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Expressionist Playwrights from the Lost Generation: The Move Away from German Expressionism

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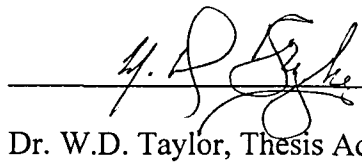
This thesis examines the use of Expressionism, and expressionist elements in the plays of four writers that were part of the Lost Generation. The thesis gives a brief history and definition of Expressionism. It also looks at the plays chronologically, and notes how the use of German Expressionism, present in the early works of Rice and Lawson, was discarded by the later authors in favor of the less-political elements of Expressionism that were originally developed by August Strindberg. Authors and plays include: Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine*, John Howard Lawson's *Roger Bloomer* and *Processional*, Thomas *Wolfe's Welcome to Our City* and *Mannerhouse*, and Djuna Barnes' *The Antiphon.*

I certify that I have read this thesis and find that, in scope and quality, it satisfies the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



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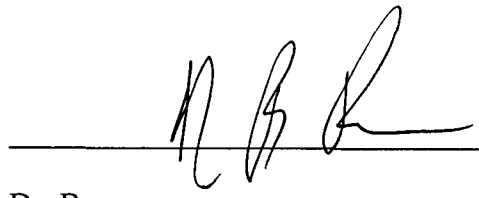

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Expressionist Playwrights from the Lost Generation: The Move Away from German Expressionism

By

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The Members of the Lost Generation produced a diverse body of literature, from novels and short stories to poetry and essays. One area of the Lost Generation's output that has never been examined are the plays that were created by the members of that expatriate community . The plays range from the well-known and oft performed, to the obscure and never-produced. Many of the best-known members of the Montparnasse environment have at least one play to their credit: Hemingway wrote his political *The Fifth Column*, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, who was a popular student playwright while at Princeton, wrote the little seen *The Vegetable or The Mailman.* Archibald MacLeish is primarily known as a playwright and a poet who, while living in Paris, wrote *Nobodaddy,* a biblical verse play that contains many of the elements that make his later play *J.B.* such a powerful work. Gertrude Stein wrote numerous plays, *including Yes is for A Very Young Man*, and *Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights.* Stein also wrote the librettos for two operas, *The Mother of Us All*, and *Four Saints in Three Acts.* All of Stein's staged works pushed the limits of what was considered theater. While these are some of the better-known figures of the Lost Generation, some of the most interesting plays from that period were written by some of the now lesser-known figures: Elmer Rice, John Howard Lawson, Thomas Wolfe and Djuna Barnes. These writers experimented with the genre of theater known as Expressionism.

Expressionism may be said to have been originated by August Strindberg (1849-1912) in his later, non-naturalistic plays. It was an artistic movement that was popular in pre- and post- World War I Germany, and was introduced in the United States through the early works of Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice and John Howard Lawson. Collectively these expatriates developed an American version of Expressionism while in Paris. Rice's

The Adding Machine became one of the best-known Expressionistic plays ever written. John Howard Lawson wrote two Expressionistic plays, *Roger Bloomer* and *Processional.* Thomas Wolfe, while known primarily for his quasi-autobiographical novels, originally determined to be a playwright. His final two plays, *Welcome to Our City* and *Mannerhouse*, both contain a myriad of Expressionistic elements. Djuna Barnes had several of her short plays produced by the Theater Guild before she moved to Paris. Later in her life, she wrote *The Antiphon*, a play with many Expressionistic elements that deals with incest and rape. This later Expressionism can be seen as not so much an Americanization of German Expressionism, although there are certainly Germanic elements in these plays, but rather as a return to the early Expressionism that is present in the works of Strindberg. This movement from the political to the personal in the writing of the expatriates parallels the development of Expressionism in the American theater in general. Expressionism was only fully in vogue in American theater for two or three years, while elements of Expressionism have been deftly integrated into some of the most timeless works of the American theater.

To understand Expressionism as a genre of playwriting, it is important to examine the genre that it developed from: naturalism. Prior to the naturalistic movement, theater was largely unrealistic. Naturalism changed that by daring to tell realistic stories, using actors that performed in a realistic manner (e.g. Stanislavsky and Chekov). Naturalism took up the nature side of the nature vs. nurture debate. Its believes that people are born a certain way, and that it is genetics, not upbringing and environment, that determines a person's course in life. Trends and genres in literature usually develop as a response to the status quo, and so Expressionism, with all of its symbolism and psychological undertones, takes up the nurture portion of the argument. It examines the upbringing and the experiences that shape a person's subconscious, rather than the theory that a person

was born a certain way.

Expressionism, as a genre of theater, has its beginnings in the later works of playwright August Strindberg. Strindberg is now remembered primarily for his naturalistic plays such as *Miss Julie*; however, he also wrote *To Damascus*, a work that is considered to be "the first expressionist play, where all the characters are emanations of a soul"(Furness 5) . He was fascinated with bringing the aura of the dream-vision to the stage, and his later plays, such as *The Ghost Sonata*, are a radical departure from his more naturalistic plays such as *Miss Julie*. Strindberg was concerned with the psychological processes and symbols behind dreams. In his introduction to *A Dream Play* Strindberg stated his goal as the following: "The author has. . . .attempted to imitate the inconsequent yet transparently logical shape of a dream. Everything can happen, everything is possible and probable"(xviv). This interest in a psychological, primarily Freudian and Jungian, basis for playwriting was added and expanded by members of the German Avant-Garde.

The Germans added an anarchist's sensibility to the work started by Strindberg, and so German Expressionism, while being rich in psychological content and theory, also had a much stronger political bent than that of Strindberg and the later American Expressionistic playwrights. While Strindberg attempted to show the dream-state on stage, the German Expressionists went beyond this to show the mechanization of humans in the post-industrial revolution society. German Expressionism was anti-materialistic, anti-establishment, anti-government, and pro-human. It was against anything that held humans back from reaching full individuality.

Expressionism is a genre of theater that "attempts to present an abstraction of life, to present its essence. . . He [the playwright] retains surface reality but alters it in many ways: the distortion of scenery, make-up, and physical and temporal elements; the

stylization of language and action" (Durham 40). Much of Expressionistic theory was based upon Freud's theory of the subconscious mind. Expressionistic drama often looked into the subconscious mind of its main characters as the motivation for their behavior. The abstract settings of Expressionistic plays would often symbolize inner-conflicts and gave insights into the subconscious mind of the main characters. There are also Jungian elements present in Expressionism, primarily in the archetypal character types.

It is difficult to give a simple definition of Expressionism because it covers so much of what is today taken for granted in plays. There is no set definition for Expressionism, but there seems to be a consensus of what makes a play Expressionistic: "In Expressionism there is an undeniable tendency away from the natural, the plausible and the normal towards the primitive, the abstract, the passionate and the shrill" (Furness 21). This is the overall tone of Expressionistic theater, a dream-like, primal, subconscious state reproduced on stage for all or part of the production. Playwrights would utilize different techniques to create this atmosphere. The settings of the productions "avoided reproducing the detail of naturalistic drama, and created only those starkly simplified images the theme called for" (Styan 4). "Curtains or screens for scenery are sometimes used to make a setting abstract. Hanging in folds, curtains suggest a plasticity but not realism" (Fulton 207). The settings are often symbolic of the subconscious of the main character(s)"A symbol being an object that stands for another object or an idea by suggestion rather than representation, symbolism in the drama is the use of a character, a situation, scenery or even lighting to suggest something else" (Fulton 206). To aid in the non-realistic settings, expressive and experimental lighting was often

used, as were set pieces of "bizarre shapes and sensational colours"(Styan 4).

In addition to symbolic and jarring settings, playwrights would shun the conventions of traditional storytelling. The poetics of Aristotle and the traditions of the well-made play were set aside for more scenes in a shorter period of time, to keep the audience for becoming comfortable with the subject matter.

> The plot and structure of the play tended to be disjointed and broken into episodes, incidents and tableaux, each making a point of its own. Instead of the dramatic conflict of the well-made play, the emphasis was on a sequence of dramatic statements made by the dreamer, usually the author himself. Styles of dialogue that were equally unsettling (Styan 4).

In his introduction to *Roger Bloomer,* Fulton likens the shifting of scenes in Expressionistic drama to "the fragments of colored glass in a kaleidoscope" (207). Expressionism shunned much of the predictability that is present in the usual stock plots of traditional plays. Because of their structure, Expressionistic plays lose the traditional dramatic build-up of rising action to climax present in naturalistic theater. This can make watching Expressionist plays an uncomfortable experience for many audience members.

The characters in Expressionistic drama are often symbolic archetypes rather than well-developed character studies. Often they were not given names at all, but were rather referred to by the type of character they were supposed to represent: "characters were stereotypes. . .rather than individual personalities, and represented social groups rather than particular people. In their impersonality, they could appear grotesque and unreal" (Styan 5). Some playwrights went to the extreme of having characters wear distorted masks to represent their characters. This is a technique that Djuna Barnes uses to great effect in *The Antiphon.*

With the unrealistic characterizations comes a highly stylized type of dialogue

and an over-the-top style of acting. The speech patterns utilized in expressionistic theater are intentionally non-realistic. The dialogue can be incredibly formal, or it can be rapid and clipped. Fulton calls this quick, clipped speech "telegraphic dialogue," and likens it to the short sentences in a telegram (206). Styan also remarks on this "telegraphese," and also states that "the dialogue, unlike conversation, was poetical, febrile, rhapsodic. At one time it might take the form of a long lyrical monologue, and at another, of staccato telegraphease - made up of phrases of one or two word explicatives" (5). Realistic dialogue between two or more characters is a rarity in expressionist plays.

