University of Alberta

Betty Lambert: A Study of Two Radio Plays

By

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Dedication

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Abstract

The thesis looks at two radio dramas by Betty Lambert. It is composed of an introduction, two chapters, and three appendices. The Introduction provides a selected biographical outline, highlights people and stories influential in Lambert's life, both on a professional and personal level, and looks at possible origins of the recurrent themes. Chapter 1 examines *Falconer's Island* as an example of her radio plays from the mid-sixties when she was working with Gerald Newman at C.B.C. Vancouver, and explores the nature of traditional and non-traditional women's roles, providing an early look at the themes of captivity and forgiveness. Chapter 2 looks at the semi-autobiographical radio play, *Grasshopper Hill*, in which the tumultuous love affair between two academics in Canada is melded with stories of systematic torture in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. The conclusion compares and contrasts themes and characters in the plays. It looks at how her personal life relates to the material, and examines her final thoughts. Appendix One provides the story of Lambert's matriarchal grandfather and his emigration to Canada as told in an interview with Dorothy Beavington. Appendix Two provides a list of her writings archived at Simon Fraser University. Appendix Three includes an omitted scene from the published version of *Grasshopper Hill.*

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Introduction

> No doubt the world is entirely an imaginary world, but it is only once removed from the real world. (Isaac Bashevis Singer)

> Her whole life was very dramatic in everything that she did. If you were with Betty, in life, and, as her sister, being around her was always full of drama. Sometimes very exhausting, sometimes very joyful and exhilarating, but there was never a dull moment with Betty. (Dorothy Beavington)

> Betty was an artist, complicated and intense... complicated being the more accurate of the two. (Pamela Hawthorn)

When Betty Lambert died on November 4, 1983, at fifty, her reputation as a powerful writer for the adult stage was flourishing. Dorothy Beavington, the middle of the three sisters of whom Betty was the eldest, told me that "She announced she was going to be a writer at age six." (Beavington) Betty Lambert continued writing on her deathbed, even after cancer had spread from her lungs to her head and rendered her blind. She was a prolific writer, with four novels, more than fifty short stories, thirty-two plays for radio, ten plays for television, and twelve plays for the adult or children's stage. She had reached the position of Associate Professor in the Department of English at Simon Fraser University, a campus at which she had worked since it opened in 1965, before poor health forced her to retire shortly before her death.

Throughout Betty Lambert's life there remained an obsession with the often-tragic complexities of human captivity and the compromises that individuals make in order to survive their circumstances. This thesis examines these recurrent themes as related through character, plot structure and narrative in two radio dramas: *Falconer's Island* and *Grasshopper Hill*. She chose to tell stories, whether her own life experiences or chronicles of social injustices, where principal characters are confined either through physical or psychological means or both. I show how she changed these stories into dramatic plots rearranged to foreground the suffering that certain characters must undergo to struggle against the various prisons designed to subjugate them. The work examines the nature of certain characters crimes against themselves or other characters, the complicity that keeps institutions running efficiently, the concept of forgiveness, the understanding of the humanity needed to forgive others or oneself, and the role that societal structures play in these themes.

I provide background and source material from the Betty Lambert Archive at the Special Collections Archives at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. This archive contains twenty-seven boxes, previously untapped, of scripts, personal journals, and correspondence. The published version of *Grasshopper Hill* was an early draft of the play. My analysis is based on the production script, which was made available through the National Radio Broadcasting Archives at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. This version of the script takes the themes of the play into far more detail than its earlier counterpart, and will make for a deeper understanding of the playwright. Extracts from personal interviews with the directors of the plays will show how the works were crafted, and how Lambert grew to master the technical and emotional possibilities of radio drama. In addition, interviews with Lambert's sister and lifelong companion, Dorothy Beavington, and others will give insight into the ways Lambert layered her plays with autobiographical material in order to produce greater dramatic effect.

Born Elizabeth Minnie Lee in Calgary, Alberta, in 1933, Lambert described her early years, "I was a sickly kid. I had asthma, and so I lived with different relatives because I was too ill to stay in my mother's home – but oh, that's a long story. Anyway, I lived with my grandfather and with various aunts" (Worthington, 55). Her sister Dorothy expands on the significant part played by their grandfather in Betty's life, and remembers the day that Betty left:

> Betty never did talk, as a lot of us feminists do, about the patriarchal system. She would get irritated by feminists who did talk that way, like myself or other friends, and in some ways I think it was that she came from an earlier era than some of us, and that she was very much attached to our patriarchal grandfather. She was raised by him. The grandfather actually came and carried her from our house to his house because he thought my mother wasn't taking good enough care of her, this was when Betty was sick with asthma. He actually walked in my house, I was there, this was when my Dad drowned, when I was six and Betty was twelve, in a tragic accident, and he lifted Betty up into his arms, this very strong patriarchal man, and said, "I am taking Betty" and he walked out with her and she didn't return for a very long time. So she had a great attachment to the patriarchy, in a way, through her grandfather, although she did examine it in her later plays. (Beavington)

Her grandfather, who was named Thomas Jefferson Craven at birth had changed his name to Cooper and immigrated to Canada as the final effort to escape from his mother's interference in his life. He was the first-born son in a wealthy English Catholic family, and as such, was expected to join the church. He had run away twice in attempts to avoid the seminary but after learning seven languages and earning five degrees from Oxford and Cambridge, he was sent, at age forty, to Ireland to try and convert Protestants to the Catholic faith. While there, he fell in love with an eighteen-year-old illiterate girl called McGrane [1] who worked at the nunnery. Determined to end this marriage to someone of the lower class and bring her son to her senses, his mother arranged to have him fired from three teaching positions before he fled to an austere life in rural southern Alberta to work as a cook at the mines and logging camps. Dorothy Beavington describes his actions:

> He was desperate by now and getting penniless, so he decided to move to Canada and change his name, and hide out completely from his mother. He felt that was the only way he could escape her… talk about confinement, confinement by the mother, confinement by the church. So he changed his name to Cooper. (Dorothy Beavington)

He never told his children about his past until he was on his deathbed, at which point he informed his daughter, (Lambert's mother), of the existence of his journal that chronicled his life. He had said that he had been miserable until age forty but that after he met her mother and had his family he found happiness. Lambert's mother, on reading the journal after his death was horrified by its contents and would have preferred they remain secret but as Beavington recalled, "the three daughters: Betty, Chrissie and myself, thought this was a beautiful love story and we would tell everybody and my mother would be embarrassed." (Beavington) (Dorothy Beavington's account of his journey, and the influence that it had on Lambert's writings, is included as Appendix Two.) This family account of entrapment and keeping secrets had a great influence on the direction of Lambert's writing.

When Lambert was twelve years old, her father died in a tragic boating accident. According to Dorothy the news devastated both herself and Betty, and she feels that this incident was also at the heart of much of the darkness in Lambert's writing. When I told Dorothy of the following biographical passage written by Lambert as a twenty-year-old, she was not surprised, but felt that it was just Betty's way of dealing with the incident. Dorothy had worked as a journalist early in her life and investigated the tragedy. She claims that all factual accounts from people involved in the attempted rescue describe the events as accidental. Whether true or not, this passage shows that from very early in her writing career Lambert sometimes found it difficult to distinguish between truth and fantasy, and had no compunctions about melding the two for the best dramatic effect:

> I guess I didn't realise that Daddy had drowned on purpose until about a week ago. I'm twenty now, and I have made up such a fantastic story of my past to tell anyone that happens to listen that most times I can't distinguish reality from fiction. I always make up as I go along too, so I

wasn't too surprised when I heard myself telling someone the other day that my father had committed suicide. For a moment I didn't think anything about it. My listener registered the proper tones of horror and secretive delight at this shocking fact and I went on with my fantasy of a past-quite-romantic. Then suddenly I associated this fairy tale with the reality and I knew, quite coldly, quite lucidly, that this was probably the truth. [Personal journal in The Betty Lambert Archive]

It was not long after her father's death that Lambert was asked to leave the church school. Here she explains the circumstances that led her to look beyond the established doctrines and seek answers about the nature of the governing system even at an early age in the staunchly religious province of Alberta in the 1950s:

> I broke with the church - that is, they broke with me - when I was thirteen, for the sin of pride. They told me they had done all they could for me. Well they had. I had gone through the first confirmation class and I had balked at the Trinity. I couldn't swear to the Trinity; I couldn't understand it. And they put me in the adult confirmation class. It was really weird. I was a Sunday School teacher and the Junior Auxiliary leader, and when it came to the Virgin Birth, I said I didn't believe *that* (*laughter*), and so they said that was it, they'd done all they could for me and I had committed the sin of Pride. Good-bye. Took away my positions, which was just as well. (Worthington, 61-62)

By sending poems to publishers listed in a writer's yearbook, Lambert was able as a young teenager to get her work in print. In the interview with Worthington, her love of the literary world and its romance is clearly shown, as is the frank willingness to publicly share her emotions:

> Yes. And the thrill of it [being published] was just extraordinary. I knew I was going to be a writer. I was going to be a pilot and then I was going to be a writer. I was going to look like Amelia Earhart. I was going to wear boots and I was going to be thin (laughter). I was going to have a silk scarf around my throat. I was going to fly places and write about them ... It's so hard to reconstruct your past, but I loved books so much and I loved the people who wrote them and I thought that if I wrote, I would be loved. I've been reading Sartre lately, *The Words*, and he says something like that, too. He wrote to please his grandfather, but I didn't have anybody to please. So I had to think in terms of some wonderful readers who would just ... see the real me. (Worthington, 56)

By age nineteen, Lambert had already won scholarships to the Banff School of Fine Arts for her short stories, and from there went on to a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and English from the University of British Columbia. While at university she married Frank Lambert. The marriage lasted approximately ten years and then the couple had an amicable separation, remaining in contact with each other. Following her divorce, Lambert, as a single parent, brought up her only child Ruth Anne, supplementing her writing career by marking papers for university professors, and then by teaching.

Already a well-established force in radio drama, Lambert, upon the urging of Joy Coghill, wrote several plays for young audiences which were produced by Coghill's Holiday Theatre in Vancouver. These plays broke new ground in tackling hitherto taboo subjects in children's theatre such as racism, rape, and violence. In a 1975 lecture in Charlottetown, P.E.I. for the Canadian Council of Teachers of English, Lambert again demonstrated great honesty in explaining her process:

> When I write for children, I write out of the same sort of emotional reality, the same sort of conflicts, the same sort of struggle as I do when I write for adults.
>
> The start of any new play is always made by the part of you that is still a child. A psychiatrist told me once that I was very lucky… that the child-part of me was still so strongly developed… because it was that which allowed me to write. And it's this part of yourself… the playful part, that really expects no judgement for its play… the fantastical part that expects no criticism of its fantasy… that will create for you… that will work like hell, because it's fun. But it's also the hurt part… the fearful part… the sense of being surrounded by huge implacable forces… the part that wonders at the shape of a dressing gown on the closet door… and the part that begins to suspect… that perhaps you are not really right… the part that wonders if somehow… you, alone of all others in the world… find living so difficult… find the rules so illogical… find 'growing up' so

very hard to manage… this part that is still the child part… will provide you all the conflict you need.

Starting a play with me is a very muddled, very depressing business. I tend to eat too much, smoke too much… there have been times when I tended to drink too much… I spend long hours in front of the television watching anything that moves… I rampage through four or five murder mysteries a day. The house crumbles about me, dishes pile in the sink, and I generally feel a complete and utter failure.

This is the process, which I have come to recognise (though while I'm in it I never believe it will end) as Summer Fallow. Just as farmers let their ground lie fallow for a year to restore it, so must I let my mind lie fallow, if anything is to grow. (Lecture for the Canadian Council of Teachers of English. Aug. 22, 1975. Charlottetown, P.E.I.)

She had a long career in radio drama, working primarily with Gerald Newman who produced plays out of the C.B.C. Vancouver studios with a small group of performers. Lambert describes her meeting with Newman in 1953:

I came to Vancouver and I was working for CFUN writing commercials and a play contest was announced. Oddly enough one of the judges was Gerald Newman. His wife worked at the radio station and I think she probably put me on to this competition. That was my first play. Later, Gerald told me they had refused to give any prize because all of the plays had been execrable. But he did say that mine had been one of the best ones, and two years later when he became a director at CBC radio, he phoned me up and asked me to write a radio play. And that's how it happened. So I had my first play done when I was twenty-two. (Worthington, 56)

In my Interview with Gerald Newman he stated that Lambert's "first drafts were emotional and autobiographical, and often non-communicative. She would then re-write to get out of the personal vision" (Newman). In reading early drafts of many of her plays, although I would question the non-communicative aspect, his observation appears to hold true in each instance. As she would work through ideas, many of the concepts would need clarification and an understanding of her personal struggles. She then transformed these individual struggles into a more universal picture.

The self-deprecating remembrance of Newman describing her work as 'execrable' and her relationship with him as a figure she admired, continued until they had a difference of opinion concerning *Grasshopper Hill*, a play he was originally slated to produce but which eventually came to Robert Chesterman. In an interview at his Vancouver home, Robert Chesterman, who counts himself in the pool of talent apprenticed by the man, described the significance Gerald Newman's contribution to the history of Canadian radio drama:

> I believe the intimacy of the radio expression through the Vancouver productions was much stronger than the theatrical style of Toronto and that this was due, very much, to the training of Gerald Newman who developed a core a radio actors that really was his own repertory company. They worked for many years together, as a unit and he

> would not let them over extend, yell or use the radio studio as a theatrical stage. No, it became far more intimate, and if the listener pays attention it reaches deeper. It allows the imagination to take over. (Personal Interview, June 8, 1999)

Lambert remained a colleague of Newman at Simon Fraser University for many years, and while continuing to write for both radio and television, she began to concentrate more upon her work for the adult stage.

Her best-known works for this medium are *Jennie's Story*, *Sqrieux-de-dieu*, *Clouds of Glory* and *Under the Skin*. In each of her plays, the audience witnesses the individual's role in the overall functioning of governing systems and the compromises made by the characters as they try to survive within them. By presenting the tales in a conventional, realistic fashion, she forces the audience to investigate the ways in which personal crimes against humanity are masked because they are supported by implicit social conventions.

In both plays under discussion, Lambert uses convincingly genuine situations within easily-identifiable, familiar locations to draw the audience into the terrors underneath the surface. Although I believe that Lambert's works are heavily autobiographical, I do not conflate her personal life with her artistic achievements as a radio dramatist. The first play I look at is *Falconer's Island*, although it is set near Lambert's home on the west coast of Canada, the play creates a fictional world of its own. It is set at an isolated logging camp during the fire season when the seasonal workers are away. The island is deserted except for the Falconer family, the cook/housekeeper, and a doctor who has run out of fuel and must wait for a couple of days until the boat returns with supplies from the mainland. The second play, *Grasshopper Hill*, while infused by her personal experiences, transforms them into a larger world vision. It is located in the home and domestic environs of a single, female teacher at a west coast Canadian university, as she documents a love affair.

Her plays are not populated with heroic figures, nor are the perpetrators of crimes painted as pure villains. There are very few of her characters who are wholly likeable, and the audience might find itself tempted to look down on them with horror and/or pity. I believe, however, that Lambert has the ability to tell a good story and ask questions that are generative, sparking discussion and argument well after the performance. After listening to or attending a Lambert play, the audience might leave more aware of the daily compromises one makes to retain one's place in society, no matter at what level or within what boundaries. Unfortunately, Betty Lambert passed away from lung cancer at the age of fifty. Her long-time battles with her smoking habit are chronicled in her journals and she eventually stopped smoking cigarettes two years prior to her death. With her early death I feel that the Canadian theatre community lost one of its most important voices.

CHAPTER ONE

Falconer's Island

After all, we all have to find our own way to get along in this world, don't we? To get along and get back. (Ellen, 63)

I will begin with a brief overview of Lambert's earlier plays which all revolve around a doctor called Brian MacGregor. This will put *Falconer's Island* in perspective to Lambert's career in radio drama. Lambert had written many plays for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio department since 1958 and was well known for her work. *Falconer's Island* was the last of a series of mystery dramas that Lambert wrote for the C.B.C. in the late fifties and into the sixties. Earlier plays had included: *Dr. MacGregor and the case of the Abominable Snowman, Dr. MacGregor and the case of the Constant suicides, Dr. MacGregor and the case of the Curious Bone*, and *Dr. MacGregor and the case of the Persistent Poltergeist.* Gerald Newman, who directed almost all of her early radio drama, and was enormously influential in Lambert's work and personal life, produced all of these plays in Vancouver.

A theme that runs through all of the Macgregor plays is the non-prosecution of crimes. A quick synopsis of three of these plays demonstrates this point. In *Dr. MacGregor and the Case of the Abominable Snowman*, a ski hill worker is discovered murdered. The audience is told that he has been threatening an unmarried woman who lives with the married couple who runs the hill. The facts of the case point to the woman as the murderer, having been terrorised by the brute of a man, but logically she could not have committed the crime. Dr. MacGregor figures out the puzzle and exposes the married man as the murderer, but for exactly the same reason: the victim was also terrorising him. At the play's end Dr. MacGregor has devised a plan which allows the crime to go undetected, and the characters left to live with their own sense of justice. In *Dr. MacGregor and the Case of Constant Suicide*, Dr. MacGregor is called in when a husband repeatedly attempts suicide. It is revealed that the man has changed identities with his friend following the latter's death in a car accident which left the former scarred beyond recognition. In a scheme to keep the estate of the dead man, both he and the dead man's wife concocted the plan but now must live with the moral consequences. Dr. MacGregor, having exposed the truth, leaves the couple to stew in their own juices rather than reporting the crime to the authorities. *Dr. MacGregor and the Case of the Curious Bone* is a very dark story, about an old spinster who had lived her life as a hermit in a large secluded house with her sister, who has recently passed away. The audience is told of the disappearance of a young man some fifty years before. MacGregor concludes that the 'plain' sister had killed her sister's suitor by locking him in an upstairs room and leaving him to starve to death. A strong door and iron bars on the window had prevented his escape, while her 'pretty' sister was in bed with pleurisy. The only way the plan had worked was that Jennie, the 'pretty' one, was deaf but having been too ashamed to reveal it, had kept her handicap a secret from the world. As in the other plays MacGregor, having cleverly done the detective work, chooses to keep the information secret. Ester, the murderer, is now dead and he does not want to cause undue shock or hardship to the surviving Jennie. *Dr. MacGregor and the Case of the Persistent Poltergeist* is a play that deals more with imagination than crime. In the following speech there is a Pirandellan quality to the questioning:

> FOSTER. Things are never clear-cut, you understand. To an actor everything you and I might consider an illusion is very real … and perhaps everything we consider real is an illusion, or less than that, to an actor. And, for that matter, can you or I say where the line between illusion and reality begins or ends? An interesting speculation. (18)

Gerald Newman describes these earlier MacGregor plays as "an entertainment", but by the time Lambert writes *Falconer's Island* in 1966, under his guidance, she had honed her radio craft to introduce "stylistic overlapping of scenes and dialogue which changes high naturalism to symbolism" (Newman). He credits Lambert for being the first to use these techniques, which have since become standard in radio drama. He sees the main theme, and one that he says was prevalent throughout her early plays, as "women striving for domination and the self-destructive evil that resides in the female". (Newman) He states that the play is essentially "Ellen's journey from innocence to dominance. Whereas it can be argued that Lisa did what she did for love, Ellen does it solely for power". The island, in his opinion, as in Circe's island, is a matriarchy, "the loggers are under her control. Any philosophy of patriarchy can only be inferred. It isn't present or discussed in the script, or in the production". In fact, he states that Lambert

"Never once, in the whole time I knew her, even said the word 'patriarchy.'" While Dorothy Beavington agrees with this last statement, she adds a provision, "It is true that she would never talk, or rail, against the patriarchy as many of us feminists do but she wrote about it through her characters who would bring out all those issues." (Beavington) In the Worthington interview, Lambert reflects on her early female characters:

> I really thought that if I looked back, I would find myself having been co- opted, because I know I had all the cunt hatred that women are taught to have about other women. For example, I had been taught to despise my mother, I had been taught to distrust any other women: you could be her friend up to a point, but if a man got involved in the situation, she would betray you absolutely. I was taught to despise my own – what I saw as weakness – which was sexuality. I had read books like Philip Wylie's *Generation of Vipers* where all cultural malaise was blamed on the mother's possessiveness. But I've been looking through my old work, and that isn't what's coming through at all. (Worthington, 57/58)

While the justification for Newman's assertions appears to be there, Lambert ultimately seems to disagree. Instead she tells Worthington that "What I've been writing about is women who are struggling – struggling with their sexuality, with their role, and maybe the limitations of their role, but not weakness" (Worthington, 58).

