

THE WITNESS

Paul had been in contact with Ennaya's family while she was in detention. He was able to answer the baseless charges that she was involved in an insurgency operation.

"This was more of the propaganda created by the government. These are people who have little respect for human life. They will lie about their opponents."

Paul had been advocating for other families. They needed someone to argue their cases. The security forces realized that Paul's efforts could jeopardize their power. They relied on intimidating people and giving them no access to any legal protection. This resistance could develop into a movement. The state had fears about such a development.

They could arrest Ennaya and hold her incommunicado. With Paul, it was a different story. They were looking for an excuse to ask him to leave the country. He had come with an NGO. And the organization helped to maintain a facade of justice. If the government decided to send home one of their representatives, this could disturb its international stature.

The intelligence services spent a great deal of time reviewing documents. If they could find some infraction on Paul's part, they might try to isolate him from his affiliation. This could lead to his immediate expulsion.

Paul had documented extensive government abuses. He had sent videos to his friends. He could attest to institutional grievances. There were multiple occasions when people had been threatened without cause by military. These dangers were consistent. A day did not go by without another incident. Paul could attest that none of those involved in these incidents ever faced any scrutiny. Local journalists would not make an attempt to investigate these stories. And international witnesses faced limited access. Families would share stories with each other. The more egregious incidents alerted people to more extreme dangers that were lurking everywhere.

Except for her youth, Ennaya's case was not that unusual. Her protest was made public. But there were younger victims of government action. In each case, the government used these situations to see how far they could push things. This lawlessness seemed to have no bounds.

Under such circumstances, the government would talk about the lack of respect for law by the enemy. Where did law still subsist? The intelligence services would talk about incriminating evidence as the way to support their program. They were creating a reality that people came to accept as unchallengeable.

Paul explained, "There is no attempt to explain the terrible condition, which people deal with every day. The suggestion is that any kind of social reforms will only weaken the ability of the state to deal with its enemies. The threat has to be maintained, even when it is barely there. This is a total militarization of society. This justifies any action by the government forces. It would be disloyalty to question these actions. It would be utter treason to consider improving the economic conditions for all people."

"From a young age, everyone learns about these trade-offs. That keeps the state in operation. And people act as if this enables the citizenry to remain safe."

"The citizens become so convinced of the legitimacy of the state that they tolerate any form of abuse. The government cannot do any wrong if it is concerned with key existential

questions. If the enemy is meant to represent an ever-present danger, then any kind of action by the state is justified. These abuses are part of the necessary actions to create peace.”

“As long as the security forces are allowed to maintain this kind of order, there will be effort to address gross neglect and inequality. It is stamped into the system. And the citizens are encouraged to act out worse examples of political repression.”

“This is not a simple matter of the hate that is fostered between two groups. This would not explain the extreme levels of economic disparity. It would not explain the inability of one group to attain any kind of normal social development. However, the government had discovered how to make itself appear in a stage of siege. Thus, any effort to challenge the state is characterized as an existential danger. Any protest can be described as a guerilla operation to take over key resources. Even when the protests are entirely peaceful in nature, the security forces will do what they can to elicit some manifestation of aggressiveness. This will appear to justify further suffering.”

“I wish this was not such a one-sided litany. For what it is, the state will always look for some excuse. This will appear to foster hatred between both groups. This can justify further action by the state. None of this is a matter of history or human nature. These are further provocations by the state. This makes this repression permanent.”

“Anyone who has analyzed the condition in underdeveloped regions of the world will find the same kind of behaviors. A small insurgency becomes justification for ruthless repression by the regime. The opposition remains disenfranchised. Any kind of militancy would be exaggerated. It could be used as the basis for repression. There would be no opportunity for peaceful protest.”

Paul had been on the front-line of activism. He had recognized how the government would put down any expressions of people power. Citizens would experience their own form of deprivation. Their opportunities would be limited. But they could always blame the enemies of the state for their lot.

Paul wanted to bridge that gap. But he found that task almost impossible. The propaganda corresponded to a fear in the people. They did not want to challenge the prosperity enjoyed by the few. They were willing to throw in their lot with an empty promise. They survived on this belief. Their meager rewards were more appealing than the life of the wretched.

This pattern was too evident. Paul needed to battle this ideology. He was given little to work with. And there were too many obstacles. For his part, he believed that he could lead an insurgency. He took pride in those who fought for justice. What could he do for his part?

If Paul was becoming a formidable leader, the government would come down on him. He could engage in this fantasy that he was a genuine revolutionary. Even with that mild opposition, he was not be able to carry on much longer. He almost found it to be a badge of honor that he had been picked out by the government. If they were willing to accept him, then he had barely done his job.

The problem seemed more pressing. If the people were supportive of the government, Paul could ally himself with a small group of committed individuals, he could take significant steps to weakening the state. He was facing numerous controls in place by the security forces. These limitations were more extreme against the oppressed. He was not formulating a strong

enough argument for the citizens to oppose this regime. He was waiting for an event, which was not really forthcoming.

Paul felt the hopelessness that was suffered by outcasts. He felt that his witnessing might create the impetus for real change. He could internalize the experience and lead it to some apex of understanding. He wanted to be heard in the court of public opinion. Where did this place exist? Some fact or come contact might give him the insight that he lacked. This would enable him to achieve an intellectual certainty. Such a realization might enable him to beat back an apologist for the government. They would have to yield to his reasoning. That could enable the eventual reckoning to occur. He thought that he was bringing a thaw to these rigid structures. An argument based on human rights would be enough to release all the power for social liberation. He did not recognize that such arguments only made sense to advocates for the government. Human rights only made sense in allying with the intelligence services. Every word, every gesture had acquired a new meaning. And this language supported the dominant culture. Paul's witness seemed more remote from any kind of social change. There was every effort to suppress Paul's beliefs.

Paul imagined a legal recourse. He could meticulously collect evidence of injustice. He could unearth all of the state actors. He could break down all the mechanisms of repression. There would be a court, which could accept the evidence and punish the perpetrators.

There was more to this reasoning. Paul felt that the truth could emerge in a systematic manner. This vision would be developed through an even-handed portrayal of the background history. It would avoid the facile characterization of the two sides. It could capture the actual conditions of economic distress. This narrative could dispel the sense of fundamental powerlessness evoked by the state. They could be convicted for their actual offenses.

Paul brought an historian's eye to this experience. And he acted as if equity could be parceled out according to this consideration. The illegitimate actions of the state could finally be adjudicated. There would be an authority, which could resolve these abuses in a favorable manner. Paul was willing to risk harm to himself to prove his point.

Ennaya's defense depended on a thorough understanding of the conditions of her detention. The intelligence services claimed that their actions were necessary to ensure her safety. On this basis, her incarceration proceeded over a longer period of time. The intelligence service assumed total control over the terms of her custody. Paul had observed cases where the detainees had been physically abused. The state concentrated on psychological isolation and other psychological techniques in persecuting Ennaya. The interrogators felt that she could serve their purposes if they did not administer physical torture.

Paul had learned about a host of prisoners, who were being detained without clear charges. The whole justice apparatus found ways to cover its tracks. People were getting lost in this system. But there were means to continue these detentions.

It was not possible to get the release of any of these prisoners. The government decided that they would hold people as long as they could find some kind of benefit. The charges would continue to mount up. The government sought further justification for its actions. It was not possible to dispel this peril.

What did it mean when the whole justice apparatus was being manipulated against the opponents of the state? The average citizen could expect no protection. He had been put under

this illusion of safety, but nothing was there to guard against his eventual capitulation to the same forces. This was how power was developed by the state. The intelligence services were there to maintain this imbalance. Paul hoped that this deeper truth could eventually be exposed.

Ennaya had the confidence to denounce this system. She may have been subject to a cruel punishment, but she remained content in her knowledge that she had not yielded to this regime. And she could offer an example to those who had their own misgivings. Too many people were willing to go along in the hope that the promise would finally be realized. This was the image, which dominated.

The security services showed very little restraint. They hoped that they could draw out their opponents by their mistreatment. They would keep pushing. Each time, they felt as they had redefined what was permitted. And this only led to more egregious abuses. These actions were coordinated with other policies of the state. It became easier to threaten the average citizen. And people continued to tolerate these actions because they couldn't let go of their belief in the legitimacy of the state. This attachment was an admittance that their rights were being eroded. But they would never yield to the enemy. That gave them the edge that they needed to keep on. They clung to their meager survival as evidence that they were triumphant. That really offered no respite.

Paul tried to communicate to these downtrodden citizens. They did not want to see themselves as wretched. The state understood the importance of this distinction. No matter how Paul tried, he was not making any headway. Perhaps, his argument leaned toward idealism. He was not able to express the fundamental longing of those in distress. The intelligence services wanted them to battle against their opponents, so they would never take a hard look at their own situation. The cauldron was intensely hot. But they had gotten used to their submission. The state made them fear a horrific past. So they would never surrender their small corner of paradise.

In order to make this system work, the state had to run through all kinds of contortions. They were saying one thing and doing another. But the observer could never focus on that discrepancy. The intelligence service felt that there was unique genius in their efforts. That allowed them to act with impunity. It added to their sense of invincibility. At each stage, they were compromising the truth. They held to the effectiveness of language. But they survived through greater levels of oppression. Paul felt that he could expose this strategy. He could bring an ongoing critical perspective to this process. But he did not understand why this was not enough. His alliances were meager. He felt that the right words would be enough to shine a bring light on this mischief. His enemies were more proficient magicians. And Paul was left with his doubts.

For all his troubles, Paul felt his position was becoming more tenuous. Who would provide him with the support to confront the government? He was biding his time as well as he could. There would be no cataclysm to change the balance. This only gave more power to the government. When would they exercise their power?

Paul knew that his every move was under surveillance. He knew what they were looking for. But he was not going change his course. He could only wait. This was all out of his power.

There was more and more evidence of the state's repressiveness. Paul wondered how children could grow up under such conditions. They would see their relatives killed in front of

their eyes. They would face intimidation from the security forces. They would be harassed by angry citizens. The state allowed all these abuses. And there was no legal authority to adjudicate the complaints. Paul believed that he was the ideal advocate.

Paul was representing a people without a hope. And he was willing to offer his soul to redeem the wretched. That would never be enough. He was dealing a ruthless oppressor. They would never find any sympathy for his struggle. How could they ever accommodate their historical legacy? They tried to furiously to edit the tale. The intelligence services were committed to such a revision. They gave them a vaunted mission in their plan to counteract protests like Paul's. The citizens were already wondering what was happening to their livelihood. Any ambiguity would feed their questions, and that would make the state more unstable. They needed to blame their critics. It wasn't as if Paul had anything to gain from his activities.

Those in power mocked the do-gooders, the big-hearted souls. They berated those, who were interfering with their abundant oasis. They were fighting the world revolutionaries. The brigands, who had accidentally landed on their shores.

The government would do anything to be rid of Paul. He realized that he was on shaky ground. A sniper might train his sites on him. Or a military vehicle could swerve and take him out. Any style of accident awaited him. Any misstep, and he had to do a double-take.

Paul did not think of himself as a martyr. He believed that speaking the truth would offer him immunity. He was experienced, but he did not realize that his opponents had not no soul. They would see him as some kind of prize, who they could display for the international press. But they also feared a backlash. So they couldn't just will him away. They were as careful as they could be. Maybe a building would collapse on its own. Or a taxi would plunge down an embankment.

He needed to keep his wits about him. He sharpened his focus. He was always looking behind him. His hearing was acute. And he developed a sixth sense. He understood if he was in danger. That almost made him let down his guard. He didn't want to think that he was overconfident. And this was almost a special skill that he could teach others.

Paul knew that there were insurgents, who faced greater risks. They had become attuned to their role. They embraced the risks. They were courageous sorts. Sure, they took chances. But they were committed to a deeper mission. Paul had an admiration for their bravado. These people seemed to be the only ones, who were truly challenging the oppressions. Paul may have found a unique appeal in their adventuresomeness. Even if they lacked a coherent program, they were committed to ending injustice. Paul had seen so much terrible neglect that he hoped for a time when someone would be able to end this pain.

The state used these fighters to distract the people. This only prolonged the level of injustice. The government could maintain the militarization of the society. And the insurgents did not realize how to counteract this strategy.

Paul wanted to believe that he could use his ideological awareness to fulfill a peaceful resolution. He could end the persecution of the young and the old. He could bring a miraculous vision to those who endured constant neglect. His commitment to principles of justice were heartfelt. He was convinced that this could be the basis of a new movement. It could renew the belief in humanity. It could take its lead from heroic people like Ennaya.

The government had the contrary intention. They viewed Ennaya as a renegade. And she needed to be punished for her insolence. This was only the beginning of a career of criminality. The state needed to make sure that they were victorious in the propaganda war. They needed to cast her as a toxic individual. She could not have any noble qualities.

Paul was mortified by this portrayal. The government made sure that these children had no innocence. They were all raised in sabotage and destruction of human life. They were born of blood sacrifice. They showed no mercy. These were all monsters. They deserved no consideration.

Did Paul really have enough insight to carry on his quest. He didn't think that he was being distracted by an impossible dream. The state was doing what it could to poison the well. People felt frustrated. They felt angry. When they acted on their anger, they were victimized by the security forces. There was little opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to justice. The advocates were viewed only for their militancy. The personal identification with the movement was transformed into a criminal allegiance. There seemed no way to contradict the reigning power.

Paul did not want to be silenced. He realized that his voice could liberate all the people. But he was seeing it all from a distance. He could not get close enough to the experience. He became caught up in the moment. And his emotions were running ahead of him.

Who would be able to carry on this mantle? Paul had found the inspiration. He recognized how his commitment was being curtailed. And he hoped that others could sense the originality of his vision. He understood the actual nature of the opposition. The government had worked on consolidating international opinion. There needed to be a battle from within to overthrow this challenge.

The security forces brought Paul in for questioning. All the questioning was conducted by a security official. But Resa was present for the session. She glared at Paul, but she never said a thing.

The security official was working to determine the level of threat that Paul represented. He tried to be as jovial as possible. At the same time, he realized that it was important not to let Paul feel at ease. He was completely in control of the situation. He could easily force Paul to leave the country. But he kept pushing for information. It wasn't as if he didn't know every detail of Paul's actions. He was softening him. Every so often, Resa would look down to make some notes. Then she would again concentrate her gaze on him.

Paul had been brought to the country to conduct research. But he had certainly been doing more than collecting data. Even in interviewing people, he was sharing his beliefs. This went beyond his assignment. However, he was hardly the first member of the organization to investigate the implementation of justice.

Paul seemed to give credibility to Ennaya's actions. That only required action by the security forces. However, there was some hesitancy on the part of the officials. Paul was being questioned to see how much assistance he had provided to her family. There were questions if they had been in contact before her arrest.

Paul tried to act oblivious to the proceedings. He questioned the actions of the government. But he felt that he had really done little to arouse suspicion. He could continue to question their actions. However, it would surprise him if they wanted him out of the country. He

clung to the right to protest. The longer that he spent in the country, the more that he was a witness to injustice.

Resa felt as if she had a unique understanding of Paul. She recognized how he could encourage radicalism. Therefore, his influence needed to be curtailed. Her arguments originated in different priorities for the state. The agency was committed to total control over information. The security services observed the relative military threat. They understood that Paul's beliefs could tip the balance. However, he did not represent a military threat.

The intelligence services thought that they were more in accord with the wishes of the government. They felt that their hold would unravel if the enemy seemed formidable. And they exaggerated the level of the threat.

Resa hoped that she could assert herself. But she also realized that she was not directing the meeting. She needed to share the perspective of the agency. She was looking for the right moment, so she could freely assert her opinion.

It was impossible for the government to allow Paul to stay. They were searching for a pretext. Resa was collecting information to facilitate this decision.

Paul notice how Resa was listening intently to the questions. She seemed to have insights into the interaction. She tried to convey a sense of intimidation. Her upper lip stiffened. She tossed her hair. She ran her finger along the table as if she was keeping track.

Paul was searching for some way to challenge his interrogators. They were not going to hold him for long.

The decision still was not forthcoming. The security forces let him go for the time being. This made Resa upset. But she carefully controlled her emotions.

This was not the first time that he had been taken into custody. This time was more of a challenge. Resa almost overruled the security chief. She decided to hold her objections.

Paul felt that he had come close to being deported. He probably would not receive another chance. He needed to make the best of the time that he had left. He realized that he might have difficulty taking pictures on his phone. It could simply be confiscated. He found ways to send the photos to himself without detection. He was documenting the case.

The intelligence services could have monitored all this activity. But Paul was clever. He was not giving them any ammunition. The intelligence services had a great deal more to fear from Paul. He may have expressed sympathy for the insurgency. But he was advancing a program based on people power. And this understanding could spread to the millions of people who felt alienated from the economic system. They worked hard but watched in amazement as others did so much better. As long as there was a wretchedness built into the system, these hard workers would contrast themselves with those who were worse off. The insurgents seemed to direct their aggression towards those who were also victimized. Therefore, the state could use this division to keep everyone under tow. Paul represented an alternative awareness. It could radicalize the citizens, who had been exploited. They would recognize that they had a choice that was rooted in their fundamental humanity. They would not get caught up in hatred for an enemy. They would see the source of their isolation, and they would cross over the breach.

Paul's sense of justice had made him feel frustrated about the actions of the security forces. Seeing such abuses, he couldn't help showing sympathy towards further militancy by the insurgents. Like Ennaya, he was proposing another perspective. But the intelligence services

needed to ensure that the citizens would not identify with this argument. For them, Paul and Ennaya both defended another form of insurgency.

For the time being, Paul was still on the streets. He was under constant watch. That did not change his actions. He never felt that he was doing anything wrong or hiding anything. He was defending the indefensible in a state where any semblance of justice had disappeared. In its place was this vague hope that the state could act out its vengeance without any sense of remorse. After all, might was right, and it needed to remain that way.

If Paul met the downtrodden on his journeys, he needed to recognize that each one deserved her fate for some obscure reason. And it was not in his purview to rectify that situation. He was doing all that he could, but that was the very reason that he was risking his time in the country. The way to the border was evident.

Paul wondered if he could use his time more efficiently. What would be the legacy once he cleared out for good? Who would even bother with the fact that he had ever been here. He wanted to believe that his impact was significant.

Since the government blamed people for their circumstances, it was evident that these conditions would worsen over time. Neglect was built into this system. And there was an effort to make sure that no one could attest to these abuses. Paul was an afterthought. He would voice his opinion. But he would not be around long enough to make a difference. Eventually, no one would accept his evidence as accurate. And that would be the end of his role here.

The government was not going to let Paul stick around. If he stayed longer, he might be a more important actor. While he remained here, there was a hope that the authorities could neutralize his role. Perhaps, he would destroy his own effectiveness. That would be an even better resolution. He would still need to be deported. However, he could serve as an asset for the state. And that would be enough.

The intelligence services were monitoring him closely. They felt that they were onto something. Indeed, his usefulness could be even more evident. Indeed, there was a committed effort to discover the correct principle to apply. All this work could result in a better understanding of Paul's role.

For the moment, Paul seemed to be drifting around. And there was no need to define the situation in a starker way. Paul was glad to be out. He tried to ignore his tail. And that made it easier for him to continue on with his life. He didn't want to make the situation worse for anyone else. That was all part of his mission. He was still responsible for documenting injustice. He recognized numerous examples.

Paul did not feel helpless. He wanted to advance the idea that truth was power. And he knew the truth. He was not confused by his principles. He had an immediate connection to the world. It might have seemed naive. He was not showing the same deference to authority. The government believed that he was taking sides. He was forgoing fundamental truth. He was blind to history.

That history appeared to grant a different point of view to the intelligence services. It wasn't simply a matter of disproportionate responses. Or the use of advanced weaponry. The state was depriving people of basic rights. It was clearing people out to make room for new developments. Paul was seeing all these massive abuses. And many citizens believed that all this was justified. This was the only way to cure the plague.

Heaven help if the plague infected them. History had granted them a fundamental immunity. The state needed to maintain that balance.

Paul knew that a different logic worked here. And that was not going to be enough to shut him down. It only seemed to motivate him in a more assured manner. Just because the society had become subject to this intense hatred did not diminish the need to report on the worst examples of neglect. This was not a matter of simple crimes. There was a great deal more going on here. A whole people was condemned to poverty. And this sentence only made life worse for everyone. Many citizens never recognized that these effects radiated everywhere. These circumstances pulled down the whole society. However, the government was able to convince people of another narrative. They viewed their enemy as less than human. That permitted any form of aggression.

The excuse was vivid. Everyone seemed to know the litany of crimes committed by the enemy. That seemed enough to allow any kind of retaliation. And that was the real crime. All these efforts were systematic. How could the citizens not recognize where their society was going? They felt under sieges. And the government needed to emphasize this constant state of siege. This state seemed interminable. What expectation accompanied such a commitment? Was this some kind of forever?

Paul was confronted by the weight of this certainty. He often felt as if his words were passing through people. He couldn't shape them in any way to make sense. They would only see what they expected to see. Even so, there was so much that they were missing about the world. It was as if they were oblivious to the weather. If people were that unaware, he wasn't going to alter their ideological bias.

Paul believed that he had more flexibility of thought. He had seen worked to identify with those who disagreed with him. He had a better understanding of Resa. He knew the basis for her suspiciousness. He had misgivings about his own country. Resa tried to take a hard line. She was afraid of surrendering her confidence. Paul could push, but he saw how she would meet his aggressiveness. She could let that facade split. He could run through all these variations. But she was holding firm. She still believed that she was a masterful agent. And he needed to accede to that skill.

Paul wondered how good a strategist she was if she was so doctrinaire. She seemed to accept the beliefs of the Director. She was not as critical as she assumed. Her position should have demanded more acumen. But she did not manifest all that vision. And he felt that he could undo her loyalty.

Resa was very careful how she interacted with people like Paul. The advantages of the interrogator were unique. There were times when Resa could not imagine it otherwise. She relished that privilege. She did not want anyone to upset her dominance.

The government relied on her adaptability. Paul represented a very different kind of challenge. In a divided society, she depended on the fact that she would not have to deal with these arguments. Paul seemed to be manipulating her. This was very different than Ennaya's more naive attempts. Paul was this constant barrage of facts and figures. No wonder she had been so concentrated. She worked to battle against every argument. She had minute details that she could use to demolish this case. She felt excited that she would be able to succeed with her abilities. That was why she viewed herself as a valuable line of defense.

In some ways, she was a land mine, who Paul needed to avoid. She was hardly going to be sympathetic to his views. And she was going to try to lean on him. She would only accelerate his exit. She may have been unsuccessful trying to pin a conspiracy on Ennaya. But she would not hesitate to offer her evaluation on Paul. For the time being, the security official was executing the outlook of the government. But Resa wanted to assert her control.

The government was using her as a secret weapon. They would bring her out when she was needed. And she would do everything that was expected of her. He could finally be dispatched out of the country.

There were some expectations on the part of the government that Paul could expose weaknesses of the enemy. He would be even better than Ennaya at getting in touch with key assets. His adventuresomeness would end up working against him. He would put his contacts at risk.

Paul was on a long leash. And the intelligence forces were able to track his network of contacts. He was motivated by other necessities. He felt that his efforts would finally result in an overall transformation. He could explode all the repressive social structures, which held people in place. He didn't want to let go of his idealism. And the government interest only confirmed his belief more that he was on to something. Over time, he was going to make a difference.

Paul continued to track the society according to the existing lines of force. He could interact with insurgents. He could recognize the injustices. He could share his knowledge. That seemed to be the beginning of a change. But he was not able to loosen the contrary forces in a significant way.

The government seemed to understand his relative ineffectiveness. This gave the security chief the upper hand. But Resa emphasized the level of intolerance in the society. Paul and Ennaya provided the awareness to break the siege. That was not a welcome change. The more that Paul seemed assertive, the more that he posed a threat.

This was a society where there was very little room for error. Resa knew this inescapable fact. And she guarded it for when it would be valuable to her. She felt that it was her job to smash opponents. She would work them down to nothing. Without such conviction, the citizens would begin to wonder. They would question the model, which they had come to accept. They would doubt the viability of this prosperity.

How much was power based on belief? The security forces could throw Paul in jail indefinitely. The intelligence services could overwhelm Paul. They could plant evidence. Paul had little recourse. Any one of these agents could make him disappear for good. However, this facade could vanish for the majority of the citizens. If they were able to work themselves out of the fog, they would hardly accept all the weak principles, which held them in allegiance. They did not see their power. They did not see how reliant the state was on this story.

The Director saw the dangers. He understood the international issues. The state could not explicitly violate legal prohibitions. Government leaders had learned to bend the rules. Fundamentally, the whole state had gone rogue. But the world economy relied on the constant illusion. And it was working everywhere. For the moment, this was indeed the source, and Paul was confronting that understanding.

Since Paul felt so certain of his knowledge, he could use it to destabilize the society. He was convinced of this. This knowledge could disseminate and find others, who were favorable. This insight would tear at the society. It would break the stranglehold of every institution.

The Director was looking at the same blueprint as Paul. They were watching it work its way out. It only needed a spark. This could have motivated the Director to step in. He wanted Paul to tell him something. Even Resa did not have that awareness.

What was Paul completing? He felt that his grip was tenuous. But it was still enough to keep him immersed in this intrigue.

Paul was only piecing together these illusions. And he was seeing it all for himself. That was still not enough. He had not found the connecting thread. He could get into Resa's head. But the Director knew another secret.

Paul felt that he was on the verge. He was talking to people. He could feel a pulse. He was detecting a soul. Resa was a little deaf to these words. She had grown too used to planting words in people's heads. She had not sharpened her listening skills enough. She was getting lost in the chatter.

Paul was still loose with the idea of finding that secret. If he reached that far, the Director could find delight in his own efforts. That could reveal something more profound about the society. This was the point of vulnerability. Such an awareness gave the Director immense control. Paul hoped that he could find the basis to break that control once and for all. They both seemed to be racing toward the same end. If the Director got too close, he would be able to pull the rug from under him, and that would be that. All Paul's efforts would have come for naught.

Until that resolution, the Director felt that he had nothing to fear. This was hardly the open society. For the benefits of everyone, they needed to pretend. Paul was assisting that pretense. The Director needed him to keep wandering.

Resa recognized that it would not be permissible for him to maintain maximum exposure. The efforts needed to be well coordinated. Resa was doing the dirty work as she always did. That was her role. She was meant to be an enforcer. It was not yet time to apply that model.

It was almost as if the Director was questioning Resa's authority. He could get her to be conscientious about Paul's actions. She would think that she has precedence over the Director. He was encouraging this rivalry. That made her think that she was closing in on Paul. She even felt resentful of the Director's permissiveness. That only empowered him more. He allowed her to carry on. That was how she always operated. It made her more thorough. At the same time, the Director was sure that she would never be able to offer any critical challenge to his leadership.

Paul did not recognize all the subtleties of leadership. But he knew that there were reasons that he was still allowed to explore. He observed Resa's withdrawn nature. By her mannerisms, he understood her limitations. She was not acting on her own. Who was supplying her with guidance? Here, Paul was encountering the influence of the Director. That enabled him to assert his independence. But he could sense the restrictions. All in all, he was learning a great deal about his alternatives.

Paul realized that he would have to be more effective in the time that remained. He recognized the nature of surveillance. He would need to act quickly. What was the source of his doubts? He was relying on critical alliances, which could provide dynamic to his efforts.

Some in the government only needed an excuse. This would end in more suffering. The military were ready. The pretext seemed inevitable. Paul felt as if he was trying to thread a needle. But the battle would eventually escalate into something uncontrollable.

Paul was doing his best to stave off a disaster. He was unsure if he had sufficient support for his efforts.

Paul realized that he had a unique opportunity to advance his argument. He recognized its unique appeal for everyone. The government ceased to advance a universal appeal for human rights. The enemy was viewed as less than human. Any attempt to loosen this hold would result in a detriment to the state. The government could not abide with the possibility that the individual might not follow the directives of authority. Anyone who opposed the state was the enemy. This meant the citizens were limited in their forms of political expression. If the individual was in fundamental disagreement with the government, then there could be a moment when that individual was ready to violate the laws of the country. This possibility was an admission of guilt. Paul only had to remind people of the constraints created by the government. There ceased to be rules of evidence or rights of *habeas corpus*. There was no proof needed. Accusation was a determination of guilt.

The Director understood the threat posed by Paul. He did not qualify as an enemy of the state. But he certainly gave comfort to the enemy. The director needed to determine when this comfort became actual assistance. The relative isolation was a hallmark of present policy. The government wanted to ensure that the opposition would not become a coherent threat. All these contrary actions needed to be neutralized. This was not a program. This was not a plan. There was barely any organization. That did not diminish the dangers to the state. The officials needed to guard against these forces.

The intelligence services created their own organizational chart. It served their needs, and it could be used publicly to humiliate the enemy when the moment required such a commitment. The Director could not let go of his total confidence. The state would persevere no matter what.

What gave the state its dominance? The citizens looked to it for protection. The state offered a history free of ambiguity. This placed all the burden on the enemy. Their abusive treatment at the hands of the security forces qualified as an aberration. There were no atrocities. There were mistakes. And they were due to the excesses of the enemy. The security services could not allow their grip to slip.

The intelligence services monitored the overall drift. What were the actual risks? The people would not be led astray. If the government faced any sort of opposition, it needed to be shut down once and for all. There was no room for backwards motion. This attitude was reinforced by the economic system. Somewhere, there needed to be a forward momentum. That way, everyone would put their faith in this system even if they had not yet received the promise. This was a difficult bargain.

