas, and produced work in other disciplines of a high quality. He was also much interested in directing.

Dan had been considering the stage as a career. He had a good appearance and presence on stage, good diction clearly produced, but in the auditions, and subsequently in his scene and in the play, he sounded unspontaneous and had a special stage voice. He was aware of the problem of going stale vocally in a part, and had encountered it before in other plays. He committed himself whole-heartedly to the work and was anxious to make a good attempt at his long, audience-addressed speech in *The Sport of My Mad Mother*. His work in the improvisations was very different, and attention is drawn to the contrast in the next chapter. Dan and Jan had the most difficulties with the 'reading' quality, partly because there were portions of writing in the roles they played which would be bound to show this up sharply where it existed. No one was wholly free of vocal problems, though Daniel came the nearest to success at this point. Where his problems existed they were of a different kind. In the next chapter we shall take a look both at the natural vocal endowment of each actor, and what he was able to do with it.
Chapter 3. Work of the Principal Actors in the Project

Sound and Movement Exercise and Improvisation

The mechanics of the Sound and Movement exercise should now be clear from the description in the first chapter. What was the individual response to it?

The most inventive and least embarrassed member of the group was certainly Rob. At first his attitudes were noisy and aggressive, and he used his voice powerfully (howls, growls and angry shouts). This was accompanied by menacing gestures directed towards other members of the circle. When a joint decision was reached to abandon aggression (on the grounds that it was becoming monotonous and repetitive) he became much more versatile and produced quite other kinds of sound, including non-human ones, such as tapping, clicking with the tongue and so on. Sometimes unrestrained, but also original and frequently amusing, he displayed great energy. Later as Fak in the play, his work was reminiscent of his activities in this exercise. Vocally he was very free.

Daniel was much quieter, and inclined to make whimpering or groaning sounds, often in response to the aggressive attitudes of Rob. He was sometimes resistant to picking up the sound and movement sent to him, especially where they were of the kind he was not inclined to initiate himself. There would be a little hiatus in the continuity of the action, while he tried to make something alien his own. He objected less to the strange or bizarre than to the angry or energetic. In the counterpoint,
where the recipient of the sound alters it in the direction of its opposite, he was more inventive and often amusing. Here he could produce a wide range of tone, along with surprising sounds. Vocally rather quiet, he would often respond to a sound with one much softer than that proceeding from the originator.

Jan always displayed energy and alertness in this exercise. She picked things up quickly and easily, unless the sound or movement was especially violent or uninhibited, such as screaming and shouting; and she could vividly express such actions as being entangled in a sticky substance. She used her high voice to good effect, and had no problem in making a strong vocal impact. Her powers of invention were less advanced than those of the two already discussed, and nowhere rivalled Jill, who excelled at animal noises.

Dan's work in this exercise was similar in many ways to that of Jan. He did not much care either for screaming or yelling, though he put up a reasonable, though not completely convinced, show of doing this when required. He was happier when nearer to some less violent human utterance. He had a lot of physical energy in the movement and was vocally quite strong. Some of his sounds and gestures were inventive, though he did not keep up a high level of inventiveness.

Mike's work was slightly more inhibited than that of the others. This appeared to be mainly due to lack of experience in improvising, as he grew more free as time went on. Unlike the others (except Jill), he had had no experience of drama courses, acting, or improvisation either at school or university, and at
first seemed a bit lost. Once he grasped firmly what was required, he did his best to supply it, but it did not appear to be quite natural to him. Occasionally he would lose this feeling of constraint and do something both inventive in concept and successful in execution. Mostly his voice was rather soft, but could be raised if necessary. On the whole, though, the louder noises were rather an effort to him.

**Improvisation**

In the recorded improvisation\(^1\) which included all members of the group, Rob played a student member of an F.L.Q. cell. In the story, he had previously dropped his jacket while committing an act of sabotage, and was now in a state of anxiety in consequence. They were all inhabiting an empty house, going out only to buy food; and they had just been listening to the news on the radio. They now had to make up their minds whether it would be wiser to go or stay, since their existence had become known to the police.

In this improvisation Rob was less convinced of what he was doing than in most, if not all, the others. I could not tell why precisely, as there were three possibilities -- he did not like the tape recorder, or he was unconvinced of himself as a saboteur, or he did not like the improvisation anyway. Watching, and listening subsequently to the tape, the second possibility appeared to

\(^1\)Cassette 3, Side 1, 000" - 96'.
be the most probable explanation. His fear and anger sounded simulated — a rare occurrence for Rob when improvising. His voice broke into a curious falsetto once or twice. This break always gave the impression that he was pushing too hard, in order to compensate for a lack of belief or feeling. It was occasionally apparent in the play as well. This was one of the few times that a voice sounded unconvinced and insincere in an improvisation.

Usually Rob had a greater tendency than the others to create a definite character when improvising, and would sometimes do this when he was only actually required to be himself. In a scene involving a mining disaster, where he had a clearly defined character to play, he was very inventive, and dominated the action. The rest of the cast had to exert considerable energy not to be overwhelmed by him. The part was that of the town drunk, who is responding with quite inappropriate words and actions to the disaster. This situation seemed to be well within his grasp, and he conveyed a personality fairly dissimilar from his own. No problem of belief occurred and he became more inventive as the improvisation continued — usually a sign that an actor has found a stable conviction about who and where he is. Sometimes success in characterization led to unrestraint, as with his portrayal of the villain in the melodrama, but again he was reaching towards a definite role to play. It is perhaps worthy of note that everyone was strong in the story of the mining disaster and this support must have helped Rob to build up the character he was required to portray.
Daniel was uneven in the improvisations. In the recorded scene his voice could frequently be heard topping the others, and this was unusual. The narrative of this revolutionary scene appeared to catch his imagination. He cast himself as a bossy, know-the-ropes member of the cell. (The situation had been outlined but people were left free to choose what kind of person they wanted to depict.) He was emotionally freer in the improvisations than when he used a text; in this one his voice became stronger and deeper than usual. Not all emotions were available to him, but he was vivid in any setting that required fear, excitement, urgency or concealed hostility. He was an excellent villain's mate, very oily, in the melodrama. He was perhaps weakest in the expression of cheerfulness or direct anger. In an improvised quarrel scene, where he was supposed to become angry with his friend for letting him down badly, he side-stepped anger and substituted suspicion, speculating grimly on his friend's probable motivation. This was done well, and gave the scene a new twist, but the original intention, the open expression of anger (and the consequent raising of the voice) was not realized. On the whole he liked to keep his voice down and the emotional temperature low when improvising. He was not as versatile as some other members of the group and several of his improvised roles were similar to the character he created for Cone in the play. This was not true of his part in the F.L.Q. improvisation, as has been noted, where he gave an unusually open and decisive performance. He was a less conscious actor than Rob, and did not use his will nearly as much to get what he wanted. Things had to
fall into place in their own time. He did not make a push to gain an effect, though sometimes in improvising, he could often get into a character or situation more quickly than he did when using a text. He rarely, if ever, sounded insincere or false while improvising, though he was often inaudible.

Jan improvised well in a group situation, though if it was large and noisy she could be shouted down rather easily; she found the competition hard to handle. If others initiated a situation she could take it up and add to it, but she did not often start anything herself. Her performance on the recorded improvisation was somewhat subdued by others, but not altogether, and her voice can be clearly heard. She moved and spoke most freely in the more cheerful group improvisations which she obviously enjoyed, and was possibly the only person able to sustain uncomplicated 'good' parts. She was more uneasy in scenes with fewer people, but occasionally displayed a gift for comedy in these. Once she created a painful sense of acute embarrassment in a scene which necessitated this quality, the vocal effect being particularly successful, as the voice dropped lower and lower until it faded out altogether. In her improvised work her voice was less strained and more natural on the whole than in her work in the play, and she could express a state of cheerful excitement or enthusiasm in a most spontaneous way.

Dan, like Daniel, came on strongly in the recorded improvisation. He assumed the leadership of the group, though not directed to do so, and his voice was strong and easy. In most of his improvised work, his conversation sounded like conversation.
His work was of great interest because his capacity to improvise with freshness and spontaneity was in such marked contrast with his work on a text, particularly that of *The Sport of My Mad Mother*, where he became stilted and unspontaneous, vocally un-natural.

One factor to be borne in mind is that an actor does not have to assume the presence of an audience when he improvises; whereas, as soon as he begins to rehearse a play, he knows that he is in training for a performance in front of an audience. Most actors look forward to the reactions of spectators; at the same time they know that a performance may occasion some degree of stress. Whether Dan preferred to improvise audience-free and without written lines was a question that did occur, though no clear answer was forthcoming. It did not seem a wise question to ask directly of an actor. His situation in the play required not merely taking on a role given to long, uninterrupted speeches, but also straight confrontation with the audience. This undertaking certainly held potential stress for an actor, particularly a young and inexperienced one. Some degree of stress may have been responsible for the lack of vocal freedom in the play; if so, this stress was in no way present in the work he did on his improvisations.

Mike's improvisations were not too dissimilar from his work on his part in the play. He mostly chose to improvise on the basis of his own personality, an exception to this was his performance as the father in the melodrama, where he gave a convincing sketch of a heavy middle-aged man. In spite of his
slightly diffident manner, he could keep up his position in noisy crowd scenes, and his voice can be clearly heard in the recorded scene. There was no wide difference, as there was with Dan, between his work on improvisation and his work on a text.

I now want to include a mention of two events which occurred in a High School drama class, since they seemed to have so much bearing on the investigation of the thesis. The students were much younger but their vocal reactions to improvisation and to a text were suggestive enough to deserve description here. The class, in which the children were thirteen and fourteen years old, was joined half-way through the course, by a new student called Craig. It was clear from what he said that he was interested, and wanted to participate fully. He was physically a little stiff, and had a good voice, which he could not, however, raise to the level of shouting. He liked to know, in a precise way, what was going on with every exercise and improvisation. The students were frequently given improvisations which followed the broad outline of a story. They filled in the details, and if the improvisation went off in a direction not included in the outline, that was acceptable, even desirable, provided it did not become phoney, or change the basic objective. (For example, if a scene was arranged in which two or three people want to talk about their personal problems and, out of egotism, refuse to listen to the complaints of a fourth, so that the scene becomes a competitive attempt to dominate the others, then this fundamental objective should not be changed, though the subject matter of the problems could be.)
Craig joined in the improvisations, but seemed uneasy. He frequently asked questions about minutiae of behaviour, and wanted the conversations completely pre-arranged. Nothing was to be left to the spur of the moment. At first it appeared possible that he might need this very clear charting of the course because he was new to improvising, but had taken part in plays in the past, and thus might wish to recreate a more structured kind of rehearsal situation, such as would be already familiar. But as time went on and the attitude did not alter, it began to look as if his need was for an authority to tell him what to do and say. He was not quite comfortable with others who were developing the story spontaneously, and initiating actions of their own. What he was looking for was, in fact, a text, with every move and change of expression written into it. He wanted to have a standard to which he could conform.

By way of contrast, another student, Linda, gave an excellent character sketch in an improvised scene. She was a teacher trying to help a not very happy pupil, who has trouble at home. She took the scene slowly and carefully, at a natural pace for the situation, and even assuming an age much greater than her own.

The same day we did some short scenes from plays. Linda did Viola's speech from Twelfth Night, 'I left no ring with her. What means this lady?'

In these lines the thought of Viola moves a long way from her first reaction to the gift of the ring. She works out, with

\[\text{Twelfth Night, Act II, Scene II, 1. 17-41.}\]
misgiving, what such a gift from Olivia must mean; she appraises her own position in relation to Orsino; speculates on the difficulties raised by her disguise, and finally hands over the tangled situation to time for solution.

Surprisingly, Linda rushed through these lines at tremendous speed, the words only just audible and the meaning unclear. Why did she make no attempt to convey the not very complicated process of thought that was quite clear in the text? The difficulty seemed more fundamental than problems with character or feeling. It arose from a basic attitude to the text. A discussion of the meaning and context of the passage only produced a slight improvement in the pace. The tendency to gallop was still there, and she was forcing herself to slow down by will power rather than conviction about the words. Something else was operating, telling her to hurry up and get it over. Since the performance was in sharp contrast with the improvisation she had done only a short while before, one had to look for new factors. One such was obviously the fact she was using a text; the other that she was playing a different kind of role. The role did not seem to be the most significant factor, since she never really got near enough to the part to project a character at all. Nor had she shown a sense of strain when playing a young adult in the improvisations.

What did the text mean to her at the simplest level? In the first place it meant words not her own, and in an unfamiliar style; then again, they had to be memorized, (an unusual activity) and reproduced from memory and not from invention. The unfamiliar
activity of interpreting a learned role appeared to be prior to any troubles with the actual passage. Her reaction to this demand was to do the minimum required, out of a sense of alienation from this new kind of work. She herself was not in it at all. She was repeating what the text told her, like a child repeating a lesson. The tentative conclusion that emerged was that she was resisting the text as if it were an authority. She conformed to the minimum requirement but with inward resentment. She herself had chosen that particular speech to work with, so the resentment was not of a superficial sort. But she had not begun to transfer the situation of Viola to herself — it remained Shakespeare's printed page. As far as could be judged, it was the text, then, that she felt was making impossible demands, demands to which she could not measure up. Only the transference of authority to herself could have made any difference.

These two students, reacting in opposite ways, one seeking an authoritative text and the other running away from it, presented another area for exploration in connection with vocal response in acting: the external authority of the playwright's written word, and the feelings, probably not fully conscious, that this authority elicited. The authority of the text is discussed further in the final chapter.

The Two Oral Readings

In discussing the two oral readings and The Sport of My Mad Mother it was found convenient, as well as more precise, to analyze the work of the students by means of categories. Three sets of
categories are used, one for the readings and two for the play. They are based on a description of the physical vocal endowment of each individual, his technical mastery, his imaginative or psychological grasp of what was required in a given situation, and his capacity to build a role (in the case of the play). The categories for these areas of activity could not be exactly similar, for obvious reasons; for example, the ability to develop a role can only be discussed in connection with the play and not with the oral readings.

'Diction', for instance, is examined both in the readings and in the play, because it was found that diction varied in the same person when engaged in these two activities. Where it was obviously superfluous to go over the same category twice, that category is omitted in the discussion of the play.

The categories for the oral readings were:

1. Experience in reading aloud.
2. Eye-mouth coordination.
3. Diction facility in reading aloud.
4. Ability to make grammatical sense at a first reading.
5. Ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual.
6. Ability to sound as if communicating with a listener.
7. Reactions to different kinds of reading material.

The voices of those discussed are on tape.

Abbreviations:

OR I = The first oral reading
OR II = The second oral reading
A Note on the Use of The Tapes for the Oral Readings

Rob: OR I is recorded on Cassette 1, Side 1, 147'-225'.
OR II is recorded on Cassette 2, Side 1, 000'-54'.

Jan: OR I is recorded on Cassette 3, Side 11, 000'-74'.
OR II is recorded on Cassette 2, Side 1, 296'-398'.

Daniel: OR I is recorded on Cassette 3, Side 11, 75'-ff.
OR II is recorded on Cassette 2, Side 1, 54'-102'.

Footage for individual passages

Rob: OR I

Narrative. Children's Story (V. H. Drummond) Cass. 1, S. 1, 147'.
Jane Eyre (Brontë) Cass. 1, S. 1, 159'.
The Applecart - Magnus. (Shaw) Cass. 1, S. 1, 177'.
Goodbat Nightman - Poem (McGough) Cass. 1, S. 1, 195'.

OR II

A Slight Ache - Edward. (Pinter) Cass. 2, S. 1, 000'.
The Applecart - Proteus. (Shaw) Cass. 2, S. 1, 22'.
The Measures Taken - Control Chorus (Brecht) Cass. 2, S. 1, 32'.

Jan: OR I

Narrative. Children's Story. (V. H. Drummond) Cass. 3, S. 11, 000'.
Jane Eyre (Brontë) Cass. 3, S. 11, 11'.
The Applecart - Orinthia (Shaw) Cass. 3, S. 11, 27'.
Goodbat Nightman - Poem (McGough) Cass. 3, S. 11, 42'.

OR II

The Room - Rose (Pinter) Cass. 2, S. 1, 296'.
The Applecart - Lysistrata (Shaw) Cass. 2, S. 1, 321'.
The Jewish Wife - Judith Klein (Brecht) Cass. 2, S. 1, 370'.

Daniel: OR I

Narrative. Children's Story (V. H. Drummond) Cass. 3, S. 11, 76'.
Jane Eyre (Brontë) Cass. 3, S. 11, 87'.
The Applecart - Magnus (Shaw) Cass. 3, S. 11, 100'.
Goodbat Nightman - Poem (McGough) Cass. 3, S. 11, 111'.

Footage for individual passages

Rob: OR I

Narrative. Children's Story (V. H. Drummond) Cass. 1, S. 1, 147'.
Jane Eyre (Brontë) Cass. 1, S. 1, 159'.
The Applecart - Magnus. (Shaw) Cass. 1, S. 1, 177'.
Goodbat Nightman - Poem (McGough) Cass. 1, S. 1, 195'.

OR II

A Slight Ache - Edward. (Pinter) Cass. 2, S. 1, 000'.
The Applecart - Proteus. (Shaw) Cass. 2, S. 1, 22'.
The Measures Taken - Control Chorus (Brecht) Cass. 2, S. 1, 32'.

Jan: OR I

Narrative. Children's Story. (V. H. Drummond) Cass. 3, S. 11, 000'.
Jane Eyre (Brontë) Cass. 3, S. 11, 11'.
The Applecart - Orinthia (Shaw) Cass. 3, S. 11, 27'.
Goodbat Nightman - Poem (McGough) Cass. 3, S. 11, 42'.

OR II

The Room - Rose (Pinter) Cass. 2, S. 1, 296'.
The Applecart - Lysistrata (Shaw) Cass. 2, S. 1, 321'.
The Jewish Wife - Judith Klein (Brecht) Cass. 2, S. 1, 370'.

Daniel: OR I

Narrative. Children's Story (V. H. Drummond) Cass. 3, S. 11, 76'.
Jane Eyre (Brontë) Cass. 3, S. 11, 87'.
The Applecart - Magnus (Shaw) Cass. 3, S. 11, 100'.
Goodbat Nightman - Poem (McGough) Cass. 3, S. 11, 111'.
Daniel: OR II

A Slight Ache - Edward (Pinter)  Cass. 2, S. 1, 54'.
The Applecart - Proteus (Shaw)  Cass. 2, S. 1, 72'.
The Measures Taken - the Control Chorus  Cass. 2, S. 1, 83'.

(Brecht)

Rob:

1. Experience in reading aloud

He was used to reading aloud, rather more than the others were. He had taken part in oral reading at school, especially in connection with the drama courses.

2. Eye-mouth coordination in OR I

He had a quick grasp of what was on the page and seemed to have been taught to let his eye travel ahead of his mouth. He was also quick to see what kind of literature he was reading. Some sort of nervousness, not continuously present, made him stumble over words, or omit them.

In OR II

There was great improvement in coordination over the first reading. No stumbles were apparent, only one slight misreading.

3. Diction Facility in OR I

Rob had fairly practised diction and was usually audible. He had some hesitations, particularly at the start, which he said later was due to nerves. He never liked the tape recorder. The break into falsetto, already noted in connection with an improvisation

3 See p. 58.

and apparent later in his work on the play

4 Cassette 1, S. 1, 159'.

was not present at all in either of these readings. He used the lower
notes of his voice well. The *Jane Eyre* passage, in spite of some stumbles, was strong and clear. The Shaw passage, too, had similar quality.

**In OR II**

This was clear and audible, but occasionally forced, particularly in the passage from Pinter.

4. **Ability to make grammatical sense of the material, in OR I**

Mostly he made good sense of the material, but experienced some failures in the *Jane Eyre* passage (e.g. the 'still green fields' were wrongly separated from the embrowned groves'). He found this the hardest passage, in common with most people.

**In OR II**

The meaning was always clear.

5. **Ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual:**

**In OR I**

Rob was sufficiently experienced always to make an attempt in this direction, and to try to get away from the feeling that he was merely using his eyes, but in this reading he sounded as if he were forcing effects in order to transcend the technical difficulty imposed by the texts.

**In OR II**

He translated sight into sound instantaneously, and used his voice as an instrument to convey character.

6. **Ability to sound as if communicating with a listener in OR I**

His awareness of a possible listener came alive in the third passage, the lines from *The Applecart*. Up until then it was very slight. Stumbles with words in the first passage (the children's
story) prevented any clear sense of communication. Generally communication in this reading was less direct than it had been in different circumstances (for example, the read-through of the play).

**In OR II**

Here he was much improved and gave a sense of being in the presence of an audience, especially in the Shaw passage where a good attempt was made to convey the character of Proteus.

7. Reaction to different kinds of reading material, in OR I

He read the narrative passage with difficulty at first; at the end with a touch of story-telling technique. The second passage, from *Jane Eyre*, was descriptive and he read with some sense of its style, and managed to create an appropriate quiet atmosphere. His diction became clearer as he progressed. The piece from *The Applecart* was done with the necessary rhetorical manner, and his timing and emphases were well-placed. He was somewhat confused by a complex sentence towards the end, but did sustain Magnus' mood right through. He grasped at once that this passage was from a play, and did his best with this piece. The verses at the end of this reading, *Goodbat Nightman* were less effective as he over-dramatized the simple irony of the poem, and made it heavy.

**OR II**

He read these passages well, as if for an audition; the timing was well-judged, although it was an actorish reading. He conveyed the fact that the character in *A Slight Ache* was an older man. In the Shaw piece, he perceived and conveyed what kind
of person Proteus was, at least in an elementary form. He built the speech well to its climax and interruption. In the Brecht mixture of prose and verse, he made the distinction between these forms clear, the only actor who did. Once or twice the verse was over-dramatized, but on the whole the passage carried the conviction of propaganda that is believed in by the propagandist, which was, of course, the case in this play.

Rob did not sound 'liney' or make serious mistakes of meaning at any point. His faults in reading showed rather in the direction of a lack of restraint; for example, he kept the piece from *A Slight Ache* at such a high level that he was unable to build at all towards a climax of irritation.

Jan:
1. **Experience in reading aloud**

   She was not used to this, and had done very little at school except when very young. She had sometimes read to a relative or to children but not regularly.

2. **Eye-mouth Coordination in OR I**

   After the reading she said she was not in good form that particular day. She made several stumbles and mistakes, but had an intelligent grasp of what was on the page. She seemed to have been taught to scan the page ahead.

   **In OR II**

   Her coordination had slightly improved over the previous reading, and there were fewer stumbles and errors.

3. **Diction Facility in OR I**
She had a clear high-pitched voice and read audibly. She made some small slips in both readings. Her pace was slower in the first reading than the second. In the Jane Eyre passage, her diction was precise, and she slowed up in accordance with the meditative style.

In OR II

In the more dramatic passages her voice rose and she rushed things, especially as Orinthia in the Shaw passage, and as Judith Klein in The Jewish Wife. She pushed out words in clumps very fast and did not give herself time to place them. The quality of her voice at these times became child-like, and there was a suggestion that, like Linda playing Viola, she would be pleased when it was over.

4. Ability to make grammatical sense in OR I

She made good sense of the material except for a single sentence in the Jane Eyre passage, and she did not completely grasp the meaning in the Shaw passage (Orinthia's speech) about whether greatness consists in great action or inherent greatness in the individual. The verses presented no problem of meaning.

In OR II

Mostly the meaning was clear, but there were places that gave trouble. One was the last sentence of Lysistrata's speech in the Shaw passage. The Jewish Wife was clear as to the surface sense, but emotional understanding was less obvious.

5. Ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual

In OR I

This was halfway towards a reproduction of sound, but there
were moments when she lapsed heavily into a 'reading' quality. Where she slowed down for *Jane Eyre*, there was a definite translation into sound, and an attempt to create the appropriate atmosphere. The Shaw piece (Orinthia) tried to get away from a read-aloud quality, but the sound produced was not really appropriate.

**In OR II**

A further move in the direction of sound took place, and a sense of the dramatic material was there. She tried to use her voice to convey character in this reading, but perhaps tried too hard; it became forced.

6. **Ability to sound as if communicating with a listener in OR I**

She communicated most in the *Jane Eyre* passage, less in the rest. Technical or nervous troubles may have hindered communication especially in the first two passages. With *Jane Eyre* she concentrated on conveying meaning.

**In OR II**

On this occasion she kept up a consistently higher awareness of a possible listener, but attempted to communicate too much. She realized that the three women were very different people, and tried hard to put them across, but the communication was forced at times, particularly in the Shaw passage (*Lysistrata*).

7. **Reaction to the different kinds of reading material in OR I**

In the first passage she had a grasp of narrative form but did not convey it well, owing apparently to some degree of nervousness or lack of coordination on this particular occasion. The *Jane Eyre* piece went well except for some slight troubles
with diction. The third passage, which she realized was from a play, although this was not indicated in the typescript, was high-pitched and petulant for the character of Orinthia, who is rather grande dame for a young girl to play; but it was possible to make a good attempt at the vigorous declamation, as the efforts of the others, particularly Anne, showed.

**In OR II**

She timed the first piece very well (Rose, from *The Room* by Pinter) and spoke the speech with sincerity. The tone did not have much variation. She read the first two passages as if the two women were similar, possibly because the second one (Lysistrata) would be a hard part for her to play in any case. The deeply felt conviction in the outpouring she could not render, even taking into consideration that this was a first reading. She tended to fall back on petulance, sarcasm or a note of childish protest. The lines from *The Jewish Wife* were more convincing, slower, and the timing was good. There was, though, no attempt to convey the concealed emotion beneath the bright, normal chat, although the situation of Judith had previously been made clear.

**Daniel:**

1. **Experience in Reading Aloud**

   He had a little experience of reading aloud in drama courses at school, but on the whole he felt he was a beginner in this area.

2. **Eye-mouth coordination in OR I**

   He was mostly accurate in following the text, but sometimes
he was slow to pick up a particular word, which made him sound confused.

In OR II
He had far less trouble of this kind, was better able to scan ahead, and to understand much more quickly what was on the page.

3. Diction facility in OR I
His voice was low and monotonous with some lapses into total inaudibility. There was also a slurring of words due to indistinct consonants. Several stumbles occurred in the Jane Eyre passage, also hesitations; the end of the first passage (The children's story, The Flying Postman) became quite indistinct.

In OR II
This reading was much more audible and distinct than the first, and also more varied in pitch. He still sometimes slurred and lost a word, eg. 'ridiculous' in the excerpt from A Slight Ache. He tackled the Shaw passage (Proteus) with far greater deliberation, and thought for punctuation and verbal clarity, than anything he did in the first reading.

4. Ability to make grammatical sense in OR I
He did convey the meaning, but in a subdued, half-hearted way. He understood what he read, but played his understanding down. He did not try to convey meaning by emphases or timing. All the prose passages were read in the same tone and mood which did not enhance the sense of what he was saying in any way. The verses were slightly more meaningful.
In OR II

This reading was different in approach. He made much better sense of it, and conveyed the sense much more emphatically. It appeared to make a considerable difference to him that he now knew at once what kind of material he was reading.

5. **Ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual**

In OR I

This reading was simply visual. He made little attempt to translate the material into sound; he just read the words he saw, and the result was unemphatic and monotonous.

In OR II

In the passage from *A Slight Ache*, the first, he moved away at once from the visual, and gave an intelligent reading that no longer sounded read. His timing and variations of tone were quite different from his previous reading. In the passage from Shaw (Proteus) he made an attempt to convey the smooth vocal quality of this politician, though less strongly than Rob. But in the Brecht passage he lapsed back somewhat into the more visual reading of OR I.

6. **Ability to sound as if communicating with a listener in OR I**

He did not sound as if he was communicating with anyone. He was possibly reading to himself, since some meaning was conveyed though not very much. He came over as if he would not mind if no one listened. (Cf. a tendency to hide voice and body in rehearsal, p.95).

In OR II

There was much more communication, and some attempt to
convey the kind of scene contained in each passage, with appropriate changes of reading style. He turned more towards a listener and away from himself.

7. **Reaction to the different kinds of reading material in OR I**

As has been noted, he read all the passages as if they were similar in content and style. In the narrative passage (*The Flying Postman*) his voice was soft and level. There was no climax or story-telling technique. The level tone suited the descriptive excerpt from *Jane Eyre* better than the other passages and it sounded more convincing than the others. The dramatic piece from *The Applecart* fell very flat. At the time he did not appear to grasp that it was a passage from a play, though later in the little interview after the reading, he said that he did. He conveyed no sense of the rhetoric at all. The verse passage had some sense of rhythm, but the reading as a whole was seriously marred by the level tone and uniformity of style that he used throughout.

**In OR II**

This reading was entirely different; he made an effort to find an appropriate style for each passage. In the Pinter piece he recognized at once what kind of drama it was and showed ability to vary tone and tempo in accordance with the demands of the passage. His voice remained rather low and he was unduly restrained, but he did convey the feeling in the lines of rising panic and irritation. In the Shaw passage he did not make as definite an attempt to communicate the character of Proteus, but it was an intelligent reading with a correct touch of rhetorical hypocrisy.
In the Brecht lines he made no distinction between the prose and verse and he did not in this case try to create a style appropriate to the formality of the lines. The sadness in his voice, though, was effective, and suitable to the theme of the play.

In commenting in general on these readings and their value for the project, it is true to say that they turned out to be the least instructive of the activities that were undertaken. This was most probably because the technical difficulties of reading aloud obscured the data. The 'reading' quality, or 'liney' delivery that was the object of investigation was not the same as this technical difficulty. The lack of mastery in oral reading, in most cases, prevented any clear perception of the kinds of problem the project dealt with. Nor was anything very much added in the way of new conclusions that did not emerge from the other work. Rob, Jan and Daniel reacted to the texts predictably, and the remarks recorded under the different categories did not contain anything new. The categories were helpful insofar as they made clearer certain natural endowments of each actor and what he was able to do with them in these circumstances. Also, the experience of Daniel was interesting, in that it confirmed an already existing impression, that where his imagination was not fired by a text, he would do almost nothing, and could make very little effort.

I have already suggested a reason why they found the second reading easier than the first, which was that their education in drama and its demands was proceeding at a far greater pace than their education in other types of literature, also their

5See Chapter 3, p. 47.
commitment to it appeared to be much greater. The fact emerged that the students lacked practice in this sphere, that reading aloud, reciting, and debating had only been touched on in a superficial way in their pre-University schooling. This was confirmed, too, in working with students still in school, when reading a text for the first time.

**The Sport of My Mad Mother, Act I**

This section discusses the work of Rob, Jan and Daniel in the play, and is followed by an account of the performances of Dan and Mike, with an emphasis on their relationship with an audience.

The work is analyzed under several headings for convenience. These are:

2. Eye-mouth coordination.
3. Diction.
4. Relationship between voice and body.
5. Relationship to other actors.
7. Attitude to a text.
8. Ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual.

The nature of some of these categories is self-evident, but others need explanation. Language facility was added in order to see if there was any correlation between an ability to talk easily and express oneself well, and acting talent. On the whole
there wasn't. Daniel, whose language facility was not outstanding, had considerable acting ability. The relationship between voice and body was included to show whether vocal success was matched by bodily relaxation or vice versa. Relationship to other actors discusses the way the actor related to others on stage with him, whether his communication with them is direct or whether he cuts himself off; other nuances of behaviour are also discussed. Development of character tries to show how an actor grew in a part during the rehearsal period, how he set about it, and what obstacles he encountered, particularly in connection with the voice.

The attitude to a text became interesting after Craig and Linda had demonstrated that actors can have a quite emotional attitude to a text. It had been observed that some people found the text a straight-jacket, and this needed a closer look. The ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual is the final category, and it tries to summarize the preceding observations in relation to the object of the thesis.

In the section on Dan and Mike, the category on relating to other actors is eliminated, since the point of interest here is the way in which they related to an audience. This whole section was included in order to see whether this made any difference in vocal quality; whether encountering the spectators directly, and not by way of the fourth wall, made the actor less spontaneous or more so, and in general what vocal problems it posed for the actors involved. In the event it turned out to be a severe test of spontaneity, in which failure to achieve the appearance of freshness was quite undisguised. Correspondingly, success was immediate
and clear.

Cast of The Sport of My Mad Mother

Steve .............. Dan
Dean .............. Mike
Patty .............. Jan
Cone .............. Daniel
Fak .............. Rob
Dodo .............. Jill

Use of the Tapes in the Sport of My Mad Mother, Act I

1. First read-through (Incomplete). Cassette 3, Side 1, 96'-250'
2. Run-through of Third Week. Cassette 4, Side 11, 000'- end.
3. Individual speeches from the play and discussion of the work.
   Cassette 4, Side 1, Dan (Steve) 64'-80'; Mike (Dean) 80'-94';
   Jan (Patty) 94'-109'; Rob (Fak) 109' ff.
4. Run-through of Fourth Week. Cassette 5, Side 1, 000'-282'
   (second half) 282'- ff (first half).
5. Interviews are taped on Cassettes 6 and 7, and are transcribed
   in Appendix A, p. 131.

Particular Units, frequently cited

Fireworks Unit: Cassette 4, Side 11, 48', p. 14-16.

The "Killer" Song (Rob): Cassette 3, Side 1, 118', p. 28.
   Cassette 4, Side 11, 251', p. 28.
   Cassette 5, Side 1, 68', p. 28.
The "Present" Speech (Rob): Cassette 3, Side 1, 186', p. 33.
Cassette 4, Side 1, 111' and 180', p. 33.
Cassette 4, Side 11, 392', p. 33.
Daniel's last speech: Cassette 3, Side 1, 240', p. 38.
Cassette 5, Side 1, 252'.
"Greta" speech (Jan): Cassette 4, Side 1, 240' and
Side 11, 151', p. 21.

The page numbers here refer to the text of The Sport of My
Mad Mother, by Ann Jellicoe, published by Faber and Faber,
London, 1964. The first act is to be found in Appendix E, p.\^\textasciitilde{}X0X.

The footnotes which refer to the Cassettes and page numbers
are included only as aids to checking particular points, and it
is not intended that they should each be listened to while read-
ing the account of the work on the play. If the tapes are used
it would be wise to listen to them first.

Rob as Fak

1. **Language Facility. Self-expression in conversation**

Rob could talk about the play, the part, and his problems
without difficulty, and express himself fairly fluently. He was
able to talk about his impressions and suggestions in rehearsal,
and to ask for elucidation of difficulties or meaning.\^\textasciitilde{}6

2. **Eye-mouth coordination**

In the first read-through of the Act he was accurate\^\textasciitilde{}7, but
he already knew the play and had taken part in school readings of

\^\textasciitilde{}6Interview on Cassette 6, Side 1, 000'-151', transcribed on p.\^\textasciitilde{}131
\^\textasciitilde{}7Cassette 3, Side 1, 93'-260'.
it, reading different parts. By comparison, his coordination in the first oral reading is much less precise. He once said that he hated to read aloud into the tape recorder, and he often stumbled and became less sure of lines in rehearsal when it was recording. On the other hand, he was accurate and fluent when reading the audition texts, when there was no tape recorder. When not nervous, then, he usually read aloud with quick do-ordination between eye and mouth.

3. **Diction**

Rob was endowed with a strong voice of middle to high pitch. A wide range of tone was available to him, including good bass notes, which he could have used to more advantage than he did. His voice had a curious break in it, and at times became squeaky and shrill. He occasionally exaggerated vowel sounds, so that a single vowel became two or more syllables: 'It's only poliiiiite!' He was somewhat nasal in the middle register, but he spoke forward into the mask of his face and was always audible anywhere. In fact, he had an instinctive sense of the size of a rehearsal room or theatre and pitched his voice accordingly. He had a regional English country accent overlaid by a Western Canadian one, which gave a slightly rural touch to his work.

4. **Relationship between voice and body**

Rob was potentially a heavy man and came over on stage as psychologically heavy-weight too. But some form of uncertainty, which he may well grow out of, made him still physically a little uncoordinated. This was not apparent most of the time and

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8Cassette 5, Side 1, 132' and p. 33 (Appendix E)
disappeared when his work seemed thoroughly absorbed, i.e. both lines and blocking had become so familiar that they were produced without effort; and also when he was quite sure of the emotional direction of a unit. But when at all uncertain about what the underlying demand of the text might be, he became somewhat awkward. Both voice and body became rather wild (the voice raucous and shrill) and he moved clumsily, eg. the passage, 'They're yeller! They're yeller!'. In the performance he knocked down a flat, and in rehearsal he found it hard not to trip over Mike when he was supposed to be lying stunned on the floor. On the whole he had more control over voice than body.

5. **Relationship to other actors**

His attention was rather more sharply focussed on the part than on the people he was relating to in the play. He had already done quite a lot of work at school and had acquired more technique than the others, as well as developing a method for tackling a new part. He was inclined to work in isolation at home. Although this meant improvement and growth in his longer passages, eg. the 'Killer' song, it led at times to a feeling of distance between himself and the other two principal characters. This is not to say that he gave a 'star' performance which did not relate to the rest, but it was at times out of touch, and his relationship to the leader of the gang, Cone, (Daniel) never developed very much in feeling or subtlety. I did not get the impression, which one should get, that he knew Cone very well.

In the run-through, taped in the third week, and in the Fireworks

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9 Cassette 4, Side 11, 140', p. 20 (Appendix E)
Unit, for example, he made a lot of noise, but was not really aware of Cone competing with him. It was noticeable too, that the anger with Patty (Jan) was voice and physical energy rather than genuine rage ('Don't you lip me like that...'). By the fourth week there was some development in relationship with both these characters. The long passage that became known as Fak's 'Present' speech, was still done as an individual aria, and not directed primarily at Dodo.

He could speak out well to an audience, as his reading of the Stage Manager in Our Town during the audition showed. In his interview he said that he would like to have played Steve, who does directly address the audience.

His talent as an actor prevented one from seeing that he is in some ways locked up in himself while rehearsing, and prone to anxiety about how it is all going. This appeared to stop him from concentrating on the development of a scene and relating to the other people in it.

6. Development of Character

He had a concept of the character of Fak from the start and did not diverge from it significantly. His main problem with the part was not to appear too intelligent. Fak's position in the play was that of second-in-command, Cone's noisy, blustering aide, dangerous when in a panic. Fak was not the brains of the gang and Rob had to work on the stupidity of the role, and his uneasy half-awareness that he is not so bright as Cone or Patty. This was

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10 Cassette 4, Side 11, 48', and pp. 13-15 (Appendix E)

11 Cassette 4, Side 11, 104', and p. 18 (Appendix E)
quite difficult, as Rob often seemed, in the early rehearsals, much too astute. By the time of the performance, however, he had identified himself sufficiently with the part to overcome his own appearance of intelligence.

Another problem arose from his physical, and even more his psychic, weight on stage, compared with Daniel's. He tended to dominate him, particularly in the early rehearsals, when Daniel was keeping his voice well down. His voice and weight made him suitable for the part, though he was not type cast for it. The problem of the comparative weight of the two actors had to be solved primarily by Daniel, with some modification in noise and energy by Rob.

In the first three weeks, he blustered and shouted in an unrestrained way. To some extent the role required this, but Rob tended to substitute noise for the creation of character at this stage. He responded well to criticism of this unrestraint, and by the time the performance took place, had imposed considerable moderation on himself, and gained insight into the real causes of Fak's bluster and assertiveness. In the last week, he conveyed once or twice, a bleakness and depression underlying the ebullience. He made trial runs at the 'Killer' speech and the 'Present' speech, and in general introduced more original, imaginative touches than any other member of the group, with the possible exception of Jill.

7. **Attitude to a Text**

The note on p. 63 is relevant at this point, where the attitude of two high school students to a text was discussed. Did
the students participating in the play have similar problems arising out of the way in which they related to the fact of having a text at all? Rob was already somewhat familiar with the play; the others were not. He was the most skilled at assuming a familiarity with a text he did not know, all the same. (Cf. his second oral reading\(^{12}\).) He was certainly the most aware that he must aim to make the text his own and get away from the dominating presence of the playwright. This may not have been a conscious thought process, but the awareness was there all the same. The gap between his performance as Fak and his work in improvising was therefore small, since in both situations, he appeared to be the one who created the part. He was no longer under the authority of the text.

8. **Ability to reproduce sound and not merely something visual**

In this category, the observations contained in the preceding ones are taken into account, in an attempt to relate them to the question of 'liney' or insincere vocal delivery. Rob was conscious of the tension between text and speech, and in rehearsal made some remarks about sounding 'phony'. He said he was always afflicted with this phenomenon until he knew his lines really well\(^{13}\), and this was borne out by the fact that he sounded less 'liney' when he was still using his script in rehearsal, than at a slightly later stage when he was beginning to discard it. In his interview\(^{14}\), on the other hand, he says that he

\(^{12}\)Cassette 2, Side 1, 000'-54'.

\(^{13}\)Cassette 4, Side 1, 129'.

\(^{14}\)Cassette 6, Side 1, 000-151', (Appendix A, p.152).
enjoyed the texture of words, and this seemed true. He experimented freely with varieties of sound, emphases and differing emotional approaches. The 'Present' speech went through several such changes and these can be heard in the recordings of it. His first version of it was loud-mouthed, and unrestrained. At times, he ranted. The bullying attitude was of course correct for the part, but it eventually became more controlled and subtle.

By the time of the performance he had lost much of the somewhat ham vocal gestures of the earlier rehearsal period. Rob's strength lay in his ability to vary tone and tempo and his firm sense of rhythm. His weakness lay in the direction of noise and lack of control, and this may well have been due to a partial failure to relate to other actors, which has already been noted. This failure tended to increase concentration on the performance in isolation, so that he seemed somewhat cut off. He tried to compensate for relationship by substituting an over-produced style of acting. There may also have been a failure to believe in the given situation adequately, a lack of conviction about it, as in the famous sermon note "Argument weak here. Shout louder."

He had problems of this kind in the first term with the scene from The Rainmaker. His actual gifts and their development as an actor, which were considerable, combined with these areas of weakness, made his performance a complex one.

Jan as Patty

1. Language Facility. Self-expression in conversation

Jan had no problem in communicating in conversation. She could speak about the play and her part fluently and with a
wide vocabulary.

2. **Eye-mouth Coordination**

She was accurate in the first read-through of the play, much more so than in the first oral reading. She usually had an intelligent control of what she read, and gave accurate readings at the audition.

3. **Diction**

She had a clear voice, middle to high pitched and it was usually audible, though not naturally very loud. It was, in fact, a little soft for this part, and she dropped it when others talked loudly. She had trouble producing a loud scream, as the role requires at one point. She said herself that she felt her voice was not loud enough in the quarrelling, yelling units, and she had to push it consciously. However, she could, if conscious effort was made, keep up a fairly high level of sound.

4. **Relationship between voice and body**

At certain times, and particularly in the first three weeks of rehearsing, she stood awkwardly on stage, interjecting lines as they came along. She was self-conscious at this stage, and found concentration difficult. She was less physically awkward when there was a lot of group activity going on, and she was part of the whole. On these occasions her voice came well forward; for example, she danced and chanted in a quite relaxed way during the 'Killer' song, and looked as if she was enjoying it. She also sang, and moved energetically during the passage where Cone, Fak and Patty turn Dean into a Guy Fawkes. The difficulty seemed

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15 Cassette 4, Side 11, 444.
to come up when the focus of attention was fully on her, as in the 'Greta' speech, and the ensuing scene where she has to give the initiative.

5. **Relationship to other actors**

In moments of crisis and excitement she joined with others, and became one of the group, for instance both where she is teased by Fak and Cone\(^{16}\) and where she joins in teasing others\(^{17}\). She had less sense of being in contact with anybody in the one-to-one scenes, especially where outright anger had to be expressed. She seemed to cut herself off from Fak or Cone in these situations\(^{18}\), and to become isolated. The 'Greta' speech requires the actress to address the audience, in the same way that Steve does at the beginning of the act. This direct contact never quite took place. The tape cannot catch all the problems here, since they were concerned with physical expression as well as vocal. The speech is difficult since the character, Patty, ceases to be herself while she conveys information about Greta, who has not yet appeared. Jan fell into a set of intonations which became fixed and thus prevented the speech from developing, as well as ruling out any appearance of spontaneity. This was also true of her anger with Cone, which followed on soon after the speech. More than anywhere else in the play she seemed imprisoned by the text in this scene, where she is supposed to goad Cone into a reaction. She was more successful with edgy sarcasm, which was

\(^{16}\) Cassette 4, Side 11, 90', and p. 16 (Appendix E)

\(^{17}\) Cassette 5, Side 1, 12', and p. 34 (Appendix E)

\(^{18}\) Cassette 4, Side 11, 155' and p. 22 (Appendix E)
somewhat less direct. But 'Jealous! Jealous! Me!'\textsuperscript{19} never had enough indignation, and became a rather set performance. Would it have been easier for Jan to improvise anger? We did try an improvisation in which she attempted to talk Rob down; it was partly successful, but did not carry over into the play.

6. **Development of Character**

Jan's interview was helpful in considering how she developed her role\textsuperscript{20}. There was constant technical improvement in her work; her voice became stronger, intensity increased, and in the last week she moved more freely. There was not a corresponding development in feeling, nor in the creation of Patty's personality. She found the part alien to her own temperament, and from the point of view of type-casting, was in fact, mis-cast.

She developed well the teasing and sarcastic passages\textsuperscript{21} fairly early on, and also her reaction to the bullying by Fak and Cone\textsuperscript{22}. But she did not reach the anger or dominance, necessary at times to the part, as has already been noted. She said in her interview that she found it hard to get any variation into the angry passages. At the beginning of the rehearsal period, when she was not able to get her voice and shout, or to produce a convincing scream, we all tried screaming together, and apparently this helped. After the improvisation with Rob she said she was helped insofar as she could feel more aggression, but this

\textsuperscript{19}Cass. 4, Side 11, 169\textsuperscript{1} and p. 23 (Appendix E)

\textsuperscript{20}Cass. 7, Side 1, 000-273\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{21}Cass. 5, S. 1, 12\textsuperscript{1} and p. 25. Cass. 4, S. 11, 155\textsuperscript{1}, p.22 (App. E)

\textsuperscript{22}Cass. 5, S. 1, 382\textsuperscript{1} and p.15. Cass. 4, S. 11, 89\textsuperscript{1}, p.16 (App. E)
improvement could not be relied on.

There was, then, in her work an increase in competence, both vocally and physically, and she was always reliable in what she said and where she was supposed to be at a given moment. But there was not a corresponding increase, though there was some, in the projection of Patty as a character with her appropriate feelings. The 'liney' delivery did not decrease and in some ways became worse, where certain cadences became fixed and unalterable. At such times the text became a straight-jacket.