To heighten the aura of unreality further, non-realistic acting techniques were developed to suit Expressionism. Realistic acting had only recently been developed, chiefly by Stanislavsky for use in Anton Chekov's plays. Realistic acting would have been far too limiting in portraying the Expressionistic vision of the human psyche: "In avoiding the detail of human behavior, a player might appear to be overacting, and adopting the broad, mechanical movements of a puppet. All of this lent a sense of burlesque to the image of life presented on the stage" (Styan 5).

Elmer Rice defined Expressionism in a letter to the Dramatic Editor of the *New York Times*. In this letter, Rice was discussing the parallels that the critic drew between *The Adding Machine* and several other plays of the time, including Lawson's *Roger Bloomer*:

> And upon reflection it struck me that what all these works have in common...is perhaps a method of attack. That is to say, they all attempt to go beyond mere representation and to arrive at interpretation. In each of them there is an element that can be called, I think, Metaphysical. The author attempts not so much to depict events faithfully as to convey to the spectator what seems to him their inner significance. To achieve this end

> the dramatist often finds it expedient to depart entirely from objective reality and to employ symbols, condensations and a dozen devices which, to the conservative, must seem arbitrarily fantastic. This, I suppose, is what is meant by Expressionism.

None of the playwrights of the Lost Generation considered themselves to be particularly lost, or as part of a larger artistic group. They have been labeled thus primarily because they were in the same place, Europe, specifically Paris, at roughly the same time. The sense of belonging and community vary, depending upon whom you read. The popular myth of the drunken expatriate, disillusioned after the horrors of the war, can be attributed mostly to the works of fiction that come from this time and place. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and Djuna Barnes fictionalized and popularized the exploits of the Lost Generation, and the essays of Malcolm Cowley gave insight to the experiences that motivated the fiction. For the majority of the expatiates, Europe was a place of cheap living and cheap drinking, a place with a more relaxed outlook on morality than the business-obsessed America that is reflected by Rice, Lawson and Wolfe. None of the writers became permanent residents of Paris; it was simply the place for an artist to be creative. It was The Place To Be.

The best-known of all these playwrights was Elmer Rice. Rice was born Elmer Leopold Reizenstein on September 28, 1892 in Manhattan. He wrote his first play in 1914, at age 22. It was called *The Trial*, and it was an instant success. *The Trial* was one of the first Broadway plays to make extensive use of the flashback (Sievers 146). Rice continued to make technical and stylistic innovations in his plays, but he didn't reach the level of notoriety that *The Trial* brought him until 1923, with the Theater Guild's production of *The Adding Machine.* The production folded after less than three months.

The Adding Machine, which produced by the Theater Guild, debuted in the 1923 Broadway season, was called by theater critic and historian John Braeman: "One of the best American expressionist plays--comparable to Eugene O'Neill's. . . *The Hairy Ape*"(Masterplots 6). The play was not well-received by the public or the majority of the critics, but has grown into one of the foremost examples of Expressionism in American theater.

The Adding Machine is the story of Mr. Zero, a man who has worked in the same company as a bookkeeper for the past 25 years. He lives in a shabby apartment with his domineering wife, who has recently made him turn in the prostitute that lives across the way from them. Watching the prostitute undress at night was Zero's one sexual pleasure in life. Scene two shows Zero with his assistant Daisy Diana Dorothea Devore. Both secretly love each other, but are too repressed to act on their feelings. Zero meets with his boss, thinking that he's going to get a promotion for 25 years of work. Instead, his boss fires him, and replaces him with an adding machine. Zero murders his boss by stabbing him with a bill file. In scene three, Zero returns home to a dinner party with his neighbors and co-workers, Mr. and Mrs. One through Six. At the conclusion of the dinner party, Zero is arrested for murder. Scene four is Zero's trial. Zero's testimony is a long, stream of consciousness monologue. He is found guilty by the jury and sentenced to death. In scene five (which was omitted from the original production but later restored)-Zero is locked in a cage and put on zoo-like display as " The North American Murderer". Scene six takes place after Zero's execution. The prostitute that he turned in comes to Zero's grave, and tries to convince her customer to have sex with her on it. Zero also meets Shrdlu, a corpse that murdered his mother and wishes to be punished for

his actions. Scene seven finds Zero and Shrdlu in Heaven/Elysian Fields. Zero finds Daisy, who committed suicide because of Zero's death, waiting for him. They tell each other of their love, kiss passionately and dance. Zero is shocked by the lack of what he believes to be morality in Elysian Fields, which is populated by, in Shrdlu's words, "drunkards, thieves, vagabonds, blasphemers, adulterers." (54) When Zero learns that he and Daisy can be together forever without marriage, he is outraged and wants to return to the "respectable" world of the living. The final scene of the play opens twenty-five years later, with Zero operating an adding machine. Lieutenant Charles, one of the officials in Limbo, tells Zero that he has to return to earth as an infant. Zero, who wonders if he will return as a king, is told by Charles that every time Zero has been reborn, it has been as a slave, and each slave has had less and less will. Zero refuses to go until he is lured away by the promise that a beautiful blonde haired woman named Hope will escort him to Earth and help him forget. Zero enthusiastically chases after the vision, and Charles calls for the next person to be brought in.

The character of Zero was Rice's attempt to illustrate the psychology of the slave mentality, which he called the Zero psychology.

> In the Adding Machine I have tried to show how the Zero psychology reacts to this ideal of freedom. Unless I have totally hit wide of the mark, the Zero psychology is the slave psychology . And the one thing that the slave hates and fears beyond all other things is liberty. For the slave senses unconsciously that authority means not only exemption from thought, but security. The power which enslaves him protects him as well.
>
> (Qtd. in Sievers 148-149)

A name is one of the foundations of personal identity, and very few

characters in *The Adding Machine* have individual names. One of the most common devices in Expressionism is to have the characters represent types, rather than Individuals:

> Characters lost their individuality and were merely identified by nameless designations, like 'The man', 'The Father', 'The Son', 'The Workman', 'The Engineer', and so on. Such characters were stereotypes and caricatures rather than individual personalities, and represented social groups rather than particular people. In their impersonality, they could appear grotesque and unreal (Styan 5).

One of the keys in making a slave is to strip that person of identity, and to make him/her an object rather than an individual . Zero is thus objectified in his symbolic name, a man reduced to nothing. His boss doesn't see him as being a person; he's one of the workers, and fully replaceable by The Adding Machine, which is more cost effective. There is no distinction made in the work place between humans and machines. In the final scene this theme is restated; Zero is working on an adding machine, in a room piled high with calculator tape. It takes a physical effort from the Lieutenant to pry Zero off of the machine. He has become a physical part of it. Zero has stopped being human, at least in symbolic terms. He dresses and acts just like all of the guests at the dinner party in scene three. Zero's friends, if they can be called that, also have numbers for names, and they all dress the same way . The wives all wear the same dresses, and the husbands the same type of suit. The couples are all identical, except for a few superficial differences:

> *Zero goes to the entrance door and opens it. Six men and six women file into the room in a double column, The men are all shapes and sizes, but their dress is identical with that of Zero's in every respect. Each, however, wears a wig of a different color. The women are all dressed alike too, except that the dress of each is a different color. (Rice 16)*

When they speak, they all repeat the same tired cliches. They discuss the weather or the

movie that they have seen, or an illness that a relative has had. The order in which they speak in is repeated throughout the scene. It is a descending order from Mr. or Mrs. Six to Mr. or Mrs. One, with Mr. Zero not participating. The men and the women don't interact outside of their sex group, until they end up damning anyone that isn't like them:

> *ALL* [*in unison*]. that's it! Damn foreigners! Damn Dagoes Damn Catholics! Damn Sheenies! Damn Niggers! Jail 'em! Shoot 'em! Hang 'em! Lynch 'em! Burn 'em!
> [*They all rise. Sing in Unison.*]
> My country 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty!(19)

In this example, all of the party guests share one thought, from minds that seem to be as identical as their appearances. This occurs again in scene four, when the couples make up the jury in Zero's trial: "*JURORS* [*rising as one and shouting in unison*]. GUILTY!" (24). Zero's peers have a herd mentality; they follow the instructions of society and hold the views that they are supposed to hold, without question. They are essentially a herd with only a collective will.

When asked about the influence that Freud had upon his writing, Rice answered:

> "The influence upon my thinking and my outlook upon life has certainly been very great. . . .Undoubtedly the effect upon my work has been considerable. . . . I have never consciously set out to apply analytic theories, but the concepts of the unconscious, of childhood conditioning, of compensatory behavior, of the significance of dreams have unquestionably entered into the choice of subject and the treatment of character (Sievers 146).

This quote shows that the psychological theories of Freud had a profound effect on Rice's work. Freud's theories were one of the cornerstones of Expressionistic theater, and there are Freudian elements in *The Adding Machine*. The most developed of these is the

expression of the unconscious mind in scene two, in which Zero and Daisy work together in the bookkeeping department of the department store. She calls out the numbers that he adds into his ledger. They are outwardly hostile to one another while they work. Subconsciously, however, each is attracted to the other. Rice shows their subconscious thoughts in the series of interior monologues, and in the form of asides that make up the scene. Daisy muses about killing herself. She wants to be kissed as she has seen the characters in the movies kiss. She also thinks about her unrequited love for Zero. Zero thinks about Judy, the prostitute, and how he should have availed himself of her services. He also thinks about his attraction for Daisy, and rages inwardly about the cost of treating his wife's pneumonia.

> *ZERO.* the time the wife had pneumonia I thought she was goin' to pass out. But she didn't. The doctor's bill was eighty-seven dollars. [*looking up.*] Hey, wait a minute! Didn't you say eighty-seven dollars?
> *DAISY* [*looking up*]. What?
> *ZERO.* Was the last you said eighty-seven dollars?
> *DAISY* [*consulting the slip*]. Forty-two fifty. (9)

The classic Freudian slip is illustrated when Zero's subconscious breaks out to the surface. He calls out the amount of the bill for his wife's treatment instead of the correct sum.