No matter how exiled from their reward, the people needed to be reminded of the spoils of the garden. The meager return was a down payment on a big payout. Paul was there to remind them that the return would always lag behind. It was hard to break down the belief. That was a challenge. The state was premised on this universal promise. It forced people to look at

the wretchedness of those who opposed the government. Citizens would recall their lives under less hospitable circumstances. That seemed to justify this sparse return.

What were the benefits of this accommodation? This was a positive view of the future. Even in the midst of great hardship, citizens would cling to their beliefs. Such a commitment could even foreclose real blessings. As long as people they could bask in an eternal warmth, they could forget about the ledger.

Paul was encouraging people to see a complete picture. They had too many ideological obstacles to see with actual clarity. They may have been acting against their immediate interests. But it corresponded with some vague perspective of freedom. They had become accustomed to ruling in hell, even if the conditions seemed intolerable.

Paul realized that his overall argument might be valid. And he could find supporters. But he was running out of time. And he had few allies. The intelligence service made sure of that.

Paul went beyond the bad blood and worked to uncover the fundamental injustices. People were being taught to exaggerate their own suffering. When they were confronted with real misfortune, they did know how to deal. They made every effort to deny the facts. They were making it up as they were going along. The state knew that it had its justification.

In a militarized society, the citizen felt it disloyal to question government policy. They blamed the enemy for inequity. And they looked forward to an eventual victory. They awaited new revelations from the intelligence services. This could explain their own misery by focusing on the offenses of the enemy. They had trouble breaking their programming. They couldn't see it any other way. Thus, Paul's evidence seemed contrived. People had lost the ability to notice what was going on around them.

If Paul did find the key, then the Director would need to make his move. Did the Director fully realize the problem? He had Paul followed. He felt that he understood all the dangers. Paul seemed to have few choices. But he continued to believe that he was a seer. And that insight would allow him to impress his program. There was so much that he seemed to miss. That did not diminish his zeal.

There were people who might be able to offer him the support which he needed. He was looking for these adventuresome sorts. He learned a lot from Ennaya's family. They revealed a deeper understanding of state oppression. And they would be able to connect her to like-minded people. All had been harassed by the security forces. They were militant, but they all showed a great deal of restraint. This perspective could extend to others, who questioned the workings of the government.

Maybe, people did recognize the potential to alter the system. That would be upsetting to the dictates of the state. That did not diminish the power of security services. They would effectively monitor Paul's efforts to shake things up. Eventually, there would be nothing that they could do. Their fear would cause them finally to force him to leave.

Paul reflected on his challenges. This was about more than the truth. He was trying to find new ways to motivate the populace. He understood that their political liberation derived from an appreciation of the immediacy of their situations. What was constantly distracting them?

'Even if I wanted to remember what has happened to me and my people, I am not allowed. That is the strictest form of social oppression. They have learned how to repress our memories. That makes it more impossible to have any sense of personal development. They are

trying to keep us in a constant state of childhood. They are trying to act as if we are a group of misbehaving children.”

“And how does our enemy live? They do not even have any emotions, which would help them to identify with anyone who is not like them. They have let their traumas misguide them into a total devotion to the state. They see themselves as modern people. They are consumers. They want cars and fashion and the latest gadgets. They want to design their personalities.”

Paul had listened to these arguments again and again. He wondered why so many people were not open to basic concern for human rights. Human rights had become so twisted. It now applied to an allegiance to the government. The violators included anyone who did not ally with the government. This kind of devotion meant that people did not notice the abuses that were committed by the state. This was an example of a blind faith. The intelligence services accused their enemies of this kind of negligence. That was how the state functioned. It worked to rewrite every narrative to empower those already in power.

“We are asked not to grieve. We are asked to ignore our basic human sympathy.”

If the enemy is not allowed to sympathize with its own plight, then there is no expectation that the citizens will even recognize their own role in the oppression. How could they? Some were victims of the same forms of denial. While others believed that their lot was tied to the policies of the government. Could they ever see how they were all pawns for this kind of tyranny? They believed in their own version of democracy. That meant gratifying their desires. However, they could never ask serious questions about their lives. Going along with a pleasurable lifestyle was all that mattered.

The security forces hoped that the government could maintain its hold over its enemies. If the security arrangements were transformed, this could provide greater legitimacy for the government. This would enable the security forces to exercise total control over these regions. That would mean that there would no longer be any kind of legal impediment for them to complete their work.

The government looked to such a change. This would allow unfettered military action against anyone who was deemed an enemy. In a fuller sense, the same determination could be made against any citizen. The security forces felt that there was no threat to their rule. And the state gave them total license.

Paul recognized that the empowerment of the security forces only made him more vulnerable. He would need to act more quickly. There were gaps in the model. That was why the security services were trying to be so authoritarian. They also realized that they were on borrowed time. But they felt that they were running the show. And they needed to assert themselves while they had the upper hand.

Paul was a witness to the resistance against the oppression. The enemy could hardly accept the version offered by the government. That only made the government more desperate in asserting its beliefs. Paul figured that he could be more relentless. There wouldn't be much that anyone would do as long as they believed themselves to be so invincible.

This invincibility was part of an insistent belief, which was shared by all members of the defense forces. That insistence seemed to be enough to guarantee their constant sovereignty. This ideological allegiance was universal. There seemed to be no obstacle to this implementation. The pretense characterized the belief of the government.

Paul felt a sense of liberation, which demonstrated his deeper understanding of this situation. He also relied on his idealism. He would not let himself be swayed by the threats. At times, he felt that some of these threats were empty. But he had seen a total ruthlessness, which was being manifested by much of the society. The government hoped that no one would object to this aggression. There was a concerted effort to dismantle international protocols. That gave the state more advantage.

Paul's committed militancy gave him confidence. He believed that a fundamental humanity motivated his actions. In contrast, he was dealing with people who had little respect for others. They had devised a way of thinking to support their total lack of concern.

What would develop from Paul's sustained actions? He was assisting the insurgents in developing an assured plan to confront the authorities. The intense cruelty of the state made it difficult to articulate a coherent policy. The security forces institutionalized the killing of children. These children were treated as enemies of the state. Their behavior would only endanger the state.

Paul was doing his best to hang on. He took comfort from that fact that he was helping people, who were constantly harassed by the government. He realized the intensity of the struggle. The government did what they could to counteract his efforts.

Paul had such a feeling of letdown. His beliefs had guided his actions. He viewed himself as an ethical person. And he really felt that an appeal to basic principles could help overcome a deplorable situation. He now observed an experience that only became worse with time. And there was this tolerance for the most reprehensible actions. The victims were blamed for their own plight. If they objected, their burden would only be increased. And this kind of behavior was systematic. He was seeing this idea reinforced throughout the society. He thought that his opposition would provide an influence toward ending the oppression. Perhaps, he could touch other like-minded souls to make a similar commitment. That idea seemed like a vain hope. He could wish all that he wanted. But he was only a spectator. And he was witnessing a more dire situation.

Some citizens seemed oblivious to such cruelty. They felt that their own survival was mediated on continuing this intolerable situation. There was moment when people started to believe that their prosperity was predicated on the failures of others. Once they were told that they could blame someone else, this became a ready excuse. The whole society was predicated upon this belief. It led to greater social inequality. But many were out of touch. They were afraid for their own wellbeing. They were forced to believe that someone else was making it worse for them.

Indeed, success was tied to the failure of others. This feelings of superiority had its roots when people were young. But they continued to hold these beliefs. They gave the appearance of rationality, but they were defending these deplorable conditions. They felt that they were battling a lifelong enemy. So anything was permitted.

That lackluster moral compass seemed to allow excesses in their private lives. They often felt inspired to act out their impulses. Whether it was anger or pleasure, there was no restraint. This was all part of an overall strategy. This was the fundamental reward of the paradise.

Paul could see how this rivalry was transforming into resentment. And the subsequent feeling was even more intense. They could never see the humanity of their enemy. If they were

drinking dirty water, that was their lot. If they were frozen on winter nights, that was what they deserved. If they did not have enough to eat, that was their own fault. It was that simple.

The successful would never dwell on the plight of others. They always believed that a greater reward was waiting down the way. This would put more pressure on them. The competition would grow worse. The enemy seemed more formidable. The state became even more committed to militarism. All that was justified by the spoils.

Paul's opposition had become more strident. For once, he started to make inroads. While some were reaping the benefits from this sport, there were others who realized that the game could not carry on like this forever.

The Director reviewed recent developments. He observed rallies for peace. He recognized Paul's increased influence. He encouraged the security officials to pick him up. Once again, Resa knowingly studied him. She felt that her determination would hold sway. She had been monitoring Ennaya's family. And Paul was still trying to insert himself. He was making links, which could be embarrassing for the government.

Paul was again let go. But this would be the last time. They did not make it entirely clear that this was the end. Paul had to know. Perhaps, they were allowing him to tie up loose ends. However, they weren't all that sympathetic to him. They were trying to pretend that his intervention was not that significant. Everything was determined.

Paul woke up back in the United States. Once they decided that they wanted him out, he didn't have much alternative. They escorted him to the plane, and that was the end. They were convinced that had right on their side. They would never answer to a higher authority. They were the higher authority.

Paul could attest to all these abuses. But he wasn't about take the matter to an international court. There were few options left. He did not have the same resentment that he had observed in the people. He recognized the criminality of people like Resa. He could only hope that there was some kind of ethical awareness, which could assist the prosecution of governmental overreach.

Paul's organization hoped that he could find enough evidence to alter the balance. The executives were not give to the same idealism. They felt that it was a matter of chipping away. Events would make it easier to state the case.

Paul that he had seen enough to challenge the government. But he was back in the states. And there was not enough momentum to fight against these abuses. Paul wished that others could recognize the truth. These principles could be the basis for an international movement. That would be sufficient. There were many ways to pressure a renegade government. This could include testing the market. Surely, there was some way to upset this situation. Paul did not want to idly watch this. He could use his knowledge in a positive way.

Paul started to make notes. He organized his pictures. He reviewed all the stories. He was lucky to be able to access everything. This made a potent argument. Paul also had an awareness of the strategic situation. How could the intelligence forces have allowed him to escape? The Director questioned his effectiveness in the States. He wasn't going to mount an operation. He was not in contact with his allies. There was very few ways that he could assert himself.

Paul was not going to collect arms. That was not his focus. He was not going to abandon his idealism. That meant trusting the process. Over time, everyone could recognize the truth. The Director would try to maintain his view. It was not going to last. Too many people faced the stark denial of the economic system. There was not enough of an abundance for everyone. When so many people were struggling for their sustenance, the ideology only offered limited recompense.

Paul continued to review these facts. He posted online. He spoke to people in radical groups in the States. He was looking for some kind of inroads.

Paul had been deported, but he had not been driven from his home. He did not view his mission as eventual conquest. He was not ready to lead an underground army. And he was not going to try to evade the intelligence services. What was next?

The Director might have asked American agents to observe Paul's actions. That would be an example of real abuse. Paul had his suspicions. And he couldn't let himself be distracted from his commitment.

Paul was raising deeper questions about his freedom in the United States. He assumed he had a lot more leeway for his political activism. How would the American authorities police his actions? Was he on their radar? What did it mean to conduct surveillance against law-abiding citizens? The state was developing new rules of allegiance that had more to do with political orientation. The intelligence services were willing to violate basic rights to maintain their hold. The enemy may not have seemed so apparent, but the effect was chilling. The citizen was rendered as the problem.

Paul used his experience in another country as a reference point. He wondered how his activism could provide an impetus for action in the America. He was more tied to the actions of Ennaya. He believed that her example could be an international model even if her problem was local.

The desperation faced by Ennaya helped to explain the simmering unrest throughout the world. Natural leaders needed to emerge. Their exploits could be written large in other settings.

The Director wanted to believe that he had the power to shut down something once and for all. She was not going to be able to make any more effects outside of her milieu. The state had vacillated about her release. There was a need to placate the international press. But the Director was willing to push things as far as he could. It was not his fault if an accident occurred. He only needed to cover his tracks.

Paul had truly overstayed his welcome. He no longer seemed to offer any impartiality. He seemed to justify her account of events. He was making it more difficult for the government to sell its version. That seemed to be the end of the story.

Paul longed to return. He felt that his efforts were successful. He was so close. He only needed to complete his work.

Paul had been in the middle of a drama. He had exhibited courage. He was not as assertive as Ennaya. But he had been doing his best. He was no longer part of that excitement. He was trying to manufacture it for himself. What was the new inspiration?

Ennaya's truth threatened the state. She was not the only person who played this role. Paul had been close enough to do some good. What in the United States had this kind of impact?

The militarism was evident. But Paul could not see such an evident contradiction. Who had the same political relevance as Ennaya?

Paul didn't want to go anywhere. He didn't want to do anything else. He still believed that the right information could move mountains. He was going to collect every detail. He felt obsessed to catalogue everything. There needed to be some kind of understanding that would help him out.

Paul would search websites. He would focus on cable news. He thought that he could find the key. Where was the liberation? These skirmishes excited him. He was scoring points. That would be sufficient.

Paul hoped that the state would show cracks. He would have just enough of a crack that he could pry open. That may not have been sufficient. He imagined that he was blessed with enough strength to make a difference.

Paul lay in his bed, and he thought of himself as a prisoner. He was identifying with those who had been wronged. He felt that he would not be fed. They would torture him for information. He would suffer from his confinement.

His entrapment became more intense. He concentrated on those who persecuted him. And their threats became more focused. They knew how to get under his skin. He could sense the suffering.

All his research was supposed to reveal how he could liberate himself. What was the obstacle? It was as if his persecutors had a secret weapon. And they were releasing it at this moment. There was nothing that he could do. He needed to understand their intent. He felt as if he needed an antidote.

The effects seemed to be chemical. This was more than sleep deprivation. Were they putting something in his food? Had it reached deep in the system?

What did Paul have to do to deprogram himself? This was not a simple case of influence. They had reached deep into psychology. They had tinkered with it all. The whole self had been flipped upside down.

As darkness fell, Paul was trying to string together these facets. The picture remained blurred. Ennaya must have felt that extreme isolation. He could find a way to sort through it all.

What did it mean to take advantage of someone in such an extreme way? The intelligence services had tried so hard to attain this level of mind control. They soaked all the energy from people. They left them comatose. In such a state, they would please their interrogators.

With such a barrage, how could anyone survive? The self needed to discover a place to hide. Then these efforts would never work.

Paul had not been exposed to such extreme questioning. He was always able to overcome his questioners. This was something else. They did not fear him in quite the same way. Ennaya was something else.

Paul could collect information on what had happened. But the intensity of mind control was something else. It was all the more crushing. Paul had recognized how they tortured prisoners. But he never identified in such an immediate way.

Once the isolation reached this point, it seemed impossible for him to make it back. How had he been left like this? He would not be able to continue. His resistance was not as resolute.

As soon as prisoners reached this point, they could be remaindered. They would be sent somewhere permanently. Or they could be released to the streets with the idea that they would never achieve personality integration. They would be babbling fools.

Paul was not connecting his present to his past. He could sense all these impressions flash by him. He was striving to glean some kind of sense. Such an extreme trauma made it difficult to achieve any kind of coherence.

Paul seemed to touch his wounds as if he was bringing some kind of rest to the situation. The pressure was overcoming him. It was the immense pain. And it was coming from multiple directions. He could not focus or subdue the feeling. And it was all in recollection.

Paul was undergoing these waves. He braced himself for the shock. Then he worked to counter the aftermath. This was a total absence of feelings. And the numbness seemed harder to bear. It offered him no connection to anything.

He was moving in and out of consciousness. He was pulled by such different sensations. There was no peace. He tried to quiet it all down.

Sleep did not come. Everything mixed together. Delusion and frenetic awareness.

If he tried to right himself, he felt nauseous. What could end these contradictory sensations? The minimal coherence left him. He wondered if he could enhance any of these feelings. Extreme pain or massive pleasure might give him some floor for his sensations.

Time was lost. He came back without any connection to what had come before. He was still woozy. The numbness seemed to recall a past pain. But there was no specificity to this feeling. He was totally elsewhere. He was in and out himself.

A switch turned on. And all memory was wiped away. He was working to focus on some thread. He imagined that he would not be able to recognize himself. But he could not move enough to find out.

How had Paul's research informed him of such an outcome? The interrogators had probed with such urgency. There was no real concern about information. Every was focused on effect. The less capable that he was, the more that the interrogation was succeeding. They were crushing him. That was the only thing that was important. They could not let him become too confident. They could not allow him to understand their strategy. They needed to destroy him once and for all.

Paul's research did not accustom him to the severity of this experience. He had no defense. What about the hardened prisoners? How had they manage to make it through? Were they already familiar with these techniques? That couldn't be. There was no defense against this.

The interrogators were increasing the load. This was more than anyone could bear. Would the prisoner be too overcome after this ordeal? Even if he was useless, he could be also remaindered. All that mattered was the process.

Paul was doing his best to hang on to something. It was all spiraling. There needed to be something. This was a brilliant understanding of the limits of the body. After such an application, no human being could counter the questioner.

How could the individual find any kind of solace?

Had Paul found information in his records that indicated how the detainee could counteract the process? There needed to be some understanding.

When he had his wits about him, he had worked his way through so much material. There needed to be some way that the detainee could get into the interrogator's head. What was the clue? Who could lead the way?

Not everyone was so acquiescent. There must have been people who worked deep into that realm. What was there to find?

How did the mind provoke these sympathetic responses? If the interrogator was using drugs, it might be too overwhelming. There needed to be a vision.

Paul's exhausted state made it seem impossible that he could liberate himself. There was simply not enough will. It was fundamental.

What possibilities remained? The self could not reshuffle all the facets of consciousness. Paul needed to understand how to regress himself. He could hide like a spry fox. He needed to be flexible. He needed to be ephemeral. He was too caught up in his beliefs. If he pulled back the ego, he could overcome any trespass.

Was there some core memory? A persistence of will? Some intellectual principle? Maybe a fundamental emotion.

Paul's curiosity was not enough to yield freedom. He needed to subtract himself from the experience. Then he could not be teased. He would be resilient in his nothingness.

If he only could, he would have marveled at his brilliance. But the adept interrogator would increase the stimulus. He would mess with the sense of reassurance.

What he put in, he could take out. It was a lure. A whole plot. He could reveal it all. It was meant to be told and repeated. It meant nothing, but it sounded eloquent. And these ideas reinforced each other. Each failure brought out another. None of it could ever cohere.

Paul would have tried to work this confidence game. He surrendered in order to get captured. The plan was incredible. But it was nothing. This would appeal to the Director. Or Resa. Someone who was certain what she wanted to hear. That was all that she would ever encounter. A reflection herself.

Why had Paul revealed himself? He hoped to be effective. He wanted to influence people. He wanted to make people afraid. They were prepared for him.

He had read so much. He had been able to construct an alternative vantage point. That told him everything.

Every circuit was firing. The alarm was going off. Everything was there to initiate his surpassing. He had never known a thing.

He needed to eat. He needed to feel better. None of this was helping. Who could guide him? Paul was not part of a military organization. He had not been trained to overcome the pain. He was not trained to silence. He wanted to reveal everything.

He could easily fold. He would be the butterfly tossed by the storm. What was his strength? He felt that he could be turned. That was their intent. The silent one could reveal all the secrets. He could memorize and store. He would betray. They worked with agent provocateurs.

Paul did not want to believe that he was so malleable. He had never betrayed his people. Why did he feel so vulnerable at this moment? What did he have in his favor? He was doubting his own beliefs. None of this worked for his development.

Ennaya may have felt that she could resist, but none of it had really worked. Resa had felt triumphant.

What had Paul been able to discover when he saw her in the interrogation? She was more broken than she believed. She did not have the insight to recognize his actual motives. She wanted it all to fit her plan.

As long as Paul remained in this state, what legacy could he offer? Against massive torture, there was no resistance. But Paul was drawn to a consistent understanding. And that gave him a sense of reinvigoration.

How had Paul attained that strength? What was his power? His research seemed to provide certainty. He was eloquent about his beliefs. These principles could convince others. The interrogators felt that they were invincible. They never contemplated the full nature of their cruelty. That made them less resilient than they believed.

Paul contemplated what he had read. There were drugs and sensory deprivation. There were threats and physical cruelty. The interrogator would try to end the power of the individual. He would strip the self down to its total incapacity.

There was nothing to remember because there was nothing to forget. All of this had been useless. It was not supposed to lead to enlightenment. This was the self subtracted from the self. The will would not be broken. The loss would be a lure.

When Paul awoke the next day, he believed that he had a significant idea how the interrogation had proceeded.

The interrogators confirmed their methodology. They were manifesting what they wanted to see. This was this intransigence of the state. The government depended on the blind faith. That was the only way to advance an idea based on faulty premises.

Paul knew that the interrogations were part of a more concerted policy to inflict suffering. This model had been applied universally. Paul had been able to reveal important details. But there were too many people, who were simply going along. They let the intelligence service impose their regime.

When suffering seemed universal, the citizen found it difficult to sort through these manifestations of power. They seemed to identify with these assertions. They all could be manipulated by these structures. And the core of this experience was torture.

The onion seemed to open up. And all the aspects were evident. This was held together the ideology. And a little push was all that it took to break this hold.

Paul had found the thread that would pull the fabric apart. They knew that his understanding would be too formidable. He felt gratified that he had come upon a clear awareness. The Director may have understood some of his insight. But he had surpassed their methodology. Ennaya had taught him a valuable lesson. Paul felt that he could not return to the same battle. He needed to document everything. Perhaps, he could offer further support the movement at another time.

He had returned to the United States. Paul needed to recognize how the same lessons applied here. There were other way that similar oppressive means were being used. Paul recognized that the actions of the people were contributing to the imposition of this tyranny. It was a more complex equation. Not everyone felt that same sense of restriction.

Paul had identified with Ennaya's plight. She needed special powers to resist all the aggressiveness. That could be an eloquent example for him. He needed to write more. He needed to read through his notes. There was a lot to consider. How had the state been able effect its cruelty? Paul had analyzed the full character of those policies. The awareness would develop for him.

Paul had undergone an ordeal simply in trying to overcome his experience. He had identified with the plight of Ennaya. That feeling had lingered with him. He needed to fight to regain his motivation. The intelligence services had played a waiting game with him. They were involved in his questioning, but they never had applied any extravagant techniques against him. He had undergone a major transformation in his personality. He had tested his beliefs in a difficult situation. He had not wavered. He had remained committed to basic principles.

Paul wondered what would follow. He needed to be more energetic. He had become so committed to this cause. Now, he felt uncertain about his activities. He didn't want to surrender his connection to that life. But there was little that he could do to sustain the same relationship.

The world was taking on a different meaning for him. His concerns seemed very different from those around him. He thought that he could find some people who might share his political vision. But he had seen things first hand. All this was all so different from the States. Paul had taken the actual risks. He felt personally involved in these events.

Some might try to dismiss his intense involvement. They had not observed the suffering. They did not believe that it was that serious. Paul realized that you couldn't forget the pain of young children. And they faced the trauma of shelling of their neighborhoods. Or being shot at by soldiers. There were a host of actions, which threatened their well being.

He had used his words to express his dissent. He had tried to rally others to oppose the state. But his stay had been temporary. And the hardships continued. There did not seem any clear way to engage the world further in addressing these abuses.

He had been a member of an organization, which continued to militate. It had made use of his services. He had assisted in advancing its mission. But the leaders realized that he would not be able to remain forever.

Paul needed a new kind of commitment. He needed to find a basis to communicate his awareness to others. Certainly, there were condition in America, which could motivate him. The United States set policy that affected other countries. How engaged were the citizens in examining international policy? Many of these issues still seemed remote. Paul could find out what motivated these people. He could create common ground.

Everything seemed so abstract. He was now pursuing these general dreams. But he no longer felt tied to an actual purpose. He needed to focus on something more immediate.

Paul had been in the midst of an extensive battle. The calm seemed too much. He felt incapacitated. What was he supposed to be doing now? How could he demonstrate his assertiveness?

He could not answer his questions. He could not envision a present sympathy. And he felt that his past had been taken from him.

Paul's inner strength could lead him to another adventure. There was surely a community, which required his services. He did not want to believe that he was driven by a

messianic zeal. He could find sufficient understanding to interact with others. He could learn from their political interests.

As much as Paul thought about this, he wondered if he had enough in common with anyone else. He didn't want to think that people were getting too comfortable here. There were certainly many who knew the ruggedness. They were denied their hopes. They felt this fundamental awareness of their condition. It expressed itself in the stark freeze of winter or the unbearable sweat of summer. People without enough to eat. Educational opportunity shut out for many. The lonely isolation of an endless night.

Where would Paul find his allies? He was turning in on himself. He could feel that disease fester within. He did not envision a cure. His nature was not infected.

He couldn't let any of this affect him like this. His confidence had propelled his activism. What was he working with now? He could not let himself be distracted. If he was meant to lead a movement, his skills were in demand. This was hardly the time to let down.

Paul had been driven by his enormous energy. He felt crisis-motivated. The fundamental impulses pushed him along. He could not be overtaken by the obstacles.

Paul did not see this as a matter of inspiration. He had been impressed by people who were renewed by an eternity. Their courage knew no bounds. What was this bargain? He needed his predecessors to emerge. He would assert himself in ritual. There was so much in his favor.

The magnificence seemed to waver. What was arresting his progress? This was not an obstacle of the mind. There was something else. Perhaps, he had returned at the wrong time. Or he was struck by a sense of resentment that he could not be more forceful.

He could stand at the center of a city street and wonder where his compatriots were. He could not understand the dynamics of this place. There were different alliances. And hidden sources of rebellion. Paul did not understand where to start the fire. Everything seemed so spread out. He could sense an explosiveness in the wind or the oceans. He understood a mad spirit, which could inflict the people. But everyone was too withdrawn. When would they recognize this dynamo, which moved it all along? There was all this volatility. There was a poison in the air. It would choke him up. And he needed to sense how dispel that constriction. He needed to find the calm.

The contagion has made itself felt. It had been hurrying along. It swirled. People were spun around by its insistence. Paul was now short of breath. The moment was rushing ahead of him. If he seemed to catch up, he would see it all from behind him. There was no performance. A tragedian was not guiding people along. He knew the cause, but he could not sort out the drama. No one would take that first step. Paul was holding his hands out. He was searching for those brilliant eyes, which were empowered by the combustible spark. That glow might get it all going. The glimmer faded out.

Paul could not claim any expertise. His support was long gone. His insight did not fit these circumstances. He was not asleep. It was so vibrant for him.

Would Paul have to explain himself more? Would he have to contain all his awareness in volumes? Who would be able to figure it out? How could he transmit his knowledge?

Could anyone attain the inner stirring of the land? How had people shaped the necessity? This was not a strange locale. He had been nurtured on these truths. Why did he feel alienated?

He felt in suspense before a greater phenomenon. There needed to be some sign, which could lead him out of this. He had been prepared for this greatness. Where would he be able to exercise his skill?

The knowledge percolated everywhere around him. No matter where he was, he would be captivated by the same urgency. He would sense it in the fields, or in the factory, or in the warehouse. It would bubble up in the classroom or the meeting rooms.

If he waited too long, would he lose his enthusiasm? Would his discernment be enough to carry him along? Was he getting lost in this impenetrable maelstrom? Would he become submerged during a relentless storm? His motivation was never sufficient. He would be staring up at a magnificent structure that he would never measure.

Was Paul seeking an understanding that would propel breadth? He did not want to get weighed down by his history. His eloquence beckoned him. Was there even an audience?

What did it take to make people rise up against intolerable conditions? What was the inescapable cause? Paul wanted to tap into that rhythm. He did not want to watch that movement come to an abrupt halt. He hadn't returned only to be defeated by the moods of time.

Paula was not retreating before a dire calling. He had been immersed in these incessant forces of history. Now the waves had subsided. And he wondered if this was the ominous calm before the storm. Could he ready himself for what was coming?

An omen seemed to beckon to him. He had been selected. What did any of that mean? Was he repeating another delusion? He had not been able to release Ennaya from harassment by the intelligence services.

What would His sphinx look like? How would the vision manifest itself? The delay only seemed like a trap. He could not go back. But there was no direct appeal in the present. That made him seem incapable.

He could devise his own beacon. Would it offer him the needed guidance? He could not get distracted by his frustration.

Ennaya had understood her moment. She could no longer accept the abuse of the authorities. She had seen the pattern all her life. She was now given the strength to fight back. In that moment she confronted the successive crimes of the state. She found her brilliance.

Paul fed off that excitement. He needed that clarity. There was not enough to lead him to the light. He was surrounded by too much obscurity. He had given himself to this uncertainty. Perhaps, he expected too much after such a letdown.

There were certainly portents, which could direct him. There needed to be something more insistent. He felt cut off from the human narrative. He could sense it brewing. Where was his starting point? There would be future discussions. There would be spiritual envoys. Paul would realize his sorcery.

What would get this alchemy going? What was the source? What could initiate the infernal sequence?

Paul was not trying force the situation. People would need to assert their sense of displacement. How would their realization proceed from their actual experience? Paul had seen people, who were declared the enemy in their native land. How did such a violation occur? There were precedents. That was how history worked.

Paul felt as if he had just woken up from an endless slumber. He could not orient himself. He was trying to relate to the history which was receding before him at this moment. There was not enough reconciliation in the present. The United States had seen the same dispossession. And it was continuing in the present. Every injustice would manifest itself in the present. This renewed the same levels of inequality, which Paul had also seen on his journeys.

Paul could sense that diffidence, which characterized his recent past. This was a world-wide movement. It worked to extend the same levels of oppression. There must be people who recognized the source of those depredations. Paul could work to organize the struggle. Paul could not quit too soon. He did not want to lose himself among these conflicts. He could not despair.

