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Getting Out: A Feminist Psychoanalytical Analysis of Intimate Violence

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GETTING OUT: A FEMINIST PSYCHOANALYTICAL ANALYSIS OF INTIMATE VIOLENCE

by

Aili Marie Smith
Bachelor of Arts, Minot State University, 1998

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This thesis, submitted by Aili Marie Smith 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.

Mary J. Cutler
Margaret R. Aton
Kathleen McVenna

This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

Carl Fox
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Department Theatre Arts

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ABSTRACT

In my thesis I examined various forms of physical and psychological violence within the text Getting Out by Marsha Norman. Getting Out is filled with disturbing visual images of intimate violence. Utilizing various feminist psychoanalytical theorists and critics, I explored the realm of intimate violence. This included paying particular attention to the feminists Rhoda Unger & Mary Crawford in Women in Gender: A Feminist Psychology and Tony Martens in The Spirit Weeps: Characteristics and Dynamics of Incest and Child Sexual Abuse. My exploration focused specifically on the acts of violence found in the drama. Not only did I relate these theories to the text, but I also used this research on intimate violence in directing my actors.

After discussing my research on intimate violence and its application to Marsha Norman’s text, I examined my staging of the text. To do so, I used Harold Clurman’s directing method.

In my conclusion, I found through my own research that the forms of violence Norman portrays in Getting Out are related to many forms of intimate violence noted by the theorists and psychologists I cite.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Synopsis Of "Getting Out"

In Marsha Norman's text, Getting Out, written in 1977, Arlene Holsclaw faces the issues of intimate violence in the relationships between her father, her mother, her significant other, Carl, and her cell guard, Bennie. Within these four relationships, incest, battery, and rape influence Arlene's entire life. "Intimate violence" is defined by psychologists Rhoda Unger and Mary Crawford as that which includes "child abuse, incest, physical violence—pushing, shoving, slapping—to severe physical violence—beating, using weapons, and sexual assault" (533).

In Getting Out, Norman's leading character, Arlene, is released from prison after serving an eight-year prison term at Pine Ridge Correctional Institute for the second degree murder of a cab driver. Before serving this sentence, she served three years at Lakewood State Prison for forgery and prostitution. One is able to see how Arlene's life has been filled with violence and crime. Norman create two Arlenes: one who represents the main character, and one who represents her internal struggle. Throughout the play, Arlene has memories and flashbacks of her childhood through
the character of the abused child and juvenile delinquent, Arlie. These flashbacks provide views of different stages throughout Arlene's life concerning intimate violence with her family, lovers, and friends.

Most of the play's action takes place in a one-room apartment located in a rundown section of downtown Louisville, Kentucky. This apartment, located in the slums, infested with bugs, and formerly occupied by a prostitute, is the only one she can rent to begin a new life. Present day action is seen here, but Arlene's flashbacks, via the character of Arlie, are presented in spaces such as Arlene's apartment, areas surrounding the apartment, and Arlie's former prison cell. In the text, Norman specifies that these areas symbolize Arlene's past imprisonment and crime, and where Arlene relives her painful past memories of violence and abuse.

Incest was the first form of intimate violence Arlene faced. Arlene grew up in a disjointed, unconnected, and broken home affected by her father's sexual abuse and incestuous relationship. To cope with this incestuous father-daughter relationship, Arlene's mother distanced herself from any connection with Arlene. Although the physical and emotional distance between Arlene and her mother is vast, the Mother is a prominent figure in Norman's drama. Learning intimate violence while growing up
influences Arlene’s future relationships with her lovers and friends.

Intimate violence also is a large part of her relationships with two close males: her significant other, Carl, and her former cell guard, Bennie. Since Arlene’s incestuous relationship with her father was emotionally and physically painful, she finds love and security in the only place she could find it easily—her lover who also became her pimp, Carl. With Carl, Arlene is able to support herself financially through prostitution and uses Carl’s support, even though he only supports her to acquire companionship and money. Her relationship with Carl contains a great deal of abuse and battering. Because Arlene knows nothing about love and of relationships without abuse, she feels she is living a normal life.

While at her last prison facility, Arlene finally believes she has found a male companion whom she is able to trust—her cell guard Bennie. Unfortunately, Bennie perceives her friendship as seduction of him and their relationship also resulted in near rape, another act of intimate violence.

Because Arlene is unable to trust any human being due to her encounters with incest, battering, and rape, she must first forgive her former self, Arlie, who plays out her past intimate violence, and put to rest those memories. Arlie is
the haunted, pained victim of intimate violence Arlene must escape before she is able to lead a new life. Arlene finally forgives Arlie and feels she may move on with her new life free of intimate violence.

Organization Of Document

With the synopsis in hand, I will discuss the issues of intimate violence found within Marsha Norman’s *Getting Out*. After discussing my research on intimate violence, I will analyze the character of Arlene by focusing on characteristics of an abused child taken from Tony Marten’s book *The Spirit Weeps: Characteristics and Dynamics of Incest and Child Sexual Abuse*, and how her father and mother affected her by allowing her to grow up in an incestuous family.

I will next discuss the effects of the incestuous relationship between leading character Arlene and her father and mother, the battering relationship between Arlene and her significant other, Carl, and the act of rape by her former prison guard, Bennie.

Focusing on characteristics of an abused child aids the director to understand how Arlene’s childhood has affected her present and future relationships. These characteristics may be defined by Jung’s term “internalized oppression.”

In Chapter II, I will focus on my staging of Norman’s text and how my research of intimate violence influenced my
production. To do so, I will utilize Harold Clurman’s directing method from his book, On Directing. Clurman’s directing method is geared towards contemporary texts depicting realistic situations such as those involving intimate violence.

Chapter III will consist of my conclusion and what I learned from researching and directing intimate violence. I will discuss how Harold Clurman’s directing method influenced and benefited my production of Marsha Norman’s Getting Out.

Theoretical Concepts Of Intimate Violence

As stated previous, “intimate violence” is that which includes “child abuse, incest, physical violence—pushing, shoving, slapping—to severe physical violence—beating, using weapons, and sexual assault” (Unger and Crawford 533). Along with Unger and Crawford’s definition, a consortium of psychologists further define intimate violence as consisting of “being slapped, punched, kicked, or thrown, to being scalded, cut, choked, smothered, or bitten” (Koss 42).

All the acts of intimate violence, as defined above, may be directly related to Arlene’s encounters with incest, courtship violence, and acquaintance rape. Arlene’s past and present relationships involve incest, physical violence ranging from pushing to severe beating, and sexual assault. For example, Arlene’s incestuous relationship with her
father includes child abuse and sexual assault which influences the relationship with her mother. Her battering relationship with Carl includes severe physical violence, being slapped, punched, thrown, and choked. Arlene’s relationship with Bennie includes physical violence and sexual assault. Intimate violence does not only occur within the home but also by someone who is close or acquainted with the victim.

Incest

Definition

According to Unger and Crawford, “75% of child molesters are actually family members to whom the child looks for nurturance and protection” (538). Most sexual abuse is inflicted on female victims by men, including uncles or as in Arlene’s case, fathers (540). Children often feel powerless in incestuous situations, even though most instances involve no physical force. Because there is no force, victims of incest are confused and overwhelmed by their feelings of loyalty and trust for the perpetrator (539-40). The adult may label the sexual contact as “exclusive, secretive [. . .] a special time” (540). As in Arlene’s case, a father-daughter incest is “most harmful not only because the child is exposed to age-inappropriate sexual behavior, but also because the parental role of protector and nurturer is violated” (541). The child will
feel vulnerable because the mother may distance herself from the incest and abuse. This leaves the child with no one to talk to in questioning the incestuous act.

Arlene is a "classic case" of the abused child in that she has all the characteristics Martens describes: prostitutes, runaways, and young offenders report abusive backgrounds" (Martens 1). Arlene ran away from home, committed acts of juvenile crime, and worked as a prostitute before her final prison sentence. When a family member such as a father acts as the offender, as in Arlene's case, the child knows the abuse is emotionally and physically painful, but loves and respects the father at the same time. Arlene has painful and confused feelings and "hates the abuse, but loves the abuser" (Martens 9). Because of this continuous abuse, Arlene displays two characteristics of an abused child presented by Martens--low self-esteem and anger.

Arlene grew up in an environment where little healthy physical and emotional touch were given. This is meaningful because her family members separated themselves from one another resulting in loss of contact which creates low self-esteem in a child.

