

The Curtain Rises on the Revolution

A Play

John Ryskamp



Gosta Adrian-Nilsson
August Strindberg (1915)

The basic principles of the state must
change: instead of duties—rights;
instead of virtue—well-being;
instead of punishment—protection.

-Danton's Death

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

Spoken—in eighteenth-century dress—before the curtain.

Here's a play to enlighten you—
And if not that, at least to frighten you!
You'll say
To the play,
'I'm middle class, so I don't care.'
And the play will thunder back at you, 'Beware!'

Scene One

The curtain rises.

Out of this welter of criminals emerges divine right.

I have this to say about theatre: it's a documentary that's entirely fictional.

On being left alone: act three.

Why is there hell? Ear it clearly: because that's where dentists are going.

Pomo is just mixed moderne.

The world has fallen into debt quicksand—the more it moves, the deeper it sinks.

The unhappiness of the queers—are you turning me on?

The middle class—that tar baby!

America is an historical abortion.

They're the most amazing combination of knowledge and ignorance!

They want heroes, not facts.

These are my rituals.

Nice means nothing to them. They'll get theirs.

You can't be taught his contempt.

It's all old people, getting older.

Middle class people are thoroughly corrupt and thoroughly evil.
They deserve nothing but death.

Is the theatre then nothing but a podium?

Yes, if you're in Germania.

Today's woman is the sexual censor.

I thought, Maybe, but that was not it.

Muses' blowback.

What does he know?

That's what we're going to find out.

Just one word: rights.

Narrow, dated, marginal, forgotten.

The audience as stalker.

Put her head in a microwave, that'll calm her down—forever.

What are you drinking?

Aged Earl Grey.

Sorry, I'm not into old people.

This audience is old people.

Theatre's been around a long time.

This play is formidable to the point of alarming.

Don't shout fire in a crowded theatre.

What happens when a side of beef appears onstage?

Bite my roses, blondie.

May you live in interesting times: is that a wish or a curse?

I'm not ordering you around, but I am telling you what to do.

I'm wandering around, searching for authority.

That's exactly what our audience is doing in staring at the stage.

This is not your garden-variety play.

It would be, if Ryskamp would only weed out the bad lines.

Then we could just raise the curtain and immediately lower it.

Splash her face with whiskey, never mind water—she's way past that!

Just remember that Ryskamp is in total control of your performance. Don't try to get artsy.

I saw Shakespeare backstage. He said he was through playing around. I told him he was being punished for doing so in the past. He was sitting there suck a Tootsie Roll.

Help me Jesus.

Contrasted with, 'Fuck 'em all.'

Did you hear? Another tranche down.

I'm not condemning them, I'm recognizing that they've committed suicide.

I couldn't decide which of these was more underclass, so I bought all three.

Our underclass lives with its head in a feed bag. That has such a nice ring to it: 'our underclass.'

Our middle class too.

But of course—they get married.

Slow loading.

I hate people without cars.

Do you have a car?

No.

I love throwing paper away. To me, it's like killing another tree, and I adore that.

This looks like a flophouse.

The question is, who's flopping?

Who's getting flopped?

It's a tasty catastrophe.

I feel like running across the borders.

Never underestimate the power of an idiot.

I agree. Look! Ryskamp got this staged.

There are a lot of squirrels in the trees: that will be the signal.

You are genetically embarrassing.

People who won't think, won't live.

Some people you shouldn't invite to weddings, even their own.

It's the market for adoration.

What you lose is fear over the prospect of dying.

Let's find it: epistemic closure.

You mean they just walked in off the street? They weren't vetted by a vet?

He signed on to another tour of duty.

Aren't you the Mother Teresa—of death!

No, that's Mother Teresa herself.

Oh good. Let's start offending Catholics. That'll really help box office.

If we want to help box office in this town, we better play the Ring.

One man's sick is another man's Chanel No. 5.

How's your economic anaconda?

It's resting in Anacostia.

Here are some Israeli flowers—covered with ash.

A reminder.

Well, just call me Marie-Antoinette and give me a poodle!

Why don't you take your belt and hang yourself?

How would I hold up my end?

You should be fed your own head.

I'd need a face-biting chimp for that.

It will be a real tragedy if you don't wake up in time.

I'm indebted to you for that: just ask Stendhal.

Europe is in disarray.

You have to cut off your leg!

You're skilling canoodles with raptors—and they aren't paying any attention!

Your poor taste in shoes is unfair to you.

Must you add your suspicions to people's unhappiness?

You should be on the catfood commission.

Planet Earth is too big to fail.

Do you have the stones?

Bonds are bondage.

That's many thefts from now.

The middle class is like the Roman Empire. It's fine while you're building it, it's a disaster while you're maintaining it. Instead of marauding tribes you have marauding ideas. Is this not obvious?

You must be thoroughly vetted before you're admitted to my august presence. For example, do you have any diseases? If not, I have no desire to meet you.

I prefer to remain invisible.

This is not some communal exercise.

Don't get ahead of yourself.

I'm not into masturbation.

We should ban any mention of Ryskamp.

Agreed. Hear us with new ears, see us with new eyes! All old organs, leave the theatre!

Watch your step!

Darkness.

Scene Two

Here at last!

I'm on a roller coaster that's left the track.

Would you rather be Jo Genmaicha or Pearl Jasmine?

I prefer Jade Oolong.

Jade for short.

But not for long.

This is like a slow record, played very fast.

Well, it took a long time to record. That's just the way it is.

My other boyfriend.

He prefers to remain master of the drama.

Ryskamp is always behind the curtain, you may rest assured of that.

It's very revivifying.

The ghost of the past.

Why does Strindberg always associate the word mistress with the word dust?

Mmm, the economic is lost in the funhouse.

Cash in your dollars!

And buy...

Peanuts!

I don't give information promiscuously. I save my promiscuity for other endeavors.

And endeavors they remain.

That's all right, that's all right. He has the right to...dig his own grave.

Is that what you call it?

May is for mayhem.

How many tears can the earth absorb?

The earth repels all tears. Go see if Joseph is trying to get in the room.

There is no room.

The economy is a lie they can no longer tell.

So hand jive.

In tandem with reality.

Turn around...oh my God!

The stage as Potemkin village.

