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Robinson Blann
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Waiting at Shoney's I

see
a fat lady waiting for her fudge cake a waitress waiting for her tip
a cook waiting for his supper break
and standing people waiting to be seated
seated people waiting to be served
served people waiting for their checks
and the cashier waiting for their money;
there are friends waiting for friends
girls waiting to be flirted with
and boys waiting for the perfect pickup
while all the while there's
Samuel Beckett waiting for Godot
Christians waiting for the Second Coming
Jews waiting for the First
myself waiting for a poem
and Time waiting for nobody.

Words to a Woebegone Lover

(in the spirit of Sir John Suckling's "Why So Pale and Wan, Fond Lover?")

After she's gone
And you've railed against her
For a month of miserable Mondays
Because she left you
Choosing the milky white whey
Of his angelic baby fat face
Over the demon dark handsomeness

Of your own lordly mien,
You must stop your bitter derision
Of her foolish decision
And admit to yourself
That she just didn't fit
The impossible vision
Your romantic mind made of her.
Mayhap she will return--but no matter
Batter not your heart, my fine young friend,
This, most certainly, is not the end.
Go out now
And raise a row.
Find another foxy female for your mate
And chalk this one off to Pyrrhic fate.

A Crossing

The pretty girl with laborious limp
Crosses the old rugged road
Her good hand holding her back,
She swings her stiff foot around.
It's been this way for years
And no one knows
Save the girl
The clattering clamor in her brain
She imagines from everybody's eyes.

Going to Work

The red rising, eye-balling sun
rises in me
the fierce blood lust
of a hundred thousand years
of wild dancing men,
and it almost blinds me

through the safety glass windshield
as I drive
interstate straight
to my cushion soft office
in the concrete heart
of the big city.

Night Song

On nights like tonight
when it is so late
that everyone is finished
except me
and all the lights are out
except mine
when all the lovers have loved
and lost
when all the sing-song drunkards
are snoring in their gutters
and when all the good people are, of course,
dreaming their minds away
snug between sheets of pastel,
I battle like a mad midwife
with a bloody breechbirth,
trying to suffuse life
into backward words,
trying to save a stillborn song
from a grave as dark
as this night is long.

What's the Subject/ What's the Verb? Language Poetry as the New Avant-Garde

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To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now. Samuel Beckett

Poems oscillate between two poles, one a smooth surface which aims to disappear so that the object described may appear as clearly as possible; the other a rough verbal surface which aims at becoming an object itself, reducing the object described, usually, to a metaphor. Think of making a photograph through a chain-link fence. The possibilities are: 1. focusing on what lies outside the fence, thus leaving the chain-link out of focus; 2. focusing on the chain-link, thus leaving what lies outside the fence out of focus. For each picture one option or the other must take precedence.

Most Western poets have favored the latter alternative--creating an object out of words rather than creating an object through words. This is a characteristic of Western poetic practice, even in the case of "In a Station of the Metro," or "The Red Wheelbarrow" which attempts being "Eastern." Ezra Pound's belief that oriental literature tends toward transparency and Western to metaphor led to his discoveries in the field of "imagism."

There are of course degrees of focus on the chain-link: Wallace Stevens, we can say, vehemently describes an exterior world (focuses through the fence) despite the verbal roughness he employs. William Carlos Williams, on the other hand, despite his many nouns, is usually describing the language itself as much as he is a lady or a chicken. In other words, despite an initial feeling of concreteness, the world outside the fence concerns him much less. Marjorie Perloff calls the practice of poets like Williams, Pound, Louis Zukofsky, John Cage, and the Language Poets (whom I'm getting to) the "poetics of indeterminacy."

These poets, she contends, use words as "compositional rather than referential" (23). Their poems are, as Williams said, "machines made of words."

J. Hillis Miller, in his *Poets of Reality*, starts from a slightly different angle, but comes to roughly the same point: the Romantics, he claims, though by dichotomy, an inside and an outside, which led not only to a rape of the land but also to Nietzsche's "death of God," and nihilism; to escape this dead end Modernist writers, he claims, "efface" their egos before the object they are writing about--the object becomes a thing in itself, separated as much as possible from attitudes toward it. This effacement minimizes the "doubleness" of words, thus leading toward a kind of truth. In this scenario writing is "a dangerous hovering between two realms which are incompatible" (37), the "two realms" being imagination and reality. The inside and the outside.

The difference of opinion between Perloff and Miller concerning the case of Wallace Stevens is instructive. Miller considers Stevens to be a major Modernist poet, Perloff thinks he is a hide-bound Romantic. Contemporary poets also break into these two camps on the subject of Stevens, and the reason lies in a debate concerning the object: how, in other words, to focus the metaphorical camera.

Perloff's "poets of indeterminacy" follow the English tradition in objectifying language but differ from Stevens in adding the Continental notion that language is an object in itself which does not necessarily connect to the outside world--that language creates thought, conditions thought, but does not necessarily describe exterior reality (if such a reality exists). The Language Poets, the latest addition to the "indeterminacy" tradition, carry Modernist practice to its logical conclusion: the effacement is finally before the last object, language itself. The Language Poets question the assumption that words "derive from speech and refer to things" (Silliman, *Tree* xvi), or, as Jonathan Culler puts it from a deconstructionist standpoint, meaning is thought of "as the product of language rather than its source" (*On Deconstruction* 110). Just as Derrida questions the notion that philosophy is any more than writing, the Language Poets question the idea that poetry stands outside the writing, is any more than the words that made it up.

Such a position presents a world in which what is outside the fence is never in focus because the artists question the connection between the exterior and the interior, and don't trust the camera to produce an accurate picture. Here every metaphor is a pathetic fallacy; every emotion is both within the artist's skull and the language that he or she uses. If there is an outside, that outside can only be reached by circumventing language: as William Gass puts it: "To look on Being bare, we must strip it of signs" (75). Language poets would not accept a capital B on "being."

The question for poets working in this tradition then is not "is there a break between the I and the Other?" but "How radically will I acknowledge the break between I and the Other?" How far will I leave "communication," and "convention," for the sake of epistomological experimentation?"

Language Poets come in two flavors: those who work with asyntactic language, or at least language very, very aware of itself, but which still operates in a fashion not much different from what we call "poetic diction" and those who use language as an object within and of itself. Thus Lyn Hejinian writes,

> The inanimate are rocks, desks, bubble,
> mineral, ramps. It is the concrete being
> that reasons. The baseboard weighing
> its wall span. (*American Tree* 49)

which is not much different from something John Ashbery would have said in 1949. But P. Inman writes,

> debris clud
>
> (sbrim
> m,nce
>
> (nome,id
>
> (armb,jor,

droit,cur. (*American Tree* 336)

which is not, as far as I can see, designed to be read per se, but rather noticed, scrutinized like a painting.

That first group, which includes writers such as Ron Silliman, Barrett Watten, Michael Palmer, Bernadette Mayer, and Lyn Hejinian, sounds very much like John Ashbery or Louis Zukofsky, while the second--writers like Inman and Robert Grenier--carry on the tradition of Clark Coolidge, Kurt Switters or Kliebnekov: a poetry, in other words, much further outside the mainstream of the English tradition, through arguably inside the North American tradition.

Anyway, these poets, as a group, have been able to produce the two best poetry anthologies of the 1980's; *The Language Book* from 1984 and *In the American Tree* from 1986. These books are important both in the artistic merit of the poems, and in the aesthetic aplomb of the essays. Aphoristic gems like Barret Watten's "A telephone pole is an edited tree" (*Language Book* 30) and "The world is complete/Books demand limits" (*American Tree* 40) or Lyn Hejinian's "Only fragments are accurate" and "certain themes are incurable" (*Language Book* 503) occur fairly regularly in both these anthologies. The anthologies of more traditional poetries, Helen Vendler's from the right for instance, and Andrei Codrescu's from the left, appear pale by comparison. Codrescu, who includes Language Poets in his anthology, finds himself dividing the contemporary avant-garde between Language Poets and poets he calls "the new Romantics." The latter pale in comparison.

Yet, despite, or maybe because of, the brilliance of Language Poets, I usually feel dissatisfied after reading one of the poems. For example, Ron Silliman says in a recent poem, "The fix is in./ Due to declining enrollments, dissertations on sci-fi/are not permissible," and, in reference to society, "The tyranny of the whole molds its parts." As these quotations indicate, Silliman, and incidentally most of the Language Poets, are traditionalist, elitist, and Marxist--they are, in other words, exactly what people who don't like poets think of poets as being. Silliman himself describes Language Poetry as "high bourgeois literature," and continues, "The characteristic features of this position within literature have been known for decades: the educational level of its

audience, their sense of the historicity of writing itself, the class origin of its practitioners. . . " (*Language Book* 168). This is a poetry written by the children of professionals; children with expensive educations who have since excelled in the professions (if they chose to). Language Poetry is Baby Boom poetry.

This is its fundamental flaw. Language Poetry is openly elitist: the Language Poets work within a closed system of friends. Their books and magazines are almost unavailable anywhere outside select bookstores in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Language Poetry depends upon liberal education, liberal government, lots of money, and lots of books--just like the sentimental-romantic poetry they condemn: the emotions and ideas of Language Poets are as dependent upon literary cliche as any other. (And as dependent upon friend networks and federal and state funding.) The Language Poets, despite, or maybe because of, their Marxist theory, have no intention of appealing to the proletariat. The Language Poet network is a mirror image, albeit on a smaller scale, of the east coast establishment which they condemn so vociferously.

Nevertheless the Language Poets are the center of a vital literary movement. They have opened a new field of literary endeavor which carries on and expands work in the tradition of the Russian Formalists. That point will become clearer if we compare the Language Poets and the people the Formalists reacted against so strongly, the Symbolists (a strong influence, one observes, on Hart Crane and Wallace Stevens). The Symbolists, despite trying to "purify the language of the tribe," worked by image, a recognizable object, despite their often confusing language (we know the basics of what Mallarme is talking about, for example, in "The Virgin, the Vivacious, and the Beautiful Day" because we immediately understand the metaphor of the swan). But the Language Poets make language the central object, not the image, though the verbal surface of the poems are often very similar to the Symbolists. A further example: though the language surface of Valery's "The Bee" is disjunctive, the symbolic system is coherent and readable. In a typical Language Poem, however, both the syntactic surface and the symbolic system are disjunctive. The difference lies in a difference of opinion concerning epistemology: the Symbolists thought that Truth exists out

there somewhere and that language merely gets in the way. By transcending "market language" they tried to get to Truth. The Language Poets trust neither language nor Truth. Their relativism potentially cuts them off from all reference.

The surface of a Language poem then is much like that of an Abstract Expressionist canvas: we look at the whole of a thing created by minute attention to a small area. We are therefore confused by the incoherence of something which never had coherence. The artist never intended for the work to be any more than small moments of attention only coincidentally bound within a larger framework.

Language Poetry then builds on several avant-garde movements. Perhaps its greatest contribution to poetry, especially at a time of increasing formalism, is to expand the definition of poetry still further --what else, after all, has avant-garde work ever been but attempts at expansion? The meaning of a Language poem, if it isn't always apparent, is that it is testing the boundaries of the rules governing poems, of even all texts: the limits of the reading contract and the limits of communication and language. How far can we go? asks the text. Maybe, they are saying, "readable" isn't the opposite of "unreadable." By expanding the borders of poetry still further, even in a ridiculous direction, the definition of poetry gets harder to write--poetry becomes more and more the "other category" Marianne Moore wrote about: poetry becomes more and more the unknown set in which the best contemporary writing can flourish.

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The Wedding of Experience and Perception in *The Reef*

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One of the most important critical issues in reading Edith Wharton's 1912 novel has been which of three central characters--Anna Leath, Sophy Viner, or George Darrow--is most worthy of romance. The problem with this critical focus is that the answer to who is best at romantic love unfairly privileges some characters and their points of view at the expense of others. Perhaps readers and critics, in focusing on traditional romance, have been deceived by the very mechanism which temporarily deceives the central character in the novel, Anna Leath.

The issue may not be romantic love, but perceptions, or more specifically, the freedom to see reality independently of the perceptions of others. The reader's question, finally, might be which perception Anna will wed to fulfillment--not which man. Fraser Leath, Sophy, and Darrow each have perceptions which fit their experience--they are quite capable of survival in the lives they have chosen--but Anna has somehow been estranged from her own reality; she has instead borrowed the perceptions of other characters in the novel, and is in search of a sense of reality which suits her own experience.

If the reader looks at Wharton's novel as a traditional romance, with heterosexual love as the focus, then the conclusion is a forbidding one for Anna. In Anna's case, traditional, or heterosexual, romance inevitably means romantic thralldom. In *Writing Beyond the Ending*, Rachel Blau DuPlessis defines "romantic thralldom" as one "script" prescribed by society to uphold socially accepted behaviors. However, "viewed from a critical, feminist perspective, . . . thralldom has the high price of obliteration and paralysis" (67). When we as readers see only through the eyes of romance, then we too are enthralled, and the novel ends as bleakly for us as it does for Anna. However, if Anna escapes the perceptions of Fraser, Sophy, and Darrow, and returns to Owen and

Effie--her own reality--through a modified form of what DuPlessis calls "reparenting" (an emphasis on parent-child rather than husband-wife relationships [82-83]), then Anna surfaces victorious. With this alternate reading, the novel presents an opportunity for Anna to return to the perception of life equal to her experience.

Anna Leath's dilemma began during her early days at the Leath estate--Givre is a world apart. The reader senses this in the shocking transition between this world and Darrow's life in Paris, being at one moment in the enclosure of a hotel room, and the next moment in the expanse of a vast estate. The late master of that estate certainly lived in a world apart. Fraser Leath was remarkably uncommunicative, so silent that Anna once compared him to "a gilt console--yes, that's it, a gilt console screwed to the wall! That's exactly and absolutely what he is!" (99). The reason for Fraser's lack of communication is not explicit, but there is a hint of some motive in the following passage:

> There were occasions when [Fraser Leath] really did look at things as [Anna] did; but for reasons so different as to make the distance between them all the greater. Life, to Mr. Leath, was like a walk through a carefully classified museum, where, in moments of doubt, one had only to look at the number and refer to one's catalogue; to his wife it was like groping about in a huge dark lumber-room where the exploring ray of curiosity lit up now some shape of breathing beauty and now a mummy's grin (95).

As master of the estate, Fraser Leath determined the value of all its objects and events, and did so by using a code utterly meaningless to those around him, including his wife. To her, his value system was unintelligible, and since his was the code of the estate, she and those things she valued were in danger of becoming worthless.

Had Anna been admitted to her husband's code, she would have shared in his power, and in the interpretation of what Givre was to be. However, by denying his wife the privilege of interpreting his code--transforming knowledge into confidential information--Fraser Leath

maintained his complete sovereignty over Givre. So it was that, for Anna, the world of Givre assumed a "ghostly tinge of unreality" (96).

After Fraser Leath's death, Wharton gives us hints that Anna lives for some time without romance. She enjoys the company of her young daughter, Effie, and her stepson, Owen, to the extent that her new lover, George Darrow, becomes discouraged, enough so to have a brief affair. Anna is "preoccupied about her step-son," and she also spends a considerable amount of time getting "frocks and governesses" for Effie (8). Effie is "the fundamental reason for [Anna's] delays and hesitations" with Darrow (323). However, Darrow does finally make it to Givre, despite what he views as Anna's distractions.

Wharton's portrait of Darrow bears a significant resemblance to that of Fraser Leath; like Fraser, Darrow is not entirely open to communication. He is prone to silence, a silence rooted deep in past experiences: "The more [Darrow] saw of life the more incalculable he found it; and he had learned to yield to his impressions without the youthful need of relating them to others" (27). For Darrow, there are chasms of experience between people which cannot be bridged by mere words. Words even fail to adequately describe shared experiences. At one point, reflecting on Anna's beauty, Darrow "felt it to be useless to speak" (272). And in the moments just before they consummate their relationship, Darrow whispers, "Not tonight--don't tell me tonight" (343). Finally, in a pivotal moment of the novel, Darrow flatly refuses to give Anna verbal explanation of his affair with Sophy. He admits to Anna that he loathes such explanations: "I've done a thing I loathe, and to atone for it you ask me to do another. It would put something irremediable between us"(358). Words, he firmly believes, can be more destructive than healing. When Anna wishes to speak, or be spoken to, Darrow shrinks from the banality of words: "Under all his other fears was the dread of dishonoring the hour" (273).

This reluctance to communicate with words, or many times a reluctance to communicate at all, prevents Darrow not only from speaking, but also, at least on one occasion, from listening. "As she [Anna] talked she began to see that Darrow's face gave back no reflection of her words, that he continued to wear the abstracted look of a man who is not listening to what is said to him" (121). His lack

staying the same house should be seen talking together--!" But Owen responds, "They were not talking. That's the point--" (244-45). Owen then proceeds to relate another of Sophy's and Darrow's mystifying conversations. Effie and he were walking in the park when they encountered Sophy and Darrow. Owen reports to Anna that "this time they were not speaking either. We came up close before they heard us, and all that time they never spoke, or stopped looking at each other. After that I began to wonder; and so I watched them" (245).

Anna begins to feel the same haunting sense of inferiority around Darrow and Sophy as she had felt in the presence of Fraser Leath. Sophy and Darrow by their clandestine meetings and subsequent heavily coded communication, lead Anna to believe, once again, that her own perception of life is suspect. In fact, Sophy's and Darrow's perceptions of life appear to be superior even to Fraser Leath's because theirs are infused with the heady excitement of romantic passion. Certainly Sophy and Darrow have it all.

At least Darrow and Sophy would like to make Anna think so, and they maintain this sense of superiority by persistently reminding Anna of her ignorance of their way. Darrow says to Anna, "When you've lived a little longer . . ." (313). Sophy Viner cries out to her, "Someday you'll know!" (318).

No matter to what degree this power play over Anna may be conscious or unconscious in the minds of Darrow and Sophy, both of them stand to gain by maintaining Anna's ignorance. Darrow, by burying his past, will secure his ties to Anna and her wealth. Sophy meanwhile will achieve her ultimate goal, which is to see Darrow happy. Since Darrow's happiness is for the moment dependent on his marriage to Anna, Sophy employs her communicative skills to that end. In conversation with Anna, on a pretense of discussing Owen, Sophy--by employing the voice of traditional romance--completely shifts the subject of the conversation from Owen to Darrow. Anna cries, "I've only my step-son to consider!" Sophy responds with "You don't mean--you're not going to give him up!" Moments later, Sophy says, "I'm not thinking of myself. [Darrow] loves you!" Anna for a moment catches on, saying "I thought you'd come to speak of Owen." Of course that was the purpose of the visit, but Sophy's sympathies are clearly with

Darrow, and Anna's motherly concern for Owen flounders beneath Sophy's romantic passion. Anna is made to believe she must sacrifice Owen's interests in favor of the love Sophy so powerfully describes. "Anna stood motionless, subdued and dominated. [Sophy's] ardour swept her like a wind" (305-07). Anna is so taken by Sophy that she kisses her, releasing in Sophy a flood of tears over lost romance. Though this moment is beautiful in its sincerity, Sophy, by employing the voice of traditional romance, has pushed Anna back into an absolute dependency on Darrow, rendering Anna herself helpless.

In fact, as Wharton depicts her, Anna depends on either Darrow or Sophy during most of the novel. Anna relies on Darrow's perceptions as long as the possibility of marriage, however painful, still seems possible: "She felt restless, insecure out of [Darrow's] sight: she had a sense of incompleteness, of passionate dependence, that was somehow at variance with her character" (318). When the possibility of connubial bliss with Darrow disintegrates, Anna turns to Sophy in a final desperate attempt to understand a situation she herself cannot interpret. We are told in the last chapter, "It was Sophy Viner only who could save her--Sophy Viner only who could give her back her lost serenity" (360). This final dependency rests on the precedent of Anna's subtle indoctrination by both Sophy and Darrow, the voices of traditional romance. Anna believes that Sophy knows something she doesn't; she feels inadequate without that knowledge.

However, Anna is at a disadvantage only if she views life through the perceptions of Darrow and Sophy. Their persistent condescension of Anna reflects their absolute judgment of her ignorance. To them, she is an outsider, and can never understand the important things of life. But what is it really that Sophy and Darrow know? The book gives the answer:

> This is what Sophy Viner knew . . . and with a torturing precision she pictured [Darrow and Sophy] alone in such a scene . . . Had he taken the girl to an hotel . . . Where did people go is such cases? Wherever they were, the silence of night had been around them, and the things he used has been strewn about the room . . . . Anna, ashamed of dwelling on

> the detested vision, stood up with a confused impulse of flight. (341)

This is the information Sophy and Darrow hold in confidence from Anna. Darrow knows the life of hotel rooms and secret romance. Sophy, whether or not she has experienced secret romance before her affair with Darrow, certainly appears equipped to deal with such a life, perhaps based on her "going round" with Mamie Hoke or her watching "the show" at Mrs. Murrett's house (26). Anna has never experienced this life, either in person or vicariously. The knowledge that Sophy and Darrow withhold from Anna colors everything they do, and because it is a knowledge based on experience, it cannot be summed up in the form of words that Anna longs to hear. Darrow and Sophy are right--Anna does not, she cannot, understand.

Wharton dramatizes the disparity between Anna's vision and that of Darrow and Sophy even further in the shocking final scene, a depiction of traditional romance gone awry. This is Anna's terrifying vision of what romance can lead to. The brothel-like accoutrements of Mrs. Birch's abode are so repellent that the reader feels jerked out of a pleasant dream into sordid reality. The fact is that the reader finally sees through the eyes, not of Sophy or Darrow, but of Anna, as Wharton creates vividly for her a life of (in Anna's mind) sordidness.

It is unlikely that Anna will pursue Sophy after this. Sophy has just been swept up by the "turbid current" (25) of Mrs. Murrett in her travels to India. Mrs. Birch tells Anna, "Sophy's restless--always was" (366). Why does the novel end so suddenly, if not to suggest that the course the reader has been manipulated into in the last chapter is not Anna's course, just as the course the reader has been following contentedly through much of the novel--Anna's marriage to Darrow--is not the course for Anna? It's not that it couldn't be a course for her. It's just that Wharton is telling the reader that it isn't appropriate for her.

Anna appears immobile and unfufilled at the novels end. In critic DuPlessis's terminology, she is without a script (67). However, she is only without a script if the novel is read as a traditional romance. The very use of the word "script" implies that, as in any drama, the script may be rewritten, reinterpreted, redramatized.

The script which has been written for Anna by her society, represented by Fraser, Sophy, and Darrow, is that a woman must have a man (either a husband, to Darrow's and Fraser's way of thinking, or a male lover, to Sophy's way of thinking) in order to be fulfilled in life. In Anna's case, these perceptions mean romantic thralldom. DuPlessis suggests, "Thralldom is one version of conventional heterosexual narrative scripts" (66). This traditional script calls for an "all encompassing, totally defining love between unequals." The basis for this inequality is the capability of one party to confer "self-worth and purpose" upon the other party. Though such thralldom could occur in any type of relationship, it is most often present when the dominant partner can maintain an aura of mystery about him/herself (DuPlessis 66). This thralldom could be expected to prevail in traditional heterosexual romances where one partner, by capitalizing on gender differences, creates a gulf of misunderstanding and miscommunication, thereby shoring up a degree of power.

Such a model fits Anna Leath's case. Fraser's and Darrow's reluctance to communicate with Anna perhaps signals attempts to maintain power over her. Sophy, meanwhile, maintains her own aura of mystery, despite the absence of gender differences between Anna and herself. These three enthrall Anna by capitalizing on the ways Anna differs from them. Each knows things Anna cannot, and must not, understand.

DuPlessis suggests several alternatives to romantic thralldom. Each of these alternatives eludes the script of heterosexual romance prescribed by society. These options are reparenting, woman-to-woman bonding, and brother-to-sister bonding (DuPlessis 5). The option that Anna chooses corresponds most closely to reparenting, defined by Duplessis as an emphasis on very early, even prenatal, mother-child bonds. Here the child returns to the mother in an effort to compose "an alternative fiction" to the romantic script written for her by society (DuPlessis 82-83).

This model of reparenting does not fit Anna's case precisely, however. She does not return to her own mother for emotional sustenance. Her option is different. Existing in the rather unique position of widowhood, with its socially-bestowed advantages and disadvantages, she may return as mother herself to a parent-child

triad--mother and two children--utterly separate from the heterosexual tie from which the triad originated.

Neither Fraser Leath nor George Darrow could ever provide the fulfillment Anna finds with her children, natural and adopted. Her love for them is Anna's special knowledge, based on personal experience, foreign to Sophy and Darrow. Theirs is the world of romantic bonds. Darrow feels secure in the presence of a woman of substantial means. Sophy is secure in the knowledge that the man she loves is happy (she believes Darrow will be with Anna). Theirs are satisfactions of the childless. They are not less than, but different from, Anna's satisfactions.

Anna's is the world of child-parent bonds. Her own perceptions appeared most distinct at the moment of Effie's birth, though this moment was brief in the shadow of Fraser Leath; and again, and this time with a more lasting and penetrating light, her perceptions came alive in her relationship with her stepson. Now, at the conclusion of the novel, where else does Anna have to go but back to Givre?

Effie (however weakly drawn she may be) awaits Anna at Givre. She has physically disappeared from the plot, but in the subtext she awaits her mother's return. The fact that we have lost her in the text is but one more example of how completely Anna's world has been read for her as a traditional romance. In such a world, the parent-child bond is merely a side effect of the romance. Yet there was a time, long ago, when Anna felt connected with life, and the connection was centered in Effie (95).

Owen has also temporarily been forced out of the narrative because he too is a threat to traditional romance. At the moment when Anna concludes that her relationship with Owen is irreparably damaged, she is most enthralled by the views promoted by Darrow and Sophy.

Despite Owen's physical absence from the final two chapters, Owen and Anna have enjoyed a remarkable relationship throughout much of the novel. It is between them that the strongest ties surfaced in the days of Fraser Leath, mainly because "Effie was still hardly more than a baby" whereas Owen was "old enough to understand" (99). The relationship between mother and stepson is so intimate that to some readers it may be questionable. Anna thinks, "There were so many things between

[Owen and herself] that were never spoken of or even indirectly alluded to, yet that, even in their occasional discussions and differences, formed the unadduced arguments making the final agreement" (100).

This intimacy means equal power for both parties. There is nowhere to hide, because the lines of communication are always open, not only because Anna and Owen are free to draw from both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication, but more importantly because their coded communication is based on shared experiences, among these their years with Fraser Leath at Givre. Anna says of this time, referring to Owen and herself, "We were like two prisoners who talk to each other by tapping on the wall" (251). Anna felt alienated from Sophy and Darrow, not so much by their coded communication, as by their experiences, which are foreign to her. On the other hand, Anna enjoys an intimacy with Owen because she has shared in his experiences, encouraging in their relationship a private code of communication.

Evidence for the intensity of the relationship between Owen and Anna is best seen at the moment of their greatest pain, a moment which may be seen as pivotal in the novel, severing Anna's strongest bond and yoking her violently with the element, foreign to her, of Sophy's and Darrow's world. In this scene, Anna and Owen are literally in the dark. Owen has just cried out, at the moment when Anna is about to turn on the lights, "Oh, don't--I hate the light!" Of course the light represents in part the painful fact of disintegrated romance between Sophy and Owen. However, the greatest source of pain, which may go unnoticed by most readers (again, reading *The Reef* as a traditional romance renders Owen an obstacle to romance) is that this is the first time the reader is aware that Anna has lied to Owen. Their clear communication is clouded by Anna's attempt to both protect and deprive Owen by withholding information from him. Of course her attempt is futile, but it is in her making the attempt that the damage is done. Owen knows everything. Anna knows that he knows. The artistic control that Wharton has given by allowing these two characters to reach such painful discoveries in physical darkness emphasizes the intensity of their relationship. A brilliant light would have revealed too much, too quickly.

Though Owen and Effie are physically absent from the final chapters, their names keep surfacing in Anna's consciousness. Anna's concern for Effie is apparent long after Effie's physical disappearance from the narrative. And Anna thinks of Owen by name no less than nine times in the last two chapters. Effie and Owen are the loose ends which, though ignored by a more traditional reading of the text, demand Anna's attention. Whereas in traditional readings, Anna's options are closed, in reading "beyond the ending" (DuPlessis), Anna's possibilities are restored. She sees things differently from any other character in the book, and if we could see into her own mind, which we do on rare occasions when Anna is not concerned about following the marriage path, when she is not probing the inside information known to Sophy and Darrow, we would see that what she will marry is not romance, but the bonds, severed from heterosexual ties, of parent and child.

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Introduction to "Modernity: A Problem for All Ages": A Forum

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The whole and species of mankind seems daily to decline and decay . . . for all arts whatsoever, the best authors are the most ancient . . . reason and all human learning shall back me, for certain it is the sun hath descended much lower by many degrees than he was in the time of King Ptolemy. (Geoffrey Goodman, **The Fall of Man** *(1616))*

We are but of yesterday, and know nothing. (Job 8:9)

He [Time] is swifter than the wind, and yet is still as a stone. (Nicholas Breton, **Characters upon Essays, Moral and Divine** *(1615))*

We have a mistaken apprehension of Antiquity; *calling that so, which in truth is the world's Nonage . . . the* present age *is the world's* Grandaevity. (Joseph Glanvill, **The Vanity of Dogmatizing** *(1661))*

England, Modern to the last degree! (Defoe, **The True-Born Englishman,** *(1700))*

Forward, forward let us range,/Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change (Tennyson, **"Locksley Hall"** (1842)); *Let us hush this cry of "Forward" till ten thousand years have gone (Tennyson,* **"Locksley Hall Sixty Years After"***(1886))*

Today the state, tomorrow the nation, next week the world, next month the universe, next year the --uh, uh -- uh, uh -- the UNIVERSES! (Anonymous lunatic shouting in Harvard Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981)

There is no present, only a past and a future. (Xicholco, first-century Nahuatl Indian, electronically fabricated by Donald Mabry, Mississippi State University, 1989)

As alert to history as they may be, intellectuals who practice all those trades denominated by "Mississippi Philologian" speak in an emphatic present tense. For fashion-conscious scholars, every sentence or verse must proclaim its modernity. Nary a word fails to insinuate its originality, newness, and superiority to everything said before (and, thereby, to imply that it might be surpassed by the ambiguously friendly juggernaut of "Further Research"). From the repetitively original jingles of deodorant advertisements to the originally repetitive jangling of literary theorists, writing nowadays has exposed itself for what it has always been--a modernizing projection of the past, future, timeless, and eternal into the open instant of the present utterance. It is therefore no accident that the "Modern" Language Association of America was founded by a group of archaizing old men devoted to antiquarian philology and that the annual bibliography of this organization confers titular modernity on early writers like the "Old English" poets.