Before choosing *Falconer's Island* as the title, the play's early drafts were originally titled, *Too many murderers*, and subsequently, *Vengeance is mine*. In an early draft of the play, Lambert has MacGregor warn the audience against quick and easy judgements of the characters or situation:

> MACGREGOR. Sometimes, well, the telling of a story purifies it. Makes it sensible, susceptible to a nice little explanatory note. You know: "Yes, I see it now. He was the villain and she was the cause of all the trouble", and so on. And even when the stories are true, the story teller can't help making it all sound eminently mysterious in the nicest way; that is, mystery with a lovely little explanation at the end. All the threads come together and the storyteller ties them into a neat little knot that you can untie later to your own satisfaction. Yet this 'mystery' doesn't have an explanation. That is, I've never been able to tie the threads into that final knot. Not that I haven't tried. I have all the threads. That is, I was there. I saw most of it happen. What I didn't see, I can guess at with a fair degree of certainty. But when I come to tying that last knot, my fingers get clumsy. Perhaps you'll have better luck. (*Vengeance is Mine*, Draft Three, 1)

Although this introduction was omitted from the production script, the essence remains the same. The onus is put on the audience to use a great deal of imagination. Lambert offers no pat solutions that stick to the formulae of many other radio and television dramas. The play uses elements from Greek mythology; the isolation of a barely inhabited island; a despotic patriarch; a manipulative heir to the throne; damsels in distress; and a knight who offers salvation. Characters are stranded on the open ocean and locked in a giant ice box with no handle on the inside, and there is the image of a women lying in a coma for twenty years. But beneath the plane of standard radio drama, Lambert investigates the theme of the individual caught within oppressive systems, and the compromises each character makes in order to survive. She presented these ideas to a public in 1965 that was not yet openly discussing such issues.

My exploration of the themes of captivity and subjugation will be developed by examining how they are presented through the creation of imagined sounds and spaces; the control of knowledge of the power systems through discourse; and the interaction of the various characters who are engaged in the struggles for survival and control. Lambert, through the use of common ambient sounds such as the waves lapping the shoreline and doors opening and closing, and through detailed compelling descriptions of certain key locations transforms the idyllic island into a prison. She takes such everyday places as an ice box, a lagoon, or a kitchen, and transforms them into treacherous mine fields. The surface drama of entrapment is layered to reveal how each character is subjugated to the rules and dictates of the patriarchal system, how their complicity ensures its perpetuation, and that there is little room for escape.

The first sound the audience hears is serene and comforting. "Waves lapping against the wharf. Gulls. Rowing. Oars are rested" (39), but the mood changes when we find the doctor in a minor crisis. He has committed the hubris of facing the vast ocean without sufficient fuel, but, luckily, has found a shore to which he has rowed his boat. David Falconer, the son of the island's namesake, meets him. The Falconers run a logging camp that is on hiatus for the fire season leaving only four people on the island. The island's population is comprised of David, his father Victor, Victor's new bride, Ellen, who is some years his junior, and Lisa, the cook/housekeeper, a long term resident who had brought up David through childhood while his mother lay in a bed comatose, unable to move or speak.

Our first indication that the inhabitants are not what most listeners would be expecting from a small island of the west coast of Canada comes from David's greeting to the stranded stranger.

DAVID. All hail, unfortunate stranger.

MACGREGOR. Eh?

DAVID. Ulysses, do not happen on this isle. 'Tis an enchanted place and all the men are swine. (39)

This is a tiny, closed community steeped in legend and tradition. Like Ulysses trying to return from the Trojan wars, Dr. MacGregor must beware the local perils. If he cannot tame the beasts of the island, he may well become like the men who live here, losing his urbane gentility, and becoming transformed into one of Circe's swine. Lambert uses the thud of the rope hitting the wharf to contrast with the undulating waves. This sound underscores Dr. MacGregor's imprisonment, and will be echoed by the thud of closing doors later in the play. The hollow quality to these echoing sounds allows Lambert to highlight crucial moments in the captivity of the characters. Having no feasible alternative, save isolation on the ocean, MacGregor chooses to stay and steps ashore not heeding David's final warning:

> DAVID. You'll find that hospitality is not exactly indigenous to Falconer's Island, Mr. MacGregor. The devil or the Briny Deep. You may wish you'd chosen the lesser of two evils. (40)

Lambert adds to the ethereal quality of the island and the stories it holds by suggesting that MacGregor could be experiencing a sort of mirage, with himself as the travelling hero; "Yes, you see, I could see your island shimmering vaguely on the horizon, so I simply put the oars into motion" (43). The 'shimmering' metaphor warns the audience that this story will be told through a diffuse light and that the focus will shift, possibly disorienting the listener.

If the island itself may be viewed as a prison, it is an open facility where the inmates may roam more freely. But as MacGregor has discovered, until Victor Falconer returns with the boat, there is no way to escape, save for a desperate fight against the ocean. Lambert establishes the kitchen as a hub of activity both for the island and for the action of the play. She heightens the sense of entrapment by the sound of the door. Within the kitchen is the small cramped space of the ice box which opens only from the exterior. She uses these locations as prisons within a larger prison. The kitchen is Lisa's domain. As with most people in captivity Lisa endeavours to add her personal touch to the place, but since Ellen's arrival, her control over the space has been fractured. Lambert will use the sound of doors opening and closing throughout the play both as a sound which evokes a sense of captivity, as when the ice box door closes, but also as an indicator of Ellen's journey. When Ellen, concerned about her bleeding foot, makes her entrance, she receives no sympathy from Lisa, but rather an admonishment for her further carelessness:

> LISA. Do you mind? The door.
>
> ELLEN. (*going off*) I always forget to close that stupid door. (*Returning*) Why don't you get one of those, you know, do-hickeys that pull the door shut for you? You know, a whatsitsname with a spring. (42)

Her cavalier attitude will have disappeared by the final scene, when her first words to MacGregor are not a greeting for a friend, but terse instructions to a trespasser: "Close that door, will you? I said close that door, will you?" (62).

If the kitchen is a kind of common room for the inhabitants, the ice box can be seen as the solitary confinement chamber to which the prisoner is banished to learn a greater lesson. Lambert first mentions the ice box in a pleasant manner highlighting its advantages. Ellen invites Dr. MacGregor to have a glass of beer in partial repayment for his kindness and his medical administrations. Having stolen MacGregor's attention from anything else in the room, Ellen takes immediate advantage of her injured status to ask Lisa to serve the beer. Later in the play, Lambert shows the audience the fragility of Ellen's regal status by revealing that a small shock to her self-confidence can send her plummeting. In setting up the power structure between the two women, Lambert also introduces the icebox as a metaphor for the feeling of captivity and death:

> ELLEN. That's our freezer room. I hate to go in there. There're all these bodies hanging in there.
>
> MACGREGOR. Really?

ELLEN. You know. "Sides of beef" and all that sort of thing. (44)

MACGREGOR. Yes, I see what you mean. Now there's a refrigerator and a half. It looks like a supermarket.

ELLEN. Well, we have to have lots of meat and everything for the men. But it's a horrible place... (*Voice up.*) You'll really have to get a handle on the inside of that door, Lisa. If it ever swung shut on you, you'd be locked in and freeze to death. (44)

In this short exchange, Lambert creates atmosphere through detailed and highly evocative description. Ellen does not feel that the door is her problem, as she intends to defer all the kitchen duties to Lisa. Lambert uses the irony to foreshadow Ellen's physical captivity within the very space of which she has warned others. We also learn that the necessary function of this freezer full of carcasses is to feed the men, but the image that she evokes is reminiscent of any slaughterhouse or site of mass destruction.

Lambert uses the icebox as a metaphor for incarceration in two ways. It represents a prison where the door is only able to open from the outside, leaving the person within at the mercy of their captor, and forced to live within their rules. But by making the space replete with hanging carcasses, Lambert also draws a parallel between Ellen and the state of the animals trapped within. The cows and pigs that line these walls have been fed and raised to perform a specific function within the system, to sustain the workers. Likewise Ellen has been reared to believe that her goal is to become a wife. When the first Mrs. Falconer went into her paralytic state she too became another "carcass" in Lisa's life, and with the presence of the doctor, the patient, and the others ministering to the doctor's orders, the room also takes on the feel of a kind of hospital, complete with its attached morgue in the shape of the icebox.

When Lisa leaves after her outburst, closing the door both literally and figuratively on the discussion of her life with Ellen and Dr. MacGregor, Ellen reduces her problems to Harlequin Romance terms, echoing the nightly conversations with her sisters which were so furtively carried out between the father's bed checks. Here Lambert invokes the romanticism of the island as an escape from one's past. Ellen, while devising melodramatic reasons for Lisa's life choices, has chosen a similar route. She has been taught that to have a husband would fulfill all her wishes. But Lambert has shown that she already misses the companionship of her sisters, and has been unable to befriend Lisa. For Ellen, marriage and this island are the same thing, and she will change dramatically to adapt to both institutions.

> ELLEN. I think she must have had a tragic love affair. When she was young, I mean. That would explain it, couldn't it, I mean her coming up here, away from everybody all? (*Sighs.*) Poor thing. It must have been awful to be old and have no one (50).

As we will also see in the other play, innocence is regarded as a crime. Ellen, wrapped up in her own role of the pretty bride, cannot see the pain she is causing Lisa with her presence on the island, and she refuses to feel guilt. But this youthful conceit is immediately punished when Ellen, not heeding the warnings about keeping the icebox door propped open, locks herself inside the abattoir-like chamber. Lambert accentuates the feeling of imprisonment by returning to the sound motif of the door:

> SOUND. *The freezer room door swings shut with a final and ominous sound.* (51)

Ellen momentarily remains strong and makes light of the situation, absolving herself of blame, but as the scene ends, panic sets in: "Well, at least there's plenty to eat if you get desperate, Ellen, old girl, old girl. 'Make my steak rare, garçon, very, very rare." (*Small laugh. Then panic.*) HEY! SOMEBODY! Anybody... please open the door" (51).

Lambert calls upon melodramatic radio drama editing practice, which facilitates imaginative leaps between multiples of time and space. This is a technique she will exploit to far greater effect in *Grasshopper Hill*. Here she leaves Ellen in peril, and switches locations to a spot above the lagoon where MacGregor has caught up to Lisa. This juxtaposition of scenes keeps the audience thinking about Ellen and her naivete, even as she is learning a powerful lesson that destroys that naivete forever. It also draws a parallel between the lagoon as the grave of the first Mrs. Falconer, and the icebox as chilling reminder to Ellen of her mortality.

Lambert creates, for the audience, the alluring beauty of the lagoon, so placid during the daytime, but also shows the inherent dangers of the jellyfish to the night eye:

> DAVID. But I wouldn't advise Mr. MacGregor to go swimming in our lagoon, would you, Lisa?

LISA. No. It's not good for swimming.

DAVID. Because of the jellyfish, you see. You can't see them now, but at night, when you stand up there on the cliff, beside the Big House, then you can see them. Lovely things, really. Beautiful. Like delicate undulating lilies ... transparent, all silvery grey. Yes, it looks peaceful on the surface, but it's not advisable to go swimming. (42)

Once again, Lambert invites her audience to look beneath the placid surface of the stage environment and investigate the terrors lurking below. As David describes the scene, the beauty of the faux flowers could be seen as enticing its victim to die in such a picturesque fashion as Ophelia, with flowers enhancing her tragic beauty. The contrast between this storybook vision of capture, and the stark reality of the island, is succinctly stated in Lisa's practical reason for not swimming in the lagoon, "They give you the itch" (42). The jellyfish lagoon could also be a metaphor for the 'terrible bed' (41) of which David warns MacGregor, as it serves as a tomb for both Lisa and the first Mrs. Falconer.

Lambert returns us to Ellen, still locked inside the ice box. David rescues his new stepmother from the freezer, but shrinks from offering the physical warmth of his body that she needs to recover. In his refusal to hug her he claims: "My father loves you" (55). David knows that, according to the strict hierarchy of the island, he must not try to cross his father's rule, nor lay claim to his property. But Lambert will also show that in order for the island to remain prosperous, David will have to claim his right of succession. By his actions, he will shift from his role as Lisa's student, to having Ellen as a pupil of his own.

Ellen has become convinced that everyone on the island hates her, and that the door swinging shut was no accident. The audience is never told what caused her temporary captivity, - whether it was her own carelessness, or a warning from David of her destiny if she stays on the island. He will try to convince her that such thoughts are solely in her imagination, but the experience has changed Ellen, giving her a perspective of the former Mrs. Falconer's life:

> ELLEN. That freezer door wasn't in my imagination. It was dark in there. And cold. I was all alone.
>
> DAVID. That's the way dying is. Dark and cold and all alone.
>
> ELLEN. Your mother was as good as dead all those years. It wasn't as if ...you know.
>
> DAVID. "As good as dead?" You think that was as "good" as death. No. No. That was worse than death. (55)

Victor's first wife lay in their bed for twenty years, having her bodily fluids involuntarily escape, unable to communicate through speech or writing, presumably ignored by her husband, as he runs the camp. Yet, according to Lisa, she was conscious of her successor's actions: "Her eyes, they followed you. They *knew*, those eyes of hers" (53). It is this bed that Ellen now shares with her husband.

Ellen casually drops the first mention of the former Mrs. Falconer's paralytic state near the end of a long breathless speech. Curiously, MacGregor, as a physician, does not inquire further, perhaps charmed by Ellen and choosing to focus on her, rather than the past. The reason for the paralysis is never revealed.

Ellen believes that her new husband has been dutifully celibate these last twenty years of his wife's illness and that this long-endured sacrifice more than justifies their rapid courtship and marriage only two weeks after the death: "Think what it must have been like for him...a normal healthy man, with a wife like that for twenty years. Twenty years, David" (56). In her naive role of the young dutiful wife what had been just thirty seconds previously an empathy with the first wife has now turned to appreciation and honour for Victor. As she falls into tears David will, at first, liken her beauty to his mother's in younger years, initiating physical contact with Ellen the first time, "Her eyes, yes, even after, when she couldn't move at all, her eyes were warm and young, like these eyes" (56). But, when Ellen says, in a single word, "Don't", he graphically warns her of her destiny:

> DAVID. She loved him. You love him. He invites love, as you, you invite disaster. Each of us invites his own personal torment. - But she died, and now, right now, that flesh, that once was like this flesh, is green, has rotted away from the bone. The maggots are at it now. Crawling out of those eyes.
>
> ELLEN. Stop. (*She has begun to shiver again.*) (56)

Lambert heightens the tension and intensifies the feeling of captivity by returning to the sound motif of the heavy door. In a thinly veiled threat, David opens the freezer door, reminding Ellen of her recent entrapment. This action further unravels Ellen's confidence and David continues to describe his mother's demise until finally breaking Ellen down and causing her to flee. Her flight is twofold: first, she runs from the fear of the ice box; and second, from the man she believes was responsible for her physical incarceration. But Lambert shows how the bonds of entrapment go beyond the physical aspects of abuse or incarceration and can control the prisoner's ability to communicate. With the sound of the door closing and David's caustic parting line of sexual innuendo - "Lisa's very fussy about what gets into her kitchen" (58) - Lambert shifts the scene immediately to Victor Falconer's return. Here, what the audience might have construed to be the heightened fancies of a young woman have, through her exposure to the realities of life, caused severe trauma. Without being physically harmed in any way, Ellen has slipped into a state of shock following her experience in the freezer and kitchen.

Lambert starts scene eight with the reassuring sound of a small boat engine, but MacGregor's imminent escape is delayed by his human curiosity and he asks David for the truth of the preceding evening's events. David offers Ellen's accident-prone role as a victim as the true reason, and claims she has learned a life lesson. When Dr. MacGregor asks about the duration of the captivity, David tells him that she had been in there:

> DAVID. Long enough to lie in the dark and the cold and to be all alone. To taste mortality. Mortality, that's a dish none of us has an appetite for, is it, Doctor?
>
> MACGREGOR. You little rotter. What kind of a game do you think you are playing?
>
> DAVID. I'm playing at life, Doctor. Like my father. Like Lisa. And now, like Ellen. We're all playing at life. Here in the underworld.

MACGREGOR. I've had just about enough of your totally inaccurate mythology.

DAVID. The trouble with educated people is... they tend to place mythology in the realm of the fantastical. You don't believe in monsters, do you, Dr MacGregor?

MACGREGOR. You're rapidly convincing me of their reality.

DAVID. Ah no. Ah no, you don't really. No, the educated man is really very poorly prepared for the truly dreadful in life. (61)

MacGregor will leave for the mainland. Victor Falconer insists that his new bride stays put, despite the fact that she is lying in a coma that has no medical explanation. In the dialogue between Dr. MacGregor and David, Lambert points to how knowledge can shield us from reality through the use of established myths and customs, by providing simple answers that prevent the characters from moving beyond their control. She invites the audience to reinvestigate the roots of their own mythology, and seek out the monsters in their own life. MacGregor leaves behind the monstrous island, and with David's line, "All hail, unfortunate stranger. Hail and farewell" (61), Lambert completes the circle from the start of the play. However, Lambert gives the audience a false ending. The doctor, perhaps in his designated profession as caregiver, or wishing another chance to be the chivalrous saviour, returns after hearing some tragic news from Victor Falconer. Lambert takes poetic licence in shaping the scene to make the audience think that Ellen has met her death, and Dr. MacGregor has come to rescue Lisa. Instead the sound of the door opening reveals a transformed Ellen. Lisa's presence in the kitchen which was once her own has been eradicated, and with it, Ellen's flirtatious charms. Her manner is now terse and direct. The first wife's bed, so long a living morgue, continues to lie fallow, and Ellen has instead opted for Lisa's old position: "Yes, and I've got her room now, too, you know, in back there. So's I can have a little privacy whenever I need it. I've got it all fixed up. There'll be nobody here all day" (63). Lambert has transformed the kitchen from a place of warmth and safety for the stranded Dr. MacGregor in the first scene to an ante room for a secluded brothel where Ellen services the men of the island, exposing the commodity of her newly adapted role.

One of the great strengths throughout Lambert's writing is her ability to draw characters that go beyond stereotypes and investigate the nature of our lives. In the eulogy to her sister, Beavington described her talent:

> She worked very hard at learning to say what she had to say very carefully. Her ear for dialogue was incredible. There is a Chekhov element to her dialogue. You are acutely aware of not only what the characters say to each other but of what they don't say. You are also aware of the silences, the spaces between the spoken words. (Betty Lambert, 1933-1983)

In the following section, I demonstrate how the characters in the play react to their various aspects of confinement, and relate to the other inhabitants of the island. The first of the characters I will look at is Dr. MacGregor, the one recurring character in the previously mentioned series.

