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A Study of Directorial Choices in Tennessee Williams' Play Out Cry Focused on Selected Expressionistic Elements

Joyce A. Johnson

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A STUDY OF DIRECTORIAL CHOICES IN
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' PLAY OUT CRY FOCUSED
ON SELECTED EXPRESSIONISTIC ELEMENTS

by

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Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of North Dakota, 1999

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To Lucy Jacobs
This thesis, submitted by Joyce A. Johnson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

Tennessee Williams' play, OUT CRY, uses many of the expressionistic and symbolic elements he used successfully throughout his career. The characters of OUT CRY struggle with the fear of isolation, of entrapment and of sexual relationship. The aim of my thesis is to focus on selected expressionistic elements in OUT CRY and to elaborate on the choices I made as a director in using the expressionistic elements to convey the theme of fear inherent in the play.

I have highlighted the methodology of director Harold Clurman in my analysis of the script. Additionally, I adhered to theory of director Francis Hodge which assisted in the rehearsal process. The expressionistic elements of the world of the play were also explored in my production design collaboration.

My study concludes with reflection on the ambiguity of the play, and further reflections on the challenges in directing non-realistic drama. Finally, I assess the ways in which the expressionistic elements of the play OUT CRY aided in emphasizing the theme of fear articulated by Williams.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Tennessee Williams felt OUT CRY was one of the most important plays of his career. In fact Williams compared this work to his Pulitzer Prize winner A Streetcar Named Desire: "I think it is my most beautiful play since Streetcar, and I've never stopped working on it. I think it is a major work ... it is a cri de coeur, but then all creative work, all life, in a sense, is a cri de coeur" (Bigsby 140). Despite Williams' estimation that OUT CRY was destined to be one of his most creative works, it has never become a popular play.

Williams wrote his most popular plays in the early post World War II years: The Glass Menagerie (1945), A Streetcar Named Desire (1947), and Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, (1954). These years were filled with countless changes for Americans, and the American theatre audiences were challenged by Williams to accept new views of what was "real." The inner truths of what was real in his own experience influenced Williams more than did any other playwright or school he attended.

Experimenting with form throughout his career, Williams drew on aspects of twentieth century forms from expressionism to poetic realism. Blending elements of stagecraft from these forms, he created his own unique style, as he declares in his Memoirs:

Actually my own theatre is also in a state of revolution. I am quite through with the kind of play that established my early and popular reputation. I am doing a different thing
which is altogether my own, not influenced at all by other playwrights at home or abroad or by other schools of theatre. My thing is what it always was: to express my world and my experience of it in whatever form seems suitable to the material. (Williams xvii)

Using his own experiences in the earlier plays, such as The Glass Menagerie, Williams still incorporated them into a mostly realistic style. While achieving great success in his early career, his later work drew negative criticism as he veered from his more realistic plays written from 1945-1960. In particular critics have grouped the later plays under the heading problem plays, citing them as being repetitious and too personally connected to Williams. Even though The Glass Menagerie was a memory play and therefore personal, it was the later problem plays that Williams was taken to task for. Among them is OUT CRY, which Williams admitted was highly autobiographical. He described it as "This is me, and it's my most personal work" (Spoto 303).

Purpose of Study

The aim of my thesis is (1) to focus on selected expressionistic elements in OUT CRY and (2) to elaborate on the choices I made as a director in using expressionistic elements in the play to convey the theme of fear of such things as isolation, entrapment and sexual relationship articulated by Williams.

Expressionistic elements have proved useful in conveying inner feelings as truth. While some critics gave Williams negative response for his use of expressionistic and symbolic elements, theorists Alan Downer in his book Fifty Years of American Drama: 1900-1950, and Louis
Broussard, in his book *American Drama: Contemporary Allegory from Eugene O’Neill to Tennessee Williams*, validate the successful use of these non-realistic techniques to convey inner feelings as universal themes. Felicia Hardison Londre in her essay, *A Streetcar Running Fifty Years*, helps define the elements used in Williams’ departures from realism. More recently, theorist Annette J. Saddik, in her book *The Politics of Reputation - The Critical Reception of Tennessee William’s Later Plays* provides insight to the later Williams’ plays and Williams’ choice to move toward a more subjective view, including use of characters as representations of a particular idea, emotion or theme.

In the process of directing *OUT CRY*, Harold Clurman’s text *On Directing* provided a beginning for a director’s analysis and *Play Directing: Analysis, Communication and Style* by Francis Hodge served as a directing tool for choices made during rehearsal.

Finally, I will reach some conclusions about the challenges of staging the play. In addition, I will offer reflection on the ambiguity of the play and the difficulty in assessing accomplishments regarding the ways expressionism aided in conveying the theme of fear in *OUT CRY*.

**Organization of Study**

Chapter One will consist of background research on the play and playwright. It will include a brief synopsis of the play *OUT CRY*, along with biographical information about Williams which relates to the synopsis. This chapter will further include a brief discussion of expressionism and expressionistic elements I selected in *OUT CRY*. In addition the chapter will also include an overview of selected problem plays by Williams, which inform my analysis of *OUT CRY* as they are all
written in the same period as OUT CRY, and each also incorporate expressionistic elements. Theorists Londre and Saddik will be used in discussion of the types of non-realistic and expressionistic elements used in OUT CRY.

Chapter Two will be organized according to the four steps used in my directing process: script analysis, casting, rehearsal and production design. My focus will be how I approached the non-realistic elements of the play in each of these steps. My script analysis was based on Harold Clurman’s text On Directing; however; I selected Play Directing: Analysis, Communication and Style by Hodge as more appropriate in making choices for directing specific themes and expressionistic elements in OUT CRY in rehearsal. Chapter Two will also include discovery of the limitations of the Clurman text in directing non-realistic drama.

Chapter Three will provide conclusions about the choices made for the set, lighting and sound design of the play. Additionally, it will provide conclusions on the choices for the expressionistic staging of non-linear action of the play and choices focused on the use of character as a representation of a subjective theme. Further, it will provide reflection on the ambiguity of the play and the manner in which staging expressionistic elements may enable an audience to experience the inner truth of feelings along with characters.

Background of OUT CRY

Tennessee Williams’ play OUT CRY has never achieved a successful run on Broadway nor a place of importance in the Williams’ canon, which seems ironic in view of the earlier stated estimation of the playwright
of his work, "I think it is my most beautiful play since Streetcar, and I’ve never stopped working on it. I think it is a major work ... ”
(Bigsby 140).

Originally produced as The Two Character Play, in London in 1967, the show was re-worked and produced in Chicago in 1971 as OUT CRY. Williams was obsessed to see OUT CRY succeed on Broadway. After numerous revisions to the play, it opened March 1, 1973, at the Lyceum Theatre in New York. In his book The Kindness of Strangers Donald Spoto relates that audiences and critics were “disappointed and confused” (304). He also notes that OUT CRY closed on March 10, after twelve performances, stating:

The critics were as disappointed as the New York public, sensing the energies Williams had put into it but feeling left outside of it. Each of the critical reactions lamented the burial of authentic feeling in a morass of verbal and dramatic confusion. (Spoto 304)

In his Memoirs Williams describes the Broadway experience of this major work as a “misadventure” citing the director as a problem and the name and stage presence of actor Cara Duff-Mac-Cormick as “insufficient” (233-34). The play was revived in New York on August 14, 1975, again with unfavorable notices. It did not go on to any successful professional revival and is infrequently performed today.

Synopsis of OUT CRY

Tennessee Williams’ play OUT CRY is set in a subterranean theatre in an unknown, cold location. The two characters of the play are acting team brother and sister Felice and Clare Devoto. They are part of a
cultural exchange program, so the theatre is not to be imagined in the United States. The action takes place in one evening. The rest of their acting company has not arrived, but rather, have sent a telegram saying they will not be joining Felice and Clare because they believe them to be insane. Faced by an audience expecting a performance they enact, as a play-within-the-play, *The Two Character Play*. We are unsure whether the audience Felice and Clare are performing for is real or if Felice and Clare imagine them to be there. This is possible, as Clare and Felice do use alcohol during the play and refer to their use of prescription drugs as well.

*The Two Character Play* is a play which Felice has been writing and struggling to finish. The setting for *The Two Character Play* is a town called New Bethesda in the deep South. *The Two Character Play* contains many parallels to their own background. It is in this unknown, cold location, after their troupe has accused them of being insane and abandoned them, that Felice and Clare end up with the opportunity for finding the ending to his play. When the play-within-the-play comes to an abrupt stop, they discover they are locked inside the cold, foreign theatre. With a revolver in their possession, the play ends suddenly and ambiguously.

Felice and Clare have a dependent relationship which may also be incestuous. This relationship will be discussed further in Chapter II. Their dysfunctional family background includes the apparent murder-suicide of their mother and father when Felice and Clare were younger. Clare and Felice have been on the road acting together for a number of years.
The main conflict of the actors Claire and Felice in OUT CRY and of "Clare" and "Felice" portrayed in The Two Character Play are then understandably similar. In each plot they struggle to cope with fears which threaten to drive them insane. One of these fears is their simultaneous need to separate and inability to do so.

Williams’ Biographical Information

As I have previously mentioned, Williams’ later plays are accused of being repetitious and too personal. One of these plays to have drawn upon his personal experiences and feelings to the greatest extent is OUT CRY. I will next offer biographical information on Williams and further relate it to the synopsis of the play.

Thomas Lanier Williams was born on March 26, 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi. His father spent a great deal of time away from his wife and children. Williams spent much of his childhood growing up in the home of his mother’s parents. His maternal grandfather was minister of the Episcopalian church. He had one older sister, Rose, and one younger brother, Dakin.

At age five he suffered a severe case of diphtheria that left him with weak kidneys and paralyzed legs for the better part of two years. He was to be affected all his life by the repercussions of this illness and his inability at a young age to run and to play games and make friends with other children. His father taunted him about his lack of interest in athletics. Young Williams and his sister often argued with their father and endured listening to their parents’ violent arguments as well.
When his father got a permanent job in St. Louis, he moved the family there. Young Tom began writing stories by the time he was eleven, and withdrew from everyone in the family except Rose. When Rose reached adolescence she and Tom grew apart, and she experienced violent outbursts with their father. Her violence alternated with sullen moods and necessitated treatment for mental illness.