Elmer Rice experimented with different types of staging in *The Adding Machine*. The conventions of the time demanded that a realistic stage setting be used: if your setting were a parlor, then it should look like a parlor with the accompanying props and flats. Rice utilized an Expressionistic setting, where the sets reflect the state of Zero's subconscious mind. The opening scene takes place in Zero's apartment, and the

wallpaper consisted of "*sheets of foolscap covered with columns of figures*"(Rice 3). These sheets are, of course, a look at the innerworkings of Zero's mind. As seen several times in the play, as in the courtroom scene, and the scene at the office with Daisy, Zero will spit out numbers at random. His job is his identity, and his home reflects this.

Another example of the symbolic and innovative staging was Rice's use of a central turntable as a playing area. The rotating stage allowed the scenes to run uninterrupted, so that when one set was facing the audience, the other could be put up by the stage crew. Once one scene was over, the stage could be rotated into place, and the play could continue uninterrupted. This second function of the turntable is apparent in scene II, where Zero murders The Boss. Once again, the setting gives an insight into Zero's inner thoughts. Once he realizes he is fired, the stage begins to rotate, and as the murderous rage builds in Zero, the stage picks up the pace. There is also the addition of a loud cacophony of jarring sounds that builds to the crescendo of the murder:

> [*Soft music is heard - the sound of the mechanical player of a distant merry-go-round. the part of the floor upon which the desk and the stools are standing begins to revolve very slowly. . . .The music becomes gradually louder and the revolutions more rapid. . . .*
> Boss [*barely making himself heard above the increasing volume of sound*]. I'm sorry - no other alternative - greatly regret - old employee – efficiency - economy - business - business - BUSINESS --
> *His voice is drowned by the music. the platform is revolving rapidly now. Zero and The Boss face each other. They are entirely motionless save for the Boss's jaws, which open and close incessantly. But the words are inaudible. The music swells and swells. To it is added every offstage effect of the theater. . . .The noise is deafening, maddening, unendurable. For an instant there is a flash or red and then everything is plunged into blackness.* (13-14)

The tempo and volume of the music, added to the rapid and unexpected rotation of the playing are a very effective technique in displaying the chaos of an enraged person's

mind.

The final scene of *The Adding Machine* takes place in a room very much like the one in scene two, Zero's work place. The difference here is that Zero is still in the afterlife, and there is the accumulated debris of twenty years worth of adding machine tape piled around him. The contrast between the pastoral loveliness of the Elysian fields and the grim, dark surroundings of the work place is striking. It makes the enormity of what Zero leaves behind by rejecting happiness and clinging to society's preconceived notions of propriety and morality that much larger.

After *The Adding Machine's* run ended, Rice moved his family to Paris, where they lived for almost two years. His desire to leave America was not a permanent one:

> Though I shared a distaste for American Philistinisim, I felt no compulsion to expatriate myself. I put no term upon my absence, but I never doubted that I would come back. What impelled me was my inner need for development. (Rice 210)

Upon his return from Paris, Rice reworked a previously unpublished play of his, *On the Sidewalks of New York*, into his Pulitzer Prize winning *Street Scene*.

The Adding Machine is the purest example of an American playwright utilizing traditional German Expressionism. The psychological and political elements of German Expressionism are all present in the play. While Zero is the central character, he is not the focus of the play itself. What is emphasized is the effects of society and its conditioning upon Zero. The implication is that he is interchangeable with the other male characters in the play.

John Howard Lawson was also a member of the Lost Generation. He joined the Italian Ambulance corps in 1917, adding himself to the ranks of such noted members of

the Lost Generation as Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos. He was a theater and film critic as well as a playwright. His best known, and most classically Expressionistic play, *Roger Bloomer* actually was produced a few weeks before Rice's *Adding Machine*, but it is not as well known.

Roger Bloomer is the story of a young adolescent who leaves home to find some meaning in his life. It is a story as old as the country itself, but Lawson imbues this cliched plotline with several Expressionistic elements that make it fresh. What makes *Roger Bloomer* interesting is the way the play uses Expressionistic elements to shows Roger's maturation into manhood on a psychological level. Lawson takes this rather common subject matter and, using Expressionist dialogue and staging techniques, tuns it into a fresh and intriguing story.

The first act of the play is set in Excelsior, Iowa, and it opens in the Bloomers' dining room during a typical evening's dinner. Roger's father dominates the conversation with his discussion about business and business principles. After Roger leaves the table, his parents discuss the distance that Roger is putting between them and the changes that are coming over him. The majority of the rest of the first act is broken up into different attempts by Roger's father to draw him out into conversation, and make him more like other boys his age. The next scene has Roger and Mr. Bloomer out walking when they encounter Mr. Poppin, another successful businessman, and his son Eugene. Eugene is five years older than Roger and is attending Yale. He is brash and self confident in a way that Roger is not. Mr. Bloomer, Mr. Poppin and Eugene discuss Roger, and come up with a plan to have Eugene take Roger under his wing and turn him into a man. Mr.

Bloomer takes Roger to his department and discusses the importance of business, and how he will inherit the large, successful store. This scene introduces Louise, a counter girl at the store who is homesick for New York. The act continues with a scene between Eugene and Roger, in which Eugene tries to explain the reality of male-female relationships at college. It is during this conversation that the root of Roger's problem is revealed as women:

> *Eugene*: What's bothering you? Cigarettes. . . coke, or women?
> *Roger* [*rising, a gesture of defiance*]: Ah. . .
> *Eugene* [*in placid comprehension*] Ah!. . . .Oh, I know, I see it in your eye!
> *Roger*: what?
> *Eugene*: You talk highbrow, but it isn't that...oh, it isn't the bean; it's inside!
> *Roger* [*frightened*] : Inside!
> *Eugene*: One of those softies that go straight to Hell with skirts. . . .What do you know about women?
> *Roger*: I saw a burlesque show once, and I've got a copy of the *Police Gazette.*
> *Eugene*: Experience is the only thing that counts. (Lawson 230-31)

The scene continues with a frank discussion of sex. Eugene has a very pragmatic view of sex and male-female relationships, while Roger is a romantic who is looking for what he calls "A dim passion"(232) with a single true love.

The next scene takes place at Roger's college entrance exams, where he refuses to finish the test, and rips his paper up in front of the Examiner. He goes to his father's store and tells him that he's not going to college. Louise the salesgirl comes in and quits so that she can return to New York City. Roger stops her outside the store, and they discuss love. Louise is bitter, but with a romantic streak lingering beneath her harsh exterior. She gives Roger her address in New York, and leaves. The final scene in act one has Roger sneaking out of his bedroom window, and running off to New York City.

Act Two opens in a dirty boardinghouse room in New York City. Roger is dirty, unkempt, and broke. His Fat Landlady tries to seduce him, and he leaves the boarding house in disgust. He looks up Louise, and she takes him to her office to try and get him work. Mr. Rumsey doesn't hire Roger because his clothes are dirty. The act continues with a homeless Roger getting propositioned by a Street Walker. This encounter repulses and depresses him to the point of suicide, and so he uses the last of his money to buy rat poison. He takes the poison, but it is not powerful enough to kill him. The Ragged Man finds Louise's address in Roger's pocket and takes him to her house. The act ends with a renewed sense of hope between the two.

Act Three begins in a conservative men's club. Roger looks up Eugene, who is staying with some millionaire friends in Manhattan. They agree to meet for dinner at Louise's apartment, where Roger is living. After the dinner with Eugene, Louise steals three thousand dollars worth of bonds from her office. She is sick of poverty, and envious of the life Eugene leads; so she steals the bonds to get ahead. Roger shames her into returning them. As shr is returning the bonds to Mr. Rumsey's desk he walks in, but does not catch her with the bonds. Mr. Rumsey propositions Louise, and when she rejects him, he asks her to marry him. She rejects him, and her fires her. She meets Roger outside the office building, and he takes the bonds from her and destroys them. The next scene takes place in Louise's apartment. Eugene asks Louise to go away with him for the weekend. When Roger hears about the proposition, he storms out of the apartment to confront Eugene. A detective comes to the apartment to question Louise about the missing bonds. The scene shifts to the street where Eugene and Roger have a

fight over Louise. When Roger returns to the apartment, Louise is dying from poison. the next scene has Roger in front of a judge. The charges are never specified, but he puts Roger in a holding cell. the next scene has Roger in the cell, when his father, who has been searching for him, visits him. Mr. Bloomer leaves, saying that he will get a lawyer to free Roger.

The next scene is a dream sequence that takes place while Roger is in jail. All of the characters from the play appear, playing the different archetypes that they represent. It is done almost as an Expressionistic ballet, and it gives a visual representation of the things that have been going on in Roger's head throughout the play. It is a nightmarish sequence, and it ends with the resurrection of Louise, who chases away the monsters and saves Roger's life.

> *Louise*: ...Go it alone Roger; are you ready now? [*He nods grimly understanding at last*] I've given you yourself, take it...face the music. . . .Good-bye...[*She raises her hand to him, with a laugh.*] A man's luck, Roger. [*They smile at each other across a distance.*] (295).

The play ends with Roger waking and being freed from his cell by the prison attendant.

There are a myriad of Expressionistic elements in *Roger Bloomer*. It maintains the convention of being divided into acts, but each one of them is divided up into many short scenes, similar to the German plays. The pace builds and builds upon itself so that the climax of the dream sequence is played at a fever pitch. Lawson's own stage directions describe the effect that he wants to create with the final scene: "*This follows technique of a very rapid ballet, with accompaniment of words half chanted. Playing time is extremely short, for it is done at great speed, like a piece of very exciting music*" (285).