Paul was creating a new relationship with time. He was recalling his initial political commitment. He recognized how total devotion to a cause could exhaust him completely. How was working behind this fatigue.

How could personal devotion prove to be an impediment? History was not pulled along without a human project. The lines of time indicated the deep hopes of humankind. Paul had observed people trying to thwart these dreams. They were attempting to put forward an alternative view of critical events.

Who were these collaborators, who tried to silence the march of time? He could not abide with this interference. He had risked his survival against this obscurantism.

Politics was not about an emerging revelation. Instead, the individual felt an immediate connection with those who had experienced the incredible violence of the state. These aggrieved souls were not waiting for some exterior manifestation to give meaning to their trespass. Such revelation would only wrest agency from the people. No, they felt it in their bodies. They knew it in their souls. They were not looking for someone to remind them of their misery. Even in their protracted struggle, they felt the constant toll. They could sense how their resilience was being worn down.

This was not about an ideal. They were not waiting for books to ennoble their struggle. This was an expression of the now.

Of course, fatigue would show its face. And a powerful opposition would act as an obstacle. That did not diminish the overall imprint of social repression. The effect was collective. Over time, people would recognize their shared experience. Even though they were feeling the brunt of their subjugation, they would sense a power that had been bestowed on them. That would eventually be enough of a motivation to battle against this injustice.

Paul wanted to be in the middle of this movement. He would throw his lot in with these renegades. There were hiding in the shadows ready to take that first step. And Paul associated a special mission with their zeal. There was nothing false in these gestures. How was all this supposed to play in the light?

The story seemed somewhat abstract for him, but this was a chance to bring all his energy to bear on what seemed to be a worthy cause. It wasn't enough for him to remain in obscurity. He needed to understand how to get these players to emerge for him.

What was the personal basis for his activism? He could have perfected a trade. He could have had a clearer knowledge of the denials felt by line workers. In benefitting from a temporary boom, he might have sensed an inability to harness the full capabilities of the machine. How

were all these factors working together to show a more accurate picture of the system. In trying to work his way inside, he was still watching it all from outside.

Where could Paul recognize it all coming together? He didn't want to get lost in the shuffle. He wanted to be there for the big deal. What would that involve? He still believed that great event would reverberate for all time. He could help the great clock to unwind. And he would be there to stop time.

Paul could have signed up for a fishing trawler. He would have got lost in the excitement of another big catch. He would become one with the storm. He would temporarily get sucked into the giant waves. And his liberation would manifest itself in the bright morning sunlight.

In his journeys, he had observed something a lot more vibrant. That is how he wanted to cast history. He only needed actors for his drama.

Paul knew how to track the shadows. These reflections hopped up and down in an effort to state their case. He gave each credit. He was hoping that he could fire it all up. He could provide contour to all these images. This was a credible starting place.

Paul believed that a viable social militancy could develop from this foundation. He had seen similar assertiveness in other countries. Often, it didn't take much to accelerate the progress of such movements. What would be needed here?

Paul was still hoping for some kind of clue to indicate his future involvement. He was sure that he could apply his own skills to taking a cause to the next level. What was going to be his starting point?

He wasn't going to make his way to the town square. He had not mapped out strategic targets. He had not scouted out important allies. He figured that the answer would soon become evident. He needed to get a better grasp on how people made things happen. It wasn't a matter of detonating firecrackers in front of city hall. He wasn't going to get into an argument in a library. He wasn't going to preach revolution in a grocery store. But there was surely some spark that was going to set it all off. Where was the stress point? Was he close to the fuse? Or was there some alternative to make it all a go.

Paul was expecting something grand. He could sense the instability. But his connection was tenuous. He was letting his beliefs drive his assessment. That didn't make it any more accurate.

His desire made him more susceptible to any sort of inclination, which might affect him. That would be the beginning of something more formidable. He was still convinced that his own viewpoint would get it all moving at once. He wanted to see himself as a source.

Paul couldn't ignore his experience. He had critical insights. Would they be enough? What was he fighting against? The rallying points were not as clear? It was not up to him to offer the program. He was looking for something organic.

Paul felt that he would join in after things were already underway. He admired people who were willing to take risks. They were rugged types. They were pushed along by their beliefs. He could see it all materializing before him. And he would stake his part.

Paul was getting some coffee. He saw Rochelle sitting at a table. On her laptop was a sticker that said, "Complacency kills children."

He asked her about it. She described her beliefs. Rochelle developed her idea of revolutionary theater. "This is more than radical emotions. Revolutionary theater presents

reality in honest terms. It does not allow the actor to exaggerate her emotions to garner acclaim for herself. Her performance is only viable insofar as it connects to the actual experience in those in the audience. She does not assert that her existence is any more valuable; she is trying to immerse herself in the concrete reality of others. Theater only has meaning insofar as its representation excites the connection to the world of the spectator. It does not exaggerate the spoils to which she has no access. The representation is vital so that the individual can negotiate her place at work. She has unique abilities, which can only be manifested collectively. Without this collective allegiance, she is trying to create a personal reputation, whose sole intent is to create domination over others. Thus, she feels that she can ally herself with those who already are in charge. As such, these solitary performers do not recognize how they are advancing a staging, which has no actual link to anything real and complete. The pretender only selects those elements of life which validate her particular entertainment.”

Paul wondered, “What does that mean?”

“People are connected to the pain of their existence; they build on that contact.”

“Aren’t you exaggerating the importance of the reaction? People may simply advance their own suffering as preeminent. That may have little to do with the actual events.”

“The events have no meaning without some grounding in actual emotions. You may have to work through those emotions just to get close to the actual details of those events.”

“Isn’t there a danger that the emotions will become so dominant that it nearly impossible to ever gain an understanding of the events?”

Paul wondered if Rochelle’s idea of radical theory was premised on the emotions themselves. The portrayal remained lost in obscurity. This might impress the audience, but it had no connection to people’s lives. Performance was meant to have a separate existence, which was meant to entertain. However, it was only meant to excite the viewer. This excitement was always an overstatement.

“So theater is never meant to be overblown. All the emotions need to be muted.”

“If someone is aggrieved, then the representation needs to be accurate. When someone loses a child, she is not going to hold in her emotions. However, the representation is about the mother, not the actress.”

“If the actress is authoritative in her representation, then she will affect many people. They will relate to the immediacy of her experience.”

“But you still are advancing some notion about the uniqueness of her performance.”

“What is the alternative? That we only validate the actual experience. Then there is no possibility of a theater. And the idea of a revolutionary theater is important if people are going to see their lives in a different way.”

“There are enough concrete influences to remind them about their lives. Why do they need a theater?”

Paul’s questions seemed to challenge Rochelle’s overall belief. But he needed her to be more specific about the role of the actor. If the only intent was make-believe, then the theater distracted from any form of social activism.

“Without a representation, the individual might not recognize the hope, which characterized her experience. Her suffering would overwhelm her. The theater tells her that her plight is shared. It does not reduce her experience. It only enables her to see with clarity.”

“You are still creating a special existence for the actor.”

“The individual needs to discover a similar awareness for herself. This enables her to grapple with the limits to her advancement. She finds a unique ability in herself, and she can link up with the struggle of others. This is the foundation of the revolutionary theater. It provides a dynamic to a social movement. A person is able to become a shining example.”

“That is how you want to describe it.”

“How else could I say it?”

“The shining example sounds as if she is doing things only to be noticed.”

“You expect some kind of notice. You are standing above your social circumstances. You are taking a chance for your beliefs.”

“Don’t you live your beliefs? Why do you need this forum?”

“This is not simply an individual consciousness. The person is seeking allies. She does not want to disappear into the burden of her life.”

“What does this mean: burden of her life?”

“This is the thing that dominates her life. It weighs her down. It threatens to drown her. But she asserts her brilliance. She does not let herself get absorbed. She fights off her enemy. She expresses her opposition.”

“Aren’t there so many forces that prevent her from standing out?”

“Are you doubting the notion of the revolutionary theater?”

“I am not sure if it ever escapes being simple entertainment. I want to believe that it could be something else. You only give people enough reality to affect others emotionally. But you want each character to be some kind of type. Therefore, there is never enough motivation.”

“How does any of this work?”

Paul was doubting the possibility of such a theater. He had observed the actual struggles of the political activist. The theater seemed like a romanticization. The character never assumed the risks faced by real people. Where the individual felt the impossibility of extricating herself from a mess, the theater put everything in simple terms. There never was the nuance to express all the features of the fight against real oppression.

“You want to reduce everything to features of personality. This can never lead to a revolutionary perspective.”

“We need to work from actual emotions. And this is the source of social motivation. People identify with the plight of others through feeling similar emotions.

“This gives too much power to the actor. You are getting distracted from the concrete details of the experience.”

“You make people bored. They lose any reference point to their own lives.”

“Nothing on the stage has an actual connection to anything outside the theater. It is all based on a belief. And that belief becomes deluded. This is not the foundation of any kind of political change.”

“The theater can set change into motion.”

“What change? It only dulls your senses. It might excite your sympathies. But it never leads to anything significant.”

“Without some kind of emotional identification, here never is any action.”:

“We are already in the midst of action. Our lives are driven by our political commitment.”

“That is an emotion. And it can be equally inauthentic. Revolutionary theater can assist you in sorting through these situations.”

“Why do people need theater? Theater is only going to mystify things. You think the best performance is more important than the actual message. So you never say anything that has any authority? You let your emotions run away with you.”

“What do you think happens to you in the actual situation? You go crazy with all the pain. You can let yourself be pushed off the path. You need to find the basis for your activism.”

“A real situation is not that casual. Your nerves get frayed. You are at the end of your resources. Those facts give you an awareness.”

“But the theater can help you to focus that awareness. It gives you a direction.

“The direction seems to distract you from your political understanding. It validates theatrical performance over real engagement. It is almost like a fashion show. You admire the most provocative outfit. Politics does not offer that kind of clarity. You need to work out your involvement. It is not a matter of spectacle.”

“That is how you get a lot of people involved.”

“They may not be that critical about their involvement.”

Paul was still not convinced about importance of the revolutionary theater. If it was an invaluable tool for recruitment, then he could see the value. However, he saw it as more of a diversion. He was afraid that people would become too preoccupied with the actor’s personality. They would not be as attentive to the cause.

“Paul, you are drawn to political leaders. But any leader can abuse her privilege. Leadership is no more of a guarantee of integrity than performance.”

“It is not the same thing.”

“So you do see the link.”

“That is your connection. I do not see the two things as even related.”

“These are all capabilities of the personality. And theater learns how to exploit these experiences. How else do you think that leadership emerges?”

“It avoids the theatrics. It is based on integrity.”

Rochelle viewed the two experiences as expressions of deeper personal motivations. The theater highlighted individual characteristics. Those qualities, which played in the theater could be developed in the political arena.

“That is all propaganda. The political warrior becomes someone who creates the most appealing facade. There ceases to be any relationship to anything real.”

Paul was fascinated by the potential of the revolutionary theater. He only wondered if the performer would get distracted by her role. She would start to believe that proficiency on the stage equated to some kind of political advancement. Acting could simply be a distraction from political development.

The actor could strive to find approval from the audience. This approval would take the place of advancing a message. For the time being, Paul needed to think about these ideas. Ennaya was a strong personality, but she was more than an actor. She realized what she needed to do for her survival. She needed protect her family.

Ennaya rose above her personal situation when she fought for her beliefs. She was expressing her concern for her people. This invitation to others made her actions public. She was not immersed in her personal problems. She recognized the connection between her life and the world around her. She was not afraid to call out the political oppression that surrounded her. She was not going to accept the blame for this abuse. There was no way that she could. This kind of authenticity made her true to herself. She had the respect of others. She committed to the world. But she was not bewildered on the stage. She was not looking for attention. She was advocating for a cause. And her actions were in balance with those beliefs.

Her struggle was intense. She was able to discover a vision within the chaos. And this seeing enabled her to make the appropriate decisions for the circumstances. Paul wanted to create that understanding for himself. He did not have that kind of devotion. He was moved by his sympathy. But he needed to recognize his own situation. How was this situation affecting him in a direct way?

The actor may have looked to others for that authenticity. An actor learned a craft. That took time. However, that craft could be remote from the actual experience of others. There was something artificial in the performance. Ennaya was not making up for anything. She was never play-acting. She couldn't exaggerate her plight for her benefit. That pledged her to silence. She was not always able to share her difficulties.

If the actors were silent, that would end the connection to the audience. The actor needed to continue to make a case. Sometimes, that could get shrill as the audience would not recognize the source of the performance. There was no confusion about Ennaya's claims. You only had to look at her house or the difficulties of her parents. None of this was pleasant.

Paul wondered if he was trying to make something of this that it wasn't. He was not Ennaya. The state never feared his message. He was trying to get onboard her show. But he didn't really have an essential role. He was trying to defend the barricades. He was right in the middle of tank's path. But no one seemed to notice him in the midst of battle. He was like a ghost. And he tried to be something substantial. Nevertheless, that didn't make that much difference. He was a blade of grass that was tossed in the wind.

Perhaps, he felt that he could be more important. He didn't want to be ignored. It may have been a badge of honor that he was asked to leave the country. But the government was more perturbed with him. The officials never view him as an authentic threat. Instead, he just seemed to be a nuisance. He was taking resources away from important concerns.

In the States, Paul was still lost. There were too many people trying to create a firestorm online. This was what passed for politics. The actual neglect continued to get ignored. All the real stuff. How could so many people get absorbed by such attention-grabbing bull shit?

Even if political theater was true to its message, how could it ever find an audience? Rochelle could make the claims for something important. But her concerns were not that special. So political theater was not the answer. What did he need to do to get the world to notice? Job stress could really become an overload. How was political theater supposed to liberate? Perhaps that was her real challenge.

Ennaya never had to wonder. She was immersed in the conflict. The bullets were flying around her. Rochelle was hoping for something that never existed. She could make a big deal out of the smallest issue. It was just the opposite for Ennaya. Resa tried to minimize her

suffering. But it was more than real. Simply because citizens ignored her did not diminish her plight.

If Paul could commit himself to political theater, that could help to fill that gap in his life. But that hardly suited him. He was not ready to exaggerate his emotions. He did not believe that this would enable a story to emerge. The struggle was much more remote. If Paul could find something substantial, then political theater was the needed avenue. He did not want to believe that the change was inside him. Ennaya was facing a real threat. And it wasn't as if things were any different in America. It just seemed harder to make a radical movement manifest itself. There was so much entertainment that seemed to promise some kind of magnificent resolution. Everyone wants to journey to the New Eden. Even if they were going to watch the festivities from the outside, the spectacle was enough. Stuffing yourself on triple burgers would make you feel close enough to the action. The resulting indigestion was enough to discourage you from venturing further. But the letdown didn't last that long.

Paul did not want to become cynical. It wasn't enough to watch from the sidelines. There were people being ground down to sawdust after fourteen hours on the assembly line. Or workers locked in a chicken plant all night. There were people losing their mind in box stores. How was Paul supposed to take on these stories? It was not up to him to pretend. He was unsure how to hear the call. The whispering dust bowl may have provided a more insistent song. How was Paul going to put together the lonely lament? This was his opportunity. It wouldn't take much to ignite the spark. That may have been the Rochelle's mistake. She felt that she was the one brewing the magic potion. It might not have taken that much effort to waft those fires. Perhaps, revolutionary theater was seeking credit for something that was not its doing.

What did Paul need to do to induce people to find their brilliance? And was that really his doing? He did not want to interfere with something organic. He needed to fashion a role. What was supposed to be his starting point? The questions only drove him back home. He might have lost his commitment. He needed to create a public profile. He needed to have the kind of dedication that he saw in Rochelle. She may have been misguided, but that did deter her effort. She could create enough momentum. Everything could get going from there.

Paul did not want to think that it was rigged against him. He was just speaking another language. Paul thought about people who thought about gratification in the moment. Were they on to something eternal? Or had they lost their direction?

"I know what I want for now."

How would all that look in the morning when a person was struggling to get to work. Whatever turned you on at the time had vanished with the morning sun. Afterwards, it all seemed like a raw deal, which had never panned out.

"Tell it like it is. In any deal, I get shortchanged. Even when I try to set the terms."

Were those the words that he needed to hear? Was he going to put everything back on the right course? How could he reach beyond these immediate emotions? It all worked as long as he was still getting paid. But the numbers were never working out just right. Paul wanted to explain these equations to Rochelle. How would that play in the revolutionary theater?

"I am dealing with bosses who try to buy out my freedom. It is always too hot. And I work too much for too little."

What was Rochelle's answer? These were people who had dug in deep. Did she have something that she could tell them? They wanted easy answers after they had fought their way through the shit with little to show. There was no job waiting for them to put them on the right track. And they weren't going to let down.

How was the revolutionary theater ever going to find its representatives? Paul thought of the appropriate examples. How did they create their act so that it matched the actual interplay of their work routine? How could they emerge from the shadows to assert themselves in the bright light?

The spotlight creates a foundation for disciplining history. The lessons could be mounted in theatrical time. This could emphasize the revolutionary potential of the individual. She would not get immersed in the incessant sweat. She would rise above her circumstances.

Paul was again seeing the brilliance of Ennaya. She would know how to assert herself in these hellish slaughterhouses. She would find a way to redeem a humanity amidst the squalor.

The radical intensity of these wretched conditions lingered. Understanding this terrible exile from the self was a critical leap for the spectator. The spectator came to life through her identification with these conditions. However, something was not being said. And there were questions if the theater could actually reproduce the massive heat of the furnace. Was the representation simply an excuse so that the spectator could avoid a confrontation with the actual circumstances. Instead, she encountered an imitative representation. This cushioned her from the realities. She got lost in minor details of the representation. She became preoccupied with the aesthetic contingencies. They only gratified the audience. This became another diversion.

Paul recognized that his experience was become more engaging. He now had the possibility to find enlightenment through his own efforts. The actor's dilemma was enough to get him involved. That would be the beginning of something more.

Paul thought of himself as the actor. He had served as a go-between for Ennaya. He could share her important messages with world. There were others, who could benefit from his intervention. Paul could sense a new power coming over him. He finally had the chance to apply his learning.

Rochelle invited Paul to go to a party. It was more of a dinner. People brought food. There was enough to feed a football team. This bounty was welcome. How could these people use their plenty to advance their cause? They found strength in this collective. They believed that this fabric would link everyone in bettering the severe forms of neglect.

"There is enough in our world to end hunger. We have to build from a position of plenty. That is how we feel our unity. It is based on a common commitment to transform the world. If we are not creating opportunity for each other, what is holding us together?"

Some people talked about distributing the surplus from their farms to the homeless. Others were involved in urban farming. The agricultural model was fundamental to social transformation.

Paul immersed himself in this plenty. This filled him with such inspiration. The carrots melted in his mouth. He loved the bursting flavor of the cauliflower. He dug into the sweet potatoes. His fork moved along the squash. He gorged himself on the broccoli.

He was becoming refreshed in the fruits of nature. He was invigorated in the harmony of universe. This was all part of the message. Nature served to disseminate this belief. No one had

to speak. He was grasping the relationship among the honeycomb. The group reflected this expressive latticework.

Paul could sense this concerted participation. He felt the appeal. But he also sensed the confusion. How was he supposed to navigate the shared awareness? Everyone else had given in to the moment. And he felt that he was holding back. He was observing it. He felt himself pulling away.

“What brought you here?”

“What or whom?”

“Whatever?”

“I came here with Rochelle. She has been teaching me things.”

“We all have things to teach.”

“Are you all working together?”

“Rochelle is part of the revolutionary theater troupe. We have a different logic here.”

“What is your name?”

“I am Ivelle.”

“Do you live here?”

“She nodded. This is a community.”

The house seemed big. Paul wondered how many people actually lived here.

“We all share principles if you can say that about the self. We have all coincided in the same place.”

Paul wanted to make sense of what was being said. He also wondered what had happened to Rochelle.

“Rochelle had to leave. You are welcome to keep hanging out.”

Paul was trying to figure out what they believed. There seemed to be a shared way of thinking. He was trying to read their mannerisms. There was more than this wonderful harmony.

Ivelle explained it, “We share a similar perspective, but we do not have leaders. We do not believe in leaders. There will be a time when people will not be afraid to dispense with the leaders. They will let their truths guide them. We are all tasked with this surpassing of the ego. We have to give ourselves to the forces, which move the universe.”

Paul wondered if everyone was held by a vague mysticism. He could not see this as a coherent sort of thought.

“The ego is a creation of an oppressive state structure. The Twentieth-Century perfected this version of social control. It led to authoritarian state structures. That belief gets in the way of our freedom. Even now. That is why we have come together to resist that oppression.”

Paul had seen the efforts of Ennaya against an oppressive state structure. This seemed to be a different kind of denial. Paul did not question that fight against injustice, he was not sure if this was the best occasion for this battle.

He wanted to vocalize his belief, “The fight against power shouldn’t reproduce the same power structures.”

He didn’t say a thing. He realized what they would probably say against him. They hardly recognized how they were advancing the same kind of thinking.

Ivelle felt that any form of authority was a repetition of the dominant culture.

“You are continuing the battle against the father.”

Paul continued to listen. He accepted the gift of the food.

Paul recognized how the group was only creating new obstacles to thought. Granted they felt as if they were escaping the negative influences of power. Their alternative to power was a cherishing of the immediacy of the moment. There was an effort to break the control of thought. Thus, consciousness was not meant to accumulate as ideas. Any sort of reflective process implied a desire to dominate the unfolding of time. Individuals could not assert themselves independently. They had emotions. But nothing had permanence. The desire to impose permanence on the world developed from a repressive political belief. The only way to challenge this belief was to break the control by the ego. This meant letting go of any kind of historical time. This notion was a result of a systematic view imposed by the authoritarian self.

“Is any kind of thought permitted?”

“We have thoughts just like we have emotions. But none of this is meant to be anything more than it is. It is simply an effect. It does not have any extension beyond its immediate application. Thoughts do not have any explanatory value. They are not much different than dreams.”

“So dreams don’t have any meaning.”

“They can demonstrate a desire to escape oppression. You can link them to a symbolic awareness. But none of this is meant to enhance the ego.”

“How does that work?”

“It doesn’t work. It just is.”

Ivelle was trying to orient him to some kind of concept of being. When he asked about that she demurred. This was not what she was talking about.

“Being is part of the patriarchy. It is another way that men try to subjugate women. Men seek to master this philosophy, so they can impose their view on the world.”

“How does that work?”

“Men create a society where it is impossible to survive without submitting to their version of power. They seek success so that they can continue to subjugate women. And women are made to think that they need to submit to this regime.”

“So you stopped being affected like that.”

“There is only one way to break the conditioning. You can’t keep thinking about it. You can’t give in to the philosophy. There are important writers, who tell you how to avoid the trap.”

Was this a philosophy which was not a philosophy? Was this thinking outside of itself? Everything seemed and magnified. How was he supposed to dial it back? There was nothing casual. He was not going to die on the table.

He had eaten the food. But he was not convinced by the argument. What was he supposed to do? He loved the challenge. This was better than staying at home and fretting about his journeys.

At home, he could review the experience. Did he need to say more? It was not a matter of convincing Ivelle. She was not looking to be convinced. She had a world’s eye view from the garden. She could look at the magnificent stalks of corn. She could see a promise in the rows of beans and carrots. The roots were buried deep. They connected to each other. And the pattern sought a randomness. There was vitality. But it now exceeded the planning. It went where it wanted. And Ivelle could find solace in these turns and twists.

Paul was not sure if he could accommodate the collective vision. At times, it seemed forced, as if no one wanted to take a risk. Everyone was passing it off on someone else. How did anything get done? What is there was a plumbing issue? Would it become a brain teaser to contemplate?

Paul felt that this was a maze. And it would be so easy to get caught in the depths. He would never have a guide out. And they would mock his confusion. That was how it was meant to work.

He needed to be tolerant. This maze was all about tolerance. He wanted something more formidable. He was one with the food. He loved the natural vibe. But this was too much a faith. And he was not ready to join up. Where did it all get detoured?

Paul imagined Ivelle digging in the garden. This was her in action. The lesson was working its way out. Each gesture was supposed to be a star in the constellation. How long would that configuration last in the sky?

Paul was not supposed to ask about the arrangement in the night sky. That implied too much order. Her night sky was full of splotches of light. Paul could not make out anything consistent. There was sparkle and flash everywhere. He became overwhelmed by the glare.

Everything about Ennaya was clarity. She was connected to a movement. She was able to inspire. Ivelle seemed to dull all that. She embraced the moment. Her expectations were manifest. It didn't take much to excite. Ennaya sought a more extensive vision. She was still attuned to the galaxies as they had first been observed by her ancestors. Ivelle may have expressed her sympathies, but these were two radically different views of history.

No one was supposed to elicit a sense of purpose from these events. They were only effects. At worst, the individual could cast off these remnants. Nothing was meant to resonate. The resonance was a belief that only fooled the observer. Ivelle warned about these inescapable consequences. Your politics created an allegiance. This was something that a person wanted to believe. There was no coherence.

The maze was not going to yield up more awareness. That was a vain hope. Ivelle wanted to shut the book on all that vigor. It was not there to inspire the seer. The seer was lost in the reflection of the self. He was letting his pride overwhelm him.

The maze did not countenance self-admiration. Ivelle did not want it to transpire like that. Paul was marveling at the show. There was too much uniformity. He didn't believe the warnings. No one could use self-reflection to criticize their principles. There was no real give and take to their thought. It was suspended in paralysis. The players seemed to take satisfaction in this level of achievement. There was a disdain for an alternative view. No one was really battling in the wilderness. There was a lack of eloquence.

Ivelle talked about rallying the downtrodden. She had these vague strategies for enlivening activism in the factory. But it might as well been the muffled sound in the corn fields. What would happen after she got things moving? Without coherent leadership, the movement would seem to die on the vine. There would be nothing beyond that. The subsequent manifestations would be more and more intermittent. The wind could catch it all. And the promise would fade in the dust.

That was all that seemed to matter to her. There these explosive moments. But it was hardly different from Rochelle's theater. In the end, it was all for show.

Paul had seen substantial. And he was still looking for that fundamental inspiration. Ivelle's maze was not going to offer his liberation. He wondered how far he could stretch himself. Ivelle was hardly open to deeper layers of revelation. Ennaya had a mystical aura. She was in touch with a more insistent emergence.

Paul believed that luster could be teased from other situations. That was why he saw hope in Ivelle's world. How could he coax out more? What did she withdraw? How did she make it more difficult to find insight? She did not see a historical progress. She wanted to connect all these nows. But she expected these threads to tear. The fabric would become more extended. Any sense of cohesiveness was dissipated.

How could Paul tighten the network to provide clarity for something resembling a political transformation? These were vague lifestyle changes.

Paul wondered if he could bring them along. What could he tell Ivelle? What about her compatriots? Would they resent his intervention? He was trying to assume a leadership role. The group did not need this kind of deformation. They took pride in their cultural resistance. More than anything, each one believed that she was the revolutionary consciousness. She lived in artificial squalor, and she thought that she was a representative of the wretched. Were any of them that remote from the golden calves that they seemed to despise. The marvel glowed inside.

Paul was working to elaborate his own appraisal. He would value other rewards. He would realize that the harvest from the sun was never sufficient. This was about more than bounty. That may have been Ivelle's shortcoming. She claimed that she was advancing a radical program. But her input seemed limited. She was not going to go to take the necessary steps to push the struggle any further. She was simply trying to align development with the abundance of the soil. Would any of this ever validate the efforts of the underclass? He needed to move beyond theater.

Paul did not want his efforts to stall in the maze. He wanted to accelerate the progress. Perhaps, he would embolden a past legacy. Paul realized that he was inspiring others. He found validation with Ivelle. But he surely needed something more.

He returned to the house. It was a little overwhelming dealing with so many people who were totally convinced by their view of the world. They eschewed the need for leaders. But they all seemed lost in group think. And they were not going to be able to convince others of their way of thinking. They didn't view work as a way of holding together their families. They felt that they had a different kind of investment in the society.

Some were running a business online. Others worked at a restaurant. They felt that bartering might enable them to escape the negative encounter with the economy. On this basis, they believed that they could lead the wage workers, who already felt that they were part of a more radical social process.

In other circumstances, this group would have accepted the rewards of entrepreneurship. For what it was worth, some still had that in. If they were lucky, they could somehow franchise their lifestyle. This kind of vague social theory could satisfy their own aspirations. But it could never provide a convincing ideology for anyone actually battling the system.

Where did their vision break down? They viewed a mass movement as a patchwork of these loosely connected organization. They had no strategies for opposing the ruthlessness of the

present system. They could jump on board demonstrations in the streets. They could chant vague slogans about change. But none of this could provide actual direction. The group was not looking to be leaders. They could not provide advice when a strike faced fierce opposition. They could not help workers sustain their animus against unfair conditions. On its view, people needed to pledge their allegiance to the purity of the group first. Then they could recognize their radical potential. That would only get them lost in secondary issues. Without leadership, there was no provocative analysis of the actual social conditions. Instead, everyone clung to her own version of social oppression. Everyone papered over the differences as if none of this mattered. If everyone decided to take the day off from protest, then they needed to work on consciousness-raising. There was so much devotion to political authenticity, that the individual ended up being authentic about pretty much nothing.

Paul admired the fact that many of the people were so devoted to a cause. This seemed to make up for his own inaction. And he wondered if he could provide the influence for another way of thinking. But everyone was so caught in their own radicalism. They fed their own aggression. And they had little in common with people, who had not undergone the same kind of initiation. In the maze, they all were convinced of a special preparation needed to change the society. They had disdain for those who were not committed to the same ideals.

