HIGH MELODRAMA

An English translation of Knut Hamsun's
The Game of Life (Livets spil, 1896), with an
extensive critical introduction

by

SIMON GRABOWSKI

B.A., University of British Columbia, 1967
M.A., University of Washington, 1968

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Department of Comparative Literature

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

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ABSTRACT.

The introduction to the present study of Knut Hamsun's The Game of Life (Livets spil, 1896) sums up the strange failure of this play, a remarkable work by a famous author, to gain any measurable recognition; a number of possible reasons are suggested, among them the membership of Livets spil in the so-called Kareno-trilogy, the other two plays of which are rather weak. Plots of all three plays are provided.

The introductory chapter is followed by a general survey of Hamsun's dramatic production. Considerable space is given to a comparison between the last of his six plays, In the Grip of Life (Livet ivold, 1910) and Wedekind's Der Marquis von Keith (1900). The remaining two long chapters - Part Three and Four - are devoted to an exhaustive examination of Livets spil. In Part Three, the method used is that of an interpretative investigation; the main characters and symbols/symbolic forces of the play are analyzed in depth and correlated. Special consideration is given to the character constellation Teresita-Jens Spir, as compared to the constellation Edvarda-Glahn in Hamsun's famous novel Pan (1894). Finally, the consistency of the play with the general story line of the trilogy is demonstrated. The method followed in Part Four is that of a dramatic-aesthetic close-reading. The focus here is on general dramatic effectiveness, and on the many special elements in the play which go into the creation of a fantastic universe on stage. Part A discusses three aspects of dramatic technique basic to the restless style of Livets spil. Special attention is given to the principle of external intrusion, the subtle disturbance of the dialogue from a source outside of the immediate sphere of action. Part B demonstrates the intrinsically fantastic nature of a large number of the play's primary and secondary elements: The basic premises from which the action derives, character appearances and the nature and function of props, the symbolic suggestiveness of light and sound effects, and the suggestive uses and implications of spatial distance. Finally, in the conclusion, the two basic methods of analysis followed are confronted with each other, and it is demonstrated how Hamsun realized in Livets spil some of the goals he had set himself five years earlier in his advocacy of a more psychologically oriented modern literature in Norway.
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#### II. THE PLAY

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Part One:

INTRODUCTION

The selection, for purposes of critical study, of hitherto "undiscovered" works of literature is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it relieves the literary critic of the obligation to familiarize himself with the utterances, often vast in both number and scope, of previous critics on the subject; on the other hand, it imposes on him the burden of convincing the reader that the work which he has "discovered" is indeed entitled to such a discovery, in other words: that its undiscoveredness, up till this point, was the failure, not of the work itself, but of all the previous critics who failed to see its true value, or even to get acquainted with it. Generally speaking, this is anything but an easy task; for in this world, the most natural tendency, even for presumably quite sophisticated critical audiences, is to assume that 'if the work really held such significant value, somebody would surely have brought it to attention long ago.'

Knut Hamsun's four-act play The Game of Life (Livets spil, 1896) is very much a case in point. To be sure, authorial lack of fame has presented no barrier to the discovery of any of Hamsun's works; for throughout at least the second half of his life, Hamsun enjoyed worldwide reputation as a novelist, and even some rather insignificant works of his managed to get translated and read, on the mere strength of his name, in a number of countries outside Norway. It would therefore be naturally assumed that anything by Hamsun which is not known at all - hardly even in his own country - could possibly hold any, let alone any striking, value. And so, this is precisely the assumption which confronts the author of the present study, in his critical capacity of the "discoverer" of Livets spil.

How could a brilliant play by a famous author have failed so utterly to attract any attention? First of all we may assume that the literary recognition of a work written
directly for the stage will tend to be dependent, at least in a fair measure, on some initial stage success, preceding or coinciding with the publication of it. Unless the author has already been established as a dramatist, a short dramatic work like Livets spil, devoid of any polemical or in other ways temporally inspired "sensation" value, might appear too insubstantial to attract the attention of a reading public traditionally oriented in terms of, not plays, but rather novels or book-long collections of short stories. As we shall see in the following chapter, Hamsun, despite a quantitatively not insignificant dramatic production, never really established himself as a dramatist, and so it has been generally assumed that no one of his plays could be significantly better than the rest of them. More specifically, Livets spil happened to be the middle member of a trilogy - known as the Kareno-trilogy, after its protagonist, the Lapp-born philosopher Ivar Kareno - the two other plays of which can hardly be said to exhibit any striking features of quality whatsoever. (Although the last play is quite amusing in places and would probably lend itself to an interesting production.) As far as plot is concerned, there is little or no need for Livets spil to be read or seen within the context of the trilogy; in fact, I doubt that there are any references in it to the preceding play which cannot be readily grasped without knowledge of that play itself, or even of its existence. However, the predilection of academic criticism for the facts of literary history has prevented Livets spil from coming into view as a play in its own right, apart from its membership in the Kareno-trilogy. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that it has never been accorded any real identity beyond the mere fact of this membership. And, since the Kareno-trilogy as a whole is remembered predominantly in its capacity of one of Hamsun's weaker creations, the equation of the identity of Livets spil with its membership in this trilogy has been vastly detrimental to its own dramatic reputation.

The present critical study does not undertake to deal in detail with the whole Kareno-trilogy, its chief substance
having been limited to a comprehensive analysis of Livets
en, on respectively the interpretative and the dramatic-aesthetic
level. However, since some of the interpretative chapters will
contain references to the other two plays, and since I do not
want to leave the reader entirely without knowledge of the
trilogy in general, a brief outline of all its plots will be
presented in the following section.

1. At the Gates of the Kingdom (Ved rigets port, 1895).

At the opening of the trilogy, Kareno is twenty-nine years
old; he is completing a major philosophical-political work,
presenting his theories which stand in sharp opposition to
the prevailing liberal views of the philosophical community.
In Act One, Kareno receives a visit from Professor Gylling,
an influential adherent of Mill and Spencer, on whom the pub-
lication of his work - and, with that, his financial security
and entire academic career - depends. Gylling suggests cer-
tain revisions in the book, but Kareno soon realizes that
these would be tantamount to a more or less total repudia-
tion of his beliefs. To these difficulties, beginning marital
troubles are being added: Kareno's wife, Elina, unable to
understand his absorption in his work, interprets his perpe-
tual absent-mindedness to the effect that he is attracted to
their maid, and accuses him of no longer loving her.

Act Two presents an evening party at Kareno's house. One
of the visitors is Endre Bondesen, a flippant journalist who
ingrates himself with Elina - who flirts away vigorously
with him in the hope that she will manage to arouse the
jealousy of her husband. Also, there are Carsten Jerven, a
young scholar, with his fiancée, Nathalia Hovind. Jerven, who
has been Kareno's philosophical brother-in-arms, has given
in to Gyllings demands and revised his dissertation in
accordance with the views of the latter; this, in addition to
his doctoral degree, has earned him a stipend which will
enable him to marry. He offers Kareno the honorarium for his
dissertation as a loan and leaves the dissertation - to be
read, as he asks, "with forbearance". When the guests have left, Kareno starts reading, and, immediately discovering Jerven's ideological somersault, he furiously calls out "Traitor!", just as the curtain falls.

In Acts Three and Four we see Kareno breaking with Jerven: He sends the money back, and, when Jerven twice comes to plead with him, he again refuses to accept it. In the meantime, Nathalia has broken her engagement with Jerven, making a resumption of it contingent upon the latter's obtaining Kareno's forgiveness, as indicated through an acceptance of the loan. Turned down by both Kareno and Nathalia, Jerven swears that he will take revenge. In the end, Kareno himself is left high and dry when Elina, having now become totally enamoured with Bondesen, takes off together with the journalist; as a concluding tableau of his bitter fate, we see the bailiff and his assistants arriving to impound the penniless philosopher's possessions.

2. Livets spil.

Kareno, ten years older than in the first play, has arrived at a small trading-post on the coast of Northern Norway where he has become engaged as a tutor for the two little sons of a wealthy merchant, Mr. Oterman. As quarrymen blast away a hillock on Mr. Oterman's property in order to open up the building-site which the latter has promised Kareno (Kareno wants to build a tower with a cupola of glass in which to write and conduct certain experiments of mental transcendence), a massive deposit of marble reveals itself underneath the seemingly worthless rocks. Oterman now claims the site for himself, giving Kareno instead a protruding headland nearby. Teresita, Mr. Oterman's daughter, makes quite unveiled advances to Kareno, but the latter remains relatively impervious to them. A travelling band of musicians and a strange old man visit the place, and we hear about a dangerous, epidemic nerve fever approaching from the north.

It is several months later, autumn and storm. Kareno receives a telegram announcing the arrival of his wife.
Teresita, who has more or less rejected her former suitor, the telegraphist Jens Spir, and thinks herself madly in love with Kareno, resolves to prevent the arrival of the ship carrying Mrs. Kareno on board: When Kareno asks to have his lamp filled - his tower with its weird glass contraption on the headland also acts as a lighthouse for the ships - she sends the old man, Thy, with an empty lamp, so that the light starts fading after a few minutes, and the ship loses its way in the dangerous skerries. (The demonic Teresita is watching the lamp fading in the tower through a pair of binoculars.) Eventually the ship runs aground, and some of the quarrymen go out in Oterman's boat to try to save the passengers.

Act Three takes place on a night-dark day in the middle of the winter; the presence of many people - a local market is just being held - plus the combined effects of northern lights, a blood-red moon, and the dramatic arrival, at last, of the mysterious and frightening fever, lends an almost operatic quality to the whole act. A love affair between Teresita and Kareno seems now manifestly in the making, and Kareno, taking advantage of the departure of a fishing-boat for the south, persuades his wife to leave, under the pretext of wanting to protect her against the epidemic. At the end of the act, Teresita has fallen ill, and Jens Spir goes away in a boat to fetch the doctor for her.

The final act takes place the following spring. The leading characters are now all more or less in a state of dissolution: Oterman, haunted by the idea of how much he could have gotten for the marble if he hadn't sold the quarrying rights right away, has gone virtually insane; Teresita, having turned her back on both Kareno and Jens Spir, now pursues the supervising engineer of the quarry, only to ridicule him a little later, thus acting openly as the nymphomaniac she is; Jens Spir, fired from his job months ago when he had left the station to fetch the doctor for Teresita, has become thoroughly destitute; and Kareno, baffled and dejected by Teresita's rejection of him, drifts around restlessly, unable to return to his writing. The end of the play is turned into a virtual
maelstrom of fantastic melodrama as Oterman sets fire to Kare­
no's tower to escape from his promise - given the day the
marble was found - that he would finance the printing of the
treatise Kareno has been working on, and Teresita is shot to
death by accident. Oterman also loses his two little sons, the
momentary, accidental presence of whom in the tower he had
known nothing about. Kareno loses all his manuscripts, the
result of years of work, in the fire.

3. Evening glow (Aftenrøde, 1898).

Kareno, now fifty, has moved together again with his wife;
after many years of financial insecurity and isolation from
the established academic and cultural community, he is now
arriving in markedly improved circumstances: his wife's large
inheritance is just coming due, and his long-standing position
as a legendary outsider and leader of the radical party "The
Mountain" has consolidated his renown to the point where
establishment political circles, represented by Bondesen -
now editor of the leading newspaper - are starting to court
him, hoping to draw him away from his party and use him for
their own purposes. Elections being close, Bondesen wants to
persuade Kareno to accept candidacy for a parliament seat
which would otherwise go to Jerven (whom the jealous newspaper-
man hopes to scandalize after having discovered him in an in-
timate situation with Kareno's maid, with whom he was also
having an affair himself). Kareno is caught in a paralyzing
dilemma: On the one side he is being beleaguered by all those
established forces of society who, having refused to honour
him for twenty years, are now courting him with promises of
all the rewards that were consistently denied him; on the
other side he faces his obligations to his admiring party com-
rades, as well as to his own personal, desperate myth about
never growing old, never changing. The unresolved dilemma with
which Act One ends is further sharpened in Act Two: In a
frightened protest against the increasing weakening of his
own determination which he feels, he tells his comrades that
they can count on him: he will stand by them in the election.
But in effect he is thoroughly tired out now and on the brink of giving in to the other side; his feeble moves to pack up and leave Elina and the dangerously comfortable household are becoming increasingly unreal, dreamlike. In Act Three, the final, long act, a series of grotesque situations is unrolled as Kareno receives visits from a number of people with whom he would never previously have dreamt of dealing: His old enemy Jerven -- who has been working against him pitilessly for twenty years -- comes to ask him not to accept candidacy for the crucial parliament seat; a young artist comes to draw a picture of him for Bondesen's newspaper; the minister of culture pays him a visit and entices him with promises of a professorship at the university if he will stay outside the election race. In the end the embittered Kareno, lured by the prospect of attaining to the very insignia of established power which have for so many years been used against him, gives in to Bondesen and his wife: he accepts candidacy for the parliament and cancels his membership in "The Mountain". An abortive attempt, by his young, fanatic second-in-command, Tare, to assassinate him, further solidifies his chances of defeating Jerven in the election. The grotesque ending shows Kareno on his way into the ultimate reactionary life-style of old-age conservatism.

There is no doubt that, at the time when Hamsun wrote the Kareno-trilogy, its theme -- the gradual defeat of youthful radicalism by the adverse forces of life, age, and society -- was of great importance to Hamsun himself. The thirty-year-old author who was catapulted into fame with Hunger in 1890 may have been young in terms of mere numerical age; but existentially, i.e. in terms of the entire preceding decade of grave hardships and disappointments which he had endured, he may well have felt that he had lost his whole youth in the process of conquering the obstacles to the recognition he so ardently longed for. It is as if he had managed to remain young only for as long as the deadly struggle to stay alive had been.
claiming his whole mental and physical being; and that, once he had at last achieved that which must gradually have come to seem to him The Impossible, the mental reaction, long overdue, set in. After _Hunger_, only his great masterpiece _Mysteries_, and, to some extent, his satirical novel _Editor Lynge_ (both 1892) exhibit features of that same youthful daredevilry; the following novel, _Shallow Soil_ (1893), seems tired to its very marrow, and even the celebrated romantic spirit of _Pan_ (1894) is anything but the spirit of blossoming youth: it is the romantic testament of someone now unmistakably moving into the shadows of a critical existential tiredness. When, at the age of thirty-five, Hamsun set out to write the _Kareno_-trilogy, the crisis was manifestly coming to a head: for here, for the first time, he undertook to deal explicitly with that very theme - youth versus old age, and the hopelessly destructive effects of the latter on the human spirit - which he was going to pursue so addictedly in almost all his writing for the next seventeen years. Unfortunately, the very fear - the fear of waning inspiration - which must have driven him on to deal with this theme was also inexorably borne out in the results of his dealings with it; for, despite the almost absurdly comical qualities of the last play of the trilogy, there is nothing very inspired or interesting about Kareno's hardships at the hands of the establishment; also, the special, Hamsunesque brand of aristocratic radicalism proclaimed by his daring "philosopher" hero - the latter speaks, among other things, of "defiance, hatred, revenge" as "ethical forces on the decline" - is so insubstantially and immaturely presented as to make it almost impossible to follow Kareno's thorny campaign against society with any real seriousness. Thus the truly interesting features of Hamsun's _Kareno_ effort do not lie with the trilogy as a whole, but rather with the strangely poetic, strangely fantastic fashion in which the thematic and dramatic texture of the middle play departs from, and transcends, those of its rather wooden neighbours. For although - as I shall later try to show - the events of _Livets spil_ remain fully operative within
the larger progression scheme of the trilogy, the play itself constitutes a more striking departure from realism than anything Hamsun had written or would ever write again.

There is some wry amusement to be found in the recollection of how, in one of those famous polemic lectures on literature with which he appeared before a series of Norwegian city audiences during the year 1891, Hamsun, amidst general criticism of, among other Norwegian authors, Ibsen, leveled a special attack against The Lady from the Sea -- published three years earlier -- for what he described as its utter abstruseness. For this was the year before Hamsun himself published Mysteries, that astounding novel which has now for almost eighty years defied the feeble piecemeal efforts of its would-be interpreters, and five years before the publication of Livets spil; two works compared to which the play about Ibsen's uprooted "mermaid" seems almost sedately unabstruse, not to say simple. Undeniably, Hamsun's uncompromising quest for perfection and precision in his imaginative writing was not exactly duplicated in his utterances on the level of public debate. He would accuse Ibsen of abstruseness at one moment if that happened to suit him, only to complain the next moment about his lack of psychological insight and the simplistic quality of his character creations. It is difficult to believe that the hawk-eyed Hamsun really found a play like The Lady from the Sea in any way abstruse. We are undoubtedly closer to his central view of Ibsen when Nagel in Mysteries refers to the famous dramatist by proclaiming that "most of his plays are like dramatized woodpulp." And yet, when Hamsun started out, a few years later, as a dramatist himself, Nagel's gibe against Ibsen could hardly have boomeranged back into a more ready target than At the Gates of the Kingdom; for this is not a play in which the dialogue is seen to rise spectacularly above the woodpulp level -- even if, on the basis of the play's content, a special case for this woodpulp quality can be made. But if this first dramatic creation of Hamsun's failed to vindicate him in his previous criticism of Ibsen, his next one surpassed virtually any of Ibsen's plays in
regard to resilience, imagination, and dramatic adventurousness. Clearly, \textit{Livets spil} was far removed from the dramatic universe of Ibsen, just as it was to prove far removed from any subsequent drama Hamsun was going to create. Thus of the two important questions one is impelled to ask in connection with its origin, the first one - the question of possible influences and parallels - does not precisely release a flood of answers. Of the two great dramatic adventurers of that time, Strindberg, in 1896, had not even embarked manifestly upon the last phase of his dramatic career; while Wedekind had two years earlier published only the second of his major plays, \textit{Erdegeist}, featuring the first half of the famous heroine Lulu's career. Externally speaking, there are very conspicuous similarities between the progress of Lulu and that of Teresita, but on a more individual psychological level the two characters seem rather different. Still, a detailed comparison of these two plays might prove anything but irrelevant, but unfortunately this would explode the framework of the present study.

The other question which comes to mind is: Why did Hamsun, with a half-decade of novelistic fame behind him, take the step into the dramatic field? Judging from his polemic proclamations of previous years, plus his previous lack of actual involvement with drama, one might chance a guess that he did it to emulate, from a now secure authorial position, e.g. Ibsen in the latter's own province, so as to add a new territory to his already conquered grounds - rather than out of any spontaneous inner urge to seek heightened personal expression through this new medium. Such a guess would seem to be further supported by his choice of such a relatively uninspired main theme for the trilogy as a whole. But after the initial play, he changed his dramatic style and vision completely - only to return in the last play to a dialogue (and stage atmosphere) as linear as that for which he had taken Ibsen to task. On the background of this strange chapter, as well as subsequent, strangely ambitious dramatic attempts, Hamsun's excursion into writing for the stage becomes a somewhat puzzling subject.
So, if we cannot answer with any immediate definiteness the question of what prompted this excursion, let us at least examine the quantitative and qualitative results of it.

Part Two:

HAMSUN AS A DRAMATIST

Hamsun's career as a writer is probably one of the longest in literary history. From the publication of *From the Intellectual Life of Modern America* in 1889 to the appearance of his last novel *The Ring is Closed* in 1936, there is a span of forty-seven years; if one includes his last book, *On Overgrown Paths*, which showed him at an undiminished height as a prosaist, this span grows to sixty years. It is significant that all of his plays are written within a period of fifteen years out of his entire career; the five first plays are even written within a period of eight years. In the twenties, Hamsun reportedly entertained plans for a renewed dramatic effort — one which was to show how drama really ought to be written! — but nothing came of it. We know that Hamsun had little love for the theatre and its world, and the fact that he did not pursue the writing of drama after he had entered conclusively into the writing of his longer novels suggests that he felt no all-important calling as a dramatist. For the literary critic, this is a dangerous awareness to work within, for it may very easily bias him against the actual texts so as to cause him to seek in these, from the very beginning, primarily the evidence of an inferior dramatic ability and talent,
- thus closing his mind to the substantial amount of counter-evidence which he might otherwise find in the plays. In the case of at least one of the plays, the one that forms the subject of the present study, this counter-evidence is so striking that we are forced to conclude that Hamsun's failure to succeed in the field of drama was the result of a lack of actual effort, rather than a lack of basic dramatic talent. It is likely, in other words, that his strange and extraordinary talent in the realm of fiction might have been capable of being channelled into drama instead, and in that case we might have gotten a whole body of bizarre and fantastic avant-garde drama, on the soaring scale of imagination of Livets spil itself. I am saying "instead", because it is not likely that such an effort would have allowed for the continued, simultaneous availability of talent in the area of longer fiction. But such speculations, of course, are just pure theorizing. I think, however, that one gets closer to reality if one recognizes that Hamsun's originality as a dramatist existed above all in the sphere of the fantastic, the unreal; and that his entrance, at the turn of the century, from an initial phase of "neo-romantic" writing into a phase of increasing realism thus logically put an end to whatever possibility of a new and truly "modern" drama Livets spil might originally have seemed to herald.

The six plays that Hamsun wrote fall conveniently and chronologically into two categories, preceding and following the turn of the century: the trilogy (1895-98), plus the three individual plays Monk Vendt (Munken Vendt, 1902), Queen Tamara (Dronning Tamara, 1903), and In the Grip of Life (Livet ivold, 1910). Taken as a whole, the trilogy contains elements both of Hamsun's neo-romantic writing and of his subsequent realism from the first decade of the century. On the one hand, the philosopher Kareno, with his aristocratic radicalism and his uncompromising ideals, is in part a descendant of Nagel, the romantic hero and 'mind-at-the-center' of Mysteries. On the other hand, the main theme of the trilogy as a whole is age, that is, the inescapable effects of old
age upon the idealism—however strong and uncompromising—of one's youth. "Old age"—which to Hamsun started at fifty and which he was beginning to fear now in his mid-thirties, with Pan formally showing him at the heights of romantic youth—was to become one of the dominant elements in the middle phase of his production, from around the turn of the century to 1912 (the publication of Look Back on Happiness (De siste glede)), during which period his own simultaneous, and often difficult, adjustment to the loss of youth was reflected in most of the things he wrote. In the trilogy, however, the age theme does not emerge explicitly until the last play, when Kareno has actually reached the age of fifty and defects to the establishment; and the violent caricature in which this defection is presented makes it difficult to think of even this play as a totally 'realistic' play. It is chronologically paradoxical—both in terms of Hamsun's own production and the hero's age in each of the plays—that the first play, At the Gates of the Kingdom, should convey such a general impression of "flat" realism as it does. While it is possible to justify this, as I shall later try to do, in terms of the external conditions attending the hero, one may also in part view it as a certain groping for dramatic expression on Hamsun's part, as if the mere technical effort of writing this first play had not allowed for the maintenance of a superordinate dramatic point of view, a general artistic vision. There is a certain dramatic awkwardness about some of the scenes, notably Act II, suggestive of the novice playwright; however, in Livets spil, immediately after, there is no conceivable sign of the novice whatsoever, and, after all—the dramatic inadequacies of At the Gates of the Kingdom were to reappear much later, in the total dramatic indisposition of Queen Tamara.

The two subsequent plays, Monk Vondt and Queen Tamara, are "romantic", above all, in the ordinary, superficial sense of the word. While the bold eccentricity and romanticism of Livets spil had been created on the basis of a formally "realistic" situation and setting, these two new plays took the
full step away from a contemporary reality into the distant realms of the ever-"romantic" past, respectively late eighteenth-century Northern Norway and late twelfth-century Georgia. Where Hamsun's romanticism of the 'nineties had materialized immediately from within, in total consistency with his artistic viewpoint, we now see him treat a formally 'romantic' subject-matter from the outside, - that is, the romantic universes of these two plays are ones which are not created coextensively out of his own writing, but which exist, so to speak, in their entity beforehand, apart from the writer himself. In fact, Monk Vendt is a very instructive example of how such an "outside creation" may come about. During the first phase of his writing, Hamsun had developed a sort of stock cycle of romantic motifs, centering around a group of legendary figures from Northern Norway of the past - Iselin, Didrik, Munken Vendt - which time and again he introduces into the phantasies of his romantic heroes of this period, notably Lieutenant Glahn in Pan. In Victoria, the third book which young Johannes publishes deals with Iselin and Didrik, and this book, Hamsun writes, was "soft and strong as wine". This brief little characterization epitomizes Hamsun's whole attitude to the Didrik-Iselin motif cycle. One finds it hard to understand his particular fascination with this material. Whenever I have come across it in his writings, it has struck me, not as 'soft and strong as wine', but rather as tedious and oddly irrelevant. In neither of these cases has there been any mistaking that this is a foreign material, i.e. something which does not grow organically out of the hero's own individuality, but rather a private hobby-horse of the artist's which the latter, always carrying it around with him, has now once again seen his chance to introduce into a given context. It is one of the few instances where Hamsun's technique of writing down whole independent passages that came into his head and using them later in an appropriate context shows clearly and to considerable disadvantage. At any rate, the time had now come to build the hobby-horse its own explicit, full-scale poetic
monument, and so, in 1900, Hamsun set out to write Monk Vendt. The result is a versified monstrosity in eight acts, - impressive, like a Hollywood epic, by the sheer amount of effort that must have gone into it, but hardly by any dramatic effectiveness as a whole. Quite clearly, Hamsun had been trying to emulate Peer Gynt; but despite the sporadic marks of genius which Monk Vendt does after all show, he came nowhere near succeeding. If ever there might have been a time for tapping the poetic sources of this quaint motif cycle, time, in 1900, had run out for Hamsun. He had probably lived with this material too long, so that it had gradually acquired an existence of its own, as an independent poetic complex apart from him. Through the prolonged storage of this romantic material, he had, in other words, automatically been placed outside of it; thus it was no longer romantic in any personal, existential sense, but merely "exotic". He was, moreover, now definitely entering into a new, realistic phase of vision and thus, from the view of any such romantic long-time baggage he was doubly outside. As a massive tour-de-force, Monk Vendt remains impressive, but the thought of two years of concentrated work having been used up on it makes one slightly uncomfortable.

No doubt Hamsun must have felt uncertain, during these early years of the century, as to what direction he was actually going, for the next year he turned out to have committed a new romantic drama, - this time, fortunately, only about one third the length of Monk Vendt, and not in verse. It is the intensely unintriguing story of the beautiful Tamara, queen of Georgia, who has to be vanquished in war by her husband Prince Georgi before she can acknowledge him as her equal in their married life. To be sure, this material was not old-time baggage like Didrik and Iselin, it was an imported souvenir from Hamsun's journey in Southern Russia and Turkey some years before. The account of the Russian journey was published the same year (I Aeventyrland), but apparently this did not seem a sufficient utilization of this new splendid motif cycle; like Iselin & Co., Tamara and her Caucasian
palace ruins had to have their own romantic drama. Of course it is legitimate for any author to fall privately in love with any such body of romantic-exotic motifs that he may come across; however, his private love affair does not in itself - not in any way! - make the material worthy of being passed on, as the most natural thing in the world, to the reader. On the contrary, to have to acquaint himself with this exotic material which obviously means a lot to the author but to reader remains forever irrelevant, only turns the latter against the author; the effort in itself is unrewarding, and in addition there is the author's own naive and awkward delight in the material, which now - given his failure to lift the latter out of its inanely private, travelogue-like sphere - comes to seem all the more pitiful and absurd. Indeed, the strange weakness, the uncritical reverence for these two banally romantic motif cycles shows a remarkable provinciality on the part of the otherwise so sophisticated Hamsun.

Seven years were to pass after Queen Tamara before a new play by Hamsun, his last one, appeared. If Livets spil had been strange only in itself, as a play, but certainly not as a lyric-dramatic addition to the already existing novelistic fireworks of Mysteries and Pan, In the Grip of Life is probably the strangest of all of Hamsun's dramas; but it is so in a strangely inconspicuous way, so that one may not really become aware of that on first reading it.

Paradoxically, it is also Hamsun's most realistic play. In terms of realism, it thus comes closest to At the Gates of the Kingdom; but where the dialogue of the latter shows a certain, squarish stylization, the dialogue of In the Grip of Life is more plainly, more matter-of-factly realistic than any other dialogue, of drama or fiction, by Hamsun. At the same time, the events are multifarious, intricate and rather unusual - incomparably more unusual than in At the Gates of the Kingdom! - not to say adventurous. This odd incongruence between content and expression, the trite and tired circumsstantiality with which the events, in themselves colourful and melodramatic, are grindingly unfolded, is the most
baffling and intriguing aspect of the play.

In In the Grip of Life, Hamsun again deals directly with the tragedy of age. It is the story of "Hønge"—Juliane, the once famous vaudeville star who had been a royal mistress and the most celebrated and desired of women. Now long past her youth, she is married to an old, rich, half-senile man, and living in financially splendid circumstances. But her life is slowly turning into a tragedy; for, as she declares herself, she "cannot let go"; cannot accept the decline, the changes, the painful adjustments she has to make.

"Do you know what my fate is like? Well, you see, with people like me it just goes downhill and downhill. You remember, I always say that it is going to end with a negro (laughs). Yes, it is really true. And yet I am not a bit old and ugly."

(Act I)

Juliane's present lover, the ruthless and heartless antique dealer Alexander Blumenschön, has been another such step downwards. Younger than she and fully aware of her dependence on him, he has taken cynical advantage of her all along. Now she is losing him too. In the end, her prophecy comes true: she does, literally, end up with a negro. There is something in this downhill pattern which reminds of Teresita's progress in Livets spil, or even more of Hedda Gabler's road from Lövborg to Tesman to Brack; schematically viewed, it is the pattern from the prototypes of The swineherd, the fable of the beautiful princess who rejects one royal suitor after another, only to end with a vagabond. But Juliane had not rejected anyone, she had given herself to each of them, jubilantly, without arrogance; she is simple life's victim, the desperate contender against age.