After winning third place in a national essay contest in 1927, Tom was admitted to the University of Missouri in 1929. It was there that he saw a production of Henrik Ibsen’s *Ghosts* and decided to become a playwright. He failed ROTC, however, and his angry father pulled him out of college and forced him to go to work in the International Shoe Company. Eventually he did return to school and produced some of his plays at college. He graduated from the University of Iowa in 1938. He moved to New Orleans and changed his name from “Tom” to “Tennessee”.

Slowly having success at writing, he received a $1,000.00 Rockefeller Grant, and in 1940 produced *Battle of Angels* in Boston. The *Glass Menagerie* was his first big success. The story of Tom and his disabled sister, Laura, and their controlling mother is thought by many to have been the first of his plays inspired by his own relationships with his family. His own mother, Edwina Dakin Williams, had allowed doctors to perform a frontal lobotomy on Tennessee’s sister Rose. Williams experienced guilt over being gone when this had happened to Rose, and later provided her with companionship and the financial support for her care and treatment for the rest of her life.

Tennessee Williams went on to win two Pulitzer Prizes (*A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1948 and *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* in 1955) and four New
York Drama Critics' Circle Awards. Several other early plays were Broadway hits, and most of his successful plays have been made into motion pictures.

In 1947 Williams met and fell in love with Frank Merlo. Merlo became his steady partner for fourteen years, until he died of cancer in 1963. Williams, who had struggled with depression most of his life and lived with the fear that he may go insane as did his sister Rose, now went into deep depression that lasted for ten years. During this period he fought addictions to alcohol and prescription drugs, which at one point, in 1969, caused his brother Dakin to commit him to the mental ward of Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. Throughout these years, however, Williams continued to write plays and completed his autobiography, Memoirs. Tennessee Williams' life ended when he choked to death on a bottle cap on February 24, 1983. He is buried in St. Louis, Missouri.

Relating Biographical Information to OUT CRY

In The Kindness of Strangers, Donald Spoto gives this brief synopsis of OUT CRY/The Two Character Play which outlines the sadly significant relationship between Williams' own life and those of Clare and Felice in his play:

In The Two Character Play, later sometimes called OUT CRY, a brother and a sister, Felice and Clare, are trapped in a theatre during the run of something called The Two Character Play. In the "performance" part of this play-within-a-play, autobiographical elements from the childhoods of Rose and Tom Williams are introduced (parental fights, the Southern setting, the name-callings, the accusations that they are
both insane). But in his now fragile state -- as he was writing this play Williams used those elements to establish most plainly the psychospiritual kinship with his sister that had been his obsession in The Purification, The Glass Menagerie, The Rose Tattoo, Suddenly Last Summer and elsewhere. (Spoto 273)

The similarities Spoto describes here refer to “Clare” and “Felice” of The Two Character Play having grown up in the South with parents who fought violently and whose father had spent time in “State Haven” for mental illness. As Rose and Tom Williams had a the type of bond Spoto refers to as an obsession on Tom’s part, so is the brother-sister relationship of “Clare” and “Felice” unusually dependent.

Although Spoto has here related the experiences of Williams’ childhood to the play-within-the-play, I see further relation in elements of the external play being significant to Williams’ later life. For example, Felice is a struggling writer, as Williams was at one time. Felice and Clare begin performing and later it is unsure whether there was ever, indeed an audience. This parallels with Williams’ own effort in writing his later plays and not being sure if there would be an audience for them. And lastly, but far more significantly as it relates to one of the themes of fear inherent in the play, the adult Williams was compelled to hide his homosexual relationships for years, as Felice and Clare have been hiding and at the same time seeking solace, in their incestuous relationship.
Expressionism

To base a discussion of the direction of expressionistic/non-realistic elements in *OUT CRY*, a brief explanation of expressionism and background of expressionistic tendencies of Williams is necessary. Theatre historians Wilson and Goldfarb define expressionism as follows:

The term expressionism was first used in France just after the turn of the century to describe a style of painting. Expressionism developed in Germany around 1915 as a movement in art and literature in which the representation of reality is distorted to communicate inner feelings. Expressionist plays are often highly subjective: the dramatic action is seen through the eyes of the protagonist and therefore frequently seems distorted or dreamlike. The language is telegraphic, with most speeches consisting of one or two lines, through these sections of short speeches alternate with long lyrical passages. (Wilson/Goldfarb 402-03)

Although the use of expressionistic technique was unwelcome by many critics, theorist Alan S. Downer has this to say about the successful use of expressionistic devices in modern repertory:

Properly handled, organically related to the action and purpose of the whole work, the devices of expressionism have permitted playwrights to penetrate beneath the surface of their situation, to reveal truths which realism by its nature tends to disguise. (Downer 104-05)

Always experimenting, Tennessee Williams used expressionistic devices successfully in many of his early plays, and was among those
complimented for this technique by theorist Louis Broussard in his book *American Drama: Contemporary Allegory from Eugene O’Neill to Tennessee Williams*: “Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and Archibald MacLeish produced allegorical plays with expressionistic stagecraft not seen since the twenties” (Broussard 111). Thus, Williams’ efforts to incorporate elements of expressionism with realism in the staging of these early plays appears to have been well supported.

Increasing his use of non-realistic elements, including symbolism, which Wilson and Goldfarb call “first cousin” to expressionism (402), Williams moved into the latter half of the twentieth century with less successful reception of the more introspective and experimental plays he chose to write. The 1960’s and 1970’s were revolutionary in sexual freedoms, experimentation with drugs and the struggle of contemporary society in finding ways of expression. Williams looked to the non-realistic style to express the changing truths within himself in his writing. As Wilson and Goldfarb note, the success of expressionistic devices lasted longer than the actual expressionistic movement:

> In its pure form, expressionism was short-lived, lasting only about 15 years. Many expressionistic techniques, however, found their way into later experimental and traditional theatre, and today’s dramatists still use non-realistic devices that can be called expressionistic. 

(Wilson/Goldfarb 404)

Williams appears to have been one of the contemporary dramatist’s to successfully incorporate these non-realistic devices of expressionism
into his own experimental style, and most particularly in his play OUT CRY.

In her essay A Streetcar Running Fifty Years Felicia Hardison Londre describes elements that she feels are characteristic of Williams' own evolved use of expressionism:

Such elements include the episodic structure, the lyricism of dialogue and atmosphere interspersed by comedy; the psychological realism of the characterization set against a striking departure from realism in the staging; the evocatively charged use of scenic elements, props, sound effects, gestures and linguistic motif. (Londre 46-47)

Further assessment of these elements listed by Londre and how I find they are put to use in OUT CRY follows.

Expressionism in OUT CRY

Using Londre's description and my study of other selected later Williams' plays which will be discussed at the end of this chapter, I analyzed the elements of expressionism in OUT CRY. In this section I will relate each of the elements in Londre's description to examples found in the play.

First in discussion, the action of the play OUT CRY is, as Londre says of Williams' style, expressionistically episodic rather than linear. Although it is announced when the play-within-the-play is to begin, the boundaries of when we remain in The Two Character Play and when we are shifted back to the external play are blurred from then on by flashbacks, dialogue that is addressed to the audience, and improvisations. In addition, after the play-within-the-play comes to an
abrupt stop, there is still another shift back to it which uses a fast forward in the lines to jump to the ambiguous ending of the play. This episodic structure leads to confusion as to which characters are having the dialogue; Clare and Felice of the external play, or "Clare" and "Felice" of The Two Character Play.

Londre next mentions the element of Williams' writing using lyricism interspersed with comedy. The strong spontaneous feeling, or lyricism of the dialogue and the intense mood of the atmosphere of OUT CRY are expressionistically interspersed with comedy of a darkly sarcastic nature. An example of this is after Felice has told Clare about the telegram from the company accusing them of being insane. Clare is attempting to rationalize that their behavior is the "peculiar" behavior of artists and Felice's next line is, "The company has been with us, except for a death now and then, or a commitment to an asylum now and then, for-" (Williams 18). Perhaps it is sad, but it is still true that this sounds humorous after all the talk of impending disaster, and they themselves just having been accused of being insane. Another example from the play-within-the-play is Felice's ultimate attempt to get Clare to go out the door calling without him: "You know what you could do? Everywhere you went calling you could say, "Oh, do you know how idiotic I am? I went out without cigarettes!" And they'd offer you one at each place and you could slip them into your purse, save them till you got home, and we could smoke them here, Clare. So! Go!" (Williams 33). His teasing of Clare is also a moment of levity which briefly breaks the intensity of their fearful mood.
Londre’s next point is that of the psychological realism of characterization set apart from striking departure from realism in the staging. This relates to the characteristic of expressionism in which the action of the play is seen through the eyes of the protagonist. In OUT CRY Clare and Felice are both alternately protagonist and antagonist. They are portrayed by two separate actors who interact realistically, but are similar enough to represent the thought process and feelings of one person. The plot is contained in the theatrical world, but a universally reflected theme is fear. Felice and Clare convey the fears of their past, present and future as writer and performer for the theatre. The play-within-the-play is not only acted by them but written by Felice. It is his vision of his life and the fears he experiences. The other, and often opposing side of himself is represented by his having a sister, Clare, to act with. Because the two characters almost appear to meld as one, with scenic elements, sound effect and non-linear action assisting, the characterization of their fear is a truly striking departure from realism.

Londre next refers to “evocatively charged” use of scenic elements by Williams. Scenic elements in OUT CRY are decidedly unrealistic. This is exemplified by the set in its unfinished state, which actually represents the set of two separate plays. The set design is as Williams specifies, abstractly and expressionistically fragmented by an unfinished door frame and window sill and steps that lead to nowhere. There are no walls enclosing the “room”. The main evocative and non-realistic element of the set is a huge, dark statue the stage directions describe as “a work of great power and darkly subjective meaning”
The statue is only acknowledged by the characters a few times, while remaining ever-present in the background of both plays as a symbol of fear.

Williams also specifies that the scenic element of the lighting changes from dimness which expressionistically gives the cold atmosphere of the external play, to warmer, bright lighting for a hot summer day in the south for the play-within-the-play. However, when the characters move in and out of the play-within-the-play the lighting does not consistently change, adding to the visual ambiguity in scenic elements overall.

I perceive what Londre refers to as evocative use of both props and gesture can be exemplified as follows in OUT CRY: Various props and set piece are mimed in the play, as the premise includes the fact that not all of the set, costumes and props belonging to the company have arrived. In their dialogue of the play-within-the-play however, "Clare" and "Felice" do not change lines to reflect items they do not have, but through their gesture and expressions provide what is missing. For example, the faded roses in the carpet are stared at as if they were there (32), and imaginary soap bubbles are blown and admired (38), all with the dreamlike quality of expressionism.

