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**SUMMER
1982
VOLUME I**



**Publications of the
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**ENOCH EMERY: FLANNERY O'CONNOR AND JUNGIAN
PSYCHOLOGY**

by **David E. Matchen and Wilton Beauchamp**
Jackson State University

Almost all of the attention given to Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood* focuses on Hazel Motes; hardly anything has been written about Enoch Emery except to dismiss him as a "caricature," a "comic parody," a "double," a "grotesque double," an "idiot," or a "moron." Certainly no one would argue that Enoch Emery is a very intelligent character or even a very realistic one, but one suspects that critics who give twenty pages to analysis of Hazel Motes and less than one paragraph to Enoch Emery avoid him because he simply does not fit into their theses. At least one-third of *Wise Blood* is concerned directly with Enoch Emery. If his only function is to parody Hazel Motes there must be something very wrong with the focus of the novel.

Some critics also seem to have trouble accepting Enoch Emery because he is as much out of place in the world of Taulkinham as in our own world. He is too primitive, too animalistic. Some critics have even been openly disgusted by him. Like Mrs. Flood who cannot accept Hazel Mote's barbed wire, they simply cannot find his behavior "normal." "It's something that people have quit doing - like boiling in oil or being a saint or walling up cats. . . . There's not reason for it. People have quit doing it.'"

Enoch Emery believes in his wise blood, and it literally controls him, no less than when God spoke to Abraham or Isaac or Jacob. Because of it he has fallen into a ritual connected with the veneration of a mummy which he is convinced will regenerate him; and after a struggle with his wise blood in the belly of a theater, he steals the mummy and enshrines it in a washstand. Finally it causes him to steal a gorilla suit so that he can be transformed into Gongga the gorilla.

As conscious, rational human beings, we simply cannot think this way. But Enoch is a primitive man. According to Jung, "the spiritual element manifests itself autonomously to the primitive psyche - where reflexes are purely animal - in projected sensuous form. . . . For him, the sensuous immediacy of the object attaches to spiritual phenomena as well. A thought **appears to him**, he does not think it: it appears to him in the form of a projected sensuous perception, almost like a hallucination, or at least like an extremely vivid dream." No doubt if any person in a civilized nation should behave like Enoch, we should think him mad or some sort of moron.

Just how close Enoch fits Jung's description of the primitive man whose "unconscious psychic life is concrete and objective" is suggested by O'Connor's picture of him at the beginning of Chapter Eight:

Enoch Emery knew now that his life would never be the same again, because the thing that was going to happen to him had started to happen. He had always known that something was going to happen but he hadn't known what. If he had been much given to thought, he might have thought that now was the time for him to justify his daddy's blood, but he didn't think in broad sweeps like that, he thought what he would do next. Sometimes he didn't think, he only wondered; then before long he would find himself doing this or that, like a bird finds itself building a nest when it hasn't actually been planning to.

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What was going to happen to him had started to happen when he showed what was in the glass case to Hazel Motes. That was a mystery beyond his understanding, but he knew that what was going to be expected of him was something awful. His blood was more sensitive than any other part of him; it wrote doom all through him, except possibly in his brain, and the result was that his tongue, which edged out every few minutes to test his fever blister, knew more than he did. (WB, p. 72)

Although one might simply dismiss Enoch's wise blood as the product of his simple imagination, O'Connor indicates, admittedly in a rather ironic tone, that it is nothing of the sort. On the day Enoch is to steal the mummy, he awakens with the knowledge that he is about to do something that he does not want to do. Consequently, he decides to remain in bed; but, the narrator assures us, his wise blood "naturally . . . was not going to put up with any attitude like this." Enoch finds himself at work by nine-thirty and, when his shift ends, on his way to the center of the business district, "the last place he wanted to be because anything could happen there" (WB, p. 75). Inside a Walgreen's drug store he "paused in front of the soda fountain to see if he would sit down and have something to eat" (WB, p. 76), but the drug store is not to be his ultimate destination. Outside the store he again tries to resist his wise blood; like Jonah he must be shown that he cannot avoid his duty. He soon finds himself before a movie house advertising a horror film:

I ain't going in no picture show like that, he said, giving it a nervous look. I'm going home. I ain't going to wait around in no picture show. I ain't got the money to buy a ticket, he said, taking out his purse again. I ain't even going to count thisyer change.

It ain't but forty-three cents here, he said, that ain't enough. A sign said the price of a ticket for adults was forty-five cents, balcony, thirty-five. I ain't going to sit in no balcony, he said, buying a thirty-five cent ticket.

I ain't going in, he said.

Two doors flew open and he found himself moving down a long red foyer and then up a darker tunnel and then up in a high part of the maw, feeling around, like Jonah for a seat. (WB, p. 77)

It appears that Enoch's wise blood has sent him into the theater to punish him. Enoch only likes "colored musical" films, but he is forced to watch a horror movie, a drama about Devil's Island, and a particularly obnoxious one about a baboon who saves some children from a burning orphanage and receives a medal. Enoch hates animals. He stumbles from the theater, collapses on the sidewalk, and then walks down the street "as if he were led by a silent melody or by one of those whistles that only dogs hear." Finally his blood shows him Hazel Motes preaching about the "new Jesus," and he knows that he must steal the mummy (WB, pp. 77-79).

Enoch's wise blood is what Jung calls "projected sensuous form."⁸ As Eric Neumann explains it, for primitive man, "everything inside was outside, . . . all his ideas came to him from outside, as commands from a spirit or magician or 'medicine bird.'"⁹ In primitive minds like Enoch's "the spiritual and psychic realm are indissolvably united with the body. Instinct and volition are as little divided as instinct and consciousness."¹⁰ If we accept the Jungian position, Enoch's wise blood is neither a hoax nor a farce. Arising from his unconscious, it is as real as any god or spirit that man has ever experienced.

Within the collective unconscious is a vast array of archetypes, and for people who have a considerable degree of consciousness they are often recognizable in various forms in the physical world. But for primitives like Enoch these archetypes have not been sublimated; rather they are quite active in his life. One such archetype is the center or omphalos, described by Eliade as "permanently the zone of the sacred."¹¹ Enoch's mummy is deep within the museum; the museum is in the center of the park; the park is in the center of the city. Coincidentally the museum is round – an omphalos. In the center of Enoch's room is a washstand that will serve as the tabernacle for the mummy:

As far as Enoch was concerned, this piece had always been the center of the room and the one that most connected him with what he didn't know. More than once after a big supper, he had dreamed of unlocking the cabinet and getting in it and then proceeding to certain rites and mysteries that he had a very vague idea about in the morning. In his cleaning up, his mind was on the washstand from the first, but as usual with him he began with the least important thing and worked around and in toward the center where the meaning was. (WB, pp. 73-74)

The mummy is also part of the furniture in everyone's collective unconscious, but because Enoch's consciousness has hardly developed, he reacts to it in a way that a conscious person would not. To Enoch the mummy "was a mystery, although it was right there in a glass case for everyone to see and there was a typewritten card over it telling all about it. But there was something the card couldn't say and what it couldn't say was inside him, a terrible knowledge like a big nerve growing inside him" (WB, p. 47). Apparently the mummy is an example of what Joseph Campbell calls "sign stimuli";¹² it unlocks for Enoch a religious idea. Like all primitive people Enoch experiences the world "mythologically in archetypal images and symbols; and his reaction to the world is "archetypal, instinctive and unconscious, not individual and conscious."¹³

Because the mummy generates in Enoch a sense of a divine presence, he has developed a daily ritual, and, typical of his primitive nature, the ritual seems to be a form of magic through which he can insure the power of the god.¹⁴ Notably Enoch cannot vary it in a single detail, no matter what the circumstances. When his wise blood indicates Hazel Motes as the chosen one, Enoch insists that Motes view the mummy on the expectation that something important will happen; but to bring Hazel Motes into the presence of the god, he must carry out each step of the ritual, even though Motes has no patience for these preliminaries and Enoch fears that the police may come to arrest Motes at any minute. The narrator tells us that "he knew he had to go to the FROSTY BOTTLE and the zoo before there . . ." (WB, p. 50). At the Frosty Bottle, Enoch tells Hazel, "We have to stop here on the way and get something to eat (WB, p. 51). After the zoo, Enoch says,

"We got to cross this road and go down this hill. We got to go on foot. . . ."

"Why?" Hazel muttered.

"I don't know," Enoch said. (WB, p. 55)

The god, unlocked from Enoch's unconscious and for whom Enoch's elaborate ritual is performed, appears to be none other than the Egyptian

Osiris. In his most basic form Osiris was a fertility god and an archetypal symbol of spiritual rebirth or regeneration. To suggest this quality his worshippers made small mummy figures stuffed with grain or formed human images of earth and grain so that when water was sprinkled on them the grain would sprout. Some figures described by Frazer are "corn-stuffed and bandaged like mummies with patches of gilding here and there."¹³ Others are images "cast in a mold of pure gold" to represent the god in the form of a mummy. In describing a ceremonial tomb of Osiris, Budge mentions that the sarcophagus rests on a raised mound along with a "gilded wooden coffer."¹⁴ Frazer also describes gilded objects in the ceremonial places, notably "the image of a cow made of gilt sycamore wood."¹⁵ Enoch's mummy, a three-foot man shrunk by "A-rabs" (WB, p. 57), is stuffed with dried peas (WB, p. 100). In its museum-temple the figure lies in a display case referred to by the narrator as a coffin (WB, p. 56). In Enoch's room, which his wise blood has designated as the new temple for the mummy, the furniture, under several layers of dirt, proves to be made of pure gold, and Enoch paints the inside of the tabernacle where the mummy is to reside with gilt paint (WB, p. 75). Once he has the mummy, Enoch puts it into the tabernacle and waits for it to make him "an entirely new man, with even a better personality than he had now" (WB, p. 95).

When ritual and the mummy fail to regenerate him, Enoch's wise blood leads him to his final and ultimate religious experience – his transformation into Gongga the gorilla. O'Connor has prepared for Enoch's destiny by developing his hatred and fear of animals, a result of his envy and his sense of inferiority to them. He hates the zoo animals because they have meat to eat, live in clean cages, and bask in the crowds of zoo visitors (WB, p. 54). For similar reasons he despises the heroic baboon in *Lonnie Comes Home Again*. He even hates the moose in the picture hanging on the wall in his room. To defeat this subtle adversary, Enoch removes the frame from the picture, leaving the moose naked and thereby negating his superiority (WB, p. 74).

Even though Gongga is only a man dressed in a gorilla suit, he fits the pattern of the other animals. By virtue of his role in a feature film, he commands attention and people line up to shake his hand. Naturally Enoch hates him, but he also has what the lonely boy wants most – popularity and power. Therefore, Enoch, whose name means "translated," becomes Gongga.¹⁶ The change occurs as he puts on the suit, so that when he gets the head into place the narrator no longer refers to Enoch as "he" but as "it."

For a time after this, it stood very still and didn't do anything. Then it began to growl and beat its chest; it jumped up and down and flung its arms and thrust its head forward. The growls were thin and uncertain at first but they grew louder after a second. They became low and poisonous, louder again, low and poisonous again; they stopped altogether. The figure extended its hand, clutched nothing, and shook its arm vigorously; it withdrew the arm, extended it again, clutched nothing and shook. It repeated this four or five times. (WB, p. 107)

Enoch's translation into Gongga suggests the transformation of the primitive shaman into the totem animal whose skin he puts on. According to Eliade, the skin of the animal "tends to give the shaman a new magical body in animal form." He becomes infused with the spirit of the animal so that "the costume inspires the same feelings of fear and apprehension as any other object in which 'spirits' reside."¹⁷ Further, the costume "represents a religious microcosm qualitatively different from the surrounding profane space. For one thing, it

constitutes an almost complete symbolic system; for another, its consecration has impregnated it with various spiritual forces and especially with 'spirits.' By the mere fact of donning it . . . the shaman transcends profane space and prepares to enter into contact with the spiritual world."¹⁸

Ready to demonstrate his power, Enoch-Gongga leaves the woods for the city, where perhaps he expects to find throngs of admirers. His transformation, however, brings him no more success than did the mummy. When he approaches two lovers who sit gazing at the city skyline, he frightens them out of their wits. A gorilla at a theater is one thing, but a gorilla in the woods is quite another.

That Enoch appears to be modeled on Jung's primitive or archaic man leaves one with the problem of determining why. One answer may be that through Enoch O'Connor could examine a dilemma that was of considerable concern to her. On the one hand she could agree with Jung's psychological explanation of religious experience, but on the other she was still a believer. As she writes to "A," the anonymous correspondent of *The Habit of Being*, "I am a Catholic peculiarly possessed of the modern consciousness, that thing Jung describes as unhistorical, solitary, and guilty. To possess this *within* the Church is to bear a burden, the necessary burden for the conscious Catholic. It's to feel the contemporary situation at the ultimate level."¹⁹ Modern consciousness, as Jung explains it, means a total escape from the influence of the unconscious, to be cut off from the past.²⁰ To have been a Jungian "modern man" and a Catholic believer at the same time must have been quite a struggle for O'Connor.

Other references to Jung in her letters suggest further tension. To Father John McCown she writes, "Jung has something to offer religion but is at the same time very dangerous for it. Jung would say . . . that Christ did not rise from the dead literally but we must realize that we need this symbol, that the notion has significance for our lives symbolically . . ." She goes on to suggest that he read *The Undiscovered Self* so that he might see what he must combat in the "modern mind."²¹ To T. R. Spivey she recommends Victor White's *God and the Unconscious* and a book entitled *Religion and the Psychology of Jung*. Jung, she tells him, offers the "modern, sick, unbelieving world" belief in "psychic realities," and while this concept is "good" for the world and a "step in the right direction . . . it is not religion."²²

O'Connor's dilemma, so strongly suggested in these letters, is reflected in Enoch Emery. As a Christian she could not accept that religion had become obsolete as a result of psychic evolution. Thus, she makes the basis of that proposition, archaic man, appear ludicrous in Enoch Emery. Yet, at the same time, as an "unhistorical" person looking at the sick, unbelieving world, she realized that the only hope for genuine religious experience is through the element of the archaic man still lurking within us. Indeed, the thrust of Jung's essay entitled "Archaic Man" is that we in the twentieth century still evidence the primitive man. Therefore, although Enoch does not find Yahweh or Jesus, his primitive psyche, in which the ego and unconscious are yet unseparated, makes him much more capable of finding God than the cynical Asa Hawks or Hoover Shoats.

Finally, we suggest that instead of a parody of Hazel Motes, Enoch is a parallel character who helps the reader to understand Motes through similarity rather than ironic contrast. Hazel Motes' blinding himself, walking with rocks in his shoes, and wearing barbed wire around his chest are practices much closer to Enoch's primitive consciousness than to modern man. If Hazel Motes actually finds Jesus, as most of the critics argue, it is perhaps the primitive man in him that causes it to happen.

NOTES

¹Josephene Hendin, *The World of Flannery O'Connor* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), p. 44; Kathleen Feeley, *Flannery O'Connor: The Voice of the Peacock* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1972), pp. 66-67; Miles Orvell, *Invisible Parade: The Fiction of Flannery O'Connor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1972), p. 86; Donald Gregory, "Enoch Emery: Ironic Doubling in *Wise Blood*," *Flannery O'Connor Bulletin*, 4 (Autumn, 1975), 52; Gilbert H. Muller, *Nightmares and Visions: Flannery O'Connor and the Catholic Grotesque* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1972), p. 68; Michael Cleary, "Environmental Influences in Flannery O'Connor," *Flannery O'Connor Bulletin*, 8 (Autumn, 1979), 23.

²See Renata R. Mautner Wasserman, "Backwards to Ninevah," *Renaissance*, 32 (1979), 23-24; Muller, p. 29; Gregory, 61, 64.

³Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood*, in *Three* (New York: New American Library, n.d.), p. 122. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

⁴*Civilization in Transition*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2nd ed., Bollingen Series, No. 20, Vol. X of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), 12.