In Act I of Norman's Getting Out, an example of how the Mother causes Arlene's low-self esteem and negative self image even after an eight-year separation occurs when her mother pays a visit to Arlene's new apartment. When
Arlene's mother visits Arlene after her release from prison, her mother insults Arlene's lifestyle, home, and appearance by saying:

You always was too skinny. [. . .] Some kids I got. (19)

You could look better'n you do. Do somethin with your hair. (23)

You always been hateful. (25)

Because of the Mother's lack of emotional and physical contact or support, Arlene feels she is worthless, ugly, and unable to acquire a job. At a time when Arlene desperately needs guidance and support, the Mother offers rejection.

The second characteristic of an abused child involves anger and aggression often labeled as a passive/aggressive attitude. When confronted with abuse or violence, the child's "anger can erupt explosively," and anger is often used by a child to "take a stand and voice an opinion" (Martens 21). This second characteristic also relates to a passive/aggressive attitude that psychologists Unger and Crawford label as Phase I of child abuse. Phase I, they state, encompasses the "moments, hours, and days following the assault" (554). These reactions fall into two categories of emotion: "controlled and expressed" (554). In the controlled reaction, the victim displays outward calmness and holds everything inside, and with the expressed
reaction, the victim exhibits emotional distress involving shock, disbelief, agitation, or incoherence (554).

Both passive/aggressive attitude in Phase I can be observed in Arlie's monologue in Act II, when she displays reactions of controlled and expressed emotions. During her monologue, Arlie is reading passages from the Bible while finally reaching out for help from her Lord, or anyone who will listen. It's possible that a passive/aggressive attitude and Phase I may be related to *Getting Out* when Arlie says:

Who's out there? Is anybody out there?

*(Reading.)* Depart from evil and do good.

*(Yelling.)* Now, you pay attention out there cause this is right out of the Lord's mouth. *(Reading.)* And dwell, that means live, dwell for-ever-more.

*(Speaking.)* That's like for longer than I've been in here or longer than . . . this Bible the chaplain give me's got my name right in the front of it. Hey! Somebody's sposed to be out there watchin me. Wanna hear some more? *(Reading.)* For the Lord for [. . .] Please let me out. I won't scream or nuthin. I'll just go right to sleep, O.K.? Somebody! [. . .] Goddammit, somebody let me out of here, I can't stand it in
here anymore. Somebody! (Her spirit finally broken.) (Norman 53)

Controlled and expressed reactions occur throughout this monologue, as Arlie starts off by portraying a sense of calmness and then yelling instantly when she needs attention. In the past, Arlie has used screaming and yelling as a way of communicating. When yelling does not work, she decides to speak calmly and reads from the Bible as her way of reaching out to someone. In the end, Arlie resorts to yelling and even swearing "Goddammit" until she finally collapses. This is a reflection of a controlled emotion of holding feelings and frustrations inside and then alternately displaying expressed emotions of distress and agitation.

The Relationship Between Arlene and Her Father

The first relationship to affect Arlene concerning intimate violence is the incestuous relationship with her father. Unger and Crawford define incest as "when a child of any age is exploited by an older person for his [the perpetrator’s] own satisfaction while disregarding the child’s own developmental immaturity and inability to understand the sexual behavior" (538-9). Because of the child’s age and vulnerability, "contacts or interactions between a child and an adult [. . .] is being used for sexual stimulation" from the adult (Fortune 11). Because
children are young, immature, and trust the older family member, they are unable to comprehend the negative aspects of the incestuous act. Since Arlene believes she should trust her father because he provides caring and needs, she does not have the ability to realize the harmful effect the abuse has on her.

Incestuous fathers, like Arlene's, are described as "authoritarian, punitive, and threatening", and parent-child incest is considered the most harmful form of intimate violence (Unger and Crawford 541). Because the child lives in the same house as the parent, the child becomes entrapped in a continuing cycle of abuse.

In incestuous families, there is little mutual display of affection and physical contact which results in families becoming emotionally distant (Unger and Crawford 542). Because of this distance, a child has a feeling of being overwhelmed, overpowered, and terrorized when finally receiving any sort of physical contact (Fortune 6). Because a family member is supposed to provide nurturance and protection, a child's ability to refuse sexual contact and confrontation is overwhelmed by feelings of loyalty and trust (Unger and Crawford 538). Here, a child feels powerless to stop the abuse. For example, Arlie displays this lack of contact and guidance when she is talking to the Doctor: "Kids need somebody to bring em up right" (Norman
Arlie can be perceived to be hinting to the Doctor that she had an abusive childhood. Because she had been abused, she hopes to prevent pain for other children, especially her own.

Because the abuse occurs in the home, victims of incest "feel powerless to stop the abuse and believe they have nowhere to turn for help, comfort, and support" (Unger and Crawford 539). An adult is in a position of authority and may tell the child the behavior is acceptable or the physical contact should be understood as a "special time."

A female victim of incest is described as being "overwhelmed by her father's superior power and unable to resist him; she may feel disgust, loathing, and shame. But at the same time ... this is the only kind of love she can get" (Unger and Crawford 541). Marie M. Fortune states how "the child may experience positive physical feelings, affection, and a sense of self-worth simultaneously with terror and powerlessness" (11). Because Arlie is neglected and emotionally isolated from her family and society, this special attention her father displays is confusing to her due to its positive feelings. Before she becomes imprisoned, Arlie feels trapped in her own home facing the most harmful form of intimate violence, incest.

Arlie is unable to tell her mother about the abuse because her father will beat her, and she needs the positive
feelings and special attention she receives from him. The incest comes to be known as the "family secret" and if anyone speaks of the abuse, it is regarded as betraying a family member (Fortune 6). In Norman's text, Arlie says:

No Daddy! I didn't tell her nuthin. I didn't. I didn't. (Screaming, gets up from the bed, terrified.)

Nobody done this to me, Mama. (19)

Arlie knows if she releases her "secret" she will face the consequences with more violent abuse from her father.

Learning violence at a young age in the home increases the probability of being involved in courtship violence within future relationships. Violence is often used by the victim of abuse as a tactic for dealing with interpersonal conflicts in romantic involvement.

The Relationship Between Arlene and Her Mother

Arlene's family life consisted of the lack of communication, comfort, intimacy, and connection. In incestuous families, the Mother "tends to lack any sense of comfort, security, direction and happiness in life" (Martens 61). In Getting Out, the Mother's first entrance and character description relate to a mother who lacks comfort, security, direction and happiness. Norman describes the Mother as "[. . .] strong but badly worn. She is wearing her cab driver's uniform and is carrying a plastic laundry
basket stuffed with cleaning fluids, towels, bug spray, etc." (Norman 18). This is the first time Arlene has seen her mother since before Arlene's imprisonment, but there is no sign of love or connection from the Mother at this moment. An example of disconnection is in the stage directions: "Arlene moves as if to hug her. Mother stands still, Arlene backs off" (Norman 18).

Similar to an abused child, a mother in an abusive situation may also tend to have a low self-esteem and negative self-image. "She usually has not learned to deal with problems effectively, or express her feelings in a healthy and responsible manner" (Martens 62). Because Arlene also has low self-esteem and a negative self image, the Mother senses these problems and subconsciously believes Arlene is a reflection of her. Instead of helping Arlene adjust and improve her confidence, the Mother attacks Arlene the moment she arrives with insults about lifestyle and appearance. When Arlene's mother appears, Norman has her say comments like:

You look tired. (18)

Didn't fatten you up none, I see. (19)

(Looking in the closet.) Filthy dirty. (19)

[Regarding Arlene's son, Joey] Got your stringy hair.

(20)
These are just a few of the insults the mother inflicts in her short visit which demonstrate how connection and love are not an aspect of their relationship.

Because of her low self-confidence and inability to express her feelings, the mother usually "denies many problems within her family" (Martens 62). A mother may ignore the abuse her child receives because she is trying to escape family pressures and responsibilities. By escaping from the world, the mother feels she is minimizing the risk of abuse on herself (Martens 63). By avoiding the situation, the abuse continues to occur between daughter and the mother's husband (Martens 68).

One example of this concept from the Norman's text is the scene in which the Mother is talking to Arlene about her father and says, "Shoulda beat you like your daddy said [. . .] He weren't a mean man, though, your daddy" (19). In this, the Mother makes excuses for her children's abuse in order to escape the situation and any future abuse she may experience. Instead of confronting the incestuous relationship, the Mother focuses on the kindness of Arlene's father by saying, "You remember that black chewing gum he got you when you was sick?" (Norman 19). This is the Mother's way of avoiding the truth.