Moving to Londre's next point of Williams' use of sound effects, I find that music and numerous sound effects are used in an evocative manner to create the mood of fear in the play. Harsh metal sounds expressionistically place the atmosphere of the theatre Clare and Felice are in as creaking, cold and empty. The sounds of imaginary stage curtains opening, the murmuring and laughter from an audience that
cannot be proved existed, the noise of gunfire from outside the theatre and echoes of the characters calling out evoke the feeling of fear. During the play-within-the-play a fast forward of the music being played evokes a feeling of fear as well. Additionally, there is a sensually called for evocative music played during one of the more intimate moments between Clare and Felice.

Finally, addressing Londre’s reference to Williams’ use of linguistic motifs, I have found several to exist in OUT CRY. For example, the rapid-fire dialogue of short length which is interspersed with puns, often overlaps or completes the other character’s line (thought). This is broken, expressionistically, by longer lyrical passages, for example “Felice’s” monologue when he leaves the house in anger, only to stand in front of the house for a few moments and very touchingly explain how impossible it is to be without Clare. In part:

... I stand here-move not a step further. Impossible without her. No, I can’t leave her alone. I feel so exposed, so cold. And behind me I feel the house. It seems to be breathing a faint, warm breath on my back. I feel it the way you feel a loved person standing close behind you. Yes, I’m already defeated. The house is so old, so faded, so warm that, yes, it seems to be breathing. It seems to be whispering to me: “You can’t go away. Give up. Come in and stay.” Such a gentle command! What do I do?

Naturally, I obey ... (OUT CRY 55)

Additionally, the play contains non-realistic language in the conventions of some lines being spoken in French, announcing of stage
directions, addressing the audience, and calling for "line". All these act in counterpoint expressionistically to the carefully written and more rehearsed sounding lines which include clever word play in their puns, repetition and alliteration. The gestures of striking piano keys for Clare and of pounding the floor with a walking cane for Felice are also language motifs used when Clare and Felice are feeling such strong emotions they can find no words to express them.

Finding all of the elements in OUT CRY which Londre had cited, my interpretation of their expressionistic use was strengthened further by the theories of Annette J. Saddik who has this to say about OUT CRY/The Two Character Play and other of the later Williams' plays:

These later plays draw attention to consciousness of performance and emphasize the ambiguity resulting from a language which inadequately expresses ideas and emotions. They do not seek to reproduce the illusionistic drama of close/(dis)closure and the reestablishment of order that realism embraces; rather, they deliberately avoid the "slice of life" reproduction of realistic speech patterns through referential language, consistent character psychology and development and the kind of linear narrative plot that characterizes realistic drama. (Saddik 79)

Additionally, contrasting several later Williams' plays with his earlier realistic plays Saddik theorizes: "The characters in the later anti-realistic plays are not characters in the realistic sense of the word, but often are themselves representations of a particular idea, emotion, or theme, following a more subjective view" (Saddik 79). My analysis of
other later anti-realistic plays of Williams formed my view that Clare
and Felice of OUT CRY are not characters in the realistic sense of the
word, but character representations of the theme of fear.

Analysis of Selected Later Williams’ Plays

In this section I will provide discussion on three of the later
Williams’ non-realistic plays I selected to study to enable a more
insightful analysis of OUT CRY. I will include the reason for choosing
each particular play and give examples of the elements of expressionism
used in each as well.

Gnadiges Fraulein

I selected to study the play Gnadiges Fraulein for three reasons.
Firstly, because of the similarity to OUT CRY in the expressionistic
element requiring multiple staging in its’ interior and exterior set.
Once identified, this imaginative use of two playing spaces was
something that assisted me in envisioning options for the staging of OUT
CRY. Secondly, the plot of the play revolves around an artist, who is
now out of work, and beset by fearful conditions. This is similar to
Clare and Felice of OUT CRY, who may not actually have an audience and
who find themselves no longer part of an acting company, as they are
also beset by fearful conditions. And thirdly, the use of sound and
lighting effects to convey mood in Gnadiges Fraulein heightened my
awareness of how these elements can be used to convey mood/atmosphere in
non-realistic drama, particularly, how they could be used for OUT CRY.

Gnadiges Fraulein is an experimental work of Williams which
premiered on February 22, 1966 in New York City. Again, my first reason
in selecting this play has to do with its use of an exterior and an
interior set. *Gnadiges Fraulein* takes place on a cottage porch in the fictitious location of Cocaloony Key. Immediately in the production notes to the play Williams writes:

> The porch is a totally unrealistic arrangement of assorted props, yard and picket fence as if Picasso had designed it. Everything is in the subtle variety of grays and grayish whites that you see in pelican feathers and clouds, changing once or twice in the play when a bloom of light behind the window reveals a poetically incongruous Victorian parlor. It’s like the recollections of the Gnadiges Fraulein, her scrapbook of a past that had splendors. (*Gnadiges Fraulein* 217)

From this description of the expressionistically abstract set, and in particular from Williams’ own explanation of how set is meant to give a more subjective idea about the character, I could see how the set of *OUT CRY* can be interpreted as the state of an incomplete and very disordered mind; the chaos/imbalance of madness.

The second reason for selecting this play for further study is that the plot revolves around a suffering artist, as does the plot of *OUT CRY*. The *Gnadiges Fraulein* (which translates to blessed virgin in German) is an ex-vaudeville singer. She now lives in a transient “dormitory”. Every day the Fraulein is attacked by vicious, scavenger birds as she tries to gather fish for supper. Among those who see the play as an obvious metaphor of the suffering artist, trying to create art to live and regularly being torn apart in society, is critic Gilbert
Debusscher, who says in his essay *The Gnädiges Fraulein: Williams' Self Portrait Among the Ruins*:

> It (*Gnädiges Fraulein*) would have been better received by audiences had they recognized the play's three main themes, the problematic relationship of the middle-aged women Molly and Polly, the boarding house as a transient residence, a recurrent locale symbolic in Williams of the pitiless universe through which we pass briefly, [and] the title character as a portrait of the artist -- appear in many of Williams earlier works and find their most exaggerated treatment here (Debusscher 63-64).

Theory regarding the main protagonist as a portrait of an artist, such as this by Debusscher, was helpful in my analysis of *OUT CRY*. It impressed upon me the importance of Clare and Felice being first and foremost performers. I then looked for the lines in *OUT CRY* which emphasize this, for example Felice’s lines, “Now all we have to do is remember that if we’re not artists, we’re nothing. And play The Two Character Play the best we’ve ever played it no matter what our condition of panic may be” (*OUT CRY* 22). Like the Gnädiges Fraulein, who breaks into song in the face of fear of being ripped apart by the cocaloonie birds, Clare of *OUT CRY* forces back her panic when the curtains open and she hears the sound of mocking laughter from an audience. Throwing off her coat in acceptance of the challenge and assuming her role as artist: “Do I enter first or do you?” (*OUT CRY* 24). This focus on a theme of the suffering artist in both plays made me aware of the fact that the fears of both confinement and isolation
Clare and Felice experience in *OUT CRY* are possible to be looked at as the fault of the outside world. However, they may also be in part, self-imposed by the memories of success and dread of failure.

My third reason for selecting this play for a comparative analysis was the discovery of similar non-realistic elements to those used in *OUT CRY*. After reading *Gnadiges Fraulein* several times I was enabled to readily identify the similar elements and then also became more adept at identifying elements of expressionism which are unique to *OUT CRY*.

In *Gnadiges Fraulein* the non-realistic elements used in the play are the non-linear action, the use of unconventional dialogue, the interior and exterior set, and the use of sound and lighting to create atmosphere. Of those, looking for and identifying the use of sound and lighting to convey mood were the most helpful in establishing what to look for in *OUT CRY* regarding these elements of expressionism. The interior of the set in the parlor is warm and colorful and seems safe from the menacing birds, the wind, and the cruel, cool tones of gray everywhere outside. The set of the play-within-the-play of *OUT CRY* is also warm and bright. It seems, even with its' bad memories, to be a safer place than venturing outside the house where cruel boys bombard the house with rocks, and may come after Clare and Felice.

The noises of wind, birds swooshing and groans and moans within the house in *Gnadiges Fraulein* come from sources we cannot see, but must be felt. From this, I realized the importance the playwright intends for the sound effects of *OUT CRY* to be felt as well. In *OUT CRY* these sound effects include harsh metal sounds, gunfire outside the theatre, imaginary stage curtains opening, mumbling and laughter from a supposed
audience, echoes of the character's own voices and a fast-forward of the music being played in the play-within-the-play.

In sum, I learned from reading and analyzing this highly non-realistic play, how to begin to follow the path of ambiguity in identifying the ways expressionistic elements are used in a later Williams' play. Most specifically this assisted me with my analysis of OUT CRY by comparison of set requirements, theme of artist to represent character, and use of sound and lighting to heighten mood.

**Small Craft Warnings**

*Small Craft Warnings* informed my analysis of OUT CRY for two reasons. The first reason was the fact that not only was this another play first produced within a short time of the premiere of OUT CRY which incorporates numerous elements of expressionism with realism, but it also was a play Williams placed great importance on to set up a positive reception of OUT CRY. When first reading this about *Small Craft Warnings* I determined it would have similarities to OUT CRY, which I find it does. Secondly, the references to this being a highly personal work, and the same having been said of OUT CRY, I felt this play may give me further information about the inner truth of the playwright, which is another element of expressionism. More insight into Williams inner truth would hopefully assist me with expressionistic technique in staging OUT CRY.