⁵C. G. Jung, "Archaic Man," in his *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, trans. W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, n.d.), p. 143. This work, first published in 1933, is among the books in O'Connor's personal library. The underlining noted by Feeley (p. 10) suggests its importance.

⁶Jung, "Archaic Man," p. 140.

⁷Eric Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series, No. 42 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), pp. 105-6.

⁸Neumann, p. 11.

⁹Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series, No. 46 (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 17. Eliade describes the road to the Center as a difficult and perilous one because it is "a rite of the passage from the profane to the sacred, from the ephemeral and illusory to reality and eternity, from death to life, from man to the divinity" (p. 18). It is no wonder that Enoch approaches the mummy with awe and expects it to regenerate him.

¹⁰Joseph Campbell, *The Mask of God: Primitive Mythology* (New York: Viking Press, 1959), p. 35.

¹¹Neumann, p. 274.

¹²Neumann, p. 124; C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2nd ed., Bollingen Series, No. 20, Vol. XI of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1958), 7.

¹³James George Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris: Studies in the History of Oriental Religion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), II, 91.

¹⁴Frazer, 87.

¹⁵Budge, E[gyptian] A[ncient]. *Osiris: The Egyptian Religion of Resurrection* (London, 1911; rpt., New Hyde Park, N. Y.: University Books, 1961), I, 26.

¹⁶James L. Green, "Enoch Emery and His Biblical Namesakes in *Wise Blood*," *Studies in Short Fiction*, 10 (1973), 418-419.

¹⁷Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series, No. 76 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), p. 157.

¹⁸Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 147.

¹⁹Sally Fitzgerald, ed. *The Habit of Being* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979), p. 90 [20 July 1955].

²⁰C. G. Jung, "The Spiritual Problem in Modern Man," in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, p. 197. In this essay Jung suggests that religion has become obsolete, especially for the modern man who "abhors dogmatic postulates taken on faith and the religions based upon them" (p. 207).

²¹*The Habit of Being*, pp. 362, 363 [18 December 1959].

²²*The Habit of Being*, p. 382 [16 March 1960]. See pp. 103, 152, 491 for other references to Jung in O'Connor's letters.

AFRICAN SCULPTURE SYMBOLS IN WOMEN IN LOVE

by Inez R. Morris
Jackson State University

Lawrence's treatment of the African wood sculpture in *Women in Love* indicates his exposure to the art and his adaptation of its significance to death and life. Since few critics have studied the essentialness of the figures, my purpose is to point out the interconnectedness of the African sculpture symbols to theme and character in the novel. First, however, I shall discuss briefly how Lawrence became exposed to African wood sculpture and the importance of this art in its own cultural setting. Such a consideration helps to illuminate the use Lawrence makes of the black figures in *Women in Love*.

The European discovery of African art dates to around the end of the fifteenth century, but the "fortune of African sculpture in Europe began in or around 1904."¹ An intellectual revolution brought on by such developments as the study of ethnography and ethnology and the creation of ethnographical museums, which helped to initiate the eradication of cultural myths, resulted in a change in attitude toward Africa at the turn of the century. This change is coincident with the discovery of African art by European artists, such as Gauguin and later Ernest Kirchner and Picasso. Roger Fry and R. S. Rattray wrote essays on primitive arts, and in some European cities dance and rhythms showed signs of primitive influence.² African art was beginning to be accepted and was considered by many as a distinctive, aesthetic form.

Primitive art forms had begun to be popular when Lawrence first went to London, and he was familiar with the interest in and findings about non-European societies; he made use of this material for artistic purposes. His approach to African sculpture is more perceptive than many. Most European artists saw barbarity and grotesqueness in African wood sculpture. Lawrence's description of the figures emphasizes culture and elegance rather than barbarity. The Laurentian treatment of the primitive is informed by his reading of available anthropological studies, such as James G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, Jane Harrison's *Ancient Art and Ritual*, Edward Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, and Gilbert Murray's *Five Stages of Greek Religion*.³ Lawrence's interest in African sculpture is doubtless artistic rather than anthropological. Admiring the untainted, primitive spirit, he decides that modern man can learn from archaic man's closeness to nature and the universe. The African sculpture employed in *Women in Love*, nevertheless, implies a meaning beyond the Romantic notion of the noble savage. His sensitiveness to the style and culture of the sculpture indicates that Lawrence "as with everything he touched . . . adapted these elements to his own vision."⁴

As with art objects in general, the meaning of West African wood sculpture is related to its motivation and function. Cognizance of this interaction makes possible the understanding of the significance of the art within the context of its culture. Figures from at least two West African tribes seem to throw light on the objects that Lawrence describes in *Women in Love*. Among the Baoule tribes of the Ivory Coast, sculptured human figures were made for use in ancestor rituals. The standing female figure is typical of their style, which displays an organic quality and emphatic naturalism in the treatment of parts

of the body.⁵ In A. A. Gerbrands' anthropological studies, he displays a standing male figure with similar characteristics.⁶ The fundamental meaning of the carved Baoule figures is found in their expressions of alert protectiveness against disease and nature.⁷

The art objects of the Sudan region in West Africa, located between the Sahara lands and the coastal forest, contrast with the art of the Baoule.⁸ The stylized human forms of this region and the belief of these African people also seem related to one of the black figures that Lawrence creates in *Women in Love*. Among the subject matter of the Bambara tribe, one of the representative tribes of the Sudan area art, is the strongly stylized human form of the female. The Bambara people "living in a basically agrarian society, as did the majority of African Negro peoples," implored aid from protective spirits of fertility. Additionally, they petitioned the figures as "ancestral-mythological beings, some going back to cosmogonic times from which strength, health and protection against unknown forces" were sought.⁹

The wood sculpture expresses religious, social, and aesthetic concerns as well as philosophical values, which the artist shares with both his patron and the community.¹⁰ The "goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness" that Lawrence mentions in reference to the African sculpture in *Women in Love* must have existed.¹¹ One question, however, the novel's statement that the basic human desires have lapsed and been replaced by "knowledge in disintegration and dissolution . . . such as the beetles have" (p. 289). The author's observation is clearly an example that Lawrence adapts what he touches to his own vision.

Lawrence describes two black sculptured figures in *Women in Love*: one a naked female in childbirth; the other, an elegant, standing female figure. These figures underscore the primitive motif in the novel, which is part of his vision of the unknown. The unknown and primitive, indicated by the sculpture, include and extend beyond the sensual. Connected to theme and character, the sculpture also implies death and destruction, which are essential in Lawrence's vision.

In his "African Sculpture Symbols in a Novel by D. H. Lawrence," H. L. B. Moody treats the symbols in *Women in Love* in relation to theme.¹² He explains that the two different figures form a conjunctive symbol in the pattern of the novel, adding that the African sculpture symbols are not worked consistently into the whole of the novel. Their role, according to Moody, is taken over by Loerke, the German artist whom Gudrun and Gerald meet in the Alps. I disagree; the sculpture is bound inextricably to theme in this novel and in other works of Lawrence. Furthermore, Lawrence links these symbols to the primitive, earthy Loerke and to the relationships between Loerke and Gudrun, and Gerald and Gudrun. Leading themes, complex character analogies, and contrasts grow out of the implications embodied in the African statues.

The implications of death, disintegration, and destruction are evident in Lawrence's use of the African sculpture, existing as one of the opposites around which the other themes of the novel revolve. A "metaphor of destruction," the sculpture is the crucial and controlling metaphor that reveals itself as an image of disintegration by heat, an opposite of annihilation by cold, but both mutually destructive.¹³

That Gerald, Nordic opposite of the African figures, notices them first is no accident, a circumstance that we shall consider subsequently in this study:

Gerald looked around the room.

... There were several negro statues, woodcarvings from West Africa, strange and disturbing, the carved negroes looked almost like the foetus of a human being. One was a woman sitting naked in a strange posture, and looking tortured, her abdomen stuck out. . . . She was sitting in childbirth, clutching the ends of the band that hung from her neck, one in each hand, so that she could bear down, and help labour. The strange, transfixed, rudimentary face of the woman again reminded Gerald of a foetus, it was also rather wonderful, conveying, the suggestion of the extreme of physical sensation beyond the limits of mental consciousness. (pp. 82-83)

With the African sculpture and its kind suggestive of disintegration by heat and Gerald and his kind suggestive of annihilation by cold, Lawrence has presented two opposites of dissolution. Allied with Gerald is Hermione. Having no "dark sensual body of life," she is a woman with a destructive will who revels in the worst kind of intellectualism (p. 46). Birkin cannot seem to let go of her before he establishes a relationship with Ursula. Both are miserable because they cannot balance their sensual and spiritual natures. Following a discussion between them in the "Breadalby" chapter, in which Birkin spurns Hermione's grasping, destructive possessiveness, she becomes lifeless and confused:

... She swallowed, and tried to regain her mind. But she could not, she was witless, decentralized. Use all her will as she might, she could not recover. She suffered the ghastliness of dissolution, broken and gone in a horrible corruption. And he stood and looked at her unmoved. She strayed out, pallid and preyed upon like a ghost, like one attacked by the tomb-influences which dog us. And she was gone like a corpse, that has no presence, no connection. (pp. 100-01)

Hermione's dissolution stems from her lack of sensuality and from her perverted spirituality. She has no substance. Consequently, she attaches herself to Birkin in an effort to gain a sense of her own being by completely devoting herself to him.

Becoming aware that the core inside Hermione is missing, and that she exercises a destructive dependence on him, Birkin rejects her. This rejection drives her to a desperate, destructive act against Birkin. She strikes her death blow with a lapis lazuli paper-weight:

Then, swiftly in a flame that drenched down her body like fluid lightning and her a perfect unutterable consummation, unutterable satisfaction, she brought down the ball of jewel stone with all her force, crash on his head. But her fingers were in the way and deadened the blow. . . . She lifted her arm high to aim once more, straight down on the head that lay dazed on the table. She must smash it. . . . A thousand deaths mattered nothing now, on the fulfillment of pure ecstasy. (pp. 118-19).

Birkin prevents Hermione from killing him only by protecting his head with the volume of Thucydides that he had been reading. Dazed by the blow, and hardly conscious, he goes away, wandering amid trees and flowers in a semidarkness. The blow is symbolic of the destructive nature of Hermione's spiritual and willful nature; it seals her alliance with Gerald, Nordic opposite of the African statue in Lawrence's metaphor of destruction.

That Gerald, among other bohemians at Halliday's flat, notices the African figures first calls attention to his symbolic function as opposite to the statues.

Observing the statues, Gerald would never admit openly that he thinks the figures are "rather wonderful." He keeps his private interest in the decadent statues to himself and gives a conventional, public response: "Aren't they rather obscene?" he asks, disapprovingly. Birkin disagrees and suggests that the carvings are "very good" (p. 83). Gerald's response is linked to the universal dissolution of which he is an essential and universal part in the novel. Moynahan assesses his destructive bent when he notes that Gerald essentially moves in an atmosphere of death and decay and that Gerald's attraction to the London Courtesan Minette is by the film of disintegration in her eyes.¹⁴

The morning after his assignation with "Pussum," Gerald again notices the Negro statues. In order to convey the effect and implications that Lawrence intends, it is necessary to include the conversation of the characters and Lawrence's omniscient narration:

"What do you think of that figure there? I want to know," Gerald asked. Birkin, white and strangely present, went over to the carved figure of the negro woman in labour. Her nude, protuberant body crouched in a strange, clutching posture, her hands gripping the ends of the band above her breast.

"It is art," said Birkin.

"Very beautiful, it's very beautiful," said the Russian. . . .

He [Gerald] saw vividly with his spirit the grey, forward-stretching face of the negro woman, African and tense, abstracted in utter physical stress. It was a terrible face, void, peaked, abstracted almost into meaninglessness by the weight of sensation beneath. He saw the Pussum in it. As a dream, he knew her.

"Why is it art?" Gerald asked, shocked resentful.

"It conveys a complete truth," said Birkin. It contains the whole truth of that state, whatever you feel about it."

"But you can't call it high art," said Gerald.

"High! There are centuries and hundreds of centuries of development in a straight line, behind that carving; it is an awful pitch of culture, of a definite sort."

"What culture?" Gerald asked, in opposition. He hated the sheer African thing.

"Pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual. It is so sensual as to be final, supreme." (p. 88)

When all of the naked men "drew near" to look at the Negro statue, the sharp contrast between their whiteness and the blackness of the figure arouses a feeling of aversion in Gerald (p. 88). He sees in its face a "void" and "meaninglessness" commensurate with the corrupt love affair that he has experienced with Pussum the night before. Yet a connection exists between Gerald and what the African carving represents. Gerald excels in the modern, industrial world, but he fails in real life because both his spirituality and his sensuality are death-dealing. Always in Gerald one of these aspects is extremely out of balance with the other, "not connected with the rest of his being."¹⁵

Gerald's corrupt living, his ruthless will, and his obsession with mechanical power are facets of dissolution, which are fatal for him. In Pussum's face, he sees the face in the African carving. Pussum's "inchoate look of a violated slave" arouses in Gerald "a mordant pity, a passion almost of cruelty" (p. 89). Gerald's reaction reflects his inflated, destructive ego which foreshadows the dangerous power that he wields in the mines. Lawrence links the dark, angular

African figures to the darkness of Beldover, where the grim wasteland-like slag heaps and the coal mine loom monumental in the background.

Gerald's reaction to the "African forms" is unlike that of Birkin, who speaks of their mindless, sensual quality. He implies that the meaning of the carving exists in the world of the unknown and must be interpreted by the "senses" as an art object expressing supremely that which can be communicated only through artistic expression. Birkin's reply, "Oh, I know, this isn't everything," indicates that in life more than the sensual is important (p. 89).

The African sculpture appears again in the "Moony" chapter, a key chapter in the novel. The circumstances surrounding it, however, are quite different from the one I have been discussing. When Birkin returns from Southern France after his illness, he is uncannily drawn to Willey Water, where he attempts to break up the image of the moon. Birkin's shattering of the moon suggests his desire to rid himself of the feeling of dissolution that he has experienced in his affair with Hermione and the dissolution that his relationship with Ursula will bring upon him if he does not fight to control his passion. Ursula's question, "Do you love me?" suggests her desire for him, but she realizes that "he wanted only gentle communion, no other, not passion now" (p. 288).

Thinking over his being with Ursula the day before, Birkin comes to a decision: "He knew he did not want a further sensual experience—something deeper, darker, than ordinary life could give" (p. 288). At this point Birkin remembers the "African fetishes he had seen at Halliday's so often" (p. 288). Especially does he recall one of the figures:

[a] statuette about two feet, a tall, slim elegant figure from West Africa, in dark wood, glossy and suave. It was a woman. She was one of his soul's intimates . . . She knew what he himself did not know. She had thousands of years of purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge behind her. (p. 288)

Continuing in deep thought, Birkin reverences the statue and is astonished by her "cultured elegance" and her "long, elegant body" (p. 288). The statue has elicited a mysterious worship from Birkin as he submits to the African female's knowledge of many years of the "purely sensual, purely unspiritual." Lawrence makes an effort to capture the world of the unknown, which, in his view, goes beyond the sensual and is not thwarted by the intellectual. He presents a paradoxical condition which the primitive culture of African has accomplished, but of which the intellectual, civilized western world has no knowledge.

Birkin's attraction to and reverence for the African statue do not last. Still immersed in his thoughts, he experiences a revulsion for the figure similar to Gerald's reaction:

Thousands of years ago, that which was imminent in himself must have taken place in these Africans: The goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness must have lapsed, leaving the single impulse for knowledge in one sort, mindless progressive knowledge through the senses, . . . knowledge such as the beetles have, which live purely within the world of corruption and cold dissolution. (pp. 288-89)

Birkin seems to awaken to the thought that "progressive knowledge through the senses" is not unlike the "corruption" and "cold dissolution" that control the knowledge of the beetles. Through Birkin, Lawrence makes it clear that while

he recognizes a deep, sensual meaning in the African statues, he does not recommend the sensual in lieu of the intellectual. Both are extremely important, but each, exceeding the other, is unsatisfactory.

