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Hole in the Head: a Play, Accompanied by a Conspectus of Knowledge, Both Repressed and Researched, that Directly Influenced the Playwright in Her Development of a New Work

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Honors Thesis, English Department

Margaret Cook

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Introduction to *Hole in the Head*

If asked to provide a summary of *Hole in the Head* in four words, my answer would be quick, without the blink of an eye or the waste of a sigh: a woman wakes up. Maude wakes up in the first act, and in every subsequent scene she undergoes some form of physical or emotional awakening. These awakenings take the shape of psychosurgeries – kitchen utensils pushed into her brain so that she may recognize the family members that surround her. The other characters in the play serve varying degrees of importance within the dramatic structure of the play. At the root of every period, pause, and monologue, Maude remains. This introduction serves as a way to understand the interplay of academia and creativity. My intention is not to tell you how to read the play. It is, however, necessary to understand the play within its process so that the influence of playwrights and their works, together with feminist and queer readings, may be fully realized. The playwright and her play are closely wound together; because my own intentions developed and morphed as time progressed, the only way to truly understand my process is to analyze its parts before piecing the whole together.

Hole in the Head was written in a rush. Maude, Gabe, Shirley, and Fernando scrambled along the pages, aching to tell a story. I had no objective; I simply captured tableaux as they came and put the incessant banter ringing in my head onto the page. It is essential, however, to understand my academic interests since many of the ideas that seemed to spontaneously develop were actually shaped by these interests.

Before theory there was theatre. Lines from scripts and images from productions danced around my mind before I had any inkling of psychoanalysis. As a young playwright I would be illogical to deny the influence of plays I have studied on the formation of my own voice. Theatre is the art of mimicry, and no matter how intensely unique I desire my voice to be, there will always be the influence of someone else's theatre. There are four British writers, in particular, who have directly informed my ideas of theatre: Harold Pinter, Peter Shaffer, Caryl Churchill,

and Sarah Kane. Each of these playwrights speaks directly to one or more of the dramatic elements in a way that has shaped my own writing.

For Harold Pinter, sometimes a pencil is just a pencil. Despite what a pencil may mean for the playwright, audiences and readers of scripts can spend hours pouring over a line in order to infuse it with social relevance. Pinter's *The Hothouse* (1958/1980) takes its audience to some institution, possibly a sanitarium but never explicitly stated as being so. The patients are nameless, distinguished from one another only by a number. They are also invisible. The central characters mention the presence of patients, yet these patients are never seen. By providing invisible patients referred to only as numbers, Pinter provides his audience with clues towards greater social implications. The audience must interpret whether these disagreeable characters are onstage as a commentary regarding the rotten nature of institutional bureaucracy. The patients are absent simply because they do not matter; the only individuals who hold any importance are those that hold power not those that need help. Did Pinter intend this sort of greater commentary within his work, or did he simply believe that additional roles for patients would make his script too messy?

One element that Pinter exhibits is a mastery of language and music. The dialogue is quick and snappy, with larger speeches introduced as a way to punctuate striking ideas. The play opens in Roote's office, with Roote addressing Gibbs. Pinter writes,

ROOTE: Gibbs.

GIBBS: Yes, sir?

ROOTE: Tell me...

GIBBS: Yes, sir?

ROOTE: How's 6457 getting on?

GIBBS: 6457?

ROOTE: Yes.

GIBBS: He's dead, sir.

ROOTE: Dead?

GIBBS: He died on Thursday, sir.

ROOTE: Thursday? What are you talking about? What's today?

GIBBS: Saturday, sir.

ROOTE: Saturday... Well, for goodness sake, I had a talk with him,

when was it? (*Opens his desk diary.*) Recently. Only the other day.
Yesterday, I think. Just a minute.
GIBBS: I hardly think yesterday, sir. (Pinter 3-4)

In the opening exchange between Roote and Gibbs the dialogue is breezy. The characters whiz through death in order to get to the joke: Roote believes he spoke to a dead man just the day before. This language develops a perplexing atmosphere for the play. The language here is ordinary; its musicality, however allows Pinter to achieve a heightened sense of reality. Using stichomythia, the dialogue clicks back and forth like a metronome, slowing only to deliver a punch line.

In *Hole in the Head* the dialogue speeds along faster than Maude can keep up. Influenced by works like *The Hothouse*, *Hole in the Head* uses speedy dialogue as a way to develop an entirely confounding atmosphere. The purpose of this language is to disorient both Maude and the audience, so that moments of stillness may draw attention to the major themes within the play. The following exchange between Fernando and Maude illustrates this downshift in language. When Fernando enters, Maude has just bore witness to the effects of the arrival of her children:

FERNANDO: Is there anything else I can get you, maam?
MAUDE: No.
FERNANDO: Tea?
MAUDE: No.
FERNANDO: Toilet?
MAUDE: No.
FERNANDO: Another ice pick?
MAUDE: (MAUDE sits up, surprised.) Why yes. That would be lovely. (Cook 50)

Fernando's questions quickly receive a one-syllable reply until the mention of an ice pick. Maude's indicated stage directions and lengthy response allow for a sudden halt in the raucous language that has progressed throughout the scene. This pause emphasizes the importance of Maude's acceptance of the ice pick, and therefore her acceptance of the subsequent psychosurgeries that are to occur.

Not all scripts present the crisp dialogue of Pinter. Some use interruptions in order to create a different type of music. Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* (1982) makes use of interruption in order to create a disharmony of voices, particularly in the beginning. *Top Girls* begins in a dream and ends at the beginning, telling the story of Marlene, a woman who gave her daughter to her sister. In her production note Churchill provides a key to understanding her dialogue: an / indicates an interruption and a * indicates the continuation from a prior speech (Churchill 9). For example, in the dream sequence Churchill writes,

GRISELDA: I asked him to give her back so I could kiss her. And
I asked him to bury her where no animals could dig her up./ It was
Walter's child to do what he
ISABELLA: Oh, my dear.
GRISELDA: liked with.*
MARLENE: Walter was bonkers.
GRET: Bastard.
ISABELLA: *But surely, murder.
GRISELDA: I had promised.
MARLENE: I can't stand this. I'm going for a pee. (Churchill 34)

The women onstage speak over each other. These interruptions mimic typical everyday conversations: each woman's sole purpose is to convey her own story. In the chapter entitled, "*Top Girls: Postmodern Imperfect*" in Drama and the Postmodern, Prapassaree Thaiwutipong Kramer addresses these interruptions. She writes, "this technique not only illustrates disharmony, foreshadowing the cacophony at the end, it also demonstrates that each character is primarily interested in relating her own experience or can understand others' narrations only in terms of her own situation" (Kramer 241). Churchill creates the music of chaos in her opening scene. This boisterous beginning makes the thematic point that no matter where in history, humans are incapable of communicating.

When I wrote *Hole in the Head* I was deeply interested in the use of the interruption. For me, interruptions serve two primary purposes. The first, as Kramer mentions, an interruption demonstrates a refusal to listen. Each character is so interested in her own story that she will

speak whether her turn or not. The second purpose is to create music with multiple parts. When one character interrupts another character, she essentially finishes the other character's sentence. Although the original meaning of the sentence is changed, it takes on a new meaning and role within the framework of the play. For example, by the second scene of the second act Maude has undergone two lobotomies and a trepanning procedure. As a result, a breakdown of language occurs and the play unravels into Maude's inner monologue. Even though it is Maude's words that are important, a final character, the Army Man, is introduced. The following exchange occurs when the Army Man first appears at Maude's door:

ARMY MAN: Are you Miss Maude?

MAUDE: You bet I am.

ARMY MAN: Your head –

MAUDE: Is getting better. Come in.

ARMY MAN: I shouldn't, I'm just –

MAUDE: I said come in!...

MAUDE: Now what is a fella like you doing ringing my bell-a?

ARMY MAN: I'm ju –

MAUDE: It would be a swell-a if you would call me Stella. (Cook
74)

Maude obviously refuses to listen. Despite the Army Man's hesitation, Maude forces him inside her house in order to seduce him. She uses rhyme as a way to further distance herself from the reality of the Army Man's desires. She creates a dominant musical language for the scene. This language creates new rules for the scene; in order to develop autonomy it is necessary to speak in this strong rhyming verse. The Army Man's common conversation fails to compete with Maude's rhythm so she may rapidly progress the scene ignoring his refusals. The singsong quality of these rhyming words also provides Maude with the opportunity to engage her body in her seduction. She can move to the beat of words like "fella" and "bell-a" and physically taste the deliciousness of language.

In addition to this, the interruptions also create new sentences. When Maude goes to the door she has just had a trepanning procedure. Her Analyst has wrapped her head with gauze. The

Army Man's references this gauze on her head, saying, "Your head—," while Maude immediately interrupts him with her response, "Is getting better. Come in." These two lines combine in order to make the new line "Your head is getting better. Come in." This new line perpetuates Maude's inner monologue and stresses her insistence that she is not deteriorating.

A play that is very much Caryl Churchill's opposite in terms of form is Peter Shaffer's *Equus* (1973). *Equus* follows the story of Alan Strang, a boy who has blinded six horses and is now in the care of psychiatrist Martin Dysart. The play unfolds through a series of speeches, with the entrance of an occasional secondary character like Strang's mother or father. What is striking about this play is its spectacle. The original 1973 production was set so that the audience was elevated on benches surrounding the actors. All actors were present onstage at all times with a chorus of six horses constantly watching the play. Shaffer describes these horses:

On their feet are light strutted hooves, about four inches high, set on metal horse-shoes... On their heads are tough masks made of alternating bands of silver wire and leather; their eyes are outlined by leather blinkers. The actors' own heads are seen beneath them: no attempt should be made to conceal them. (Shaffer 5)

These creatures become both man and horse onstage, mimicking a horse's actions with only the skeletal form of the equine visible to the audience. At the climax of the play, Alan retells the story of what happened: he travels as though in a dream, rides his favorite horse, Nugget, and violently blinds the six other horses onstage. The spectacle of blinding is wholly dramatic; it is both vicious and visceral, and unlikely to be forgotten by audiences. The overall spectacle of the original production of *Equus* is enhanced by the intensity derived from the intimacy of the theatre in the round design. Because there is no line between actor and audience, the reaction to the dramatic onstage blinding is much more emotional.

When it comes to violence onstage, audiences prefer the expressionist act of violence simulated through lighting and movement to the actual presence of gore onstage. In her play, *Blasted*, Sarah Kane disregards the notion of anti-gore and presents chaos to her audience. The

play opens with Ian and Cate in a hotel room in Leeds. Ian rapes Cate during the night and a bomb strikes the hotel. The scenes become further fragmented as the play progresses until it ends with a series of tableaux. Due to the violent nature of the play it was “critically misunderstood as a childish attempt to shock” (Greig x). Although we are bombarded by images of sex and death daily in the media, the presence of simulated death onstage causes great discomfort. In his introduction to Kane’s collected works David Greig writes, “it would be natural for the reader to question the practicality of staging the work...Every one of her plays asks the director to make radical staging decisions” (Greig xiii). He goes on further to say, “Kane believed passionately that if it was possible to imagine something, it was possible to represent it” (Greig xiii). Sarah Kane paid close attention to spectacle. This spectacle, however, is closely wrapped up with theme within her works. The purpose of this violent spectacle is so that audiences may realize the effects of violence everywhere; there is a connection between war and rape (Greig x).

In *Hole in the Head* there is an abundance of blood and guts; however, many of the violent actions occur offstage. The only onstage violence occurs to Fernando when Gabe is looking for cherries. Shirley is blinded offstage and enters with blood streaming down her fingers. In *Equus*, blinding serves as the climax of the play and deeply affects the story. Shirley’s blinding, however, is merely a happening within their world; Her vision loss is intended as spectacle and character development. Similarly, Fernando’s brutal onstage death functions as a climactic moment, signifying a great change within Maude’s character. The theatrical gore is necessary, as it holds great significance within Maude’s deteriorating world, and aids in the wavering notion of reality and unreality in the play.