I will not be afraid to have lost my all.

March around the room like a little soldier, saying that. You'll get your reward—out in the shed.

You're like Hamlet. You've been too much in the sun. It's gone to your brain, you fruitcake.

The mating habits of baboons.

Let me give you the Spanish option, right here on stage.

Him who hesitates is Slovaki lunch.

That broke my book!

I'll break your book.

Sometimes, life is unpredictable.

These are the last humans.

It's just a hunch. These are the last humans.

Can you create a compelling object?

Did Ryskamp just type something between your line and my line?

The audience has fetal wisdom.

Let's objectify music.

Wasn't this play typed?

Long before I was ever cast.

Yes, Satie.

One of Ryskamp's microadjustments. This is how he tempers the play.

The darling boy...and I'm losing mine.

For a short-tempered audience.

Audience, did you just see Ryskamp? He just ran across the stage so fast he was invisible!

I hate the mentally ill—they're the great unwashed.

I'm glad no humanity intervenes between you and yourself.

Who are the great unwashed?

Ethel and her husband.

Theatre as crossroads.

Ryskamp's plays write themselves.

That was said in *Mrs. Lincoln*. I do wish the dull boy would get some new material.

Don't blame the plays—they're pretty little things.

You say that with knives in your eyes.

You say that with knaves in your thighs.

Oh I see—casting yourself as Helen Keller. Very good.

Every reaction the audience might have is a line in a play: before Ryskamp can write the line, he must act the line.

And all the way down the line, too.

Shakespeare's other plays were written with a quill—*Coriolanus* was written with an axe.

I'll have to axe him about that later—when I'm dead.

Unencumbered Coriolanus.

I don't have to continually refer to humanity.

That's out of order!

Impossible—Ryskamp never orders takeout.

In search of the...

Listen, as long as there are African-Americans, there will be Salem cigarettes. Audience, am I right? Don't contradict me. Security! Remember, every theatre is a security zone.

For a *very* insecure audience: we, at least, know our lines.

And cross them too often!

I'm for green peas.

Greenpeace?

No, green peas.

Listen, let me fuck you. Then I'll give you twenty dollars. But for you, for you, not for Greenpeace or whatever it is.

Look at it this way: I won't be done until you're dead.

Let me get into the 'in'—ness of the play.

Is there such a thing as a fascist butterfly? How do you say that in French?

I never saw a fascist butterfly.

As follows: paradox is in the mind of the beholder.

Or in the behind of the follower.

You have official envy.

And it was a wolf.

Our director is into orgies.

The reality isn't quite as twinkling as your fantasy.

Our author is the imp with a pen.

Then pen him up. He has asshole issues. He walks around like he's ten feet tall.

Another p.o.s.q.

Romans! Lend me your countrymen!

Definitely on the garbage continuum.

Ryskamp: 'Dear diary.' Or, if he were drinking milk it would be: 'Dear dairy.'

Ryskamp doesn't mind leaving a turd on your chair.

The clock is ticking and you're playing tic-tac-toe.

At least it's a metaphor!

Oh darling, we are going to make the same mistake, so you can tickle my buttock with your tongue.

They run in packs.

That's just their sexual shopping cart.

It's a faith-based aesthetic.

You can override that.

The only one who can explain the economy is Mack the Knife.

A wolf gave me a haircut? What are we, in an Eliot play?

It was a minor dislocation.

I can't keep up with the west.

Listen, Ryskamp will attack everyone: women, Jews, blacks, cripples. He thinks he's the Secretary of the Interior.

I hope you're trending now.

I have it! Prescience is just lack of ignorance!

I had an inkling of that...but I ran out of paper.

Listen, next you'll be telling me that Hitler was Anne Frank's father! You wouldn't dare make that statement in a building by Saarinen.

Listen, Ryskamp makes Goebbels look like Katie Couric.

You're sexually evil.

But I smell good.

Listen, I think bipolar people are two-faced.

This play is a book left on a park bench. The book is the old civilization, the park is the new civilization.

Don't you mean the reverse?

Darkness.

Scene Three

Did I tell you I'm divorcing myself.

I see you're into 'I' candy.

Achievement as a talisman.

We're passing through the great restructuring—or we passed thought it: this play is in the past.

But I thought the curtain rose.

This is freight train aesthetics.

When are you going to stop telling me how to kill you? Do I hear an echo?

Yes, the aesthetic of the doctor.

Yes, the people.

If you're just talking about what people will say, well, people will say anything.

Marooned in our desires.

The master of the secrets.

Never sit by an open door.

There is some great mystery in that. We'll have to find out later what it is. Right now I have no time.

Marble odes to famous men.

Ryskamp likes to guide his audience—two fingers in the nostrils—back to the stage.

He can't—they're at a different stage.

I'm showing too much of my hand.

Tragic power.

Mrs. Lincoln casts her spell.

Machine.

No, tabula rasa.

I'm tired of my eyes being closed.

After all this time?

Ryskamp simply assigns character to blocking. What's so difficult about that?

Control over five thousand warheads, but is that power? They'll never be used, but anyone can pick up a gun.

The quid pro quo.

The identifications.

Insert tab A into slot B.

Like in a Giacometti.

All I can say is, Aida, lose the elephants!

France will do what it has always done: spread its legs.

Everyone has their own terrorist fantasy. It's like a Hitchcock film. Everyone wants that little freedom.

Everyman.

Breathing fire as usual.

I can't follow this fascist butterfly as she alights on every stinking rose!

What next, oracle bones? Fire?

Civilization is the first play.

You stepped on Aeschylus' toes.

Finding the way.

It's your quintessential south-facing house.

Thumb wrestler!

Grief is a stream, wisdom a pain.

I don't believe in dreams.

I need a haircut.

Our homeowners know only one power; that is the knowledge that kills. A new age of rhetoric begins.

I think you're a white Jew.

They lived like animals lived, they will die like animals die. It's simply mathematics.

Thank you, reality, I love you.

Junk like that, at times like these.

Let that message go forward to all humanity, through you.

Did I just not know him at all?

Ryskamp's name is etched in stone; his critics' names are etched in shit.

They feed you yourself.

Let it die.

Let me fiddle around with the columns and numbers.

History is tradable.