7. Attitude to a text

Jan had Craig's problem in more sophisticated form. In her improvisations she was flexible and lively but did not venture into anything very original and kept close to the outline as given. Her first reading of the play was also lively, but did not make any striking progress or development. It was not so much that she resisted the authority of the text, like the other High School student, Linda, but that she let the text take hold of her and own her. She was conscientious and quick about learning lines and getting the blocking down correctly, but was inclined to reproduce, as we have seen, similar intonations at each rehearsal, once certain things had been established. This version of the lines, at an early point in rehearsing, became set in her head (at least that is what apparently happened) and once there, it constituted an authority that could not be gainsaid, either by herself or the director. To change anything, especially anything vocal, would cost a tremendous effort. There was a deep, though probably not conscious, reluctance to shake off this inwardly

23See p. 63.
constituted dictatorship. In these circumstances the authority of the text and that of the director came into conflict. The new idea of the director might gain a temporary foothold, but, by the next rehearsal, the authority of the text-in-the-head was back in force.

8. Ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual

Jan had more trouble than either Rob or Daniel with a 'reading' quality. As we have seen, this showed mostly in the individual speech and in a one-to-one unit; much less in a larger group, where she was much more spontaneous, and translated the text into sound without difficulty. In anger, too, her inflections became set in a mould, and were repeated with each rehearsal. One cause for this was suggested as arising from her attitude to the text: she let the lines become a rigid authority, and this was not connected with fears of lapses of memory, which she did not have. She always seemed spontaneous, however, when the principal feeling she had to express was enthusiasm or enjoyment, whether this took place with one or many.

Daniel as Cone

1. Language Facility. Self-expression in conversation

At the first meeting, when he gave the audition, he found it difficult to talk about himself, and this remained true. He often had insights which he expressed briefly, and sometimes original views of a character in the play. In the interview\textsuperscript{24} he said he did not understand several of the idiomatic expressions

\textsuperscript{24}Cassette 6, Side 1, 152'-347'. Appendix A. p. 142.
in the play. In rehearsal he did not ask for an elucidation, and spoke the lines as if they made sense to him.

2. **Eye-mouth Coordination**

Daniel's read-through of the play was more accurate than his oral reading. There were some hesitations which may well have been due to lack of practise in reading aloud. But with Daniel, accuracy seemed to increase with understanding and liking the material, where others might make some sort of showing even when they did not fully grasp what they were reading about.

3. **Diction**

He had a light, tenor voice with some deep tones. He was inaudible, at times, in conversation as well as in rehearsal. This appeared to be due to a habit of dropping the volume and slightly slurring consonants. This problem was largely overcome, though not completely, when he gained conviction about his position as leader of the gang. He was not aware that he was inaudible unless told.

4. **Relationship between voice and body**

Daniel was physically slight. He had no ability to fake anything that he was not convinced about, vocally or physically. Thus he spent a lot of time in early rehearsal in a very low key and with a lethargic manner, looking for something. His voice would frequently go down to an inaudible mumble, and at its loudest, was far from loud. In a similar way he would hide, literally. Up to the end of the third week, he would hide behind Rob who was larger, even altering the blocking in order to do this. He would frequently turn away from the auditorium and speak up stage,
and often present his back when not required to do so. This continued, along with the low voice, until he managed, more by inner imagination than anything else, to assume the position of leadership that the role demanded. This did not come about through any correction of external factors.

He never acted with any conviction in the passage where he demonstrates on Fak how to kill someone by aiming a blow at the base of the skull.  

In the performance the hiding habit slightly returned, although previously, in rehearsal, he had overcome it. There was only one performance, and he might well have regained what he had lost in a second or third.

5. Relationship to other actors

Daniel could relate to other actors on stage, or give the appearance of doing so. He isolated himself less than Rob. This was noticeable from the first read-through, though he is quiet and unobtrusive in this. In the run-through of the third week he communicated easily with the others, particularly in the sarcastic teasing passages, where he irritates Patty, jointly with Fak. These units are full of a sullen sarcasm; Cone's mood is destructive, but not noisy. In these sections he improved continuously right up to the performance; but he was not at all easy about expressing aggression or decisiveness, and refused to encounter others directly in these angrier passages. (Rob had no problem

25 Cassette 5, Side 1, 440', and p. 18 (Appendix E)

26 Cassette 4, S. 11, 89' and p. 15. Cass. 4, S. 11, 206' and p. 25 (Appendix E)
in this area).

Other passages which gave trouble were those where he had to relate to the audience, eg. the section that we called the Fireworks Unit. This is a rather noisy and aggressive duet with Fak, in which they are trying to sell fireworks to the audience with a lot of mock sales talk. Covertly they are seeking to impress Patty, who is not paying any attention. In this unit he could not relate satisfactorily either to Rob or to the audience, especially the latter. His voice always dropped when he faced them and spoke out. This was in contrast with his conscious wish, expressed in his interview, to play Steve, who talks to the audience more than he talks to the rest of the cast.

On the whole he related best when he was one of the gang, less well when required to initiate something new. He somewhat resembled Jan at this point. This situation was not permanent though, as he had a noticeable and abrupt improvement with these problems, which will be discussed in the next section.

6. Development of character

He had a good understanding of what Cone was like from the start, but minimized what he had grasped. For the first three weeks it was a tiny but accurate portrayal. The development and enlargement of the role was hindered by his low voice and the tendency, already noted, to hide behind other actors. Some appropriate moods were developed early on, but the main difficulty was the position of Cone in the play, i.e. his leadership. Daniel was playing second fiddle to Rob until the end of the third week. This changed abruptly, apparently as the result of an improvisation
done during the rehearsal period. This improvisation was arranged to deal with this particular problem: the power relationship between the two actors. In it, Jan wanted to buy a used car. Rob and Daniel each had one to sell. They were to describe the make and merits. It was meant to be a verbal contest in which Daniel managed to shout Rob down, and successfully sell his car to Jan. At first Daniel spoke softly though fluently, while Rob easily topped him. Daniel appeared to get angry at this, and began to yell. Then, without warning, he attacked Rob with his fists, moving fast. Rob was almost too surprised to retaliate. Daniel next picked up a metal chair and ran at Rob with it. He was shouting loudly by this time. Others removed the chair and he relaxed. This raised real difficulties about the nature of improvising which will be looked at in the next chapter. In the event Daniel benefitted. He now had far less difficulty in claiming the position of leadership. One can only speculate that he had unconsciously experienced Rob as a threat up to this point. Rob was heavier, had a louder voice and a lot of acting expertise. Success in competing with him apparently removed this threat. In setting up the improvisation, I had hoped for a purely verbal contest. There was a lack of control in resorting to violence that was a mistake in an acting situation. An actor uses his emotions, but is not driven by them.

However, success in competing with Rob improved his relationship with him in the play and in general increased his ability to show emotion. His last appeal for help to Greta at the end of the act became much freer and more open. He also became the manipulative master of situations. The whole character began to
enlarge in the last ten days. He moved away from the small voice and physique.

In his interview he said that when he began to move on stage and do any physical thing, this gave him a sense of what Cone was like, as if the physical helped to build up the imaginative. He felt any tendency to feel awkward or 'phoney' with lines disappeared as he concentrated more and more on what was happening in the play and what was happening physically round him. His own aim in a unit would become clearer the more he paid attention to what was going on both with Cone and others.

He moved further in his characterization than anyone else, partly because he had started with such a slight performance, but also because he relied primarily on belief and imagination. For him there seemed to be no other way of working.

7. Attitude to a text

Daniel did not have those difficulties of 'liney' delivery, and going stale on words, that Jan and Dan struggled with. In his interview he said his most tiresome trouble was with speed: he could not slow down sufficiently and felt impelled to go fast. This disappeared with time and practise, and he could not explain it.

Like Rob, his improvisations did not have a wide gap between them, as far as the voice went. He laboured under difficulties memorizing, and it was a long time before he was free of the script. Once he knew the words he was able to make them his own -- and it may be that his trouble with speed began to disappear when he was able to trust his memory. He did not regard the text
as an authority to be obeyed, but succeeded in transferring that authority to himself. He had a much higher resistance to the words of the texts in the oral readings, particularly the first.

8. Ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual

Daniel did not suffer from a 'reading' quality when acting, in any acute or obvious form. It was more that he would produce, at times, an utterance that was meaningless and lifeless, as if the lines were without sense. Typical of this was the passage where he said, 'There's something about this bloke...' and the lines which immediately follow. For no clear reason he could recover from this and invest the part with life and personality. The ensuing scene shows this recovery. In the run-through of the third week he was still following a text-in-the-head, probably from difficulties with memorizing, but by the end of the rehearsal period his voice had lost the lifeless quality (except in the Fireworks Unit).

It is hard to summarize Daniel's work, as he did not make linear progress but jumped into life unexpectedly with a breakthrough that one could not predict.

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27 Cassette 3, Side 1, 114' and p. 27 (Appendix E)
Use of the tapes which record Mike and Dan in The Sport of My Mad Mother

Dan (Steve)

1. Part of his opening speech, p. 11, 12. First read-through: Cassette 3, Side 1, 257'.
2. Opening speech, recorded at the beginning of the third week: Cassette 4, Side 1, 64'.
3. Opening speech, end of third week: Cassette 4, Side 11, 4'.
4. Opening speech, fourth week: Cassette 5, Side 1, 281'.

Mike (Dean)

1. 'We'll now have a little peace!', p. 36. Read-through: Cassette 3, Side 1, 22 1/2'.
2. Opening speech, p. 12, recorded at the beginning of the third week: Cassette 4, Side 1, 80'.
3. Opening speech, end of third week: Cassette 4, Side 11, 31'.
4. 'What is this'... p. 29, end of third week: Cassette 4, Side 11, 276'.
5. Opening speech, fourth week: Cassette 5, Side 1, 312'.

Dan as Steve

1. Language facility. Self-expression in conversation

Dan was able to talk fluently about himself and the play, and had a fair vocabulary.

2. Eye-mouth coordination

He had no difficulty when reading aloud in scanning ahead, and in the technique of voice production in general he was proficient and fairly practised.

3. Diction

He was always audible and had a clear carrying voice of middle range.

4. Relationship between voice and body

He was somewhat physically uneasy on stage, though not off it. He looked unrelaxed when he faced the audience standing, and was much easier when he sat on his stool and began to try out his percussion instruments. Previously he had been conscious of rigidity in arms and hands. He was quite aware of this feeling, and tried to break through it; at the same time he was also trying to prevent himself from going stale on his long speech. He felt that the physical unease and the lack of spontaneity in the speech were really one problem, not two.

5. Ability to relate to an audience

In his interview, the actor said that he liked the experience of speaking straight out to the audience, though physically he did not really seem easy. The part was an unusual one, not dissimilar from Thornton Wilder's Stage Manager, in Our Town.

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28 Cassette 2, Side 11, 61', and Appendix A, p. 160.
Apart from the demands it made on the actor for the appearance at least, of sociability and self-confidence, it also required him to develop the role only through his relationship with the spectators, and not through the other characters in the play, to whom he rarely speaks. Dan knew intellectually what the part needed, and what kind of person Steve was. But he was always conscious of lines. His natural endowment as an actor, and the voice production he had acquired, were certainly adequate for the task. So this was a problem of communication and confidence. Although he tried to keep an informal, easy manner by using paraphrases and improvisations in rehearsal, the lines still hardened into a mould once he went back to the text. The same shape came out every time. This 'liney', unspontaneous speech in turn insulated him from the audience, and there was a transparent wall between them. He knew this, and also saw that the trouble was becoming aggravated as time went on, and his familiarity with the part increased. In fact, some of his early rehearsals were fresher and more polished than the later ones. These difficulties were discussed in his interview\(^29\), but neither of us was able to discover the real cause. His ability to improvise with enthusiasm and freshness has already been noted,\(^30\) and a possible predilection for acting without spectators was considered (this, if it existed was certainly not conscious). It did seem likely that he found an audience more alarming than Mike did, and that he was over-anxious to please. Mike, on the other hand, was in charge, as far

\(^{29}\) Cassette 7, Side 1, 273'.

\(^{30}\) See page 61.
as the audience was concerned, and therefore able to be at ease.

6. **Attitude to a text**

Words became set in his head as a copy to be followed. This gave his work a stale quality that he could not eliminate. He seemed under a compulsion to obey this text-in-the-head. Was he holding on to it in the face of spectators whom he viewed as hostile?

7. **Ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual**

The ability to get away from learned lines and produce spontaneous sound was not a simple thing for Dan. As has been noted, he had good natural vocal qualities, and in the early stages of rehearsal, his work was more spontaneous than it subsequently became. The 'liney' quality certainly became worse as the performance approached. Addressing the audience with this long passage of casual remarks was a stark test of vocal spontaneity. Failure in this situation would be more obvious than failure in a dialogue composed of single lines. One had to admit in the end, that any member of the audience would know that these lines were learned, and not an impromptu chat to start the play off, as the author clearly intends.

**Mike as Dean**

1. **Language Facility. Self-expression in reading aloud**

He talked intelligently about his work and the play, but not fluently. He always tried to speak accurately and without verbiage.

2. **Eye-mouth coordination**

His reading aloud was accurate and he knew how to scan ahead.
He was hampered by lack of practice, however, and spent the whole time in making sense of the written material.

3. **Diction**

Mike was endowed with a light voice of tenor range, but tended to keep it down. It lacked bright tones, and he frequently sounded monotonous, though usually audible. When he was stimulated imaginatively to put something over to the audience he achieved his goal, but this did not happen through lucid speech technique. Technique improved through imaginative response to the text, in his case.

4. **Relationship between voice and body**

He was physically fairly easy on stage, had presence, and relaxed increasingly as rehearsals progressed. His slight self-consciousness with arms and hands was paralleled in hesitation and diffidence in the use of words and vocal tone.

5. **Ability to relate to an audience**

The role of Dean is less demanding than that of Steve with respect to the audience. His lines are shorter than Steve's, and he is much more an active member of the cast and less of a compere. What the actor playing Dean has to do is to convey the character's impression of the London street scene, to paint it in words. An actor capable of visual imagination, as Mike was, would not find this very difficult. In his interview[^31] Mike said he did not find talking to the audience particularly testing, and he did not fall into the 'liney' problems of Dan. His voice was often monotonous though, as it was in ordinary conversation.

What he found hard, he said, was feeling what kind of person Dean

[^31]: Cassette 6, Side 11, 132', and Appendix A, p. 147.
was, and reproducing it. This seemed true from the observer's point of view. He had little acting experience, and in the early stages his voice was level and nervous. His development of the part can be picked up on the tapes if they are heard in order of time. Once he began to feel his way into the character, the other qualities, such as the ability to confront the audience directly, came into being automatically. Seeking first the inner nature of the role, he found the details were added spontaneously. For example, once he had seen clearly what kind of person Dean was, the speech where he reassures the audience after disturbing events have taken place, became solid, relaxed and convinced. He was not in a subservient relationship to the audience, but in control.

The most difficult lines were the first ones, when Dean is used by the author to create atmosphere and convey information. As time went on, after various trials, Mike developed a simple technique of just telling it. It may not even have been technique, but a direct communication of the scene as he saw it in his imagination. He was able to smile, too, in a genuine way at them, a thing that cannot easily be faked. So the performance developed from hesitant beginnings to something solid, the creation of a definite role. Mike was in some ways like Daniel, in that he lacked training and technique -- he had much less actual training than Daniel -- but eventually overcame this through imaginative stimulus, mostly self-administered.
6. **Attitude to a Text**

When Mike began work on his part, he constructed a biography for it. He worked out the past and the present of Dean, extrapolating from the text. Stanislavski had suggested to his students that the construction of such a biography could be of great assistance in the creation of a role. But with Mike, his own version of the character's past still remained intellectual, and both the play itself and his version of the part continued to be external, and appreciated only with the intelligence. He felt himself to be in a subservient relationship to the text, and his difficulties were only resolved when he let his feelings take over. There is no way of avoiding taking over the part from the playwright, however painful this often seems to be. Mike eventually succeeded in doing this, less by a conscious effort of the intelligence than by relaxing into it, relating to others, and replacing the text with an inner imaginative picture of what was going on.

7. **Ability to reproduce sound rather than something merely visual**

There is nothing much to add here, except to underline the fact that Mike sounded sincere and spontaneous when he was imaginatively inspired. Like Daniel, he did not fall back on technique. However, the acquiring of technique should not be ignored. If Mike wanted to continue on stage, he would be well advised to gain consciously a greater vocal range and more clearly defined consonants.
In summarizing the work of these students, some things stand out, while others need further discussion.

Rob was an able actor in the making; able enough, in my opinion, to become professional, if he so desired. He had a strong, extroverted personality, and was competent in approaching a role, and reliable. He gave a faithful rendering of Pak, and a vivid one. His successes appeared to depend on two factors: belief in a given situation, and self-confidence. The first of these led to the second. Without belief, he blustered or used vocal technique as a cover-up. He had a good command of his voice and could do this easily. But the cover-up was not convincing. He did not believe in the situation in The Rainmaker. The Sport of My Mad Mother, which he already knew, appealed to his imagination and he could commit himself to the environment of the play confidently and without strain.

He did not have the text-in-the-head problems that some experienced, and knew that he had to take charge of the part sooner or later. He showed signs of frustration when this did not happen as fast as he might wish, and got intensely irritated if his memory failed in rehearsal. He was more nervous than appeared at first and disliked the tape recorder more than anyone else. He was much aware of its presence.

He needed to develop a capacity to notice quite clearly what other actors were doing, as well as himself. As it was, he cut himself off at times from the others, and also treated his longer speeches as isolated performances. He seemed to feel, in these performances, that something special was expected of him.
Jan, in her interview said she might have preferred to play Dodo. She thought it would be different and fun. Although she did not enlarge on this, it was expressed as a real preference. A possible reason for this might be that Dodo is neither aggressive nor vindictive while Patty is both. She found that aggression quite difficult and speaks about her problems at some length.

Otherwise, well when we were interpreting the anger scene as sort of straight loud anger rather than sarcasm, or sort of a sarcastic anger -- I was just at a loss as to getting variation into a loud angry anger and that vocally, too. But when we moved into a more cynical thing, I felt easier with it.... It got easier and I could understand it more again when it got into the sarcastic controlled kind of thing but I found the less controlled anger very hard.32

Jan made intelligent and interesting remarks about the play which parallel her feelings about the role. She attributed to the author the view that violence can break out at any time in this group, and also in other groups, and went on to say:

'That's a dangerous feeling to be thinking about; you don't really want to admit that.'33

Her lack of commitment to the part, at least where Patty expresses 'dangerous feelings', might have roots in this more general response to the play as a whole. It was certainly true that the gang can become almost murderous on little provocation. The main characters, including Patty, have a love of excitement. The excitement is always showing signs of running out, so a new

32 See Appendix A, p. 154
33 See Appendix A, p. 1151
effort has to be made to keep it going. The excitement was not always innocent, often mysterious, and always disturbing. Jan possibly had the same kind of resistance to being unpleasant that Jeanine showed more obviously when playing in *The Applicant.* And this may have been the cause of her resistance to Patty's violent emotions. It was significant that, when speaking of the role, she used the word 'understand' much more often than 'felt', especially when talking about emotion. This was how she approached the part, trying to express feeling through understanding it intellectually.

She also made an authority out of the script. She learned it scrupulously early on, and although she rarely needed it in the hand, it remained firmly in the head as an instructor to be obeyed.

All this was responsible for the 'reading' quality that was noticeable in her work, and often spoiled an otherwise promising performance. I suspected that if she were cast for a more sympathetic and less destructive role than either of the two parts she played during the project, the 'reading' quality would be much diminished, and that she would give a satisfying and pleasing performance.

Daniel came through with a performance of Cone that was accurate, and, at times, first rate. The essential quality of rather nasty power-seeking was adumbrated if not underlined. Cone bolsters his power by never explaining anything, which leaves the gang puzzled and nervous. Daniel conveyed this very well.

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34See p. 35.
His greatest difficulty was in the area of projection — he projected the part on a very small scale, at least until the improvisation incident. In his audition, when he read The Stage Manager from *Our Town*, he barely projected himself at all; though what he did, if enlarged, would have been quite satisfactory. He did not produce a 'reading' quality or insincere tone, but a small voice with almost no tone, and certainly one lacking in any sort of drive or edge. After the improvisation there was a marked change, which mostly stayed with him. He needed a good deal of support from a director.

Daniel did not know that he was inaudible, nor did he know that he projected himself on a small scale. In other words, he lacked that inner critic or observer that usually operates in actors. One comment on the improvisation that he made was illuminating. After he had said that it really helped him to feel superior to Fak, as he is supposed to be, he went on: 'It was the wildness of it all. I didn't really know what I was doing.'

The improvisation was terminated at the point that it became apparent that Dan was acting out deep feelings originating at an unconscious level. To have proceeded further would have brought no additional benefit to his subsequent performance and exposed him to unjustifiable risks. There is a very thin line dividing improvisation from psychodrama, and it must not be crossed. If it becomes apparent, as happened in Dan's case, that the actor has accidentally crossed it, he must be led back into safety. Psychodrama is a very powerful therapeutic technique for reaching

35 See Appendix A, p.139.
otherwise inaccessible levels of the mind, and absolutely requires the supervision of an experienced therapist. The power of the childhood feelings evoked and released by psychodrama is so intense that it can overwhelm the defences of the ego, and induce psychotic breakdown.

Obviously improvisation and psychodrama have something in common: the disinhibition of feeling (though the feelings released normally in improvisation are far less intense). Psychodrama, after all, refers to the patient's real life situation. If, by chance, as happened in the case of Daniel, a deep hostility is released, the actor loses control, and inevitably parts company with his highly necessary inner critic. What might be appropriate in a therapeutic situation is totally inappropriate in the training of actors.

In the event Daniel was benefitted. He did not go too far into the psychodrama, and he could quickly be recalled from it. He tapped aggression whose repression had previously been preventing him from playing the role of Cone. However, this was a kind of accidental therapy for him, and really had very little to do with acting, which involves skill and an attentive inner observer of the scene. Daniel's remark, quoted above, is not an actor's remark.

There is a story about a nineteenth century English actor, Frank Benson, which illustrates what can happen on stage when the observer within is obscured. Benson was a famous Richard II. One night he was much moved during the performance and wept copiously. He told a friend who had witnessed the play that night,
that he considered that he had given a particularly moving performance. But the friend demurred and told the actor that he had been so overwhelmed by the pathos of the situation he was in, that he had lost sight of Richard and the kind of person he was. 36

Daniel preferred improvising to working with a script. 37 One could not help suspecting that his real desire was directed towards a romantic freedom, in which to act out emotion. This is not the same thing as acting, however important available emotion may be to an actor.

His lack of an inner critic was serious, since it prevented him from projecting the role on a sufficiently large scale, and in other ways kept him unaware of the effect he was creating.

Dan and Mike contrasted with each other in the way that they related to an audience. Mike overcame any vocal reading quality and to some extent the level tones of voice, once he had established, to his own satisfaction, who he was. Dan on the other hand did not succeed in becoming spontaneous once the lines had gone stale. Perhaps he never identified with his part.

What did it mean to relate to the audience? Obviously it is different from relating to another actor on stage. The audience does not reply, although it does respond. But compared with the other actor, it is passive. Talking to an audience is also different from soliloquizing — and this difference was not

36 I have been unable to trace this story, but Cf. The Art of the Actor, by C. Coquelin, London, Allen and Unwin, 1932. He insists throughout the book on the two functions of the actor, the performer and the critical observer.

37 See Appendix A, p. 141.
always clear in Dan's performance. Hamlet does not discuss with the audience whether it is better to be or not to be. He is not asking their opinion. Steve does share his views and opinions with the audience, and it would not, in fact, be surprising if a member of the audience replied to him. This reaching out eluded Dan who kept up the transparent wall that has already been mentioned. Steve's relationship with the audience is close to that of a comedian chatting to them, and, of course, improvising what he has to say. Steve had to give the impression of improvising while actually having lines, and plenty of them. The actor's task was then a hard one. Dan's inner critic was at work on his problems and he said in his interview that he could hear the difference in his voice between the occasions when he was improvising and when he was speaking from a text. The following remarks were interesting too, with regard to his feelings about working on a play:

'It is really hard to take something that's already written down, because it's not natural, which makes the biggest difference, because what you're saying in an improv., even though it's a different character that you're trying to get, it's still coming out of your head, and so it's still going to be natural for you to say that. Yet with the text it's something that somebody else had written and somebody else has said and for you to say that in a natural way takes a bit of work.'