Because of this denial, the mother in an incestuous family may frequently feel guilty about failing to protect
her child (Martens 63). The Mother tries to make amends to Arlene not through physical contact or connection, but by cleaning Arlene's apartment. By cleaning, Arlene's mother is helping Arlene start a new life but she constantly cleans and moves around so there is no opportunity for real contact.

Along with feeling guilty, the mother may feel hostile, jealous, and distrusting towards her daughter due to the incestuous relationship and special attention her husband gave their daughter. Because of the feelings, a mother in an incestuous family becomes critical of her daughter resulting in an isolated relationship between mother and daughter (Martens 64). Arlene pleadingly asks her mother if she may come over for a pot roast dinner on Sunday like they always had in the past, but her mother refuses her suggestion. This the Mother might think having Arlene over for dinner might result in the Mother seeing Arlene and her father in the same room again and the Mother's feelings of abuse might reoccur. The Mother refuses to allow any physical or emotional contact to occur at the house where the incest occurred. The abuse Arlene might have witnessed through her mother while growing up may be a reflection of Arlene's future abuse.
Courtship Violence

Definition

Within **Getting Out**, Arlene’s relationship with Carl reflects what Unger and Crawford define as courtship violence or violence occurring between cohabiting relationships or romantic partners. Historically, violence victimization, as with Arlene’s, has been associated with assaults occurring between nonromantic partners and strangers. In **No Safe Haven: Male Violence Against Women At Home, At Work, And In The Community** written by Mary P. Koss and a consortium of psychologists state how women do not realize that their “greatest risk of assault is from their intimates, particularly male partners [. . .] women are more likely to be attacked, raped, injured, or killed by current or former male partners than by any other type of assailant” (41).

Abuse in courtship violence is more severe than other forms of abuse. Studies have shown how dating or cohabiting couples have a higher rate of physical assault than married couples. The man may end up using violence against his female partner in order to prevent her from abandoning him (Koss 47-9). Repetition and severity of courtship violence is more likely to occur because partners are easily available, the amount of time at risk is high, and the act of violence may be carried out in private. Relationships
with continuous violence often times involve a combination of assaultive acts, verbal abuse, sexual aggression, and threats (Koss 41-2). In Getting Out, these acts of assault are brought forth when Carl verbally abuses and diminishes Arlene’s self-esteem, and threatens her with his aggression, power, and strength.

One might wonder still why a woman like Arlene continues to accept the abuse from her significant other, Carl. Many women, like Arlene, grow up in a childhood centered on abuse and tolerate this violence in their future relationships, as they know nothing else. Abused women report that “‘fighting back’ worsens, rather than deters, their partners’ violence” (Koss 63). Some abused women feel they must take the abuse without return action, and hope the violence will disappear. Arlene can be interpreted to feel that since she grew up with physical and emotional violence, an abuser is a perfectly acceptable partner.

The Relationship Between Arlene and Carl

As stated previously, "girls who observe the abuse of their mothers often become victims of spousal abuse as adults" (Walker viii). Arlene’s next serious encounter with intimate violence involves physical violence and battering inflicted by her significant other, Carl. Because courtship violence is finally being regarded as a serious crime,
victims are voicing their abuse, and more reports are being recorded.

Men involved in courtship violence learn at a young age that they have a right to dominate and control women using intimidating, coercive, and physically forceful tactics. Because they believe this during childhood, their intimate relationships as adults are affected by this control (Unger and Crawford 533). Unger and Crawford place courtship violence in two categories: verbal aggression and physical aggression. Verbal aggression involves "screaming, yelling, name-calling, threatening [. . .] arguing heatedly, sulking, and stomping" while physical aggression involves "throwing something at someone, pushing, grabbing, shoving, and hitting" (545).

Within Getting Out, Carl uses both verbal and physical aggression when relating to Arlene. Included with this aggression is threatening, name-calling, pushing, grabbing, shoving, and hitting. These actions are seen throughout the text. For example, when Arlene tells Carl to "fuck off" in Act II, he threatens by moving closer to her (Norman 54). He says: "You watch your mouth or I’ll close it up for you [. . .] An I wouldn’t come no closer if I’s you" (Norman 55), a demonstration of verbal and physical aggression.

Carl is also seen grabbing, pushing, shoving, and disrespecting Arlene’s valuable possessions by tossing about
her knitted objects she made for her son, Joey. As stated in the stage directions: "He knocks her away onto the bed. [. . .] Now kneels over her. [. . .] Moves as if to threaten her" (Norman 54). Before Ruby's final entrance in Act II, Carl tries to prevent Arlene from making a life decision and disobeying him when his character is directed to: "Catches her arm again, very rough" (Norman 57).

Along with physical violence, the slow emotional torture victims of abuse receive produces invisible scars which are as abusive as the quick, sharp physical blows (Walker 72). Carl is constantly degrading and lowering Arlene's hopes of survival through verbal abuse. Carl says: "You can do two things, girl [. . .] Breakin out an hookin" (Norman 33). "Who you know ain't a convict? [. . .] You ain't exactly a nice girl, you know" (Norman 55). He also degrades her when he discovers her knitting talent: "I bet you fooled them officers good doing this shit" (Norman 54). Here, he labels her knitted objects as garbage and throws them in the sink. Because of this verbal abuse, Arlene may lose all chances and hopes for survival. She underestimates her abilities to do anything including housework, cooking, and even loving (Walker 32).

As seen in the text, Arlene goes from an incestuous relationship with her father directly to a battering
relationship with Carl. In both cases, Arlene is trapped but believes she has no other way to live and survive.

**Acquaintance Rape**

**Definition**

Intimate violence occurs between romantic partners or intimates, but also with male friends. Along with courtship violence, Arlene encounters acquaintance rape with her cell guard, Bennie. Similar to courtship violence, people believe rape only occurs with the unacquainted, but many victims state they were faced with a rape situation involving a close friend or acquaintance. In Arlene's situation, her acquaintance rape occurs with her cell guard of eight years.

After Arlene is released from prison, she innocently asks Bennie to help her move into her new apartment, but he misunderstands her actions and believes she wants more than friendship. Because Bennie has driven Arlene to her new destination, unpacks her belongings, and buys her dinner, he believes that she owes him more than friendship. Unger and Crawford state how men prone to abuse feel "they are entitled to sex by any means as a return on their investments" (552). A nice dinner with a close friend is interpreted as a romantic dinner date according to Bennie. Throughout the night, Arlene refuses repeatedly any physical contact with Bennie. Upon refusing Bennie's sexual
advances, Arlene is further enraged. There is a verbal and physical struggle for power between the two, and Bennie almost rapes Arlene.

During this moment, Bennie performs the most common forms of violence involved in acquaintance rape: "slapping, grabbing, pushing, hitting, restraining, and shoving" (Unger and Crawford 356). Acquaintance rape results from men who "endorse traditional sex roles and a 'battle-of-the-sexes' attitude about relationships [. . .] women’s role is to be passive and coy [. . .] and eventually give in, while the man’s role is to initiate, preserve, and prevail until she has been 'conquered'" (Unger and Crawford 356). What started out as friendship between Arlene and Bennie ends up in acquaintance rape.

The Relationship Between Arlene and Bennie

Rape is the form of intimate violence Arlene encounters in her relationship with her cell guard, Bennie. Similar to Carl, Bennie’s act of rape is considered an acquaintance rape or a "hidden crime" (Unger and Crawford 550). Rape unfortunately is known as a "woman’s problem" according to theorist Diana Scully and is the crime least likely to be reported and least likely to result in conviction (35).

Rape is defined as "an act of violence, hatred, and aggression with violence as the common denominator instead of a sexual urge" (Fortune 15). Before this definition was
accepted, the psychological belief of rape was that it was "primarily the sexual act of a man who cannot control his sexual feelings" (Fortune 15), or an "explosive expression of pent up impulse" (Scully 37).

Relating to Getting Out, Unger and Crawford list characteristics of a rapist which can be related directly to Bennie. They state that a rapist appears to be a "normal guy" who seems to have no urges of violence in him. Bennie says: "I can't go til I know you're gonna do all right" (Norman 11). By saying this, Bennie seems to be a caring friend who will look after Arlene and take care of her if needed. No hint of violence in Bennie can be observed at this time or previous to this.