The figure Juliane had had its model in real life, but so had Blumenschön. It is the latter fact which is of literary interest, because this same model — the Munich art dealer Willy Gretor — had also been the prototype of Keith in Wedekind's Der Marquis von Keith of 1900. (Hamsun had lived in
Munich for some time, in 1896. The two dramatists have used their original in almost totally different ways. Both Keith and Blumenschön are, to be sure, lame in one leg, essentially crooked and dealing in, respectively, art and antiques. But while Blumenschön is meanness personified, a vile and conceited little scamp virtually without sympathetic features, Keith is an international large-scale swindler of considerable existential stature, thief and thinker in one person, a sisyphean con man and tragic hero who is defeated by his own perpetual self-examination and inconsistency. A comparison of the two plays brings out some of the paradoxical features of Wedekind’s and Hamsun’s relation to one another; paradoxical because as authors, as spirits of daredeviltry, they are so very akin, while as dramatists they are quite different. In some respects, Keith himself is almost like a German cousin of Nagel; yet to put a Nagelian hero on the stage required a sort of hectic, high-paced comedy, a dramatic extension and orchestration of Nagel’s crazy schemes and reasonings which was not in Hamsun’s own dramatic fashion. It is typical, in this context, that Juliane’s tragedy, cruel and harsh that it may in itself seem, looks almost calmly melancholic beside that of Lulu, the heroine of the famous double-drama Erdgeist (1894) and Die Büchse der Pandora (1904). Lulu’s life story follows the same down-the-staircase pattern, but her descent takes her through increasingly sordid, increasingly criminal areas of life, where she becomes exploited, not by one man at a time, but by everybody around her; and when at last she "ends up with a negro", it is not just a polite, Norwegian-speaking black manservant, it is Jack the Ripper himself who cuts her up in a garret in London. Likewise, where Juliane is the victim of desire and age, with Lulu it is just, plainly and colossally, desire; for Wedekind, the contemplation, in drama, of something as quietly melancholic as age would have been a luxury for which there was no time. He, too, can be rather circumstantial in his dramas, yet the constant breathlessness of his dramatic pace matches, basically, the high adventure of the happenings themselves.
In contrast to this Wedekindian pace, *In the Grip of Life* seems particularly long-winded. In itself, it is a very long play - considerably longer than any of Hamsun's other prose plays - and the slow development of its events makes it seem even longer than it is. When in the end all events have happened - and quite a lot has happened by then, to be sure - it has taken such a long time that it seems as though nothing at all had happened. Some of these events, as I have already said, are quite adventurous; but it is an implosive, self-devouring adventurousness, an adventurousness which collapses, so to say, slowly under its own weight, - as if one were watching a dragon munching away systematically on itself, from the tail upward, till nothing was left. It is not in any way surprising that this play should have found its most congenial reception - and production - not in Scandinavia or Germany, but in Russia. For the kind of drama that Hamsun had here arrived at, and which was at such a great remove from, for instance, Wedekind and Strindberg, comes closer than any drama, close to no drama as unmistakably as to that of Tjekhov. In Russia there was probably better time to watch this sort of intensified stationess on the stage.

During the decade following 1910, Hamsun gradually found the form that was going to last for the rest of his career: long, epic novels, *objective* or *realistic* in the sense that they present a large number of characters which are not just secondary figures grouped around a central hero, but all more or less extensively individualized. When there is a figure who is kept more in focus than the others, there is not then really anything more exceptional about him than about the rest; he may be a little different in some respects, but he is not in himself an extraordinary individual with his own unique vision of the world, - he is not, in other words, "the mind at the center", the convex-concave lens of the subjective viewpoint. During the preceding middle phase, there had been works which tended in this "objective" direction, but there had also been first-person lyric narratives with the "wanderer" at the center, exiled echoes from the super-subjective works of Hamsun's early period when nature and the uniqueness
of the I had still been immediate and absolute values on earth. This second phase, then, had really been a mixture of everything; it had been more or less of a crisis. It is hardly an exaggeration to suggest that the crisis had fundamentally lasted for about fifteen years: from after Livets spil, the last really inspired work of Hamsun’s neo-romantic period, through Look Back on Happiness, the last of his tiresome threnodies on the tragedy of becoming fifty. But most of his plays had been written during precisely these years of confusion when he was experimenting with a number of new, and half-way old, approaches to his art. This, I think, accounts for the problematic outcome. It would have taken a full, undivided commitment to create a generally effective, unequivocally original kind of drama. Given the basic disunity of these years, and failing the surplus of untroubled, undoubting energy which must still have been available to Hamsun at the time when he created Livets spil, such a total commitment to one particular line of experimenting was just not possible. Moreover, with the sort of fundamental awareness of himself as a novelist which Hamsun must have possessed, it would have taken a much greater perplexity to cast all fiction aside and stake EVERYTHING on drama. Thus the dramatic stakes remained few and relatively small; yet the gains suffice to eliminate any loosely preconceived or accustomed notion of the dabbler.
Part Three:

LIVETS SPIL: A COMPREHENSIVE INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS

I.

It will be instructive to look at the Kareno-trilogy as a whole from the point-of-view of idealism versus naturalism in a way similar to the common approach to Ibsen's plays. It will then be seen that in these terms the Kareno of At the Gates of the Kingdom, the first of the plays, definitely maintains high idealistic goals and an unwillingness to compromise. However, the background is also very definitely a non-idealistic one. The academic world which Kareno is up against - represented by professor Gylling - is not in any way susceptible to his views. Due to its extensive power, it is also in complete control of Kareno's academic fate and capable of totally isolating him. Thus as long as he chooses to pursue his idealistic goals within this academic context, he is actually unable to advance towards them. Kareno's own household represents an extension of this "non-idealistic" background. At curtain-rise, execution due to Kareno's failure to pay his bills is only a few days away. As the play unfolds we see that Kareno is unable to deal with his financial problems, since he places all faith in the manuscript which he is submitting for publication. He continues to do so after his refusal to revise and compromise, although it should be obvious that under these circumstances rejection of the manuscript is certain. At the same time he refuses to consider the possibility of accepting financial support from his wealthy parents-in-law. Finally he refuses to receive help from his friend Jerven, because in his dissertation the latter has abjured his former views and, ideistically speaking, "sold" himself. Thus on the domestic plane Kareno shows the same total refusal to compromise as in matters of philosophical conviction. But just as, in the latter sphere, Kareno is excluded in advance from any opportunity to fight the battle for his ideals, so in the household sphere he is exposed - and
exposes himself - not to any grand and tragic defeat worthy of a great idealist, but to mere, trivial attrition. When in the end Kareno's wife has left him and, as a powerful conclusion effect, the bailiff enters with two assistants to take away his possessions, we have the definite picture of a man who is not in any way master of his own life and circumstances. Despite any admiration for Kareno's consistency, it is difficult at this point to see him or his idealistic struggle as really monumental. It seems therefore aesthetically consistent that - unlike in most of Ibsen's "idealistic" plays - the potential element of fantasticality in Kareno's aspirations never pervades the atmosphere of the play itself, - that the actual universe of the play never transcends a basic, immutable living-room realism and comic-ironical - slightly stylized - triviality. It is this element of unredeemed, lofty aspirations which is ironically rendered through the stuffed falcon, the visual symbol of daring, soaring flight - but in effect dead, devoid of movement, a lifeless shadow of the idea of its living self.

II.

The conditions which prescribe, aesthetically speaking, this non-entrance of the fantasticality aspects of Kareno's idealism into the general mood of *At the Gates of the Kingdom* are no longer present in *Livets spil*. In fact, the non-idealistic - or naturalistic - background for Kareno's striving has now been changed into one which provides unlimited freedom for this striving. One might conclude that this new background is an idealistic one, but that would obviously be incorrect. If by the term 'naturalistic background' we refer to the relativization of values and the resulting hostility of the environment to idealistic striving, then 'idealistic background' means the recognition of absolute values, i.e., a so-called moral universe. Now in *Livets spil*, Kareno has placed himself - at least from the view of his philosophical pursuits - outside of any environment whatsoever, at the outposts of civilization. In the preceding play he had been victimized - in fact, totally restricted - by the
relativization of values in the environment. This situation we may call "relativization on a level of triviality". Now by leaving that environment behind him he enters into a situation which is apparently hospitable to his striving, but this situation is not, on the other hand, tantamount to the presence of a moral universe. In fact, the absence of a moral universe is represented allegorically through the character Thy, a strange old man who appears on a number of significant occasions wanting to perform "an errand", as he says, but failing each time to do so because nobody actually pays any attention to him. In Livets spil, then, the background of Kareno's activity as a thinker is neither one of environmental value relativization nor one of re-established absoluteness of values. It is a new, fantastic relativization of values, the one which results from the total absence of any reactive environment. This new situation we may call "relativization on a level of fantasticality".

The constituents of this new situation are not difficult to discern. In At the Gates of the Kingdom, Kareno, then 29 years old, had still been hoping to gain recognition for himself and his ideas in the traditional sense of acceptance by the academic world - although, of course, entirely on his own terms, without compromise of any kind. This had proved impossible. The end of the first play is the beginning of ten years of isolation for Kareno. As a result of his rejection of Jerven, this former friend of his had turned into his deadliest enemy; for Jerven had sworn that he would stand ready to thwart and crush Kareno's every attempt at recognition in the future. In the beginning of Livets spil we learn that Jerven has kept his promise. Apparently Kareno had continued his struggle within that same environment, but the struggle was hopeless. When he finally brought out his book, Jerven wrote against it, with the result that nobody bought it. We must assume that gradually Kareno has come to accept and identify with this hopeless situation of his as something quite natural. "Yes, I am everybody's opponent," he answers when Oterman asks whether Jerven is his enemy. It is this
gradual acceptance, no doubt, which has finally made possible his retreat, at the age of 39, into Nordland where we find him at the opening of the play.

The retreat is significant in a number of ways. Symbolically, such a retreat signifies an individual's journey, at some critical point of exhaustion of his life, into his unconscious for the purpose of revitalization. In itself, Nordland, country of solitude and mystery above the arctic circle where anything may supposedly happen, is of course an appropriate symbol of the unconscious with its potential for profound and powerful new impulses. In a more external sense, the change is important through its implication of financial security for Kareno: as tutor of Oterman's two young sons he has an easy job, no economic worries and most of his time to himself; in fact, he teaches only in the forenoon and has the rest of the day off. This welcome change if conditions is of particular significance in the case of an individual like Kareno. For the fantas, the personality of high-flying spiritual aspirations of Kareno's type, the impingement of work and money problems upon his essential interests is painful in more than the ordinary sense; thus their removal signifies nothing less than a transition to the level of an unconditionally 'fantastic' life, the definite romantic existence. (It is characteristic that none of Ibsen's idealistic characters have to face any sort of daily worries like those confronting Kareno in _At the Gates._) That such a transition has actually taken place becomes obvious to us from the very beginning when we hear about Kareno's unusual plans for building a tower to work in, and see the mining for the building-site start right away. While these manifestations are of course of a somewhat external significance, the transition is also reflected on a more internal level, namely through the significant change of style about to take place in Kareno's philosophical activity. After the political and cultural philosophizings of his fighting years he is now entering into a new phase of thinking:
"I have written my Sociology, now I write my Metaphysics. And I do not tire, I am full of strength. I have brooded and speculated, I know everything that human beings know. But I want to know more."

(Act I)

The working conditions on which this great philosophical venture is to be based are of a corresponding magnificence. Kareno wants his tower to be round because he will try to get light in from everywhere; the cupola is going to be all glass, and in the winter he wants to have a large reflector hanging inside it. For he likes lots of light.

"Our eyes see all objects as round; I will try to see surfaces. It isn't impossible. I want to learn more, I want to find out everything and fix it in my mind. Glass and light, I say; glass and light. I place some hope in that. Perhaps I could try by optical falsification to switch off my earthly cognition. It should be possible. I will incandesce my brain with light and perhaps transport myself to certain clear states of being. Oh, how I want to get to the bottom of things."

In actual fact, "glass and light" means much more than just the ingenious technical device for certain bold experiments. Like the gold of the alchemists, Kareno's "glass and light" has an independent metaphysical significance beyond its immediate concrete implications: it has itself become the symbol of the total relativization and transformation of accepted reality which Kareno proposes to undertake.

"You see, Miss Teresita, our conceptions are in no way absolute. We give them a fixed foundation and then they are usable, they serve their purpose. Blows on a mining drill produce sound. Very well. But why shouldn't blows on a mining drill be capable of producing light? That depends on me. A person who is born blind will easily learn to distinguish between a die and a ball; but open his eyes, and he won't know which was the die and which was the ball... When he began to see, his
whole point of view would have been changed: now things exhibit qualities foreign to his conception of them. You see, what I want to do is exactly the same thing: convey myself into a position where I see transformed realities. And so, since nothing is totally absolute, I may just as well raise the "chimera" to the throne, command it to exist as a fact, bestow validity upon it, crown it... Add to this, that I may be able to shift the entire basis for my observation of time. What do I achieve by this? Great things. I am going to catapult my soul out to the shores of eternity." Etc.

This if anything, is "relativization on a level of fantasticality"...

It is obvious that, in correspondence with such extravagant designs for internal conquests, Kareno would choose an extraordinary locality like Nordland, in itself an externalization, as it were, of what he metaphysically speaks of as "the shore of eternity"; and it is also obvious that the dramatization of Kareno's enterprise would have to take place at a level of fantasticalness equal to these internal and external premises. So far, I have tried to demonstrate how Kareno's transition from a situation of triviality in At the Gates to a situation of fantasticality in Livets spil has necessitated the creation, on the stage, of a romantic or fantastic universe totally different from the constraining microcosmos of the preceding play. The following four chapters will be devoted to an analysis of the characters and their interrelation with this fantastic universe.

III.

The three mystical and powerful life forces which govern, basically, the important events of Livets spil and whose play with the characters has provided the title of the play itself are Logos, Eros and Mammon - or, in terms corresponding to their dramatization in the play: The dream of total cognition, the dream of the all-absorbing love, and the dream of vast wealth. The immediate presence of a fourth powerful force, Nature, symbolized by the sea, the cycle of the year -
the four acts follow the four seasons in succession: Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring — and the ruggedness and desolation of the place, creates, from the view of ordinary human civilization, a momentous vacuum within which these forces are allowed the fullest possible play, manifesting itself in the extravagances of action and obsession to which the affected characters are led. It is these extravagances, and the pregnant setting within which they are acted out, which provide the basic texture of fantasticality of the play.

Of the numerous symbols in *Livets spil*, each one falls within the sphere, directly or indirectly, of one of these three forces of destiny. Likewise, each of the four main characters — Kareno, Oterman, Teresita and Jens Spir — is tied to one of the three forces.

I have already mentioned the significance of "glass and light" as a symbol of Kareno's philosophical venture, and, with that, as an aesthetic symbol of the whole boldly romantic universe of the play. However, the principal symbol of intellectual or philosophical aspiration per se is the tower itself. Pointing upwards it signifies, of course, the high aims of Kareno's idealistic striving. Most significantly, however, Kareno's tower has not been built onto a house in the well-known architectural tradition of Halvard Solness. It stands all by itself; and so it comes to signify, above all, the abstraction, the isolation, the loss of contact with human reality arising out of any deeply, one-sidedly intellectual preoccupation.

Some of that same significance is also in part carried by the other great symbol of the play, the marble quarry. When the marble is first discovered, Kareno exclaims: "I'll be building my tower on marble ground!" The pure, abstract whiteness of marble is indeed a worthy foundation for a philosophical tower of this kind. However, the primary function of the marble symbol lies, not with the marble which has already seen the light, but with that which is still buried underground — in what quantities, only the earth itself knows —: the vast subterranean riches, the idea of which takes
possession of Oterman as soon as the initial astonishment has started to give way to speculation. The quarrying concession is sold to a company for an extraordinary sum, but the actual capacity of the find turns out to exceed by far the estimate on the basis of which the transaction had been made. And now the demonic realm of the inorganic takes its revenge upon Oterman for his profit-greedy violation of its sleep. Little by little, it drives him insane. — In itself, this lure of the subterranean stone-world and its alienating, maddening effect upon the victim is a well-known romantic motif; but the actual premise from which Oterman's insanity proceeds is so hilariously crazy that, with the exception of Gogol and a few other of the Russians, only Hamsun could possibly have put a madness of this kind before us. As the company goes on discovering marble far in excess of the estimated volume, Oterman, in his newly-awakened greed, feels cheated and starts viewing his financial circumstances, not in terms of the considerable amount of money he has actually made, but of that which he imagines he would have made if the additional marble now being mined had been his. Thus in his developing madness he registers each new discovery, not just as an unrealized opportunity, but as a concrete monetary loss, a financial disaster bringing him one step closer to the poorhouse! At first he puts the blame on the company, but later the idea enters his mind that this whole economic "ruin" is being inflicted upon him directly by the white mineral itself — that he is being literally haunted, pursued by the marble:

OTERMAN (mumbles, searching around on the ground): They are after me. They are whispering behind my back and pointing at me. They mean harm (stops). White mountains under the earth (measures out wide with his arms). As big as this.

(Act IV)

Through its immediate effect, as well as the incredible attitudes and actions arising out of it, Oterman's subterranean obsession thus becomes one of the principal sources of eccen-
tricity and grotesqueness in the play.

From the viewpoint of the creation of a fantastic reality, Oterman remains the artistically most successful character element in Livets spil. His madness derives its essential substance from a symbol - the marble quarry - which is in itself convincingly substantial and powerful. In all its formal incredibility, therefore, Oterman the figure is real. The same can hardly be said about the other all-occentricity figure in the play, Thy, to whom I have already referred in a previous context. The weakness of this character is that, unlike Oterman, he has no immediate affiliation with any corresponding symbolic reality in the play, and so its purported fantastic properties, devoid of all substance, remain a mere postulate: for Thy is merely reported, on a number of occasions in the play, to have the surname "Justice", without this ever being spontaneously justified or at least accounted for. (To be sure, the plague which is approaching from the North throughout the two first acts and arrives in Act Three might be viewed as such a symbolic reality corresponding to Thy. But Thy is not connected with the plague in any organic way; his affiliation with it, being merely that of a mysterious messenger, is wholly superficial and arbitrary at best.) On the whole, it is hard to escape the feeling that with Thy, fantasticality is achieved only through the mere superimposition of allegory: a matter of double regret in a play which has otherwise so brilliantly steered clear of precisely such devices.

Before leaving the two spheres of symbols - Mammon and the supremacy of the intellect - considered so far, I should like to draw attention to one particular group of symbols falling, indirectly, within the sphere of the latter, - or, more to the point, connected to it through the relationship of contrast. Since 'the supremacy of the intellect' constitutes the one end of the relationship, this affiliated group of symbols can be described diametrically as representing the counter-force of intuition. In this group we find three symbols, each one connected with one of the male characters. The telegraph
symbolizes an important aspect of Jens Spir's personality which I will come back to later. The indigenous population of the place, the Lapps, symbolizes the original force of instinct and intuition from which Kareno the philosopher - himself of Lapp descent - has become separated and which he has failed to re-integrate into his over-intellectualized existence. Finally, the mute insight into the nature of the minerals possessed by the second quarryman, Højer, symbolizes a dark sexual instinct, an erotic intuition of primitive and immediate forcefulness on the part of this man - who has once been sentenced to hard labour for rape. Of the two quarrymen it is Højer who - as Kareno puts it - "understands rock"; it is also he who lights the fuse. The conclusion of Act One brings the sudden realization that Teresita has been having an affair with him.

IV.

We now turn to the sphere of the third great life force in the play, Eros. In this sphere, we do not have the constellation of a character and a governing symbol - like Oterman and the subterranean or Kareno and the tower - but rather a number of symbols subsidiary to a central figure, Teresita, in whom the force asserts itself directly and continuously, and who can therefore herself in part be looked upon as a symbolic representation of it.

One such subsidiary erotic symbol is the music - both that of the band in Act One (and possibly Act Three) and that played on the piano from inside the house by Teresita herself at the beginning and middle of Act Two. The mood of the piano music reflects the mood of Teresita's own erotic longings. In Act Two these are being increasingly focused on Kareno. Teresita has learned from Jens Spir - who, in his capacity of telegraph operator, is the master of all local secrets - that Kareno's wife is on her way. On the first occasion of her playing, the music is just "beautiful" (as Jens Spir, who has been listening outside, calls it); on the second occasion it is frenzied, obsessed. This is after Teresita has conceived
and executed her mad design for sinking the ship that carries Kareno’s wife on board. In the desperate storm, and without the guidance of a lighthouse, the approaching mail-boat is in danger of grounding, and so Kareno has asked to have his lamp — which he ordinarily only uses to work by — sent out to the tower. Teresita has sent Thy with it, but — as the ubiquitous, all-intuiting Jens Spir who has met him on the way and taken a look into the lamp had rightly guessed — the lamp was empty. And now Teresita is again heard playing inside the house, wildly, while light is streaming out of the windows. — It is noteworthy, in this context, that light has a dual symbolic function in the play. While in connection with Kareno it serves mainly as an intellectual symbol, its implications in reference to Teresita are always erotic. This goes for Kareno’s lamp itself — a recurring symbol also in At the Gates — which in Act One Teresita had exaltedly proposed to fill every day once he got his tower built; and even more so for the lamp which is lit repeatedly when she is in the house, illuminating the stage with the whole white-hot erotomania of her unseen presence. This erotic light symbolism is carried to its climax near the conclusion of Act Two. As shots and distress-rockets are being fired from the boiling ocean and the quarrymen are going out in a boat to rescue the passengers, Teresita, at the climax of excitement, once again invites Jens Spir to come with her into the house.

ONE OF THE QUARRYMEN (to Teresita): Your lamp is smoking.
TERESITA: Is it? Yes, let it smoke. I’ll turn it up more (turns it up). Jens Spir.
JENS SPIR: Here.
TERESITA (motioning towards the house): Come, let’s go in there.
JENS SPIR (takes her lantern in his hand).
TERESITA: Ho-ho, let’s go in there. A red cock is crowing inside me (up the steps followed by Jens Spir).

In Norwegian, ’the crowing of the red cock’ is a popular synonym for fire, especially incendiary fire. Given the whole
situation, as well as the traditional sexual connotations of the colour red, Teresita's exit. Words in this act present the powerful, logical amalgamate of two basic aspects of her being: extreme erotic obsession and extreme destructiveness.

It is through this obsession, not through Teresita as a whole, that the force of Eros finds its central expression in the play. While Teresita's personality can be viewed as the sum of her sexuality and her attitude to it, the sexual drive itself, through the sway it holds over her, appears as an independent complex, a supra-personal life force which has taken up residence in her. This strangely collective character of her Eros is expressed symbolically through the strange features of Teresita's own appearance, - the features by which, again and again, Jens Spir finds himself so particularly and inordinately aroused.

JENS SPIR (passionately): You, you yourself make a difference to me. Your stone eyes affect me, your protruding feet and your long hands. Whenever I see you coming, sin smoulders in me like dark-red roses.

(Act III)

Stone-eyes, long hands, protruding feet - not everybody may find this to be of basic sexual appeal. "God bless you, she has a man's hands," is Mrs. Kareno's only comment on her, - which may, on the other hand, just be a statement of jealousy. At any rate, there is something extraordinary, almost non-human about these features, eminently suggestive of some powerful and crude primordial principle inhabiting the young girl. Lieutenant Glahn in Pan had been captivated by similar features in Edvarda. And the 'sin' which smoulders in Jens Spir like dark-red roses whenever he sees Teresita approaching on her remarkable feet, seems to be the very archetype of sexual appetite and enticement. However, Teresita does not at all want to acknowledge this dark-red endowment, she wants to have it credited to Jens Spir himself:
TERESITA: I love someone who doesn't go after me and grab me. You're just a vermin on earth, Jens Spir, you are nothing more. You have taught me your horrible manners.

JENS SPIR: Which, by the way, you knew before.

TERESITA: Oh no, that isn't true. I didn't know much before. But you were a quick little creature.

These few lines give the essence of their whole relationship. It is Jens Spir who is right: if he has taught her anything, it is nothing but what she knew before. But it is impossible for Teresita to accept this "horrible manner", her own all-pervading sensual urge and awareness, as a fundamental part of herself, and integrate it into her personality. She can only allow herself to see it in somebody else of a matching disposition. Moreover, such a person then becomes nothing but a mirror of her own self, since she will always only recognize the purely carnal aspects - that which she thinks of as base and corrupted - taking them categorically for the whole. Thus when she talks of Jens Spir's brutishness and his depraved smile, she is merely equating all of him with his sensual desires, construing these, at the same time, according to the judgement of her own disclaimed sensuality. The bad which she thinks she sees in him is only the projection of her inability to accept herself.

The psychological conflict arising out of this dichotomy provides the whole dramatic foundation for the character Teresita. Her powerful sexual urge assigns her naturally to a man like Jens Spir, who, matching her on all sensual counts, is equipped to satisfy her quantitatively as well as qualitatively. "I am longing for you when you are away," she tells him; "I want you badly." She treats him differently when he is present. Time and again she has had to give in to this urge, but she is still unable to accept it naturally, and so her basic dependence on Jens Spir also continues to be unacceptable to her. This conflict underlies her whole ambivalent behaviour towards him, - which in turn becomes the basis of his own ambivalence and ambiguity. Moreover, the intellec-
tual superstructure of refinement and irony of someone like Jens Spir is bound to enhance Teresita's self-consciousness, so as to make her feel constantly under observation, constantly exposed — exposed, no doubt, particularly with regard to the prominence of those desires and dispositions in her which she is so eager to disown. On this background there may be definite advantages to an affair on the rocks with a straight animal like Højer — who probably renders as ready service and keeps his mouth shut into the bargain. In Rosa, the second of the two little novels about Benoni Hertvigsen, there are similar implications in Edvarda's affair with Gilbert the Lapp. Such an affair lacks any dimension of communication beyond the immediate sexual one. But while Edvarda harbours a virtually superstitious admiration for Gilbert and so has no feelings whatsoever of superiority towards him, it appears that Teresita has just more or less been using Højer. In the relationship with Jens Spir, the existence, schematically speaking, of an additional dimension is what makes him Teresita's equal; but it is also that which, taken together with the unambiguously sexual dimension, creates the whole ambiguity and embarrassment of the relationship.

The conclusion which Teresita has drawn from all this and through which she is, in effect, trying to resolve — or rather escape — the conflict, is that "she loves somebody who doesn't go after her and grab her". Not suprisingly, such a person has to be something special, someone definitely apart from ordinary men.

TERESITA: You're so boring. You're just an ordinary human being. I'm tired of you.
JENS SPIR: But Kareno?
TERESITA: No, no, he is not of this world. Whenever I meet him I gaze fixedly at him and whisper YES. For I feel it's the moon that is coming to me and wants something.

(Act II)

Still, a moon of this sort is characterized less through what it wants than through what it doesn't want.
TERESITA: Do you know why I want to be with you so much, Kareno?
KARENO: No.
TERESITA: Because you don't sin. No, you are not even aware that you have leave to sin.
KARENO: Well, I never...!
TERESITA: And that's why I want to be with you.
KARENO (smiling): I've heard good ones like that from you before.

(Act I)

As for Teresita's demand for something 'special', both Kareno and, later, chief engineer Brede from the company seem to qualify. Kareno is a daring philosopher, a professed visionary who speaks of glass and light; his asceticism, his self-willed isolation from the rest of humanity magnifies him, in her eyes, beyond human scope, endows him with the mystique and splendour of a stylite. She speaks of him in terms suggestive of precisely such a resplendent and enigmatic insularity, terms like "the moon" and "a green island". As for Brede, he is no prophet, to be sure, but then he is exceptional in other ways. An expert and organizer in his field, he possesses the natural authoritativeness of the modern-day, no-nonsense professional, a product of money and streamlined efficiency. His position as the big company's man-on-the-spot, supervisor of the whole remarkable mining exploit, further enhances him and establishes him as something prominent within the context. So does, paradoxically, his own visual lack of streamlinedness. "His hump, maybe," answers Teresita when the rejected Kareno asks her what she loves in him. This contrast between vocation-based prominence and general physical appearance is significant. It reiterates a similar contrast in Kareno himself from before the time when, through his display of "vulgar and ludicrous sin", he had "disappointed" Teresita.

TERESITA: You weren't the one I hoped you were, Kareno. I've told you before. You are a human being like all the others, full of vulgar and ludicrous sin. I'm tired of you.
KARENO: But once, once you did love me?
TERESITA: Dear me, do you think I loved your Lapp face and your spindly legs? Alas, no, you are no-beauty. But you were so quiet,
I thought you were full of something from another world; for your face moved me. And then you disappointed me.

(Act IV)

Nor does it take long before, through a similar misinterpreting of Teresita's favour, the poor engineer must repeat Kareno's mournful nose-dive into derision.

TERESITA (vehemently): No, I say. Don't speak to me any more. What in the world are you thinking of? Do you think you can be a lover? (looks him up and down).

BREDE: I think I can have a sincere love for you.

TERESITA (uneasy): But that wasn't what I sought; no, it wasn't. (Hard): How do you dare to kiss me on my neck, little runt!

What did Teresita actually seek in these two unsuccessful lovers? One wouldn't immediately connect two men of such highly different social and occupational stations as Kareno and Brede - the hermit and the decision-maker, the philosopher and the engineer. Yet in the light of Teresita's selection of them as alternatives to Højer and, especially, Jens Spir, the similarities between them become quite obvious. From her point of view, the special knowledge, the formal distinction of the "expert" which they both possess, gives them status of demi-gods, worthy of her spiritual aspirations: placing them in a category far above that ordinary crowd of which - through the mere display of ordinary, carnal desire - everybody else is automatically shown to be a member. Kareno's tower and Brede's pistol - the engineer is also an expert shot - can both be seen as symbolic representations of this sciential distinction in the two men. On a symbolic level, however, the phallic character of these representations points to a plain sexual urge as the true content of Teresita's spiritual escapades. Given this identity, it does not look as if the latter was going to provide much of an escape from the former; for sooner of later even a philosopher, let alone an engineer, will think himself invited to take that little step down from his pedestal
which is tantamount, by definition, to instant membership in the "carnality crowd"... As an insurance against earthliness, the pedestal itself, then, is but of temporary efficacy. The ultimate insurance — that is, the fail-safe escape mechanism built, unfailingly, into each such spiritual escapade — lies in that very contrast peculiar to Teresita's chosen idols, which I have already called attention to: for it is this contrast, this discrepancy between intellectual and visual — and, in the last analysis, amatorial — appeal which assures her, from the outset, of a safe retreat. So long as the relationship remains "spiritual", she can concentrate on the knight and ignore the countenance, thus gratifying her sexual urge by imagining herself in love with the victim of her admiration. On the other hand, the thought of actually going to bed with one of these knights would be absurd to her. As actual candidates for sex, Kareno and Brede are plainly unacceptable to Teresita. Nowhere is this basic view of them summed up more shatteringly than in her scornful reprimand of Brede: "How do you dare to kiss me on my neck, little runt!" Thus where the shining armour of spirituality ends, the erotic repulsion automatically becomes activated, precluding any susceptibility whatsoever on her part to the feeble advances of her wooers. Through this crucial shift of focus she doublecrosses, not only the unfortunate lover-to-be, but, especially, her own erotic demon, the initiator of affairs and escapades alike. Evidently, no such somersault would ever be possible vis-à-vis someone like Jens Spir, with an immediate sexual spell inescapably at the center of the relationship.