Modernity is a topic which comprehends as well as is comprehended. The issue, "what is it to be modern?" comes up in every era; the language used to debate this issue is the language used to debate all other issues of the age. Inherently modernizing, up-to-date language foregrounds the modernity of any statement on any topic. The quotations opening this introduction derive from utterly different traditions, yet all claim to comment on the totality of modern times. All of their authors assume that "all human learning shall back" them, that their radical novelty will not only be supported by all past learning, but will also shove that learning into the back-end of precedentship. In Geoffrey Goodman we have an author who, animated by a crude theological realism, interprets "modernity" as the long-term degeneration of God's universe. In Xicholco, we have a spurious pre-colonial third world poet who was, in fact, born in the high-tech, timeless, and dimensionless space of interactive university computer networks--who, outdoing Maxx Headroom, represents the deconstructed, post-platonic, unauthorized, and reproduced image of his inventor's satirical vision of modern computer-

using humanists. The journey from the cranky, Christian, and priggishly British Goodman to the interfaced, atavistic, and polyculturally silicon-coated Xicholco portrays, in brief, the history of the psychic enlargement and internationalization of modernity. It shows how modernity became a "problem for all ages." Modernity, as the word implies, is a mode, a way and a fashion. Etymological analysis is only one approach, but it does reveal the openness of, to use John Gay's phrase, the "what d'ye call it" of modernity to a variety of critical projects. The plasticity of "modernity" suggests that it may be less a thing than away of thinking, a matter of the cultural and psychological pre-conditions to writing rather than a feature of texts. St. Augustine believes that God sees time as ever-present and ever-modern; but, for us low-down psychologized beings stuck in the world of sense perceptions, he divides time into its past, present, and future components. Like Xicholco, Augustine hypostatizes only the past and the future, reducing present time to an infinitesimal. Dividing past from future, modernity is a means of organizing history, an operation of consciousness. Like that Restoration wit, Mary Manley, St. Augustine tells us "there's no time like the present," that the timeless, eternally elusive character of modernity makes it, as Blake says, the moment in which the poet's work is done.

"Modernity: A Problem for All Ages" features the work of scholars who, like Augustine's present, are just beginning to exist. The following five essays flow from the pens of LSU graduate students, young scholars floating in that limbo-land between student and professor, youth and age, past and future. A few of these students have now passed into the future of academic life, while a few continue, like Wordsworth, to complete the past. All have, like the flying Wallendas, successfully balanced, for a time, on that tightrope of presentness, graduate studies. All have proved themselves examples of what Thomas Browne calls that "strange amphibian creature," modern "man."

"Amphibian" is probably not sufficient to describe the polygenderist, polyspeciesist, and polyaeval criticism of these five budding scholars. The forum opens with Ellen Chauvin's assessment of the character of the "Machiavel." Exploring the character and concept of the unprincipled, present-oriented, and pragmatic superman in Renaissance

drama, Chauvin resolves "modernity" into the anti-heroic personification of a society pre-occupied with the "substratum to a play (and a world) which otherwise seems hopelessly chaotic." Surveying several literary traditions, Chauvin extends the already panoptical *geistesgeschichte* of Jung, Warburg, and Gombrich. She lubricates the dry inquiries of these historians with a daringly Nietzschean evocation of irrationality and senselessness. Although influenced by Stephen Greenblatt's scheme to describe character as a product of culture, Chauvin critiques Greenblatt and his vulgar Marxist coterie, for she makes optimal use of neo-structuralist ideas concerning the deep structure and psychic grammar of literary works.

From Chauvin's not-so-super machiavellian marionette-man, Deborah Jacobs proceeds to the not-so-married (and not-so-masculine) merry men of Farquhar's *Beaux Stratagem*. While Chauvin revels in post-phenomenalism, Jacobs dances through sociology and anthropology. Like Chauvin, Jacobs begins in psychology, defining modernity as a quest for contentment and compatibility, but she contextualizes her characters' desires in a society undergoing radical ideological changes consequent to urbanization. A study in psychic compression, Jacob's quasi-Jeffersonian essay stuffs Chauvin's Florentine universe, a universe extending from Skye to Sardinia, into an enlightenment drawing room. Like Levi-Strauss, Skinner, and Bachelard, Jacobs shows how behavior, attitudes, and space interact with one another. Extrapolating from the structuralism of Robert Scholes and the social history of Terry Castle, she challenges the old assumption that "modernity" means ephemerality, redefining it as the power to make permanent revisions in society. For Jacobs, affection displaces ideology while diachronic narrative becomes the timeless myth of the "modern" world.

Riding the caboose of Jacobs's celebratory train is Henry Russell, whose discussion of backward-running "celestial railroads" examines the Victorian assumption that every tale must end in some modern paradise. Redeeming writers like Tennyson and Kipling from their reputations as dullards and bores (Tennyson, after all, spoke of "ringing grooves of change" because he thought trains rolled in grooved tracks), Russell explains how the Victorian fervor for epic literature encouraged the construction of moral links between the progressive present and ena-

bling past. Russell's dynamically modern nineteenth aches for expansion, for the full exercise of imaginative and moral faculties in wide-open spaces like the plains of India. Russell's own essay, accordingly, is wholeheartedly Arnoldian. A touchstone in his own project to "inspirit" nineteenth-century authors, it tries to coordinate, in one master-discipline and one Swinburnian essay, the best that has been learned and thought in the world. In its quest for comprehensiveness, Russell's essay proves naggingly modern, for it exploits that oversupply of data which has come to characterize our "information" age. Like Pound, Eliot, and other post-Victorians, Russell fashions himself as a modern community spokesperson who invokes past didactical traditions for the benefit of future readers.

Pat Gardner brings out the inside of this modern spokespersons in her "Embarrass My Dog," a polemical essay debunking the notion that "physical," "emotional," and "moral" "stripping" epitomize modernity. Putting the clothes back on the naked poet, putting the secret writer back in the closet, Gardner affirms the marginalization of tawdry grubs like Alan Ginsberg. Firing a critical salvo at fringe feminism while blasting away a great deal of critical nonsense, Gardner campaigns for "shyness" and "restraint" as the quintessential modern idiom. Her own critical idiom is, fortunately, anything but stripped. Dressed in James Olney's theories of autobiography, cosmeticized with Derrida's feeling for "presencing," and stage-set with Sylvia Plath's explosively self-confrontational discourse, Gardner confronts that shattering sense of psychic crisis, psychic immediacy, and psychic redemption which erupts in modern works. Like Russell's, Gardner's "modernity" is post-romantic and post-transcendentalist, for it prayerfully invokes an intuition of the paradoxically communal, even supernatural, character of privacy. Like Jacobs, Gardner shows how community and radical individuality combine in a mentality half-genius, half-neurosis, and wholly modern--a mentality that *is* the present.

"Modernity: A Problem for All Ages" climaxes in Michael Crumb's "THE DRUM," an essay charting a course from modernity to its *recherche* counterpart, post-modernity. Working beyond the leading edge of modernist studies, Crumb, like Gardner, presents himself as a radically individualistic citizen of an overly complex universe, a universe

which has dissolved into too many genres, media, and informations, but a universe which, in its emphatic, critical richness, often springs into new, surprising, and hybrid forms. Post-post Althusserian-post-Marxist, Crumb's essay deals with two features of modernity/post-modernity: repetition and reproduction (drum-beating) and the problem of creating the genre, "modernity," in a post-modern world. Drawing on influences from Adorno to Orson Welles and from Heidegger to Cyberpunk, Crumb delivers a modernity which, constantly renewing itself but also constantly distancing itself from its antecedents, cannot help but be new. Like Chauvin, Jacobs, Russell, and Gardner, he creates a modern man whose alienation from himself and his signs is itself a sign of his individuality, of his irrepressible, inexhaustible, and yet reproducible newness.

"But now another garb of speech with us/Is priz'd,and theirs is thought ridiculous,/As ours perchance will be when Time, who changeth/Things changeable, the present phrase estrangeth," laments the historiographer George Wither. Wither's somber warning, that time pushes signs and symbols farther and farther apart, comes as good news for our five post-deconstructed proto-modernists, for all five argue for the permanence of that ever-reproducing commodity, modernity, and for the timeliness that all modern utterances imply. "Nothing," says Michael Drayton, is "esteemed in this lunatic age but what is kept in cabinets and must only pass by transcription," but it is to be hoped that, in valorizing transcription, reproduction, and all the other meaning-enriching acts that make up modernity, Chauvin, Jacobs, Russell, Gardner, and Crumb will entice readers to keep *POMPA* out of their drawers and instanced in the modern consciousness!

Machiavelli and the Machiavel: The Man and the Mannequin of Modernity

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By the time Elizabeth I ascended to the English throne in 1558, the links in the Great Chain of Being, by which all things in creation were securely connected, were becoming twisted and corroded. Nicolaus Copernicus, for example, published *De revolutionibus orbitum coelestium* in 1543, overturning the Ptolemaic cosmological system, and Michel de Montaigne in his *Essays* (first published in 1580) questioned man's superiority in creation, stressing the omnipresence of human pride and weakness and the belief that animals, like men, have souls. In addition, humanism in general challenged the medieval ontology, for the 'new' philosophy exalted man his present life as opposed to God and the afterlife and stressed the perfectibility of the individual in this world. Even so, the majority of English people translated medieval notions or order and harmony into their concept of government and saw their sovereign as God's appointed deputy on earth, answerable, like all persons, to Him.[1] Yet it seemed to most Elizabethans that there was one man in particular who sought single-handedly to destroy all order in God's world, and that man was none other than Niccolo Machiavelli.

By far the most illustrative example of the encounter between the thought of Machiavelli as expressed in *The Prince* and *The Discourses* and the culture of Elizabethan England is the Elizabethan stage figure, the Machiavel--a character who, for most Elizabethans, represented horrific modernity. Ironically, the prototype for these Machiavels motivated by a joy of maleficence for its own sake is none other than that infamous Marlovian exemplar of villainy, Barabas. In actuality, however, I believe that Barabas is a comic caricature of Elizabethan Machiavellianism--a ludicrous mannequin of modernity--which Marlowe contrasts with *The Jew of Malta*'s representative of true policy, the governor Ferneze.[2] Moreover, the playwright's substitution of villain and hero within this play (accomplished with a sleight of hand that might be called

Machiavellian) enables him to create a far more chillingly accurate practitioner of the philosophy of *The Prince* and to critique both Elizabethan typology and politics. *The Jew of Malta*, then, which has remained such an enigma to critics that most have considered it at best a spectacle and at worst an artistic failure, represents on the contrary a highly complex and intellectually challenging revision of the Elizabethan appreciation of Machiavelli's thought.[3]

Despite the complexity of *The Jew of Malta*, we can come to grips with some of the concepts in Marlowe's play by focusing our attention on Barabas. Marlowe bases his pernicious miscreant, as before suggested, on popular Elizabethan myth concerning Machiavelli. Of course, I am not suggesting here that the Elizabethan conception of Machiavelli was completely unfounded. As Felix Raab explains in *The English Face of Machiavelli*, it was the grim phantom of the secular state which lurks about the pages of *The Prince* that alarmed most English scholars of the Renaissance. Before we conclude that the phantom is a mere product of overactive imaginations, however, we must recognize, as Raab does, that "the Secular State is implicit in Machiavelli in his divorce of theology from politics and the function of religion in society consequent upon it."[4] While the Florentine certainly did not invent the political diseases he studied, his methodology in *The Prince* was unprecedented in that he replaced the moral core of history and politics with human puissance. Whether or not we choose to see that moral core as indicative of "the imaginary kingdoms of the moralists"[5] or as an actuality is irrelevant; to the majority of Elizabethans, Machiavelli had attempted to usurp the role of God, and it is precisely because of his methodology and his lack of moral consideration in his treatise that he becomes a handy opprobrious label for opponents in a myriad of situations as well as an intriguing stock figure on the Elizabethan stage.

Elizabethan reactions to Machiavelli, therefore, were understandable, and yet we cannot deny that the soil of justifiable disapprobation was mixed with a compost of superstition and gross libel. Granting, then, rational roots for the legend of Machiavelli in Elizabethan England, we must concentrate more closely on the irrational outgrowth in order to understand Barabas.

From the time of the earliest English indictments against the Florentine, Machiavelli's name was coupled with atheism and Satan, and his treatise was seen as a spiritual poison.[6] Particularly important is the fact that the atheism charge was followed by declarations of satanic allegiance. As Mario Praz explains in *Machiavelli and the Elizabethans*,

> . . . the most fruitful side of the Machiavelli myth was the representation of the Florentine as an instrument of Satan, as ridden by an incubus, as the Secretary of Hell, as the devil himself turned moralist. So much did the terms Machiavelli and Satan become interchangeable that, whereas at first the tricks attributed to Machiavelli were called devilish, later on the Devil's own tricks were styled 'Machiavellian'. . .. By an inversion of the process which had resulted in Describing Machiavelli as a devil, the Devil himself became tinged with Machiavellianism.[7]

As an instrument of the devil, or as the devil incarnate, Machiavelli was accused of every conceivable sin, but he especially became noted for ridding himself of human obstacles with poison. Margaret Scott states, "Everyone knew that Italians, especially the Borgias, whom Machiavelli admired, were addicted to poisoning each other. Consequently, Machiavelli, who may counsel murder but nowhere enjoins the use of poison, became in legend . . . [a] fiendish . . . poisoner." In addition, popular accounts of the Florentine's life claimed that he had lived vilely, had abhorred his neighbor as well as his country, and had died despairing:

> The brocher of this Diabolical Atheisme is dead, and in his life had never the felicitie he aimed at, but as he becam in craft, lived in fear, and ended in dispaire. . .. This murderer of many brethren had his conscience seared like Caine; this betrayer of him that gave his life for him, inherited the portion of Judas: the Apostata persished as ill as Julian.[8] (Robert Greene)

Another important aspect of the legend of Machiavelli involved his supposed interest in pecuniary matters. We see this idea in the writings of the French Huguenot Innocent Gentillet, who fumes at "Machiavellians" who accumulate "great heaps of money" and amass "riches and heapes of the treasure of the Realms, whilest it is in trouble and confusion."[9] In *A Groats-worth of Wit* Greene also mentions Machiavelli's love of filthy lucre: " . . . saw I never him, that I esteemed as my friend but gold."[10] On the whole, Machiavelli became so infamous in Elizabethan England for rapacity and other innumerable sins that even his name was distorted to serve as an emblem of his villainy--he became "Match a villain," "Mach-evill," "Hatch-evil," and, finally, "Old Nick."[11]

All elements of the incredible Machiavelli converge in Marlowe's parody of legend, Barabas. Like the hyperbolized Florentine, Barabas is a mammonist, poisoner, and demon rolled into one, and his name, like Machiavelli's Elizabethan aliases, typifies his depravity. Besides being linked to the Biblical insurrectionist and murderer who was freed in the place of Christ, various critics have shown that Barabas is also tied to Judas, to an Anti-Job, and to the Antichrist himself.[12] Moreover, in a perverted parody of the Savior's life, Barabas becomes a victim of political expediency (I.ii.), and we witness his "death" (V.i.), "resurrection" (V.i.), and finally moments on earth before he truly takes leave, a denouement wherein he commends his spirit via his curses to his infernal reward (V.v. 78-79). Of course, we must remember that our monstrous deceiver is ultimately deceived by the Machiavellian ingenuity of Ferneze. Nevertheless, Marlowe's parody of legend is complete, for Barabas, like the Machiavelli he represents, is an antithesis of Christ as well as an emissary of Hell--perhaps even the devil himself. But in *The Jew of Malta,* when Elizabethan legend confronts Machiavellian reality, legend is destroyed--on a comic level, Barabas returns to the crock from whence he came.

Generally, then, Marlowe pours a ridiculous amount of evil into his creation, stressing the fact, I believe, that Barabas is meant to be seen as a grotesque distortion. And lest we miss the dramatist's point by assuming that Barabas' dark Biblical affinities and his insane delight in both extermination and gold are meant to be taken seriously, Marlowe

suggests in other ways that his mannequin of modernity is fictitious. We know from Henslowe's diary, for example, that the actor Edward Allen played the role of Barabas with a prodigious, obviously fabricated nose,[13] and we can further note that Barabas is absurd in the sense that he lacks intelligence and foresight. He can manipulate characters, for instance, and obtain apparent success, but then some foolish error surfaces and he is forced into another plot in order to cover his tracks. As a result, his intrigues fall domino-style and become ludicrous. All in all, Marlowe continually couples Barabas' twisted deeds with the figure's absurd nature, thereby rendering his mannequin's deviltry both comical and sinister, and his play paradoxical, for the dramatist simultaneously creates, undermines, and destroys his own stereotype. Even more complex is the fact that the stereotype functions as the intellectual and dramatic contrast to the governor Ferneze, a more insidious character who literally follows Machiavelli's precepts to become a legitimate representation of the Florentine's prince, or, more specifically, a legitimate stereotype of modernity.

It is Ferneze, therefore, who emerges as the man most likely to succeed in the miasmic political and social milieu of Malta, yet we cannot applaud his unsavory performance. We can only wonder how long the governor will be able to maintain his position, for the only thing that seems certain in a Machiavellian world is constant political upheaval. Perhaps in creating such a play, Marlowe is implying that a Machiavellian world exists only beyond the English Channel, for it is clear that no Protestants or Englishmen set foot on Maltese soil. And yet, a spirit of jingoism does not pervade *The Jew of Malta*. If Marlowe wished to champion English politics, it is likely that he would have been more explicit in his play by providing the audience with at least one shining representative of Elizabethan orthodoxy in order to present a patriotic alternative to the Machiavellian actuality he depicts. But there is no alternative in the world of Malta. It seems more probable, then, that Marlowe is suggesting that all governments operate on Machiavellian tactics, cleverly cloaking their treacheries in religious garb. In this light, the dramatist's irony becomes consummate, particularly if we remember the words of Machiavel himself in Marlowe's Prologue:

But whither am I bound? I come not, I,
To read a lecture here in Britain,
But to present the tragedy of a Jew.[14]

The gloating Florentine does indeed "read a lecture" to the audience, showing that success in any political arena, whether it claims divine auspices or not, is due to the calculated pragmatism which Machiavelli defends. Marlowe's implications, then, are pessimistic and subversive, yet the dramatist nevertheless wishes us both to recognize and to condemn the unethical actions of those governed by greed and ruthlessness in his play. Though he offers us no viable alternative to a political sphere dominated by cunning policy, he nevertheless intimates the fruits of twisted endeavors: the comical fiend Barabas falls into an iconographic burning cauldron, and we realize that the more sinister Ferneze, and those who subscribe to his methods, is likewise cutting his own clear path to Hell.[15]

Marlowe, then paints a graphic picture of both the ludicrous legend of the Florentine and of Machiavellian reality in *The Jew of Malta*, and the contrast provides a coherent intellectual substratum to a play (and a world) which otherwise seems hopelessly chaotic. In other words, Marlowe's drama reflects a world which made no sense, but it is a sensible critique of that world. Even so, Machiavelli himself--and perhaps Marlowe as well--would only wryly smile at the ugly actuality depicted in *The Jew of Malta*, particularly since so many commentators have for so long misunderstood. As the Florentine explains in chapter 18 of *The Prince*, "Everybody sees what you [the prince] appear to be; few make out what you really are" (150).

Footnotes

[1]For a superb explanation of the foundation of Tudor politics, see G. R. Elton, *England under the Tudors*, 2nd ed. (New York: Methuen and Co., 1972), 398-400.

[2]Catherine Minshull, "Marlowe's 'Sound Machevill,'" in *Renaissance Drama: New Series* XIII, ed. Leonard Barkin (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1982) interprets the play similarly. She explains, however, that

Marlowe bases Barabas' character on Gentillet's *Contre-Machivel*. I feel, instead, that Gentillet's work generally mirrors the popular Elizabethan conception of the Florentine, not the other way around.

[3]A few recent commentators have begun to recognize the comical aspects of Barabas's character. See, for example, Emmanual Asibong, *Comic Sensibility in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Devon: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1979) and Erich Segal, "Marlowe's Schadenfreude: Barabas as Comic Hero," in *Veins of Humor: Harvard Studies in English No. 3,* ed. Harry Levin (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1972). Nonetheless, although these critics view the play in a more positive light than hitherto, they generally ignore the role of Ferneze in their analyses.

[4]Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 61.

[5]Allan H. Gilbert, ed. and trans., *Machiavelli: The Prince and Other Works* (U.S.A.: Hendricks House, 1984), 19. My final quote is from this edition.

[6]Reginald Pole sounds one of the first extant blasts in England on the anti-Machiavellian trumpet. Raab explains that Thomas Cromwell had apparently recommended a pragmatic treatise on the philosophy of good government to Pole. Presumably the work was Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Pole concluded in dismay that the treatise was written "by the finger of satan as the Holy Scriptures are said to be written by the finger of God" (in *The English Face of Machiavell,* 137-152). Later in that same year, Pole was driven to caution one of Cromwell's henchmen, John Leigh, "against reading the story of Nicolo Matcheuello, which had already poisoned England and would poison all Christendom" (in Gordon Zeeveld, *Foundations of Tudor Policy* [Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1948], 14).

[7]Mario Praz, *Machiavelli and the Elizabethans* (England: Oxford UP, 1928), 37.

[8]Both quotes are in Margaret Scott, "Machiavelli and the Machiavel," in *Renaissance Drama: New Series* XV, ed. Leonard Barkin (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1984), 154.

[9]In Minshull, "Marlowe's 'Sound Machevill,'" 44.

[10]In Edward Meyer, *Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama* (New York: Burt Franklin, n.d.), 68.

[11]Ibid, 68-69, 93, 116-117, and Scott, "Machiavelli and the Machiavel," 154.

[12]See, for example, G. K. Hunter, "The Theology of Marlowe's The Jew of Malta," in *Christopher Marlowe's "The Jew of Malta,"* ed. Irving Ribner (New York: Odyssey Press, 1970, 179-218 and Harry Levin, *The Overreacher* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1952.

[13]From James L. Smith, "The Jew of Malta in the Theatre," in *Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Brian Morris (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), 12.

[14]From Irving Ribner's edition of the play (*Christopher Marlowe's "The Jew of Malta,"* [New York: Odyssey Press, 1970], 28-30).

[15]Machiavelli's notion of the nature of the state may be seen as a mere recognition of the actual state of affairs then extant in Renaissance Italy (and in many places and times before and since) or as something more radical. Specifically, it may be construed as a reductively cynical, bitter reaction of a disillusioned idealist--a needlessly pejorative, and thereby dangerous, view of man and his life. The latter estimation obviously dominated Elizabethan thought on the Florentine's teachings, while the former, based on my interpretation of *The Jew of Malta*, seems to represent Marlowe's estimation. Even so, Marlowe--whatever his personal religious affiliation (or lack thereof)--indicates the true nature of Ferneze, as well as the nature of his council, with some startling Biblical parallels wherein members of the Maltese government represent Caiphas, the Jewish High Priest who spoke before the Sanhedrin concerning Christ, and Pilate himself (James H. Sims, *Dramatic Uses of Biblical Allusions in Marlowe and Shakespeare* [Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966], 84-86 and R. M. Cornelius, *Christopher Marlowe's Use of the Bible* [New York: Peter Lang, 1984], 194-197). To an Elizabethan audience, Pilate, for example, was thoroughly reprehensible, and his hypocritical deceit in the handling of the Prince of Peace marked him for Hell. Douglas Cole, who traces the figure of Pilate through the mystery plays down to the Elizabethan period, explains that the politician is the "great grandfather of the sons of Machiavelli"--he then includes Barabas as one of the double-dealer's descendants (*Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1962], 20). We have seen that the protagonist is indeed related to

many infamous Biblical figures, but Marlowe specifically reserves the role of hypocritical pragmatist for Ferneze. Thus, as we watch Barabas become a victim of pharisaical expediency, we recognize that, as ludicrously sinister as he is, the bloodthirsty terrorist pales in comparison with Marlowe's intellectual demagogue, Ferneze.

Rewriting the Rules: Modern Marriage in *The Beaux' Stratagem*

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In a 1936 address to the Modern Language Association, Ellen Glasgow declared, "No idea is so antiquated that it was not once modern. No idea is so modern that it will not some day be antiquated."[1] Glasgow's comments reveal the paradox that "modernity" represents: time and all its synchronicity is emphatically diachronic. While all human societies are in a constant state of flux, only those changes which permanently or radically alter a given society are ultimately adjudged "modern." And such changes are seldom recognized immediately; they are only recognized once the change ceases to be the exception and becomes instead the rule. Thus, while society tends to focus upon the synchronic aspect of "modernity," we should recognize that modernity itself is inherently diachronic. It is the passage of time which enables us to look back and determine that some past event was "modern."

It is just such a passage of time which enables us at this time to view George Farquhar's last play, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, as a modern play, modern because it dares to concern itself with an issue much suppressed by society and custom until the past several decades--the issue of divorce. Farquhar's contemporaries were greatly disturbed by the apparent divorce which facilitates the denouement of the play's action.[2] Nineteenth-century audiences were beguiled by edited versions of the play, so that the issue of divorce would not offend their sensibilities.[3] However, the rate has climbed steadily throughout the twentieth century, reaching a peak in 1980, when for every two couples married in the United States that year, one couple divorced.[4] And although the divorce rate has declined some what from its 1980 peak, the statistics for 1988 indicate that the divorce rate, for Americans, is once again on the rise.[5] Thus, to a contemporary audience, George Farquhar's play concerning divorce, written two-hundred-and-eighty-two years ago, seems remarkably modern.

Even though Martin Larson has revealed to us Farquhar's indebtedness to Milton's Divorce Tracts for his dialogue on the divorce,[6] this indebtedness in no way diminishes Farquhar's own modernizing contribution to the debate on modern marriages. In *The Beaux' Stratagem*, George Farquhar juxtaposes marriages and liaisons to demonstrate that the social/sexual values of an agrarian society differ significantly from those of an urban society--that, for this reason, society must be prepared to redefine sexual relationships in the modern, urban world. In an agrarian society, the emphasis is normally upon fertility--upon constant growth and increase, upon the production of crops and offspring in all forms of domesticated animals[7] (including the squire's wife). The marriage for social or financial gain, with its emphasis upon increase and upon the consolidation of land and wealth, provides a microcosmic expression of the ideals of an agrarian society. In *The Beaux' Stratagem*, Farquhar displays four such microcosmic expressions of agrarian society for our consideration. The contrasts between the Sullen marriage and the other three microcosmic expressions of sexual relationships (Boniface's marriage, the Archer/Mrs. Sullen relationship, and the Aimless/Dorinda relationship) reveal Farquhar's lesson for modern society.

Boniface's marriage, like the Sullen marriage, was a marriage of failed fertility, for Boniface, like Squire Sullen, lives on strong ale. Boniface, as an alcoholic, in all likelihood is no longer capable of performing sexually. His wife died from qualifying her ale "every now and then with a dram"[8] of usquebaugh. Usquebaugh is an Irish liquor, and the literal meaning of the word is "the water of life,"[9] an euphemism for seminal fluid. Mrs. Boniface received this usquebaugh from "an honest gentleman" (I.i.57), an Irishman. The gift Mrs. Boniface received proved to be her undoing, for Boniface admits that "the poor woman was never well after that" (I.i.58-59). When Aimless questions whether it was the usquebaugh that killed the innkeeper's wife, Boniface's reply reveals a more immediate cause of his wife's death:

> My lady Bountiful said so. She, good lady, did what could be done; she cured her of three tympanies, but the fourth carried her off. (I.i.62-65)

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "tympany" as a "morbid swelling of any kind."[10] By themselves, Mrs.Boniface's "tympanies" suggestively evidence some sort of indefinable disease. Here, however, "tympany" functions together with two other sexually charged words; the first, as already noted, is "usquebaugh"; the second is "bottle." Mrs. Boniface, her widower informs us, received from her Irish gentleman friend "a dozen bottles of usquebaugh" (I.i.58). A bottle is hard, it stands erect, it is swollen beyond its neck, and the bottles in question were filled with "the water of life." Mrs. Boniface's tympanies were not tympanies at all, but rather pregnancies which had to be terminated because she and her husband were no longer enjoying even occasional sexual contact.

Taken as a whole, Boniface's exchange with Aimwell suggests that Boniface and his wife were no more sexually compatible than Squire and Mrs. Sullen. There is additional evidence of sexual incompatibility between Boniface and his wife, for even when the innkeeper and his wife were still enjoying a sexual relationship, his wife apparently felt the need for additional male companionship. As their daughter Cherry informs us, there is reason to doubt her paternity:

> What a rogue is my father! My father! I deny it. My mother was a good, generous, free-hearted woman, and I can't tell how far her good nature might have extended for the good of her children. This landlord of mine, for I think I can call him no more, would betray his guest, and debauch his daughter into the bargain....
>
> (I.i.324-330)

From Boniface's marriage, consequently, we may predict the future of the Sullen marriage if that ill-suited couple are forced to maintain the sham that their marriage represents. Like Boniface, Squire Sullen is an alcoholic, and like Boniface, Squire Sullen's alcoholism has begun to affect his sexual performance. Although the Squire still sleeps with his wife [that is, he still lies by her side at night (V.i.29-30)] Mrs.Sullen's frustration, discontent, and attempts to arouse her sottish husband (pun intended) alert us to the almost total absence of sex from their marriage.

Like Mrs. Boniface, Mrs. Sullen has begun looking around for male companionship. Unless she is released from her marriage through divorce, Mrs. Sullen will eventually follow the road taken by Mrs. Boniface--the passing off of a bastard as the legitimate heir to her husband's estate.

The interpretation of the Aimwell/Boniface exchange which I have just offered differs radically from any heretofore offered by a literary critic; it also radically alters the common perception of Lady Bountiful, for it makes Lady Bountiful an abortionist. In the past, critics have viewed Lady Bountiful in an exceptionally positive light, the embodiment of the ancient English tradition of hospitality and communal beneficence. The interpretation I offer suggests a greater complexity to her character, an ironic component to her cognomen.[11]

We should note that Farquhar's Lady Bountiful presides over an agrarian society which should champion abundance, but one which has become curiously diseased and unproductive. Lady Bountiful is partially responsible for the sterility of the countryside. Although she graciously heals the diseases of the neighboring villagers, she remains blind to her own son's disease, a disease that threatens the destruction of this entire agrarian society. It is no wonder that the swords in Lady Bountiful's house will not draw(IV.ii.6-7), for Lady Bountiful's house is a house of impotence. In Farquhar's play, the countryside is ironically associated with disease and sterility; the city, conversely, is associated with vitality, sexual excess, and a renewal of fecundity.