Another characteristic is that a rapist may have peers who condone and encourage sexual conquests. In the text, Bennie meets Arlene in his work as a prison guard. He is surrounded by other cell guards who abuse the prison inmates excessively. Evans, a cell guard working with Bennie, says: "Got it up your pookie, I bet" (Norman 15). While saying this, he is roughly handling Arlie while searching for a lighter she stole with which she started a fire. Although Bennie may not take part in this behavior, it seems the prison surrounds him with this behavior, and he is influenced by it. An example of this influence is when Guard-Evans, while referring to Arlie, asks Bennie if he is
"screwing that wildcat?" (Norman 44). Instead of telling the truth, Bennie acts as if he has had sexual intercourse with Arlie. In order to be accepted, Bennie has to act more assertive and in control around the other guards.

Bennie also exhibits a belief in the rape myths. Rapists also believe in the accepted rape myths which include believing women unconsciously desire to be raped and beaten. Bennie says: "You don’t want me to go. You’re jus beginning to git interested. Your ol girlie temper’s flarin up. I like that in a woman" (Norman 38). By stating this, Bennie assumes he knows what is best for Arlene and that she really wants to give into his urges.

Rapists do not commit the act for sex, but to gain power, control, and to dominate another human being (Fortune 15-7). One rapist said, "I got more pleasure out of being aggressive, having power over her, her actions, her life. [. . .] I had to prove something, that I could dominate a woman" (Fortune 9). Similarly, Bennie lost control of the situation; he regained control through the use of violence to stay above Arlene physically. In the last scene with Arlene in Act I, he pins her arms down on the bed positioning her below him. Bennie loses control of Arlene and displays attempts at gaining power and control.

As in Getting Out, rape most frequently occurs in the victim’s home and the rapist may interpret the friendly and
affectionate behavior on the part of the victim as a sign of sexual interest. If the victim resists the sexual advances, the perpetrator is likely to interpret the victim's "'no' to really mean 'yes' and force her to have sex with him. [. . .] He labels the incident 'seduction,' while she labels it assault" (Unger and Crawford 552). Therefore, Arlene unintentionally misleads Bennie into believing she wants him to stay. Bennie says: "Then why'd you ask me to drive you all the way up here?" (Norman 11), and "You'll get to like me now we're out [. . .] We'll have a nice little dinner, just the two of us" (Norman 16). In these comments, Bennie believes Arlene feels the same way he does and wants a romantic relationship.

Besides verbal hinting, Bennie physically starts to coax Arlene to relax by touching her. He begins by offering to rub her back, and, when she refuses repeatedly, finally uses force. Norman outlined in the stage directions: "Grabs her shoulders and turns her around, sits her down hard on the trunk, starts rubbing her back and neck" (37). This is one example of forceful touch leading to rape.

Although Bennie did not commit the final act of intercourse involved in rape, every action he commits leading up to the point of intercourse is characteristic of a rapist. The perpetrator's emotions of lust and fantasy became overpowered by control.
Within Arlene’s past and present relationships, forms of intimate violence occur affecting her physical and mental stability. In order to survive, Arlene must release the pain inflicted by her abuse of incest, battering, and rape.

**Arlene’s Internalized Oppression**

In the book *Jung and Feminism*, Demaris S. Wehr refers to the term “internalized oppression” as a major force influencing women’s place in society. Internalized oppression is defined by Jung as women viewing themselves as “uniquely deficient or inadequate” resulting from patriarchal society’s definition of women (Wehr 18). Wehr believes that society and the individual psyche are in dialectical relationship with one another.

Within *Getting Out*, Arlene’s internalized oppression appears through the character of Arlie, Arlene’s younger self—an abused child, and juvenile delinquent. Through the use of flashbacks, Arlie appears on-stage at the same time as Arlene. Arlie is constantly in Arlene’s mind reminding her of past experiences and feelings of inadequacy. Arlie voices her opinion and tries to control Arlene’s life by not allowing change or independence from her past, and she intentionally does seem to oppress her.

Some cases of internalized oppression result from father-daughter incest as in Arlene’s relationship with her father. Because “painful, secretive, ‘dirty’ things happen
to them in childhood, they assume they are responsible or bad" (Wehr 21). Since the incidents involve male superior figures, the self-hatred or inner voice purposely blocks healthy relationships with men seen in her father, Carl, and Bennie. It can be observed that relationships with women, her mother and Ruby, are unsuccessful until she comes to terms with Arlie.

The ability of a victim of abuse to differentiate between the inner voice, Arlie, and herself is one of the main goals of a Jungian analysis. Many victims are unable to consciously confront their inner voices and this results in simply being at their mercy without knowing what the voices are (Wehr 18). Arlie’s constant intrusion in Arlene’s attempt to change her life causes Arlene to be unaware of her ability to confront and distance herself from Arlie. Because of this, Arlie becomes an antagonist or the self-hater who utters “accusations of hatred” (Wehr 19).

Psychologist Polly Young-Eisendrath believes that all adult women in a patriarchal culture have to struggle with the self-hater, or in Arlene's case, Arlie. What victims like Arlene do not realize is how they “have to contend with the self-hater, and yet do not know of its existence as an ‘inner voice’ and have not distanced themselves from it sufficiently to ‘dialogue’ with it or exorcise it” (Wehr 19). In order for Arlene to move on in life and earn an
honest living, she must understand that Arlie must be dealt with so that Arlie does not interrupt her chances of survival. The only cure of internalized oppression one may have is to make peace with the inner voice and "self-acceptance" (Wehr 20). Once a woman "changes her inner image, by dialoguing with it, befriending it [...] the person's behavior will change" (Wehr 21).

In Getting Out, Arlene finally speaks out to her inner voice, Arlie, at the end of the play. After Ruby exits, Arlie and Arlene are left alone on-stage and Arlie says, "Hey! You member that time we was playing policeman an June locked me up in Mama's closet an then took off swimmin?" (Norman 65). This statement is made directly to Arlene and is the first time Arlene consciously decides to make contact with her inner voice. Norman leaves the ending open without answering whether Arlene will survive or not. At this point, it is understood that Arlene has befriended Arlie with a hope of surviving her internalized oppression.

Now that we understand the issues of incest, battery, rape, and internalized oppression, I will explain in the following chapter how researching these theories influenced my direction of Getting Out. Along with my direction involving intimate violence, I will also include my usage of Harold Clurman's directing method.
CHAPTER II
STAGING INTIMATE VIOLENCE

Introduction To Clurman

In addition to my research of intimate violence, studying the directing method of Harold Clurman was also helpful for my direction process. Clurman believes:

The director must be an organizer, a teacher, a politician, a psychic detective, a lay analyst, a technician, a creative being. Ideally, he should know literature (drama), acting, the psychology of the actor, the visual arts, music, history, and above all, he must understand people. He must inspire confidence. All of which means he must be a 'great lover'" (14).

Through Clurman's words regarding a director, a director must know the psychology of the character, the actor portraying it, and direct accordingly. Each actor has a different personality and must be uniquely persuaded or coaxed. Through Clurman's method, I found a new way of talking to actors.

Also, Clurman prescribes directors to write an in-depth analysis of the play which includes a brief statement of the play's theme or its "message" (21). When the director finds
the theme, a progression from the "general to particular" happens, and elements start falling into place (Clurman 27). Although a director must eventually find her play's theme, the theme is not what the director should seek when reading it (Clurman 27). The theme may consist of "a mood, an attitude, a general statement [. . .] an overall feeling" (Clurman 27). Influenced by Clurman's theory, the theme I chose for directing *Getting Out* involved feeling release from society and life pressures. Not only should the actors playing Arlie and Arlene find this release, but the audience should feel trapped throughout the course of the play and by the end find release also.

Along with the theme of a play, Clurman stresses great importance on using active verbs to label characters and scenes. He states how "drama and acting are based on doing, and action", and his message employs the usage of active verbs (Clurman 28). By using acting verbs, Clurman explains how the director must label each character, the play, and each scene with an active verb, or what he defines as the spine. He defines how a spine is the "main action" which leads to the "super-problem--the dramatist's basic motivation in writing the play" (Clurman 28).

First I found the spine of *Getting Out* and then labeled the spine of every character. The spine of a play is the top of a pyramid and the spines of the characters support
and relate to the spine of the play. If one does not fit with another, then the spine is useless. Even minor characters of a play must be somehow related to the spine.

In *Getting Out*, I labeled the play’s spine as “To forgive but not forget; to move on.” One must not forget the past but realize it will always be a part of him or her. I chose this spine because Arlene must forgive and embrace her former self, Arlie, including all of the incest, battering, and rape connected with her former life. Arlene must not forget Arlie altogether, but forgive her past and move on in life.

After labeling the play’s spine, I then began to find the spines of each character. The spines of each character is as follows:

- **Arlene**: To forgive but not forget; to move on (the spine of the play).
- **Arlie**: To remain Arlie; to be heard.
- **Mother**: To suppress the guilt.
- **Carl**: To reclaim ownership of Arlene, his property.
- **Bennie**: To have Arlene depend on him, need him; to be a hero in her life.