Birkin is conscious, therefore, that the purely sensual and the mindless, which exclude the intellectual, are insufficient. Having considered this, he reflects again on the African figure:

. . . The elongated, long, long body, the curious unexpected buttocks, the long imprisoned neck, the face with tiny features like a beetle's. This was beyond any phallic knowledge, sensual, subtle realities far beyond the scope of phallic investigation. (p. 289)

Lawrence ends this aspect of Birkin's reverie with an attempt to point out and emphasize the two opposites that have produced the struggle in Birkin's mind. The African way of fulfillment was "controlled by the burning death abstraction" of the sun (p. 289). The method of fulfillment of the white races was controlled by "having the arctic north behind them, the vast abstraction of ice and snow," fulfilling "a mystery of ice-destruction-knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation" (p. 289). The second opposite here is an adumbration of the main incident in the penultimate chapter, "Snowed Up," where Gerald, having been rejected by Gudrun, meets his death in the Alps by freezing. This passage is important because of its link with Gerald and the destruction of the white races. Birkin's thoughts of Gerald underscore this suggestion:

. . . He was one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north, fulfilled in the destructive frost mystery. And was he fated to pass away in this knowledge, this one process of a frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold? Was he a messenger, an omen of the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow? (p. 290)

Birkin's thoughts with their far-reaching, overriding implications concerning the Africo-Nordic opposites of the African sculpture and the white race have a special significance. His thoughts are connected to his previous renunciation of his spiritual self and his revelling in his sensual self. Hermione's attack upon him with the lapis lazuli stone causes his symbolic rejection of her spirituality that had drawn him to her. His wandering into the woods and lying among the primroses suggest his move from extreme spirituality to the other extreme of excessive, mindless sensuality. Rejecting Hermione, he rejects all women whether they are spiritual or sensual and becomes misanthropic.

Gradually Birkin's misanthropy lessens and he still feels attracted to Ursula. Their difficulty, however, lies in Birkin's fear of the destructive female spirit and Ursula's inability to understand exactly what role Birkin wishes her to play in their relationship. Lawrence emphasizes their essential difficulties in the "Moony" chapter, where Birkin throws stones at the moon's reflection.

Contrary to Colin Clarke's statement that Birkin's reflection on the African sculpture symbols has little bearing on the pond episode which precedes them,¹⁷ the circumstances leading to Birkin's attempt to shatter the moon underlie and are interwoven with his reflection on the African sculpture. An examination of several scenes will illustrate this interconnectedness.

Surprised to see Birkin because he has been in France recovering from his illness, Ursula is even more startled when she observes him. Walking near Wiley Water on a night of the full moon, she sees Birkin throw stones again and again

into the water to break up the reflection of the moon. Ursula overhears Birkin talking to himself.

"You can't go away," he was saying. "There is no away, you only withdraw upon yourself." He threw a dead flower-husk into the water.

"An antiphony - they lie, and you sing back to them. There wouldn't have to be any truth, if there weren't any lies. Then one needn't assert anything."

He stood still, looking at the water, and throwing upon it the husks of the flowers.

"Cybelle - curse her! the accursed Syria Dea! Does one begrudge it her? What else is there? Then he stooped and picked up a stone which he threw sharply at the pond . . . Then again there was a burst of sound, and a burst of brilliant light, the moon had exploded on the water . . . (pp. 280-81)

Obviously impatient with mankind, Birkin, nonetheless, recognizes that he cannot escape the human condition. His awareness of the powerful female principle and of women themselves increases. Revolting against this principle, he strikes out at Cybelle and Syria Dea, goddesses associated with sensual activities, and stones the moon, attempting to counter the female influence and assert the power of his own maleness.

Birkin feels that he must utterly destroy the destructive spirituality of Hermione and Ursula's will which made her believe that sensual love was everything. Having broken with Hermione, Birkin has offered Ursula a love beyond sensual love, which, despite her attraction to him, she cannot understand or accept. Stoning the moon helps Birkin to release this internal destructive tension.

Attracted to and repelled by Ursula, he must still work out his real feeling towards her. Reflecting on the African sculpture, Birkin considers the alternative of "a further sensual experience - something deeper, darker, than ordinary life could give" (p. 288). He thinks through his alternative and decides that he must seek a relationship with Ursula in terms of "star equilibrium," where the couple exists separately and together.¹

The stoning of the moon, the reflection on the African sculpture, and the insight that he has gained are part of a death-rebirth process through which Birkin has gone and which began when Hermione nearly broke his head. These interconnected scenes reflect the major rhythms and themes of *Women in Love*.

Moved by his experiences and his reflection upon them, Birkin goes immediately to Ursula and asks her to marry him; he feels that he must "make a definite pledge, enter into a definite communion" (p. 290). His thoughts, influenced by the African statue, help him to deal more sensibly with the struggle between himself and Ursula in the chapters following.

As Lawrence symbolizes Gerald's dissolution and destructiveness in the metaphor in which the African sculpture functions as his opposite, he also uses the West African figures to symbolize Gudrun's dissolution and destructiveness. He compares Gudrun's art on several occasions with the art suggested by the African sculpture, whose mindless sensualness Birkin finally rejects. Conversing with Hermione, Ursula says that Gudrun's "little carvings are strange." Hermione says, however, they are "perfectly beautiful - full of primitive passion" (p. 42). At another time Gerald comments about one of

Gudrun's figures, "I thought it was that savage carving again" (p. 106). Through these remarks, among other implications, Lawrence links Gudrun to the African figures. Gudrun's attraction to Gerald, and later Loerke, reveals her propensity for destruction as clearly as her dance before the cattle on the Crich estate.

While Birkin and Ursula find a fulfilling balance in their lives, which continues through the novel, Gerald and Gudrun become continuously frustrated with tensions that destroy the possibility for a meaningful relationship. These tensions climax in the last chapters of the novel, where Gerald dies spiritually and then physically. Gudrun experiences a death-in-life. Attaching herself to Loerke, Gudrun, as well as Loerke, becomes Lawrence's prime example of the living dead.

Like the African figure, which to Lawrence exceeds all participation in a vitally living, creative process, Loerke, paradoxically, has gone almost to the limit of mindless, sensual knowledge. Contrary to Moody's reading that the African sculpture symbols are not consistently worked into the whole of the novel, and that Loerke takes over their role,² I find that the suggestion of death and destruction implied in Lawrence's use of the African sculpture is one of the most consistent symbolic meanings in the whole of *Women in Love*. Loerke does not take over the role of the African sculpture symbol. The death and destruction that the black symbols suggest are inherent in the content of Loerke's character as they are inherent in the character of Hermione, Gerald, and Gudrun. Loerke is Lawrence's supremely corrupt character and this corruptness is implicit in Lawrence's use of the African sculpture.

In art, Gudrun and Loerke have a common interest in tastes and ideas, which indicates their bond. Lawrence makes this unmistakably clear:

They had an invariable topic, in their art.

They were almost of the same ideas. He hated Mestrovic, was not satisfied with the Futurists, he liked the West African wooden figures, the Aztec Art, Mexican and Central American . . .

The suggestion of primitive art was their refuge, and the inner mysteries of sensation their object of worship. Art and Life were to them the Reality and the Unreality. (p. 511)

That Gudrun and Loerke share the same attitudes toward "the suggestion of primitive art" has implications not only for their relationship but also for their understanding of each other's perversity when others are repelled by it. Loerke's approach to all art is perverse, but he is most cruel and vulgar in his treatment of young models. Yet Gudrun and Ursula react differently to a photograph of a nude statue that he had sculptured of a young innocent female on horseback, a girl that he had used and discarded. Drawn to the picture, Gudrun reacts to its suggested dissolution: "Gudrun went pale and a darkness came over her eyes, like shame, she looked up with a certain supplication, almost slavish" (p. 489). This "slave-like" look is the same look that Gerald had noticed in the corrupt Pussum of whom the African figure reminded him.

Ursula chides Loerke for portraying brutality and stupidity. Cementing their alliance, Gudrun, the artist, takes sides with Loerke in arguing that art is separate from life. Ursula's antipathy to Loerke and his art is suggested in her response to the photograph of the nude statue: "I know it is his idea, I know it is

a picture of himself, really" (p. 490). Gudrun knows Ursula is right, but her refusal to accept the truth reiterates her affinity with Loerke.

The death-in-life drift of Loerke and Gudrun is linked to the African sculpture, and Gudrun dies spiritually as she consigns herself to Loerke. She has no thought of nor wish for a fulfilled or creative existence. The destiny of Gudrun and Loerke is implicated in the West African sculpture, as is the destiny of Ursula and Birkin, which seems to have been guided by the balance in life that Birkin sought between the "African process" and the "white races" (p. 289). Ursula and Birkin, for the time being have achieved a viable relationship, probably because of Birkin's reflections on the African sculpture.

Finally, in Lawrence's selection of the African sculpture as important symbols to convey his themes of death and rebirth, he has chosen symbols which suggest spiritual death that leads to rebirth and also to physical death. Lawrence's interest in the themes of death and life is evident in his description of the first black figure who sits in a tense position of childbirth. The second black figure of the tall, slim elegant female also suggests destruction, but she functions, moreover, as a striking opposite of Gerald and the white races. Birkin develops this Africo-Nordic symbol in his reflections on the sculpture. According to Lawrence, either opposite in excess is powerfully destructive. Birkin, however, works out a feasible direction for his life and Ursula's after his thoughts on the mutually destructive opposites. Birkin's effort to achieve a "star equilibrium" in his relationship with Ursula reflects Lawrence's view of a creative existence.

NOTES

¹Vinigi L. Grottanelli, "The Lugard Lecture of 1961," in *African Images: Essays in African Iconology*, ed. Daniel F. McCall and Edna G. Bay (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1975), VI, 3.

²Harry T. Moore, *The Intelligent Heart* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1954), p. 222.

³William York Tindall, *D. H. Lawrence and Susan His Cow* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), pp. 97-98.

⁴Moore, p. 222.

⁵Paul S. Wingert, *Primitive Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 7.

⁶A. A. Gerbrands, *Art as an Element of Culture, Especially in Negro African* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957), p. 154, pl. II, fig. 2.

⁷Wingert, p. 66.

⁸Wingert, p. 66.

⁹Wingert, p. 66.

¹⁰Gerbrands, p. 103.

¹¹D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (New York: Modern Library, 1920), pp. 82-83. Subsequent references to *Women in Love* will be to this edition and will be cited within parentheses placed in the body of this study.

¹²H. L. B. Moody, "African Sculpture Symbols in a Novel by D. H. Lawrence," *Ibadan*, 26 (1969), 74.

¹³Robert L. Chamberlain, "Pussum, Minette, and the Africo-Nordic Symbol in Lawrence's *Women in Love*," *PMLA*, 78 (1963), 407.

¹⁴Julian Moynahan, *The Deed of Life: The Novels and Tales of D. H. Lawrence* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1951), p. 85.

¹⁵Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D. H. Lawrence* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 83.

¹⁶Chamberlain, p. 407.

¹⁷Colin Clarke, "Living Disintegration: A Scene from D. H. Lawrence: *The Rainbow and Women in Love*, ed. Colin Clarke (Nashville: Aurora Publishers Incorporated, 1970), pp. 227-28.

¹⁸Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D. H. Lawrence* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), p. 121.

¹⁹Moody, p. 77.

GEORGE WASHINGTON HARRIS AND SUPERNATURALISM

by Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV
The University of Mississippi

Sut Livingood and the supernatural? An unlikely topic, many might suppose. In a class on Southern Literature, long ago, when Arlin Turner introduced the name of George Washington Harris, he mentioned no aspects of the mysterious in the Sut Lovingood sketches. Instead, Turner emphasized traits of southwestern humor and the realism inherent in these writings. Another influential source in times past for introducing the Lovingood pieces, Wallace Stegner's *American Prose: 1840-1900 -- The Realistic Movement*, also placed them among texts of literary realism. We need not belabor here the prominence of Harris as humorist-realist in other anthologies. Like Dickens and Twain, Harris performed at his best as a comic author for most readers, and to such audiences any theory that might take away from that image is suspect.

Harris did, nevertheless, venture into territories where natural and supernatural draw close. In "Realism and Fantasy in Southern Humor," Arlin Turner does move Sut almost, but not quite, into the camp of the otherworldly. Harris' fellow southerwestern humorist, Thomas Bangs Thorpe, is mentioned as a creator of "mystery," in his renowned sketch, "The Big Bear of Arkansas." In the Lovingood yarns, suggests Milton Rickels, "the impulse to give Sut supernatural characteristics is shown in the bird imagery associated with him." Rickels' observation increased my own interest in this topic, and I offer forthwith my findings. ★

Born in 1814, George Washington Harris wrote during the era of Dickens and Poe, themselves humorists and supernaturalists of no mean degree. Indeed, Kenneth S. Lynn once called attention to affinities between the comic impulses in Poe and Harris, but nobody has incorporated his theorizing into a more concentrated study. We know how many tactics of terror tales in newspapers and other periodicals were adapted by Poe because of his familiarity with the journalistic world of the times; why not discern as well such pursuits in Harris' productions?

For example, in "Old Sissum's Middle Boy" (*Yarns*, p.67) the corpulent slug-gard son of Sissum is overtly compared with the fat boy, Joe, from Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*. The latter worthy terrifies his elderly mistress in announcing: "I wants to make your flesh creep." Instead of the anticipated account of blood-and-thunder or supernatural horrors, Joe agitates the old lady by informing her about the amorous intentions of her daughter and a man in the arbor. Such reversals in a situation where supernaturalism might be expected are much a part of Harris' own procedures, although, like the fat boy, Sut Lovingood frequently conveys a "kind of dark and gloomy joy," creating through such tactics a genuine grotesquerie. The ill-fated young man in "Old Sissum's Middle Boy" is actually made up by the vengeful Sut to resemble a being far more demon than human. Surely, through such methods, Harris grafted the twigs of sensational tales onto the hardy stock of native American humor and folklore. The resultant hybrids remain to this day a fresh subject for examination amidst burgeoning Loovingoodiana. One such potentially fruitful document in this context is the obviously-titled "Saul Spradlin's Ghost," but because only the first of two installments in a newspaper is available we can conjecture no outcome.

Internal evidence of Sut's supernatural bent is amply attested throughout the texts of the yarns proper. Sut's imaginative vision and that of his friend "George" on at least one occasion, are postively morbid, running toward situations and, more restrictive and significant, dreams about the mysterious and ghostly. In the preface to *Sut Lovingood's Yarns* appear solid examples of impulses toward death as well as attention to the figure of the devil in Sut's analogical imagination. He opens by comparing books lacking prefaces to coffin-makers without their customary black clothing appearing in public. Sut continues in a manner adumbrating that of young Huck Finn, whose fantasies consist largely in themes of illness, misfortunes, painful deaths, and wraiths. Educated fools, Sut adds, "breed . . . devilment," and those who fear the devil—with good reason—will not enjoy the contents of this book. He emphasizes that it is rife with "sickenin skeers," created by his innate and "tremenjus gif . . . fur breeding skeers among durned fools." As if these examples insufficiently demonstrated Sut's predilection toward scenes overspread by anxiety, torment of a physical nature, and supernatural creatures (epitomized by Satan himself), he concludes by dubbing a married man a "poor misfortinit devil," and by reaffirming the primary purpose of the *Yarns*: to offer a "general skeer."

If in so brief a compass as this preface, Sut's rhetoric, the articulated expression of his imagination, runs to frights and demons, what evil may lurk in the ensuing pages? Although Sut's language is accorded high esteem by those intent upon finding in American colloquialisms the stuff of great literature, that expression may as readily yield illustrative substance for those who discern significance in his repeated drawing upon supernatural undercurrents. Multiple connotation, if not absolute wordplay, may be a greater portion in these sketches than many others have remarked.

