

CONTEMPORARY DRAMA IN THE  
CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

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A Thesis

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by

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## PREFACE

This project was originally conceived very simply as a measuring device to determine to what extent contemporary theatre could be meaningful when performed in the contemporary church. It was immediately recognized that the most effective procedure was to produce a contemporary play in the church and measure the acquired response. However, fitting this simple concept into a valid research design produced considerable confusion. What would the study be measuring? What kind of criteria would be used? What kind of controls would be necessary? What kind of statement should result from the experiment? How limited would the study be?

It was largely through the council of Dr. Norris H. Biggie that these questions were answered and the confusion minimized. It was Dr. Biggie's suggestion that this thesis be only a beginning--an exploration concerned more with the gathering of knowledge useful in designing future experiments, than with the establishment of any one conclusive statement. It was also Dr. Biggie's suggestion to use the phenomenological or conceptual approach in the research design.

I am very grateful to Dr. Biggie for his assistance in directing this project.

L.L.K.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. DRAMA AND THE CHURCH

Drama began with religious ceremony. Religion has played a substantial part in the origin and development of the drama. In fact, drama was created to enhance religious experience. Aristotle tells us that the drama grew out of the Dithyramb, a choral hymn sung to the god Dionysus, the god of fertility. The classical Greek drama of Aristotle's day was performed at the climax of regular annual ceremonies held in honor of Dionysus, "his figure was carried in the preliminary procession, and his altar stood in the center of the playing floor."<sup>1</sup>

After the golden age of Greece and the destruction of the Roman Empire, the theatre, as such, came to an end. All that was left were jugglers and jongleurs who traveled through the countryside performing juggling acts and singing ballads. But the theatre had a rebirth. And again, that rebirth emanated from religious experiences.

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth Macgowan and William Melnitz, The Living Stage (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 24.



In the second half of the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic church, seeing the value of the drama, introduced it into the High Mass of communion. "Tropes," or short chants were added to the Mass. One of these tropes--first noted in a ninth-century manuscript--consisted of four lines in Latin presenting the dialog between the angel and the three Marys at the tomb of Christ. Eventually this trope became an acted scene at the end of the Mass. Later it was given in the vernacular as were other tropes which were being developed. By the end of the eleventh century there were priestly playwrights devising scenes for Easter and Christmas.

Eventually this kind of theatre grew out of the church and developed into mysteres or "miracle plays." They were given this name because they dealt with the mystery of redemption through the nativity, through the passion, or sacrifice, of Christ, and through the resurrection. "Morality plays" were also devised. These plays presented abstract personifications of the virtues and vices such as mercy, humility, good deeds, lust, gluttony, and covetousness struggling for the soul of man. Even humor was introduced in these plays.

Religion has rejected the drama. But, ironically, just as religion has been the creator of the drama, so has it been instrumental in its destruction. The suppression of drama at the

fall of the Roman Empire was matched by the rise of Christianity and the attacks of churchmen. Tertullian, as early as A.D. 200, called the theatre "the shrine of Venus" and "the Church of the Devil." Priests were forbidden to attend plays and farces given after wedding feasts. Actors were forbidden communion.

Even after the rebirth of the drama and its development into the great theatre of Shakespeare, the church, this time the Puritan church of the Commonwealth, attacked the theatre, closing its doors in order "to appease and avert the Wrath of God."<sup>2</sup>

When the theatre came to America, the Puritan condemnation followed. In 1750 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a law against all theatrical performances and their "painted vanities." The ban was not lifted until 1793. In 1762 the president of Yale, then a school for the education of students preparing for the ministry, declared: "To indulge a taste for play-going means nothing more nor less than the loss of that most valuable treasure, the immortal soul."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 281.

Looking back at history, then, we see that the theatre which was created for religious purposes has also been denounced for religious purposes. The drama, as seen by the church, has been both a tool for the enrichment and the debasement of religion.

## II. A RE-EVALUATION IS NECESSARY

But what evaluation can be made about the role of the drama in today's Christian American society? Can the drama be used successfully by today's church? It is the view of this writer that this question should be asked seriously, that drama should be re-evaluated as a religious art, and that once again it should be considered as having a role in establishing religious experience.

A contemporary study is needed. Such a re-evaluation is important for several reasons. First, it has been neglected for too long. A Bibliography of Communications Dissertations in American Schools of Theology, compiled by Franklin H. Knowler, appeared in 1963 showing that the latest study in the field of drama in the church was completed in 1947. Most of the work

done in this field was done in the early 1930's.<sup>4</sup> In addition, there have been other studies done outside American schools of theology. But again, these studies are hopelessly outdated.<sup>5</sup> Only three studies have been done in recent years in an attempt to evaluate the use of drama in the church: Susanne Nabours, *Growth of Drama in the Church*, Baylor University, 1964; Carla Rae Wall, *Speech and Drama Activities in Selected Protestant Churches: Practice and Potential*, University of Virginia; and

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<sup>4</sup>Herbert William Hahn, "The Value of Drama in Religious Education" (unpublished Master's thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1932); Richard Charles Daniels, "Formal Drama in the Church" (unpublished Master's thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1931); Margaret Anna Valentine, "The Value of Drama in Christian Education" (unpublished Master's thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1947); Barbara Murray, "The Place of Drama in the Christian Church" (unpublished Master's thesis, Asbury Theological Seminary, 1949); Ruth K. Hill, "Changes in Attitudes Produced by the Use of Drama in Worship" (unpublished Master's thesis, The Divinity School at the University of Chicago, 1933); and Jeanie Stauffer Halock, "Drama in the Program of the Church" (unpublished Master's thesis, College of the Bible, 1947).

<sup>5</sup>B. W. Folsom, "Psychology of Church Audiences" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1930); Martha Jean Keefee, "A History and Evaluation of the Use of Drama in the Protestant Churches of the United States from 1916 - 1939" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Iowa, 1941); Dorothy Kreuger Lamb, "The Drama in Religious Education" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1942); and Delphine F. Murphy, "Drama in the Church Community: A Training Program in Religious Education" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1950).

William Hayden Marsh, The Presbyterian View toward Sunday Theatricals in America, State University of Iowa. Of these three, the first two are unobtainable. But the third, The Presbyterian View toward Sunday Theatricals in America, characterizes the immense need for a contemporary study. Mr. Marsh makes dangerously inaccurate statements about theatre in today's church based upon statements made by the church more than forty years ago. He concludes his thesis by saying:

Although Sunday theatricals [dramas and motion pictures] were mentioned after 1921, no further resolutions pertaining to this subject appeared in the Minutes of the General Assembly after that date. By 1942 the problem of Sabbath observance and Sunday theatricals had become, more or less, a dead issue in the Assembly. . . . Because there has been no action reversing the General Assembly's stand concerning Sunday theatricals it must be assumed that the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America today is still in opposition to Sunday theatricals. The Church evidently leaves the question to the individual and his conscience.<sup>6</sup>

Because it is dangerous to reach such conclusions on outdated material and because the bulk of research done on the topic occurred thirty-five years ago, a re-evaluation is necessary from a purely temporal point of view.

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<sup>6</sup>William H. Marsh, "The Presbyterian View toward Sunday Theatricals in America" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Iowa, 1958).

Secularization of modern theology. The validity of a contemporary study is strengthened because of a second consideration--the secularization of modern day Christianity. In 1963 Bishop John A. T. Robinson shocked many members of the theological world when he published his book, Honest to God. In this book Robinson drew together the secular theology of such theologians as Martin Beuber, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich, and Soren Kierkegaard. The result was a new secular theology. Says Robinson: "God is deliberately calling us in this twentieth century to a form of Christianity that does not depend on the premise of religion . . . ."7

A statement is "theological" not because it relates to a particular Being called "God," but because it asks ultimate questions about the meaning of existence: it asks what, at the level of theos, at the level of its deepest mystery, is the reality and significance of our life.<sup>8</sup>

What is that ultimate reality? Says Robinson:

To assert that "God is love" is to believe that in love one comes into touch with the most fundamental reality in the universe, that Being itself ultimately has this character.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>John A. T. Robinson, Honest to God (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 23.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

He says further:

God, since he is Love, is encountered in his fullness only 'between man and man' . . . . Whether one has 'known' God is tested by one question only, 'How deeply have you loved?'<sup>10</sup>

Such a secularization of Christian theology requires a re-evaluation of the nature of worship. If God is no longer "up there" or even "out there" but "in here," between man and man, then worship can no longer be a "reaching out" to God. The function of worship becomes bringing the beyond into the midst of life.

The function of worship is to make us more sensitive to these depths; to focus, sharpen and deepen our response to the world and to other people beyond the point of proximate concern (of liking, self-interest, limited commitment, etc.) to that of ultimate concern; to purify and correct our loves in the light of Christ's love; and in him to find the grace and power to be the reconciled and reconciling community. Anything that achieves this or assists towards it is Christian worship.<sup>11</sup>

If this is the basic tenor of modern theology, and to a great extent it is, then the validity of the evaluations made of drama in the church thirty-five or even fifteen years ago would

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-61.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 87-88.

be severely weakened if not made completely invalid for today's theology.<sup>12</sup> The secular language of the drama may be more valid for today's churchman than it was for yesterday's. Perhaps there is room for a new language, a new teaching situation in the church.

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<sup>12</sup>This secularization has been carried further by the "death of God" movement. This movement was initiated by the Reverend William Hamilton of Rochester-Colgate Divinity School. Says Hamilton, the only way to save Christianity is to make it palatable to the modern mind. And the simplest way of doing that is by removing that portion of Christianity that is difficult or uncomfortable or outmoded. In short, by removing God. God is dead, then, because modern man needs to be free from the obligation of believing in God in order to be able to accept the rest of Christianity.

But God is also dead for theological reasons. If Jesus was God, says Hamilton, when Jesus died, so did God. Says Hamilton: "The coming and the death of Jesus (the Incarnation, to use the technical term) stand for a kind of death of God. Here God, Christians have always said, takes on sin and suffering. Can it not also be said that God takes on mortality, that the coming of Jesus is the beginning of the death of God, and that because of this coming, men no longer need gods in the old religious sense? William Hamilton, "The Death of God," Playboy (August, 1966), pp. 137-138.

For an extremely interesting article showing the opposite point of view, or religious mysticism, see: "God and the Hippies," an article by Harvey Cox in the January, 1968, issue of Playboy.



The importance of pathos. A third reason for a re-evaluation of drama in the church has less to do with contemporaneity and more to do with the nature of the drama itself. Perhaps the drama was both originated as a part of religious ceremony and condemned by religious institutions because of its ability to create empathy. If, through the drama, man is able to experience more than the mere understanding of an idea and is actually able to become involved with that idea, or if the drama is able to communicate essentially non-expressable ideas, then the drama is too valuable to be overlooked by any religious group.

## CHAPTER I

### THEORIES OF RESEARCH

A complete evaluation of the usefulness of drama in the church would answer a multitude of questions. First, it would tell us about the goals of the church. An answer to this question is preliminary to the direction of any dramatic effort in the church. Is the primary concern of the church molding the behavioral patterns of the congregation, giving man a spiritual religious experience, or communicating a meaningful idea? Perhaps it is none of these, or it is all three. Such a study would tell us what kind of drama should be presented. Need it be didactic? Should it be Biblical or would secular drama be more effective? Should the drama be geared to younger people or the whole congregation? Should it be presented in the church basement, in the chancel, or on the church lawn? What style of presentation should be used--proscenium theatre, readers' theatre, or theatre in the round? And most important, what should be the quality of the production? Can the drama best serve the church through totally amateur productions? Or could the church be most effectively served through the establishment of professional touring companies? Should the church

provide dramatic training for ministers or Christian education workers to then guide amateur productions? These are a few of the questions which would be answered by a comprehensive study.

Perhaps we could best start by admitting our practical limitations. This study cannot result in answers of a definitive nature to all of these questions. The scope of a comprehensive survey far exceeds the limitations of this study. But beyond this practical consideration there is a very real theoretical consideration.

We can readily admit that the general nature of this project is experimental, in the broadest sense. That is, something is going to be done in order to find out the reactions to that which is done. But what we do, how we gather the reactions, what criteria we use for the evaluation of these reactions, and what kind of conclusions we draw from them will to a very large extent be determined by our point of view.

We are considering drama in the church--its usefulness, its validity. What determines this validity? Perhaps we cannot know the exact criteria but we can at least say that if drama is useful in the church it must provide a meaningful experience. Something must happen which produces some kind of meaningful reaction by the people for which it happens.

The question now becomes "How do we measure that experience?" There are two schools of thought concerning the measuring of experience, behaviorism and phenomenology. Let us take the time to consider both of these concepts, weigh them, and then choose the one most applicable to our project.

## I. BEHAVIORISM

Classical Behaviorism. Dr. Sigmund Koch has provided a brief historical account of behaviorism. He began by citing the five basic tenets of classical behaviorism.<sup>1</sup> Very briefly, they are:

1. Objectivism. Behaviorism insists on objective techniques for securing data. As J. B. Watson, the founder of classical behaviorism, indicates, the business of psychology is to "bury subjective subject matter." Only those observations which can be made by independent observers upon the same object or event are considered admissible. Psychologists are thus to accept only that kind of data which physicists or chemists would accept.

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. Koch is professor of psychology at Duke University. His remarks concerning behaviorism were delivered at a symposium on "Behaviorism and Phenomenology" held at Rice University in 1964.

2. S-R orientation. "All lawful psychological statements are to be expressed in terms of stimulus and response."<sup>2</sup> A good deal of ambiguity seems to have flourished concerning this concept.

3. Peripheralism. This concept is a result of the behaviorists' insistence that all phenomena, which has traditionally been classed as "mental," must be treated in objective S-R terms. The attempt is therefore made to show that processes formerly conceived as determined by the brain can be better understood if they are allocated to receptors, effectors, and nerve connections. This attempt produced motor theories of thinking, feeling and emotion.

4. Emphasis on learning and on some form of S-R associationism as the basic laws of learning. Behaviorism uses conditioning methods to promote learning. This emphasis in conditioning methods (especially for the study of learning in animals) was developed into the use of conditioning principles for the explanation of human behavior, to the extent that all problems of learning were phrased in terms of "conditioning."

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<sup>2</sup>Sigmund Koch, "Psychology and Emerging Conceptions of Knowledge as Unitary," Behaviorism and Phenomenology, T. W. Wann (ed.) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 8.

5. Environmentalism. Simply stated, the environment is totally responsible for the "shaping" of personality.

This classical behaviorism promised great results. It was to make psychology more akin to the sciences by reducing its subjectivity and replacing it with an objective, empirically verifiable "decision procedure." However, the movement failed. Instead, it degenerated into "polemicism and inflated program-making."

Neo-behaviorism. There were, however, many young psychologists who realized the potential of behaviorism. They, like the behaviorists before them, were concerned with developing an empirical "decision procedure." But, while early behaviorism had primarily involved attempts to objectify the descriptive concepts for empirical data, the neo-behaviorists sought to implement objectivism at the level of theory.

The idea was to insure that all elements of a system language be "securely anchored" by explicit linkages to antecedent independent and consequent dependent variables and, in general, to effect a point-for-point correspondence of the logical properties of systematic formulations of psychology with those of psychology's traditional emulation model, physics.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

To accomplish this they turned not to the physicist but to the philosopher of science (especially the logical positivists) who had formulated an over-all view of the scientific method called "scientific methodology." This methodology was based on a "rational reconstruction" of a few selected formulations in theoretical physics. It provided a detailed model of the scientific enterprise, which came to be known as the "hypothetico-deductive method."

In briefest terms, the method was to select or design a series of experiments, the empirical variables of which would be placed in correspondence with . . . the theoretical variables whose relations were in question.<sup>4</sup>

Neo-neobehaviorism. The neo-behaviorist school lasted until the mid-forties. But it came increasingly under question during the late forties and fifties. This was primarily due to a resurgence of interest in the field of psychology in the very kind of thing that the classical behaviorists had tried to submerge: e.g., perception, motivational processes, thinking, etc. It was also due to the increasing influence of such non-behaviorist formulations as Gestalt psychology, psychoanalytic and other personality theories stressing experimental analysis.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

1. Changing trends in objectivism. With respect to observation base, the neo-neobehaviorists radically modified S and R. They began to abandon the persistent behaviorist hope that stimuli may be uniformly reducible to physical description and response to "movement in space."