There was a marked contrast with Dan in his improvised work and his work on the play. With Mike there was far less difference.

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38 See Appendix A, p.162.
39 See Appendix A, p.163.
It was Mike who was more successful in relating to his audience, and who could therefore take a text and make it his own. He said this in his interview, where he insisted that at first he didn't know what kind of person Dean was; and then as rehearsals progressed it became clearer and clearer. The role, in other words, really became his, and no longer the author's. That so far as I could judge was the difference between their performances. Dan remained a prisoner of the text, and only felt free when improvising.
Chapter 4. Conclusion

The thesis set out to examine differing vocal responses of young actors to a text. Emphasis was laid on the contrast between unspontaneous quality, and a fresh, free approach to a play. In the course of the investigation it came to light that clear diction and audibility were no guarantee that the 'reading' quality might not also be present. Conversely, it was also true that people whose speech technique was poor, could, nonetheless, be spontaneous and fresh in their approach to a role. This is not to advocate the view that a lack of technique is helpful to an actor, or that training spoils freshness, which I do not believe, but that something more than good diction is needed if spontaneity is to be forthcoming. Nor is it helpful to advocate what is simply natural. There is nothing natural about being on a stage, as Hoffman and Cameron point out forcibly in their book, The Theatrical Response. ¹ They do say, however,

When Hamlet advises the players to "hold the mirror up to nature", he is not calling for exact reproduction of human behaviour, but for honesty in the artistic reproduction of life. ²

A failure to produce this honesty shows in the voice, though it may take different forms with different people. As the work continued, some causes emerged to account for the responses, and these should now be considered:

"I don't want to be a bitch/bastard."

We have already noted Jeanine's marked resistance to being


²Ibid., p. 253.
unpleasant, as the woman in Harold Pinter's sketch, The Applicant. Jan had similar problems with the role of Patty. Both sounded unspontaneous, as if speaking learned lines. What did this mean?

Robert Benedetti, introducing his book on acting, points out the relationship between acting in real life and acting on stage:

The activity of role-playing is not unique to the stage actor. It is one of the common and necessary activities of everyday social life. As you begin developing yourself as a stage actor, you will find that a great deal of your skill as a social actor will be useful. You are probably already more skilful at projecting a semi-fictitious characterisation to an audience than you might think.

Around the turn of the century, the psychologist William James suggested that our personality is a complex structure consisting of an "I" and several "me's". Each of us has a good many roles or "me's" which we play in various situations. Your roles as son or daughter, as student or employee, and so on, all call upon you to modify your behaviour at different times, to present yourself differently. Your sense of identity, your "I", is your sense of continuous identity, which lies behind these various performances and ties them together into one personality. If you have been forced to perform two different social roles at once (visits by parents to their children at college often occasion such uncomfortable situations) you know how radically different some of our "me's" can be to each other. Our sanity depends in part on keeping our various "me's" in their proper places, and holding on to a strong sense of "I".

He goes on to say that "our skill as social actors gives us a firm foundation on which to build."

I have quoted at length because the connection between acting

3 See p. 35.
in life and acting on stage is important, but in a more negative way than Beneditti suggests. Is acting socially always the advantage he affirms? The words "forced to perform" are disquieting, and carry implications that should be looked at. Acting in real life is, in fact, compulsive and imposed by heavy conditioning. We are taught to perform acceptable social roles first by parents and then by teachers, possibly by priests or ministers as well. We are brought to a state of mind which society hopes will be a useful one, enabling us to function well within its confines. And 'confines' is right. Since the heaviest part of the conditioning consists in an emphasis on "goodness" (pleasing other people, working hard, not losing your temper, and agreeing with parents on religion and sex, and so on) it becomes intolerable to the person thus conditioned that he should have, still less express, 'bad' feelings, with the result that he buries them. Anyone programmed in this way either remains 'good' and behaves 'nicely' (and incidentally becomes a hypocrite, a word etymologically connected with acting\(^5\)) or rebels and becomes delinquent or 'bad'. In either case these performances are tied to the original conditioning. The only way of escape is to find the "I" suggested by William James in the quotation. The "I" is neither good nor bad, and does not perform. It just is.

The 'good' person who goes on the stage may be cast for a part which comes into sharp conflict with the role he is already playing in everyday life. In this case the actor will try to impose

the role in the play on top of the role of everyday life, which
he dares not abandon. This is experienced as strain, especially
since the social role will force him to please the director,
instead of relating immediately to the part.

Is the experience of social role-playing, then, always such
an advantage as Benedetti suggests? Isn't the actor who is playing
the role of a 'good' person in life, limited to those parts where
he expresses only positive feelings? A good person is going to have
a hard time if cast as anyone cruel and unpleasant or hot-tempered
and uncontrolled. An actress who wants to play Hedda Gabler must
at least admit the possibility that one of the "me's" is vengeful
and destructive.

This particular block in acting is often overcome, not by the
actor, but by the casting director. Such actors are always cast
for more or less sympathetic parts with whom they can identify
without feeling threatened. There is no real solution for the
actor in this. He must deal with his situation more drastically,
if he wants to be versatile.

The goodness block will often prevent belief in a given
situation as well. The actor may feel "No one ever behaves like
that" or "I've never met with a situation like this in all my life."
This was also a problem for Jan, and her remarks about the play as
a whole are interesting at this point. The situation of the play
was accepted intellectually as a possible one, but not related to
any personal knowledge or experience.

See Appendix A, pp. 150-151.
The text and authority. "I want to do what is written down here. I can relate to that."

This attitude arises where an actor clings to his script and treats it as an authority. Sometimes he does this with the director as well, and tries to extract all that he must imagine and project from the director instead of from himself. While the director may, in a general way, tell the actor how he sees a character, his view must become the actor's or there will be no act of creation on the actor's part. Creativity needs freedom. Often an actor does not really want that freedom; he does not want to transfer the authority either from the director or from the text. It was Dan who seemed most troubled at this point. He was tied down by the text and could not make it his own. It is not possible for the actor to extract the character in a given play from anybody except himself. An analogous situation comes about when a director has to produce a play. The interpretation has to be his, or it will be visited by the angel of death. There is a fascinating account of Peter Brook's approach to the movie he made of King Lear in The New York Review of Books. Brook decided not to accept the huge reputation of the play on other people's say-so. He asked Ted Hughes, the poet, to translate the lines into present-day English. When this was completed, he compared the translation with the original, and on the basis of his own response perceived that Shakespeare's text was better, a view

that Hughes also shared. The article continues:

The important thing is not simply to have known this as 'everybody' does, but to have seen the need to work for the knowledge. Thenceforth the director saw the whole play and its verse differently. His sense of its power, its unmatched force was... no longer merely a function of what people conventionally say about it. So that whatever else he might do, he would always operate according to this luminous conviction.  

This is the attitude essential also to creating a role. If the script is not seen through the actor's own eyes, but through those of playwright or director, the resulting performance will be lifeless. One part of it will be the 'reading' quality noted in connection with Dan's portrayal of Steve. The refusal to transfer authority to oneself in acting a role may account for the development of that special Shakespearean voice, particularly in England, where this playwright is apt to become a deeply resented, sacred father-figure. The voice, in all its varieties, is notably parodied by the Beyond the Fringe team. Laurence Olivier, successfully taking authority out of the hands of Shakespeare and into his own, was able to part company with the voice, and introduce what he has called realism in Shakespearean acting; by making the playwright's words his own, he has restored their meaning.

Belief and Unbelief

Several times in the course of analyzing the work of the

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8 Ibid., p. 20

9 Beyond the Fringe, recorded by Capitol Records. W 1792, Side 2, "So That's The Way You Like It."
students, a lack of belief or conviction has been mentioned: Rob in his scene from The Rainmaker, 10 Jan in hers from The Dutchman, 11 Dan in his work on Steve in The Sport of My Mad Mother, 12 all at times were working on their roles without a sense of who or where they were. This is not easy to pin down. It affected everybody in the play at different stages of their development during the rehearsal period.

What is meant by belief? Careless definition is detrimental here. One sometimes gets the impression that actors think that they are supposed to believe totally that they are someone else, with that person's environment. People who totally believe that they are Napoleon are usually regarded as having a serious mental illness. Clearly this is not what is meant. The building up of a role into an entity that carries conviction to an audience rests on a supposition like this: If I were Napoleon, what would I do? This is the starting point from which everything else is created. An actor in this way demonstrates what he would do. He knows he is an actor, and not Napoleon, just as a member of the audience knows that he is sitting in the theatre, watching a representation of life, and not actual life. This is not to say that the actor demonstrates coldly or that the audience watches unmoved, for that would not be a successful demonstration or true response. For the demonstration to succeed, the actor has to use

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10 See pp. 31 and 34.
11 See p. 41.
12 See p. 103.
his own emotions to the full.

Stanislavski used his now famous formula of the magic if I were so and so and in this set of circumstances, what would I do? There is a good example of this in the chapter on Imagination, where the Director, Tortsov, is in dialogue with the drama student, Paul. The Director says,

"... I suggest that you, Paul, are living the life of a tree." "Good," said Paul with decision, "I am an age-old oak tree. However, even though I have said it, I don't really believe it!"
"In that case," suggested the Director, "why don't you say to yourself: 'I am I; but if I were an old oak, set in certain surrounding conditions, what would I do?' and decide where you are, in a forest, in a meadow, on a mountain top; in whatever place affects you most."  
This tree fantasy then grows and becomes more complicated. Paul's imagination is sparked off until he reaches the point where he is not only a tree growing in a field, but also in a historical context. The tree exists in the feudal period in a complex environment involving Dukes, Barons and mediaeval warfare.

The Director points out at the end that even a passive theme such as this can produce an inner stimulus and challenge to action. Once the magic if has been absorbed into the imagination, a step-by-step process of creativity becomes possible.

This psychological technique starts with the conscious, active intelligence and uses it, eventually penetrating below the mind's surface to the springs of creativity and the elusive

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13Stanislavski, An Actor Prepares, pp. 43-49.
14Ibid., pp. 51-67.
15Ibid., p. 61.
feelings. If the motivation of character is consciously explored, in the most detailed way, and images and association built up within each unit, then sooner or later the appropriate characterization and feelings will of themselves emerge.

Stanislavski was deeply opposed to a direct approach to emotion.

On the stage there cannot be, under any circumstances, action that is directed immediately at the arousing of a feeling for its own sake....

When you are choosing some bit of action, leave feeling and spiritual content alone....

All such feelings are the result of something that has gone before. Of the thing that goes before you should think as hard as you can. As for the result, it will produce itself....

About the content of 'what has gone before' he speaks in the next chapter:

During every moment we are on the stage, during every moment of the development of the action of the play, we must be aware either of the external circumstances which surround us (the whole material setting of the production), or of an inner chain of circumstances which we ourselves have imagined in order to illustrate our parts. Out of these moments will be formed an unbroken series of images, something like a moving picture. As long as we are acting creatively, this film will unroll and be thrown on the screen of our inner vision, making vivid the circumstances among which we are moving. Moreover, these inner images create a corresponding mood, and arouse emotions, while holding us within the limits of the play.

This was the area in which Rob was weakest. He tried to get at the emotions of Fak by tackling them directly. He said himself

16 Ibid., p. 38.
17 Ibid., p. 60.
that he enjoyed the texture of words, and while this appreciation is necessary in acting, it is also a trap if it means stopping at the surface level, which is an easy thing to do. It was particularly easy in his case because he had a natural gift for speech which seemed at first to deceive him into thinking that he had achieved the character and emotions long before he had. Like Tortsov's own students, he began at the end, and tried to deliver the finished product before building the inner structure. His own sense of the exaggerated attitudes he was taking up eventually drove him back towards the creation of a subtext, and this meant a more subtle examination of Fak's aim and manipulations. He needed in general, when he undertook a role, much more concentration on the stimulation of his imagination, and less on externals. It was in the nature of a paradox that the more introverted Daniel found it helpful to concentrate on his surroundings and the other actors, while Rob, more extroverted, had this need to create a subtext in some detail, in order to make Fak convincing.

The passage I have quoted where Stanislavski speaks of the 'unbroken series of images' is highly relevant to the previous section on the victims of text-in-the-head. The text can be replaced, and here personal experience bears on the problem. It involves a little effort of will to give up the authority of the text, because it seems, illusorily, to offer security. But if that hurdle can be jumped, the life of the inner images will be found rewarding, a stimulus towards further creativity, and an aid to relaxation. There can be no dogmatic utterance as to
how this is done, because it is a highly idiosyncratic activity, and each has to find his or her own way.

The refusal to play an unpleasant role, the subservience to the authority of the text, and/or director, and a lack of conviction about the part one is playing or the dramatic situation, were the three main stumbling blocks encountered on the way. These attitudes hindered the production of free and spontaneous speech, as well as free and spontaneous movement. Where the inner critic or observer was active the student actor was uneasily aware that something was wrong, as their remarks about their dramatic roles make clear.

Looking back, it was significant that Jeanine and Jan never played unpleasant parts when improvising, and that Jan's improvisations were notably freer than her work with a text. Her voice came up and her movements were usually relaxed. Dan, too, gave the impression that improvising was a totally different thing for him than working with a text. Both also had problems with text-in-the-head, perhaps more so than the others. All the three areas were, of course, related, though some individuals were afflicted more by one than the others.

Everyone had to tackle their lack of conviction, one way or the other. Other factors may account for this lack, besides not knowing how to work on it, though this seemed to be the major one. One of them was discussed earlier in connection with the quality of the text itself. A play could be written in an inauthentic way, or have units within it that did not ring true; where this happened the actor's disbelief in his part and situation was heightened, and his task in general made much harder.
He sounded inauthentic, as well as the text.

The refusal to be nasty we have already looked at. This was also a refusal to believe that if the actor was in this situation he would do so and so. He cannot accept that the character or situation is as unpleasant as the playwright or director says it is, and says to himself, "I've never met anyone like that.", or "Iago could not exist outside the play of Othello.", and so on.

Feeling and Spontaneity

What is feeling on stage? In the old debate on the subject, begun in the eighteenth century, feeling and coldness were contrasted. Diderot in his Paradox sets up an actor of sensibility as a target for his arrows of derision. He comes down heavily on the side of detachment or coldness. The great actor is one who coolly calculates and demonstrates the feelings appropriate to the role. In no way does he share them. Diderot even points out that it is possible for an actor and actress, on bad terms with each other, to enact a love scene while quarrelling under their breath. (One cannot help wondering how much, if at all, the audience responded to the love scene.)

In contrast to this cold person, he represents the actor of sensibility as one who is easily upset and moved to facile tears, and who so exhausts himself emotionally on stage that he barely has the stamina to carry the performance through. The weakness in the argument in favour of the cold, unemotional actor is revealed at this point, for the actor who feels is depicted as

capable of facile and sentimental emotion only. Sentimentality has been well-defined as inadequate emotion. It is true that some actors have the gift of tears, and that the use of this gift may be appropriate to certain roles. But if this is the only kind of feeling that is meant, then the subject is not worth the debate.

In Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* there is a chapter called "The Vashti", said to be a description of the great French actress, Rachel, playing Phèdre. The account itself is a highly dramatic piece, and the writer was evidently inspired by the performance. The feeling described is that of brilliantly controlled fury -- fury and grief. This kind of emotion is far from the sensibility of Diderot's 'feeling' actor. In fact, acting of this calibre transcends his debate. The two parts of the actor described by Coquelin, the total emotional experience of the performer on the one hand plus the dispassionate observer on the other, are working together to create a great interpretation of a demanding role. And what about other kinds of feeling or passions, for instance that of Harpagon in *The Miser* for his treasure, or MacBeth's horror at his own guilt? These cannot be experienced at a facile level. Feeling and character here are really one thing -- the strong passion, whatever it is, creating a certain kind of ego with a certain flavour, which the actor has to convey. Where successful, the question of spontaneity does not arise. The feeling, successfully conveyed always carries

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with it the effect of originality and freshness.

In the project, where such feeling was blocked, for whatever reason, this effect was lacking, and replaced either by a 'reading' quality or by an exaggerated straining for effect.

It is however true to say, that feeling on stage is not the same as it is in real life. In life, emotion may be more profound, much more painful and often unpredictable. On stage it has to be predictable, though it may vary from performance to performance in depth and intensity. And on stage the appropriate emotion has to be directed in an orchestrated way in relation to others and by a vigilant and observant intelligence.

One last comment about student actors. It often happens that work in a theatre department is undertaken by people taking courses in other disciplines. In many ways this makes the work more interesting both to the students and those working with them. But it means that many student actors have had much training in using their brains, and very little in using intuition, emotion and voice. They are, according to McLuhan, print-oriented, and find the challenge to express something orally surprising and new. A student may typically react by wanting to 'understand' what is wanted, rather than taking the plunge and doing it. They want to think about it or talk about it, but not feel it or express it. Most of us do know what is required in a given dramatic situation, but are afraid to move into action. Feelings are instantly translated into thought as a defence.

As the great Zen Master, Huang Po, said in another connection:
To make use of your minds to think conceptually, is to leave the substance and attach yourselves to form.\textsuperscript{20}

This mental activity is fatal to actors as well as disciples seeking enlightenment. The mind at a very deep level knows all the human emotions, negative or positive. It was to the task of reaching that level that Stanislavski, and all first-rate actors addressed themselves.

\textsuperscript{20}John Blofield, rendered into English by The Zen Teaching of Huang Po, New York, Grove Press Inc., 1958.
Bibliography


Interview I

Interviewer: The first thing I want to ask you is, you know you read the play before you were cast, did you want to be cast for Fak or would you have preferred to play another part?
Rob: No, I didn't want to play Fak at first. I wanted to play Steve because of the way he talks to the audience. I thought I probably would be cast for Fak, but I wanted to have a different sort of a part at first, but once I got into it I was really happy.
Int.: What was the attraction of Steve?
Rob: It was just the idea that if I had played it, I wanted to play it so that the audience would not know for certain whether I was acting or whether I was just talking to them. The whole idea of just talking to them fascinated me. And I have played the drums, so the idea of the drums attracted me.
Int.: Have you done a part like Steve before or would it have been something new?
Rob: No, I just remember when I auditioned for this group I read the Stage Manager, and I liked doing it so much that since then I have been attracted to that sort of idea.
Int.: You mean in Our Town?
Rob: Yes, I do.
Int.: I see. When it came to it, did you like playing Fak?
Rob: Oh yes, I loved it once I really got into it.
Int.: Did you find it an effort to get that kind of character, or did it come naturally?
Rob: Some of it came naturally but it required quite a bit of an effort to figure out the details and get the interpretation consistent in my own mind.
Int.: Did you like the play?
Rob: The play as a whole or . . .
Int.: Yes, apart from what you did in it.
Rob: Yes, because I have always been attracted to anything that plays with the texture of words. I liked it in that sense, but I disliked the third act somewhat. I liked doing just the first act on its own, except my favorite act in the whole play was the second act, because there was so much of a playing with the words.
Int.: Yes. You played in it before didn't you, or read it before in a group?
Rob: Not really - we did mostly the second act and it was more of a game. We hadn't really got into the characters at all, and that was three years ago. I had forgotten most of it anyway, except for the occasional line.
Int.: I see. How did you learn your lines?
Rob: Actual memorization of them was quite easy. At first I thought it would be very difficult because when I sat down at home and looked at them and tried to do it, it seemed almost impossible. But I found that just from rehearsals, and especially the line rehearsals I was able to pick them up quite quickly and it was only a matter of increasing the speed. The big sections like my speech and my poem I memorized at home.
Int.: I see. Did you find the line rehearsals valuable?
Rob: Oh yes, very.

Int.: Just for lines or for anything else?

Rob: Well, lines and general rhythm and getting an idea of the whole movement of the play.

Int.: The shape of all the different units began to run together?

Rob: Yes.

Int.: What kind of pre-rehearsal exercises did you prefer? You have done a lot of pre-rehearsal exercises in your drama courses, I imagine. Which kind did you like best?

Rob: Of all I've ever done?

Int.: Yes.

Rob: Well, I really liked that circle (i.e. the Sound and Movement) once we got into it. It's hard to say. What we used to always do in the theatre courses was warm-ups to music which I always enjoyed when I was younger because they had fantastic records like "Let there be drums", and things like that which were very, very rhythmic and which you could do a lot to. But as we got older and more mature, for some reason we got very sombre music. I used to go to the classes feeling very happy and everything, and would get depressed by the end, so I didn't like those. But I liked working with music and records and doing just general exercises starting out with breathing, being a rag doll - that sort of thing - and gradually working ourselves up.

Int.: Do you find that doing this kind of exercise before you approach a text really warms you up towards it so that when you come to the script you don't feel any sense of alienation from it?

Rob: You mean a rehearsal right in the middle after we had already read the thing before?
Int.: No, I mean if you came to rehearsal and simply went straight into the play and didn't do any exercises - would it be different from the experience of rehearsing with warm-up exercises? Would it change your attitude to the text?

Rob: Oh, I don't know about attitude to the text - that's hard to say. It's a different level. I'm just in a more physical and vocal space than if I've only read the text. You're more in a mental reading space and you can enjoy it and have the same attitude in a sense, to the play but your body isn't responding to it - just your mind.

Int.: How did you find the part of Fak physically - did you feel for example physically easy?

Rob: Well, it was a tremendous drain on me, especially on my emotions mainly because of the hysterical bit at the end; it made doing a run-through of it twice in the evening very difficult, and I had to psyche myself up to do it the second time. That would leave me drained at the end, but that was more of a mental thing I guess. Actually, physically I guess it was fine.

Int.: Did you feel at ease on the stage - not awkward or aware of hands or anything like that?

Rob: I felt at ease, yes.

Int.: Did you have any specific vocal problems with it?

Rob: Well, I wasn't sure at the time what I was doing wrong, because I found after two rehearsals of it, one run-through in an evening would be fine, but after two run-throughs my voice would often be hoarse or at least feel very strained, and I didn't know what I was doing wrong. Since doing the play, I have found what my trouble is. I seem to start the words up in my throat where
I shouldn't, and I get the volume by then pushing with my diaphragm so that I'm doing both the breathing in my chest and the diaphragm; it's just starting with the chest and getting there - the push of the diaphragm, and therefore I'm getting both the volume and the strain, so I have to work on that.

Int.: Do you consciously use breathing techniques?

Rob: Not when I'm on stage. The only time I had to start thinking about my breathing, it just seemed to come automatically and I didn't think about it, except in the part of the poem, when the first few times I did it I found I was breathing wrong, because sometimes I'd be pushing the words out and have hardly enough air to do it, and I just had to reorganize my breathing in that bit, but other than that I did no conscious work.

Int.: You know we did a lot of improvisations earlier in the year. When you came to having a text, did you find it impeded the expression of character or feeling?

Rob: No, I preferred it really because all through the improvisations I felt that I had never really got into it. It wasn't the fault of this set-up or anything but it was for some reason my own state of mind - I wasn't really getting into the thing. But once I had a script where there was some really definite, tangible thing to work with, I enjoyed it more.

Int.: So, it was doing an improvisation for you, that was more of an impediment to expressing character than when you have a text?

Rob: In a way I suppose. It wasn't really an impediment.

Int.: You remember you did an improvisation with Dan. You were in competition to sell a car to Jan?
Rob: Oh yes.

Int.: The words came very easily - that sounded quite easy.

