

ON A TRAIN FROM MORGANTOWN

BY Kip Jones

A fantasy duologue in one act

Based on the writings of Klaus Riegel and Kenneth Gergen

FADE IN:

A) SHOT FROM SPACE OF EARTH; DISSOLVE AND ZOOM TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN AND THEN TO THE NORTHEAST COAST OF AMERICA; DISSOLVE AND ZOOM TO WEST VIRGINIA;

A FLY-OVER, SHORT MOVIE OF THE GEOPHYSICS OF THE AREA FROM MORGANTOWN TO CHEAP LAKE WHERE THE 5<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE ON LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY WAS HELD IN 1976, DISSOLVING INTO A PERIOD POSTCARD OF THE LAKE TO BLACK OUT.

SOUND: TAVERNER: THE ANNUNCIATION, "HAIL!" CHORUS, LASTING THROUGH THE INTRO.

ON SCREEN:

**5th Conference on  
Lifespan Developmental Psychology**

**Cheap Lake  
near Morgantown, Virginia**

**1976**

DISSOLVE TO:

*Here am I.  
Standing before you  
Singular and solitary.  
But don't let appearances fool you.  
Each word from my mouth  
Each gesture is borne of others.*

*You see singularity  
But reality is in multiples.  
As we talk  
You enter this world.  
And I into another.*

--Ken Gergen

FADEOUT TO DARKNESS.

FADE IN:

B) EXTERIOR SHOTS: MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA 1970S TO MOTORIZED  
FUTURISTIC TRAM AND CITYSCAPE TO FADE OUT.

SOUND: FADE TO BIRDS CHIRPING, THEN STREET SOUNDS, TRAFFIC, CARS,  
TRUCKS, STARTING AND STOPPING, BIRDS, BACKGROUND CHATTER  
CONTINUES THROUGH:

BIRDS CONTINUE; JONI MITCHELL SINGING 'MORGANTOWN':

When morning comes to Morgantown  
The merchants roll their awnings down  
The milk trucks make their morning rounds  
In morning, Morgantown

We'll rise up early, with the sun  
To ride the bus while everyone is yawning  
And the day is young  
In morning, Morgantown

Morning Morgantown  
Buy your dreams a dollar down  
Morning any town you name  
Morning's just the same

We'll find a table in the shade  
And sip our tea and lemonade  
And watch the morning on parade  
In morning, Morgantown

Ladies in their rainbow fashions  
Colored stop and go lights flashing  
We'll wink at total strangers passing in  
Morning, Morgantown

Morning Morgantown  
Buy your dreams a dollar down  
Morning any town you name  
Morning's just the same

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

1. ESTABLISHING CRANE SHOT: EXTERIOR MORGANTOWN TRAIN STATION PLATFORM(1976) 8:30 AM. *A one storey, hipped-roof building, non-descript but with hanging flower baskets made of macraméd thick twine.*

CRANE SHOT ZOOMS TO NEWSSTAND AT FRONT OF STATION; *Papers neatly arranged.*

A WOMAN in a flower-print dress is SELLING MAGAZINES AND PAPERS  
*It is late Spring, 1976.*

SOUND: 70S CONTEMPORARY MUSIC COMES FROM A TRANSISTER RADIO ON THE NEWSTAND

DISSOLVE TO: LONG SHOT

KEN GERGEN WALKS QUICKLY TO THE STAND; *he is tall and good-looking, dressed in the contemporary, MID-1970s garb of a 'young professor'.*

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP

KEN TAKES A COPY OF TIME MAGAZINE FROM THE STAND AND HANDS IT TO THE WOMAN SELLING PAPERS.

WOMAN'S VOICE:

Would you like the Morgantown Gazette,  
Sir?

KEN:

No, Ma'm, Just the Time Magazine  
please.

TWO SHOT: KEN HANDS THE WOMAN SOME CHANGE.

WOMAN:

Thank you kindly.

KEN:

Your welcome!