The Hothouse, Top Girls, Equus, and Blasted each subvert audience’s expectations of theatre. While one might say subversion is a feature of much of twentieth-century and contemporary drama, since any form outside of the typical two-act, lights up, lights down drama will jar an audience so that those watching must engage differently with the performance, it is

important to recognize subversion as integral to feminist theatre. The concept of feminist theatre is one I have grappled with extensively. Is a play feminist simply because a feminist writes it? Or, does any play written by a woman become a feminist play simply through the woman's act of claiming voice? Or, is a feminist play one that draws attention to and challenges gender norms? Or, can anyone write a feminist play just by adding female characters to the script? The answers to these questions are not easily determined. There are, however, certain characteristics typical of feminist theatre. In the chapter "*Top Girls: Postmodern Imperfect*" Kramer outlines the four-part model of feminist theatre as defined by Janet Brown:

- i. Sex Role Reversal
- ii. Depiction of Women in Oppressive Situations
- iii. Undermining of Linear Structures
- iv. Presentation of Historical Figures as Role Models (Kramer 234)

Basically, feminist theatre is theatre that does not follow the archetypal Aristotelian model of drama. Aristotle said that there were six elements of theatre: Plot, Theme, Character, Language, Music, and Spectacle. By contrast, in feminist theatre nothing is fixed. Gender and character are fluid; men who play midwives later play housewives and perform their bows as the butler. There may still be a problem, a climax, and a resolution, but the play's progression does not have to follow that order.

Feminism's subversive potential onstage can be seen by thinking about the relevance of Luce Irigaray's work for drama. In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray examines the absence or demonization of female sexuality in seminal works of psychoanalysis and philosophy. In her chapter "Plato's *Hystera*," Irigaray looks to Plato's Cave as womb. In an analysis of the men standing in the cave watching their shadows on the wall, she states, "Here is theater, text, that has yet to reflect or reflect upon its perspective. Here the properties of the eye, of mirrors – and indeed of spacing, of space-time, of time – are dislocated, disarticulated, disjointed, and only later brought back to the perspective – free contemplation of the truth of the Idea" (Irigaray 253). For

Irigaray, Plato's cave disorients its occupants in such a way that there can be no complete comprehension of their own shadows. The bewilderment experienced can only be truly understood when the occupants have been given time to digest the fallacies that surround them. Feminists use the stage as their cave. Onstage, actors represent our own reality. Using a disconnection of time and space, feminists both disorient and direct their audiences to the tools to piece together a narrative of truth. In *Hole in the Head* Maude spends the entirety of the play onstage in a room on a chaise. As in Irigaray's reworking of Plato's Cave myth, this room is representative of a womb: a place where she is protected from the dangers of the outside world. With the entrance of her children, Gabe and Shirley, this womb is ripped apart, forcing Maude to acknowledge a reality she cannot remember.

Is *Hole in the Head* a feminist play? That is a question best left to the audience member. There are most definitely elements of feminist theatre in *Hole in the Head*, such as a "depiction of women in oppressive situations," a disruption of linear time, and even a tangential depiction of the historic pilgrim, Mary Rowlandson. I, however, used these elements simply because they were the ones which worked best within the framework of the play. Perhaps these specific choices only seemed to work best because of my own feminist consciousness.

This brings me to my final question – does a writer have to intend her work to be feminist in order for it to be so? Subversion is not limited to the theatre. Throughout university, my interests shifted and developed until I decided to pursue degrees in both English and Women's Studies. In theory, I kept my feminist background separate from my creative work, but realistically this separation is impossible. I am a playwright, and I am a feminist: what I study inevitably affects how I write, even if only on a subconscious level. Last spring, when Michael Bradford suggested that I write a play for workshopping in the fall, I had only three weeks to submit a rough draft to him: three weeks to develop an entire world on a blank page. I had no idea what I was going to write. On my computer lay two documents on the screen: one, empty, with an

angry flashing bar blinking my lack of inspiration, and another half-finished research paper on Sarah Waters' *Night Watch*. Naturally, I engaged with the less menacing of the two and worked towards finishing my final. It was during a late night writing that an image invaded my mind in a flash: A woman, onstage, giving birth. She has a baby. A boy. But she is not finished: a girl is born. She stands, they cry, she breastfeeds, grows tired. And then, the dream is over. From that moment, came *Hole in the Head*. Night after night I would write a paragraph about Sarah Waters and then write five pages of the script. Because I was so wrapped up in both pieces of work, the ideas discussed in my academic work without a doubt shaped my play. As I continued to read after the semester's end, I began to see the ways in which my play and feminism might be in conversation – theory and theatre were not separate entities, but rather two elements, tightly wound.

Feminists frequently establish alternative narratives in an effort to challenge the accepted heteronormative story expected within society. *The Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories* states, “feminists use narrative as a means of re-imagining their own processes of identification, revising and subverting the original (Oedipal) plot” (“narrative, feminist uses of”). Feminists reinvent typical narratives to give voice to those whose stories remain untold. Waters' novel, *Night Watch*, unfolds through a series of chapters told through multiple characters' perspectives. As I wrote *Hole in the Head*, I was conscious of this idea of perspective. Typically, plays are presented as the reality of the moment for all the characters onstage. *Hole in the Head*, however, is told through Maude's own perspective; the reality onstage is Maude's perception of her reality, and not necessarily the reality of the other characters onstage.

As with feminist theatre, feminist narratives develop multiple ways of experiencing time and space. The entry continues, “feminist uses of narrative challenge the cultural categories that are also, and eminently, operative in narrative, such as time and space” (“narrative, feminist uses of”). What this means is that feminist narratives do not operate solely within linear time; instead,

there may be a scattering within time, as with Churchill's *Top Girls*. Although *Hole in the Head* unravels chronologically, time is altered through the use of fragmentation; there is no sense of actual time, but instead a riotous string of events that occur over an undisclosed amount of time. Everyone experiences time, yet the times may affect the way you story yourself. In her book *Queer/Early/Modern*, Carla Freccero proposes a sort of haunting that occurs in the present by the past (Freccero 79). In her chapter "Queer Spectrality" she writes, "The past may not be the present, but it is sometimes in the present, haunting, even if only through our uncertain knowledge of it, our hopes of surviving and living well" (Freccero 79). Maude is haunted by a past that she has no memory of. In *Hole in the Head* the concept of "queer spectrality" is taken quite literally – the past, in the form of Gabe and Shirley, barges into Maude's present so that she is forced to recognize this "uncertain knowledge" and decide whether or not to be "fixed." Richard Lehan discusses the effect of memory on an individual in his book, Literary Modernism and Beyond. He writes, "the idea of recollected emotions moves to the belief that memory can collapse the past and the present into a kind of "time spot" in which the past and the present become one" (Lehan 249). There is no sense of specific time in *Hole in the Head*. Maude is situated within one of Lehan's "time spots." The past and present merge into one: Gabe and Shirley enter Maude's world as college-age adults, yet they dress and act like children, in order to survive in the future, Maude must separate her past from her present.

For Maude, the only means of survival is through psychosurgery. This procedure is introduced to Maude by the character, the Analyst. This Analyst offers Maude an ice pick as the only way to truly "fix" her. At the beginning of the fall workshop, the Analyst's character was terribly underdeveloped. He lacked intention; while Maude's objectives remain purposefully vague, the doctor must have a specific desire for curing Maude. When I first wrote the script the Analyst was there simply to shove an ice pick into Maude's eye, during the revision process he needed a reason to do so. In order to develop his character, I looked to those responsible for

pathologizing women's bodies.

Two major players in the field of psychoanalysis were Sigmund Freud and Pierre Janet. Freud's case study of eighteen-year-old "Dora" examines the relationship between her dreams and her obsession with her father, his mistress, Frau K, and her husband, Herr K. In his examination of her hysteric condition, Freud frequently refers to the role of "Dora's" sexuality and genitals. He states, "there is never any danger of corrupting an inexperienced girl. For where there is no knowledge of sexual processes even in the unconscious, no hysterical symptom will arise; and where hysteria is found there can no longer be any question of 'innocence of mind'" (Freud 42). Freud believes her hysteric condition proves her sexual experience; her hysteric symptoms serve as deviance. These conclusions were derived from a series of psychoanalytic sessions. Only after uncovering the root of her problem would Freud be able to cure "Dora." In many ways, Freud's relationship with "Dora" helped to develop the scenes between the Analyst and Maude. Instead of the Analyst drawing attention to Maude's genitals as Freud did, it is Maude who constantly references her own sexuality. Her emphatic actions attempt to mirror the way psychoanalysts like Freud referenced female sexuality and used it as the root of hysteria.

Pierre Janet did not believe that there was one specific moment that made someone hysteric. He understood hysteria to be "an intrinsic product of the patient's entire life, not some extraneous entity that has intruded on it" (Furst 156). Whereas Freud studied "Dora" in order to find the root of her problem, Janet explored all of the moments within his patient's life. In his case study, "A History of a Fixed Idea," Janet examines Justine, a forty-year-old woman who exhibits bizarre symptoms and is overwhelmingly consumed by a fear of cholera. In order to cure Justine of her fixation on cholera he places her in the hypnotic state of delirium (Furst 165). Once she is in this state, Janet enters as a second player within her dream (Furst 166). Justine relives her fear for Janet, and he pretends to see what she sees so that he may shift her fearful interpretations of cholera (Furst 166). He personifies Cholera as the Chinese General Cho-Ler-A,

and makes her forget that she was ever afraid of the word (Furst 166). Pierre Janet's approach to curing hysteria was obviously much more theatric than Sigmund Freud's. He played an active role in her hysteric drama and developed character and spectacle out of her cure. Janet's atypical practices were most helpful in the development of Maude's recount of her luscious dreams to the Analyst. Rather than stand by and listen to her writhe on the floor, he becomes a part of her dream in order to fix her.

What some wanted to cure, others wanted to celebrate. Surrealists André Breton and Louis Aragon hailed hysteria as "the greatest poetic discovery of the latter nineteenth century" (Aragon and Breton 320). In "The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria" they state:

Hysteria is a more or less irreducible mental condition, marked by the subversion, quite apart from any delirium-system, of the relations established between the subject and the moral world under whose authority he believes himself, practically, to be. This mental condition is based on the need of a reciprocal seduction, which explains the hastily accepted miracles of medical suggestion (or countersuggestion). Hysteria is not a pathological phenomenon and may in all respects be considered as a supreme means of expression. (Aragon and Breton 321)

For surrealists a hysteric was a muse. There was an immense beauty in the emotional freedom exhibited by hysterics. But was this elevation of hysteria any better than medicine's suppression of it? Both psychoanalysts and artists objectified hysterics. Each became obsessed with their hysterics, yet the obsession stemmed from desires of personal advancement rather than with the well being of the women. These women became a mere line on a canvas or a footnote on a page.

Hole in the Head is driven by aesthetics. One of the questions scribbled in my script is: "Should there be beauty in Maude's hysteria?" Between each scene there is a passing of time. Maude remains frozen in tableaux, while actions are often acted upon her. These physical displays allow Maude the opportunity to literally become art. Her poses should be startlingly beautiful like the hysterics the surrealists worshipped.

Walter Freeman, on the other hand, did not admire hysteria. He attempted to cure his patients and later chased each around the country in an effort to compile extensive records about their lives post-treatment. He also, however, shoved ice picks into their skulls. Freeman, considered “the father of psychosurgery,” fine-tuned the leucotomy in order develop the lobotomy. These lobotomies were frequently performed on restless housewives in an effort to cure mental illness and maintain feminine ideals. In his own words,

the lobotomy “consists of knocking [the patient] out with a shock and while they are under the ‘anesthetic’ thrusting an ice pick up between the eyeball and the eyelid through the roof of the orbit [,] actually into the frontal lobe of the brain [,] and making the lateral cut by swinging the thing from side to side.” (qtd. in El-Hai 184)

The lobotomy in itself is a tremendously dramatic procedure. A man inserts an object into an unassuming patient’s eye, wiggles it around, removes it, and suddenly the patient exhibits characteristics of a healthy member of society. Walter Freeman played the role of both director and actor within this drama. His former partner, James Watts, describes watching Freeman perform a lobotomy:

The patient was wheeled into a kind of attic...Freeman took off his coat. He kept on his vest and -- I’m sure this was for the benefit of the Baltimore surgeons and me -- instead of using a silver-coated mallet, he used a carpenter’s hammer and drove [the leucotome] through and did the operation on one side, put the hammer on the patient’s abdomen, on his nightshirt, and then did the other side...Freeman liked to do it in what you might call a more dramatic or exceptional way. (qtd. in El-Hai 193)

Freeman’s procedures afforded the opportunity for performance. Rather than execute the lobotomy in an unassuming manner Freeman uses his tools as props in a spectacle of psychosurgery.