In the long run, however, there is really no escape from the erotic demon. It is characteristic that each new attempted step away from Jens Spir is in effect one step down for Teresita, so as to indicate that she is also getting farther away from the centre of her own instinct. With Højer, she is still on sexual territory, although, presumably, this affair is devoid of all subtler aspects offered by the relationship with Jens Spir. With Kareno, she is getting into the realm of the escapade — where, through the fundamental ambivalence of her
choice, sex has in effect been precluded from the very beginning. Finally, with Brede, this basic unnaturalness of the escapade gains paramountcy through enhanced emphasis - to the point of grotesqueness - on the features in him relied upon by Teresita to preclude sexual attraction. As to originality of mind the engineer is also at least one size smaller than Kareno. In every respect a caricature, then, of Teresita's shining knight, he constitutes the terminal station on her mad race against Eros. From here she can go no further, only back to Jens Spir. But just as the repudiation of her relationship with Jens Spir had, in essence, been a rebellion against Nature, so her proposal to destroy him now leads logically to her own destruction. The pistol which she orders Thy to bring Jens Spir - it is, significantly, Brede's pistol - goes off in Thy's hands. Rushing to the scene, Jens Spir finds Teresita dead and one bullet left in the pistol; he takes the pistol with him and tells Thy to come and get it the next day. The irresolvable relationship has at last been resolved into the death of both: since the two were really one, one's death leaves no room for the survival of the other.

V.

Teresita and Jens Spir had appeared made for each other, yet in a paradoxical way this very fact seemed to create barriers of tension and antagonism between them which in the long run proved insurmountable; and so, what ought to have been the simplest and most obvious thing gradually turned into the most complicated and unachievable.

Basically, this pattern constitutes the recipe of a typical love relationship in Hamsun. Given the great compatibility of the hero and the heroine, the difficulties which they put in their own way come to seem much more tragic than any difficulties caused by a lack of compatibility or by circumstances outside of the relationship. While there is nothing really tragic, e.g., about the outcome of Nagel's and Dagny Kielland's relationship - in fact, a definite understanding between them would probably have led to considerable distress for both of
them - Høibro's retreat from Charlotte (at the end of Editor Lynge) at the very moment when she declares her love to him strikes one with deep sadness. After Pan and Livets spil we meet the pattern again in the central love relationships of Victoria, Monk Vendt and Segelfoss Town. In the three latter works, the conflict is somewhat stylized, - the emphasis being, romantically, on the pride which hinders each of the two lovers from giving in to the other. This pride is always an important element in the conflict; however, in Pan and Livets spil, the actual substance of the conflict goes far beyond it. In these two works, the conflict of the relationship has its immediate roots in an inner conflict peculiar to the heroine: the clash between her immediate erotic instinct and a certain romantic notion in her which we may call "the dream of the prince". While, as a factor of motivation, the latter might seem rather abstract in comparison with the former, it nevertheless proves to be at least as powerful.

Edvarda's and Teresita's "dream of the prince" can only be fully understood in terms of their special background, that is: the circumstances of their upbringing which we are able to deduce from the general data of the two works. Both Edvarda and Teresita are the only daughter of the local magnate of a small and rather isolated place; both have lost their mother prior to their adolescence. Given these circumstances, it is easy to imagine the extent to which each of these young girls must have been spoiled at home, as well as the general attention - especially male - which in their capacity as local princesses they must have been enjoying.

"The dream of the prince" is a product of these two forms of attention. Only the best has been good enough for Edvarda and Teresita, and so it has become natural for them to attach extravagant expectations to everything, including the idea of their future husband. At the same time, the "dream" is also a sublimation of their sexual urge. From the point of view of a "spoiled princess", sexuality in its local, more or less primitive forms may well have come to represent something un-attractive, a phenomenon difficult to reconcile with the idea
of a romantic, rose-coloured life. With Teresita, we have seen how the discrepancy between this anti-sexual view and the actual, strong assertion of her own sexuality led to a persistent ambivalence in her attitude toward Jens Spir. In Edvarda's case, the anti-sexual tendency is much less explicit, and hardly even conscious; still, it enables her to override the strong sexual attraction which she feels towards Glahn. Even in her case, as it turns out, the "prince"—according to the basic notion, in its most abstract form—is not only connected with the idea of wealth, education, gentility,—he is also someone who is unaffiliated with the idea of sex.

Both Jens Spir and Glahn have an immediate sexual appeal. Furthermore, they are not distinguished by wealth, gentility or "education" in the traditional sense; Glahn is even capable of seeming quite uncouth at times. Thus in competition with any rival who possesses one or more of these assets, including the paradoxical advantage of a solid lack of sex appeal, they are rather weak. Generally, as we have seen, this lack of sex appeal is concretized by a physical defect or some mark of unattractiveness—a further peculiarity in the strange pattern underlying the heroine's shift of favour. Edvarda temporarily switches her attention from the athletic Glahn to the doctor, who is lame in one leg; later she marries the baron who has also been shortchanged by nature in various respects. Teresita moves on—from Jens Spir and Hjer—to Kareno who is not very good-looking, thence to Brede who is even less so. In effect, however, they both remain tied to the man who has become the center of their sexual awareness. In India, years after their love affair in Nordland, Glahn receives a letter containing a proposal from Edvarda; he chooses death in order to liberate himself from her,—or, more to the point, from his own insuperable pride which forbids him to return to her. Teresita is driven further and further by her compulsory urge to humiliate Jens Spir, until finally, in order to liberate herself, she wants him killed; instead, she is killed herself, a victim of chance—or perhaps, as Jens Spir puts it, "blind justice". Where Edvarda lived on, Teresita perished. In
Teresita, the repression of sexuality through the pursuit of the "dream of the prince" had been far greater. Or said in another manner: the main emphasis in this dream had been on the anti-sexual constituent or aspect of it, while in Edvarda it had been on the external, "glamorous" aspects, such as gentility, distinction and so on. Teresita's repudiation of Jens Spir thus constitutes a far greater "treachery against Nature" than Edvarda's repudiation of Glahn; it is this very treachery which literally backfires on her, as if Nature were revenging itself directly by destroying the one who had attempted to destroy it.

This difference is also reflected by the contrasting presentations of the two characters Glahn and Jens Spir. Edvarda recognizes the animal magnetism of Glahn's eyes, his "dyreblik" (animal's eyes) as she calls it, as a definite asset. (She claims that a friend of hers has used this description about Glahn.) To her, this symbol of his sexual power is not initially irreconcilable with the "dream of the prince". On the contrary, as the doctor later points out, Edvarda had temporarily taken Glahn for her prince, especially on account of this magnetic feature in him. Romance and sex appeal, in other words, are not directly incongruent in Edvarda's view. But while Glahn had an animal's eyes, Jens Spir, as Teresita claims to have conceived of him from the beginning, was "a quick little creature" - quite a sordid twist to the romantic magnetism of "dyreblik"! And she speaks contemptuously of his red beard - another sexually suggestive characteristic - which he combs with a lead comb in order to darken it. Edvarda merely betrays sexuality without condemning it; to Teresita, it is something explicitly evil. That Jens Spir does comb his beard for exactly this purpose, signifies that he has let himself be forced into the role which Teresita has assigned to him: he symbolically accedes to the evilness of his sexuality by trying to obscure the symbol of it. The sexual values that tie these two lovers together are not only betrayed, they are even distorted.

The different structures of Pan and Livets spil cause a
certain difficulty in the comparison of the two relationships. In Pan, we followed Edvarda's and Glahn's love story closely from the beginning to the end. When Livets spil starts, the relationship between Teresita and Jens Spir apparently has already culminated; moreover, each of the acts takes place at an interval of about three months, a fact which puts the bulk of the relationship outside the framework of the play. Most of the important events of the affair are left to the imagination; we just have to construct them on the basis of what is shown on the stage. Thus while we learn a lot about Teresita herself, no direct insight into the relationship is provided through an independent characterization of Jens Spir, the way it was through Glahn in Pan. Or, more precisely: the fascination which Jens Spir holds for Teresita beyond an immediate sexual thrill is not documented in the same explicit, detailed manner as that which Glahn held for Edvarda.

The keynote of Glahn's "fascination dimension" is his relationship with Nature. His intuitive disposition - manifested in his ability to sense and take signs from everything that goes on in the mysterious wilderness around him - is based on a genuine erotic vision of Nature. It makes Eros his own basic, spontaneous way of expression, - makes him, erotically speaking, like a natural force himself. Glahn possesses the power of the primitive, yet at the same time, his extreme perceptiveness, his poetic vision and sense of detail are anything but primitive features. He thus exhibits that strange blend of innocence and knowledge which is truly romantic.

Jens Spir is definitely not romantic in this sense. Sensually, he is as gifted as Glahn, but there is nothing of the latter's innocence in his sensuality, only knowledge. Nor is this knowledge, like Glahn's, of an instinctive kind. One would rather call it - and with it, his whole power of sensuality - demonic. Love, to him, is not the divine feast of Nature; it is "sin, smouldering like dark red roses"... Indeed, Jens Spir does not have a "dyreblik", - he has, as Mrs. Kareno so perceptively observes, "lygtemandsøjne"! (The implication being that his eyes have the flickering lure of the
will-o'-the-wisp.) His red beard is perhaps his most important symbol of demonic sexuality; it calls to mind the diabolical old soldier in H.C. Andersen's The Red Shoes who put the dancing spell on Karen's shoes and made them cling perpetually to her feet. And Teresita further speaks of his "depraved smile" - which we do not necessarily, like her, have to construe as really depraved, but which is hardly, on the other hand, precisely innocent. Still, the demonic quality of Jens Spir's "knowledge" does not preclude the more immediate element of intuition; on the contrary, intuition is one of the most important aspects of his personality. But it is not, like Glahn's, an intuition based on an intimate relationship with Nature; it is thoroughly and uncannily intellectual, a fundamental, all-round perspicacity, capable of being used for concrete purposes in the game of life. The significant symbol of this intuition is found in Jens Spir's affiliation with the telegraph. The telegraph is Jens Spir's "profession", yet in contrast to the heavy professional ballast of Kareno and Brede, it is not one which requires very substantial skills; and yet it gives him a much greater, a much more general power vis-à-vis the goings-on of everyday life than Kareno or Brede are able to derive from their solid education. Symbolically, Jens Spir's position at the place due to his affiliation with the telegraph is an important, almost mystical one; his power is the natural power of intuition, as against the artificial, limited power of acquired skills. The engineer is a local Napoleon in matters of business decisions, a dictator among the people working for him; yet vis-à-vis the erotic reality of Teresita he is helpless. Nor does Kareno's synthesizing visions of reality make him any more fit to meet reality on its own, inexorable terms.

Nevertheless, Jens Spir, like all the others, eventually loses out in the erotic game. His equipment is superior in all respects, yet he is not really a "strong" man; underneath his brilliant wit and sarcasm run dangerously warm currents of sensitivity, weakening the firmness of his spell over Teresita and making it impossible for him to transform it into a
complete, everlasting conquest. Teresita accuses Jens Spir of being a rascal, yet the truth is that he is not enough of a rascal to convince her that he is stronger than her. To her, the duality of his personality—the whole mysterious dichotomy between sin and saintliness which intrigues us and causes us to see him as a "fantastic" figure—is above all a sign of weakness; she claims that she would want to be an honest man's wife, yet being an honest demon like Jens Spir means being a vulnerable demon, and she cannot surrender to anyone who is vulnerable. His great, self-sacrificing act of sailing for a doctor when she has fallen ill and nobody else is willing to go out in the raging winter storm, strips him of all pretense of cynicism, thus giving Teresita the definite upper hand. Symbolically, as a result of this trip, he loses his position as a telegraphist; without it, he is like a dethroned magician, the target of incessant attempts by Teresita at humiliating him. However, the compulsive way in which she continues to taunt him now, only shows the undiminished strength of the ties that bind her to him. After all, her advantage over him is only external; in death, they become equals again.

VI.

One confusing thing about Livets spil as seen in relation to the rest of the Kareno-trilogy is that Kareno does not seem to have been placed clearly at the center of the play. The titles of the three plays reflect this incongruency. In the first play, Kareno is the one who stands "at the gates of the kingdom" and resists that tempting invitation of the establishment to enter which is usually enough to make a recognition-hungry young revolutionary succumb. In the last play, the invitation is extended once more, and this time Kareno accepts it. The title of that play, Aftenrøde (Evening glow), refers ironically to Kareno's "old age"—he is fifty now—as if he were now entering into some beautiful, transfigured kind of peace. But it is only to the establishment that this peace has anything beautiful about it; to Hamsun, it is tantamount to senility. Even the stormiest,
most stubborn and implacable of revolutionaries, Hamsun points out to us, will eventually give in - if not earlier, then at least when he becomes fifty...

In the first and the last play then, the whole issue at stake is whether Kareno is going to stand firm on his principles or not; in the first he does, in the last he doesn't. But what is the relationship of Livets spil to this issue? Clearly, since in this play he has placed himself entirely outside any social environment in which the construct "radicalism vs. conservatism" would have any meaning, there is no establishmental pressure, direct or indirect, which he could either resist or yield to. After all, in a small place above the polar circle no one cares a farthing whether Kareno wants to send Gladstone and John Stuart Mill to hell or whether he is ready to throw himself in the dust and worship them. Thus many readers have undoubtedly conceived of the play as a digression from the main issue of Kareno's life as presented by the first and the last part of the trilogy. To be sure, there are references in Evening glow to the catastrophe which struck Kareno in Nordland ten years earlier when all his papers burned. It is to this time, he claims, that his doubts date back. But this catastrophe happens at the very end of Livets spil, and even if it would later prove to have been a turning-point in Kareno's life, essential to an understanding of his ideological frailty in Evening glow, it would hardly be a justification for the writing and presentation of Livets spil itself.

However, far from being a digression from the issue of Kareno's steadfastness, Livets spil is the real key to a comprehensive understanding of this issue. For in the long run, the steadfastness of a radical thinker vis-à-vis the establishment is not an affair between him and the establishment, it is an affair between him and life. By moving his hero away from the academic-political battlefield and placing 'him, so to speak, at an Ultima Thule, Hamsun instructively shows us that this affairs may sometimes be settled far from the madding crowd. In fact, it had probably been much easier for
Kareno to keep his spirits high back in his adverse environment; after all, the awareness of being everybody's enemy can be quite a considerable stimulus. In that case, to be sure, there is mostly poverty to fight, but that is a collective evil, something one shares with most other people in a similar controversial position. To be poor is not necessarily to have been defeated by life; at least, it is not the kind of defeat which invariably translates itself into subsequent compromise and renunciation. But to be shipwrecked in love is definitely such a defeat. The real deserters and renegades are not primarily the long-time sufferers of poverty — artists, philosophers — who have finally been relieved of their hardships and accepted into the mainstream of society; it is those, first and foremost, whom love has made light of who later become the hard-core guardians of morals and the established order.

As it turns out, then, the main thesis of the trilogy — that even the most stubborn and implacable radical thinker will in due course assimilate into the establishment — is qualified by the very personality of its hero, by the very nature of Kareno's stubbornness and implacability. For although Kareno claims (in At the Gates) that this stubbornness is an obvious part of his Lapp heritage, it has developed into something quite different — the very opposite, one might say, of that basic intimacy with the forces of Nature, that whole intuitive and adaptive relationship to life of which, in Livets spil, the Lapps may be seen as a symbol. "Life theoretically expressed through thinking" — Kareno's definition of philosophy as stated to Bondesen at the opening of Evening glow — this is the position in which, from the very beginning, we have seen him so totally and hopelessly entrenched. Abstraction and isolation have become the hallmarks of Kareno's whole existence. It is a dangerous position indeed. In his own work, where it was meant to pave the way to unparalleled conclusions, it leads only to sterility. "Glass and light" may, conceptually speaking, reflect some basic and eternal principles in human cognition; but as the sole, concrete basis
for actual, systematic cognition they are just artificial devices, a beautiful and desperate gimmick, which, in the way of results, will produce nothing but an endless perpetuation of its own sublime transparence, - the transparence, not of lucidity, but of sheer nothingness. The cutting of all ties to human reality precludes any meaningful cognition about life, - precludes, like any entrenchment in a hedgehog position of utter extremity, the integration of living experience into one's chosen form. It is characteristic that the locality itself means little to Kareno; after the many years' war of attrition in an urban environment, one would have expected him to look to the great nature of the place for new strength; but he is only interested in the seclusion which it offers. As far as the uniqueness of the place itself is concerned, he might as well not be there. The night, he explains, is his time; he goes around every day waiting for it! Given this imperviousness to new experience, it is no wonder that the high-powered motor of his intellect, however ingenious and economical, gradually runs idle.

However, the ultimate danger of Kareno's entrenchment lies, not inside his glass tower - after all, sterility seldom makes itself felt as an acute danger - it lies outside, slyly in wait. For, once outside his metaphysical fortress, of glass or ivory, no one is so hopelessly susceptible to the more serious germs of life as the individual who has been under the spell of an extreme. Kareno's fate in Livets spil shows clearly how the transcendence of such an extreme attitude - when at last it comes about - only leads to the opposite extreme. It takes a long time for Kareno to "discover" Teresita; but when he finally discovers her - spurred on, in no small part, by the unwelcome arrival of his wife! - he does so with a vengeance. For Kareno can only react in terms of extremes; he cannot integrate a new element of existence into a given framework of activity, cannot create a synthesis of a previous and a new content of life. And so his whole work is discontinued: he ceases entirely to be a philosopher and becomes exclusively a lover. Into this new confrontation with life,
he - like most people who maintain a shutter between their work and the rest of life - carries none of the intriguing qualities of mind which distinguished him in his work. As a philosopher he had seemed a fascinating person, as a lover he becomes like any average admirer of Teresita. His eagerness to please, his aimless idling, his loss of individuality and intellectual aspirations make him seem almost as banal as Brede; through his extreme involvement in the wooing of Teresita, he loses all sense of personal purpose and direction. He goes on wooing her long after she has turned him down, making himself only more ludicrous, more trivial, more empty. He has no spiritual resources to fall back upon once he has been rejected; and so he sinks into total idleness, a mere shadow of the bold philosopher and "lonely falcon" Ivar Kareno. The road back to his work, back to his own individuality, is closed. When he finally makes up his mind to resume writing, the bell has struck for Kareno. His "life's work", as he cries out, is destroyed in the fire; but we are left with a feeling that it wouldn't have made much difference whether it had burned or not. After all, beyond the bold fermentation of experiment and inquiry, Kareno's "Metaphysics" with its chapter on Justice seemed about as certain to substantialize as the great work on human responsibility by Alfred Allmers.

The lesson of Livets spil, then, when seen in relation to At the Gates of the Kingdom and Evening glow, modifies that of the other two plays and at the same time goes far beyond it. For Hamsun does not "prove" that even the most radical thinker is sooner or later going to sell out to the society against which he has rebelled. What he really proves is the futility of any political or philosophical radicalism founded on a radically abstract personal existence; the futility of any external isolation from society which is paralleled, internally, by an isolation from life itself. For sooner or later even the most isolated thinker is going to confront some aspect of what Ibsen calls "the wonderful and mysterious life on earth"; and then, his fingers frozen from too many years of writing in the tower, his eyes weak from too many nights of
waking, he will reach abruptly for the source of this new and dazzling warmth, ignorant that it may burn as often as it warms. But to get burnt and blinded in this unprepared and belated manner is a cross-roads of trauma to most wayfarers; from it, only few roads lead back to the barricades and a continued individual development; most roads lead into ex­haustion, regression, reduction - and, eventually, the over­zealous adjustment to that very sheep-fold on which the ex­wolf had once been waging its lonely war.

Interpreted in this manner, Livets spil becomes a highly meaningful, highly necessary stage on that twenty years' journey of Kareno's from rebellion to renegation which the tri­logy describes. On the surface it would have seemed more con­sistent to let the middle play maintain Kareno on his accus­tomed battlefield, showing how a continued series of political and academic defeats were slowly wearing him down, slowly eating away his enthusiasm and belief in himself. By the time we came to the third play we would then feel that we had been watching some sort of a "Rebel's Progress", the systema­tic unfolding of a politico-philosophical career, its chain of disappointments leading logically to the hero's final ex­haustion and conversion. Instead of that, the story line is now interrupted by a strange excursion to Nordland: a chapter of Kareno's private life with little or no relation to his basic struggle against the establishment. But if the former alternative would be logical in a schematic way, the latter is so in a psychological way; thus of the two it remains the truly logical one. It is in correspondence with this very difference that the strange figure of Leo Høibro in Evening glow - '51 years old, pale and furrowed, with long grey hair and a full beard' - assumes its significance. Clearly, the function of Høibro is to show that the battle of the outsider may well be continued past any point of exhaustion and "old age". It takes the events of Livets spil - the special nature of defeat in that play and the special nature of exhaustion which goes along with it - to explain Kareno's total sell-out in Evening glow.
Still, *Livets spil* remains inconsistent with the rest of the trilogy in one formal respect, the one initially mentioned: that Kareno doesn't seem to stand as clearly at the center as in the other two plays. The difference is not only apparent; it is the result of a technical peculiarity which makes the play, so to speak, bifocal. On the one hand, we have Kareno and the middle chapter of his life story, - on the other hand, we have another story, closely modelled on *Pan*. Structurally speaking, the play represents a forging of these two different components, each of which is structured in its own manner. The Kareno-structure has Kareno as its main figure, in accordance with the character configuration of *At the Gates* and *Evening glow*. The 'Edvarda'-structure consists of a capricious heroine and her lover, plus a number of secondary male figures whom the heroine uses as temporary alternatives without feeling sexually attracted to them. In *Livets spil*, Teresita and Jens Spir stand at the center of the Edvarda-structure, while Kareno is employed as one of its secondary male characters. To be sure, the letdown which Kareno suffers in his relationship with Teresita is needed as a prime ingredient of the Kareno-story itself; but the actual function performed by him within the Edvarda-structure is, schematically speaking, that of a secondary character. In actual fact, this does not have the effect of making Kareno appear as a secondary figure vis-à-vis the Teresita-Jens Spir constellation. The effect is rather on the character configuration as a whole: the foci of the two structures rule each other out, so that the characters assume more or less equal weight; and this equalization tendency even spreads to the remaining figures - Oterman, Ørde, Mrs. Kareno, Thy - so as to present the impression of an ensemble in which each character is of immediate importance.

This, then, confirms the original feeling with regard to the title of the play: that 'The game of life' (*Livets spil*) contains a less specific reference to the hero of the trilogy than 'the gates of the kingdom' (*Ved rikets port*) or 'evening glow' (*Aftenrøde*). Of course, Kareno can still be viewed as the pawn of that game; but so can Oterman, Jens Spir, Teresita,
Brede - yes, even, in some indirect sense, Mrs. Kareno. Thus no single character ever becomes the center of the play. The real center, the point of gravity of everything that happens, remains outside, above the characters: it is life itself pulling the strings, visible only through its agents, the mysterious life forces, and the obsession with which they infect their chosen victims. Everything seems predestined; viewed as a whole, the characters thus become an ensemble of marionettes, the unknowing participants in a bizarre and comical dance of life, where death, madness and desolation are the principal rewards. Through his appearance in each of the four acts, each time immediately prior to the central event of the act, Thy formally assumes the role of the messenger, God's emissary, the traditional leader of the round. But it is never revealed what Thy's message is; and on the two occasions where he personally fulfills the plans of destiny - the bringing of the empty lamp and the firing of the pistol - he does so without any knowledge or premeditation. "Justice," as Jens Spir says in the end, "is a blind animal." Does Thy himself know the content of his message? We do not find out; as far as we are concerned, he remains as blind to the ways of fate as all the others.

As an element of Kareno's life story, Livets spil remains, as I hope to have shown, fully compatible with the general story line of the trilogy. As a play, however, it far transcends its original role as a mere element of that story line and grows into an independent dramatic creation, beyond the compass of the trilogy. Evidently, the events and characters involved in Kareno's excursion to Nordland became too great a temptation for Hamsun's poetic genius; and so everything in this play took on a life of its own, and the whole play got its own poetic universe, its own poetic existence apart from the general story of Kareno's career. From there it lends its strange, generous lustre to the surrounding chapters of the story. The finished trilogy became a solar system with Livets spil at its poetic center.
Part Four:

LIVETS SPIL: A COMPREHENSIVE AESTHETIC ANALYSIS

In my previous, interpretative study of Livets spil, my main emphasis has been on an analysis of the main characters - Kareno, Oterman, Teresita, Jens Spir - and their individual fates at the hands of powerful and mysterious forces. It has been demonstrated that the presence of these forces - as represented by the fates of the characters and the apparatus of symbols which express their personality and endeavours - together with the initial situation from which the play derives, provides the basic starscape of fantasticality against which the events are acted out: that basic fantasticality which is immediately imparted through the very title - livets spil - itself. In pursuing this interpretation of characters, events, and symbols, however, I have left unconsidered until now the question of how these conceptual nuclei of fantasticality are converted into actual scenic and dramatic energy, that is: what, from a theatrical point of view, makes Livets spil a thoroughly realized "fantastic" play. The fact that this sort of question should fall so largely outside the customary scope of drama criticism is regrettable, though to some degree understandable. Thus in the case of, e.g., a playwright like Ibsen, it is fairly easy to succumb to a common lack of concern with dramatic effectiveness and put all emphasis on interpretation - since, after all, Ibsen's dramas, with their intriguing ideational labyrinths and their great appeal to intellectual speculation, can be solidly enjoyed in a deep, dark chair far from all flicker of the stage. In reading a play by Ibsen one may well be absorbed by it to the point of forgetting that it can also be played, not only read. But while a mere reading of Livets spil is at least as absorbing to the reader as an Ibsen play, the constant awareness, above all, of its scenic elements makes it impossible to forget that it is indeed a play: the more one reads it, the more one wants to see it on the stage. Thus for the critic to bypass this
rare dramatic brilliance and deal with the play only from the angle of interpretation would be to ignore the very essence of its strange genius.

In this concluding analysis, then, I shall try to trace the physiognomy of Livets spil with regard to some of its most immediate features of theatrical impact and effectiveness. I am using the word 'theatrical' as a sort of amalgamative synonym for 'dramatic' and 'fantastic', due to the peculiar difficulty of distinguishing between these two qualities in the play. In the majority of instances, the special effects used toward a heightening of the dramatic intensity are readily relatable to the realm of the fantastic; while, by the same token, most explicitly 'eccentric' or 'fantastic' elements in the play assert themselves, above all, through their ability to operate on an immediately dramatic level. It is possible, however, to single out a few more general aspects, or techniques, of intensification which can be treated as primarily 'dramatic' principles, i.e., apart from their actual inter-functioning with the fantastic context. In Part A of the present analysis, three such aspects will be discussed in depth. Part B will then be devoted to a broad survey of fantastic elements, divided into a total of five sub-categories. Since most of these fantastic elements assume the function of dramatic effects, a number of elements implied but not dealt with in Part A will reappear in B for explicit examination.

A. GENERAL ASPECTS OF DRAMATIC STYLE.

a. Fluidity of dialogue, 1: Internal intrusion.

One thing which can often make dialogue quite undramatic is the neat and logically uninterrupted flow of a conversation between two (or more) characters. A basic dramatic pit-fall, it is one, nevertheless, of which not a few dramatists remain quite unaware. By definition, the logical flow is broken at the moment when a line $x_{n+1}$, following in immediate,
vocal continuation of a line $x_n$ (spoken by another character) introduces a content belonging on a plane of thought different from that of $x_n$, and not connected with the latter by any perceptible mental association.

The graphic model depicts the course of a dialogue — or a section of a dialogue, comprising a total of seven lines — between characters A and B. The first three lines are confined to one plane of thought: B's line continues the mental direction of A's preceding line, and A carries further on in this direction with line $x_n$. But B's following line, $x_{n+1}$, departs from this direction, switching the dialogue unmotivatedly to a new plane of thought. A follows B to the new plane (line $x_{n+2}$), but B, with line $x_{n+3}$, immediately switches back, and the conversation continues on the previous plane of thought. Obviously, B's own thoughts about other matters had for a moment gained open precedence over the current line of conversation and impelled him to jump, in what seems an abrupt manner, to a totally different plane. Thus his jump, $x_{n+1}$, is "unmotivated" only in terms of A's preceding line $x_n$; in terms of what is going on in B's own head it is highly motivated. Clearly, such a technique reflects a decided orientation toward "psychological realism" on the part of the dramatist. Note that, from the standpoint of "content" alone, the conversation in our example could have continued with line $x_{n+3}$ following immediately upon line $x_n$. The logical main trend has been preserved intact; the vocal continuum (the dialogue as a function of time/sound) remains unbroken; but the actual dialogue — i.e. as a function of time and the spoken thought — moves forward discontinuously. The smooth flow of meaning has been momentarily interrupted. For the kind of interruption
described in this example, I have chosen the term internal intrusion, i.e. as opposed to external intrusion, where the latter signifies an interruption of dialogue occurring from the outside. Through the discontinuity of spoken meaning between A and B (with B as the internal element of "instability"), we perceive a continuum of thought on the part of B, verbalized only for the duration of its brief vocal interruption of the main trend of the dialogue. Basically, then, each of the characters moves continuously along his own plane of thought, and a commonality of dialogue along A's plane is only maintained through a polite effort of the "unstable" element, B. The discontinuity may be carried so far, however, that the characters speak virtually past each other — each revealing himself as being so involved with his own mental contents as to be incapable of tuning in to those of the other. Paradoxically, the very fact that A and B are not really communicating heightens the dramatic intensity of the dialogue, provided one fundamental dramatic requirement has been met: At least one of the characters must manifestly (to us) want something from the other.

The intrinsic artistic validity of internal intrusion lies, as already pointed out, in the greater psychological realism which it tends to produce. Judged, further, as an agent of dramatic spell, it is seen to lend to the dialogue an immediate fluidity, a constant atmosphere of the unpredictable — in itself like a promise of adventure — which intrigues and electrifies the listener:

KARENO: Our eyes see all objects as round; I will try to see surfaces. (....) Oh, how I want to get to the bottom of things.
TERESITA: Have you been like that long?
KARENO: What do you mean — like that?
TERESITA: Oh, I just said that.
KARENO: No, really, what do you mean?
TERESITA: You're like the moon (collects her thoughts). Well, what if it doesn't work out? If you don't get to the bottom of things?
KARENO (sits down): I will try in many ways. (....) Miss Teresita, Goethe had more love for those who went astray on their own paths than for those who kept to the route on other peoples'.
TERESITA (abstractedly): Had he really?
KARENO: I have written my Sociology, now I
am writing my Metaphysics. And I do not tire,
I am full of strength. I have brooded and spe­
culated; I know everything that human beings
know, but I want to know more.
TERESITA: Kareno, they say you are married.
KARENO (stares at her).
(Two quarrymen enter at this moment from right. Etc.)
FIRST QUARRYMAN (wearing a red woollen scarf):
Is this the place?

(Act I, 76.)

Note that, at the very moment when Teresita seemed to have
landed the main dialogue on her own plane of preoccupation,
the whole dialogue is momentarily interrupted through the in­
troduction of a new element of action. ('External intrusion',
se below under b.)

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TERESITA: Do you know what would be really great?
KARENO: What would be really great? Tell me.
TERESITA: It would be really great, if you
achieved all that.
KARENO (animated): You see, Miss Teresita, our
conceptions are in no way absolute. (.....) A
person who is born blind will easily learn to
distinguish between a die and a ball; but open
his eyes, and he won't know which was the die and
which was the ball. Well, then, I change my pre­
vious point of departure, I was born blind.
TERESITA (wearily): I'm not happy today.
KARENO (sits down): Why aren't you happy? Are
you dissatisfied with me?
TERESITA: With you? No.
KARENO: You mustn't be sad.
TERESITA: Fancy that, a man who was born blind
wouldn't know? He couldn't tell a ball from a die?
KARENO (rises): No. Isn't that remarkable? (Etc.)