Centering upon nineteenth-century evangelical, or fundamentalist, religious ethics, Sut hints suffering (here and in eternal environs), ghostliness, as well as appearances by the Prince of Darkness himself—to great literary advantage. Sut frequently comments that he himself has "nara a soul," so perhaps vampire lore figures into his background. Readers used to hell-fire from the pulpit encountered it in different guises under Sut's tutelage. Nevertheless, hellfiredness provided staples of fear, or "skeers," in many of his yarns.

To illustrate: when in "Eves-dropping on a Lodge of Free-Masons" the unfortunate Lum crashes the ceiling and hangs suspended above the gathering of puzzled brothers, some of them hastily conclude that the devil has penetrated their midst. How appropriate that sentiment is: not long before Sut describes Lum and George as "little devils" and Lum, later, as a "skeer'd divil." Author Harris may have recollected the comic devil tales popular in *Blackwood's* or, maybe, those of Irving, Poe, and Thackeray; here, instead of a genuine supernatural being experiencing defeat at the hands of a wily potential victim who ultimately bests him, young Lum suffers the ignominy of spanking at the hands of an unbefuddled masonic brother.

As in numerous other burlesques of Gothic tradition, Lum's predicament is described in terms calculated to disperse horrors by means of intruding emphatic reality. Old Stack swings his piece of ceiling plank, "an jist busted hit intu seventeen an' a 'alf pieces at wun swollopin lick ontu the part ove Lum what fits a saddil. Hit crack'd sorter like a muskit a-bustin, an' the tetchun sensashun shot Lum up thru the hole like a rocket" (pp. 119-120). Such reinstatement of reality firmly ends any notions of the horrific, at least that of other-worldly varieties, among the brotherhood and among readers.

Like many older hands at literary Gothicism – Mrs. Radcliffe, say, or, nearer his own day, Poe – Harris undercuts exaggerated supernaturalism and the foolery of those who indulge what should be rational perceptions with overdoses of nonsensical but sensational emotionalism. In this respect we must examine more closely the rhetoric, direct from the graveyard school of an earlier day, albeit still existing vestigially in pages of sentimental magazines and other literature, with which “George” begins his portion of this narration. He centers upon the old Knoxville courthouse, noting particularly its “steep gable front . . . its gloomy walls and ghostly echoes [as well as] crime unveiled,” all of which appropriately, “belong to the past.” This sketching derives from much the same vein as Harrison Ainsworth’s in *Rookwood* (1834), wherein the British novelist attempted a “romance in the bygone style of Mrs. Radcliffe.” A like accoutrement appears in the “thickening twilight” accompanying and stimulating George’s memories, for without doubt this tale is a “twilight story” akin to one offered by that old martinet of a lawyer, Mr. Tulkinghorn, in Dicken’s *Bleak House*, as he outlines the unsavory past of Lady Dedlock, or to those eerie narratives entitled *Twilight Stories* (1873), by Rhoda Broughton. Gothic touches or not, George’s memories quickly reveal the over-sentimental and lachrymose, especially when they take the form of reminiscences about the church and graveyard from childhood.

Sut can no longer tolerate his companion’s sentimentality, so he takes over the thread of the story. He misses no opportunity to “skeer,” or to create an atmosphere of anxiety and fearfulness during his outline of the boys’ increasing foreboding while darkness descends upon their hiding place. They even supposed that it was “haunted”: what a backdrop for their spying upon the secretive fraternity of Masons meeting below—because such groups were often suspected of diabolic pursuits. As if the youths had not had sufficient “skeerin’,” the Tyler of the lodge gives them sensational chase, threatening their lives, as they interpret his actions, when they attempt to escape. That bit of nightmare activity, verging very near the supernatural in its dream-like aura, gives way as the boys flee the building, only to fall into what Harris euphemistically terms a “slush” hole, above which an outhouse had been removed, dash thence to the nearest creek for a wash, and, leaving all traces of that escapade behind, return naked to their homes. Persons they meet believe that they see “the cholery a-cumin” or frogs’ ghosts, or spirits presaging an approaching famine. Sut leads into this conclusion by remarking sarcastically to George about the graveyard mentioned previously, as if Lovingood wishes to repeat his technique of taking over George’s narrative materials, but pruning them of sentimentality and irrational supernaturalism. The result is old-time Gothicism turned inside out with a vengeance.

In other ways Harris fashions his writing so that we find ourselves wondering what is and what is not of or in a world different from ours of the every-day stamp. “Well! Dad’s Dead” gives us not merely the grotesque journey of the Lovingoods with old Hoss’s corpse, which intermittently seems as life-like and vital in death as ever he was in living days; the tale also affords a specimen of near supernaturalism in Mrs. Lovingood’s harassed outburst: “I’d like to know when the devil will go out uve him.” Such an ejaculation combines with the highjinks of shoving the seeming recalcitrant corpse into its grave to effect “graveyard” humor substantially different from the concept of graveyard used above. This tale has been, rightly, called Poe-like in its macabre cast; in its bordering on the grotesque, furthermore, it suggests the works of Bierce and Faulkner (HT&HT, p. 115).

A similar manipulation of circumstances to achieve a supernatural aura (that is dispelled in the conclusion), occurs in an early, non-Lovingood sketch, “A Coon Hunt in Haunted Hollow.” The narrator, Mr. Free, and his friend Tom D. – patterned upon Thomas Bangs Thorpe’s famous Tom Owen, the Bee Hunter – believe that they have sighted a raccoon high in a tree, located calculatedly enough, on Harris’s part, in “Haunted Hollow.” After many shots to bring down the coon prove vain, Tom worriedly concludes that he has been encountering Satan himself in animal form. Returning in daylight, the hunters discover that a growth on the tree trunk was their opponent. They vow never to mention the truth of this hunt to any save the “Spirit” and in so doing they provide a neat bit of wordplay: this sketch was published in the famous comic periodical, *The Spirit of the Times* (11 Feb. 1843). Tom’s personal inclination to believe in other-worldly visitants, as expressed succinctly in a snatch of Burns’s “Tam O’Shanter”: “Where ghaists and outlets nightly cry,” prepares the way for this “spirit” in the close of the sketch.

Another piece of this type, “A Snake-Bit Irishman,” revolves around the ambiguities in the appearance-reality theme typifying so much American literature, and particularly American comic literature, of which the Lovingood yarns stand out as a high point. Sut contrives a “snake” from deer guts, attaches it to his victim, and enjoys the ensuing melee. Dashing through the campfire, the Irishman in his terror does not realize that he has ignited the bogus “snake,” but believes that it is a fiery or supernatural serpent determined to work his downfall. The components of darkness, isolation, and a threatening “spirit” draw together several strands of Gothic import. As in a Radcliffe novel, the being from what seems to be another world, so long as suspense is essential, turns out to be far less fearsome than the victim has supposed.

Another, more artistic production, wherein the seeming supernatural transcends the limitations of shoddy magazine thrillers is “Sut Lovingood’s Chest Story.” Here Sut finally gains revenge upon the philandering Sicily Burns, who had tricked him into drinking too much soda, taking wicked pleasure in his discomfiture when he tore away on horseback, looking like “a dreadful forewarning, ur a ghos’, ur old Belzebug” (Yarns, p. 83).

The frequent recurrence of the word “devil” alerts one to Harris’s careful modulation of elements that could originate in folk sources and in turn appeal to a folk mind. In other words, when Sut sets out to avenge his own emotional wounds he also accomplishes the end of Sicily’s adulterous propensities. In such a situation, where the governance of the wages of sin is but too obvious, the intrusive implications about non-human agencies of punishment would strike terror across the unsophisticated religious beliefs of the adulterers. Sut’s opening remarks about strong-minded women becoming devils foreshadow the violence and torments to come. Indeed, because Sicily seems ever to direct the situations of those tales featuring her highjinks, or seems, at least, temporarily to control sufficiently for setting in motion a chain of catastrophic events, her demonic attributes are but natural. Intending initially to frighten only Gus Fabian’s or “Gut Fatty’s,” great, black horse – itself an undeniable symbol of lustful human impulses – Sut decorates the “big, black devil” with the phosphorescent fungus known as “fox fire,” ties a charge of powder to its tail, and doses the animal with a sickening mixture of medicines. Seeing Sicily hurrying her illicit lover into a trunk (they thinking a noise made by Sut might be that of her husband returning), Sut attaches the trunk to the horse. Next he torments the imprisoned Gus with visions of retribution consequent upon his adultery. The stroke of linking the sexually rampant man with the terrifying

horse, who may symbolize a dominant animalism in the rutting relationship between Fabian and Sicily, is superb. The violent, erratic, and terrifying journey of the horse with its freight intensifies this theme. Once passion and violence gain sway, who can predict their end?

Following the horse and the battered Fabian, Sut encounters a North Carolinian, high in a tree, whence he removed in fear of the spectacle of the apparently supernatural horse and rider. This man's thoughts are artistically fitting vehicles for the theme: "Hell's busted plumb open, and this yere mountain's full ove devils." He repeats, with variants: "we wus woke by an orful yell, and here cum the devil a tarin es big es a corn crib, and he had hellfire harness on, and a knot on the aind ove his tail as big es a turpentine still . . ." To be sure, such visions as these, representative of chaos, stem from reality, here the immoderate sexual passions of Sicily; and, "devil" that she is, no wonder ordinary mortals, in contrast to her own tempestuous but determined nature, grow literally and figuratively bewildered while confronting the results of her handiwork.

Sut, of course, knows that there is no supernatural claptrap – of the sort so fascinating and delightful to unwitting readers. He sends off the woe-begone Gus, remarking that folks in the region don't believe in "the devil what invented you," an observation wonderfully ambiguous in its connotations. Sut's offhanded comments about Sicily's husband, who "believes in witches, and warlocks, and long nebbed [nosed] things more than he does in Sicily," reveals additional depths within this tale. Better, perhaps, to give credence to what we know are false ghosts than to the variety of deviltry Sicily manifests. Significantly, Sut adds that "she's warin thin, her eyes am growin bigger, and she has no roses in her cheeks. She can't laugh, and she won't cry." These characteristics typify those who in folklore are bewitched; here they devolve from Sicily's frustrated, negative sexuality. Of such substance is the making of literary art, prompting us to question just where naturalism turns into supernaturalism. Through Sut's vision, in this yarn and with frequency elsewhere, Harris implies that there is no easy solution to this dualism.

C. Hugh Holman writes that if the southwestern humorists has not given a comic edge to their productions those works would be Gothic.⁴ Hopefully, in such context, my observations may afford a fresh perspective on the Livingood canon. There realism and fantasy mingle, taking the American colloquial style and realistic mode into compelling territories. These aims and methods raise new issues about the nature of realism. More than any of the frontier humorists, Harris employs these blendings of terror and comedy. His works demonstrate a more general functionalism in their supernatural substance, making him a transition figure between the grisly grotesque of Poe and the local-color vein of comic supernaturalism in Mary N. Murfree's stories.

NOTES

¹ Turner's comments appear in the *Georgia Review*, 12 (1958), 451-457; Rickels' are in *George Washington Harris* (New York: Twayne, 1965), p. 101. I cite Harris's writings from *Sut Lovingood's Yarns* (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1867) and *High Times and Hard Times: Sketches and Tales* by *George Washington Harris*, ed. M. Thomas Inge (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967).

²*The Comic Tradition in America: An Anthology of American Humor* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1958), p. 193.

³Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*, ed. Andrew Lang (London: Chapman & Hall; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897), I, 459 [Ch. 28]. The grotesque humor expands in the next chapter, a tale in itself, "The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton."

⁴*Windows on the World: Essays on American Social Fiction* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), pp. 27-35. Holman demonstrates that the fine balance of humor with horror continues from southwestern humorists into recent writers like Faulkner, Caldwell, and O'Connor.

SAVING GRACE AND MORAL BALANCE IN JOHN CHEEVER'S STORIES

by Edward C. Reilly
Arkansas State University

Except for *Falconer*, a novel about life in prison, John Cheever's characters live in places like St. Botolphs, New York, Bullet Park, and Shady Hill, worlds dominated by social conventions which are to guide them to success and happiness in keeping with the American Dream. But suddenly the moral bottom drops out of their world and they feel betrayed, alienated, and lost. All of Cheever's stories are not totally pessimistic, however, because Cheever believes in man's potential for transcending the chaos and absurdity of the modern world. Cheever remarks, in fact, that his most useful image of man is "man in a quagmire, looking up at a tear in the sky." Metaphorically, the "quagmire" is the contemporary world with its absurdity and pitfalls, and the "tear in the sky" is man's potential for restoring a sense of moral balance that makes his life meaningful. The element that enables man to rediscover the moral order is a type of saving grace.¹ This grace is not grace in the traditional religious sense, but rather it rises naturally from the character's experiences in life and enables him to restore his sense of moral balance. It is possible to determine what comprises this grace and to see how it does restore or supply a moral balance for a meaningful life by analyzing "The Trouble of Marcie Flint" and "The Worm in the Apple," two stories in John Cheever's *The Housebreaker of Shady Hill*, an anthology of short stories about life in the Shady Hill suburb.

That Cheever believes in a form of grace is evident in some of his critical comments. Regarding light, one of the major symbols, he says:

Light, fire -- these have always meant the possible greatness of man. The whiteness of light. In the church . . . that always represents the Holy Spirit. It seems to me that man's inclination toward light, toward brightness, is very nearly botanical -- and I mean spiritual light. One not only needs it, one struggles for it. It seems to me that one's total experience is the drive toward light.²

When asked about the tension between light and dark in his works, Cheever replied that generally they mean "good and evil" and adds that "one is always seeking to find out how much courage, or how much intelligence, or how much comprehension, one can bring to the choice between good and evil in one's life."³ With the emphasis on "spiritual light," "the religious experience," and choosing between good and evil, these quotations suggest grace in its ecclesiastical sense: "divine assistance given man for his regeneration or sanctification." On the other hand, Cheever's emphasis on courage, intelligence, and comprehension enforces a more practical, secular, and modern interpretation of grace, and this is implied in another of his comments. He says that all of his works are about "confinement" and the "struggle for freedom" which he identifies as a metaphor for a "sense of boundlessness, the possibility of rejoicing."⁴ Cheever thus acknowledges that modern life may indeed be a quagmire

because of its absurdity and conformity, but man can rise above this to discover happiness and meaning in his own life. Cheever always makes this struggle for light an individual effort, and the catalyst that aids man may be termed saving grace since it restores a moral balance and meaning to life.

In "The Trouble of Marcie Flint," Charles Flint has been home eight days from an Italian business trip when the moral balance of his world is shattered. While making love to Marcie, his wife of fifteen years, their children eat ant poison and almost die. Marcie, who thinks the poisoning is divine retribution, confesses that she had an affair while Charles was away. Charles Flint is, therefore, one of the many Cheever characters who, after some crisis, must discover a type of saving grace in order to restore some semblance of moral order in his life and world.

As the narrative opens, Charles is on board the S. S. *Augustus* bound for Italy, and he begins a journal, an obvious attempt to put the events in proper perspective. As he flees from Shady Hill and from Marcie, the narrator reveals that "like all bitter men, Flint knew less than half the story and was more interested in unloading his own peppery feelings than in learning the truth."⁵ Bitter, betrayed, and disillusioned, Charles vehemently condemns life in the suburbs and he writes in his journal:

What holes! The suburbs, I mean. God preserve me from the camaraderie of commuting trains, and even from the lovely ladies taking in their asters and roses at dusk lest the frost kill them, and from ladies with their heads whirling with civic zeal. . . . God preserve me . . . from women who dress like Toreros to go to the supermarket, and from cowhide dispatch cases, from flannels and gabardines. Preserve me from word games and adulterers, from basset hounds and swimming pools and from frozen canapes and Bloody Marys and smugness and syringa bushes and P.T.A. meetings. (p. 127)

Marcie's infidelity has thus enabled Charles to see part of the story about Shady Hill. Life in this suburb is indeed dictated by social conventions and conformity, and it has its share of evil as symbolized by the adultery, the outright lie of Mr. Timmons, the druggist who denies selling the ant poison, and the narrow-minded bigotry of Mark Barrett and Mrs. Selfredge, who oppose having a library in Shady Hill because it would attract lower classes of people and thus reduce property values.