Walter Freeman is a complicated man. He wanted to be famous, the doctor that changed the brain, but he was also deeply devoted to his patients, as evidenced by his extensive body of

follow-up pictures and letters. At the root of psychosurgery lies a man who sincerely believed that this unconventional treatment would cure his patients of their mental ailments.

Through the influence of Walter Freeman's own theatrical persona I added greater dimension to the Analyst. Like Freeman, he wants to cure Maude, yet he also wants to gain personal success within the medical world. This struggle gives the Analyst purpose in his meetings with Maude. In the following exchange the Analyst must decide whether he should perform trepanning on Maude.

ANALYST: The procedure's been working.

MAUDE: Yes but now it's worn off. I need more treatment, Doctor.

ANALYST: This is an unconventional course of treatment –

MAUDE: Do it, doctor.

ANALYST: It could bring about death in the patient.

MAUDE: You must do it.

ANALYST: But it could bring about recovery.

MAUDE: Doctor, please!

ANALYST: A recovery from this type of repression would be very impressive. Very, very impressive. (Beat.) Maude. I will need a corkscrew. (Cook 71)

The above scene acts more like a brief inner monologue than a conversation between Maude and the Analyst. Maude's interjections go unnoticed by the Analyst whose character struggle finally becomes apparent to the audience.

This extensive research into psychoanalysis was performed during the revision process and calls for us to travel into the fall semester. Once the play was written, read, and almost understood, my intentions began to creep to the surface. The revision process presented the opportunity to fine tune and further develop these intentions for the play. This stage has two major parts: a workshop and extensive research, as exhibited above. The workshop brought together director, designer, playwright, and actor to develop voices within the script that are consistent and imagery that is clear. The research performed during this time was more directed than the general knowledge I held when I began the play. This research honed in on my personal

objectives and interests and served to develop accuracy within the world of *Hole in the Head*.

The workshop consisted of an intensive two-week process where I met with the cast for four hours each night and then I made any necessary revisions to the script after each rehearsal. This was a time of questions. It was these questions asked by the actors, designers, and director that drove my own process. In order to develop a creative work that best served my intentions I needed to understand what these intentions were.

The workshop process provides the opportunity to hear the script come to life. During these readings, the ear distinguishes what the eye may not see within the text, and recognition of specific linguistic phenomena within the script is necessary. With each revision, I attempted to fine-tune the script so that the characters onstage orchestrated a musical language specific to their world in *Hole in the Head*.

The rough draft contained many instances of a repetition of sound. When the actors gave a voice to the lines, this alliteration and rhyming rung out. There were moments within the script, however, when there was too much repetition. In those cases, it was necessary to recognize the use of repetition, and then strip it down so that the line had more impact. For example, in the rough draft version of the scene between Maude and the Army Man, Maude looks at him and exclaims, “Look at your teeth, so white and so strong, you look like a horse, I would give you first prize, you wouldn’t even have to tries, just listen to their cries, as the sweat rolls down your eyes” (“Rough Draft” 43). In this line the words “look” and “so” are repeated in close proximity to each other. There is also a rhyming of the words “prize,” “tries,” “cries,” and “eyes.” The original intention was to express the breakdown of Maude’s linguistic capacities as a direct result of the psychosurgery. Like a child, she finds a sound that she likes and repeats it. This line, however, is found within a scene that had only short, snappy, lines, as demonstrated in Part One of this introduction. The inclusion of a line of this length brings the scene to a halt. Because Maude’s commentary of the Army Man’s physical appearance was not vital within the scene it

was necessary to shorten the line. The revised line reads, “Look at your teeth, you look like a horse!” (Cook 71). There is the same repetition of “look” and the alliteration of “look like,” yet the line follows the linguistic pattern developed within the lines prior.

In the original script, the Analyst utters the word lobotomy only once. After he asks Maude for the first ice pick she questions why. The exchange proceeds:

MAUDE: What are you going to do with it?
ANALYST: It's a specialized procedure, highly effective. I am going to bring back the Maude you have lost.
MAUDE: How?
ANALYST: Through what is known as a lobotomy. (“Rough Draft” 9)

In his response, he gives a name to the procedure. In doing this, he introduces a medicalization that was absent from the rest of the script. During the workshop, I determined that this name was unnecessary. The revision reads:

MAUDE: What are you going to do with it?
ANALYST: I am going to bring back the Maude you have lost.
MAUDE: How?
(FERNANDO enters with an ice pick. He gives it to MAUDE.)
FERNANDO: Your ice pick, madam. (Cook 36-7)

The new dialogue removes the notion of “lobotomy” and “specialized procedure.” What is left is simply the ice pick. In his article, “Speaking and Thinking with Metonymy” Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. outlines the ways that metonymy is used. He understands metonymy as “a particular type of mental mapping, again whereby we conceive of an entire person, object, or event by understanding a salient part of a person, object or event” (Gibbs 66). Rather than using “lobotomy” or “specialized procedure” in the revised script of *Hole in the Head*, I mention only the ice pick. The ice pick represents the lobotomy because it is the most dominant image of the procedure. The medical understanding and terminology of the procedure is not important, but rather what is important is the violent action of the process and its affects on Maude, as demonstrated by the use of ice pick. Violence is a metonymy of a problematic medical

procedure. Lobotomies were performed on both men and women; however, a disproportionate amount of these psychosurgeries were performed on women as a way to cure hysteria. This violence signifies the medicalization of women's bodies, and the desire to regulate women's minds and bodies through any means as a method of perpetuating the feminine ideal.

Before psychosurgery there was psychoanalysis. In *Hole in the Head*, the two are combined; before ice picks psychoanalysts still managed to suppress female sexuality. Many great works of theatre have tackled dreams and psychoanalysis. Works such as August Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata* (1907), Caryl Churchill's adaptation of Strindberg's *A Dream Play* (2005), and Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958) inspired the development of one or more element of theatre. One of the major discussions that occurred during the workshop was regarding the presence of dreams within the play. Is the entire play a dream, or is the only dream acted out during the initial scene with the Analyst? What is the best way to represent these dreams both in the script and onstage? Strindberg employs a form of dream logic in his plays; there is no sense of fixed time or place. In his preface to *A Dream Play* Strindberg writes, "The characters split, double, multiply, evaporate, condense, dissolve and merge. But one consciousness rules them all: the dreamer's; for him there are no secrets, no inconsistencies, no scruples and no laws" (Strindberg 3). It is the dreamer who governs the dramatic action of the play, and for the dreamer anything is possible. In *Hole in the Head*, Maude's logic is the governing logic within the play. She is certainly the dreamer, because she performs her dreams for her analyst; that does not mean, however, that her entire reality is a dream. Despite this, the play must unfold through her logic in order to develop the wavering sense of reality; every character's presence must directly relate to Maude. In "The Perilous Edge: Strindberg, Madness, and Other Worlds," Peter Malekin states in reference to Strindberg's plays, "in them he is concerned with the metaphysical – that is, the relationship between mind and matter, consciousness and the physical world" (Malekin 44). In *Hole in the Head*, characters appear

because Maude needs them to appear. For example, once the children exit for the final time at the beginning of the second act, Maude realizes that Fernando seems more dead than asleep. In the following exchange, she attempts to call her analyst:

MAUDE: Oh my head. The treatment, that's it. It must be taking you away from me. I can't lose you again, I just can't. I will call my analyst and he'll help me get you back. (MAUDE exits stage left but can still be heard offstage. The GIRL WITH THE CHICKEN HEAD enters and begins to peck and nibble at FERNANDO'S insides.)

MAUDE: I seem to have forgotten his number, Fernando. Do you have it? (MAUDE enters and sees the GIRL WITH THE CHICKEN HEAD.)

MAUDE: You! Get away from him! Get! (MAUDE hits the girl with the chicken head until she falls to the ground and MAUDE kicks her. MAUDE grabs both of her arms and drags her to the door. She throws her outside. When she does this the ANALYST appears. The left side of his head is bandaged.)

MAUDE: You're here.

ANALYST: To check your head.

MAUDE: I was just about to call you but then she came back.
(Cook 69-70)

Maude needs the doctor, so he appears. Logically, a conscious desire for a person does not instantly transport that person to your doorstep; however, for the dreamer, limitations of time and space are not an issue. Strindberg does not focus on typical modes of drama, but instead conceives a world based in the vision of the mind, in order to develop theme rather than plot.

Caryl Churchill pulls from Strindberg's thematic bag of tricks in her adaptation of *A Dream Play*. Churchill, however, morphs Strindberg's work so that it pushes the boundaries of spectacle. Another question that occurred during the revision process was just how much was possible onstage? Churchill's play opens outside "a tower with a flower bud on top" and within nine lines moves to a room inside of the tower with an officer that is "rocking his chair and hitting the table with his sword (Churchill 5-6). By the play's end "the tower burns" and "the bud bursts into a giant chrysanthemum (Churchill 56). There is no sense of order besides that of the dreamer. Churchill's adaptation of Strindberg pushes the boundaries of spectacle and answered

the question that anything was possible within Maude's world.

Maude does not know what a lobotomy is when the analyst first requests an ice pick. After this initial tap on the eye Maude faces psychosurgery with a growing desire. But the question arose, is the lobotomy actually helping Maude? If it is not curing her of her misremembering why does she desire the procedure with such intensity? Are so many psychosurgeries necessary within the script?

In Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly Last Summer* a fear of psychosurgery permeates the stage. The play unfolds with little dramatic action. Instead, Williams develops plot and character with dialogue that mainly progresses through major speeches given by Mrs. Venable and Catherine. Although Williams does not set psychosurgery onstage, he paints a portrait of the horror of lobotomy through the language he uses. Catherine says, "Do you want to bore a hole in my skull and turn a knife in my brain? Everything else was done to me!" (Williams 55). Williams provides a graphic description without actually including gore onstage. Catherine describes the procedure with fearful intensity, yet she dares the doctor to perform it, demonstrating the hopelessness of her condition.

Employing a different technique than *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Hole in the Head* privileges action over language. Maude is quite the opposite from Williams' Catherine; after her initial indifference, Maude desperately yearns for the procedure. The onstage lobotomies allow for a physical deterioration of character that mirrors her interior deterioration by the play's end. Williams, on the other hand, begins with Catherine's inner turmoil, and works towards the imminent physical destruction by the curtain's close. *Suddenly Last Summer* is a play that depends on language rather than action, and Tennessee Williams is a playwright who demonstrates a mastery of the natural lyricism of character.

Zoe Beloff, in turn, while not a playwright, served as an invaluable resource for *Hole in the Head*. Upon the first reading of this script with the group of four actors one question rang

out: “What is wrong with Maude?” There is no clear response to this question; however, Beloff’s artistic and academic work with hysteria helped develop symptomatic conditions for Maude.

Beloff’s 2007 installation *The Somnambulists* directly references psychoanalytic practices of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to this, she provided a companion book to her installation entitled, *The Somnambulists: A Compendium of Source Material*, which included the academic work used to develop her creative piece. This book includes sources that were not only relentlessly intriguing, but also fundamental to the development of my own play.

The Somnambulists presents “hysterical dramas” inside five wooden miniature theatres (“The Somnambulists” introduction). Three of the theatres house archival footage of actual hysterics while Pierre Janet’s case histories, “History of a Fixed Idea” and “A Modern Case of Possession,” are recreated within the other two (“The Somnambulists” introduction). Her miniature theatres provide stages for a patient with hysterical hemiplegia, a young girl with hysteria, and Dranem, the idiot performer (*The Somnambulists*). Her final two theatres use Janet’s own academic text as a script and provide dramatic reenactments of his case histories. Inside of these theatres her actors exist within a dream world of elevated language, vivid imagery, and overstated mannerisms. In doing this, Beloff provides a commentary about the inherent theatricality of psychoanalysis. Both analyst and patient become performers in the drama of hysteria. When an actress is onstage, no matter how involved with her character’s intention, her actions are little more than pretend. She exists as a puppet: a pawn to enact a playwright’s desires and wishes. When Beloff places Janet and his patients within her miniature theatres she comments upon the reality of the hysteric condition. Was hysteria an actual illness, or merely a well-acted performance by actresses directed by their husbands and psychoanalysts? Beloff rewrites psychoanalytic history as a means of understanding the influence psychoanalysts like Janet exerted over the regulation of human sexuality. I want an audience to question Maude’s character as much as Beloff questions the players within her hysterical dramas. There is

no clear answer for Maude's curious habit of misremembering.