Another Expressionistic technique that Lawson uses is the German technique of

making the characters types rather than fully-developed individuals. Roger is the main character, and so is named to give the audience a connection to him. The major characters in the play are also named, while the more overtly symbolic ones simply have titles, such as The Judge, the Ragged Man, the Street Walker and the Fat Landlady. All the characters in the play are symbolic at some level. Roger is symbolic of the inner journey from adolescence to manhood. The entire play focuses upon Roger's struggle with passion and his desires about women, until he finally defeats his fear, transcends his desires and enters into manhood. Even Roger's last name, Bloomer, is a symbol for his emergence, his blossoming into manhood. He is supposed to be the sympathetic center of the play, and the one that the audience is meant to identify with, a teenage Everyman. Lawson says in his stage directions that: "Roger Bloomer *must* be played by an actor of sturdy virile appearance, giving the impression of average American boy. Roger's problem is that of normal young manhood. He is not neurasthenic, but rather the most normal person in the play" (212). Roger's normality makes some of the more symbolic characters in the play seem even more grotesque by comparison.

One of the more interesting techniques that Lawson uses is with the characters of Eugene, Mr. Poppin, and the Old Gentlemen that appear at the beginning of Act Three. The three all seem to be the same character, at different stages of their lives. Eugene will turn into Mr. Poppin, and Mr. Poppin will eventually become one of the newspaper reading old men. All three characters talk in cliches to varying degrees. Eugene is also a harbinger of what Roger could become in five years if he follows the path his father sets for him.

Eugene: there's nothing in that stuff - too European! It isn't safe.
Roger [*More to himself than* Eugene]: women must have souls!
Eugene: A guy soon finds out what's good for him. Two years ago I was. just like you
Roger: Then I shall be like you?
Eugene [*cordially*]: Here's hoping! Either that or you'll go wrong –
Roger: Then I'll go wrong, I'll- (232).

Eugene represents the corrupt, jaded youth of the country that will keep things status quo. He is meant to be repulsive, and his character indeed comes off that way. He is pragmatic, unromantic and unsympathetic, the very antithesis of what Roger represents. Eugene speaks much as his father does, with cliches about manhood and America:

Roger: And if I don't want to be contented?
Eugene: Don't you know discontentment of any sort is unpatriotic: you love your country, don't you? You want to get on in these United States?
Roger: I do! I do!
Eugene: Well college is your first step into the United States (230).

Eugene's father, Mr. Poppin, expresses the same sentiments in a scene with Roger's father:

Bloomer: these are queer times...new times...think of our sons, the new generation growing up in these times - what are our sons coming to?
Poppin: We gotta make Americans out of our sons. . . .
Bloomer: Your son, he's an upstanding boy.
Poppin: He's an American. . . .
Bloomer: I want my son to be somebody!
Poppin: Fathers and sons, we stick together, for Americanism and the right ideals, that's it, ain't it?. . . .
Eugene: Understand, it's like stepping into the world: Competition! A man's got to make good, keep in right, learn when to keep his mouth shut, dress well, make useful friends ... that's how college makes the American citizen! (221-223).

The similarity in speech between Eugene and Poppin, their choice of phrasing, is clear. It is the father passing his ideals down to his son. The major difference is that Eugene in

still learning these ideals, and so his phrases are longer, filled with more explanations, while Poppin's is more succinct. Poppin only appears in one scene, but all of his dialogue consists of single sentences.

The Third Act opens in a posh Manhattan gentlemen's club where Eugene takes Roger to show off the status of his wealthy friends. In the club are several rich Old Gentlemen, who seem to be the next step in the evolution of the Eugene-Poppin character:

> *First Old Gentleman*: Did you see this?
> *Second Old Gentleman* [*sleepily*]: Disgraceful!
> *First Old Gentleman*: Where do these happen?
> *Second Old Gentleman* [*tapping newspaper*]: Saloons, brothels, gambling dens, tenements, crimes of passion...
> *First Old Gentleman* [*sitting down again*] Must be stopped, must be stopped! (265).

The two Old Gentlemen's dialogue is even more succinct than Poppin's. It is oftentimes not even a complete sentence, but rather a stream of codewords that people of like minds would comprehend. It is a prime example of the telegraphic dialogue developed by the German Expressionists. The Old Gentlemen are the final step in the evolution of the Eugene character.

The female characters in the play show the different aspects of female sexual stereotypes. The character of the Fat Landlady is symbolic of Eugene's oedipal, incestuous fears. She makes a clumsy attempt to seduce him in his room at the boarding house:

> *Landlady*: You thought there'd be women with diamonds askin' you to sit on their knees! Better take what you can get...sit here [*she indicates her knee*] an' kiss me!
> *Roger*: I'd as soon kiss a horse.

> *Landlady* [*rising in majestic rage*]: Wha'd'you mean, you little whippersnapper you! 'Cause I treat you like a mother, you think I'm after somethin' wrong with you - an if I was-...- if I was, you think I'd ask you, why, I'd walk in an' take you in your bed like you'd crack a nut, an' it would be done that job before you could whisper mamma. . . .an' I got half a mind to do it now, just to learn you what you'd oughter know.
> *Roger*: For God's sake, let me out. (247).

The Street Walker, as her name applies, is representative of the fallen woman. She comes to the homeless Roger when he is at his lowest point:

> *Street Walker* [*In a low voice, a weird crooning singsong, like a mother singing to her child*] Come on, lonely kid, wanna have a good time? I make you warm, I sweet-mama you, I show you the gate of Paradise, say come in, come in, sweet papa! the face ain't so much, but it's the shape, the thin shape in a silk shimmy, silk like you see in the magazines, sweet mamma smell good in silk shimmy, lonely kid. . .(257).

As with the Fat Landlady, the oedipal nature of sex is brought out. The references that she makes to her being "sweet mamma," and her calling him alternately "lonely kid" and "pappa" emphasize the oedipal dilemma that Roger faces in his sexual desires. Both the characters of the Landlady and the Street Walker personify the carnal aspect of sexual desire. The characters are physically opposite, the Streetwalker being "*very thin, queer bedraggled hat perched on bright peroxide hair, big feverish eyes in an old face*" (256), while the Fat Landlady is as her name implies, "*A loose garish dress under which her big flabby breasts shake like jellies. About her the general greasiness of a frumpy kitchen*" (245). Both of these grotesque characters are an antithesis to the deep, passionate ideal of love that Roger is searching for.

Louise is the symbol of chaste, pure love that is physically unattainable. She loves Roger, and is inspired by his passion and his romantic longings, but she will not love him physically. Louise believes that if she can be independently wealthy, she can

rid herself of men and their sexual desires. She wants to make her money without using her sexuality: "It's better than selling my body to a rich man, and anyway, no one wants me. . . .Girls sell their bodies, near all of 'em, one way or another - but with me, I've kept my body clean, that's something, isn't it?" (270). She loves Roger in a chaste way, and is physically attracted to him, but will not give in to her desires. She goes through a period of seduction much as Roger did with the Fat Landlady and the Street Walker. Louise's employer, Mr. Rumsey, proposes marriage to her, which she rejects. In the next scene, Eugene offers to take her away for several weeks. It is this revulsion to the carnal, along with the threat of capture for stealing the bonds, that leads to her suicide. Where Roger failed in his attempt, Louise is successful. As she dies, she tries again to explain her predicament to Roger:

> *Louise*: All a joke anyway: I'm caught in a net, more subtle than Law wider than Time, that's all there is to this pure love stuff! What are we anyway? Just two children, caught by this terrible Sex joke, that's all there is. . . .I told you no man would get me: you see what an awful coward I am...[*She rises*] My mother and father and all the grandmothers...how glad they are now, saying we got her all right! I'm coming old people, I'm coming pure (279-80).

The idealized version of Louise, as the pure chaste perfect vision of love, returns as Roger's salvation in the final dream sequence.

The dream sequence is a jumble of images and confrontations between Roger and the symbolic figures from the play. It gives a unique look inside Roger's dream landscape. It is similar to the scene in *The Adding Machine* in which Zero kills his Boss. It is a nightmare in which all of the figures of authority, conformity and lust attack Roger. Elements from the play, like the bottle of rat poison that Roger uses in his failed suicide

attempt, return: "*Leaning against the bier, she* [the Street Walker] *raises the bottle to* Roger. *But the bottle has suddenly grown enormous, three feet tall, and on it in big black letters 'Rat Poison - Best for Pests*" (Lawson 290). The overt symbolism continues in this scene when the virginal Roger tries to wield a long sword against the nightmarish terrors, but he cannot control the sword, and it turns into a snake.

> Street Walker:...smother me with kisses, dearie, kill me with love! [Roger *plunges his sword into* Street Walker. *It sticks through her belly and with a ghostly smile she starts to wriggle on it. she is doing an oriental dance, crooning lasciviously. a beating or oriental music*: Rumsey, *the* Ragged Man *and* Poppin *are clashing brassy instruments. The* Two Old Women *come on either side* of Roger.]
> Tall Old Woman: Where is your sword now? [Roger *wrenches back the sword, but in his hand is a big green snake writhing. with exclamation of disgust, he throws it from him*]
> Small Old Woman: Obscene thoughts in your head.
> Tall Old Woman: Obscene wishes in your belly (291).

The rest of the nightmare reveals the connection in Roger's subconscious between sex and death. His oedipal fears are realized when his mother attempts to smother him with her love and expectations: "I am a mother's love, and I bring you the peace of death, relax, Roger, be a child, mesmerize yourself, softly, softly" (293). Roger rejects this version of childhood love and declares himself a man. The nightmarish figures move in to kill him, and Louise's corpse, which has been laid out at center stage, is resurrected and saves Roger. This is the idealized image of Louise, the radiant pure virginal love, that Roger has been seeing throughout the play.

Another Expressionistic element in the play is the first scene in the office. While Roger is in his interview with Mr. Rumsey, the office work in the background forms a mechanical backdrop.