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KARENO (dreaming): Add to this, that I may be
able to shift the entire basis for my observa­
tion of time. (.....) Suddenly I am confronted
by my eightieth year and I die. But I die young.
My independent center of cognition calculates my
age and finds that it is fifteen years and ten
days (stands for a moment silent, then sits down).

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1 Knut Hamsun: Livets spil, Samlede verker vol. 14, pp.71-125,
Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, Oslo 1956. All page references are
to this edition.
TERESITA: Kareno, they say you are married.
KARENO (after a brief pause): No, I am not married. Why do you ask?
TERESITA: That's what I've heard.
KARENO: I'm not married. Did Jens Spir tell you that? He tells you so many things. I was married once.
TERESITA: But your wife is still living.
KARENO (pensive): You ask twice in the same day if I am married, what does that mean? If only you knew how I wish you wouldn't ask again.
TERESITA: Just imagine, and then you die fifteen years old, you say. Wasn't that what you said?

(77-78.)

TERESITA: I know that if I had the power to do something to make you happy, I would do it.

(THY, a very old man, has come in. Has come to a stop, standing erect, his cap in his hand.)
KARENO: Who is that?
TERESITA (turns round): That's Thy.
KARENO: What does he want?
TERESITA: And there is never anything but sunshine. Can you tell me why it doesn't rain any more?

(80.)

Finally, in the following passage from the opening of Act II, note the unsmooth profile of the dialogue, the sprightly zigzag of the sentences flickering, for a brief moment, between Teresita, Oterman, and Jens Spir - like gusts of a giddy scherzo from some winged piece of chamber music. The technique - in itself simple - of disconnecting a line from the previous one creates an immediate musical effect:

TERESITA: But Papa, you are making all the people leave.
MR. OTERMAN: Can we pay them? (to JENS SPIR).
People get shameless, Jens Spir, they ask for raises, they bleed you to the last drop. And if they can't have it the way they want, they leave.
JENS SPIR: Your music was so beautiful, Miss Teresita.
TERESITA: Then I'll take the coffee to the office for you.
MR. OTERMAN: No I don't have time to drink it.
JENS SPIR (to TERESITA): You wouldn't have seen Kareno? I'm looking for him with a telegram.
MR. OTERMAN (continues): And besides we can't afford this lordly life any longer.
TERESITA: Kareno is out in the tower.
MR. OTERMAN: I tell you, Teresita, you must not light the lamp before four o'clock this evening. You don't know, child, how much oil we burn every year (exit).

(Act II, 86-87.)

b. Fluidity of dialogue, 2: External intrusion.

It has been noted, already, how the dialogue between Kareno and Teresita was momentarily interrupted by the entrance of the two quarrymen, at a moment when it had just reached a significant point. A similar interruption — i.e. through the appearance of another character — occurs a little later, when Oterman breaks in at an even more crucial turn of the conversation:

TERESITA: I don't understand myself. But it's you I want to be with.
KARENO: Where did you get that notion?
MR. OTERMAN (coming towards them; laughing): It seems to be a bog I've given you, Kareno.

(Act I, 79.)

Mostly, however, non-person elements, rather than characters, are used for purposes of intrusion. In these latter cases, the effect of the intruding element is that of supplementing the dialogue on stage, rather than interrupting it. From a source mostly not present on the stage itself, a new impression-ingredient suddenly emerges into the totality of stage-impressions at a given moment and is "added", as it were, to the immediate dialogue/action: asserting itself independently of the latter and without necessarily becoming integrated into it. Rather, the intruding element continues to exist as a separate aesthetic dimension, of either light or sound, or both — lending pregnancy to the action on stage precisely because of its aesthetic disconnection from it. Through the suddenness of its intrusion, and its spatial and mental separation from the action-on-stage, the totality of events becomes, aesthetically speaking, bifocal, cleaving the spectator's consciousness in two as he tries, bedazzled, to
assimilate both the immediate dialogue and its new, attention-usurping background. As with internal intrusion (i.e., its breaking up of dialogue into two separate planes of thought), so the effect of external intrusion— the sudden jolting of dialogue through the contraposing of a separate non-dialogue dimension—is that of creating a trans-literal totality, an opalescent dramatic flux approaching the free expression of music. Ever restless, the dramatic action is not allowed to petrify into exclusive, one-dimensional dialogue. - In the following, I have listed the essential instances of external intrusion throughout the four acts of the play.

ACT I: After a few minutes of conversation between Kareno and Teresita, the two quarrymen have entered with their equipment and ascended the slate hillock in the right half of the stage. The first quarryman now sits down and starts turning the drill; the second quarryman starts hammering. At the same moment, the band of travelling musicians visiting the place strikes up a piece somewhere out to the right, off stage. The hammering comes to coincide with the beat of the music.

KARENO: Miss Teresita, now you've got your music after all (coming back to her). Listen how the mountain echoes every beat. Now I conjure the Powers. Oh, I have great things brewing.
TERESITA: I understand you better with music.

The unseen music, and its precise merging with the hammering, comes as an odd surprise. For about five minutes now, the conversation, springy in itself, remains afloat on a liquid mattress of sound. When both the music and the hammering suddenly stop, the very restoration of silence feels as much like the initiation of a new sound effect as did the original initiation of sound before (78). (An apt aesthetic comment on Kareno's speculations concerning the relativity of sense-impressions.) A minute later, the hammering is resumed, and the band breaks in with a new piece at the exact same moment; this time, the music is more distant (79). Through this slight relative change within the sound constellation, greater attention is imperceptibly attracted toward the action on the
hillock, which had until now seemed peripheral. The conversation itself, however, having now entered its most significant phase, continues to claim all direct attention. When it reaches its final impasse - Kareno has been resisting Teresita's ever more aggressive inquiries about his wife and ends up asking her to leave him alone - the music, then the hammering, stops again. The blasting is about to take place (81). The conversation is resumed briefly toward the end of the act, when Teresita tells Kareno that Jens Spir has proposed to her; then interrupted again by Oterman's final appearance (85). - For a full survey of how the long main conversation between Kareno and Teresita - it extends over almost fifty percent of Act I - is impinged upon by the various intruding elements, the following diagram will be of service:

The sound (a non-personal, or non-verbal, intrusion) supplements the conversation, in what may be referred to as a contrapuntal manner; the occurrences listed above the line (personal intrusions) interrupt it. Throughout the first half of the conversation, where two mental planes of preoccupation are competing for the main direction of the dialogue, fluidity is derived largely from 'internal' intrusions, with hardly any external intrusions beyond the sound (75-78). In the second half, Teresita's plane has taken over the whole dialogue, and so instead, in addition to the switching on and off of sound, a total of four direct interruptions from the outside are used here to maintain fluidity. The conversation between Kareno and Teresita is virtually bombarded with intrusions of various kinds. It takes place, then, in an atmosphere which reflects and magnifies its evolving tension, - increasingly
so, as Teresita's advances become plainer and plainer, and Kareno starts to become unnerved by her rather unblushing manner and questions. But the total significance of this mind-clearing atmosphere extends far beyond the conversation itself. Through the constant flux of sound, speech, and happening, the fragmentation of the moment into a swirl of separate elements, we perceive that reality - the total reality of the place and of the main characters involved - is being restructured in a mysterious and meaning way. However, the task of charting and interpreting this structure of elements requires a focus specifically on their fantastic, rather than dramatic, aspects, and thus will have to be deferred to Part B.

ACT II: In this act, Hamsun again uses a dual-element contrapuntal intrusion effect, similar to that in Act I; this time, however, it is based, not on dual sound, but on a sound-light constellation. It occurs during the scene in which Oterman is trying to bribe the quarrymen into "not finding" any more marble on behalf of the company for which they are now working, i.e. let him keep the rest in secret. In the previous scene, Teresita has just assured Kareno that Thy has been sent to the tower with his lamp. Kareno leaves, Teresita disappears into the house, and Oterman enters, followed by the quarrymen, talking. While he is arguing with Højer, light goes on inside the house, and music starts.

MR. OTERMAN: In particular I forbid you, Højer, to work so industriously all the time to fleece me. You have such keen eyes for looking down into the earth. (The lamp is lit inside the house, its light shines out of the windows and illuminates the stage. Immediately after, frenzied piano music.)

MR. OTERMAN: Yes, my dear fellow, your eyes are all too keen. It was you who found the last vein.

SECOND QUARRYMAN: The engineer ordered me to look. (92.)

The dialogue on the stage continues for a while, with no apparent notice of the emanations from the house. Again, this "parallel persistence", this separation between main action
and intruding element has the effect of "cleaving the attention" of the spectator. While we are following the intriguing argument on the stage (appurtenant, in symbolic terms, to the realm of the inorganic), we are being kept aware of Teresita's mounting erotic frenzy and the mad havoc which it is about to produce. After a few minutes' discussion, however, Oterman suddenly becomes aware that the lamp - which was not supposed to be lit until four o'clock! - is shining, and hurries inside to put it out. Engineer Brede - whom Oterman probably wanted to avoid - enters. In the following, the contrapuntal effects seem almost to take over the action through a mysterious life of their own. Again, evidently, the discontinuance of a light or a sound is as much of a dramatic "event" as its incipience.

THIRD QUARRYMAN: Well, for my part, I just think the devil has taken possession of him.
ENGINEER BREDE: You don't need to have any thoughts at all about that (the lamp goes out in the house).
SOME QUARRYMEN: There, he has put the light out, for God's sake.
(Piano music stops. Dark stage. Roar from sea increases.)
ENGINEER BREDE'S VOICE: All right, move on
(engineer and quarrymen exit right).
(Suddenly a blazing light goes on in the tower out on the headland. The glare is thrown all around. JENS SPIR turns and looks in direction of tower.)
(TERESITA comes down steps with a burning lantern and a pair of binoculars. JENS SPIR steps forward.)
TERESITA (starts): Who is that?

As in Act I, the music was linked quite accurately to its companion element. Despite the logical connexion between them here, this simultaneity creates an effect of puzzlement and suspense; the tiny lag of the music behind the light when they stop even seems to underscore the simultaneity. But most signally, their place is taken - i.e. the contrapuntal dimension is carried on - almost immediately by the sudden, intense radiance from the tower. Of the following dialogue between Teresita and Jens Spir, more than half is supplemented by this new and powerful element. The final extinction of the light leaves the dialogue devoid of counterpoint for a bare minute and is then followed by a new sequence of sound and
light: a succession of siren whistles and shots from the doomed ship, topped by the flaming streak from a distress-rocket (96). Toward the end of the act, as Karono is rushing around to arrange for the quarrymen to go out in Oterman's boat, Teresita withdraws into the house with Jens Spir. Presently, amidst the firing of shots from the sea, light again goes on inside the house; shining steadily out of the windows, it presides over the last few tumultuous moments of the act (98). The whole second half of this act, then, can be seen as essentially structured through its contrapuntal elements alone:

(92). BEGINN. OF LAMPSHINE + PIANO
(93). END OF LAMPSHINE, END OF PIANO, BEGINN. OF LIGHT FROM TOWER
(95). END OF LIGHT OF TOWER
(96). BEGINN. OF SECOND DISTRESS OF SIGNALS LAMPSHINE
(98). SECOND BEGINN. OF LAMPSHINE

- Of the above contrapuntal events, however, there are two - the light from the tower and the distress signals - which do not appear to meet the criteria, as established up to now, for what constitutes a counterpoint. It has been suggested that the mind-cleaving, i.e. contrapuntal, effect of an intruding element presupposes its non-incorporation into the main sphere of action upon which it intrudes. (To be sure, remarks are made, e.g., about the music impinging on the conversation in Act I, but these are only occasional.) Obviously, an element which is seen to be consciously and continuously perceived by somebody on the stage, would reach us, as it were, through the perceiving character, instead of directly from the outside; thus, it is only the de facto unIntegrated element which diverts part of our attention, forcing our total experience into a state of dividedness. In other words, spatial separation alone does not ensure an autonomous, contrapuntal dimension (or, as I have termed it earlier, aesthetic separa-
tion'); the element must be mentally separated, above all, from the action-on-stage, and has to emerge into our attention in a somewhat sudden, unexpected manner, i.e. independently of what is going on at the given moment, and thus not defined in terms of that. Its significance within the larger context being undefined, its appearance seemingly not bearing any relevance to it, the spectator is forced to explore on his own the hidden relevance and significance suggested, after all, by the very insistence of its presence. The contrapuntal "mystique" which distracts us, in part, away from the dialogue, is reflected back on the latter as an atmosphere of pervasive pregnaney within which whatever is being said is felt to assume an enhanced significance, as if it were seen through some strangely coloured piece of glass.

Now in the case of the tower light, 'mental separation' most certainly would not seem to have been achieved, since the light is the primary subject of the conversation between Teresita and Jens Spir. Was the lamp empty? Is the light dwindling? are questions, indeed, which do not leave the light on the periphery of the action. Nor should the initial appearance of the light element come as anything unknown or unexpected to the spectator - who had already learned about the great importance of this light and most probably had inferred Teresita's determination to obstruct its saving mission.

Still, in spite of these two basic hindrances, Hamsun manages to derive a highly contrapuntal effect from the tower light. First, surprise and mystique are made to supersede preparation and foreknowledge for and of the element through the interposing of one unrelated scene (Oterman, the quarriers, the engineer); this scene dislocates the issue of the lamp being on its way to the tower just enough for the spectator not to be concretely concerned with when, how, and whether he is actually going to see the light appear. When the light finally materializes, it does so - as explicitly indicated by the author - in a sudden and overpowering manner. ('Suddenly a blazing light goes on in the tower out on the headland. The glare is thrown all around.') This is the first time we
actually see the "glass and light" of Kareno's ambitious illumination project at work, and it is something quite different, of course, from our awareness — concretely limited by the picture of a small hand-lantern - of the light being on its way out there. In the stormy, dark evening, the whole potential for mystique and fascination inherent in the symbol of the tower is dramatically released by the sudden light. Moreover, this happens in the silence preceding the actual conversation between Teresita and Jens Spir (and following, as I have already pointed out, a scene primarily unrelated to the issue of the lamp); and so to us, the light element does not seem to grow out of the main action, but rather to assert itself independently of it, totally from the outside. In spite, then, or our foreknowledge of the element, we are surprised and intrigued by it from the first moment. However, to sustain the element as a counterpoint throughout the dialogue, Hamsun now has to overcome the second hindrance to a mind-cleaving effect: the lack of 'mental separation' between the element and the main sphere of action. This is achieved through the digressions made by the dialogue from the subject of the light. As a matter of fact, throughout the duration of the latter, more than half of the dialogue does not deal with the light at all. Several lines are spoken, before the actual observation of it is initiated (94). The conversation then centers on the empty lamp (identical, in actual fact, with the light in the tower, and yet experienced as aesthetically different from it). As the light starts decreasing, the dialogue deviates into Teresita's tongue-lashing of Jens Spir, interspersed with periodical observations by the latter on the flickering of the lamp (95). Thus while the light remains constantly at the basis of the dialogue, most of the dialogue deals with other things than the light! It is through these digressions, these very gaps of non-reference, that the contrapuntal effect is after all achieved. The dialogue deviates, but the light remains, and so the spectator has to concentrate on it by himself, aside from the dialogue. Clearly, this invests the light with a significance and spellbinding power far greater than that which would have been possible had we had to take it in
via the constant commenting of the characters (which eo ipso would have set the bounds for our experience of it). Now, the mystery of contrapuntal autonomy remains with the tower light till it dies; and this mystery, in turn, is reflected back on the dialogue at large, enveloping every line with an aura of pregnancy.

In contradistinction to the tower light, the distress signals, though spatially separated from the action-on-stage, do not assume contrapuntal function. For while Kareno's tower light contained within itself both its role of this particular evening and its essential role as an omni-nocturnal symbol, the distress signals hold no significance beyond the immediate context which has provoked them, no independent mystery or surprise. Moreover, they occur only at intervals, and each occurrence prompts an immediate dialogic response. Their function within the dialogue – as well as the function of the tower light in those instances where the latter, too, serves as dialogic object – will be discussed in Part B.

ACT III: Sound and light are used as outside elements throughout this act, though perhaps not in any markedly contrapuntal manner. The northern lights are present from curtain-rise (and presumably to the end); this rules out the element of inception on their part, i.e. of attention-diverting intrusion at and from a given moment. Thus in lending atmosphere to the action, the northern lights are absorbed into that atmosphere themselves. On two occasions, however, Hamsun states a change in the appearance of the northern lights. First,

A MAN (points): Look how red the Northern Lights are growing.
SEVERAL (exclaim): As red as blood!
A WOMAN: Oh God! Oh God! (104-05.)

And a little later,

A MAN: The wind is rising.
ANOTHER MAN: The night's getting cold and windy. The Northern Lights are getting jagged.
THE MAN: There's a ring around the moon.
JENS SPIR (from right with a telegram in his hand): Skipper Reiersen, yacht Southern Star. (107-08.)
Hamsun gives no stage directions for these two changes, merely states them dialogically through observations made directly by characters on the stage. Since the coincidence of change and observation would, by definition, rule out any contrapuntal effect, a director who actually wanted to use these changes contrapuntally could do so by placing them slightly in advance of the observing comments, so as to allow them a few moments of attention-cleaving impact prior to their link-up with the dialogue.

(Note also the sudden, interruptory entrance of Jens Spir with a telegram. Contrary to what one would expect from the sudden introduction into the action on stage of such an object as a telegram, the latter does not come into any immediate focus on stage; through a succession of rapidly changing scenes, the action continues independently of the telegram until, two pages later, the skipper (who has in the meantime been fetched from the prayer-house) turns up to collect it from Jens Spir. At this stage, the telegram — which orders the skipper to leave for another fishing location — assumes some significance for the main plot, in that it enables Kareno finally to get rid of his wife; but it is characteristic of Hamsun's technique that he splits the function of the telegram up, so to say, in its basic plot function (B), plus a purely intrusive (and thus purely technical) function (A), separating the two in regard to the temporal flow of stage events. Furthermore, in the course of this time interval, this new (and rather hastily introduced) element in the action can then become partly forgotten, so as to maintain in the spectator's mind a sort of sub-liminal waiting for (B) as the potential revelation of its actual significance.)

In this act, Hamsun again uses the music band from Act I, structuring its presence throughout the act in a similarly elaborate way. As with the quarrymen's hammering in Act I, the music again is correlated with another element, this time within the dialogue itself. This latter element consists in such conversation and action on stage as pertains to the arrival of the fever. The correlation is a negative one: the
music at first starts only at the cessation of the presence of its "companion" element, and is brought to a stop three times by its re-emergence into the action. Of the music's three appearances during the act, the second one is very short, and the third one extremely short (104 & 111). The act opens with general conversation about the fever having arrived the day before; following the initial seriousness of the news that two local people have already died, the talk soon develops into pure joking about the fever, interrupted by the Laestadian's austere "Don't joke about that, young man." (99.) At this point, the conversation has been exhausted, and the band starts playing upstage, attracting the crowd towards it and leaving the downstage area free for dialogue between, first Kareno and his wife, then Kareno and Teresita, then Kareno and his wife again. At the point where Elina comes back and Teresita leaves with Jens Spir, the dialogical change of partnership is paralleled by a shift in the musical background accompaniment: the music, according to the stage directions, now plays closer (101). (Note how, during this long musical sequence, the movement of the band - from distant to closer - is the opposite of its movement in Act I, from close to more distant.) Towards the end of this second half of the music's first appearance, the fever finally starts re-emerging into the picture: a man comes to ask Oterman for room for a sick woman, and a short argument between the two follows, re-establishing, suddenly and dramatically, the uncanny presence of the fever. The music now finally stops (103). After a short while, the talk about the fever has simmered down again; the musicians take up a new position downstage and start playing (104). When almost immediately after, the drunk man falls down in the snow, people motion to them to stop. A new wave of agitation about the fever follows, then gives way to a succession of subsequent scenes showing no connection with the fever. Toward the end of this long stretch without music, the news that Teresita has fallen ill starts emerging into the dialogue on stage. The musicians now take up a position again and start playing quietly. Immediately, a man enters with the message that the drunk
man has died, and people again motion to the band to stop (III). As in Act I, each stopping of the music carries as distinct an intruding effect as the playing itself.

ACT IV: In this act, outside elements are limited to the burning of the tower which provides the contrapuntal background for the final, chaotic sequence of the act, i.e. from the death of Teresita till about the end of the play (122-25); however, throughout this whole sequence, the attention-cleaving impact is considerable. Teresita, shot to death by accident, has just been carried into the house when suddenly flames are seen to shoot up from the tower out on the headland. Naturally, the immediate heaping of this new, shocking event upon the previous one is vastly melodramatic. Each of the two would be violent enough in itself to claim our whole, undivided attention, and so our attention now becomes violently torn between them. This split is perpetuated throughout the whole sequence, in that none of the characters entering, successively, into the action on stage - with the exception of Thy who is present all the time - share our simultaneous awareness of both these events, but have to be informed about one of them, or both. The first one to enter is the maid, who has seen Oterman set fire to the tower; she is told by Thy about Teresita's death and rushes into the house. A moment later, a similar arrival is performed by Oterman himself, who has the news about his daughter broken to him by Jens Spir. During the following dialogue between Jens Spir and Thy, the former suddenly enters into our (and Thy's) awareness of the tower burning; while Kareno, replacing Jens Spir on the stage a few moments later, learns about Teresita's death from Thy, then suddenly catches sight of the fire which is now beginning to die down. Finally, the two spatially separated disasters melt together into the third, crowning one as Kareno informs Oterman that, in addition to his daughter's death, his two sons have been burnt to death in the tower. Only at this point, then, a few seconds before curtain-fall, is the bi-focality of events - and of our awareness of them - resolved back into one single focus of action, limited to the immediate stage area alone.
c. High-suspense dialogue.

In Act II, the most fundamentally dramatic of the play's four acts, Hamsun repeatedly uses a special kind of dialogue designed to produce an all-enveloping stage atmosphere of sinister significance and suspense. The first passage of this kind -- from early in the act -- is brief, but ominous:

TERESITA: Do you think the ship will be here in half an hour?
JENS SPIR: Maybe. If nothing happens between now and then.
TERESITA (looks at him): What could happen?
JENS SPIR: No, what could happen?
TERESITA: The approach to land?
JENS SPIR: The approach to land is paved with disasters (pause).

The subsequent conversation between Teresita and Kareno is massively suspense-building:

KARENO (walks back and forth): Tonight? Can you tell me if it really says tonight?
TERESITA (reads): Tonight.
KARENO: Tonight (suddenly). There is a storm at sea today.
TERESITA: There always is in the fall.
KARENO: Especially outside here, it seems to me. Let it storm.
TERESITA: Yes, let it storm.
KARENO: It's going to be a dangerous night. Ships may be wrecked.
TERESITA: Why do you say that?
KARENO: Let ships be wrecked allright, I say.
TERESITA: You've turned so pale.
KARENO: Miss Teresita, I won't be home for any stranger who comes asking for me.
TERESITA: You won't?
KARENO: Listen out there (listens). Out there in the night.
TERESITA: It's the sea.
KARENO: Did you hear screams?
TERESITA: No.
KARENO (takes a few steps across the yard and listens bent forward; abruptly back): My lamp, Miss Teresita!

Note how the dark and foreboding pregnancy of these brief and rapid lines emanates, in effect, from just one word, (or a few words) in each of them, words of a basic and elementarily
concrete dramatic suggestiveness. Let us imagine a parallel dialogue in which each line would consist merely of the particular word/words constituting the essential source of pregnancy in each line of the original dialogue:

- Tonight.
- Tonight.
- Storm.
- Especially outside here.
- Dangerous night. Ships.
- Let ships be wrecked.
- Pale.
- Stranger, comes asking.
- The night.
- The sea.
- Screams.
- Lamp!

Put together in this way, the words tell, if not the precise, actual story, then at least, most immediately and unmistakably, a story - i.e. a story which would be totally self-contained at the semi-conscious perceiving level (the level, so to say, of spontaneous imagination) where the sense of "plot" does not depend on the specification of subjects and objects functioning within a logically ordered sequence of action. Clearly, these are all words that pertain directly, in a breathlessly concrete and urgent manner, to fundamental quantities and forces within human experience: Time, space, darkness, light (light-in-darkness), dangerous journeys (shipwrecks), raging elements and emotions, the arrival of a stranger. Thus in the perceiver's mind the configuration of these words/lines is transformed, as it were, into a kind of magic mystery lampboard, blinking feverishly in all colours - where each blinking word signals some spontaneous and intense emotional energy eruption. Through the key words of each line, then, the dialogue at large becomes the freely emotional - one might almost say musical - version of an intellectually formulatable plot sequence, the basic premises of which are that Kareno's unwelcome wife is less than an hour from land and that the weather may indeed facilitate any attempt to prevent her arrival. Once these premises - which we know beforehand to their full extent - are given, they can be concretized
into primitively simple words, each of which will serve, against the background of the situation given, as a highly compressed, highly charged representative of its corresponding constituent at the premise level. ("Tonight" = the time situation, "ships" = the ship carrying Mrs. Kareno, and so on.) Thus it may be said that the dialogue of high suspense presents the verbally compressed, narrowly concretized version of a basic situation of high urgency (the time factor is always basic to this kind of dialogue) and far-reaching human and/or material implications. In a dialogue of this kind, each of these super-concrete key words ultimately serves as an emotional gateway to the entire range of actual plot premises - and the hopes and fears attached to them - behind; and each such word suffices, by dint of association, to bring/keep this whole spectrum of action ingredients alive in the reader's/spectator's imagination. Thus in the passage quoted, the word 'ships' comes to carry the weight of the entire dramatic action in both the stage dimension and the (postulated/imagined) background dimension; and so do the words 'how far', 'mail-boat', and 'lamp' in this concluding quote from the long, climactic dialogue between Teresita and Jens Spir later in the act:

JENS SPIR: Do you want to ask me how far the mail-boat has come?  
TERESITA: No. But how far has it come?  
JENS SPIR: It's right offshore now.  
TERESITA: Of course it's right offshore.  
JENS SPIR: I met Thy down on the road.  
TERESITA: I sent him with the lamp.  
JENS SPIR: Yes, he carried the lamp that is now shining so brightly out there.  
TERESITA (impatient): I'm standing here telling you that I sent Thy with the lamp.  
JENS SPIR: Yes.  
TERESITA: Yes? And so?  
JENS SPIR: Nothing. I had a look into the lamp.  
TERESITA: You had a look into it?  
JENS SPIR: It was empty. (94.)

Again, the whole, vast range of progressing events have been channelled into something as ultimately concrete and tangible as Kareno's empty lamp.
The dramatic techniques outlined by me here in Part A are not employed by Hamsun in a truly consistent degree throughout the play; on the contrary, there is a marked decline in the use of them after the first half, when increasingly rapid changes of scenes – i.e. changes in dialogical partnership constellations – take over as the primary means of maintaining the fast-moving, fluid kind of dialogue basic to the play. Internal intrusion – the momentary destruction of dialogical linearity from within – belongs mainly to Act I, with its long, central dialogue between Teresita and Kareno; and so does external intrusion of the personal category, i.e. the intrusion of other characters into the basic dialogue. In later acts, such an intrusion will not be just momentary, but rather in itself come to occasion the transition to a new scene (as when, e.g., Mrs. Kareno interrupts the conversation between Kareno and Teresita in the beginning of Act III). As for external intrusion from non-verbal intrusion sources – chiefly parallel sequences of sound and light activity of various kinds – I have shown how, to the extent that such activity is maintained distinctly as a dimension of its own (i.e. as uninvolved in the verbal action by any dialogic comment), its function becomes "contrapuntal", so as to divide the spectator's attention between the verbal foreground action and itself. (As already said, the special dramatic effects deriving from the incorporation of a non-verbal intrusion sector into the verbal action will be treated separately in Part B.) While the use of non-verbal intrusion is highly contrapuntal, in this attention-dividing sense, throughout the first two acts, the contrapuntal effect is more indirect in Act III, in that the initial, long musical sequence would tend, at least in part, to melt into the general action as mere "background" sound; although, on the other hand, the subsequent interconnection between the fever and the music does in fact bestow some subtly contrapuntal qualities on the latter. Further, we have seen how, in addition to his use of intrusion techniques, Hamsun employs in Act II the special technique of high-suspense dialogue; while in contrast to the electrifying dramatic fireworks of this act, Act III and,
notably, Act IV seem almost pale in their limited exhibition of the dramatic techniques described here.

The gradual decrease in the use of these dramatic techniques throughout the play reflects, as it were, the fortunes of the characters themselves. The restless sub-surface disturbances of the dialogue in Act I correspond to the clandestine emergence of the mineral realm, as well as of the power of uncontrolled passion, into the everyday realm of human destiny. The totalregnancy of passion in Act II, and the wild and ruthless excesses to which it drives Teresita in her pursuit of Kareno, pre-establishes this act as the naturally climactic one as regards dramatic intensity throughout the play. To be sure, her passion for Kareno seems to be undiminished in Act III, but in this act the decline of the latter - as marked by his absence from his work, and his "idling" - has already set in: Kareno has begun to stagnate, and the anticlimactic quality of this act heralds his fall from the heroine's favour in Act IV. In this act, then, a fundamental quality of dissolution is perceived; the scenes change rapidly, and the intrusion-effected tension and restlessness in the longer dialogical sequences of the first two acts is replaced by the general flux of the market-place and of the popular confusion caused by the fever - scenes almost operatic in their use of comic mass superstition and other motley, choir-like crowd effects. In fact, the use of precisely Act III for such purposes shows an interesting structural correspondence with the way in which similar stage episodes - ballet interludes, burlesque-relief mass scenes - have been placed within the progression scheme of a number of 'dramatic' (as opposed to 'comic') operas; namely at the relatively advanced stage where a setback in the hero's fortune has begun to materialize (as in e.g. Bizet's Carmen, to which the love story of Livets spil bears some certain schematic resemblance).

Finally, then, the total absence of special energy effects throughout most of Act IV, and the pale, exhausted mood which, in contrast with the previous acts, it seems to produce, becomes, on the aesthetic level, a general reflection of the final downfall of the individual characters: the burnt-out
hopes of Kareno and Jens Spir, as well as the ultimate, total confusion of Teresita in this latest stage of her surrender to the erotic demon. Only with the concluding series of catastrophes do we return, once more, to the attention-expanding effects from the first half of the play.

B. SPECIAL FANTASTIC AND FANTASTIC-DRAMATIC ELEMENTS AND EFFECTS.

a. Premises, situations, events.