Rather, we find ourselves inevitably describing [stimuli] in perceptual terms; moreover, it is . . . necessary that they have meaning for the responding organism (italics mine).<sup>5</sup>

2. Return of the repressed. Says Professor Koch:

Perhaps the single most conspicuous and significant change ushered in by neo-neobehaviorism is the massive return to a concern with empirical problem areas long bypassed or only glancingly acknowledged because of their subjectivistic "odor" (or, I would add, because of an entirely realistic appraisal of the difficulties of significant progress on these problems in an exclusively "objective" mode).<sup>6</sup>

Professor Koch quotes J. B. Watson, whose response to this new development in behaviorism was:

The situation is somewhat different when we come to a study of the more complex forms of behavior, such as imagination, judgment, reasoning, and conception. . . . Our minds have been so warped by the fifty-odd years which have been devoted to the study of states of consciousness that we can envisage these problems only in one way. We should meet the situation squarely and

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 19.



say that we are not able to carry forward investigations along all of these lines by the behavior methods which are in use at the present time . . . . The topics have become so threadbare from much handling that they may well be put away for a time.<sup>7</sup>

This concludes Professor Koch's brief historical account of behaviorism. It points out that, for behaviorism, learning is a product of stimulus/response; that its procedure is clinical, that is, it seeks to verify or prove hypotheses in order to create a formal psychological system (much like the system of physics); and that its method is logical and objective. Behaviorism has thus been associated with such experiments as running rats through mazes, ringing bells before dogs, etc.; the idea being that, through objective observations, postulates can be formed which can be identified with the processes of learning.

#### Application of Behaviorism to Experimental Theses

Behaviorism has had a great influence on those academicians who have been given the task of directing graduate students in the formulation of experimental theses. A standard text for such formulation in the field of speech is J. Jeffery Auer's An

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

Introduction to Research in Speech. There are several points at which Dr. Auer sounds very much like the behaviorists.

1. An experimental thesis must prove something. The term "experimental research" is perhaps a misleading one. The more accurate term might be "experimental proof." Dr. Auer suggests that the experimenters' primary task is to test the validity of a hypothesis. This he does by designing an experiment which will permit application of the canons of logical proof.

The research design, or scheme, is simply a sequence of steps that will permit the pertinent variables to be observed in an uncomplicated fashion, and make it possible and convenient to apply the canons of logical proof.<sup>8</sup>

2. Manipulation of variables. In order to prove conclusively a one-to-one relationship, the variables in question must be isolated and controlled. Says Dr. Auer:

As we use the term here, an experiment is a systematic study of the operation and effect, or casual relationships, of a single variable factor (and occasionally of several variable factors), controlled or manipulated in a situation where all other essential factors are held constant.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>J. Jeffery Auer, An Introduction to Research in Speech (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1959), p. 76.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

This, of course, results in an artificial arrangement of the most pertinent variables.

3. Insistence on empirical data. Perhaps experimental research as dictated by Auer is most akin to behaviorism in its insistence on empirical verification. Auer suggests that the experimenter must formulate his hypothesis in such a way that it can be tested empirically. Dr. Auer quotes William Goode as saying:

It [hypothesis] may seem contrary to, or in accord with, common sense. It may prove to be correct or incorrect. In any event, however, it leads to an empirical test. Whatever the outcome, the hypothesis is a question put in such a way that an answer of some kind can be forthcoming. It is an example of the organized skepticism of science, the refusal to accept any statement without empirical verification.<sup>10</sup>

As we see here, the experimenters are as concerned as the behaviorists that their method be considered scientific, meaning that it must be empirical and objective.

## II. PHENOMENOLOGY

Edmund Husserl. The word "phenomenology" first appeared in the writings of the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl. Husserl's major concern was to replace empirical psychology with

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

what he termed "transcendental phenomenology." There are at least five important points to consider concerning this attempt.

1. Existential view of man. As we have seen, the behaviorist views man as the product of his environment. The environment determines what a man is. The psychologist who carries this view to the extreme, as Watson does, is able to describe man by describing his environment. This is a purely objective view of man. The phenomenologist opposes this view. For him, man is not objective but subjective. Man is what he has made of himself. He is an individual with a personality or essence.

2. Concern with the perception of essence. Whereas empirical psychology was concerned with the description of realities (objective environmental facts), transcendental phenomenology is concerned with the perception of non-reality (essences) "inquiring . . . after the invariant, essentially characteristic structures of a soul, of a psychical life in general."

3. Procedure--transcendental reduction. This inquiry was conducted through a process called transcendental reduction. Through this process essential phenomena were purified from the "trappings" of reality, environmental phenomena. It was only

when the environment and any other non-essential "facts" were bracketed or swept away, that it was possible to "discover the 'I' in the ordinary sense of the term, as this human person living among others in the world . . . ."11

4. First person perceptual point of view. For Husserl, discovering the "I" was the only true form of perception. And that perception was purest, most accurate, and most attainable from the person himself.

I obtain an original and pure descriptive knowledge of the psychical life as it is in itself, the most original information being obtained from myself, because here alone is perception the medium.<sup>12</sup>

5. Subjective experimental procedure. Because of the highly subjective nature of man, psychologists should not be concerned with experiments which provide only for the observation of non-essential facts, rather they should provide for the perception of the essence or eidos of the individual.

Perceptual psychology. Husserl's notions concerning transcendental phenomenology were gratefully received by those psychologists who had been anxiously awaiting the readmission

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<sup>11</sup>Edmund Husserl, *Ideas* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 7.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

of the personal approach to psychology. They molded these notions into a psychological framework and termed their new school of thought "perceptual psychology." The relationship between Husserl's phenomenological philosophy and this new phenomenological psychology is difficult to describe. This is primarily due to the non-objective nature of that relationship. They are similar in approach or mood, yet different in goals and outcome. Perhaps we can best see this relationship after considering them both separately. Let us momentarily disregard phenomenology as a philosophy and study it as a psychology.

1. Subject-matter. The perceptual psychologist, like the philosophical phenomenologist but unlike the behaviorist, accepts as the subject-matter of his inquiry all the data of experience. Here the word "datum" is used in the broadest sense to include all of "that which is given."

Colors and sounds are data; so are impressions of distance and duration; so are feelings of attraction and disillusionments; so are all the relations--ranging from the crude and obvious to the delicate and intangible--with which the world presents us. These are data, given in experience, to be accepted as such and to be wondered about.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>R. B. McLeod, "Phenomenology: A Challenge to Experimental Psychology," Behaviorism and Phenomenology, T. W. Wann (ed.) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 51.

2. Perceptual field. Fundamentally, perceptual field psychology ceases to see individual personality as a collection of experienced data and seeks to understand the person through an understanding of interrelationships. This view has been developed by two psychologists, Donald Snygg and Arthur W. Combs.<sup>14</sup> Snygg and Combs explain the perceptual field concept in this way:

Modern science has long since discovered that many matters cannot be understood solely in terms of the "things" with which it deals. Many of the complex events we hope to understand and predict can only be dealt with through an understanding of interrelationships. To deal with such interrelationships modern science has invented the very useful concept of a field.

When something occurs at one point in space apparently because something else happened at another point with no visible means by which the "cause" can be related to the "effect," the scientist often says the two events are connected in a field. This field serves as a kind of bridge between cause and effect by which the scientist can deal with a problem even though he may not be clearly aware of all intervening aspects.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Donald Snygg is chairman of the department of psychology at Oswego State Teachers College; and Arthur W. Combs is head of the Mental Hygiene Service in the School of Education at Syracuse University.

<sup>15</sup>Arthur W. Combs and Donald Snygg, Individual Behavior (revised edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 19.

An example of such a field is electricity. No one has ever seen electricity. As such, it cannot be said to be an observable "thing." No one is entirely certain exactly what it is or how it works. In spite of this lack of observed information, however, we are able to deal with the phenomenon electricity by assuming the existence of an electrical field. Using this field concept scientists and engineers have been able to predict and control electric currents and build devices using its properties.

What is essential to note is that this perceptual field is transcendental. That is, it is intangible and non-objective. It is nothing more than the interrelationships of the perceptions of the individual. As such, we can call it personality. And, it is the organization of this field which gives a personality its uniqueness. Many people have the same perceptions but very few of them organize those perceptions in the same way.

The perceptual field has at least four distinctive properties--stability, fluidity, intensity, and direction. To illustrate: when iron filings are scattered on a piece of paper and a magnet is applied under it, the filings form a pattern. These filings are directed in a line with the electric current. As such, they have stability. And that stability is directly related to the intensity of the current. However, if that current



should be interrupted by, say, the introduction of another electric current, the pattern would change. Because of this property of change, the filings are said to have fluidity.

The same is true of the perceptual field of a personality. The interrelationships of the perceptual data which form a personality or phenomenal self are highly organized. This organization is necessary to the maintenance of the self, it creates a stability. The intensity of this stability is directly related to the completeness of the organization. But the perceptual field also has fluidity. New perceptions are constantly being taken in by the self which have to be incorporated into the organization. This sometimes necessitates a certain amount of reorganization.

3. Interaction. The basic question which the psychologist asks is "What motivates behavior?" In their quest to lend scientific credulity to psychology, the behaviorists have answered the question with the most fundamental of scientific principles--the principle of cause and effect. Every cause (stimulus) produces an effect (response). So far, the perceptual psychologist would agree. But the behaviorist went still further to insist that both the stimulus and the response be viewed objectively. With the establishment of this criteria, psychologists

could devise experiments capable of impartial observation. They could observe stimuli and response and draw logical conclusions from their observations. Here the point of view is that of the scientist who is above, looking down on the behavior.

It is this point of view which the perceptual psychologist could not accept. For him, the objective picture was inadequate and often misleading. It occurred to him that the objective stimulus observed by the scientist may be altogether different from the subjective stimulus perceived by the behavior.

The story is told of two friends driving along a midwestern country road at night. Suddenly a large spherical object appeared to one side of the road moving toward the car. Both men saw the object. The passenger of the car, an Easterner who saw the object as a large boulder, reached for the steering wheel to swerve the car in an attempt to avoid it. The other man, a Midwesterner, seeing that the object was only a large tumbleweed, fought with his friend to keep the car on the road.

This simple story illustrates that, so far as behavior is concerned, the objective approach is inadequate. It makes no difference what the object actually was. The important thing is that these men behaved according to what they saw. It is the

perception and not the object which determines the action:

People do not behave according to the facts as others see them. They behave according to the facts as they see them. What governs behavior from the point of view of the individual himself are his unique perceptions of himself and the world in which he lives, the meanings things have for him.<sup>16</sup>

Several experiments in perception have been conducted at the Hanover Institute in Hanover, New Hampshire. These experiments will further exemplify the interactive nature of perception.<sup>17</sup>

The demonstration with lines. In a darkened room, two vertical lines of different lengths, at the same distance from the observer, appear as though the shorter line were farther away, if the lines are positioned so that their middle points are on a level B. However, if the shorter line is arranged below the longer one, it will appear closer, A. The apparent explanation of this phenomenon is that, in the first relationship, there is a greater probability that the two lines might represent identical things; e.g., telegraph poles, than in the second relationship where the

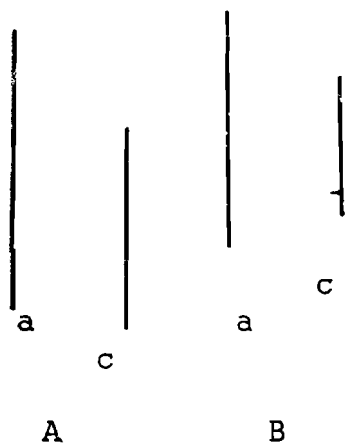
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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>17</sup>These descriptions have been taken from Kenneth Norberg, "Perception Research and Audio-visual Education," Readings for Educational Psychology, William A. Fullagar, Hal G. Lewis, and Carroll F. Cumbee (eds.) (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964), pp. 32-33.

second relationship where the longer line might represent a telephone pole and the shorter line a fence post.

Now, if we repeat the first demonstration of the lines with the middle points on a common level, and give the observer a stick with a light on the end of it, directing him to touch the lines (first the shorter, then the longer), the following will result: the observer, after touching the shorter line with the end of the stick, will at first fail to touch the longer line. After some experimental trying, he will be able to touch the longer line also. But by this time the two lines will appear to be at the same distance from him.



Distorted room demonstration. Another demonstration is the distorted room demonstration. A distorted room is so designed that when it is viewed with one eye through a hole at a certain position in a screen the room appears rectangular and normal. (Even if the observer has already looked behind the screen and knows the room is

distorted, it will still look like an ordinary room when he views it with one eye through the screen.)

Now, if the observer takes a stick and tries to touch a ball in the upper left hand corner of the room after touching a ball in the upper right hand corner, he will be at first unable to do it. After repeated tries, he may become fairly successful in touching both balls. As this occurs, the appearance of the room will change.

Analysis of demonstrations. Several things seem to be evident as a result of these demonstrations. Perhaps the most striking is that: (1) What is perceived by an observer is not solely determined by the object stimulus that he experiences. The observer brings something to the perception. (2) What the observer brings to the perception seems to reflect an "assumptive form world" built up out of his past experiences. This "assumptive form world" seems to change as the prognosis of the predictions which form his perceptions are acted upon, and tested. This suggests that: (3) The observer perceives whatever represents, for him, the most likely prognosis for action based upon his experience. And finally, (4) The true understanding of perception is that it is a "transaction" between the individual and the environment. Both the individual and the environment bring something to the perception.

4. Meaning is central. "For the phenomenologist, meaning is central and inescapable."<sup>18</sup> A good example of the varying degrees which meaning has for psychologists is found in theories of communication. One such theory, known as the "information theory," sees communication as a process of encoding, transmission, decoding, feedback, etc. This theory is analogous to the telegraph wire along which pulses of energy pass. These pulses are separated by varying time intervals, as in the Morse code. With the addition of a few more variables such as intensity and pitch, the telephone is born. Perhaps this is exactly what happens in vocal communication. At the input end, certain disturbances are produced that are transmitted through the medium and then registered at the output end. The distortions in transmission are taken care of by feedback, redundancy, etc. The psychologist interested in this theory will study this process in detail, his goal being to insure that whatever is received at the output end will be an accurate representation of whatever was fed into the input end.

The problem for the phenomenologist is that what these communications engineers frankly and explicitly ignore is the meaning

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<sup>18</sup>MacLeod, p. 54.

of the message; instead, they are almost totally concerned with the techniques of encoding, transmitting, and decoding. MacLeod has put it this way:

In the psychology of language we have tended in the past to be concerned more about the machinery of output and input, i.e., in the psychophysics and psychophysiology of sound production and sound perception, than with the meanings that are being conveyed.

Behind the encoding machine, however, is someone with a message, and what is decoded must be understood by someone else. Until communication is taken over by electronic thinkers at both ends of the transmission wire, I think there will still be a place for a few of us who are interested in the content of communication.<sup>19</sup>

This interest in meaning is not limited to theories of communication. For the phenomenologist no experience is devoid of meaning. Even a pinpoint of light in a dark room has meaning. It is white and not red, small and not large, out there in space and not in here in me. A piece of modern music may be for me an unordered mass of sounds, for you a delicately ordered composition. To describe it as I would describe it is not to say that it has no meaning, only that it has a different meaning. "Meaning is literally what is there for you when you confront the world . . ." <sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

5. Suspended bias. Primary to the phenomenologist is his eagerness to exclude anything which might limit his research. For this reason, he makes an active commitment to identify his biases and then put them in brackets. He does not assume, for example, that only objective data are worthy of analysis. He is not tied to the theory that the self and the world are two separate entities. He is not convinced that in studying communications he must be limited to the "information theory" or any other theory.

6. Subjective experimentation. Because of his suspension of bias, the phenomenologist must not be limited to traditional objective experimental methods. His subject is all the data of experience as it is perceived by the observer, and he must use any means available to approach that perception. He may go so far as to use such an unconventional approach as asking the perceiver what it is that he has perceived. There will be more said about this in the next chapter.

A comparison of transcendental phenomenology and perceptual psychology. This comparison is not absolutely essential to this study. Transcendental phenomenology was only cited in order to give historical support for perceptual psychology. In order to tie the loose ends together, however, a brief comparison is permissible.



As mentioned before, the comparison is primarily of mood rather than objective point for point analysis. Perhaps this mood can be most accurately created through the reproduction of the elements of both phenomenologies in table form.

<u>Transcendental Phenomenology</u>	<u>Perceptual Psychology</u>
1. All data of experience accepted	1. All data of experience accepted
2. First person point of view	2. Perceptual field concept of self
3. Existential view of man	3. Interactive concept of perception
4. Concern with the perception of essence	4. Meaning is central
5. Transcendental reduction	5. Suspended bias leading to pure research
6. Subjective experimental procedure	6. Subjective experimentation

### III. EVALUATION OF BEHAVIORISM AND PERCEPTUAL PSYCHOLOGY AND THEIR THEORIES OF RESEARCH FOR USE IN THIS STUDY

Explorative nature of this study. There are three primary reasons for using the perceptual theory of research as a basis for this study. First as explained at the beginning of this chapter, this is an exploratory study. There is no attempt at proof here. To put it very simply, this project was executed to "find out"

what church audiences would think and feel about the production of a meaningful contemporary play in their church. The details of that procedure will be discussed in the next chapter.

Maintenance of natural situation. Because of its exploratory nature, the most accurate research design would maintain, as nearly as possible, the natural situation of the audience. Because the topic of this study is drama in the church, and because its intent is to form some guidelines to possible future dramatic productions in the church, it would be inappropriate to distort the natural church performance situation. Such a distortion, or manipulation, is not necessary to an accurate study and could indeed prove misleading.