> *Across the greater part of the stage, a series of little offices, doors opening from one to another. . . .At each desk a man bending over papers. . . .These men are very busy, and in spite of the fact that they are separated by partitions, they all move in unison like wax-works throughout the scene. . . .giving the impression of choral movement. . .Each man in each of the five rooms rises simultaneously, picks a sheet of pink paper out of a file, and returns to his desk consulting it. . . .the five men in the five offices begin taking papers out of drawers, piling them up on the desks higher, higher. . . .In each of the five offices bells ring. simultaneously, five men pull telephones toward them on adjustable arms. Five Men*: Hello- Yes- Good-by. [*Telephones spring back.*](252-255)

One of the main concerns of German Expressionism is the mechanization and interchangeability of human beings. The fear is that repetitive work and industrialization will transform humans into automatons. A similar fear was illustrated in *The Adding Machine*. The scene with the five workers in the background in *Roger Bloomer* is a brilliant representation of that fear. The Five Men are there to show the conformity of the work world, and like the character Eugene, are there to show what will happen to Roger if he takes the corporate job.

Both *The Adding Machine* and *Roger Bloomer* are excellent examples of Expressionism in American theater. They follow primarily the German model in its political message , and in their structure as plays. Straight Expressionism as a popular genre in American theater lasted only two or three seasons on Broadway, from 1921-1924. The plays, while provocative, were also jarring and disturbing to audiences that were not used to the visual and verbal stylings, or the uncomfortable issues raised by Expressionism.

While it soon decreased in popularity with the public, the psychological elements of Expressionism that were first developed by Strindberg and later refined by the

Germans, and the window it provided into a character's interior world, continued to be used by American playwrights. They fused Expressionism with other genres of playwriting. Expressionism was very useful in showing the interior life of the characters and so, as American theater became more character rather than situation-driven, elements of Expressionism insinuated themselves more into American theater. This Americanized Expressionism focused more on the individual than on the whole of society.

The first playwright from the Lost Generation to utilize a non-German form of Expressionism was Lawson. After the limited success of *Roger Bloomer*, Lawson went on to create *Processional : A Jazz Symphony of American Life in Four Acts*. It was staged in 1924 by the Theater Guild, the group that also produced *The Adding Machine*. Unlike *Roger Bloomer*, which is strictly Expressionistic, *Processional* is an innovative fusion of Expressionism with elements of vaudeville theater and jazz. Lawson used symbolic sets and locations, but he also used the broad cultural stereotypes, over-the-top acting and common language of vaudeville. Lawson denied that *Processional* was an Expressionistic play, despite the elements of Expressionism contained within it. He preferred to think that he was pioneering a new form of theater that was purely American.

> I have endeavored to create a method which shall express the American scene in native idiom, a method as far removed from the older realism as from the facile mood of Expressionism. It is apparent that this new technique is essentially vaudevillesque in character- a development, a moulding to my own uses, of the rich vitality of the two-a-day and the musical extravaganza (*Processional* v).

In *Processional*, Lawson attempted to create what he considered to be authentic

American entertainment. He took the two art forms he felt were completely American: vaudeville theater and jazz, and attempted to fuse them with Expressionistic theories.

Processional takes place in the coal country of West Virginia, during a miners' strike. The action of the play revolves around "Dynamite" Jim Flimmins, a mine worker and jazz musician who is jailed for desecrating the American flag. Jim escapes from prison, and later kills a soldier while fleeing. He hides in the barn where his mother lives. He discovers that his mother is a prostitute; so he damns her and leaves. Jim finds Sadie Cohen, a young girl that witnessed the killing, and rapes her in a mine shaft. The police, soldiers and the Klu Klux Klan finally track him down and capture him. The final act occurs six months later. The Klan captures Mrs. Flimmins and Sadie, who is pregnant with Jim's child. Jake Pinski, another miner and jazz musician, arrives with an army of workers and drives the Klan off. Jim, now blind, is reunited with Sadie and his mother. The strike is called off by the mine owner, and Jim and Sadie are married.

Vaudeville had a tradition of using broad cultural stereotypes and accents for comedic purposes. Expressionism is similar to Vaudeville in this respect, because Expressionism is usually concerned with character archetypes rather than fully-developed characters. The major difference is that vaudeville stereotypes are based on parodying the ethnic background of the character, rather than portraying the archetype and their place in the larger scheme of the play. Lawson takes the Vaudeville tradition and gives several of his characters stereotypical personalities to match their dialects. Rastus Jolly is a striking miner, and a member of the miners' jazz band. He's African American, and speaks with an exaggerated dialect. He is also depicted as being superstitious, ignorant, and cowardly. In one scene, Jim has escaped from prison, and Rastus sees him rising out of a coffin. He drops down to his knees and begins to pray. "I'm a good nigger an' I done no wrong, I paid my dues an' I done no wrong, I kilt ma mother-in-law but I done no

wrong. . . ." (63). Rastus has a symbolic assimilation into society when he joins the Klan in Act Four.

Jake Pinski is a Polish immigrant. He, out of all of the miners in the Jazz Band, has the most stage time, but none of it is used to develop any type of character for him. Jake is Lawson's socialist mouthpiece for the play. Most of his lines are concerned with uniting the workers, or talking about the glories of socialism. Jake leads the workers' revolution against the Klan. The stereotype that Jake represents is that of the Eastern European socialist, for whom social and economic revolution is important. Lawson himself was a devoted socialist, and his socialist beliefs were also the basis of one of his later plays, *Success Story*.

Processional is a political play as well as an experimental one, and its political message is one of socialism and workers' revolt. The characters that represent society and capitalism - the Man in the Silk Hat, the Sheriff and the Klansmen - are all corrupt. The society that holds the moral compass of the country is morally bankrupt. When the Man in the Silk Hat calls off the strike at the end of the play and guarantees amnesty for Jim and all offenders, he pulls the Sheriff aside and tells him, "Make a list of the marked men and we'll get them in their beds tonight! [Turning suavely to group on stage] My friends, we have each other's confidence." (212). The message is clear; the people in charge of a capitalist society cannot be trusted. It is only through a workers' revolution that the workers will be free.

Lawson's Expressionism is evident in his use of archetypal characterization throughout the play. The Klan is used to symbolize moral society and popular public opinion. The Man in the Silk Hat, who runs the Law and Order League, heads up the Klan. The need to join into conventional society and repress your own identity can be seen in two of the Klan members, Cohen, a Jew, and Rastus, an African American. Both

of these men are people that the Klan would normally persecute. They have, instead, subverted their individual and cultural identities in order to fit into society. Rastus joined the Klan because "Anybuddy owns a sheet can belong, I rekoned it was safer-" (193). The Klan represents the "moral" society of the past that so many of the Lost Generation rebelled against. Lawson uses the Expressionist technique of using archetypes instead of characters in *Processional*, much as he did in *Roger Bloomer* and also as Rice did in *The Adding Machine*. He makes a departure form traditional German Expressionism by using vaudevillian racial stereotypes

Many of the settings in the play have the Expressionistic love of symbolism. The setting for Act II scene2, is in front of the Temple of Labor. The Temple is large and imposing, but no one goes there anymore to worship the large statue of the working man out front. Jim goes there to escape, and ultimately murders in front of the temple. Mrs. Flimmins uses the temple for a place to take her clients. Other soldiers use the temple as a place to drink. The status of the temple, which is falling into disrepair and is not used or respected, parallels the status of the workers, who are on strike during the course of the play.

The strong Socialist message of *Processional*, along with the melding of Expressionism with jazz and vaudeville stereotypes, distance it from traditional German Expressionism. By looking to a political system for the salvation of an individual, Lawson undercuts the anarchic, anti-government stance of the German Expressionists.

Before he became a novelist, Thomas Wolfe's main ambition in life was to be a successful playwright. Throughout his undergraduate and graduate education as well as during his early teaching career, Wolfe labored to create plays that would be professionally produced. This dream of Wolfe's was never realized. Disheartened from a

lack of support from the American theatrical community, he stopped writing plays altogether and turned his creative energies to producing the novel that would ultimately become *Look Homeward Angel* (1929). The plays of Thomas Wolfe have been routinely dismissed by critics as amateurish. If they are examined, it is the biographical background under which the plays were produced that is stressed. The motivations for the plays have been thoroughly documented, but the plays themselves have never been examined as a body of work. More often than not, they are ignored altogether. This does a disservice both to Wolfe and his plays. The post-World War I theater scene is filled with stylistic and technical innovations in storytelling. Wolfe reflects these changes in his plays. He makes the same leap in his playwriting that Lawson does: from using German-based political Expressionism to an Americanized type of Expressionism.

Wolfe's plays run the gamut from the southern local color movement *in The Return of Buck Gavin* and *The Mountains*, to a fusion between naturalism and Expressionism in *Welcome to Our City*, and ultimately to Expressionism in *Mannerhouse*.

Wolfe wrote his first play in 1918 as part of professor Frederick Henry Koch's Playwriting class at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Koch was a student of Harvard's legendary theater professor George Pierce Baker. Koch began his theatrical career teaching in Grand Forks, North Dakota. It was in Grand Forks where "the staging under his direction of plays by Lady Gregory and other Irish dramatists led him to encourage students to write and produce comparable plays of the American folk" (Walser 86). Ultimately Koch organized his students into the Dakota Playmakers, a group that

would write and perform plays based on regional folk-tales. Koch moved to Chapel Hill in 1918, and Wolfe was the only male student in his first class.

Welcome to Our City is Wolfe's most ambitious play. It has elements of political satire, social commentary, naturalism, and Expressionism. The play was written not in Koch's class, but in Wolfe's second and third years in George Pierce Baker's 47 Workshop at Harvard, and was performed May 11 and 12, 1923 at the Agassiz House Theater. Wolfe follows Professor Koch's advice, which was to write from experience. Wolfe's two years away at Harvard had begun to change the way that he looked at his home of Asheville, North Carolina:

> Coming home this last time I have gathered enough additional material to write a new play. . . .This thing I had thought naive and simple is as old and evil as hell; there is a spirit of old-world evil that broods about us, with all the subtle sophistication of Satan. Greed. . . . deliberate, crafty, motivated - masking under the guise of civic associations for municipal betterment. the disgusting spectacle of thousands of industrious and accomplished liars, engaged in the mutual and systematic pursuit of their profession, salting their editorials and sermons and advertisements with the religious and philosophical platitudes of Dr. Frank Crane, Edgar A Guest, and the American Magazine (*Welcome* 2).