DISSOLVE TO:

2. LONG SHOT: TRAIN PLATFORM, FACING TRACKS; A FREGHT TRAIN SLOWLY PASSES THOUGH THE STATION ON THE OPPOSITE TRACK

SOUND: FOOTSPETS, MORE STREET SOUNDS

DOLLY TO:

MEDIUM SHOT: KLAUS RIEGEL *an older, European-looking man*

COMES INTO VIEW.

KLAUS STOPS AND FIDDLES WITH THE LOCKS *on a recently purchased, plastic molded briefcase.*

KEN WALKS INTO SHOT.

TWO SHOT:

KEN:

*(Tentatively)*

Ah, Professor Riegel, I didn't expect to see you at the train station, I thought you were flying back to Michigan!

KLAUS:

*(Smiling, self-assured)*

Call me Klaus. *(beat)* It's Ken, isn't it?

KEN:

*(Picking up the beat)*

Yes, Ken Gergen. We first met two years ago at a conference in New York.

KLAUS:

Ah, yes. I enjoyed your paper yesterday. And yes, I am flying, but from Pittsburgh back to Ann Arbor. I thought a train journey to Pittsburgh might be of interest.

SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE THEN TRAIN PULLING INTO STATION

KEN:

Ah, ha.. I always take trains. I'll be changing trains at Pittsburgh for Philadelphia. Sometimes I take boats. Never planes. *(beat)* I even took a boat to Japan a few years back.

SOUND: TRAIN STOPPING, TRAIN DOORS OPENING, ETC.

VO:

All aboard!

(SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS, ETC.)

WIDE SHOT:

KEN AND KLAUS BOARD THE TRAIN, KLAUS RATHER SLOWLY, AHEAD OF KEN.

DISSOLVE TO:

3. INTERIOR SHOT: TRAIN CARRIAGE: IT IS A 1970S AMTRAK TYPE COACH, SILVERLINER, QUITE NEW.

MEDIUM SHOT:

KEN AND KLAUS SLOWLY MOVE THROUGH THE CARRIAGE

KLAUS:

A train journey is like many things in life --it's a good metaphor. Perhaps you and I can share this metaphor today.

KEN:

It would be a privilege. *(beat)* Where would you like to sit?

STRETCHING AND POINTING

Down there? *(beat)* Ah, yes, there are two seats facing each other just down there on the left.

KEN AND KLAUS MOVE SLOWLY TO THE TRAIN SEATS.

KLAUS:

I go a bit slow these days. *(beat)* I have been ill lately, as you probably know.

KEN:

Your enthusiasm and spirit certainly does not show it, though!

KLAUS:

Thank you, Ken. Yes, I do my best.

KLAUS SITS

MEDIUM SHOT FROM KLAUS' POV:

KEN TAKES KLAUS' SUITCASE AND BRIEFCASE AND PLACES THEM ON THE OVERHEAD RACK THEN PUTS HIS OWN LUGGAGE NEXT TO KLAUS'.

MEDIUM SHOT:

KEN TAKES THE SEAT OPPOSITE KLAUS

SOUND: PEOPLE SITTING DOWN, SOUNDS OF TRAIN DOORS SLAMMING SHUT, THEN TRAIN MOVING OUT OF STATION  
A few beats then:

TWO SHOT:

KLAUS:

Any thoughts on the conference, Ken?

KEN:

Two main responses, actually. First, that there is a widespread convergence around dialectic principles. *(beat)* But, secondly, that this convergence is most probably momentary.

KLAUS CHUCKLES

*(smiling)*

After all, the dialectic would insist upon disruption and change, wouldn't it??!!

KLAUS:

KLAUS LAUGHS

Ah, you make a good point there. So at what juncture would you like to see this disruption begin, then?

KEN:

Ah, I tend to back away from the realm of predictions these days. I find myself fascinated by transformations (beat) and how we talk about them.

KLAUS:

Yes, if we stick to the principle of a changing person in a changing world ...