Personal approach. The most significant and meaningful response to this study must come from those people who are affected by this experiment--thinking back on Husserl's phrase, "the most original information being obtained from myself, because here alone is perception the medium," the accuracy of this kind of information is directly related to the research design, which will be discussed in the next chapter. But the basis for that design is perceptual psychology and the importance of the personal approach.

## CHAPTER II

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### I. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

The general purpose of this thesis is to provide some suggestion for the future use of drama in the church. As discussed in the last chapter, there are at least two possible points of view from which to proceed. The one is objective. Its approach is to arrive at a hypothesis by positing a cause and effect relationship between two primary variables, and then setting up an experiment which (1) eliminates all the variables except those affecting the cause and effect relationship, (2) manipulates the existing variables so that an accurate relationship can be obtained, (3) results in the observation of objective data, and (4) allows for the applications of the canons of logical proof.

The other point of view is subjective. Its approach would be to produce a dramatic production in the normal church situation and then ask those people who viewed the production to comment on what they saw. It is this second point of view which provides the basis for this study.

A very fine example of this type of research is Adah B. Maurer's study, "Children's Conceptions of God."<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Maurer is primarily interested in the psychological well-being of primary school children. Such an important part of that well-being is the student's relationship with his parents that Mrs. Maurer became interested in possible ways of determining the nature of that relationship. Thinking back on Freud's speculation that every man's God is modeled after the father of his childhood, she began to think that the converse might be true--that the child's definition of God might reveal the essence of his relationship with his parents. She decided to explore this possible relationship.

Her research design was extremely simple. She asked each child "What's God like?" and then compared his answer with what she could discover about the parent-child relationship from other sources--school records, conversations with parents and teachers, etc.

Ostensibly, this design may seem to be too simple, especially to anyone schooled in objective experimental psychology. In the first place, she was not trying to prove anything. She did

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Maurer is a psychologist in the Fairfield, California, school district and lecturer at the University of California, Extension Division, at Davis, California.

not restrict her study to proving or disproving any single hypothesis. Her method was to explore the possibilities of a hypothesis. As a result, her study provided "direction signals toward understanding family dynamics."<sup>2</sup>

Her research design might also seem inadequate to the traditionalists because of her point of view. The study was almost purely subjective. She did not determine the child's concept of God through the objective sources available. She did not ask the child's minister, Sunday school teacher, or parents. She asked the child. And even then she did not structure her questionnaire with a series of individual questions to determine separate and distinctive ideas of God, to insure that the answers of all of the children could be accurately and objectively calibrated.

This subjective, nonrestrictive research has resulted in an extremely exciting study. For example, Mrs. Maurer discovered that, to a large degree, the type of discipline at home was reflected in the child's concept of God. If that discipline was kind and non-violent, the child tended to see God as a "good guy." If he

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<sup>2</sup>Adah B. Maurer, "Children's Conceptions of God," The Challenge of Humanistic Psychology, B. Bugental (ed.) (New York: MacMillan and Company, 1965), p. 75.

was accustomed to violent discipline, God was equated with fear and punishment.

A first-grade boy whose head was covered with scars, who needed glasses but whose parents refused to permit him to have them, and who suffered from pica so much that his teacher kept cookies for him in a vain effort to substitute these for the chalk, paste, crayons, and paper he continually ate, answered the question about God with a very angry, 'I don't know anything about God!' When the request was repeated, he shouted in what was an unmistakable imitation of his mother's tone: 'You don't listen to your mother: you listen to the Devil!' Then he looked up coyly and added confidentially, 'If you listen to Jesus, the Devil gets mad.'<sup>3</sup>

This thesis has been designed using Mrs. Maurer's study as a model. Yet when applying her general design to this study, several problems evolved: Primary is the problem of accuracy. What insurance do we have that the student or audience member will give an accurate report of his reactions? For some reason--his embarrassment, his wish to impress those listening, his inclination to be overly helpful, or even his downright desire to mislead--he might not express what he really feels. Indeed, he may not express anything at all. He may be too embarrassed to tell his innermost feelings. He may feel that his reactions are his concern only and are not to be made public. He may feel that his response would

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

not be acceptable by others and thus he had better not express it.

Arthur W. Combs deals with this problem in some detail.

Combs suggests that, initially, a person's perceptions are personal and private, and he will not be inclined to bring them out, at least accurately, "unless the climate outside is safe for them . . . . They come out only when the perceiver feels that he wants them to be presented."<sup>4</sup> It becomes the business, then, of the questioner to create an atmosphere which will allow them to come out. The key to the creation of that atmosphere is acceptance. An accurate and meaningful response will only be forthcoming if the perceiver is aware that his response will be accepted by those to whom he responds. Combs speaks of the classroom situation: "The classroom climate must be made safe for exploration of meanings . . . . Its atmosphere must be fundamentally accepting."<sup>5</sup>

The method of creating this acceptance might vary from audience to audience. An audience of theatre personnel at a college or university may not be inclined to think along the same

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<sup>4</sup>Arthur W. Combs, Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming (Yearbook 1962, prepared by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, D. C.), p. 70.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

lines as the church audience who has never seen a dramatic production. For this reason, no set speech can be expected to promote the desired result from every audience. Each presentation must be geared to the audience for which it is presented.

This is not to say, however, that the same question cannot be asked of all audiences. On the contrary, the question must be kept uniform in order for the responses to be meaningful.

The central question asked in this experiment was "What did you think or feel before, during, and after the production?" This question was followed by several other questions to promote thought: "What happened to you? Were you bored? Did you become involved with the production? Did you identify with the characters in this play? Are there really people like that?" The audience was then instructed not to limit its answers to these questions but to express what it was that they thought or felt before, during, and after the production. The answers to these questions were written down on a single sheet of paper that had been given to each audience member. After they had finished writing, a discussion was asked for by repeating the question: "What did you think or feel before, during, and after the production?"

Another problem with this procedure was to identify those



people making the responses so that correlations could be drawn between who was speaking and what was said without inhibiting the speaker. Keeping in mind that the fundamental atmosphere must be one of acceptance, each audience was given a general background of the production--that it was an experimental project designed to discover how drama could be used in the church, that all responses would be accepted as valid and that in order for their reactions to be meaningful their general identity needed to be known. They were assured that their personal identity was not necessary and would not be revealed. They were then asked these questions:

1. What is your sex and age?
2. What is your occupation?
3. How many plays have you seen in the past two years?
4. How often do you attend church - seldom, occasionally, or regularly?
5. How many plays have you seen in the church in the past two years?
6. What is your denomination or religious preference?

## II. WHY THE ZOO STORY

Perhaps the most significant problem in the research design was deciding on the play to be presented. There were several things to be considered. Those which took the least amount of thought were the practical considerations.

Practical considerations. It was imperative that the production be quite small. A play with a large cast, unusual costumes, etc., must be avoided. At the same time, the production must be highly mobile. Little or no settings must be required, special effects must be limited, and nearly any playing area must be adequate. A play had to be chosen which allowed for a small mobile production.

The Zoo Story was well adaptable to these considerations. There were only two members in the cast. No unusual costumes were required. Props were kept to a bare minimum, with only a knife and small park bench needed. Because of the small cast, the playing area was quite small, which necessitated very few lighting instruments and made almost any playing area adequate. Two lightweight portable dimmer boards were taken to enhance the lighting effects. A tape recorder and a large portable speaker were taken to play introductory music. Only one car was

necessary to transport the entire cast, crew, director, and all of the equipment.

Theatrical value. There were more important considerations which required more thought. A play must be found which had adequate theatrical value. Again, The Zoo Story fulfilled that criterion. Although the play was only forty-five minutes long, because of the skill of Edward Albee's writing, primarily his skill in creating authentic characterizations, a believable situation was produced. This situation included definite goals for both of the characters, a conflict of the method in achieving these goals, and a partial resolution of that conflict, which produced a high degree of emotional impact. Because all of these theatrical elements were present, it was possible to test the emotional response of the audience. Both involvement in the situation and identification with the characters were possible.

Theological value. As important as the test of emotional involvement was the test of ideological import. As you may recall, the basic assumption of this project is that drama will have a place in the church if it is capable of producing a meaningful experience. One of the keys to that experience is the theological content portrayed.

Some mention of the relationship of this study to contemporary theology was made in the introduction to the study. For that reason, it will not be developed here. But it is important to realize that in order for this study to be coincident with contemporary theology, it should involve contemporary secular society.

The Zoo Story is highly secular. First of all, there are no overt religious overtones. There is no direct mention of the church or of metaphysical theology. Secondly, the characters portrayed are not concerned with established religious practice. Jerry, one of the characters, obviously disclaims any adherence to established moral practice. In addition, a very vivid picture is portrayed of his highly immoral background. His mother was a whore, his father committed suicide, and he has been everything from a homosexual to a sex pervert.

In spite of the secularity of the work, or perhaps because of it, The Zoo Story does have a great deal to say about God, love, and human relationships. This is primarily the story of a man who does not have, nor has ever had, love and who wants it very badly. He is so concerned about establishing this kind of relationship with someone or something that when it is not established, he is killed. The importance of love among men is its theme. The play is, therefore, in line with modern, secular

theology.

Why begin with The Zoo Story. But the question still persists. Why begin with The Zoo Story? There are certainly other plays which meet these considerations. Why pick this one? Primarily because it is felt that drama in the church has traditionally been seen as necessarily different from drama in society--different in several respects--subject matter, quality of production, tone, etc. In short, most church drama is written for the church, utilizing the church's symbols, and establishing the church's teachings. This sort of drama has in the past tended to limit itself to drama about Biblical characters in Biblical times. Recently, such drama has broadened to present contemporary circumstances and characters; but the tone of the production is the same, being plainly didactic. This lends a certain amount of unreality to the production.

The Zoo Story does not follow this pattern. It is very plainly real. It deals with real people, in a real contemporary situation. There are people today like Jerry and Peter. There is part of both of them in each of us. We can identify with them. Their actions can be our actions, and their thoughts can be our thoughts. We may have lived some of their experiences.

In line with this attempt at creating a real situation is the

realization that much of this material may be offensive. If it is true (and I think to some extent it is) that a portrayal of real people asking ultimate questions necessitates a certain amount of contact with the offensive, then this study had better test its audience's acceptability of such offense. The Zoo Story provides such a test.

### III. CUTS IN THE ZOO STORY

The question of offensiveness in a theatrical production almost invariably produces arguments for cutting such material from the script. It cannot and need not be denied that some such material was cut from this production of The Zoo Story. It must, however, also be pointed out that offensiveness was not the sole or even the most important consideration in determining what would or would not be cut. For one thing, there was offensive material left in the script. Jerry exclaims with jubilation:

I was a h-o-m-o-s-e-x-u-a-l. I mean, I was queer . . . . queer, queer, queer . . . with bells ringing, and banners snapping in the wind. And for those eleven days, I met at least twice a day with the park superintendent's son . . . . a Greek boy, whose birthday was the same as mine, except he was a year older. I think I was very much in love . . . maybe just with sex. But that was the jazz of a very special hotel, wasn't it?

And now; oh, do I love the little ladies; really, I love them. For about an hour.<sup>6</sup>

But more importantly, nearly all of the cuts in the script were made for theatrical purposes. Albee has a tendency in The Zoo Story to be highly redundant and extremely long and tedious. It was decided, by the director, to cut the script in order to avoid such tedium. In all, nearly one-fifth of the play was cut.

Because so much of the play was cut, it would be impossible for the reader of this study to accurately evaluate the audience response for himself unless he were aware of some of the more important cuts. Most of the cuts were made because the lines made absolutely no difference with either what the play said or the rhythm or style in which it was said. Some cuts, however, did make a difference. These cuts were the ones which included some mention of possibly offensive material. For that reason, these cuts are reproduced here.

Part of the description of the dog was cut:

. . . and . . . yes . . . and an open sore on its . . . right forepaw; that is red, too. And, oh yes; the poor monster, and I do believe it's an old dog . . . it's

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<sup>6</sup>Edward Albee, The Zoo Story (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1960), pp. 12-13.

certainly a misused one . . . almost always has an erection . . . of sorts. That's red, too.<sup>7</sup>

We also cut:

Poor bastard; he never learned that the moment he took to smile before he went for me gave me time enough to get out of range.<sup>8</sup>

Some description of the landlady was cut:

She had forgotten her bewildered lust and her eyes were wide open for the first time. They looked like the dog's eyes.<sup>9</sup>

When Jerry mentions all of those things that it is possible to have communication with, part of the list was cut:

With a cockroach, with a . . . with a . . . with a carpet, a roll of toilet paper . . . no, not that, either . . . that's a mirror, too, always check bleeding . . . With a street corner, and too many lights, all colors reflecting on the oily-wet streets . . . with a wisp of smoke, a wisp . . . of smoke . . . with . . . with pornographic playing cards, with a strong box . . . WITHOUT A LOCK . . . .<sup>10</sup>

These were the only cuts made of possibly offensive material.

All other such material was left in the script, including swear words.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 19.



"God damn" was left in the script, as well as several "Oh my God's" and "JESUS, you make me sick!"

#### IV. THE FACTS OF PRODUCTION

Who the people were. No production of this type could possibly be undertaken successfully without the help of many capable people. Both to recognize them for their superb efforts in this study and to give the reader an idea of the qualifications of the people involved in the production, a brief description is included here.

1. The director. The play was directed by Suzanne Thompson. Suzanne was a graduate student in education with an emphasis in theatre. She had directed several productions as an undergraduate and had worked for two years as a director for the Tyroe Players, a summer theatre group in Estes Park, Colorado. She had acquired fifteen academic hours of directing and the same number of hours of acting as an undergraduate. In addition to directing the play, she traveled with the production and participated in the discussions which followed each production.

2. Jerry. Jerry was played by Larry Klein. Larry was a graduate student in speech with an emphasis in theatre. Although his undergraduate degree was not obtained in theatre, he had

earned eight academic hours in acting and twelve in directing.

He had acted in several major roles in undergraduate productions and had directed one full scale graduate production. He is, of course, the writer of this thesis.

3. Peter. Peter was played by Will Cass. Will was a graduate student in education with an emphasis in English. He had acted many major roles as an undergraduate as well as several roles as a graduate. Will also had several hours in undergraduate directing and acting.

4. Technical director. The technical director and assistant to the director was an undergraduate sophomore, Lynn New. Lynn had stage-managed several productions as a high school student, as well as some major college productions. She had worked in nearly all areas of technical theatre.

5. Business manager. Nearly all of the business of setting up performances, collecting and disbursing of moneys, etc., was handled by the Reverend D. Jeffrey Lenn, who is the assistant pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Emporia. Without Jeff's knowledge of the churches and ministers in the area, this study would not have been possible. Jeff also acted as the discussion leader.

Financial report. Even a study of this limited size required money. Standard royalties for the production of The Zoo Story were \$25.00 for each production. Due to the graciousness of Dramatists Play Service, Inc., however, the royalties were reduced to \$20.00 for the first performance and \$15.00 for each performance thereafter. Four scripts were purchased at a cost of \$5.00. Lighting equipment was rented from Associated Theatrical Contractors of Kansas City, Missouri, at a cost of \$100.32. There were \$36.01 spent in telephone calls to set up productions. No accurate record of gasoline consumption was kept and all transportation was provided by this writer's privately owned automobile. With eight performances of The Zoo Story, the total cost of production, not including transportation, was \$266.33.

Each church was asked to donate \$50.00, if possible, for the production. All eight churches, as expected, were not able to pay the full amount, although no charge was made for admission at any performance. In all, a total of \$345.00 was collected. This left a balance of \$78.67 for transportation. Since approximately 1,370 miles were traveled during the course of the tour, transportation reimbursement amounted to slightly less than six cents per mile.

The places of production. In order of their production dates, the places of production were: (1) Topeka-Highland Presbytery at Emporia, Kansas; (2) Marymount College, Salina, Kansas; (3) Central United Presbyterian Church, Topeka, Kansas (4) First United Presbyterian Church, Derby, Kansas; (5) Brotherhood United Presbyterian Church, Wichita, Kansas; (6) First United Presbyterian Church, Emporia, Kansas; (7) Overland Park United Presbyterian Church, Overland Park, Kansas; and (8) Southridge United Presbyterian Church, Roeland Park, Kansas. Several of these churches invited congregations of different denominations from their surrounding areas to attend the performance.

## CHAPTER III

### ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND DIRECTIVES

Because of the exploratory nature of this study, the knowledge acquired is not channeled into any one direction to result in proving and disproving any one point. Quite the opposite is true. The study was designed to discover all that could possibly be discovered about the use of drama in the church. The bulk of this chapter is, therefore, a display of that knowledge.

#### I. ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge acquired can be separated into two categories. The first has to do with statistical or objective data about the audience who came to the performance. The second category is more concerned with the type of response given by the audience after viewing this production of The Zoo Story.