Paul loved this devotion to a political program. And he was just as susceptible to its appeals. If they had called him to action, he might have jumped at the opportunity. He did not doubt their zeal? But he wondered if they would take the steps to implement a program. Instead they were drawn to spectacle. And since they were caught in their inaction, it was much easier to criticize them.

It wouldn't take much for Paul to get caught up in the drama.

Cremlia worked at a local supermarket. She cornered Paul one afternoon before he was heading off on errands.

"I have heard you talk about revolution. What is the complaint? A lot of people who don't pull their fair share don't have a right to complain."

"People are exploited at the workplace. This is hardly fair."

"Labor expenses overwhelm any business. How can you really expect anyone to pay any more? If you don't like how your job is going, save your money and start your own business."

"After paying for your car, rent, and food, there is not much left for anything. Are you supposed to hole up in your room when you aren't working?"

"You can cut down your expenses. You get a roommate. If you aren't making enough for a car, use public transportation."

"While the bosses are making a killing, you ask for belt-tightening from the general population. We are even talking about some catastrophe that can wipe you out over night. You can get sick and can't work."

"All these able-bodied people are complaining. What is there beef?"

"They already see the problem. It's a dead-end game."

"If you aren't earning enough, do a second job."

"You can barely stay awake at your first. You are acting as if you're going to be some kind of millionaire on bare bones wages. Get your sardines and champagne, and toast to your good fortune. What is your hope in ten years?"

“I save to get a good home. I start my own business.”

“You make it out. But you have a family, and you get priced out of the market for a better life.”

“Where have you learned to speak like this?”

Paul was not averse to fighting for a better life. But he had been around the world. And he had seen other places where people were exploited for even less money. And it was all connected. Maybe Cremia did not want to see the full picture. That would mean giving up a little bit of her rosy scenario.

Cremia kept believing that her bonus could give the edge that she was hoping for. This was a contest where the strong would get rewarded for their hijinks, and the rest of the gang would be toiling away twenty years from now. The winners would all be ready to fashion their memoirs where they could extol their superior virtues.

Why were Ivelle’s friends already convinced of the need for a major change in the world? Did they have another view of exploitation? It wasn’t as if Ivelle wasn’t using the opportunities offered her. But she also realized how she could contribute to changing the balance instead of just earning her place at the top. If people lost sight of the importance of health, education, and art, then what would they all be working for. There would not be a lasting reward.

Sure, there would be pockets of success. Even the successful would rely on the contribution of those who toiled day in and day out with a meager return. Every entrepreneur would be in the market for an underpaid workforce. It didn’t even seem worth quibbling about.

The Yellowbrick Road was diverging into two distinct paths. One was full of gingerbread and fudge icing. The other was a haven for witches, the wolf, and assorted predators.

Paul needed to focus. He was not prepared to join up. That didn’t diminish his need to explore. Could his association with Ivelle turn into something more? Did she really have plans to expand her activism? What were the targets for her persuasiveness?

Ivelle’s group seemed concerned with creating the perfect radical worker. This person may not have been an activist, but she did advance an enlightened consciousness. She was not going to get caught up in social backwardness. She was not apt to show negative attitudes towards any group. She took this perspective into an egalitarian way to see the world. Ivelle was more attuned to the philosophical turns. But everyone worked on their attitude about personal identity. They were all sculpting themselves. They would chip off any offending contour.

Paul had seen this before. But he was more familiar to activists, who were battling on the front lines. They adjusted their personalities to the intense physical and emotional demands. Ivelle created her own theater to test her beliefs. She was sure that these ideas would be useful in the event of a confrontation with the police. But she was only exploring these risky situations. Sure, there were demonstrations at local college. Someone would try to convince kids not to sign up with an employment recruiter for an exploitative corporation. That took some real seeing.

You could find an elaborate theatrical costume which expressed your identity. And you could discover a stage where you could corral an audience. But that kind of rebellion wasn’t going to get things moving for very long.

Paul thought about dinners at the house. He couldn’t imagine that there was much basis for disagreement there. Everyone would percolate with her political breakthroughs. That seemed

to be the basis for some radical insight. That would be the forum to voice a personal transformation. And the group could turn all of this into its own mosaic. And everyone admired the elaborate patterns. The diners would zone out as their revelation became all powerful. The high would dissipate, but no one could move. Or they would get immersed in a whirling dance around the living room.

Paul was hardly giving credibility to these get togethers. He wanted to impart more magic to the collective. He was staring at worshipers for a harvest moon. That was all that he could see.

Paul was using his visions to distance him from the experience. He did not want to belittle their beliefs. But he was still having trouble making inroads. He didn't want to think of this as a private joke. But he didn't know how to express his views. He might try to convince people to take a stronger stand. That all seemed like authoritarianism. You were not supposed to assume the role of a critic. You needed to be more open to the ideas of others. Paul was trying to crush people with his ideology. There was no tolerance in his views.

The hive would center him out. And they would expel him. He would not have a chance to fight back. They would detect his unorthodox nature in a few words.

Paul wondered if he exhibited such backwardness. He could sense a clash. But he had not pursued these arguments. Paul did not want to be disruptive.

These dinners were more than an excuse for socializing. Sure, everyone could feel comfortable with her unique personality. But there was an expectation for something more. These various viewpoints could provoke a collective spirit. Everyone knew the secret code.

How could Paul break into the conversation? He didn't want to appear to be all-knowing. There were simply different kinds of experience. Some in the group had emerged from their lives in other countries. But many believed that their experience in America gave them a unique foundation for the next phase of political movements.

They had the perspective of guerilla insurgencies, who were convinced that they needed special training to confront their opponents. They were part of a militant underground, and they acted as if they were battle-hardened. What were the real battles? Everyone understood what was the right uniform. They could stake the pose. They could vanquish any enemy. They could rout any opposing ideology. He was somewhat impressed by the resilience. But it really didn't count for that much.

Was Paul supposed to learn how to infiltrate the group? He wanted to open his mind. This was a little of a stretch. Sure, he loved the sense that this was not about ownership. Everyone shared. They could all join into a sustained celebration. Paul wanted to be part of the liberating wonder.

More than ever, this all appealed to his idealism. He envisioned everyone running around with some vague purpose. And all this action would seem to suggest a massively impressive event. Paul could imagine a demonstration turning into a festive parade. The group was advancing a new way of interacting with others.

Paul aspired after different way of communication. This was almost like telepathy. It went beyond non-verbal communication. Everyone would resonate the same rhythm as if it was primal.

Paul felt as if he was unearthing a fundamental truth. And it had innumerable facets. It would glow in people's eyes. How was he meant to respond? He was seeing this from afar. And he could not get inside the give and take. The layers became more involved. They would all hold hands to reinforce their closeness.

There was a particular rigor to this theater. Paul could observe each performance. He could chronicle their interactions. He wanted to believe this was all part of an organized program. No doubt, Ivelle would resist this characterization. But it seemed to fit the absurd interplay among the group.

What was the eventual direction? There needed to be something more than these vague sensations. How would these ideas manifest themselves? Did Paul even know the questions to ask?

Paul felt that he had been on a mission. He was endowed with a unique purpose. How could he pull all these threads together? There were surely moments when he felt that he could guide them outside of the maze. That might ruin their energy. He may have been able to lure one or two away. But that would only convince them that he was a nuisance.

The closer that he was drawn, the more that he felt their resistance. And that didn't seem to go anywhere.

Who was Paul to criticize? It wasn't as if he was an important organizer in his travels around the world. He had learned from Ennaya., but he could not claim that he was essential to her development. He was a witness to all these events. Once, he returned to the States and stayed in his room. He was not offering any kind of direction for the group. They might have felt that he was only interfering with any progress.

This was not a cult. The members of the group had not been indoctrinated in a single way of thinking. They all valued their independence. But sometimes, Paul felt that they all spoke with the same voice. He could hardly upset that confluence.

If the group had contemplated some adventurism, would Paul have been sucked in. There was barely anything aggressive in their actions. They truly believed that their lives were the example of radicalism. That was enough of an affront. They would not take it any further.

How would a reporter capture the liveliest moments? This was not the apex of consciousness raising. No one was going to levitate a building. Everyone grabbed on to bits and pieces of ideology as if this was enough to propel something more significant. The mind was meant to slow the progress of any lasting realization. They would all hang on each other's after dinner comments as if this was deep revelation.

"Everyone here is competing to turn her beliefs into a social movement. I think that people view this is some kind of battle of the bands. The Revolutionary Council is going to give a grant to the best program."

"We are all trying to describe the shit in our lives. What are we missing?"

"Trying to understand the man behind the mask."

"That is an interesting way to put it."

"You wouldn't say it like that."

"I don't gotta be friendly to no one."

"Tell me how you want to be seen."

"That is how we live here."

“How does that work?”

“We make our thing. And we mix it up the way that we want. If we want to put a word on it, that is how we are worded.”

“How does that make sense?”

“Wording is contrary to being who we want to be.”

“Sometimes, you just want to be free.”

“Sometimes, you have no idea what you want to be.”

“I don’t even know how I ended up here.”

“Free food is a powerful inducement.”

“Free thought is also a blessing in itself.”

“That is how I am getting blessed.”

“Do you only want to hear what goes on in your head?”

“Sounds good.”

“No one wanted to subscribe to a linear view of time. Events can add or subtract how we want to see the world. We may feel as if we are making progress, but our experience is more like going back in time. If we are caught up in a linear view of time, then we are not giving credibility to our actual feelings.”

Paul wanted to relate to this way of thinking. An oppressive regime might do its best to rewrite the past. They could pull out details that would not fit their ideology. Paul could recognize the limitations of this view. Ennaya fought a people who would never recognize the source of her suffering. For them everything originated in her mind. They could attribute her anger to her own questioning of the state’s legitimacy. She was trying to justify her rebellion.

Ennaya was not fighting for her version of time. She was appealing to a shared view of experience, one where she was not excluded. She did not want to be reduced to opinion. She was saying that the same standards applied to all children.

The group had a different view. Perhaps, altered states of consciousness would invite the individual to a transformative way of seeing. She could finally escape her conditioning. But she would become too subservient to her persecutors. She would prefer to withdraw from the scene rather than seeking a confrontation. That inevitably provide her with an advantage.

This was a safe place, but was it offering enough comfort to those who needed more support. How would they send their disciples into the world. Would they ever have an inkling of a deeper mission, or would they all venture off to get distracted as they were completing their errands?

It seemed simple enough to carry on a rebellion as long as everyone remained locked in place. What was even encouraging them to leave the protection of the home base. There the story seemed complete in itself. The dinner was only part of the overall ritual to dispel the demons. That was how the exorcism was supposed to work. And the feast only confirmed that the efforts had paid off.

No one felt as if she was running from something. They recognized this as the last resort. So they accepted any limitations. For what it was worth, no one worried if she was falling short. Everyone was able to find an appropriate niche. And she learned how to blend in. She had never succeeded before. She didn’t mind being a phantom. All these spirits blended together. If the nature of presence was somewhat tenuous, that expressed how experience was meant to be. They

had all grown up with a rigid view of upbringing. So it was only natural that they would accept this haphazard way of life.

Everyone believed that this would be enough to depose any lasting remnants of their former lives. They did not want to cling to troublesome memories. A clean slate meant simply cleansing the writing surface. There would be no trace of what went before. All these poltergeists had been given their summary release.

How far did Paul want to pursue to gain a better understanding? He didn't mind a more provocative inspiration for himself. Was he also vanishing in the mist? He was not there to criticize, but there was something lacking. He didn't know how to coax it out. He was an active thinker. He was supposed to take a stand.

Paul recognized that no one was asking him to lead. They didn't see some kind of lack which needed repair. Paul didn't view himself as a nuisance. He had been welcomed. But he was not meant to disrupt their activities. They all were driven by clear impulses. And they also resisted the pull. The winds seemed to catch them all, and they let themselves get tossed by the storm. This was part of their experience.

Therapy would not pull them together after chaos. There was a deep strain of disorder in their lives, which they all cherished. It was not meant to be any different.

"Society has made us to be out of joint. I think that there are some therapies, which try to put everything back into place. We see this as a way of collaborating with the dominant culture. We cannot go along with this kind of typing. If anyone thought any differently, they would not have a life."

Ivelle was very clear in describing an antipathy to any kind of norm. But it went beyond that. She emphasized that the catastrophic was a form of mental balance. The desire to discipline others was a mistaken belief, which motivated most therapies. This site was all about living. No one here was embracing death.

"There is a unique form of liberation in being yourself. Even presence can be an impediment. We are drawn to a precedent state. One that antedates presence."

Paul was trying to make sense of what she was telling him. He wondered if the group was attached to pleasure. Paul thought about Resa's ideology. It was rooted in pleasure, but she could show such cruelty to Ennaya. Did this understanding reveal a more constant understanding of the group? Were they trying to avoid the lure of pleasure for some other kind of manifestation? If that was so, they revolted against pleasure because it implied allegiance to authority.

"Is that why you disagree with psychoanalysis? It is more than a disagreement with Freud's misogyny. You question the notion of a pleasurable impulse?"

Paul was not going to wait for an answer. He might have said too much to accord with her way of thinking.

"I do not think that words create our way of thinking. But words can prevent us from experiencing the world in a complete way."

"You are making your own language."

"I think that there are already existing languages that can accommodate our beliefs."

"How does that work?"

"We are not the first to realize that something is wrong."

Paul wondered where he could find this library. Did each person have a couple of these unique works that she passed around? Or was the secret collection located in a hidden part of the house? He again explored the idea of the ritual. Where would that take him? He didn't need to be convinced that they were moved by an infernal force. That would suggest that no one could ever attain the seriousness for her own ideas. At the same time, they all found attraction in a mysterious entity which might stimulate their awareness.

Paul was feeling as if he had been exiled here, and there were no markers to assist in his seeing. Each attempt to find coherence led him to speculate. He was again interfering. He remained a guest. He could not assimilate. He was not allowed to include his perspectives. He remained a frustrated observer.

I met Paul at a friend's house. I was interested in his experience as an international activist. He described meeting Ennaya's family. They had been traumatized by the security forces. Paul felt that direct action could have taken against these forces. He did not believe that there were enough citizens, who were willing to oppose the government's dictates. He felt that there was more appeal in empowering commando groups, who would oppose the government. He realized that this was a dead end. In fact, he had seen the difficulties firsthand in other countries.

In some cases, these insurgent forces had become completely invisible. Their lives were constantly in danger. And no one was allowed to talk about these groups. Paul did not see the limits of this kind of radicalism. You needed to admire the persistence. However, many of these groups assumed their opposition was monolithic. They were not seeking allies, who could facilitate their fight. The leaders also assumed that the state was not as powerful as it was. They were offering credible assessments of what kind of armed opposition that they faced. The state was more ruthless than they admitted. The cruelty became more sustained.

Paul felt that his knowledge could supplement these groups. He could offer the missing link for a successful movement. He studied and listened. He felt that he only had to rearrange the cards in a different order. Paul had put himself in Ennaya's place, and he felt that this would bring him a unique insight. He could pass this on to others. This could win over many people.

Paul told me about visiting Ivelle.

"How is she different from Ennaya?"

"She sees activism from a personal viewpoint. She wants to offer her inspiration. But she is caught up in her own moment. She might as well be part of a theater troupe. I met someone at the house, who is actually part of a political theater group. But Ivelle is not that far off."

I needed to understand how Paul viewed the limitations of political theater.

"Ivelle has her own views. But I do not see them catching on. There are houses like this all over the United States. Everyone is an ideological purist. But it makes no sense to someone who is working fifty or sixty hours a week. When you are on a picket line, it doesn't matter what they call you. It is not based on crafting secret identity. Your identity can assist you in breaking from your upbringing. It can inspire your activism. But these are two different ways of being. The house might be the ideal living space. No one has to remember her evil stepfather or her abusive ex. But that doesn't end to the oppression for people who are living outside of the house. The house is not the final destination for change. Ennaya does not need figure out how to think

in a different way. She is already an oppositional figure. Ivelle assumes that a book will tell her how to complete herself. It can reveal the political equation that is missing in her life. It will make her more attuned with the severe oppression felt by others. It can remind her of the roots of her own conflict.”

“Does she really believe that her own understanding will serve as the basis of a new society?”

“She is ready to create the perfect text. Without such a primer, she believes that she will slide back into her old ways. She will again be submissive to a dominant power. It is more than that. The longer that she remains at the house, the more that she feels that she will have surpassed whatever threatened her. She will finally have the weapon to bring down the system. They all believe that they are a vanguard. Not because of their commitment. Not because of a real analysis of the system. They have put together their own twisted version of what is wrong. So that is enough to lead them a proper realization. There is a little bit of a despair that is the best that can be done. The society is too far gone. Only these pockets can truly resist.”

“They remain active in their opposition.”

“They have committed themselves to a way of life. That puts everything topsy-turvy. They have surpassed the present. So the future awaits the transformation.”

Even in questioning this movement, Paul showed his respect. If it wasn't this, what else was there. He could have become a factory organizer. But he was remote from the action. The house seemed to have its own connection. People could talk about working in bars and restaurants. How would they organize? How would these changes relate from one site to another?

“What do they say? What are they doing?”

“They say that they are not ready. They need to get more people to come over to their side. They do participate in rent protests. They are activists at school. But it all seems like a big project. They are awaiting future event, which will bless their actions.

Paul felt somewhat distracted from his important commitment. He wished that he could be the definitive guide at the house. But he also realize their resistance to any outside influences. They were not awaiting a messiah. They were waiting for something more inchoate. At times, Paul talked like a parent. This was not the language that they wanted to hear. They did not want to feel as if they were again prisoners of their own lives.

Would anyone have the wherewithal to battle Resa? What was lacking from their background? These people were all thinkers. At least, they could lose themselves in their personal narratives. They loved all the theatrical aspects of their transformation. There was something almost cartoonish in their beliefs.

Over time, Ivelle could absorb more theory. She could see the weaknesses in her way of thinking. She would recognize that there not a sufficient program. None of these ideas would last against an immovable force. Ennaya had demonstrated a different kind of courage.

Ivelle felt that she could engage with Ennaya's people. She would be the perfect representative of her beliefs. She could hold off security forces.

She would explain her position: “We have participated in demonstrations. We have been assertive in stating our beliefs. We have helped to raise consciousness.”

“Where does that take you? The demonstrations are good. But there needs to be effective direct action. You have to find ways to disrupt the system.”

“I am thinking about what might be best. I do not want to give the state the chance to shut down our actions. We have to find ways to be present but absent.”

Her philosophical beliefs were again resurgent. How would Paul have ever been able to challenge her. She was again letting herself be distracted by the theater. How could an individual be absent?

“What more can you expect?”

“You can lay the groundwork for a mass movement.”

“What would that involve?”

“Strengthening those already with power to oppose the system.”:

Ivelle wanted to know what that actually meant. Where were the actual stress points? She expected him to talk about battles in the streets. But for herself, she imagined a more unusual forms of opposition. People might shut down power grids. They could take over media conglomerates. Even those images were too specific for her. She envisioned a transformation of being. Individuals would discover powers that they never knew that had.

“I have asked her how important are metaphors for political thought. She doesn’t see it as metaphors. For her, it is a kind of being. A kind of inhering. I am not really a philosopher. She is attracted to that kind of thinking even it is not entirely conducive for her.”

Paul was struggling with this vision. Ivelle was seeking some kind of clarification from Paul. And Paul wanted to see where she was willing to direct her thought.

“Steven, I see the importance of political thought. And you have to make an effort to attract more support. But she seems to be focusing on this impossibility. I do not feel as if I can act on my own. When will her people even take a step towards any kind change?”

“But you do like the energy of this place.”

“They have a way of making it seem as if they are the next point in some kind social revolution. I feel as if the building is going to get shaken by an earthquake.”

Paul wanted me to assist him in figuring out why he was so captivated. He did not want to admit a feeling of desperation.

“She has spent a great deal of time trying to craft a personality. And that personality has locked in with the other participants in the house. I realize that there is something spontaneous about all of this. But it seems contrived as if they have all worked on attaining just enough critical awareness of self to move things along. They have all promised not to submit to the world of their predecessors. What does any of that mean? How radical are any of them?”

Steven realized that Paul saw all of this. He was not about to mock Paul’s interest.

“I think that we have been influenced by the same outlook. Political organizing can seem to be frustrating. People take so long to come along. So the house offers that ideal image of a revolutionary culture. They might as well be issuing t shirts.”

“That does seem to be a little cynical.”

“I am not sure if I can be as tolerant.”

“What are you doing, Steven?”

“I am talking to you about the challenges.”

“What are the challenges?”

“It is no longer a matter of shocking the dominant culture. That only flatters the purveyors.”

“What do you propose?”

“You don’t have to ask me.”

Paul did not want to commit to a labor-based revolt. He was not as attuned to a popular uprising. He shared a belief with Ivelle. The opposition required a unique kind of soul.

“Work helps to craft the contours. People need to base their commitment on the actual conditions that they encounter.”

“Ivelle says that everything is real.”

“It is not the same thing to build consciousness in a safe house. The people are not going to flock to a pre-packaged revolution.”

“There have been mistakes in the past.”

“There will be mistakes in the future. But do not assume that the people are not ready for a radical change.”

“That sounds idealistic.”

“Warehouse workers are not thinking that their lives are ideal. They see how they are being short-changed. What more do they need to know?”

“They are too committed to the work-place.”

“That is where you make change occur.”

“Why should anyone trust that ideal? You are setting the people up for failure.”

“And it’s not failure to hang around the house and debate alternative revolutionary scenarios. There must be a video game for that.”

“Toward what end?”

“For taking a political stand. For living in the present.”

“The present is predicated upon the past and the future.”

“That has a sense of brilliance.”

“Seriously?”

“If you never take action in the present, there is no need to call upon the past.”

“Steven, where does any of this come from?”

I was seeing the world with a clarity. This was not fundamentally my realization. Other people could see what I was seeing. I was surprised that the people in the house were not more focused. How did they let their lives get distracted?

“Ivelle questions whether we understand the actual forces operating in society. She suggests that the working class can harbor right wing sentiments.”

“She is trying to make herself the arbiter of revolutionary sentiment.”

I wanted to explain the breaches in Ivelle’s way of thinking. Indeed, she saw herself as part of an advanced wave for social change.

“There are enough influences holding people back. But political leaders need to be clear. They need to provide individuals with a stronger basis for their development. Otherwise, they can become confused how to shake off their oppressors.”

“Steven, you seem to have such lucidity about political change. There are no purists. We all live in the world.”

“I am not asking for lucidity. You have taken some kind of steps.”

“We are watching from the sidelines.

“I want it to be more than that.”

Was Paul supposed to return to the house? How would he talk to Ivelle? Could he bring fresh insights. He could share stories of Ennya. Ivelle could profess an allegiance to Ennya’s commitment. But she was influenced by a different reality.

I recognized something about my own commitment. It was easy to find focus when you talked about someone else. But I did not see clarity in my circumstances. I was having trouble keeping up with the discussion between Ivelle and Paul. Why had I inserted myself in the middle? Did I have a unique awareness?

Political change occurred in the workplace. The individual needed to make an alliance with others, who were undergoing the same experiences. He was not supposed to show up at some new location. The action needed to be sustained so that it could link up with other similar actions in other locations.

Ivelle continued to haunt Paul. He wanted her to have the same kind of motivation as Ennya. He needed that kind of inspiration for himself. Paul thought about the others at the house. They all claimed that there were new leaders. But they would all follow whoever was dominant at that moment. Ivelle’s reading had clued her in to critical ideas. Thus, she could influence the others. But she was not all that ambitious.

There was such a uniformity of ideological commitment, which Paul admired. But he wondered why no one focused on a more insistent cause. Everyone seemed too concerned with lifestyle. If everyone had the right diet, they believed they could change the diet. The argument might have appeared to be valid. However, it didn’t take much to figure out that this was going nowhere.

All the discussion revved up Paul. And he found appeal in this alternative experience. The house magnified this earthy feel. He could smell natural foods cooking even if they weren’t. This was enough of an invitation. On this basis, he assumed that everyone shared the same beliefs.

Maybe a different menu could motivate people in a different way. Paul started to believe the mystical powers. He might as well have been chosen from the crowd and given a calling. Natural food restaurants tried to give off the same vibe. There might be radical newspapers strewn on a big table. People could spoon spinach pasta from a mug while they argued politics. Everyone was on the line. None of this was meant to be game.

When Paul first came to the house, he could sense the electricity. That was why he continued to visit. He so much wanted to provoke them to do something more daring. Everything seemed too planned. He was always a spectator. He could not find an in.

He wanted to understand the rhythm. He needed to learn the song. What were they saying in secret?

He might have had questions about the group. But now he almost felt as if this was the right choice for him. Was he waiting for a clearer sign?

Politics seemed to be this shared belief. It might not matter if it led to actual change. Just the sense of togetherness was a beginning. People would be able to escape past fears. Even as things got going, he could feel them all slow down. He was supposed to accustom himself to this lull. After all, the residents were doing the best to maintain their lives.

Cera would come back from a night of waiting tables. And she would feel solidarity. Jake would be less frustrated when he was up at five to make the construction site. There was a collective purpose. It made everyone more productive. They did not feel depressed. They were not angry. Everyone was part of eventual transformation of the world. They could celebrate this certain knowledge. This was their science. And it held together with utter confidence.

At what point, would the spark be lit. How long would it remain active? Ivelle relayed her expectations to Paul. Paul felt as if he was monitoring a heart patient. What would make him feel that his chances had improved? What would he have to take to restore his fluid balance? When would it be permissible to exercise? How long would he have to wait until he could go back to work. These challenges seemed more and more tenuous. Paul felt as if he was the one with the expertise. He was a miracle worker.

Surely, he could offer some important advice. What would that be? He could pass someone an elixir. But he was not supposed to advise anyone to be more assertive. That would make it appear as if he was the one taking charge. He was not brought here as a consultant. He was not relaying critical advice.

Paul was attached to a more dynamic view of history. So he could feel that everyone was lost in inaction. Desert would start to hit, and Paul wanted to move the story along to the next phase.

Ivelle reminded him, "You are going to be the only person awake in a couple of hours."

He had imagined a conversation lasting all night long. This would be the revolutionary legislature ready to make an eventful decision for all time. But no one else remained. Paul was not about to turn on television. No one engaged in such distractions. He told himself that he was playing some kind of game, which advanced his own desires. What would that be?

In his mind, the battle became intense. Was there an imperial palace to storm? What qualified as a strategic target? Paul continued to sit around in the half-darkness. He almost assumed that someone would get up and take him on. None of this happened.

When Paul got back to his place, he wondered what he had been missing. There was none of the drama on which he seemed to rely. He fell asleep.

Paul didn't return to the house for a few days. He had not returned to the States for this. He loved the passion. But he feared none of this amounted to much. He heard about strikes for living wages. Some workers were doing their best to hang to their pensions. They started to realize that the unions were only collaborators. It was time for new organizations.

Ivelle talked about participating in such workers' demonstrations. They were connected to organizers. But there was no strategy when met by serious opposition. Paul wanted to offer his thoughts on militancy. There was more than showing up. It wasn't enough to show disgust with her life. She needed to take more sustained steps. She saw this as more conscious raising.

Paul questioned if the discussions were even engaging. He had talked to militants who had hid in the mountains from government troops. He knew people who risked their lives for their beliefs. It was still so casual here. If he searched for something more, he would seem like an interference.

Maybe Paul had lost his edge. He could blame Ivelle's friends, but he felt shell-shocked. Refugees could find shelter at the house. They could let a homeless stranger crash for a couple of

days. They would do what they could to get him back on track. There were even a couple of runaways that they were able to help.

The house was a shining example for those who needed fortification. They were all able to face particular obstacles. But that assistance hardly captured the full impact of the activity at the house.

They wanted to create a stronger profile for their beliefs. Ivelle was ready to defend the house against any incursions. There indeed was a sense of missionary zeal emanating from the house. Everyone had been converted. And they were waiting for something more engaging in the future. This should have been the cue that Paul needed. But they never seemed to reach the apex.

In his mind, Paul completed the picture. That continued to offer him a reason to sustain his commitment. It was evident that his influence had not provided any kind of change. He was actually a veteran of harrowing situations. And he was surrendering his own credibility to a garden party. He hated to think of the group in such a condescending way. Why were they not willing to take advantage of his expertise? He even questioned himself.

In his imagination, he was a member of a guerilla insurgency. They had been chased from their stronghold, and they were on the run. He would have to circle around and attack the main enemy force.

He found special appeal in this confrontation. Paul felt that he had significant tactical skills. He could apply them to a successful fire fight. He might be outnumbered, but his knowledge was effective. He would succeed.

Even in achieving victory, he could not gloat. He had freed an important resource, but he needed to retreat to protect himself. He had inflicted major casualties on an enemy.

Paul considered his knowledge. Was he exaggerating his acumen? Even in learning from these groups, he realized that the risks were even greater. And the insurgents' victories were much more piecemeal.

Paul wanted a decisive demonstration of strength. If only he could show such a victory to Ivelle, the group might have been shaken from their slumber. Were they actually taken seriously outside of their circle? What would the security services think about this in another country? There were university groups who posed no threat. They would all talk like dangerous characters. But none of them would ever show their face when it mattered. A repressive regime would not recognize their inherent strength.

For Ennaya, the situation was entirely different. The intelligence services expressed total certainty about their assessment. Ennaya was a charismatic sort. She could inspire others in opposition to the state. Did Ivelle understand that same calling? The philosophical influences should have been enough. Each person convinced the others of their sanctity. That gave the group its potency.

At time, Ivelle was convinced that she had a special ability that would need to be explained to others. They had all been immersed in their endless conventionality. They would not recognize the spirit of rebellion.