*Small Craft Warnings* started out as a shorter work under the title *Confessional* in 1969. Expanded, it was renamed *Small Craft Warnings* and produced off Broadway in 1972. In Annette Saddik's book, *The Politics*
of Reputation: The Critical Reception of Tennessee William’s Later Plays she recounts:

The most successful play of the later period was Small Craft Warnings, which opened off-off Broadway in 1972. When the play moved uptown to the New Theatre, Williams entered his own play in the role of the alcoholic doctor to boost ticket sales. (Saddik 22)

Even with William's appearance in the play, Small Craft Warnings only managed a run of over three months. This was particularly disappointing to Williams because he felt the success of Small Craft Warnings would lay ground for a positive reception of OUT CRY. In his Memoirs he reflected on one of his appearances as the doctor in Small Craft Warnings which gave me my first reason for delving further into this play:

And yet I got good hands. I guess there is something about me that is recognizable as something about "Doc" - regardless of whether all that I say is heard. It is imperative that the show complete the summer. It must, it will. I think the production of OUT CRY may hinge upon my demonstration to draw again and to keep a show that received "mixed reviews" running five months, which is, I mean would be, quite a prestigious accomplishment and a help with the big one. (Memoirs 128-29)

Because of this inference that OUT CRY would be "the big one", I felt I needed to know what the playwright was working on at this point in his career which Small Craft Warnings was to be the precursor of.
I would argue that because Williams almost seemed surprised that it may be true that "something about me is recognizable as something about "Doc", he does not always intend to over-emphasize what is personal to him. I feel his aim is to relate his life experiences in themes that can still be universally empathized with. However, for this play, and for many of his later works, he continued to be criticized for the autobiographical elements in his work. It was during the time Small Craft Warnings premiered that Williams came out with an essay addressing the accusations of his work being "too personal" Saddik explains:

Intended as a pre-opening piece in the New York Times, it became the introduction to Small Craft Warnings (New Directions 1972) after the Times chose to interview him instead. Williams answered the charge of being "too personal" - "Is it or is it not right or wrong for a playwright to put his persona into his work?" My answer is:

"What else can he do?" - I mean the very root-necessity of all creative work is to express those things most involved in one's particular experience. Otherwise, is the work, however well executed, not a manufactured, a synthetic thing? (Saddik 131-32)

To clarify the value of personal writing for an audience Williams went on to say:

Now I assure you that I know it can be overdone. It is the responsibility of the writer to put his experience as a being into work that refines it and elevates it and makes of
it an essence that a wide audience can somehow manage to feel in themselves: "This is true." (Saddik 132)

These words of Williams on personal writing which were found through my research of *Small Craft Warnings* became important to me in interpreting what I felt would be honoring the playwright in production. There are more elements of expressionism in *OUT CRY* than in *Small Craft Warnings*. In particular the ambiguous and expressionistic use of language would necessitate an emphasis on the characters in order to "refine and elevate" the human experiences of Williams. This would be very important if the work were to result in the ability of an audience to feel the subjective theme of fear.

Saddik also connects Williams' "too personal" response at the time of *Small Craft Warnings* to other later Williams' plays, including *OUT CRY* (*The Two Character Play*) expressing the more positive opinion she has of *OUT CRY*s non-realistic form: [In the case of *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*]

The excessively personal nature of the play is indeed part of the problem, but only in the sense that Williams had not yet found a way of dramatizing his personal vision effectively in nonrealistic form, as he finally did in *Can't Imagine, Tokyo Hotel*, and *The Two Character Play*. (Saddik 132)

Possible reasons for Saddik's opinion of *OUT CRY/The Two Character Play* became more clear as I continued to study *Small Craft Warnings*.

*Small Craft Warnings* presents the regulars of "Monk's Place", a California beachfront bar, and several other male characters that are
passing through. Expressionistically, no specific date, time or location are given for the play. The focus is kept on the characters’ lost and wasted lives. There is no definitive end to the play. The characters leave the bar by choice or by force and it is left ambiguous to the audience what will become of each of them.

Non-realistic elements in the staging are numerous, and as he does with the script of OUT CRY, Williams begins relating them in the play’s stage directions: “The scene is non-realistic evocation of a bar on the beachfront in one of those coastal towns between L.A. and San Diego ... the walls on all three sides should have the effect of fog rolling in from the ocean” (Small Craft Warnings 11).

Additionally, non-realistic elements of the play create mood in an expressionistic style. Sound effects include the sound of the ocean, sound of a police car, the sound of group singing, and the sound of the same violin music repeatedly played on the jukebox. The lighting is perhaps the most important nonrealistic element used. The forestage is lit for a "confessional" effect, and the rest of the bar dimmed, as each character advances to the forestage to give a reflective monologue directed to the audience. When seated at tables, the table that has a conversation going on that the audience is supposed to hear has its hurricane lamp lit, while all the other table lamps are off and those patrons are in dim light. And when Violet is giving sexual favors under the table to Bill the table is not lit, but "a pin-point of light picks up Violet’s tear-stained and tranced face" (Small Craft Warnings 52).

Water, fog, Violet’s dirty and smelly slippers, a huge sailfish over the bar and the stairs all have symbolic significance. The use of
the dreamlike confessional with the fog rolling past is a technique of expressionistic style for flashbacks and for conversations with the audience. The non-linear action shifting from character to character as they enter and exit is another expressionistic element of the play.

To conclude, of greater emphasis than the similar use of elements of expressionism I found in OUT CRY and Small Craft Warnings, was the additional information I uncovered on the personal writing style of Williams by researching Small Craft Warnings. I used this information to guide my choices as director in attempting to honor the intention of the playwright to conveying the theme of fear in a manner that would hopefully enable the audience to empathize with the characters.

**Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play**

I selected Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play for further comparative data firstly because of the interesting and ambiguous manner in which the non-linear action shifts from one era to another. In part Williams accomplishes this through on-stage scene changes, but the dialogue and use of sound and lighting elements also expressionistically convey the crossing of boundaries as well. Attention to these devices informed my analysis of the language, and the sound and lighting elements of OUT CRY.

My second reason for selecting Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play was the part of the plot that pertains to madness, and confinement in an asylum. These are two of the huge fears dealt with in OUT CRY and I felt the characterization of these fears in this play with its similar non-realistic elements would assist me in directorial choices for the subjective theme of fear.
Written in 1975, Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play premiered March 26, 1980 in New York City. In the introductory pages of the script Williams writes the following, which established my two aforementioned reasons for selecting this play:

This is a ghost play. Our reason for taking extraordinary license with time and place is that in an asylum and on its grounds liberties of this kind are quite prevalent; and also these liberties allow us to explore in more depth what we believe is truth of character. (Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play I)

The clarity with which Williams here established what he was doing and why he was doing it helped me with my readings of the ambiguous language in OUT CRY and the more ambiguous meanings to be found in the play that relate to the theme of fear of madness and confinement. I will first address the similar challenge to that in OUT CRY of analyzing the expressionistically non-linear action of this play.

Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play is loosely based on the troubled marriage of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. The action moves back and forth from the 1940's to the 1920's with the aid of light changes, costume changes and the movement of spare set pieces. The characters all perform as ghosts of themselves, but this is not always apparent; it is through the expressionistic linguistic motif of the characters reference to themselves as dead or referring to an experience and telling another character how it turned out, that we are led to this conclusion.
In this play, Zelda tells us right away she is dreaming when she asks the Intern/Edouard "How shall I play it?" (8) and a few lines later says of her meeting with Scott, "It's an impossible meeting, one that he would regret" (Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play 8). The rest of this conversation sets up the form that will be followed:

Intern: You must play it
Zelda: As if it existed?
Intern: After a while, it will seem to exist.
Zelda: Why should this be demanded now...I thought all obligations stopped with death? (Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play 8).

After a while what is happening in the play truly does seem to be what is existing in the "present". However, evocative use of sound and lighting to expressionistically convey mood successfully moves the audience back and forth in time. In her essay Tennessee Williams: The Last Two Decades Ruby Cohn describes some of the ways that Williams uses light, sound and language in the play, which include some devices which assist in the shifting of time:

In Clothes Williams expands his light and sound effects: a projection of Scott in drag precedes his scene with Hemingway; fire seems to erupt from a stage bush and Zelda's third-story room; in no other Williams play does the wind whistle so cruelly. Music and dancing nourish Zelda's hallucinations. Dialogue ranges from the nurse's brief injunctions to the rhythmic exchanges of Scott and Zelda, of Scott and Hemingway, of Zelda and Edouard, sprinkled with
French. At the Murphy party guests banter in trivialities; at the asylum the staff speak authoritatively. Repetitions are meaningful, particularly Zelda’s: "What about my work?". (Cohn 242)

The projection of Scott as a younger man as a background for a scene in which he and Zelda are discussing the same picture that is projected, brings us to a realization they are in the 1940’s discussing the 1920’s event. The fire which seems to erupt in a bush and in Zelda’s room crosses time to when Zelda died in a fire in the asylum, but with her on stage speaking, we realize this is a premonition of the future. The wind whistles cruelly when we are in the present situation of the 1940’s and Zelda is a patient in the asylum, but we do not hear the wind in the scenes from the 1920’s. Music and dancing facilitate the scene changes from the 1940’s back to the 1920’s and there is music and dancing at the party of the 1920’s era. There is also music and dancing by Zelda in the asylum scenes, but it is not beautiful. Here the music is poorly played on a phonograph and Zelda’s dancing is pitiably poor also. The harsh "reality" of the voices of staff in the asylum are different from the rhythms of voices at parties back in the 1920’s before Zelda went mad and was committed to the asylum in the 1940’s.

From the study of the manner in which language and sound and lighting elements are used to span time, I was made more aware of the same elements being intended to assist in establishing boundaries in the ambiguity of the external and play-within-the-play of OUT CRY.

My second reason for selecting Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play for study is the element of the plot having to do with
madness. Zelda Fitzgerald is depicted part of the time as a patient in an insane asylum. She is married to a writer, and considers herself an artist as well, both of which she blames for her madness. She and her husband have struggled for attention to their work. Their existence as artists has also been plagued by alcohol use (Scott) and use of prescription drugs (Zelda). The use of alcohol and prescription drugs by Clare and Felice, actor brother and sister, is also depicted in OUT CRY. I was able to assess the characterization of such usage in Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play in violent outbursts, unpredictable behavior, and incoherent speech. This provided me with insight to some of the possible effects of alcohol and drug use on Clare and Felice in OUT CRY, leading to my interpretation of the expressionistic dreamlike quality of OUT CRY not actually being a dream at all. In my opinion it seemed more likely to be the distortions and the hallucinations of mental illness heightened by alcohol and drug use.

Furthermore, the fact that these are illnesses suffered by characters in both plays who are also artists, led me to the conclusion that in the later plays Williams is trying to give evidence of the connection in some instances of both. Lines taken from the two plays which are very similar in this idea, would be for example from Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play:

Zelda: Between the first wail of an infant and the last gasp of the dying it’s all an arranged pattern or submission to what’s been prescribed for us unless we escape into madness or into acts of
creation. (Clothes For A Summer Hotel - A Ghost Play 71)

And those of Felice in OUT CRY after telling his sister that the company has accused them of being insane:

Felice: The telegram was shocking, but we're both over that now. Now all we have to do is remember that if we're not artists we're nothing. And play The Two Character Play the best we've ever played it no matter what our condition of panic may be. (OUT CRY 22)

In the language of both plays, Williams gives obvious clues to the distorted reality of the writer's mind resulting from madness and evidence of drug and alcohol use, which are further suggested in the many non-realistic elements used in staging both the plays.