In this excerpt from a letter to Mrs. Roberts, his former teacher Wolfe is discussing the spirit of boosterism that was sweeping through Asheville. He was so disgusted by this greed that he devoted *Welcome to Our City* to exposing the hypocrisy behind it.

Welcome to Our City is a huge play. It is made up of ten scenes, most of which tell the central story of the Altamont Development Company, an unscrupulous real estate company that hides behind the facade of a civic improvement association, and its attempt to chase the African Americans out of Niggertown. Niggertown is a prime area of real estate at the center of the expanding city. Dr. Johnson, a mulatto doctor, lives in an old mansion that is now part of Niggertown. The mansion was once owned by Rutledge, the

protagonist's, once-prosperous family, but they were forced to abandon it after the Civil War. Rutledge, along with Johnson, wants the house back in his family, but Johnson holds out for a better offer before he will sell. There is a confrontation between Rutledge and Johnson when Lee, Rutledge's son, attempts to solicit sex from Johnson's daughter Annie. Johnson refuses to sell the house to Rutledge or anyone else. The tensions between the races escalate until the African Americans stage an uprising, and set the mansion on fire. The militia is called in to stop the uprising. Lee shoots Johnson at the end of the play as the mansion is destroyed. Woven into this story are scenes that satirize the boosters, the Governor, African Americans, various ladies' clubs and the differences between the generations.

In *Welcome to Our City*, Wolfe moves beyond the genre of naturalism, in which his earlier plays were written, and makes the play a daring experiment in merging both naturalism and Expressionism. Wolfe was exposed to Expressionism by reading the works of O'Neill and Rice, two authors that "he was acquainted with" (*Welcome* 26). The acquaintance almost certainly came from Wolfe's time in the 47 Workshop, of which Eugene O'Neill was a former member. What Wolfe does in *Welcome to Our City* is expose the greed, hypocrisy and ignorance that live below the manners of polite society. He uses symbolism and some stereotypical characters to make his point. This is suited to Wolfe's playwriting style. One of his shortcomings as a playwright is in plotting to advance characters and make a significant change from where they began the play. Expressionism does not seek to change the characters, but rather to represent and expose their unconscious selves.

The play's most successful expressionistic scene is Scene Seven. Throughout the play, Carr has been praised for his youth, virility and personal attractiveness. Wolfe

writes a series of brilliant stage directions that show Carr getting ready for bed. The Governor turns from a confident, vivacious powerful man into a paranoid, repulsive little boy. Carr examines himself in the mirror, and then checks the room for intruders. He goes so far as to check under the bed twice and nail the shade to the bottom of the window ledge. He then begins to disrobe:

> First he removes his toupee. . . .Then he takes out a gleaming set of false teeth. . . .Then he pulls off his shoes and takes out three sets of false soles and a pair of leather arches. He then pulls off his coat and takes from under the shoulders a thick pair of shoulder pads; then he removes the shoulder braces which give him an erect appearance. He pulls off his shirt and unlaces his abdomen supporter; an immediate fleshy landslide to his middle region is visible. . . For the benefit of those who have never seen a governor at his prayer, it is well to explain that, in engulfing darkness which blots out line, form and perspective, and which gives a vast and empty look to things, he often seems no more than a small, pudgy and terrified little boy(*Welcome* 92).

Carr's true self is exposed in both his behavior with the men, and then in the scene where he is alone in his room. Wolfe strips away the pretense of Carr's public persona, and gives us a glimpse into his unconscious self.

Another Expressionistic element is the mansion at the heart of Niggertown. It is an ambiguous symbol onto which the desires of both Rutledge and Johnson are projected. For Rutledge, the house is a symbol of his family's former prosperity. For Rutledge, the house also represents an idealized view of the pre-Civil War South. According to Rice, another aspect of Expressionism is "an idealization of the past as compared to the complex modern life"(*Welcome* 24). Rutledge longs for nothing more than a return to the antebellum Southern ways, and to pass the house on to his son. For Johnson, the house is a symbol of his prosperity and his achievements in post-Civil War America. He is a successful, educated doctor who bought the house with the fruits of his own labors. The

house is ultimately destroyed by the actions of an unthinking mob. The destruction of the house is symbolic of both the death of Johnson and the death of Rutledge's dreams of a past that can never be reclaimed.

The play is not entirely Expressionistic, however. There is an attempt by Wolfe to portray some of the characters not as simple stereotypes, but also as individuals. Wolfe wanted to make the play as realistic as possible, while still keeping the Expressionistic undertones. Unfortunately, naturalism and Expressionism are not compatible, and this is one of the play's major shortcomings. The structure of the play is suited for Expressionism rather than realism. A realistic play functions effectively with a linear plot, rather than with a series of scenes, some of which are not directly connected with the main story line. There is a buildup of dramatic tension, which is necessary for a successful realistic play, but not all of the scenes contribute to that buildup. The scene with Carr is not essential to the plot, nor is the scene that takes place at the Ladies Aid society, and would have been cut from a purely naturalistic play. *Welcome to Our City* also has stage directions that describe very detailed rooms and sets. Expressionism has abstract or representational sets that reflect the inner landscapes of the single or group unconscious.

The length of the play was the major problem with its production. Professor Baker's stated policy for producing student-written material was that "The fundamental principle of the 47 Workshop - and to this it has held steadily throughout its history - has been that everyone from director to stage hands must cooperate in putting the play upon the stage as the author sees it" (21). This was not possible to do with *Welcome to Our City* as it was originally written. The play has ten scenes, and over thirty named characters. Each of the scenes requires a different set, and according to Wolfe's

meticulous production notes, the sets were to be made as realistic as possible. He wanted the play to create a definite sense of place and the detailed sets would contribute to that. This is contrary to the German use of abstract, symbolic settings. When Baker asked Wolfe to revise the play and shorten it, Wolfe gave him back a draft that was longer than the original. Baker ultimately cut the play for production himself, against Wolfe's wishes. Even with the cuts, *Welcome to Our City* ran for four hours. The surviving critiques of the play are enthusiastic:

> One suggested that some drawn-out scenes should be cut but concluded that Wolfe's play was 'quite the most interesting piece of work I have seen at the Workshop'. another member of the audience...was surprised and pleased that Wolfe had done something quite different: 'That idea of making the life of a city the plot of a play seems to me not only intensely interesting, but almost limitless in its possibilities'."(Donald 101)

Despite the cuts that he was forced to make to the play, Baker was enthusiastic about *Welcome to Our City*, and believed that it had a chance to be performed professionally : "he took the script to New York himself, in order to make sure that the Theater Guild gave it a careful reading"(Donald 102). The play was declined in October, and the script was returned to Wolfe in December. The Guild criticized the play's length and loose construction. In addition to their issues with length, they were not willing to take a chance on an unknown playwright(Donald 107).

Wolfe left Harvard convinced that he would become a professional playwright. On his application for a teaching position at New York University, he wrote "It is only fair that I tell you that my interests are centered in the drama, and that someday I hope to write successfully for the theater and do nothing but that" (*Mountains* 3). However, his teaching job took up most of his energy, and left him little time to work on revisions of

Welcome to Our City.

When Wolfe graduated form Harvard, he attempted several times to have the play produced. *Welcome to Our City* went through another revision, but instead of cutting out some of the extraneous subplots, Wolfe added more to them, making the play longer than the version he first submitted for performance. The Guild was interested in Wolfe and his work, but needed a shorter version that could be cheaply and easily produced. Wolfe submitted the play to the more experimental Provincetown Players, but the script was not even read. He then submitted it to the Anne MacDonald, a reader for the Neighborhood Playhouse, and "almost immediately he began bombarding her with letters 'full of proud and vaunting speech' insisting on a prompt decision"(Donald 120). The Playhouse kept putting Wolfe off until Alice Lewisohn, one of their main financial backers, returned from Europe and could read the play. The Playhouse ultimately rejected it. *Welcome to Our City* has not been performed since its initial staging in 1923.

Length and the inability to edit his own material are problems that Wolfe never overcame. The first draft of *Look Homeward Angel* ran well over 200,000 words, and was only pulled into shape by the editing of Maxwell Perkins. Without a critical editor, Wolfe could not write with brevity. Baker once told him, "Your gift is not selection, but profusion"(Donald 104). Profusion may be fine for a novelist, but for a playwright being able to select the essential and excise the extraneous is a necessary quality.

Wolfe's final play, *Mannerhouse*, went through several aborted drafts during the 47 Workshop before he finally wrote it during and after his first year of teaching at New York University. His original draft was called *The Heirs,* and in it he "argued that miscegenation was at the root of the problems of the South" (Donald 104). His later versions shift emphasis from this idea to a story of the fallen aristocracy. His final manuscript of *The Heirs* was in his luggage that was stolen from the lobby of his hotel in

Paris during his first trip to Europe. Wolfe was furious about the theft, and wrote to his mother that " Nothing has hit me as hard as this since papa's death" (Donald 122). Wolfe sequestered himself in a Paris hotel for the month of December, 1924, and rewrote the entire play. He called the new version *Mannerhouse*.