KEN:

And concentrate our efforts on describing those processes...

SOUND: TRAIN PICKING UP SPEED; CLICKING SOUND OF TRAIN OVER TRACKS CONTINUES THROUGHOUT THE SCENE

KLAUS:

Perhaps, but I like to think of the changing world first and it's dynamic interface with the person. (beat) Think of the changes we have experienced in just the last ten years! (beat) Look at that Time Magazine you have with you. There's a story in there about computers really becoming personal with the introduction of the Apple computer, of all things. They imagine a day not so far away where everyone will have a computer just like they now have a television.

KEN:

I dread the thought of that day!  
(beat) I am more fascinated by women in the NASA training programme for the first time and how that will change women's ideas of what it means to be female.

SOUND: SCHULTZE MUSIC BEGINS TO PICK UP PACE MATCHING RHYTHM OF TRAIN MOVEMENT.

KLAUS:

What about this new plane they've come up with, Concorde? I hear we will be able to fly from New York to Paris in under four hours.

KEN:

I still wouldn't want to fly though. Technology doesn't necessarily hold much interest for me. I am more interested in stories about people - *(beat)* Patty Hearst's trial, Karen Quinlan and the right to die question, Rene Richards, the tennis player who's had a sex change and the resulting questions that raises. What do these events say about us as a culture and how do they affect us? In what way as scientists are we involved in the changing world around us and not simply remaining in the ivory towers of learning?

KLAUS:

And the politics of it. I mean, look at All the President's Men, the film that was just released. The story is an indication of how corrupt western democracies can be.

KEN:

I, for one, found Taxi Driver more riveting, actually.

*(Pensively)*

The story of one man, a loner, getting paid to wander the streets of Manhattan as a taxi driver. The faceless person in a crowded city and the dangers inherent in certain individual's experiences of war when they return to society. *(beat)* The film is prophetic in so many ways.

SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE OVER MUSIC



KLAUS:

Yes, the world changes and for some time now it is America that best reflects those changes. *(beat)* This is the first year that all of the Nobel Prizes go to Americans, by the way.

KEN:

Yes, Saul Bellow won for literature, didn't he? His characters seem to wallow in their mental misery, almost proud of their suffering. Their personal problems of Identity become society's problems, not the other way around. Bellow's characters are celebrated by many as almost self-constructed, figments of the characters' own imaginations.

KLAUS:

His fiction certainly is in direct opposition to the preceding materialist realism of the Soviets.

KEN:

Bellow is a very American phenomenon. But we might ask, are his characters constructed by their imagination or rather Bellow's own imagination? And isn't it a reality constructed through language that we are considering in Bellow? If that is the case, then a dialogue, a least, is going on and constructing this identity itself.

KLAUS:

History is always perceived and interpreted history. We must recognise a constructed viewpoint, then?  
*(beat)* Back to your taxi driver, his living experience is experienced as movement and action, both creating and reflecting the living past the anticipated future -both for the taxi driver and our society. *(beat)*

SOUND: BRING UP TRAIN MOVEMENT SOUNDS

KEN:

It's like this train we are on right now. Movement forward -or at least to somewhere -while, at the same time, having this conversation we are having. Wheels with in wheels, but each one dependent upon and affected by the other.

KLAUS:

And dialectical psychology is committed to the study of actions and changes.

*(Almost mockingly)*

We must unite! You have nothing to loose by the respect of vulgar mechanists and pretentious mentalists; we will win a world, a changing world created by ever changing human beings!

KEN:

Yes, but is that accomplished by simply tinkering with priorities in order to fit into normal science? Underlying the dialectic movement is a series of assumptions about the character of human activity which are fundamentally opposed to those undergirding the traditional positivist edifice. *(beat)*

*(smiling)*

The little fish cannot swallow the big fish; it would choke. *(beat)* The scientist is a fully active member of the mass. Science both shapes and is shaped by the very social interactions it hopes to understand.