If they learned, they wouldn't be the bourgeoisie.

I suppose you're right.

What's this mean? I'm not going to die!

Don't worry about it.

What are you planning to wear?

Yet.

To your own funeral.

Better die than subordinate to you.

You'll get that chance.

She has Nixon tattooed on her—

Where?

Well, it depends on what you think of Nixon.

OMG!

Ryskamp wrote this play in little books—they're like a Book of Hours.

That seems to be how long this play is lasting.

Some people were looking for you.

No they weren't, because I'm not looking for anyone.

Reality is itself.

She has a monkey named Euro. It bit my face off. This is a replacement—from an actor.

There they are, living in the complete isolation of their little personalities.

Onstage as it is in heaven.

I can look forward to the time when this play is over.

I'm feeling a little more poorly every day.

Have some more.

Kiss kiss slash slash.

Just wait! You laugh now—you'll be laughing on the other side of your grave.

It's not so much that you're a bad person—you're just evil.

You need a spanky I can only describe as papal.

Self-indulgence is an animal that never stops eating.

This is difficult to do: shake your head and say, 'Yes,' nod your head and say, 'No.'

You do that in Plato's cave—and then your shadow bites your face off!

Rooms of doom.

If you can make me speak with a German accent, you will have accomplished something.

I would wish the German people well in 1938—well and truly dead.

Isn't that taking things a little tragically?

It's because I'm bored.

It's monkey time.

I need more face time.

No, the hour of the generals.

Well done.

Done well or done for.

Darkness.

Scene Four

It takes all kinds.

We get all kinds.

Just for that, I'm going to listen to Donna Summer for nine hours. That'll teach you.

What.

I really feel like Shakespeare now.

I want to shoot a pistol at the sun.

I blame the moon on global warming.

We can't both be telling the truth.

He was not above an abrupt turn to the grotesque.

You fall apart.

Water will dry.

A Boy Scout in a police state. I see.

Remember: hate the poor.

It's called 'spitting in the eye of posterity.'

Are you part of the drive-by media? Well, move along. There's nothing here to see.

It's tricky: five loaves and two fishes.

Adventure without danger.

Half and half.

Smoking is expensive.

Because they're trying to reduce debt: the circle closes.

This is one of those moments where I say, 'Have a nice day,' and then walk rapidly away, leaving you with a Camus-like, rat-filled, sun-filled, violence-filled experience.

I'm falling apart.

Foolish friends, dangerous foes.

The dick of a dog.

The doctor, and his mechanism.

I was the victim of my own illusion, I cannot forgive myself.

My brain is ringed with fire.

People are too sensitive to some slights, and not sensitive enough to others.

Interestinger and interestinger.

Your interest is increasing.

So is your anxiety.

Literally a dance of death—to the accompaniment of a string quartet.

Listen, my name is Attila Kovacs. That should tell you something.

Suppose post-modern life is exciting and purpose-driven.

Bite my lips.

This leaves us on the street.

The festival of masks.

You only get one bite of the apple, stupid. Or is that a redundancy?

On using red again.

On being productive—again.

Don't ask for the argument—ask for the orientation.

Should I laugh, like someone in a Goldoni?

I wish this volcano would finish.

Listen, how is a mortgage CDO made?

They're lost in Joyce. I can't maneuver within that—within Ryskamp either. There's only room for one maneuver at a time. I get tired.

A play, like a notebook by Picasso.

Listen, if I were to say, 'Picasso,' would that make it any clearer?

I'm going to stop treating you as a human resource—you get the idea.

No other love.

Catch his voice.

The impossible playwright.

Ryskamp's furniture.

An entitled class always becomes decadent—and falls apart.

It's the coffee talking.

But always learning.

When I look in your eyes I see language.

That my dear is the very unpleasant smell of anxiety.

Written in the dark.

They would rather change their lives—to death—than change their minds.

Find Helen.

Liquidation takes no prisoners.

Lines eat themselves. Lies too.

He thinks with a wand—all Americans do. It's their besetting sin.

Maintaining quality—coping with demand.

Nursing babies in public—what's next, sex on the street?

She's a cougar mom.

Who?

That woman from Ryskamp's last play.

Oh that's been forgotten.

Bouquet.

Ashes loom.

This instant, this time, this...page....

Have a tobacco mint. This particular stinker has to be trendy, or it will sink like a stone.

Then it will stink like a stone.

Is there someone else in the room?

It's an automatic stabilizer.

He scarce knew where he was or what he was.

I can make a man disappear.

Did you know the first umbrella was a tree?

That's so obvious.

It's the third act. It's spring.

There are black snakes and white snakes. I would be proud to be called 'nigger.'

That's because Americans are feral, honey.

I'm not a pencil and eraser! This is my defense against the world.

September economy.

Don't say, 'service,' say, 'struggle.'

A slight faux pas.

A footlights miracle.

Are you drinking hatorade?

In a moment of lucidity.

Dust cannot collect where there is already dust.

Indolence is a duty—and it is enforced.

We are Wallensteins without a compass.

Darkness.

Scene Five

All signs point to predestination.

What does the farmer see and see again?

Don't hide fire from me.

Another day, another world.

Confess that you want to spank Gertrude Stein.

That's not all I want to do to her.

Listen, I've given you the only word that need remain in your brain: microfiber.

What time is it?

Hey, there's nothing wrong with homophobes: they can suck my dick.

Are you a renowned reflexologist?

Rome noir.

Meaning?

Our letters are read.

When I'm in this play, I feel like I'm on the run.

Like in a Picasso painting.

The middle class is a ghost, but you see, there's just one thing: I don't believe in ghosts.

Please, audience, make it nice for him; this is his last day—on earth.

You can't sail a sinking ship.

I need a place in the sun.

Mother?

Are we dreaming Ryskamp or is he dreaming us?

How bees make honey.

Someone's barking up a wrong tree.

He makes Prince William look like a rentboy.

Aren't you the one with the tattoo of Nixon?

They see their girls as men.

Men as girls.

Order *is* the bourgeois imperative.

If you say so! The struggle from chaos.

Who are you, Doctor Copper?

Trivially edgy.

The avant garde is a muse.

Yes and drama is a prison, the theatre its handcuffs.

So stop writing.