In relation to the other principal characters, Dr. MacGregor's journey shows little growth. He maintains a certain objectivity that allows the audience to view the island community with an outside eye. His medical credentials give him license not only to administer physical care, but also to take an implicitly superior position over the characters caught in the turmoil of their lives. Yet Lambert leaves him with questions: What are his motives in returning to the island a second time? How does he react to Ellen's final invitation? Whatever answers are to be found, are left for the audience to decide.

After David's frosty welcome to the island, MacGregor and the audience are introduced to Lisa in the kitchen that has been her workplace for some twenty years. Initially, her demeanour is no more gracious than David's. She is a woman used to dealing with hardened loggers, and in language that contrasts with MacGregor's relative eloquence in his request for assistance, she offers a terse reply. "Close the door. The flies" (40). We will see that, until a burst of unbridled emotion brought on by her no longer being able to face the naivete of Ellen in Scene Three, Lisa will speak sparingly, choosing to answer specific requests rather than adding to the conversation, and sometimes not even then. It is only David, to whom she has been educator, surrogate mother and, as we eventually find out, lover, whom she feels comfortable enough to correct:

> DAVID. I've been telling him, Lisa, how all the men on this island are turned to swine.
>
> LISA. Yes. And a moment ago I heard you threaten him with a Procrustean bed as well. It's not wise to mix one's mythology. (41)

The story of the Procrustean bed referred to by David is an apt warning for MacGregor, if he can decipher the literary allusion. According to myth, any stranger that fell into the hands of Procrustes was tied to his iron bed: "If they were shorter than the bed, he stretched their limbs to make them fit it; if they were longer than the bed, he lopped off a portion" (*Bullfinch's Mythology*, 110). Lambert shows the audience the lack of respect in this student/teacher relationship by having David defy his formal education and claim, "if the myth fits, wear it" (41). Underneath the flippancy of an errant student lies the implication that David, Lisa, and the islands' other residents are manacled to its soil, and have been brutally altered to fit into the strict parameters of their roles. We learn that Lisa has not left the island since her arrival as a young schoolteacher. Each year the men go off to their mainland lives for the fire season. As is the nature with seasonal labour, some will return while others escape forever. Again, underlining the captive quality of the island, David says of Lisa, "Yes, she's never 'gone out'. You've been here, how long is it now, Lisa? Twenty years" (41). Lisa remains, performing the same duties, while the loggers get consistently younger. And while, at least according to Ellen, the years have been kind to Victor - "But really, my husband is really very young, physically, I mean" (46) - her youthful condescension of Lisa portrays, perhaps, the rigours of her long unbroken captivity in the role of "Family Retainer" (41).

Prior to Dr. MacGregor's arrival, the relationship between Lisa and Ellen has been that of a somewhat reluctant housekeeper to her master's new bride. Conversation has been limited to functional matters, and Ellen's efforts to assist have been dismissed. Ellen obviously misses the female company of her sisters and is desperate for friendly discourse. Finding Lisa finally face to face, and with the buffer of Dr. MacGregor at the table, Ellen takes the opportunity to pry into Lisa's mind. Even though Lisa is sitting at hand, Ellen refers to her in the third person, as if inviting MacGregor, in his privileged capacity of being a male physician, to sit in judgement over the investigation: "Do you know, Dr. MacGregor? Lisa was a schoolteacher once. Yes, she was. ... And yet, she came up here, took a job as a logging camp cook, miles and miles from anywhere, with only loggers to talk to" (48).

Apparently unaware of the parallels to her own situation, or perhaps as a form of self-investigation, Ellen speaks plainly of Lisa's captivity in a male-only society:

> ELLEN. I don't think it's ordinary to come up north to a little island at the back of beyond, to shut yourself off from absolutely everyone. Away from people. People you could talk to, anyway. Away from women. Do you know, Dr. MacGregor? I'm really the first woman Lisa's talked to in years and years. Except for Mrs. Falconer. But she couldn't actually talk, could she Lisa? Away from just everyone. Men, too. I mean, the men who work here, well, they're not really... you know. (48/49)

But Lisa will justify her life succinctly by proving she performs a function in the system; "I'm just a person doing a job" (49). Ellen has not yet learned to mind her own business, and Lisa erupts from her relative silence with a tirade against the falsity of language and the titles, such as Mrs., that it holds so dear. The question of language and its use as a weapon in determining power is present, as we shall see, in both plays. Here Lisa points to the hollowness of words:

> LISA. I know what you meant. You think that if I talk, if I tell you about my - what did you call it? - "my story," then you'll be able to understand *me*. You think that words contain the truth. Well, they don't. words give the lie to everything real. Shall I tell you one thing, Mrs. Falconer? Something I've only just learned? Words mean nothing. I could tell you... I could say words to you, make you promises, and all of it would mean absolutely nothing. Words are empty. It's what people *do* that counts. They can talk and talk and talk. They can promise and swear. They can take a sacred oath, but it all means nothing. Nothing has reality except the doing of the thing. It has taken me almost forty years to learn that simple truth. (49)

Lisa, to this point in the play, has been silent about her emotions and has joined conversations on a purely functional level, but now she must have her say. Defying the reasoning that two women necessarily benefit from "having a good cry together" (49), and that understanding is universal among them, she continues:

> LISA. She would like me to put my world into her words so that she can say, "Ah yes, I understand, I've felt like that, too."
>
> ELLEN. But, really, Lisa, people are all alike, once you get to know them.

LISA. No people are not all alike. People do not feel the same way about things. People do not live or die or love or hate in a ... communal manner. Each one does it alone. And death or love or hate to one person, that's his. Putting the word to it, that only falsifies. Give it, that... thing, that lonely word, give it the word "love", give love to the thing itself and it's no longer what it was. No longer so large or so terrible. Say "I love" or "I hate"... say it out loud and everything becomes clear. It settles everything, makes it all manageable. Now we can all sit down and have a cup of tea and go on living as before. And when she says "I love", it means the same as my "I love" does it? Ah no, no, Dr. MacGregor. The word is the great equaliser, the great leveller. The word reduces us all to the common denominator. The word makes it all so simple... you and I and Mrs. Falconer...the word makes us all the same. But we are not. (49-50)

Lisa has been performing wifely duties for Mr. Falconer for many years while tending to his wife who was in a coma, with the promise that when the wife died she would take on the official name of Mrs. Falconer. His word proved to be unreliable, however, when he returned with Ellen. Lambert points here to the unbalanced power structure which allows such abuses of promise.

When MacGregor had first arrived in Lisa's kitchen, he had asked if she would mind if he smoked. David, perhaps trying to provoke his long time cellmate out of her silence, answered for her: "No. She doesn't mind. She's used to men and their ... ways. She's inured to their disgusting, filthy habits, aren't you, Lisa?" (41). MacGregor's silent refusal to follow David's invitation and disrespect Lisa's living space now elicits amusement from Lisa for the first time in the play:

> MACGREGOR. May I smoke?
>
> LISA. You asked that once before.
>
> MACGREGOR. Yes, and you didn't answer.
>
> LISA. Is that why you didn't?
>
> MACGREGOR. Of course.
>
> LISA. (*Laughs, a dry unused sound.*) Yes, you may smoke. (52)

By using such a specific stage direction to describe the tone of the laughter, Lambert is able to capture a profound character quality in a moment. We can hear that Lisa has become inured to the ways of working men and is both taken back and amused by the chivalry that was perhaps a part of her youthful hope as a teacher. If the actor is able to portray such subtlety of emotion as the 'unused' quality to the laughter, it informs the audience of the void that has been in Lisa's life. Perhaps being with someone nearer her own age, or having just exposed her feelings for the first time, she opens up to the stranger. She reiterates his earlier claim about innocence, but heightens the indictment.

> LISA. I cannot bear her [Ellen's] ... nullity. Her complacent nullity. Her pure unblemished soul that has never done or said anything for which it can feel shame. (*Disparagingly:*) No, there is no harm *in* her. - She comes up to you, full of faith in your immediate love. Full of trust and eagerness. She *is* as David says - like one of those creatures down there

in the water: transparent, lovely, and she clutches at you with those lovely innocent tentacles of her faith. Little by little, they embrace you; they surround you, those naïve trusting - (*Shudders.*) Finally, you feel you must ...

MACGREGOR. (*Humourously*): Scratch?

LISA. It is not the large event that drives one to a terrible act. But rather, it is the accumulation of petty irritations. Yes. To scratch. To scratch and scratch until all the flesh is torn away where she has touched it. (52)

Having the naïve Ellen arrive on the island makes Lisa remember all the scars left upon herself as she lost her innocence and became inured to the hardened existence of the camp. MacGregor, in storybook fashion, offers to rescue her from this slow death, but in so doing, reminds her that she is the author of her own captivity:

LISA. You do not understand.

MACGREGOR. I understand that you are free to do what you will. Your feet have not grown roots. You are not attached in any way to the island. (53)

But Lambert again points to a double standard in gender roles. MacGregor is also naïve and never having had to submit to the same narrow parameters of the options offered to Lisa, he cannot understand the depth of Lisa's guilt. She warns him not to fall in love with her and begins to reveal the personal hatred that has grown to envelop her world: "Be afraid of what I am, but not for me. Let me warn you of women who dares everything for love. Never love a woman like that. She is capable of anything" (53). Lisa has become so indoctrinated in her guilt that she cannot see life without it, and so must remain in this self-imposed exile.

Living on this mythological island Lisa is still haunted by a strict Catholic upbringing. There is no church on the island, or confessor. Instead she has deemed herself guilty of these crimes of sexuality and awaits eternal damnation in the Hell she deserves. She asks MacGregor if he believes in Hell, and he echoes the a line from Jean Paul Sartre's *No Exit*: "No. Not a hell of that sort. I believe there can be hell on earth, in this life" (53).[2] Lisa, however, rejects this existential philosophy and wallows in her guilt. For the previous twenty years, she has served two primary functions on the island. She has not only provided nourishment for Mr. Falconer, his son, and the workers through her excellent cooking and housekeeping skills, but has also attended to the sexual appetites of the men. Both of these roles have, perhaps, added to the overall productivity of the logging camp through job satisfaction. Her third role has been to provide sustenance for the first Mrs. Falconer while she lay in a coma. For twenty years, she has fed her and tended to her bodily functions, all the time awaiting her death. Lisa's stance of self-hatred stems from her belief that she is guilty for the pain and death of the first Mrs. Falconer:

LISA. The wish is as the deed. Do you believe that?

MACGREGOR. No. we all wish for... the unattainable. It is not the same as the doing. You said that yourself. You said that it is only in the doing that we become ourselves.

LISA. But that *is* what we are. Our wishes *are* what we are. I am a Catholic. I wear this about my neck. Do you understand? When we made love, it was there all the time? Do you understand what I'm saying? (54)

By this omnipresent guilt, she claims to have denied herself any pleasure in the love-making and has waited for the day of Mrs. Falconer's burial so that she could immerse herself in sexual relations with Victor, unfettered by the presence of her predecessor. Following the death, Victor Falconer made a trip to see the priest and arrange the burial. To Lisa, the arrival of the priest, an obvious stranger to the island, would have been a two-fold saviour. Not only would he have been able to marry her to Victor, thus officially sanctioning their sexual activity, but also he could hear her confession and perhaps offer absolution. Lambert shows how Lisa is held captive by the influence of the Catholic Church and the significance it places in the institution of marriage. Even on this island, away from direct intervention of the church, she remains chained to its rules. As Lisa gets caught in the emotion of the story Dr. MacGregor offers some physical consolation.

LISA. Don't touch me! "Noli me tangere, for I am Caesar's." (*Begins to laugh.*) He was to bring back the priest. And there, when he was arranging for everything, when he was buying the flowers for the funeral...(*Laughs hysterically.*)

MACGREGOR. Stop. Stop it. (*Finally, he slaps her face.*)

LISA. *Sobbing but subsiding.*

MACGREGOR. I'm sorry I had to do that.

LISA. He never brought the priest. He brought her. Her. He brought her instead.

SOUND. *Fade lapping.* (54)

Lambert shows that even in his role as the benevolent caregiver, the doctor resorts to a violent act to bring the patient around. It is a language that Lisa understands, and by her lack of lack of protest or surprise, Lambert shows how this is regarded as an acceptable custom in the control of women. MacGregor had likened her, in her anger, to Medea, and like Jason, Victor returns with a new lover in Ellen. Although Lisa has no children to slaughter, the image of the jellyfish clinging to the corpse in the lagoon could suggest that like Medea, she too clothed her husband's bride in a poisoned coat. The scene ends with the eternal lapping of the waves on the shore: waves that, for Lisa, promised salvation, but delivered a crushing blow.

Lisa initially came to the island of her own free will. In this way she can be seen to be complicit in her own captivity. But given limited options, she wished to find a way to function in the given circumstances. The details of why she left her teaching career to come to the isolated logging camp are not revealed, save for David's implication-loaded taunt to Ellen after she had spurned his affections:

DAVID. Ask her why she [Lisa] came here in the first place. Ask her why a schoolteacher should come to cook in a logging camp. Ask her what advertisement she answered. Ask her about the "personal interview" she had with my father twenty years ago. (57)

In her novel, *Crossings*, Lambert has the central character go through a similar journey.[3] Both of these characters left careers in the somewhat secure world of teaching, still one of the few careers considered an option for women of the early sixties. Both have moved to male-dominated environments, perhaps to escape the forced gentility of their previous lives. By moving to a remote camp, living by rules much closer to the bare nature of man, they think they are escaping a system that has stifled them in some way. Lambert presents a world where too much is demanded of women in their acutely observed roles in the city, and salvation is sought through a return to a place where the male/female binary is more clearly defined. In *Falconer's Island*, however, Lisa's case is less clearly defined. By moving to the island, she perhaps feels that she is escaping the systems that had, until that point, controlled her life. But during the course of the play we see that she has only substituted one type of control for another. She, like the character from *Crossings*, takes solace in any small victory. Lisa never heard Victor tell her that he loved her. When Victor surprises himself with the admission of his hidden feelings to MacGregor in Scene Eight, Lisa has already died. A small victory, indeed. The strict rules of the camp leave no room for emotional attachment in sexual acts. Later, when Ellen is found in a paralytic state, Lisa envisions herself reverting to her familiar role and refuses MacGregor's final appeal to leave with him for the mainland. This is the last we hear from her.

Whereas Lisa has gone by the end of the play, her student remains. Gerald Newman describes David as a weak character that comes across as "somewhat precious when we meet him", (Newman) and this indeed is true. He loses in his attempt to talk over the head of Dr. MacGregor; he is corrected by Lisa, his teacher, and initially spurned by Ellen. He is rarely addressed directly, and tends to interject into the conversations of others. He is resentful of his father's power, and grew up watching his mother lie paralysed in her wedding bed. Dr. MacGregor who chooses to spend his time with the wcmen ignores David. Yet despite all this, by the play's end, he sits primed to continue the hierarchical regime when his father dies.

Lambert portrays David as childish in the early scenes. Resentful of his father for bringing Ellen to the island so soon after his mother's death, he lurks at the edge of the scene. Believing he has solved the riddle of the relationships among his hosts, MacGregor mistakes Ellen for David's wife, a natural error, considering their closeness in age:

> ELLEN. My husband? Oh, you mean David? David isn't my husband. (*Laughs.*) David, you should see your face. No, David is my… my "son".
>
> DAVID. You're my father's bride. I'm not your son. (45)

He is a man who is still treated as a boy by those around him. But through his brutal torture of Ellen, first by locking her in the icebox and then by shattering her naïve view of her new life, he grows up. His successful use of such tactics of control shows that he is ready to take over from his father. When Ellen asks how a paralysed woman could have made it to the lagoon in order to drown, he gives her a curt piece of advice, "I mean I found her there. How do I know how she got there? Don't ask questions, Ellen, someone might answer them. (57)

His objective in urging Ellen to leave is not solely selfish, but protective. He cannot bear to watch another woman sacrifice her youth and beauty to his tyrannical father and the island itself. However, within seconds of breaking the island's code of silence and appealing to her better judgement, his desire and jealousy take over.

ELLEN. (*starting to cry in gasps*): I hate it here. I want to go home.

DAVID. Then go! Go, go, go. Leave. For god's sake. Leave us to it. Leave us alone.

ELLEN. Ah, ah, ah.

DAVID. Leave us to it, whatever it is. - Ellen. Ellen. Please. You're so clean. Don't do it with him. He's *old*. You're so lovely and clean. (*He kisses her.*) (57)

When his advances are further spurned, David no longer couches his remarks in innuendo, and he spells out, for Ellen, all of Lisa's job responsibilities. The scene will end with Ellen in flight, and David, smug in his victory, lashing back at her.

DAVID. Ask her about the "personal interview" she had with my father twenty years ago. Ask her what is was like, caring for the brat and the wife of the man she...

ELLEN. (*cries out*)

DAVID. You stupid little girl. You little... innocent. What did you think life *was*?

ELLEN. I'm going to be sick (*Runs off.*)

SOUND. *Screen door opens.*

DAVID. *(calling after her)*: You forgot to close it, mother dear. And Lisa hates flies.

SOUND. *Door closed.*

DAVID. Lisa's very fussy about what gets into her kitchen. (57-58)

When the play ends, David has lost both his mother and his only formal teacher in life. And although Lambert has shown that he is petty, and has not been diligent in his education, he sits poised to take over. Whereas Lisa loved his father first and foremost, and seemed to merely tolerate David, Ellen owes much of her education to David. Having schooled her in the ways of the island, he has ascended to his father's position and will be able to keep her in a subordinate position.

Fittingly, given the future nature of their relationship, it is David who introduces Ellen's entrance: "Here comes our transparent lily now" (42), and with comic stereotyping she arrives, shedding blood, in distress at having been cut by an oyster shell. She is the epitome of the "wounded heroine" (43) as MacGregor will later describe her. Serendipitously, the stranger is a doctor, and he dresses the wound for her. But this is an island where the inhabitants must look out for themselves, a lesson which David will eventually teach Ellen.

From the time of her entrance, Ellen assumes a privileged status, buoyed by her youth and beauty. It is not her fault when she neglects to properly shut out the flies from Lisa's kitchen. Instead she claims: "the door needs a spring"(42). She casually dismisses carelessness, such as when she ignores the dangers of the lagoon: "the water was so clear, but the nasty oyster was waiting" (43).

On her arrival on the island, in an effort to be useful, Ellen attempted to help Lisa with the rudimentary aspects of her domestic chores. But her naivete, fostered by the fact that: "My mother always did everything for me. I was spoiled" (45), leads her to believe that she is incapable of looking after herself or her mate, and also that this function will be served by others. Her attitude toward Lisa is rooted in a feeling of superiority, buoyed by her youth and her newly acquired status as Victor Falconer's wife:

> ELLEN. (*Laughs*) My husband says I'm just his good-for-nothing. Finally, he told me to just keep out of Lisa's hair ... keep myself pretty and ... just keep out of the way. Well, you see, I'm just a city girl, really. I worked in a flower shop ...that's how we met, Victor and I. And I guess playing with flowers doesn't really prepare you for life at the ... at the back of the beyond. (45)

Ellen is delighted to entertain a visitor to the island. In her experience so far on the island, there has been no chatting. She attributes this to the fact that "Everyone's usually so busy around here. Too busy even to talk. There's nothing I like better than a good talk" (46). The audience has learned in the first scene that Lisa and David have a classical education, but they use this knowledge as an insidious code rather than in any friendly way or conversational manner. Against the innuendo of David's words and the detachment of Lisa, Ellen presents a refreshingly honest admission:

> ELLEN. You know, Dr. MacGregor, I'm so glad you ran out of gas, I

mean, petrol. (*Laughs.*)

MACGREGOR. (*laughs*): Well, that's a fine thing to say.