Along with finding the spines within the play, I also developed a director’s score using Clurman’s three-column technique. A director’s score consists of three columns labeled as actions, adjustments, and activities. The first
and most important column, actions, is where Clurman places the active verbs. Here, a director must find a verb which describes the specific action for each moment in the play. Often, there is a new verb for every line in the script.

After completing the first column, the second column relates to the active verbs because it describes the manner in which the action is carried out (80). Adverbs are often used to describe these adjustments. Finally, the third column describes the overt physical activity which accompanies the action (81). Clurman recommends leaving this column blank before rehearsals begin because physical activity occurs more naturally during rehearsals than trying to figure it out beforehand by using a model or floorplan.

The four examples I will provide of my three-column director score include the final scene between Arlene and Arlie, and the first scenes between Arlene and the Mother, Carl and Bennie. An example of my director’s score is located in the Appendix.
Directing Arlene

Incorporation of Clurman

I chose Arlene’s spine as “To forgive but not forget; to move on.” Arlene says, “I don’t need nobody hangin around remindin me where I been” (Norman 17). Because of this one line, I realized how Arlene is struggling with trying to forget Arlie, her past experiences, former lifestyle, and the people closest to her. After finally being released from prison, Arlene wants to start her life over without Arlie and everyone else involved in her past. She must realize she cannot simply forget the past and never think about it again, but learn from her experiences, grow through them, and accept them as part of her life as a human being.

Throughout the entire play, Arlene is in contrast with Arlie, her younger former self, who is constantly reminding her she is still part of the violent, hateful child she once was. Arlene tries to disconnect herself from Arlie, Bennie, and Carl, but at the same time wants connection from her mother who ends up keeping her distance physically and emotionally. Arlene must learn to forgive her mother along with Bennie, Carl, and Arlie in order to survive and move on.

In order to continue living life on the outside and survive, Arlene must realize Arlie will always be a part of
her life. She will never fully release or kill a part that was so close to her for many years. When it seems as if Arlene has nowhere to turn except back to her former pimp Carl, Ruby introduces herself into Arlene’s life. Ruby, Arlene’s upstairs neighbor, is the only person who presents Arlene with the truth. When Ruby enters into Arlene’s life, she provides hope, friendship and honesty—feelings Arlene has never been given by anyone else. Ruby helps Arlene realize “you can still love people that’s gone” (Norman 62).

**Directing Arlene As An Abused Child**

When I cast the actress playing Arlene, I understood I would have difficulties not only with her appearance but also having her emotionally portray a woman affected by years of past childhood abuse. The actress playing Arlene was usually cast as the ingenue or pretty young woman, so the character of Arlene was an enormous challenge to play.

In Norman’s text, Arlene is described as a “thin, drawn woman in her late twenties, who has just served an 8-year prison term for murder” (5). The actress playing Arlene was twenty-two and grew up in North Dakota—a safe environment with little crime. Portraying a woman older than the actress was a challenge for her.

First, I discussed with the actress playing Arlene the similarities/differences between Arlene and herself as an actress which included Martens’ characteristics of an abused
child. While discussing the characteristics of an abused child, I had the actress describe her own personal characteristics and opinions of herself. What we found were vast opposites between an abused child and the actress playing Arlene. For example, an abused child shows signs of low self-esteem and anger. The actress labeled herself as energetic, confident, attractive, assertive, and secure. These characteristics are extremely different than those of Arlene's—unattractive, insecure, and emotionally unstable. The two characteristics the actress playing Arlene had the most difficulty portraying are low self-esteem and anger. For example, the issue of low self-esteem was difficult for her to portray not only because she herself has great confidence in life, but because she had never played a character who had low self-esteem due to intimate violence. We discussed movement, physical posture, and gestures which might portray low self-esteem.

During a rehearsal, I encouraged the actress playing Arlene to experiment with movement an ex-con/prostitute might display. For example, an insecure woman would walk with her head less erect, shoulders slouched, and with an unmotivated, lethargic pace. Especially during the physically violent scenes between Arlene and Carl or Arlene and Bennie, the actress would stand with such poise that she looked like Arlene had dance training. A graceful movement
would occur rather than an unconfident woman with low self-esteem.

Because of low self-esteem, Arlene may present a passive face to the world but she also has the strength and violent behavior patterns to prevent further violence and being killed (Walker 31). Anger, Martens' second characteristic of an abused child, and a passive/aggressive attitude are extremely difficult to direct because a character must not play all anger or all passiveness, but both consecutively. What a character says or does may be the opposite of what she truly feels. For example, Arlene "displays outward calmness and holds everything inside" but, yet, contains pent up feelings of hurt and anger inside which will soon erupt (Unger and Crawford 554).

Along with anger is the resilience to continue living, defend herself from her past, and prevent being killed. Because the stage was an intimate setting, I decided to have Arlene slap Bennie at the end of Act I rather than use a stage slap. After discussing the real slap with the actor playing Bennie, we decided it was acceptable to use hand-to-face contact. The actor playing Bennie was not apprehensive at all about being hit, but the actress playing Arlene hesitated when hitting Bennie. To work on the problem, I substituted a stuffed pillow as the object to slap and provided her with motivation geared towards anger. She then
hit the pillow over and over again due to her pent up feeling of anger. I also had her take small cardboard boxes and throw them against a wall. This helped with the scene in which Arlene hurls a peanut butter jar at her door due to anger. Finding the resilience in Arlene was difficult for the actress because she herself is not physically strong. A passive attitude resulted from the actress playing Arlene, which made her appear less aggressive and fierce.

**Directing Mother**

**Incorporation of Clurman**

Unger and Crawford state how in incestuous families there is little mutual display of affection and physical contact which results in the family becoming emotionally distant (542). The mother in incestuous families “tends to lack any sense of comfort, security, direction and happiness in life” (Martens 61). Within such a mother/daughter relationship, there is no physical or emotional connection. Arlene’s mother wants to complete her motherly duties she feels are necessary without forming any connection or relationship with Arlene. Before Arlene opens her apartment door to let her mother in, the mother is described as “pulling the doorknob from outside, angry that the door is locked” (Norman 18). She says:

> What’s takin you so long? [. . .] I brung you some stuff but I ain’t gonna stand here all night (18).
I ain't gonna be here all that long. Least you can talk to me while I'm here (19).

Immediately her mother says she does not and will not make time to bond with Arlene; she just wants to clean the apartment, give Arlene some living and home supplies, and leave.

I chose the Mother’s spine as “to suppress the guilt.” As Martens stated, “the mother may frequently feel guilty about failing to protect her child” (63). Because the Mother feels guilty about not raising Arlene right, she takes her anger and frustration out, not on herself but on Arlene. Instead of helping Arlene, the Mother provides insults one after another. Distance is safer for the Mother because she feels she will not get hurt as easily. While conversing with Arlene, she keeps herself moving and busy cleaning. This way there is no opportunity for physical or emotional closeness.

Directing Mother Through Incestuous Families

The Mother is a challenging role to play because of the possible trap of portraying the character one-dimensionally. Because the Mother displays lack of love towards Arlene, does not mean she should be completely mean and uncaring. Clurman has mentioned that a villain must not be played as only mean but that the villain has a good side also (75).
It is these moments of love that I worked on with the actress playing the mother.

Within incestuous families, there is little mutual display of affection and physical contact. In my staging, I encouraged avoidance of intimacy. For example, in her first appearance the Mother carried a laundry basket and cleaning supplies. By having her hands full, there was no opportunity for the Mother to allow any physical contact. Here, Arlene attempts to hug her mother since they have not seen each other in years, and the Mother stands still with offering no chance of intimacy. These initial first moments of the scene between the Mother and Arlene are crucial in setting up the relationship.

Instantly, the Mother avoids Arlene’s gesture and begins inspecting the apartment and cleaning to avoid connection and love. I discussed how a mother in an incestuous family “tends to lack any sense of comfort, security, direction, and happiness in life” (Martens 61). Through cleaning, Arlene’s mother has comfort and direction in this uncomfortable mother/daughter situation and is showing how she cares but uses a duty instead of emotional or physical contact. The Mother displays love by sweeping Arlene’s floor but interrupts this kind gesture by hitting Arlene hard on the butt with her broom to make her move.
Another crucial moment I worked on with the actress occurred when Arlene left the room to fill up a bucket of water for her mother to clean with. When Arlene exits into the bathroom, I worked with the actress playing the Mother on displaying emotions of love, hurt, and guilt when no one is around. This moment was a nice break for the actress playing the Mother because she was able to avoid the one-dimensional portrayal of playing anger. I directed her to look around the room and touch the kitchen chairs, counter, and the bedspread she had given Arlene. In these brief moments, the Mother became a three-dimensional person with feelings of love and anger.