After the initial development of the script, the play underwent a third workshop process. Staging was introduced – actors brought life not only to the characters' words but also their actions. It was during this time that the academic component of the play became obtrusive: the characters began to explicate rather than exist. When the play was initially written there was immediacy in character and action; because the intention was not a concern it was not always obvious within the dialogue. The revised script told a complete story. In order to create a spectacle of intrigue, several of the story's layers needed to be stripped away.

A dream is remembered in pieces. Tiny flashes of memory open for interpretation. Throughout the play there is a major question of reality: is what is happening onstage really happening or is it merely a product of Maude's own imagination? I will not answer this question. In order, however, for an audience to challenge the content's truth onstage, the play's structure must be formed so that the content may reside within the real and the unreal. To do this, the play must unfold through a series of fragments. These fragments purposely omit pieces of time and story, with many questions remaining unanswered. In this way the play may be interpreted as a series of unrealities – the audience watches the unfolding of a woman's dream (or nightmare). Similarly, the play may also be interpreted as a series of realities – the audience watches the unfolding of a woman's experience with psychosurgery. Either interpretation is a fine interpretation.

Although my personal intentions were developed over time it became apparent that what was on the page did not mirror these intentions during the first reading of the second workshop. Boggled down by my academic research, I became overly concerned with reason. Rather than throw my own reality aside, I looked to explain her situation. The play existed in a strange realm where it did not completely choose to exist within our reality, but did so enough that the idea of unreality was unbelievable. The story was no longer Maude's, but instead a series of characters

performing and providing a commentary of my own personal interests in feminism and psychosurgery. I had to remove myself from the play, and it was in the staging that I was able to do that.

Once a play is given to actors, it is no longer the playwright's work. Of course, the title page will always read the playwright's name, but because no actor performs any given role in the same manner, the play exists differently with each subsequent production. Watching the actors walk and talk as their characters allowed me to realize when it was not the character's voice, but rather my voice, instead. There was no character that spoke in the explicative voice as much as Fernando.

The first workshop was a time of questions. Actors asked questions about my own intentions and questions about the event unfolding within the play itself. Each night after rehearsal, I returned home to rewrite with these questions in mind. Fernando was the character who was most changed as a result of these revisions. During the staging process it became apparent that I had used Fernando as a vehicle to explain the play. Through him, I developed a story that directed an audience towards only one possible understanding of Maude. He also became too involved with his own personal truth; the play is Maude's, the other characters are present, but on a superficial level only. After watching Fernando live and breathe onstage it was obvious that there needed to be a new ground for him to stand upon, so that he may exist in rather than tell Maude's story. In order to do this, many of the lines that were written in response to the questions posed during the first workshop were cut. His character went from saying lines like, "Oh Maudey I thought you'd never remember – I've been waiting all these years for you to come back to me!" to simply, "You do?" This change in Fernando's lines allowed for a loss of conscious back-story from the secondary characters. Although the play begins *in medias res*, that middle consists of Maude's story alone.

In conclusion I give you *Hole in the Head*. There are no grandiose pronouncements here

about theatre or academia; instead only a quick tidy discussion of a number of works that both directly and indirectly inspired a play. Consider this introduction the gaudy gold frame that surrounds a portrait of a woman waking up on a chaise lounge.

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Hole in the Head

CHARACTERS:

MAUDE, the mother

GABE, the son

SHIRLEY, the daughter

FERNANDO, the butler with a Spanish accent

THE ANALYST, the analyst with a German accent. Played by Gabe.

THE ARMY MAN, an army man. Played by Gabe.

THE GIRL WITH THE CHICKEN HEAD, a girl with a chicken head. A monster. Played by Shirley.

BOOMING VOICE, voiced by Fernando.

BOOMING PREACHER VOICE, voiced by Gabe.

TIME:

Any. Throughout the play there are many passages of time between one scene and the next yet MAUDE doesn't move. Lighting should be used in these cases to signify a passing of time or a shift in MAUDE'S mood. The scenes should feel like fragmented pieces of her passing life.

PLACE:

A room. Outside there is a war and MAUDE'S house is situated in the line of fire. This war should be heard, but it should not be overpowering unless otherwise noted. Only a faint beat of shots, yips, and hollers that is amplified when a character comes from the outside. It is not until ACT II Scene II that the war sounds fade into silence.

A NOTE ABOUT THE LANGUAGE:

The dialogue in this play should go very quickly. No one listens to anyone, and the character's attentions are directed towards getting what they want from MAUDE.

A NOTE ABOUT DESIGN:

This play is set during anytime so that there may be an amalgamation of all eras; however the predominant setting should not look contemporary. Although the characters may live in one time, it is important to note that almost twenty years have passed without MAUDE having an awareness of time at all. They were once rich, but now that wealth has deteriorated; their clothing and house should reflect this. Everything should feel like faded glamour, like old Hollywood or Coney Island.

ACT I SCENE 1

Black. The sound of a man's climax. A door slam. The sound of war.

MAUDE:

Goodbye.

Light. A room. There is a chaise lounge center stage. On the wall is a crooked "Birth of Venus" in a gaudy gold frame. On each side of the painting there is a window. Outside of this window an occasional arrow or rope flies by. MAUDE stands at the door. Her dress is torn at the shoulders, there is some blood on her face, and her hair is a mess. She holds a letter in her hands. She hears something. She freezes.

MAUDE:

Get out.

Silence.

Much better.

FERNANDO enters with a bowl of water, washcloth, and a comb. MAUDE hears him and stuffs the letter into her dress. FERNANDO turns MAUDE around and gives her a pill. She swallows it. He then begins to clean MAUDE up.

MAUDE:

How come they haven't got you?

FERNANDO:

Who, madam?

MAUDE:

Them. Outside.

FERNANDO:

I work for you, madam.

MAUDE:

And what's your name?

FERNANDO:

Fernando.

MAUDE:

Fernando. What an alluring name. Fernando.

FERNANDO:

Yes maam.

MAUDE:

Are you new?

FERNANDO:

No madam.

MAUDE:

How long have you worked for me, Fernando?

FERNANDO:

Quite some time, maam.

MAUDE:

Have you?

FERNANDO:

Yes madam.

MAUDE:

You're quite handsome, Fernando.

FERNANDO:

Yes maam.

MAUDE:

You would think I'd remember such a face.

Pause.

Fernando.

Beat.

Finish my face. I could have a visitor at any moment.

FERNANDO:

Yes maam.

FERNANDO finishes. He picks up everything he brought out and moves to exit. He stops.

FERNANDO:

Are the children coming?

MAUDE:

Children?

Yes madam.

FERNANDO:

I don't have any children.

MAUDE:

Yes maam.

FERNANDO:

FERNANDO exits. MAUDE takes the letter out of her dress and rereads it, lips moving.

Children.

MAUDE:

War overtakes her. MAUDE listens.

ACT I SCENE II

MAUDE lays draped across the chaise lounge. The doorbell rings.

Come in.

MAUDE:

Her ANALYST enters. He is in control. He moves her as though she is not a woman, but a doll. Their dialogue should be spoken quickly – they have done this before – up until the mention of MAUDE'S dreams.

Good evening, Ms. Maude.

ANALYST:

Hello. Come sit. Please.

MAUDE:

Her ANALYST ignores her request and immediately starts examining her head, face, and eyes. All the while scribbling in his notebook. His movement is slow and deliberate.

It has come to my attention that you have not been feeling well.

ANALYST:

No, I guess I haven't.

MAUDE:

ANALYST:

Please, tell me what has been irking your psyche.

MAUDE:

Everything.

ANALYST:

What about everything?

MAUDE:

Everything.

ANALYST:

Specifics, Maude.

MAUDE:

My life is a dream.

ANALYST:

What sort of dream?

MAUDE:

Did you know I had children, doctor? I woke up today and there was a telegram telling me they were coming home. Here. Here is home.

ANALYST:

We've talked about this before.

MAUDE:

We have?

ANALYST now checks her vital signs. He checks her throat, her heart, her lungs. As he does this, he grazes her breast.

MAUDE:

Are you sure you weren't dreaming?

ANALYST:

I do not dream – tell me more about what you are feeling.

MAUDE grabs his hand and keeps it at her breast. She forces his hand in a rough circular motion.

MAUDE:

That feels nice.

ANALYST:

Does it?

MAUDE:

No.

ANALYST pulls his hand back.

ANALYST:

Of course it does.

ANALYST writes in his notebook.

MAUDE:

Don't stop.

ANALYST:

Tell me about your children.

MAUDE:

What about them?

ANALYST:

Anything.

MAUDE:

I don't know them.

ANALYST:

They're your children.

MAUDE:

I don't remember them.

ANALYST:

You must remember something.

MAUDE:

Not a thing. But I've been having the most peculiar sleep lately.

ANALYST:

What is so peculiar about this sleep?

MAUDE:

My dreams.

ANALYST:

I would like to see them. May I?

MAUDE:

Oh they're luscious really. But...

As MAUDE tells her dream her chest begins to rise up and down as she writhes and squirms. Her breathing gets heavy. She is entering the dream. The ANALYST comes with her. The dialogue should no longer be as quick as it was and everything should feel like a dream.

MAUDE:

I feel like someone is looking for me. They're always reaching for me, pulling at me, wanting something.

ANALYST:

What do they want, Maude?

The sounds of battle cries, yee haws, glasses breaking, and gunshots are heard.

MAUDE:

Me. They want me. Do I want them? Such powerful loins. I must want them. Oh, and all that noise. Can you hear them?

ANALYST:

Yes.

MAUDE:

They're ravishing me. Up and down. Everybody wants to fuck me.

MAUDE lies on the floor. She is slowly rocking her hips up and down. This is accompanied by moaning, heavy breathing, and the occasional giggle – she does this until she reaches her climax, then her body stops, motionless. She turns on her side with her back to the audience. When she rolls back over on her back she has a belly, obviously pregnant. Heavy breathing begins, rhythmic and slow, until it eventually gets harder and heavier and she starts to scream. She pulls something from between her legs – a doll baby. GABE starts to cry offstage. MAUDE tries to get up but she only falls back down again, her breathing begins again, followed by screaming. Soon she is pulling another doll from between her legs. SHIRLEY, like GABE, begins to cry

offstage. MAUDE gets up and examines the pair.

MAUDE:

Christ.

MAUDE watches her crying babies.

MAUDE:

Well you might as well stop this nonsense. It's not going to do you any good.

GABE and SHIRLEY stop crying.

MAUDE:

That's better. Care for a drink?

MAUDE picks up the two dolls and sits on the chaise lounge with them. She lifts up her shirt and places each one at a breast. As they eat, she grows visibly tired. The ANALYST watches her carefully and scribbles as she does this.

MAUDE:

Heathens.

MAUDE puts the two babies on the floor.

MAUDE:

And then she comes in.

ANALYST:

Who?

MAUDE:

The girl with the chicken head!

As MAUDE talks about the girl with the chicken head, the GIRL WITH THE CHICKEN HEAD enters. MAUDE does not immediately notice her.

MAUDE:

Those beady little eyes, I didn't know chickens had black eyes, but they do, little black dots. With that crooked beak. Gone, everyone, gone.

ANALYST:

What happened to them?

She pecked out their eyes.

MAUDE:

The GIRL WITH THE CHICKEN HEAD
pecks out the babies' eyes. GABE and
SHIRLEY scream off stage. She moves
towards MAUDE. MAUDE sees her.

She's here. Get away from me!