In this agrarian society presided over by Lady Bountiful, Mrs. Sullen, the London-bred socialite, discovers herself involved in two special relationships, one with her husband and one with the opportunist Archer. She is totally incompatible with her husband, and although she seems somewhat more compatible with Archer, she is not totally compatible with the London adventurer either. As she admits to Dorinda, Mrs.Sullen has already begun to wonder about her ability to withstand indefinitely Archer's sexual advances:

> ...if I met him dressed as he should be, and I undressed as I should be--look ye, sister, I have no supernatural gifts. I can't swear I could resist the temptation, though I can safely

promise to avoid it; and that's as much as the best of us can do. (VI.i.459463)

A little later on (V.ii.), Mrs. Sullen meets Archer in precisely such a situation. A number of critics have suggested that Farquhar's play posits a future sexual liaison between Mrs. Sullen and Archer. However, as Fifer has concluded, there is little evidence to support this conclusion.[12] Although Mrs. Sullen fantasizes about Archer as a lover, she clearly rejects his sexual advances. And although discovery of the thieves within the house prevent us from finding out whether Mrs.Sullen would have resisted Archer or not, there is no mistaking her efforts to avoid falling victim to Archer. Thus, while Archer and Mrs. Sullen seem sexually compatible, Mrs. Sullen is no more morally compatible with Archer than she is with her husband.

Farquhar posits the Aimwell/Dorinda relationship as the ideal, the perfect blending of urban wit, vitality, and action as represented by Aimwell with the agrarian sympathy of Dorinda and the promise of actual fecundity as the result of their union. By the end of the play, Aimwell and Dorinda prove to be ideally suited to one another, although this is not the case when the play opens. While Dorinda's repartee with her sister-in-law marks her as the intellectual equal of Aimwell, Aimwell's own mercenary designs reveal his initial unsuitability as Dorinda's mate. And while Aimwell's initial susceptibility to the emotions of love mark him as a villain less heinous than Archer, it appears doubtful that his emotional susceptibility is sufficient to rescue Aimwell from Archer's fate. Fifer claims that Aimwell is eventually overcome by the country values associated with Lady Bountiful's household.[13] In truth, what we see taking place between Aimwell and Dorinda is not a surrender, but rather a truce, mutually agreed upon, mutually beneficial, with Aimwell promising to infuse an urban vitality into a countryside that has become diseased and consequently barren. Aimwell's prospective marriage to Dorinda promises to perform in actuality that action which Mrs. Sullen had hoped to accomplish through her own marriage to the Squire.

Dorinda's openness eventually leads Aimwell to confess his attempted villainy, and we are remiss if we do not note that it is that

confession which enables Aimwell to achieve equality with his prospective bride. The moment Aimwell confesses, he is literally "enobled," discovering that he is, in fact, the Viscount Aimwell he only pretended to be when he first began pursuing Dorinda. Furthermore, the moment Aimwell is made aware of his new social status, the play's dialogue resounds with new signs of genuine fecundity:

> **Aimwell**: Thanks to the *pregnant* stars that formed this accident.
> **Archer**: Thanks to the *womb* of time that brought it forth. (V.iv.111-112)[14]

Farquhar has painted a picture of a countryside that is diseased, barren, no longer truly productive, but Aimwell's and Dorinda's relationship promises a new fecundity brought about by a remarkable degree of compatibility between two marriage partners. Aimwell went to the country in search of a prize--Dorinda's ten thousand pounds. The faith, love, and honesty Dorinda showed towards him has caused Aimwell to re-evaluate his standard of measurement. Aimwell and Archer had agreed previously that each man would enjoy one-half of Dorinda's estate. By the end of the play, Aimwell confidently suggests to Archer a new division of the prize:

> ...to end the dispute the lady's fortune is ten thousand pound. We'll divide stakes. Take the ten thousand pound or the lady. (V.iv.128-130)

Dorinda is at first shocked by Aimwell's suggestion, until Archer replies, "No, no, no, madam, his lordship knows very well that I'll take the money. I leave you to his lordship, and so we're both provided for" (V.iv.132-134). In one sense, Aimwell has been overcome by the country--overcome by the sympathy it offers and overcome by its system of evaluating worth, a system that differs dramatically from the monied economy of the city. In another sense, however, Aimwell has overcome the country; that is, he has overcome the country as George Farquhar has depicted it. Aimwell will not fall victim to the disease and sterility

that defeated Mrs.Sullen. Aimwell's union promises actual abundance, an abundance that will return the countryside to the productivity that exists in it at this point in a state of promise only.

Critics have long debated the meaning of the Sullen's apparent divorce, a divorce which William Archer, accepting the divorce as having actually occurred, has criticized as evidence of sloppy composition.[15] And Martin Larson's revelation of Farquhar's debt to Milton's Divorce Tracts for the dialogue on the divorce has served to intensify debate concerning the meaning behind this apparent divorce. Some critics, such as Perry,[16] Fifer,[17] and Kenny,[18] point to eighteenth-century English law and categorically deny that the Sullen's divorce could actually have taken place. Regardless of whether one believes the Sullen's divorce occurred in fact or not, it is difficult to avoid agreeing with Farquhar's characters that the Sullen marriage ought to be terminated. And this is Farquhar's point. The Sullens are totally incompatible, and marriage in the modern world demands as much compatibility between marriage partners as is possible. This is why Farquhar can put forth the Aimwell/Dorinda relationship as ideal. By the end of the play, Aimwell and Dorinda have achieved an equality that bespeaks a unique compatibility, and their union bespeaks a renewal of promise for themselves and for the English nation as well.

In his last play, George Farquhar is asking us to consider three things: 1) our reasons for choosing marriage over a single state; 2) those qualities by which we choose a mate; and 3) what, precisely, we have a right to expect from the choices we make. He is likewise suggesting that the rules which govern the choice of a mate in an agrarian society, the consolidation of property and the production of an heir at any cost, can no longer be the primary concerns governing our choice of a mate in an urban society. An urban environment forces us into prolonged, intimate contact with our mate. And, as Mrs. Sullen informs us, the city also enables one to compare his or her own marriage with hundreds of other such unions:

> A man dare not play the tyrant in London because there are so many examples to encourage the subject to rebel.
> (II.i.121-123)

For all these reasons, Farquhar is telling us, mutual compatibility must be the first rule governing the selection of a mate in an urban society.

Footnotes

[1]*Familiar Quotations by John Bartlett*. 13th Ed. (Boston, Little, Brown, 1955), 873.

[2]Eric Rothstein. *George Farquhar*. (New York: Twayne, 1967), 28. Rothstein relates one of the many tales which make up the legend surrounding George Farquhar and his work: "Mr. Wilks told Mr. Farquhar that Mrs. Oldfield [who originally played the character of Mrs. Sullen] thought that he had dealt too freely with the character of Mrs. Sullen, giving her to Archer without a proper Divorce, which was not a Security for her Honor."

[3]William Archer, ed. *George Farquhar*. (London: Scribner's n.d.), 28-29.

[4]*World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1989*., s.v. "divorce." 807.

[5]Ibid. 806.

[6]Martin A. Larson. "The Influence of Milton's Divorce Tracts on Fraquhar's Beaux' Strategem," *PMLA* 39 (1924): 174-178.

[7]Reay Tannahill. *Sex In History* (New York: Scarborough, 1982), 47-8.

[8]Charles N. Fifer, ed. *The Beaux' Strategem* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1977), II.i.56-58. Further references to *The Beaux' Strategem* will be taken from this edition.

[9]*Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971), s.v. "suquebaugh."

[10] *Op. cit.*, s.v. "tympany."

[11]Such an ironic component suggests that Lady Bountiful is a typological representation of Queen Anne, a queen who may be associated with bounty through her establishment of Queen Anne's Bounty in 1704 [See George Macaulay Trevelyan. *England Under Queen Anne* (London: Longman, 1931), 48], with healing through her reestablishment of the Queen's Touch in 1702 [See Trevelyan, 174-5],

and ironically, with bounty because her own eighteen pregnancies resulted in twelve miscarriages and six births, with none of her children living beyond childhood [See Hester W. Chapman. *Queen Anne's Son: A Memoir of Henry, Duke of Gloucester, 1689-1700* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1955), 22-24.] Because Lady Bountiful may be viewed as a typological representation of Queen Anne, the need to further evaluate Farquhar's play as allegory becomes apparent.

[12]Fifer, xxxv.

[13]Fifer, xxxi.

[14]Emphasis in this quotation are mine.

[15]Archer, 18.

[16]Harry Ten Eyck Perry. *The Comic Spirit in Restoration Drama: Studies in the Comedy of Etheredge, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar* (New York: Russell, 1962), 120.

[17]Fifer, xxxiv.

[18]Shirley Strum Kenny, ed. *Works of George Farquhar* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), I.135.

From Camelot to Kathmandu: Must Celestial Railroads Run Backwards?

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Readers familiar with Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story, "The Celestial Railroad," know that the road should lead, not from Camelot to Kathmandu, but from the City of Destruction, that "Populous and flourishing town," to the Celestial City. This genial parody of 19th-century American religion savages the manner in which Transcendentalism, that era's precursor of no-fault religion, had converted the lonely, terrifying soul-journey of John Bunyan's Pilgrim into a pleasant day excursion in comfortable rail-coaches with the great burdens of sin tucked away in the baggage car.[1] Pilgrim's old enemies are now employed as menials on the railway; even the fearsome Apollyon is converted into the engineer in the locomotive. Indeed, as Hawthorne's comment on the machine age, Apollyon is scarcely discernible from the machine itself since the locomotive looks alive and demonic and the demon's abdomen, covered in fire and smoke, appears to be a great furnace. As we might expect, the real stopping place of this train is Hell.

The railroad has no place for Greatheart or any of Bunyan's other Christians. Such men are "preposterously stiff and narrow, in [their] old age" (189). They might come to illiberal blows with the agents of Prince Beelzebub who are the ticket takers, conductors, etc. for this great joint stock company. Neither the Interpreter's House nor the Palace Beautiful of the sisters Prudence, Piety and Charity are fit stops for the new man. The spot where Pilgrim's burden of sin dropped away is now of no account since the baggage car can keep sin safe and available, but not weighing on one's shoulders. Vanity Fair remains as busy and grandiose as ever, even though the city's inhabitants have a disconcerting habit of vanishing like soap bubbles in mid-sentence. Hawthorne's grim vision of the moral state of modern man is most ably summarized in his famous description of the bridge which crosses the old Slough of

Despond: "We obtained a sufficient foundation for it by throwing into the slough some editions of books of morality, volumes of French philosophy and German rationalism, tracts, sermons, and essays of modern clergymen, extracts from Plato, Confucius, and various Hindu sages, together with a few ingenious commentaries upon texts of Scriptures--all of which, by some scientific process, have been converted into a mass like granite" (187). Unfortunately the bridge still vibrates and heaves up and down, and Hawthorne's Rambler is not at all sure that this conglomerate will hold together under any real weight.

Published in 1843, this story stands as at least one model of Hawthorne's concept of modernity. It is a joint-stock company composed of men largely ignorant of their true nature or purpose, mixed with agents of Hell. This is not to say that Hawthorne had no hopes for the modern world. He essayed the communal experiment of Brooke Farm and wrote its epitaph in *The Blithedale Romance*. He loved the vision of grandeur of the human soul implicit in the American Experiment and he wrote *The House of the Seven Gables* and many of his tales to describe why and how it could not live up to its promise. In *The Marble Faun* he pits the innocence of American artists against the authority and brilliance of Rome, the Catholic Church, and Classical and Christian art. The Americans are brought into a love-hate relationship with all of these heritages that ends with an almost worshipful regret that this is no lasting home for them. They return, hoping once again to create a better world in America, just in time for the Civil War that the Transcendentalists urged on.

In these works, as in *The Scarlet Letter*, what is most important to Hawthorne about modernity is its relation to the past. Just as the Puritans of Salem are inextricably tied to the Dark Man of the Woods of the wilderness, Hawthorne's contemporaries were living in relation with the shadows of men and women who cared enough about sin to condemn it, whether their judgement was sound or faulty. For modernity is at root a moral and ontological stance. Only secondarily and superficially does it refer to the increase in scientific and technological know-how or changes in the means of production. It is the moral nature of the term modernity which makes it such an unstable concept. The mind wants to grasp it as an achieved state, but in any age some cynic

is sure to point out that the moral state achieved is rather sorry. If modernity is to exist in the present, only a thorough going Philistine could be happy with what has been accomplished. Thus modernity becomes, paradoxically, the possession of the radical or the conservative. The radical, for his part, must invent what has not been; he tries to create *ex nihilo*. Since he has not seen the future he has remarkably little to work with and usually fails to convince us. His great strengths are our dissatisfaction with what we are and the mean impulse to reduce those who have come before us. The Conservative has rather the better of it. He has all the intricate detail of history to support his fiction. The inexhaustible supply of creativity in the lived world awaits his hand. And it was largely to these conservative resources that the great writers of the 19th-century betook themselves.

So it was that Camelot and Kathmandu became the typical locales of much of their best poetry and fiction. Both are terms that I use generically. Camelot stands for any period of the past looked upon as the Golden Age. Now it is true that the Victorian writers were largely subtle and melancholy critics who could see the worm at the root of any civilization's Golden Age. They were all too conscious of their own ironic position as the vanguard of a material progress made possible by science; a science that was eating away at the simplistic public and popular version of Christianity; a science that is a community-based, institutionalized activity that developed in the West, and only in the West, because Christianity had made possible an ordered, stable, inquiring community where it could flourish.

Faced with this corrosive irony it is no wonder that nostalgia for Gothicism as an expression of communal values became a potent force in the latter 1800's. John Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture* was the critical prose around which the idea crystallized; it ramified in the arts and crafts movement of William Morris and in the hierarchial yearnings of Newman and the Oxford Movement; Gothicism found its artistic culmination in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. The distinction between the age of Gothic architecture and the remaining medieval centuries was largely overlooked. Thus Arthur took his place in the public mind beside the Cathedral of Mont Saint Michael and Ivanhoe in a space of the imagination vaguely called Gothic. James Russell Lowell, Swinburne,

Matthew Arnold and Longfellow are just a few of those who used Arthurian or medieval matter in literature. The Pre-Raphaelite painters, especially Millais, Burne-Jones, Arthur Hughes, Holman Hunt and John Waterhouse intensified the image in their paintings of literary subjects. They were often inspired by Keats, and Tennyson, especially the latter's early works like *The Lady of Shalott* and *Mariana in the Moated Grange*. Nothing, however, rivalled the *Idylls* as a subject for art.

This story of the rise and fall of Camelot derived its power from the fact that Camelot was, as J. Philip Eggers remarks in *King Arthur's Laureate*, "a Victorian version of the New Jerusalem."[2] As he writes further,"Victorians did not consider the *Idylls* as merely a poem, but an event, a cultural phenomenon. It was read, memorized, and lived. It helped to define the mentality that we call Victorian, and yet it was highly critical of Victorian society. The age saw in the *Idylls* an exalted reflection of itself as the second coming of the Round Table" (53). Naturally enough the poem was partially misunderstood by almost everyone who read it (and it probably still is for that matter.) Most reviewers saw its connection with their age but overestimated its compliment to that age. Like Elizabeth Barrett Browning they did not want to read another of the poets she describes in *Aurora Leigh* who thought that theirs was "A pewter age,--mixed metal, silver washed;/ An age of scum, spooned off the richer past, / An age of patches for old gaberdines" (V,160-62).

Certainly Tennyson's image of Victorian society is neither so simple nor so pejorative. But the *Idylls* do end in the defeat of Arthur (who could once see the morning star "even in high day"), now unable to see the enemy he fought in front of his face. The high figures of chivalry who once held the sieges of the Round Table are reduced to beasts, but worse than beasts--the monsters men become when they are no longer men. As Eggers writes, "Darwin's theory only added impetus to the trend toward distrusting the natural as a norm for behavior and regarding the term *nature* in a pejorative way" (194). John Stuart Mill had set the tone in his *On Nature*: moral example would not be found in the natural state.

Both modernity and Camelot are described by the passage where an aged seer describes the city in "Gareth and Lynette:"

> For an ye heard a music, like enow
> They are building still, seeing the city is built
> To music, therefore never built at all,
> And therefore built for ever. (271-74)

Like Camelot, modernity is never built, never there, although it is continuously in the process of becoming. But what separates modernity from the past then becomes radically self-destructive. If we are to be different from the past we must be either better or worse than the past. Serious people do not entertain the idea that we are better than past generations much beyond the age of twenty-five. That means that we know modernity by its distance from all that is best of yesterday. Tennyson's vision of Camelot made all the more clear how Victorian England had failed to match the moral stature of Arthur, whom he presents as a type of Christ figure. This self-destroying self-image might have become desperate indeed, as it was to do in the savagery of our own century. But the Victorians had one advantage over us. Their world was still broad and little travelled. They still had Kathmandu.

Kathmandu is again a generic term, almost a state of mind. It was inaccessible by paved road even as late as 1956. Like Lhasa in Tibet it was a symbol of the "other," of a world so strange it was almost, but not quite, inhuman. But I do not use the word "other" with the burden of hatred and race contempt that Edward Said claims it bears.[3] The "other" was usually seen as a great opportunity, a place of simpler virtues where one might escape the Europe that was already becoming seen as "The City of Dreadful Night." When the Sepoy Mutiny in India shocked the empire to its core with the murder of pregnant women and the torture of captured whites, it was from Kathmandu that an army of 6,000 Ghurkas was offered to the British to put down the rebellion. Imperial literature delights in measuring the Briton by the virtues and faults of the "other." That self-examination often is as confessional as it is boastful.

R. W. B. Lewis wrote about "the American Adam" in the New Eden of America. The figure of the British Imperialist is more like that of St. Paul, struck down with remorse at his persecution of God, going forth to make amends for his wickedness by doing the Lord's work for the rest of his life. If the image and the reality of imperial power contains much of pride and certainty, it was counterpoised against roots of humility and service. That at least is the side which the great voice of British Empire, Joseph Rudyard Kipling, never forgot. For that daring defense, his reputation remains under dreary attack by hosts of critics who reserve (seemingly for him alone) moral criticism, to the effect that his art is "illiberal." My inclusion of Kipling with giants like Hawthorne and Tennyson may shock those who forget that he published "Plain Tales from the Hills," among the purest short stories in English, when he was twenty-three. It seems very easy to forget his honorary degrees from universities such as Oxford and Paris, or his Nobel prize. Kipling refused a knighthood and two Orders of Merit. He was friends with Twain, Hardy, and King George V. His relatives included Stanley Baldwin (the Prime Minister) and Burne-Jones(the Pre-Raphaelite). He has been damned by Robert Buchanan, Edmund Wilson, and Lionel Trilling who wanted jingoism reserved for socialists. T. S. Eliot, C. S. Lewis, Somerset Maughm, and Bonamy Dobree had a better appreciation of him. Kipling is one of the rare authors whose greatness was recognized not only by the public but by the critics of his time. Henry James, the best man at his wedding, called him "the most complete man of genius (as distinct from fine intelligence) that I have ever known."[4]

To his own time Kipling was the poet and the author of the little man, of the laborer, of the engineer, the soldier, even of the prostitute. James could never understand why Kipling did not use his talents on nuances, on the divine subject of the "cultured," especially of what passed among them for love. Kipling insisted on writing about building, administration, and what Klausewitz calls "the logical extension of foreign policy," warfare. He wrote with impressive sympathetic power of Indian natives, of the common soldier, of quadrupeds, of fish, and even of "engines and screws." Kipling had no distaste for the vulgarity of the common man and he was contemptuous of what he called the

"immoderate Left," like Bloomsbury, who saw commoners as victims too dumb to know they were being fooled.

There are few who would argue the point that Kipling's finest work centered on India. For him India is the same kind of vast stage for moral drama that Tennyson found in the past. Whether we call it India, Kathmandu, China, or Conrad's South America, the effect is the same. The modern world is suspended, by isolation and by a different cultural history. A new earth is found where time has, if not stood still, been pulled out of place like one of Madame Tussaud's waxworks into a tableaux of another way of life. The imperialist fiction stretched the arena of potential moral action as far as it could go before science fiction invented new worlds for it.

In a representative tale like *The Man Who Would Be King*, two scoundrels set off to become kings in Kaffiristan, modern Afghanistan, with the plan of locating some petty king, drilling his soldiers, defeating his enemies (other local tyrants,) then subverting that original king and setting themselves on his throne. In order to accomplish this goal Daniel Dravot and Peachy Taliefero Carnehan make a solemn contract to avoid liquor, women, and to support each other till the job is done. They go courageously into a howling wilderness, and achieve their goal exactly as planned. After it falls apart, one comes back to tell the tale to a representative of a nation which has done on a grand scale the same thing they did in miniature. As Philip Mason writes, Kipling has a poetic sense of "the essence of nineteenth-century imperialism, the bluff by which English officials with a minimum of physical force again and again established and maintained a supremacy."[5] But as surely as the situation highlights the qualities which enable the Western "gentlemen at large" to gain moral ascendancy over another culture, their own weaknesses are ruthlessly exposed by the situation. Daniel Dravot breaks his pledge to his friend; for after all, who can rule a king? He chases a native woman, she bites him, he bleeds, the natives see their God is human. They march him onto a rope bridge out over a gorge and cut the bridge from under him. Peachy they crucify. When he survives a day, the natives let him go, for he is more truly a God than their ex-king. He can suffer.

Tale after tale repeats the pattern of western man stretched to his breaking limits by the heat, the land, the work, the plague, his inability to fathom the native's wisdom or his needs. Both native and westerner are judged and they judge each other. It is the values of work, service, and self-defense which are most helpful for survival in Kipling's world. They are part of a moral code enforced by the nature of creation. Kipling argues that in the desert places of the world this law operates most clearly, purified of the many layers of convention and rationalization that metropolitan modernity provides. In the semi-autobiographical novel, *The Light That Failed*, the light in the title refers not only to the painter-hero's growing blindness, nor to the failure of his heroine to be a source of light, but to a false conception of intellect and art that produced a class which put the cult of art above moral and survival values.[6]

If there is a thinness of character in Kipling's work it is because his gift was not for the intricacies of feeling in a conventional English setting. His strongest emotional characters are often natives of the foreign lands. But dominantly he looked less to feeling than to solution, to some action that would lead to reward or ruin. His was not a mind that valued complexity over correctness. His characters live in worlds where they are largely responsible for what happens to them (although unearned disaster can occur). Such characters look out of place in the crowded world of London where the common man did not daily face the burdens of imperial administration hundreds or thousands of miles away from higher authority. This is where Kipling found modern man at his best, using the power of the modern world in a space that offered him the scope of an earlier time for heroic or moral action. Kipling's characters are modern in their tools but their decisions and quandries are judged by standards firmly rooted in the past, standards that are drifting off into the nebulous world of machines, astheticism, and evolution in England, but which recur in the far city of Kathmandu.

Thus the answer to the question in the title of this paper is largely "yes." Any modern celestial railroad that is not designed to lead to hell must run backwards into the moral history of mankind. Hawthorne, Tennyson, and Kipling are only part of the complexity of attitudes toward modernism that developed in the nineteenth century, but they

represent an important body of its best works. Modernity for them was essentially defined by the moral relation to the past and that relation leads always to the past as an example of what the present may be losing. Although each writer maintained a hope for a future in which new forms of life and new machines would be compatible with older virtues, their typical examination of the modern world took them back through time to Camelot or to the countries of the past like Kathmandu.

Footnotes

[1]Selections are quoted from *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ed. William Charvat, Roy Pearce, Claude Simpson, et al, 16 Vols. to date (Ohio State U P, 1962); *The Poems of Tennyson*, 2nd. ed., Christopher Ricks, 3 Vols. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1987); and *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (Cambridge edition, 1920; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

[2]J. Philip Eggers, *King Arthur's Laureate: A Study of Tennyson's Style in "Idylls of the King* (New York: New York UP, (1971).

[3]See A.J. Moore-Gilbert, *Kipling and Orientalism* (London: Croom Helm, 1986) for a more complex treatment of this issue.

[4]Letter to William James, February 6, 1892, quoted in Charles Carrington, *The Life of Rudyard Kipling* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1956) 149.

[5]Philip Mason, *Kipling: The Glass, The Shadow and the Fire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), 137.

[6] Norman Page, *A Kipling Companion* (London: Macmillan, 1984) is a good introduction to modern criticism that is more balanced about Kipling's ideas.

Embarrass My Dog

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Emotional and sometimes moral and physical stripping continues to be regarded as a late twentieth century trademark.[1] According to one persistent interpretation of modernity, "modern" writers stress individualism as an end in itself and view community values as mere impediments to the instant and open expression of personal values and feelings. Even women's clothing which leaves more to the imagination than the eye is ridiculed as an attempt to conceal and negate the person.[2] Unrestraint is sometimes paradoxically hailed as a standard to be imposed upon writing, as is evident in the work of many writers of the last two decades.

A study of those modern poets as well as twentieth-century fiction writers whose work appears to be enduring, however, will reveal a certain decent restraint--almost shyness--upon which their writing depends. This quality is expressed in many ways--in matters of style and setting as well as in the relationship of an author to his work. Writers express it in their conversations and their correspondence--as when Emily Dickinson complains about of people who are too forward and "embarrass my dog."[3] This same shyness explodes--with appropriately discrete indirection--when Faulkner, upon learning that a visiting Russian was determined to call on him, said, "Maybe the b hasn't realized he's in America now; I still own my home."[4]

Probably no writer displayed restraint more consistently in both art and life than did Eliot. Nor did anyone demonstrate more convincingly that poetry can exhibit this quality while being autobiographical--assuming that autobiography is the portrait of a life rather than a chase after facts. Known for saying that great poetry is impersonal,[5] he also said that poetry might be a poet's way of "talking about himself without giving himself away."[6] This reluctance is evident even in photographs. James Olney has noted that Eliot was "on guard, reluctant to offer too much of himself" in photos taken by anyone but his wife.[7] Eliot is doing more than shielding himself from biographical critics and other voyeurs.

He is enacting and enabling the metaphorical quality upon which poetry depends. Without this ability to give shyness a public form, to *be* a poem, the basic bond between reader and poet--the ability of the text to speak for both--could not exist. In the poem--which serves as a shared and thereby redeeming metaphor--one gets past the isolation that is the everyday hell of existence, the fragments of this very hell being transformed into art.

While examples of this type of restrained autobiographical poetry abound, Eliot's canon is perhaps the most cohesive example of it. As a young man he wrote "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." The postponements and indecision of the character Prufrock recall Eliot in his youth, as anyone addicted to Eliot biographies can see. Later, when he was truly living in hell, he would write *The Waste Land*. In "What the Thunder Said," he writes, "If there were water / and no rock" and then goes on to wish even for water with the rocks but concludes that "there is no water." Surely this is a picture post card from hell! In "Ash Wednesday" Eliot is not yet redeemed but turning. He is able to end the poem with an anguished plea:

> And even among these rocks
> Sister, mother,
> And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,
> Suffer me not to be separated
> And let my cry come unto thee.

It is finally in the *Four Quartets* that Eliot has attained the "Condition of complete simplicity / Costing not less than everything." It is when Eliot himself feels whole that he can write, "The fire and the rose are one." Finally, his autobiography, as recorded in the poetry, is complete. And he has told his whole story "without giving himself away."

Though such a cohesive autobiography in poetry is rare, Eliot's choice to talk without "giving himself away" is not. Auden is another prime example. Barbara Patrick argues convincingly that Auden's work resembles a detective story[8]--a genre based not on personal feeling but on an intellectual working out of detail. "To be well-bred," Auden once said, "means to have respect for the solitude of others . . .."[9] Auden the

teacher could not educate everyone to be well-bred. But he could guard his own solitude through both tone and literary device. In the poetry, one can sense Auden standing before a class; one certainly cannot imagine him, like modern emotional strip-teasers, phoning at two a.m. to share anguished personal secrets. Even in a situation as intimate as that of "Lay Your Sleeping Head, My Love," the lover muses wistfully on the ephemeral nature of all that is human. Clearly Auden writes a love poem without panting like an over-heated sophomore. Instead he is the restrained representative, always speaking for the reader.

Often Auden uses a mask or a persona. He referred to "Paid on Both Sides" as a "charade." At times the charade involves impersonating another poet. In "The Wanderer" Auden actually reenacts an earlier poem and uses the original title. The first line, "Doom is dark and deeper than any sea-dingle," is from a Middle English homily.[10] Even this line, in its management of sound and sense, reenacts and re-establishes itself as the Old English poem by the same name. Word choice and sentence structure maintain the flavor of the original poem. If he were merely re-writing the original, one might pause to appreciate Auden's skill. His genius, though, lies in his ability simultaneously to get inside the original poem and move it to the twentieth century. In Auden's poem the man leaves not a mead hall but his house. He misses not a lord but a wife. His possible assault would take place not at sea but on a street corner.

While "The Wanderer" exemplifies Auden's use of a persona, it also shows what he is up to when he uses one. If he meant merely to imitate, he would not be so blatant. One does not move an Old English poem to the twentieth century and retain the poem's original name if the intent is to kidnap the poem. Instead, Auden is momentarily becoming the Old English poet and expressing what might not otherwise be expressed--which is what pretending is all about. The rather general twentieth-century setting invites the reader to pretend too.

Still, one might poke around behind the masks and find an individual man to compare with the speaker in the poetry. There one will find the man who was sued for disorderly housekeeping[11] and the man who prompted the Ole' Miss professor to say, "I prefer my poets dead."[12] Colorful as these anecdotes are, they do not capture, for example, the hue of the speaker in "Refugee Blues." The man who "objected to one's

using more than a sliver of lavatory paper or ever leaving anything on one's plate"[13] is not even recognizable as the poet.