As he continues to write in his journal, Charles recalls, however, how much pleasure he had from working on his house, swimming in his neighbor's pool, and watching his children at play. "Oh God, was I happy," he confesses, and then later he recalls sitting in the evening sun, reading his newspaper, and feeling so happy that even the "news in the papers seemed cheerful" (p. 134). As he thinks of making love to Marcie, he exclaims:

Then I was seized by some intoxicating pride in the hour, by the joy and the naturalness of my relationship to the scene, and by the ease with which I could put my hands on what I needed. I thought again of Marcie sleeping and that I would have my way there soon -- it would be a way of expressing this pride. (p. 135)

Significantly, this quotation is the other half of the story about life in Shady Hill. Charles realizes and then admits that his life gives him a sense of pride, that it

is a happy and natural life, and that he is an integral part of it. His previous negative vision is now overshadowed by a more positive one, and he cannot understand why he is fleeing from this life. He then writes: "Ants, poison, peanut butter, foghorns . . . love, blood pressure, business trips, inscrutability. I know I will go back" (p. 143). Immediately after he makes this comment, he has a "vision of his family running toward him . . . and their much-loved faces" (p. 143). Charles then writes:

I will go back. I will see my children grow and take up their lives, and I will gentle Marcie - sweet Marcie, dear Marcie, Marcie my love. I will shelter her with the curve of my body from all the harms of the dark. (p. 143)

Through his journal writing therapy, Charles Flint has finally gone beyond the story to the truth about Shady Hill and Marcie. As the narrator emphasized in the opening of the plot, the real truth is that there is "nothing wrong with the suburb [Shady Hill] from which Charles was fleeing," and that Marcie is "gifted with great stores of feminine sweetness and gallantry" (p. 127). Flint's closing comments, moreover, imply what comprises the saving grace which restores the moral balance and meaning to his life. His saving grace is rooted in love - "their much-loved faces" - and Cheever believes that love is a panacea for the "ills of the flesh and spirit." The redeeming nature of this love is suggested in his sense of responsibility toward his children and in his desire to protect Marcie from "all the harms of the dark," or all the inscrutability, conformity, and evils of the world. This selfless love gives Charles the courage to return to Shady Hill and his family instead of negatively fleeing from them. Significantly, those Cheever characters who act positively and who show grace under pressure are the ones who are granted saving grace and a restoration of a moral order.

"The Worm in the Apple" is about Larry and Helen Crutchman who live in Shady Hill and who are so "very, very happy and so temperate in all their habits and so pleased with everything that came their way that one was bound to suspect a worm in their rosy red apple and that the extraordinary rosiness of the fruit was only meant to conceal the gravity and depth of the infection" (p. 85). The worm symbolizes, of course, the eventual fall from grace and the destruction of the moral order in the Crutchmans' world, and the plot involves the narrator's attempt to discover just exactly where and when the fall from grace will occur. As he examines those things which usually destroy the moral balance, the narrator cannot discover the worm in the past lives of Larry and Helen even though Larry was in the wartime navy and his ship had been sunk and Helen's inheritance gives her a larger income than Larry would ever make at his job. Nor is the fall from grace evident in the Crutchmans' suburban life of conformity: they live in an expensive house, have two automobiles, dress fashionably, attend church every Sunday, and belong to book, local art, and music appreciation clubs. Neither does the worm appear in Tom and Rachael, the Crutchman children, who love their parents and are loved in return. Because Tom and Rachel marry for love and have happy marriages, there is still no fall from grace. Nor does the worm appear when Larry and Helen age. It might be expected that they should "suffer the celebrated destitution of their age and kind" but they "lost neither their teeth nor their hair." Finally, the narrator is forced to conclude that "one might wonder if the worm was not in the eye of the observer who, through timidity or moral cowardice, could not embrace the broad range of their natural enthusiasms and would not grant that,

while Larry played neither Bach nor football very well, his pleasure in both was genuine." (p. 89)

From the narrator's jaundiced viewpoint, it should be only a matter of time before there is a crisis and the moral bottom drops out of the Crutchmans' world since they seem mired deepest in suburban conformity. Yet, despite their conformity and despite some parental crises—Tom fails his junior year of high school and Rachel is three months pregnant when she elopes—the Crutchmans' moral balance remains firm because of the grace present in their lives. This grace, which is termed the "touchstone of their euphoria," arises naturally from the things of their life. As is evident in "The Trouble of Marcie Flint," love is the most significant factor in the Crutchmans' grace, and the love is evident between Larry and Helen and between parents and children. Another element of their grace is the Crutchmans' "natural enthusiasms" and genuine pleasures in their friends, their civic responsibilities, their clubs, and their hobbies. Because they capitalize on these qualities, they are never as confined and tottering on the brink of moral chaos as the narrator would stereotype them.

The narrator of "The Country Husband" says that life in Shady Hill "hangs, morally and economically, from a thread, but it hangs by its thread in the evening light" (p. 67). When compared with the other stories in *The Housebreaker* of Shady Hill collection, "The Worm in the Apple" is a prime example of Cheever's optimism, a rare quality in much contemporary fiction. In this particular story, John Cheever affirms that life in Shady Hill does indeed hang morally from a thread, that life in the suburbs can be just as meaningful and happy as anywhere else, and that the moral bottom does not necessarily have to drop out of one's world to benefit from the grace in life. Cheever thus underscores this story-book existence in a supposedly contemporary wasteland by giving it a fairy-tale ending:

The touchstone of their euphoria remained potent, and while Larry gave up the fire truck he could still be seen at the communion rail, the fifty-yard line, the 8:03, and the Chamber Music Club, and through the prudence and shrewdness of Helen's broker they got richer and richer and lived happily, happily, happily. (p. 89)

Even though in Cheever's dark tales - "O Youth and Beauty," "The Hartleys," "The Swimmer," and "The Enormous Radio" - are characters who fail to discover any saving grace, the majority of stories in *The Housebreaker* anthology as well as "A Vision of the World," "The Cure," and "The World of Apples" are about characters, who after some crisis, discover in their experience a type of saving grace. These experiences are, moreover, as varied as Cheever's plots. For Charles Flint the experience is recalling the past happiness of his suburban life and then having the vision of his family's much-loved face; for Johnny Hake in "The Housebreaker of Shady Hill" it is the rain on his face; for Francis Weed in "The Country Husband" it is woodworking therapy; for Asa Bascomb in "The World of Apples" it is making a pilgrimage to a sacred shrine and then bathing in a mountain waterfall; for the narrator of "The Cure" it is kissing his children's dirty handprints near the baseboard of the wall.

Regardless of what awakens the character to the possibility of saving grace, Cheever believes that man, and man alone, is solely responsible for reestablishing his own moral balance. Or, as Johnny Hake finally learns: "There were ways out of my trouble if I cared to take them. I was not trapped. I

was here on earth because I chose to be" (p. 27). Hake's remark underscores two of Cheever's critical ideas: that man must constantly make choices between good and evil and that man is never trapped because there is the possibility of discovering joy and freedom in life. This is essentially what Charles Flint, Francis Weed, Johnny Hake, Asa Bascomb and other characters discover through saving grace.

In story after story, then, John Cheever examines the idea of saving grace which enables his characters to restore a moral order by granting them an insight into the eternal verities which not only make life complete and meaningful but which also give a moral certainty in an uncertain world. What these truths are and how they work may best be summed up by the narrator of "A Vision of the World" whose moral balance is restored one rainy night as he exclaims: "Valor! Love! Virtue! Compassion! Splendor! Kindness! Wisdom! Beauty!" and who, as he continually recites this litany, feels his "hopefulness mount" until he is "contented and at peace with the night." As do many other contemporary authors - including Hemingway, Faulkner, Heller, and Bellow - John Cheever believes that man, and man alone, is either his own destroyer or savior.

NOTES

¹Clinton S. Burhans, Jr., "John Cheever and the Grace of Social Coherence," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 14 (January, 1969), 187.

²Jesse Kornbluth, "The Cheever Chronicle," *The New York Times Magazine*, 21 Oct. 1979, pp. 26-29. Kornbluth writes: "Cheever's early stories and novels are not really about people scrapping for social position and money, but about people rising toward grace," Kornbluth cursorily mentions "grace" but does not see it as saving grace which allows Cheever's characters to restore a moral balance in order to discover meaning and happiness in their lives. See also Alwyn Lee, "Ovid in Ossining," *Time*, 27 March 1964, pp. 66-72. Lee says that Cheever's "freaks" are those "who have fallen from grace," but those who do find grace do so through piety.

³John Hersey, "A Talk With John Cheever," *The New York Times Book Review*, 6 March, 1977, p. 28.

⁴John Hersey, "John Cheever, Boy and Man," *The New York Times Book Review*, 26 March, 1978, p. 34.

⁵John Firth, "Talking With John Cheever," *Saturday Review*, 2 April 1971, p. 22.

⁶John Cheever, *The Housebreaker of Shady Hill and Other Stories* (New York: Macfadden-Bartell Corporation, 1969), p. 127. Future references to this volume will be noted parenthetically.

⁷Robert Towers, "Light Touch," *New York Review of Books*, 9 Nov. 1978, p. 3.

⁸John Cheever, *The Stories of John Cheever* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978, p. 517.

THE DISJUNCTIVE PHRASE

by T. J. Ray
University of Mississippi

While it might seem to you that this paper is more suited to a class, it is actually deliberately aimed at teachers of English. In the course of teaching the language, often we find that students do not understand this or that point. At rare moments we may discover to our consternation or embarrassment that there is something that we do not understand about the language. When the shepherd is lost, the sheep will be also. What is to be done when off-the-wall, out-of-left-field there comes a question that Teacher cannot answer? I suspect that each of us has private defenses for such a situation.

Several years ago a student raised just such a question in a grammar class I was teaching. The sentence under consideration was this: The ship was seen to sink. His task was to explain the function of each word in the sentence after he decided how many words there were. Mistakenly, he said there were six, when there were only five. Once that problem was sorted out, he began to parse the sentence. He correctly noted the pronoun *he* as the subject and *was seen* as the verb. After several false starts he announced that he could not find a function for the infinitive. Nor could his teacher. That event was the genesis of this paper.

The problem was this: How does the infinitive function in any sentence such as "The ship was seen to sink"? Recourse to the textbook section on infinitives offered no help. In fact, the section gave no examples of such a construction although further search in the same book yielded half a hundred such sentences among the exercises. How, may one ask, are students to understand exercises which texts neglect to explain? Although this perplex may seem tangential to our topic, it is not. And it is fair to note that texts regularly ignore matters that text writers do not understand. Further search in nearly two dozen grammar books shed no light on this particular problem.

Perhaps a moment of *cogitus interruptus* is in order here. Many difficulties in teaching language accrue from either the inadequacy of texts or the failure of teachers to stay abreast of the state of the art. Actually, these are two sides of the same coin. Texts are often inadequate because as they age no one demands that they be improved. And teachers have difficulty keeping up with the field because texts are not more illuminating. For example, consider that there has been a war against the split infinitive at least since William Ward admonished against it in his *Grammar of the English* way back in 1765. The infinitive has proved an elusive little sprite. Even now there is disagreement as to precisely what the infinitive is. Some linguists would have it that the *to* is not a part of the infinitive, only a marker that sometimes is prepositioned with an infinitive. Back in 1869, in his *The Grammar of English Grammars*, Gould Brown claimed that the *to* is actually an adverb that modifies the infinitive. As we know that the particle *to* was adopted as a replacement for the suffix that had been lost after the Norman conquest, it is reasonable to argue that an infinitive constitutes the verb base form plus the marker. Then we are left to consider why the marker is sometimes dropped but sometimes retained.

Consider the two sentences "The boy will run down the road" and "The boy is going to run down the road." If it be conceded that these two strings are

synonymous, then it must be concluded that *to run* in the second is the same as *run* in the first except for the *to* marker. The same principle holds in case of the two alternative forms of obligation: "The boy has to run down the road" and "The boy must run down the road." Consideration of these two examples leads to the conclusion that the *to* that follows *will* and *has* is a part of the infinitive that follows and not, as some texts suggest, a part of *will* and *has*. Certainly further study is needed to clarify the reason why the marker follows some auxiliaries and not others. Remember that in Anglo-Saxon the inflected form of the main verb would be found in either case.

Is it not sufficient, therefore, to designate the *to* as the infinitive morpheme just as *-ing* may be the present participle marker?

But the gusher of anti-split-infinitive propaganda remains to be capped. Listen to that ready advisor on usage, H. W. Fowler, in his *Modern English Usage*: "We maintain . . . that a real split infinitive, though not desirable in itself, is preferable to either of two things, to real ambiguity, and to patent artificiality." Please note the use of the royal "We." Consider a later judgment of the split infinitive, this time from Barbara Strang in her book *Modern English Structure*: "It need, I hope, hardly be said at this date that there is no more reason for preserving unbroken the unity of the *to* infinitive than there is for refusing to put adverbs anywhere else in the course of verb phrases. Fussing about split infinitives in one of the more tiresome pastimes invented by nineteenth-century prescriptive grammarians. The question is, in any case, one of usage, not principle, and though much remains to be explored in this matter, one thing that is clear is that in speech the split infinitive is common even among speakers who on principle reject it with horror."

Consider two other cases of misteaching before we get back to business. First, there is the feckless harping against the passive voice. Second, there is pointless teaching of the gerund. Clearly, both of these matters need reconsideration if not abandonment. They are of that other world where prepositions cannot end sentences. The longer we wait to purge the inconsequential from the teaching of language, the longer students will hate any linguistic experience.

This digression has been sneaked into this paper in order to make a point. The classroom grammarian cannot depend completely on the information contained in texts. Texts, like dictionaries, are often nothing more than postscripts of past conditions that no longer obtain. The problem of the function of the infinitive in "The ship was seen to sink" has stimulated for me eighteen years of collecting passive sentences and sentences with infinitive phrases. For instance, there is the nagging question, Why is the agent deleted from some passive sentences and not from others?

Let us look closely at the crucial sentence. If you find terminology from various grammatical systems co-mingled, recall Charles Hockett's advice that it is better to mix grammars and clarify an issue than to be wedded to one system and leave matters cloudy. In traditional terms, there are only three elements that can follow a passive verb. These three are a retained object, a retained complement, and an adverbial. In order to discover which of the three exists in a given sentence, it is helpful to convert the passive sentence into its original active form.

When "The ship was seen to sink" is reconverted to the active state and an agent is supplied to replace that deleted in the passive transformation, the sentence reads "Someone saw the ship sink." This, then, becomes the first object of analysis. In school terms, the sentence consists of a pronoun subject, a transitive verb, and an infinitive phrase which is the direct object of that verb.

Within the phrase there is the noun "ship" that functions as the subject of the infinitive "sink," which appears without its infinitive marker. It might be argued that the sentence would be non-idiomatic with the *to*. How does "Someone saw the ship to sink" sound?

In transformational-generative terms we have the matrix sentence "Someone saw (blank)," consisting of the noun phrase, AUX, the main verb, and the complement noun phrase. Into that matrix has been inserted "The ship sank," consisting of the noun phrase, AUX, the main verb, and a null complement. The *s* to transformation has been applied to the insert sentence, resulting in an infinitive phrase from which the *to* marker is further deleted. This transformed insert sentence becomes the complement in the final string.