If she thought about it, Ivelle could chronicle her own tour of duty. Her critique was solid. And she was on to something. Others might have succumbed to the mind control and the anguish. She remained sharp.

Paul wanted to believe that Ivelle was worthy of greater achievements. Maybe, she needed to have more experience outside of the States. She had vision, but there was not enough. That hardly mattered. She did not see herself as a leader. She did not really accommodate to the advanced levels of training needed to face down her opposition. No wonder, Paul did not notice any kind of resilience needed to advance a movement.

Paul was trying so hard to close the book. And he did not want to create a belief that had little support in the facts. If she was not able to demonstrate her abilities, that might not amount for much of anything. Paul was not expecting anything more.

The appeals of the house remained. Paul could start a conversation with such vigor. The energy would all trail off. But that would be sufficient entertainment. Somewhere, he could find the engagement to which he aspired.

The house was still an imposition. So Paul welcomed its continued influence. He wanted so much to change the story. Why was everyone clinging so adamantly to their roles? They could have complemented each other. They could have brought out the abilities in each other. Everyone had become too soft. They were vulnerable. They were never going to emerge from the shadows.

Ivelle would never understand the cat and mouse game played by Resa. She would not recognize the twists and turns of psychology. She had a very different view of the soul. She realized what she was trying to escape. But the process was more straight forward.

Once she had attained her understanding, she felt that she would have her resolution. Resa existed in a different place of the mind. There was more intimidation. There was more ruthlessness. Could Ivelle battle those idols?

The house was a refuge. But these walls prevented the occupants from venturing further. They felt that their safety was everything. It resolved all their questions. That was why they rejected leaders. They had become too complacent. They did not want someone to rile them up. That only reminded them of their former submission.

Paul wondered if their histories had prevented them from realizing their dreams. They seemed to accept what their lot. They had lost any understanding of revolutionary potential. They believe that this was just enough for their survival.

In spite of their insights, they could not make them mean anything more. Everything was therapeutic. That was almost adequate. This radical psychology would always seem to be contestatory. The freakish nature was a basis for a revolt. This imbalance drove their advanced state. There were only refined consumers. They had assumed the appropriate beliefs for their station.

Why did they believe that they were anointed? This seemed more important than their actions. Actions seemed to a property of a backwards ideology. They were trying to dismantle being. They would only observe.

“You seem to be more committed to working on yourselves. Do you really think that will sustain anything lasting?”

“Do you realize how deeply you have been programmed?”

Was Paul supposed to answer her? He did not feel as vulnerable. That was the source of an active movement. Participants were not supposed to be therapists. They did not have time to

admire their achievements. They did not want to be exposed to their enemies. They needed to think quickly. They needed to respond with stealth.

Ivelle sounded as if she was preparing another course for the meal. This hardly had any political import.

Paul could not rely on his poetic insights. He was seeking something more substantial. They would have to attain a better understanding of the social construction. They would have to make real steps towards knowledge.

“You are trying to conduct philosophy class. It’s just different principles. You might as well be my father.”

Had he heard it this way? Or were those only assumptions on his part. Ivelle had never said anything about a father. Was this part of his own bias. What were the basis for such doubts?

Paul was working through his own history. He wanted every version to be uniform. They could all fit a mold.

Something was being excised from the memory. How did that work? Ivelle was committed to this kind of confessional. The avowal was only the beginning of further revelations. None of the revelations had any resonance. This was all lip service. She was excellent at this recognition. This was her constant theater.

Paul was seeing the relationship between their performances and their psychology. They clung to these beliefs. The histories may not have been so spotty. But they would build them for convenience. And they could recite them by rote.

How had this enactment become so prevalent? No one had been coached. However, there was this synergy, which had infected each one. The collective was so tight. It was welcoming, but it also put him off. He could walk away, but it was so much part of all of them. He had no personal connection. He could sense all those alliances. There was this fabric. But he was not really infiltrating. He might be able to understand the interaction, but he remained excluded.

Paul wouldn’t be able to explain any more. Again, he needed to get away. His understanding required a clearer manifestation. The housemates were not able to carry the story any further.

Paul reviewed his travels. He probably would not be happy until he again faced the same kind of challenges. But he had always been seeing it all from the outside. He wanted to offer his contribution. And he did not want to feel derailed. Where could he match his commitment to the wonderful promise that he envisioned? It was not enough to think or say the right thing. His allies would have to arrive at a suitable understanding. Ivelle would not even ask such an end for herself.

Ivelle’s concerns had nothing to do with her feelings of submission. She could not progress any further. It was enough to have this vague feeling.

Paul felt as if he was reinvigorating himself. The past needed to become part of an overall perspective about the world. If he dwelled too much on individual consciousness, he would never make a link to any deeper social connection. The self would become too absorbed in a repetition of past chaotic experiences. This would never permit any lasting escape. The individual would remain paralyzed.

Paul tried to picture the kitchen. The cooking grease had congealed on the walls and the ceiling. Conscientiousness about their lives meant that they would scrub it all off. They were making a world for themselves. Each day was meant to be different. It was a commitment to remembering and moving on from the present. Everyone was working together for an idea. Paul had his own reference points.

He needed to make every argument. He was stringing together a way of complete program. The notion of the program seemed illegitimate to the group. That implied too much individual control. The collective actions needed to manifest themselves in a more organic way.

“How do all the dishes get done? What if someone does not want to help with the trash? Why does the collective ever coalesce?”

“Paul, we are all working together.”

Paul wanted to assume that the ideal could carry them all along. But he wondered if everyone was maintaining the same level of commitment. Work could distract a person. There were a thousand other interests. Did the house have its own logic?

“I thought that you all rejected logic.”

Paul could understand why all the residents felt protected. Did that work?

If he remained here, he wondered if he would do anything more. He might sit in the dining room discussing politics every night. Sure, his level of self-awareness might improve. But there was nothing real against which to measure himself. It was all too insular.

Paul felt a sense of powerlessness. Everyone was so motivated. That seemed enough in itself. They could keep that feeling at work. They could even develop art projects to drive that same conviction. Why did anyone care all that much? When it became too late to talk anymore, everyone would head to bed. And Paul wondered where all that excitement disappeared.

He needed to have more of an imaginative bent. He could run the panorama of history for himself. He was looking for a constant vision. He might see himself as more dominant in this telling. How else could he confront experience? He wanted to be more than a spectator. It was one thing to find people who agreed with him. How would he engage them?

The house had been welcome transition on returning to the States. He was now reaching a plateau, and he recognized that he would have open up new vistas. He could sit around the living room and hope that a revelation might occur. But all the variations had been visited. Without leadership, not one would break from the complacency. Everyone believed that she had arrived at enlightenment.

Years in a classroom might prompt their confidence. Work would only harden those attitudes. This was where the individual needed to step out of the obscurity. But these classrooms lessons reinforced a belief in perfection. No one accepted the opportunity to carry the struggle further. That would inhibit the revolutionary strategy.

Paul did not come looking for this kind of vacillation. The individual wasn't supposed to allow herself to be intimidated. No one here would see it like that. They all had their answers. But it hadn't taken that much to get them all to retreat. Paul was not there to rouse them up.

The housemates were all convinced that they had attained an advanced state of being. This was why Paul felt that there was a telepathic unity that held them all together. If it was not that formidable, then he would have been able to be more assertive. Nothing seemed to move.

Ivelle wanted to believe that she could capture that dynamic. Why was that not enough to alter the course? It was almost as if she had discovered an antidote to change.

Ivelle felt that her ideas were grounded in her reading. The more that she read, the more that she became convinced by these same beliefs. She found a way to subdue the disquiet in her soul. How else could she relate? Everyone shared troubling events. No one wanted to get dragged down by troubling memories. They all felt liberated. That was the premise of these living arrangements. No one had taken an oath. But each person went along with the same code. That enabled their solidarity.

How would Paul feel if he was no longer part of this kind of togetherness? He was looking for something more persistent. This had carried him along. He had good feelings about his experience.

If these people stayed in this house, much would change after a few years. Everyone had assumed a role. They each went along with the currents. There had been such a radical change in becoming part of this community. That was such a giant step. No one could envision what Paul had seen. Each person would have needed more insight to look further. It wasn't as if their families would have taught them those lessons. And work seemed to reinforce self-reliance. They could see the problems. But this all created a vague reformist attitude. People could recognize the radical nature of lifestyle changes. But there was no foundation for deeper social theory. Sure, people were influenced by radical political thought. It was all focused on the transformation of the personality. This was a communion of the souls. However, it did not present a significant challenge to economic order.

Paul had not come here to create a manifesto. He was learning from the residents. That was the best that he could hope for. Ivelle was the most involved in this transformation. And she continued to remind the others that this was a leaderless society. She found theories that further supported the stripping down of consciousness and the apprehension of being. That was how she felt most giving. She was taken to service. So the house represented a more fervent philosophy.

For the time being, Paul thought about heading to Philadelphia. He had been in communication with social activists. This was the boost that he needed. He wished Ivelle and her friends well.

Paul had never introduced me to Ivelle. He told me about the house. This was one step in his string of activist experiences. I realized that he would not be long in Atlanta.

I was at a coffee shop when I met Ivelle. I had no idea that she knew Paul. And it surely was somewhat coincidental. She was committed to radical psychology. I wanted to learn about her influences. In fact, she thought about becoming a therapist. She was finishing up online course before she pursued this option.

I wanted to pursue what was her radical notion of the psyche. On her view, the differentials of personality left the individual open to actual changes in her milieu. This was the basis for a more committed activism. The individual could respond more accurately to changes in her world. She was creating a new biology.

“Steven, what do you want from me. Do you want me to be your analyst?”

“You haven't really started your training. What would that involve?”

“You have done the reading. You could tell me. Where do you want to start the questioning?”

“I know your writing.”

“And how does that relate to your personality differentials?”

The personality differential would enable the observer to track the source of minute changes in the individual. This could even accommodate any kind of disorder. The analyst would have a better understanding how the psychology buffered these shocks.

I was trying to understand Ivelle’s perspective of psychology.

“The therapist is not meant interfere with the development of the patient. She needs to provide the individual with doors to open.”

“Clues?”

“Clues seem to suggest the possibility of an existing solution. There is no substratum of truth for the psychotherapist. That belief in a stable personality is forced upon us. People fit their psyche for a diseased society.”

“You are avoiding addressing the source of disorder.”

“Steven, you know all this stuff about the mind, but you are using it to manipulate people.”

“We work from what we know. You have found a subtler form of manipulation.”

“Why are you trying to tell me what kind of psychologist to be? Is someone trying to tell you what kind of writer you should be?”

“If they were, I would listen.”

“I am sure that people have told you some great things. But I am not looking for you to talk to me in that way. It can be an imposition.”

“How is that?”

“You are trying to set yourself up as an authority.”

“Are you questioning my psychological awareness?”

“I am a writer. That originates in an awareness of human consciousness.”

“You impose your pictures on the world.”

“I adjust the pictures to match what I see.”

“You are still trying to force people in a frame.”

“And radical psychology does not do that.”

“No, she frees the body. She allows the psyche to flow like waves on the water.”

“How does that work?”

I was trying to make sense of this picture that she was creating.

“Steven, what are your expectations for people?”

“I want to work a miracle.”

“How is that?”

“I want to do something that does not fit with the natural order of the universe.”

“Explain that!”

“People who talk to me all want something special to happen to change their lives. They want a miracle worker. I just can’t be the miracle worker that they want me to be.”

“I think that people expect their analysts to have an answer that they can’t give. Therapy is not meant to be like that. That suggests that the differential has a clear resolution. The river overflows the bank. It cannot be any other way.”

She was still not saying what she needed to say. How was I supposed to explore her vision? She was revolting against a more traditional view.

The mythic awareness was a significant tool for the analyst. How could she use her knowledge to resolve the individual’s discomfort?

“Steven, you believe the mythic order provides your answer. What are you seeking to know?”

“The storyteller offers an awareness.”

“You are forcing a view on the world. There is too much content. You see the myth as a final judgement. Someone messes up, and the myth points out the source of the displacement. That is what you propose as your solution. But you are only seeing a view of the self. You are confirming what you want to see.”

Her Narcissus could never break the glass. Thus, he would never accept his role in the resolution. She find marvel in these successive apparitions. But she would only embrace her own judgement. She would never be able to criticize her viewpoint.

“What does it mean to break the glass? You value the reflection for something that it is not.”

The successive reflections only made a person more disassociated. She was finding glory in this living outside of the self.

“Ivella, you reject the substratum of truth. But your hero is a storyteller who is enamored with his own story.”

“What if there was a button that I could push that would make you seem charming to the world. You could get whatever you wanted. Everyone would think that you had a special power. It would be like a miracle.”

“Do you know about such a machine?”

“Isn’t that what people expect to get from their therapists?”

“That might not be what you expect. There could be side effects.”

“That has always been the story of the magic lantern.”

“Have you ever found such a thing?”

“That is what we are all looking for?”

“What if there was a power that would make you feel forever happy?”

“Happiness might not seem like such a gift.”

“What if such a gift arrived out of the blue?”:

“I might wonder where it came from. Like there was some donor who had made me feel that way.”

“What if you knew who the person was who had blessed with you the gift?”

“If you were blessed with three wishes, what would they be?”

“Everyone is looking for compound interest on those original three wishes. If you let the principal build up, you can live off those three wishes for the rest of your life.

“The anonymous donor may believe that he has the ability to grant those wishes. So he is offering a future of constant reward. Why wouldn’t you accept that offer if it was offered to you?”

“This is something that I can’t really figure out. Sure, I would love to eat off of the tree of knowledge. But it is never going to offer me what I am really looking for.”

I was able to develop an advanced political consciousness that I could teach to my students. Even if I gained renown, I felt that this recognition would contribute to a major social change. For what it was, I was contributing to a movement. I didn’t feel guilty if I was rewarded for my efforts. I could open my closet, and it was full of new pairs of shoes. I was doing well. I didn’t mind rewarding myself.

I didn’t see my efforts as narcissistic. I didn’t think that I was the only person who was valuable to this movement. But I wanted to believe that my contributions were important. My students followed my cue. They developed a sense of self-awareness unlike anything that they had encountered in their lives. This seemed like a helpful reference point. They could recognize the means to overcome terrible situations from their past. This painful situation had dominated their psychological development. Now, they were living in a safe place without all the anguish, which had characterized their childhood. They welcomed this empowerment. It did not stop with their escape from darkness. I could sense that my associates were coming to life for the first time. Their unique experience.

There comes a point when the only interest of the writer is to write a perfect sentence. And that sentence will enable him to live completely in the moment. He can overcome a devastating past. He can create a convincing world from his imagination. And from that understanding, he believes that he has the ability to recognize the intricate organization of matter. From his art, he has crafted a science. He gains a knowledge of these secret laws. From that vision, his language is able to offer a greater insight about the world.

In a universe strung together by these hidden patterns, the observer gains more insight about this network of connections. The self becomes implicated in this lattice work, and this enables the individual to attain more power over his experience. He is imposing his perspective on the world.

It isn’t a matter of only seeing. This knowledge has deeper influences on the personality. The writer has a unique ability to depict the inner workings of the individual. He learns how to focus his description so that his awareness provides a more accurate view how the psyche works. He is able to coordinate this insight with the intricacies of matter. This assists in creating a radical cosmology.

“You are going to be tested for what you do or do not know. And how are you going to do on this test. Are you going to try to laugh off your performance? Does this mean that you have been trying to ignore your lack of success?”

“Sometimes, I feel as if I have shut off that voice once and for all.”

“Where are you going?”

“Anywhere to get away from this kind of thing.”

“There is a moment when all your fears come back to you. It might as well be a three-thousand-pound weight pushing down on you.”

“Aren’t you just afraid of what is different than you are? It is a sum total of your uncertainties.

“Steven, I feel as if you are losing me.”

“You have a few of the self that is easy to lose.”

“What does that mean?”

“Maybe, you should get another set of keys.”

Ivelle felt as if she had lost a critical reference point for her thoughts. She wanted to view the house as an application of her perspective on the psyche. How could psychiatric theory serve to organize a living space? Radical psychiatry could be seen as the basis for politics. This could determine everything from communication to the division of chores in the household. The psychiatric approach was different from psychological motivation. Psychiatry was meant to be descriptive. Psychology focused its descriptions on developmental norms. As a radical psychiatry, the practices include the need to deviate from the norms. These norms were instituted to restrict the assertiveness of the individual. The purpose of the house was to allow people to express more extreme impulses. There may have been dangers that house would explode in total anarchy. Everyone would feel inspired to say or do whatever came to mind. Ivelle’s theories suggested that there was something more cohesive that held everyone together.

Ivelle offered her perspective of radical psychiatry: “Traditional philosophies advocate for a singularity of being. The self is supposed to conform to being. Therefore, thought supports the assertion of identity. Identity is an expression of sameness. And this keeps philosophy as a basic support for the status quo.”

“When philosophy develops from the same, the individual cannot never develop a distinct identity. Psychology only repeats existing patterns of behavior. Metaphoric language is used to discipline the psyche. The self cannot emerge independently.”

“Difference provides the means to break the unity of being. This gives the individual the opportunity to create her own self. She is differentiated from being. This invites new ways of seeing.”

“These metaphors are essential for the assertiveness of the self. Otherwise, the self gets caught in the traps of being. Being is constructed in a way to restrict the articulation of the self. Psychologically, the psyche retreats into the self. She cannot find a distinctness from the world. She cannot explore her otherness because she keeps returning to the same.”

“A radical psychology empowers the individual to differentiate. The self detaches from those impediments for its complete liberation. When the self is no longer pulled toward sameness, it achieves an incredible release of power. The self embraces its disassociation. It does not try to assimilate into the uniformity of being.”

I wondered how these beliefs would fit in with the practices of a repressive regime. Could they make this psychology work for another version of social control? Ivelle believed that the disassociative personality provided the individual with the means to escape from the domination by the state. The state would never be able to localize the self. Therefore, it could not assert its power.

If the state was able to control critical resources, it hardly mattered how personality was articulated. Without any sense of agency, the self would not be able to convincingly challenge the state.

Ivelle continued to articulate her politics. She was convinced that the restrictive social order maintained the concentration of power. I felt that Ivelle was becoming more concerned about a local conflict for personal expression. This recognition would never offer a threat to an oppressive political order.

On Ivelle's view, the state derived its power from ideological influence. The individual needed to undergo a determined analysis of the psyche in order to arrive at the key psychological structures, which limited the self.

She accorded herself to energies that seemed to inhere in the universe. The self could learn to tap these energies. But she was not meant to resolve these energies. They all needed to stay in play. The personality faced problems when the individual tried to control these impulses. In disassociating, the self learned to accommodate to these currents.

This philosophy could be applied to a relationship. An individual might try to control another person. He would impose his view of personality on his partner. He might expect the other person to be like his mother. He would only recognize how the person fit her traditional way of expressing herself.

Radical psychiatry would break from this attachment. The self could explore in multiple ways. She could take on different identities. She could explore multiple attachments. She would never be tied down by the need to accord with a rigid standard.

Ivelle's perspective was particularly liberating for her. She was able to escape the restrictions of her past. She was not burdened by terrible memories. She did not report having scary dreams. But there were enough disturbances in her life, that any of them might have created serious instability. Radical methods could provide the freedom, which she was seeking.

Philosophy offered a powerful starting point for individual development. Even though traditional philosophy might lead a person astray, a break from tradition could offer the individual a way to dissolve the tethers of the material world. Thought could move in a vibrant manner. This kind of excitement would be the foundation for the overturning an affection for the dominant perspective of reality.

Ivelle believed that the threatening characters in her past did not have an independent existence. They were sustained by their lingering representation in her psyche. This connection was sustained by her imagination. But the imagination was fueled by the metaphysics of a traditional philosophy. These ideas persisted in her consciousness. Thus, consciousness was fundamentally a manifestation of metaphysics. Only by disrupting this metaphysical fabric could the individual ever escape from the horrors of existence. She needed to embrace her non-being. She could attain the self only through this repeated differentiation. Thought could explore the innumerable possibilities offered in experience. The individual would not get dragged down by these phantoms. She would learn how to move among the alternatives.

This fluid form of the self was made available through philosophical thought. The philosopher was a unique adventurer. She was not weighed down by the troubles of the world. She could float in the firmament.

Philosophy offered a personal freedom. The past was no longer an oppressive form, which could attack at the self. Instead, the self was opened to innumerable ways of being. Personality was the site of this incredible energy. The self could get propelled by all these

influences. The individual learned how to accept this invitation. It gave her the insight that she needed. It was a remarkable adventure.

Despite the wonderful terms, which she used to describe her search, she continued to lack the critical knowledge to transform experience. The house was the cocoon. But it held something back from the individual. It made all power into expressive power. The self needed to work harder and harder to elicit these rewards for her efforts. She needed to prime this system to make it yield a constant return. She was seeking a reality outside of her own. But she was more vulnerable than ever to the powerful effects emanating from a dominant culture.

She was creating a new theater, where she may have been more willing than ever to surrender to the appeals of her dominators. She was looking for the ultimate level of this expression. This theater sought a director. And she was willing to submit to the script.

Was there actually a vacuum in this way of thinking? She had given herself to these intense energies, that could provide an essential insight. But she was involved in an absurd endeavor. The perspective manifested itself as an actual presence, which could affect her. All these ghosts had conspired together to create a superior specter. And there was nothing that she could do to fight against this chain reaction.

Had Ivelle banished science from her way of thinking? Did this reveal a deeper threat? She had worked to elude such influences. But she never was able to achieve a desired independence.

“Steven, how do you do that? You know all about this philosophy. And you are trying to mock my beliefs.”

“I am open to hearing what you have figured out.”

“You do not really trust what I know.”

“What do you know? You are not facing the challenges in your experience. You are trying to adapt to this philosophy. How much does it have to do with the way that you really are? Why have you adapted yourself to this kind of belief? Doesn’t it diminish your own strength?”

I was not trying to mock her. Did she understand the restrictive qualities of this kind of thought? She had not escaped any of the persecutors.

“Do you get excited by questioning me? You are not really providing me the opportunity to be myself. You are acting as if you are the only person who can interpret this philosophy?”

“I am only asking simple questions. Are you getting what you really want?”

“It is not up to you to say.”

“Can you use your ideas to get what you need for yourself? You talk about trying to escape from repressive ways of thinking. This is your doing. And you are letting your philosophy distract you from the source of your oppression.”

“You know that?”

“I am calling it as I see it.”

“We do not think alike. I do not want to accede to your way of thinking.”

“But you are submitting to well-known philosophies. Do they offer the understanding that you need?”

“This works for me. It makes things function in my life. I am not asking you to monitor my psychology.”

“If you believe that these beliefs are liberating, it is worth understanding them.”

“The writers have their own way of relating to the world. And this all makes sense to me. Traditional philosophy is not as interested in the contributions of the individual. We are supposed to learn the method. We are meant to follow the laws. If we step outside of these restrictions, we cannot be ourselves. I am learning a way to realize my identity in unique way. I do not have to conform to my teachers or my parents. I am totally free.”

“Any totality is itself part of a totalizing system. All these thoughts are derived from systems, which seek absolutes. That is the basis for extraordinary experience. That itself can be a distraction.”

I wanted to explore these variations that she had provided for me. How would she serve as a tour guide? Could I get her to lead me on an unusual adventure?

The house provided the opportunity to explore multiple social experiences. If Ivelle was going to advance her own practice, how had she prepared for her future research? What did she want me to see about her method?

Ivelle had been taught to be vigilant about new experiences. She was now being encouraged to let novelty guide her life. She was trying to accommodate to these unusual experiences.

“Who is to say what we call unusual?”

“Unusual experience can be so disruptive that you do not know how to recover.”

“That could be a welcome event. We may have been punished into being conformist. We have created this enormous boundary to our development. We need to learn how to be more daring. This is important to escaping our negative conditioning. Sometimes it is difficult. Guilt accompanies our development.”

“You risk giving into novelty for its own sake. That will only make you possessive about your psychology. At the same time, we can be equally vulnerable to manneristic behaviors.”

“What is that?”

“We get attached to these manias. At the same time, we become as nervous as fuck in the presence of these new experiences. We are letting our fascination dominate our lives. But we do not take the steps toward self-assertiveness. We are hampered by our fears. You may deny that these feeling remain in the expression of the self. But you are oscillating between these different kinds of responses.”

“You are again trying to control things. Radical psychologies believe that the mind is not a depository for our feelings. That is itself a mania. We need to let go of that association.”

“What are you trying to tell me?”

“You are trying to explain these structures. But they are the source of the problem.”

That would all make sense if you did not have these negative reactions. They still subsist in your soul.”

“This is one more thing that you are saying to try to trap me. You are forcing your beliefs on me. I am reading about a different way of observing the world. That is liberating. You only want to trap people.”

“I am not creating the traps of the psyche. Do you want to learn?”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“You are instituting a philosophy of not analyzing.”

“How analytical are you?”

“I want to say very analytical. But analysis can be its own trap. We impose our own view on the world.”

This radical way of being had a lot of promise for Ivelle. She did not want to get trapped in problems of conscience.

“You disagree with the present regime. Does your politics provide the means to create an alternative way of observing the world?”

“Of course, it does?”

“But you have so many alternatives. You vacillate. There is not possibility for creating decisions.”

“I decide what I want to decide.”

“You start avoiding situations.”

“What does that mean? What am I avoiding?”

“Are you waiting for psychology to put everything in place? What do you know for yourself? What is the source of your understanding?”

“I am not on trial.”

“I only want to understand the connection between psychology and political action.”

“We have to get rid of those forces, which have made us this way.”

I was still caught up by the level of indecision in her way of thinking. How could this dispelling of the self ever initiated any action? What connection did the self make to a political situation?

“Once you take out the ghost, it is impossible to put it back in.”

“What does that mean?”

“You are dispelling the social fabric. You want to free the self, but how will the self ever be committed to anything.”

She found a different way to describe the world. These energies could be overwhelming. The self needed to be open to these moments.

Ivelle explained her understanding, “The dominant culture prevents us from feeling.”

“Who is this culture? You are more concerned with cultural domination than the actual sources of power.”

“Steven, what are the actual sources. You are obsessed by manifestations of the pleasure principle. Or whatever universal principles that you recognize. What is missing from this vision? You hide behind rules and forces? Where does any of this progress? You are trying to restrict our development.”

How could she discover what she needed for her continued experience? These were disparate experiences, and she was being tossed in the wind. She wanted to experience it in this way!

What kind of coherence could affect her? She seemed to be waiting for these explosive events, which could engage her in a marvel. In one sense, these explosions were controlled. They were almost spontaneous, but there were limits on their consequences. They existed for themselves. They were absorbed by the moment.

She was learning how to confront these phenomena. This was why she was attacked to philosophical language. It could encompass the manifest aspect of experience. At the same time, it pointed to an abstract phenomenon, which could take the individual out of this

recognition. The progression became more and more intense. Any kind of knowing was meant by a withdrawal from consciousness. This was a kind of non-being. She would need to throw herself into experience. It wasn't to know. She wasn't searching for a sense of belonging. She was not supposed to be the site of learning. Somewhere in the universe, these constellations exploded.

"Steven, you have become used to using your knowledge to control other people. They were not clued into your rigor. Therefore, you could blame them for something that they lacked. Nothing they felt had any validity. That is the purpose of writing. It creates a rigid view of the world. It categorizes people and things. And you like it that way. That is only a partial description of anyone's life. But you enjoy it like that."

"What is your objection?"

"I want to find pleasure where I want it. Or if there is not pleasure in my life, that is not a short-coming. You are trying to classify everything so that you can control. Even my emotions are meant to subsist on a scale."

She continued, "I no longer felt as if I was part of my own life. There was this judge telling me what I could and could not feel. Only when I let go of that mirage was I able to find real coherence in my life. I no longer had to fit into someone else's show."

Ivelle was pushing out further. Did her life actually support this view? There was no longer any need for any sort of reflection. This may have seemed like the correct way to be. There was no exaggeration. Emotions were not the source of these mazing ideas. Things happened. In some cases, there was nothing else to say. That was it.

"People have been taught to see emotions as part of this grand project. This is why our psychology gets so messed up. We lose ourselves in a relationship. We are looking for a promotion in our jobs. We expect things from people that they cannot give. That is why you are so obsessed Steven. You have these unusual ideas. And you are trying to impose your views of personality on other people. That way, you can track them in what they do. There is nothing that holds any of this together. These are all stars firing randomly. What does any of this mean?"

What would be her inspiration? I watched this trail of ideas. I couldn't help but track their movement. This more than her random constellations. She worked to put it all in place. She spent a great deal of personal effort in constructing her personality. It was the theory of anti-theory. She succeeded at breaking down some of the phantoms. Others only got bigger, and these mutations created their own difficulties.

"Steven, you are only trying to pile on. I can't anticipate where any of this is going."

Ivelle wanted to erect this massive wall to block the influences of the past. In this black box, the individual could create her own reference points. I wondered about the influence of history. Something was occurring behind our back. The moment that we turned to get a glimpse, it would all disappear.

Ivelle hoped that vanishing would be the end of the trouble. In fact, this was only the beginning. The magic would start to blossom on its own. And the future would bring it all back.

"Steven, what do you want to know? I am not prepared to share."

I was not seduced by the image of this house working as some kind of ideal. What were they hiding? What was the secret?

“It’s not as if we sacrifice goats in the basement.”

I was not supposed to connect anything to her humor. She did not even laugh about any of this. She was very serious about her world change.

Ivelle had made everything work for her house. And the house had gratified her. This was a perfect balance. It was not meant to progress further. She did not see this as a shortcoming.