ELLEN. Well, I am, anyway. You're my captive now. For two whole days. You'll have to talk to me anyway. Or listen to me. I warn you now, I'm brimfull of talk that's just bursting to come out. (46)

Ellen has not yet learned that the strategy for survival on this island is to keep one's feelings, whether joyous or tragic, inside. She intends to use her charms to hold MacGregor as a friendly captive, using him as a vent to release the valve of stifled communication. Ellen has been held captive by being kept on the outside of a mainly tacit but profound relationship between Lisa and David. As David has mentioned earlier: "In a manner of speaking, Lisa really is one of the family" (41). This is true in everything but name. The title of Mrs. Falconer now belongs to Ellen, but having usurped the position from Lisa, her power is fragile.

When the action is rejoined, MacGregor and Ellen have harvested an abundant amount of oysters. This shows not only that Ellen has conquered the beast that maimed her the day before, but also that she can use the native supply of food to provide for herself and the family. The two enter with childlike excitement, brimming with pride from their long day's hard work, but Lisa tries to dampen their glee first by informing Ellen that Mr. Falconer (a title she still uses even after all these years), "doesn't like oysters" (47). She then negates any utility in Ellen's work, but MacGregor will gallantly step in to defuse the situation:

LISA. The oysters aren't good this year. There's been a red flood all spring. They're poisonous.

ELLEN. Ah no! Ah heck, Lisa, they aren't. Are they? Rats. I never do anything right.

MACGREGOR. Ah well, Ellen, we had a good time picking them anyway. (47)

Here Lambert again points to the inherent dangers of living on this island. The oysters are abundant and appear to be nourishing, as inviting to Dr. MacGregor as Ellen's obvious charms. Lisa can be seen to equate the two, both having surface beauty as well as hidden dangers, and warns him to avoid both temptations.

Ellen has enjoyed her talk with Dr. MacGregor far too much to have her spirits deflated, and she invites Lisa to sit with them. Unaware of the parallels to Lisa's situation in her story, Ellen gaily talks of the notion of forgiveness: "My sisters almost died when I got married, I was the youngest and they swore they'd never forgive me" (47). The theme of forgiveness will run through both plays. Lisa cannot forgive Ellen her naivete, but ironically, at this point, Ellen is too naïve to be aware.

As has been shown, Ellen learns through the brutal tactics of David that her choice is either to stay in the same paralytic state as the first Mrs. Falconer, or to adapt to the harsh realities of the island system. She chooses the latter.

In the Worthington interview, Lambert stated that "Women know something that men don't know. We know that after death, somebody cooks the bacon and eggs" (Worthington, 64), and when Dr. MacGregor is surprised to find Ellen in Lisa's stead, she replies, "Someone has to do it, you know. The cooking and cleaning and … everything" (63). MacGregor asks Ellen directly if she had killed Lisa, but the audience now understands how deeply she took David's survival strategy to heart: "Someone once told me never to ask questions, Doctor, they might just get answered. Yes, I'm good at it. I've learned a lot since you left" (63). Ellen is proud of how she has come to function within the system: "Oh yes. Just ask any of them. I'm much better at it than she ever was. Ask David. Ask the men. They're all quite satisfied with me" (63).

The play ends with Ellen, in her new role as camp employee rather than blushing bride, inviting the doctor to spend the afternoon. Ellen has survived and surpassed her predecessor in all things. She has learned from her experiences, and has put romance and sentimentality behind her, ensuring the continuing function of the island. Significantly, Lambert never has Ellen and her husband share the stage. We are given no direct account or image of their personal relationship, a relationship that, despite its short span, has been the catalyst for the island's turmoil. This is because, to Victor Falconer, the primary concern is for the island and not its inhabitants.

On MacGregor's arrival on the island, the patriarchal Victor is off-shore getting supplies and will not return until the penultimate scene. David will say about his father that the name Victor "suits him" (40), and on first appearances this may well be true. Victor Falconer is as solid and intransigent as the island named for him. Despite his physical absence through most of the script, we feel his presence through the way the other characters behave and adhere to the rules which he oversees. When he returns to find his new wife mirroring the catatonic state of her predecessor, the first Mrs. Falconer, he inquires of MacGregor, "Why does she keep looking at me like that?" (59), but the doctor turns the question around for both Victor and the audience, "You're in a better position than I am, Mr. Falconer, to answer that question" (59). Victor does not provide an answer but equally refuses Dr. MacGregor's request to transport Ellen to the mainland for observation. Once on the island she must remain chained to its shores. In Scene Nine, Lambert has MacGregor return and constructs the dialogue to make the audience believe that it is Ellen who has died, making us look back differently at such confessions from Victor as:

> FALCONER. You see, I loved her.
>
> MACGREGOR. Yes. I know. Where is...?
>
> FALCONER. (*Surprised as he says it.*) I did, you know. Her? She's in the cookhouse. (62).

Disregarding the recent tragedies that, by this point, have befallen the women on his island, his telling final remark ignores MacGregor's line of questioning:

> MACGREGOR. I'll just go up and see her for a moment, if I may.
>
> FALCONER. Yes, the men are all back again. And all the trees are coming down. Everything's going on just as before. (62)

For Falconer, the women on his island are as interchangeable as the transient workers who man his logging camp each season. He cares more about the efficiency of the business operation than he does about interpersonal relations with his wife. Even though he has spent most of the play on the mainland he is as captive to the island as any of the characters. He may also be seen as a loser rather than a victor as David suggests. He has lost his first wife to a coma, and after falling for someone much younger on the mainland, he now misses Lisa's love. He no longer holds that position of privilege over Ellen, who now owes her allegiance to David. Lambert shows that, as the natural human cycle continues, nothing changes in the larger power systems.

Lambert introduces us to five permanent residents of the island: Victor, David, Ellen, Lisa and the first Mrs. Falconer. At the play's end, Lambert gives the audience no sign to believe that either Victor or David have changed. They presumably continue living their lives according to the same rules and patterns. Ellen has become entrenched in her new functions, Lambert portrays her as a character who has not submitted to the role of a victim, but rather has learned the lessons needed to survive in her chosen environment. She, like Lisa, turned down the opportunity to leave for the mainland with Dr. MacGregor. Lisa and the first Mrs. Falconer both meet their ends in the flesh-consuming shroud of the jellyfish lagoon. This is shown as the only escape from the purgatory of their lives.

As will be shown in *Grasshopper Hill*, the only escape from the immediate confrontation of this purgatory is to be found through work. In *Falconer's Island* Lambert places the action at a fallow time on the island. David appears to have little to do; Ellen cannot perform her wifely duties due to Victor's absence; and Lisa's usually hectic schedule of cooking, cleaning and maintenance for a camp full of men has been sharply reduced. Even Dr. MacGregor is on vacation. To contrast Ellen's domestic inefficiencies, and to keep herself busy, Lisa has baked a wonderful apple pie, touching in the audience a sense of the warmth and safety of a mother's kitchen. But, as many mothers have been taught, she will not sit and eat with them without their cajoling her: "I'm not used to sitting down and doing nothing - Very Well. (*She sits*)" (48). Lisa seems most content when working, and the sense is that she has yet to sit down with Ellen.

When Lambert's characters are not occupied by some form of labour, when they are no longer functioning as cogs in the system, they lose this sense of self-worth. Although the theme of work as a path to freedom is recurrent in the plays, Lambert will ultimately show that it is a construct created by controlling regimes to keep their subjects in an oppressed situation.

Lambert uses the doctor, as she does throughout the MacGregor plays, in the role of an outsider who is able to observe the struggles of the characters, as well as the constructs of the systems that keep them there, but who, having observed the situation, moves on without changing anything. The human elements of the character prevent him from being their needed saviour. Ultimately, I believe that in *Falconer's Island*, through the systemic destruction of the human inhabitants which mirrors the destruction of the land through logging, Lambert is expressing a similar desperation with the state of the world to be found in the poem from which David and Dr. MacGregor quote:

> The darkness drops again; but now I know
> That twenty centuries of stony sleep
> Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

(*The Second Coming*, William Butler Yeats)

As Yeats ends by questioning our hope for survival, so too does Lambert ask the audience to look inside themselves for such answers. In which way are we trapped in subjugated positions, how does our complicity manifest itself, and how can the system be improved?

CHAPTER TWO

Grasshopper Hill

Susan. Is this a true story or a good story?
Gustav. What difference does it make?
Susan. None really. Go on. (44)

The idea for *Grasshopper Hill* came from a relationship Lambert had with a man who had escaped from the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz during the Second World War. Rudolph Vrba, a retired academic from the University of British Columbia is, according to Dorothy Beavington, "A brilliant man, that Betty always loved despite how he treated her"(Dorothy Beavington). He had written an autobiographical account of his journey called *I Cannot Forgive*, and Lambert uses some of the facts from this book in the play. Additional material comes either from their conversations, from another expert brought in by Robert Chesterman, the play's director, or from Lambert's imagination. *I Cannot Forgive* is a fascinating and detailed account of the systematic butchery that occurred under the Nazi regime.

The play marks Lambert's artistic break from the direct influence of Gerald Newman; a break that Dorothy Beavington believes "allowed Betty to grow to find her own voice as a playwright." (Beavington) Lambert wrote several drafts of *Grasshopper Hill* before it reached the air in 1979. Originally titled *One day in a place called Canada*, the play was accepted for production by the C.B.C., but several months passed during which no action was taken. The play had been given to Newman to direct but he had wanted more input into the script. In a letter to C.B.C. executive Bob Weaver, Lambert gives a description of Newman's work practice and which shows that she had moved on in the relationship with her former mentor.

> In a way, you predicted what would happen. That Gerald would want to go back to the good old days... those long hours of psychotherapy on the writer... the total tearing down of the script, and all this before he had actually read it! And I just couldn't accept this. It's all so ironic too... for the play is about betrayal and loyalty, and self survival. I could turn down the money but I couldn't throw away the play, as I saw it. (Letter to Bob Weaver, July 31, 1975)

In an early outline to *Grasshopper Hill*, the autobiographical nature of the story is clearly evident within Lambert's notes. In the first paragraph, where she refers to the characters in the third person, the paramount concerns are with structure and theme, but then she slips seamlessly into the first-person voice. In the second paragraph, the writing becomes confessional, chronicling small victories within a system of judgements in a society which she acknowledges as being morally corrupt. Lambert emphasises the triangular structure of the play in which all three protagonists share culpability for the outcome. The triangle of characters in a symbiotic relationship is a feature of both plays under discussion in this thesis:

> The man and the woman... each has friends... and betrays them...

for the man… it is the German lieutenant… enemy and beloved… for the woman, too, it is a female friend… enemy and beloved… each feels humiliated and condescended to by the enemy/beloved…yet each betrays the other… the woman, too, must betray her female friend/enemy. This is the structural parallel… and that which I have never dealt with fully. The woman friend both hates her and loves her and demands some loyalty… which she does not give. And it is tied with domination, servility… to be one with…what loyalties do we owe to those who kill us, curse us, would see us die? Yet we owe loyalties… this is the link.

What I did was… not tell everything… so that she did not know what the people in her world were doing… and I encouraged her to think she could have him for herself… she thought I was too wispy, too Irish… too helpless, too unwomanly, and this angered me… and I mocked her… to him… and to others… I let her make a fool of herself… and I felt guilty… was guilty. That she 'asked for' is somehow not the point… but that I did it… just as the fact that the German lieutenant believed he was superior to Jews… to the man… does not make the rescinding of the promise right. I wanted her to know I was as strong or stronger than she, she with her hubris and her queen myth. I was to be reckoned with. And the proof I offered was that a man loved me. It was competition on a gross level and yet one to which she somehow subscribed… with her poor Betty's.

(*Grasshopper Hill*, Outline, undated.)

In these notes are several indications as to how the extension of the humiliation and condescension in the primary relationship between Gustav and Susan stretches to other aspects of her life. The tactics of Gustav's debasement may be initially attributed to his history of systemic torture at the hands of the Nazis, but here Lambert shows that even in the supposedly liberated milieu of Canadian West Coast academia the same strategies apply, and that also these phenomena are not restricted to the male gender. Susan's chief transgression is not a manifestation of physical abuse toward her friend, nor does she heap verbal tirades in the manner she receives them from Gustav. Rather, her crime is one of omission. She has allowed the Woman Friend to live in a state of innocence that she knows will one day be shattered. In Susan's role as an educator, to hold back on knowledge in order to wield power goes against everything she has been taught. This is, indeed, exactly what Gustav does through the play. As Susan conducts her interrogation, hoping to be his witness and to help him explicate the nature of his abuse, Gustav will only let out pieces of information, and withhold vital links in his stories, so that Susan cannot know too much. In prisons, schools, hospitals, and other institutions, furtive conversations and secrecy are prevalent. Personal knowledge is seen as empowering, but Lambert also shows that by not sharing that knowledge, her characters are complicit in maintaining the hierarchical structure.

In Lambert's competitive world between these women, the large stick that represents affirmation of superiority is the proof of a man's love. Lambert, in the previous notes, does not hide from the admission that she is also caught in this trap, even as she exposes it through her work. In the final draft of the play, the competitive relationship with the 'Woman friend', as a catalyst and impetus for the affair with Gustav, has been condensed to a few short but integral scenes which act as a barometer to Susan's feelings. With this focus, Lambert perhaps falls short of her goal of dealing fully with the symbiotic triangular relationship of the three characters, and instead dwells more on the direct relationship between the two lovers, although this does not detract from the quality of the work.

When I read this script the power of it came across strongly. There were times that the feelings of entrapment and horror were so strong that I had to put down the script to breathe. Upon hearing the production for the first time, however, these feelings were multiplied many times over. This sense of being overwhelmed was echoed by Joy Coghill, the renowned veteran of the Canadian stage, and a longtime close friend of Lambert. She told me that when she first heard the play, she was driving to an appointment in Ottawa from Montreal and had to pull off the road because the images were impairing her ability to drive. Robert Chesterman also told me of mail he received echoing this sentiment. Maybe this was the reaction the playwright anticipated when she changed the play's title from *One Day in a Place called Canada* to *Grasshopper Hill*. Much earlier in her life, Lambert was struck by an image she encountered in Mexico, and she wrote a short story, *Impressions of Mexico: A visit to Chapultepec*. In it, she describes the futility of fighting against an overpowering system and the strategy for survival. The narrator of the autobiographical story puts it this way:

> Chapultepec...do you know what that means?, asked the American

lady. No we didn't. It means Hill of Grasshoppers. Ever seen a plague of grasshoppers? They come and sweep your land and eat everything there is to be eaten. There's nothing you can do. It's no use trying to beat them off. All you can do is stand and wait. And that's what the Mexican does. He knows when everything is gone the grasshoppers will move on. (Impressions of Mexico, Undated.)

The play was eventually passed on to Robert Chesterman and was first broadcast on March 26, 1979. After the final draft had reached the desks of the Toronto executives of the C.B.C., it was considered a very powerful play. Chesterman remembers with great excitement his involvement in the project. In the following interview excerpt, he asserts the vital importance of careful casting in such emotional charged material to achieve empathetic characterisations, and explains the significance of the play's position in the history of Canadian radio drama:

> It was decided that we had to have extremely good actors to pull it off. I had been working with Kate Reid at the time, we had done Edward Albee's "*A Delicate Balance*". We sent the play to her and she called me straight away, and said that it was excellent. Kate Reid is not just a powerful voice; she is a highly intelligent radio actor. She really used to suffer doing these plays. Anything she did was really quite an emotional affair. She took her work extremely seriously and she loved radio. And because Susan is such a tortured person in any case, and I knew that Kate was, that I knew she wouldn't hide from it.
>
> We then asked another Toronto actor, Henry Reimer, whom she

> knew well. She was doing a stage play in Chicago at the time, but because it had been read by people in Toronto who recognised that it was an important statement, we rented a radio studio in Chicago at great expense and recorded it over the space of a week while Kate Reid was acting on stage in the evening. This was 1979, and although the so called 'Golden Age of Radio Drama' was long past, The Festival Theatre series was an example of the time and attention spent on producing these original Canadian writers, like Betty Lambert, John Murrell, and Herb Hosie. The third actor in *Grasshopper Hill* was Lillian Carlson, who was also a superb radio actor trained by Gerald Newman. (Chesterman)

Gerald Newman had, through his rehearsals and many takes, given his actors room to let go, so that "Everything, breath, voice is terribly exposed" (Newman), and this ability for self exposure remains essential for any actor in a Lambert play. For her performance, Kate Reid won the A.C.T.R.A. award for best performance in a radio drama. The play also won the award for best radio drama of 1979.

Unfortunately, the chance that the Canadian public will hear this play in its original format on the air today is slim. It did have a repeat broadcast in a retrospective series in 1990, but radio drama has been neglected by the C.B.C. in recent years. The drama that is on the air currently is based, to a great extent, on topical comedy. The dramatic plays are always serialised, so that the audience must follow a series of short excerpts over a week or so. When *Grasshopper Hill* was broadcast, the audience heard the entire ninety minutes in one broadcast of the Festival Theatre. With a play so layered in time, space and realities, it is essential that the audience hears the piece uninterrupted. Robert Chesterman talks of the benefits of radio drama and Lambert's skill in this regard:

> It seems a cliché to say that radio drama's prime advantage is that you can place it anywhere, the past, the present, or the imagination. The writer has such an enormously free scope that the stage, or even the film, writer cannot. And I believe that by this time Betty Lambert had captured all the possibilities of the medium and could use them to great effect. Added to the power of this that, I believe, much of the material was autobiographical and that to an extent we can assume that she (Lambert) was Susan. But I didn't know her well enough to ask her about it. I just accepted it as a love story, at the end, as brutal as he was to her. (Chesterman)

Here Chesterman pinpoints the strength of mixing the autobiographical aspects of her life with the greater observation of systemic structures. He also told me that in his discussions with Lambert about the script, they never discussed the personal nature of the piece despite its strong presence. As is evident in the letter to Bob Weaver, by this time in her career, Lambert preferred to speak through her writing, rather than explain her voice.

In this play, Lambert explores themes of gender oppression at the personal level, and sets them against the larger systemic oppressive structure of the Nazi regime. In so doing, she shows that oppositional gender roles have been so internalised that they are almost impossible to escape. The strength of the play lies in its honest portrayal of a love affair filled with humiliation and debasement. Lambert does not stand back and offer theoretical explanations for all the layers of public and private abuse of others or of the characters themselves. Rather, she embraces the challenge of discovering these emotions for herself, and consequently gives this raw account from the inside of the relationship. It is, I believe, through this brutal frankness in melding her own life with that of the characters that made this play the great success it was. I will show how Lambert layers and constructs the play in a non-linear layered fashion, forcing the audience to listen closely, but also to realise the subjectivity of the story being told, thus evoking a more subjective response from the listener. The power of the play, as in *Falconer's Island*, is that it poses generative questions about the complicity that is required on a personal level within the abusive power structure of heterosexual relationships.

The version of script published in *The West Coast Review* was actually an earlier draft of the play. Although I do not know why this happened, I imagine it was an organisational oversight. My initial reading of the play was in this copy, but at my meeting with Robert Chesterman, when I quoted from the opening scene, he assured me I was mistaken. He gave me his copy of the production on cassette tape, which included a much stronger opening and also material that I had previously encountered only in notes scattered through various drafts. I was able to secure a copy of the production script from the Broadcasting Archives at Concordia University in Montreal. In my discussion, all page references will be according to this script. The main differences between the published version and the final production script are in the opening and experiment scenes. In order to give full justice to the oppressive weight of Gustav's 'experiment' I have included an extract of the latter in an appendix.