Auden, with his self-consciously representative voice, provides a convenient example of properly impersonal poetry. There is no reason, however, to be so intellectually shy as to deal only in easy examples. A poet as intensely personal and as prone to moral and emotional stripping as Emily Dickinson writes from behind a set of carefully controlled personae even while running on raw emotion. In his book, *Emily Dickinson's Use of the Persona*, John Emerson Todd discusses the "little girl" persona in the poetry. This persona appears in the letters to Higginson, which read like her poetry and seem to be an extension of it. Her first letter begins, "Are you too deeply occupied to say if my verse is alive?" A few lines down she is calling him "Sir" and asking him to tell her "what is true." She adds, you will not betray me--." A few months after beginning her correspondence with him she is signing herself "Your Scholar."[15] After becoming his scholar she says, "I had no monarch in my life, and cannot rule myself . . . ."[16] Clearly she is asking him to do so. One has the definite sense, though, that Emily Dickinson means to retain the upper hand. She is simply too elusive to be dominated. In a letter more lyrical than factual she concludes, "Is this--Sir--what you asked me to tell you?"[17] A woman who does not even answer direct questions directly is in no real danger of being dominated, despite her talk of needing a monarch. Instead she is playing at being a child and asking Higginson to play at ruling her. In this same letter she says, "My size felt small--" before getting to her serious question: "Could you tell me how to grow--or is it unconveyed--like Melody--or Witchcraft."[18]

Dickinson is having fun, and there is the temptation to attribute the development of her persona only to the work of her mischievous nature. Likewise, although her shyness seems so convincing--along with the boldness--it might be easy to attribute her persona only to the poet's natural reticence and fail to see her artistic and thematic purpose. Dickinson's writing resembles a snapshot. In a certain light it reveals a scattering of brilliant colored fragments--bits of raw emotion. In another light, though, one sees a figure at the center of the snapshot. Since everybody is, in some sense, a child in need, this figure is basic to

the ability of the text to speak for both writer and reader. It is in this hesitant child persona--this metaphor--that the experience of both reader and writer is shyly exposed.

Without the use of some distancing device, however, a poet as emotional as Dickinson could not even be heard; the reader, unable to cope with so much raw emotion, would stop listening. Rather than overwhelming the reader, Dickinson maintains a restrained, conversational tone whether writing a letter or a poem. The poems, in fact, read almost like notes to the reader. Were this restraint absent, the reader would view Dickinson as the mad woman overwhelming him with anguished letters. Notable to bear so much unrelieved passion, the reader--if he listened at all--would either pity or despise her. Instead, a dignified little note veils--but does not hide--feelings for this woman who believes in telling all the truth but telling it slant. It is only in this manner that she is able to express both her own experience and that of the reader. Instead of merely photographing her own undigested experience, she creates out of it a metaphor to represent both her own experience and the reader's.

One might best understand the power of poetry to represent publicly the private reader by looking at poems that fail to represent the reader. Unexpectedly, Eliot provides one such negative example in that insipid poem written to his wife.

> . . . the rhythm that governs the repose of our
> sleepingtime,
> The breathing in unison
> Of lovers whose bodies smell of each other.

Suddenly the poet of the "Waste Land" is writing about breathing in unison. One somehow doubts that these lines express the unstated experience of the reader. Eliot is expressing "private words addressed to you in public." Private words should not be spoken in public. A properly impersonal poem should be spoken to the reader in private, expressing the experience of both poet and reader.

But Eliot should not be judged harshly if, just once, he lets us hear him talking to his wife. By that time he had already produced his body

of great poetry, demonstrating that poetry can be both impersonal and autobiographical. He could, in fact, talk about himself without giving himself away.

Twentieth-century fiction writers, as surely as modern poets, talk about themselves without giving themselves away. It is not difficult to find passages in fiction that seem to parallel the author's life--especially in the modern era, when so much usually is known of the life. At times the author makes the comparison almost impossible not to draw. One thinks, for example, of Faulkner's tribute to Caroline Barr, the black woman who was a mother figure to him: "From her I learned to tell the truth, to refrain from waste, to be considerate of the weak and respectful of age."[19] In *Go Down Moses*, which is dedicated to her, Faulkner has a strikingly similar description: ". . . teaching him his manners, behavior, to be gentle with his inferiors, honorable with his equals, generous to the weak and considerate of the aged, courageous, truthful and brave to all." Certainly, for one considering restraint in modernity, a study of a fiction writer's relationship to his work would prove interesting--but less useful than a consideration of style and even setting in this context. One thinks, for example, of Thomas Mann, with his preference for German order as opposed to the unrestraint of more southern lands--whether or not the prodigal returns to his native order. In "Death in Venice" the character, with his homosexual fantasy, chooses to remain in the plague city and die. In "Disorder and Early Sorrow" the consequences are less severe, but both the title and the description of the too voluptuous young woman suggest, through negative example, the need for order. It is in "Tonio Kruger"--perhaps Mann's gentlest story--that the prodigal returns, both seeking to establish order through writing and loving the commonplace:

> "I am looking into a world unborn and formless, that needs to be shaped; I see into a whirl of shadows human figures who beckon to me to weave spells to redeem them: tragic and laughable figures and some that are both together--and to these I am drawn. But my deepest and secretest love belongs to the blond and blue-eyed, the fair and living, the happy, lovely, and commonplace.

"Do not chide this love, Lisabeta; it is good and fruitful."

While no modern writer speaks more engagingly about restraint than does Mann, it appears even in some rather unlikely places. In some Joyce stories, for example, more is suggested than actually said. In "Araby," the rather ordered setting, with the Christian Boys School and the family structure, provides a frame for the young boy's yearning. Setting serves a similar function in "Clay," in which the only one weeping is not Maria.

Numberless authors could be named as examples of restraint in modernity, but there is no reason to wander widely when Mississippi's own William Faulkner provides the best example of all. Faulkner might initially seem to be an odd example of restraint. He is, after all, an author who deals in material such as an old lady sleeping with a corpse, a young woman being raped with a corn cob, a lynch mob forming to kill Lucas Beauchamp, and a redneck having his hand cut off and put on the tombstone of the old lady he killed.

This type of alarming action, surprisingly, requires some form of restraint. Often Faulkner's setting itself provides restraint without which the material would not work. One can see, for example, that the idea of Miss Emily sleeping with a corpse in San Francisco or Las Vegas would not be effective in fiction! Instead, these events take place in a Southern culture which is fundamentally Victorian. In Faulkner's neo-Victorian Southern culture, constraints must be surpassed but not broken. The players are expected to step around culturally imposed barriers and to do so with grace. This culture might even be discussed in Eliot's context of talking about oneself without giving oneself away. It might be argued, in fact, that being Southern is a perpetual exercise in talking about oneself without giving oneself away. This paradox would seem to explain why Southerners appear to reap benefits from being more vocal than other people. At any rate, such a restrained, Victorian culture serves as structural support for the violent plots and provides dramatic contrast, thus both sustaining and intensifying the material.

Whether one thinks of Granny being careful to carry her parasol while stealing mules from the invading yankee army or the city officials

in "A Rose for Emily" not wanting to tell a lady that her yard stinks, examples of the constraining function of setting. Examples might almost be picked at random. At times, though, the setting is made sharper by the appearance of an outsider. One thinks of Joanna Burden, a barren descendent of carpetbaggers. Recorded through Joe Christmas's eyes, there is the repeated implication that this hardened yankee is not even a woman. Adjectives such as "man-like" are used to describe her appearance, and Christmas finds that making love to her is "as if he struggled physically with another man." Likewise, one thinks of the brash Sutpen, who sacrifices everything to his plan. Such occasional outsiders put into stronger focus that culture in which it is bad manners to appear to strive while striving.

Though setting does much to maintain restraint in Faulkner, sentence structure should not be overlooked. The long sentence, for which he is known, usually provides either description or lengthy statements of philosophy--or even what might best be called poetry. A pithy little sentence, on the other hand, often summarizes character or theme. One thinks, for example, of the last line of *Intruder in the Dust*. The attorney has just asked his client, "'Now what?'. . . . 'What are you waiting for now?'" The answer is simple: "'My receipt.'" These two words provide a summary of Lucas's character. Unwilling not only to play "good nigger" but even to accept a gift, the proud--perhaps arrogant--old man has insisted on paying his attorney. Finally the attorney yields and says, "'You owe me two dollars'"--only to be asked for a receipt.

There is a similar use of sentence structure in the Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury*. Though added later, this section makes significant thematic statements, and the arrangement of the list is significant. The Appendix includes some lengthy statements and even some ironic humor ("the first sane Compson since before Culloden"). The last line, however, is a pithy statement following Dilsey's name: "They endured." Here she is listed last--just as she would have sat at the back of a bus or on the back seat of a car. And yet, while Mrs. Compson has been a non-mother, Mr. Compson has bordered on alcoholism, and the children have been busy on their destructive courses, Dilsey has loved.

The thematic value of the simple statement, "They endured," is self-evident.

The use of the tight little sentence for purposes of characterization and statement of theme becomes obvious. The device is also used, however, as a plot clincher. Probably it is nowhere more evident than in "A Rose for Emily." Throughout the story, long sentences--and long paragraphs--are used for description. The shortest sentence, however, is also the shortest paragraph in the story: "The man himself lay in the bed." This controlled little sentence, with its sudden impact, is essential to what Cleanth Brooks has called "a shocking little story."[20]

Perhaps every writer wants to shock--at least enough to keep the reader reading. An unrelieved electrical current at full voltage, however, would only numb readers. The current must be handled with the restraint upon which good writing depends. With this idea in mind, one might finally ask if noisy, unrestrained people are even capable of communicating. Probably not. With only somewhat reserved people able to produce art, one might suspect a delicate balance--as difficult to maintain, perhaps, as it would be to fight in the mountains. But to quote John Sartoris, who had been fighting in the mountains, "'You can't. You just have to.'" Indeed the writer's particular contribution to modernity may be that he alone maintains this delicate balance. While Faulkner was right in expecting no competition to be "the last private citizen,"[21] those seeking to be neither private nor, for that matter, citizens, may be in the majority. With a certain decent restraint, the truly modern artist stands at a respectable distance from the strip show.

Footnotes

[1]For one of the most thorough descriptions of physical and moral stripping, as a characteristic of twentieth-century writers, see Linda Wagner-Martin, *Sylvia Plath: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

[2]Barbara Seaman, *Free and Female* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1973), pp. 20-21.

[3]Emily Dickinson, Letter #271 in *Literature of the United States*, ed. by Walter Blair, Theodore Hornberger, Randall Stewart, and James E. Miller, Jr. (Dallas: Scott, Foresman, 1966), p. 210.

[4]Joseph Blotner, ed. *Selected Letters of William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 235.

[5]T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 44.

[6]F. O. Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot: An Essay on the Nature of Poetry* (New York: Oxford UP, 1958), p. 204.

[7]James Olney, editor's note to "A Photographic Memoir," *Southern Review* 21 (1985): 987-8.

[8]Barbara Patrick, "Faith, Fantasy, and Art: The Detective-Deliverer in W. H. Auden's The Age of Anxiety," *South Atlantic Review* 53 (1988): 87-101.

[9]Stephen Spender, ed. *W. H. Auden: A Tribute* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), pp. 79-80.

[10]Richard Ellman, ed., *Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry* (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 737.

[11]Dorothy Farnan, *Auden in Love* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), pp. 79-80.

[12]Leslie Burris was a graduate student when Auden came to the University of Mississippi. Mr. Burris recalls that Auden's habits such as carrying a suitcase of liquor and not showering caused a genteel old professor to remark, "I prefer my poets dead."

[13]Spender, p. 92.

[14]Dickinson, Letter #260.

[15]Dickinson, Letter #260.

[16]Dickinson, Letter #271.

[17]Dickinson, Letter #261.

[18]Dickinson, Letter #261.

[19]Blotner, p. 118.

[20]Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner; First Encounters*. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1983), p. 7.

[21]Blotner, p. 176.

"The Drum": Postmodernity and Textuality

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One does not always encounter the post-modern text on the printed page; what follows is a printed transcript of a cassette tape reproduction of an album recorded from the performance of excerpta from a novel:

> Uranium Willy The Heavy Metal Kid. Also known as Willy The Rat. He wised up the marks . . . THIS IS WAR TO EXTERMINATION. FIGHT CELL BY CELL THROUGH BODIES AND MIND SCREENS OF THE EARTH. SOULS ROTTEN FROM THE ORGASM DRUG, FLESH SHUDDERING FROM THE OVENS, PRISONERS OF THE EARTH COME OUT. STORM THE STUDIO -- . . . Burnt metal smell of interplanetary war in the raw noon streets, swept by streaming glass blizzards of enemy flak [tape only] . . ."Shift linguals -- Free doorways -- Cut word lines-- Photo falling -- Word falling -- Break Through in Grey Room -- *Towers, open fire* --" "*Partisans of all nations, open fire -- tilt -- blast -- pound stab -- strafe -- kill* -- " "*Pilot K9, you are cut off -- back. Back. Back before the whole fucking shit house goes up -- Return to base immediately -- Ride music beam back to base -- Stay out of that time flak -- All pilots ride Pan pipes back to base*--"
>
> The Technician mixed a bicarbonate of soda surveying [the havoc on his view screen] -- It was impossible to estimate the damage -- Anything put out up till now is like pulling a figure out of the air -- Enemy installations shattered -- Personnel decimated -- Board books taken -- Electric waves of resistance sweeping through mind screens of the earth -- The message of Total Resistance on shortwave of the world -- *This is war to extermination -- Shift linguals -- Cut word* lines --

Vibrate tourists -- Free doorways --Photo falling -- Word falling -- Break through in grey room -- Calling Partisans of all nations -- Towers, open fire --"

These selections come from a chapter of William Burroughs' *Nova Express* called "CHINESE LAUNDRY," including the sequences "Uranium Willy" and "Towers Open Fire."[1] This and another chapter in the novel, "THIS HORRIBLE CASE," were written in collaboration with Ian Sommerville, a mathematician (n. pag.). In the latter chapter, there is an excerpt from Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial* (121-22); this serves to connect one "horrible" case to another, that of Joseph K. Burroughs' texts have not been widely considered accessible, but they have been viewed as illustrative of postmodern textual production. Modern expressionist writing, the literary mode of postmodernism, assaults the reader in passages from *Nova Express* through rhythm, signifier play, portrayal of psychic states and images, intertextual connections, and involvement in scientific discourse; for example, the isolated utterances and heavily emphasized signifiers along with the staccato rhythms of the taped segment suggest the drum, the horse of the shaman and the uncanny medium of choice for forestless natives worldwide. The drum, associated with the image of war, provides a useful, if limited, metaphor for describing the expressionist aesthetic that forms the basis of postmodern culture. The relation between the problematic term of modernism and the ill-defined one of expressionism requires revision to show the dialectic between competing mimetic strategies that has been subsumed and, often, obscured by these terms. This relation is crucial if we are to distinguish types of textuality in contemporary culture, and it provides the means to recognize how postmodern authors pursue discursive strategies through textual arrays.

The difficulty with the use of the term "modern" arises because we are often unsure what characterizes a modern attitude, and this becomes further complicated by the use of terms like "contemporary" or "postmodern" in relation to modernism. Still, this is not the only occasion where we have accommodated an awkward terminology because it served a practical purpose; recall Walter Ong's criticisms of "oral literature" in *Orality and Literacy*.[2] The term remains in use because it

designates the means of production of a certain kind of literature and shows that literature is not always written, i.e. not limited to the technology of writing. Ong's study shows that the differences in production of primarily oral and written literatures lead to different aesthetic values in their composition and appreciation.

Relative to each other, it is fair to say that written literature is more modern than oral literature, but is it accurate to equate an aesthetic with a technology? According to Martin Heidegger's essay "The Question Concerning Technology,"[3] the attempt to discover the essence of technology through questioning leads to the conclusion that technology offers a way of revealing that is intimately connected with artistic production, so art provides us with ways of revealing, with epistemologies. These systems of thought are constrained in particular ways by their means of presentation, so it becomes meaningful to discuss technological limits to aesthetic systems.

Mikhail Bakhtin has shown how the discourse of the novel is based on a contemporary temporality that opposes itself to the distant past temporal orientation of the epic, the characteristic genre of primarily oral cultures. His "Epic and Novel" describes how a modern attitude concerns itself with present-time, everyday matters and contests traditional formulations bringing about a dialogical discourse that characterizes the novel.[4] This dialogical tension also is characteristic of drama, a genre that relied on writing systems for the production of scripts.[5] Writing systems, through the provision of codes that were reproduced in relatively permanent manuscripts, improved transportation of stories while enhancing their accuracy well beyond memory's reliability. Further, a manuscript could travel where the story teller could not, and the movement of literature across national boundaries is crucial to Bakhtin's formulation of novel discourse.[6]

Writing systems also provide the means of formulating aesthetic principles, making it possible for Aristotle to prepare *The Poetics*, the first comprehensive literary theory. The Harvard translation of *The Poetics* shows a sensitivity to Aristotle's sense of modernity: "the old writers made their characters talk like statesmen, the moderns like rhetoricians."[7] Aristotle's theory of literature already recognizes and incorporates both primarily oral and verbal literary history, and, al-

though he does not use these terms, his theory is based upon the comparison of a wide sample of literary works within the context of literary history, a contemporary perspective. It may be helpful to conclude, tentatively, that writing technologies brought about a significant change in systems of thought that characterized a modern attitude. This sensibility would come to prefer the novel and, eventually, to overthrow the monological discourse of the epic in favor of the dialogical discourse of the novel.

The novel has shown an amazing flexibility for the accommodation of diverse perspectives, and works in this genre have even disputed naturalist mimesis as the basis for aesthetic endeavor. The representation of reality split into divergent strategies that were sometimes viewed as mutually exclusive: the classical "imitation of nature" or "naturalist" discourse and the contemporary discussion of art itself (either through criticism or exemplification in stories or both) or "expressionist" discourse (see below for example texts; here I am simplifying the argument somewhat for brevity, for the marked appearance of expressionist writing is bound up with the development of printed texts). Despite the endorsements of stylistic analysts like Erich Auerbach, who concludes in *Mimesis* that the portrayals of consciousness in Virginia Woolf and James Joyce are strong representations of reality,[8] there came about a common conception that literary expressionism consisted of mimetic distortions.[9] Such characterizations as "the willing yielding up of ...verisimilitude"[10] precisely show the contested ground between naturalism, which presents itself as an accurate rendering of external reality, and expressionism, consequently labeled "unreal" or "fantastic," which concerns itself with subjective treatments of reality. The resultant privileging of the natural as "real" tends both to delegitimize expressionist presentation and to mask the expressionist tradition. Where did expressionism come from and what is modern expressionism?

To return briefly to Aristotle, there are at least two aspects in *The Poetics* that can be called expressionist: 1) that as a literary theory, as metatext, both form and content are treated and 2) that Aristotle's preference for tragedy, partly based on the presence of music and spectacle in that genre,[11] to this extent goes beyond what are ordinarily

considered the features of verbal literature. The addition of music to literary production renders the presentation more complex; the work no longer consists of writing only, and the writing lends its significance to the music, making the music's form specific to the writing. With respect to spectacle, the verisimilitude of a text that presents an image of itself is overdetermined, for such an image exists in reality whether or not it may be called "accurate." Writing in tragedy enhances itself both through music and through spectacle, which are additional forms of aural and visual presentation, by multiplying itself into an aggregated presentation, a multi-media multiplex. These other media increase the substantiality of the presentation, but, in themselves, depend upon the writing for whatever actual significance they possess. Thus, it is not surprising that "as an organized literary movement *expressionism* was strongest in the theater in the 1920's, and its entry into other literary forms was probably through the stage."[12] Evidently, the literary effects that Aristotle found superior were quite long in becoming an organized aesthetic movement.

The totalizing effect provided by spectacle is analogous to the images through which we experience life, images that surround us through our sensory media. Further, recalling Heidegger, it may be inferred that the revelation of technology is accomplished through image, and James Hillman makes this explicit in his *Archetypal Psychology*: "an image is not what one sees but the way in which one sees."[13] In other words, the image contains the form as well as the content, and the image is discursive in and of itself; in short, the image does not imitate nature as much as it expresses an informed opinion about experience. Expression is a broad term that cannot simply be related to either form or content, so it is well suited to designate works that combine media, that are explicitly metatextual, or that focus on the subjective realm. Many literary innovations have an expressionist character in that they cause us to consider them with respect to the form of a work as well as its content, and the apparent distortions in some of these distinguish them from imitative naturalism. Expressionist writing makes the production of image its self-sufficient goal, and in doing so, reveals the discourse inherent in the technology of language.

The novel has often proved to be a site for expressionist discourse, and an early example of this can be found in Petronius' *The Satyricon* which, in spite of its many lacunae, portrays a protagonist who is a student of rhetoric, features discussions of rhetoric, and provides examples of various forms of writing. All this imparts to the novel a discursive aspect that remains independent of the fictional story; Petronius' remarks on art made through the characters of the novel constitute criticism, and fiction is an inappropriate term for the analysis of criticism. A more modern analogue to this strategy is found in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* which explicitly discusses aesthetic theory and which anticipates the postmodern through its changing portrait image, an effect that we take for granted in film.

If expressionism is a part of the modernism brought about by the technology of writing systems, then what is modern expressionism or postmodernism? The advance to a more modern modernism comes about because of a change in technology at a fundamental level, for twentieth-century thought is qualitatively different than what has gone before; this change is typified by the refinement of the electronic image. This image, which I have designated as a "material image" to show its function in literature, has transformed writing styles and has made spectacle a relatively calculable part of literary presentations, some of which appear in image media like film and video. We would be unwise to consider the signifying capability of image to be simply equivalent to that of words; for example, the processing of words can be managed much more easily by computers than that of images, and this difference suggests a quantitative difference in their signifying capabilities. The technological transformation of our modern era has encompassed all, and the old and new technologies have combined to yield an unprecedented cultural diversity of forms and media.

The formulations of Freud, Darwin, and Nietzsche shook the Victorian world, but the formulations of quantum mechanics have led to even more fundamental transformations. The myth of external reality, the focus of naturalist mimesis, has been exploded, like Burroughs's "ticket" (33). All that we know of experience is that it is indistinguishable from psychic states. The changes in our ability to process information are overshadowed by the suggestion that even

sub-atomic particles process information. Gary Zukav's *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* discusses in accessible terms the transformations of thought that have accompanied quantum mechanics. Among the most crucial of these are the realization of the impossibility of knowing about particular events with the attendant emphasis on describing systems and the realization that language constitutes the real limit of knowledge. These are dramatically fused in Zukav's suggestion that physics may be "the study of the structure of consciousness."[14]

Most of us recognize the ways in which writers like Poe and Melville anticipated the changes that came with the revisions of psychological and philosophical systems. With new technologies came changes in the mode of production of art, and these technologies are changing our aesthetic values as significantly as they were changed by the arrival of writing systems. Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" focuses on two different "manifestations" of the new technology: the reproduction of works of art and the art of cinema.[15] His treatment evokes Aristotle in that "spectator" appears where habit might lead us to expect the term "reader," and his conclusions and implications are both startling and enormously helpful. The reproduction of art makes art into an image of itself capable of simultaneous collective experience and participation;[16] this withers the "aura" (aesthetic distance/authenticity/ authority) severing the connection between images of art and their traditional formulations.[17] The art of film through image montage uses the camera to instruct us about systems of sight and of consciousness.[18] Video tapes and computers now make possible the accurate rendering of anyone's wildest dream; insofar as it may be described, it can be shown.

Although space here does not permit a full elaboration of the bases for my conclusions, I have been able to formulate these specific parameters of modern expressionism, what could be called the essential features of postmodern culture:

1) political relations, not the sublime or the beautiful, become the fundamental justification of modern expressionist writing;

2) expressionism is a fundamentally discursive approach, so story becomes incidental to expressionist discourse, unlike naturalism where discourse arises from story;

3) the basis for representation in expressionism is the material image (Hillman's "psychic image" in *Archetypal Psychology* is a helpful analogue [19]), and cinema as a mode of production possesses a basically expressionist character;

4) reception of expressionist writing involves participation through speculation for an audience of writers;

5) metatextuality, criticism, subjectivism, and illustrations or visual presentations function as marks of expressionist discourse, and these elements are usually overdetermined when a particular work is designated as an expressionist one;

6) ideological stances often are clearly recognizable in expressionism, not ambiguous or sublime (even though actual signification in expressionism usually requires speculative participation, cf. "4"), and no part of an expressionist text is exempt from ideological treatment;

7) in expressionism meaning is coded through an indefinite allegory (one image leads to another)--as opposed to naturalism in which traditional allegory (one-to-one correspondence) is thought to be sufficient to produce meaning.

Some examples of this ideological discourse with respect to the Burroughs' selections include direct narrative address (an additional example comes with his attack on those who have conspired "to sell the earth from unborn feet forever" (11)), the inscription of an image from Kafka's *The Trial* in "THIS HORRIBLE CASE," and the image of war which, according to Benjamin, is the functional image of fascist culture.[20] So, we are presented with the paradoxical situation that Burroughs' ideological orientation is fairly clear even though the specific meanings of the passages remain somewhat obscure. Indeed, John Carpenter's recent film *They Live*, although based on a different story, provides a cinematic treatment of this theme in *Nova Express*, another version of "war to extermination."

Postmodern authors often pursue a strategy of creating textual arrays in their works as a means of development of expressionist discourse: a

textual array results when a material image from one text is inscribed into another text, creating a specific discursive link between the texts. These arrays help to illustrate the difference between what is typically thought of as "modernism" and postmodern textuality. I believe that with the widespread development of printed texts, the tendency toward expressionism became an important factor in literary production; perhaps this came about because print allowed text to be perceived as an image of writing (this is consistent with Benjamin's ideas, cf. above). Consequently, both naturalist discourse and expressionist discourse used expressionist techniques: in the former case, these techniques were associated with traditional mimesis, while in the latter, they became connected with a more purely expressionist discourse. All this resulted in a catalogue of intertextual relations in which naturalism and expressionism sought to define themselves through a dialectical discourse. Terms like "closure" and "fiction" became the means through which naturalists could designate expressionism as a failed literature while preserving their connection to the traditional justification of the beautiful and the sublime.

The notion of intertextuality is typical of modernist presentations, and Eliot's *The Wasteland* probably represents the best known example of this modernist approach. Nevertheless, Eliot's poem uses expressionist technique to further the discourse of naturalism, and his allusions become disconnected from their original contexts in their service of Eliot's. Alternatively, expressionists, by inscribing the images of other texts within their own styles, preserve the contexts of those works and aggrandize the discourse of expressionism. This dialectical strategy emphasizes the social basis of postmodern art by connecting the writers in a common discursive cause. This is not another rehearsal of the relation of "individual talent" and "tradition" because expressionism constitutes its own tradition such that tradition no longer exists in a fundamentally singular way and because the inscription consists of an image of a specific text, not of a traditional idea, and, further, the inscription resides in a style that often is radically different from the style of the image source. It will perhaps be helpful to illustrate the concept of arrays with the material at hand, the texts of Burroughs and Kafka.

The sequence called "Brief for the First Hearing" in "THIS HORRIBLE CASE" contains an acknowledged, quoted passage from *The Trial* (121-22). The following sequence, "Brief for the First Hearing // Case of Life Form A" (122-24), uses a variation of the cut-up technique called a fold-in method, in which words from the quoted passage are mixed into Burroughs' text. The actual content of these passages is less significant than the way in which they serve the discursive end of connecting the two texts, particularly insofar as the styles of Burroughs and of Kafka exhibit marked differences. We should also be reminded that quoted material more usually is associated with critical methods. The inscription of images from Kafka's important novel is not limited to this particular text of Burroughs.

The reader may recall that *The Trial* features three sexually charged encounters between Joseph K. and his neighbor at the boarding house, a woman at the court who is kept by a law student, and Leni who is the mistress of K.'s lawyer. In Alberto Moravia's novel *The Conformist,* a similar motif occurs. First, there comes the oblique narration of a sexual encounter in the minister's office. Second, Marcello meets a whore in the brothel to which he has come for instructions regarding his mission. Third, Marcello desires the wife of the professor whom he has been ordered to kill, and her name is Lena. The multiplicity of commonalities between Kafka's three encounters and those of Moravia, their number, the names, and the lack of consummation all serve to show the discursive connection between the texts. The repetition of this motif is neither coincidental nor necessary to the story in either case. We can readily see how the theme of innocence relates to the theme of conformity, so on a thematic level the discursive connection already exists, but this connection becomes overdetermined by the repetition of motif, and the inscription of an image from one novel is accomplished in the other in a way that allows for the recognition of that image in a style that preserves differences in the particulars of presentation. Both novels have been produced as films. Orson Welles directed Kafka's (1962), and Bernardo Bertolucci directed Moravia's (1969). Both films preserve these encounters, although some differences occur in the cinematic presentations. Both directors saw this motif as significant, and their treatments contribute to the image discourse. Why three en-

counters/women? Should we trace this back to the weird sisters of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* or the judgement of Paris? Such "tradition tracing" is not helpful here, but the image and its discourse remain.

Another case of inscription of images from *The Trial* occurs in Georges Bataille's novel *Blue Of Noon*. In some remarks that follow the text, Bataille asks: "[h]ow can we linger over books to which their authors have manifestly not been driven?"; then, he lists some novels that reflect his "intention," including *The Trial*.[21] Once again, we have an explicit connection to Kafka's novel that shows a discursive link, and, again, we may go to the text of Bataille's novel and discover the inscribed image there. Bataille's narrator has a dream in which he is terrorized by an animated marble Minerva.[22] Minerva, a goddess of the hunt, recalls the figure that is drawn by Titorelli, the painter, while Joseph K. watches: "that brightness brought the figure sweeping right into the foreground and it no longer suggested the goddess of Justice, or even the goddess of Victory, but looked exactly like a goddess of the Hunt in full cry."[23] This image serves to foreshadow K.'s execution, and this foreshadowing does not only occur in the novel. *The Trial* was not published during Kafka's lifetime; it was assembled by Max Brod from those papers of Kafka's which he had been instructed to destroy. During his lifetime, however, Kafka did publish a short piece called "A Dream" which appears to be an excerpted segment of the novel manuscript. The piece recounts a nightmare of K.'s in which a painter inscribes a "J" upon a tombstone.[24] This deadly foreshadowing connected to the dream and to the goddess of the hunt and to the artist (Bataille's mobile sculpture) all together over-determines the congruence between the image in Kafka and the image in Bataille even though Bataille's style is quite different, and the image in his narrator's dream proves not to be so ultimately menacing.