Now, if the passive transformation is applied to the sentence "John eats prunes," the immediate result is "Prunes are eaten by John." There are no serious problems with such a sentence, and it is offered here only to establish that the noun phrase following the main verb is moved to a position in front of the verb. That is the normal process. But when a sentence contains an infinitive phrase in the second NP position, that is, following the main verb, that phrase is not moved to a position in front of the verb when the sentence becomes passive, as happened with "prunes." Instead of that taking place, the subject of the infinitive, or the NP preceding the infinitive, is separated from the rest of the phrase and it alone is prepositioned before the verb, duly altered to its nominative form if it is a pronoun. The remainder of the infinitive phrase stays after the verb. In other words, in the reordering that normally would take place in a sentence such as "Someone saw the ship sink," the result string would be "The ship sink was seen." Such a terminal string would be not only nonidiomatic, it would be ungrammatical.

One further nuance of this transformation may be noted. Notice that in the passive version of the sentence the *to* marker surfaces. It would be ungrammatical to produce "The ship was seen sink." If one were to write a set of T-G rules to describe the process that occurs here, it would be necessary either to incorporate as part of the passive transform a rule to insert the *to*, or, better still, the *to* deletion rule that operates in the active version would not be exercised in the first place.

Thus far, most of this paper has dealt with the split infinitive phrase. It would be remiss not to point out that almost the identical process occurs when the sentence inserted in the complement position of a matrix sentence contains a transitive verb and PROGRESSIVE. Consider the sentence, "The boy was seen chasing the girl." Again there is a matrix sentence that effectively says "Someone saw something." Into this matrix is inserted the notion "The boy was chasing the girl." The result of this insertion leaves the insert sentence as a participial phrase that has a subject. Had we not banned the term "gerund, above, it would be convenient now to say that this is a gerund phrase used as the direct object of the verb "saw."

When the passive transformation is applied to the intermediate structure of this sentence, a now familiar splitting occurs. The subject NP of the complement phrase is moved in front of the main verb, and the remainder of the phrase stays put. Thus, we have "The boy was seen chasing the girl."

All those years ago, the answer the student was seeking in that modern grammar class was this: the function of "to sink" in "The ship was seen to sink" is that it is part of the subject of the verb "was seen." The infinitive was not a separate object in the active voice, nor was it an objective complement; hence, it cannot be considered a retained object or retained complement in the

passive. Nor is there any way to find an adverbial function for it. A similar understanding is true of "The boy was seen chasing the girl." In that sentence, the subject of "was seen" is the rest of the sentence, before and after the verb.

As man is a label maker, so is the linguist. Let us, then, name this newly delivered creature. Perhaps we might call it the Disjunctive Phrase or the Disjunctive Subject.

ELLISON'S INVISIBLE MAN AS A PICARESQUE NOVEL

by Mabel H. Pittman
Jackson State University

For one who is invisible, the search for visibility in a society fraught with a corruption of values is a chaotic experience. To dramatize the condition, Ellison sought a perspective from which he could tell of the American experience as he knew or perceived it. He knew that the art form had to be a primary concern, that the American experience in itself acquired importance in literature only when expressed through an art form. As he stated in "Hidden Name and Complex Fate," art gives meaning to experience, while experience provides the basic theme the writer employs in telling a story.¹

Looking back to its inception Ellison recalled that this nation began when a group of men, "some of them political philosophers," wrote their conception of what they believed this nation ought to be, what its obligation to the citizen should be, what the citizen's obligation to the nation should be, what the founders' ideas of justice were, and what kind of system the nation needed to guarantee equality of opportunity for all citizens. All of these, the writer noted, were noble ideals; yet, in actuality, when citizens attempted to carry them out, problems arose. These problems resulted in a moral predicament, a contradiction between the ideals and the actual experience of achieving the ideals. This moral predicament, with its emphasis on guilt and social injustices, has been a major source of themes for American novels ever since.²

By providing a panoramic view of a hostile society in which human values have been distorted and the central character leads a disrupted life as he searches for his visibility, Ellison is directing the reader's attention to a form of the novel in which chaos is inescapable and the precarious existence and adventures of the hero are essential to an understanding of the story.

The novel gives a selective view of reality, basically "a slice of life," in which the characters speak in an idiom and behave in a manner characteristic of their races, social classes, localities, and personalities. From time to time the nameless hero engages in meditations about his predicament. Or the novel may deal more often with human behavior and relationships than with events of the story. Satire is integrated into the story as it is in any literary work of social criticism. *Invisible Man*, however, is guided by a literary form that makes it more than a traditional story realistically portraying social injustices endured by a young, black man. It is more than a psychological treatment of one man's attempt at self-discovery. And although satire is the essence of this critical study of a social problem of invisibility from a literary stance, Ellison had more in mind than chiding the American people about their distortion of human values. *Invisible Man*, when it is viewed as what it is, a picaresque novel, is, as Stuart Miller puts it, "an expression of a certain essential and unending chaos in life."³

It is difficult to give a definition of a picaresque novel that is comprehensive because the genre changes somewhat from story to story. Even so, there are certain elements which are basic to it. *Lazarillo de Tormes*, a Spanish picaresque novel of the sixteenth century, is considered to be the first such novel. It is followed by Aleman's *Guzmain de Alfarache* in 1604 and Tuevedo's *El Buscon* in 1626. These novels help *Lazarillo* set the picaresque tradition of which

Ellison's novel is a part.

Like *Lazarillo*, *Invisible Man* is told from an autobiographical perspective. Through this perspective, the narrator, the nameless picaro, remembers one experience after the other in his life when confusion and chaos surround and engulf him so that he is at one time baffled, then alarmed, and continually shocked at the difference people show him. He is puzzled and haunted by his grandfather's deathbed request made to his son, the picaro's father. The confusion created in the young man's mind over the meaning of the statement made by a grandfather, who all his life had been "a quiet old man who never made any trouble," was to leave him in a state of anxiety which would torment him from that day forward. How can meekness in a man's demeanor be treacherous? he is to wonder. Yet, the dying grandfather, whom the picaro is said to resemble, has seemingly kept an armed truce with the white segment of a southern, segregated society with the philosophy he is now to pass on to his family: I want you to overcome 'em with yeses, undermine 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction, let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open."⁴

The picaresque myth becomes more evident in *Invisible Man* as trickery and the rush of events add to the disordered world of picaro. Both trickery and the rapid piling of event on event to create chaos are elemental to the picaresque novel. The picaro is either tricked or becomes the trickster at some point in his life. One of many tricks to be played on the invisible hero takes place on the night he is present at a smoker where he expects to deliver his high school graduation speech before a group of the town's leading citizens. No sooner does he arrive than he is dressed in boxing trunks, crowded into an elevator, and brought to the place of the smoker where he is made to watch in shame and agony, but with a bit of fascination, the spectacle of a naked, blond, white woman. He thinks he sees pain in her face as her body contorts in sensuous movements to tantalize both the drunken "leading citizens," who grab at her with "beefy fingers" and the young, black, teen-aged boys who are threatened if they look and threatened if they don't (IM, p. 23). Following quickly after this is the battle royal, a boxing match among the black boys in which the picaro is bloodied and bruised just before he is made to scramble for his pay of coins and a few crumpled bills tossed upon an electrically charged rug which gives off a "hot violent force" that tears through his body and makes his hair bristle on his head (IM, p. 29). Finally, when it is nearly forgotten and he has been stripped of all dignity, he delivers the speech amid laughter and chatter. Except for one or two words like "social" and "equality," which attract the men's hostility, he is ignored (IM, p. 33). As tradition would have it, he is given a briefcase and scholarship. That night he is to dream the first of many dreams about the briefcase, with its message buried in a succession of envelopes within envelopes and which reads, "To Whom It May Concern ... 'Keep This Nigger-Boy Running'" (IM, p. 35).

The significance of the trickery and the frenzy of action is that they establish, early in the novel, the idea of a corrupt and disordered world where the picaro must live, and live by his wits. In addition, the episodes evince an emotional response of shock which the picaro experiences throughout the story. This chaotic or disordered world which Ellison has created in *Invisible Man* provides the unity of focus needed to observe the picaro as he moves from milieu to milieu.

Although it is a matter of tradition in America for bright, young men to leave home and go to college, Ellison makes use of this shift to create a sense of internal chaos and disorder in the lives of the characters. To make this disorder

more keenly felt by the reader, he creates what appears to be an externally ordered world against which the characters are viewed. In this world, he presents a description of the campus in the spring – beautiful, alive, ordered. The buildings covered with vines, the winding roads, the smell of “honeysuckle, purple wisteria, and magnolias;” girls in summer dresses promenading across the grassy lawn; the music; lovers; the shellshocked veterans headed for the cafe, whiskey, and women; the bronze statue of the college Founder seemingly lifting the veil from the faces of the students (IM, p. 37) – are all part of the scene that exudes a sense of an ordered life. Then, there are the students—the responsible ones who are chosen to chauffeur the rich, white trustees who come each spring for a meeting of the Board. It appears that the more responsible the student, the wealthier and more important the trustee he chauffeurs. It is this kind of logic that, by chance, pairs the nameless picaro and the wealthy Bostonian trustee, Mr. Norton.

And it is from this logical and externally ordered world that the reader views the effects of the internal chaos in the lives of the characters on the picaro. Ellison extends the accident motif which sets into motion the incident that will change the course of the picaro's life. Accidentally, as the trustee talks and the driver listens, the two find themselves on the road leading to Jim Trueblood's cabin. Norton is interested in the age and history of the log cabins (IM, p. 48) and wants to stop and inquire about them. The picaro's hesitation, coupled with the sight of two pregnant women in the yard, starts Mr. Norton asking questions. The revelation that Jim Trueblood is the father of the baby his daughter is carrying (IM, p. 49) as well as the one his wife carries arouses in the old trustee “something like envy and indignation” (IM, p. 51) that Trueblood had “looked upon chaos and [was] not destroyed” and found “no need to cast out the offending eye” (IM, p. 51).

The accident motif which continues throughout the novel and determines the picaro's fortune is nowhere more pronounced than at this point. Ellison uses a series of unfortunate happenings which plague the picaro and lead to his expulsion from college to put into effect the protean, or changing circumstances of the young man's experience. Thus, in the course of the novel as his fortunes alternate from good to bad to good again, or vice versa, the picaro is seen as a responsible college student, a chauffeur, and then as an outcast who has subjected Norton to the likes of Jim Trueblood, the shellshocked veterans, and the women at the Golden Day (IM, p. 74). Following his expulsion from college by President Bledsoe, he becomes, by turns of fortune, a job seeker, a paint mixer, a boiler tender, a hospital patient, an unemployed boarder, a rabble-rouser, a Harlem leader, an advocate of women's rights, a lover, a rioter, and a trickster. The fluctuation of circumstances contribute to his internal instability and make chaos more and more an intimate part of his life.

Ellison's picaro differs in some respects from his Spanish predecessor, Lazarillo. Although he lives by his wits and must stave off starvation, the nameless picaro's standard of life is better than that of Lazarillo. When the young picaro is expelled from college because he forgets the code, that is, he forgets to lie to Norton to avoid Norton's acquaintance with Trueblood, he is deprived of the intellectual life he enjoys. His search then becomes one not so much for food and shelter as Lazarillo's does, but for self-realization, personal freedom, and vindication. His betrayal by the Brotherhood and the fact that the only visibility he can ever expect to enjoy is his mistaken identity for Rinehart, the Harlem pimp (IM, p. 424-30), lets the reader, along with the picaro, see that nothing is ever going to change for him. The struggle continues and so does the chaos until he falls into the hole. There he accepts his invisibility.

By this time society has made him a trickster. Interestingly enough, his trickery differs from that of the typical picaro. Instead of practicing it for the sake of the deception itself, he seemingly uses the skill only for just causes. Annoyed by the jingle suggested by the doctor to help him recall his identity, but really not foolish enough to try it, he says, “I fell to plotting ways of short-circuiting the machine.” (IM, p. 212). When he has been accepted into the Brotherhood and he wants to repay May, who nursed him back to health and fed and sheltered him following his lobotomy, he tricks her into accepting a one-hundred-dollar bill by saying he acquired it playing the numbers (IM, p. 218). At a party on the evening of the same day, he accepts the new name, Booker T. Washington, but he reports that “he feels laughter bubbling inside” him when he decides to let the brothers think he is acting like Washington while, in truth, he acts like himself (IM, p. 264). Even the wiring of his hole, he says, was done to “illuminate the blackness of his invisibility and vice versa” and to regain the money he has paid to the Monopolated Light and Power before he learned to protect himself (IM, p. 10).

A controlling element of the episodic plot in *Invisible Man* is the dance pattern. Ellison controls the pervasiveness of the story's chaos when he employs the dance pattern to pull the story together. Characters who are important to the telling of specific episodes disappear from the novel never to reappear “in the flesh” again, except, of course, for Mr. Norton, Clifton, and Ras the Exhorter. Yet, there are certain recurrences which give unity to the story. The recurring pattern of the letter – first, in the dream he has of his grandfather and the message contained in the briefcase (IM, p. 35), followed by the Bledsoe-trustee letters, (IM, p. 168) and later the anonymous letter he receives at the Brotherhood (IM, p. 332) – keeps the picaro running, moving blindly, until he falls into the hole and eventually accepts his invisibility.

Ellison permits the picaro to recall earlier incidents in the story which parallel later experiences in which pain and humiliation are unstabilizing forces. The invisible hero's vision of Dr. Bledsoe getting caught eating chitterlings in secrecy, being denounced as a bad example for youth, losing the trustees' money, and finally being relegated to the job of dishwasher in the Automat (IM, pp. 230-31) appeases his desire for vengeance while, at the same time, it eases the shame he feels over his loss of dignity as he eats the hot buttered yams on the street. His experiences with the trustees, that is, their deception in not telling him the content of the letters Bledsoe has written make him afraid to trust the Brotherhood. There is always the uncertainty of what is true and what is not. Later, the picaro's struggle with Ras for the leadership of the Harlem District is to remind him of the battle royal on the evening he was to deliver his high school speech (IM, p. 323).

Many episodes return to the picaro's mind, bringing back incidents, some of which are no more than adventures he mulls over. The most significant episode comes, perhaps, at the subway on Centre Street when he meets Mr. Norton again (IM, p. 500). Here he tries in vain to explain to him the day he was his chauffeur. But his attempt fails once more because Mr. Norton does not even recognize him. Thus, the picaro's invisibility remains intact, as does his loneliness and his uncertainty of his identity. And the world, with its corrupt values, continues its chaotic way never noticing his escape into solitude.

NOTES

¹James A. Emanuel, *Dark Symphony* (New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1968), p. 280.

²Emanuel, p. 293.

³Stuart Miller, *The Picaresque Novel* (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve, 1967), p. 135.

⁴Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: A Signet Book, Published by the New American Library, 1952), p. 19. Hereafter, unless otherwise noted, all citations will be given parenthetically.

PART OF THE LITERARY CONTEXT OF THE WORK OF FLANNERY O'CONNOR

by Phil O'Mara
Jackson State University

About midway in her tragically brief career Flannery O'Connor published an essay on "The Church and the Fiction Writer" in which she noted the absence of important novelists among the alumni of Catholic schools. She could, of course, have mentioned several authors of distinction who had been educated in American Catholic schools and whose contributions to American literature are numerous, varied, and influential; she could have named Theodore Dreiser, James T. Farrell, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mary McCarthy, John O'Hara, and Katherine Anne Porter. She did not do so for the obvious reason that all of them abandoned the Church early in their careers and only Katherine Ann Porter ever recovered her faith. There have been, it is true, some believing Catholic authors other than Miss O'Connor in our literature; one thinks of Paul Horgan and J. F. Powers among cradle Catholics and of O'Connor's friends and correspondents, Caroline Gordon and Walker Percy, among Catholics who came to the faith in adulthood. But most of the literature of the United States in the twentieth century presents to its readers a world in which Christian belief is almost or quite invisible, and in which Christian practices and institutions either share that invisibility or undergo harsh, scarcely qualified condemnation. Christian belief has been articulated occasionally, even in work of major significance, as in the poetry of T. S. Eliot and the fiction of Willa Cather. But the presuppositions of our literary culture have been powerfully secular, and this is unmistakably seen in every genre: in the poetry of Wallace Stevens and William Carols Williams, in the drama of Elmer Rice and Maxwell Anderson, in the fiction of William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway (himself, very briefly, a Catholic convert), in the criticism of Lionel Trilling and Edmund Wilson. Catholicism—its teachings, institutions, and cultures—has perhaps been more fully and sympathetically presented than any of the facts of Protestantism, with Flannery O'Connor's own work helping somewhat to right the balance. But it may still be taken as a parable of the presence of Catholicism in American letters to observe that the successful comic playwright Philip Barry remained a practicing Catholic while the Nobel prizewinning tragic dramatist Eugene O'Neill did not.