Rob: Yeah. They all came fairly easy. That's why I wanted to keep away from the word 'impediment' - neither seemed an impediment. In working on the scripts I worked more on the character, so that my mental state was right. But in the improvisations I hadn't concentrated enough in a lot of them and so felt I was sort of doing a half-assed job in the characters I was doing and often wouldn't really do anything much with them.

Int.: Okay, thanks very much.

Interview II

Int.: You know you read the play first before you knew what part you were going to play. Did you want to be cast for Cone or would you have preferred to play someone else?

Daniel: I really wanted the part of Steve at first.

Int.: Oh, why did you want to play Steve?

Daniel: I think I saw the character differently than it was portrayed. I just wanted to play that kind of a part as a more really menacing part.

Int.: So Steve is menacing?

Daniel: Yeah, very menacing.

Int.: Can you remember why?

Daniel: The rhythms and the lines and like "releases frustrations," like before he said that line "see" like a drum roll or a machine gun fire.

Int.: So you would have played it quite differently from Dan?
Daniel: Yeah.

Int.: Do you think anything else in the part suggested that kind of interpretation?

Daniel: I can't remember too much of it now, but he seemed very contemptuous of the audience, and the way the drums have such a very physical violence to them.

Int.: When you were cast for Cone, did you regret it very much?

Daniel: At first until I began to feel my way round the part a bit more. I had a lot of trouble at first.

Int.: How long did it take you, roughly?

Daniel: About half-way through the production.

Int.: About two-and-a-half weeks or so?

Daniel: Yeah.

Int.: Did you like the play when you read it?

Daniel: I liked it but I didn't think of it as a great play.

Int.: No. As we progressed with it, did you still like it?

Daniel: I began to like it a bit more.

Int.: So your initial reaction was not that enthusiastic?

Daniel: No. It was only after we were able to do some of the movements especially, they seemed to come to life.

Int.: Did you find the text obscure or difficult to understand?

Daniel: No, not to any great degree.

Int.: You didn't find the English hard to understand?

Daniel: No.

Int.: How did you learn your lines?

Daniel: Not intellectually at all really. I just looked over it a lot.

Int.: Did you learn by rote at all?
Daniel: By what?

Int.: By rote - repeating them over and over to yourself?

Daniel: No.

Int.: So it was through the rehearsals.

Daniel: Pretty well totally.

Int.: Did you find the line rehearsals valuable?

Daniel: I thought they were one of the biggest helps.

Int.: Just with lines?

Daniel: Just with the lines.

Int.: Did you find them valuable in any other way?

Daniel: Yeah. I liked to say the lines without any emotion, without anything expected of me, just so it would become fixed in my head. And when I was doing that I wouldn't have to worry about expressing the emotion of the line, and I could think about the line and the possibilities available to me in this interpretation.

Int.: I see. And when you had to rehearse on your feet so to speak, did you find this more difficult?

Daniel: Initially.

Int.: At what point did the lines stop bothering you?

Daniel: After about two or three weeks. The more I could do the physical gestures, the more the lines seemed to fit. The motivation would come more from my movements than anything else.

Int.: Yes. I remember after about two or three weeks you did an improvisation with Rob, in which you were competitive with him. You were both selling a car to Jan. It seemed at the time that this gave you some kind of break-through in the part. Is that right or is that impression correct?
Daniel: Yes, because up to that point I was very unsure of my ability. And that improvisation gave me a chance to just let loose, and it served to clear the air a bit.

Int.: Did the effect stay with you?

Daniel: I'd lose it every once in a while, but the general effect was there for the rest of the production.

Int.: What was it about the improvisation that helped you. Can you say at all?

Daniel: It was the wildness of it all. I didn't really think about what I was doing. I just sort of yelled - I was emotionally selling the car.

Int.: Yes, but you were in competition with Rob. Did you still feel he was going to win?

Daniel: No.

Int.: And did that make a difference?

Daniel: I think so. For the part of Cone I felt the superiority.

Int.: So the improvisation helped you towards feeling superior to Rob which you needed to do, is that right?

Daniel: Yeah.

Int.: Of the pre-rehearsal exercises we did, we did some trust exercises earlier on, and we did a lot of improvisations and we did the circle, i.e. the Sound and Movement. Which of these exercises or any others that you've done anywhere else do you prefer before a rehearsal?

Daniel: I really like the trust exercises most of all, because I always felt like I could operate far better when I felt more a member of the group instead of an individual and the trust exercises gave me a group identity, while sometimes I felt with
the Sound and Movement exercises, it was more of a competition.

**Int.** I see. The trust exercises particularly the kind where you fall backwards and people catch you?

**Daniel:** Yeah.

**Int.** And did you feel any kind of pre-rehearsal exercise is better than not having them?

**Daniel:** Yeah.

**Int.** How did you find the part physically. Did you feel physically comfortable?

**Daniel:** Yeah, I did.

**Int.** When we went over and over something, like we drilled and drilled and drilled some of the things that were hard to do technically like taping up Dean, that kind of thing, did you find the repetition useful or did you find it simply exhausting and that it got stale?

**Daniel:** At the time of doing it, it seemed to get stale, but the results that came out later I thought were really beneficial.

**Int.** How did you find the part vocally; were you aware of any specific vocal problems?

**Daniel:** I hadn't really thought about that much.

**Int.** Well, from crude things like audibility to anything else.

**Daniel:** I felt my speech patterns were in a way too fast for the part. I noticed that I would start speaking too fast and I couldn't see Cone doing that, like I could see him being snappy but not really rapidly snappy. That's the thing that bothered me the most.

**Int.** I see. Did you feel any difficulties with the loud voice of Rob?
Daniel: I usually wasn't that aware of there being an audience, so that I was only playing against Rob and not playing for the audience so I didn't really pay attention to his voice. I'd only become aware of it when you'd tell me that I was inaudible.

Int.: When you have a text instead of having just a free improvisation, do you find the text itself impedes the expression of character or feeling - just having a script?

Daniel: Yes, having a script.

Int.: Which do you prefer doing?

Daniel: Improvisations.

Int.: Does this hold true even when you know the text very well and have thrown it away so to speak?

Daniel: There's a sense of security with the text but at the same time when I improvise I feel I am communicating far more and being far more creative.

Int.: Has this been so in the past when you've done drama at school at all?

Daniel: Yeah.

Int.: When you improvise, can you easily improvise not merely feeling, but a character for a situation?

Daniel: Usually for me that depends on the length of time that we go on, or going back over the same improvisations again and again in different variations, I begin to feel the character coming.

Int.: Yes, because we didn't do an improvisation more than twice at most, I think, did we?

Daniel: No.

Int.: Is there anything else that you can tell me about your
feelings about having a text or having language which isn't the kind you use every day and the demand made on you, so to speak, to be somebody else?

**Daniel:** In this play, a lot of the expressions used I didn't understand, yet I could see what they meant merely by the relation, so I could say them without actually knowing what they meant, but knowing in a way how they should be said. I suppose I was rather bluffing my way through in certain things like that.

**Int.**: Was this so even after we had rehearsed - I mean, you didn't ask for meaning?

**Daniel:** Yeah, I didn't really think it was that necessary. It was just the intensity of the way it was said and how fast it was said.

**Int.**: You can't give any examples of that?

**Daniel:** I can't remember any at the moment, no.

**Int.**: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

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**Interview III**

**Int.**: Well, you had the play to read before I cast the parts, so you had some idea of it. Did you want to be cast for the part of Dean, or would you have preferred someone else?

**Mike:** I just sort of figured I was either going to be Dean, Steve - I liked the idea of the parts like Cone and Fak; they seemed to be a little more solid, I don't know, more emotional. I liked those parts but I didn't think that was really what I was going to be; that's just the way I saw it.
Int.: Which were you attracted to?
Mike: I think it was Fak, he was so -- oh wow! I think it was Fak.
Int.: But you figured that you'd probably be cast for Dean or Steve? And of those two?
Mike: Dean.
Int.: You liked Dean. Some people would have liked to play Steve, in fact both guys playing Cone and Fak wanted to play Steve.
Mike: That's strange. No, I didn't.
Int.: Did you like the play?
Mike: Yeah, I did. Yes, I liked the energy of it - you know it's so optimum and so dry all the time, rather than just a slow going down. It's an exciting play.
Int.: You mean the way each section has a kind of crisis? Did you find it a bore - there were certain sections which had to be drilled over and over again because they were technically difficult to do to get words with movements and sounds, like the one where they first start teasing you, "Go round, he's loose, he's looney" - that section, and the other section where they tie you up in newspaper and scotch tape, did you find it helpful to do it so many times or not?
Mike: Oh yeah, I did. I don't ever remember being bored with it. It's more like every time you do it you really have to do it; it's not like sitting back on it.
Int.: I kind of wondered sometimes how people felt when we had done it about twenty times at least and then we did it again.
Mike: Yeah. The only times I got bored during rehearsals was when I was watching somebody else doing something over and over and
over again.

Int.: Mike, how do you learn your lines - do you pick them up at rehearsals or do you learn them at home or what?

Mike: I learn them at home. I found the meaning of the lines and the expression, I got those at rehearsals; and I found I had trouble doing that at home. I used tape recordings at home and played it back and played it back but I don't think it helped very much except for just learning lines.

Int.: Why was this, do you know? Could you analyze it at all? Why didn't it help you to do it at home?

Mike: I just don't think I had the part very clear in my head, like as rehearsals went on it got clearer and clearer to me who Dean was, and how to do them, and at the beginning it wasn't clear to me how it should be coming out. So when I heard the tape back, it was like, well the lines are right and it doesn't sound too bad, but it didn't seem to fit into anything, or was that character.

Int.: Did it have anything to do with doing the part in isolation?

Mike: Not so much, because when I practiced at home later, once it became a little clearer; I didn't use a tape recorder because I could almost tell when I was doing it right and could do it at home all right. I think it was just a matter of getting it clear in my head and getting the feel of it.

Int.: Right. Which kind of pre-rehearsal exercises did you like? Do you recall we did some improvisations? We did some trust exercises very early on and we did the circle most frequently here.

Mike: I liked the circle for getting the energy up and getting moving. I liked those trust exercises, the ones where we did
almost two people going back and forth across the line, and the ones where you are just zapping with somebody else and very closely following them.

Int.: Copying everything they do.

Mike: Yes.

Int.: Those are not the trust exercises I meant. Those are the ones where you collapse and people have to catch you, or you run blindfold and people prevent you.

Mike: I missed out on that, I think.

Int.: I see. Do you find the improvisations helpful?

Mike: I was just thinking of the last one we did, that one about the store. I didn't find that particularly helpful - you know the one where we went into the store and it was robbed. I didn't find that helpful. Some of them are really good for when you are getting into a part and doing it and then reacting to others. I liked doing that mining disaster one, you remember?

Int.: Yes, that was a good one.

Mike: And the Cinderella one, not Cinderella ...

Int.: The melodrama?

Mike: The melodrama, right.

Int.: You were a heavy father? Yes, that was good.

Mike: It depends. They can be really good. I think it's just the matter of getting the part - you know, getting the character down. I think they're really good then. I learned a lot from those two particular ones - maybe it was just because the characters started coming out.

Int.: And you found that lines just came?

Mike: Oh, yeah.
Int.: How did you find the part of Dean physically? Did you feel physically comfortable on stage?
Mike: Yeah, not too bad. I found one thing: at first where I walked on and looked to the right and turned off when I walked up on that look-over thing, that put me right there. That was the most important thing for some reason. Just looking out like I was looking round, put me right into the situation and made me feel - well, I am Dean. We didn't get on to that until very late.
Int.: Yes, We had an exact place for you to do that?
Mike: No, before I had been coming on, and just walking across and then noticing the audience. But then we changed that and I walked on, stopped and looked, you know I was looking upstage with my back to the audience and then I turned just my head right and then turned left and just happened to see the audience. It was just that little pause in time that seemed to put me there.
Int.: I see. Then this didn't happen almost until we got into the studio?
Mike: Yes, just about. I don't know, but it was just from that movement - maybe it was just because everything else was jelling - but I just remember every time I did that it was great. It seemed to work from then on.
Int.: So that actually helped you to get the character.
Mike: Yeah, and the situation.
Int.: And how did you find the part vocally? Did you have any vocal problems?
Mike: Yeah, my voice, you know - that yelling.
Int.: Shouting 'Stop'?
Mike: Yeah. I guess I just don't have my voice trained enough
yet, but when I had to shout down those three people, you know three of them going around and we'd do it over and over, my voice just went time after time.

Int.: Yes, well it was heavy that way. But you didn't have any problem relating to the audience in the early part where you talk to them direct?

Mike: That first piece? No, it seemed a lot better having them there finally. It was a little distracting to see some of them sitting there smiling at me.

Int.: People you knew?

Mike: No, it was just strange to see some guy sitting there smiling at me I didn't know, sitting there smiling like he'd just found an old friend or something.

Int.: Yes. I feel that both Steve and Dean really need an audience. Doing it in rehearsal must be quite difficult.

Mike: Yeah, I found I just had to imagine an audience. I had to imagine chairs out there and people actually sitting there. It helped when I got into the studio to see the actual chair audience there.

Int.: Did you find having a text impeded the expression of character? You know you said that having done a lot of improvisations you could get the character in the melodrama and so on. Did you find having actual lines impeded you in getting to what Dean was like?

Mike: Yeah, it was like I had to search for him. They were the clues to what his character was like, and I had to search through and try and find out what it was. The other ones you can drag from a couple of sources that you have on your own and put them
together and sort of chop off corners, but you couldn't do that with Dean. I started out with that head space thing and tried to get his background, but that didn't fit in with the clues. It was different totally, you know like it was a search until I found him.

**Int.**: Some actors do build up a whole biography and find it helpful; with others it doesn't work.

**Mike**: I think it was helpful in some ways to get the idea and try to put a little flesh on it.

**Int.**: Did you find in rehearsal at all that you got into a rut with the lines so you could hear your own voice, and it got into certain intonations which you couldn't get out of? Please don't think I'm saying it sounded like that. I'm only asking questions because reactions to the actual speech set on paper is what I'm interested in in asking these questions.

**Mike**: No, I think it was more like that at the beginning, like when I didn't really know the character and was just doing the lines I did get into a thing. But as soon as the lines started taking on a meaning it wasn't so bad.

**Int.**: And did you find in an improvisation, not having lines impedes the expression of character - having to look for them and make them up - was it a strain?

**Mike**: It was a strain in a way, but it was like you knew every line you made up had to fit in with the character, had to be an expression of the character. No, I don't think it impeded the character; it sort of helped.

**Int.**: Good. Have you anything you want to say about the thing in general that I haven't asked you, or anything you discovered
about yourself?

Mike: Not a heck of a lot. I found toward the end of the rehearsals I'd get a little pissed off at the other actors sometimes. Maybe it was just nerves building up to the thing.

Int.: Yes, they kept treading on you, too, didn't they?

Mike: Yeah, right.

Int.: You were in an unfortunate position from this point of view.

Mike: But I did sort of begin to feel a little - I don't know . . .

Int.: Yes, well that's just natural. Did you have any acting problems of any kind?

Mike: No, it was all just learning for me. This being the first thing I've ever really been in, it was just all learning. I don't really have anything to compare it with.

Int.: Okay, well fine. Thank you very much.

Interview IV

Int.: You know when you read the play through before I cast it, of course there were only two women's parts, but was Patty the one you wanted to play, or would you have liked the other one?

Jan: I had mixed feelings. Dodo really interested me because it was just different and fun, but with Patty I knew I would learn a lot more by doing that part, and in that way I was interested in it. But Dodo attracted me more.

Int.: Yes, because it was a bit out of the ordinary?

Jan: Yeah.

Int.: Did you like the play?
Jan: In first reading it do you mean, or looking back or what?
Int.: Well, both - what was your attitude to it - how did it develop?
Jan: In reading it first I wasn't very sure about it. It was powerful, but in reading the whole play, especially the end which I didn't really like - but looking at the first act and reading it several times, then I was quite interested in how we would go about the sort of ritual. That really interested me. Then when we got into it, too, that side of it interested me. I liked the play ... there's still things about it I don't understand. I don't understand what she was trying to do, and that way I'm not so sure about; but as a whole yes.
Int.: Do you feel emotionally you don't understand, or that it's a different culture and hard to grasp.
Jan: Well, it seemed to me, and I more and more felt it, that it was dealing with something underneath a real situation, and that underneathness - I wasn't sure whether it was quite right. You know she was dealing with quite a bit of violence, well it was real, the things she was doing were real; it was sort of an underlying violence and easily getting into orgy situations. I was questioning whether this could happen if you take it out of the situation of a street gang, and if she was saying that, I'm not sure whether all she was saying was right.
Int.: You mean particularly the relationship between Greta and Cone?
Jan: No, I mean more what could suddenly very quickly happen between these particular three, and with others.
Int.: You mean with the sudden switches of mood, yes.
Jan: It's a dangerous sort of feeling to be thinking about, but I guess you don't really want to admit that.

Int.: Yes, that they could suddenly switch into almost a murderous violence then switch out of it again.

Jan: Yes, and so easily manipulate it with just one word.

Int.: Yes, but she says at the beginning something about how inadequate they are emotionally - that the emotion in a way is kind of on top - more profound emotions are not things they know.

Jan: She says that, but at the same time I had the feeling she was really talking to all of us, and if that's the case, then that's where I start to worry and question. I mean, assuming she was not just taking a street gang in London, then you start to wonder.

Int.: Yes, especially as she also says that it started with watching a bunch of university students fooling around.

Jan: Yes, right - that's more threatening.

Int.: How did you learn your lines?

Jan: A couple of different ways - the short and frequent lines, especially at the beginning of the play I tended to break up into units and sort of learn orders in which things come. Then when we began rehearsing it, they began to make sense as well. But at first it was quite a memorizing thing. The longer speeches I started more with the sense of what it was, but it shifted. As you got into rehearsals, the longer ones, even though I'd started with learning it by the sense, it became more of a memory process. I think partly the longer speeches were also the ones I was having a lot of difficulty with, the emotional set-up part of it, I think.

Int.: Yes, one of those speeches was very difficult, and I think
not a good piece of writing, that was a real problem, sort of over-written and out of character. The one about Greta, planets and stars.

Jan: Yes, that is the one I was thinking of.

Int.: Did you find the line rehearsals helpful?

Jan: Very much, both in warming up beforehand and then going into rehearsal and in learning them and getting the speed up on the cues - that was really helpful. But in the part where I'm getting angry, where there were a few more lines rather than the one-line things, it didn't really help the learning.

Int.: I see. What kind of pre-rehearsal exercises did you prefer, the improvisations or the things we did earlier in the Fall term? We did some trust exercises and these sorts of feeling exercises hand to hand. Then we evolved this Sound and Movement circle.

Jan: The trust exercises, particularly the individual hand-to-hand thing for me I really like. My concentration sort of snaps up very quickly and I like that for starting, and the improvisations also. A few times in rehearsals we'd stop and do an improvisation, sometimes related directly to something but sometimes, well once we did the store robbery and it had some of the same elements as the play and I found that really helped; I liked the ones which were somewhat related to what we were going to be rehearsing.

The Sound and Movement towards the end when we did it just before a complete run-through, then it was helpful because you were really feeling as a group, and that group feeling for me was really important, because you could go on then, and feel you were putting something together; but in terms of concentration and in intensity, it didn't help nearly so much.
Int.: One person said that he found it quite tiring; he put so much effort into doing the Sound and Movement that he was actually quite tired when he came to the rehearsal. Did you find that at all?

Jan: No, they felt quite distinct to me.

Int.: I see. Did they help you to feel alert?

Jan: Yes, particularly towards the end when we were moving quickly from one to the other to an extent, but I found some of the other things more helpful in that way.

Int.: You were saying about concentration, I seem to remember we did one improvisation where you were supposed to be looking at pictures in a gallery and imagining the pictures very thoroughly, do you find that kind of improvisation helpful where there isn't much outward action but rather something going on in your head?

Jan: But I find more helpful ones that involve personal relations like particularly some of the quiet but intense things like the F.L.Q. type of improvisation - I find that much more helpful.

Int.: Yes, and the mine disaster?

Jan: Yes, very much. That for me was the best improvisation in all sorts of ways.

Int.: How did you find the part of Patty physically?

Jan: I was scared of it for quite a while.

Int.: Did you feel relaxed on stage or physically tired?

Jan: Again, the last week or so I felt quite good about it. I was quite relaxed, but before that not quite so much. I was probably overly self-conscious about it.

Int.: Before that you looked sometimes physically slightly uncomfortable, this is why I asked you.
Jan: Yeah, right.

Int.: How did you find it vocally? Did you find you had any particular vocal problems?

Jan: A couple, one was just the volume level - I had to think to get it loud enough, especially starting off. It seems if I really concentrated on it for the first scene then it went all right.

Int.: When you say 'think', you mean you had to remind yourself?

Jan: Yes.

Int.: Yes, your voice is naturally fairly low.

Jan: Yes, and I tend to let it go lower than it naturally is, and tend to mumble into sentences. Otherwise, well when we were interpreting the anger scene as sort of straight loud anger rather than sarcasm, or sort of a sarcastic anger - I was just at a loss as to getting variation into a loud, angry anger and that vocally, too. But when we moved into a more sort of cynical thing, I felt easier with it.

Int.: Yes, I see. Did you find the kind of emotion she expresses kind of uncomfortable to express, or did you get easy with it - you know she was quite unpleasant at times.

Jan: It got easier and I could understand it more again when it got into the sarcastic, more controlled kind of thing but I found the less controlled anger very hard. I hadn't had any experience with it on either end, either being it or having it happen to me, or being in a room with it and I found that very hard to understand.

Int.: You said several things about the improvisations which you liked. Did you find having a text impeded the expression of character?

Jan: Well, I think there's a double answer for that. In one way,
with the text you're given much more of a character than you ever were in an improvisation. In an improv. you're given sort of a character, but you still put much more of yourself, outwardly yourself, into it; whereas with a text you had to take what was there. You're still very much putting yourself into it but you're putting yourself into another character rather than yourself with another character - if that defines it enough.

Int.: Did you have any sense of restriction once you had lines?
Jan: To the extent that I couldn't do with the lines some of the things I wanted to do or I saw that should be done. Gradually that worked out: I could do more; that kind of restriction, yes. But in terms of just feeling, 'well, I have to say this line now, I can't say what I want' sort of thing - no, not after the lines were learned at all.

Int.: Did you find the lines got set at all, so that after about three weeks' rehearsal, if you were required to change anything you found it hard - they seemed to come in a certain fixed way?
Jan: Oh, maybe the first couple of times you did it, you were sort of aware that you were leaving something out, but very quickly no. Very easily, though, you got set and well there's this, then there's this, and then there's this; and if you started in the middle you didn't necessarily know where you were.

Int.: Were you aware of the sound of your own voice?
Jan: Well, in the beginning when I started and trying to concentrate on bringing the volume up and making it sort of more blatant, making Patty's voice quality more big, and also the screaming, the sort of straight-out anger, I was really conscious of my voice. But after you pointed out that I was speaking very highly on one
level, in a very high tone of voice. I wasn't aware of that until you did, but when you did point it out I was quite aware of it, but I wasn't until you said that.

**Int.** And did my remark help you or did it make you more self-conscious?

**Jan:** Yes, it helped, not immediately right then, but in thinking about it. No, come to think of it, definitely it helped because it broke problems that you didn't know why they were happening.

**Int.** You said when we first started to talk, that there were frightening things about the play - you either felt that it was frightening to think people were like that or that they, in fact, weren't like that; I wasn't quite sure what you were saying - that they could change suddenly from rage and could be taken straight out of it by a chance word - did this relate to your own part particularly? Did these feelings arise from playing Patty?