MAUDE:

The GIRL WITH THE CHICKEN HEAD
reaches towards MAUDE with both her
arms. MAUDE punches at the girl's head
over and over again. All the while the
ANALYST watches MAUDE and takes
something out of his pocket. A tiny hammer.
He also takes a handkerchief out of his
pocket and cleans this tool as MAUDE
continues.

You poke their eyes! But you can't poke my eyes! Get out of my house! Get out! Get out!

MAUDE:

The GIRL WITH THE CHICKEN HEAD
falls to the floor and crawls offstage.

Stay away!

MAUDE:

There is a change. The dream is over.

Repression.

ANALYST:

What?

MAUDE:

You have repressed all memories of your children because you want to live a fantasy.

ANALYST:

I don't.

MAUDE:

You do. But I can fix it.

ANALYST:

You can?

MAUDE:

ANALYST:

I can.

MAUDE:

How? Pills?

ANALYST:

No. Something we haven't tried before. Do you by chance have an ice pick?

MAUDE:

An ice pick? I don't know. I believe I would prefer pills though.

ANALYST:

Pills will not help you. The ice pick, Maude.

MAUDE:

If you insist. I'll ask that man.

ANALYST:

What man?

MAUDE:

The one who works for me. Do you know his name?

ANALYST:

Fernando?

MAUDE:

Yes. That's it. Fernando. Fernando!

FERNANDO quickly enters.

FERNANDO:

Yes madam? Good evening, doctor.

MAUDE:

Bring us an ice pick, Fernando.

FERNANDO:

Yes madam.

FERNANDO exits.

MAUDE:

What are you going to do with it?

ANALYST:

I am going to bring back the Maude you have lost.

How?

MAUDE:

FERNANDO enters with an ice pick. He gives it to MAUDE.

Your ice pick, madam.

FERNANDO:

Thank you Fernando - that will be all.

MAUDE:

FERNANDO exits. MAUDE gives the ice pick to the doctor.

And you're sure you can't fix me with a pill?

MAUDE:

Nothing will cure you like this will. Just a few quick taps and you will be as good as you once were.

ANALYST:

Doctor?

MAUDE:

Yes?

ANALYST:

MAUDE grabs his arms and desperately looks into his eyes.

Fix me.

MAUDE:

ANALYST takes MAUDE'S vital signs once again.

A few quick taps where?

MAUDE:

ANALYST gets on top of MAUDE and straddles her. He gets closer to her face as he examines her eyes. She believes he is leaning in to kiss her and she puckers up. She squeezes her eyes shut. He holds the ice pick in place with the hammer ready to tap.

Open your eyes, Maude.

ANALYST:

MAUDE opens her eyes and the
ANALYST'S hammer hits the pick.
MAUDE screams.

ACT I SCENE III

MAUDE lies asleep. She wears big
sunglasses over her eyes, very Hollywood.
FERNANDO enters wearing white gloves.
The following actions should be executed as
a series of poses held for ten seconds. This
should seem fragmented rather than fluid –
a significant amount of time has passed.
FERNANDO sits on the chaise lounge with
MAUDE –he watches her. He moves to her
feet, holds it out—rubbing. He straddles
her—rubbing. He lifts her glasses—
looking. He kisses her. FERNANDO exits.
MAUDE wakes up.

MAUDE:

Fernando?

MAUDE goes back to sleep.

GABE and SHIRLEY enter. They are both
dressed in sailor suits. They are adorable.
They each take their respective doll and
throw it offstage. They begin to shake
MAUDE awake.

Throughout the scene there are periods of
complete silence from MAUDE; during this
time she should not be paying attention to
the conversation occurring, but instead
looking away from the action and
obsessively rubbing her hands together in a
subtle fashion – these nervous ticks should
continue for the duration of the play.

GABE and SHIRLEY:

Mummy, mummy wake up! Mummy! Oh wake up, sleepyhead.

MAUDE wakes up.

MAUDE:

Where did you two come from?

SHIRLEY:

University, silly.

GABE:

Yeah mummy we're home for summer recess.

MAUDE:

University?

GABE:

Yes, mummy.

SHIRLEY:

Are you feeling alright? You look a little pale darling.

MAUDE:

Am I dreaming?

SHIRLEY pinches MAUDE and MAUDE squeaks.

SHIRLEY:

Of course you're not dreaming!

MAUDE:

I felt that. But...It feels like you were just born.

GABE:

We were just born.

MAUDE:

You were?

GABE:

Didn't you get our letter?

MAUDE:

Your letter?

MAUDE shakes her head a bit and adjusts her glasses.

MAUDE:

Your letter? Oh your letter. I've got it right here.

MAUDE pulls the letter out of her dress. She reads it while GABE mimes the words.

MAUDE:

“Dear Mum-

Put on some satin and lace because your babes will be home from University at the start of the Summer Solstice.

Cuddles and kisses,
Gabe and Shirley”

SHIRLEY:

Gabe wrote it.

GABE:

Sure did. Where’s your satin and lace, mum? That’s the same ratty dress you were wearing last time we saw you.

SHIRLEY:

I think it’s absolutely lovely!

GABE:

It’s horrendous. What’s for dinner?

MAUDE:

Oh. Why, I hadn’t thought about it, I’ll ask Fernando. Fernando!

FERNANDO enters.

FERNANDO:

Yes madam.

MAUDE:

It seems the children are home.

FERNANDO:

I can see that.

MAUDE:

Do you have dinner prepared?

FERNANDO:

Of course, madam.

GABE:

What is it?

FERNANDO:

Salisbury steak, master Gabe.

GABE:

I’m a vegetarian, you nit.

SHIRLEY:

But I'm not. I missed you Fernando.

FERNANDO:

There are vegetables as well.

SHIRLEY:

Did you miss me?

FERNANDO:

Yes, miss. Dinner is in the dining room.

SHIRLEY:

All those long, cold nights with nobody to keep me warm.

FERNANDO:

Very well, miss.

MAUDE:

Fernando?

FERNANDO:

Yes madam?

MAUDE:

I would like to have my dinner out here this evening,

SHIRLEY:

Oh me too!

GABE:

Me too, and don't forget my vegetables!

FERNANDO:

Very well. Dinner will be in the living area.

FERNANDO exits.

GABE:

He had better bring my vegetables.

SHIRLEY:

I didn't know you were a vegetarian.

GABE:

I am.

SHIRLEY:

Since when?

GABE:

Since now.

MAUDE:

Children. I've got a terrible headache can you please quit your bickering.

SHIRLEY:

Oh mummy, I'm sorry. I knew you weren't feeling well, I said it as soon as we came in, you just look so pale.

GABE:

I bet I can make you feel better – let me massage your head.

GABE joins MAUDE on the chaise lounge. He grabs her head and rubs it vigorously, then slowly, then he moves his hands down to the sides of her neck, eventually making his way to her collar bone.

All the while SHIRLEY hums a tune, a well-known children's song like "Hush, little baby," and dances around MAUDE and GABE.

SHIRLEY:

Two little babies home from school
Back to their genetic pool
Swimming in a house full of love
Flying high like a turkey or a dove!

Brother Gabe rubbed mummy's head,
Not too hard or she'll be dead
Sister Shirley –

GABE:

Quit your yammering!

SHIRLEY:

You never let me finish.

SHIRLEY moves to the corner and continues dancing,

SHIRLEY:

Sister Shirley's like a button cute,
Why can't they turn Gabe into a newt!

Gabe ignores SHIRLEY. He takes off MAUDE'S sunglasses, and sees her eye.

GABE:

Christ mum! What happened?

The doorbell rings. MAUDE grabs her sunglasses and puts them back on.

SHIRLEY:

I'll get it!

SHIRLEY answers the door.

SHIRLEY:

Why hello! Welcome to our house, what's that you've got there? A letter! Oh, how I just love mail. Buh-bye, now.

SHIRLEY looks at the letter.

SHIRLEY:

Oh poo. Gabe it's for you.

GABE:

Hold your horses, Shirl. Can't you see I'm rubbin' mum?

FERNANDO enters with a platter. On this platter are three tv dinners, each in its own black plastic container.

FERNANDO:

Dinner is served.

SHIRLEY jumps up to help FERNANDO.

SHIRLEY:

Fernando! Let me help you.

GABE:

Oh Christ, what is this?

FERNANDO:

Salisbury steak, master Gabe.

GABE:

I asked for vegetables!

FERNANDO:

The dinner includes potatoes and creamed corn.

GABE:

But it's touched the meat.

SHIRLEY:

Cut it out, Gabe. Oh Fernando, this meal looks scrumptious! Did you really make all this for me?

FERNANDO:

Yes, miss.

SHIRLEY:

Oh what a doll you are.

MAUDE:

Thank you Fernando, that will be all.

FERNANDO:

Very well.

FERNANDO exits.

SHIRLEY begins to eat while GABE merely picks at his food. MAUDE just stares down at hers after the first bite.

GABE:

This is garbage. Absolute garbage. Do you see this mother? It's grey. All of it's grey. Grey food does not sit well with my palate.

SHIRLEY:

You're just being contrary Gabe. Isn't he, mummy?

MAUDE:

It does taste like shit.

SHIRLEY:

Mother! Gabe! You two are impossible! I'm going to have to eat everything you don't finish. I don't want Fernando to feel bad about his work—Got to keep his morale up. Really Gabe, must you spoil everything?

SHIRLEY takes the uneaten dinners and gobbles them down.

GABE:

He should feel bad, he's a twat.

SHIRLEY:

He is not.

(Beat.)

Don't you mean twit, anyway?

GABE:

No you nit I mean twat.

SHIRLEY:

Fernando is a lovely man.

GABE:

You just want to screw him. Keep his morale up.

SHIRLEY:

You're disgusting.

GABE:

Not as disgusting as you. Looking to screw the help.

SHIRLEY hits GABE in the head and turns
to MAUDE, sweetly.

SHIRLEY:

I can't believe you haven't asked us what we learned yet in school, mummy. Don't you want to know what your darlings have been doing?

MAUDE:

Oh. What did you learn in school?

SHIRLEY:

Pick a subject and we'll tell you all about it.

MAUDE:

I don't know.

SHIRLEY:

Let me see, what should we talk about Gabey? What is the most titillating, tantalizing, fact that we have learned all year? I just don't know – all we talk about in school now is those smelly old Indians because of the war –

GABE:

I'll give you a war!

GABE bends over and farts on SHIRLEY.
SHIRLEY screams.

SHIRLEY:

I hope they draft you and make you go fight far away from me !

Beat.

Oh! I know! Let's do a play! I've got it! I'll be the star, Mary Rowlandson and you be one of the

Indians who took her.

GABE makes whooping sounds as he runs around the room. He picks up a fork and grabs SHIRLEY. He holds it to her throat. SHIRLEY squeals in delight.

As GABE and SHIRLEY play, the sounds outside grow louder and louder. Both speak louder in response to the growing noise, but no one acknowledges it otherwise.

GABE:

You cook meat. Or I cook you.

SHIRLEY crosses herself. MAUDE lies back and falls asleep.

SHIRLEY:

Oh god, please do not let this monster cook me. I will cook your meat, squawking duck, but you must not touch any of my holy places, those are saved for my husband.

GABE smacks SHIRLEY and she falls to the floor.

GABE:

You make me cloth.

SHIRLEY:

I will make you clothes, squawking duck but you must promise never to take them off in front of me.

GABE kicks SHIRLEY.

GABE:

Stupid woman.

SHIRLEY gets up.

SHIRLEY:

Indians don't say words like stupid. Now try it again.

GABE:

Okay fartface.

SHIRLEY:

Quit it, Gabe. Mother will never learn it if we don't do it for real.

GABE kicks SHIRLEY extra hard and she

falls to the ground. He grunts.

GABE:

Woman have no brains!

SHIRLEY giggles. GABE kicks her again.

SHIRLEY:

Harder Gabe!

GABE grabs her hair and attempts to scalp her with a fork.

GABE:

Me eat woman's brains.

SHIRLEY:

But Gabey, you just said I didn't have brains – you've ruined it twice now! It's hopeless. Did you like our scene, mummy? Teacher says it was just like that.

SHIRLEY notices that MAUDE has fallen asleep.

SHIRLEY:

Mummy! Wake up! Did you even watch our scene?

MAUDE:

I was just resting my head.