It's about the establishment of a civilization.

And it's about time.

They're, like, mentally deformed.

Why do you want...write like that?

Black hole economics.

He evicted narrative from drama.

But it's waiting in the wings.

Amputated bicycle.

You're such a feathered dinosaur!

Modernism and its obsession with ‘paradox’ are fading into the past so quickly that soon you won’t be able to tell a Johns from a Watteau.

I keep my eyes on the stars.

You should be shot up the ass.

Modest in Modesto.

Our political mummies.

Dance, monster, to my tune.

Ravel among the lorettes.

Exorcizing those ghosts.

What ghosts?

The ghosts of language.

I hope Ryskamp isn’t going to interrupt his own play by jumping on the stage, like Booth.

Well, this is certainly one of those plays you can’t experience by reading.

Then it will forever remain unperformed.

Listen, this play is a doll's house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

I care much more about what goes on in a play than about what it goes on in.

Well aren't we just Thespis.

Play time is train time.

I wish I didn't have to learn all these lines!

Oh don't worry—plays are just quotes from people's lives.

The computer is simply a language that we understand with another language.

Yes, it wrote this play.

I'd like to delete that.

The air is going out of me.

Well don't sit down!

Postmodern moment.

Goldilocks in boboland. The task to be undertaken is to bind the populace ever more securely to the fascist system.

Protests make great dates.

I can't begin to tell you how frantic I am about that.

I say Nixon walking down the street, his hair was...perfect.

Face it: Ryskamp is the great one and we're the frogs.

Our needs and desires are oppressive.

Sympathy for this play is sympathy for the devil. I spent today not being interested in people. How did you spend today?

Urban—Ryskamp is getting very artsy here.

If not artful.

In your dreams!

Can we ever do justice to Schubert?

I just hope this place isn't bugged.

Listen, reality is bugging me.

Unfortunately, this play is written like a painter paints.

Don't tar me with that brush!

Director's gambit.

Liquidate him!

You're not normal if you don't say, 'Fuck you!' when you're young.

And you're not normal if you don't say, 'Fuck you, too!' when you're old.

Darkness.

There is a two-minute intermission.

ACT TWO

Scene One

What are you doing?

I'm chasing oxygen molecules with a butterfly net.

Like Nabokov!

I found a butterfly in a book. It said, 'Hello.'

It's disgusting, and sick, to see people clinging to the last remnants of their petit bourgeois ideas, rather than embrace the New Bill of Rights and the maintenance regime.

Their eyes stood out on stalks.

Oo oo, the wonderment of it all. How enchanting!

Your freedom becomes your prison.

Your prison becomes your freedom.

Well aren't you just the little engine that could.

Really, it's none of my business, and I'm just not interested. I know I don't have the interest, and I don't think I have the right.

Bourgeois toys.

Cinema gives new life to literature. It is a blossoming of literature.

And I have to put up with this just because I have black skin?

Oppression is the spice of life.

Let's get hooked.

Trolls from the sewer we call history.

Mmm, mimicking trolls from the sewer we call history, mimicking....

There are conferences and conferences. Shouldn't that be the title of this play? I'm afraid our dear Ryskamp writes plays that have nothing to do with their titles.

Drift on a wave of disaster.

Fried chicken is *not* invited!

The politicians always want to be near the crosshairs but not in the crosshairs. Shouldn't this play be called, 'The Politicians'?

No, it should be called, ‘The Crosshairs.’ You know: a little solemnity, a little feather up your butt. The sort of thing audiences adore.

Listen, I’m not about to take responsibility for my responsibilities.

Another day in the life of the generals.

But that’s not the present dispensation.

Until then, you’re living in a polemical dreamworld.

It’s so...multivalent.

Swap your ride.

When you think about it, you realize that the essence of performance is repetition. It doesn’t just shut down your options, it shuts down your freedom.

So don’t think about it.

‘But if the people be....’ How does that go?

‘When Jesus from a tree....’

Ryskamp as an educator.

Metaphors of themselves.

Diarrhea of the stage.

To love is to lose.

The defenses of our democrats go no further than depression and martyrdom.

Politicians and artists may admire each other, but they usually remain in separate worlds.

Real strength comes from understanding—but most will settle for unreal strength, and unreal understanding.

Most effects are affectation.

Memory is a room you can't enter, with people you can't meet—one of whom is you. It's like trying to enter a play—it enters you, you never enter it.

You need to die. So die.

You want solidity, and you do get respite, but then something changes.

Our 'economy' is only a system of looting. It's our culture, our civilization.

It's a technical world. Should this play be called, 'Persistence'?

No, I should be.

You'll have the last word.

Listen, as stocks drop, so do mouths.

It's an exchange of degrees of contempt.

If I gave you mush, you'd make mushrooms.

Have you got the sack?

No, I'm still working.

Who is guiltless?

Who is guiltless?

Minimum inherent value, maximum exchange value.

A child's sense of humor.

There's one character who is both in this play and not in this play. Who is it? Perhaps the audience can tell us.

See how that goes around? Not in circles, but rather, in a downward spiral.

In the counterintuitive is the meditational. That sums up everything.

I'd hate to take a line out of context.

When there is no context, how can it be taken out?

You gotta do what you gotta do.

King, queen, knave.

If you think I'm going to put up with your ignorance, you've got another thing coming.

What are you drinking?

A cup of Café Rojas. It has a smoky hint of roasting human flesh.

What is the point of power if you don't put it on the line.

Now, read that backwards.

I mean, close up, everything looks small. Far away, it looks big.

That's because it's one-dimensional.

What's one plus two plus three?

Three.

I've heard that before.

As if being a humanist is any great achievement! You're settling for crumbs!

Well here's the floor, and here's the cutting room.

I'm not about to criticize heaven for not being avant garde.

I'm just surprised that middle class people—who are notoriously nasty—would allow this.

Cruel, cruel privilege—that dwells in his heart of mine.

Evenings in a garden in Spain.

It's this irritating tendency of language to mean something.

Now you're back on track.

Like looking in a fishbowl.

Two spoons.

At least in this one, there are no elephants popping out of birthday cakes, no...assumptions popping out of conclusions. Is that a good thing?

Naturally.

I hear a train coming.

Putting an end to everything.