To summarize, the use of these selected later plays in my analysis of OUT CRY, I found value in the study of these plays because of their similar yet individual use of the expressionistic elements of language, of non-linear action, and of sound and lighting effects to create mood/atmosphere. Furthermore, I was made aware of the recurrent importance in theme of the artist as being one who struggles/suffers with madness and the need to look at some of the more ambiguous references to this included in OUT CRY.
CHAPTER II

Having explored the critical theory of expressionism and how expressionistic elements apply to the later works of Tennessee Williams, particularly in OUT CRY, I will explain my work in script analysis, in casting, in the rehearsal process and production design. In this chapter I will discuss my script analysis using methods borrowed from Harold Clurman. I will also discuss casting choices as well as my choice to utilize a combination of directing tools suggested in Francis Hodge’s text Play Directing: Analysis, Communication and Style with my own rehearsal techniques to aid in rehearsal and performance of expressionistic style in OUT CRY. Lastly, I will discuss how I collaborated with designers on the expressionistic style in set, costumes, lighting and sound design for the production.

Script Analysis

I began my script analysis of OUT CRY in a manner that was familiar to me by following a methodology for script analysis in Harold Clurman’s text On Directing. Although I perceived in the text that the theme of fear cannot be easily represented by expressionistic elements, OUT CRY has a plot being enacted by two characters. Clurman suggests finding a spine or through-line of action for the play and for each character, which is an approach he takes from the work of Konstantin Stanislavski. I used the method of finding spines for the play and the characters to assist me in determining how I would best connect the action of the play to the subjective theme of fear.
Both characters in OUT CRY are struggling with fear from their past, present and future. The fear from their past stems from their parents' tragic death and their own incestuous behavior as brother and sister. Presently, they are trying to cope with the fear they have as unsuccessful, lonely and penniless performing artists. Finally, as the play progresses and they become physically entrapped in the theatre, they both struggle, though briefly, against the fear of physical confinement that may not end.

Clare and Felice need to advance to a new stage of their lives and go their separate ways in order to put the past behind them. Instead, ironically, the final physical entrapment causes them to be even more dependent on each other to face this greatest fear. Looking at past, present and future fears, I decided then on the overall spine of the play: "to conquer fear and emerge into the future accepted and understood." The spine I chose for the individual character Felice, who wanted to finish his work without losing his mind was "to grasp tightly to sanity and to complete The Two Character Play." Clare wants to be done with acting and also with a hidden, reclusive lifestyle. She desperately wants to reach out to people, but is afraid people will not accept her because of her past. From these perceptions of the text I chose her spine to be "to attain love, respect and freedom."

Although Clurman would suggest a spine for each of the two plays and to also include a separate spine for "Clare" and "Felice" of The Two Character Play, I diverged from his method. The main through-line of the two plays were the same to me, both built on the theme of fear, therefore I kept the same spine for both. The characters of "Clare" and
“Felice” had only one spine I chose for the two of them: “to break out of bondage to this place and each other.”

In addition to deciding the spines for the play and for the two characters another method from Clurman I was able to use is that of putting together a working score of the script with notations of actions and adjustments (adverbs which modify the action) that further distinguish the action. For example, in the external play I wrote down “to avoid” for the manner in which Felice answers Clare’s questions regarding their missing company. I used the words “with authority and impatience” to further describe the action. In the play-within-the-play however, it was difficult to determine active verbs for the character’s lines because of the expressionistic element of the non-realistic speech patterns. In particularly, this was a problem in the lines started by one character and completed by another. One example is when “Clare” and “Felice” are contemplating whether or not to go out of the door:

Clare: Sometimes our fear is ...
Felice: Our private badge of ...
Clare: Courage ...
Felice: Right! The door is open. Are we going out?

(OUT CRY 45)

For Clare’s first line I wrote “to explain”, but because she does not actually finish the thought I was not successful in finding an adjustment to describe how she would do the explaining. For the following line by Felice, I wrote “to complete” which was where I felt the lines were headed, but the action from such a verb seems vague when the sentence is again picked up by the character of Clare in the next
line. I found the adjustments I used in the play-within-the-play to be repetitious ("to explain", "to complete", "to agree", "to end") and unsuccessful in describing the shifts between the thoughts of the characters of "Clare" and "Felice" of the play-within-the-play to the characters of Clare and Felice in the external play. I feel that the difficulty I experienced here with the use of the Clurman text is that he does not give examples of directing these types of non-realistic speech patterns nor theory on how to delineate the characters' feelings in this type of writing. So, for my directing of the external play the Clurman analysis offered me tools I could use, but in the expressionistic language of the play-within-the-play it did not. I hoped that the actors cast and myself would come up with activities in rehearsal to clarify the action of the play-within-the-play.

Script analysis next included addressing the given circumstances of the play, much of which were unspecified, as mentioned earlier in the synopsis. There is no day, time or place specified for the play in the script. The lack of importance of time and location for a play is another element of expressionism. I set the time of the external play as 1970, sort of a mid-date of the time it was first performed (1967) through the re-writes that lasted up until 1975. Because the play-within-the-play refers to things such as a parlor, use of the operator to place a phone call, and in particularly the fact that Clare wears gloves, hat and a parasol to go out visiting, it could be assumed that The Two Character Play is set much earlier in the twentieth century. Because of those indications of the script and the fact that they would
all pertain to life in the South at this time, I chose summer of 1919 for this performance.

I next analyzed elements of the play having to do with dialect, age of the characters, mannerisms of the character and speech patterns. The following is a summary of my findings in each of these aspects of the play.

Although the setting for the play-within-the-play is specified as the town of New Bethesda in the deep South, there was no specification in the script for a southern accent to be used. I felt it added to the ambiguity of the boundaries of the two plays not to have the actors use an accent, and chose not to. There was another more practical reason for this choice. Even actors who knew or could quickly learn and make use of an appropriate dialect would then need to be pre-occupied with their use of the dialect as well as with the rapid manner in which dialogue slips in and out of the two plays. This could have resulted in humor that was not intended.

The ages of the characters are not specified in the script. Because Clare and Felice are adults who have been acting and traveling together for a number of years, I chose to envision them as being between thirty and forty years of age. They could have been older, since I set the external play in 1970 and the play-within-the-play in 1919; however, I did not want to necessitate "aging" the young actors of my production to such a degree that it would be very noticeable in a small theatre space.

The mannerisms of the two characters change with the non-linear action, another element of expressionism. The separateness of these
mannerisms is very important because the incomplete set does not clearly denote two separate locations and time frames. It is my opinion that the dialogue and the mannerisms of the characters actually "set" which performance they are in.

Mannerisms of Felice which are cited in the text are thumping the floor with a walking stick or his foot, running his hands through his hair, smoking, and rough gestures with his sister. Also specified in the script are Felice's mannerisms are striking piano keys, pausing in his speech, laughing at inappropriate times, and making physical contact with his sister Clare which is described quite intimately by stage directions such as "a convulsive embrace-like two lovers meeting after a long separation" (56). I perceived from the script that "Felice" of the play-within-the-play does not smoke, does not use the walking stick, is more solicitous of his sister and exhibits indecision and panic.

The mannerisms of Clare in the external play as described by the text are striking the piano keys at emotionally charged moments (which she also does in the play-within-the-play), stumbling and bumping into things, being easily startled, smoking, having hands that shake, using French expressions, touching Felice's hair and responding in a lingering manner to Felice's physical touch. Additionally I perceived from the text that Clare has a determined and resistant manner, and exhibits confusion and panic when she and her brother forget lines and ad lib in their attempts to get through The Two Character Play. I further perceived the "Clare" of the play-within-the-play has a sad, desperate and pitiable manner. She does not smoke, is tender and caring with
"Felice" much of the time, and attempts to have a bit of playfulness to her.

The aspect of speech patterns in the external play were significantly different from those in the play-within-the-play. Felice's opening monologue is spoken with pauses and changes as he is in the process of re-writing it. He addresses the audience and responds to his sister's calling to him from offstage almost as if both are in interruption of his thoughts. We are unsure if a play has begun or if he is alone and talking to himself. Once Clare enters there is a dialogue which consists of one or two lines spoken by a character at a time, punctuated with several short monologues by Clare. Their sentences are fragmented and there are many pauses and occasions when words are substituted by Felice thumping his cane on the floor or Clare striking a piano key. Felice does not have another monologue until he introduces The Two Character Play. Once the play-within-the-play begins there is a drastic change in the speech patterns. The characters begin to finish each other's lines, as if completing the thought. There is overlapping dialogue, alliteration, and an acceleration of tempo that at times becomes rapid-fire. Word play becomes prominent, and words are often repeated within several lines, for example in this excerpt of an argument:

Clare: I'm sorry but you'd allowed yourself to lose contact with anything that seemed real.

Felice: Seemed and real don't fit.

Clare: Stopped speaking!
Felice: Had nothing to speak of.

Clare: Stared without recognition!

Felice: With nothing to recognize!

(OUT CRY 47)

The ways in which these speech patterns are used give the feeling that neither character really gets "the upper hand" in the dialogue -- they continue to go around in circles, and conclusions are elusive. This importantly conveys the chaos of madness or a feeling of going insane that the two characters fear.

My script analysis also included some of the information discussed in the biographical information on Williams in Chapter I which had to do with what was personally influencing him at the time he was writing OUT CRY. Additionally I will now summarize what was going on in the world at large during those years that may have influenced the world of the play.

The socio-political factors related to the late 1960's and early 1970's when OUT CRY was written reflect very unstable times. Beliefs and values of society were being challenged. The United States was involved in the war in Vietnam, which many Americans opposed. Horrible race riots in larger cities cost lives. Dr. Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were both assassinated in 1968. Young people were advocating resistance, "free love" and experimentation with mind-altering drugs. A United States astronaut realized the fantasy of space programs world-wide by being the first person to set foot on the moon in 1969. Rock and roll music festivals involving hundreds of thousands of people were fueled by drugs that distorted reality.
This information is important in establishing the playwright’s awareness of not only the chaos and instability of what was going on in his own life but also the effects on society of such overwhelming “highs” such as landing a man on the moon and “lows” such as losing the lives of so many soldiers to war. There is fear involved in erratic change of such magnitude, as well as fear involved with things such as experimenting with drugs and with sexual relationships. The fear of being alone and of going insane seems a possible result of many of the events going on during those years. Everything in Tennessee Williams’ play OUT CRY can be perceived as relating to themes of fear; his fear, an artist’s fear, everyman’s fear.