**Jan:** Yeah, very much. First of all it was just in reading it, but then it sort of developed in getting into that part, trying to understand her fast changes and her need to sort of destroy things around her - very much, quite a strong feeling. Sometimes I would walk out feeling just drained out because of all that was going on. You figure it's probably in yourself, that it's not too close to the surface, then suddenly it is. It's sort of scary.

**Int.** Sometimes it's due to an inner resistance too. I played a very angry part which I didn't do terribly well actually when I was perhaps a little older than you. Mrs. Joe Gargery in "Great Expectations" - she is furiously angry nearly all the time and horrible to this child, and I forced it, really, because I
couldn't get the anger up and this was very draining. Did you have that sort of experience or did you feel that you did manage to get the anger up and that this was exhausting?

Jan: Well, again the straight anger, it was forced and that was one kind of draining; it wasn't a good feeling at all, and it wasn't being effective, which makes you feel even worse. But I was talking more of emotions that I felt were - it was more when I was really understanding all that was there, that it was draining because it was all there; she meant it to be.

Int.: Yes, right. Do you find in an improvisation that sometimes not having a text impedes the expression of character?

Jan: Yes, well personally I tend to let other people - I tend to be quiet in any situation that is new and different which most of the improvisations that we set up were. They were 'once-in-a-lifetime' situations, not the Christmas scene we did, but other things. So it's more of a fight if you're trying to have another type of character; there's more problem there. You've got to make yourself do that - you can't say 'well, I've got a line here'.

Int.: Do you feel it's easier to let others take the lead in the improvisations?

Jan: Not actually the lead; well you could say the lead or the defining role.

Int.: Yes. Well, thanks very much.
Interview V

Int.: You know I gave you the play before I cast it, when you read it did you want to play any particular part?
Dan: Well, it was funny - I cast it all out and the casting was exactly the way it turned out, and in a way I wanted to play either Fak or Cone because it was so completely different from me. But I was happy the way it turned out anyways.
Int.: Yes. Fak and Cone really wanted to play Steve.
Dan: Yes, which is really interesting.
Int.: One of the things which arose from one of the other interviews - it was either Fak or Cone - said that they thought that Steve was a really menacing or threatening part.
Dan: Yeah, it was. When I first read it I thought 'oh wow! it would be so easy to sort of frump out', you know.
Int.: But he didn't mean that. I think he meant more that the part itself, that Steve threatened other people, that he threatened the audience, "releases frustrations."
Dan: I never thought of that.
Int.: It never occurred to me to see the guy as a menace - did it occur to you?
Dan: I never got that. I guess it could be done, but I don't see him as a menace really, especially him being a drummer, it would really completely change everything if he was an absolute menace. I think he would be more apt to get in in the play himself, like doing little things if he was more of a menace type figure. But I think if he was a menace I don't think he'd be there to sit and watch and play once in a while.
Int.: Yes, I agree. I was really interested in this quite different view of the part.

Dan: That's interesting all right, but no, it never really occurred to me.

Int.: Did you like the play?

Dan: Yeah, I really enjoyed it. When I first read the script I thought 'wow' it would be great if it could really be done but I really had second doubts as to whether it could really be pulled off or not.

Int.: Yes, it's one of those plays which is rather like reading a musical score and it becomes suddenly alive when it's done.

Dan: Yeah, and it has to be seen to really be appreciated.

Int.: Yes. How did you learn your lines?

Dan: Just be reading it over and getting the general thought of it, because all I had really was that big speech and I didn't want to sit down and memorize it line by line because I knew it would sound 'liney', because I had that problem from the beginning anyways, and I didn't want to get that. So what I did was just to read it in the context of the script, and read the following things that would come on, read what came before it and really thought of the situation, and just walked it out and said it, paraphrased it, and became very familiar with it, and kept on going over it like that until I knew it.

Int.: Did you feel you ever overcame this problem? You said you felt you were 'liney'?

Dan: Yeah, but it took me quite a while to do it, because once I had it it still kept on slipping back once in a while but in the performance I think I got over it.
Int.: Was that having a live audience?
Dan: Yes, definitely. That had so much to do with it. It really made a world of difference, especially with a long speech. It's meant to be played to a lot of people, and it really helped.
Int.: Yes. You didn't do much on the line rehearsals, did you?
Dan: No, I didn't do any line rehearsals.
Int.: Did you do much rehearsing at home on your own?
Dan: Just in paraphrasing it and going over the speech and thinking of character, and near the end I spent quite a bit of time going through the script, and lining up places to work in the instruments and thinking of how the beats would go and different things.
Int.: Yes, that worked very well. Did you find any kind of contrast between working at home and working here?
Dan: Yeah. In working here it seems it was quite a bit easier because everybody else was working for you, even the simple fact of them concentrating and them receiving what you were doing, it seemed you could get a lot more out of it. Also, when you were at home, you were the only person to judge, whereas up here when you were doing something wrong they could spot it and help you along, stop you getting trapped into something.
Int.: Do you find if you work at home you tend to set the thing up imaginatively so that when you come here this kind of fantasy is troubled by the reality of the rehearsal situation; did you find this sort of problem?
Dan: Not really, no. Because what I did, I just sort of imagined talking to different people and I didn't create too vivid a situation because I didn't want to be used to one situation and then be put in another one. I didn't want to fall into that trap
either.

Int.: Getting away from that—we did some pre-rehearsal exercises—we did the Sound and Movement circle and we did other things with Helen, that mask thing she did, and relating one-to-one copying what people did, and some trust exercises before that, you know people falling into each other's arms. They have to be caught or they'd fall on the floor; and feeling hand-to-hand, that kind of thing, and of course we did a lot of improvisations. Of these sorts of exercises, can you say at all which you found helpful? Dan: I think the Sound and Movement one was the best because you really learned what exactly that other person was, what they were going to do. You became accustomed to them, physically and mentally. You knew what was going on in their heads, what types of moves they were making, and you felt a lot more secure working with them.

Int.: That was the circle.

Dan: Yes, and the trust exercises were really good, because they gave you a feeling of security and sort of brought the group together, which all the exercises did, and the improvisations.

Int.: Do you think the improvisations helped your actual acting skills?

Dan: Yeah, I think they do because you have to think of different characters in different situations quite quickly. Because it's really easy to be a sort of blase character, and just work more on the situation. But it takes you a while to get into them, like I felt our first improvisations weren't quite as good, as far as getting the characterization and the spontaneity of the thing. Doing an improv. and then going through a line rehearsal shows you, you know what you've got to reach, that sort of sound and the spontaneity
of the thing. In doing my speech and doing an improv. I really noticed a difference - I knew what I had to get.

Int.: So if you were going into another rehearsal situation and you had your choice of which exercises were done, which would you choose?

Dan: I'd choose the trust exercises first and definitely the Sound and Movement and I'd do some improvs. too, I think, to bring the group closer. I think I'd start out with that before I'd even attempt to start working on the play just to get the people working with that set of people, to alleviate any fears or inhibitions that you have.

Int.: Yes. How did you find the part physically? Did you feel physically comfortable?

Dan: Yeah, because it was the sort of part I could mold around myself anyways. At first I felt quite uncomfortable because I was playing it so close to me, and yet in a way it was so different. But after a while, as we became more accustomed to it, I felt quite easy with it.

Int.: You didn't feel unrelaxed?

Dan: No, there weren't any physical barriers in it at all.

Int.: And vocally, were you aware of any vocal problems at all?

Dan: Just in getting variations in the speech. I tended to keep it not really monotone, but not really lively either. That came with the spontaneity of it.

Int.: Did the paraphrasing help you?

Dan: It really helped a lot, especially for getting the variations in the voice quality, and for getting rid of the 'liney' bit, too, it really helped.
Int.: Did you find that having a text impeded the expression of feeling which you were able to achieve in other ways, like in improvisation?

Dan: Yeah, it is hard really to take something that's already written down because it's not natural, which makes the biggest difference, because what you're saying in an improv. even though it's a different character that you're trying to get, it's still coming out of your head and so it's still going to be natural for you to say that. Yet with the text, it's something that somebody else has written and somebody else has said, and for you to say that in a natural way takes a bit of work.

Int.: Yes. On the other hand in an improvisation, did you ever find that having to look for lines impeded the expression?

Dan: Yes, that's true too, because lots of times you wouldn't really know what to say. Sometimes it was often funny in different improvs. - I know in two different improvs. I found myself saying exactly the same lines.

Int.: Yes. Did you find that doing the improvisations helped with the part?

Dan: Yeah, when I first brought them home I was having trouble getting the relaxed and very casual qualities that Steve has to have, and I found that playing the bongoes, just sort of talking, just even holding them without even playing them, it was like all the nervousness that I had in me sort of went right into the bongoes, which was really, really good.

Int.: It 'released frustrations'?

Dan: Yeah, it really did. It was really amazing, like all the static I had in me just sort of went in and I got it all out which was really good, really helpful. When I first started playing it,
I put on a record to start out with, and started battering away to the record; then I took it off and just started battering away and I realized that this probably wouldn't be something Steve would be doing. For one thing, Steve probably wouldn't be listening to that type of music, and so I thought well, I won't even think of any music, I'll just sort of get into the character then I'll pick them up and start playing them. It was sort of a slow, rhythmic, jazzy-type beat because I sort of had imagined that Steve would be a jazzy-type musician and really it was actually an incredible change.

Int.: Did the cymbal have any effect on this?

Dan: Yeah, because the cymbal came very early and I sort of walked out and saw all those people out there and I had just said a few lines and just sort of, smash - like everything went right.

Int.: Good. Okay, thanks very much.
APPENDIX B

Texts Used for Auditions

OUR TOWN by Thornton Wilder, Act II

How do such things begin?
George and Emily are going to show you now the conversation they had when they first knew that ... that ... as the saying goes ... they were meant for one another. But before they do it I want you to try and remember what it was like when you were young, when you were fifteen or sixteen. For some reason it is very hard to do: those days when even the little things in life could be almost too exciting to bear.
And particularly the days when you were first in love; when you were like a person sleep-walking, and you didn't quite see the street you were in, and didn't quite hear everything that was said to you.
You're just a little bit crazy. Will you remember that, please?
Now they'll be coming out of High School at three o'clock. George has just been elected President of the Junior Class, and as it's June, that means he'll be President of the Senior Class all next year. And Emily's just been elected Secretary and Treasurer.
I don't have to tell you how important that is.

He places a board across the backs of two chairs, parallel to the footlights, and places two high stools behind it.

This is the counter of Mr. Morgan's drugstore.

All ready!

Emily, carrying an armful of imaginary-school-books, comes along Main Street from the left.

Emily:
I can't, Louise. I've got to go home. Good-by.
Oh, Earnestine! Earnestine! Can you come over tonight and do Algebra? I did the first and third in Study Hall. No, they're not hard. But, Earnestine, that Caesar's awful hard. I don't see why we have to do a thing like that. Come over about seven. Tell your mother you have to. G'by.
G'by, Helen. G'by, Fred.

George, also carrying books, catches up with her.

George:
Can I carry your books home for you, Emily?

Emily:
Coldly.

Thank you.

She gives them to him.

George:
Excuse me a minute, Emily. --Say, Bob, get everything ready. I'll be there in a quarter of an hour. If I'm a little late start practice anyway. And give Herb some long high ones. His eye needs a lot of practice. Seeya later.

Emily:
Good-by Lizzy.
George:
Good-by, Lizzy. —I'm awfully glad you were elected, too, Emily.
Emily:
Thank you.

They have been standing on Main Street, almost against the back wall. George is about to take the first steps towards the audience when he stops again and says:

George:
Emily, why are you mad at me?
Emily:
I'm not mad at you.
George:
You ... you treat me so funny.
Emily:
Well, I might as well say it right out, George. I don't like the whole change that's come over you in the last year. I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings, but I've just got to tell the truth and shame the devil.
George:
I'm awfully sorry, Emily. Wha-a-what do you mean?
Emily:
Well, up to a year ago I used to like you a lot. And I used to watch you as you did everything ... because we'd been friends so long ... and then you began spending all your time at baseball ... and you never even spoke to anybody any more; not even to your own family you didn't ... and, George, it's a fact, you've got awful conceited and stuck-up, and all the girls say so. They may not say so to your face, but that's what they say
about you behind your back, and it hurts me to hear them say it, but I've got to agree with them a little. I'm sorry if it hurts your feelings ... but I can't be sorry I said it.

George:
I ... I'm glad you said it, Emily. I never thought that such a thing was happening to me. I guess it's hard for a fella not to have faults creep into his character.

They take a step or two in silence, then stand still in misery.

Emily:
I always expect a man to be perfect and I think he should be.

George:
Oh ... I don't think it's possible to be perfect, Emily.

Emily:
Well, my father is, and as far as I can see your father is. There's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be, too.
Brutus:

Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear. Believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe. Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living, and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears, for his love; joy, for his fortune; honour, for his valour; and death, for his ambition. Who is here so base, that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude, that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile, that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.
KING JOHN, by William Shakespeare, Act II, Scene II.
(The French King's Pavilion.)

Enter Constance, Arthur, and Salisbury.

Constance:
Gone to be married! gone to swear a peace!
False blood to false blood join'd! gone to be friends!
Shall Lewis have Blanche, and Blanche those provinces?
It is not so; thou hast misspoke, misheard;
Be well advis'd, tell o'er thy tale again.
It cannot be; thou dost but say 'tis so.
I trust I may not trust thee, for thy word
Is but the vain breath of a common man;
Believe me, I do not believe thee, man:
I have a king's oath to the contrary.
Thou shalt be punish'd for thus frightening me,
For I am sick and capable of fears,
Oppress'd with wrongs and therefore full of fears,
A widow, husbandless, subject to fears,
A woman, naturally born to fears;
And though thou now confess thou didst but jest
With my vex'd spirits I cannot take a truce,
But they will quake and tremble all this day.
What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head?
Why dost thou look so sadly on my son?
What means that hand upon that breast of thine?
Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,
Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds?
Be these sad signs confirmers of thy words?
Then speak again; not all thy former tale,
But this one word, whether thy tale be true.
APPENDIX C – AUDITIONS

Questions at First Audition

1. Age?
2. What previous drama experience? Parts?
3. Any experience of improvising?
4. Want to go on the stage?
5. Want to do amateur dramatics?
6. Want to major in theatre here?
7. Interested in acting in the department here?
8. What year as student?

Questions After the First Audition

1. How did you feel about the audition?
2. Did you like the texts?
3. Were you already familiar with either of them?
4. Did you prefer one to the other?

Questions after the Second Audition

1. How did you feel about this audition, compared with the first one?
2. How did you work on the text?
3. Were you able to do what you wanted to do? Did your performance come close to your conception of the part?
4. How did you react to the texts after you had become familiar with them?
5. Did you like them? Did you prefer one to the other?

I asked further questions as they arose in accordance with answers given.
Bob. 18. First Year.

Has done ten years of Holiday Theatre courses.

Was in the movie The Education of Philistine.

Small part in the Playhouse production, Christmas At The Market Place.

Whitney in Life with Father. Fancourt Babberley in Charley's Aunt.

The General in Romanoff and Juliet. Jonathan in Arsenic and Old Lace.

Jean in Rhinoceros (Ionesco): School productions.

Has done drama courses at School.

Does not yet know whether he will major in Theatre, or whether to become professional.

Wants to do acting courses here.

Likes Comedy.

Audition. Our Town.


Read George as well. Intelligent, but not ideal casting.

Julius Caesar. Eloquent. Intelligent in an instinctive way. Not Patrician, but this is first reading.

Answers to Questions

1. Said he was very nervous. Always is before he starts anything.

2. Liked doing the Stage Manager in Our Town.
3. Had read it before. Liked the Shakespeare text.
4. Could not compare texts or say which he preferred doing.

Second Audition. Our Town.

Stage Manager: easy movement and manner. Overacts. Did too much, but certainly has something to restrain.

As George: took time to set stage as he wanted it. Too heavy for the part but intelligent reading and did it easily.

As Brutus. Eloquent. Did too much, but could be effective. Took great advantage of the time between the auditions to work on the texts, and put effort and imagination into it.

Answers to Questions

1. Less nervous than previously, but finds he does not do so well when less nervous. Is not nervous when actually on the stage.
   Stage Manager: aimed at naturalness and relating to audience. The look of spontaneity.
   Brutus. Tried to be a less good speaker than Antony. Tried to be a politician making an effort to reach an unsympathetic public.
   Did it all aloud. Worked about two-and-a-half hours on all three parts.
3. Felt a big gap between what he imagined and actually did. Is never satisfied with his work.
4. & 5. At first, preferred working on Our Town, because he
started off with it and found it difficult to wrench himself out of that mood into Shakespeare. Though actually much prefers *Julius Caesar*. Liked doing George best and thought he did it best. Actually he was most convincing as the Stage Manager.

**General comment:** Speaks very fluently. Hope he will join the project.

Holiday Theatre creative drama for two years.
Also New Focus. (see Ann's audition.)
Acted at school, in chorus of the *Mikado*.
Olivia in *Twelfth Night*. Did many improvisations in Holiday Theatre.

Expects acting to be side interest. Main interests are education, sociology, community planning.

**Audition**

*Our Town*. Very appealing as Emily. Young. Intelligent reading.


**Answers to Questions**

1. Quite apprehensive of coming. It built up more. Is always nervous of auditions. Was less nervous for this than some other situations.
2. Liked the *Our Town* text and doing it. Fun.
   Liked the feeling in the words of Shakespeare, but could not imagine what Constance really felt like.
3. Was unfamiliar with texts.
4. Preferred doing Shakespeare and thought she did this best.

**Second Audition**

Emily, did it twice, first alone then with a student.
First time: has improved, would make an excellent Emily.
Second time: related to George well. She almost knows the text by heart.

Answers to Questions

1. Not nervous. Felt she did both parts too fast. Did not like the way she did Emily. Felt things went better this time.

2. Read such parts of King John and Our Town as she thought were relevant to the particular scenes. Worked out the character of each. Did it aloud mostly, some to herself. Emily troubled her. Couldn't believe in her. Thought her delivery of E's long speech too monotonous.

3. Felt there was a gap between her conception of the parts and their outward expression, especially in movement.

4. & 5. Liked Constance more and more as she worked at it. Liked Emily less and less. Couldn't feel with Emily. Shakespeare really hard, a lot of work. Enjoyed it.

General Comment: Talks easily and clearly. Very possible. Would like her to join the project. She was mistaken though about what she did best, unquestionably Emily.
Mike. 21. Third year

No previous acting experience.
Doing film course and Theatre 120.
Has not thought of becoming professional.

Audition


Julius Caesar. Intelligent, but too quiet. Inward turning. Did not put it across to the crowd at all.

Answers to Questions
1. Felt mildly nervous beforehand.
2. Liked Our Town text. Felt natural with it.
3. Was not familiar with either text.

Second Audition

Our Town. Quite good, has obviously worked at it, but still needs to project voice and personality much more.

Brutus. Ditto. Introspective but highly intelligent. Might be more spontaneous when he is playing a part, reading rather visual.

Answers to Questions
1. Not nervous. More concerned about how it went. Liked this audition much better.
2. Read texts out loud but had to do this in bathroom owing to presence of room-mate.
3. A gap between his aims and what he did.

4. Got tired of *Our Town* but enjoyed it, especially the Stage Manager which seemed real.

Did not get tired of the Brutus speech, worked at it hard and enjoyed doing it. Paraphrased it and tried different ways of doing it. Only one way of doing *Our Town*.

Was initially nervous of the Shakespeare text.

**General Comment:** Very possible. Speaks fairly fluently and easily. Would like him to join project.
Dan. 18. First year.

Interested in Theatre of the Absurd and wrote an Absurd play with a friend.

Made a film which won second prize in B. C. contest for High Schools, 1969.

Drama courses with acting, grades 9 and 11. Studied with Doris Chilcott as acting teacher. Did lots of improvisations.

Acted in An Enemy of the People. The Late Christopher Bean. Might major in Theatre. Interested in film making; any aspect of this.

Does not know yet if he would like to be a professional actor.

Audition

Our Town. Has a natural manner but did not project either voice or personality nearly enough for the Stage Manager. Quite good as George. Weak voice, almost inaudible at times, but natural most of the time.

Julius Caesar. Made good sense, but same problem as with Stage Manager.

Answers to Questions:
1. Nervous of the audition.
2. Preferred reading Shakespeare to Thornton Wilder, because the Shakespeare text is more flamboyant.
3. Already knew Our Town but not the Shakespeare.

Second Audition

Our Town. Stage Manager: intelligent and natural but very
quiet and inward-turning.

Told him to do it again and to imagine he was addressing a huge audience and to project himself on a large scale. He remained much the same.

Third time: projected rather more.

*Julius Caesar.* Very level and not at all rhetorical. Made some suggestions that he picked up second time around. But remained level and shy. Undoubtedly has potential as actor. A natural, though quiet manner and unusual quality. Not 'liney'.

**Answers to Questions:**

1. Less nervous this time.
2. Worked in head, not out loud. Did not do much preparation.
3. Felt he did poorly in *Our Town* and better in Shakespeare. Preferred the latter.
4. & 5. Found *Julius Caesar* easier to grasp than *Our Town* which he thought had subtleties he had failed to grasp. Did not like *Our Town*; too sentimental.

**General Comment:** Finds it difficult to talk about himself fluently. Has a fresh and unconventional approach to his work. Is very possible.
Ann. 18 First year. Tall.

Worked with Holiday Theatre course.

'New Focus', for Vancouver Y's. Improvised a play for children one year.

Every day, four-week Summer School. Was in Under Milk Wood.
Played Ismene in Anouilh's Antigone.

Was in part of The Sport of My Mad Mother in Holiday Theatre.
Drama Course in High School in Toronto. They did The Diary of Ann Frank. She played Ann.

Juliet in Balcony and Potion Scene from Romeo and Juliet.

To audience.

Calpurnia in performance of Julius Caesar.

Is in one-act play now in rehearsal, directed by a graduate student.

Could be interested in being a professional.

Audition

Our Town. Too large a personality for Emily but intelligent reading.


Answers to Questions:
1. Felt all right about audition. Enjoyed it.
2. Liked the texts but not the part of Emily.
3. Knew Our Town but not King John.
4. Preferred Constance to Emily.
Second Audition

**Our Town.** Much the same comment as before, but more polished performance. Natural feeling. Did it with George the second time; picked up things previously missed.

**King John.** Too fast but quite emotional. Not too much change from previous audition.

Second time through: Much better. Picked up and used suggestions about mood changes. Can learn from experience.

**Answers to Questions:**

1. Felt all right about auditioning.
2. Worked on texts line by line at home. Worked silently for two or three sessions and once aloud.
3. Managed to bring what she imagined and what she was able to do physically, reasonably close.
4. & 5. Liked working on both texts; slightly preferred Constance.
   Is nervous if presented with a Shakespeare text.

**General Comment:** Fluent in conversation; wide vocabulary. Lively manner. Has worked quite hard on text. Good possibility. Would like her to join project.

(Ann left the project after the first as she went into a main stage production.)
Gillian. 18. Second Year. Dark, tallish, thin.
Worked back stage at School. Very little acting experience.
Is doing the 300 in Mrs. Prothero's section.
Is majoring in theatre and Fine Arts.
Acting primary interest, but doubts if she could become professional.

Audition

Our Town. Slightly spinsterish. Lively and intelligent reading. Not ideally cast as Emily. Voice has interesting soft quality, plus audibility.

King John. Best Constance so far. Nervy quality implied well. Didn't rush it. Highly thoughtful reading.

Answers to Questions:
1. Looked on audition as youthful exercise. Not nervous.
2. Enjoyed texts but found shifting her age from Emily to Constance difficult.
3. Unfamiliar with both plays.
4. Preferred Shakespeare.