These various images and the works in which they appear constitute an expressionist discursive array of at least the four novels and the two films. The earliest of these is Kafka's novel, as far as this description goes, for the connections extend to other works both before and after *The Trial*, but Kafka's novel is mainly credited as the image source with respect to this grouping. There are many other arrays that connect postmodern works in expressionist discourse, and these are not limited

either by medium or by approach. A telling example involves the title image from Burroughs' *Nova Express* and "IX" from Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in which he discusses the Klee painting "Angelus Novus."[25]

The drum becomes an apt metaphor or image for postmodern textual arrays in that the "message" or image remains congruent from one text to another even though the "drummers" or styles that contain the message/image may vary widely, even to the point that they may not be recognizable as similar styles. This argues against the problem of individualism in styles in that writers are able to preserve highly individual styles and still participate in a common discourse, rather than remaining isolated by the uniqueness of those styles. The discourse remains the important message, and the image becomes the means through which these writers are able to express a discursive solidarity. We have seen how Kafka, Moravia, Bataille, Welles, and Bertolucci focus in a speculative fashion on the discursive significance of the connection between sexuality and political systems ; in other words, these areas are viewed as inseparable, rather than as special. This idea has come to be a foundation of the important school of gender criticism and theory that has been founded recently, but we can see how these texts have also suggested the importance of this approach, not only through the discourse of the individual texts, but through the strategy of the textual array which has emphasized the commonality of discourse among the various writers involved in these example texts.

The salient difference between modernist discourse and postmodernist discourse becomes, on the one hand, a virtual entrapment in verbal categories that have been designed to further a naturalist mimesis and, on the other hand, an expressionist potential for nothing less than a unified theory and praxis of the arts and sciences. We have come to the end of one road, and we are setting forth on the next.

Footnotes

[1]William Burroughs, *Nova Express* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964), 56-63; subsequent references are parenthetical. Excerpta: "Uranium Willy" and "Towers Open Fire" from *Nova Express* by William

Comedy and Continuity: The Frame Device In *Light in August*

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The final chapter of *Light in August* has been described by some critics as a type of satyr play reminiscent of the required bawdy, burlesque scene following a tragic trilogy in Greek drama.[1] Though the Lena Grove ending fits the characteristics of the satyr play, it is more than just a tagged-on ending. It is part of the frame that Faulkner constructs to take the reader into and away from the dark, shadowy stories of Joe Christmas and Gail Hightower.[2] And, unlike the satyr play, the final chapter functions not merely as comic relief but provides balance, structure, and imagery as well as an expression of Faulkner's belief in man.

Both John Lewis Longley, Jr., and Robert M. Slabey deal briefly with the return to the Lena Grove story as a type of satyr play rather than as a frame device. Longley notes "the Greek demanded that each trilogy submitted in the great dramatic contests be accompanied by an outrageous and lewd satyr-play, which preferably would burlesque the very elements and events just presented as tragedy."[3] Slabey uses specific Greek terms as he identifies the ending as a satyr play, saying that the ending provides "a radical change of mood from sadness and horror to joy and humor, similar to the *peripeteia* or outburst of joy in the satyr play following the *anagnorisis* (discovery of the slain and mutilated hero) at the conclusion of the Greek tragic trilogy."[4] The story of Christmas, Hightower, and Lena can be seen as the trilogy. The *anagnorisis* is the just-told horror of Christmas's murder and castration while the *peripeteia*, an unexpected humorous counterpoint, is Lena's wide-eyed amazement at her expanding world and Byron's "desperated," dogged pursuit of her. The bawdiness occurs in the colorful conversation between the furniture dealer and his wife as well as in the painful longing for and bumbling attempt at intimacy that Byron makes with Lena. But the marriage bed conversation between the furniture dealer and his wife

concerning Byron's pursuit of Lena also burlesques the serious sexual theme of the novel. Both the conversation between husband and wife as they lie in bed together after his return from a trip and Byron's delayed advances toward Lena after he has committed himself to accompanying her as she looks for the father of her child give the reader assurance that some sort of normality between man and woman is possible after the perversion of male-female relationships in other stories of the trilogy.

In the final chapter the verbal exchanges between the narrator and his wife while they are in bed and he is telling her about Lena, Byron, and the baby whom he picked up on his trip to Tennessee give life to the bawdiness and burlesque. The bawdiness begins with the furniture dealer's comments on Byron's unnoticeableness: "I just couldn't imagine anybody, any woman, knowing that they had ever slept with him, let alone having anything to show folks to prove it" (470).[5] His wife mildly reprimands him for "*talking that way before a lady*" (470) while they lie there in the dark. He teases her that he "*cant see [her] blushing any*" (470). They when she asks what Byron was getting all "desperated up" to do, the husband comments, "*You wait till I come to that part. Maybe I'll show you, too*" (472). Shortly, the wife repeats the question. This time the husband's comment is "*I just showed you once. You ain't ready to be showed again, are you?*" (472). She responds to his offer with "*I reckon I dont mind if you dont. But I still dont see anything funny in that*" (472). (Though the wife misses the humor of the situation, the reader doesn't.) Continuing leisurely to tell how Byron finally one night approaches Lena who is sleeping in the truck, the furniture dealer says he was worried about what to do if Lena screamed. The exchange between husband and wife that follows has its own on-going suggestiveness:

> *I reckon the reason you knew you never had to worry was that you had alredy found out just what she would do in a case like that* the wife says.
>
> *Sho* the husband says. *I didn't aim for you to find that out. Yes, sir. I thought I had covered my tracks this time.* (476)

with Lena is structural as well as thematic because he uses Lena as the beginning and the end, an alpha and omega for the novel.

The burlesque and bawdy elements of the novel's ending do not belong solely to the satyr play but, also with the frame, are also characteristics of early Southern humor influenced by the Cavalier tradition that produced Restoration and Eighteenth-Century comedy with all its bawdiness. The bawdiness even serves to balance the grim Calvinism that plagues other characters in the story and plunges them into tragedy.

Humor and comedy provide a necessary perspective from which to cope with horror and human tragedy such as that exhibited in Joe Christmas.[13] Thus the final chapter, with its "happy ending of the fairy tale . . . is to be read, not as a contradiction, but as a transcendence of the universal tragedy of man."[14] In *Light in August* the character of Joe Christmas descends into an abyss and rises to a kind of rebirth through the figures of Lena and her baby.[15] Hightower too descends into the depths but gathers his own strength to rise. This descent and resurrection, a type of epic journey, is symbolic of the lot of mankind (rather than of a man in particular).[16] Even as Faulkner takes his reader down through the tragic in *Light in August*, Faulkner lifts him up through the comic.

Light in August has elements of both tragedy and comedy; but with the final chapter, which completes the novel's structure rather than functioning as a separate piece like the satyr play, Faulkner rescues the novel from the realm of tragedy. He aligns himself with the promise of a generous community rather than with the tragedy of an individual; he writes with a sense of faith rather than fate. In Lena, he personifies

> those simple and permanent values which [he] so frequently and so powerfully affirmed, the values of endurance, patience, fecundity, and simple faith. "*That will be her life, her destiny,*" Hightower recognises [sic]: "*The good stock peopling in tranquil obedience to it the good earth; from these hearty loins without hurry or haste descending mother and daughter.*"[17]

By ending with Lena Grove and Byron Bunch and the furniture dealer and his wife, even with all their comedy, Faulkner succeeds in doing what he challenges young writers to do in his Nobel Prize Award Speech: he writes of love not lust, of struggles for things of value, of hope and pity and compassion.[18] In so doing, he doesn't just divert his reader's attention from the tragic through bits of comedy, but he reminds the reader that man "has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance."[19] And this is Faulkner's belief in man.

Footnotes

[1]Robert M. Slabey, "Myth and Ritual in *Light in August*," in *The Merrill Studies in Light in August*, comp. M. Thomas Inge (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1971), p. 96. Slabey gives credit in a footnote to John L. Longley for the satyr play-likeness suggestion. Longley's article, "Joe Christmas: Hero in the Modern World," can be found beginning on page 107 of the *Merrill Studies* .

[2]Michael Millgate, in *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1966), refers to the opening relationships (i.e. Lena and the Armstids) as "a framing episode, a prelude, linked with the epilogue or coda provided in the final chapter of the book" (124). Francois Pitavy, in *Faulkner's Light in August*, trans. Gillian E. Cook (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1973) also refers to the last chapter as an epilogue (33).

[3]John Lewis Longley, Jr., "Joe Christmas: The Hero in the Modern World," in *The Merrill Studies*, p. 119.

[4]Slabey, p. 96.

[5]William Faulkner, *Light in August* (1932; New York: Vintage, 1972). All references are to this edition of the novel. Italic type and omitted punctuation (such as apostrophes in contractions) are as they appear in the text.

[6]C. Hugh Holman, "The Unity in Faulkner's *Light in August*," in *The Merrill Studies*, comments that Lena and Byron "establish a norm for the other actions, a definition of the natural order against which the perversions and distortions of the other stories are to be set. Here it is sex which is the principal subject matter" (69).

[7]Pitavy, p. 82

[8]A brief comic allusion is made by the furniture dealer when he describes his and Byron's actions around the campfire as "like those two fellows that used to be in the funny papers, those two Frenchmen that were always bowing and scraping at the other one to go first" (473). Richard A. Milam, "Faulkner and the Comic Perspective of Frederick Burr Opper," in *Journal of Popular Culture,* 16 (Winter 1982), comments that this allusion produces "numerous images of an exasperating and unrelenting dedication to chivalry . . . an apt description of Byron" (139). In this article Milam identifies those two fellows as Alphonse and Gaston, comic strip characters created by Opper. Suggesting Faulkner's probable familiarity with the cartoon and comparing characteristics of cartoon humor with literary humor, Milam shows that the "themes and techniques [of cartoons] . . . are among those fundamental to artists of the comic grotesque school" (148).

[9]Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, eds. *Faulkner in the University* (Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 1959), p. 74.

[10]Pitavy, p. 9. Pitavy discusses changes in page and chapter numbers and concludes that existing revisions show that Faulkner "spent proportionately more time on the first chapters than on the rest of the novel" (10). Concerning the change in the novel's opening, Millgage writes: "[T]here exist at the University of Texas a few pages of what appears to be an early draft of *Light in August*; this version opens with a description of Hightower in his study and continues with material that was eventually absorbed into the published novel . . . (131).

[11]Pitavy applies the "double evocation of circularity and eternity" of the urn to Lena (79, 86, 144). Holman names Lena as the novel's "third aspect of the urn or vase image, one neither removed and inhuman like Hightower's or horribly imperfect and repulsive like Joe's, but simply right and natural and combining both" (70).

[12]Darrel Abel, "Frozen Movement in *Light in August*," in *The Merrill Studies*, comments that "[t]he figure which structures his [Hightower's] revery is a rapidly revolving wheel of thought, or consciousness, which slows and stops to focus the static images and characters which perception distinguishes in the continuous, moving reality" (48-49). Slabey sees the wheel images as "only of passing interest" except as they are

"part of a major pattern of symbolism" and then they are "significant" (94). Slabey relates "Hightower's wheel of thinking" and the wagon-wheels of Lena's journey to the "ancient Mandala symbol[s]" (95).

[13]Pitavy, p. 46, and Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1963), p. 71. Brooks makes this distinction between the functions of comedy and tragedy: "Tragedy always concerns itself with the individual, his values, his tragic encounter with the reality about him and the waste which is suffered in his defeat. Comedy involves . . . the author's basic alignment with society and with the community" (72). However, the community doesn't always exhibit characteristics that are exemplary. Millgate points out that the *Light in August* community shows both its best and its worst faces. With Percy Grimm in control the community allows "the worst elements in Jefferson to emerge" and act against Joe while Lena, the "calm recipient of kindness," seems to bring out the community's best (128-29).

[14]Joseph Campbell, (*The Hero With a Thousand Faces,* 1956) as quoted by Slabey, p. 97.

[15]Slabey points out three ways he sees Joe Christmas reborn. But the physical way is the clearest: "Faulkner asserts the 'endurance' and continuous flow of life by having Lena's baby born where Joe lived and where Joanna was murdered on the same day that Joe and Hightower die" (83).

[16]Slabey views the "whole novel in general" as such an epic journey (82, 90, 96, 98).

[17]Millgate, p. 129.

[18]William Faulkner, "Nobel Prize Award Speech," in *The Literature of the South*, ed. Thomas D. Young, et al. (Atlanta: Scott, Foresman, 1968), p. 1042.

[19]Faulkner, "Nobel Speech," 1042.

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Miss Ellen's Fallen Women: "The Dark Stream of Identity"

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From 1925 to 1935, Ellen Glasgow produced a body of work that constitutes her series on Virginia's social history, post 1865. Following a time of change and turmoil in the author's literary and personal life, these books reflect a moderated author's voice, less shrill and insistent than the tone in her early novels protesting the standard vapid fiction of her Southern contemporaries. Eschewing her previous use of male protagonists, Glasgow in this series employs strong females who dare to struggle against Southern society's dictates. With a style no less deadly for its moderation, the author pits her women against the double standards of Southern society. Aiming her attack against the very bedrock of "pure" womanhood, Glasgow depicts the fallen woman in her struggles against "what is" in Virginia society.

It is tempting to range Glasgow personally on the side of her outcasts; she had during the previous decade bounded from one violent love to another: one with the mysterious married man, "Gerald B." and another with perfidious Henry Anderson (Wagner 10-16, 81-93).[1] Outwardly conforming to the social norms of female behavior, Glasgow nonetheless refers, in *The Woman Within*, of being "immersed in some dark stream of identity" (88). If the emphasis in her statement falls on the word "dark," then Glasgow's plight reflects the situation in her social novels: a woman's quest for sexual identity after betrayal both by her man and hypocritical society.

Writing during an era when women characters were traditionally either "good" or "bad" according to the accepted sexual definitions held by males, Glasgow decried this trend in the South. Her women are complex, as much sinning as sinned against. Like the author, the female protagonist in her five social novels freely chooses her path toward sexuality. There is no question of seduction; the male characters are too weak to lead astray these strong women. For Glasgow's three most

representative women, Dorinda (*Barren Ground*), Annabelle (*The Romantic Comedians*) and Jenny Blair (*The Sheltered Life*), sexual transgression becomes means for the woman to escape society's dictates. Sex frees her from her role as a "good" southern woman, and allows her to seek true identity.

The chief method that Glasgow employs for arranging the ironic stance in each book involves the voice of society against which she can display the actions of her female protagonist. The three town books contain society's views voiced by old males frozen like their society in a time that was. Clinging to the Southern myth that "once there was an age of grace and splendor . . ."[2] the men speak for the male-dominated Southern society which has once and for all defined the "fallen woman." *Barren Ground* and *Vein of Iron*, of course, lack the sophisticated Queensborough voice of Episcopalian "good family" but have the more fundamental and Calvinist view of "good people," wrapped in the timeless cloak of Scotch-Irish religion. In both books, the villagers' religious stance against the Devil's temptations contains the dictates which the female confronts head on. Whether the setting is town or country, however, the nature of the females' antagonists provides the ironic context against which her women rebel.

In point of time, Dorinda Oakley in *Barren Ground* (1925) is Glasgow's first strong and fallen woman. Although a few women of strength figure in a small way in early novels like *Deliverance*, Dorinda maintains her strength throughout the work and serves as the author's first full-fledged female protagonist. With this novel, Glasgow gives herself a huge task and her female, pregnant and abandoned, a dismal present with which to contend. Reacting against her contemporaries' romanticized view of the fallen Southern civilization, Glasgow sets Dorinda in a muddy barren Virginia landscape with morally-inert failures, whose stalwart Scotch-Irish blood has run thin. In order to sin even, the protagonist must first stay alive amidst the dying old order and the creeping broomsedge.

Glasgow surrounds Dorinda with beaten women, victims of circumstance and the "what is" of village society. Women know their place at Pedlar's Mill but Mrs. Oakley realizes that there could be another way:

> Grandfather used to say that when a woman got ready to fall in love the man didn't matter, but she could drape her feeling over a scarecrow . . . . The way I've worked it out is that with most women, when it seems pure foolishness, it ain't really that. It's just the struggle to get away from things as they are. (103)

Dorinda sees her mother's worn-out life, like Aunt Mehitable Green's, shaped and destroyed by men and their institutions, whether marriage or slavery, consecrated by the church. When Dorinda is betrayed by Jason, she does not wait around for ecclesiastical forgiveness, revenge, or a shotgun husband. Only a true escape can get her away from "things as they are." In her New York venture, she slides away from a would-be suitor, not content until she can return home on her own terms. "I've got to stand it. No matter what it does to me" (240).

Dorinda develops a monomania about the success of her farmlands and withdraws from village contacts that interfere with business. She enjoys male approval of her intellect, face, and body but she enjoys more the sense of power a humble male makes her feel. Sex, after the dalliance with Jason, occupies none of her time: "I've finished with all that" (526). Even with her only lover, while she feels passion, she withholds part of her emotion; there is "something left over and this something watched as a specter" (117). Sex is too impermanent for Dorinda and certainly not worth the forfeit of her life's freedom.

Glasgow uses sex to free Dorinda and to give her identity. Sex is the force that impels the protagonist to run, not from her impoverished society's disapproval, but simply toward freedom. Knowledge of sex makes her "no longer afraid of life" and her fear of religious approbation withers, "robbed of terror" (109). The old Calvinistic restraints dissipate, making Dorinda at once free and alone. Although the baby is Dorinda's punishment, it soon dies; Glasgow on the one hand rewards Dorinda with a rich life and on the other with a life of celibacy. Dorinda has learned to fill her life "with something better than broomsedge" (233) and sex.

In part three, "Life-Everlasting," Dorinda with her "vein of iron" triumphs. Her character has indeed determined her fate; she is aided by black Fluvanna in her farm world dominated by the female principle. Like women at the mercy of men's laws, her men are shaped by her institutions and the role of sex on her farm is reduced to animal husbandry. She settles her score with Jason, but it really doesn't matter. At fifty, beautiful and rich, Dorinda receives at Glasgow's hands "dignity and independence."

> The story and the hag-ridden dreams of the night were over, and the land which she had forgotten was waiting to take her back to its heart. Endurance. Fortitude. This was the permanent self. (524)

In speaking of *Barren Ground*, Glasgow repeatedly stated that it is "the truest novel ever written . . . a perfectly honest interpretation of experience. . ." (*Woman Within* 171). She also states in *The Woman Within* that during the period of its writing, she had gained her own freedom: "The obscure instinct that had warned . . . against marriage, was a sound instinct . . . I was free from chains. I belonged to myself" (*A Certain Measure* 201). Glasgow invested her exhilaration in Dorinda.

Written the same year that *Barren Ground* was published, *The Romantic Comedians* (1926) represents a 180 degree turn from the character study of Dorinda. The wry examination of Annabelle's morals contains the "delicate laughter" certainly absent in the former book. Her first of the Queensborough trilogy, the work concerns itself less with the fallen state of Annabelle than with the decayed state of polite Virginia society in the twenties. The plot is antediluvian: poor girl marries an old blue-blood whom she cuckolds. Satire, not realism, is Glasgow's goal, as she depicts the sexual misconduct of her protagonist.

What the reader knows of the male-dominated Virginia society which Anabelle defies rests with ancient Judge Honeywell, itchy from his own sexual swan song. His illusionary point of view dominates almost half the book, allowing Glasgow to portray a society that looks

back on an Old South society frozen in time. Women still belong to that sheltered generation for whom everything is "decided for them by the feelings of a lady and the Episcopal Church" (143). Tidewater society still venerates the bustle, the Victorian pompadour, and the modest (though middle-aged) belle Amanda's unspoken love. Outraged by Edmonia's "French" life, the Judge upholds the double-standard of old Virginia in the face of her witticisms tinged with truth:

> You resented the way I wasn't satisfied simply to stay ruined and to stew in a consciousness of sin . . . it wasn't my fall, it was my being able to get up again, that you couldn't forgive . . . . (227)

The women in the Judge's society constitute a subculture, all but his sister Edmonia, play acting the Victorian flirt with the Judge but demonstrating by their actions a quite subversive threat to his ancient illusions. Glasgow provides the feminine voice of European society in sexually adventurous Edmonia whose epigrams make a counterpoint to the Judge's old moralities. He is appalled that his sister's "scarlet letter" of immorality is treated by the young "less as the badge of shame than as some foreign decoration for distinguished service" (84). Edmonia replies that distance from Virginia society is cleansing, that by the time she travels to the Balkans, she becomes "a tombstone of female virtue" (310).

Although the two do not converse, Annabelle seizes Edmonia's sexual example but does not have her societal standing. Sick of taking in boarders and eating "fried liver and eggs," Annabelle uses sex as her lure in evading poverty and a landscaping job when she victimizes the Judge with his own illusions of Southern womanhood. "I'd rather have money than anything in the world" (68-69). Annabelle's clear-eyed and "frank" conduct with Amanda contrasts sharply with her Victorian-tart behavior with the Judge as she and her mother barter the girl's body in return for the Judge's wealth. Glasgow makes Annabelle discontented with the Judge's "mild caresses . . . [which] were too fleeting . . . to ease his overcharged heart" (167). Through married sex, the author places the protagonist in a Victorian bird cage of Annabelle's own devising,

and she cries "I want to be free. I don't want to be married" (229). She gets her wish. Through free sex with the aptly-named Dabney Birdsong, Annabelle escapes, and the females in this "different world" only lift their eyebrows.

Sex is not the drawing card for Annabelle, however--freedom is. "I want my life while I am young. Life won't wait" (286). Glasgow rewards her iconoclast more generously than she rewards Dorinda. Annabelle receives her freedom, the Judge's money, and a young lover. The penalty Glasgow imposes on Annabelle, however, is far more harsh: dependence forever on a man. Sex is a barter that requires a partner; for Annabelle, the constant search for a victim/purchaser will occur in a shifting European world of expatriots not bound by the Judge's ludicrous notion of "a gentleman's responsibility" in marriage.

Glasgow wrote that *The Romantic Comedians* was a book she conceived for her "private diversion." Further, she stated that "As for the idea--well, I was worn out with having men write what they know or don't know about dangerous ages in women" (Rouse 90). Raper refers to the comic, realistic voice of Edmonia being Glasgow's own (105-106) as the book abounds in her and the narrator's witticisms:

> You look as if you had lived on duty and it hadn't agreed with you. (83)
>
> It was evident that [the Judge] had married in the post-war period, he still thought in the primitive terms of a world which, like the Garden of Eden, was unaware of its own innocence. (180)
>
> If there is anything wrong with the Episcopal Church or the Democratic Party, I would rather die without knowing it. (9)

Jenny Blair, Glasgow's protagonist in *The Sheltered Life*, characterizes a view of the traditional Virginia female darker than that of *The Romantic Comedians*. The third in Glasgow's Queensborough trilogy, *The Sheltered Life* maintains the author's tragic-comic thrust, but the emphasis here falls on tragic irony. The author is bitter in her denunciation of the societal "shelter" that has ruined her fallen woman more devastatingly than sexual transgression. Indeed, to emphasize her

meaning, Glasgow allows Jenny Blair to fall only technically, with an adulterous kiss symbolic of the sexual act.

As in *The Romantic Comedians*, an elderly male's point of view dominates a large part of the novel. General David Archbald's observations encompass the whole realm of Virginia society in which women's assigned roles circumscribe their lives. A "civilized man in a world that is not civilized" (252), the General is frozen, like his society, in a stance looking back at an illusionary past. In the five women to whom he offers the ancient rites of shelter and homage, Archbald witnesses the tragic results of traditional female education; while his eccentricity permits an intuitive horror at the results, he feels "that he was helplessly watching a violation" (245).

Glasgow's female society forms no subculture in the novel, as Eva, Cora and Jenny Blair step through their choreographed lives innocent of understanding the "Red Indian" implicit in their masters. Subservience for bread and shelter impels the female society to be one of servants who faithfully espouse their masters' views. After a lifetime of substituting "manners for thought," only when faced with death can Eve recognize that ". . . what she feared most was not death, but life with its endless fatigue, its exacting pretense" (245).

Jenny Blair embodies women's plight as Glasgow portrays the character's development over an eight-year period. Although crying, "I'm different. I'm different . . . I'm alive, alive, alive, and I'm Jenny Blair Archbald," Jenny sinks under the accumulated weight of the female tradition. She understands her role early: "Do you think I can possibly grow up as plain as Aunt Etta?" (89) Fed by stories of Eva's legendary beauty which delayed even "wedding processions," Jenny's infatuation with the woman catches her in society's time warp, as she learns about life secondhand from Eva: "You can never give up too much for happiness" (55, 57). Passionate involvement with Eva leads Jenny to passionate involvement with Eva's philandering husband. Breaking the protagonist's static life, Glasgow allows sex to urge her to action and propels Jenny's romanticism to confront human desire. Obsessed sexually into breaking her traditional bond, Jenny's moment of passion proves fatal for George. Eva's pent rage climaxes with Jenny's passion,

leaving her "naked . . . bloodied" from her loss of innocence. Jenny can only fall back on the one role she has been taught:

> "Oh, Grandfather, I didn't mean anything," she cried as she sank down into blackness. "I didn't mean anything in the world!" (395)

In *The Sheltered Life*, Glasgow uses sex to victimize Jenny Blair in a world where everyone is trapped in societal molds. Surrounded by stasis, the protagonist's adolescent sexual impulses, like Eva's homicidal one, will be smoothed over by General Archbald's chivalric lies. Jenny has freely chosen to pursue George; but when her passion mounts, her sheltered life has taught her nothing of reality (Rubin 35-37).[3] Before sex can truly offer her freedom, she's involved in murder, the ultimate reality. Ironically, her character is her fate as Glasgow allows (and damns) Jenny to respond at the moment of crisis by sinking back into her traditional, subservient role. Her attempt to become involved in real life explodes; Jenny is a fallen woman who will stay down, a victim of the sheltered life.

Wagner refers to Glasgow's references that her idea had "been to give the scene an added dimension, a universal rhythm, deeper than any material surface." Almost in response, Allan Tate wrote Glasgow that "you have taken your subject beyond the providence of the novel of manners into the tragic vision" (qtd. in Wagner 92-93). In this her last book of mannered society, Glasgow abandons the light heart of *The Romantic Comedians* and reveals the impulses that will lead to her last great novel of the Virginian backcountry, *The Vein of Iron*.

Ellen Glasgow, in the decade of her greatest writing, produced a body of social history that addressed the problems of women in the repressive Southern society. *Barren Ground*, *The Romantic Comedians*, and *The Sheltered Life* in particular mark her as one of the early proponents of feminine liberation. Although she herself stated that she only would go so far as to propose women's suffrage, her books exhibit her great concern with the role of women in their society. In three of her novels during the 1925-1935 period, Glasgow depicts two societies, town and country, in which the fallen woman is the metaphor for

societal ills. "Real women aren't human," Glasgow has Annabelle state. Dorinda, Annabelle, and Jenny Blair escape the mold of the "real" Southern woman, and become human, impelled in each instance by sex. What concerns Glasgow is not the sexual act but what the woman does with her moment of reality for, once freed by sexual action, her characters are allowed to develop. Dorinda escapes, rejecting sex totally in her search for identity. Annabelle, too, escapes but reliance on a man simply places her in another role in which she is again identifiable only by male standards. Jenny, the youngest of the protagonists, loses completely; her confrontation with reality appalls her and she returns to society's womb. The difference in Glasgow's women is the presence in one of that "vein of iron," which strips through the illusions and male definitions in search of the woman's essential self. Total rejection of "what is" in society allows Glasgow's one survivor, Dorinda, to discover who she is. "Endurance. Fortitude. This was the permanent self."

Footnotes

[1]I am indebted to Ms. Wagner for information pertaining to my topic. Although my focus is similar to hers only in general terms, I am grateful for her work on Glasgow, the woman.

[2]Dr. David Marion Holman, late professor of English at the University of Mississippi, used this line from *Gone with the Wind* to illustrate the nature of the Southern myth.

[3]I am grateful to Dr. Rubin for this information.

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Inner and Outer Space/the Myth of the UFO: Self and Shadow in Crichton's *Sphere*

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Michael Crichton's *Sphere* (1987), participates in the modern myth of the UFO in its portrayal of a quest for the secrets hidden in a spacecraft discovered at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. The American craft, from well into the twenty-first century, has travelled to the stars and through time and contains a silver sphere of unknown, possibly alien, origin. The sphere's mystery, the powers it ultimately exhibits, and the symbolism of its shape--associate it with what Jungians think of as the god and the devil within, the archetypes of the self and the shadow. In portraying these timeless archetypes, this science fiction novel is highly mythic--containing variations on symbols universal and ubiquitous in the human past the world over. Thus, here myth transforms itself again and lives on even in the world of modern technology and speculation about the future and about outer and inner space--even in the form of a "thriller" remaining for three months on the *New York Times* best-seller list.

Crichton tells his story from the third-person point of view of Norman Johnson, a fifty-three-year-old psychology professor called to be a member of an investigatory team concerning a crash in a remote portion of the Pacific. Norman has served as psychologist investigating airline crashes repeatedly (4). When Johnson reaches the crash site, he is amazed to find that the matter of the site is shrouded in the utmost secrecy. Navy Colonel Harold C. Barnes, the "Project Commander" (9), informs him that it is "a spacecraft crash site" (11)--the crash estimated as having occurred at least three-hundred years ago (12).

The novel serves the function of modern myth in keeping with a number of Jung's statements in *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky* (1958):

> Untold millions of so-called Christians have lost their belief in a real and living mediator [the Christ; along with the supporting myth and dogma]
>
> A political, social, philosophical and religious conflict has split the consciousness of our age. (424)
>
> In the threatening situation of the world today, when people are beginning to see that everything is at stake, the projection-creating fantasy soars beyond the realm of earthly organizations and powers into the heavens, into interstellar space, where the rulers of fate, the gods, once had their abode in the planets [perhaps Jung should have mentioned the stars as well]. (320)

That is, the old mythological systems in the form of religions like Christianity are failing in the age of "better living through science," "mega-death," and the "iron curtain." Yet the same archetypal needs and situations are being spoken to by a new mythology, that of "outer space." Thus, in approaching the modern novel containing UFO's or aliens or space travel, we should expect the reframing of the same archetypal mythic materials in the context of the world of science and technology. In this version of the myth, the archetypes of the self and the shadow --which in Christian mythology were expressed in the forms of the God and the devil--appear in modern form in the alien sphere (found in the crashed ship) and its effects on the human psyche.

After the civilian members of the "Anomaly Investigation Team" have been brought together, Norman learns that the craft was found recently (the novel is set in the late nineteen--eighties) by a ship laying a communications cable when the cable was sheared (31). The huge rocket-like craft shows a technology unknown at present on earth--although it involves a kind of technology experts think may exist in from ten to fifteen years (33). It has been decided that the crashed craft has been "on the planet at least three-hundred years," perhaps five-hundred or even five thousand (34).