“Look at what is happening in Puerto Rico. The movement is looking for leaders.”

“Everything is active. People are forming their own organizations. Everyone is responding to the individual changes that is occurring to them.”

“But Wall Street is working behind the scenes. As any stage of the movement progresses, there will be official opposition to those changes.”

“You cannot impose a view on the people.”

“I am not determining their history, but I can see the developments.”

“Are you seeing this as a personal shortcoming?”

“The people have already endured enough shit. They are not waiting for a great event to alter the balance. But there is not an enlightened leadership to provide the way.”

“What would that be? You cannot direct movements to mean what you want them to mean?”

“Leadership is critical.”

“The leadership cannot be imposed.”

Ivelle recognized the needed changes. But she was not willing to let go of her philosophy. She believed in this complete independence for the actors. However, she was not demonstrating how the people could confront the tricksters on Wall Street. This had nothing to do with consciousness raising. People needed to realize the power that they had. Each incremental change would only put them back at the same stage later. They would eventually have to make a break.

Many did not have adequate sanitation. These intolerable conditions had motivated people. This was not a matter of engaging in psychological self-reflection. They would only need to enhance their strategies. The people were not waiting for the definitive conscious-raising principles.

Ivelle was being taught lessons by this situation. How was she using her knowledge to change her own perspective? She felt that any kind of view that pushed for leadership was doomed. It was more important for the people to find their way. Water would have to reach its level.

“Ivelle, what does any of this mean?”

Was I rallying anyone to action? The cauldron was already burning hot. What were they waiting for? A shipment of air-conditioners.

“It feels good in here.”

“Steven, what are you asking me?”

“What is history asking you?”

“History does not ask. You cannot personify events.”

“What do you want to know?”

“What does anyone want to know?”

Did Ivelle respond to the concrete conditions that she encountered?

“Steven, what about your world.”

“I am a writer. I am calling it like it is.”

“What do you do when the roof is leaking?”

“The rains have been terrible. Trees have fallen. Some people have lost their homes. They have no insurance, and they have nowhere to go.”

“I am looking for more excitement.”

“I hate my helplessness.”

“When do I become human?”

“There are roofs leaking everywhere.”

“You need to connect the roofs.”

“I am not sure if I have the mentality.”

Whitney and Lakita were looking at the manuscript.

“How do you radicalize Ivelle? For herself, she believes that she is already free. She responds to her calling. She is committed to lifestyles changes. They are so unusual that she assumes that this a radical step. She asks for a different diet. She reads different books. She thinks about the world in a different way. She wants to escape the conditioning of her parents. She thinks about her sexual identity in a more fluid way. In some ways, she sees her existence as something immaterial. It cannot be owned. It cannot be possessed. She is totally outside the world. But she is also caught in the same structure. She is not that radical because none of her ideas coalesce into something that is contestatory.”

“What does that mean?”

“She talks about dominant powers and oppressive forces. What is she doing to cast out the demons? How accurate is her reading of power?”

“Are you saying that education is not important?”

“It is an important step, but it needs to be accompanied by some kind of conviction. If you are planning to change the workplace, you need to understand the sources of opposition. You need to recognize what kind of latitude you will be given so that you cease to pose a threat.”

“What does that mean?”

“You can become a cultural hero. Your ideas will be branded and sold, and you will cease to pose any kind of challenge to the dominant culture.”

“We are all brands.”

“Not when you take over a factory. You can espouse your revolutionary personality. If it has not actual function, it will take you nowhere.”

“We need to start by seeing.”

“There are people who see all the time. Whitney, you recognize how they see. Board the bus. Ask them about their work. They know what is going on. All the other stuff is personal.”

“Writers are important.”

“Agreed. But writers can get people to collaborate.”

“We all have to eat.”

“How long will the system even allow us to survive?”

We were invited by Peter Last to his castle in Italy where we could discuss macroeconomic policy.

“The worker has three hundred French francs to buy food. But the exchange rate goes down. He is still using francs. But wages do not change immediately. They use their time to make more steel. And the market is ideal. He now has five hundred francs. And the exchange rate changes finally take effect. He has been able to use the output power to increase his take.”

“The owners might move faster than him. They might shut down the plant. They could get other workers make more for less. They do not grasp the changes immediately. Their wages do not go down.”

“He needs to work harder and not buy a German car.”

Peter was looking at the numbers.

“What more can we accept?”

“That is not how it goes.”

“Lakita, what did you learn from the macroeconomic example.”

“It is important to control how wages are dispersed.”

“We meet the circuit’s resistance.”

“What is the actual alternative?”

“Steven, you have always argued for a social revolution, a change of mores. What is now the basis for battling for a political revolution?”

“You don’t really think that people’s fortunes are going to improve if the world stays as it is.”

“That seems like a circular argument.”

“Pleasure does not originate in allegiance to an oppressive regime.”

“What is the source of the oppression?”

“The numbers. You think that you are holding a winning hand. But something strange happens before you are ready to cash in.”

“You work harder. You buy a car. You get your own house.”

“And you lose your savings after you have a major operation.”

“You pay what you can until you get back on your feet.”

“The cost of maintaining becomes more than the cost of retaining.”

“What does that mean?”

“The ownership society concentrates wealth in the hands of a few.”

“You can learn the secrets to wealth.”

“I am Steven Fisher. I had the secret to wealth.”

“You taught people to fish.”

“Then all the fishers become billionaires.”

“They have a method for harvesting fish, but it bankrupts everyone else on the coast.”

“There has to be a way.”

“There is a way.”

“We are so close.”

“Or we are never close enough.”

“You can either get down on your persecutor. Or you realize that he is being persecuted by a bigger fish.”

“Steven, you are saying that the market should reward you for not working.”

“It never rewards teachers, who are doing the real work.”

“Teachers could do better if they set up merit pay and privatized their business model.”

“That still doesn’t commit enough resources for all students. You are going to ration the best for the privileged.”

“That is how it is now.”

“It doesn’t have to be like that.”

“Who is staring at me.”

I felt as if I had special access to the road paved in gold.

“We believe things that we dream about.”

“What about this house?”

“What is wrong with Ivelle’s model of social liberation?”

“It is all piecemeal. One step forward and two steps back. And the steps back are presented as some kind of entertainment.”

“Someday the waiter will own the restaurant.”

“Or she may get back pain and have to cut back on her hours. Or she coasts along until she realizes that she has a problem with alcohol or pain killers. And she blames herself for every obstacle in her way.”

“Steven, are you a fair judge.”

“I try to be. But I wait for the world to come to me. And it is all vanishing just beyond my view.”

“One of the roommates agrees to do a double shift. She is exhausted afterwards. If she has a couple of drinks, she might get powered up. But she is going to be a wreck the next day. This one guy works as a welder on major construction jobs. And he makes loads of money. But he can’t save. And is blinkered on his days off. And he can’t deal with looking at other people. One woman gets money from her parents. She has not held a steady job for more than a few months. She has this nasty ache in her spirit. She has been on and off of meds. Nothing seems too serious. Nothing seems much of anything.”

“Ivelle is studying online to become a psychotherapist. She takes a couple of courses every quarter. Sometimes she can’t afford to pay. She may not get along with the instructor. She is sure that she is going to finish someday. She is developing her own theories. And she has done a lot of reading. She has a lot of resentment toward her family. It took a long time to work through that struggle. She would look in the mirror and wonder who was looking back.”

“She has big political dreams.”

“She figures that everything will all fall into place.”

“What does that say?”

“What does any of this say?”

“What do you want to know?”

“Ivelle is studying online. And she has been working a double at the restaurant. And lunch was good. But they cut her at dinner. She says that she has prospects. But she is too tired to do any studying tonight.”

“The real Ivelle is a better student. She is sharp.”

“There is someone in the house with the same dreams. But she is not that quick doing her studying. She drops out. And she tells all her friends that she is going to go back. She covers Ivelle when Ivelle needs some time off to complete her research paper.”

“Ivelle is behind in the rent. And she needs to borrow money.”

“Why am I always finding losers? Everyone I meet is some kind of loser.”

“I have a great job. I stay ahead in my bills.”

“And you are drunk every weekend.”

“That is not me.”

“Who are any of these people?”

“Everyone’s identity seems to blend.”

“I blame my stepfather for a lot of my shit. He wasn’t all behind my education. But he felt guilty about things. And that all messed with me. He would send me money. And then letters and postcards where he would apologize for shit. He complained that I never liked him when I was a kid. But all that he did was lecture me about shit. He told me that I didn’t have my life together.”

“Did you let all this shit affect you?”

“I was a kid. We expect kids to think like adults. But they withdraw. They stop wanting to deal with shit. They find a world where they can be themselves.”

“And that makes adults who don’t want to come out of their rooms. And they take something just to give them that edge to cope.”

“Or they don’t take anything, and the ego just steers them in that direction.”

“Steven, is that your revolutionary potential?”

“You tell me. I am not asking people to snap out of it. People understand shit. Their lives help them to see. I can’t put it any other way.”

“What do you know? What does anyone know?”

“This is a land of opportunity. You work a little harder. And things fall into place.”

“You learn a formula that does not work anymore.”

“How does the return on someone else’s work keep increasing when the person doing the work sees no real change.”

“I can’t worry about someone else.”

“Do you worry what is happening to someone else?”

“I worry about my family.”

“We all have a family.”

“We all have a wonderful opportunity.”

“Whitney, what have you figured out?”

“It’s not who you know; it’s who you know who is willing to work for you.”

“We all need surrogates.”

“The surrogates keep getting less and less.”

“Then they revolt.”

“Everyone I know is trying to get her own brand. And she is going to get her designs manufactured in Vietnam. Pretty soon, she is arguing with her distributor. She wants to pay less for the products. She is engaged in a labor dispute. But she is pro-labor. At least, that is what

she thought. She would have paid more in the States. It all turns into the same thing. Every garment worker understands the real process. Maybe money increases in value quicker in the States. Or there is some safeguard. Or she gets promised more. But none of these promises materialize.”

“So you stop worrying about someone else’s problems.”

“What was wrong with the brand?”

“It was not aggressive enough.”

“And someone wrote in the garment: ‘Please, save me.’”

“When does the saving begin?”

“People are willing to pay for quality.”

“I can get it all on the corner.”

“You own the block.”

“You sell real estate.”

“You really have no understanding about the creation of value. You believe that all the red stars and the blue stars will be replaced by shining stars.”

“This is not an idea.”

“There is labor, and there is work.”

“What is labor?”

“The moment that the worker recognizes the systematic value of her efforts. The more that she strives, the more she will get eaten up by the system.”

“Do you really believe it?”

“You can work even harder. You can outpace your neighbor. And you look at it all, and you say, ‘Oh shit how did I ever get taken in by any of this?’”

“How did you?”

“You hang out at this house where they are making a new world. And they have a picture of a harvesting machine in the living room. And everyone works in a garden. And they believe that cottage industries will enable the laborers to own the means of production.”

“Then there are those entrepreneurs, who dream of owning the process.”

“This all once made sense.”

“The house gives them options that they never had before.”

“They can turn their off time into a plan for changing things.”

“How long is this going to last?”

“We are all going to get on our bikes and figure it out.”

“I am not making a mess.”

“That is doing nothing to stop the big mess. It is working systematically.”

“What are you making fun of?”

“You, my dear.”

“Whitney, have you figure it out?”

“I do like the idea of making your own food.”

“We are not living in the agrarian age. Surely, there is a way to do this in an environmentally-friendly way.”

“There is a balance.”

“I want to ride the Star Wars mobile.”

“Where does that come from?”

“None of us are willing to make systematic changes.”

“I am doing better than the other guy.”

“Steven Fisher, why are you advocating for a political revolution?”

“Any single day can be shitty. I don’t meet quotas.”

“All these people are part of the techtopia. They have found the promised land. They do not have to scatter along the Euphrates. They do not wait along the Nile. They are not gathered on the Amazon. They do not surround the Mississippi. They have the fruits of their labor. They live off the fat of the land.”

“Lakita, does any of this makes sense?”

“I want to be a writer. I want to understand how words can actually create political change.”

“Write advice columns about banking.”

“That ends up being the great swindle.”

“You learn the time value of money.”

“And the times are all reversed. Some people are winners. Some are super winners. And you wonder why you are not cleaning up in a bull market. You could leverage your brandt to better your fortunes. You wear blinders. You have a goal. You tell people what they want to hear. You never let them feel guilty. You medicate their doubts.”

“Do you think that you would enjoy living here?”

“I enjoy the feel. I love how it smells. Ivelle told me about the place. We work together. And she told me that I would have to cleaer it with all the other roommates.”

“I guess that I am one of the other roommates. If you are a friend of Ivelle’s, you are cool for us. But it’s important that you understand who we are.”

“How is that?”

“She told you that the house is more than just a house. It’s not like this is a cult. We all have our own beliefs.”

“She joked me about the ideology test.”

“That is what people say about us. But we are not really like that.”

“I wondered about all that.”

“We have political discussions all the time. It can get tense. But no one screams. There is no aggression. No one threatens anyone.”

“How serious is this?”

“We are all working. Or at least all paying the rent. And we look out for each other. We have all been through some rough times.”

“What do you do?”

“I don’t do one thing. I have worked as a bike messenger. I am good with my hands. I do odd jobs. Sometimes, I fix cars. I can do construction. I am a busy person.”

“How does that all work?”

“Everyone has a special skill. Or a passion. Something that keeps the person going through the tough time. We try to spend time together.”

“What about the ideology?”

“None of us feel particularly blessed by the system. We don’t complain. We work it out. But we see how something fundamental is fucked up. And we think about ways of changing it.”

“Do you go to demonstrations?”

“Some of us have organized at our place of work. But there is a lot of futility. We recognize how bad leaders can screw up any movement. What about you?”

“This pretty much how Ivelle described it all.”

“Do you have any questions?”

“Do you get along with the landlord? Do you collect money for a political fund?”

“The landlord is all chill. He lets us do what we want. And there is no political fund. We are all independent.”

“I work in real estate. I think that you would get on me all the time.”

“I work as a teacher. I am not sure if I would share any interests with people here.”

“I work in a bank.”

“I work in a restaurant.”

“I am a property manager.”

“People get accustomed to their lives. And their politics is something that they check off. They figure that blocking cars from getting on the freeway is the beginning of changing the society. But the cars find another on ramp. And the world transforms into something else. It’s all about how things happen at work. Or you just find that you have no options in your life. Or you share the same point of view with other people that you meet. And you feel empowered finally to do something. But the union foreman tells you to be patient. And everyone tells you to wait. All the waiting is on your time. Everyone seems to have it just the way that they want it.”

“What would you have us do?”

“Organize.”

“They’ll just replace you.”

“Organize everyone.”

“They will get robots.”

“Are you the smart ass taking our jobs. Because you are starting to look a lot like that guy. You really think that you are going to survive in the new world.”

“I have guards.”

“You don’t really do anything useful. You are hoarder with loads of guards. This is not going to last. There will be a palace coup. Someone will be handy with a cigar cutter.”

“You have to take your stand.”

“I do not think that I could live in the house. My political ideas are not so rigid.”

“What do you think?”

“I think what I want to think.”

“The house provides support for a particular kind of political allegiance. No one’s blood is tested. But we all see to share the same outlook.”

“And what is that outlook.”

“We have to take strength in our differences.”

“The philosophy of difference.”

“Sameness is the source of totalitarianism.”

“How do you ever create any unity?”

“I hate to say it. But it is in the food.”

“How can that be?”

“Too much sugar makes people anxious. No one really eats frozen pizza and other shit.”

“I think that I get it.”

“You’ve taken anthropology. These groups signal each other. It really is in the food.”

“Does that mean that you eat the food, or do you just look at it?”

“These are not chefs. But you do it all.”

“Does it stop at that?”

“You have half the world dealing with food insecurity. So it is not a matter of taking comfort in food. Where do the symbols lead?”

“Why do people need the codes?”

“They don’t have to spend all their time dealing with shit. They can close the book and realize how things are going to be just right.”

“How is this any different than the rest of society?”

“You don’t want to spend all your time arguing with an asshole. You can make plans for something better. Even if it never happens, you don’t have to spend all your time angry at someone.”

“I think that everyone comes to the house full of anger. They are all trying to put it away once and for all.”

“So everyone stays mad at the world.”

“It is not quite that. We recognize the source of our problems. And we are not ready to tolerate bull shit. We just can let other people try to intimidate us.”

“What does it meaning learning how to cut through the shit?”

“It is an important part of psychological development. I think that is why we have been able to cope.”

“Don’t you still cling to the same kind of paralysis?”

“There is only so much that we can do.”

“That is why you read theory.”

“What we believe, how we see our big picture, helps to make sense of all the small steps in our life.”

“Is theory only a distraction?”

“It can be a tonic. It helps us to deal with our pain. It gives us the authority which we lack in our lives. It is the beginning of a plan. We can recognize how things are starting to accelerate in a single direction.”

“I think that I want to curl up in a corner and eat a muffin.”

“Where is all this going?”

“I don’t want to think about deep shit. I just want to let go.”

“You probably need to do that.”

“That is what I am doing.”

“Steven, I am not sure that I could live among such ideological purity.”

“We all find our version of purity. Maybe you’re obsessed about dishes in the sink. Or you’re super serious about paying your bills on time. Or you never want to hear someone talk about an ex. Some people are all wound up about their parents or their boss. There are different styles of socializing.”

“Some people are a lot more casual about their beliefs.”

“No one wants to be insulted all the time. You learn how to draw a line.”

“But you don’t need a book to tell you what to think.”

“Sometimes, you do need that kind of clear break.”

“If there was one work which could explain your way of thinking, what would it be?”

“*Signs and Insignias* by LaReine.”

“*Icons of Insecurity* by Troupeau.”

“*The Last Stand of the Word* by Roncelle.”

“I think that this emphasis on culture and ideology obscures the social dynamics.”

“What is the basis for social dynamics?”

“Work. All the things that affect our ability to transform our world.”

“That is why people became interested in ideology. It helped to explain how someone’s psychological habits could dominate his political interactions. He could feel the need to compensate for his vulnerability.”

“That kind of understanding may only obscure one’s understanding.”

“What are you trying to say?”

“There still needs to be immediate influences on your interaction. You may be able to articulate your own beliefs. But that does not provide you a strong enough foundation to counteract those influences.”

“How do you break?”

“You realize how you can remake the world. But you can never do it on your own.”

“Where does that take you?”

“When you see it as a social movement, that gives you the ability to break with your psychological influences. You are not a helpless patient in the psychiatrist’s office.”

“How can a psychological disorder be symptomatic of a disorientation with the dominant political order? Therefore, treatment is based on a different kind of seeing.”

“Doesn’t the individual need to address her psychological disorder?”

“She needs to make an effort to subdue the immediate effects. If she does not address the underlying cause, she will continue her exposure. And that will only create the same effects again and again.”

“A person could get immersed in the world. She will only feel more helpless.”

“There has to be a point when you finally make the break. I think that the house facilitated that change. We are all looking for those factors, which can assist us to make a change. You have to follow the cycles along. You move from personal to social to personal. If you miss the social connection, you never attain any kind of liberation. You continue to repeat the same ordeal.”

Ivelle did seem to endorse the social explanation for her dilemma. But that social encounter still developed through the prism of a psychological analysis. And that seemed

entirely more important than any other kind of relationship with the world. Everyone depended on understanding this psychological manifestation. This was how the world emerged. The individual always mediated her social interaction through this template.”

“So politics is something other than these customs. It determines how much of yourself you give to these interactions. This could be family or community. Your knowledge of self is always dependent on an understanding of your circumstances. You learn about your unique abilities. You can recognize what motivates individuals.”

“Where does this differ from mass psychology?”

“These are different kinds of systems. The individual may have more influence over his own experience when he shares his understanding with others.”

Ivelle recognized mythic patterns in mass psychology. These ideas could affect how the individual conformed with the dominant regime. The totalitarian state would learn how to cultivate this form of identification. It could be even more sophisticated when the individual felt rewarded for this identification. She could identify completely with the mass. This kind of would overtake everyone. There would almost be safety in numbers.

This kind of belief could work on someone who felt isolated from others. This kind of loneliness made a person even more of a candidate for this program. Her complete victimization would make her identify completely. It could be the Wicked Witch or Cinderella. She would feel implicated personally in this story.

The story had a million variations. You would be in a field with others of our kind. This would be totally alien to your childhood. But it would all make sense. You would pledge a special allegiance.

Ivelle was learning more about these encounters. That is why she needed a theory to see her through. It made her feel particularly empowered.

Ivelle recognize a special connection among these psychological forces. However, they were almost disembodied from individual. That was why power seemed to burst as this affront. The individual was overtaken.

How could these individual energies dominate the self? There was a total disembodiment of the forces. They were entities which were moved by their own laws.

The house was dominated by the same question. In many forms. Ivelle was there to provide an answer. It enabled people to cast off their persecutor. The wolf could be sent back to the woods. The house set the wall high. That was why entry was so exclusive.

Ivelle had revealed all the variations to me. I was doing my best to understand the complete picture. She wanted me to recognize the philosophical influences. I wondered what kind of vision she brought. She seemed to exaggerate the heterogeneous elements. She was devoted to a leaderless society. But everyone seemed to be convinced by her views. She has attained a universality for which she sought. However, she dismissed any sense of loyalty. This was the natural development from such influence.

She acted as if these philosophies were outgrowths of activity in the garden. Each book might be found beneath a lettuce leaf or hanging from a tomato vine. They would have the appropriate content to accompany her outlook.

How would a philosopher begin her search? Was there an irreducible trait which was personality dependent? Did such an awareness promote an awareness of the world? Would it be

possible to find a way to escape this substratum? Would she be able to find a transformation principle to discover an alternative foundation for the self?

The house certainly was able to expand on these principles. Why did the overall movement seem to slow down? This was critical for this belief-system. The individual was not meant to allow his psychology to obscure someone else's. The force would dissipate, almost as if it was hitting a barrier that preserved immunity.

Every could feel comfort in the shared insight. There was a sense of relief in escaping past influences. Each person's psyche could achieve a point of resilience so it was no longer subject to detrimental feelings. The journey had been protracted.

I could be impressed by this give and take in the house. But everything seemed to live and die there. There was not enough collectivism to take things to another stage. The residents marveled at these myths. They did not register anywhere else. An observer would see everyone in the house as driven without sufficient follow through. Any grand project would never yield. The ideas would all dissipate.

The house had learned to neutralize the influence of time. Nothing mattered in its development. Everything existed in a now. Even in changing over time, a thing would only manifest itself in its immediacy. The residents learned how to give detailed reports of whatever existed in the moment. But no one would be able to tie together these impressions in a significant way. The overall description would seem to have integrity. There would appear to be no gaps. Nevertheless, the picture was shot through with incoherence. There would be no notice of the discontinuity. People would find ways to compensate for their blindness. Since they all communicated on the same level, there was no real incapacity. No one would want to return to a past riddled with misery.

The gaps enable the people to achieve complete freedom. The disturbing matter had been lesioned from their brains. They interacted with others, who had been similarly affected. In conducting a more in-depth analysis, the problems were apparent. There was never an ability to draw more sweeping generalizations. History had been completely erased in this community without any hope of restoring it. This philosophy was adept at accomplishing its goal. The creator would have knowledge of an intricate fabric. The participants would never be able to trace back to their previous enlightenment.

I learned that Rochelle has a loose association with this house. Her outlook was completely distinct. She thrived on reenacting the very events, which had been effaced from the residents of the house. For her theater was grounded in these kinds of impactful moments. The individual lost her political orientation if she failed to preserve this dynamic.

What would happen when the individual had repressed the very events, which defined her consciousness? The disintegration of self was a theme of her theater. She sought to create a confusion in the individual. This confusion would provide the impetus for the self to seek liberation through engaging this event. The recovery would shock her into a recognition of a necessary connection, and she would be motivated to accentuate political change.

The residents of the house would resist the construction of the event. Without any attachment to this experience, they would resent an attempt to impose an alternative opinion on their lives. This was confirmation for the residents of something that they cherished. Each person could remake herself. But Rochelle reminded everyone of the inescapable nature of these

events. They were indelibly part of the individual's awareness. The theater would represent this immense tension. The stage captured a fundamental social tension. Revolutionary theater enabled the viewer to recognize the source of this alienation. This provided the self with an immense inspiration. She could sense this force coming over her. She was led to action. The revolutionary theater was this immense force for personal transformation. From this change, the individual sought to make connection with others. She was inspired to engage in a movement.

The revolutionary theater prepared for collective interaction. I questioned if these actions were simply another entertainment. There was not enough planning to sustain anything more.

"Steven, are you resentful of what I am doing. I feel that I am creating a real dynamic among the viewers."

"What is the point if the theater distracts from an authentic political action?"

"Who is to say what is authentic?"

"Authenticity is meant to divide the individual from allegiance to an oppressive power structure."

"How does that relate to our immediate concerns?"

"What are your immediate concerns? How does the political provide a connection to work and family?"

I wanted the image of revolutionary theater to stand forth. I had worked so intensely to understand Ivelle's thinking. I wanted Rochelle to offer me a similar answer. I imagined bands of revolutionary actors making their way across the city. They threatened the complacency of the city.

"You make people afraid. They become inhibited to make any real changes to their lives. They turn inward. There are ways that you could be more active in engaging their insights. You are only adding to their fears."

Rochelle wanted this presentation to be explosive. I loved the idea, but it risked becoming this jumble. This could fascinate the viewer, but it would be almost impossible to follow such a manifestation. The individual would not be sufficiently present. The shock would overcome her.

I saw a great deal of similarity between Rochelle's presentation and Ivelle's philosophy. The individual would be unable to assert her integrity. She would be caught up in the intensity of the event. And there would be nothing that she carried from the experience.

Political theater avoided the vibrancy of the event. Instead everything was at maximum intensity. The political consciousness was marginalized. The self became reactive.

"Some people appear to be resilient to the most devastating experiences. While others might fade under these influences, these people find a way to hold it together. They have a unique strength. It would be a wonder to discover the source of this power."

"That was Resa's hope. She had found someone who would not submit to her mind control. And that upset her. She was committed to creating the worst trauma, so that she could finally break that wall of protection."

"Paul, did that method succeed?"

"She realized that she would have to take major steps to achieve that result. And that really messed her up."

“Her efforts threatened her more than her subject. That was great for Ennaya, but it played havoc with her psychological experiment.”

“And you are telling me that Rochelle is trying to incorporate the same principles in theater. How does that work? Why would the audience agree to be intimidated?”

“It is a slow effect.”

“Do they ever realize that they are being tortured?”

“Is it that extreme?”

“Is there an agreement between the detainee and the torturer?”

“The viewer does not want the entertainment to get too risky.”

“Psychological experiments now have protocols to protect subjects.”

“Rochelle believes that society has made people complacent. They accept their own subjugation. So she is trying to find ways to break that attachment.”

“Many people accept the anesthesia.”

“It is called social amnesia.”

“All people do not live in that state. They are clearly enlightened to the state of the world. But others are more susceptible to these market influences. They see this as their time. They wanted to be rewarded. And they need to be shocked out of their obliviousness.”

“She really likes this sadistic representation. What kind of person is she?”

“Someone who is looking for an in. Who wonders how people can live in the shit all the time.”

“Maybe she is mocking those who already realize that things are messed up.”

“Is she throwing gasoline on the fire?”

“That is her intent. But some are already getting burned. Then she is showing no sympathy.”

“Is sympathy the beginning of her art?”

“Sometimes you decide not to sympathize.”

“Why would you do that?”

“People get turned on by their bull shit. Someone has to say no!”

“Who appoints her to be a naysayer?”

“She realizes that she has to take a chance.”

“She is in the business of making people’s lives miserable.”

“Doesn’t that get old?”

“She is hoping from something important to happen,”

“We all do.”

“She is influencing the results.”

“It could backfire.”

“She is focused.”

Paul described it as surgery. The experienced doctor would know where to cut. She could find the weak points in a person’s arguments. She could slice away the extraneous meat. And she could cut to the bone. His analogy had a frightening potency. This expressed his own challenge. He was again confronting Resa. He had learned skills so that he could fight back. He would no longer feel helpless.

Resa had important insights that enabled her to take on any opponent. He would get them to play her game. Rochelle wanted to be just as formidable. What did she lack? She did not know how to use the other people's weaknesses. That was her intent. But she became lost in developing her program.

How could she attain more conviction? She did not want to surrender her ruthlessness. This was the only way that she could confront her own suffering. She felt directly implicated in the performance. It was as if she had finally discovered her enemy. She could not let off on her cruelty. She was looking for revenge.

Resa might show total control. But there would be a way to shake her up. Rochelle could peel back the layers. She would exaggerate a fear. She would play upon Resa's emotional uncertainty.

Maybe, Rochelle would be going too far. She would give in to their violent impulses. There was no restraint. This was completely opposite to her beliefs. That did not diminish her sense of satisfaction. She had found a sense of liberation. The theater was representing these petty squabbles. Did that leave her vulnerable? She did not want to seem so helpless. That only repeated her initial discomfort. She was enjoying her sense of alienation. This was going beyond her initial commitment. These were not basic emotions. This was a disorder. It led to the destruction of the self.

The theater was creating totally the opposite reaction from what she had hoped for. She was avoiding any serious impact.

"I think that there is a limit to your personal involvement. The writing should come from something immediate. However, the creator needs to step back. Otherwise, she lets her anger dominate the presentation. There is nothing effective about the work. You are not using your insights. You are getting immersed in petty emotions."

"Why doesn't she tell it like she sees it?"