Anna's rosary.

An inferior imagination haunts us all.

Unification, preservation, sunset.

Last night (or is *this* last night?) I dreamed a black guy fucked me. And guess what? Today a black guy fucked me.

It's all part of the Korean drama.

Your head has to be rung like a Chinese gong.

Put you in a home with no food, and lock the door.

Young people are love love love, old people are life life life.

No wonder they never meet.

It's not happiness itself.

The world of blood.

The lizard.

Guarded emotions.

They give up their lives so others may have power.

What is this I'm hearing?

It's Ravel, played on the guitar.

Listen, ducky—and here’s a soliloquy in the best Shakespearean tradition: when the generator is made to turn at a given speed or turned to a certain angle, each motor connected to it will also turn at that speed, or to the same angle.

Hey, I can dance to that! The generator and his doctor.

Did you say, the general and his proctor?

I spray for depression.

I want that sense of security that reality doesn’t give me.

Darkness.

Scene Two

Did I tell you I'm divorcing myself?

I see you're into 'I' candy.

Achievement as a talisman.

We're passing through the great restructuring—or we passed through it: this play is in the past.

But I thought the curtain rose.

This is freight train aesthetics.

When are you going to stop telling me how to kill you? Do I hear an echo?

Yes, the aesthetic of the doctor.

Yes, the people.

If you're just talking about what people will say, well, people will say anything.

Marooned in our desires.

The master of the secrets.

Never sit by an open door.

There is some great mystery in that. We'll have to find out later what it is. Right now I have no time.

Marble odes to famous men.

Ryskamp likes to guide his audience—two fingers in the nostrils—back to the stage.

He can't—they're at a different stage.

I'm showing too much of my hand.

Tragic power.

Mrs. Lincoln casts her spell.

Machine.

No, tabula rasa.

I'm tired of my eyes being closed.

After all this time?

Ryskamp simply assigns character to blocking. What's so difficult about that?

Control over five thousand warheads, but is that power? They'll never be used, but anyone can pick up a gun.

The quid pro quo.

The identifications.

Insert tab A into slot B.

Like in a Giacometti.

All I can say is, Aida, lose the elephants!

France will do what it has always done: spread its legs.

Everyone has their own terrorist fantasy. It's like a Hitchcock film. Everyone wants that little freedom.

Everyman.

Breathing fire as usual.

Is this something like repetition à la Kierkegaard?

I can't follow this fascist butterfly as she alights on every stinking rose!

What next, oracle bones? Fire?

Civilization is the first play.

You stepped on Aeschylus' toes.

Finding the way.

It's your quintessential south-facing house.

Thumb wrestler!

Grief is a stream, wisdom a pain.

I don't believe in dreams.

I need a haircut.

Our homeowners know only one power; that is the knowledge that kills. A new age of rhetoric begins.

I think you're a white Jew.

They lived like animals lived, they will die like animals die. It's simply mathematics.

Thank you, reality, I love you.

Junk like that, at times like these.

Let that message go forward to all humanity, through you.

Did I just not know him at all?

Ryskamp's name is etched in stone; his critics' names are etched in shit.

They feed you yourself.

Let it die.

Let me fiddle around with the columns and numbers.

History is tradable.

If they learned, they wouldn't be the bourgeoisie.

I suppose you're right.

What's this mean? I'm not going to die!

Don't worry about it.

What are you planning to wear?

Yet.

To your own funeral.

Better die than subordinate to you.

You'll get that chance.

She has Nixon tattooed on her—

Where?

Well, it depends on what you think of Nixon.

OMG!

Ryskamp wrote this play in little books—they're like a Book of Hours.

That seems to be how long this play is lasting.

Some people were looking for you.

No they weren't, because I'm not looking for anyone.

Reality is itself.

She has a monkey named Euro. It bit my face off. This is a replacement—from an actor.

There they are, living in the complete isolation of their little personalities.

Onstage as it is in heaven.

I can look forward to the time when this play is over.

I'm feeling a little more poorly every day.

Have some more.

Kiss kiss slash slash.

Just wait! You laugh now—you'll be laughing on the other side of your grave.

It's not so much that you're a bad person—you're just evil.

You need a spanky I can only describe as papal.

Self-indulgence is an animal that never stops eating.

This is difficult to do: shake your head and say, 'Yes,' nod your head and say, 'No.'

You do that in Plato's cave—and then your shadow bites your face off!

Rooms of doom.

If you can make me speak with a German accent, you will have accomplished something.

I would wish the German people well in 1938—well and truly dead.

Isn't that taking things a little tragically?

It's because I'm bored.

It's monkey time.

I need more face time.

No, the hour of the generals.

Well done.

Done well or done for.

Darkness.

Scene Three

Shhh!

This has to have consequences.

Do you think I would hesitate for a moment to run over a person with disabilities?

It's not kabuki, it's theatre.

It's not theatre, it's kabuki.

She was his motherwife.

Find Helen.

Ones lover is always slightly ridiculous.

You're gaming on imperfect information. Let's call Turing.

It's what I would ask Mrs. Bates: Feeling henpecked?

Six of one, five of the other—that's what we're talking about.

That was then—this is sure as hell now.

Happy in hell.

First we kill all the canaries.

Not the Jews?

Why the Jews?

There. Now I've made my poweraura felt.

What's that supposed to mean, that you're autoimmune?

He makes Hitler look like the tooth fairy.

Oh, now I need endless chiropractic. You've thrown me out of alignment at every level, from my Hegelian Other down to my toes.

The blue cross. Fidelity to the blue cross.

Revolution is now if you want it.

He's not a character because he's a character, and he's a character because he's not a character.

And it's his own fault.

Who's he?

Houdini.

She's the tart with a heart.

You mean she's Little Red Riding Hood?

Love, the metaphor of indifference.

Even from behind?

Triple cross.

You steal your very life from corruption.

The vampire and the supplier of milk.

It's not patriotism to promote a dying system. It only increases people's suffering.

A plant is a picture.

It's an accounting gimmick.

I'm trying to help you be a full person.

I already had lunch.

Little clouds.

Never think about the past. Think about right now.

Listen, I'm gonna want preglimony.

The puppy look didn't work? Up your ass!

Rome wasn't destroyed in a day.