First, I look at the way Lambert constructs a framework through the narrator's voice, but then destabilises the truth by overlapping thought and dialogue with shifts in location, thus making the audience unsure of what is happening, when, where, and to whom. I then examine certain of the tests through which the characters put each other personally, and how they interweave with Gustav's camp experiences, mounting up to deepest humiliation for him and degradation for her. Following the climax of the piece, I then illustrate how, in the denouement, Lambert shows that, despite Susan's apparent escape from the abusive relationship, she will continue to see Gustav, will live with the memories of the crimes against her, and will ultimately excuse the perpetrator.

In *Falconer's Island*, Dr. MacGregor, as a visitor to the island, gave the play an objective view. In *Grasshopper Hill*, Lambert uses the device of Susan/Narrator, who with the benefit of distance and hindsight attempts to find a focus to the story that is blurred by the immediacy of dealing with extreme emotions and events. By presenting the play as an 'associative process', as Lambert suggests, she allows the character to selectively skip through her memory, shaping the journey in order to understand it for herself. But as the play progresses, the voices of Susan the character and Susan the narrator become indistinguishable and the objectivity recedes. By this device, Lambert shows how, once a person has been abused in this manner, the latent effects remain forever in her consciousness, defying objectivity. By telling the story through Susan's perspective, the audience only hears the aspects of Gustav that Susan wants us to see. Gustav's lack of trust stems primarily from his indoctrination at Auschwitz, but when he holds back from telling Susan the truth of his stories, she is seen as partly to blame. The sense is that she asks these questions more from the viewpoint of a writer than of a partner, thus adding justification to his reticence.

The female friend, played by one actor, is clearly intended, in the following outline, to be heard as a composite of accepted public opinion. But this character's objectivity is belied by the subtext of her own agenda, which dictates that she holds a hierarchically superior position to Susan. She holds her marital status over Susan by flaunting her emotional security, which allows her to goad Susan by telling her Gustav is too dangerous for her.

By this lack of a clear objective voice in the play, Lambert forces the audience to regard subjectively everything that happens. It is left for them to answer the questions generated from the script by looking within at their own lives. Lambert tells the story of how Susan and Gustav 'survived' their relative imprisonment and torture, but she does not offer pat solutions as to how to dismantle the apparatuses that ensure the perpetuation of such environments. In an early outline Lambert gives these instructions:

> SUSAN, who also plays the NARRATOR. *Each character, Susan and the Narrator, changes during the play. The Narrator begins, trying to speak impersonally of that time; Susan is of that time; but, at various places;*

the Narrator is drawn back into that time. Towards the end, the two become indistinguishable.

GUSTAV GUTKE. *Central European Accent*

FEMALE FRIEND. *Various persons, various guises*

Time. 1970 to 1975

The play does not take place chronologically. The scenes shift back and forth in a kaleidoscopic fashion. Hopefully, the shift of scenes can be accomplished with different acoustical backgrounds. No fades, and no time lapses between segments, unless otherwise indicated. Segments will be introduced by *PLACE*, although *PLACE* is not always geographical. There must be no announcement of scene or place, except perhaps at the beginning of the play. As a line through, it might be helpful to see the script as the associative process of the narrator. (*Grasshopper Hill* Outline, undated.)

Lambert frames the play through the characters' voices, their relationship to the microphone, and the silences between the words. She uses various locations to underscore captivity, and the ambient sounds of a railroad station to both start and finish the play, which serve as a metaphor for the journey of the characters. The railroad being a significant part of the Canadian cultural landscape, these sounds would be familiar to most of her audience. But by the time the ninety uninterrupted minutes of this drama wraps up on the same train platform, the audience will witness the location in a different light. They would have experienced the horrific journey of the love affair between two people in relation to the concentration camps, where trains also played an enormous role. The first dialogue gives a rather tender parting scene between Susan and Gustav that overlaps into a belated realisation by Susan of the significance of train stations to Gustav:

> SUSAN. I hadn't thought of it, not 'til that moment. Those other train stations. Those other trains. Not until just then, waiting in the CN station. All those other trains. When he was young. In that other place, in that other forest. That first was from Maidanek. When he was seventeen. (1)

This realisation underlines Susan's obsession for trying to understand Gustav, as well as setting up the background for another location in the play, that of the train platforms of Auschwitz. Through the ninety-minute journey, the realities of Susan's comfortable Canadian life and the torture of the Nazi regime will converge as the objectivity of the narrator subsides. When Gustav tells Susan, "I will never trust you. You are not a partner. You are jealous. You are a small Canadian whore" (23), it is a result of his experiences as a survivor of the concentration camps, where the unwritten rule was to divulge escape plans to nobody lest they were caught and tortured, and to trust no-one for fear that they could be collaborators. To Gustav, Susan's jealousy denotes a lack of trust that must be reciprocated. He will question her feelings for him, accuse her of trying to trap him by means of pregnancy, as well as questioning such minor things as her vocabulary and spelling, never wholeheartedly admitting that he is also wrong on occasion. Lambert points out the trivial nature of these tests by having him look up the spelling of the word 'unnecessary'.

Lambert continues to destabilise the audience's concept of truth by having Susan question the veracity of Gustav's stories of his internment, and his later crusades with the partisans against the Nazis following his escape. I will show how the themes of trust and honour are put on trial through the play and how Lambert uses captivity both through her choice of physical locations, and through the confinement of the character's thoughts, to intensify the character's insecurity. The play seems to chronicle Susan's journey through her own kind of concentration camp. In order to escape she must understand Gustav in the same way that he had to think like a Nazi to escape Auschwitz:

> SUSAN. I think you have to understand. Only if you can... imaginatively... enter ... into someone like Eichmann, can you understand that there is no frontier ... that human beings are capable of anything ... that we are not different ... (21)

Robert Chesterman, the play's producer, explains how the feeling of captivity and claustrophobia is transmitted to the listener:

> The sense of captivity is heightened by the shifts in time; one can use the voice over narrative, thoughts in the head, which were commenting on the scene you had just heard or which, indeed, could be still taking place. Therefore simply by the relationship to the microphone, the actor is right there commenting, which can be quite claustrophobic. And the way that Betty Lambert had so cleverly written it, for she had come to understand

the medium, herself, so well, made it relatively easy for a director to understand it. (Chesterman)

The following short scene between Susan and her female friend is layered with her own thoughts, as well as Gustav's presence, invading Susan's thought process. Through this crowding of thought, and Susan's never-ending quest to understand human nature, Lambert introduces the theme of betrayal which will dominate the characters and the story.

WOMAN FRIEND. That's all he said? He told you to put on your seat belt?

SUSAN. He said, "Put up your seat belt." So I wouldn't have another car crash. Or, in case I did.

WOMAN FRIEND. Well all I can say is, it's a good thing he's out of your life. All those years and all he can say is put on your seat belt. If that's what you call love.

SUSAN. I'd forgotten about the other trains. – In a way, it was, a kind of love. For Gustav. Even to think of it.

WOMAN FRIEND. You don't ask much, do you?

SUSAN. It was something. It was better than nothing..

GUSTAV. Love. A word people use when they start to betray.

SUSAN. (*Still to Woman Friend*) I was taught that love conquers everything. Amor vincit Omnia. It doesn't. I was taught: to understand is to forgive all.

GUSTAV. Who can understand?

SUSAN. (*To Woman Friend*) We ask a lot of love really. And it isn't that strong. It won't stand up to a good wind. A good brisk breeze will do it every time. Well, the Nazis proved that anyone can be made to betray anyone. (Revision, 1-2)

Lambert interweaves the statements that Gustav has made to Susan, dismissing the possibility of love, with her dialogue with the Woman Friend, By indenting certain lines, as with Gustav in the preceding extract, she alters the actor's relationship with the microphone, creating an echoed effect to the lines that establishes deep-rooted ideas in Susan's consciousness. The last statement pits the ideal of love against the vicissitudes of life that force us to betray the ideal, and foreshadows the horrific experiment in which Susan will later participate. In a way, the Woman Friend betrays Susan by being incapable of understanding Susan's love for Gustav. Lambert shows how the Woman Friend can only view Susan and Gustav in terms of her own relationships and middle-class rules of conduct, rules that Susan later dismisses as shallow and controlling. But Lambert also illustrates that Susan's idea of love is also based on a desire to control her mate. Susan believes that Gustav's continual denial of love is just a front to mask his fears, and that she will eventually break down his resistance to her. Later in the scene, with a continuous melding of memories from different times and localities, Lambert takes us to the initial introduction of the couple, but does so through the altered perspective of the characters' memories. By so doing, she layers the story in a way that forces the audience to keep thinking for themselves. Rather than blindly following a simple story line, they must look beneath the surface romantic drama and concentrate on the constructs that inform their own choices.

WOMAN FRIEND. I'll never forgive myself, for introducing you. You weren't up to a man like that.

SUSAN. I loved Gustav.

GUSTAV. Why is it when a woman tells to me she loves me, what I hear is, she wants to murder me? (*Laughs*)

SUSAN. (*Tearful, arguing with Gustav in his flat*) But if there hadn't been love in the first place! – We wouldn't even understand what it means! Betrayal. What it means!

GUSTAV. Always you make big philosophies in the morning. Get me a big tonic. With lots of ice. And don't get sentimental.

SUSAN. When we met. That night. Do you know what Gloria said about you?

GUSTAV. Are you going to psychologize me so early in the morning?

SUSAN. Gloria said to me

SOUND. *Background party noises.*

WOMAN FRIEND. Susan, I want to introduce you to an arrogant, dangerous man. Gustav Gutke. Susan. (Revision 3- 5)

Her first reaction to the man is abhorrence, both in his dinner-jacket formality, and, indeed his name, which "clicked its heels at you"(5), yet despite of, or perhaps due to, his wild and uninhibited condemnation of everyone and everything that Susan and her friends are meant to hold in high esteem, there is also an attraction. The peculiarities of romantic attraction are highlighted in the exchange between the two women. Susan introduces a huge philosophical question of government-sanctioned murder, and her friend responds by reducing Susan's concerns to girlish dreams:

> SUSAN. I'm not driving anywhere with that man! My god, did you hear him out there? The hippies should be gassed?
>
> WOMAN FRIEND. I think he's rather taken with you.
>
> SUSAN. He's a nazi! (6)

Lambert uses the Woman Friend as not only a signpost to public opinion, but also as a mirror to the central relationship. The condescension that Susan receives from Gustav for her shallow view of life is in turn passed on to the Woman Friend. Despite the warning, or perhaps in defiance of it, Susan shows her arrogance and accepts a ride to her car from the drunken Gustav who, after ignoring her directions and pleas for safer driving, inveigles himself an invitation to enter her house, despite his degrading statements.

> GUSTAV. You do not ask me in even for a cup of coffee? I drive twenty miles to bring you to your door and you do not even ask me in for a cup of coffee? When it must be apparent to any idiot, even a small Canadian whore, that I am sloshed out of my mind. (7)

As the above description shows, everything about this relationship is going to be fraught with conflict. I will demonstrate how Lambert uses tests and games to show the levels of inequality as the relationship progresses. The first of these tests of trust is Gustav's erratic driving with Susan as a passenger. The reckless endangerment inherent in Gustav's actions, and his blanket degradation of her mind, body, and national identity, are learned behaviours from his life in Auschwitz and are delivered to Susan as a warning to avoid his company. But Susan, like Lambert herself, rather than heeding his advice, chooses to embrace the challenge and discover what lies underneath such seemingly destructive behaviour. Having survived the car journey unscathed and relatively confident in her ability to play chess, Susan suggests a game in order to deflate his ego. As indicated in Lambert's stage directions in the passage below, the flinches in the battles and the usually rapid recoveries are shown through the subtleties of breath control. As previously mentioned, radio creates a special relationship with its audience. By focusing on just the auditory sense, it allows the listener to be drawn into the characters more privately and intimately. This technique brings the audience closer to a personal experience than the stage, film or television can convey through their more public personae. Whether the listener is having a bath or doing the dishes, radio can transport its audience imaginatively to a world that gives shape to the characters and their locations. In the second of these tests, Gustav takes the initiative.

> GUSTAV. I'm white.
>
> SUSAN. Oh well, women learn to play defensively.
>
> GUSTAV. Yes, it comes by nature. You all think with your pudendum.
>
> SUSAN. (*Exhales with some shock. Laugh*) I've met your type before. You think you can call me a lesbian and then I'll go to bed with you to prove I'm not. I've heard that line before. (9)

The competitive nature of the relationship is highlighted from the opening scenes. The two lovers will continuously attempt to shock each other through words and actions. Lambert raises the ante in the testing by having Gustav suggest a wager on the game. Susan is reticent:

> SUSAN. It's foolish to wager on a first game, before I take your measure.
>
> GUSTAV. You are a coward, like all women.
>
> SUSAN. Sometimes discretion is the better part of valour. (8)

Her reply is a new expression to Gustav, yet one to which he has applied to himself in order to survive. Further goading, this time adding hypocrisy to the list of accusations, prompts her to take the bet:

> SUSAN. What is the wager?
>
> GUSTAV. If I lose, you will become my master. You will own me. Completely.
>
> SUSAN. I see. And if I lose?
>
> GUSTAV. Of course the wager is reciprocal.
>
> SUSAN. *Laughs.*
>
> GUSTAV. You must shake on it, like a gentleman.
>
> SUSAN. All right. (*And they shake.*) (10)

There is a certain irony that so much attention is paid to rules and civility when the contest has such a barbaric prize as a master/slave relationship. Gustav, rolling up his sleeves, raises the stakes by revealing his identification tattoo from Auschwitz, an indelible corporeal reminder of his subjugation. He plays his trump card and dares her to try and top it. The statement is similar to one offered by Mik, the violent transient logger with whom the narrator of Lambert's novel, *Crossings*, falls in love: "You can't destroy me. I've been destroyed by experts" (1). Both this statement, and Gustav's constant denials of love for Susan, come from characters who have had their trusts broken by systematic torture to such a degree that concepts of honesty and love have become foreign.

Gustav has internalised such a love and respect for the pyramid of prison values that he distrusts the so-called, liberated ideals espoused by Susan and her friends. He believes that Canadians, and Canadian women in particular, have never experienced complete loss - loss of rights and dignity, to the point of complete subjugation of the kind that he has both witnessed and experienced directly. And that perhaps the feeling of loss is exciting sexually:

> GUSTAV. But part of you wants to lose. To see what will happen. The thought of losing excites you?
>
> SUSAN. No one wants to lose.
>
> GUSTAV. Yes. Many people want to lose. They feel safer that way. To be owned. To be owned completely. To have a master that will tell you what to do. For many people that is very exciting. And then, of course, they can blame God. (13)

Another theme that runs through the play is the shallowness of the Canadian existence. The relative comfort of Canadian lives allows us to dismiss the atrocities of warfare as belonging to a system out of our control, and makes it difficult for us to empathise with people placed in these situations. Lambert seems to suggest that, as Canadians, we merely play at achieving such empathy, but lack the courage or resilience to commit to the challenge. It is this lack of commitment for which Gustav will chastise Susan in their high-stakes game, and which she will refute:

> GUSTAV. Canadians are dishonourable, they do not understand the seriousness of the trivial. A wager to a Canadian is a trivial matter. When a Canadian loses, he will say, "But it was only a game." And Canadian women are the worst.
>
> SUSAN. I am not dishonourable. I pay my bets. Where do we start? (14)

Following his victory he expects Susan to renege: "You will be dishonourable. And you will renege on the wager. I know your type of small whore. You will say, 'I am not that sort of woman'" (14). Susan does not renege, however, and following his instruction, strips naked. Then, perhaps in an attempt to shock him, or to gain some control, or for reasons of safety, she opens the curtains to make the affair public. When told to take a shower her fascination leads her to believe that she can vicariously experience the terrors of Auschwitz:

> SOUND. *Water.*
>
> SUSAN/NARRATOR. It was only a moment, but the walls were cement. Grey cement. And I was pressed in closely with the others. And we were all naked. I felt very ugly. They were pressing all around me, and we were all ugly. I couldn't breathe, and they were going to turn on the water and there would be no water.
>
> SOUND. *After a moment, the sound of shower curtain on rings being pulled back.* (15)

Lambert fills the scene with the sound of cascading water, that in the production somewhat imitates a herd of people, to invoke the chaotic noise of the camps. But the voice of the narrator gives the audience some distance from Susan's personal, imagined, terror allowing them to dismiss the horrifying image as nothing more than sexual foreplay.[4] When the image is replaced by the reality of standing naked under a shower, defenceless and honour-bound to submit to Gustav's demands, Susan remains defiant, however, and draws the line at ruining her expensive hair-do, "I'm not going to waste twelve bloody dollars"(15). She feels the immersion in the shower was a sufficiently profound experience for the game they are playing. Through Susan's attitude towards her hair, Lambert shows that her experience in the shower is more like flirting with danger as a form of sexual foreplay than undergoing the real terror that will come later. It is, however, a significant step in the breaking down of Susan to the point where she is able to feel empathy.

Lambert leaves the audience to imagine how far the experience went in terms of humiliation and abuse and jumps the action to a week later, to the third of these tests. By the fact that there is a second date, the audience is led to believe that whatever the stakes were, Susan has not been deterred, and gives a sense of equality to the contest by making Susan the ensuing game's victor. In this short scene, it is Gustav's turn to submit to her will. He immediately goes on the defensive and bargains for leniency. He tries to set parameters on the slavery, the ownership rights. "I will not mutilate myself" (16), supposing that his slavery will be defined by corporal mutilation. This once again destabilises the extent to which he did abuse Susan in the previous scene. He then disowns his previous claims to the status of 'gentleman' and opts for the lower status, "...I am a peasant from

Toplczeny. Well? What are you going to do with me now?" (16). Rather than humiliation or torture, Susan endows him with: "The worst thing. Freedom." (17). As in the end of Scene One, the implications of just how this *freedom* will be acted upon him are left to the audience to decipher. If it is an invitation, laced with a warning on Susan's part, for Gustav to leave the relationship, he does not take the opportunity. The subservient position taken by Gustav and Susan's casual gift of freedom might appear as more banter for the couple's sex-based games of daring. But the language chosen echoes the strategy Gustav used for his survival at Auschwitz, and mirrors the position many women are forced to take in heterosexual relationships. Lambert shows Susan's hubris in thinking that she can grant Gustav freedom, which has been Susan's goal throughout the play.

Even though Susan will also be proved correct in the fourth of these tests, the patterns of the relationship are already laid. Even when she is right, Gustav will hold the trump card. When the action is rejoined, the *love story* is in the middle of another battle. In this play, Lambert keeps all the small memories alive, festering not just with dissatisfaction and bitterness at the losses, but also at the hollowness of the victories. By layering so many of these tests, Lambert underscores the multitude of barriers Susan must face. This time the dispute is over spelling. Gustav insists that Susan has spelled "unnecessary" incorrectly and challenges her on it. "Don't be an idiot" (13), he says, denying her intelligence, a place where she should feel safe, and again a wager is involved. She wins the casual bet, a bet that presented her no challenge, as she was sure of the spelling. However, rather than simply enjoy the small victory, Susan will later use his failure to pay his debts as an indictment of his honour:

GUSTAV. (*Flips page.*) Oh. All right. Sometimes you are right. All right. You can spell.