Objective data. There are two very good reasons for analyzing the audience of The Zoo Story. It is not only interesting but important to know what kind of people, even from an objective point of view, are disposed to come to a church on the evening of

a weekend, and view a production of this type. Objective data about the audience may be used in determining future productions. In addition, such an objective view will provide a meaningful basis for evaluating the responses obtained. As we have discussed, the viewer himself is as important in the determination of his own response as is the object about which he responds. Because a table is provided (Table I, page 56) in this chapter giving a complete statistical account of objective audience data, this discussion will be concerned primarily with generalities and round numbers. The first three categories in the audience description are the most objective--sex, age, and occupation. The audience was almost equally divided between sexes. There were 168 men and 177 women. Their ages spanned from 12 years to 77 years. Approximately 25 per cent were 18 or under. The largest percentage were those from 19 to 39 years of age. These made up nearly 35 per cent of the audience. About 33 per cent were beyond 40 years of age and under 60. Only slightly more than 6 per cent were 60 or older. Generally, then, the ages were fairly evenly divided between 18 and under, 19 to 39, and 40 to 59.

Occupations were not so evenly divided. There were far more students than anything else. There were 122 students, which accounted for slightly more than 35 per cent of the audiences.

TABLE I  
OBJECTIVE DATA ABOUT THE AUDIENCE

Sex	No.	%	Age	No.	%
Male	168	48.7	0-18	89	25.8
Female	177	51.3	19-39	120	34.8
			40-59	113	32.7
			60-	23	6.7

Occupation	No.	%	Religious Preference	No.	%
Minister	49	14.2	Presbyterian	245	71.0
Housewife	67	19.4	Catholic	37	10.7
Student	122	35.4	Methodist	13	3.8
Teacher	35	10.1	Congregational	8	2.3
Other	72	20.9			

Church Attendance	No.	%	Plays seen past two years	No.	%
Regularly	295	85.5	0- 5	174	50.4
Occasionally	26	7.5	6-10	107	31.0
Seldom	24	7.0	11-25	48	14.0
			25-	16	4.6

Plays seen in church past two years	No.	%
0	174	50.4
1	83	24.1
2	48	14.0
3-5	32	9.2
6-	8	2.3

Housewives were the next largest group, totaling almost 20 per cent. Next were ministers at 14 per cent, and then teachers with 10 per cent. The miscellaneous group amounted to nearly 20 per cent.

It should be noted that no special attempt was made to select the age, sex, or occupation of audience members. However, the first performance was given at Topeka-Highland Presbytery which, as mentioned before, provided an audience primarily of ministers. This audience also tended to be somewhat older than the average audience. And too, the second performance was given at an actor's workshop on the campus of Marymount Catholic College at Salina, Kansas. This was, of course, primarily a young student audience. The only other determining factor of sex, age, and occupation concerned the Derby, Kansas, audience. The advance publicity about that production included the suggestion that The Zoo Story should only be viewed by a mature audience. This undoubtedly limited the number of young people attending the performance.

Most generally, then, the audience was evenly distributed between men and women. Although slightly more than 25 per cent were 18 years old or younger, it was primarily a mature audience. An unusually high percentage of audience members were students



and ministers. Although the play was produced at only 7 churches, there were 49 ministers present. This is, of course, due to the one performance at a Presbytery meeting.

Objective data were also obtained concerning the religious life of the audience. The audience was asked to indicate their religious preference and whether they attended church regularly, occasionally, or seldom. Naturally, since most of the performances were staged at Presbyterian churches, most of the audience was Presbyterian. Two hundred and forty-five of the 345 attending were Presbyterian, or 71 per cent. Roman Catholics amounted to a little more than 10 per cent, Methodists accounted for nearly 4 per cent, and Congregationalists about 2 per cent. The remaining percentages were classified as miscellaneous.

Of those attending, an overwhelming number attend church regularly, more than 85 per cent. A little more than 7 per cent attend occasionally; and 24, or exactly 7 per cent, attend seldom or not at all. So far as the religious life of the audience was concerned, then, most of the audience was Presbyterian and attended church frequently, or regularly.

There was also an attempt made to discover the theatre life of the audience. This was done in two main areas, secular theatre and theatre in the church. Most of the audience had not

seen many plays in the past two years. Outside of the church, more than 50 per cent had seen fewer than five dramatic productions, 31 per cent had seen six to ten productions, and only 18 per cent had seen more than ten.

Attendance of plays produced in the church was even less frequent. More than half of the audience members had not seen a play in the church in the past two years, 25 per cent had seen only one, 14 per cent had seen two, and only 11 per cent had seen three or more.

It can be accurately said, therefore, that the general audience was not accustomed to viewing theatrical performances. When considering that more than 35 per cent of the audience were students and that five of the churches were in metropolitan areas, this fact about play attendance becomes striking. For some reason, church people do not attend plays.

Concerning the attendance of church plays, it was noted that those not attending included a good number of ministers, which suggests that perhaps a major reason for the lack of attendance at plays in the church is a corresponding lack of plays presented. Perhaps one of the most important facts produced by this study (given the limitations of this study) is that very little drama is done in the church.

Responses given to The Zoo Story. As indicated in Chapter II, each audience of The Zoo Story was asked to respond to the production. Although this study was designed to make that response as free and unrestricted as possible, it will be noted that audience response generally answered fairly specific questions. These questions were those provided by the questionnaire in order to promote thought on the part of the audience. It is still important to note, however, that no audience member was asked to respond directly to any of these questions. The demonstrated importance of those questions answered was, therefore, assigned by the audience member and not by the questionnaire.

1. Involvement. The most popular response given to the production concerned the audience's involvement with the production. (See Table II, page 61.) The degree, or type of involvement fell into five different categories. Each of these five categories will be discussed very briefly and examples will be given.

The highest level of involvement was that which resulted in some actual demonstration. A fifteen year old girl said "I felt like I was a person sitting in the next bench maybe 20 feet away; a bystander having to sit in on this tragedy." Another young girl, a seventeen year old, said, "I became so involved that I wanted to run up on the stage and listen to him and tell him I'd listen."

TABLE II

## LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT COMPARED TO OBJECTIVE DATA

OBJECTIVE DATA	LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT				
	Demon- strated	Said	Ideo- logical	Negative	Race Issue
TOTAL	45	68	142	25	7
SEX					
Male	20	33	62	22	4
Female	25	35	79	2	3
AGE					
0-18	12	27	29	3	1
19-39	18	26	46	6	5
40-59	15	14	58	7	1
60-		1	7	7	
OCCUPATION					
Minister	12	9	14	6	1
Housewife	6	7	41	1	
Student	18	37	35	3	2
Teacher	2	8	17	1	2
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE					
Presbyterian	23	28	88	6	3
Catholic	2	3	6		
Methodist	1		5		1
Congregational	2	4	2		
CHURCH ATTENDANCE					
Regularly	38	54	125	25	7
Occasionally	5	5	10		
Seldom	2	9	6		
PLAYS IN LAST TWO YEARS					
0- 5	18	24	72	16	4
6-10	18	28	44	6	1
11-25	6	13	19	1	2
26-	2	2	3	2	
PLAYS IN CHURCH					
0	17	36	74	12	
1	11	17	39	3	
2- 5	15	11	27	8	3
6-	2	4	2	2	

Some audience members told something of themselves, which demonstrated their involvement. A forty-four year old woman said, "I was involved in that I could see how I put up a front that is acceptable to others because I want to be accepted." Perhaps the most complete level of involvement was experienced by a sixteen year old young woman at Marymount College:

I was in wonder. I wanted desperately to find what had made Jerry like he was. I wanted to reach out and hold his head. I wanted to tell him it wasn't really like that at all, at least not if we don't let it be.

There were, in all, 45 people who demonstrated this kind of involvement. The objective data showed no trend as to sex, age, religious preference, church attendance, or number of plays seen in the last two years. It can be generally noted, however, that young female students expressed this involvement most vividly; and that an unusually high percentage of ministers were in this group. More than 25 per cent of the people in this group were ministers, which shows a significant trend when it is considered that ministers made up only 14 per cent of the total audience.

A second level of involvement was "spoken" involvement. These people, although they did not actually demonstrate their involvement, said they were involved. These produced such comments as: "I knew what to expect, but I hadn't planned on getting

involved to the actual extent that I did"; and "The characters were so convincing that the whole time of the play was filled with feeling." This kind of response was given by 68 audience members. Most of them were under the age of 40 and most of them were students. Even according to percentage, more students than any other group had a tendency at this kind of involvement.

A third kind of involvement was ideological, or "at the level of meaning." These were those who discussed the meaning of the play--such comments as:

This play seemed to me a very realistic one. We can see how Jerry was trying to have communication. He was lonely and probably this is why he saw the dog every day. It showed us how we must start contact even though with animals and then with people.

Most of those who expressed involvement expressed it on this level. There was a slight trend for these people to be age 40 or over, although all age groups were represented. Proportionately, far more housewives had this kind of involvement than any other occupation group.

A fourth kind of involvement was negative. These were people who expressed some kind of negative reaction. This reaction was sometimes quite strong and included some invectiveness. One elderly postmaster put it this way:

The acting was good. One thing is quite evident--the

decline of morality that is one of the rotting tendencies that will bring this society to its downfall is now receiving the benediction of the church.

Others of this group, although expressing some negative reaction to what they saw, indicated that perhaps it was good that they had seen it. A middle-aged woman said:

Before the performance I was irritated at the necessity of having to watch an episode of 'real drama in the church'! It was so well done I was at once caught up in it-- although I have seen this play many times. I wondered if I--or others---should be feeling 'shock' but really didn't feel shock. It made me think of the emptiness of so many lives around us and how shallowly most of us react to them.

There were only 25 out of a total audience of 345 who expressed these negative feelings. Interestingly, 22 of them were men, 6 of them were ministers, most of them had seen no plays in the past two years, either secular or religious, and all of them attended church regularly. It was very noticeable that, although most ministers were not opposed to this drama (many of them being in accord with it), those who were, were older than the average. Two were over 60, two were over 50, and two were over 30.

After presenting the play several times, it became apparent that another kind of involvement was possible. After nearly every performance, discussion was made likening the problems in The Zoo Story of communication with the most outstanding problem of our modern secular society, the race issue. This interest was

not too well indicated through numerical count of individual responses. It was, however, noted that several people showed appreciation for the discussion because it was through the discussion that they had become aware of this issue.

2. Identification. A second topic of concern for many members of the audience was the amount of identification which they had for one, or the other, or both of the characters in the play. The degree of that identification ranged from a demonstrated kind to flat denial of any identification. (See Table III, page 66.) Thirty-nine people demonstrated their identification. Twenty of them identified with Jerry. A thirty-year old zoologist said:

I rather strongly identified with the character Jerry in the play--mainly because of a similar gap in communication between myself and my parents (they being the representatives of the establishment).

Incidentally, he went on to say:

The point was well made about the person who is unable to communicate with people turning in desperation to an attempt to communicate with animals. Albee may have known that the basic emotional communication is the same.

A young high school girl, said, "I wished to identify with Jerry, I wish I could think like that, really."

Fifteen people expressed some identification with Peter. A sixteen-year old girl said, "I could identify with Peter because all



TABLE III

## DEGREE OF IDENTIFICATION AND WITH WHOM IDENTIFIED

OBJECTIVE DATA	DEGREE OF IDENTIFICATION		IDENTIFIED WITH	
	Demonstrated	None	Jerry	Peter
TOTAL	39	220	20	15
SEX				
Male	19	111	9	8
Female	20	109	11	7
AGE				
0-18	13	63	7	3
19-39	15	69	11	7
40-59	11	77	1	4
60-		11	1	1
OCCUPATION				
Minister	9	27	1	2
Housewife	5	43	5	3
Student	15	72	9	6
Teacher	2	26	1	2
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE				
Presbyterian	19	114	13	9
Catholic	4	9		
Methodist	4	3		1
Congregational	1	6		
PLAYS IN TWO YEARS				
0- 5	14	96	9	8
6-10	16	65	7	5
11-25	6	29	2	1
26-	3	10	1	1
PLAYS IN CHURCH				
0	13	109	11	6
1	10	56	6	4
2-5	15	49	3	4
6	1	2		1

my life, the things and ideals he represented have been drilled into me."

But, an overwhelming majority, 220, either expressed a lack of identification or did not mention identification at all. Many of these people were concerned with other things. Most of them wrote mainly about involvement and did not distinguish between involvement and identification.

3. Desirability in the church. Forty-seven audience members spoke directly to the question "Is this kind of drama desirable in the church?" This is important, because this question was not directly asked by the questioner. Twenty-nine of them said "yes" and eighteen said "no." Because of the importance of this question, all of these responses are reproduced (Appendix A, Section IV). There were three primary reasons why people wanted to see this kind of drama in the church. The first two were coincidental: (1) because the production was excellently done; and (2) because the characters and situation were portrayed realistically. The third was, they felt, because the church needs to be "wakened up." A sixty-one-year old woman, a school teacher, put it this way:

I thought the play was excellently portrayed. Both of the characters were very real. Peter is the one closest to my

daily experience. It is very hard for us to realize that there are people as desperate as Jerry in the world unless we are brought up short by something like this once in a while. The church could use more drama I believe.

The comment made by a thirty-two-year old housewife was expressive of this feeling.

I felt very involved with the play. The actors possibly were attempting to express man's inability to communicate, to establish meaningful relationships. I think if this play had been performed anywhere else I would not have seen it. Excellent.

When asked if the discussion had caused her to change her mind about the production, she said:

No. I still feel the church should take a more active part in the dramatic arts, especially those areas concerned with the plight of man's everyday life.

Of the 47 people who addressed themselves to this question, 29 wanted this kind of drama in the church and 18 did not. Those opposed were also very expressive. A minister, who did not give his age, expressed his repulsion this way:

I felt throughout the play how I was captive at an awful waste of time. I could have been studying or working, but here I was listening to such nonsense. The play dealt with symptoms of sickness in society but I felt that it was very inappropriate in language and content in the Sanctuary (in fact in the chancel).

A fifty-six-year old woman expressed similar thoughts:

The play was very well presented and probably has merit.

But personally I did not appreciate the presentation in the church. I do not think the work of the church should be degraded in this manner.

For the statistics of those who expressed opinions, both positive and negative, see Table IV on page 70. It is surprising to point out, however, that there is no real trend according to age in the acceptability of The Zoo Story. But there is a trend in age at the rejection of it. No one under 25 was repelled by the presentation. Ten of the eighteen people were over 40 and five were over 60. Seven of the eighteen were ministers and none were students.

4. Quality of production. It must, of course, be realized that a study of this type, that is, one in which a play is performed and a response is given, will be strongly influenced by the value or quality of the production. No one is going to become involved or identify with a bad production. On the other hand, many people might become more fully involved with a play because it is produced well, even though they did not mean to. It is important, then, that the reader have some idea of the quality of this production of The Zoo Story.

Again, this question was not asked for by the questionnaire. Nor was it asked for in the discussion. These are voluntary

TABLE IV

DESIRABILITY OF DRAMA IN CHURCH AND  
VALUE OF PRODUCTION COMPARED TO OBJECTIVE DATA

OBJECTIVE DATA	Desirability of drama in church		Value of Production	
	yes	no	good	bad
TOTAL	29	18	148	3
SEX				
Male	14	15	69	1
Female	15	4	79	2
AGE				
0-18	6		39	1
19-39	11	6	47	2
40-59	11	5	50	
60-		5	9	
OCCUPATION				
Minister	5	7	17	
Housewife	5	3	26	
Student	7		51	2
Teacher	6	3	21	1
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE				
Presbyterian	14	3	70	
Catholic	1		8	
Methodist	2		2	1
Congregational			1	
CHURCH ATTENDANCE				
Regularly	16	12	124	1
Occasionally	2		15	1
Seldom			9	1
PLAYS IN TWO YEARS				
0- 5	18	9	62	
6-10	7	5	51	
11-25	2	1	14	1
26-	2	1	9	2
PLAYS IN CHURCH				
0	13	8	79	2
1	10		28	1
2-5	6	8	36	
6		2	5	

comments. One hundred and forty-eight said that it was a good production and three said that it was a bad one. All others did not comment on the production quality.

As previously mentioned, the second performance was for an actor's workshop at Marymount College. Neither on the individual questionnaires or in the discussion after, did anyone express a negative feeling toward the quality of this production. On the contrary, many expressed high praise.

There were several times when members of the audience were relieved to discover that the actors portraying Jerry and Peter were not really like the characters that they portrayed. This was especially true at the Southridge United Presbyterian Church in Kansas City.

A seventeen-year old girl expressed her feelings with much exclamation: "I felt involved from the beginning to the end. I thought your actors were fabulous! They portrayed the characters very well!!! I enjoyed it thoroughly!!!!!!!!!"

Some indicated that it was the quality of the performance that forced them to listen. A twenty-nine-year old woman said: "Delighted, but would not have been had it not been a superior performance. As it was, I was carried in the production and found new meanings in the play." There was an overwhelming

indication that the production was of very high quality.

5. Results of discussion. After the second performance of the play, it became apparent that many questioned the performance of this kind of play, without the opportunity to discuss it. Beginning with the third performance, then, after the discussion, each audience member was asked to write down his reactions to the discussion. He was asked to say whether or not the discussion had changed his ideas about the play or whether it had developed them. Eighty-one of these people simply responded with "no," meaning that their ideas had not changed. Eighty-one also responded "no," but went on to say that meanings had been deepened by the discussion. Thirty-eight said that their ideas had been significantly changed. (For a statistical tabulation of these answers, see Table V, page 73.) Typical comments favoring discussion were:

The discussion helped broaden my perspective and understanding of what Albee might have been trying to say.