Rochelle had critical shortcomings. Did she understand her limitations? She believed that the theater offered her special license. She could say whatever she wanted. She claimed that she was advancing a revolutionary theater. But there was no clear program. She was ready to attack. Was she even sure who she was attacking? She might be able to overcome an enemy. But she was releasing pesticide everywhere. There was too much damage. And she was not really able to rescue anyone. Even she was vulnerable. Resa had faced the same risk.

The interrogator was never neutral. She needed to sort through her bias. Otherwise, she would only hear herself talking back. Rochelle faced these same problems. The cruelty that she discovered reflected her own dominance. She needed to sort out what was affecting her. The theater could have been a wonderful opportunity. She was using it to hide from herself. She was creating a straw man, and he was the source of her rancor. This did not give her any actual knowledge.

Rochelle was putting too much of her own personality in the representation. Her portrayal was not that accurate. She was letting the dazzle of the theater distract her. How could she return to the concrete influences, which sustained her representation? She needed to work on her conviction. The drama was motivated by exaggerated emotions. Rochelle was immerse in this exaggeration. This was the basis of her distraction.

The distraction created an inauthenticity. The audience lost its focus. It became too absorbed in frivolity.

“You are defending classic theater. Why are you so attracted to this rigid presentation?”

“Rochelle is not offering an alternative.”

“Do you want her to be more honest? You are ignoring the conventions of the theater. There is a possibility of opening up the emotions to something more vivid.”

“You are letting your beliefs about the theater get in the way of appreciating her work.”

How did I want to see her efforts? She was not empowering the viewer to create a political action. Instead, the emotions were too prominent for the message.

“Steven, the emotions are the message. People put together their understanding by living the emotions. The theater is not a forum to lecture the public. The emotions leave the viewer free to create her own vision.”

The viewer’s terrible memories could provide the impetus for the presentation. But that did not accommodate for a full-fledged confrontation with reality.

“What is the role of nonsense in revolutionary theater?”

“Realistic theater is meant to provoke an emotional connection with an event in the viewer’s experience. Revolutionary believes that association only creates an attachment for the present. Even when the event is presented in a hellish manner, this entertainment involves the viewer in a dramatic representation that primarily. The individual become attached to this representation. Instead of understanding the basis of a revolutionary activism, the theater popularizes a lifestyle that keeps the individual locked in the present.”

“Nonsense presents the nostalgic attachment to the dominant culture as a destructive myth. Rituals and institutions, which serve to propagate this reality are mocked so the viewer’s affection does not subject her to the negative effects of this witnessing. Instead, she has the skills to break from this attachment. Absurdist theater developed from a distancing effect. The normal became estranged. The weird became a way to survive.”

“Revolutionary theater is based on the belief that the individual needs to escape an attachment to the dominant culture. This means refusing to accept a portrayal of reality that only continues the present attachment to capital. Capital is a view of money that always rewards the owners for the toil of labor. Those who are rewarded by the present system have no need for revolutionary theater. They wallow in nostalgia that carries on forms of social oppression throughout the world.”

“A revolutionary theater is not meant to please the exploiters, just as an exercise in the truth does not gratify the propagandist. Revolutionary theater is not based on hyperreality. The grotesque exaggeration does not provide the means to escape terrible circumstances. Instead, hyperreality only makes the individual more attached to the present.”

Revolutionary theater is meant to create an alienation from experience. Thus, the individual ceases to be connected to the world as it is given. Instead, the theatrical encounter enables the individual detach herself from involvement in exploitative circumstance.”

“Rochelle, you see revolutionary theater as creating the circumstances to oppose an abusive political situation. However, the theater seems to obscure the actual source of the exploitation. The theater never allows the actor to focus on the actions, which have dire consequences. Instead, the presentation places an emphasis on the emotions of the viewer. If the viewer decides that she does not want to validate the events, then she can console herself with her own beliefs. She can totally delegitimize the scientific foundation for what she observes.”

“Aren’t you only identifying with the present modes of social deprivation?”

“If you can’t question the social order in detail, then you are only supporting new forms of subjugation.”

“At what point does the constant ordeal become the basis for a revolutionary consciousness. It seems as if you are ignoring the ability of the present system to absorb the individual complaint. You cannot create a revolution based on a couple of bad days at work. You are an adult. You have to develop the ability to cope. If you are having difficulty coping, then you could use some counseling. You need to find some maturity. You are working a job. You do not own the company. The owner has worked hard for his return. You cannot begrudge him his efforts. Otherwise, someone is going to do the same to you.”

“Does a revolutionary theater assume that we already subsist in a political advanced state? A political revolution has been accepted as a necessity. The revolutionary theater provides the means to work out individual action?”

“Is your economic exclusion really an example of exploitative conditions? Or are you only describing your own failure to apply your skills?”

“A general description of our economic situation needs to be grounded in actual experiences. If my experience is not a valid example, then there is no general argument.”

“You’ve had a bad day, and you want to blame someone, so you scream revolution.”

“I have had a bad day. I am not going to blame myself. I want to analyze the conditions that made me feel this way.”

“You are looking for a systematic perspective only to support your point of view. That gives you an excuse. But your analysis is not based in any statistical awareness.”

“I am the statistic, and I feel it every day.”

“Isn’t revolutionary theater based on an idea, which is never manifest? You try to portray this ideal, but the actual worker is petty and gets sidetracked in petty arguments. You are trying to elevate this pettiness into some kind of social liberation. There is nothing liberating in your vision. It is based on a false promise.”

“I thought that I was being treated for an infection. But I was being given a mind control drug. It took a while before I noticed the effects. I had been quarantined for what I was told was an infection. I hadn’t felt any symptoms. Here, I was being confined for what was my own good. The team doctors claimed that I was contagious. I might as well have been put into solitary. I couldn’t leave my quarters. And no one was allowed to check on me. They would slide my food under the door.”

“At first, the effects seemed to be due to the infection. I thought that the medicine would cure my ills. They continued to keep me in isolation.”

“I started to feel foggy. I had difficulty concentrating. It was almost as if there was

something in my way, which was blocking my clarity. I felt that I only needed to clear the dirty window. But the cloudiness only continued.”

“These effects continued. I eventually realized that my food was being dosed. Even after I got wise, I had a feeling that the drugs were still being administered through the ventilation system. Or maybe the effects were now permanent.”

“I felt this intense itch cover me all over. I wanted to see if there was a rash. I didn’t notice anything. But the pain would come in waves. Even when I touched, it seemed all hollow. The throbbing would subside. Then I would again feel the itching.”

“I was developing this fear of hurting myself.”

“I had little understanding of the source of any of these feelings. I seemed to be drifting in turbulent waters. Occasionally, I had trouble breathing.”

“I was being pulled back and forth. I could not discover any sense of balance. I felt nauseous. I had the worst stomach pains. I could feel something hollowing me out from the inside. I wanted this pain to end. What was I supposed to say to stop all this?”

“I was living in my past and my long-lost past. How had I arrived here? I was forgetting the infection. There was only the pain.”

“I started to recognize a persecutor. My decay was not simply a result of these destructive effects. There seemed to be a purpose to all these changes. There was someone who was behind this. I guess that this should have been apparent to me all along. I thought about the identity of such a person. How had he been managing his program?”

“I really had no recollection about meeting this individual. But everything had the imprint of his personality. What was the purpose? I did not view myself as part of a threat. How did they see me? What was the intent of all these efforts?”

She told me that her name was Glenda. She was working with the revolutionary theater. Her mother had divorced her father when Glenda was young. The way that her mother told it, her father had difficult coping with the failure in his life. Her mother suffered her own bouts of depression. She seemed to alternate between prescription meds and alcohol. Glenda swore that she was not going to live the life of her parents. However, she was afraid that these influences were embedded deep in her personality. She fought against any of the feelings that cropped up inside of her.

She became an actor because she wanted to explore these emotions. She hated the fact that she was giving a public forum to her demons. But she felt that she had no choice. She needed to battle her past.

She became a part of a well-known theater company. And the acting coach was an innovator. Glenda felt honored to be a member of the company. He was not always fair with her. He realized that vulnerability was a foundation of the craft. And he worked to create a professional technique to advance his exploration of self.

Glenda felt wedded to the company. Her success was connected to her progress in the group. But the director was very short with her. He would taunt her. He would use her as an example of a weak performance. He first believed that this was standard. He would berate all the members of the group.

Glenda had always dealt with these serious doubts about herself. They were becoming exaggerated. It had nothing to do with the craft. But she had become so committed to the drama

coach, that she found it difficult to see her role any other way. This persecution was almost worse than anything that she could imagine. And he realized how he could get under a person's skin. He could be so injurious.

Glenda felt that she couldn't quit the group. Her whole identity was tied to her participation. Nevertheless, she felt that she was being excluded from the better roles. She tried to resist her marginalization.

She hated the fact that she relied so much on her coach. She didn't want to think that her development was based on someone else. She understood her skill well enough. She did not want to think that she was unable to control her own future. But she could not achieve the independence that she craved. Everything was based on her efforts.

Since she had felt so oppressed by her teacher, how could she ever escape this feeling? She realized that she would have to leave the group. She continued working as a server. And she questioned if she would ever be able to return to acting. Did she actually have the skills to take the stage?

After the experience, she spent great deal of time alone. She needed to figure out how she had become so weak. Her weakness had left her helpless. Her struggle with her parents had left her uncertain about her life. But she felt that she had fought against the negative influences. Now, she faced a more extreme burden. She did not have the wherewithal to counteract these effects.

"Does the revolutionary theater give you the opportunity to express your own feelings?"

"This is the first time that I have ever felt that my own experience is valuable for theater."

"Aren't you still becoming distracted from your emotions?"

Glenda felt that her emotions could help to propel the revolutionary theater. But she was not acting out her script. She was following the expectations of others. This seemed to contradict her own needs. She was only feeling that raw contact with her sense of impotence. She was willing to don a mask to make herself feel powerful. But her questions were evident.

"Does Rochelle give you the chance to be yourself?"

"What kind of question is that? This is what I want to do. I have found a place for myself."

"But you could be the source for a deeper political understanding. Rochelle diminishes the importance of personality. However, that seems to be the source of your liberation."

"When we have question, we truly believe that there is someone who can answer those questions. After a while, we develop wonder. We hope that we can resolve our confusion."

"Does all experience become part of the revolutionary theater? At this point, the theater seems to be a convincing determination of every part of our lives. We become captivated by someone more urgent."

"The actual event has more force than the representation. Otherwise, the representation is trying to turn the individual experience into the only measure of truth. This is solipsism."

"You are arguing that there are critical events in our lives. And they have provided a connection to something that is very much a risk."

"Steven, does the revolutionary theater assist you in understanding the role of the writer?"

"The writer exists in a perilous space between supernatural revelation and obsessional

fantasy. These rare manifestations remind him that he is close to a special understanding. His writing seems to offer him a special glimpse. But he pushes that feeling until he feels that there is a deeper support for his vision.”

“The revolutionary theater offers a special promise. It engages the writer in this colloquy. She has the opportunity to overthrow all the bosses, who have intimidated her over the years. The only thing that matters takes place on the stage. The witness is supreme in determining the truth. And the theater challenges the witness.”

“But the witness wants satisfaction. She finds extraordinary ways to gratify her desires.”

“This sounds addictive. You are offering nothing substantial.

“Traditional theater repeats the same events over and over again. There is no actual liberation of the self. The self is victimized by her own emotions. The revolutionary theater takes a step to break the conditioning. The individual can finally assert her identity in a truly free way.”

“This sounds like another obsessional fantasy. The numbness of the narrative invites a more extreme representation. That is hyperrealism. There is no other alternative. And this only becomes a distortion of experience.”

“My mother answered this ad about an antique oak chest of drawers. She left his name and address. We warned her about the dangers. She met Ron, and she came back with the furniture in her truck. She goaded us about our worry. After she found a place for the chest of drawers, she told us that Bore had been the perfect gentleman. And he invited her back to the house. And she made us believe that it was no big deal. She was spending a lot of time with the man. But he never showed up at the house. So it all seemed very strange. I truly wondered what was happening.”

“One day, when I woke up, I noticed that my mother was nowhere in the house. Her bed had not been slept with. I thought that this was all very strange. When I didn’t see her all that day, I decided to go over to Bore’s address. I was polite, and I rang the buzzer. Then I knocked on the door.”

“Things got really strange when a woman came to the door. I blurted out, ‘Are you his Bore’s wife?’”

“The handyman?”

“Bore is the handyman. So he lives here.”

“We haven’t seen him in months.”

“My mother bought a chest of drawers from this location.”

“The chest of drawers. We told Bore that he could have it. We left it on the porch for him to pick up. We came back one day, and the chest wasn’t there. Bore never told us a thing. He just came by and picked it up.”

“My mother picked it up. He sold it to her. Then he met her back her another time. They started spending time together.”

“I never saw either of them here.”

“That is strange. My mother never told me about another house.”

“How long has she been gone?”

“She didn’t return from last night.”

“I wouldn’t worry about it. She is probably having fun.”

“I wouldn’t worry about it. This sounds like totally crazy shit. I am worrying about it. I know my mother.”

“I can give you Bore’s address. That is his forwarding address.”

“I went to find Bore. I wanted to discover what had happened to my mother. The forwarding address turned out to be the house of his ex. The woman started to go off on him. He was a good for nothing. He had stolen money from her. He had borrowed her truck and not brought it back. It was a litany of offenses. She wished me luck after I told her my story. But she had no idea what I could do to find him. She gave me a list of jobs where he had worked in the past. She also knew some of his exes.”

“The woman knew nothing about violent past. She didn’t know if she could reassure me about my mother’s safety. Bore had a turbulent childhood. He would get to drinking, and he could be dangerous. He had never been arrested. But he would get into bar fights. The ex told me everything that she knew. She had this love-hate relationship with him. They would have these knock-down-drag-out fights. Despite her anger, she wasn’t going to say something completely terrible at him. Even with all that venom, she seemed to be covering for his worst excesses. He might have spent time in jail. And he could have messed up some people really bad.”

“I was hardly calmed by the encounter. I planned to follow up every lead. As I did, I kept hoping that I might hear from Mom. I planned to call the police. I wasn’t afraid for myself. I had nothing to worry about for my own safety. But I was in real fear for my mother. It wasn’t as if it was evident what had happened. I could only suspect the worse.”

“None of the leads turned up a thing. I was starting to worry. It was hardly clear what I should do next. I talked to the police. The investigator seemed a little worried. He painted a different picture of Bore. Sure, he had run-in with the law. He had been abusive with woman. It was surprising that his ex had said nothing. And the handyman had stolen from his clients.

“Why wasn’t he in jail?”

“I am asking that question. There were some warrants out on him. I am baffled why he was never picked up.”

“The investigator seemed to suggest that there was a darker side to this man. His temper seemed to have no limits. What crimes did he conceal because of his rage?”

“The ex-convinced me how charming he was. I was never really fooled by any of this. But I could see how he could have sweet-talked my mother. This was scary in itself. There was no end to the possibilities. He could have planned this kind of thing. Or some kind of incident might have set him off.”

“I went home and cried and cried and cried. I felt hopeless. But that didn’t stop me. I decided to go over the leads. I returned to the place where my mother had bought the chest of drawers”

“When I again saw his ex, she did not seem as cooperative. I decided that something must have changed. I started to suspect that he had come back. And she was hiding him. That made me feel more afraid. That suggested that he might have done something to my mother.”

Ashe was quite effective in telling the story. I was not sure if this had actually happened to her mother. I had an image of her staking out the ex. She thought that any action might be the clue that she was looking for.

She didn't see anything that unusual. One day, the ex seemed a little secretive about leaving the house. Ashe decided to follow her. She went to this abandoned house. Ashe came out to meet her. This all seemed weird. He gave her a kiss. The greeting was not that passionate. He was a little panicked. I again thought that Bore had harmed my mother. Whatever it was, the ex was now conspiring with Bore.

"There was no way that they could have seen me, but they stayed in the house for a long time. It started to get dark. I didn't want to spend my night in the car. I called the investigator. He promised to send a uniformed officer to the house. The officer was going to ask about my mother. But the investigator made me promise to return to my place. I was a little anxious to leave. I felt that the officer would only spook the two of them. Bore would have to go somewhere else. I decided to hold in place."

"I saw the officer knock on the door. Bore came out. He became loud. He was motioning with his hands. I couldn't hear exactly what they were saying. But I could tell that the officer asked to look around. Bore calmed down. And the officer left."

"After the cruiser drove away, the ex got in her car. I decided to stay at the house. It all seemed too suspicious. I was sure that my mother was in there. The ex may have been administering the worst punishment. Bore would look on. This might have been something that they had been doing for years."

"I realized the dangers. But the officer had not accomplished anything. I needed to get in the house. I knew the risks. That was my only choice. I knew that I would have to wait until Bore left. Indeed, I knew that I would have to sleep in the car."

"I was in the middle of crashing out when I heard a knock on the window. There was Bore standing there. He was looking at me with a devilish grin."

"Can I help you?"

"I didn't need any help. I tried to start the car. It kept turning over, but it would not crank. He was trying to open the door. But I had locked it. I saw him reach for a boulder. Then I woke up. It was still dark, and I was in my car. I felt freaked out. I jumped."

"I again fell asleep. I never saw Bore leave. But the truck was gone. From the way his ex talked, I had no idea where the truck came from. I felt empowered enough to make my move. There didn't seem to be anyone watching me. I tried the back-porch door. Also, the downstairs door. Both were locked."

"I tried all the basement windows. They all had been nailed shut. One was a little iffy. I saw a shovel that I used to pry it open. I didn't need to break a window."

"There was really know light. I didn't hear a thing. I had my phone with me. There I was with the phone light trying to make my way from room to room. In the corner of one of the rooms, I found my mother lying there. She was hardly moving. For a moment, I thought that she might have been murdered. I was able to shake her awake. I tried to see how bad her condition was. She gave me a big hug. And we both started to cry. At that point, I could hear a door open upstairs. The footsteps seemed to be the ex. We didn't have a chance to hide. There she was with a giant flashlight standing before us."

"I asked, 'Were you part of this from the beginning.'"

"No. Not at all. I'm just the one who had to clean up after things like this."

"Clean up."

“I can’t really allow either of you to leave her.”

“I wanted to have a comeback. I had no idea what I could say under the circumstances. This woman was even more dangerous than Bore. I had not planned for this. I really hadn’t expected my mother to be here.”

“The police know about all of this.”

“The police always know. They can’t prove anything. I am not going to leave any bodies here.”

“She had said bodies. I didn’t see that she was armed. But she was shining the light in my eyes. I was not sure how I was going handle any of this. If I could only reach the shovel, it might prove useful. She would still have to take on both of us. I could dislodge the flashlight. Then we would all be at the mercy of the darkness.”

Ashe had focused on a moment of fear. This created an interesting dynamic for the story. She was telling us her tale. So we expected her to escape somehow. But the dream could not resolve, and we might realize our own danger.

I wondered if Ashe might have been the source of the fright. She might have been friends with Bore. And she had a spat with her mom. Whatever it was, I wasn’t sure what to believe. Why would the ex have been so sloppy to let Ashe get the jump on her? Why was she interested in such a story?

“In today’s exercise, I am going to ask each of you to tell a scary story.”

“Why is fear a part of revolutionary theater? The way that you present it, this horror-packed experience is supposed to distract us from actual examples of suffering. The run-down house might not be a source of horror. It is the only refuge for the residents. The house could have rats. The landlord is hesitant to take action. The grandmother is sick and on assistance. One of her daughters has a degenerative nerve disease. The son does a minimum wage job to cover the remainder of the expenses. They deal with issues of malnutrition.”

“The revolutionary theater has to entertain.”

“It needs to find a way to entertain by being honest. The truth is edifying. Everything else is a delusion. If you are fed on lies, then you will never be able to deal with the shit in your life.”

“My mother disappeared about the time that I was twenty-four. She had some issues. This would cause her to go off for long periods. She would turn up in different cities. And we would have to send someone to get her. It wasn’t as if she was suffering from dementia. She would simply lose her orientation. She wouldn’t be able to stay in one place for very long. She told me that she couldn’t stand all that pressure. She needed to get free, and nothing that she did gave her a feeling of freedom.”

“I was a little worried when she didn’t turn up. I was convinced that she had finally found that dream place that she was looking for. The story was getting even stranger. I wondered if I was supposed to chase after her. This had been coming on for a long time. She had finally found that place that she had always been looking for.”

“After that happened, I felt that there was place where I could ever feel comfortable. I felt that I was a responsible person. I was a hard-worker. I kept a job. But I could feel that

calling. That is what attracted me to the revolutionary theater. I felt that it could open me up to some kind of wonderful possibility for my life.”

“Revolutionary theater means trying to find a story that can best express our emotions. We have been cut off from our childhood home. And the story-telling give us the ability to get back to our true home.”

“The revolutionary theater makes up a connection that never exists. There is no primal home except for the exploiter. That is how torture works. It makes a promise that can never be satisfied. You get further and further away from this supposed source. And the suffering becomes more extreme.”

“Can the revolutionary theater get you back to your childhood home? Is the denial of adulthood the source of your alienation? And this sense of estrangement increases your psychological suffering.”

The revolutionary theater needs to ensure that it does not exaggerate its portrayal. Then the viewer will only find more excitement in the representation itself. She will fashion herself after the entertainment. She will get into having a revolutionary pose. But it will have no actual connection to any kind of social reality. It will only gratify the audience.”

“The artist can become distracted from any social purpose for her creation. She is only concerned with enhancing her brand. She may get off on her own misery as if this is a lifetime imprint of authenticity. Instead, she will end up collaborating. Life becomes a celebrity party. And she wants to adopt the perfect pose to find a place for herself.”

“Rochelle, what is the purpose of the revolutionary theater?”

“The artist creates from nothingness. She is not attached to the spoils of wealth.”

“Emotion should not be the dominant motive of theater. Theater needs to lead you to a class consciousness. The drama should not be a distraction from the actual conditions of work.”

“No one wants to be reminded of a terrible time at work.”

“Class consciousness does not lull you with the rewards. Those in power will try to buy you off. They will try to obscure the effects of the boss’s whip.”

“I have a job that I like.”

“And you have zero consciousness. You do not see how the depredations get you over time. You are not looking at the odds. You are an odds-on favorite to get worn down over the years. And you will not have much to show.”

“I have savings. I have loads of things to make all this happen. I have property.”

“And how well do you keep it up.”

“I know how to avoid the law.”

“And that is the revolutionary theater.”

“He’s got a vicious right hook.”

“He has everything going his way.”

“Do you have a place for me?”

“What is this thing that you call class consciousness?”

“It is an awareness that the economic system cannot operate without exploitation.”

“Getting fucked over is part of life.”

“Getting fucked over leads to a bigger fuck. But you don’t notice. You enjoy the spoils. Are you keeping track?”

“I have the back door.”

“When do you rest? What is your art? What is the real rate? And if you are the boss, your people are going to see beneath you bull shit.”

“Nothing that good is going to get wasted.”

“I am sure that I have seen this before. I have read it.”

“What are you bringing?”

“Something so far beyond me.”

“I think that I see it better than most.”

“Don’t even think that you can get any of that.”

“I have an audience.”

“The revolutionary theater needs to question the existence of audience. You have an audience only as long as you treat people. You go along with the pump and dump. That is what you are made of.”

“I have an audience!”

“They are laughing at you. They are mocking you.”:

“This is the theater of nonsense.”

“Is that a prelude for the revolutionary theater?”

“Why do you want a revolutionary theater?”

“I am playing both ends against the middle.”

“You are the non-productive asshole.”

“What are you making?”

“I am mixing it all up in my bathtub.”

“That was never revolutionary. It was collaboration. The mob is a collaboration.”

“I need to eat.”

“Cut the shitty propaganda that goes along with it!”

“This is all theater. I do not really go along!”

“Why is consciousness actually a part of theater? You have fragments of emotions. But they never attain the level of consciousness. The revolutionary theater needs to be disruptive so that you do not praise the dominant reality.”

“We all want a giant tub of ice cream. The frozen pizza is good.”

“This is no kind of diet to deal with the future.”

“We are all feeling the same shit?”

“Consciousness is necessary if you are going to do more than go along with it.”

“You are watching it all from the outside.”

“You have to find an outside so that you are not bought off.”

“No one wants to surrender. Revolutionary consciousness seems to say that the individual can never get the will to resist.”

“You resist. That is the foundation of a revolutionary consciousness. But you realize that it is a systematic occurrence. The system is making it happen this way.”

“You are the system.”

“Do you know?”

“You are wrong?”

“My being right or wrong does not determine the system. You figure it out. If you can really get out of it, then take your reward!”

“Do you have this planned?”

“No one can plan it.”

“The head planers try.”

“It is a system that gives a temporary boost before it all quakes apart.”

“It seems pretty resilient.”

“It is short-changing everyone.”

“Not those at the top.”

“They spend all their time trying to buy serenity. It never lasts!”

“What lasts?”

“The revolutionary theater does not try to convince anyone who likes it just as it is.”

“The revolutionary theater is meant for people who realize that something shitty is going on. It helps to make sense of the shit.”

“Why not tell us how to get rich?”

“You work eighty hours a week. You have no time for your family. And you watch things go wrong around you.”

“I like the good side.”

“Let me see the good side.”

“I felt exploited at home. I couldn’t deal with it anymore. My husband didn’t give me what I needed. And he prevented me from getting close to the children. I felt that I had no choice. I charged a plane ticket. I went to the Northwest. I felt disassociated from my life. It wasn’t psychological. I saw a reality that I hated.”

“Couldn’t you have worked to change things?”

“You don’t know my husband.”

“Sometimes you don’t have any choice. The shit builds up. And you are only getting more fucked up.”

“Rochelle, you can call it the revolutionary theater, but it needs to grip the audience.”

“You are exaggerating the role of the audience.”

“The theater will find its audience if it is true to the world.”

“Theater is a construction. It is only true to the beliefs of the viewer.”

“What do you see?”

“I want to see it as I like it.”

“There is enough theater for that.”

“Do you want me to give it to you the way that you don’t like it.”

“He was tired of his family being humiliated. Even in a job, he wasn’t going to make that much money. He needed to figure who was his enemy. He needed to fight against the enemy. The water was seeping in through a hole in the roof. The family couldn’t afford to move. He had been working at the same job for years. He was a mechanic. He was good at his job. Everyone depended on him to keep their vehicles running. But he had lost interest in the game. And he could feel them coming down on him. The only solution was to fight back.”

“Where did this come from?”

“The organization said that they could help even thing out.”

“What kept the organization going? Some petty bank robberies. That only empowered the state.”

“There are enough reasons to protests. Reasons to fight back.”

“Does the revolutionary theater depict the sabotage of key sites?”

“If the state can counteract these acts of destruction, what kind of revolution is it?”

“You cannot let your frustration get in the way of political action.”

“Why can’t your frustration fuel the movement?”

“This is a movement without clear class consciousness.”

“People talk class consciousness, but they do not understand how to empower the working class.”

“You create a system to empower them.”

“Systems do not exist in vacuums.”

“The revolutionary theater needs to emerge in the recognition of class consciousness.”

“How does a revolutionary class attain consciousness?”

“The understanding of exploitation needs to precede the desire to end that exploitation. The theater does not give reality a reason in itself. The reason needs to emerge from the understanding of class.”

“Is this a psychological awareness?”

“Psychology needs to create an accurate portrait of the world.”

“What does that mean?”

“A delusional awareness does not provide the basis for a revolutionary consciousness. The individual needs to break down the source of the delusion. The revolutionary consciousness cannot proceed from a rage about the system.”

“Don’t the negative effects of the system preclude the development of a revolutionary awareness?”

“Revolution proceeds from a knowledge about the source of exploitation. The process leads the individual to an awareness. This is the contradiction for the system. The individual cannot achieve independence until she recognizes the fundamental relationship of work. Work creates exploitation, but the overall experience enlightens the worker about her power.”

“Why is revolutionary theater needed?”

“It helps the individual to see the authenticity of her experience. Otherwise, her class consciousness gets distracted by the spoils of the system. The system tries to disengage the individual from her fundamental awareness. The system can promise a greater reward. But the system does not permit that situation. It cannot. The owners will eventually be forced to lower wages. Or they will raise their return so that the overall yield of work occupies a smaller percentage. The worker believes that she is still getting the reward. But the real goods flow to the owners. Any productive yield goes to them. The percentage keeps changing. Revolutionary consciousness means that the individual understands the equation.”

“How can theater help to explain something that is fundamentally a way of seeing?”

“By showing how individual attain this understanding through actual experiences. By working in a coal mine. By bagging groceries at a supermarket.”

“These jobs get replaced by automation.”

“There have always been forms of automation. People learn the machines, which operate the machines. There are crafts on crafts.”

“What does the theater say?”

“More illegal dumping!”

“What parts do I get?”

“The theater sells shares on your high.”

“The owner sells shares in your high!”

“It is a boss high.”

“What is this all about?”

“Everyone is trying to take his share.”

“I am working for myself.”

“Which self is it this week?”

How well did Ivelle understand the subtleties of the revolutionary theater?

“There will be new processes. Then there will be processes based on processes. That is how it works.”

“The processes will become too complex.”

“There will be micro-processes. And people will make money off of all of your emotions.”

“There will still be a site for change.”

“We are living in a present moment of exploitation. You can talk about all your forms of automation and transformation. But the now is exploitation. And your new forms of labor will find some way to milk that exploitation to eternity. You will only automate what is hard to exploit. Everyone has been dreaming of pie in the sky. But you will be paying for the pie.”

“People will be paid to tickle the rich. You know where it is all going!”

“You are trying to move from total control to control now and then. You are not accurate historically.”

“It is happening now!”

“I am playing a video game.”

“I am reading.”

“Steven, you are still looking to win at this hand.”