The use of a daring philosopher as the hero of a play does not automatically transpose that play to the level of the fantastic; of this, *At the Gates of the Kingdom* is an immediate example. Nor does the use of a remote locality like Northern Norway in itself make for an outright non-realistic framework, as demonstrated by a number of Hamsun's realistic novels from after the turn of the century. But for a dramatist to decide, as a starting-point, on a combination of the two, is virtually tantamount to a declaration that the play which he is going to write will be aiming, in content, scope, and dramatic effects, for something emphatically out of the ordinary. At the end of a decade of loneliness and disappointments, Kareno, exiled from the philosophical community in the city, is proposing to initiate a series of fantastic perceptional experiments, tantamount to a departure from our realm of daily - i.e. physical, time-bound - existence into the exclusive timeless realms of the mind at large; and he is proposing, moreover, to conduct these experiments in a setting which is in itself like a transitional zone between human, time-bound reality and the infinite, timeless spaces of cosmos and mind. In this borderzone, as it were, between civilization and eternity, between the real and the super-real (a potential quality in the setting, in other words, which becomes manifestly actualized through the catalytic superimposition on it of, precisely, a figure like Kareno and his transcendental enterprise), all funda-
mental existential contrasts - between life and death, summer and winter, sanity and madness, hope and ruination - become vastly and primitively magnified; the light is more penetrating and the darkness more engulfing, and everything may turn into its own opposite without warning. In such a potential superrality, then, the laws of everyday triviality may become totally suspended, so as to make room, at the right moment, for any prodigious event to happen. The right moment is marked, in the play, by Kareno's proposition to erect his wondrous glass tower - his curious meditation retreat that is going to "burn like a star among the mountains" - amidst the bleak rocks on Mr. Oterman's property by the sea, face to face with the desolate nature of the north. Perched, as it were, on the transition line between the realms of time-boundness and transcendence, he will try to penetrate into the vertiginous secrets of the latter. But the transcendent realm accepts his challenge with a vengeance: the shining white marble emerging underneath the seemingly worthless slate hillock (which was to provide space for the building-site for Kareno's tower) is in itself like a great secret of Nature suddenly revealed. The throwing open of a totally new view (towards the sea and the headland), hitherto blocked by the hillock - in itself a rather extraordinary effect on a stage! - i.e. the complete transformation, as a result of the blasting, of surroundings which have up to that very moment always been the same, signifies that some irreversible transition has taken place, the consequences of which cannot yet be foreseen. In addition, the contrast between the casual, peripheral role of the blasting preparations in the preceding action and the magnitude, subsequently, of the result itself is like an uncannily whispered assurance to the spectator that this was anything but the trivial, routine episode which it might have seemed to be. The casual note (i.e. casual with regard to the blasting episode) on which the act ends further reiterates this contrast, so as to convey to us the surface impression that nothing really important has been changed: telling us at the same time, underneath the surface, that everything has changed, nothing will ever be the same again.
In each of the remaining three acts, the dramatic center of energy is constituted by an event of similarly fantastic proportions. (It should be noted that in all four acts the appearance of Thy – the "wandering Jew", or "Justice" – trying to deliver his perpetual "message", occurs as a kind of prelude or concomitant to the central fantastic event of the act.) By itself, the shipwreck in Act II might have appeared dramatic only in a more ordinary, one-dimensional sense; but its basic dramatic energy potential is refracted into a whole spectral range of phantasmagoric fireworks through the brilliant nightmare eccentricity of the circumstances and effects surrounding it – i.e. Teresita's staggering resolve to sink the whole ship, as well as the nature of, and orchestral interplay between, the individual elements of the entire visual and auditory stagescape: the tower, the sending of the empty lamp, the binoculars, the lamp in the tower and the observation of it through the binoculars, the shots and distress-rockets fired from the sinking ship, the caustic, playful dialogue with Jens Spir on the spectatorial brink of disaster. – Act III is the only act in which the central fantasticality does not proceed from or involve Kareno's tower; here it is constituted by the "nerve fever", the legendary epidemic which has been slowly but steadily approaching from the north and now finally hits the trading-post like a mysterious and frightening visitation. – Finally, in Act IV, the crowning fantastic event centers directly on the tower: spurred on by his insane, materialistic passion, Oterman takes the full step into the committal of a crime as extravagant as that to which the chimerical passion of Teresita had driven her; and the tower itself, the construction of which had been the original starting-point for the whole series of darkly fantastic happenings, is destroyed by the flames.

b. Props as special dramatic-fantastic energy sources.

In a play in which, as in Livets spil, a number of formally very objectively real but in essence highly extraordinary events are acted out, within a verbally logical realm of
personal action, against the background of what one perceives (through the extraordinary, symbolic quality of the events themselves) as the realm of a supra-personal dispensation, there arises between these two realms a special action space within which all non-verbal, non-personal (i.e. inanimate) elements concretely participating in the action of the play will assume a particular quality; as it were, of "over-concreteness" - i.e. an identity (to the perceiver) apart from and beyond the common spatial everyday continuum of human agents and inanimate objects/phenomena within which they would ordinarily be perceived. Given the sense (on the part of the spectator) of a mysterious, supra-personal realm behind the realm of immediate personal stage action, any action element on the stage which is not personal - i.e. not an actual, living character - will tend (given a sufficiently significant context) to be at least subliminally construed as being somehow connected with this supra-personal, transcendent realm, rather than with the realm of human action to which it formally belongs. This is borne out especially in the case of dynamic sound-and-light participation in the main action (I have discussed this particular subject under A.b., and will return to it in a little while), but also in the case of a number of highly noticeable props used by Hamsun in the play. Thus in Act II, Teresita's lantern assumes an independent double function by, (a): intensifying, on the stage, that darkness in which it constitutes the sole, minute presence of light (the effect of a tiny, concentrated light source amidst an otherwise total darkness - a device extensively relied on by e.g. Kafka in his novels - is that of converting the fundamental contradiction between darkness and light into a kind of magical light-and-darkness simultaneity); (b): establishing through the darkness a point of correspondence with the dying lamp in Kareno's tower, thus accentuating the whole, fantastic lantern drama which is being acted out across this great distance. However, the main link between the foreground action and Kareno's lamp is furnished by another fascinating prop of Teresita's, the pair of binoculars through which she is keeping
watch over the sinking light on the headland. In addition to their immediate, sinister identity as, so to speak, an instrument for/symbol of Teresita's crime and a receptacle for the extreme intensity of her observation, the binoculars, through their optical superiority in this demanding context, become like an independent, magically superior observing agent, the superhuman gathering point of everything that is going on. Thus in terms of dramatic energy, they almost seem to play the real lead in this whole sequence.

Other noticeable props, of a more one-dimensionally fantastic character, are Thy's strange shoes and the mysterious red veil of Mrs. Kareno (both in Act III); while the recurring presence, throughout Act IV, of Engineer Brede's pistol gradually endows this object with an imperceptibly mounting significance, so that, by the time Teresita is killed by it, it has assumed an absurdly fateful autonomous existence, totally apart from all the characters involved. - Finally, the telegrams used in Act II and Act III constitute a more immediately obvious example of the particular "mysterious messenger" quality in the props to which I have pointed. In their isolated, enhanced concreteness, the telegrams - and most of the other special props with them - become like, dissociated exclamation marks, independent explosions of mute, irreducible mystery; their ultimate point of reference is - themselves.

c. Special features in the visual appearance of the characters.

In my previous, interpretative analysis of the characters of Livets spil I referred to a significant feature in the external appearance of Jens Spir: his red beard which he combs with a lead comb to blacken it. A symbol, in itself, of demonic sexuality, this feature assumes a particular quality of the fantastic through its inclusion of two visual identities, i.e. a hidden, secret identity - the true, red colour - behind the apparent one. - An examination of the other main characters shows that Kareno is the only one who has been left without any particular external feature of oddness or fantasticality. (With the partial exception of Mrs. Kareno - whose theatrically
mysterious red veil amounts, to be sure, only to an episodic feature in her appearance; but one, nevertheless, which adds most scintillatingly to the general phantasmagoria of Act III.) This would seem to be logically accounted for by that other, intellectual fantasticality endowment through which he is distinguished: that of his eccentric metaphysical knighthood and wild transcendence-bent cognition enterprises. - The eccentricity of Oterman's appearance materializes gradually throughout the play, in proportion as his frustrated greed drives him farther and farther into grotesque miserliness and paranoia; while the peculiar characteristics of his daughter - her "stone eyes", her "long hands" and "protruding feet" - set her up as a center of strangeness right from the opening of the first act. At the far end of the strangeness scale stands Thy, with his fantastic shoes and general appearance of unearthliness - so unearthly, in fact, as to place him slightly outside the sphere of all the other characters, in an autonomous object zone similar to that of the dramatic-fantastic props. Finally, the hunchbacked Engineer Brede, with his furcoat, his pistol, and his feeble voice, is the most immediately theatrical character creation of the whole play.

Taking the characters as a whole, then, the highly theatrical appearance of its individual members might be seen as contradictory to the fact that, in the play, they are all members of an assumed realm of everyday life, and not the actual agents of fantasticality - the source of the latter being the transcendent realm of the mysterious life forces, the gradual penetration of which into the realm of the living we witness throughout the play. However, it is precisely this total lack of autonomy in the characters - the fact that they are not free agents in regard to anything, but merely and exclusively acted upon - which makes natural this very stylization of their appearances, a stylization so consistent as to reduce them to the brilliantly eccentric figures of a chess game or a pack of playing-cards. If the playground of the life forces is transformed into looking-glass land, it is only reasonable that their victims should be made to look like its fantastic inhabitants.
d. **Light and sound as primary transmitters of the fantastic.**

The middle and last of the three diagrams in Part A showed how it was possible to view extensive passages of, respectively, Act I and Act II of *Livets spil* as structured in terms of light and sound alone, i.e., how these latter elements can be seen as making up a whole progressional dimension of their own, parallel to the progressional dimension of the dialogue. In Part A, the examination of these elements was basically oriented in terms of the dialogue; i.e., we were asking the question of how their varied and persistent impingement upon the dialogue served to enhance its fluidity. Given this orientation, the effect of these intruding elements on the dialogue were studied as an instance of **dramatic style**, while the question of their intrinsic, fantastic nature was postponed till later. Prior to this, however, I had already referred to the difficulty, within a terminology such as that of the present study, of keeping the qualities of 'dramatic' and 'fantastic' truly and readily apart. If, on the one hand, the penetration of a full-fledged, bafflingly autonomous, non-verbal background dimension into the dimension of verbal foreground action would tend to make for a greater dialogic fluidity on the part of the latter, it would also constitute, on the other hand, that clash between two warring aesthetic dimensions which is the ultimate essence of "unreality". The former effect, then, is 'dramatic', the latter - by its triggering of a dual-reality experience - 'fantastic'. By and large, however, the prolonged validity of the latter effect will rest on the presupposition that, in addition to the logical reason for their occurrence, the intruding elements somehow manifest a symbolic charge, so as to be suggestive/capable of being associated with a transcendent realm beyond the immediate time-bound reality for the dramatic action.

In order to demonstrate the actual association of light and sound elements with such a transcendent realm, let us subdivide the latter into a number of individual sub-manifestations, in accordance with my previous designation of a number of so-called life forces, or mystical supra-human principles.
governing the action of the play. While a number of these principles assert themselves in each act, it is possible, on the other hand, to see each act as centered around one such principle in particular, or around a confrontation between the act's central principle and another one. The central principle/contest in each act can be generally deduced from the act's central fantastic event (in accordance with the outline of such events in B.a.); on a more subtle level, however, it can be perceived, in greater symbolic detail, through the structure of the light and sound events of the act. A brief survey follows:

**Act I:** The principle of Logos — Kareno's proposition to extend his powers of conscious, intellectual knowledge into a conquest of the deep recesses of the unconscious mind — is introduced. In this act, its association with any potential light element remains indirect: Kareno speaks of his tower which is going to "burn like a star among the mountains"; further, references are made to his lamp, and to the significance of light experiments for his future activity. As the quarrymen commence their work on the slate hillock, Kareno immediately tries to usurp the sound of the hammering as a symbol for his transcendental exploits. ("Listen how the mountain echoes every beat. Now I conjure the Powers. Oh, I have great things brewing."). However, as this is the only reference made to the hammering, the attempted association of it with the aforesaid principle does not materialize; instead, the hammering is left alone to tell its own story — and so is the music, which started simultaneously with it. While Kareno's and Teresita's conversation is meandering along laboriously, a totally different kind of dialogue is taking place underneath it, between these two intruding sound elements. Thus of the three principles competing throughout this sequence, Logos is shown to be the weakest, by being represented on the dialogic level only, through Kareno; while Eros is represented both dialogically (Teresita) and contrapuntally (the music), and the mysterious realm of the Inorganic — symbolic of the lure of, and obsession with, vast mineral riches — is represented contrapuntally, through
the hammering. Thus the latter two are set up against each other in a kind of contrasty sound tapestry - reminding, in its evocation of the mineral realm, of the two sequences framing Wotan's and Loge's mission to Nibelheim in Wagner's Ringgold. For a brief moment, the music seems to get the upper hand, then both sound elements cease simultaneously. There now follows an exchange between First Quarryman, Kareno, and Oterman concerning the mysterious softness of the rock. (The rock is "as soft as clay"). A simultaneous recommencement of the hammering and the music follows, but now the music is playing further away, thus altering the relationship between the two decidedly in favour of the hammering. The unsensational victory of the latter in the subliminal, contrapuntal sound contest is like a subtle intimation to the effect that the truly sensational event of the act is going to materialize, not out of the wordy dialogue between Teresita and Kareno, but out of the strangely wordless proceedings on the slate hillock.

**Act II**: In this act, the music affiliated with Eros (Teresita's piano-playing) has a much more directly fantastic quality, in accordance with the growth in her erotic obsession: suggesting that the latter has reached such proportions as will allow unconscious impulses of great violence and destructiveness to invade the realm of her conscious decisions. The same quality of fantastic obsession is conveyed by the light from her lamp as it is shining out of the windows, illuminating the stage. The combined effect of the two is so powerful as literally to establish Teresita's emotions palpably on stage while physically she is inside the house, unseen by us. (Again, this is an unreality effect in the best sense of the concept: She definitely is not present on the stage, yet she definitely is present on the stage...)

The main sequence of the act is centered around the contest between Logos and Eros, as represented by Kareno's lamp in the tower and Teresita's lantern with its cloak-and-dagger atmosphere. (On the straightforwardly psychological level - which is precisely the level that is so brilliantly rendered through the parallel, contrapuntal events - one perceives the
defeat of Logos to be almost visibly the result, not so much of the actual lack of kerosene as of its total lack of support from Kareno's subconscious, the desire of which to get rid of his wife had even been so consciously and explicitly expressed by him as to play straight into the long hands of Teresita and her Eros.) The sound-and-light distress signals from the sinking ship following upon the extinction of the lamp are not, of course, of an intrinsically fantastic nature; although, by occurring at such a climactic moment and in direct continuation of the preceding elements, they would most probably be felt to inherit some of the fantastic quality of the latter. Finally, the mad agency of Eros is conveyed to us once more by Teresita's lantern shining out of the windows for a feverish moment just before the curtain falls.

Acts III and IV: These two last acts do not really exhibit continuous contrapuntal, "fantastic" sub-versions of the verbal action. The music in Act III, through its subtle affiliation with the fever, does take on a decidedly fantastic quality; one senses the existence of some secret, unintelligible relation between the two - the nature of which is further complicated by the previous association of the music with Eros. Indirectly, then, the music may be seen as linking these two forces - Eros and Death, as represented by the fever - together. - The light phenomena in the sky - the northern lights that turn "as red as blood", as well as the moon with a ring around it - become fantastic within the given context, i.e. that of the plague and of local superstition responding to it. Finally, a sense of the ultimate reign of chaos - of human consciousness dissolving in the grip of the forces of madness and destruction - is conveyed towards the end of the act by the sound, passing rapidly by, of 'cowbells, barking dogs and trampling as of many animals', as the delirious Teresita has let all the animals loose.

The two climactic events of Act IV - and of the whole play - find primary expression through surprise effects of, respectively, sound and light. The shot that kills Teresita constitutes a true moment of unreality because, at the same
time as it is seen to be totally accidental, it is felt - against the background of the whole succession of events leading up to it - to be the very opposite. (On the metaphysical level, then, this unreality proceeds from the idea of identity between Justice and Chance, as posited by Hamsun here toward the end of the play and represented through the strange figure of Thy.) The same kind of unreal moment is created by the fire in KARENO's tower. This event, to be sure, is not an accident, yet at the moment when we see it happening, it is bound to strike us with amazement - only to make us realize the next moment (when we think back to the basic data present, so to say, from the early stages of the play) that we "knew" that EXACTLY THIS was going to happen ... "Total chance" vs. "total inevitability", and "total surprise" vs. "total expectedness" are, then, the two components of magic simultaneity, constituting the fantastic-dramatic quality of, respectively, the shot and the fire in the tower.

e. Distance Factors and the creation of dramatic force fields.

The special factor to be isolated and identified in this concluding section was negatively implied in the treatment of contrapuntal intrusion effects. The latter were characterized by mental separation from the sphere of the main action - or, as we may appropriately term it here, the center of action. Given the absence of dialogic connection between the intrusion source and the center of action, the attention of the spectator was said to become divided between the two, as shown in the diagram below.

It was further pointed out how the involvement of the intruding element in the dialogue would rule out the special contrapuntal effect of the intrusion. Through the establishment
of an explicit, i.e. dialogically manifested, observational contact between the action center and the intrusion source, the latter is set up as a (postulated) second center of action, as pictured in the following diagram:

(The dotted line indicates the potential simultaneous observational contact between the spectator and Action Center II - the actual existence of which depends, of course, on whether the latter is visible both to the actors and himself, or only to the actors.)

The direction - apparent to the spectator through the dialogue, gestures, etc. - of all observational efforts of the actors towards the, more or less remote, Center II brings the latter dramatically into the main action: establishing, as it were, a dramatic force field between the immediate stage area and this distant object of observation. The spectator, by participating in the mental concentration of the actors on Center II, becomes immediately involved in this dramatic force field; thus to him, the action now comes to comprise the entire force field, enabling him to project himself into two different realms of stage reality at the same time, one of which attracts his imagination, so to say, beyond the actual stage - instead of, as in the more conventional theatre experience, limiting him to the latter alone. Obviously, the participation in such an observational dramatic force field, while the actual dialogue is subjected, in large measure, to the creation and maintenance of observational suspense, will engage the senses and the imagination of the spectator on a far greater scale than
the rather passive involvement in, e.g., an ordinary, spatially self-contained dialogue between two characters on stage.

An examination, from this new angle, of the special elements and effects which we have studied here in Part B reveals a number of them to be significantly characterizable, within the general context of the play, through their intrinsic affinity with the idea of distance: i.e., to contain an immediate or potential distance factor, so as to make possible their use for the creation of a second center of action, as well as the resultant creation of an observational force field exploding the immediate confines of the stage. Re-stating, in these new terms, what was said earlier about e.g. the binoculars, we can now say that, through the observational function basic to precisely this kind of instrument, they become the very embodiment of the dramatic principle of force field creation per se. As for elements immediately suggestive of actual 'second centers' of action, the tower, and its location out on the headland, is an exemplary invention; and the use to which Hamsun puts it - i.e. by extending its inherent distance factor to the visual effects of the lamp and the fire, and placing it naturally within the whole shipwreck context - is sublimely melodramatic. The successful effect, from that same point of view, of the distress signals from the ship derives from the fact that the ship itself is not seen; thus the actual (postulated) event of the shipwreck, represented through the elementarily suggestive distress signals, comes to carry a far greater appeal to the spectator's imagination, intensifying further the force field between itself and Teresita-Jens Spir. Note that, as a second action center, the shipwreck is halfway mental, i.e. it is maintained as an action center only through the extension of the spectator's imagination beyond the representative perceivable point of the distress signals. An example of an exclusively mental action center is the plague, the gradual approach of which we hear about in the first two acts; these references to the approaching epidemic creates a subtle force field between the general action in this first half of the play and the supposed - and supposedly ever closer -
position reached by the fearful visitor advancing from the north. As in the case of observable second centers the binoculars could be seen as a fundamental embodiment of the principle of force field creation, so the role of telegrams/the telegraph can be seen in a similar way in relation to purely imaginary force fields, i.e. force fields whose second center is exclusively mental. A few years after Livets spil, Strindberg made brilliant, most thorough use of the telegraph element in his Dance of Death.

CONCLUSION.

My attempt to execute a more or less exhaustive critical survey of Livets spil was carried out, so to speak, in two installments: the first oriented predominantly in terms of an interpretative approach, the second in terms of an approach predominantly concerned with particular technical features of the play. Obviously, behind the use of such an explicitly bipartite procedure there is always the stated/unstated expectation that ultimately the two will come together: that in the end one will be able to return to the interpretation and see that the author's particular techniques, which one has discovered in the work, do indeed serve the "meaning" of the latter -- that, in fact, they constitute such an immediate expression of this meaning that the process of identifying and describing them becomes in itself another path to an interpretation of the work.

In concluding the previous, interpretative section of my survey I pointed to the real center -- the "point of gravity" -- of the play as lying outside the immediate sphere of the characters, in that realm -- the realm of "life" itself -- from whence their destinies are determined. In other words, Livets spil is a play about Fate -- the unpredictable, apparently random, yet minutely directional game which life the chessmaster plays with its human pawns: the unyielding directedness of which becomes clear only at the very end, when the events of the beginning have come full circle, and Karenos's arctic Tower
of Babel, that cognitional challenge with which he had originally "conjured the powers", is destroyed by Oterman - who in his turn has been nothing but the unknowing tool of the very forces that had been conjured up. The play, then, clearly possesses two different dimensions of reference: a surface dimension of singularly melodramatic events, plus a second, secret dimension which we perceive behind the first one: that of the mysterious, supra-human agency - the agency of "Fate" - of which these events are the external manifestation. It is precisely for that reason - because the events in the human, time-bound realm are basically manifestations of a hidden, transcendent realm - that the author had to fashion these events on such an extravagantly melodramatic scale that the basic fantasticality of the meeting between the two realities - the fantasticality of "Fate" - would automatically be conveyed by them. The apparent "melodrama" of Livets spil is a special, extremely stylized version of the dramatic: a vertiginously sophisticated, vertiginously primitive concretization, as it were, of the very idea of the dramatic. It is, then, not just "melodrama", but high melodrama; a tapestry of exaggeratedly formalized fantastic events, lucent with the light from its own hidden, supra-human energy sources. With the possible exception of the somewhat allegorical character of Thy, the play distinguishes itself most radically from a morality play through this very technique of indirectness: through the fact that these transcendent energy sources are formally totally absent from the play, i.e. their hidden presence has to be extrapolated from the fantastic quality of the events - and, especially, of the many non-personal elements and effects which fill the play, like a subsidiary, yet independent dimension of happening, with their murmuring, multicoloured flicker of dreamlike intrusions.

Through its subtle and complicated technique of suggesting, indirectly, a hidden, transcendent realm of influence behind its visible, objective realm of action, Livets spil came to join Mysteries as the only other work in which Hamsun succeeded in opening up, underneath a semi-secretly transparent floor of
action, those actual abysses of transcendent reality which had been heralded in his lectures on psychological literature and the subconscious of 1891. In *Mysteries*, the enigmatic recognitory projections, by Nagel, onto the reality surrounding him, of his own unconscious mind grow to ever larger proportions until finally, threatened by the fear of being engulfed by his unconscious, he takes the shortcut to annihilation through suicide. In *Livets spil*, the individual unconscious of *Mysteries* - the mystery of one individual's re-materializing "fate" - has been externalized, as it were, into a hidden region of collective destiny; the intellectual challenge posed to the latter and its accidental exposure, in the early stages of the play, are like the careless opening of a door through which the subsequent invasion of collective consciousness by the realm of the unconscious can take place. On the level of dramatic technique, the whispering, non-verbal language of the many intrusion elements masterfully echoes this invasion. It is indeed interesting that for seventy-five years *Livets spil* should so totally have escaped discovery; and it is even more interesting that its unmerited place in the shadow should have been shared, to a not inappreciable degree, by, precisely, *Mysteries*. To be sure, the latter has not been lacking a fairly respectable circulation over the years; but is has never achieved any genuine recognition, and it is only now in the process of being critically discovered. However, the fact that such a discovery is at last beginning to dawn for *Mysteries* leaves hope that one day it may also dawn for *Livets spil*; in literature, one may presume, it is never too late.

* The absence of any previous criticism within the particular area of Hamsun's drama is related in Ronald Popperwell's *A Hamsun bibliography* in the Spring 1970 issue of *SCANDINAVICA* (Univ. of Cambridge). The availability of this exhaustive bibliography, plus the fact that the present study has been carried out without any reliance on existing Hamsun criticism, accounts for the absence of a bibliography in the present context.
THE GAME OF LIFE
(1896)

A play in four acts

by

KNUD HAMSON

Translated from the Norwegian

by

SIMON GRABOWSKI
CHARACTERS

MR. OTERMAN

TERESITA, his daughter by his first marriage

GUSTAV

his sons by his second marriage

ELIAS

IVAR KARENO, candidate for a degree in philosophy, tutor

MRS. KARENO

JENS SPIR, telegraphist

THY

ENGINEER BREDE

A MAID

ACT ONE

(Landscape in the North with low mountains. A slate hillock to the right and in the center of the foreground blocks almost all the view, but a protruding high headland is seen somewhat further out to the left. In the immediate foreground a narrow road crossing the stage from right to left.) (Summer afternoon. Dull sunshine, casting practically no shadow.)

KARENO (is heard from the right): This is the place I thought of. (enters along the road and climbs up on to the slate hillock. He is 39 years old, and his hair is completely grey). This would be a good spot, I thought.

MR. OTERMAN (following him, stout, 60 years old, jovial): Oh, I see, - here (climbs after him on to the hillock and looks about him). Well, yes. Yes, of course, go right ahead and build your cabin here. You can have all the land you want.

KARENO: Thank you. You see, this is only a five minute walk from the house, so I can come here any time.

MR. OTERMAN: Perhaps you ought to clear the ground first?

KARENO: I have two men coming to take care of that.

MR. OTERMAN: This hill will have to go, you know....It's some kind of tower you want to build, isn't it?

KARENO: Yes. A round structure. I want to sit here and work.

MR. OTERMAN: Why does it have to be round?

KARENO: It's an experiment. I want to try to attract light from all angles. The dome will be all glass.

MR. OTERMAN (laughing): So you will be sitting in a sort of cheese ball.

KARENO: And in the winter I want to have a powerful reflector hanging inside the dome. I like lots of light.

MR. OTERMAN: What ideas you philosophers think up!

KARENO: My house is going to burn like a star here among the mountains.

MR. OTERMAN: And this is where you are going to sit and write your opus?

KARENO: Complete it. Finish it at last (dreaming). Oh, I've written such a lot already, great stacks. It has been a good year up here in the North.
MR. OTERMAN: And when you have finished the work?

KARENO: Then I hope to get somebody to print it.

MR. OTERMAN: Well, that shouldn't be difficult for you.

KARENO: I'm not so sure about that. I got someone to print the last one, but he would hardly do it again. He lost money.

MR. OTERMAN: The book didn't sell then?

KARENO: No. Professor Jerven attacked it.

MR. OTERMAN: Really? Is he your enemy?

KARENO: Yes, I am everybody's opponent.

MR. OTERMAN: But this time you will have a publisher, I'm sure. And if the worst comes to the worst you can always have it printed at your own expense.

KARENO: I can't afford that.

TERESITA (enters along the road from right, slender, 25 years old, dressed in black, although it is summer. She walks with her feet markedly turned out): Yes, this is the place. I helped him choose it. What do you think, Papa?

MR. OTERMAN: It's all right.

KARENO: I'm so grateful, your father is going to give me all the land I need.

MR. OTERMAN: I assure you, these rocks are yours. What do I need them for? (with a sweeping gesture). I'll let you have all you see, clear down to the ocean.... Aren't the quarrymen coming?

KARENO: They promised to come at once.

TERESITA: There were two men coming along behind me.

MR. OTERMAN: Well, well, Kareno, I'm glad that you are going to build your tower here with us. I am especially happy for my two little boys; you're a good tutor. And if their mother had been alive she would have said the same.

KARENO: I thank you for your great kindness.

MR. OTERMAN: If I can be of any help while you are building your tower I am at your disposal.

TERESITA: Why, yes, Papa, he needs both horses and men.

MR. OTERMAN: After all, the whole thing can be done in one day's work.
(A band of musicians in along the road from left; they salute and stop.)

MR. OTERMAN: Hello there...Ah (takes a coin out of his pocket and hands it to Teresita, who passes it on to First Violin, who is standing next to her).

DOUBLE-BASS (grey-bearded and old; bows): Thank you, Mr. Consul.

MR. OTERMAN (laughs heartily): No, I am not a consul. No more this year than last. Every year you call me consul.

DOUBLE-BASS (bows): Many thanks.

MR. OTERMAN: You're going North as usual?

DOUBLE-BASS: Yes, up North, from door to door. And then back here again for the fair.

MR. OTERMAN: But don't you know there's an epidemic in the North?

DOUBLE-BASS: No, we don't know that. What is there in the North?

TERESITA (to her father): He doesn't understand the word epidemic.

MR. OTERMAN: There's an infectious disease up north, nerve fever. People are dying by the hundreds.

DOUBLE-BASS: Yes, we know that.

MR. OTERMAN: And yet you are going. Do you have to?

DOUBLE-BASS: Oh yes, we have to. We have families back home, almost all of us.

MR. OTERMAN: Well, then, the Lord be with you. Goodbye.

DOUBLE-BASS: Many thanks for all your help (the band salute and exit right).

MR. OTERMAN: Oh yes, there are so many to help. So much need (looks at his watch). But what's happened to the quarrymen?

KARENO (to Teresita): Did you notice that it was the Double-bass who spoke for all of them. The First Violin had to keep silent. It's always like that.

TERESITA: The Double-bass was the oldest, I suppose.

KARENO: Yes, he was. He was also the oldest.

TERESITA: Papa, why didn't we get them to play a little?

MR. OTERMAN: Yes, dear child, why didn't you say anything about it? Well, they will be playing up by the houses soon (smiling). No, I had better go myself and tell those men to get a move on (down the hill and out to right).
KARENO: Miss Teresita, now I'll get my tower.

TERESITA (sits down by the road): Yes, now you'll get your tower. I think I'm looking forward to it being there in the winter more than anything else.

KARENO (sits down beside her): Why?

TERESITA: Because then it will give out such bright light. And I won't fail to fill your lamp every day.

KARENO: You will fill my lamp? And I'm not doing anything for you.

TERESITA: What are you looking at? (moves away a little).

KARENO: What's the matter, Miss Teresita?

TERESITA: You looked at me (composing herself). But then I suppose the result will be that you'll be sitting here in the tower day and night.

KARENO: No, I'll be coming home every night.

TERESITA: Then I'll meet you. Or maybe you don't want me to? But I will fill the lamp (suddenly). Kareno, I'm not happy today.

KARENO: No, I've noticed that. Has something unpleasant happened to you today?

TERESITA: No.