Allowing personal involvement by the audience is a good way of making a play come alive.

Yes, the most wholesome dividends of such a play came from hearing different interpretations. The more we hear, the more we think. The more we think--the better.

The idea of racial conflict shows how easily we can change our outlook, say on the play, just by someone's suggestion. Are interpretations the mirrors of our concern?

TABLE VI

RESPONSES OF MINISTERS, HOUSEWIVES,  
AND STUDENTS TO THE ZOO STORY

Response	Minister	Housewife	Student
<b>INVOLVEMENT</b>			
Demonstrated	12	6	18
Said	9	7	27
Ideological	14	41	35
Negative	6		3
Race Issue	1		2
<b>IDENTIFICATION</b>			
Demonstrated	9	5	15
With Jerry	1	5	9
With Peter	2	3	6
None	27	43	72
<b>DISCUSSION</b>			
Ideas changed	1	9	19
Ideas not changed	4	23	28
Ideas developed	5	15	29
<b>DO IN CHURCH</b>			
Yes	5	5	7
No	7	3	
<b>PRODUCTION VALUE</b>			
Good	17	26	51
Bad			2



6. Ministers, housewives, and students. The three major occupations of audience members were ministers, housewives, and students. Because of the importance which occupation has in evaluating a study of this sort, a table is provided corresponding these occupations with the five areas of response (Table VI, page 75). Briefly, this table shows the large percentage of ministers who demonstrated involvement with the production. However, ministers also showed more negative views than other groups. They also comprised a high percentage of those who demonstrated identification. Most of those ministers reluctantly identified with Peter:

I felt the frustration of Peter in the sudden realization that one is not really able to communicate with some people. And that the difficulty lies largely within myself. That probably I do not want to 'open up' to that person.

Some identified with both Peter and Jerry. A thirty-two-year old minister expressed real concern:

I am a minister age 32. It helped me to see I need to empathize with people. Identified with both people. First with the middle-class publisher because he was the scholarly type. He was so easily threatened for his values were shallow. I am him. I am easily threatened. Identified with the single youth because I alienate people so easily. I need them and it kills me when I am criticized and when I alienate them when I don't preach right or they like my preaching.

Students identified more with Jerry than with Peter.

TABLE VI

## COMPARING RESULTS OF DISCUSSION WITH OBJECTIVE DATA

OBJECTIVE DATA	RESULTS OF DISCUSSION		
	Ideas changed	Ideas not changed	Ideas developed
TOTAL	38	81	81
SEX			
Male	12	40	27
Female	26	41	54
AGE			
0-18	19	24	25
19-39	9	23	25
40-59	9	29	30
60-	1	4	
OCCUPATION			
Minister	1	4	5
Housewife	9	23	15
Student	19	28	29
Teacher	2	5	13
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE			
Presbyterian	27	62	62
Catholic	2	2	3
Methodist	2	4	5
Congregational	5	2	
CHURCH ATTENDANCE			
Regularly	35	57	71
Occasionally	1	11	5
Seldom	1	8	4
PLAYS IN TWO YEARS			
0- 5	17	46	33
6-10	12	18	36
11-25	5	9	11
26-	1	1	1
PLAYS IN CHURCH			
0	20	52	30
1	14	17	25
2-5	4	12	24
6			2

Numerically, all three groups were nearly even in their wanting to see more productions like The Zoo Story in the church. This means that since there were decidedly fewer ministers and housewives than there were students in the total audience, the percentage of ministers and housewives who wanted more productions was much greater than those of students. Students generally did not comment on the desirability of the production in the church. It is, however, significant that no student was opposed to the production, and most of the people of these three groups who were against it were ministers.

Housewives were very impressed with the production. There were only 67 housewives in the entire audience, and 26 of them expressed a positive attitude. No housewife thought it was a bad production, and no minister thought it was bad. As was said, only 3 expressed a negative quality, and 2 of those were students.

## II. DIRECTIVES

One can easily see that a great deal of knowledge has been acquired as a result of this study. The study, therefore, has been successful. The question now becomes "What do we do with all of this knowledge?" To answer this question, we should return

to the purpose of this study, which was to discover the usefulness of drama in the church. Can drama provide a meaningful experience in the church?

Practical considerations. This study has shown that it is practically possible. Whatever else may be said about the production of The Zoo Story, it did happen. It is a matter of fact that seven churches and one church-related college in Kansas were willing to pay for the performance of a play for their congregations. It is also a matter of fact that several other churches had the money and were willing to pay but had not learned of the production early enough to put it on their calendars. Couple this with the fact that many of these churches expressed a willingness to subscribe to the next production, and the practical feasibility of such a project becomes clear.

There are, however, other practical considerations, not the least of which is the fact that the base for this operation was an established, funded institution provided a strong academic program in the theatre. All of the members of The Zoo Story were a part of that institution and all had received training there. While it is true that there was no connection between the production of The Zoo Story and Kansas State Teachers College Speech Department

on any other basis, that academic basis cannot be overlooked. It took talent and skill to produce The Zoo Story. These vital elements were provided by an institution outside of the church.

As has been pointed out, to a substantial degree the success of The Zoo Story was determined by the high quality of its production. Whether or not a poor quality production could have been as successful is not known, but it is safe to say that if the church chooses to provide touring productions of this caliber, it must also provide some kind of training and base of operation.

Emotional involvement. We might ask ourselves again "What kind of an experience is a meaningful experience?" Surely, it must involve the absorption, or reabsorption, of something important. The audience must accept, or become aware, of something. That kind of acceptance includes an emotional involvement. And this study has shown that that kind of involvement is possible with a production such as The Zoo Story. Out of a total audience of 345, there were 262 who experienced some kind of involvement. There were 113 of those who experienced an emotional involvement, 45 of them to the extent that they were able to demonstrate that involvement in the questionnaire.

What does this tell us about drama in the church? At first glance, it tells us very little that we did not already know. Theatre people have been exclaiming the value of the drama in creating emotional involvement since before the Golden Age of Greece. What have we learned that is new? To answer this, we simply need to look at what it is that created this involvement.

Ideological involvement. It is no accident that this involvement was a result of a realistic portrayal of real people asking ultimate questions about reality. This is contemporary, secular drama with meaning. What does this tell us about drama in the church? First, it tells us that drama must ask meaningful questions. Second, it tells us that it must be realistic. And third, it tells us that it can be highly secular.

The secularity of the play might even have been one of its strongest points. Many of those who expressed a desire to have this kind of production in the church, or who thanked us for this production, did so because of its secular nature. They were able to become involved with this secular portrayal. The reality of the portrayal impressed them. A nineteen-year old boy put it this way:

I felt before the play a drama of a homosexual was to

unfold. During the play I was emotionally involved in every move. It was torture watching it because I identified with Peter and felt the same feelings he did. It was very good. After the play I felt sympathy toward Jerry but shared Peter's emotional agony at what had happened. Yes, things like this do happen. Very realistic.

There were, of course, people who were repelled by the realism. One sixty-three-year old minister said that the play was "so true to so much of life that when I seek entertainment I much prefer something very different from this in content." But notice the difference in these two comments. This young man was not seeking entertainment. He was asking ultimate questions about life, the same kind of questions that the play was asking, and he was grateful for the experience.

The goal of this thesis was to determine the usefulness of drama in the church by measuring audience response to an actual dramatic production. The production was of a play with both theatrical and theological value. It was highly secular, portraying believable characters in a real-life situation. It was determined at the beginning that the success of this production would be measured by the audience response to the production. In keeping with this phenomenological point of view, perhaps, it would be best to close this inquiry with one of these responses.

It is difficult to choose a response that reflects the general

feeling. But again and again, we who produced The Zoo Story were impressed with the kind of response that teen-agers had to the production. To answer the question, "Can drama provide a meaningful experience in the church?" this comment by a sixteen-year old high school girl may be most appropriate:

I immediately identified myself with Jerry. He was so sad, just to look at his loneliness made me want to cry. He made me feel lonely, too.

The play shocked me. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I think I'm still trembling. I really think I am! I'll have to think about it. You can't ignore it.



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APPENDIX A

## QUESTIONNAIRE A

## REPRESENTATIVE QUESTIONNAIRES OF LAYMEN

The clearest and most meaningful responses gained by this project were the original responses given by the audience. These were the most direct and, therefore, the most valid. Because of this, this Appendix is provided. The reader can read these responses for himself. However, from eight performances given, there were a total of 354 individual responses accumulated. Two things became evident. First these responses were too many in number to reproduce them all; and, second, there needed to be some organization of those that were reproduced.

I have chosen to reproduce 112 responses. These are divided into two primary groups. The first group, of which there are 82, is composed of laymen. The second group contains the responses of 30 clergymen. These two groupings are subdivided into five major categories: (1) those who show their involvement with the production, both negative and positive; (2) those who show some identification with the characters in the play by telling something of themselves; (3) those who directly discuss the place, both negative and positive, in the church of such drama as The Zoo

Story; (4) those who express their opinion concerning the value of discussion after the performance; and (5) those who express some appreciation for the production.

These responses were not chosen to directly influence the reader's opinion concerning the validity of drama in the church. There are both negative and positive responses given here. Rather, they were chosen because of the quality of the response itself. These responses are those which best express whatever idea is given; they are, therefore, the most interesting and the most worthy of space. Because of this criterion, there are no negative responses showing a lack of identification or a lack of interest in discussion after the performance. These responses were characterized only by a simple "no." All responses, however, have been reproduced of those who made a direct statement concerning the use of productions like The Zoo Story in the church.

So that the reader will know who is making the response, relevant data is provided in an abbreviated form. The first column gives the subject's sex and age, along with his occupation. The second column shows how many plays he has seen in the past two years and how often he attends church. The third column shows how many plays he has seen in the church in the last two years (excluding The Zoo Story) and his religious preference. The line

after the subject's initial response indicates that the comment which follows was given in response to the question "Do you feel that your views have changed as a result of the discussion? Why or why not?"

The arrangement of the words and sentences and the punctuation are kept as close as possible to the originals.

### I. INVOLVEMENT

Female 17	10	1
Student	Regularly	Congregational

Before the play I tried to understand the title of the play. During the play I had mixed emotions about the two characters--whether or not I sided with Jerry or Peter. Peter seemed a stereotype of a society of shells--empty inside but carefully masked outside. Jerry seemed a stereotype of an undercurrent in our society trying vainly to understand his inside soul while trying to tear the outer mask away. After the play--I find myself asking the questions--would I rather be Jerry or Peter. Jerry I think. Because he tried to understand himself. Yet I fear I am more like Peter--many are.

---

Yes, I think I now see Jerry in a more rational light. I felt sorry for him during the play. I became so involved that I wanted to run up on the stage and listen to him and tell him I'd listen. But now I see him from a distance--perhaps the magic of the after effects of the play has worn away and I'm now in a class with Peter.



Female 15	0	3
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before: It was just another play. I knew only that it was a play.

During: I felt like I was a person sitting in the next bench maybe 20 feet away; a bystander having to sit in on this tragedy.

After: I felt very hurt but was awakened by something.

---

Well there is more to my ideas now. I have taken in a little more. The views are clearer and better rounded. I'm glad we had a discussion.

---

Female 16	6	0
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

I immediately identified myself with Jerry. He was so sad, just to look at his loneliness made me want to cry. He made me feel lonely, too.

The play shocked me. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I think I'm still trembling. I really think I am! I'll have to think about it.

---

No, not really. I think I grasped the play and I knew what it was saying. But the discussion helped me to see the views of others.

---

Female 26	9	7
Saleswoman	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before: Intense interest--had heard of this but not details of plot.

During: Extreme involvement with especially Jerry, who was

communicating to us as well as begging for a real gut response. Both came through--the happy, normal, and the tortured searcher for some touch from outside himself that accepted him so that he could accept himself (i.e. difficulty identifying with mirror) each happening to me and with realistic portrayal of Jerry's experiencing.

After: Exhausted!

---

Discussion necessitates change in that it stretches even the thought I had to other dimensions via though other build on them. The discussion didn't change the emotional import nor my personal experience with the play.

---

Female 44	4	2
Homemaker	Regularly	Presbyterian

I did not know what the play was about specifically before I came. I did feel it was about people as they really are. I feel the two actors did a good "job" of presenting what two people really could be and are. Jerry was more honest than Peter though most of us would say he was not as "nice." I was involved in that I could see how I put up a front that is acceptable to others because I want to be accepted. We tend to not be honest because we say it is unkind(?). This also portrayed great loneliness--so desperate that anyone's attention was craved. Do we really care about each other? Or do we just use each other? Do we really listen to the other fellow--whoever he might be--or do we only listen to the fellow who agrees with me?

---

Yes, it was helpful--brought out some views I hadn't thought of and might not have thought of even later on as I reconsidered the play itself.

Appreciated the final question.

Thank you!

Female 16	20	1
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before: Worried I wouldn't understand, that Mike would be right and I wouldn't get anything out of it.

During: Something like, "Don't just sit there, help that guy."

Leaves me with the feeling that I'd like to read it over. I don't really get it, even partially through--only snatches. Certain phrases still puzzle me, like when he talked about going the long distance to get the short distance right, and his comment near the beginning about time. It doesn't really hit me because I think he and I don't have entirely the same problem in this area--though similar, quite similar.

It's hard to say how this really reached me, or whether it did or not. I'll definitely have to think it over, so don't expect much out of this paper.

I don't think I've ever really related like Jerry wanted to. I was happy for Jerry in the end.

---

Yes, helped clarify, 'cause I really didn't have any ideas before the play. I told you that before.

---

Female 16	43	4
Student	Regularly	Catholic

I was in wonder. I wanted desperately [sic] to find what had made Jerry like he was. I wanted to reach out and hold his head. I wanted to tell him it wasn't really like that at all, at least not if we don't let it be.

Peter--I felt so sorry for him for his complete helplessness--his inability to help or even fully understand.

It was fabulous acting by both of you. Peter, after Jerry stabs

himself isn't quite right. However, the fight scene was much unbelievable.

Yes very much--talking about [it] out loud and hearing and having to put into words our thoughts gave a much deeper realization and understanding.

---

Female 21 Student	14 Occasionally	1
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Having been acquainted with the play before the performance I knew what to expect, but I hadn't planned on getting involved to the actual extent that I did. I felt this was partly due to the actors superior ability to make Peter and Jerry real people. They were real to the extent that I reacted, almost visably, and vocally to what they said or did.

---

Male 19 Student	4 Regularly	1 Catholic
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I felt before the play a drama of a homosexual was to unfold. During the play I was emotionally involved in every move. It was torture watching it because I identified with Peter and felt the same feelings he did. It was very good.

After the play I felt sympathy toward Jerry but shared Peter's emotional agony at what had happened.

Yes, things like this do happen. Very realistic.

---

Female 22 Student	6 Regularly	0 Presbyterian
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1st Anger towards Jerry and then laughing at Peter.

2nd Then in middle of conversation anger at both of them.

3rd When Jerry died I felt sorry for Peter for his not understanding.  
(Along with my own feeling of not understanding).

---

Yes, I think someone helped me to understand Jerry.

---

Female 57	24	2
Office work	Regularly	Presbyterian

The characters were so convincing that the whole time of the play was filled with feeling. Such sadness--even through the lighter lines. How little we understand. What happened to Peter?

It really is too soon to write a reaction!

---

No--but helped make clear the things I was feeling.

---

Female 24	10	0
Secretary	Regularly	Baptist

I think that I was very definitely involved with this play since now it is difficult to isolate any particular feeling at any given time. At various periods during the play, I felt drawn to, sorry for, and repulsed by each of the characters. Occasionally I could even put myself in their "shoes." Certainly I think they were believable and the play well directed. I still wonder what Jerry did at the zoo!

---

Yes, but not so much changed but made it more concrete which probably wouldn't have happened until 11 pm when in bed.

## II. NEGATIVE INVOLVEMENT

Those who were repelled.

Male 62	0	0
	Regularly	Presbyterian

They were good actors but I do not care for this kind of drama.

---

75	0	0
	Regularly	Presbyterian

Bored. Unable to understand theme and plot. Why can't we have plays any more without bringing in sex.

I must be old fashioned, age 75.

---

Female 47	12	0
Government clerk	Regularly	Church of Christ

Before: Is this play going to be worth the effort, is it going to instruct, what will I learn?

During: Well cast. However, no self-identification, or, very little. Felt Peter's characterization fell apart near end.

After: Is this type of thing becoming necessary in church? Having been brought up very strictly religiously, I abhor cursing and fear that presenting it in church gives tacit approval--but realize that I am getting old and set in my ways.

---

Thoroughly enjoyed the discussion--However, still feel this type thing has no place in the worship service proper. It's too distracting. You can not [sic] become involved even outraged, and still "Be still and know that I am God."

Male 26	100-125	Many
Teacher	Regularly	

Before: I dislike the play.