“I have bet the farm on this one.”

“What is the role of the public intellectual?”

“The individual may strive to be the conscience of the society. What if the social contract has been so damaged that the public intellectual has no place in social discourse?”

“Those in power have done their best to neutralize any checks on their actions. They want everyone to be beholden to their whims. We have left the realm of democracy. Everyone wants to be king.”

“Ashe, are you still looking for you mother?”

“Supposedly she met a man, and I have not seen heads or tails of her since then.”

“Are you sure that jealousy is not interfering with your ability to tell the truth about her?”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“The man is only a substitute for the hatred that you show toward her. And you have written her out of your life. You don’t see her anymore. You blame her for things that happened on your watch. So you tell this story how she has disappeared. She is probably waiting at the house.”

“Why are you trying to psychoanalyze me?”

“Do you think about what you are saying?”

“I think about my mom, and I am afraid for her safety. Why are you questioning me?”

“Do you really think that your mother was kidnaped? Why don’t you call her now?”

“She isn’t going to answer. I have no idea where she is.”

“Did you have something to do with her disappearance?”

“You are asking a cop question.”

“You are acting like a criminal.”

“The public intellectual can assist us in ameliorating the deterioration of social institutions.”

“Are we going to depend on someone who has no connection to any valid organization?”

“Is that an apology for expertise?”

“Who is the public intellectual?”

“Someone with a conscience.”

“How does that work?”

“Sometimes it just takes someone with the right words. They feel that the situation is intolerable.”

“I think that I remember this.”

“You need an audience.”

“Anyone with an audience.”

“Clapping in the dark.”

“Nothing gets done.”

“What are you looking at?”

“What did Ashe lack?”

“Anyone can play.”

“An honest relationship with her mother.”

“I get along pretty well with my mother.”

“So why did she go away. Was she getting sick of you?”

“We all get sick of ourselves. Biology has cell death built in.”

“That is not what that means.”

“You need to keep putting gas in the car.”

“What happened to your mother, Ashe?”

“Steven, what gives you the right to ask me questions like that?”

“What are you asking?”

“The effectiveness of the public intellectual is not only a factor of her eloquence. She may have an audience, but they have been rendered helpless by the general deterioration of social institutions.”

“No one really cares anymore. It is all about your effort.”

“Have you thought about doing podcast about your mom. Someone could hear it, and she might have a clue that would lead to her whereabouts.”

“I am afraid that we are never going to find her again.”

“You can say that, but there may be no clues.”

“When you start looking for clues, you need to look around the house. You need to ask questions of her relatives.”

“We saw the house as this place where people could bring their fears and set them to rest. We tried not to ask too many questions. You know how that can be. Tolerance was a big deal. That was how we wanted to see each other. And you know how little things can let someone off. So we tried not let those little thing get in our way. The house was all about big things and a vision for our lives. If we actually got distracted from our goal, I wonder what was the real reason. All of us had jobs. We had demands. And it was hard to advance this collective thing.”

“We could come into this house and do the walls and the floors. It would be a completely different place.”

“I think that you are confusing location with intention.”

“We tried to turn the location into a shared intention.”

“You were believing things that were not true. And you made commitments that you could not keep.”

“There is something pure that we were looking for. We thought that our lives would provide that kind of reference point. We could learn from our own struggles.”

“What got you distracted?”

“Our ideology. We had these ideals. We wanted people to take our program seriously.”

“Does it make a difference whether you lived your ideals? Or was that automatic.”

“We tried to make it easy. But sometimes, there would be a falling out. We had to check ourselves. Someone would do something that contradicted our lifestyle. We thought it wouldn’t take much effort to bring everyone back to the fold.”

“But it didn’t always work like that.”

“Not at all! Even if we settled a problem, there would still be some resentment beneath the surface.”

“So it was not all that ideal.”

“We never wanted to give up. We developed these lofty ideas to go along with our living arrangements. There were just these impediments that kept getting in our way. We should have been able to talk through these problems. It was not clear what we were supposed to say. We felt that we were threatening that precious balance that kept everything together.”

“The revolutionary theater does not accord with the belief in the reality that characterizes other theatrical companies. The veneer of reality was created to distract people from the actual circumstances of their lives. They would get distracted by social climbing. They would try to affect the right kind of emotions for the situation. But everything was entirely contrived. And people would never admit to the basic urges, which ruled their lives.”

“Could the revolutionary theater sustain a living situation? Do all of you need to live in the same place?”

“The revolutionary theater is different than the house. It is not based on ideals. He individual is motivated by a personal commitment. That notion could result in a unique kind of personal behavior. That is more of a goal. People may work to create unique living situation. But there may be very different needs. The house develops from similar plans for career and self-development. The theater brings together people who are different stages in their development.”

“Over time, the theater could bring individuals together. However, the focus is not on individual conversion. The theater tries to move masses of people in a different way. This can create lifestyle changes, but it is not the same thing.”

“Isn’t the revolutionary theater a way of life?”

“That view comes from another era. During that period, theater manifested itself as something more radical. The individual faced challenges to her personality. She fasted. Or she didn’t sleep for day. She was trying to transform consciousness. She wants to loosen the tethers that held her to conventional reality. She realized that she was part of something more earth-shattering. She was not afraid of the turmoil.”

“Such turmoil could threaten a living space.”

“And it sometimes did.”

“You don’t practice those same kinds of techniques.”

“Some of actors are willing to try anything. This identification with the role is part of our psychological identity. That identity prevents us from understanding critical elements of the representation process.”

“Why can’t theater adapt to the basic truths of a person’s life?”

“We might try. But people can become caught up in delusion.”

“The individual continues to believe in a false promise about her life. She is always exceeding herself. She is one step ahead of her present. She never catches up. And she weaves these illusions. The server thinks that she will be discovered as an actress. The mechanic will get rewarded for his engine panic. There are so many of these promises that string you along for a lifetime. So you never live the immediacy of your actual experience. It is always a down payment on glorious paradise that never arrives. You are excluded from the promised land by your own greed.”

“Is the revolutionary theater moralistic?”

“It realizes the falseness of conventional morality.”

“What is non-conventional morality?”

“Accepting real risks. Maybe realizing that the morality is only a way to keep people subservient.”

“Risks are exaggerated. Knowledge should not just mess you up.”

“It’s not knowledge if it is something that you already have. True knowledge does not reinforce your complacency.”

“You are looking for something, and you find it.”

“You only find it if you view your attractions in a different way. You have to create your own biology. You have to change what you are given.”

“That is heroic!”

“It could be. Or heroism could hide the actual benefits of the search.”

“So you stopped looking for you mother.”

“I was never looking for my mother. That was a theatrical exercise.”

“She didn’t meet this strange guy through the classifieds.”

“You heard about that.”

“It happened to her.”

“It happened to me!”

“What?”

“I went to pick up this chest of drawers. And I didn’t have a truck to take it back. And I was riding with this guy. And he drove back my location. He had his own plans. He was going to hurt me. He wasn’t going to let me out of the truck.”

“Why did you tell the story about the truck?”

“It showed a basic fear about our lives.”

“What did that have to do with the revolutionary theater? You are creating horror about an actual situation. This an exaggeration.”

“I have been threatened before.”

“You need to provide context.”

“Some guys are crazy.”

“Revolutionary theater does not use psychology for entertainment. It tries to get at causes.”

“Revolutionary theater cannot offer causality. That is an illusion of corporate entertainment. It tries to manipulate people by providing an explanation. People feel that their lives should fit that patterns. That is how they can explain a crisis or resolve a problem.”

“Would revolutionary theater be a dangerous journey, like getting in a truck with a stranger?”

“Hollywood likes the stranger theory of history. It really doesn’t offer a serious explanation. It lulls people into somnambulance.”

“What are you trying to show me?”

“Tell me about the truck.”

“He made me promises. He was doing his best to distract me.”

“How did you get away.”

“I needed to jump out while the truck was moving.”

“I thought that he locked you in.”

“He had to get out to check on something. At that moment, he unlocked the door. I had no idea until he started driving. I just test it out by accident. Then I had my chance. I was subtle. He had no idea that I was about to make my move.”

“Does anyone believe your story?”

“I thought that it was pretty convincing.”

“Conventional theater will give this impression that it can create any sort of reality. It can’t. When it comes time to grasp the actual motivation, the fakery will be evident.”

“You are convinced about the motivational awareness of the revolutionary theater. How good is it a representing the actual crises of human development. It has a tendency to mock the serious experiences of people.”

“You are too attached to the representation. The theatrical representation presents a different object than psychology. Sometimes, the nostalgia or the fear is over-saturated to get a reaction from the audience.”

“There is a moment when you face the persecutor. The story was an effort to portray that background.”

“The actual persecutor would have stronger foundation for his actions. He would not be a mysterious character in a truck.”

“Who do you feel is persecuting you?”

“There is someone pulling all the levers. He always seems to draw all aces. And he thinks that it is based on his talents. But he has a talent for hurting people.”

“Are you really saying that much? Do you think that there is one person in a room who is putting all the pieces in place?”

“I guess that we see what we want to see.”

“What do you want to see?”

“Why am I a factor?”

“You don’t look at the violence. You observe the social causes. You learn to go deeper.”

“What is deeper about a crazed psycho?”

“A childhood of pain and neglect.”

“Are you making excuses?”

“If you really have the desire to end that behavior, you need to have a more provocative understanding.”

“I was in the truck.”

“That is a story that you made up.”

“Where were you?”

“I was in acting class. I needed to create a story to capture my fear.”

“Ashe, what is the actual basis of your fear?”

“Fear is not part of the revolutionary theater. We are not trying to create the basis of revenge. If there are extreme behaviors, we need to find what is the source of justice. That does not resolve the economic issues. The theater needs to discover the basis for that inequity. That is the only basis to change that relationship.”

“We cannot be idealistic in our presentation.”

“Isn’t that the inevitable result of dramatic performance?”

“You are not acknowledging the facts of your everyday experience.”

“What are you talking about?”

“This is not only about suffering. The suffering provides the terms of liberation. That is the basis for the revolutionary theater.”

“I am seeking enlightenment.”

“This is not simply a change in consciousness. There is an effort to change the situation. That is the basis for some kind of actual transformation.”

“I want to forget all of this. It is only going to drag me down. It is going to turn me into something that I do not want to be.”

“I get impressed by people who are trying to destroy me.”

“Hence, your persecutor.”

"This is a good story for inspiration."

"This is how I live."

"You are acting weird on me."

"That is the basis of the theater. None of this is straightforward. This is not glimpse.

The image represents our encounter with the world."

"If you had to do it over, would you still get into the truck."

"We cannot pull back that moment."

"In the theater, you can represent it in a different way. You can show the choices that you never saw before."

"How can you ever get free?"

"Does revolutionary theater precede the awareness of these events?"

"How is that?"

"The theater has to be accurate in describing the circumstances and personal motivation."

"You portray a mother who is going to get her power cut off. Or a teacher who is working for better pay. These are people who are ready to challenge the dominant culture."

"I am going to have a good life."

"You sell out, you buy in, you remake yourself so that you are one among many."

"Do you want to know what the revolutionary theater really says?"

"You tell me. What do you want to know?"

"I want to know what is going to happen at the eleventh hour."

"What is the need of ideology?"

"It assists in describing the systematic basis for oppression."

"The system gets you away from the system. You do not see the immediate effects. What is happening in your daily struggle?"

"Are you calling something a struggle?"

"What does this do to you? What does this do for you?"

"What do you want me to do for you?"

"Give me a script."

"This is not glamor. You are the script."

"How do I pay my phone bill?"

"What is happening to the utility employees?"

"They hire you to put up a million buildings. Then they send you on your way."

"What are you talking about?"

"These are things that I want to forget."

"They are things that I will forget."

"Conventional theater lulls you with forgetfulness."

"This is something that you need to forget."

"You forget a traumatic experience."

"That is not the definition of trauma."

"You bury it."

"It comes back every time that you try to avoid it."

"Is that some government conspiracy shit?"

"I need to explain this for people who are not serious."

“What made the tragedy happen?”

“Forgetfulness.”

“The nostalgic attachment to present reality.”

“I am about to cross over.”

“That is the promise of the revolutionary theater.”

“You might as well be talking about a revolutionary dating service. None of these emotions are going to change how you see anything.”

“I have not been drugged.”

“How do you know?”

“Do you get off on your own neglect?”

“What are you asking me?”

“That is how someone gets enraged by their experience. That is the story of the guy in the truck.”

“I only made that up.”

“You are trying to explain your trauma.”

“Revolutionary theater is not psychology.”

Ivelle explained that psychology did not necessarily provide the terms for a radical transformation of society. Mind control could pick out those features of experience, which held the individual to the present moment. Nostalgia brought everything to the surface. And the individual remained with that fascination.

“Mind control functions by taking these moments of eternal present and turning them against the individual. There is no longer any historical relief. You are dissolving time for a cyclical presentation. Everything is in an ecstatic now.”

“This perspective appears to accord with Ivelle’s way of seeing. She dissolves the independence of the self. Everything is a manifestation of the immediate. This is the ecstatic character of these various manifestations. There are no events. Everything is explosive in nature. And it seems to turn in on itself.”

“This is not enlightenment. This is the immersion in experience. It is the volatility of the world.”

Ivelle’s vision was overwhelmed by these electric forces, which seemed to pull her along. There was no clarity of cause. She was convinced that this would move along a social movement. The swamp bubbled up with this unpredictability. She embraced the motivation. She felt that she could avoid the hierarchical traps of thought. Consciousness would only repeat past oppression. The freedom of the individual developed from a refusal to go along with these delusions.

“The individual cannot change the situation by the will. She can use the will to work with others who recognize the same basis for oppression.”

“Your psychologies create your oppression.”

“There are real acts of social repression.”

“Are we going to get into a description of the unconscious?”

“We are going to look at the roots of social dominance.”

“This is economic. The revolutionary theater finds its strength in an effort to focus the awareness of the individual. She has the strength to change her situation. She can link up with other people who want to transform the world.”

“A revolutionary consciousness is not a natural characteristic of your being. This is something that you need to work on. You need to recognize that your personal development is tied to other people. You decide to take control over that process. You work to make changes that will assist you to link up with other people, who are moved by similar circumstances. There is a need to discover the source of these effects.”

Ivelle claimed that the need to isolate a source was based on a hierarchical organization. The individual was trying to dominate others by using a form of thinking that excluded alternatives. Everyone was constrained to move toward the same end. This was a restrictive form of being.

Ivelle worked to make her presentation more dynamic. She understood the appropriate images, which could assist her viewpoint. She wanted this to have a poetic outlook. She sought an organic picture. This was a body in constant mutation.

How could nature permit this disruption?

Darcy worked in human services. She was reviewing my case. She was an empath. She gave herself completely to my defense. She felt that she might be able to release me from my persecutor.

“Sometimes, you are your own worst enemy.”

“Sonny, this is a game of self-control. What kind of control do you have?”

“Steven, you are letting your gut-brain destroy you. There’s no reward for this. You are not in the zoo.”

“Is this supposed to be a new definition of determinism?”

“Was you mother afraid to leave? She needed to leave.”

“She must have been restrained.”

“Steven, you do not have enough concern for humankind to be a good writer.”

“I am still trying to describe the kitchen wall.”

“You describe the wall in your prison cell.”

“My writing teacher told us that we should start by describing the wall in front of yourself.”

“You are going to torture yourself by doing the accounting problems.”

“That is what they are meant to do. You have to use offshore accounts to turn debits into assets.”

“Do you want to be a bookkeeper?”

“The machine will do it for me.”

“I can’t find nine cents.”

“The nine cents are in the basement.”

“How much money are in the boxes?”

“These are the treasures.”

“The nine cents are in the penny jar.”

“I wait here and let life come to me. Then I describe it.”

“Steven, it sounds like she sold out.”

“She got a husband in the deal.”

“And she is in the will.”

“She will have ten years of free money.”

“That is called a will.”

"She is driving him to the grave."

"He wants to be driven."

"We all want a driver."

"Does the house have a penny jar?"

"We are financing the revolution."

"Want kind of penny ante revolution is this going to be?"

"Plastic spoons and paper plates."

"More garbage."

"Everyone has her own cup."

"More garbage!"

"What do you put in the cup?"

"We have refilled the water cooler."

"I don't want to get more satisfied that satisfied."

"Are you going to work Darcy into the story?"

"I got distracted by a fashion show."

"Did that scratch the itch?"

"There is more pain."

"Darcy, can you take more pain?"

"You can go home and count the things that you should have done. This is Festo, and you are going to lose."

"Is this an advice column?"

"I am falling love with the sweet dreams."

"You are always going to want more sugar."

"I am not the honey diet."

"Darcy, my problem is that I don't know how kick the sugar diet."

"Walking across the room is not worth the effort."

"You have to learn how to describe the wall."

"Staying longer will not give you more reward. How long do we have to wait for our meal?"

"This is not a meal."

"We haven't talked about what I need to talk about."

"You need to be more forthcoming."

"I can't project in space. I need a reward."

"There is an elite."

"We have our writer. She can describe all the partitions of the ceiling."

"You have to find the wave."

"I cannot see that far in front of me."

"The tower is going to fall."

"Call the landlord."

"We have figured out how to do most of this on our own? What is the problem?"

"I don't have a more sustained goal."

"I am always working. Always trying to solve an equation."

"In maximum security, there are no locks. They have created these personal

puzzles. And everyone is obsessed with solving these puzzles.”

“That makes no sense.”

“It works. They do not want to leave their cells. They have found a perfect place to find the solution. They have food, and no one disturbs them. They apply all their brain power to coming up with a solution.”

“You are waiting in the obscurity. There is a solution for you. But you are going to go home before I can relay it to you.”

“This is everything that I don’t want.”

“We fill a jar with suggestions for each other written on folded-up sheets of paper.”

“We use these sheets to write uplifting messages.”

“Now, you are smiling.”

“What do you want to know?”

“Why do I not smile like you smile?”

“There is a secret code.”

“That is elitist. There is no power elite here. We have made an effort to dismantle all the power elites.”

“You want to jump to the solution. You are going to mess things up.”

“This house is a well-ordered place.”

“Can you tell people what to think?”

“Sometimes, you want direction. You join a group. You wait for Marie to tell you.”:

“She wouldn’t know about this place.”

“The revolution happens after she leaves.”

“They have a book on the dining room table with all the answers.”

“Who wrote it?”

“Some philosopher.”

“They all did.”

“They are all contributors.”

“We all believe the same thing. You don’t get anything that you don’t work for.”

“Who taught you about markets. Markets on markets. See no evil.”

“Collect more bananas.

“Kate or Amanda?”

“That is the future.”

“There is Ivelle and Rochelle. Darcy and Ashe. Politics by the moment.”

“I am signing up for the revolution.”

“This is going to be more than consciousness. This is more than work. Do you have a view of history?”

“I have been to history class.”

“All that stuff is nonsense.”

“What is your project? What are you working on?”

“I feel as if you are trying to hurt me.”

“You are trying to hurt yourself.”

“What do they teach you in that place?”

“Classes are online.”

“You are teaching yourself.”

“We are all on guide rope.”

“You are making your way up on your own.”

“I have a spelling list.”

“My life is a spelling bee.”

“Spell *disorder!*”

“Spell establishment.”

“Why do I have to go along with this?”

“This is exactly what I am looking for. The rejection of the father.”

“We have no fathers here. We have got rid of authority.”

“There are no locks. Only puzzles.”

“I was clear before the questions.”

I was asked to remove all the questions. I needed something to get the puzzles going. I was playing a difficult game, but I did not know who my opponent would be. I could only understand his personality by following his moves. He was a very aggressive person. This was not someone who would be allowed in the house.

“I have to figure out how much is in my account.”

“We try to do things simply. We do not waste our money on frivolous things.”

“I can only speculate so much.”

“What do you to offer.”

“Would you ever know?”

“Ivelle, do the people in the house fear you? You are constantly trying to psychoanalyze them.”

“I do not believe in that kind of psychology. People are not supposed to fit a model.”

“They ended up acting like robots. They learn from their parents.”

“They look at the roots of the tree.”

“Is that the most efficient route?”

“They learn to adapt.”

“They learn to adapt.”

“I messed up.”

“Not that close.”

“Ivelle, what happens when you fall in love with your roommate.”

“This is not a convent. There are no rules about emotions. Other therapeutic methods try to control the individual.”

“Do you really know what you are talking about? Everything is descriptive. There are no prescriptions. You remain with your therapist, and she tells you just enough to keep you coming week after week. She is reading a murder mystery to you. Pretty soon, you realize that it is your death. There is not rescue. No blessing. She might as well be torturing you.”

“We do not abide with this in the house.”

“This is a kind of enjoyment.”

“There is a wonder.”

“Do you calibrate your nightmares?”

“The world is the nightmare. We share a vision.”

“Does that balance dream therapy?”

“I can feel that.”

“What do I get from this?”

“Who is next for the spelling bee?”

“This is revolutionary theater.”

“I do not get it.”

“You like your shitty life.”

“I am a winner every morning.”

“The vision is unraveling.”

“Have you figured it out yet?”

“No one person figures it out. There is no authority. No celebrity. No chief audience member.”

“You need to include a chief audience member. You need to offer her a script.”

The chief audience member was disappointed. He did not understand the context for the dialogue. He was unwilling to make an effort. He would not change so that he could see things any differently.

“Who are you working for?”

“Does the revolutionary theater require you to change?”

“No, it asks you to stare at stage and marvel.”

“What is that all about?”

“If all that you do is marvel, you might as well stay home.”

“You gotta eat.”

“Whole lotta love.”

“That is not going to get you much of anywhere.”

“It is a trick. You see something silly on the stage. You can’t get past the nonsense.”

“There is a code.”

“How do you figure it out?”

“I was supposed to be a lot further along.”

If I had quit the dialogue, would I have been able to describe the process more succinctly.

“More succulently.”

“There is this idea in your head.”

If you stare at the screen, none of it is going to make any sense for you. You have to apply the idea.

“You have to go to the beach and try to swim against the current.”

“What is the point?”

“What are you expecting?”

“Someone who is dressed for the part.”

“We all have our own novels. And our own stories and our own psychology books.”

“And our own revolutionary theater.”

“Nothing gets done in unison. And nothing gets done. And people speak about lifestyle revolutions. Or conformism with a new spin. A revolution is more than a mass movement. It is based on making a lasting change. So you need to figure out what is preventing change from occurring.”

“You can’t even move in your room. You just have space for a bed. And they lock the door behind you. Or you lock the door, and you do not leave. And you try to explain your agrophobia. But it is not psychological. It is a political disorder. You accept the shit because you see the reward as just around the corner. And the water is sweeter, and the rate gets sweetened. And you are getting jumpy because the chemical that they are putting in you water. No shrink is going to help that. That is all that you want. You enhance the sucking response. The return to your birthplace.”

“How long do we have to remain in this place?”

“Until you make a transaction. Until you see that there is no persecutor. That you better hold out for this. This is the revolutionary theater. You are going along because you are afraid that it will be different. You are all eating the same thing. And thinking the same thing and comfort the same thing.”

“Is this what you tell each other?”

“What are the walls saying?”

“Do not interfere in my life?”

“There is a source. This is what the dinosaurs told each other. I have come to this place to start again. And I am going to do it the dino way.”

“I have planned all day to get here. And you will do my homework. And you will do my nightwork. And my no sweat work. And you will not flinch. This is all that I have ever wanted. I will not complain. I cannot complain. There is no place for complaints. I like what I have. I like the rice dish. I like the chicken dish. I don’t want a meat dish. I eat the revolutionary dish. I sleep in Goldilocks’s bed. I find a place to crash. I learn how to crash myself.”

“There is a source.”

“You go along to get along. You stand in the middle of the shop floor, and you scream at the top of your lungs. I have a souvenir. I want to remember wonderful events from my past. I keep mementos in my drawer. I make sure that I do not get lost. I realize that there are alternatives. But that is not a revolution. That is the same thing in another package. Promising chicken sandwiches to the world.”

“I want to explain about my studies.”

“Is this what you want? What do you have?”

“I need to solve the romance problem.”

“There is only a now problem problem. We will not get to the later if we do not solve the now.”

“What is the cooking time?”

“The two buses are leaving.”

I was listening in to the conversations at Ivelle’s house. I hoped that they would preserve the ideological purity. Everyone had what they wanted. There was no kind of psychological conversion. Everyone thought the same. They ate the same. They were all the same. And that is how things were meant to be.

“How is that?”

“You have a theme. You buy a section of the house. You buy part of the incipient revolution. You realize that change is one step away. The life that you always wanted to read. Pay your mortgage tax. Sign on the dotted line. Sign your name twice. Sign away your fortune.

Feel that it is too late to see a doctor. Find everything paired off. Get an editor. Make notes in the margin.

You thought that you were moving a lot faster. You had a pose or a room in the house. You put sprouts in your salad. You embraced a new ritual or an old myth. You believed in the survival of consciousness or the persistence of revelation or the constancy of love or commitment or a secret word that you couldn't speak. All of that rolled together. And you felt that there was an image that would express all these variations. And you gave too much of yourself to an ideal or a reality or a new soup recipe. And you waited all night for someone to add ginger or to pray over the carrots. None of that was sufficient to give you courage. And you all held hands on the porch. And you thought that consciousness-raising would lead to the raising of the building's foundation. You had found an architecture that you had been looking for all your life. All that you wanted to do was to bake it in a pie. And when the pie cooled, it would be the beginning of a movement.

You wanted someone to talk back. There was a liberation in the rhythm of the sentences. And they kept talking about a revolutionary theater. But they became afraid of their own shadows. And they did not take it to the streets or put it on a leaflet or dance to it at dawn. There was no rhythm or song. No way to tie it into one thing that would stop being many things. What did you want to know? You needed to find a path from one point to another.

How did it work? You accommodated to a playboy lifestyle. You tried to let the machines do the talking. You never took a stand. You watched all the shit melt around you.

You laughed at all the serious moments. How could anyone put up with that shit. That was the basis of the revolutionary theater. You all sit and watched. But the actors didn't come out. And the audience members started to argue among themselves. When the arguments got to such a tenor, the director came out and told you that this was the revolutionary theater. But these were the roles that you already loved. And you did a lot of shitty stuff. And you were full of guilt. But someone told you that it was all in the gut. It was a shadow or a smudge. None of it was meant to be much of anything.

And every time that you felt like you had the answer, you felt like you had the answer. You made yourself oatmeal. You memorized the speech of the three bears. And you found the look to carry you to the top.

So you went back to the hole, the family trap, the sustained human connection, the lasting human condition. And that was your revolution, or your resolution. And everything made total sense. You signed in and out. You got our release. You stopped being afraid of tomorrow. You became the shit head that you always hated. And you found something that could help you to forget.

You realized that you had a lot less of what you needed. When would you hold it in our hand? Who would guide you once the guide rope broke? And your leader was not a leader."

I would close the book. I would not move. I would not let it influence me. I would stop believing that I could record my life and play it back. I would get disoriented. I would believe that none of this had anything to do with me. I couldn't be touched. I could be touched, and it meant nothing.

“Ivella, there is not time here. No one can say that this is a total shit hole. No one can rise up and say what the fuck. Because getting fucked is part of acceptance. Or you put it all back in the box.”

“There is one more option.”

“Instant oatmeal.”

“Instant gratification.”

“That is all there is. History does not have a conscience.”

“This all lead to one place.”

“What would my doctor say?”

“We all suffer for someone else.”

“This is altruism.”

“Ivella, do you have a martyr complex. Or you do not care enough. So you can never be martyred. It is martyrdom without caring.”

“Human sacrifice.”

“There is an audience member who can grasp it all.”

“They are doing it all for him.”

“Is that how you view the theater? Is it an act for someone who is not you? You soaked the book of its content. You stayed at the house. You saw what it was really about. It could have been any other house. Some people lost their shit. Others did not pay on time. And you walked into this life. And you were not sure if you could ever get out. You only need one. A martyr on stage. Or an audience member who wants to get convinced. But the revolutionary theater is based on not sympathizing. Then you are a true martyr. There are the martyrs in the wedding party. And the martyrs on the city council. Where is your part? Does the revolutionary theater need another level on the stage? It could be a witness booth. The Mandies could get an answer from the Kates. The revolutionary theater does not have premonitions. It is not a horror or a ghost story. It is an all now story.”

Resa had her own version of theater. She wanted to get into someone’s head. She was engaged in this biopsy of the soul. She hollowed out anything that meant anything And this left everything that meant nothing. This was the resolution theater. You found a costume and you took a stand. You pretended to care, or you pretended to be someone. You knew when to take your exit. You were wonderful. You are afraid. You were nothing. You sneered, and you laughed. And you developed class consciousness. And that was an act. And you got a better offer. And you made a pilot. And you went into syndication. And people watched the same episode a million times a over and over again, and it all made sense then it became nonsense.

“There has to be a moment when you take the stage. You have to say what you feel. You have to say what you can’t say. History is a food that you can swallow. History holds you hostage until you get you reward. Then they give you another reward. And you do not mind being one among many. You do not mind being the only one. You do not mind fucking anything.”

“Put this on, America!”

“I am a world traveler.”

“I am a world unraveler.”

“Then someone stains the costume, and you cannot pay to have it cleaned.”

“The stains will not come out. Did you do this on purpose? You are going to have to keep it. You are going to have to wear it.”

“It is stained.”

“This was my life, This was my hope. I lived on a smile or a color or a taste or a promise or a snowflake or another year.”

“The theater could give you another identity.”

“There is not enough time for me.”

“We are all coming back.”

“The cast has been thinned. The options are not the same.”

“I feel as if he is reading from a laundry list.”

“He is!”