SHIRLEY:

Your eyes were closed! I saw them from behind your glasses!

MAUDE:

I was sleeping.

SHIRLEY:

But mummy, aren't you even a little curious about what we've been doing?

MAUDE:

Not particularly.

SHIRLEY:

Fine. All I want is a mum who cares about me. Instead all I get is a mum who sits around like a bowl of lumpy potatoes.

SHIRLEY finally acknowledges the sounds outside.

SHIRLEY:

What IS that sound? That's it. Everybody wants to ruin my scene!

SHIRLEY runs to the door she opens it and steps offstage.

SHIRLEY:

PLEASE BE QUI-

Loud shots are heard. Followed by SHIRLEY'S screams.

SHIRLEY reenters. She holds her hands over her face, as blood streams through her fingers. MAUDE never reacts.

SHIRLEY:

I've been hit, oh I've been hit! I'm blind!

GABE begins to act like Squawking Duck again. He chases the bleeding SHIRLEY with a fork.

GABE:

Oh me love eyeballs. You give me one for appetizer, and I eat rest for dessert.

SHIRLEY:

Indians didn't know words like appetizer, you idiot!

SHIRLEY exits. Offstage you can still hear her.

SHIRLEY:

Fernando! Fernando? Oh Fernando! I've been shot, I've been shot. My eyes! I'm blind! I require a medic!

GABE sits next to MAUDE. He plays with her hair.

GABE:

You're not yourself, mum. Do you need me to fix you?

MAUDE:

I need my analyst.

GABE:

What's he gonna be able to do that I can't?

MAUDE:

Fix me.

GABE:

I told you I would fix you.

MAUDE:

Call my analyst, Gabe.

GABE:

If he doesn't fix you, I will.

GABE exits.

MAUDE:

Good boy.

MAUDE notices the letter SHIRLEY left.

MAUDE:

Gabe!

GABE reenters.

MAUDE points to the letter on the floor.

GABE takes the letter. He opens it.

An arrow flies across the stage and gunshots are heard. Confetti falls. A loud BOOMING VOICE is heard as GABE silently rereads the letter over and over.

BOOMING VOICE:

"Dear Sir-

Congratulations! You have been selected to exercise your civic duty. Currently, our country is in the middle of a civil war. East verses West, or cowboys and Indians, as we at the House of White like to call it. You will be fighting for the East, you cowboy you. Report to duty tomorrow at oh nine hundred.

Potus"

MAUDE:

Gabe.

Silence.

Gabe.

GABE:

Yeah mum?

My analyst.

MAUDE:

Right.

GABE:

GABE folds up his letter and puts it in his pocket. He exits. FERNANDO enters. His white gloves are stained with a red color.

Is there anything else I can get you, maam?

FERNANDO:

No.

MAUDE:

Tea?

FERNANDO:

No.

MAUDE:

Toilet?

FERNANDO:

No.

MAUDE:

Another ice pick?

FERNANDO:

MAUDE sits up, surprised.

Why yes. That would be lovely.

MAUDE:

FERNANDO takes the ice pick out of his pocket.

Thank you.

MAUDE:

FERNANDO exits.

ACT I SCENE IV

MAUDE sits with the ice pick in her hands.
The doorbell rings.

MAUDE:

Come in doctor.

The ANALYST enters. His clothes are torn, his hair is a mess, and there is blood on his face.

ANALYST:

It's a war zone out there.

MAUDE:

So I've heard.

The ANALYST points to a bloody ear.

ANALYST:

I lost my ear on the way.

MAUDE:

It didn't work.

The ANALYST moves his head to hear.

ANALYST:

Pardon me?

MAUDE:

We have to do it again.

ANALYST:

You must wait for the results, no procedure has immediate results.

MAUDE takes off her glasses. Her left eye is swollen, black, blue, with crusty blood all over it. She grabs the ANALYST.

MAUDE:

I know that it did not work, doctor. I can feel it in my head. You must do it again. These children are strangers screaming for my attention and Fernando –

ANALYST:

Impossible. I cannot do another procedure so close to the last. It could have grave results.

MAUDE lifts the ice pick and holds it at the ANALYST'S jugular.

MAUDE:

You said you would fix me, and I want to be fixed now.

I cannot do it. It's not safe.

ANALYST:

It is.

MAUDE:

It's not. If you die –

ANALYST:

Just fix me.

MAUDE:

Did you feel any sort of change after the last procedure?

ANALYST:

No.

MAUDE:

Not a thing?

ANALYST:

No. Yes. A pinch. The girl pinched me. I felt that!

MAUDE:

Silence. The ANALYST removes a stethoscope from inside his jacket and places the chest piece on top of her head. He listens.

Then this one will work wonders for you, I am quite sure.

ANALYST:

He readjusts his war torn suit, takes a handkerchief and wipes his bloody ear and takes out his notebook and scribbles. He removes a small hammer and gestures for MAUDE to sit down. She sits, ready for him to hammer into her brain. Her eyes are wide open.

The right one this time.

MAUDE:

The ANALYST hammers the ice pick into her eye. She doesn't scream or flinch. When he is done, she puts her sunglasses back on.

Thank you.

MAUDE:

The ANALYST opens the door. An arrow flies in. MAUDE lies back and goes to sleep. SHIRLEY enters with swollen eyes. She is holding one of the baby dolls from earlier. The doll's eyes are gouged out.

SHIRLEY:

Goo-goo ga-ga. What's that sweetheart, you're hungry? Goo, goo, goo. Oh well mummy will feed you darling. Ga-ga. Mummy will always feed her baby when she's hungry.

SHIRLEY puts the baby to her breast. She makes the sound of a baby sucking. She giggles.

SHIRLEY:

Don't tug too hard now, mummy's got sensitive nipples. All done?

She kisses her baby.

SHIRLEY:

Mummy, would you like to meet your granddaughter, Little Sweet Shirley Junior – Sugar, for short? Mummy?

MAUDE does not respond.

SHIRLEY:

Don't mind her, sugar, I'm sure she's just dreaming of her sweet grandbaby.

SHIRLEY feels her way over to the chaise lounge and tries to give the baby to MAUDE.

SHIRLEY:

Don't you want to hold Sugar, mummy?

SHIRLEY drops the baby into MAUDE'S lap, but misses. The baby falls to the floor and her head falls off.

SHIRLEY:

Isn't she just a doll, mummy? Mummy?

SHIRLEY feels MAUDE'S lap.

SHIRLEY:

Oh mummy, you're not even holding her right!

SHIRLEY picks up the headless doll and

moves to exit.

SHIRLEY:

Your silly grandmummy doesn't even know how to hold babies, Sugar-boo. Let's go and find Fernando instead – he adores children!

SHIRLEY exits. FERNANDO enters. He walks over to MAUDE and lifts up her glasses. He kisses her forehead and puts her glasses in his pocket. He exits.

ACT I SCENE V

MAUDE is awake. She holds the doll head in her hands, cradling it lovingly. Both eyes are now black eyes.

GABE enters doing a battle cry. He is dressed as an Indian. He is wearing a loincloth, a full headdress, and lots of war paint. He carries a tomahawk.

MAUDE:

What are you doing, Gabey?

GABE:

I am being an Indian. I hate cowboys. They're a bunch of stupid pricks with stupid hats. I want to be an Indian.

MAUDE:

You look like an Indian.

GABE:

That's cause I am one. I don't want to fight for the east, mum, I want to fight for the west. And I'm going to, no matter what that nit Potus says.

MAUDE:

Why don't you come rest your head on my lap. That'll make you feel better.

GABE lies down next to MAUDE and places his head on her lap. She immediately begins to play absentmindedly with his hair.

GABE:

So you're feeling better then?

MAUDE:

Much.

A long silence. The more MAUDE plays with GABE'S hair the more childish he gets, until he is curled up in the fetal position, sucking his thumb.

GABE:

Mummy, I want some cherries.

MAUDE:

Of course my darling. I will call Fernando. Fernando? Fernando!

GABE:

Get out here you lazy sack of shit.

FERNANDO enters.

MAUDE:

We would like some cherries, Fernando.

Silence.

MAUDE:

Cherries, Fernando.

FERNANDO:

There aren't any, maam.

GABE:

You're a liar. I bet you ate them.

MAUDE:

That's just nonsense Fernando. We must have cherries.

GABE:

Do you know what I do to liars, Fernando?

FERNANDO:

No madam. The icebox is quite empty.

MAUDE:

Did you eat the cherries Fernando?

FERNANDO:

No madam.

GABE:

He's lying, mummy.

GABE gets up and puts a scalpel under FERNANDO'S neck. FERNANDO ignores

him.

GABE:

Quit your lying or I'll slice your throat.

MAUDE:

This is impossible –

FERNANDO:

There is no money, madam.

GABE:

You hear that mother, now he's stealing our money!

FERNANDO:

That reminds me, isn't it time for your bath, Master Gabe? What is that you have smeared all over your face?

GABE:

Why don't you just mind your own. You just want to see my peen.

GABE lifts up his loincloth and flashes him.

MAUDE:

Please stop it Gabe. Why wouldn't you get me cherries, you know they're my favorite. Are you sure that you didn't?

FERNANDO is silent while MAUDE stares intently at him. It is as though she is remembering everything she had once forgotten.

MAUDE:

Fernando?

FERNANDO:

Yes madam.

MAUDE:

Do you know where to find the cherries?

FERNANDO:

I do.

MAUDE:

Fernando. Fernando. Seems so wrong. Fernando. Will you go find them?

FERNANDO reaches into his empty pockets.

FERNANDO:

Yes maam.

MAUDE:

Thank you.

FERNANDO exits.

GABE:

That Fernando is a real bull shitter.

MAUDE:

Don't say that, Gabe.

GABE:

Sorry mummy.

MAUDE:

You shouldn't say bad things about him at all.

GABE:

But he's our slave. That's what you do to slaves.

MAUDE:

I don't think he's a slave, Gabe.

GABE:

Of course he is.

MAUDE:

I think he's one of us.

GABE:

I think you should check your eyes.

MAUDE:

I think...he's your father.
(No response.)

He is your father! I had sex with Fernando! I remember! I had forgotten once but now I remember. It's working. The treatments! Did you hear me, Gabe?

GABE:

I heard you. My father is a millionaire, not a slave, silly.

MAUDE:

Fernando is your father.

GABE:

He is not. My father struck gold when I was just a boy –

MAUDE:

No.

GABE:

He's a real tycoon in the oil industry!

MAUDE:

No.

GABE:

He's the best damn–

MAUDE:

No Gabe. You only think that because you dreamed it to be true. It was a fantasy, but we're not living in that fantasy now.

GABE:

You're lying to me!

MAUDE:

I'm not lying to you. I had sex with Fernando twenty years ago. Nine months later you were born.

GABE:

How could you do this to me, you slut? You know I'm going off to war soon!

MAUDE:

I haven't done anything to you. You're a big boy and you need to know the truth. We all need the truth.

GABE:

No. I think you're lying. I think you want me to get angry so that I will lose my head when I fight the cowboys. Then I'll be dead and daddy's heir will be gone, and you will get all his money, you money-grubbing whore!

MAUDE:

There is no money. I had sex with my butler.

GABE:

Yes there is, look at this house!

MAUDE:

Gabey, we don't even have cherries.

GABE:

But we do, Fernando just eats them.

FERNANDO enters stage left as GABE says his name. He carries a pathetic pie.

MAUDE:

You shouldn't call your father by his first name.

GABE:

Okay mummy. Hello daddy.

FERNANDO:

Pardon me sir?

MAUDE:

I remember Fernando.

FERNANDO:

You do?

MAUDE:

I do.

FERNANDO:

What do you remember?

MAUDE:

You, Fernando.

GABE:

What's that you've got in your hands, daddy?

FERNANDO:

You remember me?

MAUDE:

Yes. But Fernando wasn't always your name now was it?

FERNANDO:

No.

MAUDE:

What was it?

FERNANDO drops his accent.

FERNANDO:

Earl.

GABE:

Me like pie. Is that pie for me?

MAUDE:

That's right. Earl. I had forgotten.

FERNANDO drops the pie and MAUDE
grabs his hands.