During: Appreciated the emphasis being made on certain lines but was prejudiced by question: "Why this play in a church?"

Offended, highly by some language which I felt could be cut and idea expressed in action.

Identified more with Peter but sympathised [sic] with Jerry. Yes, there are persons similar to Jerry but Albee is generalizing.

After: Appreciate the play more with the emphasis made by director and exceptional actors. Still--"Why?"

---

Male 75	3	2
Insurance	Regularly	Presbyterian

I don't think it had any connection with Christian Education. God can be portrayed in a more acceptable form.

---

Male 30	3	4
Dentist	Regularly	Presbyterian

I was expectant before the play. I did become involved with the action, and dropped few lines. At a point, I was a little annoyed with mention of sexual perversity etc. and I'm not sure yet that there's real need for that kind of thing to make a point. Does it take that to challenge people. SHOCK?

I felt as if the play was very well done--A good point was made, too. We are sometimes, most often, little aware of others about us. But . . .

---

I'm rather closed-minded. I knew that before the discussion. I

didn't see nearly the symbolism brought out in the discussion. I still feel that a relevant Christian approach may be the most worthwhile.

---

Male 67	2	0
Farmer	Regularly	Presbyterian

Good acting--the rest can not [sic] say much for. If that is what is taught in College better they should spend their time somewhere else.

---

Repulsed but wondering.

Male 29	0	0
Banker	Regularly	Presbyterian

I personally did not enjoy this type of drama. This is due primarily to the unpleasant things that were evident. This is probably because of my own feelings, since I do not like to witness unpleasant circumstances. I perhaps did feel more aware of the human tragedy in the world after the drama.

---

Male 51	5	3
Salesman	Regularly	Presbyterian

Wonder  
Indifference  
Relief  
Wonder

This sort of crap can be expounded anywhere and does not appeal to me! I wonder about my comments above!



Male 46	4	0
Businessman	Regularly	Presbyterian

Had no idea what the play was to be about so didn't anticipate much. Then as it progressed I was at first entertained and surprised at the skill of the performance (church drama is usually pretty sad). As it went on I was shocked at the subjects--homosexuality--illicit [sic] sex--the treatment of deceased mother and father--and then I forgot the skill of actors and became involved--repulsed--at the violations of basic human rights. Altho I'm sure people like this do exist, maybe it's too far out for Topeka--and then again maybe it's right in our midst and we're too blind to see.

---

No.

---

Simple dislike.

Male 16	3	0
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

I did not like the play. What was the point? No doubt a certain amount of symbolism is involved, but the points did not reach home with me. This was due to its confusing nature.

Jerry's role is not clear. Throughout I thought he was building up the incident at the zoo. The last part suddenly appears putting you in a state of bewilderment.

A little too long. Is there a main point? Fatalistic. A colored queen? An interpretation of God from the general interp.

---

Somewhat. Yet I feel I am aware of the problems. I need a solution a 16 year old kid can carry out.

---

Male 65	2	1
	Regularly	Presbyterian

The boys acted their parts real good. I can't say I liked the drama, but is typical of young men of broken homes carried by Jerry. No motive in life except self.

Peter a self-centered person.

---

Got nothing out of it.

Male 75	0	2
	Regularly	Presbyterian

I got very little out of this. I thought the men did very well but failed to get any message. Drama in church is new to me but I have no objection to it. In my opinion it should teach a lesson.

---

Female 17	8	0
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before this play I didn't feel anything because I didn't understand what this was really going to be about. I feel that the characters really portrayed themselves well and that I did get to know them as what they were. Other than people trying to find something in life to understand them as they are, I really didn't get anything out of this performance. I don't believe I understood it.

---

My feelings changed very much by the discussion. Now I see Peter and Jerry more clearly and I have a better understanding.

Male 18	4	1
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

I did not think the play was too interesting but part of the reason might be that I did not fully understand it. Also I did not completely understand what Jerry's role was.

---

No.

---

Male 53	3	0
Editor	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before the play I hoped a drama would present some message or idea that was worthwhile. As the play went on, I kept hoping for a turn that would give it some real meaning. At the end of the play I was still waiting. I believe it was well done. The boys knew their parts. But I believe it was "a tale told by (about) an idiot . . . . signifying nothing."

I think the boy Jerry was psychotic and perhaps the tragedy was the fact the other boy could not do anything to help him.

---

Male 47	2	0
Sales	Regularly	Presbyterian

First--I am not a drama critic. I am no authority of drama as such, and rarely attend such. This is necessary to say to prefix my comments.

I thought the two actors were fine but to me the plot was nil. If it was there, I missed it. Perhaps I am too shallow.

How this plot brings any understanding between mankind or relates to religion I could not see it.

Male 31	1	1
Engineer	Regularly	Presbyterian

I felt very much as a woman must feel at a football game. Without some knowledge or study of drama, the play has very little meaning and probably accomplishes very little. It did not stimulate any particular trend of thought.

It was interesting and did hold my attention.

Neither of the characters would be my idol but of the two I associated myself more closely with Peter. Unless the youth have more training or knowledge of drama I doubt it accomplishes very much.

---

Today's problems related to The Zoo Story

Female 31	3	2
Housewife	Regularly	Methodist

The play was very well acted. The part of Peter seemed to represent the ordinary American, concerned only in his little world. Jerry represented an intruder--a "have not" trying to enter Peter's world. Peter fought for his world, destroying Jerry. Could this represent the Negro crying for admission to the white man's world? We tend too much to be like Peter--we don't want to know about the deprived or ones who really need help. They are intruders to us. We need to see ourselves in this light, to see that the Jerry's need to be heard.

---

The discussion has perhaps broadened my original view allowing me to notice things I had missed.

Male 59	1	0
Salesman	Regularly	Presbyterian

Very good acting--especially by Jerry.

This play portrayed the need for love and respect by man--this has become necessary more today with our race problems.

---

Male 30	1	0
Social Worker	Regularly	Presbyterian

I think that the two characters played their parts well. I think that Peter represents a lot of our middle class society and the other character represents some of the problems should need to be heard in any way possible. Sometimes it is the violent way which we have been experiencing as of late.

---

Yes, I enjoyed expanding on some of the ideas of the play.

---

Male 16	1	0
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

In an identification with Jerry, I responded with enthusiasm to This situation as presented in conjunction with Simon and Garfunkel Patterns. I was thoroughly impressed with the vivid realistic portraits as presented by both actors and the frightening effect it created. This is certainly important because those which were formerly oppressed are represented (riots) by Jerry. I also identified with Jerry?--in that sometimes I feel as though I am lost.

---

No.

Female 29	12	5
Church educator	Regularly	Presbyterian

Delighted, but would not have been had it not been a superior performance. As it was, I was carried along in the production, and found new meanings in the play. (I'd read it, but never seen it performed before).

It's interesting how very much experiences influence what we see in something. In this light of our recent difficulties, today Peter became for me The Black Man--deprived, cut off from society and unrelated.

---

Female 48	12	0
Teaching	Regularly	Presbyterian

I must admit I have used the play in class. I was thinking how lonely Jerry is and how some people never "make it" in the real world of relationships and yet how some like Peter, who appear to "make it" are really kidding themselves and don't ever know they have "sold out to the middle-class values" and have no meaning at the gut level.

And will we kill the black man within 18 months?

---

Yes. Of all things I hadn't thought of Peter as the Rock before. Albee always amazes me! Yet, I know there are many more valid interps.!

### III. SHOW IDENTIFICATION

Male 17	3	1
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

The play brought about my identification with Jerry. He was a person trying to tell of his problems. Peter symbolized the people of today too interested in themselves to bother with others.

This play brought to my attention a problem I have myself. I want people to listen to my problems but I'm too interested in myself just like Peter was.

By showing a play that portrays a problem of today, I think it is possible to use this type of play in church.

---

Yes, it brought Christ more into the picture than I realized.

---

Male 30	3	0
Zoologist	Never	None

I rather strongly identified with the character Jerry in the play-- mainly because of a similar gap in communication between myself and my parents. (They being the representatives of the establishment). The point was well made about the person who is unable to communicate with people turning in desperation to an attempt to communicate with animals. Albee may have known that the basic emotional communication was the same.

---

No. But my discussion is not nearly long enough to give a complete articulation to my impression of the drama.

---

Female 16	10	1
Student	Regularly	United Church of Christ

The characters were very accurately portrayed. There are many, many people exactly like these two men. I could identify with Peter because all my life, the things and ideals he represented have been drilled into me. The pure conformist. You are born, brought up to say and do the right thing at the correct time, you do this or that because it is proper. Then you float on thru life teaching this same to your children. A conformist life.

Not the right one for me, however. So many people are the way Peter was.

---

They have not changed, but they are much clearer and I have many more ideas because of the discussion.

---

Female 17	10	0
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

I don't know what I was looking for when the play started but it was a great play. I think if I read it or saw it again I could get so much more from it. It has so much foreshadowing I felt that meant so much. I wished to identify with Jerry. I wish I could think like that, really, think and to live a life may be not worthwhile but at least searching. I associated with Peter because Peter was so typical and satisfied and ordinary with everything typical as most people. Besides, most people would deep down inside be Peter and not get involved.

---

No, but everyone said in the discussion that Peter wasn't typical. I disagree. Peter was typical of everything and everybody. To me that was the idea of the play.

---

Male 41	1	1
Insurance	Regularly	Presbyterian

The character Peter was a rather pleasant inoffensive type who I am afraid, represents many Christians. I'm also afraid I could identify with him. Jerry, was someone who we Peter's avoid whenever possible, especially when it looks like there is a serious possibility that they're going to involve us in their rather messy immoral lives. I think Jerry was trying to break through Peter's shell of insulation to tell him the story that was deeply disturbing him. The story of the landlady's dog was a



parallel between Peter and Jerry with Jerry representing the dog.

---

Did the discussion change my ideas about the play? Not very much except that I did not get the idea about God being in all of us as in the colored queen.

---

Female 16	20	1
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before the play really started, the music told the story of Jerry ahead of time. I do think people like Peter and Jerry not only exist but are very common. Jerry was who I identified with. For if you feel something different then what you should and don't know how to express yourself, you would naturally become depressed. Jerry was lonely and searching for himself.

---

No, they just came out clearer.

---

Female 42	1	0
Housewife	Regularly	Presbyterian

Felt embarrassed at first for Jerry and sorry for Peter that he had to endure Jerry. Became more involved--wondered what Jerry was driving at--felt that Peter wasn't really involved with Jerry until Jerry took over his bench. Then Peter really noticed Jerry. I wondered why Jerry did this and changed my opinion of Peter. Felt disgusted with Peter because the bench was so important to him. Wondered at the end about a connection between Peter and Jerry and Peter and Jesus.

---

Not really.

IV. THE ZOO STORY IN THE CHURCH

It should be done in the church.

Because this kind of drama has to do with reality.

Female 61	4	1
Teacher	Regularly	Presbyterian

I thought the play was excellently portrayed. Both of the characters were very real. Peter is the one closest to my daily experience. It is very hard for us to realize that there are people as desperate as Jerry in the world unless we are brought up short by something like this once in a while. The church could use more drama I believe.

---

My ideas have been deepened because of the discussion. Much of what was said was meaningful and good. The last remarks about finding God were especially good. How could anyone be bored?

---

Female 32	5	0
Teacher	Regularly	Catholic

This play seemed to me a very realistic one. We can see how Jerry was trying to have some communication. He was lonely and probably this is why he saw the dog every day. It showed us how we must start contact even though with animals and then with people. Peter was very good too and portrayed his role very good.

---

Yes. I was just thinking that there is a need for scratching the ribs of the church (Peter) in order to get it to communicate with Jerry.

It is the church where we must see the realism rather than having the church as a refuge to forget about life and its striving.

---

Female 32	3	0
Homemaker	Regularly	Protestant

I felt very involved with the play. The actors possibly were attempting to express man's inability to communicate, to establish meaningful relationships. Like a zoo, animals and people all around, we hear one another, we see each other, but we can't really talk to each other.

I think if this play had been performed any where else I would not have seen it.

Excellent.

---

No. I still feel the church should take a more active part in the dramatic arts, especially those areas concerned with the plight of man's everyday life.

---

Female 17	4	2
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

The music set a good stage and ended it well. It seemed to give an insight on what to look for in the play.

To become involved was easy. Drama, I feel, can be used in the church and I hope that does become more accepted.

Most of the older people probably thought the language was too much but there are some things we have to accept in the world as they are and vulgar language is one.

---

No.

Female 19	15-20	0
Student	Regularly	

I suppose the two characters involved effected me most. A study of two people commonplace in our society--a questioning one, an apathetic and/or complacent one. A question: Where can we value in our society and yes, there is a need for it.

The production can take place almost anywhere as you have demonstrated here. The presentation grabbed my mind and I want to see people as more than just in a zoo.

In a church? The church is a gathering place for people involved in the world. The church should be every bit a part of it!

---

Because of values of dramatic production.

Female 52	8	0
Teacher	Occasionally	Methodist

I came to see an Albee play with anticipation, having some vague idea that it was something read and discussed in school. I had very little hope that a church youth group would do much with it. However, within minutes the play became involving. It was real theater. These two young actors knew what they were about. The story became an experience, a poignant one, and one in which an individual sees some of himself in each character. Jerry was the hurting individual, trying to desperation to make real contact with another creature; Peter was the unaware one. We take these various roles in turn, perhaps.

---

My ideas have not changed. However, I would like to say that this was a most meaningful evening--and to my surprise within the church for once. I have always hoped that the church might lead off on some live presentations and discussions.

Female 29	15	3, not enough
Housewife	Regularly	Christian

I feel there was definitely a place for drama in the church as a teaching tool and also for purposes of discussion which I hope will follow this gross imposition of writing down my feelings. I feel like I'm writing a 1st grade--after summer-vacation story. Obviously I identify with Jerry at this point in that who gives a damn what I have to say?

The performance was superior.

---

Yes, I was getting discouraged because of so little support in dramatic ministry. This is encouraging. I want to continue in my endeavors.

---

Female 17	5	1
Student	Occasionally	Presbyterian

I think it is a good idea to take in place of one sermon--once.  
 - The death scene gave me the idea of suicide, too.

Your actors portrayed the parts beautifully. Our youth director had read to us and explained the Zoo Story last year. He had explained the symbolism in which I've forgotten. After hearing the story I wanted to see it be performed. Yes, the actors were very realistic. I did get involved and felt as though I were a part of the story. The costumes fit the parts too. The beard was good because it made him look like a ho-bo. I associated Peter as Christ's deciple [sic] and Jerry as Christ. (Might be wrong--??)  
Thank you for coming.

---

After hearing parts of discussion I knew more. Not really. The older people get riled and it seems to me as though after all these years, they are finally seeing through themselves.

Male 25	30	2
Instructor	Occasionally	Baptist

Being thoroughly familiar with the production I was in a predictably comparative state of mind when I entered.

I feel that the production was very good and served its purpose. This is a valiant effort at a tremendous undertaking. The unusual selection for this audience helps considerable--Drama should have a definite place in our society--especially in the church. Bravo!

---

The discussion confirmed my prediction.

Even old stick-in-the-muds get involved.

---

Male 35	2	0
Farmer	Regularly	Presbyterian

The characters did a fine job presenting the play. I think this will be a good move to present things of this nature in our church. It was very touching to watch. Keep up the good work.

---

Female 34	6	0
Teacher	Regularly	Presbyterian

I had read and seen the play before. I felt that I was very involved in the play. I feel that the actors were portraying real people--in my acquaintance. I felt there are more "Peters" than "Jerrys." To me Peter symbolizes the "successful" suburbanite (even though he lives in New York City.) I'm not sure of the symbolism of Jerry--perhaps those who "have-not." Even though I've read the play, and now I've seen it twice, I'm not sure what it means--I would hope that perhaps I could gain insight in discussing the play with others.

---

The discussion helped clarify my feelings--I feel that it should be used in the church, but only when there is a discussion.

---

Female 50	5	0
Housewife	Regularly	Presbyterian

I think they play the parts good.

I think Jerry was trying to say that there is a God this was the last half of the play.

Maybe this is the way to get the young people back in the church work.

---

No.

---

Showed appreciation but no direct statement about the church.

Male 53	2	1
Banker	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before the play I had no special feeling except maybe anticipation as to what Albee would do with this one. During the performance I was very involved with first Peter and then Jerry alternately--I tried to tie other meaning to what was being said then became so involved in their life situations that I lost my pre-determined thoughts.

This is a terrific way to make meaning out of meaninglessness.

Wow! I find myself being more involved--

---

No.

Female	Several	2
Teaching	Regularly	E.U.B.

My feeling was what excellent acting was taking place. Also, even though the acting was excellent who should be allowed to see plays like this. There are types of people such as these two, maybe by showing the characters of each would be a lesson for witnesses.

---

I still feel the discussion brings out the two different types of people but how are we going to deal with these people to make them the right kind of people to live with.

---

Male 45	2	2
Savitikman	Regularly	Presbyterian

Boared. [sic]  
Amazed by content.