You're gaming on imperfect information. Let's call Turing.

Better inexpert and getting all the facts out, than expert and the facts never come out.

Objects are ideas.

Do you trust this man?

Sex is a stretch of the imagination.

Dramatists have not yet mastered drama. They still don't know what it is. Even Sophocles, even Shakespeare! Is that heresy?

Sure is!

Will I go to hell for it?

Yes!

Good! I hear hell is hot!

Menstruation is the cruelest month.

You're breaking Ryskamp's cardinal rule: don't think about the past.

He breaks it all the time in his plays.

He's Ryskamp.

That's the rule—and we all play.

Blood is our friend.

That proves nothing.

Then it proves everything?

By no means.

Is it *commedia dell'arte* if I fall?

No, if the curtain falls.

No, if it is fall.

Let's see what the future, rather than my imagination, will provide.

Imagine that!

A whatif just crawled in my ear.

A whatif just crawled in my car!

Clockwise: Ryskamp's into that.

Someone's in the kitchen.

They're history—no, not even history.

He has nothing to deploy against you—and yet he still threatens you.

I don't talk to people. Or dogs.

Thanks for letting me know.

Since when are you the sexual arbiter.

Since yesterday.

Are we having corn on the cob for breakfast? I mean, I just wanna know.

Not another sexual ninny!

Here's an exercise in not remembering.

My mind is fine, it's my brain that hurts.

This is what is known in Homer as a 'Johnny day.'

Vain thing!

There's a whiff of the Victorian in everything Ryskamp writes.

Yes, and the audience gets off on it!

That's why people live: if you were living someone else's life, you wouldn't live at all.

Terrible artist, worse person, horrible, horrible.

With a bit of Blake thrown in—makes no sense at all.

Revolution and reaction—they're always there, like the sun and the moon.

What have you been doing today?

Hating people's guts.

You dubious monster.

Just as stupid close up as it is far away.

This constitutes perceptiveness in humanity.

May I feel this?

Geological interactions—materials and time.

Mondrian by addition.

We're divesting from life.

It's corruption with a stone face.

A ringing heart.

Fun comes in many shapes and sizes.

Hour of the oligarchs.

I was more faithful to drama than drama was to itself.

Is that a tragedy or a comedy?

It's certainly a farce.

They're envious because I had no real interest in it, and yet I stole the show.

You know he did his turn as a slut. Now he's a reformed slut—the kinkiest kind!

Today 'modern' is a brand name. You have to look in a history book to see what it was about.

Some ideas make us feel good.

Hang on, you're in for a ride!

There has to be something about sex.

OK, you make noise during sex. It sounds like you want the Oscar for best actor.

In a comedy.

Do we have a built-in awareness of the globe?

No, just a built-in awareness.

What rhymes with 'Johnny'?

Arty. Sapphron.

Do you have some cocaine-flavored gelato?

Let's end on that note.

Darkness.

There is a five-minute intermission.

ACT THREE

PROLOGUE

Spoken—in eighteenth-century dress—before the curtain.

Now comes a scene of sweet delight—
Such scenes usually take place at night—
And, just as in our play,
Don't let chronology get in their way!

Scene One

The curtain rises.

A masterpiece, plucked out of thin air.

In the wink of an eye.

What do you think of when you think of her?

Cheap thrills.

What do you think of when you think of him?

Disciplinary thrills.

What do you think of when you think of her?

German thrills. Don't ask me to elaborate.

What do you think of when you think of yourself?

The thrill of thrills.

Nazi gods and goddesses.

And always the skull overhead?

Did you say overheard?

It's like trying to do brain surgery through a tub of mud.

It can't bear the burden.

You mean I've been speaking Google all my life?

If a shorthand for objects, why not a shorthand for processes?

The ya ya hey hey ministers.

Why must I be a martyr to every fucking thing? Jesus is partying compared to me.

Will you lend me one trillion dollars? Now, before you go off on some giddy, half-assed response, let me tell you two options you do not have: you can't say, 'No,' and you can't say, 'I don't have it.' Apart from that, you are free to respond in any way you like.

I'm just a voice in the crowd.

What happens if a black swan appears and no one sees it?

That's the next act.

You can't live and not be writing drama.

That sort of thinking gives me a headache.

I'm suffering from the Latin American dilemma.

Qu'est-ce que c'est?

Growth versus exhaustion.

As usual: doing it without realizing that you're doing it.

No one ever knows all the facts.

No one ever knows all the facts.

Don't you care what people think?

What people?

Star eater!

You'll never convince me that feeling love isn't different from making love.

Europe is the sick man of Europe.

We're doomed, but not today, and not tomorrow.

Cocaine—breakfast of champions.

Total dissociation.

Wait a minute. Don't criticize Hitler. He was my grandfather, even if he did only have one testicle.

Is that true?

Some record should really be kept of American dog suburbanities. After all, they were the queen around which the hive of the world buzzed, for fifty years. But no record will be kept because, in the end, life is for the living, just as Kennedy said. People only care what is happening to *them at this moment*.

Shouldn't there be some contraption onstage, to convince the audience that this a Gesamtkunstwerk? or some spiral leading up to utopia?

I like to aerate my sugar.

That's scary.

Vet your own remarks.

The career of a passage in Shakespeare.

Underclass screeching. Achieves nothing.

The god is in the machine, but the devil is in the details.

You just keep putting it off, and putting it off, and putting it off,
until finally you die.

I write everything down in this little book, just like Ryskamp.

We are all Ryskamp.

Only not as ugly.

No, it's Pynchon who's ugly, ugly as a tree. That's why you
never see him. He would make little children faint.

Special pleading.

He's very Tintoretto.

Nobody cares about lies, lies are forgotten first.

Aeschylus is the beginning of Hellenism, the beginning of Greek
decadence.

Listen, it's their own default.

What we owe to each other.

A thousand eyeballs are glued to you.

I'm feeling more fertile.

You must be fertile.

No, our author is.

A tribute, to coffee and yoga.

I call the shots—and they're not aimed at me.

Our fascist melodrama.

The abundance of alternatives, the lack of alternatives.

Dead debt.

Shocked by words. You know, he doesn't really think so.

The snake is now devouring its tail.