SOUND: A THIRD TRACK OF TANGO MUSIC (PIAZOOLA) IS ADDED TO THE MIX OF TRAIN SOUNDS AND THE SCHULTZE MUSIC *The tango music mimics the train sounds, but also represents the sense of duologue: two individuals moving individually but as a pair: a conversational dance*

KLAUS:  
(*Now completely  
drifting into his own  
world*)

And I reject, absolutely, our contemporary science's preference for stable traits, abilities or competencies and in turn, I therefore reject equally the preference for equilibrium, balance or stability. We should stop wasting our time directing attention toward the question of how tranquillity of the mind and the social situation can be achieved (*beat*)-finding answers, in other words. We need to at least, at least devote equal emphasis to the issues of how problems are created and how questions are raised.

KEN:  
Yes, and as scientists we often falsely believe that our efforts are accumulating knowledge for posterity. This is just another invitation to join the dance of scientific respectability. A social psychology that is adequate to the challenge of impermanence in social affairs must agree that the character of social life is in a constantly emerging state, that history seldom repeats itself, and that little in the way of human interaction is incontrovertibly locked in the construction of our nervous systems.

SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE

DISSOLVE TO: EXTERIOR TRAIN MONTAGE, TRAIN SPEEDING  
DOWN TRACK

DISSOLVE TO: INTERIOR TRAIN

KLAUS:

SHUFFLING, STRETCHING AND LOOKING AROUND

*(beat)* I think they have one of those  
new telephones on the train. Let me  
see.

SHUFFLES

*(beat)* No I can't see it down that way.

STRETCHES SOME MORE

*(beat)* Oh, that's a pity.

KEN:

You can't see one then?

KLAUS:

SLUMPING BACK INTO HIS SEAT

No, --no on board telephone!

KEN:

KEN CHUCKLES

Perhaps they will develop a personal  
telephone for you like the personal  
computer -that way you can take it  
everywhere with you!

KLAUS:

*(excitedly)*

And a computer small enough to take on  
a train too. Imagine!

KEN:

I don't think I want to; now I am  
saturated, just thinking about it!

KEN & KLAUS LAUGH

DISSOLVE TO: SHOTS LOOKING OUT OF TRAIN WINDOW, PASSING  
SCENERY

DISSOLVE TO: CLOSEUP KLAUS

KLAUS:

*((several beats then))*

So, Ken, you wife is well, then?

SOUND: A FOURTH TRACK OF TANGO (THIS TIME ON PIANO) IS ADDED

TWO SHOT:

KEN:

Ah, yes, Mary. I do miss her company on these trips. She is deep into her third year of a PhD now. And then there is our home life, the children ---all well. *(beat)* We've been holding home seminars that are very stimulating for both of us. We do enjoy travelling together. In fact, we leave for Paris in a month or so. We hope to accomplish more writing together too. *(beat)* And your wife?

KLAUS:

Ruth is well, thank you; just quite busy taking care of me and my health now that things have taken a downward turn. *(beat)*

*(lightens)*

She is the perfect academic hausfrau, making tea, greeting guests, organising my study, my appointments, typing and correcting manuscripts. *(beat)* Yes, life without Ruth would be much more difficult. *(beat)*

*(philosophically)*

"Two individuals, both operating interactively over time and thus growing and developing together ...".

KEN:

Mary and I seem never to have clear-cut ideas of what our roles should be and things are changing between us as they are around us --all the time. *(beat)* Our relationship is an on-going creative metamorphosis. This is mostly due to Mary's hard work and insistence too. Her being has dramatically changed mine over the years. I am sure there are more changes to come. At first I was resistant, now I welcome the adventure. Especially when we are travelling -the travelling seems to be

the catalyst for change for us. *(beat)*  
"Movement through movement" -very  
interesting.