GABE:

Look at that, mummy. He didn't even make us a cherry pie, it looks like he made us rhubarb. Rhubarb Schmubarb, that's not what you feed a boy about to go off and save the west. Shows how much daddy cares about us. Just wants us to starve and die.

MAUDE:

But why did you change your name?

FERNANDO:

You wanted a foreign butler.

MAUDE:

Right. I quite like Fernando better. Do you mind if I call you that from now on?

FERNANDO:

No.

GABE takes a piece of pie off the floor and
stands between the middle of them to show
MAUDE.

MAUDE:

And Gabe here is a product of our passion. Do you remember that night we shared twenty years ago?

MAUDE begins to imagine that night.

MAUDE:

Your hands groping my breast, your tongue –

GABE:

Yeah Fernando, don't you remember when you fucked my mother?

As MAUDE and FERNANDO talk
MAUDE gets closer to FERNANDO'S face
and ignores GABE. GABE sneaks behind
FERNANDO with his tomahawk.

MAUDE:

You inside of me. Oh Fernando! We mus'nt be so lewd. Little Gabe can hear.

Beat.

Now how did we get so poor?

FERNANDO:

Poor?

MAUDE:

I know you are just a butler but why didn't you make money while I was lost? A woman needs cherries.

FERNANDO:

I've worked for you all this time.

MAUDE:

And I appreciate your many years of service, but –

GABE eases behind FERNANDO and slits his throat with the tomahawk.

GABE:

But we won't be needing your help anymore.

MAUDE:

Gabe!

FERNANDO'S limp body falls to the floor.
MAUDE screams.

GABE:

This man is not my father.

GABE slices open FERNANDO'S stomach and pulls out a bloody mess. MAUDE cries as she watches.

GABE:

Look mummy, I found our cherries. Looks like Fernando stole them just like I said.

MAUDE:

He did?

GABE:

Yes mummy.

MAUDE:

He wouldn't.

GABE:

He did.

MAUDE:
You're sure?

GABE:
I'm sure.

MAUDE:
Good help is so hard to come by these days.

MAUDE and GABE each take a piece of
FERNANDO'S stomach and pop it into
their mouths. They chew.

SHIRLEY enters.

SHIRLEY:
When's dinner, mum? I'm absolutely starved.

GABE hands SHIRLEY a cherry from
FERNANDO'S belly.

GABE:
Eat this.

SHIRLEY chews.

SHIRLEY:
How I just love cherries! Did Fernando get these for us?

GABE:
Of course he did, sis.

MAUDE and SHIRLEY together:
I love him.

Black out.

ACT II SCENE I

The setup is the same as before; however,
now there are smears of blood around the
room.

MAUDE has propped FERNANDO up onto
the chaise lounge. He sits upright while she
runs around the room making plans. His
throat is still split, and his guts are smeared
all over his chest and stomach. MAUDE
looks better than before, she has fixed her
hair and wears an old wedding dress.

MAUDE stands fixing FERNANDO'S tie,
and smoothing out his suit.

MAUDE:

Oh Fernando! This is the happiest day of my life.

FERNANDO:

Mine too, madam.

MAUDE:

Fernando. You are going to have to stop calling me madam. My name is Maude. I told you, I remember everything. You must forgive me for forgetting, do you forgive me? Oh please say that you do. I'll just die if you don't.

FERNANDO:

I forgive you...Maude.

Pause.

Maude.

MAUDE:

That's right darling.

FERNANDO:

What about the children?

MAUDE:

Gabe and Shirley?

FERNANDO:

Yes maam.

MAUDE:

Gabe and Shirley are adults now, they don't need us –

FERNANDO:

Yes ma –

MAUDE:

Gabe and Shirley were mistakes. Without them, maybe I would have never forgot. Maybe we could have been together all this time. Oh nevermind that.

There is a voice. The BOOMING
PREACHER.

BOOMING PREACHER:

Dearly Beloved –

MAUDE:

Oh hush up, Fernando! The ceremony's about to start. We're here, Father!

BOOMING PREACHER:

We are gathered here today, to join this lovely pair, Maude and Earl.

MAUDE:

His name's Fernando, Father.

BOOMING PREACHER:

Maude and Fernando. In holy matrimony.

MAUDE:

That's marriage, Fernando.

BOOMING PREACHER:

Maude, do you take Fernando as your awfully wedded husband?

MAUDE:

I do!

BOOMING PREACHER:

Fernando, do you take Maude as your awfully wedded wife?

FERNANDO:

I do.

MAUDE swoons.

BOOMING PREACHER:

Then I say you're married. You may kiss the bride.

MAUDE kisses FERNANDO, passionately.
The BOOMING PREACHER is gone.

MAUDE:

We're married!

(Beat.)

Do you know what lovers do when they're married?

FERNANDO:

What's that?

MAUDE:

Have babies!

FERNANDO:

I –

MAUDE:

Oh Fernando, your name is so exotic, do you think our babies would be exotic? Maybe little black babies with big puffy lips and almonds for eyes, or little asian babies with rice bellies. We should probably get to making these babies right away, let's start now.

MAUDE climbs on top of FERNANDO.

MAUDE:

Let's make a baby, Fernando.

FERNANDO:

I –

MAUDE:

Fine. If you only want to focus on me right now that's just fine. Let's discuss us, shall we? Where will we honeymoon?

FERNANDO:

Here?

MAUDE:

Oh you. All freshly married couples must travel for their honeymoon.

FERNANDO:

But –

MAUDE:

But maybe you're right. I do love this house. And that painting, I couldn't leave it, and I don't think I have a suitcase large enough to fit it.

FERNANDO:

You're right.

MAUDE:

No you're right, I'm so glad I remember you now.

FERNANDO:

Me too.

They kiss.

An arrow sails into the room, and lands in the middle of the painting. It is from GABE'S bow and arrow. GABE and SHIRLEY enter. GABE is wearing the same outfit as before, except there is more war paint on his face and arms now. This war

paint is blood from FERNANDO. He is emitting a war cry. SHIRLEY wears a typical nurse's uniform – all white, with a cap with a red cross. When the children enter FERNANDO falls from MAUDE'S embrace, dead. MAUDE is not disturbed by this.

GABE:

Hoy oy oy oy Hoy oy oy oy
Kill the Cowboys
Kill the Cowboys
Hoy oy oy oy Hoy oy oy oy
Slice 'em Dice' em

Don't think twice'em.

Hoy oy oy oy Hoy oy oy oy

Fuck their wives

Steal their lives
Hoy oy oy oy Hoy oy oy oy
KAPOW.

SHIRLEY:

Our Father,
Who art in heaven, Harold be thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those that trespass against us.

And lead us not into Temptation; but

deliver us from evil.

AMEN.

GABE:

You better kiss us goodbye, mum, 'cause we're off to fight!

SHIRLEY:

Don't you worry, mummy, I won't be fighting, I'll just be healing the wounds of all those poor sick men.

GABE:

Aw Christ, you're just looking for a husband.

SHIRLEY:

Am not!

GABE:

Are too!

SHIRLEY:

Am not! Mum, tell him I'm not looking for a husband.

MAUDE:

She's blind, Gabe. She won't be able to see them.

SHIRLEY:

Compassion knows no boundaries, mother. I can still see goodness.

GABE:

And feel money in their wallets.

SHIRLEY:

You're disgusting.

GABE:

You are.

SHIRLEY:

Tell mum how you're not even fighting for the cowboys. Did you know that mum? Gabe is doing exactly not what Potus said, he's only being an Indian because he's got a stupid costume. Everyone's going to know that those feathers aren't real anyway. There's no such thing as a pink bird.

GABE:

Ever heard of a flamingo, you turd.

SHIRLEY:

Flamingos don't have feathers they can't even fly.

GABE:

How do you know what color my feathers are anyway? I thought you were blind.

SHIRLEY:

I can still smell cheap color.

GABE:

Why don't you just shut your yap. I am in strong moral opposition to the cowboys and I will not fight with them because I want to cut out their tongues.

SHIRLEY:

No one is morally opposed to cowboys.

GABE:

I am.

SHIRLEY pulls a worn photograph of the Marlboro man out of her bosom. There are holes poked all around his outline.

SHIRLEY:

Who could oppose this?

GABE:

See! I knew you were just looking for a husband. What are all those holes doing around his head? You been seeing with your fingers? I bet you're doing more than that with those fingers.

SHIRLEY:

I'm not! I'm not! I'm not! I'm just remembering who I'm fighting for. I'm doing what is right, I'm going to be an angel of mercy for those cowboys. As soon as we walk out that door you are just a stinky savage, and not my brother.

GABE shoots an arrow at her head and narrowly misses.

GABE:

Great. Fantastic. Terrific. Let's just kiss our mum goodbye and cut those ties that bind us.

SHIRLEY:

Goodbye mummy, I'll miss you so. I'm sorry our visit had to be so short, but my country needs me right now.

MAUDE:

Goodbye Shirley.

SHIRLEY hugs and kisses MAUDE.

GABE:

Move it, it's my turn.

SHIRLEY:

You can't rush goodbyes, Gabe. Aren't you proud of me, mummy?

GABE:

Why should mum be proud of a self-serving twit like you?

SHIRLEY:

You really are a vile human. I'm glad you'll die an Indian.

GABE:

And I'm glad you'll die an idiot. Goodbye mum.

MAUDE:

Goodbye Gabe.

GABE and SHIRLEY move to exit. GABE notices the dead FERNANDO lying on the floor.

GABE:

Oh Shirley, aren't you going to say goodbye to Fernando?

SHIRLEY:

How could I have forgotten! Fernando? Fernando! Where's Fernando? Fernando, I have to go, but I'll miss you so much!

GABE and SHIRLEY exit to the sounds of war and screams outside. You hear GABE yip and SHIRLEY squeal and then there is nothing else from them. After this, the war sounds should grow fainter, until they are no longer heard at all.

ACT II SCENE II

MAUDE:

I thought they'd never go. That was smart of you to keep so quiet just now. This way they won't expect anything.

Silence.

Fernando? Fernando, darling, they're gone, you can wake up now.

MAUDE shakes FERNANDO.

A heavy sleeper are you? Well its almost twilight so you'll never get to bed tonight if you don't get up now. Fernando. Fernando?

MAUDE realizes that FERNANDO seems to be more dead than asleep.

Fernando? Fernando you really must wake up. Oh Christ, why won't you wake up? You were just here. Fernando please, we've got plans, you must wake up so that we can make our babies and start all over.

MAUDE grabs her head. Beat.

Oh my head. The treatment, that's it. It must be taking you away from me. I can't lose you again, I just can't. I will call my analyst and he'll help me get you back.

MAUDE exits stage left but can still be heard offstage. The GIRL WITH THE CHICKEN HEAD enters and begins to peck and nibble at FERNANDO'S insides.

MAUDE:

I seem to have forgotten his number, Fernando. Do you have it?

MAUDE enters and sees the GIRL WITH THE CHICKEN HEAD.

MAUDE:

You! Get away from him! Get!

MAUDE hits the girl with the chicken head

until she falls to the ground and MAUDE kicks her. MAUDE grabs both of her arms and drags her to the door. She throws her outside. When she does this the ANALYST appears. The left side of his head is bandaged.

MAUDE:

You're here.

ANALYST:

To check your head.

MAUDE:

I was just about to call you but then she came back.

ANALYST:

Shirley?

MAUDE:

No.

ANALYST:

Who?

MAUDE:

The girl with the chicken head. She was trying to eat Fernando.

ANALYST:

I see.

The ANALYST notices the dead
FERNANDO on the floor.

ANALYST:

What happened?

MAUDE:

She wanted to eat him. I forgot him, but then I had him, and now I've lost him. You must get him back for me, doctor!

ANALYST:

You mentioned earlier that you remembered –

MAUDE:

Everything. I remembered everything.

The following lines should follow the
ANALYST'S train of thought. Although he

is saying it out loud he is talking to himself.

ANALYST:

The procedure's been working.

MAUDE:

Yes but now it's worn off. I need more treatment, Doctor.

ANALYST:

This is an unconventional course of treatment –

MAUDE:

Do it, doctor.

ANALYST:

It could bring about death in the patient.

MAUDE:

You must do it.

ANALYST:

But it could bring about recovery.