The mythological nature of the scenario is emphasized by the fact that Norman's Odyssean descent to the lower world where a laboratory has been set up in an undersea habitat is accomplished in a submarine called "Charon V." Norman and Ted Fielding, the astrophysicist member of the team, pay the pilot for good luck as though there were dead souls being ferried by Charon across the river Styx (49). The hell-like nature of the situation is intensified by the fact that soon after the team starts its investigation, a typhoon arrives in that area of the Pacific, communication is lost, and ultimately all surface support vessels have to leave the area.

Though the assumption has been that the half-mile long spacecraft is of alien origin, when the team members enter the craft, they find it is not. The original suspicions of mathematician/logician Harry Adams are confirmed: The labels inside the craft are in English. The craft materialized from the future in that location three-hundred or more years ago (66). The date near the serial number is 2043 (79). Harry theorizes that the craft went through a black hole and thus traveled in both space and time (100-101). Though a speculation and not an empirically verified fact, this idea qualifies as an element of modern myth, as it fulfills, in general, Joseph Campbell's requirement of congruence with the scientific thought of the time (221-222).

Ted discovers the sphere (103-104). "Large, perfectly polished and silver," it is "about thirty feet in diameter." At first, it appears to have "no markings or features of any kind." Norman notices "an odd shifting iridescence, faint rainbow hues of blue and red." On the far side of the sphere, they discover "a series of deep, convoluted grooves, cut in an intricate pattern into" its surface. Norman finds the pattern arresting, though he does not know why (104). Thus, the sphere has that typical arresting effect of the mythological symbol.[1]

Ted thinks the sphere is the instrument by which some form of intelligent life has attempted to communicate with other beings across the vastness of space (105). Harry thinks the sphere is hollow and contains something and is frightened by the fact (107). Colonel Barnes is preoccupied with the idea of eventually blasting open the sphere, if necessary, to see what is inside (108), thinking of it in a purely adversarial manner. Zoologist Beth Halpern, who has serious fears

about her own ego, imagines the possibility of a long series of attempts to get the sphere open, culminating in the use of a nuclear device, all to no avail--"One great frustration for mankind' (109). Thus to some degree, the sphere functions here as the gold doubloon does in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (Ch xcviii). Several characters see it, each giving it a different meaning based on his own fears, desires, or preoccupations--as is the case with any true symbol.

Harry is the first to open and enter the sphere. When he emerges, he is changed psychologically. He has lost what Norman thinks of as a "slow sarcasm," having replaced it with a "speedy, overly cheerful quality" and a "laughing indifference to everything" (155). At first, Harry says he does not remember what happened to him in the sphere. Later he declares that "It was wonderful, and beautiful. Something about lights, swirling lights" (154). He only remembers that the idea come to him as a sudden intuition as though it were an inspiration: "I just remember this sudden insight, this certainty about how it was done" (155), but he has lost the conscious knowledge of how.

Soon after Harry's excursion into the sphere a number of sea animals invade the area around the undersea habitat: bioluminiscient squid, shrimp, jellyfish, and a gigantic squid. Some of these animals have anomalous physical characteristics, and all seem peculiarly out of place there. Also, at one point, Norman encounters a black sailor he at first thinks has been sent down to the habitat by the military. This sailor has about him a "flatness" which Norman finds "odd" (220). It turns out that Harry has seen him too and found him to be "dull," "kind of boring" (221).

It is decided about the black crewman, as about all the unusual sea animals, that, "he came from the sphere," as Ted says, "Or at least, he was made by the sphere" (221). Another development since Harry's entrance into and emergence from the sphere is that the sphere, it seems, or something inside it that calls itself Jerry, has been communicating with the crew through the computer terminal. The first manifestations on the computer screen were in the form of numbers which at first seemed random and then turned out to have a design. Ultimately, came language in code, which was eventually broken. The "alien," or whatever was revealing itself, identified itself as "Jerry" and proceeded to converse

with the team in very simplistic language. The style seemed to indicate a childlike mentality. Like the typical science fiction alien, it was fond of the term "entity" (187).

Ted thinks that Jerry is able to "create things. Animals. I don't think Jerry is a giant squid, but Jerry created the giant squid that attacked us" (221). Ted thinks that the attack was an accident, that the squid attacked the cylinders of the habitat, thinking they were its mortal enemy, a whale. Norman thinks it is more likely that it is Jerry that is hostile. Soon afterward the squid continues its attacks, and it, or one or another form of sea creature, kills everyone in the habitat except for Norman, Harry, and Beth (232).

At one point, Jerry says that "THE ENTITY SQUID IS A MANIFESTATION," adding that he/it finds it difficult to manifest the squid. It becomes clear eventually that the other anomalous animals were also manifestations provided by Jerry. Jerry seems to think that all the separate human beings living in the habitat were "MANIFESTATIONS" also made, presumably, by some other immaterial, or perhaps compact, "entity" (259).

Soon Beth notices that Harry has regained the same psychological traits he had before his short trip into the sphere: "the same old Harry--arrogant, disdainful, and very, very intelligent" (257). The reasons for these changes are unclear. Jerry begins to use here and there particularly colloquial expressions, like "HEY MAN GET OFF MY BACK" (262, 264). Norman begins to wonder why Jerry decided to manifest a squid (264). He realizes that just before the squid first appeared, the crew had been discussing the giant squid in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*--which had frightened *Harry* when a child. Norman realizes that it was *Harry* who broke the numerical code, making it possible for them to communicate with Jerry. As Norman is playing around with the code, hoping to discover something, he discovers a mistake in the translating of the name of Jerry: the name is really "*Harry*" (266).

Beth and Norman get together and put together a variety of facts: the animals as well as the computer messages started appearing *after* Harry came out of the sphere; it was *Harry* who held special memories about a giant squid; "Jerry" only communicates with them when *Harry*

is in the room; the black crewman appeared "just as Harry is having a dream of being rescued" (Harry, by the way, is also black) (269). In the middle of one of the attacks of the squid, Harry was knocked unconscious, and the squid disappeared. Norman theorizes that while inside the sphere, Harry gained the power to make his thoughts real, even to make manifest things he merely imagines (270-271).

Norman brings up the subject of Jungian psychology (272), giving an explanation of the shadow archetype that is quite accurate:

> Jung suspected there was an underlying structure to the human psyche that was reflected in an underlying similarity to our myths and archetypes. One of his ideas was that everyone had a dark side of his personality, which he called the 'shadow.' The shadow contained all the unacknowledged personality aspects--the hateful parts, the sadistic parts, all that. Jung thought people had the obligation to become acquainted with their shadow side. But very few people do. We all prefer to think we're nice guys and we don't ever have the desire to kill and maim and rape and pillage. (273)

Norman thinks that all the "manifestations" have been projections, comings-to-life of various aspects of Harry's shadow side.

Norman decides to talk with Jerry again, knowing that he will be talking to a part of Harry (278). Norman tries to convince Jerry to stop attacking the crew of the habitat with manifestations. Jerry reacts with what must be the deep-seated (unconscious) attitude of Harry:

> YOU SHOULD NOT BE DOWN HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE. YOU PEOPLE DO NOT BELONG HERE. YOU ARE ARROGANT CREATURES WHO INTRUDE EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD AND YOU HAVE TAKEN A GREAT FOOLISH RISK AND NOW YOU MUST PAY THE PRICE. YOU ARE AN UNCARING SPECIES WITH NO LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER. (281)

When Norman tells Jerry that it is he who is unfeeling, Jerry reacts with the threat: "I WILL KILL YOU ALL" (281).

While Harry is asleep, Norman and Beth decide that if Harry dreams, he might manifest monsters from his dreams,[2] so they decide to give him an anesthetic to produce a dreamless sleep (283-84). However, while going to do so, Norman finds "two female Navy crewmen" outside where Harry is sleeping--"handsome, black, and muscular-looking." Though he has the syringe ready, Norman leaves without applying it (286). The giant squid attacks again, Harry is awakened, and Norman tells him that he is causing the attack and must stop it. Harry rejects that idea, but Beth is able to apply the syringe of anesthetic, so the attack halts (289-91).

Beth starts displaying erratic behavior such as carrying out a fixed idea of wiring explosives around the crashed space ship so that if "something starts to come out of that sphere" the whole ship can be exploded (295). Despite the fact that Harry is anesthetized, Jerry shows up again on the computer screen with "I WILL KILL YOU" (303) while Beth is outside the habitat on the way back from the ship. Norman goes outside and rescues her. A mass of sea snakes come inside with them, but neither is seriously injured. A little later, Norman remarks to Beth, "With your hands full of snakes, you looked like Medusa." Beth's lack of recognition of the mythological reference elicits thoughts in Norman that constitute one of the key passages in the novel involving the theme of the UFO as a myth of modern times:

> It was remarkable, he thought, that at one time every educated Western person knew these figures from mythology and the stories behind them intimately--as intimately as they knew the stories of family and friends. Myths had once represented the common knowledge of humanity, and they served as a kind of map of consciousness.
>
> But now a well-educated person such as Beth knew nothing of myths at all. It was as if men had decided that the map of human consciousness had changed. But had it really changed? (309)

Indeed, according to Jungian psychology and to the work of Joseph Campbell as well, the psyche itself has not changed. The same instincts and archetypes are still there in the unconscious to be contended with. In works like this one, the "myths we live by," though the same in their basic patterns, have updated and have appeared in modern dress. In fact, the very scenario which Norman and Beth have been living in this novel is one of those myths in modern dress. Norman realizes a portion of this idea when he tells Beth that "Perhaps these are our new myths. Dorothy and Toto and the Wicked Witch, Captain Nemo and the giant squid" (310).

The computer screen starts printing words--"I WILL KILL YOU NOW" (310)--even though Harry still sleeps. Also, Norman realizes that Beth has armed explosives around the habitat as well as around the space ship. He accuses her of making the recent manifestations (of the squid and the threats on the computer). She says that he is the one causing these manifestations. In other words, it seems to be possible that the (inner) shadow side of either one or both of them is, like Harry's, projecting real threats into the (outer) environment (311). Beth and some of Norman's own thoughts and memories make a fair case that Norman could be responsible, at least partially (311-14). He offers the negative argument that he, unlike Harry, has not been inside the sphere. Beth's rejoinder is that he really has but that he merely does not remember (314). She points out other facts, such as the fact that his middle name is "Harrison" (316). Norman realizes the clear possibility that she could be correct, that no one is exempt from the "blindness about self" which causes the ego to ignore the shadow (316-18).

By watching the video tape made by the camera trained on the sphere, Norman discovers that Beth herself has been in the sphere (320). Norman realizes that Beth, "with her lack of self-esteem, her deep core of self-hate," has become obsessed with power but at the same time perhaps unconsciously wants to kill herself (321-22). While they are arguing over the intercom, she turns off the life support system and locks him in one room of the habitat (322). He escapes by going outside the habitat with an air bottle, entering through another airlock. He immediately puts on his diving suit and goes to the space ship (326-29).

He realizes that Beth must have gotten the sphere to open simply by imagining it open. He does the same, and the sphere opens. He sees darkness and then "something like fireflies," "a dancing, luminous foam, millions of points of light, swirling around him." He sees in it no structure "and apparently no limit." He sees it as "a surging ocean, a glistening, multifaceted foam" and feels "great beauty and peace" (331).

After he has adjusted to his surroundings, he feels a presence and asks, "Anybody here?" "*I* am here," says a loud voice. When Norman asks who this voice is, it says, "*I am not a who.*" "Are you God?" Norman asks. "*God is a word,*" comes the reply (232). The replies to Norman's questions indicate that the presence is not from another planet or another civilization. Norman realizes that he is communicating in thoughts with the presence. The sphere itself *does* come from both another civilization and another time. Norman continues to think that the presence must or should be "God": "I'm afraid I am not very knowledgeable about religion. I'm a psychologist. I deal with how people think. In my training, I never learned much about religion" (333). The presence tells Norman that it and Harry and Norman and even Jerry "*spring from the same source.*"[3] It tells Norman he already has "*the power to make things happen by imagination*" (334). The presence goes into a long speech starting, "*On your planet you have an animal called a bear.*" It makes the point that the imagination is the greater part of specifically human intelligence:

> *This the gift of your species and this is the danger, because you do not choose to control your imaginings. You imagine wonderful things and you imagines terrible things, and you take no responsibility for the choice. You say you have inside you the power of good and the power of evil, the angel and the devil, but in truth you have just one thing inside you--the ability to imagine.*
>
> *I hope you enjoyed this speech, which I plan to give at the next meeting of the American Association of Psychologists and Social Workers, which is meeting in Houston in March. I feel it will be quite well received.*
>
> What he thinks, startled.
>
> *Who did you think you were talking to? God?*

Who is this? he thinks.
You, of course. (335)

The first of the paragraph just quoted is, of course, parallel to the statement made by Jerry (281) about the "arrogant species" in the wrong place. This time, instead of being prompted by someone's shadow side, this statement seems to be prompted by the self in Norman, with which the sphere, as a kind of psychological "enzyme" or "mirror,"[4] has put Norman into direct contact.

The sphere--or, rather, the superior consciousness within it, which is also within Norman--coincides with a universal pattern for the symbolic expression of the archetypal self, or what Jung calls "the God within." Jung notes repeatedly the congruence of the typical shape of the UFO--spherical or saucer/disc-like--with the archetypal image of the mandala, or magic circle (338 note *Saucers*). According to Jung, "ritual mandalas"

> express either the totality of the individual in his inner and outer experience of the world, or its essential point of reference. Their object is the self in contradistinction to the ego, which is only the point of reference for consciousness, whereas the self comprises the totality of the psyche altogether, i. e., conscious and unconscious. (*Individuation* 389)

In this novel as modern myth-text, the sphere--as a variation on the mandala--functions as a symbol of the self--as well as being an "unidentified" alien something, perhaps a former UFO.

Further, the lack of recognizable structure, the oceanic aspect, and the limitlessness of the "foam" (331) also point to the transpersonal and infinite aspects of the self. Norman notices all point to the godlike nature of the sphere and the being Norman meets therein. As for the "fireflies," or "millions of points of light," light is again and again all over the world associated with the supreme godhead. In particular, Jung notes that "globular luminosities . . . with remarkable consistency, are regarded as 'souls' in the remotest parts of the world" (*Individuation*

244-295). "Soul" is frequently used to imply "whole human being" or "individual."

After Norman returns to the habitat, he tries to disconnect Beth's explosives but by mistake starts the timer (339-40). Despite his knowledge of the shadow, Norman starts to take the submarine and leave Beth and Harry to their fates. Yet even as he is in the process of leaving, he recognizes facts in keeping with Jungian psychology: "Left unattended, the irrational side of man had grown in power and scope." "Complaining about it," he realizes, "didn't help either. All those scientists whining in Sunday supplements about man's inherent destructiveness and his propensity for violence, throwing up their hands" (342). Norman knows that the "responsibility began with each individual person, and the choices he made" (343).

As he starts to ascend, Norman thinks about the tendency in human beings never to explore their unconscious sides. However, "As a psychologist, Norman had some acquaintance with his unconscious. It held no surprises for him." He thinks that unlike Beth and Harry, he is a person whose unconscious contains no "monsters." Suddenly, he realizes how wrong he is about that, that right now he is in the grips of the shadow side which is forcing him cruelly to leave Beth and Harry on the bottom of the ocean. This realization is perhaps the major climax of the novel (345).

Norman goes back, but at this point, Beth is so much in the grips of the self-hate caused by her shadow side that she tries to force him to leave, wishing to commit suicide. Harry, suddenly awake and lucid, presumably brought forth from his deep slumber by Norman's power of imagination, incapacitates Beth (253), and the three of them escape before the explosion occurs (353-60).

After the three are safe (and while they are in the decompression chamber and have had no contact with other people), they decide not to reveal the power given to them by the sphere. They decide to "imagine away" all the evidence of the sphere's existence and the power it conveyed--a power too dangerous to the world in its primitive psychological state, the power even "to overcome your enemies simply by imagining it had happened" (361). Norman says that "The sphere was built to test whatever intelligent life might pick it up, and we simply

failed the test" (362). They do not wish any group or government to search the crash area for the seemingly alien, and perhaps indestructible, silver sphere.

However, Norman later says that the sphere might "have nothing to do with the search for other life forms, or testing life . . . [that] it may be an accident that it causes such profound changes in us." He realizes that they really know nothing at all about the sphere or where it originated, only that it is "sort of a mirror for us (363). They fashion a story to substitute for what really happened and decide to imagine, on the count of three, that the story they have fabricated is what really happened. The alternative-reality story contains no reference to a sphere. Of course, the plan works.

The effect of the experience each of the three main characters has with his own shadow side is presumably enduring in that it is not something limited to the conscious and cognitive side of the psyche. The value of the power of imagination is associated, at least in regard to Norman's excursion into the sphere, with an insight or intuition hailing from the self or true center of the psyche. It represents a theme persistent in the modern myth of UFO's and space travel: the idea that in an extremely desperate situation, even in one like that at the end of the twentieth century, things can improve if only enough people imagine other alternatives.

Notes

[1]The "individual human being" can appear in dreams as a sphere, indicating the parallel between the little circle of sphere or the ego and the great circle or sphere of the self (Cf. Jung, *Individuation* 302).

[2]In the nineteen-fifties film *Forbidden Planet*, partially based on Shakesphere's *Tempest*, the concept arises of "monsters from the Id." While the highly intelligent Prospero character on the deserted planet somewhere in the depths of space is asleep, the rescue ship that has recently arrived from earth is attacked by grotesque monsters. The Prospero character has gained this psychological characteristic through his discovery of the records of the "Drael," the ancient race once

inhabiting the planet which destroyed itself through the psychic powers of its own imagination.

[3]This "*same source*" is, in Jungian terms, the self, which is universal and transpersonal, and is, by Jung, likened to the Christ and the Hindu Atman (Cf. "Christ" and "Secret").

[4]At one point in the novel, Beth theorizes that perhaps the sphere acts as a kind of mental enzyme (292), and Norman, while they are in the decompression chamber, calls it "a sort of mirror for us" (363).

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The Stern, Old Lady At The Burger King

(Dedicated to the Whopper We All Get, Sooner or Later)

Patricia Grierson
Jackson State University

Befitting decor of times-gone-by burger,
Framed face glowering on life's daily specials,
She watches them eat their "all-the-way" orders
From her frame on the wall by the cast-iron sickle,
The fading label of purple hull peas,
Furrowed features for black days,
Since time sees her hung this way, and eternal,
And has taught her its ultimate pickle.

It is, she thinks, as I knew all along,
(Watching the world fill its present day needs),
Life is so fast, and so furious, and so fickle,
And the rest is just sesame seeds.

Some Antecedents of the Dichotomous "Vanderbilt" Agrarian Movements

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In an earlier article, which appeared in the 1988 volume of *Publications of the Mississippi Philological Association*, I delineated the profound disagreement among the "Vanderbilt" Agrarians about the "race question," as clearly reflected in *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*. In fact, I noted sufficient disparity in attitudes toward Blacks and the "Old South" to justify the conclusion that *I'll Take My Stand* embodies two Agrarian movements, one sentimental, elitist, racist, and regressive; and one realistic, equalitarian, non-racist, and progressive. The existence of two such diametrically opposed sets of attitudes toward Blacks and the "Old South" points logically toward the fundamental question of why such disagreement. Specifically, it raises the question of whether there are historical antecedents in the South for the divisive perspectives among the Agrarians, antecedents which allow their conflict to be placed in an inclusive historical context that explains much about why the "Vanderbilt" Agrarians disagreed and why such disagreement about race and the "Old South" continues today in the Southern United States.

A logical starting point in a search for historical antecedents is the life and work of Thomas Jefferson, since the "Vanderbilt" Agrarians themselves indicate Jefferson's importance to their movement (Ransom, 53, 69-70, 88-90). However, in attempting to synthesize Jefferson's ideas and lifestyle into the classic embodiment of Agrarianism, one immediately encounters problems. One problem is that Jefferson apparently never resolved the "race question" in his own mind. Although he publicly argued and voted for the abolition of slavery, including the barring of it from the West, he at the same time speculated that Blacks were innately inferior as a race (Peterson, xxiv), and he never freed the bulk of his own slaves, apparently because he did not believe in emancipation without compensation to the owners and

colonization of Blacks elsewhere (Peterson, xxxix). Also, although he strongly defended states' rights in the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798, his specific concerns in those resolutions were the Alien and Sedition Laws, not Northern attempts to end slavery. Granted, he did argue in those resolutions that the states had a right to nullify "usurpations by the national government" (Peterson, xxxi), but he never advocated such nullification of anti-slavery laws. In fact, he hoped throughout his life that slavery could be ended peacefully, "short of the catastrophe he increasingly feared" (Peterson, xxxix). Also, he advocated general unrestricted commerce with other countries rather than total Agrarian self-sufficiency (Peterson, xxvii), and he emphasized state-supported education for all Americans (Peterson, xxxix), in so doing agreeing with one faction of the "Vanderbilt" Agrarians in the first instance and the other faction in the second.

Clearly, then, one important factor in the Vanderbilt Agrarians' disagreement about race and the "Old South" derives from the complexity and contradictions of their "model" Agrarian. As Peterson says of Jefferson,

> Because he never codified his thought but let stand the existential record of "man thinking" in all its shapes and hues, it has been easy for men of different persuasions to seize upon some fragment, eminently quotable, and impute to it the character of the whole. So it is that Jeffersonian political craft have sailed under many colors: Democracy, State Rights, Agrarianism, Anti-Semitism, Civil Libertarianism, Isolationism, One Worldism, Welfare Statism. None of these flags is entirely fraudulent. (xli)

Thus, each Agrarian faction could point to Jefferson as its source for very different beliefs, and even for directly contradictory ones in the case of the "race question," given Jefferson's ambivalence about it.

Tracing the development of divergent Agrarian movements leads even beyond Jefferson's life and work, though, to forces which existed separate from Jefferson and influenced him. For example, the historian Eugene Genovese notes the "French revolutionary tradition of agrarian

egalitarianism" (89), and it is common knowledge that Jefferson lived in France for years and was greatly affected by many aspects of French civilization. However, another strain of Agrarianism is noted by W. J. Cash in *The Mind of the South*, as well as the problem of precisely defining "Agrarian." Says Cash,

> Both [English] squire and Southerner may be properly described as agrarians. But this word "agrarian" is an extremely loose one; it may be applied to anything from the first settled life of Neolithic man, and from the culture pattern of a Russian muzhik in the time of Peter the Grand, down to, one might almost say, the rustic play of Marie Antoinette and the Duchesse du Maine. And, as a matter of fact, nothing could be more unlike the life of the English squire in its fundamental aspect than that native to the South, nothing could have differed more profoundly from the peculiar coloring with which the squire's world endowed his subconsciousness than that with which the Southerner endowed his. For the squire's agrarianism was a highly formalized and artificial thing. If it stuck its roots in the soil, it lived and had its being only on the medium of consciously realized tradition--a tradition with a great deal more of the salon than of the earth in it.
>
> The Southerner, however, was primarily a direct product of the soil, as the peasant of Europe is the direct product of the soil. (30-31)

Hence, the two primary strains of Agrarianism at the time of Jefferson were that of the English gentry and that of the European peasantry. Certainly, Jefferson was influenced by both, given his years in France and his contact with the English gentry (and given that his mother was descended from English and Scottish aristocrats and that his father was a mapmaker and surveyor of humble origins). The French egalitarian peasantry and paternal influences were perhaps stronger, but Jefferson's Virginia planter status certainly meant inculcation of some of the artificial agrarianism and racism of the typical English squire.[1] Thus, in

essence, the two groups of "Vanderbilt" Agrarians simply keyed upon different aspects of Jefferson's multi-faceted nature which reflected these two very different Agrarian traditions.

The historical disagreement antedating and generating the "Vanderbilt" Agrarians' disharmony doesn't begin or end with Jefferson, then, as he is only the fulcrum of it. With European equalitarian peasantry and racist gentry Agrarian strains and conflicts antedating Jefferson, artificial and generally racist Southern plantation Agrarianism and "pure and undefiled" (Couch, 296), generally non-racist yeoman "hill country" Agrarianism followed him. These latter, still-conflicting strains began serious confrontations with the spread of the plantation system in the South. As Couch notes, "it was actually 1820 before the plantation was fully on the march, striding over the hills of Carolina to Mississippi (10), in the process driving to the upper South the "thousands and ten thousands--possibly the majority--of non-slaveholders [who] were really yeoman farmers" (22). And, as Cash explains, these "pure and undefiled" Agrarians remained thus because "the plantation system had driven these people back to the less desirable lands, but also . . . it had, to a very great extent, walled them up and locked them in there--had blocked them off from escape or any considerable economic and social advance as a body" (23). Barry Crouch points to essentially the same effect in his comparison of ancient Rome and the slave-holding South, indicating that "Economic considerations led them [wealthy Southerners] to bring in slaves who ultimately replaced independent small-time and peasant farmers. Those displaced were Roman peasants and Southern yeomen. They either became Roman city dwellers or Southern hill farmers" (6). Also, even if these upper South Agrarians owned slaves, they still usually continued in the essentially egalitarian tradition of European peasantry, as noted by Kenneth Stampp, who says that "In the upper south . . . it was not unusual to see the sturdy yeoman and his sons working in company of their negroes" (35).

This geographic displacement of less wealthy Southerners by the plantations, and general division of the South into slave-holding and non-slave-holding Whites, was inevitably accompanied by ideological and political complications. Many Agrarians of the upper South realized early that slavery was antithetical to their interests, evident in actions

such as the 1831 proposal by small farmers in western Virginia (soon to become West Virginia) that slavery be completely abolished in Virginia. Although this proposal was defeated in the legislature, the slaveholding-non-slaveholding economic, political, and social division in Virginia eventually led to the creation of a new state representing the interests of these yeoman Agrarians (Wish 233). The "hill country" Agrarians' prescience about slavery is also reflected by anti-slavery Southern Whites like Hinton Helper, from mostly non-slaveholding western North Carolina, whose *The Impending Crisis of the South* (1857) criticizes slavery harshly and was openly dedicated to non-slaveholding Southern Whites. Harvey Wish places Helper in a large upper South anti-slavery movement, too, saying that "his family belonged to the Henry Clay Whig Nationalists who resisted the planters' demands for extreme states' rights if not outright secession" (283). Also, Herbert Aptheker indicates upper South resistance to slavery as early as 1792, in Kentuckian David Rice's comment, at the Kentucky constitutional convention, that the slaves on Haiti were "engaged in a noble conflict" (26). Eugene Genovese provides some evidence of this division among Southern whites, too, in his comment that "Recent research into the politics of the 1850's suggests deepening class antagonisms, which spurred proslavery extremists to push for secession as a way disciplining the white lower classes" (26).

The economic profitability of slavery, and the displacement of the "pure and undefiled" Agrarians into the upper South, had ideological and political significance for the artificial Agrarianism of the Southern gentry, as well. Its most immediate effects were disaffection with Jeffersonian equalitarianism and even greater artificiality in this brand of Agrarianism, as it became primarily big business and only secondarily Agrarian. Aptheker notes that, with the new sugar and cotton inventions after 1795, "slavery became more than ever before the foundation of a 'big business,' a heartless big business whose markets were unlimited and whose workers were completely in the power of the bosses" (26). Kenneth Stampp provides further evidence of this expansion of the disparity between the planation Agrarians and the "hill country" ones. He notes that, in contrast to the yeoman and his sons and slaves, on the plantations "the normal relationship between field-hands and their

masters was not that of fellow workers but of labor and management" (36). In fact, says Stampp,

> These agricultural enterprises, with their business directors, production managers, labor foremen, and skilled and unskilled workers, approached the organizational complexity of modern factories. Though agriculture was not yet mechanized, the large plantations were to a considerable extent "factories in the fields." (42)

Also, perhaps even more revealing of the movement of the slaveholding South away from Agrarianism "pure and undefiled" is Barry Crouch's notation that, although "American slaves toiled primarily on plantations and small farms . . . there may have been as many as 500,000 engaged in various types of industry or manufacturing" (13). That fact makes Stampp's "factory" metaphor seem even more apt, and certainly this was a virtually transformed Agrarianism, even judged by the standards of the English gentry Agrarians.

The ideological rejection of Jeffersonian equalitarianism was pronounced among the Southern gentry, as well, Aptheker perceptively analyzes it as follows:

> The irreconcilability of a progressive political philosophy with the persistence of plantation slavery was well understood in the South. The fear that the former would lead to the destruction of the latter did much to hasten the South in its repudiation of Jeffersonian equalitarian doctrines. A Virginia aristocrat back in 1794 pointed out that the democrats favored the common, poor people and asked, "Who so poor as our slaves, who therefore so fit to participate in the spoils of the rich and to direct the affairs of the nation?" This is certainly a factor explaining the dominance of the anti-Jeffersonianism in cities like Richmond and Charleston, and in the early substitution by the South of a superior "race" and property-rule philosophy for the Jeffersonian ideals of equality and democracy. (63-64)

In fact, says Aptheker, "By the 1820's the Bourbons had avowedly turned against the Declaration of Independence and denounced it as a ridiculous, and dangerous, concoction of glittering generalities" (67). Genovese points to this rejection of Jeffersonian egalitarian ideals, too, saying that "The southern Federalists . . . berated the Jeffersonians for spreading a French gospel of liberty, equality, and fraternity that the slaves would hear, interpret with deadly literalness, and rally around" (126). Further, Genovese effectively argues that this hysterical rejection of Jeffersonian democracy reflected in the "gag rule" in Congress, in mail-tampering, in the suppression of free speech by abolitionists and their right to assembly, and in the Fugitive Slave Law's defiance of home rule "did for the enemies of slavery what they could not easily have done for themselves: They associated slavery with an arrogant and reactionary social class prepared to trample on the time-honored and blood-won rights of white Americans" (115). Clearly, the economic profitability of slavery produced extreme ideological and political effects among the Southern gentry which profoundly altered for the worse that particular strain of Agrarianism, and it is the strident polemics of this group which are mirrored in the racism and elitism of the "Vanderbilt" Agrarians Davidson, Owsley, and Fletcher.