Then wondered how I would act in a similar case.  
This method is good.

---

No!

---

Female 43	3	0
Housewife	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before: The play--both Jerry and Peter seemed like real people-- I think Jerry was looking for someone to understand him and to help him understand himself. Peter was unprepared to know what to do in the presence of such a person.

After the play--thought about the hopelessness of such a situation. What could Peter have done differently?



---

No.

---

Female 47	1	0
Housewife	Regularly	Presbyterian

It was portrayed very realistically--it seems to bring out strongly the point that this type of life or living does exist but we are hardly aware of it or maybe we don't like to believe that people do live like this. We should work harder to reach people who need love and need to know that they are accepted and that there is an abundant Life in Christ and Christian Living.

---

Feelings changed--No. Except the questions and answers made some points more clear. I think we over "30" need this type of thing to shake us apart more often and make us stop to think more deeply!

---

Male 25	3	1
Teacher	Regularly	

Before: Thought play was going to be put on by and for H.S. kids. Felt gray because of rain. Wondered how to communicate to Sr. Highs.

During: Thought fight over bench was fight over pew. Realistic. Couldn't quite get Jerry's hang-up?

After: Not enough time to write, organize thoughts. Didn't like to write. Just took 6 hours of tests Saturday.

Drama good for involvement with one another but not purpose of worship.

---

Change? In what sense? Total? In a Gestalt Field sense would have to say yes. Clearer on others views.

---

Female 57	4	1
	Regularly	Methodist

I felt Jerry to be a very lonely person trying to find someone to be interested in him or to talk to. Peter an ordinary man content with his way of life. I found the play too long on the same thing and a little hard for me to try to find what they were trying to convey.

---

Yes. Helped me see what the players were trying to convey.

I see it could be on the several different themes that were presented and discussed.

Food for much thought. I would reserve it for education and discussion not strictly as worship.

---

It should not be done in the church.

Male 55	0	0
Postmaster	Regularly	Presbyterian

The acting was good--One thing is quite evident--the decline of morality that is one of the rotting tendencies that will bring this society to its downfall is now receiving the benediction of the church.

---

Female 56	2	0
House director	Occasionally	Presbyterian

The play was very well presented and probably has merit. But

personally I did not appreciate the presentation in the church.  
I do not think the work of the church should be degraded in this manner.

---

Female 25	1	0
House director	Regularly	Presbyterian

I think the actors were very good and played their parts very well. However, to be perfectly frank, I could not appreciate their efforts in the setting of the church.

Maybe I just missed the point.

---

Female	15	2
Housewife	Regularly	Presbyterian

Well acted but has little place in the church!!  
Probably shows the need for dialogue with people different from ourselves--lonely, disgusting, crude people!!  
Excellent drama, excellent acting but can't relate it to a part of the church program--not really!!

Can't figure out the motive for this sort of thing! Too far out for most people--Too horrid and vulgar for average!! Liked it as drama only!!

---

Female 42	5	0
Housewife	Regularly	Presbyterian

Mine has been a mixture of feelings and not necessarily in this order.

Why this in Presbytery?

Reminded of the complications of our society and the nostalgic look back at how easy it was for us as compared to today's youth.

Frustration, indeed--where do I fit into this?

Well done dramatically.

## V. THE VALUE OF DISCUSSION

Female 23	8	0
Teacher	Regularly	Christian

I quickly became involved in this play and with Jerry and Peter--their loneliness and isolation. They resemble persons that I have known, especially Peter. His secret fears about his manhood and sexuality were similar to Jerry's, only he was much less open and aware than Jerry. I almost felt more sad about him than about Jerry.

---

The discussion helped broaden my perspective and understanding of what Albee might have been trying to say. Allowing personal involvement by the audience is a good way of making a play come alive.

---

Male 30	1	0
Pharmacist	Regularly	Presbyterian

It was easier to identify with Peter. It is always difficult to identify with people like Jerry unless one can actually experience life as Jerry does--In all of Jerry's contempt for life (as Peter portrays it) I seek to see how many of his thoughts and expressions are really those of ordinary "contempt" and how many of them actually are a sincere rebuff of the many faults our society has!

As open contempt for many of our well established social practices lavishes, it will be very important for us to try and see why--and also to do our best to bring out of these a more perfect society!!

---

Yes, the most wholesome dividends of such a play came from hearing different interpretations. The more we hear, the more we think. The more we think--the better. Many thanks for a job WELL DONE.

---

Female 38	7	1
Teacher	Seldom	None

I was tremendously impressed by the effective difference in the two characters. Jerry was a "rough" character, and everything about him was "rough"--hair in unruly fashion, beard, ragged cut-off sleeves on his sweatshirt, and that patterns.

Peter was "rounded and smooth"--his hair, his turtle-necked sweater, his face and eyes, and that patterns. The "business" of touching his fingertips while listening looked natural and "rounded out."

I caught certain phrases to "store away" for future ruminating: The "sometimes you have to go a long way around to come back a short way correctly."

---

No, the discussion hasn't changed my opinion of the play, but it's certainly widened my understanding of the personalities who view such drama. I'm always amazed how differently any and every work is received.

---

Female 36	3	1
Housewife	Regularly	Presbyterian

During: That people just don't get involved with others feeling--that they don't really want to hear. People want to relate to others but don't know how. Jerry was forcing the relationship--he had no other choice. He had to be heard to feel that he was of worth.

After: This is life's tragedy--Peter did leave. He didn't get

involved. Jerry had no choice but to die. Altho I expected him to bounce back e.g. not have been stabbed.

---

The idea of racial conflict shows how easily we can change our outlook, say on the play, just by someone's suggestion. Are interpretations the mirrors of our concern?

---

Female 66	3	1
Housewife	Regularly	Presbyterian

Jerry and Peter were two opposite types. Conventional and erratic--never understanding each other. Jerry was the product of his environment, and I pitied him, so unhappy, but criticizing the other fellow because he was happy in a way Jerry could never be.

---

Various interpretations discussed were interesting. A play like this could mean anything. Does Albee know what he's driving at?

---

Male 18	10	1
Musician	Regularly	Presbyterian

I came in the last five minutes of the play. I wished I could have seen it from the beginning to get the full value of text from the play. The play seemed to tell a definite story and characters were good.

---

I was surprised to find over 30 people getting involved in a communications discussion with younger people and the exceptance [sic] of both to each others ideas.

## IV. THANK YOU FOR THE PRODUCTION

Female 17	5	0
Student	Occasionally	Presbyterian

Of course, our youth group at our church had already read the book, "The Zoo Story" and therefore, I was very interested in seeing it done in person.

I thought that the play was very realistic in some ways.

I felt involved from the beginning to the end. I thought your actors were fabulous! They portrayed the characters very well!!! I enjoyed it thoroughly!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

---

No, because everyone has his or her own ideas therefore, no one could change your own opinions!!!!

---

Male 36	2	0
Aeronautical Engineer	Regularly	Methodist

My initial feeling was that of contempt for Jerry--he was overbearing. I felt that Peter was smug. As the play progressed, my contempt for Jerry increased and my feeling for Peter was compassion. I was surprised that Jerry apparently had some religious background because of the quote after he stabbed himself. I felt sorry for Peter because he had been an innocent part of a knifing.

---

The discussion has brought my feelings to a better focus. Some just, tho. I felt the acting and production both were very good--thanks!

---

Female 40	10	0
Homemaker	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before: I was thinking and wondering what this play would be about, as I hadn't any idea at all. I've read a little about Albee and we'd talked about a few Albee plays in an adult class here recently.

During: I was completely caught up in it and very involved with both characters and I feel I've experienced some of their feelings, too--both of them.

Jerry was reaching out to communicate with someone--anyone. He was despondent and rejected. Peter was uninvolved and I felt even more sorry for him. Maybe he was more like most of us wanting to play it safe.

---

I think my ideas went along with the discussion, but they were made stronger.

It was a fine performance and we thank you!

Female 48	7	2
Housewife	Regularly	Presbyterian

I had heard the Zoo Story before so I knew what to expect and I was anticipating a thought provoking experience.

The play was well done. I identified with Peter as he described his "good" life. And I felt ashamed of the gap between the two men as I recognize the truth portrayed here so vividly.

The description of life -- (love and compassion) -- (attack, surrender) -- (love and hate) says so much that there's no time to put it here; but the discussion will provide this opportunity.

This is a very worth while experiment and we thank you!

---



Maybe--Some people saw some things in it that I did not see but I'm not sure that it changes my idea of the play. The discussion did provide added thought material for future thinking.

---

Male 22	Numerous	0
Clinical Child Care Worker	Seldom	Methodist

I had seen the last scene before, so the play affected me with the end in mind. Peter's inability to deal with the situation of pressed himself passively; Jerry's failure took an active course--I empathized more with this eventually although I felt myself in Peter's position during most of the play. Peter disgusted me at the end, Jerry was pathetic. The salvage: Communicate at any cost.

---

#### Discussion

Helpful--friction--reaction = expanding thoughts, unexpected depths plumbed.

Wow experience

---

Female 17	9	1
Student	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before the play I didn't feel much of anything. I was just talking to a bunch of kids. I talked to Peter Fosberg about the play before so I was ready for the worst. Once the play started I became more involved. I found myself identifying more and more with Jerry. It was very strange at times. I became very depressed. There were very few periods of enlightenment. Afterward I was even more so depressed. I have a lot of questions running through my mind. Life is like that. There are people like that. Why does it take this to make you see it?

---

Yes. Because my questions have been answered. I had so many different interpretations with nothing to compare them with. I still

identify with Jerry because I can't stand society. I must sympathize with Peter because of his smallness.

Thank you for coming. It was fabulous!!

**APPENDIX B**

## APPENDIX B

## REPRESENTATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE OF MINISTERS

## I. SHOW INVOLVEMENT

Male 36	8-10	2
Clergy	Regularly	Presbyterian

Felt the frustration of Peter in the sudden realization that one is not really able to communicate with some people. And that the difficulty lies largely within myself. That probably I do not want to "open up" to that person.

I felt the play was powerful, and important in the message it brings of the tremendous separation which exists within our society of groups, and even of individuals who are alienated from almost all meaningful communication.

The emotion which I feel most keenly is one of personal helplessness, strongly tinged with shame.

---

Male 54	4	2
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before: Trying to guess what the presentation would be like. Had just driven in from Denver, Colorado, and was met outside the door by a friend who invited me to come in. I was quite aware of my not being properly dressed, etc.

During: From the very beginning I became lost in the play, forgetting myself, and beginning to identify with both Peter and Jerry, on and off. Peter: Representing the affluent society of which I'm so much a part now. Jerry: Representing in many ways the part of society in which I grew up. I could see my own little room with the hot plate and my tears in trying to communicate my loneliness, and,

at times bitterness: I kept hoping Peter would respond in the ways others responded to my own need. Roles were authentic.

How terribly afraid we became of the unknown; and how we fear to become involved in the needs of others! We have so much at stake.

---

No.

---

Male 32	6	2
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

I enjoyed it.

I am a minister age 32. It helped me to see I need to empathize with people.

Identified with both people. First with the middle-class publishers because he was the scholarly type. He was so easily threatened for his values were shallow. I am him. I am easily threatened.

I identified with the single youth because I alienate people so easily. I need them and it kills me when I am criticized and when I alienate them when I don't preach right or they like my preaching.

---

Male 32	6	3
Pastor	Regularly	Presbyterian

(I saw this several years ago at Second City in Chicago. This performance was more action oriented--well done. Thank you.)

I found myself identifying alternately with both characters. But I suppose this isn't unusual--both were lacking in relationships. The play simply reminded me once again of what I feel about my relationships with people--and how utterly lost sometimes I feel. Then I try to forget it again until something like this--a play or an experience of a terrible superficial relationship that shouldn't be--hits me.

Male 32	5	4
Pastor	Regularly	Presbyterian

### Feelings

Overwhelmed with disappointment at participation with people who tried to talk. The disappointment includes some anger at the attempts--The facade represented by Peter--the attempt to come through.

The feeling of being scared begins to emerge as I write this--that we can't respond except impulsively to one another--that we only experience fantasy--that's scary.

---

Male 39	6	0
Pastor	Regularly	Presbyterian

I felt a strong identification with Peter at main points--the play--the conventional man seeking some solitude--probably from wife, daughters, cats and parakeets and certainly from nuts like Jerry.

I also keenly felt the loneliness, the tortured, twisted aloneness of Jerry. I felt real sadness and anger that there are so many such in our world and that we know so little and do so little to help.

---

Male 42	9	6
Minister	Regularly	United Church of Christ

What were you thinking or feeling before, after, or during the sermon. What was the play all about? Could you identify with any of these?

Peter was so proper I became bored by him. Jerry certainly opened my heart as he searched for something real. He tugged at me to break through propriety to humanness.

Sometimes the imagery of the play gets in the way. But I think the block is in me. It is a block of what is moral and proper again. We get separated from one another by our cold morality and ethics. Love is gutsy but we make it a pretty card.

A bid for the real, for real feeling and real relationships, even if it has to be the planning of one's own death.

---

No. What I felt and saw was bonified by the discussion.

Thanks, it was well done and very stimulating.

---

Male 40	10	5
Clergy	Regularly	Presbyterian

Interpretive acting excellent

Nothingness

Confusion

Suffering

No understanding

Emptiness

Left me with no particular mood except "pathetic"

Felt I'm not sophisticated enough to get with it.

Emotion without direction.

Nothingness

---

Female 42	3	1
Homemaker (Elder)	Regularly	Presbyterian

Began uninvolved. Gradually became more interested. Sympathized with Peter who had not asked for intrusion but responded to ? (other member's) ramblings. Gradually became more interested in the character and musings of ?. Finally very involved in drama, feeling much sympathy for Peter, antagonies for? (other character). Felt some relief (!) when he was stabbed--felt futility-frustration.

---

Male 58	4	1
Clergyman	Regularly	Presbyterian

Frustration--

Identification with status quo--and uneasy with it.

Feelings of uncertainty difficulty to identify--uncertain about what?

I don't know--

I guess a feeling of uneasiness came to me over and over.

---

Today's problems related to The Zoo Story.

Male 38	6	4
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

I felt anticipation in seeing this play done in the church. I wondered if many people wouldn't reject the play because of: foul language, done in front of communion table, couldn't see purpose of such a play because it is not an indoctrination approach.

During the play I had the feeling the actors were doing a good job and: Peter portrayed the church--proper, clean, unaware of the kind of life Jerry lived and very defensive, unable to express himself and his true feelings and therefore trying to be nice denied his humanity. Jerry standing for a large segment of society we don't understand and whom we avoid.

At end felt that this play expresses polarization in society: race, Viet Nam, foci within the church.

Found myself identifying with both.

## II. NEGATIVE INVOLVEMENT

Opposed to subject matter and language.

Male 63	6	4
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

Character portrayals--excellent

Plot--excellent



Settings--excellent  
 Teachings of social lessons--questionable  
 Entertaining--definitely yes  
 Desirable--no

Why--So true to so much of life that when I seek entertainment I much prefer something very different from this in content.

P.S. I am much in favor of dramatics in churches.

---

Male	6	4
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

I felt throughout the play how I was captive at an awful waste of time. I could have been studying or working, but here I was listening to such nonsense. The play dealt with symptoms of sickness in society but I felt that it was very inappropriate in language and content in the Sanctuary (in fact in the chancel).

The players acted well, but I felt sorry for them that they had to play these parts. I also felt that such a poor play would not have been put on in the days when the church was attending to its real mission. Also I felt that I would not like to think my children would ever have to act in such a play.

---

Male 71	8	12
Retired Navy Chaplain	Regularly	Presbyterian

The actors were good. The thread of thought seemed very repugnant; the action was vivid, but I doubt need to use such to try to entertain or educate. Dramatically, the two men knew their stuff. Acoustics were such that I had to strain to follow the discourse. I wouldn't care to see the action again.

Dramatics was a big part of my college life, but I liked our subject matter better than this.

Male 37	8	2
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

I feel somewhat frustrated in that I'm not sure what the point of such a play might be--especially at Presbytery.

As to the play itself--there were times I felt disgusted with the language. Yet I know it is common. There were times I could identify with both characters. Fear, loneliness, disgust, shock, anger, bewilderment.

Questionable.

Male 53	Many	0
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before the performance I was irritated at the necessity of having to watch an episode of "real drama in the church"! It was so well done I was at once caught up in it--although I have seen this play many times. I wondered if I--or others--should be feeling "shock" but really didn't feel shock.

It made me think of the emptiness of so many lives around us and how shallowly most of us react to them.

---

Male 30	7	5
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

I was, at first learning we were to see Zoo Story, very pleased--since I was already familiar with the play. However, I was anxious and somewhat afraid that others might be offended by it--by its "obscene language" or subject matter--and thus diminish its effectiveness.

Although I should like to think of myself and liberal and open minded regarding these things.

Male 59	0	0
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

Although I felt the actors did very well in doing their parts, I was not impressed with the play, I felt what are they trying to portray? or what message were they trying to convey? Personally I drew a blank.