KARENO: And you who can toss your head so proudly.

TERESITA: But all that light you want to sit in isn't healthy I'm sure.

KARENO: It's a little experiment. There will be lenses high and low; I'm going to guide the light through a system of labyrinths.

TERESITA: Well, I don't understand that.

KARENO: Our eyes see all objects as round; I will try to see surfaces. It isn't impossible. I want to learn more, I want to find out everything and fix it in my mind (rises enraptured). Glass and light, I say; glass and light. I place some hope in that. Perhaps I could try by optical falsification to switch off my earthly cognition. It should be possible. I will incandesce my brain with light and perhaps transport myself to certain clear states of being (with emotion). Oh, how I want to get to the bottom of things.

TERESITA: Have you been like that long?

KARENO: What do you mean - like that?

TERESITA: Oh, I just said that.

KARENO: No, really, what do you mean?
TERESITA: You're like the moon (collects her thoughts). Well, what if it
doesn't work out? If you don't get to the bottom of things?

KARENO (sits down): I will try in many ways. I have other means to
resort to. I have paced back and forth in my room at home and wept and
thought it out...Miss Teresita, Goethe had more love for those who went
astray on their own paths than for those who kept to the route on other
peoples'.

TERESITA (abstractedly): Had he really?

KARENO: I have written my Sociology, now I am writing my Metaphysics.
And I do not tire, I am full of strength. I have brooded and spec-
culated; I know everything that human beings know. But I want to know
more.

TERESITA: Kareno, they say you are married.

KARENO (stares at her).

(Two quarrymen enter at this moment from right. They carry drills,
hammers, crow-bars, a fuse, powder, and water.)

FIRST QUARRYMAN (wearing a red woollen scarf): Is this the place?

KARENO: Oh, here they are (gets up). Yes, it is (climbs the hillock and
shows them). You will have to drill a hole here somewhere and blast
away this hillock.

FIRST QUARRYMAN: It's granite. We'll need two holes.

SECOND QUARRYMAN (a dark young man of great beauty): It's mica.

KARENO: Drill a hole for a start.

(First quarryman sits down and turns the drill; second quarryman
stands upright and hammers. At this moment the band strikes up off-
stage right. The hammering and the beat of the music become one.)

KARENO: Miss Teresita, now you've got your music after all (coming back to
her). Listen how the mountain echoes every beat. Now I conjure the
Powers. Oh, I have great things brewing.

TERESITA: I understand you better with music.

KARENO: What I want to do is so simple when you think about it. I want to
let myself be taught by the world of phenomena, I want to listen at
its door. Do you think that's so fantastic? If I succeed, then I
shall have seen more than human beings have ever seen.

TERESITA: Do you know what would be really great?

KARENO: What would be really great? Tell me.

TERESITA: It would be really great, if you achieved all that.
KARENO (animated): You see, Miss Teresita, our conceptions are in no way absolute. We give them a fixed foundation and then they're usable, they serve their purpose. Blows on a mining drill produce sound. Very well. But why shouldn't blows on a mining drill be capable of producing light? That depends on me. A person who is born blind will easily learn to distinguish between a die and a ball; but open his eyes, and he won't know which was the die and which was the ball. Well, then, I change my previous point of departure, I was born blind.

TERESITA (wearily): I'm not happy today.

KARENO (sits down): Why aren't you happy? Are you dissatisfied with me?

TERESITA: With you? No.

KARENO: You mustn't be sad.

TERESITA: Fancy that, a man who was born blind wouldn't know? He couldn't tell a ball from a die?

KARENO (rises): No. Isn't that remarkable? When he began to see, his whole point of view would have been changed: now things exhibit qualities foreign to his conception of them. You see, what I want to do is exactly the same thing: convey myself into a position where I see transformed realities. And so, since nothing is totally absolute, I may just as well raise the "chimera" to the throne, command it to exist as a fact, bestow validity upon it, crown it.

TERESITA: When you stand like that and speak you look as though you were flying away on a swan.

KARENO (smiles): I'll sit down (sits down). On a swan? On the contrary. I'm sitting on my old black horse who is stomping along at a trot. Its tail sweeps the ground.

TERESITA: You have something white on your elbow. Wait (takes out her handkerchief and brushes his sleeve).

KARENO: It must be rock dust. Thank you very much (dreaming). Add to this, that I may be able to shift the entire basis for my observation of time. What do I achieve by this? Great things. I am going to catapult my soul out to the shores of eternity. Yes (inspired by his own words, rises). If I could totally halt my stream of perception, time would disappear. If I could reduce the speed of my mental current only five times, I would turn my constructs upside down. Day and night would alternate every four minutes; the crops would be sown, would ripen and be harvested all in one moment. Suddenly I am confronted by my eightieth year and I die. But I die young. My independent center of cognition calculates my age and finds that it is fifteen years and ten days (stands for a moment silent, then sits down).

TERESITA: Kareno, they say you are married.

KARENO (after a brief pause): No, I am not married. Why do you ask?

TERESITA: That's what I've heard.
KARENO: I'm not married. Did Jens Spir tell you that? He tells you so many things. I was married once.

TERESITA: But your wife is still living.

KARENO (pensive): You ask twice in the same day if I am married, what does that mean? If only you knew how I wish you wouldn't ask again.

TERESITA: Just imagine, and then you die fifteen years old, you say. Wasn't that what you said?

KARENO: Your mind wanders so restlessly today, Miss Teresita.

TERESITA (suddenly gets up, moves away a few steps and comes back): I know something that you and Papa wouldn't like very much.

KARENO: Do you?

TERESITA: I cook an exquisite meal and give it to our dog.

KARENO: Well, your father would hardly punish you for that.

TERESITA: And then I invite a hungry young man to come and watch (brief pause).

KARENO: I don't know why you're telling me this (the music becomes louder).

TERESITA: I'm telling you because it was whispered in my ear. Why else would I say it? .... Listen, now the music is growing sweeter.

KARENO: To me it seems to be getting louder.

TERESITA: Now it is tender (throws herself down where she was sitting before).

(The music stops. The quarrymen stop hammering.)

FIRST QUARRYMAN (pulls the drill out and examines it; speaks down to KARENO): This is the softest rock I ever drilled.

KARENO (gets up and is about to answer).

TERESITA (uneasy): Was that wrong, too, the last thing I said?

KARENO: Was it wrong? No, not at all, Miss Teresita.

FIRST QUARRYMAN: It's as soft as clay.

KARENO: It's mica, didn't you say? (gets up on the hillock). Clay?

FIRST QUARRYMAN: Now I don't know what it is any more (waters the hole).

KARENO: Well, whatever it is. Drill away (climbs down again).

MR. OTERMAN (from right): Have the quarrymen come?

KARENO: They are drilling. The rock is remarkably soft.
FIRST QUARRYMAN: Almost like clay.

MR. OTERMAN (laughing): Like clay? (up onto the hillock in continued conversation with quarrymen).

KARENO (to TERESITA): Was it wrong, what you said? Perhaps I have hurt you somehow lately.

TERESITA: No, you have not. (While the quarrymen start hammering again, the music strikes up a new piece, this time further away. Hammering and beat of music become one.)

KARENO: Would you tell me what's the matter with you today?

TERESITA: No, no, no (looks at him). Do you want to know? (gets up). Anyway, there's nothing the matter with me.

KARENO: You used to be so gay.

TERESITA: Now the music could stop, I think.

KARENO: Miss Teresita, you wanted it yourself, didn't you?

TERESITA: I knew you would say that (vehemently). Well, now I don't want it any more, you see.

KARENO: I could go and tell the musicians.

TERESITA (imploring): No, don't go (changes). Well, all right, you don't have to stay here if you'd rather go.

KARENO: I don't understand you.

TERESITA: I don't understand myself (throws herself down again). But it's you I want to be with.

KARENO: Where did you get that notion?

MR. OTERMAN (coming towards them; laughing): It seems to be a bog I've given you, Kareno.

KARENO: A bog?

MR. OTERMAN: The drill sinks in deep with every stroke. Won't you come and look? (back to the quarrymen).

KARENO: Certainly (about to climb the hillock).

TERESITA (gets up): Forgive me.

KARENO: No, I have nothing to forgive you.

TERESITA: Wait a moment, there's another spot of white (brushes him with handkerchief). There. Now you can go.

KARENO (again about to climb the hillock).
TERESITA: Are you leaving now?

KARENO (looks at her): No (down again).

TERESITA: Now you're thinking something about me, aren't you.

KARENO: I think you are in a very restless mood.

TERESITA: I know that if I had the power to do something to make you happy, I would do it.

(THY, a very old man, has come in. Has come to a stop, standing erect, his cap in his hand.)

KARENO: Who is that?

TERESITA (turns around): That's Thy.

KARENO: What does he want?

TERESITA: And there is never anything but sunshine. Can you tell me why it doesn't rain any more?

KARENO: But it rained the day before yesterday.

TERESITA: No, it didn't.

KARENO: I assure you....

TERESITA: Well, let's not start a fight about that, too. I'd rather give in. It rained the day before yesterday (brief pause).

KARENO: I've seen you like this once before.

TERESITA: Day and date now. I'm sure you know.

KARENO: It was the first time I met you; the very first day. It was one year ago.

TERESITA: I hope you got a good impression of me.

KARENO: I don't think that's what you hope. You haven't even thought about it....What does that man want anyway? He doesn't leave.

TERESITA: That's Thy....Do you know why I want to be with you so much, Kareno?

KARENO: No.

TERESITA: Because you don't sin. No, you are not even aware that you have leave to sin.

KARENO: Well, I never...

TERESITA: And that's why I want to be with you.

KARENO (smiling): I've heard good ones like that from you before.
TERESITA: There's that man standing there. I won't say anything to him unless he speaks first (suddenly). Good day, Thy.

THY: Good day.

TERESITA: Do you want me to talk to you?

THY: No.

TERESITA: Where are you going this time?

THY: Far away.

TERESITA: Always barefoot. Aren't you cold?

THY: No.

TERESITA (turns to KARENO): Certain days are meted out to human beings for the dull suffering nobody knows the source of. Then the whole earth lies there staring at you with hostility.

KARENO (to THY): Do you want to speak to Mr. Oterman?

THY (does not answer).

TERESITA (determined): One question.

KARENO: Do you want that man to hear it?

TERESITA: Your wife—is she fair or dark?

KARENO: Miss Teresita!

TERESITA: Fair or dark?

KARENO: She was fair. I don't remember.

TERESITA: Very fair?

KARENO: Yes, very fair. She had a fair face.

TERESITA: But she isn't young any more?

KARENO: Yes she was also very young....Leave me alone.

(The music stops. The quarrymen stop hammering.)

MR. OTERMAN (comes): So. The hole is drilled now....But look, there's Thy. Good day, Thy.

THY: Good day.

MR. OTERMAN: Brisk and active, as usual. Wearing well.

THY: I can just drag myself around.
MR. OTERMAN: Yes, yes. But then you are an old man now, Thy (gets a coin out of his pocket and hands it to him).

KARENO (to TERESITA): He didn't thank him.

TERESITA (to herself): Imagine, the whole big, thick earth lies there and stares up at you with the most horrible hostility.

KARENO: Your father gives money to everybody. He is always giving.

MR. OTERMAN: Yes, yes, Thy, the Lord be with you.

THY: I have a message.

MR. OTERMAN (patronizingly): You have a message today, Thy? (calls to quarrymen). Right, put the charge in now and get it over with.

FIRST QUARRYMAN: We're just putting it in.

TERESITA: Papa! Kareno thinks you're so generous.

MR. OTERMAN (laughing): Really? You see, I'm not so rich that giving away a crown makes me poorer.

THY: I wanted to say something.

MR. OTERMAN: Did you? ....I have enough to make ends meet, and there are many who don't even have that. Now the fever is raging in the Korsfjord, there is incredible want among the people. I've sent some flour up north; but how far does that go! The pestilence is spreading, it visits house after house; children are dying. Any moment we may have it here.

TERESITA: Here?

MR. OTERMAN: It's coming south.

TERESITA: I will watch over you, Kareno.

MR. OTERMAN (puts his arm around her): You dear child (lets go of her). Tell me, Kareno, what would you advise me to do with my two little boys? Should they go into business?

KARENO: The one, yes. He is a real speculator. He finds sea birds' eggs and sells them in the kitchen.

MR. OTERMAN: That's Gustav.

KARENO: With the other one it's music and dreams of travelling.

MR. OTERMAN: That's Elias. He takes after his mother. I've thought of spending something on that boy, if I can afford it. Send him away from here. Teresita, you'll have to practise with him now and then.

TERESITA: Now ask Kareno what he would advise you to do with me.
MR. OTERMAN (smiles and chucks her under the chin): With you, you little troll? You belong in an institution. Ha ha. Yes, you do. To make a lady of you (embraces her). Oh, you'll see, somebody will come and take you away one day. Sadly enough.

FIRST QUARRYMAN (calls out): Watch out! Fire!

MR. OTERMAN: Oh, they're going to blast now. Off with you (leads TERESITA to the left).

THY: I have a message.

MR. OTERMAN: Oh, there's no time for that now. Make sure you get out of the way. Over here.

FIRST QUARRYMAN (calls out): Watch out there! Fire!

THY: I wanted to say something.

MR. OTERMAN (goes to him and leads him to right): Don't you see they're lighting a fuse! Are you crazy, man! Get away! (motions him away; hurries with TERESITA and KARENO out to left).

(First Quarryman moves away with signs of fear. Second Quarryman lights the fuse and walks calmly off. THY stands for a moment scowling humbly after MR. OTERMAN. MR. OTERMAN is heard calling out loudly from left: Look out, man! The fuse is smoking. THY slowly walks off-stage right: the charge goes off. White rocks roll away. The view is thrown open, at the back are seen low masses of rock, to the left a high neck of land and far out on the same side a glimpse of blue sea. To the right a few red cottages.)

(The music is heard playing far away.)

FIRST QUARRYMAN (confidently approaches the blasting-site and calls out): Come b-a-c-k!

SECOND QUARRYMAN (coming): It is white rock.

MR. OTERMAN (from right): Is it white rock?

KARENO (follows): Is it white rock?

FIRST QUARRYMAN: It is white rock. I think it is a rare kind of rock.

MR. OTERMAN: But Jesus Christ....?

SECOND QUARRYMAN (pokes with a crow-bar).

MR. OTERMAN: What is it?

SECOND QUARRYMAN: It's marble (puts down crow-bar).

KARENO: Marble?

FIRST QUARRYMAN: Just what I would have said. It's marble.
MR. OTERMAN: That's impossible. Look again, Håjer.

FIRST QUARRYMAN: Yes, look again, Håjer. Hurry up, will you.

SECOND QUARRYMAN (again pokes with crow-bar): It's marble (puts down crow-bar).

FIRST QUARRYMAN: That's what it is. It's marble, no question.

KARENO: Imagine, marble! (runs down to TERESITA, who has followed from right). Did you hear, it's marble. I will be building my tower on marble foundation (returning to the blasting-site).

TERESITA (follows): Marble?

FIRST QUARRYMAN: Yes. A thin layer of slate, and underneath pure, sheer marble.

KARENO: How strange it is! Quite a place to build on, isn't it....What happened to the man?

TERESITA: What man?

KARENO: The old man.

TERESITA: He left.

KARENO: Twice he tried to say something.

TERESITA: Papa, what was it Thy wanted to say?

MR. OTERMAN (thoughtfully): Yes, what did Thy want to say?

KARENO: He had a message.

MR. OTERMAN: A message (collects his thoughts): Oh, he always has. He is so old. Some people believe he is the wandering Jew. It was Thy you were asking about, wasn't it?

KARENO: Yes.

MR. OTERMAN: He was badly cheated in his youth, swindled out of everything he had. Since then he has been like this.

KARENO: What did he want from you?

MR. OTERMAN: I don't know....Some people call him Justice.

KARENO: Justice?

MR. OTERMAN: Yes. He's crazy....Well, I must go home and get some more work done (looks at his watch). It strikes me your tower will have to be moved elsewhere.

KARENO: Moved?

MR. OTERMAN: Since there's marble underneath. There may well be treasures around us.
KARENO: That's exactly why it should be built here. The thought makes me happy. I shall work well here, in these radiant surroundings....I was really struck to hear that that man is called Justice. I'm just writing my chapter on the wise Nemesis.

FIRST QUARRYMAN: Shall we carry on?

KARENO: Clear it away. Level the site.

(MR. OTERMAN goes down on to the road and out to right lost in thought. The quarrymen poke the ground with crow-bars.)

KARENO (down): For that very reason. Just because the site is so priceless....Have you noticed something peculiar about those two men, Miss Teresita?

TERESITA (follows): No.

KARENO: One of them talks, speaks for both, gives the warnings. The other remains silent and lights the fuse. It's also the other one who understands rock.

TERESITA: That's Højjer. He was once sentenced to hard labour.

KARENO: What?

TERESITA: That's where he learned stone-breaking.

KARENO: What was he sentenced for?

TERESITA: For rape....Do you know, I've just realized what's wrong with me today.

KARENO: What is it?

TERESITA: Jens Spir proposed to me (watches him).

KARENO: Did he really?

TERESITA: What do you say to that?

KARENO: Now I understand your restlessness the whole day.

TERESITA (smiles): You do, don't you? That's what's making me restless, you see (laughs). It's gone to my head.

KARENO: So I can congratulate you?

TERESITA: Well, what do you think I should do?

KARENO: It isn't settled?

TERESITA: No.

KARENO: Well, what can one say? Yes, I think so. That is, if you yourself....After all, an outsider can't very well....But I think so.
TERESITA: I wish you didn't.

KARENO: Don't misunderstand me. I can't have any opinion, can I?

TERESITA: Because I don't think I should.

KARENO: Well, then you shouldn't, should you. You shouldn't say yes, I mean.

TERESITA: If I say yes, that will be the end of it.

KARENO: You don't mean that.

TERESITA: And nobody will be sorry.

MR. OTERMAN (extremely pale and deeply affected, entering from right):

But this is marble (points).

KARENO: So?

MR. OTERMAN: There will be no cabin built here.

KARENO: But...you gave me the site. Clear down to the ocean, you said.

MR. OTERMAN: But it's marble, do you hear. I'll give you the headland out there. Build your tower there. I want everything around here examined; there may well be marble everywhere. God bless your soul, man.


MR. OTERMAN: Yes. Out among the breakers with the tower. There it will stand as a lighthouse for the ships (to SECOND QUARRYMAN, pointing). Make another hole here, Højer.

FIRST QUARRYMAN: Right away.

MR. OTERMAN: Because there may well be treasures worth a fortune here (goes down on to the road and out to right).

TERESITA: Did your joy collapse, Kareno?

KARENO: Did you notice, Miss Teresita, how pale he was? There were eels wriggling in his eyes.

TERESITA: Thy's eyes?

KARENO: No, your father's eyes. There were eels wriggling in them.

(The quarrymen start drilling.)

KARENO: Are you coming along to the new site?

TERESITA: No. I'm going home to Jens Spir.

KARENO: Oh yes, I forgot. I'm sorry (bids her goodbye and exits to the left).

SECOND QUARRYMAN (moving towards her).

TERESITA: I don't want to again, ever. Do you hear? (stamps her foot). Don't come again (out to right).

ACT TWO

(At Mr. Oterman's house. To the right a wide, stately flight of stone steps and part of the main building with windows. Scenery from first act, seen from another angle. On the headland a high, tower-like building has been constructed. Sea with skerries against which the waves are breaking.)

(Autumn and some snow. Distant roar of the sea. It is three o'clock in the afternoon. It is growing dark. Piano music is heard from the house.)

(Jens Spir, a 30 year old man with a beard, by the steps. He is smoking and listening to the music. Mr. Oterman enters quickly from right, walks past the steps and turns around the farthest corner of the house. In a little while he comes back.)

MR. OTERMAN: Rough sea today.

JENS SPIR: Storm.

MR. OTERMAN: Anything new on the line, Jens Spir? (Music stops).

JENS SPIR: Some ships wrecked up north last night.

TERESITA (out on the steps): Papa, your coffee is getting cold.

MR. OTERMAN: I'm busy. Where are the boys?

TERESITA: I don't know.

MR. OTERMAN: Now, if you had known, you could have told me where they are. I need them.

TERESITA: I'll look for them.

MR. OTERMAN: There is work everywhere and I have nobody to do it.

TERESITA: But Papa, you are making all the people leave.

MR. OTERMAN: Can we pay them? (to JENS SPIR). People get shameless, Jens Spir, they ask for raises, they bleed you to the last drop. And if they can't have it the way they want, they leave.
JENS SPIR: Your music was so beautiful, Miss Teresita.

TERESITA: Then I'll take the coffee to the office for you.

MR. OTERMAN: No, I don't have time to drink it.

JENS SPIR (to TERESITA): You wouldn't have seen Kareno? I'm looking for him with a telegram.

MR. OTERMAN (continues): And besides we can't afford this lordly life any longer.

TERESITA: Kareno is out in the tower.

MR. OTERMAN: I tell you, Teresita, you must not light the lamp before four o'clock this evening. You don't know, child, how much oil we burn every year (exit right, past the farthest corner of the main building).

TERESITA: Are you still looking for Kareno?

JENS SPIR: No.

TERESITA: No?

JENS SPIR (smiling): I'm standing here listening to your beautiful music of course.

TERESITA: Let me see the telegram once more.

JENS SPIR: I've sealed it.

TERESITA: Did it say Elina?

JENS SPIR: Yes.

TERESITA: Arriving tonight. Elina?

JENS SPIR: Yes, something like that.

TERESITA: You're right. That must be from his wife.

JENS SPIR: How would I know?

TERESITA: What time is it?

JENS SPIR: It's three o'clock.

TERESITA: It's three o'clock. In an hour she'll be here. Here with us (leans against the banister).

JENS SPIR: I told you this bit of news just to let you know in time, Miss Teresita.
TERESITA: Of course. And I didn't misunderstand you. Ha ha (GUSTAV and ELIAS in from left each with his snow shovel on his shoulder).

JENS SPIR: What have you been doing, boys?

GUSTAV: We keep the road to the tower open. The snow is blocking it all the time.

JENS SPIR: Was Kareno out there?

GUSTAV: Yes.

ELIAS: Yes, he was out there.

TERESITA: Papa has been asking for you. He's in the office. (GUSTAV and ELIAS put the shovels away and walk playing past the main building and exit right.)

TERESITA: Are you waiting for your beloved to say something, Jens Spir?

JENS SPIR: No.

TERESITA: I long for you when you're away. I want you badly.

JENS SPIR: It ought not to be true.

TERESITA: Why ought it not to be true?

JENS SPIR: You ought not to long for a man who knows so little that he loves you, Miss Teresita.

TERESITA: Do you think the ship will be here in half an hour?

JENS SPIR: Maybe. If nothing happens between now and then.

TERESITA (looks at him): What could happen?

JENS SPIR: No, what could happen?

TERESITA: The approach to land?

JENS SPIR: The approach to land is paved with disasters (pause).

TERESITA (laughs): What funny wrinkles you have in your face. Ha ha.

JENS SPIR: It's because of you that I have wrinkles.

TERESITA: You're so boring. You're just an ordinary human being. I'm tired of you.

JENS SPIR: But Kareno?

TERESITA: No, no, he is not of this world. Whenever I meet him I gaze fixedly at him and whisper YES. For I feel it's the moon that is coming to me and wants something.
JENS SPIR: Have you heard of Ishtar?

TERESITA: What?

JENS SPIR: I said Ishtar.

TERESITA (laughs again): God, do you look like some melancholy cat out of a fairy-tale?

JENS SPIR: That you could make into the proudest fool in the world.

TERESITA: You don't mean half of what you say.

JENS SPIR: No, I don't.

TERESITA: Why do you say it then?

JENS SPIR: That's my strategy.

TERESITA: And deep down you are filled with shamelessness towards me.

JENS SPIR: Yes.

TERESITA: That's your strategy, too?

JENS SPIR: No, that's my principle.

TERESITA: How well you answer for yourself. Ha ha.

JENS SPIR: You should know how it wears me out, too.

TERESITA (tired, looks into the air): Yes, yes, Jens Spir. It may well happen that you tire me out in the end, and that I give in to you. It's not impossible (turns towards him). But if you only knew how you disgust me.

JENS SPIR (makes a deep bow).

TERESITA: Why do you bow so deep?

JENS SPIR: To hide that I was laughing.

TERESITA: Did you laugh? (spitefully). At which of us?

JENS SPIR (smiles): You were not wrong, Miss.

TERESITA: There is Kareno (calls out). Kareno (KARENO from left).

JENS SPIR: I'm looking for you.

TERESITA: Have you come from the tower?

KARENO: Yes.

TERESITA: Have you finished out there for today?

KARENO: Yes.
TERESITA: He's finished out there for today.

JENS SPIR: You still believe in light and glass, Kareno?

KARENO: I don't believe in anything. But I have hopes of everything.

JENS SPIR: And keep your holy lamp burning.

KARENO: I've been working with great success lately. A few things have become clear to me. The night is my time.

JENS SPIR: What experiences do you have then? (takes the telegram out of his pocket).

KARENO: Night is what matters to me, every day I go around waiting for it. And when it finally comes, I sit down out there and speculate. Once in a while I manage to see farther than I have ever seen.

TERESITA: Are you expecting visitors?

KARENO: Visitors? Me? (smiles). What visitors would I be expecting here?

JENS SPIR (holds up the telegram).

KARENO: What's that?

TERESITA: That's for you.

KARENO: For me?

JENS SPIR (shows him): Sign here (hands him a pencil).

KARENO: Who in the world could that be from? ...Here, did you say?

JENS SPIR (shows him): Yes, sign here.

KARENO (signs): A telegram. Are you sure it's for me?

JENS SPIR: Maybe it's an appointment. You are being acknowledged.

KARENO: I expect no acknowledgement (signs).

JENS SPIR: What would you rather have? The ribbon or the cross? (exits laughing to right, waving the receipt).

TERESITA: Shall I read it to you?

KARENO: Yes, please. Oh no, thank you (laughs). It can't be all that bad (opens the telegram and reads).

TERESITA: Ribbon or cross?

KARENO (walks back and forth): Tonight? Can you tell me if it really says tonight?

TERESITA (reads): Tonight.
KARENO: Tonight (suddenly). There is a storm at sea today.

TERESITA: There always is in the fall.

KARENO: Especially outside here, it seems to me. Let it storm.

TERESITA: Yes, let it storm.

KARENO: It's going to be a dangerous night. Ships may be wrecked.

TERESITA: Why do you say that?

KARENO: Let ships be wrecked all right, I say.

TERESITA: You've turned so pale.

KARENO: Miss Teresita, I won't be home for any stranger who comes asking for me.

TERESITA: You won't?

KARENO: Listen out there (listens). Out there in the night.

TERESITA: It's the sea.

KARENO: Did you hear screams?

TERESITA: No.

KARENO (takes a few steps across the yard and listens bent forward; abruptly back): My lamp, Miss Teresita!

TERESITA: Your lamp? But you have finished in the tower for today?

KARENO: The mail boat is coming. It wouldn't do.

TERESITA: Let the mail boat come.

KARENO (disturbed): Can't you see it's getting dark? And that the sea is smashing over all the rocks?

TERESITA (up to him; close): Very well! You shall have your lamp.

KARENO (joyfully): Yes, thank you so much. But quickly, will you? There is not much time.

TERESITA: You shall have your lamp, I say (up the steps and into the house).

MR. OTERMAN (entering from where he went out): Are you there? I was just thinking about you, Kareno.

KARENO: Can I be of any assistance?

MR. OTERMAN: Yes, that's exactly what you can be, if you want to. You can do a bit of work for me. I can't cope with everything.
KARENO: What kind of work, Mr. Oterman?

MR. OTERMAN: All kinds of work, in the office, in the store, down at the jetty. You teach in the morning and have the whole afternoon free.

(THY has entered from left. He stands erect and serious, cap in hand.)

KARENO: There is a man standing over there.

MR. OTERMAN (turns): Thy...Are you here again?

THY: Yes.

MR. OTERMAN: Where do you come from?

THY: From the North.

MR. OTERMAN: Where the fever is?

THY: The fever is coming closer and closer.

MR. OTERMAN: What do you want?

THY: I have a message.

MR. OTERMAN: Always a message. Go inside, there's my cup of coffee in there for you (leads THY towards the steps).

THY: I want to say something.

MR. OTERMAN: Some other time (calls). Teresita, give my coffee to Thy (waves him off).

THY (up on the steps and into the house; scowls back).

MR. OTERMAN: There I saved my crown.

KARENO: He wanted to say something.

MR. OTERMAN: I haven't got time. I have to be everywhere. My servants have left and I can no longer afford help. It's getting too expensive for me.

KARENO: You're joking, Mr. Oterman. You with your riches.

MR. OTERMAN (shakes his head sadly): You don't know what you're saying.

KARENO: Didn't you sell the marble quarry for a vast sum of money?

MR. OTERMAN: Yes, but perhaps I could have got more for it. You're not counting what I've lost. Just think if I had waited till now.

KARENO (worried): No, listen to the sea.

MR. OTERMAN: And all these losses and daily expenses are ruining me. I am not exaggerating.
KARENO: I'm on pins and needles to get my lamp.

MR. OTERMAN: Are you going out to the tower tonight?

KARENO: Yes.

MR. OTERMAN: You spend more and more time out there. What's the good of it?

KARENO: I'm working on my treatise.

MR. OTERMAN: You write and write on masses of paper. It swells beyond all limits. Who is going to print it?

KARENO: You are, Mr. Oterman. You promised that.

MR. OTERMAN: I did?

KARENO: The day you found the marble.

MR. OTERMAN (laughs): God bless you. One says these things.

KARENO: Yes, you said it.

MR. OTERMAN: But one doesn't mean them.

KARENO: One doesn't mean them?

MR. OTERMAN (laughs): But it's impossible man, don't you see?

KARENO: I have three adult witnesses against you.

MR. OTERMAN: You have? Three witnesses? (changes). When will your work be finished?

KARENO: I don't know. In a few months.

MR. OTERMAN (pleading): But I assure you, you have to give me an extension. It involves a lot of money. What are you thinking of? There is no great hurry to get your work published. Let it mature within you for a few years. I advise you to for your own sake.

KARENO: It has matured within me for twenty years.

MR. OTERMAN: You are stripping me bare, all of you. You have no pity (stares towards left). Do you see those black dots there? Those are the quarrymen. Now they are coming home, now they've done a day's work out in my rocks, in my marble. Oh, they're a gang (hurries to meet the quarrymen).

TERESITA (down the steps): Haven't you left?

KARENO: Left, Miss Teresita? I'm waiting for the lamp.

TERESITA: It has been sent. Everything is in order.
KARENO: I'm waiting for it, I'm standing here waiting and waiting. Every minute is precious.

TERESITA: The lamp is out there. It will be lit any moment now.

KARENO: Who carried it?

TERESITA: Thy.

KARENO: Thy?

TERESITA: Justice.

KARENO (off, disappears around the farthest corner of the house).