Flannery O'Connor, born and raised in a Catholic family, the descendant of the founders of the church in her home town of Milledgeville,⁵ was aware of the minority status of American Catholicism as a social as well as a literary fact. Her education began in a parochial school in Savannah but there was no Catholic school in Milledgeville, and after the family moved there the rest of her education was in public schools. There have never been many Catholics in rural and small-town Georgia, nor were her teachers and associates in college or graduate school Catholics, as far as is known. The southern literary tradition, as it happens, includes a few Catholic figures, such as Sidney Lanier, John Bannister Tabb, and the very minor Abram Joseph Ryan; and Joel Chandler Harris was received into the Church in his old age. But the social fate of

Catholicism in most of the South was obscurity, and in literature it was almost always disregarded or scorned. All the more remarkable is the comfortable and assured Catholic Christianity which is integral to O'Connor's perspective on the world and on literary art.

It may be suggested that some of the immediate circumstances of the time when Flannery O'Connor was reaching adulthood and beginning her career, the 1940s and 1950s, constitute a partial explanation of her confidence. These decades were a large exception, thus far the only one, to the tradition of hostility to Catholicism in American literature. The exception was only partial, but it was distinct and prolonged.

In fact, in the ten years between Flannery O'Connor's entrance into college, in 1942, and the publication of her first book, *Wise Blood*, in 1952, American Catholics published more work of literary significance than they had done in the previous history of English letters on this continent. These were the years in which Daniel Berrigan, S. J., began his career as a poet with *Time Without Number*, in 1952. He had been preceded by the Cistercian monk Thomas Merton, with *Thirty Poems*, 1944, *A Man in the Divided Sea*, 1946, *Figures for an Apocalypse*, 1947, and *The Tears of the Blind Lions*, 1949. Both men were to become active as social critics, in a tradition going back to Orestes Brownson and Bishop John England, two of the most prominent nineteenth century Catholic writers; and both were to inaugurate essentially a new tradition by producing works of spirituality, beginning with Merton's *Seeds of Contemplation*, 1950, that had substantial literary merit. O'Connor's close friend and eventually literary executor, Robert Fitzgerald, was publishing poems and translations during those years. Robert Lowell was converted in 1940 and as a Catholic published *Land of Unlikeness*, 1944, *Lord Weary's Castle*, 1946, and several of the poems in *The Mills of the Kavanaughs*, 1951. Caroline Gordon, the critic and fiction writer, was received into the Church in 1947; she became a close friend of O'Connor's and a frequent correspondent and advisor. Other Catholic writers of the 1940's and 1950's, the years when O'Connor was completing her education and developing her career, included two editors of *Poetry* in Chicago, Henry Rago and John Frederick Nims, both graduates of Notre Dame where O'Connor had several friends; John Logan, the poet, an editor of several little magazines and a professor at Notre Dame, and William Everson, who was for several years a member of the Dominican Order and published under the name of Brother Antonius, O. P. The distinguished and influential anthology edited by F. O. Matthiessen, the *Oxford Book of American Verse*, included selections from Lowell and from his mentor, Allen Tate, who was at that time a Catholic. Another, more contemporary anthology, also widely read and influential, John Ciardi's *Mid-Century American Poets*, 1951, included selections by Nims and Lowell and essays by or about them.

It should also be observed that during these years T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden, officially Protestant but very close to Catholic belief, were active and close to their peaks of popularity. The Christian inspiration underlying the work of Marianne Moore was becoming clear, and Richard Wilbur, another Protestant with sympathies to some elements in the Catholic tradition, was coming to prominence (he too appears in Ciardi's anthology). The literary criticism of the time was deeply affected by a number of Christian critics and scholars, especially by Cleanth Brooks and W. K. Wimsatt who was a catholic.

As a result of the outbreak of the second World War, many distinguished Catholic refugees came to America and added to the visibility and acceptability of Catholicism within our literary culture. These included the Nobel prizewinning novelist Sigrid Undset and the Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain, for

many years resident at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. Maritain was one of the few neoscholastics to devote much attention to esthetic or literary issues (Etienne Gilson, who moved to Toronto, is almost the only other), and his thinking is known to have influenced O'Connor in her earliest formative period.³

Flannery O'Connor's published correspondence shows that she was aware of much of the background that has just been sketched in and that many of the writers involved were her friends. Although her comments on poetry are usually elementary and she was clearly much more familiar with her own chosen form of fiction, she was certainly in touch with many poets, and it seems likely that at least some of the similarities between her work and that of her friend Robert Lowell are the result of direct influence.

Lowell's Catholic poetry had all, or almost all, been written by the time he met Flannery O'Connor; after some vacillation, he made a definitive break with the Church in the late 1940's, after a severe mental collapse and probably in connection with his divorce from Jean Stafford and subsequent marriage to Elizabeth Hardwick. His relation to the Church was a matter of deep importance to O'Connor, who was close both to him to Hardwick.⁴ The poems of his Catholic years bear many similarities to O'Connor's stories. He often used titles drawn from the Catholic liturgy, such as "The Holy Innocents," "The First Sunday in Lent," "To Peter Taylor on the Feast of the Epiphany," and "As a Plane Tree by the Water"; and the texts of his poems are saturated in liturgical references. This compares with the several O'Connor titles with theological, scriptural, and liturgical resonance: "A Temple of the Holy Ghost," *The Violent Bear it Away*, "The Lame Shall Enter First," "Why do the Heathen Rage," "Revelation," and "Judgment Day." Titles of this kind are quite uncommon in other Catholic writers of the time. More significantly, both writers evidence a concern to appropriate within a Catholic sensibility and doctrinal frame of reference the ideas and feelings of a morally rigorous and characteristically American form of Protestantism: in Lowell, Puritanism of the colonial period, and contemporary fundamentalism in O'Connor.

In both writers there is frequent recourse to episodic violence, to the grotesque in circumstance, event and personality, and to moments of profound self-discovery issuing in a newly realized, though not always accepted, proffer of divine grace. Lowell's narrative technique is far indeed from O'Connor's, but his imagery is not so far, and his narrative materials and themes, in such poems as "Thanksgiving's Over," "In Memory of Arthur Winslow," "Her Dead Brother," and "Mother Marie Therese," are much like hers. In one of his early poems, "The Exile's Return," the tone established is one of serious conversation, but the mode is prophetic:

There mounts in squalls a sort of rusty mire,
Not, ice, not snow, to leaguer the Hotel
De Ville, where braced pig-iron dragons grip
The blizzard to their rigor mortis.

Here one also notes a solidity of specification that is reminiscent of O'Connor, though it is also found in much other fiction of the time. The poem, in a sense, is all setting, with the exile's true alternatives of salvation or damnation made explicit only at the end, and the underlying subject not return and restoration but the choice of permanent alienation either in this world or the next. The thread of hope in the poem is presented chiefly by indirection, in references, all in the final lines, to "liberators," lilies, and a cathedral that "lifts its eye." The irony

essential to the poem's structure lies in the realization that every element of expansion is ultimately reduced on unreality: the newly liberated city is gripped not only by winter storms but by the power of evil. The poems end with a reference to the inscription that Dante imagined over the entrance to hell, *Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate*, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here":

Pleasant enough,

Voi ch'entrate, and your life is in your hands.

To be set free from Nazi oppression, to experience an end to the war, is indeed a deliverance, but one whose life is now in his own hands may or may not use his freedom well, and the quotation suggests that the result will most probably be morally disastrous. Such ambiguous deliverances are not at all uncommon in Flannery O'Connor's fiction; one thinks of the new freedom Rayber has, now that he no longer needs to care for his handicapped son, and the certainty that he will abuse it.

A still more striking parallel to O'Connor's concerns and approach may be seen in one of Lowell's best poems from this period, "Falling Asleep Over the Aeneid." Here an unbelieving intellectual confronts a committed Protestant believer, and one is reminded of the irritation that Bible Belt attitudes give to secular intellectuals in "Good Country People," "Revelation," "The Lame Shall Enter First," and several other O'Connor stories. The violence of the Vergil-reader's dream, with its description of human sacrifice, functions like O'Connor's lurid sunsets, as an image outside the character's will, reflecting the conflict that occurs within. Like the Heideggerian *Hulga*, like Rayber and other O'Connor characters, the speaker has hold of a dangerous partial truth, that human values derive much of their human meaning from our mortality, and, led by subconscious energies (symbolized as fire in the poem) that are both destructive and enlightening, he opposes his awareness of death to all sense of supernatural. These are the issues to which O'Connor addressed herself in "The Displaced Person," "The Enduring Chill," and elsewhere, and further exploration of possible parallels between Lowell's early poetry and her fiction seems warranted.

Flannery O'Connor was aware, at least from the time of her failed negotiations with the Rinehart publishing company over her first book, that her fiction was unusual. On the evidence of her letters, she only gradually learned that her Christian perspective constituted a large part of the difficulty. She was, however, well aware of the limitations in American Catholicism that made it hard for her work to be appreciated, and she was probably not surprised that only one Catholic periodical, *Commonweal*, reviewed *Wise Blood* when it first appeared. For some Catholic readers her Christianity itself was invisible; for others, its Catholic dimension or its theological acceptability. In writing as she did she was seeking to reformulate certain issues that have had a long life in the American literary tradition, envisioning the conflict of self and society, for instance, or that between instinctual drives rational modes of action, in the light of Catholic doctrines of personal moral responsibility, divine grace as it acts upon human free will, and the modes of God's presence in the world. Her project was advanced enough, and her techniques sufficiently peculiar to herself, that miscomprehension or inadequate interpretation was to be expected.

The reviewer in the lay Catholic weekly *Commonweal* saw chiefly the Southern grotesque element in *Wise Blood*. He described the characters as un-free animals, and, although he recognized that Hazel Motes is turning to Christ

in the frightful penances to which he subjects himself, doubted that he "redeemed."¹¹ A few years later, in the same journal, the reviewer of *A Good Man is Hard to Find* employed no religious references, noting, however, her characters "are strangers to despair," and describing the final effect of stories as of "a struggle against darkness . . . like tales told in a war tent." A well-known Catholic journalist, Dale Francis, then wrote *Commonweal* to inform its readers that "the Catholicism of Miss O'Connor . . . gives her the viewpoint from which she writes"; but he incorrectly identifies her as a convert mistakenly declares that she had not yet "touched on Catholic sub-matter,"¹² although the volume to which he is referring contains two stories, "Temple of the Holy Ghost" and "The Displaced Person," in which she does. Even later, in discussing *The Violent Bear It Away*, a writer in a Catholic scholarly journal could charge that her work was "deterministic" and thus denied "Free Will, Redemption, and Divine Justice," concluding that O'Connor was "an enemy of literature and of life," whose fiction was "distinctly a Catholic."¹³

This is not to suggest, however, that she met only with misunderstanding her personal life there was frequent contact, as her letters show, with Carol Gordon, with the Fitzgeralds, with her fellow-Georgian "A," who was slowly working her way into the Church, and with many others. Catholic critics did, at times, discuss her work with appreciation and insight. In the late fifties her Oxford-educated Jesuit friend, Robert McCown, published the view that her work compassion usually runs deeper than irony, and that her stories "often show that God-fearing humble parents, no matter how ignorant, shiftless, will generally produce psychologically and morally sound children; a judgment which may surprise some readers now." The periodical in which these remarks appeared, *The Catholic World*, made something of an effort to keep American Catholics in touch both with the state of American culture generally and with specifically Catholic intellectual concerns, with regular columns on contemporary drama, on affairs in Britain, and on the Catholic literary and intellectual revival in continental Europe. In a review of *The Violent Bear It Away* in this magazine, the critic P. Albert Duhamel affirmed that O'Connor's apparent violence is really a mode of prophecy and saw young Francis Marion Tarwater "one of the most challenging symbols of modern man."¹⁴ The same book evoked from the *Commonweal* reviewer observations about her awareness of the prophetic role of her fiction and her similarity to French Catholic novelists.¹⁵

In two other Catholic journals devoted chiefly to discussions of recent books intelligent appreciation of her work was sometimes voiced. In *The Critic*, always the most feisty of Catholic reviews, Rev. F. X. Canfield drew reader attention to the social facts of fanaticism, madness, "wild rationalism," "degeneracy" in *The Violent Bear It Away*, but pointed out that all the characters in the book, in their different ways, try to save one another; ultimate life of the story lies in its "compassion" because its "relentless realism" includes the Redemption as its "pivotal point."¹⁶ Near the end of O'Connor's life the novelist Doris Grumbach, herself then a Catholic, wrote the same journal that *Wise Blood* "achieves . . . the moving reality of the human search for God."¹⁷ In the much more sobersided *Best Sellers*, a journal chiefly intended to help Catholic school librarians decide what to acquire, one prior reviewer praised O'Connor's effective imagery, story-telling power, and compassion; another noted her realism and her sense of the Redemption, :

argued that Tarwater goes wrong by wanting a disincarnate God, not Christ and especially not a Christ present in earthly realities, so that "it is only after he has acknowledged Christ that he can see God in the woods burning."²⁰ In the most wide-ranging, scholarly Catholic journal of the time, *Thought*, an influential educator, then the President of Marillac College, published an analysis of four of O'Connor's stories which found in them parallels to a number of biblical themes such as the necessity of hope and the way in which the weak and simple confound the strong, as well as "ironic humor, . . . rare compassion . . . informed with the action of redemptive grace."²¹

Such appreciation might eventually be expected to arise in scholarly, professionally literary circles. Recognition also came to O'Connor, however, in the more popular Catholic press. As early as 1955, *Today*, a monthly directed chiefly toward high school students active in the lay apostolate, published an article by a friend of hers which declared that her work was true to "The mystery and misery and horror of these lives of the South."²² Later, in the same periodical, a Benedictine teaching sister claimed that O'Connor "sees more clearly than her fellow mortals do, and proclaims more surely the Kingdom of God," with "Realism . . . as plainspoken and blunt as the Bible," and with a Catholic outlook both humorous and unsentimental.²³ *Jubilee*, culturally the most alert Catholic monthly, reviewed some of her work, published her essay on Mary Ann, interviewed her, and after her death published a brilliant prose elegy for her by Thomas Merton, a piece which also contains some acute criticism.²⁴ Another popular monthly, *The Sign*, largely given to devotional writing, with some comment on national affairs and Church issues, offered its readers a biographical and critical portrait emphasizing the "situations of spiritual conflict" and the "light made up of hope and faith in ultimate salvation" in her work. The editors of two Southern Catholic newspapers published her book reviews, and she took this task very seriously; during the last eight years of the her life, despite illness, much time-consuming lecturing, and the writing of her two last books, she prepared about one hundred thirty reviews.

A few of the published reviews (about sixty were not used by the newspapers and remain in typescript; the rest have recently been reprinted in book form²⁵) throw some light on her thought and work, although usually she restricts herself to a rapid survey of the themes of the book, a note about the author's qualifications, and a brief characterizing quotation. One learns from these reviews, as from her letters, that she was impressed by the Catholic thought of contemporary Europe; by von Hugel (p. 133), Maritain (p. 175), Guardini (pp. 148, 165, 174), Edith Stein (pp. 138, 155), Congar (p. 195), and Bouyer (p. 159), among others. She was at first an almost unconditional admirer of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, although she recognized that his thought might also have similar power and depth (pp. 157, 161, 178, 179); but she came to the view that however admirable his saintly life had been, his writings were "incomplete and dangerous" (p. 196). She recognized that value of modern biblical studies and strongly recommended them (pp. 143, 152, 171, 172, 176, 184, 186, 198, 202). She displayed concern for Catholic critiques of the thought of Freud (p. 145) and Jung (p. 158).