INTERCUT WITH MONTAGE EXTERIOR TRAIN SHOTS SPEEDING DOWN  
TRACKS

SOUND: SCHULTZE UP

KLAUS:

There are no finished products to man's  
thinking, no fixed and final answers  
that can be assembled in all their  
parts and laid down once and for all.  
The products are developing products  
with a potential for change. The  
individual, the society, and even outer  
nature are never at rest. In their  
restlessness, they are rarely in  
perfect harmony.

SOUND: TANGO UP

KEN:

But isn't the individual at the centre  
of human action being replaced by the  
relationship? Perhaps we should be  
talking of relatedness. Isn't my  
autobiography, your autobiography just  
a retelling of the achievements of  
relationships, rather than of an  
individual? *(beat)* We need to open up  
the vocabulary for understanding  
others, create a multiplicity within  
our work and our world.

SOUND: SCHULTZE UP

KLAUS:  
*(grandly)*

And I return to my concept of  
psychology through a transformational  
approach with history and culture at  
its core. Nonetheless, dialectics  
emphasise human activities rather than  
contemplation!

SOUND: TANGO UP

KEN:  
 And I contemplate a vision of  
 psychology in which the cultural and  
 historical are of paramount concern,

SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE

KEN:  
 (CONT)  
 but where also diversity and deviation  
 are honoured, political and moral self-  
 consciousness are keen, dialogue across  
 disciplines is abundant, and the  
 consequences of our work for the  
 cultures of the world represent our  
 chief concern.

FOCUS BEGINS TO FADE IN AND OUT; INTERCUT MONTAGE WITH  
 SHOTS OF TRAIN HURLING INTO AND OUT OF TUNNELS  
 CONTINUES NOW PICKING UP SPEED

MONTAGE: MEDIUM SHOTS AND CLOSE-UPS OF KEN AND KLAUS  
 INTERSPERSED WITH SHOTS OF TRAIN RUSHING IN AND OUT OF  
 TUNNELS

SOUND: MUSIC IS NOW A HYPER-COLLAGE OF THREE VERSIONS OF  
 ASTO PIAZOLA TANGO, OVER SCHULTZE AND TRAIN SOUNDS

FOLLOWING SPOKEN AS MONOLOGUES, BEGINNING TO  
 OVERLAP, AS IN A DREAM:

KLAUS:  
 The long term conception  
 of dialectics..

SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE

KEN:  
 ...the often blinding  
 force of tradition.

KLAUS:  
 Stable plateaux of balance,  
 stability and equilibrium. . .

KEN:

For me the most important question is: to what forms of social life do we contribute?

KLAUS:

*(stridently)*

Psychologists unite!

KEN:

I no longer find the tradition of argumentation a viable one. What kinds of worlds do we sustain by this kind of ritual?

KLAUS:

*(in speech-making mode again, exaggerating)*

Let there be a hundred new flowers blooming! Gelassen gibt es hundert neues Blumeblühen!

KEN:

Required are forms of relationship that do not suppress and negate, but give birth to meaning.  
*(beat)* I dream of a social science practice where ...

SOUND: TRACK LAYERS DISSOLVE TO BIRD SOUNDS, THEN SINGLE BIRD ALONE OVER SAX VERSION OF WERTHER SOLO



CUT TO:

4. INTERIOR SUBURBAN PHILADELPHIA BEDROOM, PRESENT DAY. LATE AFTERNOON, SPRING.

*A shadowy room is papered in a dusty rose-flowered design, reminiscent of Anais Nin, the writer and the perfume; a large work of art from India dominates upon entry. A dark wood, antique country French bed extends into the middle of the room.*

A LIGHT BREEZE STIRS WHITE SHEER CURTAINS ON AN OPEN WINDOW, LIKE THE GLIMPSED UNDERGARMENTS OF A PASSING WOMAN

KEN IS LYING ON THE BED IN STREET CLOTHING. MARY GERGEN STANDS OVER HIM.

*KEN is 25 years older than he was in the first scene.*

*MARY is somewhat younger than Ken, dark haired and attractive.*

KEN:  
*(talking in his sleep)*

I envision a social science practice  
where ...