Perhaps most fundamentally, however, the division of Southern Agrarianism is reflected in the religious controversies in the South about slavery. Cash makes it clear that, in actuality, many Southerners rejected slavery because of their religious beliefs. He says,

> The evangelical religious sects had all begun by denouncing it, and were still muttering over it as late as the early 1830's. Of the 130 abolition societies established before 1827 by Lundy, the forerunner of Garrison, more than a hundred, with four-fifths of the total membership, were in the South. (63)

Since it is common knowledge that the evangelical religious sects had the greatest impact and acceptance among the peasantry, the connection to upper South "hill country" Agrarianism is obvious. However, such widespread objecting to slavery waned rapidly as the plantation South

increased in wealth and power and began to inculcate its racist and elitist ideology. for example, a young professor at UNC-Chapel Hill was forced to resign in the 1830's because he stated openly his intention to vote for John C. Fremont because of the similarity of Fremont's position on slavery to Jefferson's (Cash, 92). Also, Cash notes that

> In all Dixie indeed, from 1840 on, only a dozen or so men of the greatest and most impregnable position, such as Cassius Clay, of the border state of Kentucky, and Robert E. Lee, stationed in the North, would be able even mildly to express doubts about the institution in public without suffering dismaying penalty. Not even the cloth of a minister was sufficient protection. For when Daniel Worth, of North Carolina, and John G. Fee of Kentucky, almost alone among Southern ministers, attempted to speak out against it, Worth was jailed for a winter and had to endure an appalling stream of vituperation and insult; and the more militant Fee is said to have fallen twenty-two times a victim of mobs, and on two occasions to have been left for dead. (92-93)

Such religious controversy because of slavery reveals the centrality of slavery and the rise of the plantation South to the widening disparity between the two strains of Agrarianism reflected in Jefferson and continued on the plantations and in the "hill country" of the upper South. Thus, it is not surprising that the "Vanderbilt" Agrarians disagreed most fundamentally about the "race question," a question which Jefferson never satisfactorily answered and upon which the South has never really reached unanimous agreement. In fact, the historical record makes it clear that one can certainly be Southern and be opposed to slavery, racism, and elitism. It is also clear that one is more likely to be Southern and non-racist, realistic, equalitarian, and progressive if one is from the upper South, since the peasant strain of Southern equalitarian Agrarianism was forced back into the "hill country" by the spread of the plantations. Thus, it isn't surprising that two of the most non-racist and equalitarian Agrarians, Warren and Tate, were from Kentucky, whereas several more racists and elitist Agrarians, such as Wade and Young, were

from the lower South. Their attitudes simply reflected the dominant ideologies in their respective geographic areas. Finally, it is clear that to be pro-Black in the 1980's isn't at all necessarily to be anti-Southern, but is simply to take one side in a dialectical Southern ideological conflict which has continued for over 200 years and to which there seems to be no end in sight.

Footnote

[1]For more on racism among the English gentry, see Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P. 1968), and especially pp. 44-98.

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Sylvia Plath's "Lorelei" and "Moonrise": Biography into Art

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Sylvia Plath often uses biographical details from her own life as the foundation for many poems; however, in so doing, she fictionalizes, alters, or recreates them, thus transmuting biography into art. Two poems written in July of 1958, one well-known and the other almost entirely ignored, effectively illustrate her method.

Reflecting an emotional state which Plath herself often experienced, "Lorelei" hauntingly captures the terror as well as the attraction of suicide as an escape from the sufferings of life. As Plath notes in a journal entry, it was written on July 4 in response to a directive from the Ouija board:

> Last night Ted and I did PAN [Ouija board] for the first time in America . . . . Among other penetrating observations Pan said I should write on the poem subject 'Lorelei' because they are my 'own kin.' So today [July 4] for fun I did so, remembering the plaintive German song Mother used to play and sing to us beginning '*Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten* . . . .' The subject appealed to me doubly (or triply): the German legend of the Rhine sirens, the sea-childhood symbol, and the death-wish involved in the song's beauty. The poem devoured my day, but I feel it is a book poem and am pleased with it.[1]

The song is Schubert's musical setting of Heine's most famous poem, "The Lorelei," which tells of a golden-haired goddess on a rock in the Rhine river who lures fishermen to their deaths by her song. Plath combines this story of a single siren with another German folk tale involving seven sirens, which Smith has identified as "Oberwesel: The Seven Maidens." She points out that "Both legends, significantly, are

stories of fatherless siren-temptresses who . . . destroy the men they enrapture" and who themselves drown at the end; the former commits suicide to join her "father dear" and to escape being drowned by her captors, while the latter are drowned as punishment for their deeds.[2]

In addition to the German folk tales, two other sources are important. According to Hughes, Plath was influenced at this time by one of Cousteau's accounts of undersea exploration; Mazzaro suggests that the specific account may have been the article in the March 1958 issue of *National Georgaphic* noting that "The surprising calm that the marine biologists discovered existing at that depth may well have prompted the lines of 'Lorelei,' "They sing / Of a world more full and clear than can be."[3] These lines also echo a third important source which has not previously been acknowledged, Yeats's early poem "The Stolen Child," in which fairies lure a child away from the mundane, misery-filled real world by singing of their magic world of enchantment and delight:

> Come away, O human child!
> To the waters and the wild
> With a fairy hand in hand,
> For the world's more full of weeping than you
> can understand.[4]

Ironically, while the last line of Yeats's refrain describes the real world, the lines of Plath's poem which echo it describe the sirens' world.

In "Lorelei," Plath brilliantly portrays the subtle seduction of the female speaker as she is taken in by the singing as well as the silence of the sirens. Despite her strong opening statement that "It is no night to drown it"[5] and her awareness of the dangers of these temptresses, she cannot resist them and falls prey to the vision of the peaceful world which they present so that at the end she implies that she will indeed drown herself in order to join them there. The poem's quiet quality of inevitability, of pressure, of irresistible forces is powerful as is its sense of a deeply personal and troubled voice speaking with calm melancholy.

The poem's stunning first line, which ironically will be reversed at the end, seems to be supported by the description of a beautiful, tranquil scene on the Rhine river in the first three stanzas: a full moon, blue

mists, the river's glittering surface so smooth that it reflects the turrets of the castle on its bank. But, as Melander notes, it is a "*deceptively* placid, postcard-like description."[6] Ominous details like the blackness of the river and the comparison of the mists to "fishnets" anticipate the disruption of this calm exterior by the frightening appearance of mysterious shapes rising up from the river's depths. Up to this point, the speaker's voice has seemed to be that of a neutral third person objectively describing a landscape, but now we discover abruptly that it belongs to a first-person singular speaker who is personally and intensely involved in the situation: "these shapes float / Up toward *me* troubling the face of quiet." They trouble not only the calm surface of the river but also the speaker, causing her to feel anxiety and even fear. Yet, as they rise closer to the surface, her response becomes ambivalent, for she describes them in terms of valuable art works, like marble statues: "their limbs ponderous / With richness, hair heavier / Than sculpted marble."

The speaker now moves from a description of their physical appearance to that of their song, which entices her with its vision of a wonderful world "more full and clear / Than can be." Though tempted, she does not immediately succumb. The last three words indicate her doubts about whether such a meaningful and peaceful place can really exist, for she is well aware that the song is deceptive and thus dangerous, conquering its listeners by deranging their minds. At this point she shifts from describing the Lorelei in the third person to addressing them in the second person, signalling her increasing personal involvement even as she fights against it. This involvement is reinforced in that "Sisters" not only refers to the sirens themselves being sisters but also, and more importantly, suggests that they are *her* sisters, that she feels a kinship with them. (Plath in her journal entry refers to them as her "'own kin.'")

However, she is here still fully cognizant of their dangers as reflected in the images of battle, nightmare, and suicide she uses to describe their song; it puts enormous pressure on the ear, "*too* weighty" implying that it cannot ultimately be withstood and that it will break through the barriers of reason, sanity, and balance represented by the "well-steered country" and its "balanced ruler." In the following lines, their singing voices are described as laying siege to this country, the rational mind,

finally "Deranging" and thus conquering it. This military image is succeeded by a nightmare image: "You lodge / On the pitched reefs of nightmare, / Promising sure harborage." The actual jagged ("pitched") reefs of the Rhine on which many boats have wrecked are evoked here, conveying symbolically the danger of the mind's being wrecked and pitched into a nightmare world of death or insanity. And again the speaker's awareness of the deceptiveness of the song is stressed; while "Promising sure harborage," it leads to shipwreck. Plath has subtly shifted metaphors for the rational mind from a "well-steered country" that can be conquered to a well-steered boat that can be sunk. Finally, the speaker reveals that the song is heard not only at night, but also during the day from the fringes of dull, daily routine and "from the ledge / Also of high windows," the latter an oblique reference to committing suicide by leaping from windows.

Yet, according to the speaker, as maddening as their song is, their silence is worse. That both are dangerous is indicated by her calling the latter "worse" that the former; both are bad. Further, she realizes that the sirens themselves are "ice-hearted," cruel, unemotional, inhuman even as she is enticed by the appeal of the world they offer: "At the source / Of your ice-hearted calling-- / Drunkenness of the great depths." In their world one can be deliriously drunk, relieved of the pain and misery of real life; according to Hughes, this phrase is "from the book of Cousteau's [sic] she was reading as she wrote 'Full Fathom Five' some time earlier. It describes the euphoric visionary state of acute oxygen shortage in which divers blissfully forget all precautions and dangers."[7]

So powerful is the attraction of their promised world of peace and escape that, despite her realization that they are deceptive, dangerous, and cold-hearted and that they work by deranging the mind, the speaker at the poem's end *is* seduced. She now addresses not the sirens but the river itself, for they have begun to sink back toward the bottom: "O river, I see drifting / Deep in your flux of silver / Those great goddesses of peace." Reflecting her total seduction, she no longer sees the river as black but as shining silver, and the sirens, whom earlier she described as "shapes," "They," "Sisters," and "You," she now calls "great goddesses." Thus, in the last line, she indicates her intention to join them: "Stone, stone, ferry me down there." In terms of the legend, the stone which

she addresses is the Rock of St. Goar on which the Lorelei sit and on which their victims are wrecked and thus drown, but on a realistic level it is the heavy stone which will aid her in drowning herself. The word "ferry" is used ironically, of course, for ordinarily it refers to transporting one over rather than down into a river. The firmness of her decision is suggested by the predominance of stressed syllables in this last line. The speaker's tone of voice here, while decisive and deliberate, is sad and low-key, rather than "high-pitched," as Broe asserts.[8]

The images of stone and water which dominate the poem are ambivalent. As in many other poems, stone is a negative image suggesting danger or emotional hardness; the rock on which the sirens sit causes shipwreck and drowning. However, it also has positive connotations in this context: the sirens are described as marble statues, valuable and attractive, and a stone is the means by which the speaker will be able to attain the peace they offer. Water, too, is ambivalent, being the source both of death and of peace.

The technical aspects of "Lorelei" function organically to create a sense of the flowing movement of the water, the rising and then the sinking of the sirens, and the uncertainty of the speaker. Plath chooses a favorite stanzaic form, terza rima, with its interlocking rhyme which moves constantly forward. She only breaks this rhyme scheme of imperfect rhymes in the last stanza, perhaps to reflect the speaker's decision to drown herself. This flowing motion is reinforced by the use of syllabics; there are seven syllables in each line, the extra, often unstressed, syllable at the end impelling the reader forward into the next line. The predominance of feminine rhyme also reflects the uncertainty, the indecision, of the speaker. Further, since no stanza is a self-contained unit, each flows over into the next; indeed, all but three end without any mark of punctuation at all. The use of eleven participles and of the sounds of "s" and "e" contributes to this sensation of moving water, while also suggesting the inevitable, inexorable movement of the speaker towards drowning. Finally, Plath's placement of certain words in positions of great stress effectively communicates a rising and sinking motion; for example, the former is conveyed by the placement of the words "Up" and "They rise" at the beginning of lines ten and twelve and

the latter by the similar placement of "Deep" in line thirty-four as well as by the poem's ending on the words "down there."

"Lorelei" is an extraordinary expression of the compelling attraction of suicide as an escape from the anguish of life into the peaceful realm of death, despite its attendant horrors.

Although "Moonrise" is an absolutely first-rate poem, it has only received limited attention from a few critics, none of whom present a valid interpretation largely because it was attributed to 1959 prior to the publication of *The Collected Poems*. Assuming incorrectly that Plath was pregnant when she wrote it, these critics assert that its theme is pregnancy and the ambivalent responses it evokes: for Kroll, the ending "clearly connects the Moon and, through the mulberry imagery, the White Goddess, with the process of pregnancy. (Plath probably wrote this poem while pregnant with her first child)"; for Bundtzen, the poem is "about woman's [ambivalent] feelings toward pregnancy"; for Rosenblatt, it portrays a pregnant woman fearful of the pain and possible death associated with childbirth.[9]

However, that it does indeed belong to the 1958 section in which Hughes has placed it in *The Collected Poems* is supported by two small, fragmented references in a journal entry of July 19, 1958, in which Plath despairs over an anguished period of nonproductivity; finally freed of all jobs and commitments, she ironically encountered an imaginative paralysis. The entry begins, "Paralysis still with me," and then describes her feeling of emptiness caused by the sudden absence of specific plans, by her vague desire to produce both literature and a child ("I dimly would like to write. . . . And fearfully, dimly, would like to have a child"), and by the sterility of her imagination: "Lines occur to me and drop dead. . . . I observe: 'The mulberry berries redden under leaves.' And Stop" (J 251). She then agonizes over how she might "catapult myself into . . . stories and poems and nursing babies" and in the midst of the self-castigation which follows abruptly inserts the unexplained brief sentence, "Grub-white mulberries redden under leaves" (J 252). Clearly she is struggling here with the creation of the poem which becomes "Moonrise." When she reports in a July 27 entry, "I have written four or five quite good poems this past ten days, after a sterile hysterical ten days of nonproduction. The poems are, I think, deeper, more sober,

somber (yet well colored) than any I've yet done" (J 253), it seems unquestionable that one of them was "Moonrise," since it certainly fits the description of "well colored" and contains a reference to the month of July as well.

As indicated by the circumstances surrounding its actual date of composition as well as by a close reading, the poem's true subject is not pregnancy, but sterility--and not physical sterility (though that is a major metaphor) but imaginative sterility, the absence of poetic inspiration and accomplishment from which Plath herself was suffering at the time and which she equated with imaginative death.[10] Throughout the poem images of emptiness, decay, and death (dying catalpa flowers, rotting smells, stones and headstones) symbolize this condition of artistic paralysis; in contrast to these, the color red and other images of fruitfulness, ripening, and life (mulberries, eggs) symbolize artistic productivity. However, the twenty-two references to white as compared to the five references to red/purple reflect the dominance of sterility. In addition to these contrasting sets of images, the moon, the grubs, and ultimately the mulberries themselves are ambivalent, suggesting both. Undergirding the entire image pattern is the metaphor of the female reproductive cycle, made all the more poignant and appropriate in that Plath herself was agonizing over not producing either poetry or a child.

The situation and setting are rather directly stated. The first person speaker, an artist suffering depression as a result of nonproductivity, sits idly in a park (a reference no doubt to Plath's Child's Park next door to their Northampton apartment), not a field, as Rosenblatt says.[11] She observes in its plants and insects life and fertility on the one hand and death and sterility on the other, applying them to her own situation. The poem is thus a kind of meditation based on a series of symbolic images from nature and the speaker's imagination, and her tone of voice is subdued, weary, and dejected, hardly that of a "chanting lunatic," as Smith claims.[12]

As the poem begins, the speaker notices from inside her house or apartment that the white mulberries in the neighboring park are beginning to ripen and turn red in the July sun and decides to "go out and sit in white like they do, / Doing nothing." The conflicting images

of sterility/death and of fertility/life are thus immediately introduced, the former in "grub-white" and the latter in "redden." Once in the park she observes two other elements of nature which she sees as symbols of her own nonproductive state: the enormous white catalpa flowers which topple and die and the white pigeon which sinks earthward. She compares her ten white fingers, the poet's tools, to the flowers' petals and the bird's tail feathers. Her fingers do not create poems but only open and shut futilely, or dig their nails painfully into her equally unproductive white palms, an obvious sign of her frustration and self castigation:

> opening, shutting
> White petals, white fan-tails, ten white fingers.
>
> Enough for fingernails to make half-moons
> Redden in white palms no labor reddens.
> White bruises toward color, else collapses.

As the berries continue to ripen, the speaker continues to meditate, now on an image of death from her imagination rather than from nature, the smell of a white body rotting in its grave. But then she becomes aware of that same smell near her, "beneath the stones / Where small ants roll their eggs, where grubs fatten." Even eggs and larvae, actually associated with new life and growth in the life cycles of ants and beetles, are seen by the speaker as subject to death, its omnipresence and inevitability reinforced by the repetition of "Death may whiten in sun or out of it / Death whitens in the egg or out of it."

Her focus now becomes entirely internal. "I can see no color for *this* whiteness. / White: it is a complexion of the mind" clearly refers to what she sees as the total sterility of her own mind, for which there is no hope or possibility of color (fertility). Her mental exhaustion as she images the overwhelming enormity of her mind's sterility, which she describes in a surreal manner as a white Niagara Falls thundering upward rather than downward, echoes Plath's own exhaustion at this time: "I have been ridiculously exhausted every morning, as if waking out of a coma, a queer deathlike state" (J 253).

At the poem's end, the speaker is drawn out of this inward-looking state by the rising of the moon, on which she meditates as the final complex and ambivalent image of fertility/life and sterility/death. Traditionally, Lucina, whose name means "Light-Bringing," is both the moon-goodness of fertility and childbirth and the symbol of the origins of poetic inspiration.[13] Yet as Kroll notes, her "full symbolism includes the cycles of birth, life, death and rebirth; and the female functions of menstruation, and fertility or barrenness." [14] Clearly it is her negative aspects which are predominant here, for the speaker sees her as death-dealing, sterile, and terrifying, *her* muse. She is a "bony mother," the word "bony" suggesting a hard, brittle skeleton; she is in what appears to be a difficult but nonproductive labor among white stars that are "socketed," a word evoking the empty eye-sockets of a skull; and she is frightening because she demands a painful honesty about oneself:

Lucina, bony mother, laboring
Among the socketed white stars, your face
Of candor pares white flesh to the white bone,

Who drag our ancient father at the heel,
White-bearded, weary. The berries purple
And bleed. The white stomach may ripen yet.

The moon's dragging the father perhaps refers to Plath's various attempts, which she apparently regards as unsuccessful, to dredge up her father from her subconscious and portray him in her poems; as recently as May she had made such an attempt in "Full Fathom Five." Furthermore, she often presents the moon with its gravitational pull dragging some object,[15] an indication of its malign and sinister power.

These negative qualities of the moon, suggesting that poetic inspiration is sterile or dead in the speaker, are associated with the incredible reversal of the established symbolism of the mulberries in the poem's closing lines. Having finally matured fully and attained total redness, they begin to bleed, suggesting both pain and death (bleeding to death) and the release of blood from the uterus (the bleeding of menstruation) which indicates that conception has not occurred. Yet the speaker

inexplicably indicates in the last line a very cautious hope, which is almost cancelled out by the tone of weary dejection in which it is uttered, for the possibility of imaginative fertility in the future: "The white stomach may ripen yet."

The technical elements work to support the intricacies of the poem's highly psychological content. The three-line stanzas, all end-stopped themselves, contain a predominance of end-stopped lines, creating a halting quality which conveys a sense of the difficulty of creation, of the inability of the imagination to flow forward smoothly. This quality is reinforced by the absence of rhyme and by the absolutely jarring meter; the latter is definitely not "more-or-less iambic pentameter," as Smith argues,[16] although there are ten syllables in every line, making this yet another 1958 poem in which Plath experiments with syllabics.[17] Finally, the intricate interweaving of paired repetitions of words ("do," "doing"; "fan-tail's," "fan-tails"; "body," "body"; "Rots," "rot"; "whiten," "whitens") reflects in its incantatory, almost hypnotic sounds the melancholy listlessness of the depressed speaker.

Thus, although largely overlooked by the critics, "Moonrise" is a powerful and brilliant poem of extreme complexity in both content and style. These two poems brilliantly illustrate Plath's ability to transform highly personal and uncommon states of mind into works of art that, as Helen Vendler notes, authorize those states even to those who may not have experienced them;[18] in so doing, she stuns the reader not only with their subject matter but also with their artistry.

Notes

[1]Sylvia Plath, *The Journals of Sylvia Plath* (New York: Dial, 1982), pp. 245-6. All subsequent references to the *Journals* will be to this edition.

[2]Pamela Smith, "Architectonics: Sylvia Plath's *Colossus*," *Sylvia Plath: The Woman and the Work*, ed. Edward Butscher (New York: Dodd, 1977), p. 119.

[3]Jerome Mazzaro, "Sylvia Plath and the Cycles of History," *Sylvia Plath: New Views on the Poetry*, ed. Gary Land (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1979), p. 226.

[4]W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (London: MacMillan, 1963), pp. 20-21.

[5]Plath, *The Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath* (New York: Harper, 1981), p. 94. All subsequent references to the poetry will be to this edition.

[6]Ingrid Melander, *The Poetry of Sylvia Plath: A Study of Themes* (Stockholm: Almquist, 1972), p. 85.

[7]Ted Hughes, *The Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath*, p. 287.

[8]Mary Lynn Broe, *Protean Poetic: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath* (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1980), p. 55.

[9]Judith Kroll, *Chapters in a Mythology: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath* (New York: Harper, 1972), p. 42; Lynda K. Bundtzen, *Plath's Incarnations* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1983), p. 194; Jon Rosenblatt, *Sylvia Plath: The Poetry of Initiation* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1979), pp. 74-75.

[10]"What I fear most, I think, is the death of the imagination," J 109.

[11]Rosenblatt, p. 75.

[12]Smith, p. 116.

[13]"Lucina," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1975 ed.

[14]Kroll, p. 42.

[15]See, for example, "The Moon and the Yew Tree," "Lesbos," "Thalidomide," and "Edge."

[16]Smith, p. 116.

[17]Plath experiments with syllabics in seventeen of the poems written in 1958.

[18]Helen Vendler, "An Intractable Metal," *The New Yorker* (15 February, 1982), p. 135.

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Delirium

All night I uttered your name in a delirium transfixing by bolster.
I tossed and turned whenever my torso exploded or reached out to merge with you.
My arms girdled around your neck, lips inside your tongue, moisten with their passion, licking, transmuted, a naiad's breasts swinging over spring water.
The locomotive stopped, silence laps, sound
travelling nanosecond across the brine a thousand stars from heaven.

The Blue Naiad

Blue naiad forming rising from the mid-ocean flying Albatross high
Across the Atlantic, soar eagle over the Azores turn around,
Streaking through the erratic undulating Arctic clouds and snows
And fluttering and flapping between soaked silk feathers and spread wings,
Comes in through the window at night and stands against the wall by the attic door.

The ragamuffin has waked from a yearlong sleep.
He regains self-confidence, prospers, and builds a heartwood home in Maine.
He pulls the girl toward him with an impeccable ease
Then, whispering, and holding each other with tumultuous hands.
Treading galletas, they dart toward the unruffled sea.

Dirty Dancing and the Undeserving Poor: Class Consciousness in *Tom Jones* and Johnny Castle

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In the movie *Dirty Dancing*, Max Kellerman, the owner of a Catskills resort, says to the leader of his orchestra, "It's not just the changes. It all seems to be slipping away." We could say the same thing about the way meaning in our symbols changes with time and use. It isn't just that new experience calls for new words and symbols, but symbols themselves through use lose power to signify their initial content. By the time a signifier becomes familiar enough for common use, the meaning often "seems to be slipping away." But signs are recycled; when meaning breaks down, they open up and are reinscribed as, with each use, a symbol picks up inherent and surrounding connotations of the occasion of that particular use. Such phrases as "final solution," "read my lips," and "kinder, gentler nation" pick up historical coloration. A graphic illustration of breakdown and reinscription presents itself in this popular movie.

Dirty dancing used to describe a kind of dancing done by rebellious young people in the basements of their parents' homes. It was the expression of young sexuality in tension with parental repression. The sexually explicit movements of the dance challenged the restrictions of authority. The pelvic thrust asserted a new generations's sexual energy. This is no longer true. Dirty Dancing is now the proper name that identifies a commodity, connections with the historical moment of its invention are fading. Once the words "Dirty Dancing" appear in neon at the mall cinema, and are thus sanctified by industrial capitalism, they can never again be the symbols of basement teenage revolution. In the movie, during the heroine's first trip to the basement dance floor, someone asks her, "Can you imagine dancing like this on the main floor, home of the family fox trot? Max'd close the place first." Later Max will ask for sheet music for "dancing like this," but by then the symbolic function of the dance will have changed.

The dance's symbolic gestures evolve in the same way that, according to Peter Fitting, Cyberpunk evolved by moving from counterculture to mainstream. Fitting describes how Cyberpunk started as an alternative to the increasingly commercialized mainstream science fiction, then became so commercially successful that it was absorbed by and became part of what it wanted to criticize (MLA 1989).

Because the basic symbolic forms of dirty dancing evolve from counterculture to mainstream, the film is set up for misreading. The egalitarian world view which seems to be portrayed in the film is undercut by a more authoritarian view the film finally reinforces. The real message of the movie is not easily recognized because the reinscribed codes support some old stereotypes. The counter cultural elements are subsumed by prevailing cultural assumptions so that they are at once mainstreamed and nullified. Existing power structures are maintained. Dirty dancing is sanitized.

Two aspects of the power structure being maintained here are sexual repression and class stratification, and the apparent vitality of the sexual rebellion masks the entrenched position of the power class. This link between sexual expression and class dynamics is important. Laura Rice-Sayre, in her reading of *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, recognizes the "identical origins of civic and sexual repressions in the ideology and structure of domination" (249).

Fredric Jameson illuminates the symbiotic aspect of the relationship between sexuality and restraint:

> The center around which the Freudian interpretive system turns is not sexual experience but rather wish-fulfillment, or its more metaphysical variant, "desire", posited as the very dynamic of our being as individual subjects. (65)

He also sees:

> It is as though "genuine" desire needed repression in order for us to come to consciousness of it as such; but then in that case desire must be transgressive, must always have a repres-

> sive norm or law through which to burst and against which to define itself". (68)

What happens in *Dirty Dancing* is a negation of rebellion through sublation and containment. Genuine desire is transformed from transgressive to normative. A coup is put down.

The political symbolism inherent in release of pent-up sexual energy has long been evidenced in English literature. Ronald Paulson, in his study of the relationship between gothic fiction and the French Revolution traces the portrayal of unleashed sexual force as a metaphor for revolution. He cites H. L. Mencken's expression that "Revolution is the sex of politics" (545). The metaphor seems appropriate. Revolution and sex both release compressed energy which is potentially creative, but also potentially destructive. Old social structures are dismantled by revolution, and familial domination patterns are displaced by the sexual maturation of a new generation.

Fear of this powerful energy, as Paulson demonstrates, can inhibit development of progressive social change. As he puts it:

> [T]he French Terror . . . cast its shadow on libertarian dreams . . . that constant potential for simple inversion of the persecutor-persecuted relationship which events in Paris has so terribly exemplified. (538)

John M. Ellis, in another context, describes a model that explains what happens in such a backlash:

> In general, any wild and incoherent attack on conservatism always tends to strengthen it, and to give it added legitimacy. Instead of slowly changing and relaxing with the passage of time, it is suddenly given new life as the legitimate alternative to the current excesses. (*New Literary History* 275)

Fear of upheaval that accompanies challenge to authority can provoke longings for traditional order to save us from the results of our released energy. This is what happens when the sexual energy in *Dirty*

Dancing is unleashed and ultimately recaptured. The reinforcement of established power can be traced through the breakdown and reinscription of symbolic gestures as they exhibit in the various dance styles performed in the film.

When David Edelstein, in *Rolling Stone*, refers to *Dirty Dancing* as "a Marxist Forty-second Street" (27), he interprets symbols in terms of their old inscriptions and misreads the film's ideological content. There is, indeed, a surface valorization of the working class as the agile working class dancers miscouple with the clumsy--the upper-class guests on the main dance floor. The viewer identifies with the dancers emotionally and sensually. There's a feeling that we're all here to make fun of the awkwardness of the upper class as they try to relax and do what comes naturally to poor folks. But the real message of this film is that the right people have power and that upward mobility comes from winning the approval of some of these right people.

Observing the way initial misreading yields to reveal underlying ideology in this film may tell us something about the way class dynamics are perceived by current American producers and consumers of entertainment. The movie is a commodity that must sell in volume in order to succeed, and this movie was the number one video rental in 1988 (Reed). We enjoy fictions that portray a character's rise from humble beginnings to greater social status. It's the enactment of the American Success Story.

In the movie scenario of *Dirty Dancing*, the characters are clearly divided into upper and lower classes in the setting of a resort hotel in the Catskills. There are employees and guests, and the employees, themselves, are divided into two groups. The waiters are recruited from the campuses of Yale and Harvard, and they are encouraged to romance the daughters of the guests. The working class dancers are from places unknown and are warned to stick to the dance floor, and "nothing else." They are there to entertain the guests and teach them outdated Sambas and Cha Chas on the main dance floor. But after hours, the dancers get down and dirty on their own basement dance floor. The prince of this basement dance world is its star dancer, Johnny Castle. The implication of their nocturnal festival is, "So what if the rich got money, we got rhythm." Their rhythm seems to celebrate a kind of libidinal liberation,

and their after hours dancing provides them with a kind of updated ritual reminiscent of slave religion.

Fredric Jameson describes how religious and cultural symbols can pass back and forth between culture and counter-culture:

> Christianity of the slave-owner is appropriated, secretly emptied of its content and subverted to the transmission of quite different oppositional and coded messages . . . while folk music and peasant dance . . . . [are] ceaselessly drawn on to restore vitality to an enfeebled . . . "high culture". (87)

This is exactly what happens with dirty dancing. Johnny and his crew leave the fox trot floor to preform their subversion of dance, an uninhibited form of the rituals performed in the more sedate upstairs setting. When the dance resurfaces in the main ballroom, it renders its vitality in service to the power group, and in the transformation disassociates from its original sexual content. One has only to compare the tentative hip swiveling of the main floor guests with the supple undulations of the basement cast to observe the change. The young dancers dance to express excess sexual energy. The older dancers dance to recall lost sexual energy.

Jurgen Habermaus describes the potential for shifting of content and inscription during the process of signification when he discusses the transformation of bourgeois art into counterculture and its alternatives:

> Modern art . . . . shed the aura of classical bourgeois art by making the process of production evident and presenting itself as something that was produced. But art infiltrates the ensemble of use values only when it surrenders its autonomous status. It can just as easily signify the degeneration of art into propagandistic mass art or into commercialized mass culture as, on the other hand, transform itself into a subversive counterculture. (55-56)

The symbolic gestures in *Dirty Dancing* seem to be presenting a subversive counterculture, but are in fact already commercialized into mass culture, as evidenced by the very production of the film.