Mannerhouse is based upon a story that W.O. Wolfe told Thomas about an old Southern Colonel and how he led his life after the Civil War. In the final version, Wolfe tells the story of the Ramsay family, and the birth and death of the "Mannerhouse." The prologue opens in the pre-Civil-War south. Ramsay is overseeing the construction of his house. The workers are a new group of slaves fresh from Africa. The local minister arrives and blesses both the house and the slaves. The biggest, strongest slave (later referred to as Tod) refuses to kneel, until Ramsay beats him into submission. Act One takes place several years later, on the eve of the Civil War. Ramsay and his sons Ralph and Eugene are preparing to go off to fight. Act Two opens with the return of General Ramsay and Eugene to the Mannerhouse, defeated. Ralph has been killed. Act Three takes place four years later. The house has decayed, and the general is dying. He signs over the deed to the mansion and the land to Porter, one of his tenant farmers. Act Four shows Eugene returning to the decaying mannerhouse years after his father's death. Porter is stripping the house of all of its lumber. Eugene is working for Porter in disguise. At the end of the play, Eugene tries to destroy the house, but is crushed under one of the columns from the front porch. He calls on Tod to destroy what he created. Porter kills Tod, and as the former slave falls to the floor, the house too is destroyed.

Wolfe claimed that his influences for the play were Anton Chekov's *The Cherry*

Orchard, Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* and Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. *Mannerhouse* has elements of all of these plays, but it also contains much that is Expressionistic. Wolfe's biographer David Donald says of the Expressionism in *Mannerhouse*: "Now that he was no longer under Baker's influence, he introduced soliloquies and asides in *Mannerhouse* and gave his characters lines, both lyrical and enigmatic, that were less like the steps of the logical argument than the unanticipated but meaningful juxtapositions of a dream"(123). This is especially true in the character of Eugene. Eugene is not the autobiographical Eugene Gant from *Look Homeward Angel*; he is a more aristocratic version of the artistic young man. Eugene Ramsay is a sarcastic, caustic young man who is disillusioned with life and the aristocracy, but goes to fight in the war regardless of his personal beliefs. The character is Wolfe's first attempt at an autobiographical representation: "The play was, he admitted, 'the mold for an expression of my secret life, of my own dark faith, chiefly through the young man Eugene'"(Donald 124). In one of his speeches, Eugene espouses the modernist ideal of writing that was popular among the exile Lost Generation in Paris:

> We are going to have something to say about this before we are through. We shall say, perhaps, that all the men in the world are brothers - all the young men. We are going to write some books and poems about all this. Perhaps we shall even write some plays. . . .We shall burst all old hypocrisies. We shall give tradition a handsome stiff kick in the rump We shall tell about things exactly as they (*Mannerhouse* 103)

Later in the same scene, Eugene tells about a new style of writing that he is experimenting with: "It is the new method, Major. A novel I wrote. Turns inward, you see. Gets the inside of things. In its apparent formlessness it achieves a form" (*Mannerhouse*104). This may be read as Wolfe's definition of Expressionism.

Another Expressionistic element in the play is the detached voice that only Eugene hears. The voice echoes throughout the house. It is never explained wheather the voice is coming from within Eugene, or from the house itself. The beginning of act four contains a conversation between Eugene and the Voices:

> *There is a gentile scurry of undiscovered feet; and thin gay mocking laughter in the distance*
> SOFT VOICES (*Laughing*) Eugene, Eugene!
> EUGENE (*in a low voice*). Old house! My God, old house, old house (*the soft dim feet are moving now to the even rhythm of the waltz. With a cry*) Oh, I will join you, even if I cannot dance. . . .
> VOICES (*very faint*) Ah, Eugene, Eugene.
> EUGENE. . . .Where are you, then? Where are you?
> VOICES (*laughing softly*) Where are you, 'Gene? Where are you?. . . .
> EUGENE (*with a great cry*). Oh, Christ, I am forsaken by my shadows even!
> VOICES (*softly*) Not by *your* shadows, shadow. (*Mannerhouse* 137-8)

The ambiguity of the voice's origin is one of the most effective Expressionistic elements in the play.

The main symbol in the play is the house itself. It is under construction at the beginning of the play, but once the war is over, the house begins to decay. It falls to pieces at the end of the play. The house is a symbol of the southern aristocracy and their destruction at the end of the war. The setting of the play is symbolic, because the action takes place within the symbol of the house itself. The family's decay matches the decay of the house. Eugene is the final member of the family, and he is literally killed by the house, when one of the front porch columns falls on him. The house does not fall, however, until Tod, the former slave that built the house, is killed within it by Porter. Tod's beating and death at the hands of Porter parallel the beating inflicted by Ramsay at the beginning of the play. Tod's death, along with the "death" of the mannerhouse, is the symbolic closure at the end of the play. Once again, Wolfe moves away from the German practice of using purely symbolic and abstract settings. Wolfe uses a symbolic

set in *Mannerhouse*, but tries to merge it with the concrete. The mannerhouse is a definite setting that also functions as a symbol.

Another possible reading of the symbol of the house is that it is representative of Wolfe's shift in writing from romantic melodramas to Expressionism. The destruction of the mannerhouse can be viewed as Wolfe's disillusionment with the values and writing of the old southern aristocracy, and his move to a more modern system of values, and style of writing. If Eugene is in fact a dark mirror of Wolfe's interior self, then this reading is accurate. Even if it is not, the growth as a playwright that Wolfe demonstrates from *Buck Gavin* to *Mannerhouse* is substantial. The shift in genres through the course of his playwriting career is consistent with the progression of the modern theater in America.

Mannerhouse is a play that has "no relation to problem, none to history"(Donald 124). It is the only one of Wolfe's plays that was not produced in an academic setting. This was a story that Wolfe tried for years to tell, and the only play he wrote without a mentor. As literature, the play is an excellent example of certain elements of Expressionism, but it would be far too difficult to perform. Many of the psychological elements in the play are described not within the dialogue, but in the stage directions. Wolfe is dependent on his stage directions, which in some cases, according to Jerry Rice, were descriptive vignettes, which "cannot be used as a guide for designing a stage setting"(Rice *Mannerhouse* 31).

Wolfe knew the effect he wanted the play to have, but he did not have the ability to express this in his dialogue. As a result, the play has never been produced professionally in the United States. Wolfe submitted drafts of *Mannerhouse* to the Theater Guild, the Neighborhood Playhouse, the Actors' Theater and the Provincetown Players. They all declined the play for production. It is fitting that *Mannerhouse*, while never produced in the United States, has been produced twice in Germany, in 1953 and

then in 1956. The director of the productions decided to have an actor read the stage directions. The play was very well-received (Rice 32-34).

This was Wolfe's last venture into playwriting. He must have realized that his strength was not in dialogue but in the descriptions that he was writing within the plays. His growth as a playwright was substantial, and he showed a willingness to use experimental types of drama to express his themes. He moved from realism to Expressionism, and ultimately abandoned the constraints of drama altogether in favor of the more malleable narrative form of the novel.

In leaving Wolfe, we leave the main era of Expressionistic playwrighting. Straight Expressionism was only in vogue for a few Broadway seasons, from 1921 thru 1924, and its appeal as a genre of theater was limited.

Djuna Barnes was also a member of the Lost Generation, and until the recent feminist movement in literary criticism, a largely overlooked one. She was quoted once as saying "I am the most famous unknown of the century"(Benstock 234). Although Barnes is best know for her modernist novel *Nightwood*, she began her writing career as a reporter for several New York newspapers, specifically the *New York Press*, *Telegraph* and *World* (Benstock 237). She also wrote "Light essays and journalistic commentaries. These short pieces were published in little magazines and periodicals such as *Charm, Vanity Fair*, the *New Yorker* and *Theater Guild Magazine*"(Benstock 237). Many of Barnes's one-act plays were originally printed in these publications. Three of these plays were produced by the Theater Guild. None of Barnes's early plays, which were all extremely short one-acts, were Expressionistic. Rather, she attempted to emulate the popular Irish playwrights of the time, Synge, O'Casey and Yeats. It was not until she

returned from almost twenty years abroad, the majority of that spent in Paris, and took up residence in her beloved Greenwich Village that she returned to playwriting, and utilized elements of Expressionism in *The Antiphon.*

The Antiphon is the result of over fifteen years of work, and it is looked upon as a largely autobiographical work by the few critics that have actually studied it. While the themes of bigamy, abuse and implied incest are indeed present in *The Antiphon* and in Barnes's life, feminist critics seem all too ready to confine their arguments to these issues. The play itself has yet to undergo a serious analysis on its merits as a piece of theatrical literature.

The Antiphon was first published in 1958, almost 20 years after Barnes returned from Paris. *The Antiphon*, and one other currently unpublished play, the *Autobiography of Julia VonBarton*, were the two works that occupied Barnes's writing career over those twenty years. *The Antiphon* has never been produced in America, and was only performed once in Switzerland, in a production directed by Dag Hammerskold. It is a dense, almost impenetrable play, written in blank verse. In *The Antiphon* Barnes follows the pattern that she first developed in writing her one-act plays: an extended conversation, punctuated by shocking and rash acts of violence. While that pattern may hold an audience's interest for twenty minutes, it could not keep them entertained for the three hours minimum it would take to get through a complete performance.

The Antiphon is the story of the conflict between Miranda, a middle-aged woman who had fled from her family in America years before, and her mother, Augusta. The time and setting is a partially bombed-out abbey in England in 1939. The scene opens in

the Abbey, which has been in Miranda's family for three centuries and is run by her Uncle, Jonathan Burley. Miranda and her traveling companion, Jack Blow, are awaiting the arrival of her brothers and mother. They have been summoned to the Abbey by their long lost sibling Jeremy, who left the family home in America at the same time Miranda did. Miranda, who is dressed outlandishly in a theatrical gown, leaves the stage, and Jack and Burly speak about Miranda, and the circumstances of their meeting in Paris:

JACK
Suspect *her* as a member of the Odeon;
A dresser for the opera - and say,
She swept the Comedie Francaise for tragedy.
Me - plain Jack - who followed close behind,
The whipper-in, the prudent ferryman. . . .
Wait. I say fell in, a time ago in Paris.
I, with the single, she, the compound eye
met back to back - a kind of paradox.
Descending the terraces of Sacre Coeur (103-04).