SUSAN. *And moreover, you never paid up on that debt. I'll never forgive you for that either. I paid my bet, I was honourable, but you never paid up. You are a completely dishonourable person!* (18)

(Lambert's italics indicate a time change)

The casual quality of the previous test will now change as the stakes rise. Lambert introduces the supposed truth of the printed word to add credence to Gustav's history. The audience, like Susan, is led to think they are getting closer to the truth, but will again be betrayed. History as we read it is shown to be relative and not to be trusted. Unable to sleep one night, Susan stumbles upon a copy of Gustav's book describing his life at the camp. Gustav, however, distances himself from credit for the writing: "They were the best years of my life. I enjoyed Auschwitz enormously" (20), later claiming that "No one can take the truth. It's all lies, that book. I wrote it for the crehteens. Nobody wants the truth. You couldn't take the truth. Come back to bed" (20). In these games between the two lovers, Susan continues to search for answers and Gustav claims that she is incapable of understanding within the confines of her soft lifestyle. He starts to break down her defences:

GUSTAV. You want the truth? I will tell you the truth.

You sit here in a nice comfortable flat with a glass of whisky, and you get all serious about a book full of lies. What an idiot. Look, it's a nice morning. There are worse places than this. Here you can suffer in comfort. You think you can take the truth? I'll tell you the truth.

SUSAN/NARRATOR. And so it began. Gustav's stories. His truth stories.

SUSAN. That's a lie, Gustav. That's a lie, you stole that one from Betelheim. I read that in Betelheim. You stole that one, it's not true. (21)

Even at this pivotal moment in the relationship when Susan has discovered his book and Gustav appears to open up, Lambert tells the audience that these truths must be questioned. Susan has studied other accounts of the concentration camps and uses this knowledge to try and catch Gustav in a lie. Later in the scene, Susan perhaps hits upon the real reason that Gustav cannot trust himself or others:

SUSAN. You want some truth Gustav? You did something, yes, you did, you did something there, to survive, something you don't want...

GUSTAV. Oh now we begin the psycologization of me. Oh now we begin the explication. Where did you read this, some new textbook?

SUSAN. to face... that made you exactly like them... that's what you...

GUSTAV. Don't explicate me, I'm not one of your literary books. You are a small whore. Get me another whisky and then we go to bed, and don't get sentimental.

SOUND. Glass. Off. (22)

Lambert shows that Susan believes that she has gained a greater understanding of Gustav as she continues with the questions, sensing by his reticence to discuss his shooting of the German soldier that, "This is a true story. When you tell me lies, you fill in all the gory details" (22). However, she then juxtaposes this breakthrough towards truth with a comic scene. Susan acts as a Zionist spy out to slay the evil Gustav, and in the humour and giddiness of the game, the theme of trust remains central. Susan feels comfortable enough to joke about her body, usually a subject of abuse by Gustav, but Lambert cuts the playful atmosphere off abruptly by having him assure Susan that this is just a game, and that he remains as distant as ever from her.

> SUSAN. You are helpless, Gustav. I have wormed my way into your confidence, and now I am going to kill you. You were a fool to trust me.
>
> GUSTAV. What other orders did they give you?
>
> SUSAN. They said, Gain ten pounds, he likes them fat.
>
> GUSTAV. Mmm. A very thorough dossier. Even the secret police did not have such information.
>
> GUSTAV. I will never trust you. You are not a partner. You are jealous. You are a small Canadian whore. (23)

The lighthearted sense of the scene is laced with another truth. Susan believes she is winning, beginning to crawl inside Gustav's head, and interprets the barrage of insults as a breakthrough. At the same time, Lambert leads the audience to believe that through Susan's constant questioning they are also peeling layers off the onion, and that, once they reach the core, the relationship will perhaps be equal, honest and free. But by having Susan concentrate so greatly on Gustav's life while he appears so little concerned about her, other than sexually, Lambert points out the underlying inequality in the relationship, that Susan appears to miss. The admissions, by their sheer weight, allow Gustav to maintain his superior position. Each time Susan feels that she is approaching empathy, he shifts the power back to his side. The story of Kastner, like the tattoo on his arm, is an indelible indication to Susan that she has yet to experience pain and suffering to the extent he has witnessed and undergone. As such, he proves why he can never be trusted or held accountable for his behaviour toward her.

With this in mind, Gustav now slowly reveals his own personal crime against his honour, but as he tells Susan the story, he will continue to juxtapose comments to undermine her self-confidence, and try to convince her that there is no permanence in the relationship: "I would like to fall in love. It is like a disease, very pleasant at first with the fever. I am going to find myself a twenty-year-old whore" (26). Then he says, "You cannot be trusted. You are going to play me some trick, I know your type. You are going to get yourself pregnant on me" (26). Gustav has become so disillusioned by a lack of humanity that he now can only see individuals as types, and feels that in all relationships, there are ulterior motives. Susan accuses him of placing winning over truth, but he gives a stock answer from his bag of colloquialisms, complete with a mispronunciation that proudly reflects his European origin: "Of course I care for winning. The first thing that goes is a man's *wanity*. If a man doesn't have wanity, he is finished" (28). He will continue to push the boundaries of their partnership, as if taunting her to break it off:

GUSTAV. If you really loved me you would arrange for me that small whore I met here. She is like my first wife.

SUSAN. You've only had one wife.

GUSTAV. Big ass. And very smug. And twenty-two. If you really loved me, you would be a good sport.

SUSAN. (*Tearful*) Go to Hell! Just, go to hell!

GUSTAV. You don't love me. He believed in it. He believed they were going to win. He said my German was very good. He believed in it. The destiny of Germany. We had a good talk. He said I spoke very good German. He said I didn't look Jewish. (28/29)

Gustav has internalised this feeling of inferiority to such a degree that like a beaten dog he takes any compliment from the German soldier as the truth. He regards the respect of the German soldier as much more valuable than the opinions of Susan's academic friends, over whom he feels superior. The oppression of the perpetual, methodical breaking of the spirit finally forces Susan into an ultimatum: "Every morning, you say, I do not love you, you are not my type. To wipe it all out. Quit screwing me or quit the morning after routine" (31). But Gustav has learned well from his time under the highly organised Nazi regime, and now he takes the next step in testing Susan's forgiveness. He tells her he has met someone else, "Very big whore. English. Twenty-two. She speaks perfect English, not like you" (31), but that if Susan was a true partner she would trust in the ephemeral nature of his physical desires for a younger woman. Through Gustav's tactics, Lambert shows how systemic and legalised state torture reaches right into his daily misuse of power in interpersonal relationships.

Lambert has Susan continue undeterred in her questioning until she feels that she has caught Gustav in the personal act of betrayal that has dogged his self-esteem since the war. She now builds the intensity with a short intimate scene in which Susan dreams that 'Gustav Gutke' is a assumed name but Gustav, or whoever he is, even though subdued by fatigue, a tactic he will later turn on Susan, will change to a subject he knows will silence her:

> GUSTAV. I'll tell you my number.
>
> SUSAN /NARRATOR. I could never look at his number. Even at the end. I never could look at it. I never knew what it was. I could not look at it. I could look at his buttocks. (35)

Susan cannot bear the sight of the scars that indelibly mark the subjection of humans to an oppressive system, and there is a sense of condescension, or perhaps sorrow, when, through the voice of the narrator, she tells the audience, "Over the gate it said 'Arbeit Macht Frei' – Work Makes Free. And he believed it. And he worked" (36). In *Falconer's Island* we saw the importance that Lambert places on work as an instrument to keep the occupants from thinking of their plight, and Gustav is another example of this philosophy. Gustav, however, is quick to point out that far from being a victim, he was able to cheat the system. He tells her how the Jews would try to smuggle their life savings into the camp with them. His job was to sort the luggage that sometimes was "So heavy, like this. I almost drop it. (*Laughs*) Gold coins. Gold coins inside the loaf. So I would put some away. Not all, I would have to give most in, but some I put away. And then I would go to the lavatory and throw in" (36). It was a chemical lavatory that made the gold irretrievable. Echoing the relative futility of his eventual escape, he then explains the reasoning behind such an audacious robbery for such a small victory:

> GUSTAV. It was all economic, you see. It wasn't inhumanism or anything so romantic. It was to get the gold. That's all. It was an economic strategy, that's all. Nobody understands this. But I never stole. It was all for the gold they brought, the stupid Jews. The gold and the houses and the land they left. (36)

Even though his actions were obviously futile in sabotaging the Nazi war machine, it was enough to allow Gustav a modicum of freedom within the economic harshness of the system. He emphasises this lack of forgiveness in a story of a well-dressed argumentative woman as she got off the train at Auschwitz. When a man tells her the truth - "You cow, you'll be dead in thirty minutes" (37) - she complains, and is reassured that all will be fine. Meanwhile, the man is taken behind the train and shot for his honesty. Lambert uses the image of the well-dressed Woman Friend, who refuses to believe that such atrocities could take place even as she stares them in the face, to bring the question of the residual effects of war victims into a contemporary Canadian context. Lambert has Susan question Gustav on why he must continually return to Europe to dredge up old memories, but then she juxtaposes this with Susan's indignation when the Woman Friend espouses similar ideas about putting history behind us, as this scene highlights:

> SUSAN. Do you have to go back? Why are you going back again? You don't believe in it.
>
> GUSTAV. So they take this Ukrainian out behind the train.

SUSAN. Haven't you gone to enough trials?

WOMAN FRIEND. He spends a great deal of time reliving the past. Isn't there amnesty on war criminals now? Hasn't there been a statute of limitations? I mean, really, it's all rather ancient history now, isn't it?

SUSAN. You... you... you who have spent six thousand dollars on psychiatrists, to find out why your mother didn't breast feed you! You, you ... bloody ... bitch. What have you been doing all these years, poring over your West Vancouver entrails, your West Vancouver ancient history, your feelings of *rejection* ... you dare to say Auschwitz is ancient history?

GUSTAV. Have some compassion.

SUSAN. Compassion? For her? What happened to her? How does she dare... (37)

Lambert continues Susan's education by having Gustav tell of a near-death experience in Auschwitz. Although the fact that he survived is obvious, we see the price he has paid for his freedom. The lesson in Gustav's speech underlines the hero-worship that can be a factor in the relationship between people in subjugated positions and their oppressors, and suggests that Gustav has never been able to break this mould and experience true freedom:

GUSTAV. And he said, very calm, "What's this then Horst?" And Horst said, "He was eating and it was after nine." And Otto Gassner took notice and he said, very easy, very calm, "Horst, I think your watch is fast." And he put his hand on his watch, and we could see him, turn the knob, back? And he showed his watch to Horst. And he said, "You see, Horst? Three minutes yet. Your watch is fast, my friend." And then he laughed. And Horst laughed. And we all laughed. And then we went back to work. (45)

After Otto Gassner defuses the crime that, according to the rules of the system, should have led to Gustav's death, he will hold a place of adoration in Gustav's heart. Gustav is not willing to give Susan this lofty position. The price is too high. He continually reminds her of her physical shortcomings, covers her face while telling her that she is ugly, that she cannot satisfy him. Then he tells her that he desires, and eventually has an affair with, a younger woman who he also claims will not satisfy him. When Susan asks about a story in his autobiographical book about his time during the war, specifically that he had offered to go to death with her in his undying love, he dismisses it as a lie:

GUSTAV. For love, I should go to the chamber, to keep her company? She was a small Jewish whore. Romantic. I still had a job. I could still work. Why should I go? There were other small Jewish whores. Women are like train stations ... you pass through them, or you stay overnight. (25)

His complimentary statements are reserved for the men who were significant in his life during the war. When he refers to the captain of the partisans with whom he allied himself after escaping the concentration camp, he always uses the possessive pronoun, "my captain". He is impressed by the bravery of the captured German lieutenant, who has had an arm blown off. And after initially refusing to give his prisoner a cigarette, choosing to crush them in his hand as a symbol of his newfound power, he will be taken in by flattery - "We had a good talk. He said I spoke very good German. He said I didn't look Jewish." - to the point that he will agree to take his prisoner's identification tags back to his parents in Stuttgart. The audience, having listened to Susan gaining equality throughout the investigation, will now have the tables turned and watch a master interrogator at work. Using to its fullest, the intimacy that radio can create, Lambert re-enacts, in the comfort of a Vancouver home some thirty years after the purported torture took place, an unbelievable experiment conducted by the Nazis. In the preamble to the scene, Gustav has slept with Susan's student and Susan offers him the cab money to get out of her life. Gustav calmly explains his reasoning and suggests that Susan must realise the situation:

> GUSTAV. She is very beautiful and very young. I like them young. It is only natural. A man likes women to be young. It is nothing you can help. She is very cruel and stupid and she doesn't try to understand. She is just a small whore. Men fall in love with cruel women. You try to understand too much. How could I love you? (46)

Lambert now, in the climactic scene, for the first time in the play, concentrates the action in one arena. For the duration of the 'experiment' there is no cutting to a different time or space. The audience is forced to undergo the trial at the same relentless rhythm as Susan, its primary subject. Waiting for a time when Susan is exhausted, Gustav starts by asking her to confirm the depth of her feelings:

GUSTAV. You love me. – And you could suffer for me?

SUSAN. I think I could, if only it were over fast. (46b)

Gustav has studied his subject well and uses the mention of his mother to entice Susan into the experiment through sentimentality, a well-established criticism he makes of her character. By talking of his prostitute mother and his tragic childhood he opens up a previously uncharted avenue on his life. Lambert shows that by doing so, he is able to change Susan's attitude, and she softens on the test. He casually informs her of the infallibility of the experiment, but then assures her that it will not be fatal: "You will live. It is not dangerous to life. To lose." (46c). Having gained her confidence, he now describes the environment both for Susan and the audience:

GUSTAV. Small room. Very hygienic. White. Everything is white. To test the fallacy of love. White. White walls. Very clean. Mother to child. Child to mother. The Nazis are very clean. Two chairs. One here. For you. One here. For me. (46c)

He establishes a sense of sterile efficiency that will underscore the chilling experiment. He will give answers to her questions but only release information in a piece-meal fashion. As Susan senses the preliminaries are closing, her anxiety increases and she reverts to sarcasm as a defence:

GUSTAV. Now. I am here. In this chair. And you are there, behind the glass wall. In that chair. And I pour you a small whiskey.

SOUND. Pouring

Now when you pick up the glass, you will stop the experiment.

SUSAN. (*Sarcastic*) They gave them whiskey? (46d)

Lambert no longer uses the narrator to intervene on the action and with no break from the tension, Gustav knocks the smirk off her face by relating the details with a casual detachment.[5]

GUSTAV. You are strapped into the chair. And your child. The child you love. Sits here. In this chair. What is greater than mother love?

SUSAN. I'm in a chair. Strapped in. And someone gives me an electric shock. And to stop it all I have to do is pick up the glass.

GUSTAV. But then, I will get the shock. Only bigger. Only more. (46d)

Lambert heightens the sense of captivity by introducing the idea of straps. And even though no physical bondage takes place Susan will feel the restraint. The audience by this point in the play has been accustomed to using their imaginations, and are perhaps able to experience the tangible feeling of restraint without the help of the narrator to mediate the emotions. Susan will try to back out of the experiment:

SUSAN. I don't like this game, Gustav.

GUSTAV. But madam, this is not a game. You are volunteering. To advance human knowledge. To come to some final truth.

SUSAN. Is that what they told them?

GUSTAV. You say you love me!

SUSAN. (*Like hate*) I love you! (46f)

Lambert has him dangle the elusive carrot of truth which he knows she cannot ignore. Susan agrees to the wager despite his previous failures to pay up.

SUSAN. Okay.

GUSTAV. (Puts out his hand) But we must shake on it. Like gentleman. (He pronounces it *Gentile*men)

SUSAN. Okay okay okay. (They shake) Okay. Go.

GUSTAV. (*He lights a cigarette, taking his time. We should begin to hear Susan's breathing, up close. Gustav's voice does not move off, but her breathing is up* (46f)

Lambert again shows how the intimacy of radio can transport audiences into the secret depths of human emotions. The contrasting breath of the characters shows the hierarchical power at its height, and shows under what circumstances such contracts are reached, making the human subject of the experiment, even in situations of extreme cruelty, feel complicit in the torture. Susan's bravado disappears as Lambert changes the rhythm drastically when Gustav begins the interrogation in earnest. He destroys her defences in a calculated manner, first by melding her life with his mother's, then by invoking her learned underlying racism. It is at the nadir of her resilience that he returns to the young woman who precipitated the debate. He accuses her of pandering to him. He acquits the young woman of any culpability, then turns the screws as Susan leans toward the breaking point.

GUSTAV. You grow old. your breasts are not firm. You stare at them in the mirror. You lift them with your hands. Your teeth are bad. You are afraid to smile. The veins will grow big in your hands. You will be the big professor and your students will get A's. And you will say, "Come to my house after the prizes."

SUSAN. She could have said No!

GUSTAV. But she hated you. Her professor. She hated you. She hated you too, and here I was, and what an excitement, to take me from you! For years you have bullied her, and now she has the prize, and now she takes me from you, because she is young, because her breasts are firm, because her skin is cool like old silk. (46i)

Lambert keeps the attack centred on the body. Gustav plays upon Susan's weakness. He reminds her that, as age passes, she becomes expendable. Again echoing the Pirandellan theme in *Enrico IV*, where the Marchioness Matilda Spina is confronted by a vision of her youthful self in the guise of her daughter, Susan starts to see herself through her child, and becomes jealous of her lost youth. Although in this case it is her student, the relationship is given credibility by Susan's lack of a child of her own. She has filled this apparent void through her love and commitment to her work, but Gustav now exposes this for its selfish nature, and makes her admit to a truth she had never consciously realised. Although, given the story of the play to this point, whether this is actually the 'truth', or just a reality fabricated by Gustav in order to prove his point, is left for the audience to question. Susan's line, "Just to get it over!", proves that the bombardment has worked and that she now believes that she bears responsibility for Gustav's transgressions. Lambert now picks up the pace of both the dialogue and the characters' breathing. As Susan begins to panic, Gustav moves in for the kill:

SUSAN. She was so certain, so sure. So ... pleased with herself. It was true you know, she already despised me. – But it wasn't like that. It was not like that.

GUSTAV. It was exactly like that.

SUSAN. She could have said No. You could have said No.

GUSTAV. No one can say No. There is never time for the choice. There is only the pain and there is only to say Stop.

You gave her to me. She was very lovely. You would have liked her.

Shall I tell you what is was like? To fuck her?

SUSAN /SOUND. (*Grunts and throws the glass at him. It shatters against the fridge.*)

(*Brief pause. We hear Susan breathing, but she does not cry.*) (46j-k)

The shattering of the glass climaxes both the experiment and the play. The sound signifies a new beginning. He has proved that he is unworthy of her love or respect, that he is irredeemable and hence she is wrong. The test is over, and Susan regains her breath. Lambert illustrates that when people are put under enormous pressure, they will react in any way that will facilitate their survival. She offers no proof that Susan actually did any of the things of which she is accused. In fact, by keeping the student absent from the cast of characters, she underlines the lack of significance she has for Gustav. The significance lies in the fact that Susan is eventually, through this systemic torture, convinced that she has indeed committed a crime and deserves the punishment. Lambert holds Susan back from crying, despite the weight of the oppressive brainwashing. Her reaction is more one of defiance. It is a violent rage against the power of his words that Gustav will use against her in his condemnation:

> GUSTAV. (Sighs) You see? And you were not even in real pain. Of course, you could say, (As he gets another glass and pours her a drink) what does such an experiment prove? Simple and crude. (46k)

It is in his smug acceptance of victory, the condescension toward his vanquished opponent that Gustav is at the peak of his machismo:

> GUSTAV. You better sweep up that glass, or you will get cuts in your feet. They all press the button. In both experiments. Every one. Mother and child. One hundred percent verification of hypothesis. Very successful experiment. Go on, I tell you, get the broom or you will get cuts in your feet. (46k)

His sardonic laughter and ridicule of Susan as a representative of both her gender and her race counterpoints what Gustav considers to be the icons of masculine strength and resilience: Nietzche, and Otto Gassner. He dismisses Susan's feminine failings as nothing more than a warm-up for his challenge against a real man. Having proved to himself that he could perform the same detached and methodical torture techniques as well as Gassner, his hero and saviour from the camp, he now feels that he can go to Vienna for the trial as his equal.