MARY:  
Ken! Ken!

KEN WAKES, DISORIENTED

KEN:  
Mary!  
*(still disoriented)*  
How did you/are you in Pittsburgh?/ I  
didn't realise...*(beat)*

MARY:  
*((cheerfully))*  
Ken! Wake up!

KEN:  
*(still disoriented)*  
Wha/Huh?

MARY:  
*(more forcefully)*  
Ken! Wake up now, Ken.

KEN:

*(awake now)*

Mary! I must have been dreaming.

KEN SITS UP IN BED, STRETCHES AND YAWNS, MARY SITS NEXT TO HIM.

MARY:

Yes. You've been sleeping for quite awhile now and it's not your style to sleep during the day.

*(making an excuse)*

I think the flight back from Berlin did you in this time.

KEN:

*((now fully awake)*

What time is it? We're supposed to be at a concert on the campus, aren't we?

MARY:

It's okay, we have time. I thought we'd have a picnic supper first. It's such a beautiful day.

KEN:

KEN STRETCHES AND YAWNS

That was some dream! I was on a train back in the 1970s talking with Klaus Riegel, of all people.

MARY:

He died in late 70s, didn't he? 1976? 77? It must have been around that time, as I recall.

KEN:

*((still dreamlike)*

Hasn't life changed so much since..

MARY:

Or have we changed? You fly now and get jet lag too!

KEN:

That's right. We were taking boats and trains everywhere in those days. The 70s. Seems like yesterday, seems so long ago.

MARY:

I wonder how much of that dream was constructed in the present by the present?

KEN:

Yes, all of it, of course. Even the scenery seemed somehow contemporary. I do wonder why I dreamt about it now, though?

SOUND: SAXOPHONE ARIA FROM WERTHER LOW IN BACKGROUND

MARY:

Ah, probably being in Berlin triggered thoughts of KLAUS in some way.

KEN:

And the struggles in that time -

KEN LAUGHS

*(melodramatically)* I was rather misunderstood then, wasn't I?

MARY:

*(exaggerating)*

Even pillaged at times. Yes. I wouldn't want to go back there, not in that way at least.

KEN:

*(coming back to the present)*

Anyway, what's with this picnic you've planned?

MARY:

Just you and I down by the stream. It's such a beautiful early spring day ...and you've missed most of it dreaming!!!

KEN:

Yes, but I feel rested now.

SOUND: SAX SOLO CONTINUES TO BUILD

MARY:

We can go directly to the concert from our picnic, if we'd like. Or should we come back and dress first?

KEN:

Aw, no. Let's just be casual and surprise them. Well, maybe not so much of a surprise-- just a reminder of what we were like in the 70s!

MARY:

Yeah. Let's pretend. They were fun times back then, too!

KEN:

Oh, yes. *(beat)*

SOUND: MUSIC HAS CHANGED TO PAVAROTTI SINGING AREA FROM WERTHER

SITS UP STRAIGHT

What's that sound?

MARY:

JUMPS FROM BED

What sound? Where?

KEN:

Oh. I hear some music or something?

MARY:

Oh, it's the radio in the study; I must have left in on when I was in there working earlier. It must be the opera broadcast from the Met.

SITS BACK DOWN

KEN:

Oh, I thought I might still be dreaming!

MARY:

The two of us have been dreamers  
*(beat)* from the beginning.

MARY & KEN BOTH LAUGH

SOUND: MUSIC UP TO FULL VOLUME: PAVAROTTI VERSION OF WERTHER'S  
ARIA:

*Pourquoi me reveiller, o souffle du printemps?  
Sur mon front je sens tes caresses.  
Et pourtant bien proche est le temps  
Des orages et des tristesses.  
Demain, dans le vallon, Se souvenant de ma gloire première,  
Et ses yeux vainement chercheront ma splendeur:  
Ils ne trouveront plus que deuil et que misère!  
Helas! Pourquoi me reveiller, o souffle du printemps?*

FADE OUT.