When Jack and Burley step outside to tend to Jack's horse, Miranda's two brothers, Elisha and Dudley, enter the abbey and discuss their plan to kill Miranda and Augusta while they are there. The boys and their mother are planing to sail for America in the morning to avoid the war.

DUDLEY
We'll never have so good a chance again;
Never, never such a barren spot
Nor the lucky anonymity of war.
Old people die of death, remember?
We're strangers here; they people that estrangement.
Good, here's innocence, let's taste it.
Landscapes alter everything. The sea
Will wash us. Tomorrow we are men:
Swing in my stability, Elisha.
They ground they stand on, let's uncover it,
Let's pull their shadows out from under them;
Let's get them over (101).

The second act begins immediately where the first cuts off, with the arrival of Augusta. Augusta gives more exposition in the background and the circumstances of the meeting in the Abbey, stating that she received a letter from Jeremy requesting to meet her there. The brothers also give Augusta the news that Miranda is somewhat famous in both France and England:

ELISHA
I hear Miranda's all get-out in France.
And apparently a scribbler in England.

BURLEY
She is praised here and across the channel, (Barnes 125).

Augusta then goes on to tell her brother Jonathan about her life in America with her late husband, Titus. Titus was a polygamist, and while Augusta kept his house, which he called Hobb's Ark, and tended to his children, he had several other wives and lovers. Miranda enters the room, and neither woman knows the other would be there. The children accuse Augusta and condemn her for letting Titus abuse them when they were children.

AUGUSTA
Don't name his creatures when you speak of me!
ELISHIA
Why not? you also did exactly what he told you,
And let him get away with anything.
DUDLEY
[*With anger*]
Even as a baby in your arms
You let him lash me with his carriage whip.

The mother and her children continue to argue about Titus, with Augusta defending herself by saying that she was a good wife that remained with her husband. When Jack and Burley leave, Dudley and Elisha attack Augusta and Miranda:

> [*Exunt* Burley *and* Jack. *they are no sooner gone than silently and swiftly the two sons* - Dudley *donning a pig's mask,* Elisha *an ass's, as if the playthings would make them anonymous - rush the two women.* Elisha *knocks* Miranda's *cane away from her, seizing her and pinning her arms behind her.* Dudley *pushing* Augusta *about in an attempt to make her dance*] (175).

The brothers shout out accusations at Augusta and try to kill her by means of the intense physical gyrations that Dudley is putting her through. Elisha attempts to rape Miranda. There are inferences in the text that the brothers have had her sexually before: Elisha calls her a "Well-used spinster" (176), and Dudley says "Slap her on her rump, and stand her on four feet! That's her best position!"(176). The verbal abuse of the two women continues, until Elisha grabs her and says:

> Manless, childless, safeless document -
> I'll staff you!
> [*He is weeping as he mauls her.*]
> MIRANDA
> [*Quietly pushing him away*]
> Do not think to climb me, brother.
> See how it is with a man who has no history.
> To make him innocent. See how deaf the face is.
> How the crouching tongue turns in the mouth
> To sting me down; look how he pricks up his ear!
> You'll rump it to the judgment seat, poor trader,
> Dragging the lumber of your tail (Barnes 179).

Then the boys take off their masks, and stop abusing Augusta and Miranda.

Jack and Jonathan return, carrying a model of Augusta's former home in America. Jack forces Augusta to look inside the attic window. She sees dolls depicting the incestuous rape of Miranda, presumably by Titus. Augusta replies to this with horror, contending "I don't care what you've done, I forgive me" (184). She refuses to admit any complicity in her husband's actions, even though she has allowed him to rape his

daughter. Jack calls her "a *madam* by submission With, no doubt, your apron over head" (185).

The third act is a prolonged argument in which Miranda wants Augusta to admit culpability in the abuse she suffered in childhood. Augusta continues to defend herself, and wants to hear about Miranda's life in Paris. Throughout the scene, Augusta attempts to assume Miranda's identity by stealing bits of her clothing. The climax of the play comes when Elisha and Dudley abandon Augusta in the abbey . Augusta blames this on Miranda, and also blames her for Jeremy's running from the family. She attacks and kills Miranda with a large bell:

> AUGUSTA
> Then why did you let me grow so old?
> And let them get away - and Jeremy?
> You are to blame, to blame, you are to blame -
> Lost - lost - lost, lost-
> [Augusta *brings the bell down on* Miranda. *Both fall across the gryphon, pulling the curtains, gilt crown and all. The ringing has ceased.* Burley *appears on the balcony, carrying a lamp.* Jack *turns in from the fallen portion of the wall.*] (223).

With both Miranda and Augusta dead, Jack reveals himself as Jeremy in disguise. He gives no reason for bringing his family together; his motives are never discussed, and at the end of the play he exits the stage, seemingly indifferent to the events that he instigated.

The Antiphon is a difficult play, and its meanings are found in the subtext rather than in the exact words of the characters. It contains a degree of subtlety that is not present in traditional Expressionistic plays. Some critics have gone as far as to call the work "Inscrutable, unplayable, inviolably private by accident or design"(Altman 271).

Given the way it is written, it would seem like an impossible task to stage a workable production of *The Antiphon*. The blank verse is dense, almost impenetrable. The characters, despite their long speeches, do not seem well-developed. Their motivations are not always clear. One way that *The Antiphon* deviates from other Expressionist plays is in the fact that the characters are not archetypes, but rather real individuals with a past history. It is the history that provides the impetus for the action of the play.

One of the Expressionistic elements present in *The Antiphon* is Barnes's use of language, not only to create a dream-like atmosphere, which she effectively does throughout the work, but especially in the structure of her dialogue. One element of Expressionism is its highly stylized dialogue, which: "Unlike conversation, was poetical, febrile, rhapsodic. At one time it might take the form of a long lyrical monologue, and at another, of staccato telegraphese. . . .The lines made no attempt to obey the laws or Pirandello's 'spoken action', in which the words directed the actors movements and gesture, but they tried instead to evoke sympathetic feeling directly" (Styan 5). The blank verse that Barnes uses throughout *The Antiphon* is very stylized and poetic, although she does incorporate long interior monologues that show the characters' mental states. At times, Barnes notes that the delivery of these lines should overlap: "*His and* Elisha's *remarks follow so closely they are spoken in a sort of free-for-all*" (177). One of the elements of the dialogue that makes *The Antiphon* such a frustrating experience is that many of the lines seem to be non-sequiturs between the characters, instead of the traditional building of dialogue in traditional drama. The acting for this piece presumably would not be realistic, because the lines do not suit realistic interpretation.

Another Expressionistic element is the setting. The play takes place in a bombed-out abbey, one that is described in the stage directions as being decorated with flags and bits of theatrical costumes:

> *Directly under the gallery, an arched doorway without a door. In the hall proper, a long table with a single settle facing front, at either end of which is set the half of a gryphon, once a car in a roundabout. . . .*
> *To the left, standing before a paneless Gothic window, a dressmaker's dummy, in regimentals, surrounded by music stands, horns, fiddles, guncases, hatboxs, masks, toys and broken statues, man and beast.*
> *To the right, through the tumbled wall, country can be seen, and a part of a ruined colonnade* (81-82).

The abbey is symbolic of the fractured family, a shell of what it once was. It stands, but only barely. Also in the setting is a Gryphon, once part of a merry-go-round, now sitting inexplicably in an abbey. It is a little piece of the fantastic in the bombed-out setting. The theater costumes and banners that hang about the abbey also add to the sense of the dream-like in the setting.

One other instance that adds to the dream-like qualities of *The Antiphon* occurs when Jack brings in the model version of Hobb's Ark. The family is looking in at a representation of its former life, and there are shadowy figures at the top of the gallery that have come in through the holes in the wall to observe the family observing their former selves:

> AUGUSTA
> [*Looking wildly about, and seeing stray travelers who have climbed up the backway into the gallery, staring down, she throws herself over the doll house, beating at it with both hands. . . .All the heads disappear from the balcony. MIRANDA helps her mother down from the table, putting her own cloak about her*] (186-7).

That motif of watching and being watched carries with it a very dream-like tone. The

presence of these travelers is never explained in the play. They are silent witnesses to the forbidden history of the family that Augusta tries so hard to deny.

Masks are also put to use in this play. The boys use the masks to give them anonymity which gives them the power to attempt to kill their mother and rape and murder their sister. The masks are not enough to let them act on their desires, and they are unable to finish the act. The masks are symbolic of their inner-selves: Dudley wears the mask of a pig, while Elisha wears a donkey head.

While *The Antiphon* is not purely an Expressionistic play, it does contain many elements that were developed in conjunction with the Expressionist theater movement. This corresponds with the use of expressionist elements in American theater after the initial popularity of straight Expressionism faded.

Thus, Barnes's *Antiphon* has several expressionist elements without being a purely expressionistic play. This is consistent with the state of Expressionism in the American Theater. Expressionistic elements continue to be used, but the largely didactic political messages so prevalent in traditional German Expressionism, and in the works of Rice and Lawson, have been replaced with smaller character-driven studies. Several elements have been retained in American drama, such as introspection into the mind of the characters, and symbolic sets. *The Antiphon* also utilizes the atmosphere of the Expressionistic drama, which "was often vividly dreamlike and nightmarish" (Styan 4). The psychological component of Expressionism is also retained in American drama. Many of the elements of Expressionism would continue to be utilized by American playwrights. Two of the most famous plays of the last half-century, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Tennessee Williams' the *Glass Menagerie*, are rife with Expressionistic elements, in both setting and execution.

The playwrights of the Lost Generation wrote several plays that use elements of

Expressionism. These plays follow a trend that was present in the American theatrical community, a movement from German Expressionism back to its less-political origins as developed by Strindberg.

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