Second Audition


King John. Good but emotion forced. Indicated changes of mood well, but not sincerely.

Second reading: better, less forced, quieter. More convincing. Put a lot of work into this audition.
Answers to Questions:

1. Felt better than last time, but good both times.

2. Saw the character of Constance clearly, taped her reading of it three times. Noted the changes of mood and attitude in the text and tried to keep them in the performance. Played tape back and tried to keep improvements. Read the whole play of Our Town to get context. Spoke both texts aloud at home.

3. Did not feel as Emily that she achieved what she really felt about the part. Thought Emily was unhappy, at times miserable. Had subtle reading of the character.

4. & 5. Did not like Our Town much at first, but slightly warmer towards it after working on it. Liked the Shakespeare scene. Tense with a wide range in it. Not nervous of tackling a Shakespearean text.

General Comment: Speaks fluently with wide vocabulary. Not a stereotyped approach to texts. Would like her to join the project.

Drama Courses at School, and has taken part in several school plays. Freddie Beanstalk, *Hobson's Choice*. Dr. Swinford in *David and Lisa*, (Dr. S. a middle-aged psychiatrist.)

Demetrius in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, scene from, plus other parts. Also improvisations and mimes to audience.

Also worked at school on short scenes, mimes, accents.

Will major in Theatre if grades good enough.

Might consider a professional career on the stage.

**Audition**

*Our Town*. Intelligent reading of both parts but curiously lacking in character. Easy manner for the Stage Manager. Could speak out clearly to audience.

*Julius Caesar*. Intelligent reading of Brutus but not much conviction. Voice medium light, very audible.

Answers to Questions:

1. Nervous at start.
2. Liked texts but preferred *Our Town*.
3. Already knew *Our Town*.
4. Preferred doing the Stage Manager to George. Does not like reading Shakespeare and preferred doing *Our Town*. Likes emotional parts.

**Second Audition**

*Our Town*. Intelligent reading as Stage Manager, slightly stagey voice. Over-acted a little. Good presence and appearance. Stiff as George but got the young quality and the nervousness.

Did *Our Town* again with an Emily. Much better. Related quite
well to her. Not a spontaneous voice and manner, but is competent.

*Julius Caesar*. Brutus: does not seem to have taken too much advantage of available time to go over this. He said he was not convinced of Brutus' position.

**Answers to Questions:**
1. Felt quite easy about audition.
2. Worked on text, reading it through mostly to himself.
3. Felt he could not do what he wanted.

**General Comment.** Can Talk fairly easily about his views. Good possibility.
Gave a lot of attention to Theatre in School.
Three years of acting in grades 10, 11 and 12, improvisations too.
One year directing in drama course Grade 12.
Writing scripts in Grade 12.
Wide variety of parts including Elaine in Arsenic and Old Lace.
Was in The Land of Oz, and The Soldier. Leading parts.
Villainess in a musical melodrama; been in several one-act plays, done monologues. Has acted in French.
Would like to major in Theatre here if grades good enough.
Is considering professional stage.

Audition

Our Town. Would be well cast as Emily. Very competent. Not subtle. Managed to get the slightly bitchy quality. Clear, high voice but not a spontaneous delivery.


Answers to Questions:
1. Not nervous, slightly tense, curious about what was going on.
2. Our Town. 'Nice', not challenging, said it was not complicated.
   Character easy to get into.
   Liked the Shakespeare text, thought Constance difficult, and the situation, though explained, not clear.
3. Was familiar already with Our Town.
4. Did not prefer one text over the other, but identified more
easily with Emily than Constance.

Second Audition. Some improvement in Emily and generally good. Would be an effective and competent Emily.

Constance much, much improved. Has used intervening time well, managed to get a bit angry.

Did it again. Emotional tone raised, best at anger. Not profound. Used the time well between auditions.

Answers to Questions:

1. Less like an audition, she thought. Felt she was here to learn something and had done so.

2. Worked on motivation of character in both cases, changes of emotion. Spoke it aloud most of the time.

3. Her understanding of it was more intense and vivid than she was able to reproduce.

4. & 5. Found Our Town much easier than Constance but enjoyed challenge of latter.

General Comment. Very possible. Spoke easily and fluently.
APPENDIX D

Texts of Passages Read in Oral Reading I

1. Mr. Musgrove was a Postman in a village called Pagnum Moss.

Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove lived in a house called Fuchsia Cottage. It was called Fuchsia Cottage because it had a fuchsia hedge round it. In the front garden they kept a cow called Nina, and in the back garden they grew strawberries ... nothing else but strawberries.

Now Mr. Musgrove was no ordinary postman; for instead of walking or trundling about on a bicycle, he flew around in a Helicopter. And instead of pushing letters in through letter-boxes, he tossed them into people's windows, singing as he did so: 'Wake up! Wake up! For morning is here!'

Thus people were able to read their letters quietly in bed without littering them untidily over the breakfast table.  

2. Traversing the long and matted gallery, I descended the slippery steps of oak; then I gained the hall: I halted there a minute; I looked at some pictures on the wall (one, I remember represented a grim man in a cuirass, and one a lady with powdered hair and a pearl necklace), at a bronze lamp pendant from the ceiling, at a great clock whose case was of oak curiously carved, and ebony black with time and rubbing. Everything appeared very stately and imposing to me; but then I was so little accustomed to grandeur. The hall-door, which was

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half of glass, stood open; I stepped over the threshold. It was
a fine autumn morning; the early sun shone serenely over em-
browmed groves and still, green fields; advancing onto the lawn,
I looked up and surveyed the front of the mansion. It was three
storeys high, of proportions not vast, though considerable;
a gentleman's manor-house, not a nobleman's seat: battlements
round the top gave it a picturesque look. Its gray front stood
out well from the background of a rookery, whose cawing tenants
were not on the wing.  

3. (Women.)

"It must be magnificent to have the consciousness of a
goddess without ever doing a thing to justify it."

"Give me a goddess's work to do; and I will do it. I will
even stoop to a queen's work if you will share the throne with
me. But do not pretend that people become great by doing great
things. They do great things because they are great, if the
great things come along. But they are great just the same when
the great things do not come along. If I never did anything but
sit in this room and powder my face and tell you what a clever
fool you are, I should still be heavens high above the millions
of common women who do their domestic duty, and sacrifice them-
selves, and run Trade Departments and all the rest of the vul-
garities. Has all the tedious public work you have done made you
any better? I have seen you before and after your boasted strokes
of policy; and you were the same man, and would have been the same

2Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*, first published 1847, Penguin
man to me and to yourself if you had never done them. Thank God my self-consciousness is something nobler than vulgar conceit in having done something. It is what I am, not what I do, that you must worship in me.  

3. (Men.)

"There was a time when the King could depend upon the support of the aristocracy and the cultivated bourgeoisie. Today there is not a single aristocrat left in politics, not a single member of the professions, not a single leading personage in big business or finance. They are richer than ever, more powerful than ever, more able and better educated than ever. But not one of them will touch this drudgery of government, the public work that never ends because we cannot finish one job without creating ten fresh ones. We get no thanks for it because ninety-nine hundredths of it is unknown to the people, and the remaining hundredth is resented by them as an invasion of their liberty or an increase in their taxation. It wears out the strongest man and even the strongest woman, in five or six years. It slows down to nothing when we are fresh from our holidays and best able to bear it, and rises in an overwhelming wave through some unforeseen catastrophe when we are on the verge of a nervous breakdown through overwork and fit for rest and sleep only .... Our work is no longer even respected. It is looked down on by our men of genius as dirty work."

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4 Ibid., p. 36.
God bless all the policemen
and fighters of crime,
May thieves go to jail
For a very long time.

They've had a hard day
helping clean up the town,
now they hang from the mantlepiece
both upside down.

A glass of warm blood
and then straight up the stairs,
Batman and Robin
are saying their prayers.

They've locked all the doors
and they've put out the bat,
Put on their batjamas
(they like doing that).

They've filled their batwater bottles,
made their batbeds,
with two springy mattresses
for sleepy batheads.

They're closing red eyes
and they're counting black sheep,
Batman and Robin
are falling asleep.⁵

Texts of Passages Read in Oral Reading II

1. (men).

EDWARD: Keep away. (Pause).

(Slowly.) I want to speak to that man. I want to have a word with him. (Pause.) It's quite absurd, of course. I really can't tolerate something so ... absurd, right on my doorstep. I shall not tolerate it. He's sold nothing all morning. No one passed. Yes. A monk passed. A non-smoker. In a loose garment. It's quite obvious he was a non-smoker but still, the man made no effort. He made no effort to clinch a sale, to rid himself of one of his cursed boxes. His one chance all morning, and he made no effort. (Pause.) I haven't wasted my time. I've hit, in fact, upon the truth. He's not a match-seller at all. The bastard isn't a match-seller at all. Curious I never realized that before. He's an imposter. I watched him very closely. He made no move towards the monk. As for the monk, the monk made no move towards him. The monk was moving along the lane. He didn't pause, or halt, or in any way alter his step. As for the match-seller -- how ridiculous to go on calling him by that title. What a farce. No, there is something very false about that man. I intend to get to the bottom of it. I'll soon get rid of him. He can go and ply his trade somewhere else. Instead of standing like a bullock ... a bullock, outside my back gate.
ROSE: Well, you can't see me, can you? You're a blind man. An old poor blind man. Aren't you? Can't see a dickeybird. (Pause.) They say I know you. That's an insult, for a start. Because I can tell you, I wouldn't know you to spit on, not from a mile off. (Pause.)

Oh, these customers. They come in here and stink the place out. After a handout. I know all about it. And as for you saying you know me, what liberty is that? Telling my landlord, too. Upsetting my landlord. What do you think you're up to? We're settled down here, cosy, quiet, and our landlord thinks the world of us, we're his favorite tenants, and you come in and drive him up the wall, and drag my name into it! What do you mean by dragging my name into it, and my husband's name? How did you know what our name was? (Pause). You've led him a dance, have you, this week-end? You've got him going, have you? A poor, weak old man, who lets a respectable house. Finished. Done for. You push your way in and shove him about. And you drag my name into it. (Pause.) Come on, then. You say you wanted to see me. Well, I'm here. Spit it out or out you go. What do you want?


2. (Men.)

PROTEUS: My friends, we came here to a meeting. We find, alas! that the meeting is to be a leave-taking. It is a sad leave-taking on our part, but a cordial one. (Hear Hear, from Pliny). We are cast down but not discouraged. Looking back to the past with regret, we can still look forward to the future with hope. That future has its dangers and its difficulties. It will bring us new problems; and it will bring us face to face with a new king. But the new problems and the new king will not make us forget our old counsellor, monarch, and - he will allow me to say - comrade. (Hear Hears ad libitum.) I know my words will find an echo in all your hearts when I conclude by saying that whatsoever king may reign --

AMANDA: You'll be Vicar of Bray, Joe.\(^8\)

2. (Women.)

LYSISTRATA: Just so! Breakages! Limited! Just so! Listen to me, sir; and judge whether I have not reason to feel everything you have just said to the very marrow of my bones. Here am I, the Power Mistress Royal. I have to organize and administer all the motor power in the country for the good of the country. I have to harness the winds and the tides, the oils and the coal seams. I have to see that every little sewing machine in the Hebrides, every dentist's drill in Shetland,

\(^8\)Shaw, op. cit., p. 73.
every carpet sweeper in Margate, has its stream of
driving power on tap from a switch in the wall as
punctually as the great thundering dynamos of our
big industrial plants. I do it; but it costs twice
as much as it should. Why? Because every new inven-
tion is bought up and suppressed by Breakages, Limited.
Every breakdown, every accident, every smash and crash
is a job for them. But for them we should have un-
breakable glass, unbreakable steel, imperishable
materials of all sorts. But for them our goods trains
could be started and stopped without battering and
tearing the vitals out of every wagon and sending it
to the repair shop once a week instead of once a year.
Our national repair bill runs up to hundreds of
millions. I could name you a dozen inventions within
my own term of office which would have effected enor-
mous economies in breakages and breakdown; but these
people can afford to pay an inventor more for his
machine or his process or whatever it may be than he
could hope to make by a legitimate use of it; and when
they have bought it they smother it. When the inventor
is poor and not good at defending himself they make
bogus trials of his machine and report that it is no
use. I have been shot at twice by inventors driven
crazy by this sort of thing; they blames me for it -
as if I could stand up against this monster with its
millions and its newspapers and its fingers in every
pie. It is heart-breaking. I love my department:
I dream of nothing but its efficiency: with me it comes before every personal tie, every happiness that common women run after. I would give my right hand to see these people in the bankruptcy court with half their business abolished and the other half done in public workshops where public losses are not private gains.  

3. (Men)

THE FOUR AGITATORS: As Chinese, we went to Mukden, four men and one woman.

THE YOUNG COMRADE: To make propaganda and support Chinese workers through the teachings of the classics and the propagandists, the ABC of Communism: to bring to the ignorant instruction about their situation; to the oppressed, class-consciousness; and to the class-conscious, the experience of revolution.

THE CONTROL CHORUS:

It is splendid
To take up the word as a weapon in the class war
To rouse the masses to the fight in a loud and ringing voice
To crush the oppressors
To free the oppressed.
Hard and useful is the small daily labour
The grim, persistent tying and spreading of the party's net

9Shaw, Ibid., p. 50.
For the capitalists' guns
To speak
But conceal the speaker
To win the victory
But conceal the victor
To die
But hide the death.
Who would not do much for fame
But who would do it for silence?
Yet the impoverished host invites Honour to supper
And out of the tiny and tumble-down hut steps
irresistible
Greatness
And Fame calls in vain
On the doers of the great deed.
Step forward a moment
Unknown ones with hidden faces
And receive our thanks!

THE FOUR AGITATORS: We helped the Chinese comrades in the city
of Mukden, and made propaganda among the workers. We
had no bread for the hungry but only knowledge for the
ignorant. Therefore we spoke of the root cause of
poverty, did not abolish poverty, but spoke of the
abolition of the root cause.10

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10Bertolt Brecht, "The Measures Taken", in The Modern Theatre,
Vol. 6, ed. by Eric Bentley, Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co.,
New York, 1960, p. 262.
3. (Women)

WIFE: Judith Klein speaking. Is that you, doctor? Good evening. I just wanted to call and say you'll have to be looking for a new bridge partner. Yes, I'm going away. - No, not for very long, but not less than a couple of weeks. I'm going to Amsterdam. - Yes, they say the spring is lovely there. - No, friends, in the plural, unbelievable as it sounds. - How can you play bridge now? But we haven't played for two weeks. Certainly Fritz had a cold too. When it gets so cold bridge is impossible, I said so too. - Oh no, doctor, how could I? - Thekla had to accommodate her mother. - I know. - How should I suppose that? - No, it didn't really come suddenly at all, it's just that I kept putting it off, but now I must .... Yes, we'll have to call off our movie date. Say hello to Thekla for me. Perhaps you'll call him sometimes on Sundays? So long then. - Well, gladly, of course. - Good-bye."

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Appendix E

ACT ONE

Down behind a back street, a protected corner.

Enter STEVE, a young man fairly tall and well built. Pleasantly and informally dressed with care and taste so that he is "with it" rather than "way out". STEVE doesn't fuss, he lets events flow round him, but there is something decisive about his manner and he looks as if he wouldn't let people push him around much.

STEVE brings onstage a drum, motor horn, triangle, cymbals, etc., which he arranges on one side of the stage. He speaks as he works.

STEVE: (striking the triangle). Pure and clear, very low harmonic content -- practically a pure tone. (Possibly trying another instrument.) I like playing percussion, it's not difficult and it's satisfying -- (a little amused at himself) -- releases frustrations. I don't do it professionally, this job's just part time. I'm not a musician but I do effects here for the -- (gesturing to acting area). I'm here -- to -- well to have a look -- I like seeing how things work, what life's got to offer, I wanted to see what there was to theatres and acting. (Possibly playing as he talks.) Everyone's vaguely interested in the theatre, not many people know as much as they think they do. I was in an electronics firm after I left training college --
made valves and cathode ray tubes. They had a special training course so I know quite a lot about electronics. Now I'm with an accountant -- I like figures -- They send me out to the different firms and I go through the books and draw up preliminary statements. You get to know how a business really works when you go through the books; the figures mean something, they have something real behind them. That's what interests me about theatre: it's not real. I mean a play is just something that somebody has made up. And yet -- I don't know -- it's curious -- anyway that's why I'm here, it interests me, I can sit here and watch and play. (Possibly playing.) I enjoy playing, oh yes, it's my way of relaxing, I like instruments, the way they're made and the sounds they make. But what I like most is the way music reaches into you. I just want to reach people I want to make them feel, and with music somehow ... music communicates, it reaches into people and they can forget their brains, their intellects and the way they've been taught to intellectualize about everything, they can just let music happen, let it happen physically to them. (He plays a little.) Mmm...

(Enter DEAN, a young American dressed with a little more formality than STEVE but with an air of expensive relaxation, possibly he wears dark-rimmed spectacles. A good-looking, intelligent and sensitive man.)

DEAN: As you go down the main road there's a side street running off -- you see them all over London -- the houses are small, two or three
storeys high with dirty bits of net curtain in the windows ... why dirty? ... Why don't they wash them? ... Who's "they"? ... There's a little newsagent on one corner and an empty shop boarded up on another -- why empty? Why boarded up? As you pass you can feel a kind of dampness. There's an old woman looking at you from behind some of those net curtains: you can feel her eyes following you as you walk on -- not quite stabbing you in the back but kind of daring you. Half-way down the street there's an alleyway: there's ashcans at the entrance and at the bottom the alley seems to turn ... why not old woman? -- It's a free country! You walk down the alley and you wonder what goes on round the corner ... (Enter PATTY, 17 years old, a pretty little cockney girl with a lot of make-up round her eyes. She is looking at a home permanent wave outfit. Enter FAK, about 18 years old, built loose and big, dressed in real flash clothes. He carries a box which he sets down. Enter CONE, a little older than the other two, careless of his clothes; but they are essentially sharp and he looks thin, small and tough.)

PATTY: (to the audience). Have a good look. You'll know me next time.

FAK: (bringing out a gun which he points at STEVE). Bang! Bang! Bet that give you a turn.

STEVE: They got me.

PATTY: You look after your drum.

CONE: (stopping the others with a gesture). Hey! (He listens.)

FAK: Hear anything?
CONE: Thought I ... (Signalling FAK to carry on.) No.
FAK: Wotcher! Bang bang! Fireworks. Ten bob a box.
CONE: Genuine atomic dynamite.
FAK: Cor what a blast. Bang bang.
CONE: Hydrogen! Plutonium! Uranium! You won't get them in no emporium.
PATTY: (counting curlers in her home perm outfit). One, two, three, four, five, six ... six small ones. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve: ...
Mind you don't hurt yourselves.
FAK: (to audience) Surprise packet.
CONE: Mystery bunch of big trouble.
FAK: Six bob a box.
CONE: Five bob.
FAK: Four bob.
CONE: No fooling, no kidding. Look what you're getting for your money. (FAK and CONE open the box.)
FAK: Aw shut up.
PATTY: Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen ...
CONE: What!
FAK: No!
CONE: Unrepeatable!
FAK: Unbelievable!
CONE: Stick it up a car exhaust.
FAK: Rip off the silencer.
CONE: Burst a tyre if you're lucky.
FAK: Two and a tanner at Woolie's.
CONE: Atomic cannon! ... And six king-size Chinese crackers -- real fire -- plenty big bang!
FAK: Just the job for a bow wow's wagger. Wham! Whack!
   Clack! Splam!
CONE: Packet of sparklers: let the kiddies blind each other!
   Did I say four shillings? I don't ask four bob --
FAK: I don't ask three and a kick --
CONE: I don't ask three shillings --
FAK: Two and a tanner!
CONE: Half a dollar! Reach the moon on a Jet Morgan sky rocket.
PATTY: There should be another big one, have I been done?
CONE: Hey! (He listens, motions FAK to look outside, FAK does so.)
FAK: No.
PATTY: Are you listening for something?
CONE: Please to remember the fifth of November. (CONE sees
   something inside the box.)
   Whow!
PATTY: Instructions read carefully.
CONE: (throwing the firework to FAK). Lamp that.
PATTY: Firmly wind strand to root of hair ...
FAK: There's gunpowder here.
PATTY: Thoroughly moisten with cotton wool dipped in wave lotion...
FAK: This'll give us a giggle.
PATTY: It must be strong, it don't half pong.
FAK: And uncle was going to raffle it. ... Here, catch!
CONE: Catch!
FAK: Catch!
PATTY: Do you mind, I'm trying to read.
CONE: She's reading! Ah hah! What you doing, Patty?
FAK: What you doing, Patty?
CONE: What you doing, Patty?
PATTY: Aw shut up.
CONE: She's reading.
FAK: What'll Greta say to this, eh? What'll she say to this?
PATTY: (irritated). Aw Greta!
FAK: (teasing her): Aw Greta! Greta! Greta!
PATTY: Aw Greta! Greta! Greta! Greta!
(CONE laughs and goes and looks outside.)
PATTY: What you got there? ... Well?
FAK: Something'll take the curl out of your hair.
PATTY: Where'd you nick it?
FAK: Hah hah.
PATTY: Bet there wasn't a copper for miles.
FAK: Couldn't bloody matter.
PATTY: Blow up Buckingham Palace! Oh no. Might upset Greta.
FAK: Aw shut up.
PATTY: Bet you bought it.
FAK: What?
PATTY: Bought it I betcher.
FAK: Wet, she says we're wet.
CONE: Nothing doing, Patty?
FAK: Slack Alice?
PATTY: Look to yourself, Faky-boy.
CONE: Look to yourself, Faky-boy.
FAK: Look to yourself, Faky-boy.
CONE: Seen you somewhere.
FAK: Somewhere before.
PATTY: Big act.
CONE: Sweetie peetie Patty-paws. Beat! Beat!
FAK: Going my way?
PATTY: Catch me --
CONE: Catch me.
FAK: Catch me.
CONE: Catch me, Patty-paws, who'd ever have thought?
PATTY: Oh, give over.
CONE: Give over.
FAK: Give over.
PATTY: Give over. Give over.
CONE: Give over, sweetheart.
FAK: Lovey dovey, night night.
PATTY: Leave me be, I never!
CONE: She never.
FAK: She never ever.
CONE: She never ever what?
FAK: What did she never ever?
CONE: She never ever been with nobody -- what, nobody?
No! No! No! Nobody.
PATTY: Stop it! Stop it!
CONE & If you see a big fat woman.
FAK: Standing on a corner humming.
That's fat Jessie.
PATTY: Is that so.
CONE & If you see her in the pictures
FAK: With a bag of dolly mixtures
That's fat Jessie.
PATTY: Is that so.
CONE & If you see her in a shop.
FAK: Sobbing on a great big mop.
That's fat Jessie.
FAK: (bringing out his gun). Yah!
(PATTY screams.)
FAK: Always scares birds.
CONE: Shut up. (Listening.)
PATTY: What?
CONE: Be quiet.