If the Mother were to show love, she believes she would get hurt, so she, instead, hurts others by not expressing her care and love. Because of her low self-confidence and inability to express her feelings directly, the Mother usually "denies many problems within her family" (Martens 62). Before she leaves, the Mother erupts verbally towards Arlene in order to keep life the way it always was. When Arlene tries to tell her mother she has changed and is not the same hateful brat Arlie was, her mother refuses to listen.

By blocking out Arlene’s abuse by her father and her accomplishments or future goals, the Mother does not have to face the real world and display any softer feelings towards
her loved ones. By escaping from actual life, the Mother feels she is minimizing the risk of abuse on herself (63). I worked with the actress playing the Mother on fighting the love she feels towards Arlene. The Mother’s last line while she is exiting is “Don’t you touch me” (Norman 30). Then, as a director using Clurman’s method, I worked on finding opposites in what characters do, feel, and say. For example, when the Mother says “Don’t you touch me” (Norman 30), she is really crying out for love and connection. At these moments, I discussed with the actress how the Mother’s last exit should not only be full of anger, but also of guilt, fear, regret, and love. A clear understanding of a mother influenced from an incestuous family was developed from the actress, and she attempted to approach her acting differently.

Directing Carl

Incorporation of Clurman

In order to survive, he must rely on Arlene and continue using her prostitution for financial needs. Without Arlene, Carl is nothing. I chose Carl’s spine as “to reclaim ownership of Arlene, his property.” Since Carl once controlled and dominated Arlene before she served time in prison, I believe his goal is to reclaim her. Because his actions worked in the past, Carl wants to re-enact his violence in order to own Arlene and survive.
Because Arlene never had a stable relationship with a man, the attention Carl gave her made her feel important. Because Arlene grew up in an incestuous family, her future relationships are affected by her upbringing. In incestuous situations, children become confused and overwhelmed by their feelings of loyalty and trust for the perpetrator (Unger and Crawford 539-40). Like her father, Carl provides financial stability, a familiar caring, and love for Arlene, even though he also inflicts harmful abuse on her.

Also, as a female victim of incest, Arlene may be described as being "overwhelmed by her father’s superior power and unable to resist him; she may feel disgust, loathing, and shame. But at the same time [ . . . ] this is the only kind of love she can get" (Unger and Crawford 541). Relating to Carl, Arlene finds him powerful, is unable to resist, and is fearful of his abuse, but at the same time she feels Carl’s is the only love she will be able to find. Of course, the attention he gives Arlene is only given so he is able to eat and earn a living through Arlene’s prostitution. In the end, Carl says he will never beg anybody, but he knows he is unable to survive without her. When Carl leaves Arlene at the end of Act II, he is left without an answer on whether she decides to follow him or
not. This shows how Carl has lost control, is unable to reclaim Arlene, and is afraid of survival.

**Directing Carl Through Courtship Violence**

As Unger and Crawford stated, men involved in courtship violence learn at a young age that they have a right to dominate and control women using intimidating, coercive, and physically forceful tactics. Because they believe this during childhood, their intimate relationships as adults are affected by this control (Unger and Crawford 533).

Using control as the main issue, I worked with the actor playing Carl in owning the space in Arlene’s apartment. For instance, Carl’s first entrance involves him twisting the front door violently and kicking it in. Such an action is labeled as physical aggression by Unger and Crawford. Carl uses force and believes this is the way to win Arlene back. After Carl kicked the door open, I directed him to inspect Arlene’s new apartment and belongings in her trunk, which to me signified control and ownership. He moved into her territory without gaining Arlene’s acceptance.

Carl displayed physical aggression by kicking or breaking inanimate objects, but also by “throwing something at someone, pushing, grabbing, shoving, and hitting” (Unger and Crawford 545). Oftentimes, men who batter within courtship violence present a dual personality. Even though
Carl is an antagonist, I stressed the importance of not playing him as the villain.

Working with the actor, we found moments where Carl would coax and persuade Arlene, and moments where he turned into an animal that may explode violently at any moment. In order to persuade Arlene to move with him to New York City, Carl attempts to tell Arlene about what she will be able to offer her son, Joey. Carl says, "You come with me, you kin send him big orange bears an Sting-Ray bikes with his name wrote on the fenders" (Norman 57).

Here, I directed Carl to lay his head on Arlene's lap while both were on her bed. Carl was then able to touch Arlene's face, hair, and body while at the same time forcing her to stay close to him. In order for Arlene to move, she would have to take the initiative to move Carl's body off her.

In Norman's text there are three moments where Carl turns into an animal with violent explosions, due to Carl's drug abuse and unstable mental state. Carl says, "What'd you say? [. . .] You watch your mouth or I'll close it up for you" (Norman 54). At this moment, Carl makes his first entrance in Act II. When Carl enters, Arlene responds in a negative way which throws Carl off guard. Because he feels he has the right to control, Carl believes his violent behavior is justified and should not have negative
consequences. Carl says, "Since when Carl couldn't find it if he really wanted it?" (Norman 55).

Cohabiting or dating couples have a higher rate of physical assault than married couples. As such, Carl may end up using violence against his female partners in order to prevent them from abandoning him (Koss 47-9). At the end of Act II, I worked with the actor on his final exit. Here, he exits and leaves the door open, but before he leaves he has a look of insecurity and fear in his eyes. Arlene chooses not to answer and chooses to live on her own without him. Carl's first entrance is of pure bravado, and by the end he is sorrowful and even pitiful.

Directing Bennie

Incorporation of Clurman

Similar to Carl, Bennie seems to be a friend and gentleman towards Arlene, will do anything for her, and take care of her in and out of prison. While working in prison, Bennie became too familiar with Arlene's prison life, knew her violent outbursts, and discovers a way of controlling her in a sense by rewarding her with a stick of chewing gum. He takes pride in these small accomplishments because no other cell guard was able to control or calm Arlene.

Although he is different than the other guards in this aspect, Bennie is also different because he never physically took advantage of Arlene while she was a prisoner. Because
his former marriage with Dorie did not last long, and he has not experienced sexual activity throughout his life, due to her illness, Bennie does not know how to behave towards a lady on relationship situations. He desires Arlene but misunderstands her intentions of living a new life without anyone from her past. I chose his spine as "to have Arlene depend on him, need him; to be a hero in her life." Without Arlene, he will not survive and with her, she makes him complete.

**Directing Bennie Through Rape**

Even though Bennie did not commit final intercourse with Arlene, he still committed every action of a rapist. Again, I worked on creating a three-dimensional character rather than the stereotypical violent rapist. I discussed how rapists are labeled as normal guys whose intentions are not rape, but control (Unger and Crawford 551). We discussed characteristics of such a normal guy and how they compared to the actor.

I also discussed how rape, as defined in Chapter I, is "an act of violence, hatred, and aggression with violence as the common denominator instead of a sexual urge" (Fortune 15), and that rapists do not commit the act for sex, but to gain power, control, and to dominate another human being (Fortune 15-7). Because Bennie never had control in his life, he becomes violent when Arlene refuses his sexual
advances. At first, he only wants a simple back rub which he believes will lead to more intimacy. After refusal upon refusal, Bennie gains control by pinning Arlene down using force. The actor playing Bennie had to realize that his emotions of lust and fantasy became overpowered by control. Control is the main issue in rape, not a sexual urge. Intimacy and physical touch are difficult aspects to direct. I had the actor playing Bennie portray two sides of his character: lust as his motivation for rape, and need for control over Arlene. By using lust and control as motivation, the actor playing Bennie was able to feel a strong difference between a rapist and someone wanting sex for pleasure.

Because Arlene invited Bennie to help her move, he believes she wants him to help her get started in her new life. Relating to Chapter I, Unger and Crawford state how rapists feel "they are entitled to sex by any means as a return on their investments" (552). The actor and I discussed all the events leading up to the act of rape and how each event brought hope to Bennie by believing Arlene wants a relationship with him. Bennie believes Arlene wants more than just friendship by saying, "Then why'd you ask me to drive you all the way up here?" (Norman 11). By driving Arlene to her new apartment, Bennie is hopeful that he may continue living life with Arlene outside of prison.
I directed moments in which Bennie displayed his attraction and lust toward Arlene. Physical contact involving attempted back rubs and patting Arlene on the behind were included in Bennie’s actions. Also, when Bennie is talking about the bars on Arlene’s apartment window he says, “These bars won’t be so bad. Maybe you could get you some plants so’s you don’t even see them. Yeah, plants’d do it up just fine. Just fine” (Norman 14). On the second “Just fine,” I directed Bennie to gaze at Arlene bending over looking into the trunk. Here he would react with attraction and lust while referring to Arlene as “fine”.