Lambert now winds down the play in a less intense fashion. The final scenes will show that, despite the vicious end to the affair and Susan's ability to break from seeing him as a full-time partner, Gustav will remain in her life. The Woman Friend, while consoling her friend, offers an observation which forces

Susan to face a paradoxical truth that her physical appearance improved during the affair when she dressed to please a man. But Susan has also learned from Gustav and goes on the offensive by indicting the Woman Friend's institution of marriage as a sham in comparison to the depth of emotion in her short-lived affair, echoing Gustav's statements about his time at Auschwitz:

> SUSAN. Tell me something. Are you in love with Jake?
>
> WOMAN FRIEND. In love with Jake? Why do you ask?
>
> SUSAN. I'm asking!
>
> WOMAN FRIEND. We... we were older when we married. We... we were both very ... I don't know.
>
> SUSAN. You don't know. Then you know. When a woman says she doesn't know, she knows. Then don't talk to me about how it's all for the best! Don't you dare tell me it's all for the best. If you don't *know*. Let me tell you something, this last year? This last year with Gustav? Let me tell you something you won't understand in a million years. It was the best time in my life. (47/48)

Gustav has used totalitarian tactics of abuse. He has degraded her sexuality, delivered a constant barrage of objectifying insults such as "whore, ugly, old," etc, and has made disparaging comparisons to younger women. Susan, through her intuition and advanced education, is well aware of these tactics, yet she still sees the conquest as having been won by the understanding of Gustav that she has gained. To understand is to win, and by winning, she defies her friend's challenge that Gustav is irredeemable.

Lambert has Gustav return from Vienna where Gassner, despite being found guilty of one hundred of the one hundred and one counts against him, was acquitted of his major crime. This acts as a metaphor for her relationship with Gustav. She tells the audience, "There are some things I will not stand – will not forgive. (*Laughs)* And when he flew back to Vancouver I met him at the plane" (48). Through this, Lambert seems to say that we as a society tend to overlook the huge institutional crimes perpetrated by oppressive regimes, and that this permeates our personal relationships. Susan forgives Gustav because of the greater crimes committed against him. She will continue to hide the actual level and details of her degradation from her friends in order to save face and survive. Susan's character is not a poster girl for the feminist movement. She is full of contradictions in her life that prevent her from taking a political stance. But she holds true to a statement Lambert made in her interview with Bonnie Worthington:

> Last night I was talking to my friend, and her memories are that my women weren't co-opted types, but very strong, and I think she's right. What I've been writing about is women who are struggling - struggling with their sexuality, with their role and maybe the limitations of their role, but not weakness. (58)

Susan is certainly not a weak person. In the course of her journey she never shrinks from the ultimate challenge of trying to understand Gustav. In comparison with the character Ellen in *Falconer's Island*, Susan is a little older. Susan's relationship with Gustav is much more combative than the one Lambert shows us between Ellen and Victor; in fact the Falconers never share the stage, but the characteristic of mistreatment is in both. Just as Ellen, in the final scene with Dr. MacGregor, appears at ease with her new lot, Susan will say of her time with Gustav: "It was a good fight though. I enjoyed it" (57). This in turn echoes Gustav's feelings of his time in the war. The image of Ellen's being locked in the freezer in *Falconer's Island*, a passage of fear much heightened by her own imagination and the expectation of an uncertain immediate future, has parallels to Susan's experience in the shower in *Grasshopper Hill*. Having just seen Gustav's identification tattoo from Auschwitz, and finding herself in this enclosed space, Susan identifies with the concentration camp victims, a claim to which Gustav believes she has no right, having not yet experienced true barbarity. In *Falconer's Island*, Ellen, in her moment of terror, identifies with her predecessor, the first Mrs. Falconer, but her claims are also dismissed as shallow. The difference between the two is that Susan, despite admitting her love and desire for Gustav, will eventually leave the relationship. Whereas Ellen finds a way to survive in her given circumstances, Susan transcends this by leaving the relationship. At the end of the play, the love and affection have grown with the mutual understanding between the two characters to the point where they will always care for each other, even if they both know that the love affair is over. Gustav, in his final line, delivers a parting lesson to his friend: "Goodbye. And don't get sentimental!" (Revision, 59). Susan now sees how deep the scars left by his experiences have affected Gustav. She now must choose whether to internalise the torture of the relationship or free herself from it.

Conclusion

MOYERS. If my private dreams are in accord with the public mythology, I'm more likely to live healthily in that society. But if my private dreams are out of step with the public -

CAMPBELL. You'll be in trouble. If you are forced to live in that system you'll be a neurotic.

MOYERS. But aren't many of our visionaries and even leaders and heroes close to the edge of neuroticism?

CAMPBELL. Yes, they are.

MOYERS. How do you explain that?

CAMPBELL. They've moved out of the society that would have protected them, and into the dark forest, into the world of fire, of original experience. Original experience has not been interpreted for you, and so you've got to work out your life for yourself. Either you can take it or you can't. You don't have to go far off the interpreted path to find yourself in very difficult situations. The courage to face the trials and to bring a whole new body of possibilities into the field of interpreted experience for other people to experience - that is the hero's deed.

(Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth, 40)

She is not out to give a moral message. She is not teaching but presenting life. The core of her greatness was that she understood what makes us tick, a never ending curiosity to finding that out and using whatever she needed in terms of plot, setting, confinement, to, in the space of an hour you are overwhelmed, or enraged.

(Nelson Beavington, brother-in-law/ and former student)

Through the many hours of reading through Lambert's plays, ideas for plays, and her diaries, her comments on injustices, either on a personal or the societal front, I was never once less than captivated by her knowledge of and insights into the human psyche. As I have come to know her through her work and through the reminiscences of family members, friends and colleagues, I feel that my own understanding of how we all interact on different levels, and my own role in shaping these relationships has been immeasurably expanded.

In conclusion, I will talk of two recurrent themes concerning forgiveness and the loss of an important female to the males at an early age. I will also talk of Lambert's last hours and the legacy I think she has left the Canadian theatre.

I believe that Lambert was, in Campbell's terms, a visionary. She embodied someone who had - "the courage to face the trials and to bring a whole new body of possibilities into the field of interpreted experience for other people to experience" (Campbell) - My interviews with many of the people who knew her well in both professional and personal capacities attest both to this fact, and also to her neuroses. However, as her life drew to a close, she allowed herself to relax, and stopped viewing the world with her ever-examining eye. She did not die referring to injustice or betrayal, but instead chose to go by hearing nostalgic stories:

> .Her favourite game was Trivial Pursuit and although her sight had gone she could still hear and she wrote out "Q", for question, "What is the primal desire in life?" We, Nelson and I, were on either side holding her and knew she was near the end due to her breathing. And I said, "I don't know the answer to that but I'm sure that you do", so she wrote, "A", for answer, then, "More and more and more nostalgia." So I said, " I

think I get it. You want me to talk about our family, about the time we've had as sisters, and the courage, and our mother and father and the games we've always played, and the joyfulness we've had as a family." And she nodded her head. So as she died in our arms I talked about all those things ... But what was so astonishing was that even as she was dying, she was, I felt, almost choreographing her ending. She was saying to me "This is what I need. This is what I need to hear." And she did it in this fun, 'Trivial Pursuit' way. That was Betty. She wasn't going to go out with a whimper. She was going to go out hearing what she needed to hear. She was directing it, with humour and with great courage, and she just died in our arms. (Beavington)

The idea of forgiveness runs as a strong theme throughout the three plays and through much of Lambert's work. In *Falconer's Island*, Ellen coyly tells Dr. MacGregor that her older sisters will "never forgive me" (47) for getting married before them, while Lambert has the sound of Lisa shuffling dishes in the background, silently echoing the indictment. Lisa cannot forgive herself for what she believes to have been twenty years of sin and refuses to return with the doctor to the mainland. The island remains her purgatory. David seems unable to forgive anyone, and his respect for Lisa as his teacher of the classics is tainted by his disdain of her other duties. He cannot forgive her for loving his father, and like many others of Lambert's male characters, has never recovered from the loss of his mother in his life.

Grasshopper Hill was partially based on a book called *I Cannot Forgive*. Gustav is unable to forgive Kastner's betrayal of his heroic escape. He cannot forgive the world governing systems that allowed the transportation of four hundred thousand Hungarian Jews to their systematic deaths. As Lambert says in a synopsis:

> Gustav really exists. He did get word to Kastner, and to Churchill. Churchill announced the news on a B.B.C. broadcast in 1943. After this, "Gustav" and his friend waited frantically for something to happen. For the bombers to come. But nothing happened. (One Day...Synopsis, 2)

Gustav is so certain as to the inevitability of betrayal, both within institutions and on the level of inter-personal relationships, that he travels to extremes to avoid any emotional ties. He forces Susan into an experiment, a test that he knows she will fail. He puts her into a position where in order to survive with any dignity and self respect, she smashes the glass, thus betraying her love for Gustav and transferring the pain to him. He tells Susan that he can never forgive her for this failure, but in his eyes the greater disappointment comes when Otto Gassner, the Marlon Brando figure that had once saved Gustav's life in such a smooth and confident manner, deteriorates so rapidly after just three weeks in a Viennese jail.

Susan has not only survived the relationship, but claims, like Gustav and his time in Auschwitz, that she enjoyed the experience. As Lambert writes, "They begin a love affair, in which he tries to smash her, to crush her, to teach her what the world is. And she tries to absorb it, to understand, to redeem, not just Gustav, but the world, herself" (One Day...Synopsis, 1) Susan is able to forgive his brutality toward her. In the same synopsis Lambert uses the image of shook foil, which will later be prominent in *Jennie's Story* as a symbol of hope and forgiveness:

> Yet, in all this, there are moments. When something between people, in the midst of horror and betrayal and banality, leaps out "like shining from loose foil." And one morning in a place called Canada, a small thing happens. Nothing that can redeem the world, or save us from the general defeat. But something.
>
> (*One Day in a Place called Canada*, Synopsis, 3)

In both plays, Lambert calls for forgiveness and tolerance of others in life. She seems to state that in human nature, tolerance is a precious commodity. Her characters invariably remain confined by their prejudices and their need to survive within a given system. Undoubtedly, her characters would be able to live more contented lives if they could nurture some forgiveness of others and themselves.

Another theme that runs through the plays is the need for strict organisation in order to keep the systems running correctly. In *Falconer's Island*, Ellen is initially in awe of the way Lisa copes at times of great stress and activity: "Lisa's just wonderful, the way she manages everything. You should see the camp when the men are here" (45), and the image of the beef, strung up in a row inside the icebox is a picture of perfect order. MacGregor is impressed by the civilisation of the island: "I didn't expect to find such an eminently well organised camp. You really do have all the amenities"(45). In *Grasshopper Hill*, Gustav will refute Susan's claims to the soldier's sexual arousal in a massacre by claiming that in his own experience:

> GUSTAV. But the Germans were orderly. They were very orderly. They did it in an organised way, there was no excitement. And very little sex. If you have to do it like a job, you have to be organised. And dedicated. And full of ideals. The Germans were very idealistic. Like you. (15).

To look at Victor Falconer, his son David and Gustav Gutke, the three central male characters in the plays, we see three men who have lost women at a relatively young age, who were significant to their lives. Victor has lost his first wife, and, arguably, his first love, to a state of an involuntary burden on him, just lying prostrate, in a frozen pose. David has likewise lost his mother and has also, in a way, his surrogate mother, Lisa. By having sexual relations with her, he has lost respect for her status as a mother figure and teacher. Gustav had written, in his memoirs of the concentration camp, that he had tried to join his girlfriend in the gas chambers, but when Susan questions the veracity of the story by asking, "You didn't offer to go with her, out of love?" (17), he vehemently denounces this as lies contrived to please a romance-seeking book public, invented by the ghost writer. He then gives conflicting accounts of his relationship with his mother. But as throughout Lambert's writing, the line between truth and fantasy is hazy at the best of times. If Gustav had loved this girl, and had been impotent in his storybook role as saviour in the face of the Nazi regime, it may well explain his refusal to allow Susan any sign of affection for fear that he will eventually lose her or not be able to fulfil her expectations. This guilt, along with his reneging on the promise to return the lieutenant's identification tags to his family, will provide the tools for his self-flagellation. Feeling unworthy of anyone's love or trust and full of self degradation, having twice compromised his ethics in order to survive, he, like Groucho Marx: "Would never join any club that would have him as a member". The men, feeling that they had been deserted by women to whom they had pledged their love, have now become so inured as to eliminate the capacity to invest in love. Or, indeed if he had murdered his mother... but now I find myself falling into the trap that Lambert warns her audience to avoid: the trap of pigeonholing characters to fit my own ideas of entrapment.

Lambert started her professional writing career in radio by going through all of her early drafts with Gerald Newman to weed out the overly emotional autobiographical material. Only after such minute inspection of her personal life did she and Newman shape the plays for production. Her role in the actual production remains a question. Newman claims that he would not have allowed her near the booth during taping, yet Joy Coghill recalls that Lambert was always present at the many plays on which Coghill worked. Which of the truths you choose to believe, it is clear that after her artistic break with Newman, she became more judicious and private about her early drafts. Neither Robert Chesterman nor Pamela Hawthorn, who directed many of the initial productions of Lambert's stage plays, remember much workshopping on scripts, and both directors kept a professional distance from discussing anything of a personal nature in the material.

As Lambert became more sure of her voice as a playwright, and mastered the techniques of the various media, she would only show scripts when she felt they were ready for production, thus leaving the practitioners to do the psychological discovery for themselves. The break with Newman also coincided with her shift into theatre that moved away from the personal vision and took on some of the major concentrations of power in our time. In *Clouds of Glory*, she looks at the internal politics of a Department of Philosophy at "an obscure mountain top university on the west coast of Canada" (*Clouds of Glory*, Author's notes.), very much like her own Simon Fraser University. In *Jennie's Story*, she challenges both the Catholic Church and the respective governments of Alberta and British Columbia for their use of barbaric, and abusive, eugenic laws.

To most of the audience who would attend or listen to one of Lambert's plays, complicity in something like the Nazi regime, that in hindsight is so overtly uncivilized, would appear out of the realm of possibility. However, in 1933, 92 percent of the German electorate voted for the Nazis. Through her plays, Lambert shows how the systems that we presently support might well be seen by future historians as equally oppressive.

In her ability to expose the constructs of such systems, and how the effects of the oppression seep into the very fabric of our lives, Lambert should solidify her place as a playwright ahead of her time. Although in recent times the subject-matter of her plays, such as abuses against women and the effects of torture and genocide on survivors, has become more common on our stages and in other media, the power of Lambert's work is perhaps even more relevant today then when she produced it.

Appendix One

The Betty Lambert Archives

Novels:
Keep it in the family
The victim
Victorian era

Short stories:
Banff school
Bending sickle
Bingo
Black gold
Blue chow
The black night-gown
Cinderella man
Dance of the moon
Don't bring him in the house
The dream
French seams
The guest room curtains
Guilt
The hen who forgot how to hatch her eggs
How we married mother
Just a little game
Kiss Googie Winthrop
Last Dinner
Lollypalooza and Jim Molockee
No love lost
No yesterdays
Nobody knows I'm here
The personal column
The pony
Prairie fire
Pronounce it to rhyme
The rebel
So much more
A story!
The strange, the foreign faces
Swiss cottage
Sylvia
Tatiana

That Mrs Benton
Them as has pride
This side of tomorrow
This university life
Tony
The Unloved
The victory
The wasted years
Winter never comes
A woman in love
Miscellaneous - seven untitled drafts

<u>Radio Plays</u>:
All in good time
And bacon for breakfast
And when the nights are long
The annuity
The bequest (To reach and understanding)
The dark corner
Death watch
The devil & disciple (written by G B Shaw, adapted for radio by Betty Lambert)
Dr MacGregor and the case of the abominable snowman
Dr MacGregor and the case of the constant suicides
Dr MacGregor and the case of the curious bone
Dr MacGregor and the case of the persistent poltergeist
The doctor's dilemma (written by G B Shaw and adapted for radio by Betty Lambert)
The encircling island
Essentials
Falconer's island
Grasshopper hill
Hamlet, revenge (written by Michael Innes and adapted for radio by Betty Lambert)
In the name of progress
King of the castle
The ladies
The lady upstairs
Once burnt, twice shy
The portrait of a lady (written by Henry James and adapted for radio by Betty Lambert)
The rebel
The seagull (written by Anton Chekov and adapted for radio by Betty Lambert)
The sea wall
The summer people
The three sisters (written by Anton Chekov and adapted for radio by Betty

Lambert)
A time of rejoicing
The visitor
Whoever murdered good ol' Charlie

Stage plays:
Aleola
The best room in the house
Clouds of glory
Dressing up
The good of the sun
Jennie's story
Out of this world
The pirates and the gypsies
Song of the serpent
Sqrieux de dieu
Turtle beach (The foolish virgin)
Under the skin
Visiting hour
The Visitor
World, world, go away

Television plays:
The apartment
The closet
The human element
The infinite worlds of maybe (written by Lester Del Rey and adapted for television by Betty Lambert)
Lilacs and lilies
No love lost
Prescription for love
Return of a hero
Tumult with Indians
When the bough breaks

Miscellaneous:
Fragments of 12 untitled plays.
Essays, reviews, poetry

Appendix Two

Excerpt from Interview with Dorothy Beavington

Our Grandfather was a Roman Catholic priest in England ... It did bring down, with that, a lot of Catholic guilt to my mother, and which then, we felt confined in and we had to overthrow, the three daughters. He was from a very wealthy family, he was sent to the seminary at the age of nine. He was the first born son. They were very well off, he had sisters who were P.H.D.'s and magistrates, the women were educated, too. He hated being a preacher. He ran away at twelve and they brought him back. He ran away at sixteen and they brought him back. Her, the father was apparently more laid back, but the mother insisted that first born sons in wealthy aristocratic families were priests, if you were a catholic.

So, when he was forty he went to Ireland, in the meantime he'd got five degrees from Oxford and Cambridge, he spoke seven languages. He was a fluent musician and singer, he been to Italy to study singing, so he did try to escape, in truth, by doing many other things. But, at forty, they set him to Ireland to try to get some of the heathen protestants into the Catholic church. He stayed in a nunnery... There was an eighteen year old girl there whose job was, solely, to serve the priests potatoes... all different types of potatoes.

And she was the daughter of the town drunk, she was completely illiterate and had had no schooling, none of the family did, they were very poor. Her father drowned on the beach. He got so drunk that he fell asleep on the beach and when the tide came in he drowned. And she was supporting the family by working at the nunnery... And they fell in love. The illiterate and the aristocratic priest... what a love story.

They were excommunicated from the church, both of them. He was disinherited by his father from his family. He got a job at a university but his mother got him fired. She was determined to break the marriage. He moved to England to work at another university and the mother got him fired again. She got him fired from three positions. He was desperate by now and getting penniless, so he decided to move to Canada and change his name, and hide out completely from his mother. He felt that was the only way he could escape her... talk about confinement, confinement by the mother, confinement by the church. So he changed his name to Cooper.

After staying in Montreal for a while he foolishly bought land in Southern Alberta, by Cowley, near Pincher Creek, on a tip that the railroad would be coming through and a fortune could be made. Anyway, they changed the railroad plan and he was left with this totally useless land and no money ... kid number three was on the way, because of course they practiced no birth control, so kids were coming pretty regularly. And he had a young wife who was about eighteen when they got together.