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PATTY: You expecting someone? ... Who? ... Who! Who!
CONE: Shut up ... Where d'you nobble it?
FAK: My Dad. He knocked it off a Jerry depot in the war. Got a lovely axe but he had to chuck it away. Plenty of ammo too.
PATTY: You want to be careful.
FAK: Kill a feller easy.
PATTY: Put it away, you soppy thing. You're talking silly.
FAK: Don't you lip me! Don't you lip me like that!
PATTY: You'll get hung.
FAK: That's for stupid fellers. That's for stupid fellers.
CONE: Relax ... Hands is quieter ... see ... there's a spot there -- just there (CONE demonstrates on the base of FAK's skull) and you hit -- so.
FAK: Here go easy .... There?
CONE: Just there.
FAK: There.
CONE: Stick to the gum, chum. This requires finesse. ...
Better keep it from -- she don't like raw gats.
FAK: (uncertain). Oh, I dunno, I dunno.
(PATTY laughs and taking some nail varnish from her handbag starts to paint her nails.)
PATTY: Was I with you lot Friday week?
FAK: Went to the flicks.
PATTY: Friday before that.
CONE: Went to the dogs.
FAK: That's right. There was a shell-out and us and some of the fellers went to the dogs.
PATTY: Ah ... that's when Maureen did my hair.
CONE: How d'you keep your nails so long?
FAK: She never washes up.
PATTY: Don't be daft.
FAK: Nice smell.
CONE: Give me that. I'll do it a sight better than you.
(To FAK indicating the exit) Keep yourself awake.
(whistling through his teeth)
Bang bang bang and bish bish bish
Bang bang bang and cosh cosh cosh
Aldgate pump it ain't what it used to be
Poor old Aldgate pump. O!
PATTY: I never seen that blond feller since.
FAK: What feller?
PATTY: Since we went to the pictures with him -- you know, the tall feller, blond and quite good looking really ... What happened to him?
CONE: What happened to who?
PATTY: The feller I was sitting by ... what was his name?
CONE: Didn't go with no one else.
PATTY: Are you potty? He sat between me and you: Fak then me then him then -- Garry -- Garry, um, Garry ...
CONE: (jabbing her hand). Shut up.
PATTY: Oo! Mind my nails. That hurt. ... My Ma'd slay me if she caught me with this on!
FAK: Go on, bet you beat her.
PATTY: Could be.
FAK: What's stopping you going off on your own?
PATTY: Oh ...
FAK: Scared?
PATTY: What me? -- I wouldn't like to live on my own, that's all.
FAK: Why live on your own?
PATTY: Eh?
CONE: Are you not the flipping virgin.
PATTY: You keep your gob straight. ... I couldn't, I can't, ...
     I'll not be another Connie.
CONE: Eh? ... Did you leak?
FAK: Yes, I told her and I told her to keep her mouth shut.
PATTY: I haven't told anybody.
CONE: Get this: It won't be me that'll be at you if you do.
PATTY: I've said I haven't told anybody, haven't I?
FAK: And don't you neither.
PATTY: I haven't.
CONE: Keep still ... just remember: it won't be me.
PATTY: ... Any day, any time of day, any night ... in the streets,
or the flicks or an espresso ...  
     (CONE laughs gently.)
FAK: Bet I can hit that harder than you. Bet I can hit it 
     so it falls down.
PATTY: You'll break your fist.
FAK: Bet I can hit so --
CONE: Quiet!
PATTY: What you listening for?
CONE: Shut up! (Listening.)
PATTY: What! What's happened? Has something happened?
CONE: Aw sit down and keep still. I haven't finished yet.
PATTY: Well has it?
CONE: Has what?
PATTY: I don't know.
CONE Well, what you flapping about?
FAK: (hitting the wall). They're yeller! They're yeller!
Ha ha! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

PATTY: Aw shut up.
FAK: Bang! Bang!

CONE: You keep over there. (indicating the exit.)
FAK: Why don't you take a turn?
CONE: I'm busy.
PATTY: Tell us about her and Ronny.
FAK': I told you that.
PATTY: Tell me again.
CONE: For crying out loud.

FAK: She had it in for Ronny so he hid himself and she let him. But she knew where he was and he knew she knew.

CONE: (lyrical sarcastic). And she knew he knew she knew.
FAK: And he knew if he stepped out he'd get trod on.
PATTY: And he had to, didn't he? He just had to. He got all sort of excited and dreamy of the thought of it and he couldn't stop himself. He had to -- come out. ... And she saw to it. She fixed it. I bet it give you kicks. I bet he had kicks in there just waiting and dreaming. I bet he got all worked up.
(CONE laughs quietly.)

I wish I was -- I wish I was Greta. Greta! ... Like spit on a hot plate that's her. Razzle dazzle. It's like -- it's like she hits 'em and heps 'em. Anyone'll do anything for her. She'll have Solly caper down Blackpool pier with no clothes on and bash a copper with a Pepsi-Cola bottle. It's like she makes something come bursting out. Everyone's got something inside and she makes it grow and grow and come
busting out. She looks at Solly. Solly fights Bobby and first thing they know they're down the end of the street fighting anyone they see. And she picks them up and chucks them round her head and that four is fighting eight and the eight's fighting sixteen: the whole street's fighting. It'll start with one fight and then the whole street -- all exploding and growing and exploding, and every bit of every explosion makes everything round it explode. The whole street's fighting -- the whole block -- the whole country -- the sea -- the air -- all the planets. And she stands there, her eyes glittering and sparkling and laughing the whole time. Bearing it. Bearing it.

CONE: (painting his finger-nail). Cute ain't it.
PATTY: O! Let's go somewhere. Get something started. ...
It's Guy Fawkes. It's Guy Fawkes. ... I never been on a bash. I want -- I want to know! It's Guy Fawkes. ...
You'd do it for her. ... Is it ... is it ... her ... eh?

FAK: Sort of.
PATTY: Ha ha her! Her!

FAK: Aw shut up.

FAK: Eh?
PATTY: Tell me, Faky -- why you like eh?
CONE: Who says he likes her?
PATTY: She sends you doesn't she? She really sends you.
FAK: Aw shut up.
PATTY: You'd do anything for her -- anything.
FAK: Shut up! Shut up!
CONE: Hark, louse. I love you.
FAK: Shut up!
PATTY: Shut up shut up says Faky-white-with-fear.
FAK: I'm not afraid of her.
CONE: You're jealous.
PATTY: Jealous! Jealous! Me! You're all -- no minds of your own. Men! My stars! Jealous! And she's not even clean. Men! And she has the lot of you -- the lot -- Harrow Road -- the lot! And all for someone who's -- for a woman who's --
CONE: Sweet feminine bitch.
PATTY: You said ... you said ... you said -- she's not nice.
FAK: What!
PATTY: You did.
FAK: I didn't.
CONE: She ain't nice.
FAK: She is.
PATTY: You say she isn't.
CONE: Spare me.
PATTY: And I don't understand you and I never will. You. You and all the others! All the others! What about them?
FAK: What?
PATTY: What about them. What about them.
CONE: What about them?
PATTY: The gang. The gang.
CONE: (mocking). The gang! The gang!
PATTY: The gang! The gang! The gang she runs! She
runs the protection! Pay up or squeeze! Break your windows break your bones! Pay up or scream!

CONE: Shut up.
PATTY: Aw! Greta'll hear! Greta! Greta! Greta! And the joke -- the joke! Ha ha! Hop! Hop! But you'll soon see! You'll see!...

CONE: Quiet. Listen. (Trying to hear something outside.)
PATTY: Changing isn't she? Changing!

CONE: (to FAK). Stop her. Clout her.
PATTY: Listening for Greta? Looking for Great, eh? Why's she not here, eh? Changed! She's different! And it's going to get worse. Worse. Bah! Mummy's boy Master Coney! Doesn't love him any more! She! She! She's losing interest and especially in Master Coney!

(CONE turns on her.)

... I ... I ...

FAK: (inarticulate, trying to distract CONE). Ah.

CONE: Eh?

FAK: ... Dolly.

CONE: Dolly?

FAK: Dolly!

CONE: Dolly?

FAK: Dolly.

(CONE turns to PATTY again. FAK goes to her other side and by his desperation draws CONE's attention beyond her.)

Dolly! Dolly!

CONE: Dolly?

FAK: Dolly!

CONE: Dolly!

FAK: Dolly.
(CONE and FAK have hypnotized each other. PATTY tries to get away and in so doing draws them on to her.)

FAK: (at PATTY). Dolly.
CONE: (at PATTY). Dolly.
FAK: Dolly.
CONE: Dolly.
FAK: Dolly.
PATTY: Shoo.
FAK: Shoo.
PATTY: Shoo.
FAK: Shoo. Shoo.
PATTY: Shoo. Shoo.
CONE: Shoo. Shoo.

(PATTY screams.)
PATTY: (to audience as if drowning). Help! Help me! Help!
DEAN: Stop ... (He walks into their midst.) ... What goes on here?
PATTY: Eh?
FAK: Them ... One of them.
CONE: He's alone ... (walking up to DEAN) Nice, isn't he?
PATTY: (they begin to amble round DEAN). Nice --
FAK: Cecil Gee --
CONE: Careful not to crush --
PATTY: Pardon.
FAK: Excuse me.
CONE: He don't look very well --
FAK: Bit daft, ain't he?
PATTY: Hi Mister!
FAK: Can you hear?
DEAN: (amazed). Hey.
PATTY: He's loose.
FAK: He's loony.
CONE: Quack! Quack!
PATTY: Potty!
FAK: Look!
DEAN: What!
CONE: Mmm ... pooch!
FAK: Boo!
DEAN: Animals --
CONE: Boo! Boo!
DEAN: -- Like stampeding --
PATTY: Bim! Bam!
CONE: Bang! Bang!
FAK: (bringing out his gun). Yak! Yak! Yak! Yak!
PATTY: Boo boo boo boo.
CONE: Yak! Yak!
DEAN: Control. Control
FAK: Yak yak yak yak!
PATTY: Tcha! Tcha! Tcha!
FAK: Yay yak yak yak!
PATTY: Tcha tcha tcha tcha!
DEAN: (making a great effort to collect himself and dominate them.) What are you trying to do?
(CONE behind DEAN gives him a sharp blow at the base of the skull -- unseen by the others.)
Ah!
(DEAN collapses forward against FAK who is sent staggering away firing his gun wildly. DEAN falls and is still.)
FAK: One o' them! One o' them! One o' them!
CONE: Stop.
FAK: ... Dead ... he's dead ... She'll maim me
for this. She'll kill me ...

CONE: Shut up, slob.

FAK: It ain't you. It ain't you. It's me. It's me she'll be after. She said not, not for a bit, not after Aldgate ... Aldgate ... Leave it. Come on. Let's leave it. Someone'll take it away -- perhaps it'll disappear -- perhaps it'll melt. Come on. Let's go. Where'll we go? Let's go to the flicks. Come on, Patty. Let's go.

CONE: Wake up, stupid.

FAK: (weeping). It ain't you. It ain't you.

CONE: O blubber shut up.

FAK: It ain't you. It ain't you.

CONE: Oh -- (dismissing it). Oh -- I'll think of something.

FAK: What? ... Waht? You -- you -- yes, you will. That's it, he'll think of something. Yes, you will, you will, you will, oh well. That's well. That'll be all right. That'll be all right.

CONE: Yeah. (Relaxed and drowsy he picks up the gun and laughs.)

FAK: What you laughing for?

CONE: He looks a treat.

FAK: A treat ... A treat ... a fair treat ... I feel good ... I feel bloody good ... I feel bloody wonder ful.

PATTY: (weeping and laughing). Mucker! ... Mucker! ... Stuck up! ... That's for you, mucker. You. You. I hate you!

CONE: There's something about this bloke ... something about the way he looks, he don't look ... Wonder if he's got a gun.

(CONE finds some American cigarettes in DEAN's pocket.)
Yank ... Is he a yank? ... Let's get this lot shifted before someone stumbles over it.

FAK: They got no Yanks.
CON: Eh?
FAK: They got no Yanks!
CON: For crying out loud get lifting.
FAK: You'll think of something.
CON: Yeah.
PATTY: I feel sick.
FAK: Not bad. Not bad eh? ... Killer! ... Killer! ... Oh!
I'm gonna get a whistle sleeker than this and longer ...
new drains -- narrow, narrow and dark ... and a new shirt ... Oh! White! With French cuffs. And a new tie --
and I'll knot it broad ... I'm gonna get a cigarette-holder, thick and stubby. Bamboo with a gold band.
    I'm gonna get me a great red ruby!
    Rich and bulging and bold like blood.
    Sweet thick pleasure is guttering through me.
    Red! Red! Red! 'll make me feel good.
CHORUS: Killer! Killer! Killer!
FAK: Carry it dressy on a thick gold ring;
    Solid and stubby and strong and thick.
Flash 'em in the looker and stab and sting
    Send them solid and clutch in the mick.
CHORUS: Killer! Killer! Killer!
FAK: Sweet old, lovely old, solid gold ruby --
    Deep, sweet, blood warm, sombre and soft.
    Great sweet pleasure is welling all through me --
    Loose and easy and warm and free.
(They are in a state of euphoria or post ecstasy, their minds and nervous system unslung. STEVE has helped lull them to this. STEVE strikes a note. DEAN gets up and considers CONE, FAK and PATTY.)

DEAN: What is this? What is this? I don't get it ... I like to understand things and I don't understand this ... It's like some nasty joke ... It's like spitting in your eye ... kind of nasty and weak and dangerous ... If I turn my back on this it'll rot inside me ... O.K. fellers, this time you won't get me so fast or so easy, we'll wait until the moment I choose and then we'll see who bops who ...

(DEAN resumes his corpse posture but chooses a different part of the stage to lie down. At a sign from DEAN, STEVE strikes a note and wakes the others.)

FAK: Ah! Hah!
CONE: Eh? What's up with you?
FAK: (sheepish). Oh -- sorry?
CONE: What you mean sorry?
FAK: Thought it was them. Thought I heard something.
CONE: Nit.
FAK: Might've been them, could've been.
CONE: If you'd heard them.
FAK: Yeah, if I'd heard.
CONE: If. Where'd you think Greta's got to?
(Pause.)
FAK: Greta'll be along.
CONE: I know she'll be along.
(Pause.)
FAK: She'll be along.
CONE: She said she'd be here.
FAK: Well ... (Pause.) Here! Where's it gone?
  Someone's pinched it ... You've put it somewhere.
PATTY: What's the matter?
FAK: It was here I swear. Oh Gawd!
PATTY: It's there.
FAK: How'd it get there? (Turning on CONE.) Very funny,
  very funny I'm sure. Hah hah.
CONE: Look out! Get that.
(Enter DODO. Apparently about 16 years old with a
plain, pale, old face. She might even be an old woman.
She wears a man's overcoat too large for her and a big,
old hat. She brings on a huge pile of rags, newspapers
etc., carrying them, dragging them on a makeshift sledge
or pushing them in a pram. She doesn't see the others
but she sees the audience and is startled and suspicious.
Eventually she decides the best way to get round them is
to try and amuse them. She performs any tricks she may
know of the simplest, clumsiest kind, making shapes
with here fingers resembling animals etc., presently she
begins to make noises: clucking, grunting etc., again
imitating animals, finally she is at her ease. PATTY
gets the giggles.)
PATTY: I wish Maureen could see this.
CONE: Take your tip from me. (To DODO) Hiya banana face!
  What's your name?
(DODO freezes with fear.)
DODO: (Inarticulate). Do ... do ... do ...
CONE: Dodo eh? Hiyah Dodo.
FAK: Hello, Dodo.
CONE: Glad we seen you.
PATTY: Ever so glad.
FAK: Ever so glad, eh?
CONE: Because we've got a little present for you.
FAK: A present?
CONE: For her birthday.
FAK: Her birthday?
PATTY: Her birthday.
CONE: A birthday present for her birthday. Let's show.
Let's show her the present.
(CONE motions them to fetch the "body".)
PATTY: Yes! Yes!
FAK: Yeah!
What'd you guess it was, Dodo? What'd you guess?
PATTY: Guess.
FAK: Guess.
CONE: Guess.
PATTY: Guess. Guess.
CONE: Say something, Dodo. Close your eyes and say what comes into your eyes. Think! Long and thin --
FAK: Heavy.
CONE: Yeah. Long and thin and heavy ... eh, Dodo?
PATTY: Yes.
FAK: Long and thin and heavy.
CONE: What is it? What is it, eh?
PATTY: Long and thin and heavy.
FAK: Long and thin and heavy.
CONE: Long and thin and heavy -- like a -- ?
PATTY: It's like a --
FAK: Like a -- (Touches DODO).
DODO: Carpet!
FAK: A carpet!
CONE: A carpet! ... A carpet ... Who said this girl was stupid, eh? ... Who said she was dull ...

FAK: A carpet.
CONE: Faky-boy. Show the lady her carpet.
FAK: What?
CONE: (miming). You take that. And you take that.
PATTY: This, eh?
FAK: What?
PATTY: That! That!
FAK: Oh ... that?
CONE: Yes, stupid. Patty, you take this.
PATTY: This? This?
FAK: Oh, I see -- that!
CONE: When I say "heave": heave. O.K. One! Two! Three! --
FAK: (stumbles against DODO). Oh pardon.
PATTY: Oh!
CONE: Shy, you stupid.
FAK: Oh, I;m ever so sorry.
FAK: Please excuse me. I'm ever so sorry. Beg pardon.
CONE: A bit more to you -- mind the wrinkle.
FAK: The what?
PATTY: The wrinkle! The wrinkle!
FAK: Oh, the wrinkle.
PATTY: If one of you stood in the middle --
CONE: I'll stand in the middle --
FAK: No. I want to.
CONE: No, I want to.
FAK: No, I want to.
CONE: Oh, very well...
PATTY: Take your shoes off.
FAK: What!
PATTY: If you think anything of Dodo you'll take your shoes off before you stand on her nice carpet.
FAK: Oh heck.
CONE: Let's all take our shoes off.
FAK: Oh all right. If we all do.
(CONE, FAK and PATTY remove their shoes.)
Your feet smell.
CONE: They don't.
FAK: They do.
PATTY: You've got a hole in your sock.
FAK: So's he.
PATTY: Cor! Don't it look silly. What a lark. Why don't you mend it?
CONE: Oh, come on. Let's get out of here.
FAK: What about Greta?
CONE: (irritated). Let's get out.
FAK: (to DODO). Glad you like the present ... I said glad you like it ... What you think about the present, eh? ... You like it, don't you? ... Well, go on, say something, it's only polite ... nice, isn't it? ... I said it's nice ... it's nice ... you do like it, don't you? ... Go on say you do ... Go on ... You do like it, don't you ... you do, don't you ... You got to say you do ... you got to. You got to say you do ... you do, don't you ... you do -- you do, don't you, you do ... eh? What? ... What ... what ... what ... what's the matter? I said what's the matter? ... Oh ... oh heck ... oh hell, oh bloody hell ... oh bloody bloody ... look!
It's going! It's bloody going! I'm bloody taking it away! Look! Look!

PATTY: What's the matter with him?
FAK: What shall we do with it?
CONE: Wrap it up in brown paper.
FAK" (seeing DODO's pile of old rags). They'll do.
DODO: No!
FAK: Eh?
DODO: No!
FAK: What!
DODO: No! No!
(FAK and DODO, their joy growing, tussle for the rags.)
DODO: No! No! No! No! No! No!
FAK: No! No! No! No! No!
PATTY: (laughing). Oh silly, silly Faky-boy. Oh my, isn't it blarney, girl. Oh horrible, horrible.
(FAK lets go the rags and snatches up the newspapers.)
DODO: Ooops!
FAK: Yippee!
(They stand DEAN upright and wrap him in newspapers, winding scotch tape around him to hold the papers in place. Note: STEVE may give them the tape, if there seems to be a problem keeping the "body" upright, then STEVE may be able to help with commands on his instruments.)
DODO: No No No No
Throw Throw Throw Throw
So So So So
Blow Blow Blow Blow
Crow Crow Crow Crow
Doe Doe Doe Doe

What you got there? Sandwiches?

Strong and neat. That's what I call a packet.

(Reading a headline from the paper) "London policeman beaten by an iron bar." Hurrah!

(FAK sticks a hat on DEAN's head.)

Got a penny for the guy, Mister! Got a penny for the guy.

Got a penny for the guy.

Got a penny for the guy.

Tootle tootle tootle toot.

Tootle tootle tootle toot.

Got a penny for the guy.

Got a penny for the guy.

(DODO)

Tootle tootle tootle toot.

Tootle tootle tootle toot.

FAK:

Got a penny for the guy.

Got a penny for the guy.

(STEVE picks up the rhythm. The rest pretend to be playing instruments.)

DODO:

Tootle tootle tootle toot.

Tootle tootle tootle toot.

CONE:


FAK:

Got a penny for the guy.

Got a penny for the guy.

PATTY:

Wow wow wow wow

Wow wow wow wow

DODO:

Tootle tootle tootle toot.

Tootle tootle tootle toot.

CONE:

Tcha!

(CONE, FAK and PATTY begin to dance round DEAN as round a totem: bellowing words at the head wrapped in newspaper.)

PATTY:

Wow wow wow wow wow wow wow.

FAK:

Guy guy guy guy guy guy guy guy.

CONE:

Bang bang bang bang bang bang bang.

(CONE, FAK and PATTY begin frenziedly to tear the paper from DEAN.)
CONE: Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!  Ah!
FAK: Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
PATTY: Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
DEAN: Stop
CONE: (holding out the American pack). Cigarette?
(DEAN stretches out his hand and waits. CONE puts the cigarette in DEAN's hand. CONE walks away sulking and angry.)
DEAN: (including the audience). We'll now have a little peace -- a little tranquillity. I'm serious. I'm calling a truce for one minute. For one whole minute nobody up here is going to do anything and you can all relax. Nothing's going to happen up here. Nothing at all. (To the others) You understand?
PATTY & FAK: (in character). Yes, all right.
DEAN: All right ... You can just relax. Just let go. O.K. one minute from now ... (After sufficient time, to DODO) Feeling better?
(CONE rises.)
That's all right. Time's up.
(For DODO.)
Saw a silver feather
Floating in the sun --
Reached up and caught it.
That was one.

Saw a golden nugget
Glitt'ring down below --
Dug deep and found it.
That was two.

Saw a pearly oyster
Washed out to sea --
Swam out and fetched it.
That was three.
(CONE goes as if to exit then, seeing something
outside, flattens himself.)

FAK:  (whispering). What is it?
CONE:  Them.
FAK:  Aldgate?
CONE:  'Bout eight of them. All round out there they are.
FAK:  Let's have a look.
CONE:  Keep back here, you can just -- careful! If they
see us we won't have a --
FAK:  Gawd!
CONE:  Where's Greta eh? Where is she? Why ain't she here?
DEAN:  Who's out there?
CONE:  Never you mind.
DEAN:  Friends of yours?
CONE:  Yeah, friends of ours. Why don't you go have a little
chat?
(Pause.DEAN starts to exit.)
FAK:  They'll smash you.
(Pause.)
DEAN:  (to DODO). Just you wait there, honey. Don't you stir
till I come back.
FAK:  They'll kill you.
(Exit DEAN. CONE, FAK and PATTY watch him outside.)
Cor!

PATTY:  What's happened?
FAK:  Cor!
PATTY:  Let me see! Let me see!
FAK:  Look at that. Will you just look at that.
(FAK and PATTY exit.)

CONE: What you want to go with him for? Why you want to 
go with him? Ain't you going to wait for Greta? ... 
Greta ... I'll tell her ... I'll tell ... I'll go and 
find her and tell her ... tell Greta ... Greta ... Mamma! 
Mamma! Where are you, Mamma? Why you left me? ... 
(Going) Mamma! (Off) Mamma! Greta! ... 
(DODO plays with the light. STEVE starts to tap a 
rhythm. DODO keeps time allowing the sound and the 
texture of the light to govern her body. Pause. 
STEVE comes to her.)

STEVE: You're all right. But you let them push you around 
such a lot. I mean you let them push you around such 
a lot in the play. 
(DODO looks at him, lights start to come up for interval. 
DODO hastily clears off.)

(End of Act One)

During the interval STEVE might remain on stage, 
attending to his instruments, doing odd jobs around 
the stage, chatting to stage hands etc.