Unger and Crawford state how acquaintance rape results from men who “endorse traditional sex roles and a ‘battle-of-the-sexes’ attitude about relationships [. . .] women’s role is to be passive and coy [. . .] and eventually give in, while the man’s role is to initiate, preserve, and prevail until she has been conquered” (356). I discussed with the actor how Bennie believes he is the authority figure in his relationship with Arlene. When he says, “You gotta make decisions now, Arlene. Gotta decide things” (Norman 14), Bennie believes he is taking the initiative to help and guide Arlene. Eventually, Bennie realizes Arlene wants to make her own decisions without him. Once he has lost control of the situation and is asked to leave, he
tries to gain control back through the only way he knows how, power.

**Staging Arlene's Internalized Oppression**

As stated before, the term "internalized oppression" is defined as women viewing themselves as "uniquely deficient or inadequate" (Wehr 18). This situation can be perceived in Norman's text through the character of Arlie, Arlene's younger self. Arlie acts as the self-hater and inner voice of Arlene who is unable to distance herself from Arlie. In order to distance herself, Arlene must converse and befriend Arlie, her inner voice (Wehr 9-20). This does not occur until the end of the play when Arlene finally listens, accepts, and responds to Arlie.

Up until the end, Arlie acts as an antagonist or self-hater towards Arlene. Throughout the play, Arlie appears constantly in Arlene's memories and flashbacks. In the playwright's notes, Arlie is described as "Arlene's memory of herself, called up by fears, needs, and even simple word cues. The memory haunts, attacks and warns. But mainly, the memory will not go away" (Norman 6).

Originally in the script, Norman places Arlene and Arlie in different areas of the stage. Instead of following the stage directions, I chose to allow Arlie to move through Arlene's apartment and the entire stage area. By blocking Arlie's scenes within Arlene's apartment, this forced the
inner voice or self-hater to be directly in front, next to, or nearby Arlene during her flashbacks. Also, by allowing Arlie to walk from her cell directly into Arlene’s apartment, one may see how the two different playing areas both serve as cells. A cell has no escape outlet and Arlene’s apartment is imprisoned by society’s pressures and influences.

Norman also describes how most of Arlie’s “scenes take place in the prison areas” which consist of a catwalk that “stretches above the apartment and a prison cell [. . . ] connects to it by stairways [. . . ] The apartment must seem imprisoned” (6). Instead of a catwalk above the apartment and prison cell, the designer and I agreed upon steel grate platforms surrounding the outer edge of the stage. This would still have the effect of imprisoning the cell and apartment since the theater space was too small for levels.

Norman suggests that Arlie’s scenes in the prison surround the apartment. Instead, I chose to block Arlie’s scenes in her cell which connected to the apartment, in the apartment, and on the steel grates surrounding the outer edge of the apartment and cell. In a sense, this displayed how Arlie is able to roam wherever she chooses but is always imprisoned either in her cell, the apartment, or the steel grate platforms. There is no outlet or means of escape.
In Act II during Arlie’s monologue involving passive/aggressive attitudes, I directed Arlene to hurl a jar of peanut butter at her door out of anger and fall to the floor in exasperation. Because the jar fails to bounce, she believes she will be unable to bounce back and start her life over again. While Arlene is cradling herself on the floor, Arlie begins her monologue about needing someone to listen and believe in her. Instead of directing Arlie to stay in her cell, as given in the stage directions, I directed Arlie to cross into Arlene’s apartment and circle around Arlene on the floor. By doing this, I believe it displayed an internalized oppression in Arlene.

In the text, when Arlie yells, “Who’s out there? Is anybody out there? [. . .] somebody let me out of here [. . .] Somebody!”, Arlie speaks directly to Arlene rather than performing to an unseen figure around her prison cell. Arlie is pleading for Arlene to forgive and listen to her, but Arlene tries to forget about Arlie’s existence.

Now that I have provided examples of using research on intimate violence and Harold Clurman’s directing method, I will explain the difficulties and challenges I experienced while directing intimate violence. I will also discuss the knowledge and experience gained through my research and production process.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

Difficulties In Directing Intimate Violence

Not only is intimate violence difficult to discuss, it is also challenging to stage and communicate with actors. Finding the spines of each character and relating them to theories of intimate violence benefited my direction process and helped me understand and communicate more efficiently during the rehearsals.

Arlene

My approach as a director is to guide the actor during the rehearsal process using the research on intimate violence and Clurman’s directing method. My spine for Arlene is “To forgive but not forget; to move on.” With this spine in mind during rehearsals, I attempted to direct the actress playing Arlene with a goal towards survival in her life. I explained how Arlene makes life choices of surviving and overcoming her past, but, in the end, society may not permit Arlene to survive the future. As a director, I never outrightly told the actress that Arlene wants to survive and is not a quitter, but through discussions during the rehearsal process with the actress, I tried to lead her to this realization.
This particular actress, I believe, needed to be told exactly what Arlene wants and guided specifically by a director. The actress seemed hesitant and unsure of her own actions, decisions, and opinions as a performer. Clurman prescribes not to tell actors exact character needs or specific wants, but I found this to be an ineffective directing approach to use with the actress playing Arlene.

Instead of wanting “to forgive but not forget; to move on,” the actress playing Arlene portrayed a character who had no intentions of continuing life and survival. What resulted in the actress’ acting was a depressed state of being; someone who wanted to quit. In performing Norman’s work, the play’s ending was unclear as to whether Arlene could survive on her own, even after forgiving her mother, Carl, Bennie, and her past; the actress’ performance of Arlene seemed at odds with my spine.

A major impact on the actress’ performance was the actress’ attitude towards the role itself. In directing this actress, I had a difficult time communicating how a battered woman, influenced and affected by an abusive childhood, full of intimate violence would express herself. Because the actress had never played a role involving intimate violence before, it was an enormous challenge for her. One of the main struggles for her as an actress was to admit that Arlene does not believe she is an attractive
person physically or spiritually. After discussing the characteristics of battered women and abused children, it was a challenge for me to make the actress understand that she and Arlene may be attractive people, but according to society, Arlene is considered homely and appears unconfident.

According to Martens', characteristics of an abused child include low self-esteem and anger. These are the two characteristics I focused on when directing the actress playing Arlene. After the issues of low self-esteem and anger were discussed, the actress had a difficult time not playing the role one-dimensionally. What resulted was more of the actress' portraying a depressed person, but not a person of low self-esteem. Arlene is not a quitter, and must come to terms with how she must survive, but she is not depressed. Because Arlene is not a quitter, there should have been moments of anger and eruption both physically and vocally.

The moments within the script where Arlene becomes a fierce and violent animal (especially during the Arlene and Bennie rape scene) were never solid because of a hesitancy in the actress to release all of the pent up energy Arlene acquired. These moments appeared delicate rather than violent.
Also, we discussed movement and gesture relating to Arlene, but what resulted in this actress' acting was a certain poise in the character, unlike that of an insecure and unconfident woman, influenced by a life of intimate violence.

Not only was low self-esteem a challenge for the actress portraying Arlene, but she also objected to the costume designed for Arlene. The actress was not pleased with the loose, unflattering work dress designed for the character. I discussed with her how Arlene has lost weight while in prison, and that her dress must be similar to Ruby's work dress but with less color. I felt the actress' attitude towards the character and the character's descriptions affected her overall performance. I believe she did not give complete effort and dedication to the role of Arlene compared to other roles she performed.

From this experience, I need to understand in my directing the psychology, not only of the character, but also of each actor I am working with. If the Clurman method of communicating with actors does not work on a specific actor, I need to find other approaches to use.

Mother

As a director, I work with actors on playing the opposites of what they believe their character to be. For example, the Mother may want to display emotions of anger
towards Arlene, but she also has loving feelings for Arlene. A great struggle with the actress playing the Mother was to have her display moments of love rather than complete anger throughout her scene with Arlene. Again, creating a three-dimensional character was difficult for me as a director and the actress playing the Mother. What resulted in performance was mostly anger throughout the scene, from the moment the Mother entered until the end. During rehearsals, I attempted to guide the actress into feeling the Mother’s need is “to suppress the guilt” she has from living in an abusive and incestuous family. Towards the end of the scene, the actress yelled angrily before her last exit.