(Voices are heard. TERESITA goes up the steps and into the house. Quarrymen with tools on their shoulders enter from left. Ahead of them MR. OTERMAN who walks and stops, walks and stops, talking.)

MR. OTERMAN: You're finding more and more, you're sniffing under every tuft and there is marble everywhere. How can you defend that?

FIRST QUARRYMAN: You'll have to talk to the engineer about that. He'll be right along.

MR. OTERMAN: In particular I forbid you, Hjöjer, to work so industriously all the time to fleece me. You have such keen eyes for looking down into the earth.

(The lamp is lit inside the house, its light shines out of the windows and illuminates the stage. Immediately after, frenzied piano music.)

MR. OTERMAN: Yes, my dear fellow, your eyes are all too keen. It was you who found the last vein.

SECOND QUARRYMAN: The engineer ordered me to look.

MR. OTERMAN: I have no dealings with the engineer.

THIRD QUARRYMAN: And we have none with you. (JENS SPIR enters from right and stands by the step.)

FIRST QUARRYMAN: It's true what he says. We have nothing to do with you.

MR. OTERMAN: Are you crazy, all of you?

FOURTH QUARRYMAN: We're not your workers.

MR. OTERMAN: Whose workers are you then?

FOURTH QUARRYMAN: The company's.

FIRST QUARRYMAN: That's correct. We are the company's workers.
MR. OTERMAN: You are on my books, almost all of you. What do you say to that? (changes). Don't you know old Oterman, my friends?

SOME QUARRYMEN: Well, yes, what is it you want us to do?

MR. OTERMAN (pulls some of them forward with him): What do I want you to do? Quarry a reasonable amount of marble and then don't find any more. Simply don't find any more--anywhere.

SOME QUARRYMEN (who have been listening): Well, I never....!

MR. OTERMAN (to everybody): I'll make it up to you. I don't have much, believe me; but a little money I will give you. I'll borrow some.

(Rising murmur and laughter.)

MR. OTERMAN: I'll cross out all the old debts.

FOURTH QUARRYMAN: As far as that's concerned I am not on your books.

MR. OTERMAN: I want my marble to myself.

VOICES: Here comes the engineer (all look to left).

MR. OTERMAN (swerves around): Nothing but losses on all sides. Cheats and swindlers every one of them (to Jens Spir). Isn't that true, Jens Spir.

VOICES: Now talk to the engineer.

MR. OTERMAN: I have nothing to talk to the engineer about (discovers the lamp is lit inside). Isn't there a light on inside already?

JENS SPIR: Yes.

MR. OTERMAN: Didn't I say we can't afford all this waste of oil! Four o'clock, I said. Not before four o'clock.

JENS SPIR: Miss Teresita is playing.

MR. OTERMAN: I shall turn off the lamp again (up the steps and into the house).

FOURTH QUARRYMAN: He didn't dare speak to the engineer.

THIRD QUARRYMAN: I think the devil has taken possession of him.

SOME QUARRYMEN (laughing): Yes, I think so, too.

SECOND QUARRYMAN: Remember he did a lot of good before.

ENGINEER BREDE (from left. He is small and hunch-backed; speaks in a feeble voice; dressed in fur-coat and yet is cold): Why have you stopped here?

FIRST QUARRYMAN: We've been talking with Mr. Oterman.
FOURTH QUARRYMAN: You wouldn't recognize him as the same man.

THIRD QUARRYMAN: Well, for my part, I just think the devil has taken possession of him.

ENGINEER BREDE: You don't need to have any thoughts at all about that (the lamp goes out in the house).

SOME QUARRYMEN: There, he has put the light out, for God's sake.

(Piano music stops. Dark stage. Roar from sea increases.)

ENGINEER BREDE'S VOICE: All right, move on (engineer and quarrymen exit right).

(Suddenly a blazing light goes on in the tower out on the headland. The glare is thrown all around. JENS SPIR turns and looks in direction of tower.)

(TERESITA comes down steps with a burning lantern and a pair of binoculars. JENS SPIR steps forward.)

TERESITA (starts): Who is that?

JENS SPIR: Me.

TERESITA: What do you want? I don't like you following me all the time.

JENS SPIR (smiles): I was standing here listening to your beautiful music again.

TERESITA: Yes, but I don't like it, you see.

JENS SPIR: Why are you carrying a lantern?

TERESITA: What's that to you? I don't want to sit in the dark in there.

JENS SPIR: Are you afraid tonight?

TERESITA: Afraid?

JENS SPIR (points to binoculars): What are those for?

TERESITA: Yes, don't you think I ought to explain to you about that? (looks through binoculars out towards tower). How merrily that light is shining over there.

JENS SPIR: Do you want to ask me how far the mail boat has come?

TERESITA: No....But how far has it come?

JENS SPIR: It's right offshore now.

TERESITA: Of course it's right offshore.

JENS SPIR: I met Thy down on the road.
TERESITA: I sent him with the lamp.

JENS SPIR: Yes, he carried the lamp that is now shining so brightly out there.

TERESITA (impatient): I'm standing here telling you that I sent Thy with the lamp.

JENS SPIR: Yes.

TERESITA: Yes? And so?

JENS SPIR: Nothing. I had a look into the lamp.

TERESITA: You had a look into it?

JENS SPIR: It was empty.

TERESITA (lowers the binoculars and holds the lantern up to his face): Was it empty, Jens Spir?

JENS SPIR (stares at her): No.

TERESITA (with binoculars to her eyes): I believe the light is fading.

JENS SPIR: Is the light fading?

TERESITA (hands him binoculars): It's sinking.

JENS SPIR (with binoculars to his eyes): He is lighting up the place for his wife's arrival.

TERESITA: Is it sinking?

JENS SPIR: Yes.

TERESITA (puts lantern down and leans against banister): Do you know what is so sad?

JENS SPIR: No? That Mrs. Kareno is coming?

TERESITA: That you are such a wicked soul.

JENS SPIR (with binoculars to his eyes): Now the lamp is going out.

TERESITA: Because just think, if you weren't, then I could have been a decent man's wife.

JENS SPIR (looks at her, smiling): You, Miss Teresita?

TERESITA (in a rage): Ha ha, you comb your red beard with a lead comb to blacken it.

JENS SPIR: Yes.

TERESITA: I saw you do it today.
JENS SPIR: Yes.
TERESITA: Yes, because the beard is the only thing on you that will turn red.
JENS SPIR: Now the lamp is flickering.
TERESITA (clasps her hands): Great God, it is Kareno I love. Now I'm thinking of him.
JENS SPIR (lowers binoculars and laughs).
JENS SPIR: I laugh to hide how sad I am.
TERESITA: Your human sadness moves me very little.
JENS SPIR: That makes no difference to me. It is not your pity I'm asking for.
TERESITA: Yes, what does make a difference to you? I have never seen you enthusiastic.
JENS SPIR (passionately): You, you yourself make a difference to me. Your stone eyes affect me, your protruding feet and your long hands. Whenever I see you coming, sin smoulders in me like dark-red roses. I want you, Teresita, I always want you (reaches out for her).
TERESITA (withdraws): I don't want to any more.
JENS SPIR: Yes, you want to. I shall ask you constantly.
TERESITA (stamps her foot): I never want to again.
JENS SPIR (smiles).
TERESITA: There you smiled your depraved smile again. Oh, that mouth of yours is an indecency in your face.
JENS SPIR: There, the lamp has gone out.
TERESITA: It has gone out? Now? (seizes binoculars and looks).
JENS SPIR: It is done.
TERESITA (throws the binoculars on the steps and resumes her former posture): I love someone who doesn't go after me and grab me. You're just a vermin on earth, Jens Spir, you are nothing more. You have taught me your horrible manners.
JENS SPIR: Which, by the way, you knew before.
TERESITA: Oh, no, that isn't true. I didn't know much before. I remember that. But you were a quick little creature.
JENS SPIR: And Kareno, he's the moon?

TERESITA: Yes, Kareno is like a green island that I come to and stay with.

JENS SPIR: A beautiful thought.

TERESITA: But now hear an even more beautiful one. I once dreamt about a big green flower and myself. I wish I had never awoken.

JENS SPIR: Sela (a siren is heard from the sea).

TERESITA: What is that?

JENS SPIR: A steamship signalling.

TERESITA: Are there steamships off here tonight?

JENS SPIR: So it seems.

TERESITA: Now you're standing there letting yourself be humiliated inch by inch. It does you good, you enjoy it (suddenly flies at him). Oh, I'm going to hit you (hits him across the chest).

JENS SPIR: Harder!

(Siren is heard again.)

TERESITA: It's sounding again?

JENS SPIR: And it still makes you wonder.

TERESITA: I hit you, Jens Spir.

JENS SPIR: You hit me with a flower.

(A shot is heard from the sea.)

TERESITA: What was that?

JENS SPIR: A distress-shot.

TERESITA: How it's seething out there. The steam-whistles and the shots and the storm. It's the twittering of demons.

(New whistlings, interrupted by shots.)

JENS SPIR: Tonight Kareno's lamp would have been useful if it hadn't gone out.

TERESITA: Was the lamp empty, Jens Spir?

JENS SPIR: No.

TERESITA: It was empty.

JENS SPIR: How daring of you to confess so many murders.
(Muted turmoil, tramping, voices. A streak of fire rises from the sea.)

TERESITA: What was that fire?

JENS SPIR: It was a rocket.

TERESITA: Do you think it's sheer disaster out there?

JENS SPIR: Most likely, yes.

TERESITA: There shall be no one between him and me. Bow, Jens Spir, bow deep to my deed.

JENS SPIR (bows deep and smiles).

TERESITA: Deeper! Disgracefully deep! I annihilate anyone who comes in our way. I love him, oh, I stand on tiptoe for him.

JENS SPIR: Listen! There are people running around here.

TERESITA: He must be here soon now.

JENS SPIR: Do you want to stay here?

TERESITA: I want to see him.

KARENO'S VOICE (distant): The lamp is going out. The ship....

TERESITA: There he is. It was his voice.

KARENO'S VOICE (closer): The lamp! The lamp!

JENS SPIR: Was the lamp empty, Miss Teresita?

KARENO (enters, breathless): The lamp is going out. I saw it going out and ran off.

TERESITA: It has gone out.

KARENO (turns around): Yes, it has gone out. It went out just now. There was something wrong with it.

TERESITA: It was empty.

KARENO: Was it empty? God help you, how terribly wrongly you have acted.

SECOND QUARRYMAN (from right with a lantern): Is Mr. Oterman here?

JENS SPIR: No.

TWO OTHER QUARRYMEN (also from right; one with a lantern): Where's Mr. Oterman?

JENS SPIR: In the office maybe.
SECOND QUARRYMAN: We must put out the boat.

KARENO: Yes, go out and rescue. May God reward you, go out immediately.

THE TWO OTHER QUARRYMEN: We have to have Mr. Oterman's boat.

KARENO: Take it! Take it! (runs around the corner of the building and calls). Mr. Oterman!

TERESITA (nods her head): He's going to save her.

ONE OF THE QUARRYMEN (to TERESITA): Your lamp is smoking.

TERESITA: Is it? Yes, let it smoke. I'll turn it up more (turns it up).

JENS SPIR: Here.

TERESITA (motioning towards the house): Come, let's go in there.

JENS SPIR (takes her lantern in his hand).

TERESITA: Ho-ho, let's go in there. A red cock is crowing inside me (up the steps followed by JENS SPIR).

KARENO'S VOICE: And then they have to have your boat (KARENO in extreme agitation from right, followed by MR. OTERMAN).

MR. OTERMAN: My boat? (to QUARRYMEN). What's going on?

(Shots from the sea.)

SECOND QUARRYMAN: There, you heard what's going on.

(Light streams out from the windows of the house. THY has come.)

MR. OTERMAN: My boat? Do you think it's that bad out there?

KARENO: Yes, yes, man. The ship is in distress, do you hear?

THY: The ship has run aground.

KARENO: It has run aground! Quick, boys! (drives the quarrymen past farthest corner of main building and out).

MR. OTERMAN (calls): Be careful with that boat, do you hear! (exit after them).

THY: Wait a moment. I wanted to... (stops and stands alone, tall, erect, cap in hand).
ACT THREE

(Market place on MR. OTERMAN's property; booths, tents, open stalls.)
(Tradesmen, common people of the sea, Lapps, Kvaens, men and women. Band of musicians from Act One. Quarrymen.)
(Afternoon in the winter. Moonlight and Northern Lights. Snow. Lanterns are burning. People are moving to and fro in the camp.)

A MERCHANT (at his booth): Any news today?
A CLOTHES-MERCHANT (outside his tent): No news as far as I know.
A MAN: The fever has come.
KARENO (strolling aimlessly around in the crowd): Has the fever come?
THE MAN: The market people brought it here; it started yesterday.
KARENO: Has anyone died?
THE MAN: Two have died.
THE MERCHANT (his hand at his side): For a whole year now I've been hearing about that fever. I'm not afraid of it any more.
A YOUNG BOY: I know a good cure for the fever.
A VOICE: What cure is that?
THE YOUNG BOY: You take to your feet and run for three days.
SEVERAL (laughing): Some run!
THE YOUNG BOY: Then you stop and catch your breath by a wall.
THE VOICE: By a ...?
THE YOUNG BOY: By a wall. And into that wall you drive a nail.
SEVERAL: A nail? What for?
THE YOUNG BOY: And on that nail you hang yourself (loud laughter in the crowd).
THE YOUNG BOY: That is my cure for the fever (more laughter).
A LAESTADIAN (holding up his finger): Don't joke about that, young man.
(The band of musicians start playing upstage.)
THE YOUNG BOY: Hey! (takes hold of a girl and starts dancing).
(Gaiety. Most of the crowd moves towards the music.)
THE MERCHANT: How's business?

THE CLOTHES-MERCHANT: Bad.

THE MERCHANT: I'm not complaining. If it keeps on like this I'll have to wire for more goods.

THE CLOTHES-MERCHANT: And bring them here on a special ship?

THE MERCHANT: Yes. On a special ship (into booth).

THE CLOTHES-MERCHANT: Ha ha. Who is going to believe him! (goes into tent).

(MRS. KARENO, a woman of 33 with light hair and beginning to grow plump, approaches from where band is playing. She is followed by TERESITA and JENS SPIR.)

MRS. KARENO: You disappeared, Ivar.

KARENO: I'm idling around here.

MRS. KARENO: Are you walking around thinking?

KARENO: It's so strange. These people here are my kin. My instinct recognizes them. I greeted a girl just now. She crossed her hands over her head and greeted me back. Then my Lapp blood beat toward her.

MRS. KARENO: Would you rather be alone?

KARENO: Yes.

MRS. KARENO: Come, let's go (turns back with the two others).

TERESITA (returning): Would you rather be alone?

KARENO: No.

TERESITA: Your wife is standing there looking at us.

KARENO: Now she has left....Listen, I followed you here to the market place. I knew you were here.

TERESITA (wondering): Did you follow me?

KARENO (after looking at her): Yes, your surprise was genuine. You think too well of me, Miss Teresita, you don't suspect me of anything. For instance, I might be thinking of you all the time, be full of madness for you, and you would not believe it.

TERESITA: No, I couldn't hope for that.

KARENO: We meet every day like two invisible beings, without blending. But I can't get away from you any more. Again and again you are in front of me. Who are you?
TERESITA (in awakening joy): Am I yours?

KARENO: I don't know, I don't know. No, you are not mine. How can you ask about that? Is it true that on that day last fall you would have sent the mail-boat to the bottom of the sea?

TERESITA: I don't know. All I thought of was you.

KARENO: You don't bat an eyelid. You do wrong in full view of God and feel no scruples about it.

TERESITA: I only feel one thing at a time.

KARENO: A red cock was crowing inside you, you said.

TERESITA: I didn't say it to you.

KARENO: No, I heard it later. Somebody told me. But I have never been able to forget that a red cock crowed inside you.

TERESITA: And then your wife arrived.

KARENO: Why do you say that?

TERESITA: When is she going away?

KARENO: I don't know. Oh, your beautiful, soft stole! (lifts her stole to his mouth).

TERESITA: You kiss my stole (pulls it to her and kisses the same place).

KARENO: What did you do just then?

TERESITA: Good or bad. I don't know. . . . Kareno.

KARENO: Yes?

TERESITA: What did I do?

KARENO: Yes?

TERESITA: I kissed you.

MRS. KARENO (with JENS SPIR): Would you rather we didn't disturb you?

KARENO: You're not disturbing us.

TERESITA: Yes, yes, you are disturbing us, Jens Spir.

JENS SPIR: It seems to me you could well show a little appreciation of my desire to be near you, Miss.

TERESITA: There, again you said something you didn't mean (after thinking it over). Well, I'll go with you (leaves with JENS SPIR).
**MRS. KARENO (looks after them):** God bless you, she has a man's hands.

**KARENO:** Who?

**MRS. KARENO:** No, what I wanted to say was: you've become so boring lately.

**KARENO:** Really.

**MRS. KARENO:** So lifeless. You weren't like that before.

**KARENO:** No, many things were different before.

**MRS. KARENO:** I don't know what's the matter with you (swirls away). But really you don't think I want to hang around here and be serious all the time.

**KARENO:** No, do as you like, Elina.

**MRS. KARENO:** Because I just don't feel like it (moves close to him and puts her arm in his).

**KARENO (frees himself):** No, not that.

**MRS. KARENO:** Not that either? Not even that? You know, I won't stand for this any longer.

**KARENO:** I just prefer to be alone, that's all.

**MRS. KARENO:** Perhaps you would really have been glad to see me go down that evening last fall when I came here?

**KARENO:** No, Elina. You were welcome. I was expecting you.

**MRS. KARENO:** And the first thing you asked about was what had happened to my open eyes. Ha ha.

**KARENO:** Yes, what happened to them? They were quite blue.

**MRS. KARENO (sings):** Tahitaho; that's the Charivari waltz (points after TERESITA and JENS SPIR). There they are coming back.

**KARENO:** Who are coming?

**MRS. KARENO:** She treads her shoes over....Oh God, what a dry stick you have become (swirls around). You bore me stiff with your transfigured soul.

**KARENO:** Why did you come then?

**MRS. KARENO:** No, that's too much. Are you asking why I came? To my lawfully wedded husband?

**KARENO:** Whom you have managed to live without for ten years.
MRS. KARENO (sings): Tahitaho; that's the Charivari waltz 'swirls around'.
I'm no longer the little farm girl, let me tell you. Goodbye (leaves between tables to the right).

(MR. OTERMAN from the same direction, thinner, in worn clothes. He picks something up from the ground and puts it into his pocket. Mumbles in an undertone.)

THE MERCHANT (in his doorway): Good day, Mr. Oterman.

MR. OTERMAN: I was just saying to myself that people get worse and worse about wasting things. I find fish-hooks and nails and buttons everywhere in the snow.

THE MERCHANT (his hand at his side): Do you really mean to say, Mr. Oterman, that we should start picking up things like that? In our modern times?

MR. OTERMAN (continuing): It's just as if everybody had become rich. As if they had chestfuls of goods and gold (to KARENO). Do you know where the boys are?

KARENO: By the merry-go-round.

MR. OTERMAN: I so often think about what I will have to leave them. I think about it day and night. For I have nothing.

THE CLOTHES-MERCHANT (in his door): Ha ha. Oh, there will be a little something left over, Mr. Oterman.

MR. OTERMAN: I keep a tutor for them. I pay for their education with great sacrifices. That's the only thing I can do.

TERESITA (with JENS SPIR): Did your wife leave?

KARENO: Yes.

MR. OTERMAN (continues): But how long will I be able to afford it? (to KARENO). I said, how long will I be able to afford to keep such an expensive tutor for them?

TERESITA (to KARENO): Are you coming with us?

KARENO: Yes (goes with TERESITA and JENS SPIR).

A MAN (coming): Can we find space for a sick woman?

MR. OTERMAN: At my house?

THE MAN: She fell sick on the boat. She's already delirious.

MR. OTERMAN: I haven't any room. People come and ask for rooms, they crowd in everywhere; but they don't pay their way.

THE MAN: It's the fever.
MR. OTERMAN: I don't see how I could do it, my good man (again finds something on the ground and puts it in his pocket).

THE MAN: You won't deny us that charity.

MR. OTERMAN: I don't want the fever in the house. Are you crazy?

THE MAN: We shall take her inside. You can't refuse (turns and walks quickly off).

(Music stops. More and more people appear. Laughter and loud gaiety.)

MR. OTERMAN: I can't refuse? Am I to keep a hospital for everybody?

A VOICE IN THE CROWD: Now the fever has broken out.

A YOUNG GIRL: The fever?

THE VOICE: There are two people lying in our boathouse.

ANOTHER VOICE: And two in ours (the gaiety fades).

A MAN (coming): What's going on?

THE OTHER VOICE: It's the fever.

THE LAESTADIAN (holding up his finger): It's God's punishment.

A DRUNK MAN: What is God's punishment? Eh? What is God's punishment?

A THIRD VOICE: Keep quiet, Aron.

THE DRUNK MAN: Hee hee. I only wanted to know what was God's ....what was God's punishment. Hee hee. (Band of musicians into foreground, greeting MR. OTERMAN.)

MR. OTERMAN: I haven't got anything for you any more. I haven't got anything. What do you want?

DOUBLE-BASS: We don't want anything, Mr. Consul, sir. We are playing.

MR. OTERMAN: Yes. You play and play and make lots of money; but what do I do? You'll have to pay rent this year.

DOUBLE-BASS: Rent? We're not staying on the premises.

MR. OTERMAN: No, you are not staying. That's exactly the smart thing about it. You have no expenses. But you're raking in money (out between booths to the right).

THE MERCHANT (his hand at his side): Ha ha. That man has completely lost his senses.

THE DRUNK MAN: Yes. Hee hee. Lost his senses....He's crazy (suddenly greeting the merchant very seriously and respectfully). I say he is crazy.
THE MERCHANT: He's shrinking daily. His riches have destroyed him.

THE DRUNK MAN: Yes. Hee hee. It's the damndest thing I've seen, the way his riches went and destroyed him (again greets the merchant). I say, it's the most...that it's the damndest....

(Gaiety increases again. The musicians breathe on their fingers and take up a position by merchant's booth.)

A VOICE: How many glasses have you had today, Aron? (Laughter from the crowd.)

THE DRUNK MAN: 'm? How many glasses? (greets merchant for the third time). I say, it's some of the damn-dest I .... (to a man who pulls at his sweater). Let go, will you. (Music plays.)

THE DRUNK MAN (sings with many gestures): Twelve-year-old girls and glasses full (starts dancing).

A SERIOUS MAN: Is that a way to behave where the fever is raging!

SEVERAL: You may say so. (Suddenly the drunk man falls down in the snow.)

THE SERIOUS MAN: So, no more pranks from you today, Aron (over to him, wanting to get him on his feet). Get up, do you hear (to crowd). He's blue in the face.

SEVERAL: What? (quickly over).

THE SERIOUS MAN: He must have had a stroke. (Several motion to band; music stops.)

THE SERIOUS MAN: Give a hand there, and let's get him inside. (The drunk man is carried away.)

THE LAESTADIAN (holding up his finger): God's knife struck him.

THE YOUNG GIRL: I'm sick. I feel cold.

OLDER WOMEN: Go home, child. Go home.

THE YOUNG GIRL: I can't. Help me. (The young girl is helped away.)

A BIBLE-PEDDLER (at his table): These are grave times. Come and buy the word of God (holds out pamphlets).

A MAN (points): Look how red the Northern Lights are growing.

SEVERAL (exclaim): As red as blood!

A WOMAN: Oh God! Oh God!

FIRST STONE-CUTTER: Oh no....! My watch has stopped?!

SECOND STONE-CUTTER: Has it stopped? (looks at his watch). It's five o'clock.
FIRST STONE-CUTTER (looks at his watch, shakes it, listens): I don't understand this. It worked all right up to now. It has stopped at five.

THE LAESTADIAN (holding up his finger): Think of the end.

THE WOMAN: Oh God! Oh God!

ANOTHER MAN: So many strange things are happening these days. In my parish a strange calf has been born.

A THIRD MAN (to a fourth): And didn't you hear a fly last night?

THE FOURTH MAN: Yes. I was lying for a long time listening to it. A fly in the middle of the winter.

THE THIRD MAN (to the second): What was the calf like?

THE WOMAN (cries out): Be quiet! Don't say it! (other women surround her and lead her aside).

ONE OF THE WOMEN: Be quiet. She's pregnant.

A FIFTH MAN: I met a man at the wharf.

SEVERAL (crowding around him): A man? What about him?

FIFTH MAN: His feet were not like human feet. They were club-feet.

SEVERAL: Both of them?

FIFTH MAN: Both.

A KVAEN (cries out to heaven): Jumala!

ONE (to fifth man): Didn't you talk to him?

FIFTH MAN: I greeted him but he didn't answer. He was holding his cap in his hand.

ANOTHER: What happened to him?

FIFTH MAN (who has turned around): There he stands (points to THY).

(THY has on his feet a pair of fantastic shoes with heels forward and toes back. He is holding his cap in his hand.)

SEVERAL (drawing back): God save us!

A LAPP (crosses his hands over his head and calls out): Ibmel! Ibmel!

A MAN: Who is that?

SKIPPER REJERSEN (old, in high sea boots): Do you know him?

A FISHERMAN: No.
A WOMAN (dressed in a man's sweater): I don't know him either.

SCATTERED VOICES: Me neither.

THE BIBLE-PEDDLER: Methinks I recognize him.

THE LAESTADIAN (holding up his finger): It is Thy. Justice.

A FATHER (to his son): Come and say a prayer with me.

THE SON: I only know the fisherman's prayer.

THE FATHER: Come and say the fisherman's prayer (leaves with son).

THE MAN (to THY): Why do you go around with shoes like that?

THY: Do you know me?

THE MAN: No.

THY (to another): Do you know me?

THE OTHER: No. I don't know you either.

THY: You all know me and shun me. When you see my tracks in the snow you turn around and walk the other way.

SEVERAL (in dread): Look at his shoes.

THY: When I walked north you walked south. For twenty years you have avoided me. Now I have caught you.

AN OLD WOMAN (pleading): Come and pray for us.

THY: I have a message. (A shot booms.)

LAPPS (cross their hands over their heads): Ibmel! Ibmel!

WOMEN: What was that?

THE OLD WOMAN: Jesus Christ!

SECOND STONE-CUTTER: It was only blasting over at the quarry.

THE LAESTADIAN (holding up his finger): Don't joke about it, young man.

SECOND STONE-CUTTER (taken aback): Did you ever hear such a fool! It was only blasting, I say.

THE OLD MAN (in ecstasy): You shall pray for us. This way (leads THY away).

THY: But....? There was something I wanted to....?

(THY is led away. Most of the people follow him; TERESITA, JENS SPIR and KARENO stay back. Further away a few scattered people are seen walking between booths and tents.)
THE KVAEN (calls out to heaven): Júmala! (rushes after the crowd).

KARENO: What's going on here? People keep shouting God in all kinds of languages.

JENS SPIR: It's the symphony of cheeses.

TERESITA: Are you going, Jens Spir?

JENS SPIR: Yes, you are right about that. I really have station duty. I hope you'll excuse me (takes his leave and goes out right).

KARENO: This is getting impossible for me. You are tearing me away and disturbing all my peace.

TERESITA (quietly): Yes, you have also disturbed mine.

KARENO: I don't work any more, I'm not getting my chapter about Justice completed because I keep thinking of you. The tower stands empty, my life's work is crumbling.

TERESITA: Does that trouble you?

KARENO (takes hold of her stole): No, no. It's sweet.

TERESITA: I never thought I would see this day.

KARENO: Teresita!

TERESITA: Yes?

KARENO: Your name alone bubbles through me. It rustles like a silken banner.

TERESITA: Yes, when you are calling me.

KARENO: Teresita!

TERESITA: Yes? What do you want? (throws her arms around his neck). Oh no, wait a little, I want to kneel. Yes, yes, don't say anything, I want to be yours completely (kneels). Do you love me now?

KARENO: Yes (lifts her up).

TERESITA (against his shoulder): Say it again. Say it all the time.

KARENO: Why did you kneel?

TERESITA: I was obeying someone.

KARENO: You were like a snake, why were you like that? You lifted your head and arched your back. I have to see your wondrously strong neck.

TERESITA: I have been wringing my hands for you, Kareno. I have been standing in my room staring at the wall and listening for you....Breathe on me.
KARENO (breathes on her).

TERESITA: More. It's like starlight. I'm lifted soundlessly from the earth. (More people are seen in the camp again.)

KARENO (embraces her suddenly): Come, let us go.

TERESITA: Go?

KARENO: Are we to stand here among all these people?

TERESITA: Where do you want to take me?

KARENO: There (points to the right). Home.

TERESITA (after a moment's consideration): Where your wife is (slowly walks away from him).


TERESITA (turns around): Is she leaving tonight? (slowly walks out to the right).

KARENO (stands for a moment considering, then hurries out across market place).

A MAN: The wind is rising.

ANOTHER MAN: The night's getting cold and windy. The Northern Lights are getting jagged.

THE MAN: There's a ring around the moon.

JENS SPIR (from right with a telegram in his hand): Skipper Rejersen, yacht Southern Star.

THE OTHER MAN: He's not here.

A THIRD MAN: He's in the prayer-house. I'll go and fetch him (out to right).

A DUBIOUS-LOOKING WOMAN (from right in thick red veil): Is that for me?

JENS SPIR: The telegram? No. Are you expecting something?

THE DUBIOUS-LOOKING WOMAN: Yes. I'm expecting a telegram from some Brazilian diamond merchant or other with glowing eyes.

JENS SPIR: Oh. Who are you?

THE DUBIOUS-LOOKING WOMAN: My name is Mora; Tahitaho...And who are you?

JENS SPIR: Are you making the rounds of the market?

THE DUBIOUS-LOOKING WOMAN: Of course. I'm amusing myself.

JENS SPIR: Have you come from the prayer-house?
THE DUBIOUS-LOOKING WOMAN: Ha ha. My poor wordly heart....Is there anything else you want to know, Mr. Jens Spir?

JENS SPIR: Do you know me?

THE DUBIOUS-LOOKING WOMAN: You have eyes like a will-o'-the-wisp.

JENS SPIR: Where are you going?

THE DUBIOUS-LOOKING WOMAN: Wherever you want.

JENS SPIR (starts): You can always talk. With that thick veil over your face.

THE DUBIOUS-LOOKING WOMAN (with a passionate gesture tears veil off her hat, stares at JENS SPIR for a moment and pockets veil as she goes out to right).

JENS SPIR: Mrs. Kareno! (MR. OTERMAN in conversation with ENGINEER BREDE in from left, followed by quarrymen in smocks with tooi, or shoulders.)

MR. OTERMAN: It's not that it is marble; but that you find it. You keep on finding it. You aren't leaving me enough marble for a single step.

ENGINEER BREDE: I have no instructions from the company to leave you any steps.

MR. OTERMAN: But we could come to some agreement about it. I'll make it worth your while.