MAUDE:

Doctor, please!

ANALYST:

A recovery from this type of repression would be very impressive. Very, very impressive.

(Beat.)

Maude. I will need a corkscrew.

MAUDE exits. The ANALYST examines FERNANDO, he checks for a pulse. He sees the neck and belly wounds and backs away from the body. He pulls his notebook out of his pocket and scribbles.

MAUDE:

What does it look like?

ANALYST:

Silver with wood on top.

MAUDE reenters.

MAUDE:

I can't find one anywhere!

ANALYST:

Maybe you should check him.

MAUDE:

He's asleep.

ANALYST:

He is the butler.

MAUDE:

Right.

MAUDE carefully rummages through FERNANDO'S pockets, as she does so she kisses him when her face grazes his. She finally finds a corkscrew in his jacket and gives it to the ANALYST.

MAUDE:

Bring him back.

The ANALYST places the corkscrew in the center of this square and taps it gently with his hammer. He then turns the screw into her skull. She squeezes FERNANDO'S hand.

MAUDE:

Push harder, doctor, he's not squeezing me back.

The ANALYST screws into her skull even harder.

MAUDE:

I said harder, you puss!

ANALYST:

That's all I can do for now. You should begin to feel the effects of the procedure very soon.

MAUDE:

No, no. I must feel him now. Let me do it.

MAUDE starts poking her finger into the new hole atop her head.

ANALYST:

Impossible. Your fingers are not sterile. You must wait.

The ANALYST bandages up MAUDE'S

head with white gauze.

ANALYST:

You shall feel better soon. If you experience any difficulties, please call me.

MAUDE grabs the ANALYST'S arm as he tries to go.

MAUDE:

Doctor.

ANALYST:

Yes Maude?

MAUDE:

My brain feels like marshmallows.

ANALYST:

Very good my dear, that's what we want.

MAUDE:

Will I get him back?

ANALYST:

Of course. Then you may roast your marshmallows together.

MAUDE:

Lovely.

The ANALYST exits.

MAUDE:

Oh my sweet, beautiful butler, you'll be back to me soon, so soon.

Beat.

Oh! I bet I know why you're being so still. You're sulking because we didn't have a wedding cake. Silly me. How could we have had a proper wedding with no cake? I will make one for you! We'll need sugar, eggs – we've already got eggs, her eggs, but they'll do – and butter, and marshmallows, of course!

MAUDE runs offstage to find these things.
She returns empty handed.

MAUDE:

I'm really going to need you to go to the store, Fernando. How can I make you a cake if you don't get me the things I need?

Beat.

I need you, Fernando. My body needs you to lick me, I mean like me, I mean love me, oh shove me into the oven, a bun in the oven!

The doorbell rings.

MAUDE:

Pardon me.

MAUDE walks in zigzags over to the door.
She opens it.

MAUDE:

Why hello.

At the door is ARMY MAN, a man in uniform. He wears a green suit. He carries two large boxes, one under each arm.

ARMY MAN:

Are you Miss Maude?

MAUDE:

You bet I am.

ARMY MAN:

Your head –

MAUDE:

Is getting better. Come in.

ARMY MAN:

I shouldn't, I'm just –

MAUDE:

I said come in!

MAUDE pulls the ARMY MAN in. He is careful not to drop the boxes.

MAUDE:

Now what is a fella like you doing ringing my bell-a?

ARMY MAN:

I'm ju –

MAUDE:

It would be a swell-a if you would call me Stella.

ARMY MAN:

You said you were Miss Maude.

MAUDE:

I said call me Stella.

ARMY MAN:

I'm sorry. Stella.

MAUDE:

Swell-a.

MAUDE takes the packages out from under his arms and puts them on the floor. She takes his hands in hers and pulls him around the room.

MAUDE:

Your face is so pretty.

ARMY MAN:

Excuse me?

MAUDE:

Your genes must be swell, I bet you look so good in jeans.

ARMY MAN:

I must –

MAUDE:

Look at your teeth, you look like a horse!

ARMY MAN:

Thanks.

MAUDE:

So it's packages you deliver?

ARMY MAN:

It is, I –

MAUDE:

Any kind of package?

ARMY MAN:

Only ones from –

MAUDE:

I know what kind of package I want.

MAUDE begins to unbutton his pants.

Yours.

Miss Mau –

ARMY MAN:

Stella.

MAUDE:

Stella.

ARMY MAN:

Yes.

MAUDE:

We shouldn't do –

ARMY MAN:

MAUDE puts her hand in his pants.

What?

MAUDE:

This.

ARMY MAN:

We should?

MAUDE:

Not.

ARMY MAN:

No?

MAUDE:

The ARMY MAN'S knees begin to buckle.

Oh yes.

ARMY MAN:

That's better.

MAUDE:

MAUDE pulls the ARMY MAN to the ground. He lies on top of her and thrusts. They emit grunts and moans.

How lovely.

MAUDE:

ARMY MAN:

Thanks.

MAUDE:

Love me.

ARMY MAN:

Do I?

MAUDE:

Yes.

ARMY MAN:

No.

MAUDE:

You lie.

ARMY MAN stands up and begins to button his pants.

MAUDE:

Do you think we did it?

ARMY MAN:

Did what?

MAUDE:

Made a baby?

ARMY MAN:

A baby? I sure as hell hope not.

MAUDE taps her belly.

MAUDE:

We did. I can feel its heart beat beat beat, and its feet, they kick, how quick this happened.

ARMY MAN:

You're crazy.

MAUDE:

I'm pregnant.

ARMY MAN:

I've got to go.

MAUDE:

I'm a newlywed! It's bliss.

The ARMY MAN is leaving.

Beat.

Who are you?

ARMY MAN:

Oh. Right. I forgot. I'm from the government.

MAUDE:

Why are you here?

ARMY MAN:

Your children –

MAUDE:

They've already gone to fight for you –

ARMY MAN:

The two that went to fight –

MAUDE:

And you can't have this little one, he's too young.

ARMY MAN:

The other two –

MAUDE:

Yes.

ARMY MAN:

Were in an accident.

MAUDE:

What sort of accident?

ARMY MAN:

A deadly accident.

MAUDE:

Deadly? How dead.

ARMY MAN:

They lost their heads.

MAUDE:

Lost where?

ARMY MAN:

Just outside your door. Your son shot an arrow at the Indians and they sent a tomahawk his way.

But he was an Indian.

MAUDE:

Unofficially.

ARMY MAN:

They wanted to help.

MAUDE:

They didn't watch their arrows.

ARMY MAN:

What's in the boxes?

MAUDE:

Your children.

ARMY MAN:

The ARMY MAN walks over to the two boxes and he opens them. He pulls a head out of each one. In his left hand he holds GABE'S head, with his war paint quite smudged and his feathers ruffled, while in his right hand he holds SHIRLEY'S head, with her white nurse's cap with the red cross securely in place still.

We thought you'd like to keep them.

ARMY MAN:

MAUDE takes the children's heads from the ARMY MAN. She stares at them.

I would.

MAUDE:

I'm sorry for your loss.

ARMY MAN:

Dead. Dead.

MAUDE:

Goodbye.

ARMY MAN:

MAUDE:
Two dead heads. A baby in my belly and two heads in my hands.

MAUDE goes to where FERNANDO lies
and places the two heads next to him.

MAUDE:

Fernando, don't be so cruel to me. He gave us a baby. Please talk to me. Oh my head, it hurts. It works, so I'm not dead.

(Silence.)

Come back to me. I'll call my analyst. He'll help. Of course he'll help. Fix me right up. Treatments should work almost immediately, you'll be very pleased, very pleased. Fix to remember. Right. Away. Right away.

MAUDE goes to the door and calls out.

MAUDE:

Doctor! Doctor? Come back! Hello?

MAUDE fumbles through FERNANDO'S
pocket and pulls out a small card.

MAUDE:

Got you.

She exits and returns, dragging a telephone.

MAUDE:

This way I can make sure she doesn't get you while I'm gone.

She tries to call.

MAUDE:

Fernando, how do I use this, you must help me.

She takes FERNANDO'S hand and dials
with his fingers.

MAUDE:

Doctor, doctor. Hello? Hello. He's not back. No he's here but he's not talking to me. You said you would. You won't? But you must! You must! Come fix me. Time? It is time. I've got no time for you to wait. My children came back. No. Dead. Fix us, please. You have to. Please doctor. No-

(She hangs up.)

He won't, won't fix us.

MAUDE sits among the dead.

MAUDE:

Say something.

MAUDE picks up GABE'S head.

MAUDE:

Gabey baby, mama loves you. Don't you wanna talk to your mama? Stroke mama's hair?

MAUDE unwraps the gauze from her head,
and puts her head to GABE'S.

MAUDE:

Yes, yes, that's nice now. Say something to me. Please my baby.

MAUDE puts GABE'S head down and
picks up SHIRLEY'S. When she sings, she
sings to the same tune SHIRLEY sang
earlier, yet MAUDE'S should be off and
jarring.

MAUDE:

Shirley girley, mama's here. Mama's here. Say hello. Say mama. Say hello mama. To me. Please.
Do you want a song?

Maude loves Shirley, Maude loves Gabe
She even loves this little babe-
In her belly.
It would be swelly
If you came back.
You, too, Fernando.
Come back.

MAUDE puts SHIRLEY'S head down. She
leans over FERNANDO and kisses him.

MAUDE:

I'll bring you back to me. I'll bring you all back, back, back to me. Three of you and one of me, a
two boy two girl family. We will leave this house when you're all better, do you like that?
Gabey? Shirley? Fernando? Oh! I haven't had a visitor in such a long time, why is that, don't
they like me anymore?

MAUDE goes over to the door. She opens it.
There are no more sounds of war.

MAUDE:

Hello? Hello! Don't you like me anymore? Don't you want me anymore?

MAUDE closes the door and returns to her
dead loves.

MAUDE:

They must have left.

MAUDE takes the corkscrew that the
ANALYST used earlier, and puts it on top of

her head on the other side. She pushes.

MAUDE:

Harder. Harder. HARD-ER-ER-ER. We'll have a show. A show that travels, the famous family of father Fernando and his dazzling darlings. We'll wear sequins and bows and tippy taps on our toes. My toes are so cold. I'm not wearing any shoes. I'm never wearing shoes. We can do dances for crowds! I'll dance with Shirley darling and she'll rub the bump on my belly that isn't filled with jelly but a baby instead. Our wonderful boys will come out and take off our sequins and show our fans what they want. Where are my shoes, Fernando? Shoes go on your feet. Feet shoes. Street blues. Neat news.

MAUDE bangs the corkscrew into her head
but nothing happens.

MAUDE:

Pick ice, ice pick, quick!

MAUDE searches the room for an ice pick.

MAUDE:

They'll read about us in the paper every day. We'll sing we'll dance we'll fly to France. Perhaps we'll take a boat, you can be the captain Fernando, but don't hit anything because we're on a schedule. Schedule on time, you want time, need time, I got time when you're back. Crack. My head. What's wrong with my head? Blood on my head? No just love on my head. Did I ever tell you about the time I traveled to Europe with my mummy and daddy? Oh it was so lonely, I mean lovely – we visited castles and pianos and ate poke salad. Salad? I don't like salad. Now that I think think think about it I don't think that happened at all. They must have went without me. You won't go without me will you? Of course you won't. You love me. Come back to me.

MAUDE exits and returns with a meat
tenderizer. She takes the ice pick used earlier
and places it on her head. She hits the pick
with the meat tenderizer. There is a loud
crack. As she hits her head she counts off the
blows.

MAUDE:

Holes in my head one, two, three, four holes.

MAUDE begins to make guttural sound, but
visibly fights through it.

MAUDE:

D-d-d-id it work? Did it?

The silences that follow should be
exaggerated.

MAUDE:

Fernando?

(Silence.)

Gabe?

(Silence.)

Shirley?

(Silence.)

Maude?

MAUDE sits center stage and begins to rock back and forth. Blood covers her face. Physically, she has deteriorated.

MAUDE sticks her fingers into her head and squeezes her brain.

The girl with the chicken head enters. She stalks over to MAUDE and leers over MAUDE'S frail body. She is poised to peck.

MAUDE:

No...no...no...please!

Black Out.