He left the door open—the world walked in.

The passenger and the driver.

They led privileged lives of ignorance.

Rough magic.

Who died?

A movie isn't a Tintoretto!

Human blood.

I've wrecked a chain.

A play cut into rock.

A sexual arcadia.

Why are people always murdered in the bath?

Murder washes away guilt.

And bleed intimate blood.

Away.

Darkness.

Scene Two

He made a face.

So did the chimp.

Residue of human experience.

You alpha dog!

Are you a libertarian paternalist? It killed my father.

You're whining. Are you about to lose your trust fund? You shouldn't have been born—we're out of reality. There. That should make you feel better.

This play is all over.

Not yet—and yet, the map.

So artful!

But no dodger!

America tells one lie, the rest of the world tells many lies. But it's all the same lie.

Americans don't have rights, they have swagger. They drink four-dollar lattes and are in foreclosure. They're garbage!

Americans are the garbage of history.

Who said that?

Someone in the audience. I caught the thought on the fly.

A very authoritative source: Theodore Roosevelt.

Good! Got what he deserved.

Some lines are just a tangle. You should be over there, and I should be over here. And the little man should be behind the curtain.

We've arrived back at the same place.

We're back from Moscow.

Always the same place: narrative—that is, the normative—versus declamation, which is to say, speculation.

Very well put.

Thank you, Ryskamp.

The condition object *par excellence*.

Are the actors in this play really as ignorant as the lines in this play?

How do you think we got our parts?

God gave them to us.

Judas rocks.

Judas rocks!

Makes you think.

A feline Hitler.

You're heteronormative, honey.

Just let me comb out my hive, honey.

You're humanophilic, baby.

You should seriously ask yourself why you're still alive.

Are you British? You look like your food. You're so ugly and pasty faced, you ought to be Prime Minister. Are you as old as your brother?

Listen, I want a glammobile.

OK Andy.

Baby, you're stinking rich now!

If that is so—and I'm not saying it isn't—then why do Aeschylus' plays strike me as a sport and frolic?

Because they caught him out behind the training facility.

At least he doesn't write like Ryskamp! Ryskamp writes like Callas sings Donizetti—with a mouthful of marbles.

What did you say? You have a very ill-fitting dental plate.

No no! I saw a bust of Aeschylus—he had a mouthful of marble.

I do wish our Ryskamp wouldn't punish his audience—with me as the executioner!

He's punishing them for his actors.

Oh. I feel very demure now.

I've read everything about it, so it must be so.

Children don't have a long institutional memory.

Neither do the institutionalized.

The subject was parchments.

Is that sexual art?

No, this is.

Every art is its own enemy.

Listen, combine the last seven lines, and there you'll have my point of view.

Thank you, Soren.

Well, why don't you just stroll around Copenhagen on a sweltering day?

Once you've set foot on the death train, you can't hop off.

When did the peace train become the death train?

When it stopped.

When it left the station.

When Anna threw herself in front of it.

When Uncle Charlie got off of it.

Oh well. Let's look toward a brighter tomorrow.

Love as aggression.

Have a Franco-Prussian War on me!

Pink and blue.

That's punishment enough!

Defensiveness is a luxury—I can't afford it. That's for the upper class. Just look at the clothes I'm wearing.

Anything to make this play better. The audience is trying so hard!

On my way here I saw the grudging earth smoke. Who is dead in the house?

Love is a tree that springs from nothing.

We have had quite enough of civilization, thank you very much.

And that's tiresome too.

What is this play about?

Over.

Ask the director. Ryskamp lives for his director. Can you guess why?

If there really is magic, if there really is mystery, it will assert itself—we don't need to court it.

You are the court jester.

The one who never calls to order.

Twelve horrified expressions.

What are you, the Madonna of the Old Testament?

I only listen to the inner me.

Well, the inner you is about to get kicked out.

Please pass the Manets.

I named my dog Euro.

Why?

Because he's sick. He's all bark and no bite. And it's costing me a fortune.

It's sending you down a rabbit hole. You should have gotten a rabbit.

I was afraid it would bite my face off.

It's Christonomics.

I didn't know Jesus was for sale.

Well deplete my uranium!

When will a drama be written?

That's wishful thinking.

Look what happens when you get to the bottom.

No comment.

Death a thousand times over.

Slow brain: shove it down their throats.

An old man, lost in his clouds.

Feeling philosophical?

Are you a frenemy?

Somewhere Ryskamp is smiling maliciously. Will he ever be brought to justice?

Darkness.

Scene Three

They're a psychosore.

Don't call it murder, call it, being helpful to someone you don't want around.

Whodunit?

Ryskamp. Off with his head.

Go sit in a birdbath!

You want me to do the Mrs. Bates routine?

We must look through the language to see the death.

Your eyes are a shade of blue that I can only call startling.

Godard's fans get all jittery.

They're doing the shutterbug.

Is the curtain an eyelid and the stage a ginormous eye?

Then what are we?

Thoughts?

No, greeting card sentiments.

Tragic.

Then go piss in an urn, like the Minotaur.

You're better than Rimbaud. Or is it, worse?

Thoughts?

Brick-and-mortar theatre: I dislike it.

Here, have a nutella crepe. Ryskamp never has any props in his plays! There's nothing to eat! There had to be at least one. As we move toward the end of the play—thank God!—have a nutella.

A tiny part of me is white supremacist.

You need to get it punched.

Look at a tree.

I'm not going to let anyone stand in my way that a guy can't get out of my way.

I know your obsessions, your dreams.

I just want to know what the Duchess said about Chopin.

He certainly anticipates his critics.

A broken film, like Godard's latest.

Our bourgeoisie just would not learn!

Out of isolation, a great strength.

Ryskamp writes too many sentences.

To bad they're not life sentences.

No, they are!

Ones eyes glaze over at the very thought of Estonia. I mean, it sounds like the name of some amazon.

Psychiatrists on street corners.

I've reached parity.

You're comparing apples to oranges.

You're the one wearing naked shorts!

Thank you Mr. Luddite.

The people in this play are like people everywhere: they're gross, face-biting chimps.

They should have their heads cut off.

No, just starved.

These are people who have cancer but what they think they have is a new idea.

People don't inherit passions: your obsession is my eBay listing.