Casting

In preparation for the auditions for OUT CRY I was very aware of the relative “weight” of these characters who would be performing in what Williams describes in the play as “...a tour de force - it’s more like an exercise in performance by two star performers, than like a play, a real play” (62). The actors chosen to play Felice and Clare needed a stage presence that could portray that actors were portraying actors enacting a play-within-a-play -- a great challenge.

Because I assessed flexibility to change the voice was one way to make a distinction between the characters of the external play and the play-within-the-play, vocal quality would be very important. Ability to exhibit the control and elocution of an actor who uses his voice for his living and to use it differently in the situations of each play would be necessary.
I was fortunate to have a good number of actors to choose from and although their experience was widely varied, everyone participated in what I considered to be a successful audition process. This process consisted of 1) a prepared one-minute monologue; 2) participation in improvisational exercises and 3) participation in readings selected by myself from the script, which was available for perusal before auditions.

I perceived that because Clare and Felice make their living by acting it would be important for them to have the ability to project well vocally and use excellent enunciation, which would be necessary for the rapid pacing of the dialogue of the play. I also perceived that as actors they needed to be aware of their posture and poise. I had only one rigid physical image in mind which was my desire for the actors cast to be close enough in looks to appear likely as brother and sister. The emotional resources may or may not all be apparent at auditions, but I was looking for a sexual undercurrent in pairing female and male partners for readings from the script. There are instances of sexual innuendo in the script which may have offered some difficulty to students auditioning. These instances will be further discussed later in this chapter.

The actor who was cast as Felice was a Theatre performance major who brought training and some stage experience to the role. More importantly he had both an intellectual quality to his delivery that was desirable and in his improvisation exhibited an ability to be versatile physically and vocally. He was by far the most adept auditionee at
using the language of the readings without becoming tongue-tied. This was hugely important with the emphasis on language in the play.

The actor I chose for the role of Felice had obvious chemistry with the young woman I decided to cast as Clare. The actor cast as Clare was a student from the International Studies program, and had some high school and community theatre experience. At the time of auditions she was a new student to an Acting I class. She had spent the previous year of school in France and knew the pronunciation and meaning of Clare’s French lines. She also had skills in stage speech which overshadowed other auditionees. She and the actor cast as Felice were among the most willing to try whatever was “thrown” at them in auditions, and I sensed a competitive sort of admiration between them right away, although they were not previously acquainted. Beyond their obvious interest in the script, I did sense the sort of sexual attraction I was looking for. Finally, their physical attributes matched well for brother and sister roles; average height and weight, light brown hair and fair complexions. I felt very fortunate to have so many of my anticipated casting needs met with these two individuals and was anxious to be able to work with them.

Rehearsal

Throughout the rehearsal process I encouraged the actors to ask questions and share any confusions they may have. Rehearsals began with an initial reading, discussion of organizational matters, discussion of the groundplan, the play’s style and discussion of my choice to direct the play as a thesis project. I wanted to engage enthusiasm for the
project while openly relating my own struggles with the ambiguity of the play.

Following the initial reading, several more nights of rehearsal were devoted to additional readings of the play. The difficulties of the expressionistic elements of the language of the play and the blurred boundaries of the play-within-the-play were new to the actors. Because of this I chose to have four readings of the play. However, only the first reading was uninterrupted. The interruptions were not only of my own making, as I invited the actors to ask questions. Questions we could not find answers for at the time were written down and referred to after reading the entire play.

As a rehearsal technique I devised, we interpreted the change of beats, or smallest units of intention in the text, together. This was important because the complexity of the expressionistic language devices such as overlapping, using silence as sound, word play and completing lines for another character, alternately confused the actors. Often the subjective theme of fear indicated a beat change, and discovering this together with the actors helped them in their characterization. An example of this from the external play is seen in the following lines:

Clare: Where is the sofa?

Felice: It didn't arrive. We'll have to use cushions, Moroccan style.

Clare: Are you going to throw new speeches at me tonight?

(OUT CRY 14)

Clare's last line here reflects what is really going on in her mind. The change of intentions is based on her need to find out because of her
fear of not being able to get through *The Two Character Play* if Felice insists on performing it.

As mentioned earlier, actors were invited to ask questions, and questions that were not immediately answered were written down and discussed after reading the entire play. Some questions which were still unanswered at the end of a rehearsal period were given to the actors as an "assignment" even if it was something I had researched. For example, the meaning of Felice's line, "a garden enclosed is my sister" is from the Song of Solomon, 4:6 and is part of some very suggestive language in the love poems of this section of the Bible. When neither actor had answers for what this line was from or its inherent meaning as it is used in the script, I asked the actor Felice to look up the information for the next rehearsal. I felt it was important for the actor portraying Felice to find the essence of this moment in the play from the textual hint that Williams is giving, rather than second hand information from the director. The actor looked up the information and it was discussed at the next rehearsal, which brought more of the element of the fear of their incestuous relationship into discussion. Each of the actors continued to research things such as definitions of words or unfamiliar phrases if I felt it would aid them in characterizing their fear. This was my own technique developed for the rehearsals due to the difficult language, and also the actors' need to identify every aspect of their character's fear.

Another example was the actor portraying Clare was unsure how to pronounce the name of the town newspaper in which their family tragedy had been reported. I asked her to look up scimitar of *The Press*
Scimitar, not for the pronunciation, but for the meaning of the word, which is a curved, one-sided oriental sword. I hoped she would see that such a weapon causes severe damage and pain. The one-sided manner in which their family had been ripped apart in *The Press Scimitar* was something Clare never got over. As a result of absorbing this information, I hoped the symbolism of the sword would serve the actor as a meaningful image she would use when attempting to project “Clare’s” fear in the memory of what people knew about them.

**Character Work**

As I used the Clurman text for methods of script analysis, I had hoped to find assistance there in guiding the actor’s portrayal of subjective theme in non-realistic drama. I found that the information Clurman gives is based on his experience of character work for realistic plays and some memory plays, and he does not provide information on directing expressionism versus realism. However, in Francis Hodge’s text *Play Directing: Analysis, Communication and Style* I did find useful rehearsal technique. The section of the text entitled *Interpretation: A Matter of Style*, covers discussion of different dramatic styles which was of help. Hodge states:

“Departure of Realism” includes all drama and production that moves away from the literal appearance of things. The basic intention of these styles is to communicate through essence rather than through appearance. The audience is given the feeling of something, and consequently it is able to receive the communication in direct terms. This aesthetic approach assumes that observed realities do not
communicate well because they are so familiar that most people do not perceive them, and thus cannot feel them.

Hodge gets to the "bare bones" of what seemed applicable in directing expressionistic elements in OUT CRY. Hodge's ideas influenced me to turn my focus to the portrayal of fear as being the essence in the play. I also experienced new confidence in my idea that what the actors needed to be doing was convey the feelings they experienced as the characters and they would be supported by the sound, lighting and set design elements when they were completed. I further utilized suggested tools from the Hodge text in several rehearsals. I also used rehearsal technique of my own.

Music and Essence

Desiring to develop mood and feeling that would aid the actors in their characterizing "essence" I used one of my own methods in early rehearsal. I attempted to create a connection for the actors to the character's feelings of fear through music. My musical background influences me to invariably "hear" certain music that touches my inner sense of any drama. Williams uses music in many of his plays as an expressionistic element to evoke mood, and OUT CRY is one of them. Hoping to evoke mood for the actors in rehearsal the way we expect an audience to enter mood at performance, I devoted an entire rehearsal period to listening to music from the 1960's and 1970's, which had been compiled by our sound designer. The sound designer and I had collaborated and come to an agreement that while he would choose the music played within The Two Character Play, he would allow the actors
and myself to choose the pre-show, intermission and post-show music. This music was chosen from tracks of over 40 songs he had recorded.

The songs were rated individually on paper, without discussion, as we lounged in a quiet space. I asked the actors to concentrate not only on words, but specifically on the mood brought on by the tempo, rhythm and vocal quality. The imagery of these songs gave strong connections to the themes in OUT CRY of fearing entrapment, fearing isolation, fearing madness and fear of sexual relationship. The cast was brought back to a different time and also to ways of imagining fear and expressing those fears in layers. For example, one of the songs chosen by the voting, which was obvious in its connection through lyrics was No 

Sugar Tonight/New Mother Nature:

... she hasn't got the faith or the guts to leave him
and they're standing in each other's way
driven back now to places you've been to
wonder what you're gonna find
you know you've been wrong but it won't be long
before you leave 'em all far behind... (The Guess Who, 1969, Side 1)

However, no song was chosen for its lyrics alone. The above example's lyrics move counterpoint to its feelings:

lonely feeling, deep inside
find a corner where I can hide
silent footsteps crowding me
sudden darkness but I can see (The Guess Who, 1969, Side 1)
This song is a good example of the feelings that came through to the actors and myself about the inner truth of fear. We hoped that these feelings would also be expressionistically conveyed to an audience through the music and through the actor's characterizations of Clare and Felice, who fear being alone but also battle the fear they have of remaining together. The actors input in this rehearsal was another indication to me that they could feel the spine of the play through mood without me dictating it, and would be able to further develop their own character's spine:

**Blocking**

The next step after reading and study discussions was the "blocking" rehearsals to rough out the general shape of the staging. Clurman's text had many references to blocking, which he defines: "blocking" (or staging) a play--that is, in assigning the placement of actors on the boards and indicating crosses from one position to another" (11). However, the blocking references in the Clurman text all carried with them the ideas of flow and continuity along with making the audience comfortable as their final aim. This was not appropriate for the expressionistic devices of multiple staging, discontinuity of action and unrealistic set of *OUT CRY*.

When looking to the Hodge text for blocking references, however, I was able to find a methodology I felt more applicable to directing expressionistic elements. Hodge's text gave me the term *organic blocking*, which can be used simultaneously with an improvisational approach in rehearsal. Organic blocking does, Hodge theorized, allow for some outward form (blocking) combined with it being "organic":
The word "organic" is used to denote that such blocking is in no way superimposed on a play or forced on an actor, but implies that such blocking suggestion derive from the play itself (the organism) and are therefore inherent in it. *Organic blocking*, then, is not a pictorial process, not a way of making a performance more beautiful through stage arrangements, but an inherent activation of a playwright through a body of physical suggestions that can arouse imagination in actors. (68)

One of the tools that Hodge further suggests to be used in organic blocking is the groundplan. The groundplan for *OUT CRY* offered good potential for "arousing the imagination in actors", and so I established landing areas and entrances and exits with the actors, and thereafter allowed them to use the groundplan and their own imaginations. The actors established their own traffic patterns within the playing space. The expressionistic feeling of the confinement they experienced within the small space influenced their movement and there was no difficulty with their instinctive choices or desire on my part to "force" blocking.