ENGINEER BREDE (to the quarrymen): In any event, I call you as witnesses to Mr. Oterman's words. You heard them?

FIRST QUARRYMAN: Yes.

(ENGINEER BREDE coldly lifts his hat and goes out to right, followed by quarrymen.)

MR. OTERMAN: It's my marble.

THE BIBLE-PEDDLER (with pamphlets in his hands): Come and buy the word of God.

MR. OTERMAN: Me? Can I afford to buy anything? A man who has been cheated.

THE BIBLE-PEDDLER: Here are words from the Bible for every day of the year. Here is Nelly the Negro woman or the flower of Sumatra. Here is The Quiet Comforter.

MR. OTERMAN (shakes his head): I can't.

THE BIBLE-PEDDLER (disgusted): You can't? With all your money?
MR. OTERMAN: May God forgive you for what you say. I have lost everything.

THE BIBLE-PEDDLER: Then I will make you a gift of this book.

MR. OTERMAN (greedily grabbing it): Thank you (pockets the book).

Bystanders: He accepts it. He has no shame.

THE BIBLE-PEDDLER: And may it be a blessing unto you.

MR. OTERMAN: These people are rich every one of them, Jens Spir. They make money beyond belief.

JENS SPIR: I met your daughter. She was ill.

MR. OTERMAN: Is Teresita ill? (looks around on the ground and now and then puts something in his pocket).

JENS SPIR: I believe she's got the fever. She was shivering when she went home.

SKIPPER REJERSEN (followed by several others from right): Skipper Rejersen, yacht Southern Star.

JENS SPIR (delivers the telegram to him and points): Sign here (to MR. OTERMAN). As I said, your daughter is ill.

MR. OTERMAN: What do you want me to do, Jens Spir? (continues searching further up the market-place).

JENS SPIR (abruptly seizes receipt and goes after MR. OTERMAN).

A MAN: What news, skipper?

SKIPPER REJERSEN (having finally opened telegram): Sailing orders. They are fishing cod in the strait.

(KARENO and MRS. KARENO from right.)

KARENO: As I was saying, it was good I found you at once. You must leave, Elina.

MRS. KARENO: But I'm not the least afraid of the fever, do you hear.

KARENO: It goes from man to man. I can't allow you to stay here any longer.

THE MAN: What time do you sail, skipper?

SKIPPER REJERSEN: Tonight.

THE MAN: You couldn't get a better wind. Right behind you.

SKIPPER REJERSEN: But it gets stiff towards night (looks up into the air).

KARENO (to SKIPPER REJERSEN): Where are you sailing?
SKIPPER REJERSEN: South.

(KARENO draws SKIPPER REJERSEN aside and talks to him.)

A MAID (bare-headed and with a white kitchen apron quickly in from right):
Is Mr. Oterman here? (catches sight of him). Mr. Oterman, Miss Teresita is ill.

KARENO (with a start): Teresita?

MR. OTERMAN (followed by JENS SPIR): Is it the fever?

THE MAID: Yes. She wants the doctor.

MR. OTERMAN: What? I have nobody here to fetch the doctor.

THE MAID: I could talk to some of the quarrymen.

MR. OTERMAN (to JENS SPIR): Perhaps you think it's a small expense to send a boat for the doctor (to maid). You have to bargain with them, do you understand. They're a bunch of bastards when it comes to charging for things (goes on searching through the market-place).

(Maid hurries out to right.)

KARENO: I have spoken to that man, Elina. You can go with him.

MRS. KARENO (with an expression of disappointment): With that old fellow?

SKIPPER REJERSEN: But we have to leave soon. Be on the wharf in an hour (exit across market-place).

KARENO (feverishly): Right, go home and get ready (leads the unwilling MRS. KARENO out to the right).

MRS. KARENO'S VOICE: With that old fellow!

(More people have come. The musicians breathe on their fingers and again take up their positions.)

THE MERCHANT (in his door): It's no good, I'll have to send a wire.

THE CLOTHES-MERCHANT (in his door): For new goods?

MERCHAND: For a larger shipment of new goods (reenters booth).

THE CLOTHES-MERCHANT: He hasn't had one customer today (reenters tent).

MR. OTERMAN (to JENS SPIR, who is leaving): Are you going home, Jens Spir?

JENS SPIR: Yes.

MR. OTERMAN: Cancel that boat, will you.
JENS SPIR: Cancel it?

MR. OTERMAN: Yes. I think my daughter is getting better, thank God.

JENS SPIR: How do you know that?

MR. OTERMAN: I have thought about it. Oh, it's sheer ruin on all sides (up the market-place).

JENS SPIR (follows).

(Music starts playing quietly.)

A MAN (coming): Aron is dead.

SEVERAL: Is he dead? (motions to musicians who stop).

WOMEN: Oh God! Oh God!

THE SERIOUS MAN: There, you see how short life is.

THE LAESTADIAN (holding up his finger): The wages of sin is death. (Laments and murmurs.)

THE BIBLE-PEDDLER: These are serious times, people. Come and buy the word of God.

THE MAID (again in from right; calls): Mr. Oterman, none of the quarrymen wants to go for the doctor.

MR. OTERMAN (followed by JENS SPIR): They don't want to go?

MAID: No. They're afraid there'll be a storm coming up by nightfall.

MR. OTERMAN (with joy): A saving is a saving (to maid). Tell Teresita she'll get well tomorrow.

JENS SPIR (after thinking it over): Tell Teresita I am going.

MR. OTERMAN: You?

THE MERCHANT (out from booth with telegram in his hand): I have a telegram here. If you would send it immediately.

JENS SPIR (tears envelope open and reads): You aren't selling anything?

MERCHAND (his hand at his side): That's no concern of yours.

JENS SPIR (hands telegram back to him): You are asking your boss for the return fare?

MERCHAND (furious): Are you going to send the telegram?

JENS SPIR (throws telegram away): No. I have other things to do (to maid). Go home (buttons his coat, presses his hat down on his head and disappears across market-place).
MERCHANT (calls after JENS SPIR): You'll answer for this (picks telegram up and leaps into booth).

THE CLOTHES-MERCHANT (who has been standing in his door): Ha ha. Those were the new goods (in).

(The sound of cowbells, barking dogs and trampling as of many animals passes rapidly by.)

TERESITA (from right in unbuttoned dress and dishevelled hair; looks around her): Isn't he here?

SEVERAL: Who?

TERESITA: I don't want to get the fever; why do I have to? I was lying in my bed, but I got up again and came here. I want to be out here.

SEVERAL: What bells are those?

TERESITA: I did that. I let all the animals loose.

SEVERAL: Why?

TERESITA: Listen how the cows are running. Why is it so quiet here? Strike up, musicians; I have a crown here (finds a crown in her pocket and holds it up).

THE SERIOUS MAN: She has the fever.

TERESITA: Now life is roaring and the dogs are barking. No, strike up, musicians. I have my new love's month.

THE SERIOUS MAN: This is blasphemous.

AN OLD WOMAN (buttoning TERESITA's dress): Oh, isn't it a pity. It's Teresita Oterman.

THE LAESTADIAN (holds up his finger wanting to speak).

TERESITA: Tell him when he comes that I was here looking for him. Tell him that. I've been looking for twenty years (to LAESTADIAN). Oh, you God's slave, what do you think of me?

THE OLD WOMAN (takes off her shawl and puts it around TERESITA's shoulders): Let me help you (leads her away).

THE LAESTADIAN: Sin no more.

TERESITA (turns around): Sin no more? Oh, you God's slave, I do not sin, I'm obeying someone. I keep looking everywhere, day and night.

THE SERIOUS MAN: It must be her father she is talking about. Where is Mr. Oterman? (THY is standing downstage to the left.)
THE OLD WOMAN: Come now, child.

TERESITA: There is Thy. You shall have the crown (throws the coin to him and goes out to the right with the old woman).

(THY hurries forward, stumbles in his shoes and falls.)

THE SERIOUS MAN: Did you fall? (hands coin to THY and helps him on his feet).

SOME IN THE CROWD (standing on their toes): Who fell?

OTHERS: Justice.

ACT IV

(Same place as Act III, but without snow. Calm sea.)
(Late afternoon in the spring. Sunshine.)
(Maid at the window, cleaning panes on the outside. MR. OTERMAN enters from right, thinner and more poorly dressed, mumbling loudly to himself, searching around on the ground with his eyes.)

MR. OTERMAN (to himself): They keep finding more, every day they find more (stops and spreads his arms as though measuring). Great, white masses under the earth (walks). They aren't leaving me enough for a tabletop (catches sight of maid). I was just saying, you must not waste soap, you and the others.

MAID: No, we won't waste soap.

MR. OTERMAN: You must wash with water. Things get incredibly clean with just water.

MAID: I'll tell the young lady.

MR. OTERMAN: Is Teresita inside?

MAID: No, she went out with the engineer.

MR. OTERMAN: And then you must go and look for me now and then, when you think I've been gone too long.

MAID: Yes, we'll look for you.

MR. OTERMAN: Because you haven't been looking after me enough lately. I might fall ill, nobody knows.

MAID: No.
MR. OTERMAN: And then.... (looks around him) then one or other of those quarrymen might be lying in wait to get me.

MAID: Yes.

MR. OTERMAN: Because they're all robbers, those quarrymen, every one of them (to JENS SPIR who comes sauntering around the farthest corner of the building in somewhat worn clothes). Anything new on the line today, Jens Spir?

JENS SPIR: On what line?

MR. OTERMAN: The telegraph line.

JENS SPIR: You forget that I have been fired by the cable company.

MR. OTERMAN: Yes, that's true, you have been fired. What are you doing now?

JENS SPIR: Nothing. I don't work. One gets stupid and coarse from working.

MR. OTERMAN: You happy man, who can live all the same. I'm toiling.

JENS SPIR (to maid): Is Miss Teresita in?

THE MAID: No, she went out with the engineer.

MR. OTERMAN: I said, I'm toiling.

JENS SPIR: Each to his fancy (to KARENO, coming from right). Are you idling, like me?

KARENO: I'm idling.

JENS SPIR: And looking at humanity with all the indulgence it deserves.... So, Miss Teresita is out with the engineer?

MAID: Yes (closes window and polishes panes on the inside).

(KARENO turns and walks out.)

JENS SPIR: There, he's gone....One piece of news I have though (nods his head towards left, indicating). They've found a new vein over there,

MR. OTERMAN (spins around): A new vein again? Jens Spir, they don't stop, they find new veins every day. There is no end to it.

JENS SPIR: It was found this morning (leans against banister).

MR. OTERMAN: This morning, this morning. Another new vein (with small, disturbed steps out to right).

(TERESITA and ENGINEER BREDE from left. ENGINEER BREDE carries a pistol in his hand.)
ENGINEER BREDE (takes his hat off): Well, this is where I have to leave you, Miss.

TERESITA: Say that it makes you sad.

ENGINEER BREDE: It makes me desperate....Do you want to keep the pistol?

TERESITA: No, thank you.

ENGINEER BREDE: And I hope to see you soon (takes leave and turns back).

TERESITA (to JENS SPIR): If that is you standing there, I'd rather go back with the engineer.

JENS SPIR: It's not me. It was me once.

TERESITA: You're always harping on that. Why were you fired, Jens Spir?

JENS SPIR: Because I left the office one day last winter.

TERESITA: And fetched the doctor for me?

JENS SPIR: Yes.

TERESITA: Am I not kind to give you an opportunity to tell me that once more?

JENS SPIR: I thank you.

TERESITA (annoyed): But why did you do it? I didn't ask you to. And now I have to walk around here and look at your thin unemployed face all the time.

JENS SPIR: It pains me that I displease you.

TERESITA: You are getting more and more hollow-cheeked, your clothes are getting worn out.

JENS SPIR: But then I am also displaying myself here to earn your pity.

TERESITA: Tell some more lies. Why have you come here, did you say?

JENS SPIR (slowly): I have come here, Miss Teresita, to thank you for the meal your maid brought me this morning.

TERESITA: But you sent the food back, didn't you?

JENS SPIR: Yes, I sent it back.

TERESITA: And yet you thank me?

JENS SPIR: Yes, yet I thank you.

TERESITA (after some consideration): Well then, you have done it. Then what?
JENS SPIR: Do you intend to go on sending me food?

TERESITA: Do you intend to go on needing it?

JENS SPIR: Because in that case I would ask you to be good enough to stop.

TERESITA (laughing): I can't promise that I will do it again either, Jens Spir. You mustn't take that for granted. You have to look for a job again.

JENS SPIR: Thank you, that's all (walks away).

TERESITA (gazing after him): You're really priceless today. What would the consequences be if I sent you a bowl of soup this afternoon?

JENS SPIR (turns around): The consequences could be, Miss Teresita, that at some suitable moment I shall walk up to you and catch you by the wrist and hold two crowns out to you in a significant manner (stares at her for a moment, then walks slowly out to the right).

KARENO (from farthest corner of the building; nervously): Teresita?

TERESITA (passes her hand across her forehead).

KARENO: You were out. I've been looking for you. You have been with the engineer.

TERESITA: What did he mean by that? He talked about giving me two crowns in a significant manner?

KARENO: Who?

TERESITA: That's what he said. Can you understand it? (a light dawns upon her). Ah! (stamps on the ground). I'll do it (clenches her fists and walks around furiously). I'll do it (stops and calls). Nikoline.

THE MAID (opens window): Yes?

TERESITA: Take a bowl of soup to Jens Spir.

MAID: Yes (closes window).

TERESITA (calls in through the window and makes signs): A big bowl (turns around; with assumed mildness). Is that you, Kareno? What do you want?

KARENO: You have been out walking with the engineer again.

TERESITA: We've been shooting with a pistol.

KARENO: You spend so much time with him.

TERESITA: Yes, I'm beginning to love him. Is there anything else you want to know?
KARENO: I cannot...I'm no good at quarrelling with you. And I don't want to remonstrate with you any more. Just tell me, are you serious, Teresita?

TERESITA: God bless you, you touch me a little with your sincere questions.

KARENO (hurt): I don't want to touch you. I want to know the truth.

TERESITA: You weren't the one I hoped you were, Kareno. I've told you before. You are a human being like all the others, full of vulgar and ludicrous sin. I'm tired of you.

KARENO: But once, once you did love me?

TERESITA: Dear me, do you think I loved your Lapp face and your spindly legs? Alas, no, you are no beauty. But you were so quiet, I thought you were full of something from another world; for your face moved me. And then you disappointed me.

KARENO: In what way did I disappoint you? Didn't I speak of glass and light any longer?

TERESITA: Every evening you came and looked at me. Like this (looks askance at him). And that meant something. And I got tired of it.

KARENO: Then I will never look at you that way again.

TERESITA (shakes her head): Now it's too late.

KARENO (vehemently): But woman, what did you want from me then?

TERESITA: What did I want from you, Kareno? The rod bent in my hand when I stood before you.

KARENO: As it bends for the engineer now.

TERESITA: Yes.

KARENO: And what do you love in him?

TERESITA: His hump, maybe. God knows what my heart will love in him.

KARENO (catches her by the arm): Strike me in the face and call me yours still, do you hear.

TERESITA: How sad that you ask me to do that.

KARENO: Give me time and don't leave me, Teresita. Don't make it definite now. Wait till we see each other again.

TERESITA (with an expression of disgust): Is there anything else you want?

(The sun goes down.)

KARENO: No. Only that you should think it over once more.
TERESITA: Now the sun has gone down completely.

MR. OTERMAN (from farthest corner of the building, mumbling to himself; catches sight of KARENO): A new vein, Kareno. Another new vein. I was just walking here saying to myself that I have to talk to you.

(KARENO involuntarily stretches out a hand after her.)

MR. OTERMAN: The boys are growing up. They'll have to go their own ways hereafter. It's hard necessity that drives me; Kareno.

KARENO: The boys are sitting inside reading.

MR. OTERMAN: Are they? Well yes. You are their tutor. I am extremely satisfied with you.

KARENO: I thank you.

MR. OTERMAN: But I can't keep it up any longer. It's beyond my means.

KARENO: What are you trying to tell me, Mr. Oterman?

MR. OTERMAN: It grieves me. The boys are fond of you; but they'll have to do without a tutor from now on.

KARENO: Ah? You are giving me notice?

MR. OTERMAN: I'm ruined. They've found a new vein today.

KARENO (after a pause): All right, Mr. Oterman. I have been given notice (slowly out to right).

MR. OTERMAN (mumbles, searching around on the ground): They are after me. They're whispering behind my back and pointing at me. They mean harm (stops). White mountains under the earth (measures out wide with his arms). As big as this.

ENGINEER BREDE (from left, with pistol in his hand; greets OTERMAN without words).

MR. OTERMAN: A new vein today again, I hear?

ENGINEER BREDE: A side vein. A branch of the main vein.

MR. OTERMAN: It's all the same. It's my vein.

ENGINEER BREDE: You mean the company's.

MR. OTERMAN: I need everybody's pity. I no longer have food to put in my mouth.

ENGINEER BREDE: Then you are truly to be pitied.

MR. OTERMAN: I thought I would turn to you. You can help me onto my feet again.
ENGINEER BREDE: If I can do that, nothing would please me more.

MR. OTERMAN (with joy): Yes, exactly, it would please you, wouldn't it? You will do it? You will help me onto my feet again?....Is it my daughter you are looking for? I'd like to see you going out with her a lot. Great girl; isn't she? (digs him in the ribs). What do you say, young man? Hee hee, you're quite a rogue, yes, you are (points up to the house). There you can see her window. That's where she lives. Just get to meet her some time or other, do you hear. Oh, you're a merry fellow, I can see.

ENGINEER BREDE (confused): Is Miss Teresita in?

MR. OTERMAN: Now I'll go and get her....Mr. Engineer, then you could save the new vein for me.

ENGINEER BREDE: How do you mean?

MR. OTERMAN: I'll pay you for it. We could share. Let the vein lie where it lies, shut away down in the ground.

ENGINEER BREDE: What you are suggesting is nothing less than a crime, don't you realize that?

MR. OTERMAN: I am a cheated man.

ENGINEER BREDE (continuing): And at the same time it's stupid.

MR. OTERMAN: Do you know another way then?

ENGINEER BREDE (coldly): No. I know no other way.

TERESITA (comes down the steps; with radiant joy): The sun set. The sun rose. (ENGINEER BREDE bows deeply.)

MR. OTERMAN: It is my marble (shuffles out again around farthest corner of the building repeating: It is my marble).

ENGINEER BREDE: Miss Oterman, I don't suppose you expected to see me again so soon.

TERESITA: No. You are giving me a new joy.

ENGINEER BREDE: Thank you for those words.

TERESITA (looks at him): Are you thankful for so little?

ENGINEER BREDE: It is a great deal for me. Don't you understand that?

TERESITA (sniffs): Do you feel the vapors from the ground?

ENGINEER BREDE (also sniffing): I can only smell stone from the quarry.

TERESITA: Are you already on your way home?

ENGINEER BREDE: No. I just became restless and went for a walk. Miss Oterman, you have done something to me today.
TERESITA: Miss Oterman always does something wrong.

ENGINEER BREDE: After what you were kind enough to tell me during our walk, I may perhaps dare to presume that I’m not completely indifferent in your eyes.

TERESITA (points towards the mountains): It's getting green out there.

ENGINEER BREDE (puts on his pince-nez and looks around him, bows): I see only you.

TERESITA: Do you want to come inside?

ENGINEER BREDE: Wouldn’t you rather shoot some more? Then I can talk to you better.

TERESITA: What are you looking at?

ENGINEER BREDE: I saw something beautiful. I saw your neck (bows).

TERESITA: Come, let’s shoot (goes with ENGINEER BREDE to the left).

KARENO (from right): One word! Have you thought it over? I can find no peace.

TERESITA: I have thought it over. Everything is finished.

(ENGINEER BREDE goes off to the left.)

KARENO: Finished for ever?

TERESITA: Yes (walks on).

KARENO (with both hands stretched out): Teresita!

TERESITA (turns around and stamps the ground): Miss Teresita! (goes after ENGINEER BREDE).

KARENO (stands for a moment looking after her; determined): Very well then! Miss Teresita! (repeatedly puts his hand to his forehead and paces about; stops at the window and calls): Boys!

(GUSTAV and ELIAS down the steps.)

KARENO: Dear boys, would you do me a favor?

BOTH: Why yes.

KARENO: Thank you so much.

GUSTAV: What shall we do?

KARENO: You’re to go out to the tower and tidy up. Sweep the floors and dust around a bit.

BOTH: Yes.
KARENO: Because I'm going to start working again.

ELIAS: That's great.

GUSTAV: Shall we go at once?

KARENO: Yes, please. Go at once. Here is the key (hands GUSTAV the key). But you must not touch any of the papers on the table.

BOTH: Oh, no.

KARENO: Thanks a lot, boys.

(GUSTAV and ELIAS run out past farthest corner of the building.)

MR. OTERMAN (in from right, mumbling; discovers KARENO): And then there was another thing, Kareno. In case you want to leave right away....

KARENO: I am not leaving right away.

MR. OTERMAN: The sooner the better. I beg you.

KARENO: From tomorrow I shall resume work on my book!

MR. OTERMAN: You will?

KARENO: And finish my chapter on Justice. It's going to be a chapter with teeth and nails.

MR. OTERMAN: But you have been given notice.

KARENO: Mr. Oterman, spare me from replying more clearly: I am completing my work.

(THY has come in. He is barefoot and stands with his cap in his hand.)

MR. OTERMAN: But that may take a long time?

KARENO: No, have no fear about that. Now it's going to be fast work, I'm going to put force into it. It's no use walking ahead, coaxing it along; the only thing to do is to walk behind using the long whip. Roll, roll, ball of yarn. I'll run the haft right into you.

MR. OTERMAN (to THY): Are you here again? I have nothing for you any more. Go away.

KARENO: I have a crown (hands a crown to THY).

MR. OTERMAN: But afterwards, Kareno? I'm thinking of that.

KARENO: Afterwards I'll be quiet. I'll sit at the end of the world and be silent while everybody else talks. I will listen to what they say and think about it and smile. For nothing will surprise me any more.

MR. OTERMAN: I meant, when you have written the tower full of paper....
KARENO: Then you are going to print it.

MR. OTERMAN: You never tire of repeating that joke.

KARENO (curtly): I do not wish to quarrel further with you. I have three adult witnesses against you (with erect figure walks out to right).

MR. OTERMAN: He has witnesses against me. Three adult witnesses (to THY). Did you hear that?

THY: Yes.

MR. OTERMAN: No mercy from anyone (approaches him). You got a crown, Thy.

THY: Yes.

MR. OTERMAN: I have given you many a crown in the old days. Now you give me one.

THY: Do you want a crown from me?

MR. OTERMAN: You stand before a ruined man.

THY (hands him the crown).

MR. OTERMAN: Thank you, Thy! You have done a good deed (pockets coin; talks to himself). He is going to start writing more tomorrow. He has three adult witnesses (out past farthest corner of the building, mumbling).

THY (scowls humbly after him).

(TERESITA and ENGINEER BREDE from left, TERESITA in front, fleeing.)

TERESITA (vehemently): No, I say. Don't speak to me any more. What in the world are you thinking of? Do you think you can be a lover? (looks him up and down).

ENGINEER BREDE: I think I can have a sincere love for you.

TERESITA (uneasy): But that wasn't what I sought; no, it wasn't (hard). How do you dare to kiss me on my neck, little runt!

JENS SPIR (with pale face from farthest corner of the building, makes straight for TERESITA, catches her by the wrist, stares at her and holds out a coin. With same hand points repeatedly up at TERESITA's window. Finally presses the coin into her hand, releases her and goes out the same way he came).

TERESITA (groaning): What?....What did he do?

ENGINEER BREDE: What did he do?

TERESITA: Two crowns? Wasn't it Jens Spir (suddenly runs up towards farthest corner of building and calls). Ah, it was for the soup? You don't have to pay so dearly for it. It was left over from yesterday; our dog didn't want it (back to ENGINEER BREDE, takes hold
of his arm). He just wanted to pay for some soup I sent him.

ENGINEER BREDE: And I just want to ask you to forgive me because down
there on the road I....

TERESITA: Do you think he heard what I called after him?

ENGINEER BREDE: It was my innermost fire that flared up. I couldn't
resist you.

TERESITA: Didn't I call him a dog?

ENGINEER BREDE: You stand here and talk about Mr. Spir and his two crowns
all the time.

TERESITA: Do I? (collects herself). Excuse me, did you want to tell me
something?

ENGINEER BREDE: Yes. I love you, Teresita.

TERESITA: Good day, Thy.

THY: Good day.

TERESITA: He was just paying me for some soup.

ENGINEER BREDE: I was just thinking how your father wanted me to conceal
the discovery of the new vein. But it's not feasible.

TERESITA (abstractedly): Isn't it?

ENGINEER BREDE: Another thing is that your father could open negotiations
for the re-purchase of the quarry.

TERESITA: Yes, I suppose that's another thing.

ENGINEER BREDE: And then I as supervisor would have it in my power to
describe the quarry as depleted, the marble as entirely exhausted.

TERESITA: What are you talking about?

ENGINEER BREDE: I'm telling you your father can get the quarry back for
a nominal sum.

TERESITA: Can he? That would make him happy, I am sure.

ENGINEER BREDE: But it doesn't make you happy?

TERESITA (looks at him): Oh, my dear man, go away!

ENGINEER BREDE: Teresita, you can't mean that. Do with me whatever you
want. Tell me what you demand of me.

TERESITA (takes the pistol): May I borrow this?

ENGINEER BREDE: Borrow it? I give it to you.
TERESITA: Is it loaded?

ENGINEER BREDE (pulls off a glove and examines pistol): There are two bullets left in it.

TERESITA: Thy! Take this pistol and go to Jens Spir with it. If he asks who sent it say it was I. Then he'll understand.

THY: Yes (takes pistol).

TERESITA: Wait a moment, Thy. Here is Jens Spir's money. He'll pay you himself (hands coin to THY).

(At the same moment the pistol goes off, a shot and a loud shriek are heard. TERESITA tumbles back towards steps, THY drops the pistol.)

ENGINEER BREDE: Did you fire, you crazy man? (runs around bewildered).

THY: It went off.

ENGINEER BREDE (calls out): Help!

JENS SPIR (runs quickly from farthest corner of the building): I thought I heard a shot?

ENGINEER BREDE: Yes, Miss Oterman.... It hit her.

JENS SPIR: Did you shoot her?

ENGINEER BREDE: No, it was him (points to THY): The pistol went off.

JENS SPIR: Him? (quickly examines TERESITA, takes her in his arms and carries her up the steps and inside).

ENGINEER BREDE: I'll send someone for the doctor (out to left).

(Suddenly flames shoot up from the tower out on the headland.)

MAID (from farthest corner of the building; disturbed); The tower's on fire. I saw him do it. It was Mr. Oterman. He locked the door real fast and set fire to it. I saw it. God have mercy on us.

THY: Teresita is dead.

MAID (looks blankly at him): No, I'm telling you I was out there. He asked us himself to look after him. Then he closed the door real fast and set the tower on fire. God help me, I dare not go inside.

THY: Teresita is dead.

MAID: What did you say? Is Teresita dead?

THY: The pistol went off.

MAID (screams): Is it true? (up the steps and into the house).
MR. OTERMAN (from farthest corner of the building as if fleeing from somebody, out of breath, talking loudly to himself): They were after me again. They were talking in loud voices in there. There were a lot of them, they were lying in wait for me (wipes off sweat). Who spoke? Nobody. Nobody, I say. I only thought so (looks towards tower where fire is growing). Now the opus is burning. Three witnesses, you say. Ho-ho, the papers are burning (wipes off sweat and again looks out towards tower). All that woodwork going to waste. I could have used it for something (catching sight of THY). Why are you standing here, Thy? Have you been listening?

JENS SPIR (down the steps): Mr. Oterman, your daughter is dead.

MR. OTERMAN: What are you saying?

JENS SPIR (leads him towards steps): Go inside and see.

MR. OTERMAN: Teresita, you say?

JENS SPIR: Go inside and see (leads him all the way up the steps and opens the door for him; back to THY again). So, it was you who fired the shot, Thy? Why did you fiddle with the gun?

THY: She gave it to me.

JENS SPIR: What were you supposed to do with it?

THY: I was to bring it.

JENS SPIR (looks at him): To me?

THY: Yes.

JENS SPIR (after a pause): So now you have delivered your message? You who always wanted to say something, did you get your opportunity today?

THY: The pistol went off.

JENS SPIR: Yes, of course....Are you the one they call Justice?

THY: Yes.

JENS SPIR: Yes, Justice is a blind animal, I know. It takes its revenge at random. Its pistol goes off (picks up pistol and examines it; to himself): There is still one bullet left (notices the fire in the tower). What's that?

THY: The tower is on fire.

JENS SPIR: Are you standing here watching the tower burn and not saying a word? (shrugs). Well, not that it makes any difference (suddenly). Do you know what justice is? It's something away there in the clouds. It watches patiently while people do wrong, and then it strikes them down and punishes them with death (again examines the pistol; to himself).
There is still one bullet left... In short, then, Thy, will you come and fetch this pistol from me tomorrow?

THY: Yes.

JENS SPIR: Did a smile cross your face? Did something give you joy?... Well, will you fetch the pistol?

THY: Yes.

JENS SPIR: You will find it in my room. You knock on the door; nobody answers; but you walk right in. The door is open.

THY: Yes.

JENS SPIR: And the pistol is lying in my hand (puts pistol in his pocket and walks off around the farthest corner of the building).

KARENO (from right): How fortunate that I should meet you, old man. I want to talk to you before I go on writing.

THY: Teresita is dead.

KARENO: Teresita? We won't mention her.

THY: She is dead.

KARENO: Dead?

THY: The shot hit her.

KARENO: I heard a shot. Did it hit her?

THY: Yes.

KARENO: Her of all people!

MR. OTERMAN (down the steps, disturbed): My daughter has been shot, Kareno.

KARENO: I've heard that. Man is at the mercy of higher laws.

MR. OTERMAN: She is dead.

KARENO (Notices flames from tower where fire is beginning to die down): Holy Heaven! Isn't there a fire out there?

THY: The tower is on fire.

KARENO (clasps his hands over his head): The tower is on fire! My papers! (stumbles bewildered up towards steps): My life's work is burning to ashes.

MR. OTERMAN (looks that way): All that glass. And all that wood.

KARENO: Is that heaven's punishment for my sin? Won't I get off cheaper?
MR. OTERMAN: My daughter has been shot.

KARENO (*jumps up*): Yes, and your sons burnt to death.

MR. OTERMAN: My sons? Where are Gustav and Elias?

KARENO: They were in the tower.

MR. OTERMAN (*stares at him for a moment*): Was it they who were speaking in the tower? (*Gives a piercing shriek as he runs out toward farthest corner of the building*). Elias!

KARENO: Wise Nemesis! (*with folded hands and head bowed low walks out to the right*).

THY (*is left standing alone in the middle of the yard, tall, erect, and with his cap in his hand*).