I'm starving of oxygen.

Listen, Eliot should get a cat and call it Socks.

It's a fly in search of a windshield.

The sun is a smile in the morning.

I'm a person just like everyone else—you rub me the wrong way, I rub you out.

It's getting very violent in here. Not that there are any acts of violence, it's just getting very violent.

Are you mimicking language?

Aeschylus, the great lawyer.

We are free in our minds.

I want to kiss myself but I can't reach my face.

Let me get my old chimp.

If enough people commit a crime, it's not a crime.

Then we must redefine crime so as to exclude them.

That's what I said.

I'm going on a nationwide ubiquity tour, to gin up interest in me.

I have news for our audience: my malignant tumor is also my heart.

Listen, if the audience bothers you, shame on them. If you let the audience bother you, shame on you. If Ryskamp lets you bother them, shame on him.

Words only come back to haunt you if you believe in ghosts.

Let's get married. I want a robot to officiate.

Dude, raptors.

Listen, I'm not prejudiced, but all queers are terrorists—because of what they want.

Listen, let me get into my flying Mercedes.

The god in the machine destroyed my portfolio.

Michelle Obama is speculating on government information.

There's always a vacancy at Death Inn.

Terracentric.

Savor the moment.

This play exists in a new theatre.

And what that is, is Greek to me.

It's very task-oriented.

It's oriented away from purple. Gee, I don't know, Dr. Frankenstein, I'll have to check with the lab.

If you can't forget humanity in the sky, you can't forget.

Fear is a good thing.

I just adore plays. They're so fuddyduddy.

So was Aeschylus.

I thought it would be something spectacular. It wasn't.

It's like every circus. Once the tent comes down, there's nothing.

Soirée cinématique.

Soviet cinema.

Darkness.

Scene Four

They don't know what they want, and they're cowards. In fact, they don't know what they want because they're cowards.

You know what you're getting.

Another language.

Share the animal with me.

I happen to know it will end in nothing. Powerful are my powers of prediction, aren't they?

She stole her own youth.

What if there were no bubbles?

Then the sky would fall apart.

To a certain extent, you have to fight—you will fight. But beyond that, you have to be philosophical.

When I see homeless people, I envy Helen Keller. I never thought I would, but I do. When I see homeless people. You see?

They're not doers, they're gawkers.

They're desperate to belong to a society in which it is impossible to belong.

A real camera and real film.

Just hang around Earth: you'll learn to hate.

No more pensions, thank God, no more retirement: they'll work til they drop.

They can just look on it as reparations for their crimes.

Yes! And the crimes committed against them?

Those too. What crimes?

The well of crimes.

Our scummy pensioners—what did they earn their pensions doing?

Killing swine.

They should widen the staircase or you should narrow your hips.

You have the build of a dinosaur.

You have the brain of one.

An execution as intimate as an evening in bed.

What about a guillotine for two?

That's the next play.

Say, Geithner and Bush.

Don't you wish they'd walk on right now, just like Bush did in Iraq?

I'd love to shoot them both.

And the oil spill: will they remember that two hundred years from now when they read this play, or will they have to footnote it? I'm sad about the latter possibility—see the bottom of this page. Who remembers Schiller?

His biographers.

I mean, he's the bride with his own bachelors.

Every line in this play should be stepped on—as should its author.

Really: Shoes for Ryskamp. Let's start a collection drive.

They can drive by.

And shoot to kill. Is every bullet intended for Ryskamp?

Every bullet has his name on it. Let's buy him a ticket to Dallas.

Let's buy him a date with Mrs. Lincoln.

Listen, don't say that, there are live people here.

Is that what you call it? We are racing to the conclusion now.

Yes Alice.

If you're not interested, you're not likely to notice.

Have a pulse, write a play.

How can you say this is two plays instead of one?

The climber's dilemma.

The moment it ceases to be amusing, I leave the theatre.

The gardener problem.

Tending sheep.

Growing flowers!

Foregrounding incident.

And grinding lenses.

And poetic license.

Rat change.

Some lines belong in one play, some in another.

And a spoon for Giacometti!

We're beyond that stage now.

Which one?

The one the audience is sitting on.

What a thrilling observation! It's almost original—but it's past five o'clock. Let's get this coach under way. And don't forget the plaster coins! and prayers for the Duchess!

And the prisoners in their prisons. As the curtain falls, so are the prisoners released.

Ask Ryskamp. Are the prisoners released? No answer. Always with him, no answer.

Let us to the Lord Hamlet.

I didn't comb my hair.

The bourgeois imperative. And don't tell me you Kant!

Wisecracks and murders. Just as with Goering.

We'll sweep up later.

Yes comrade.

Revolution is lying all over the floor. Sweep it up.

Lower middle class life turned out to be, not the life for me.

Much turns on little things.

Is the cause of the revolution, the solution to the revolution?

Could you repeat that?

I'm asking the question because I'm searching for the answer.

We have now only rights with which to confront economic power. That's the revolution.

What's the whisper number?

You know my little dog Rodeo?

Yes.

Well, he's very politically aware. He's an American.

They're trying to put out a fire with flames. They're trying to stop explosions with detonations.

The stage is bare. RYSKAMP, emerging from a chest, carrying his shoes, tiptoes offstage saying 'Shh!' to, and then winking at, the audience.

Darkness. The curtain falls.

EPILOGUE

Spoken—in eighteenth-century dress—before the curtain.

Mary had a little lamb.
It was her lover, too.
And everything that Mary did
The little lamb would do.

John Ryskamp's previous work in FlashPoint magazine includes:

The Twenty-First Century (Revised Version) (Spring 2006, Web Issue #8)...

<http://www.flashpointmag.com/rev21.htm>

The Twenty-First Century (Original Version) (Summer 2004, Web Issue #7)...

<http://www.flashpointmag.com/ryskamp.htm>

John Ryskamp's brilliant bolt from the blue, "21st Century". A pestilent persona, struck in the mint of French symbolism and surrealism, reflects Prufrock-like upon the arcade and arcadia of his poetic/historical existence.

Notes On Postconstructivist Art... <http://www.flashpointmag.com/ryspostconA.htm>

Prose Poems... <http://www.flashpointmag.com/ryspro1.htm>