**Working Rehearsals**

Once the repetition of early rehearsals had allowed the actors to become very familiar with the unusual language patterns in the text, use of the non-verbal was emphasized more in working rehearsals as being the more compatible to the organic use of self. Use of self was my concept of how the actors could become expressionistic representations of the subjective theme of fear. Some of the more fearful moments of the play required more rehearsal and different techniques.
An example of one of the intense moments of the play that required more rehearsal to generate the experience of fear for the audience as subjective theme was the struggle between Clare and Felice to go out of the door in *The Two Character Play*. The action is mimed through a non-existent door represented only by a door frame. I felt very fortunate that the actor portraying Felice had experience with improvisation as a member of a performing improvisational troupe, and had skills in quick action of miming in detail. I did not have to instruct or direct their movement, which they found the impulse for in imagining their character’s fears. More rehearsal was required of this moment however, because of the small door frame and crowded area the action took place in. The door frame being accidentally treated as if it were only a door frame would break the illusion for the characters and the audience. The precision and the timing of this moment came only after many repetitions in rehearsal.

Some of the intense moments of the play which required a special rehearsal technique were those to do with the fear of sexual relationship. From my first readings of the play I perceived that the moments of incestuous sexual innuendo between Clare and Felice could be the most difficult for the actors to project. The actors had both instinctively recognized indications of these sensual moments, even though they are few and are scattered within the text. Because these moments of being “unnatural creatures” (59), are scattered, decisions had to be made in rehearsal to make the “big” ones count. For example, a smaller intimate nuance was felt in the way the actor portraying Clare lingered in touching Felice’s hair for her lines, “You have lovely hair
but there's much too much of it. Why, it's almost as long as mine" (15). This did not prove to be a difficult impulse for the actor to feel and to execute suggestively, nor did it prove difficult for the actor portraying Felice to react.

An example of a larger implication of the incestuous relationship that needed to be assisted with innovative rehearsal technique is found in the play-within-the-play. At this point Clare and Felice have failed to leave the house and acknowledge that it is like a prison to them. To this point they have avoided looking at each other, and then Felice's next lines lead them into meeting in a passionate embrace, with Clare whispering "inaudible words" against his face (56).

The actors experienced difficulty, going only "half-way" in my estimation for quite some time in this and other moments of the play where they had to deal with the character's feeling of fear of their sexual relationship.

The fact that these were young actors who had just become acquainted with each other affected their overall level of comfort to engage themselves in these physically sensual moments. Therefore, time was spent in rehearsal doing improvisational exercises. These included mirroring each other's movements to evocative music and slow-dancing together in an effort to increase the actor's comfort level with eye contact and physical contact of a suggestive nature. The actors responded to their impulses in a much more sensually physical manner for these scenes as rehearsal progressed to include Felice's unbuttoning Clare's blouse at one point and caressing her buttocks at another point in the play's action.
Polishing
diction was a constant task up to performance. As
actors portraying actors the cast was reminded at nearly every rehearsal
of word pronunciations, enunciation and lapses into poor diction. In a
play of only two characters the amount of lines memorized was staggering
and at times speed-through readings were necessary to pick up the pace
of the play. The actors themselves came up with a technique for a
different variation of a line speed through that consisted of dueling
using Felice’s walking stick and another cane as swords. This kept them
very mentally and physically connected as they were on their feet
dueling while trying to retain the rapid-fire pace of the dialogue.

Another aspect of the play that needed polishing was the
completion of each other’s lines in the play-within-the-play. This was
a very challenging speech pattern, and was difficult for the actors to
be consistently on top of. My idea for a rehearsal game that was used
more than once to assist with this was the electronic word game of
"Catch Phrase". The player (actor) giving a “clue” cannot complete it,
and with the timer running, the player (actor) guessing had to fill in
the correct word as quickly as possible. This game was used with some
success to familiarize the actors minds with the sort of pacing versus
process which both the game and the lines in the play-within-the-play
required.

In summary, both of the actors in OUT CRY experienced new and
exciting challenges acting in this play that utilizes expressionistic
elements of non-linear action, representation of subjective theme as
character and non-realistic language. In facing these challenges with
them, I successfully supported the actors with thorough analysis, exercises, improvisation and rehearsal.

Production Design

As many of the expressionistic elements exist in the visual and aural imagery of the set design, costumes, lights and sound, decisions in these areas were a huge factor in the performance of the play. Weekly production staff meetings run by my stage manager were held once rehearsals began; however, individual designers had presented some of their ideas to me before auditions were held. The following is a summary of the designer’s concepts for set, costumes, lighting and sound.

From our first meeting, the student who was designer for the set knew my main set concerns were 1) the need for a small performing space that would convey the feeling of entrapment and also include a defined “outdoor” area used during The Two Character Play; and 2) the huge statue which the stage directions indicate suggests things “anguished and perverse”, and which Felice looks at and addresses as “Fear!” (8). I requested of the designer that a projection be considered for the statue. My idea was that just as there was a play-within-the-play with ambiguous boundaries, a projection of the statue would be a representation of a representation, confusing the boundary between illusion and reality. It would not be clear if the statue is really there of if only Clare and Felice think so.

The set designer liked this idea, and with the help of another crew member carved a huge, androgynous styrofoam statue. The set designer then videotaped the statue and the tape was used for the
projection. The projection was cast on a parachute cloth of dark, muted colors, hung on the back wall of the stage area. A second projection of sunflowers was planned as well, which is suggested in the script for the ending of the play.

The designer's groundplan for a small, simple proscenium playing space between two existing pillars worked well. Black curtains extended beyond the pillars to the existing black walls of the laboratory theatre space. This darkness all around the set added expressionistically to the mood of being in a dark, cold subterranean theatre. On stage, there were no walls enclosing the playing space. The unfinished door frame, windowsill and step unit to nowhere were made of steel, all part of the set designer's concept of conveying the coldness of the external play. The angles at which the set pieces were placed were purposefully without symmetry. These set pieces included a prop box, a piano, one small chair and a metal stool used as a table. The forestage area used for both the outdoors and as the space in front of the imaginary curtain was very shallow and brought the actors very close to the audience.

The set designer was also the designer of costumes for the production. The majority of the 1970's era costume pieces were pulled from costume stock; however, the designer did need to fashion a special "astrology" shirt for Felice, which is specified in the script. Felice inherited this shirt from his father and wears it in his offstage life as well as in The Two Character Play. This shirt is referred to as being "worn out" and "bears the signs of the zodiac on it" (39). The designer made a "poet" style shirt with V-neck and long full sleeves, which was sewn from dark purple fabric. The fabric was distressed to
give it a worn look, by bleaching and rubbing it with rough tools. The
designer also painted the front of the shirt with the golden
astrological symbols that are pointed out by Felice's lines in the play-
within-the-play. The purple color of Felice's shirt continued in
Clare's straight corduroy skirt.

Condition of the clothing used for costumes reflected the
character's poor financial state; coats were missing buttons, blouse of
nearly threadbare material, and scuffed boots for Felice. There were no
costume changes since the costumes for the acting company had not
arrived. Costume accessories which are used in The Two Character Play
included a hat, parasol and gloves and other costume pieces for Felice
are mimed.

The lighting designer was regularly in attendance at production
staff meetings and attended early rehearsals of the production as well
before beginning his lighting design. He admitted the script had
confused him and he preferred to work in this manner for this particular
play. Aspects of the lighting design when finished included the idea I
suggested to him of the play beginning in the dark so that Felice would
be the one to bring the lights up in the theatre. This was accomplished
by the lighting designer's plan of a backstage "safety" light being the
only light on when we first see Felice come onto the stage. This
"safety" light faintly caught the reflection of the statue and cast
expressionistic shadows that conveyed a cold and fearful feeling. The
darkness was justified later, when the audience realizes through
Felice's lines, that he is the only one in the theatre at the time and
has not yet discovered where the lights are turned on.
When Felice goes back offstage and turns on stage lighting, the resulting light was dim and cool, and lit only the inner set, not the forestage. There were shadows that gave an expressionistic distortion to the perimeters of the acting space, and which also added to the cold, confined and eerie feeling.

From indications in the script it was perceived by the lighting designer that Felice is responsible for yet another lighting change. Traditional scene changes do not occur in the play, but the action does shift expressionistically between the external play and the play-within-the-play, which indicates a change in lighting. When Felice announces the change in program, he then leaves the stage to open the imaginary stage curtains. Presumably he is the one who then brings up the lights for *The Two Character Play* at the same time. The atmosphere, through expressionistic use of suddenly warm, bright tones, becomes the "hot summer day in the South". This fairly simple change from cool to warm did conceal the subtle opportunities to turn on lights in the brightness of the play-within-the-play, which would stay on for the external play in new areas. This avoided the distraction to the audience of lights somehow being turned on when supposedly Felice and Clare have no crew. It also added expressionistically to the feeling of isolation.

Several lights were later added for areas of the stage that were found to be too dim. Some of these lights were strategically placed to accent areas where the actors frequently smoked, and the smoke would linger in the light giving the areas an added dreamlike quality of expressionism.
The sound designer and I started meeting long before rehearsals to discuss music and sound effects for the play. The designer was very familiar with the psychedelic music of the late 1960’s and early 1970’s and soon had recorded three CD’s for me to hear. This music which would be used for pre-show, intermission and post-show would reflect not only the era in which the play was written and the time frame of the external play, but also the essence of a mind struggling with madness, feelings of isolation or confinement and feelings of sexual frustration. As noted earlier, the actors and I made the choices of this music from the designer’s compilation of songs as part of a rehearsal exercise.

My only initial request of the sound designer was for music by The Doors to be included somewhere. My reasons for this came from my research and first analysis of the play. Jim Morrison of The Doors was also a poet, who was very influenced by the 19th century French poet Arthur Rimbaud. Rimbaud was one of the poets I repeatedly found mentioned by Tennessee Williams to be among those poets whose writing had influenced him as well. Rimbaud experimented in free verse and his subtle but highly suggestive words drew from the subconscious, much as his lover, Paul Verlaine when the two were very young. A tortured existence is often the theme of his poetry. When going back to listen to the music of Jim Morrison, I found similarity of themes of fear in his songs to the fears in the plot of OUT CRY. I requested People Are Strange and Break on Through to be included in the music for the production because of the sense of madness in both their lyrics and melodies. The sound designer also came up with Wishful, Sinful by The Doors, which was immediately kept because of its reference to a
"wishful, sinful, wicked too" love relationship. These feelings were perceived by the designer and myself as similar to those Clare and Felice experience; simultaneous fear and need for their incestuous relationship.