The actress did not understand that the Mother feels pain, guilt, and love when becoming angry with Arlene. Because the Mother does not want Arlene to see her vulnerable side, the Mother must use anger to deal with the situation. I believe the yelling resulted too quickly without enough realization that the yelling is geared not only towards Arlene, but also aimed at the Mother.

During rehearsals, I worked with the actress on using less yelling to display moments of anger. Instead, I had her experiment with different vocal inflections but not raising her volume. In these controlled moments, I saw more depth in her acting, but I believe Norman’s language in the text interfered with the actress. Since the actress is a
foreign exchange student, she has difficulty with the English language, especially since the language within *Getting Out* is dialect. I felt the actress developed more of a three-dimensional character only during nonverbal moments.

One particular moment I blocked was that of Arlene filling up a bucket with water in the off-stage bathroom and the Mother is alone on-stage for a moment. Here, I directed the Mother to stop cleaning and let her relate to the moment. She looked around the room and touched Arlene’s kitchen chair with love and care. I believe this symbolized the Mother reaching out, not by touching Arlene but Arlene’s tangible objects. At this moment, I believe the actress displayed and expressed some love for a moment, and I was able to sense more depth in her performance.

**Carl**

When directing a play, I emphasize the first entrance and last exit of each character. It is at these moments that an audience is able to understand where the character is coming from and where the character is headed. Since I labeled Carl’s spine a “To reclaim ownership of Arlene, his property,” I believe his first entrance in Act I was a success. I directed him to break into Arlene’s apartment without her consent and instantly take over her belongings. One moment the actor had difficulty with was owning a new
space. Since this is the first time he has entered Arlene’s apartment, he needed to take more time looking around. Instead, he headed straight for the trunk and began inspecting. As director and actor, we discussed taking more time to display confusion and uncertainty. During rehearsals, the actor struggled with playing Carl as only powerful and dominant, not showing his insecure and vulnerable side.

I discussed with the actor the psychology and characteristics of a batterer. The actor playing Carl developed a clear understanding that physical and verbal violence erupted in Carl when he lost control of a situation or became jealous of Arlene’s life without him. The violence should appear through a clear realization by Carl that he believes only violence will resolve conflict. Upon expressing anger, he believes he will remain the dominant figure in his relationship with Arlene.

Working on a three-dimensional character instead of a stereotypical one-dimensional batterer/drug dealer was extremely beneficial. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to direct this actor before but never with my research on intimate violence or Clurman’s directing method. Before rehearsals, we had a clearer director/actor communication, but the research enhanced the process. I believe the actor developed a clear understanding of a batterer’s state of
mind and owned the space he was trying to reclaim, yet, he also displayed moments of fear and vulnerability. In life, the actor playing Carl is the opposite of a batterer, but he chose to fully become a different person on-stage. Not only was the actor eager to experiment with my direction, but he also brought his own ideas and methods to his acting. Therefore, my usage of Clurman's directing method and research on battering was combined with the actor's methods to produce a three-dimensional character.

**Bennie**

As a director, I again focus on portraying a three-dimensional character rather than a stereotypical character. The actor playing Bennie displayed a great sense of wanting Arlene to depend on him and need him. He portrayed a man who loved Arlene so much that he would do anything for her. When he sees she does not need his help, he tries to gain control by using his strength. Understanding a rapist's frame of mind is difficult to comprehend and portray, and directing rape on-stage is a difficult aspect of this text. What was difficult for the actor playing Bennie to understand is how the main urge is not for sexual pleasure but for control.

I believe the actor portrayed Bennie as a normal man and also as a life threatening rapist, but the transition was unclear from the nice man to the rapist. I worked with
him on not quickly jumping from the normal guy to the rapist, but by trying to gain control slowly. When he has no chance of power, he resorts to control using rape. I discussed the characteristics of a rapist and broke the script down into segments leading up to the rape with the actor. Breaking the script into sections and labeling each section was beneficial in helping the actor and myself understand Bennie's frame of mind. However, in performance, the transition between lust and control was rushed.

Every event leading up to the rape provides hope and a sense of future love for Bennie when he believes Arlene will continue life with him outside prison. When this hope proves false, the actor playing Bennie had to realize the urge turned from love or sex to power, control, and dominance. Although the transition from lust to control was unclear, I believe the actor playing Bennie performed a character who is a normal man wanting connection/love.

Knowledge And Experience Gained

Overall, I believe my research on intimate violence and my usage of Clurman's directing method proved to be extremely beneficial. Before I started rehearsals, I gained a clear understanding of incest, battering, and rape. With this study, I was able to communicate ideas and subjects I would not have known without my research.
Also, Clurman’s directing method was a challenge for me because he prescribes a different way of communicating with actors than I have dealt with before. I believe I am able to now delve deeper into comparing perceived character of self and character of role and communicate my ideas more effectively. As a director, I learned to not only find the psychology of each character, but also the psychology of each actor. In the future, I realize I must coax and persuade each actor differently and not assume they understand my direction. Not every actor is willing to experiment or follow my direction, so I must find different directing approaches to reach each actor.

Intimate violence is an uncomfortable issue to stage, especially for certain actors. Because of the issue, I had difficulties staging certain sequences involving intimacy and closeness.

Overall, I felt my usage of research on intimate violence and Harold Clurman’s directing method proved to be beneficial in my production of *Getting Out*. At the time of rehearsals, I was also being introduced to Clurman’s method. I feel that if I had been introduced to Clurman’s method before rehearsals began, I would have communicated my ideas and direction views more efficiently. With these improvements on my directing style, such as utilizing Harold Clurman’s method of actor/director communication and the
three-column director’s score, I will also continue to research theoretical works such as intimate violence, and test how theory might relate to a text.
APPENDIX

DIRECTOR'S SCORE
ARLIE: Hey! You member that time we was playing policeman an June locked me up in Mama’s closet an then took off swimmin? An I stood around with them dresses itchin my ears an crashin into that door tryin to git outta there? It was dark in there. So, finally, (very proud.) I went around an peed in all Mama’s shoes. But then she come home an tried to git in the closet only June taken the key so she said, “Who’s in there?” an I said, “It’s me!” and she said, “What you doin in there?” an I started gigglin an she started pullin on the door an yellin, “Arlie, what you doin in there?” (Big laugh.)

ARLIE and ARLENE: Arlie, what you doin in there?

ARLENE: Aw shoot.

(Norman 65)
MOTHER: I brung you some stuff but I ain't gonna stand here all night. (Arlene opens the door and stands back. Mother looks strong but badly worn. She is wearing her cab driver's uniform and is carrying a plastic laundry basket stuffed with cleaning fluids, towels, bug spray, etc.)

ARLENE: I didn't know if you'd come.

MOTHER: Ain't I always?

ARLENE: How are you?

MOTHER: Bout the same.

ARLENE: I'm glad to see you.

MOTHER: You look tired.

ARLENE: It was a long drive.

MOTHER: Didn't fatten you up none, I see. You always was too skinny. Shoulda beat you like your daddy said. Make you eat....He weren't a mean man, though, your daddy. (Norman 18-9)

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CARL: Bad-lookin dude says move your ass an open up this here door, girl. Where you at, Mama?

ARLENE: Carl?

CARL: Who else? You spectin' Leroy Brown?

ARLENE: I'm takin a bath!

CARL: I like my ladies clean. Matter of professional pride.

ARLENE: Don't come in here.

CARL: Don't come in here. I seen it all before, girl.

ARLENE: I'm gittin out. Sit down or something.

CARL: Ain't got the time. Jus come by to tell you it's tomorrow. We be takin our feet to the New York street. No more fuckin around with these jiveass southern turkeys. We're goin to the big city, baby. Get you some red shades and some red shorts an

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the john's be linin' up fore we hit town. (Norman 31-2)

BENNIE: I can't go til I know you're gonna do all right.

ARLENE: Look, I'm gonna do all right. I done all right before Pine Ridge, an I done all right at Pine Ridge. An I'm gonna do all right here.

BENNIE: But you don't know nobody. I mean, nobody nice.

ARLENE: Lay off.

BENNIE: Nobody to take care of you.

ARLENE: I kin take care of myself. I been doin it long enough.

BENNIE: Sure you have, an you landed yourself in prison doint it, Arlie girl.

ARLENE: Arlie girl landed herself in prison. Arlene is out, O.K.? (Norman 11)

Arlene/Bennie

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