### III. SHOW IDENTIFICATION

Male 55	20	4
Pastor	Regularly	Presbyterian

Extreme identification with the loneliness of Jerry.

Sympathy, yet corporate guilt sharing with the affluent detachment of Peter.

The intersection of a placid self-centered life by a life of need--yet both lives characterized by the need of love.

---

Male 35	2	2
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

I confess that I identified with Peter--that man of middle-class morality and circumstance. I am more like him and therefore felt a sense of outrage and fear at this "intruder."

The intruder however had the better case and heaped honest judgment upon Peter.

There was also an identification with Jerry who found real communication a rarity.

---

Male 32	6	1
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

I worried about the attendance until the play started, then it really didn't matter how many or who was there.

I tried to figure the play out--I like trying to think the thoughts the author may have had--Albee knows there are these two people, but I find both of them in me--in most of the people I know. One worries about decency and order, while the other is fighting for anything that would seem real--

I appreciate Jerry--he's everything we all must experience sometime: for God's sake--isn't there anything real--

Maybe I should have said, he's definitely something I experience.

---

No. The word "real" occurred that often that I felt my ideas and feelings bolstered.

---

Male 33	8	3
Pastor	Regularly	Presbyterian

Feelings during play.

I felt anger at various times. Sometimes at Jerry for his obviously angry provocation. Sometimes at Peter for his ineffectual responses to Jerry's manifest pain.

I felt touched and moved by Jerry's struggles within the bondage of isolation and with Peter's own shame at his inability to express anything.

I felt frightened [sic] at the desperate quality of Jerry's every emotion and at the sudden realization of what had to come.

## IV. THE ZOO STORY IN THE CHURCH

It should be done in the church.

Male 34	5	3
Chaplain, U.S. Army	Regularly	Presbyterian

I found myself identifying Peter with myself and with "middle-class" America. My feelings were that the drama said a good deal that most of us can't, or at least don't say from our pulpits. During the drama I felt most of the emotions--anger, laughter, empathy, frustration, sadness. I wasn't bored--just justifiably uncomfortable.

---

Male 41	3	0
Clergyman	Regularly	Presbyterian

This is important. I'm turned on. The apathy of the day is past. I'm left with some anxiety and it's there in the pit of my stomach. Perhaps it is because I am identifying with Peter--with all of his nice polished middle-classness--and also because I'm with Jerry and his desperate yearning to be accepted and loved. This is a message the church as an institution better start hearing. The good men are leaving, one by one. There ain't many of us left.

---

Male 46	6	2
Pastor	Regularly	Presbyterian

Before--

Anticipating good experience because I like drama, chancel drama, and was acquainted with this play and had heard good things about the group.

During--

Greatly pleased with portrayals--alternately aggravated by and sympathetic to both characters--Jerry was pathetic yet repulsive, but

likeable all the same--Same for Peter--Message was powerful and hit me--

Necessity for persons to relate to another, no matter how--"The cry for help."--

After--

Thank you--I'm grateful for useful experience.

---

Male 42	5	0
Pastor	Regularly	Presbyterian

Though I had seen it twice before and read it to laymen, H.S. groups, I was still quite emotionally moved--nervous, anxious, afraid of Jerry/for Peter. The Elder next to me was nervously "twitching" a paper and this annoyed me for myself and others, too; I wondered what he was feeling about such a production, period--but I was not thinking of his thoughts: in the sanctuary (I forgot that until the lights and the worry over knife/carpeting!).

I would like to have it put on up our way--even for the \$50.00 that is the charge (?) for many of folks in our town very "up-tight" and rigid.

---

Male 32	6	1
Clergy	Regularly	Presbyterian

Having seen the play (and cast) before--I was interested in the characterization more than the contents. The contents grabbed me, nonetheless. (1) I want to think about the "Love like hate is meaningless . . . unless they are both present . . ." notion--it sounds possible. (2) Both men use each other--but only in crisis do they seem to really communicate. (3) Question--who's was the Zoo Story--Jerry properly sees Peter's home as the Zoo Story. (4) Very helpful chancel drama. (5) I detest discussing plays immediately after seeing them. They are too personal to be discussed. Thus I resent this work!

The discussion has forced me to consider optional interpretations. I'm sure, wouldn't have observed--I still dislike discussing a play this close to its performance. I could do it more comfortably tomorrow nite.

It should not be done in the church.

Male 45	3	0
Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

I wondered what was going on. The boys did an exceptionally good job of acting, but I am not sure what the point of it all is. How does this fit into Christian Education and the preaching of the gospel? Is this another illustration of the generation gap? Can the arts be practical as well as entertaining?

---

Male 68	1	0
Retired Minister	Regularly	Presbyterian

Had no identification although felt sorry for Peter. Felt Jerry looking for love but rather inept at attempting to find it. At one time had the feeling Jerry was making a homosexual approach. I suppose that these two characters exist but it seemed a rather exaggerated characterization. Felt players did a good job of acting. Held my attention thru-out.

---

Yes. Have a deeper insight into the play and its purpose. Suffering seems central to it, but why can't we get this thru the teaching of the cross (there goes the older generation again.)

APPENDIX C



## APPENDIX C

## TOPEKA-HIGHLAND PRESBYTERY DISCUSSION

After each performance of The Zoo Story the audience was asked to reproduce their thoughts and feelings before, during, and after the production, in written form. After completing the written form, they were asked to discuss these reactions. The discussions were tape-recorded for reproduction in this thesis. Since in nearly every case the discussions showed very similar reactions to those in written form, and since some of the discussions were quite long, resulting in voluminous manuscripts, it became apparent that it would be both useless and impractical to reproduce the discussions in full.

On the other hand, one discussion proved to be of more than passing significance--the discussion at Topeka-Highland Presbytery. The discussion is more interesting and perhaps more valid than the others for two reasons. First, those participating in the discussion were either ruling elders in the church or were ministers. And secondly, this performance at the Presbytery provided the only captive audience during the tour. The play was

performed at a regular meeting of Presbytery as the Christian Education Committee report. It is, therefore, felt that since these people had not come for the purpose of seeing the production, the broadest spectrum of opinion was achieved.

In order to keep the discussion from being too confusing and in order to identify those members of the production from those of the audience, some identification is added to the vocal transcript. Members of the production are identified by their first names. Those members of the audience who spoke more than once are identified by alphabetical letters. All unidentified comments were from audience members.

### THE DISCUSSION

You see two elders who happen to be farmers, both of them, and in the church, come out of themselves a little bit and lose what seems to be a pretty good sense of inhibition. They kind of put themselves into a little eight-minute drama, that they did in the Idelia Presbyterian Church, script in hand. One thing I felt about this is the intensity of it is something we've missed in the church. The intensity of drama is something that few of us can approach homiletically or musically or prayerfully or in any way. I was most impressed with the intensity of what you were doing. It came across very strongly. And it seems to me to be very desirable for us by way of portraying feelings, or problems, or in this case the longing of man.

Jeff: Thank you, Don. How about some of the rest of you?

A: I felt a strong sense of identification with Peter--conventional man who is able to escape from the problems into solitude away

from his wife, his parakeets, his cats, into a solitude intruded upon by Jerry.

Jeff: Why do you think Jerry was intruding?

A: I think that conventional man is very comfortable. I wouldn't have been inclined to sit there during the goings on. He's different than the part of me, at least that I want to know about.

B: Jeff, I found myself alternately repulsed and attracted by these two guys. At one minute I'd think, "Well, that Jerry, you know, I don't like him at all." And the next minute I'd say, "You know he's a pretty likable guy after all. What he's after is reasonable." And I'd find myself identifying, you know, sympathizing with Peter and then a few minutes later be very . . . . I felt real flip-flop feelings in myself, weaving back and forth in myself.

Jeff: Who did you identify with in the end?

B: I don't know.

C: About that identification at the end, I feel that I wasn't anywhere. It was too Ibsonian to identify. We don't know what happened afterwards and there's where we begin to wonder what happened thereafter.

Jeff: How did you feel during the play?

C: Oh, I've dealt with so much of this in real life that I'd just as soon not bring this kind of life to the fore in the church.

Jeff: You were somewhat repulsed, then, by this kind of drama here?

C: Now mind you, I'm for drama in the church . . . .

Jeff: Now, I'm not here to judge you. I hope we get some honest feeling here.

D: That's the first thing . . . was. That statement that he wants to keep the emotions . . . at the same time if feel . . . why he's gushing at me. I was really torn up by it. This is the fourth time I've heard this and still I'm . . . I don't know if I've had too much

coffee, but I feel like I've had too much coffee. And I don't think I identified with either one at the end but with the theme when he said you're not a vegetable, you're an animal, well, now I feel okay. At least he's an animal, you know, with all the . . . I almost did the same thing right now. I was afraid to discover myself. To feel the self protection and also to feel he got through me. Even the dog came through this time. But at least he communicated.

Jeff: What do you feel it means to be a vegetable, or what it means to be an animal?

D: Well, I felt that Peter was in a double bind there. Became . . . he was forced into fighting over a lousy bench and yet would have had to have been very very . . . to go over and pick up the book and go home.

Jeff: As a director, what do you see vegetable as meaning?

Suzanne: The whole idea to me was that Peter was such a conformist, he didn't even care about communicating. All he wanted to do was to be left alone and sit on his bench. He was totally unaware of Jerry's problem . . . and that there are people in the world who need to communicate with something, who don't even have two parakeets, a wife and two daughters, as Jerry did. Jerry is repulsed by Peter because he is such a vegetable. He never does anything to humanity or to help humanity.

Larry: What did you think about the statement, "God is a colored queen who wears a kimono and plucks his eyebrows"? Does that have any significance to you? Is that a meaningful idea, is that babble?

E: I think this is Jerry's concept of God as being about that irrelevant and that uninteresting and that out of touch with reality.

Larry: Can you see some relationship between the statement and Jerry's whole longing for communication?

E: Yes, I think he was . . . the business of the colored queen which he brings up, what I heard in this was, here he's repulsed yet he's angered that this guy goes about his business before him and yet there's no communication. It seems to me that this God

is a colored queen or whatever, is an angry statement about the cut offness that he feels with God like everything else. It's just another function of his isolation.

F: May I ask you a question?

Larry: Yes.

F: You're Jerry now. Do you think Jerry would ever be happy to have a wife, a couple kids, some cats, and a couple parakeets?

Larry: I think Jerry would be happy. I don't think Jerry would ever be anything like Peter. He would be happy if he could find communication with somebody but I don't think that he'd ever . . . because he paints a very vivid picture of his background. I don't think he could ever be a Peter.

Did you think that Jerry was different than some people . . . some concern, even to the point of about to commit suicide?

Suzanne: No, the paper is a foreshadowing of what is to come. When Jerry comes to the park, when he was in the zoo, he already has made up his mind what is going to happen. This is Jerry's last attempt to make some communication with a human being. Like he says, "With a person, someday." And he knows when he comes there. He has this whole thing thought out. He says in the very ending, "Could I have planned this? I couldn't have but I guess I did." And he knows when he comes to Peter what's going to happen in the end. And that's why he says, "If you don't read about it in the papers or see it on the TV the next morning." This is a foreshadowing to the end when he says "You remember, Peter? You remember the face that I told you about . . . my face?" And it's a foreshadowing because he knows when he comes . . . .

Jeff: Okay, let's go back here to Don Parkinson.

One of the things that I was feeling during this was that this is an excellent way to present many things you can't do by some other media, by talking about it. One issue that I felt strongly in this after last week in Kansas City and the race issues there was that Peter is pretty much of a stereotype, in an exaggerated form, of maybe the church, maybe the suburban white community, very proper. All they want is peace and here comes along a whole . . . of

society. He wants to ignore him. And finally, you know, after trying and trying . . . with violence. And it takes violence. This is probably not the only issue.

Jeff: That's an excellent insight. Yes?

The director said that he had already made up his mind what he was going to do. I wonder if there was any hope within Jerry that he might find a different kind of person. I mean, how did he know that he was going to find this typical conformist on the bench? What would have happened if he had found a different kind of person with whom he could communicate, or someone who he understood? Was this anywhere in the thinking or did Albee have it all planned all pat like this?

Suzanne: Well, Albee is very much a pessimist and he's showing a very negative . . . and it is theatre of the absurd. It's a very negative way of showing the thing that he wants to tell. There's not much hope . . . at the end.

G: I think this business of identifying . . . I just pulled away . . . the last half. Was my feeling. This was not . . . It started off as pathos, you know, that if only . . . and then all of a sudden it took the twist to classical drama, tragedy. There was a point in there that I saw very clearly what was going to happen and that it was all unwinding before me. And at that point I couldn't identify. I mean I was . . . it was no longer in the realm of things that might happen.

Larry: At that point did you stop feeling and begin to think? Could we say something like that? Could we say that at that point you pulled away and now had to think about it instead of just feel about it?

G: Yes.

Jeff: Why did you pull away? Was it an aversion?

G: No. Because it was already, because my involvement in it no longer made any difference. It was going to wind itself out. I saw what was going to happen, there was no cheering one side or the other. There was no good in hoping, no good in fearing. There was no good in anything.

Suzanne: Do you know where the point was?

G: I can't remember. But it just, you know, it crashed in on me. That point for me, and the crescendo is when he finished the story of the dog and then he says, "And now we neither love nor hurt each other because we've stopped trying to reach each other." At that point he had said it all.

I thought that the statement that we have to see the result of our actions. He didn't want the dog to die because he wanted to see the results . . . .

[At this point, the tape was turned over.]

Tribal relationships are relatively easy to come by, they're the natural make-up of our situation--the family, the home. But to break the tribalism and to produce a relationship between the other who is outside of our own tribe this is the problem. And this is where the church is unique as a community if it is unique at all. It can break the tribal relationships that are otherwise our normal situation.

As I think about the ending, about this point where he said, "So be it," that almost suggests that although he's planned it this way that there's a kind of longing that somehow . . . And it somehow didn't quite fit with the gratitude for the knife. There's something in there that doesn't quite measure up for me. Maybe the pessimism is kind of overridden by a kind of hope on the part of the author so that in a sense the "so be it" is kind of a . . . it didn't quite fit. If it was that pat to begin with the "so be it" doesn't belong. To my mind it doesn't fit in the play.

Jeff: I think my experience with the writers of what are called the theatre of the absurd, there is still an optimism--a feeling that if you can expose people to what they're doing, maybe they will see in time so that they can change their ways. Maybe that's because I am optimistic. I think even in this play there's optimism if you will let this sink in, maybe you will change.

Suzanne: But it's not within the play.

Larry: I want to ask a question if I might?

Jeff: Yes, go right ahead.

Larry: If you were given the opportunity of having this play presented in your church, would you?

Let me answer that in relation to your question about the theological significance in an indirect way of wanting to be . . . of the layman. What theological significance did I see is the fact that church people have seen some value brought into the church leads to how does the layman respond to having this in a church, in a sanctuary, showing it to a church group, etc. And the second one is likened unto it, is the fact that outside of the church men who probably don't attend church anymore nevertheless have this sort of theme about God and interrelationships. This is important to me that out in secular society God is not dead, there are yearnings for him somehow. So I would . . . your question in response especially from elders.

Jeff: I think that's a good point. How would you who are ruling elders respond to a drama like this in your church? How do you think that your fellow laymen would respond to this?

I don't know about them.

Larry: Well, we're going to tour and find out about them, so let's find out about you.

Jeff: What about Hiawatha?

. . . . .

Jeff: Why? I think we're talking about someone who could come in and do the production, and do it well. Yes?

Well, I live in a conservative community which many of us represent, there would be so much shock at some of the material used in an adult congregation. I think for young people this would be great.

Jeff: Thank you.

Larry: Do you consider yourself an old person or a young person?



Well, I identify with, I mean I know some people who would feel such shock they would turn back and feel the whole thing as a miserable mistake.

Jeff: Yes, sir?

I was merely going to comment that I think it would be very well received in a church such as ours. However, I would like to think that I was young at heart. I was as shocked today probably as anybody in the room, but I believe there was great value, great value could come from the play if you have the discussion following such as you're having here. And perhaps with this director present who can do some interpretation that we are not capable of. I don't believe this was the most important part of it. I'm not belittling the play, but without it . . . .

Suzanne: I think that every work of art is a lot less meaningful if you don't have a discussion afterward.

The shock of the age that we're living in . . . . Maybe we're trying not to face it. We know it's here. We may as well be slapped with it again. And I believe some of your discussion in the local church following will be more open and more derived than in this group where even I hesitate to speak because I know three people. And yet you get a group of people who know each other I believe they'll all enter into it more.

Jeff: I think that's a good point.

I'm not an elder so I'm not entitled to speak. But I think that this is interesting. We had that quarter used in Crossroads, "Caught in the Act" (and he was in the class "Hay there, you're Values are Showing") said that it was very marked that in talking about drama that they had read or the play-reading of drama, people were freer to open up than they had been on the class on values. Because they could at first without exposing themselves, I suppose.

A question on procedure and information. When you go on tour, will you present the play and will you also afterward present a discussion such as this?

Jeff: We are going to do the same thing as we are doing here. Incidentally, before we close, I might say that we . . . .