The music that is turned on and off during The Two Character Play is from a different era, and the designer and I agreed that something classical, preferably piano, would work here. The designer had very good instincts about the necessary tempo and rhythm needed in this music to provide the feeling of tension as Clare and Felice's fear of leaving the house builds. He brought me several options, all of which we both liked. We agreed on the Chopin Polonaise in A Flat minor as the final choice because of the manner in which it expressionistically builds to a mood of panic in its dramatic composition.

Williams specified evanescent music during the play at one of the several points of sexual innuendo in the script. Shortly after Felice first starts admiring Clare's opal ring, and before his line, "Nothing could be unlucky that's so lovely, Clare", this music fades in and as the stage directions indicate, He turns it on her finger, a sort of lovemaking (27). The music the sound designer chose for this segment was a lovely sensual guitar instrumental that although lasting so briefly, supported the indication of the nature of their relationship being intimate.

The sound designer also compiled the various sound effects that were used expressionistically to convey the moods of fear throughout the play, including: the mumblings and laughter from an audience that may or may not be there; the noise of the non-existent stage curtains being
pulled open; echoes of names called out by the characters that
accentuated both their feelings of isolation and entrapment; sounds of
gunfire exploding somewhere outside the theatre; the fast-forward of the
Chopin music used when Clare and Felice abruptly stop The Two Character
Play for the first time, and the metallic sounds of noises in old, empty
spaces which heightened the feelings of isolation and entrapment as well.

To summarize, the designers of set, costumes, lighting and sound
for the production collaborated with me to convey the moods of fear
inherent in the play. Each designer's decisions for the play OUT CRY
added to the resulting abstract and fragmented visual and aural imagery
of expressionism in the production.

In conclusion, the work of my script analysis using Harold
Clurman's methods was successful with the language of the external play,
but not as useful to me with the more complicated speech patterns of the
play-within-the-play. Additionally, I did not find assistance in the
blocking style offered by Clurman. I found the organic blocking
technique suggested by Francis Hodge to be applicable in directing non-
realistic drama with an expressionistically abstract set design and
complex linguistic motifs.

Further, I was fortunate in my ability to cast two actors who
possessed many skills desirable for portraying multiple roles. Our work
together became a consistent discovery of the fears of the characters
and how to use expressionistically evocative language, movement and
gesture of the actors to convey these fears.
Finally, the character representation was heightened and supported by the expressionistic mood setting of the set, costume, lighting and sound designs for the production.
CHAPTER III.
ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

My experience of directing *OUT CRY* was an even greater thrill than I had hoped for. Through the process of directing the production I learned much about non-realistic style and how expressionistic elements can help convey the essence of subjective theme. Watching each successive performance of *OUT CRY*, I felt I was witnessing something that consistently moved closer toward the major work Williams intended the play to be. In this chapter I will further assess what my choices as a director accomplished in conveying the themes of fear inherent in the play.

The most challenging aspect for me in directing *OUT CRY* was dealing with the unfamiliar use of lighting, sound and set design as some of the expressionistic elements to aid in conveying the themes of fear in the play. These were also the areas I did not feel truly satisfied with by the end of the performances. This did not have anything to do with designers, but rather my lack of experience in technical theater and the fact that this was my first attempt at directing expressionistic technique.

In asking for a projection of the statue, I had not considered that the low ceilings of the theatre space to be used would prohibit the necessary height needed for the angle at which the projector could show the image of the statue to be as large as it needs to be. I did stay with my idea for the projection, however, and the audience was able to
see it above the actor's height, although not as convincingly as I would have desired. In addition, the projection of the statue was hard to see when the lighting changed expressionistically from the cold, dim shadows in the external play to the bright warm lighting of the play-within-the-play. Again, this was not a lighting design problem as much as it was a simple matter of having only so many areas to hang lighting instruments from to achieve this important transition in the action of the play. The projection was noticed initially, and then afterwards only on occasion. The lighting and set designers and myself tried at length to solve this problem, but with no success.

This led me to conclude that an additional designer of this special effect may have been in order. Had it been the task of a separate designer for this sort of effect there may have been time to solve the problem.

The expressionistic elements of sound that were used to convey moods of madness, isolation and entrapment worked well in giving the illusion we were hearing the characters hearing them. These sound effects, mumbling and growling of an audience, stage curtain being pulled open, echoes, and metallic sounding noises all heightened the fears the characters were experiencing at those moments. In reflection, I think the volume of the sound effects could have been increased to be sure every audience heard each one of them. These effects were set at a fairly low level to give impressions, not loud and harsh information, and in rehearsal they seemed very noticeable. However, I do recall the unpredictable noise level of the audience, in particular an audience
member experiencing a coughing problem, to have prohibited me from hearing all of them during every performance.

The expressionistic sound element of the music played from the onstage tape recorder was very impressive, not only in the choice of music and how it fit the mood of tension that was building, but also the way the fast forward of this music worked at the exact moment *The Two Character Play* abruptly comes to an end for the first time. In summary, through this device we were brought back to the present situation of the external play as clearly as if a narrator had said, "we are now back in the subterranean theatre".

The set design for *OUT CRY* was an effective assimilation of imbalance and incompleteness, as well as affording a small enough playing space to expressionistically convey the feeling of entrapment. The set element that was missing, however, was the planned projection of sunflowers that are specifically indicated by Williams in the script (72). Late in the rehearsal process it was discovered it would not be possible to use a second projection. The set designer’s idea to substitute painted sunflowers on the proscenium pillars for a projection of the sunflowers was not acceptable because the sunflowers do not appear until some of the final moments of the play. Furthermore, one of Felice’s earlier lines relates to them being imaginary until then:

 Felice: The audience is supposed to imagine that the front of the house, where I am standing now, is shielded by sunflowers, too, but that was impractical as it would cut off the view. (*OUT CRY* 55).
It is my belief that the playwright intends for the projection because the vision of the sunflowers in the last moments of the play comes at a point when Felice and Clare, in a state of panic from their physical confinement, realize their longlived fear of madness, and hallucinating now, can actually see the flowers. Through their minds we can now see them as well - but not before or after this point in the play. This problem never having been solved, I would conclude that this is another aspect of design for the play that is worthy of a separate special effects designer.

In summary, the challenges of using light, sound and set design to expressionistically convey the themes of fear in the play were bravely faced and partially met. Furthermore, I would conclude that in order to have been more successful in this aspect of the production, a special effects designer for the projections of both the statue and the sunflowers would be desirable, as well as myself as director having had more experience in the realm of technical theatre.

The aspect of directing the actors using the expressionistic language of the play OUT CRY was challenging. Not only are the speech patterns unusual, they are difficult to incorporate into the action of the play. Additionally, in The Two Character Play sections of the dialogue become rapid-fire in pace. Throughout rehearsal the actors became more and more adept with the language and some of the original blocking ideas were adjusted to better convey what was taking place behind the words. An example of this clarification of the meaning of language arose in the segment of The Two Character Play when "Clare" is relating the fact that she and Felice have received a telegram from the
insurance company saying no benefits would be paid to them. Here I deviated from the direction I gave for the other "completion" lines which was for the actors to position themselves close to each other on stage and to make eye contact. This type of "mirroring" with language added had been helping to project their sharing of the panic experienced. However, with the lines regarding the Acme insurance company fiasco, I interpreted the lines to be "Clare's" monologue. While "Clare" is speaking, Clare of the external play is also remembering the actual fear of this moment. In her agitated state she begins forgetting words of her monologue. Interpreting the language of this segment in this manner, made it meaningfully performed with Clare downstage and apart from "Felice". As Clare forgets "Clare's" lines, Felice is still nearby to support her by ending them or giving her the next line. Her position clarified she was the focus, however, and also resulted in the realization of the fear Clare in the external play had expressed earlier: "I can't play tonight, not The Two Character Play - why I can't remember a line" (21).

I would conclude then, that individual ways of interpreting the unusual expressionistic language patterns in the play can clarify their meaning for the actors. It can be hoped this would heighten the perception of the audience as well.

Working with the concept of characters as a representation of the subjective theme rather than characters in the realistic sense sounds very scary at first. I found that discussing the characters' goals, obstacles, tactics and expectations with the actors at length was much more helpful than referring to every action, adjustment, and activity I
had come up with in my working score using the Clurman method. If they were to feel the fear of every action of the play, it was the actors who needed to do the delving into what those fears were.

As a result the actors discovered much about why the character took each action. I would conclude then that the reason I could not continue to utilize the methods of Clurman in expressionistic character representation of a theme is because of his emphasis on the director as being author of those feelings.

As a summary of my work in directing OUT CRY, I found truth in the idea that by keeping a plot, but stripping away the devices of the realistic set and linear action, and using a fragmented set and non-linear action, the focus came down to the two characters and the feelings they were experiencing. In my opinion, the confusion in how to follow the plot due to these expressionistic elements of the play, compels the audience to pay closer attention to Clare and Felice. Furthermore, the expressionistic patterns in the language conveying the plot forces the audience to be active listeners and in doing so they are aided in absorbing the expressionistic elements of sound used to heighten the mood of fear. It is also my opinion that the end result for the audience is their being enabled to simultaneously experience the very emotions Clare and Felice experience as the characters are experiencing them. This ultimately increases their empathy for the characters. At the same time, however, I do not feel it is necessary for the audience of OUT CRY to be aware of the meaning of each and every symbol and expressionistic element to experience the full impact of the play if they are successfully absorbed in the action.
The play is a journey we take with Clare and Felice, feeling their constant fears. Felice is unable to end *The Two Character Play* because he has no answers for how to permanently end their fear. When we arrive at the moment near the end of the play where Felice urges Clare to hurry and finish the play-within-the-play, it is my hope that the audience had felt enough of their own fears to empathize with the character's choice not to go on in an unending cycle. Without screams, without a gunshot being heard or seeing stageblood shed, our gut feeling is that Clare has acted on her decision that, "Things do end, they actually have to" (64).
Felice and Clare Devoto of OUT CRY
"Felice" and "Clare" Devoto of The Two Character Play
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