So my grandfather, who had all these degrees, spoke Greek, Latin and five other languages, went out to support the family as a cook at the coal mines and lumber camps of Alberta while she grew vegetables. She had to survive, somehow, without him while he was away and they ended up with five kids. It was very difficult and they almost starved to death. This put a lot of strain on the marriage, but they survived.

One of the themes of Betty's plays is secrecy, family secrets, and this was kept a compete secret until he was dying, and he said to my mother ... "There's something about my life that you don't know"... and there was a locked desk that nobody was allowed to look in, and he had kept a journal which unfortunately has been lost along the way, but the story was in there. And he said "I was very unhappy until I was forty, but the latter part of my life I was happy because I was with your mother". He said "We kept it a secret from you children because some people wouldn't approve". She didn't know what he was talking about, he was dying... but he gave the key to the desk and told her to read the journal afterwards. So after the funeral, with great fear and trepidation, she opened the desk and read the journal saying he had been a priest from this aristocratic family, etc, etc, and she was horrified... my mother... she didn't see it as this terrific love story and was horrified.

Then his wife died very soon after, they were very close... and my mother always felt great guilt about this. She felt this was a terrible secret that we should keep. The three daughters: Betty, Chrissie and myself, thought this was a beautiful love story and we would tell everybody and my mother would be embarrassed.

When I lived in Oxford for a year I took my mother to her father's place and her mother's place. We saw the mansion he was to inherit. I saw the pictures on the wall but she refused to acknowledge him in his clerical collar, we girls wanted to point him out, but my mother would say, "I'm not sure?" She was so ashamed. My mother had this catholic guilt that came down, probably from her mother, because he never regretted it, he was intellectual, but my mother's mother felt the guilt and probably passed it on somehow.

Then we went to Ireland but found out that all the catholic McGranes, my grandmother's family had died off. But with Betty, it was a very strong influence, I did the trip with her also... and the secrecy within the family where you are not allowed to be what you want to be and are trapped by a very domineering mother.

Appendix Three

Omitted Scene from *Grasshopper Hill*

GUSTAV: You are hysterique. I think you are prone to suicide. Look at the dishes in the sink. Look at how you look. You have lost all your wanity. This is the first dangerous sign. You are going to kill yourself on me.

SUSAN I was working today. I work sometimes, Gustav. I have to work, you know.

GUSTAV: She is very beautiful and very young. I like them young. It is only natural. A man likes a woman to be young. It is nothing you can help. She is very cruel and stupid and she doesn't try to understand. She is just a small whore. Men fall in love with cruel women. You try to understand too much. How could I love you? I have to go back. I have to go back. Because. Because there were other things. You are a crehteen.

SUSAN: (*TIRED*) Gustav, what did you do, with the identification discs?

GUSTAV: You think you are different.

SUSAN: I am different! (TIRED) I am not different. I am just tired of it.

GUSTAV: You pathetic Christian.

SUSAN: (*TIRED*) I am not a Christian,

GUSTAV: You are a Christian. They had you, the first seven years. You are a Christian. You believe in it.

SUSAN: In what.

GUSTAV: Love. You believe in love. You believe in it. In love. They did a very interesting experiment. In Auschwitz.

SUSAN: No more Auschwitz.

GUSTAV: There was a room. They put in filial partners. An experiment on love.

SUSAN: No more horror stories.

GUSTAV: With a glass wall between. Mother and child.

SUSAN: She was my student! You had to pick on my own student?

GUSTAV: You arranged it.

SUSAN: Oh sure.

GUSTAV: I said to you, If you love me, you will arrange for me that small Canadian whore.

SUSAN: And I "arranged" her for you, oh sure. I was her teacher!

GUSTAV: You love me?

SUSAN: I can't remember.

GUSTAV: If you love me, you will do anything. Suffer anything.

SUSAN: I don't know. I'm so tired. I don't know anymore.

GUSTAV: That is the precise time they come for you. When you are tired.

SUSAN: (*DEEP BREATH. LOW*) Yes.

GUSTAV: I do not hear you.

SUSAN: Yes!

GUSTAV: You love me. --And you could suffer for me?

SUSAN: I think I could, if only it was over fast.

GUSTAV: Oh yes. It was over fast. When I am a boy, I think, if only I can meet some real challenge. To stand the test. To know what I am. If I have courage. Honour. Real courage. Real honour. I dream of it. To meet some Nazi. To stand the test. My mother was a whore. I was only young. She thinks I am asleep. She brings me in. And I hear them. She thinks I am asleep. I remember those nights. I slept in the same room. Sometimes it is more real to me than Auschwitz. Sometimes I take her, what is the word, a reticule, for evening, she throws it on my bed when she comes in....

SUSAN: (*IN SPITE OF HERSELF, INTERESTED NOW*) Evening bag?

GUSTAV: No, not evening bag, that's not good English. Purse. Evening purse. With embroidery. And inside, old silk. I put my face into the old silk, and I say to myself, One day they will come for her. And I will kill them. And then I shall know. I love my mother.

SUSAN: Gustav, I do love you.

GUSTAV: Will you wage on it?

SUSAN: (*TRYING TO RELIEVE THE TENSION*) You never pay when you lose. You always welch on your bets. -- What do I get if I win?

GUSTAV: I do not know. Nobody has ever won.

SUSAN: (*SMALL LAUGH*) And if I lose?

GUSTAV: You will live. It's not dangerous to life, to lose.

SUSAN: No. No more wagers. No more games.

GUSTAV: One more. Small. Wager. To amuse us.

SUSAN: (*SHE POURS HERSELF A DRINK*) What room.

GUSTAV: Small room. Very hygienic. White. Everything is white. To test the fallacy of love. White. White walls. Very clean. Mother to child. Child to mother. The Nazis are very clean. Two chairs. One here. For you. One here. For me.

SUSAN: You never told me about any of that. Before. Your mother.

GUSTAV: Yes, I knew you would like that story. Here, you sit, as you are. And over here, behind the glass wall, someone you love. They used a mother and her child. In the experiment.

SUSAN: I don't have a child.

GUSTAV: You had a student.

SUSAN: You . . . bastard. --Oh no. Oh no, Gustav, I'm not playing. I looked it up, Gustav. Sondercommando. I know what that means. I know what you were.

GUSTAV: You know nothing.

Now. I am here. In this chair. And you are there, behind the glass wall. In that chair. And I pour you a small whiskey.

SOUND OF POURING
When you pick up the glass, you will stop the experiment.

SUSAN: (*SARCASTIC*) They gave them whiskey?

GUSTAV: There are no buttons here. On the chairs.

SUSAN: Buttons.

GUSTAV: To stop the shock.

SUSAN: They gave them ... shocks? Electric shocks?

GUSTAV: They gave them shocks! Electrical shocks! I will explain to you. What will happen is this. I will give you a small shock. If you pick up the whiskey glass, you will stop the shock.

SUSAN: Jesus.

GUSTAV: You are strapped into the chair. And your child. The child you love. Sits here. In this chair. What is greater than mother love?

SUSAN: I'm in a chair. Strapped in. And someone gives me an electric shock. And to stop it, all I have to do is pick up the glass.

GUSTAV: But then, I will get the shock. Only bigger. Only more.

SUSAN: If I pick up the glass, you get the shock.

GUSTAV: Only more.

SUSAN: And you're my child.

GUSTAV: I am your child.

SUSAN: (*TRYING TO JOKE*) Listen, you play my mother, I wouldn't mind giving my mother a shock.

--

So what is it? You bet me I'll pick up the glass. What're you going to do, wire me up to the toaster?

GUSTAV: I will not touch you.

SUSAN: They really did something like this? To test mother love?

GUSTAV: To test love. The children, on their side, they could push the button too. But that was another experiment.

SUSAN: But, how far could you go? How much shock could you ... transfer?

GUSTAV: Does it matter. You say, you would not push the button.

SUSAN: And I could see you if I....

GUSTAV: You could see me, yes!

SUSAN: I would not push the button. I would not.

GUSTAV: You will not pick up the whiskey glass.

SUSAN: No. I will not pick up the whiskey glass.

GUSTAV: It is a wager. We shall shake hands, like gentlemen?

SUSAN: (*DOESN'T PUT HER HAND FORWARD*) What happened? In the experiment?

GUSTAV: No. That could influence the outcome. No. You must do this all on your own. It must be your own choice.

SUSAN: I don't like this game, Gustav.

GUSTAV: But madam, this is not a game. You are volunteering. To advance human knowledge. To come to some final human truth.

SUSAN: Is that what they told them?

GUSTAV: You say you love me!

SUSAN: (*LIKE HATE*) I love you!

GUSTAV: Then we wager. If you pick up the whiskey glass, I will stop.

SUSAN: I will never pick up the glass. I will die first.

GUSTAV: Yes. You think it is so easy to die.

SUSAN: I'll die first!

GUSTAV: Then, it's a wager.

SUSAN: But you're not really going to ...

GUSTAV: I will not touch you. I will only give you ... small shocks. In the imagination.

SUSAN: Okay.

GUSTAV: (*PUTS OUT HIS HAND*) But we must shake on it. Like gentlemen. (*HE PRONOUNCES IT GENTILEMEN.)*

SUSAN: Okay okay okay. (THEY SHAKE) Okay. Go.

GUSTAV: (*HE LIGHTS A CIGARETTE, TAKING HIS TIME. WE SHOULD BEGIN TO HEAR SUSAN'S BREATHING, UP CLOSE. GUSTAV'S VOICE DOES NOT MOVE OFF, BUT HER BREATHING IS UP.*)

(*KINDLY*) You are thirty-eight now.

SUSAN: Yes.

GUSTAV: You have had men.

SUSAN: Yes.

GUSTAV: The skin on your legs. It is no longer young.

SUSAN: Oh boy, here we go on my legs.

GUSTAV: You look at your body sometimes. In the mirror. To see the flesh fall away from the bone. I see you. At night. Looking into the mirror. Before you get dressed to go out. Putting on your pretty dresses. Taking down the purse, with the old silk inside. You look into the mirror and you smile at yourself in the mirror, but your teeth are going bad now. You don't smile now.

SUSAN: Gustav.

GUSTAV: You are afraid to go to the dentist. You are afraid to go anywhere now. But at night, late at night, you go out. You put on your pretty dress with the beads, and you cover yourself with oils, and you take down the evening purse, with the silk like skin inside, and you go out, and then, much later, I hear you come home, and you are not alone.

"It's all right. He's sleeping." you say.

SUSAN: Gustav, this is me. Susan.

GUSTAV: I know. Your teeth are quite good. But you are not afraid to go to a dentist. Here, the dentist does not report your visit. You are Susan. When you were young your father said, DirtyJew, like that, as if it were all one word.

SUSAN: I only told you that because ...

GUSTAV: It is a big tragedy for you. Your father says DirtyJew, like that as if it were all one word. You suffer in the mind.

SUSAN: All right.

GUSTAV: A big comfortable tragedy. Like lying in bed, hearing your mother screw her head off. To suffer in the mind! -- You invited her here.

SUSAN: All right. I invited her here.

GUSTAV: And you invited me here.

SUSAN: Yes. I invited you here. All right.

GUSTAV: Your own student.

SUSAN: Yes.

GUSTAV: You knew.

SUSAN: No.

GUSTAV: A stupid child.

SUSAN: No.

GUSTAV: You invited her here. A stupid fool. A crehteen. A child.

SUSAN: She's twenty-four old, for god's sake.

GUSTAV: She knows from nothing.

SUSAN: It wasn't up to me. You and she, you're adults, you're free!

GUSTAV: You have never loved anyone. Not your men. Not your students. You have no child. You are a barren woman.

SUSAN: I have loved.

GUSTAV: Never. You are old and you have never loved anyone.

SUSAN: I have.

GUSTAV: You invited her here and you gave her to me, like a small pig to be butchered.

SUSAN: No no.

GUSTAV: She is young. Her breasts are firm. Her skin is cool, like old silk. She is a small pathetic fool.

SUSAN: She gets all A's!

GUSTAV: You gave her to drink.

SUSAN: All right. Stop it now.

GUSTAV: Pick up the glass.

SUSAN: --- You asked me to.

GUSTAV: And you brought her here, to me, out of love.

SUSAN: Just to get it over!

GUSTAV: You never loved me. You used me. I am your punishment.

SUSAN: That's not true

GUSTAV: You grow old. Your breasts are not firm. You stare in the mirror. You life them with your hands. Your teeth are bad. You are afraid to smile. The veins will grow big in you hands. You will be the big professor and your students will get A's. And you will say, "Come to my house after the prizes."

SUSAN: She could have said No!

GUSTAV: But she hated you. Her professor. She hated you. She hated you too, and here I was, and what an excitement, to take me from you! For years you have bullied her, and now she has the prize, and now she takes me from you, because she is young, because her breasts are firm, because her skin is cool like old silk.

SUSAN: That's enough now.

GUSTAV: Pick up the glass. -- You taught her and she learned from you. She hated you. She hates you.

SUSAN: It's not true.

GUSTAV: It is true and you know it is true. In your dreams, you say, I would have done so, I would not have done thus. I would never give in.

SUSAN: That's enough.

GUSTAV: Pick up the glass.

SUSAN: No.

GUSTAV: And you say, "Come to my house for a drink, after the prizes." Like a judas goat. In the slaughter shed.

SUSAN: Shut up.

GUSTAV: Your student. Your own student. You loved her.

SUSAN: I did. I do.

GUSTAV: Like a child.

SUSAN: No more. Stop it now.

GUSTAV: A small pathetic fool, with large eyes, full of fear and trust, and skin like old silk, cool to the touch. And you say, "Come along, I will give you a piece of candy before the shower."

SUSAN: What does she know about anything?

GUSTAV: Yes. Let her find out.

SUSAN: Why should she be safe?

GUSTAV: Yes, let her suffer too.

SUSAN: She was so certain, so sure. So ... pleased with herself. It was true you know, she already despised me. -- But it wasn't like that. It was not like that.

GUSTAV: It was exactly like that.

SUSAN: She could have said No. You could have said No.

GUSTAV: No one can say No. There is never time for the choice. There is only the pain and there is only to say Stop.
-- You gave her to me. She was very lovely. You would have liked her. Shall I tell you what it was like? To fuck her?

SUSAN/SOUND: (GRUNTS AND THROWS THE GLASS AT HIM. IT SHATTERS AGAINST THE FRIDGE.)

BRIEF PAUSE. WE HEAR SUSAN BREATHING, BUT SHE DOES NOT CRY.

GUSTAV: (*SIGHS*) You see? And you were not even in real pain. Of course, you could say, (*AS HE GETS ANOTHER GLASS AND POURS HER A DRINK*) what does such as experiment prove? Simple and crude.
-- You could say something! Of course!
Now you give in and you were not even in real pain!
Here in this experiment you suffer in comfort.
Here. Have a drink. Don't be stupid.
-- I thought you don't go down so easy.
I thought you have more wanity. But you are a poor Canadian Christian liberal after all!
-- Your imagination hurts! (TRIES TO LAUGH)

SUSAN: It's all true.

GUSTAV: Sushka! I will not forgive you, you go down so easy.

SUSAN: When you press the button, what happens?

GUSTAV: Nothing. At first. The other one gets a shock, only more.

SUSAN: But if you go on.

GUSTAV: Oh, if you go on, then they die.

SUSAN: What, they killed them?

GUSTAV: You better sweep up that glass, or you will get cuts in you feet.

-- They all press the button. In both experiments. Every one. Mother and child. One hundred per cent verification of hypothesis. Very successful experiment. Go on. I tell to you, get the broom or you will get cuts in your feet. ---

It's true you know, what Nietzsche said. He was a very clever man, that Nietzsche. He said, the suffering we inflict is more real than the suffering we endure.

SHORT LAUGH.
Go on, drink up. It is not real. It is only a game. Now I go to Vienna. Now I will beat Otto Gassner and that will be no game. But Otto Gassner will not go down so easy. Even if they sentence him to life, he will laugh in their face. He is what he is. Because Otto Gassner is not a hypocrite!....

I never forgive you, you should go down so easy!
I tell to you, Sushka, I will not forgive you this!

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End Notes

[1] Jennie McGrane is the title character's married name in *Jennie's Story*

[2] Lambert was well acquainted with the writing of Sartre. Characters throughout her work expound his existential philosophy and the triangular structure of *No Exit* is used as a structural framework for *Grasshopper Hill*.

[3]. In *Crossings*, a straight laced academic from Kitsilano, a respectable community that hugs the shores of the Pacific ocean, near the campus of the University of British Columbia. She falls in love with an itinerant logger, with a criminal record, who bilks her and her sister for the rent. She then goes to visit the logging camp, echoing the fantasies of Lambert's later journal entry; " It is the stuff behind the Voyage of Innocents, the High Wind to Jamaica: the captain who rapes the girl child... the love that springs up between them" (Personal Journal, Sept. 8, 1976.). She is both horrified and enticed by, the logger, Mik's primal sexuality, the novel has several scenes of erotic nature that recount the brutal aggressiveness in their love making:

> I am still wet outside from the shower and I bend and let my hair tickle his face. 'Aw for
> christ sake.' I bend and kiss and lick him all over, taking it in my mouth till it rises in spite of itself. He sits up abruptly. 'Shit.' Then he gets up and slams me against the wall, so that my feet are dangling somewhere near the top of the baseboard. 'I could break you in two,' he says, but whether it's a threat or a statement I can't tell. I put my arms around his neck, now that we are face to face, and kiss him on the mouth. 'Aw christ,' he says and loves me. It is a kind of victory. Over what I'm not sure. (185)

[4] In Lambert's last play, *Under the Skin*, she uses the true story of the kidnapping of Abby Drover as a basis for her story. In her notes following the rescue of, the twelve year old girl who had been missing for 181 days and found in a dungeon under a house, having been held captive by a neighbour, Lambert questions why such stories can be sexually arousing.

> ...But of course, it is the Persephone myth. That is why we have no summer. Persephone has been in Hell and Demeter has been mourning for her. And of course - the strength of the Persephone myth is exactly the same strength... sexuality. The hidden idea of rape beneath the earth, the dark saturnine Pluto, in his palace beneath the earth. And the mother who mourns the loss of her child's innocence mourns also the loss of her own sexuality. That is why, the night I read of Abby Drover, I suddenly became a shrew with Ruth-Anne (*Lambert's daughter*).
> It is the stuff behind the Voyage of Innocents, High Wind to Jamaica: the captain who almost rapes the girl child... the love that springs up between them. For this of course is necessary, that there should finally be some sort of love, tenderness. How else did Abby Drover survive? How else did he not kill her? She must have become real to him. How else did Pluto allow Persephone to go free, for at least six months of the year?
> I am guilty for having been aroused by what in reality was brutal and not human, in my definition of human. ...To know oneself capable of becoming sexually excited by such horror... to know that one's reaction is partly compounded of anger at innocence itself... where does this leave you? To lock someone away, Elaine and I felt is not a female fantasy. For myself, it would be of course a burden, yet another burden, that creature in

the cell I now must feed... whose chemical toilet I must empty. Of course, he didn't, he left her alone for long periods of time. I do not have too many years left. I would like to understand part of this before I die. I have never rejected my father. He died just as I was myself becoming sexually alive. We did not have that falling away that must be necessary to father/daughter love. I have denied this to Ruth-Anne. Simply sheared that possibility away. (Personal Journal, Sept. 8, 1976.)

[5] This characterisation is similar in many respects to the torturers in *One for the Road* and *New World Order*, two plays by Harold Pinter written for Amnesty International. These plays both deal with government sanctioned systematic torture as an everyday profession.