The reviews do show how fully religious, cultural and literary issues were unified in her mind. When she praises St. Augustine for his attainment of an experience of "sin and its relation to history" (p. 151), or Guardini for underlining the need for "a conscious unity of existence," a faith that lives in the real world, enlightened by it and giving light to it (p. 174), she is indicating the viewpoint from which she viewed literature too. She finds in Fr. Durrwell's research on

the Resurrection the theme of the presence of the death and resurrection of Christ as permanent realities in the life of the whole Christian people (p. 171); she observes that "for the Christian with Mauriac's anguish others [i.e. All other human beings, because they are objectively redeemed] are Christ," a concept absent from his education to which Mauriac came in maturity (p. 154), and one which she regards as more meaningful than its Sartrian opposite. She is glad when, in Fr. William F. Lynch's book *Christ and Apollo*, "man is shown to be the limited creature he is" (p. 154; cf. also p. 188), as opposed to the romantic and undefined preference for possibilities over actualities, and she has no use for Christ-figures in fiction, "attempts which by their nature must fail" (p. 177). It is of interest to the student of her fiction to note that she found solemnly bad anti-Catholic novels hilarious (p. 185), that she had a great interest in Christian critiques of American culture (pp. 142, 164, 166, 192, 203), and especially that, while she found stories of diabolical possession unconvincing, she thought the evidence for the "more generalized activities of Satan" was "terrifying" in its conclusiveness and held that "The Christian drama is meaningless without Satan" (p. 182). Cumulatively the reviews, which by their sheer numbers prove her willingness to serve her fellow-Catholics, demonstrate a continuing assurance in judging the questions of the day from a Catholic theological perspective, and in calling for a more complete assimilation of the full Catholic tradition into American culture.

In one passage only does anything appear which seems to bear directly on a specific story of hers. In reviewing an essentially Jungian work by Fr. Victor White, O. P., she comments on the power of archetypal images of Christ:

In discussing the prevalent lapse of Catholics brought up in Catholic homes and educated in Catholic schools, Fr. White observes that this is very likely a failure of our sacred images to sustain an adequate idea of what they are supposed to represent. The images absorbed in childhood are retained by the soul throughout life. In medieval times, the child viewed the same images as his elders, and these were images adequate to the realities they stood for. He formed his images of the Lord from, for example, the stern and majestic Pantocrator [sic], not from a smiling Jesus with a bleeding heart. When childhood was over, the image was still valid and was able to hold up under the assaults given to belief. Today the idea of religion of large numbers of Catholics remain trapped at the magical stage by static and superficial images which neither mind nor stomach can any longer take. (p. 158)

One is reminded, of course, of the image of the Pantocrator, derived from an icon, which appears in - and on - "Parker's Back."²⁶ More generally, the reflections in this review, which dates from 1960, may well be related to the distinctly iconic character of several of the images in her last short stories: the bull in "Greenleaf," the lake monster in "A View of the Woods," the bird that represents the Holy Ghost, "emblazoned in ice instead of fire" in "The Enduring Chill,"²⁷ etc.

In Flannery O'Connor's later years the embattled character of the Catholic faith, and of all forms of Christianity, was obvious to her not only in the general state of modern culture but in a markedly personal way through her correspondence with ex-Catholics like Cecil Dawkins, Alfred Corn, and eventually "A." The work of Catholic writers whom she respected, like Paul Horgan and Madison Jones, remained in obscurity.²⁸ Her reading, to judge by her library,

was even more religious than literary, and was especially concentrated on Christian humanists who were especially vigorous in their analysis of the weaknesses of the modern sensibility. She owned fifteen books by Mauriac, eleven by the German spiritual writer and philosopher Romano Guardini, and several each by Jacques Maritain and M. C. D'Arcy, S. J.²⁰ She also possessed books by other authors in this tradition, such as Leon Bloy, Charles Peguy, Gabriel Marcel, Etienne Gilson, G. K. Chesterton, Walter Ong, S. J., Christopher Dawson, Gustave Weigel, S. J., and William F. Lynch, S. J.²¹ She heavily annotated works by Emmanuel Mounier, Erich Voegelin, Guardini, and two copies of Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism*.²² She read widely in the entire stream of Catholic literature from the Fathers of the Church through the medieval mystics, St. Thomas Aquinas, and down through Newman to the moderns.²³

Given O'Connor's frequent references to Mauriac, the fact that she arranged for a literary group to which she belonged to read and discuss Bernanos' *Diary of a Country Priest*, and the holdings in her personal library, it is obvious that French Catholicism was on the whole the strongest literary and intellectual influence on her from outside the American literary tradition. Full as the record is of the ways in which that influence reached her, we should not suppose that it is complete. Only late in her life, apparently in response to a casual remark by her teacher friend Janet McKane, did she mention that she had recited, "every day for many years," a prayer to the archangel Raphael, who figures in the book of Tobit, which had been composed by the French litterateur Ernest Hello.²⁴ This author, a novelist, translator and controversialist who lived from 1828 to 1885, is a minor figure, remembered chiefly for his influence on Leon Bloy and his circle; Bloy published his prayers after his death. Like O'Connor he was an invalid although unlike her he was vocally impatient about his afflictions. She may not have been familiar with his career, in which quasi-mystical concepts, some doubtfully orthodox, are combined with sounder attitudes.²⁵ Thus, in the last weeks of her life, appears a reference to a long standing devotional practice which was another link to the French Catholic revival. This suggests how many and varied are the significant bonds between her life and work and the Catholic literary context.

Flannery O'Connor, a richly Catholic writer, was often humorously critical of superficial Catholic foibles, and was at the same time deeply concerned for the authenticity of Catholic life. As unmistakably American as any writer in the canon, like most American writers she consistently questions the foundations of our society. Her fictional *metier* generally did not include characters with whom she herself could identify. Although the schoolgirls in "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" and the priests in "The Displaced Person" and "The Enduring Chill" are entirely convincing figures, for anyone with much acquaintance with southern Catholicism, they are not deeply realized. Perhaps only twice in her fiction, for all her interest in the alienated intellectual, did she envision figures whose real-life counterparts might have read her stories, and she was never satisfied with either of the resulting works, although "The Partridge Festival" is surely successful to some degree and "The Enduring Chill," where not only Asbury but his northern Jesuit friend could have been readers of her work, is among her best.²⁶ The sense that one derives from close attention to her fiction is of a committed and intelligent sensibility that penetrates its material but is not immersed in it, that affirms without adhering. The stance she takes would seem to be founded on standards derived from the intellectual and artistic achievements of European Catholicism.

In one episode of her life Flannery O'Connor was enabled to unite her participation in the grass-roots life of the Catholic Church in the South with her literary vocation and also with her own sense of American literary ancestry. The Introduction which she wrote for *A Memoir of Mary Ann* was, in her own view, of central importance for her work as a whole.²⁷ She worked hard to help the Dominican Sisters write this book about a cancer-stricken little girl, helped them to find a publisher for it, and made lifelong friends of some of the sisters who had cared for the child. Discussing this community in a letter, she writes:

I have more admiration for them than any other order I know. You know it was founded by Hawthorne's daughter? My evil imagination tells me that this was God's way of rewarding Hawthorne for hating the Transcendentalists.²⁸

Her admiration for the work done at St. Rose's Home is clearly intensified by the connection that she perceived between Nathaniel Hawthorne's harsh vision of human nature and the service which the Sisters give to the afflicted. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, Hawthorne's daughter, was converted to Catholicism after his death, and after both her husband and her only child died, she felt that God had called her to the special service of cancer victims who were too poor to provide for their own care. The Dominican Sisters for the Relief of Incurable Cancer, whom she founded, carry on this work. Mary Ann had lived and died in the home which they run in Atlanta. O'Connor's introduction to the book about this child goes to some lengths to show that this congregation of Sisters has some of its roots in Nathaniel Hawthorne's own writing and in his own experience, and that his daughter, their foundress, was herself a talented writer.²⁹

Flannery O'Connor was touched that these sisters would ask for her help. She declared that the experience of working with them had helped her to understand the place of the grotesque in life and in her own fiction, and she accepted the identification of their work with the cancerous poor with one aspect of her own literary vocation.

It is noteworthy that the official name of this group of Sisters is the Congregation of St. Rose of Lima. No doubt the facts that St. Rose was the first native of the Americas to be canonized by the Catholic Church and that she was Rose Hawthorne Lathrop's patron saint had much to do with this choice of name. O'Connor, however, would have appreciated the further facts that St. Rose's personal austerities were of an exceptional ferocity, almost severe enough to rival those of Hazel Motes, and that, like O'Connor herself, she was not a nun but a single woman, an invalid who lived with her family for most of her short life. The O'Connor family library included an old edition of Butler's *Lives of the Saints*,³⁰ from which she could have and probably did learn all of this even if the Dominican Sisters from the Home in Atlanta did not tell her.

The personal and literary context of Flannery O'Connor's achievement, as sketched above, does not go to the heart of her work, as she herself would have insisted. To know the true God experientially, as did Pascal; to recognize the goodness of the world he created, and unlike Emerson, whose "vaporization" of religious faith she despised, to accept the sacramental implications of the central Christian doctrines; to live constantly in an encounter in faith with Jesus Christ as Savior: these, O'Connor believed were the bedrock necessities of Christian existence, and therefore of Christian writing.³¹ These are the realities on which her own fictions focus. Nevertheless, the dramatic tension, intellectual confidence, all-encompassing comedy, and compassionate exactness of the rendering of modern life in these works may be better understood if we place them in this context of the literary and personal renewal of Catholic spirit by which their author was sustained.

NOTES

- ¹Mystery and Manners (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 1961), pp. 143-153.
- ²Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: a Life Story* (New York: Scribner 1969), p. 201.
- ³Robert Donner, "She Writes Powerful Fiction," *The Sign*, March 1961, pp. 46-48; Lorine M. Getz, *Flannery O'Connor: Her Life*, *Library and Book Reviews* (New York: Edwin Mellen 1980), pp. 6-11.
- ⁴W. J. Stuckey, *Caroline Gordon* (New York: Twayne 1972), pp. 79-81.
- ⁵Sally Fitzgerald, "Introduction," in *The Habit of Being*, by Flannery O'Connor (New York: Vintage 1980), p. xv. Metz, p. 103, indicates that after O'Connor lost her first copy of this book she read and annotated another copy. References to Maritain are frequent in her correspondence.
- ⁶O'Connor, *Habit*, p. 152.
- ⁷Robert Lowell, "Lord Weary's Castle" and "The Mills of the Kavanaughs" (New York: Meridian 1961), p. 3.
- ⁸Dante, *Inferno*, Canto III, 1. 9.
- ⁹Lowell, pp. 95-97.
- ¹⁰J. W. Simons, "A Case of Possession," *Commonweal*, 27 June 1952, pp. 297-298.
- ¹¹James Greene, "The Comic and the Sad," *Commonweal*, 22 July 1955, p. 404.
- ¹²*Commonweal*, 24 August 1955, p. 471.
- ¹³Robert O. Bowen, "Hope and Despair in the New Catholic Novel," *Renaissance* 13 (1960-61), 147-152.
- ¹⁴Robert McCown, S. J., "Flannery O'Connor and the Reality of Sin," *The Catholic World*, January 1959, pp. 285-291.
- ¹⁵P. Albert Duhamel, "Flannery O'Connor's Violent View of Reality," *The Catholic World*, February 1960, pp. 280-285.
- ¹⁶James Greene, "The Redemptive Tradition of Southern Rural Life," *Commonweal*, 15 April 1960, pp. 67-68.
- ¹⁷F. X. Canfield, *The Critic*, 19 (April-May 1960), 45.
- ¹⁸Doris Grumbach, *The Critic*, 21 (October-November 1962), 95.
- ¹⁹Francis J. Ullrich, *Best Sellers*, June 1955, p. 59.
- ²⁰John J. Quinn, S. J., *Best Sellers*, March 1960, pp. 414-415.
- ²¹Sister Bertrande Meyers, D. C., "Four Stories of Flannery O'Connor," *Thought*, 37 (1962), 410-426.
- ²²John A. Lynch, "Isolated World," *Today*, October 1955, pp. 30-37.
- ²³Sister Bede Sullivan, O. S. B., "Prophet in the Wilderness," *Today*, March 1960, pp. 36-37.
- ²⁴Paul Levin, Review of *The Violent Bear it Away*, *Jubilee*, May 1960, p. 52; Paul Levine, "The Violent Art of Flannery O'Connor," *Jubilee*, December 1961, pp. 40-52; Flannery O'Connor, "Mary Ann: The Story of a Little Girl," *Jubilee*, May 1961, pp. 28-35; Thomas Merton, "Flannery O'Connor," *Jubilee*, November 1964, pp. 49-53. Merton, after comparing her to Sophocles, finds that Americans need the "slashing innocence of that dry-eyed irony" of O'Connor's fiction because a "spurious reverence" is destroying our self-respect. He observes that her urban and rural characters, "two kinds of very advanced primitives," whom she herself respected, "suspending judgment" after "searching for some sense in them," exhibit "the most profound and systematic contempt for reality."

- ²⁵Donner, pp. 46-48.
- ²⁶Metz, pp. 129-203. Subsequent page references to these reviews are given parenthetically in the text.
- ²⁷Flannery O'Connor, *The Complete Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux 1971), pp. 522-530.
- ²⁸O'Connor, *Complete Stories*, pp. 333-334; 356; 382.
- ²⁹Metz, p. 132; O'Connor, *Habit of Being*, p. 529.
- ³⁰Metz, pp. 83-116, lists the books which were in O'Connor's possession at the time of her death, and indicates those that were annotated or inscribed.
- ³¹Metz, p. 72.
- ³²Metz, pp. 83-116; Fitzgerald, "Introduction," in *Habit of Being*, p. xv.
- ³³*The Habit of Being* witnesses to an even wider reading acquaintance with this material than does the evidence gathered by Metz. It should be evident, however, that O'Connor's reading was not systematic and that Metz is mistaken in calling her a "pedant," p. 122. There are major figures, e. g. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance in spiritual theology, to whom she never refers, and others whose work she misunderstood: she refers once to Hopkins' "Spring and Fall" as a sonnet (*Habit of Being*, p. 586).
- ³⁴*Habit of Being*, pp. 590, 592-593.
- ³⁵Ernest Hello figures extensively in the authoritative work by Richard Griffiths, *The Reactionary Revolution: The Catholic Revival in French Literature 1870-1914* (New York: Frederick Ungar 1965).
- ³⁶Father Vogle in "The Enduring Chill" carefully avoids using any metaphor for the Holy Spirit but he does mention both conversion and "the Third Person of the Trinity," thus planting the suggestion which flowers in Asbury's final vision (*Complete Stories*, p. 360).
- ³⁷"In the future, anybody who writes anything about me is going to have read everything I have written in order to make legitimate criticism, even and especially the Mary Ann piece." *Habit of Being*, p. 442.
- ³⁸*Habit of Being*, p. 145.
- ³⁹*Mystery and Manners*, pp. 213-228. Her information about Rose Hawthorne Lathrop (Mother Alphonsa, O. P.) came from the standard biography by Katherine Burton, *Sorrow Built a Bridge* (New York: Image Books 1953).
- ⁴⁰Saint Rose of Lima (1586-1617) was canonized in 1671, so the O'Connor family's 1845 edition of Butler's *Lives of the Saints* (Metz, p. 89) would have contained her life story under her feast day, August 30.
- ⁴¹*Mystery and Manners*, pp. 160-161.

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