When dirty dancing makes it to the fox-trot floor this process is completed. But even before that it serves a containment function. The basement dancing is a rebellious expression, but at the same time it allows the employees an illusion of power that enables them to endure the real lack of power that constricts their lives. The illusion of freedom the dancers enjoy is confused by the perception of freedom in the dance movements.

Peter Fitting calls attention to the difference between perception and theoretical knowledge in his discussion of Philip K. Dick's science fiction when he points out that the socially constructed nature of reality is at odds with our experience of reality as "a seamless immutable given" (234). He says that contemporary theories address this schism by contesting empirical positivism:

> Their theories raise the question of ideology; and maintain that the practices and systems of representation which produce our understanding and perception of ourselves and of our reality play an essential part in the maintenance and reproduction of the existing (capitalist) relations of production. (220)

Terry Eagleton traces the intrusion of existing power systems into the personal representation systems:

> Discourses, sign systems, and signifying practices of all kinds, from film and television to fiction and the languages of natural science, produce effects, shape forms of consciousness and unconsciousness, which are closely related to the maintenance or transformation of our existing systems of power. (266)

He sees that exploitation of such power takes place "not only in company balance sheets and in air bases, but can be tracked to the most

intimate roots of speech and signification" (268). The basement dancers' intimate roots of signification set up as symbol of both kind protector and firm ruler. Winning his acceptance becomes a goal for Johnny.

As the hero of *Dirty Dancing*, Johnny Castle appeals at the unconscious mythical level to some American beliefs about hierarchical structures. Johnny combines two of our favorite mythical themes, rise of the warrior hero, and the prince in disguise. The warrior hero, such as Rocky Balboa, in the Rocky movies shows that sheer determination can produce magical results; what we might call voodoo sociology. As long as we can believe that Rocky is possible, we can believe that anyone can "make it." The myth of the warrior hero helps keep the people at the lower end of the social ladder loyal to the system of stratification. It is not always easy to see that "anyone can make it" is not the same as "everyone can make it."

The prince-in-disguise story, a young man of apparent low birth performs some surprisingly noble deeds, and is then revealed to be the long lost child of noble parentage. Reassuring the reader that peasants can't after all really perform noble actions, and thus they can't really threaten existing social order.

Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* presents a prince-in-disguise story, and has much in common with his American cousin Johnny Castle. Like Johnny, Tom is a compassionate young man who rises in the world at the end of his story. They experience some of the same pitfalls along the way, and the reasons for their ultimate triumph are open to question.

In Fielding's novel, Tom's benefactor, Squire Allworthy, who fills a function similar to that occupied by Jake Houseman for Johnny, tells him that he has "much goodness, generosity, and honor" in his temper, but that if he wants to be happy, he must add prudence and religion to these qualities for, "the three former qualities . . . make you worthy of happiness, but . . . they are only the latter which will put you in possession of it" (191). Fielding's morality and religion were founded, according to Martin Battestin, on benevolist theories. As Battestin puts it in his introduction to *Tom Jones*, "[T]he major themes of the novel are the assertion of the doctrine of Providence . . . and the recommen-

dation of Prudence. . . . Together these two concepts define Fielding's world of order" (xxv).

As Rex Stamper sees it, Fielding's *Tom Jones* asks the reader to believe that "Tom wins Sophia and gains Paradise Hall because he has added prudence and religion to . . . qualities that comprise his temper, but he achieves both through luck, and it did not matter to the resolution of the novel what qualities he possessed" ("Satiric Self-Signification" 200). As Stamper points out, "Tom wins Sophia and Paradise Hall not because he has gained any virtues," but "because a former lover happens to be in a position to come forward at an opportune time" revealing "the truth of Tom's birth" (199). In other words, luck, and personal relationships win Tom his reward, and the reader may well realize that "the ethical views presented in the work have little to do with the ultimate resolution of the plot" (200). Johnny Castle achieves his goal in a similar manner: a lucky encounter reveals to Doctor Houseman that Johnny is not the father Penny's baby, allowing Johnny to win both Baby and the acceptance of her father.

Both plots have two similar strains. In both benevolence is subject to caprice, but in both the goodness of the strong father insures that justice will prevail. Neither Tom nor Johnny challenges the power of the status quo, each only wants a fair hearing within it.

Tom's acts of goodness, because they are imprudent put him at odds with his own best interest. His benevolent acts toward Black George and his desire to show responsibility for Molly Seagram's pregnancy damage his position in Squire Allworthy's grace. Stamper calls Tom's acts of goodness to Black George "ideological demonstrations" which represent a secular value satirized in the text but sees this "satire directed toward the worthy vs unworthy poor" as deflated by the fact that "Tom's actions demonstrate compassion, a religious quality" ("Satiric Self-Signification" 204). Thus Fielding has arrived at an irresolvable position, caught between limited social vision and broad ethical views (200). Ambiguity in Fielding is set up by Fielding himself when he says one thing and his plot demonstrates another.

Fielding's support for individual acts of benevolence, requires the preservation of the existing social structure. The two qualities, providence and prudence, are necessary to preserve Fielding's world of

order. Stamper considers these qualities "supplements that devalue the qualities of goodness, generosity and honor" (204). Individual benevolent acts must be controlled by prudence lest the social order be upset. This ideological content has not been lost between Paradise Hall and Kellerman's Catskill resort. The social order will not be challenged by Johnny's rise, nor will any power structures be modified. Room will only be made for one more member among the upper class. Johnny will modify himself to fit existing structures. He seeks not to displace the father, but to win his approval.

Like Tom, Johnny Castle suffers from a lack of prudence and his imprudent compassion causes him trouble. His attitude of responsibility toward his pregnant partner blocks him from the good grace of Doctor Houseman, just as Tom's wish to take responsibility for Molly Seagram's condition is among the events that lead to his expulsion from Paradise Hall. Acceptance will come for Johnny, not by any change in his character, but by circumstances when Baby speaks up for him, and when a lucky encounter reveals to Doctor Houseman that another man is the father of Penny's baby.

The undeserving poor for Tom are personified in Black George and Molly Seagram. For Johnny, it is the entire cast of his basement group, for as he affirms his desire "to be the kind of person Baby taught me to be," he attributes virtues to his new class identity, and by implication, says these virtues are lacking in the class he is leaving. He has been unable to find moral value there, but he has found it through his relationship with Baby.

A number of scenes in the movie underscore the relative power of the two groups at Kellerman's resort. Johnny takes pride in his ability as a dancer and choreographer, but he must follow the orders of the manager's nephew who knows nothing about dance. Johnny wants to stage a new dance, but is curtly reminded that he can be replaced. He meekly agrees to do a "Pachanga" which is one small step away from the usual "Mambo." Later, when Johnny comes back to do the new dance, it has already lost its counter-cultural value.

One of the Yale waiters, Robbie, has no problem with the imprudent benevolence. This is the man who gets Penny pregnant and abandons her, and he tells Baby his simple philosophy, "Some people count. Some

don't." Robbie is a sort of straw man, the man who misuses power, and is eventually neutralized by Doctor Houseman, the good, strong father who uses power wisely and well. This transmits the message that the good strong leader can protect us against the excesses of misused power in a world controlled by a hierarchical system.

In an early scene in the movie, Baby is cut in half by a magician in a talent show. This fake cutting will resonate strikingly with an event that will come later, when Penny is actually cut by a bad abortionist. These two incidents underscore the fact that the dancers are vulnerable to risk, while the guests only play at taking risks. The magician says to Baby when he saws her in half. "You've got Blue Cross, right?" Attempting to add sexual connotation to the act, the magician says, "was it good for you?" The limpness of the joke punctuates the fact that there has been no real sexual engagement here, and there's been no risk either. Penny has had the real sexual engagement, but she doesn't have Blue Cross to cover her abortion.

Several events in the movie demonstrate that while Johnny and the other dancers are in touch with real feeling, they are also in touch with real vulnerability. Johnny, in the course of teaching Baby a dance invites her to feel the music, "It's not just the steps, its a feeling, a heartbeat." Johnny's vulnerable position is underscored by his relationship with one of the guests, Mrs. Pressman. This liaison nearly results in Johnny's dismissal when he rejects Pressman in favor of Baby and she provides false evidence that links him to some thefts. It takes the word of another guest, Baby, to clear him. He is saved by the benevolence of the existing power structure, just as Penny is saved from the consequences of the botched abortion by the intervention of the good father.

Johnny's relationship with Mrs. Pressman parallels Tom's with Arabella Hunt. These relationships demonstrate attempts of each hero to control his own destiny. One might say of Pressman, as Stamper says of Hunt, that she is "one fully aware of the socio/economic system in which she lives and who attempts to control her interactions with that system" (Tom Jones and Arabella Hunt" 177). Like Tom, Johnny becomes aware of the sexual and economic realities of his situation and resists commodification. Johnny tells Baby about his former liaisons with female guests. She says, "I understand. You were just using them."

"No," he tells her, "That not the way it was. . . . They were using me." Both Tom and Johnny make decisions by being true to their own self-actualization, but they are able to follow through with their decisions only because of their personal relationships with the upper class.

In the final scene of the movie, the resort's host makes a show of egalitarianism, by asking the guests and staff to join hands and sing a song about "voices, hearts, and hands." It is in this scene that Max laments to his band leader that "It all seems to be slipping away" because "kids don't want to dance with their parents anymore." Johnny, then comes in with some real music, seemingly to challenge, but really to reinforce, the status quo. At the end of the movie, kids are dancing with their parents; guests are dancing with staff. They have all adopted the new dirty dancing, but it's the all new, sparkling clean version, performed on the main dance floor, the home of the family fox trot. Max asks, "Is there sheet music for this stuff?" Once sheet music for "this stuff" is served up at Kellerman's, its sexually subversive original content will be a distant memory.

Dirty dancing, having been appropriated by the ruling class, will render its vitality in service to new masters. Fredric Jameson recognizes that "in its generic form, a specific . . . paradigm continues to emit its ideological signals long after its original content has become historically obsolete." He sees this happening in such things as "the transformation of a peasant dance into the aristocratic minuet", and he sees that such transformations continue until "the most archaic layer of content continues to supply vitality and ideological legitimation to its later and quite different symbolic function" (187). The pelvic thrust is now a symbol for the containment of rebellion, rather than a symbol of rebellion itself.

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The Image of Malcolm X in Afro-American Poetry

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Anyone interested in Afro-American life and culture of the 1960s and 70s would have to note the influence of the late Malcolm X upon the self-concept of black Americans. The young, in particular, were profoundly affected by the lifestyle and rhetoric of the charismatic Black Muslim minister who seemed to have packed the experience of several lifetimes into one thirty-nine year span. Malcolm's speeches are still found in college readers, and his *Autobiography*, as told to Alex Haley, is considered by many to be one of the major American contributions to that genre.

Even middle-class blacks of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement admitted admiring Malcolm, while adding that they personally did not adhere to the overtly racist Muslim teaching. And when he was assassinated, most blacks saw him as a martyr of black liberation, even though three black Muslim men were tried and sent to prison for the crime. Many Afro-Americans simply refused to believe that his death was the result of an internal Muslim feud; instead, they were convinced that the CIA or FBI was the true culprit. At the very least, they felt that the forces of law and order could well have prevented his death, but chose to do nothing. As with the other assassinations of that calamitous era, we shall probably never know.

In view of the feelings he aroused in both black and white, and because of his influence as a role model for young blacks, it is worthwhile to ask what remains of the legacy of Malcolm X today. One must not ask today's average young black student, because most of the students have never heard of him. They have not been taught about Malcolm, because he is not the sort of race leader who is enshrined, for example, at the typical Black History Month program. He said and did too much that was suspect. Many blacks do not want to "upset our white friends," who may recall Malcolm as the man who declared that the white man is the devil. It seems that Malcolm is on the way to being forgotten;

and he might be much more easily forgotten were it not for the words he left behind, his own words and the words of a number of black poets.

The majority of the Malcolm X poems were written at the time of the assassination or shortly thereafter, and fifty-eight of these were gathered in the collection *For Malcolm: Poems on the Life and the Death of Malcolm X* (all but one of the following citations refer to that volume). All the best Malcolm poems are found here, along with some of inferior quality by unknowns.

The poetry, for the most part, fixes on a few interrelated themes: pride, manhood, and rage. Students have variously located the sources of these aspects of Malcolm's character in the injustices of his early life or in the Black Muslim religion. Whatever their cause, this is how most of the poets saw him.

Actor-playwright Ossie Davis wrote of Malcolm: "It was impossible to remain defensive and apologetic about being a Negro in his presence" (xxv). Malcolm's pride in blackness is the theme of "A Poem for Black Hearts" by Imamu Baraka (a.k.a. Le Roi Jones):

> For Malcolm's eyes, when they broke
> the face of some dumb white man. For
> Malcolm's hands raised to bless us
> all black and strong in his image
> of ourselves . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . For Malcolm's
> heart, raising us above our filthy cities,
> for his stride, and his beat, and his address
> to the grey monsters of the world. For Malcolm's
> pleas for your dignity, black men, for your life,
> black men, for the filling of your minds
> with righteousness . . .
> . . . . . .
> For all of him and all of yourself, look up,
> black man, quit stuttering and shuffling, look up,
> black man, quit whining and stooping . . . (61-62)

This poem emphasizes Malcolm's earlier preaching of black race pride based on anti-whiteness. This theme is also expressed in "My Ace of Spades" by Ted Joans:

> Malcolm X praised me and this condemned you
> Malcolm X smiled at me and sneered at you
> Malcolm X made me proud and so you got scared (5)

In "Malcolm X, a Lover of the Grass Roots," Margaret Danner speaks of

> . . . a deeply loving Malcolm X
> imploring us to stand, not bow, walk, not
> hesitate. . . . (7)

Closely related to the theme of black pride is that of black manhood. Historians and sociologists have said much about racist America's castration of the black male, both physical and psychological. In his eulogy at Malcolm's funeral, Ossie Davis proclaimed, "Malcolm was our manhood, our living black manhood! This was his meaning to his people" (121). In the short lyric "Malcolm X," Gwendolyn Brooks recalls:

> He had the hawk-man's eyes.
> We gasped. We saw the maleness.
> The maleness raking out and making guttural the air
> And pushing us to walls.
> . . . . . .
> He opened us--
> Who was a key.
>
> Who was a man. (3)

And most of the poets revel in the description of Malcolm as the macho ideal--assertive, aggressive, absolutely without fear of whites. In

"They Feared That He Believed" Clarence Major asserts that Malcolm was

> Too strong in his manhood.
> This meant that reason was no longer reason.
> What he said showed them
> he did not see the world through
> THEIR eyes. This frightened them. (6)

Above all, the poets who glorify the vigorously masculine Malcolm hail his gift of militant rhetoric, his rubbing the white man's nose in reality without qualification or accommodation. The third major theme in poems about Malcolm might be called "re-echoing the rhetoric of rage." Like any faithful member of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X was angry; he preached hatred of whitey. Yet even black moderates had a sneaking admiration for Malcolm, who was able to ventilate generations' worth of unexpressed, frustrated fury. It was time for the oppressor to be given a good scare. Margaret Danner puts it:

> And Malcolm X, having outgrown the tricks
> of this briar trade was so churned
> over the stunting of the grass roots of us
> that he dared to say, aloud, "I hate" . . . (7)

And Malcolm's anti-white rhetoric is seen as the cause of his death, even though the actual trigger men were black. In "It Was a Funky Deal" convict poet Etheridge Knight says:

> In the beginning was the word,
> And in the end the deed.
> Judas did it to Jesus
> For the same Herd. Same reason.
> You made them mad Malcolm. Same reason.
>
> It was a funky deal.

You rocked too many boats, man.
Pulled too many coats man.
Saw through the jive.
You reached the wild guys
Like me. You and Bird. (And that
Lil LeRoi Cat.)

It was a funky deal. (21)

Most of the Malcolm X poems cover the same ground that has been outlined in this paper, but there is one poem which is so excellent in style and so radically different in its perspective from all the others, that it must be cited at length. The poet was about as different from Malcolm X as any Afro-American could have been, the late Robert Hayden. Professor Hayden lived the middle-class life. In racial matters he was a strong integrationist. Although proud of his black heritage, he was also unresentful that the blood of white and red ancestors flowed in his veins. In religion Hayden was a devout Baha'i, committed to their teaching of universal brotherhood as the only hope for world peace.

Hayden's poem "El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz" (the name Malcolm took after he made the haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca) presents a very different Malcolm, sounding a note which no poet or prose biographer has made much of: Hayden sees Malcolm as a profoundly religious man. Hayden does not ignore Malcolm's political side; in fact, he does a remarkable of job of putting Malcolm's politics in perspective as shown in the poem's epigraph: "O masks and metamorphoses of Ahab, Native Son" (14).The epigraph's allusions to two masterpieces of American literature, shows, as I have stated elsewhere, that Malcolm, the quintessential embodiment of black rage, is also quintessentially American ("Robert Hayden," *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 76). In attempting to pursue and slay that which is evil, like Captain Ahab, Malcolm embraces other, and equally great evil. The poem begins,

The icy evil that struck his father down
and ravished his mother into madness
trapped him in violence of a punished self

struggling to break free.
(14)

The poem follows the outline of Malcolm's life as found in the *Autobiography*. His career in street crime brings him into conflict with "the cannibal flowers of the American Dream," but in the end he loses, is jailed and becomes the most incorrigible man in prison, nicknamed Satan, spending weeks and months in solitary confinement. From this, he is rescued by belief in "a racist Allah pledged to wrest him from / the hellward-thrusting hands of Calvin's Christ." As a Black Muslim minister, he "becomes his people's anger." As Hayden perceives, however, "Rejecting Ahab, he was of Ahab's tribe." And, like Ahab, Malcolm rushes on to his own destruction.

But here the resemblance to Captain Ahab ceases. Malcolm, as he approaches what he called "the martyr's time" makes the "ebb time pilgrimage" to Mecca where he discovers orthodox Islam and has the shattering revelation that white men can be his brothers. Marching around the Kaaba, Islam's most holy place and chanting with the other pilgrims "Labbayk! Labbayk!" (In Arabic, "We have obeyed your call and we are here.") Malcolm was transformed.

For Hayden, the Mecca experience is a towering religious revelation; it is Malcolm's Damascus Road, a complete reversal of all that he had known of God and based his life on. Hayden describes it in the poem's climax:

He fell upon his face before
Allah the raceless in whole blazing Oneness all
were one. He rose renewed renamed, became
much more than there was time for him to be.
(16)

Hayden's poem, of course, is not the only poem which pays attention to Malcolm's religion or which contains Muslim terminology. But I contend that Hayden is the only poet who takes Malcolm seriously as a divinely inspired as well as a political man. Given time, Hayden

implies, Malcolm might well have made himself remembered as a religious rather than a racial prophet.

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William Peterfield Trent: Early Critic of Southern Literature and Society

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In the recent *The History of Southern Literature*, one chapter included in the section "The War and After, 1861-1920" is devoted to "The Rise of the Critical Temper." According to Fred Hobson, that phenomenon "resulted largely from a new point of view held by various young Southerners, particularly academics: who wanted to "reintroduce the spirit of free inquiry and bold examination that they associated with Jefferson. They would be critics of the South, not apologists or press agents for it." Concerning their training, Hobson notes that "although most of the new social and cultural critics had received their undergraduate education in the South, they had gone elsewhere for further education and had seen the South with new eyes." As a result "the geographical detachment brought a new objectivity that these Southerners employed when they came to study Dixieland" (252-53).

These Southerners, Hobson contends, "wrote with a certain caution, an awareness of consequence. They knew the necessity of an honest investigation of Southern life and letters, and they possessed a critical temper alien to the generation before them; but they also knew the price that criticism exacted. They wrote with conviction but not often with abandon or iconoclastic glee" (257). That hard-won luxury would come with the writers and critics of the next generation--of the Southern Literary Renascence.

Among the early critics Hobson discusses are Walter Hines Page, who became the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, began his own publishing house, Doubleday, Page, and later became U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James's; William Malone Baskervill of Vanderbilt University, who is generally credited with writing the first scholarly essay treating Southern literature; Edwin Mims, first of Trinity College (which would become Duke University) and later chair of the English Department at Vanderbilt University; the historian John Spencer Bas-

sett of Trinity and Duke, who founded the *South Atlantic Quarterly* and attacked white supremacy, calling Booker T. Washington "the greatest man, save General Lee, born in the South in a hundred years"; and William P. Trent, whose biography of William Gilmore Simms, the most important figure save Edgar Allan Poe in ante-bellum Southern literature, was published in 1892.

In his review of Trent's biography of Simms, Professor James M. Garnett of the University of Virginia wrote, "Indeed no Southern man can read this book without feeling his blood boil within him at the injustice of the author, at the aspersions cast upon his people and their motives" (151). Perhaps one of the things that so much infuriated Southerners and resulted in the book's receiving only one favorable review in Southern newspapers and periodicals was the fact that the author himself was also a "Southern man" and the Southern "people" were indeed his people too and had been, in fact, for several generations.

William Peterfield Trent was born 10 November 1862, during the Civil War in Richmond, Virginia, to Peterfield Trent, a physician who was in the process of giving "his health and inheritance to the Lost Cause" (Walker 139, 3), and Lucy Carter Burwell Trent, both of whom came from distinguished Virginia families. The Trent family had been in Virginia since the late seventeenth century, and Lucy Burwell was sixth in descent from Edward Digges, Governor of Virginia from 1655 to 1658 (Walker 4, 15).

The young Trent attended private schools in Richmond, where he received his secondary education. While attending the University of Virginia, Trent edited the literary magazine, receiving the B. Litt. degree in 1883 and the A.M. in 1884. He planned a career in the law and during 1884 read law and taught in the private schools in Richmond. In 1884 he went to Johns Hopkins University for a year of post-graduate study in history and political science. His teachers there included the historian Herbert Baxter Adams and Woodrow Wilson.

In 1888 Trent joined the faculty of the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, as Professor of English Language and Literature and Acting Professor of Political Economy and History. He became Academic Dean as well in 1894. It was while Trent was at Sewanee that his main interests gradually shifted from history to literature.

One of Trent's most significant activities while he was at the University of the South was his leading the way in founding the *Sewanee Review* in 1892 and serving as its editor for seven years. Franklin T. Walker in his unpublished critical biography of Trent summarizes his achievement with the *Review*: "To William Peterfield Trent is due the credit for founding the *Sewanee Review*--a splendid achievement in itself--and in so doing, opening the way for other Southern cultural organs which more or less continued the tradition he established: *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and the *Southwest Review*" (167-68).

Always a prolific worker, during his Sewanee years Trent edited eleven texts, wrote sixty-five articles for periodicals, and published eight books. The latter included *Southern Statesmen of the Old Regime* (1897); *English Culture in Virginia* (1899); a collection of his own poetry (1899); and four biographies--*William Gilmore Simms* (1892), *Benjamin Franklin* (1897), *John Milton* (1899), and *Robert E. Lee* (1899).

On 8 December 1896, Trent was married to Alice Lyman, and they became the parents of a daughter and a son. In 1900 he accepted a professorship of English literature at Barnard College, the women's college of Columbia University.

One of the major projects of Trent's career was *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, which he edited with Carl Van Doren and others (1917-1921). Another was the Columbia edition of *The Works of John Milton*, in eighteen volumes (1931-1938), which Trent first suggested in 1908; he served as editor-in-chief until ill health forced him to resign in 1925. During his career Trent also edited the works of Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, and Honore de Balzac, among numerous others. He devoted two decades of research to a monumental work on Daniel Defoe; at his death his 3,000-page manuscript was not for publication and at his request was deposited at Yale (Walker 530).

Trent was always one to let his opinions be known in extra-literary matters, as well as in literary ones. He protested against American imperialism and war at the time of the Spanish-American conflict, and his disapproval of British imperialism caused him to oppose American entry into World War I and to go so far as to publish in 1915 a

controversial poem of sympathy for Germany. His stand alienated many of his friends.

In addition to his appreciation for the South and yet his criticism of it, one of his closest friendships, that with Theodore Roosevelt, is characteristic of the outspoken and strong-minded Trent and of the conflict and paradox that typified his life. Roosevelt's view of the Simms biography in the *Atlantic Monthly* "marked the beginning of a warm friendship for the young author, who had to look beyond his native section for appreciation." After 1892 Roosevelt wrote for the *Sewanee Review*, entertained Trent in Washington, and introduced him to influential people (Walker 170). In spite of that friendship with the Rough Rider, however, Trent espoused pacifism in 1898 and again in 1915.

Another acquaintance of Trent's was Samuel Clemens, whom he met on board ship on his trip to Europe during the winter of 1894-95. Trent told of the meeting in a letter: "Mark Twain was on board and I had a great deal of pleasant chat with him. Like most humorists--he has a serious side to him which he shows, when you begin to know him, more than he does his facetious side. I not only like him but respected him for his brains and his heart and I was very much touched by what he told me of his financial embarrassments" (186-87).

A paralytic stroke in Paris in the summer of 1927 ended Trent's teaching duties. A sophisticated skeptic in matters religious for most of his adult life, Trent in 1929 summoned an old friend from his Sewanee days, the Bishop of Tennessee, the Right Reverent Thomas Frank Gailor, to his Connecticut home to confirm at age sixty-seven an old, paralyzed man, "who as a baby had been baptized in old St. James's Episcopal Church in Richmond" (Walker 475). Trent died of an heart attack at Hopewell Junction, New York, on 6 December 1939.

Though "dated in its critical judgment and . . . written from a marked social bias" (Homman, *Fifteen* 394), Trent's *William Gilmore Simms* is "still the best biographical study" of the writer and the first significant scholarly attempt to write a chapter of the literary history of the South (Holman, *Guide* 288). The biography was, moreover, "much more than a study of the most important native writer of the Old South; it was also a vigorous dissertation on certain aspects of antebellum civilization

which the biographer held both made and marred the Carolina writer." The study was thesis-laden with Trent's unsettling belief "that conditions in the South not only blighted the career of Simms but of other potential literary geniuses because of the soil upon which the literary flower depended for life and nourishment" (Walker 125-26). It was Trent's analysis of those conditions that made him, according to one of his friends, "the first Southerner who looked with critical eye at the life of the old South and dared to insinuate that it was not perfect" (Mikell 153).

Trent had been invited early in 1890 by Charles Dudley Warner to do the life of Simms for the "American Men of Letters Series." Trent, however, had not been the first choice. A previous offer had been made to George Washington Cable, and that choice had been publicly announced. Cable secured the aid of Simms's family but was not able to furnish the biography. It has been concluded that "the very liberal Cable would hardly have presented a life satisfactory to Southern readers" (Walker 127). The irony of the situation is interesting, for when Trent's work was completed, it annoyed Southern readers almost as much as Cable's probably would have.

When the book finally was published, "The Southern press joined in a chorus of condemnation" (Walker 126). The chief criticisms of the biography have been classified under groupings:

1. He "belittled" and "sneered" at all things Southern.
2. He misrepresented the reception of Simms by Charleston society.
3. He was not in sympathy with his subject.
4. He injured Simms's reputation as a writer. (Walker 144)

The feeling against Trent was so intense in Charleston that "he felt it was not safe for him to visit that city which, the year before, received him and opened their archives to him" (Walker 151). One freshman entering the University of the South that year was later to recall that his "'father was severely criticized in Charleston for sending his son to Sewanee since Trent who had written such an offensive book was on the faculty there.'" In Richmond, where Trent's mother still lived, old

friends would "cut her on the streets" as a result of her son's book. At Sewanee itself some of the school's constituents demanded Trent's academic head, but he was the most popular teacher at the school and the students were behind him. Apparently there was great concern about the matter on the Board of Trustees, but the entire matter never got into the minutes of that body (Walker 151-53). That the school "refused to heed the popular outcry" has been heralded as "a victory for Southern liberalism that made it possible for other Southerners to speak their views on social and political questions with measurable greater freedom" (Dabney 155).

The intensity to which feelings about Trent ran can be seen in a letter written by Simms's granddaughter, Mary C. Simms Oliphant, to Franklin T. Walker in 1942, fifty years after the publication of her grandfather's biography. Ms. Oliphant says that Trent's "own heredity and environment, the twisted age in which he developed, his immaturity at the time of the work, the hurried manner of his research--of which . . . [are] found many evidences--all were contributing factors, to my mind, to the result." She interestingly goes on to say that "the Simms family were somewhat to blame. We all talk too much. We are great *complainers* [emphasis added]." But further in her letter she continues none too logically, "If Mr. Trent had stopped a moment to reflect, he would have realized that Simms' children would never have been so indecent as to *complain* [emphasis added] of social neglect," for "Simms and his sons were members of the St. Cecilia" (144-45).

Against those charges, however, can be seen Theodore Roosevelt's calling the work "the best piece of literary biography that has been produced anywhere in recent years" (146).

The most controversial part of Trent's biography of Simms did not really concern matters literary but resulted from Trent's belief that it was necessary to "consider Simms's environment before we attempt to follow his career as a man and a writer" (*Simms* 143). Trent asserted that one of the crucial aspects of Simms's environment was Charleston itself, a city under the "domination of a blind, exclusive, and thoughtless aristocracy," and Simms and others like him who had not been born into that aristocracy perceived that there was "much to be reprehended and feared for in the social structure of the city they nevertheless loved."

Simms and his fellows knew that in Charleston they "were not so much looked upon with disfavor as not looked upon at all" (*Simms* 20). Trent notes that the lack of a good market in Charleston "bore hardly on the poorer classes" and made their lot difficult, and that remark is particularly interesting because in his biography of Simms and other analyses of the Old South by him Trent exhibits an uncommon interest in middle and lower class whites that was to be picked up by other Southern historians and sociologists only later in the twentieth century. Trent also notes "a smoldering discontent among the slaves" in Charleston (*Simms* 24).

Trent sees two preeminent characteristics of the Southern environment that were detrimental to Simms and other would-be literary artists of the region--feudalism and slavery. Trent describes the Southern feudal existence: "It was . . . a life that choked all thought and investigation that did not tend to conserve existing institutions and opinions, a life that rendered originality scarcely possible except under the guise of eccentricity." Further, "It was a life affording few opportunities to talents that did not lie in certain beaten grooves" (*Simms* 37).

Along with feudalism, the other bane of the Old South to Trent was slavery. He notes that "Most of the great Southerners of the days of Washington were . . . outspoken about the evils of slavery," as indeed the first President was. The trials of the Revolutionary times "had taught Washington and his compeers to use their minds," and "they turned them upon themselves, nor shrank from the painful but logical conclusions forced upon them." But as time passed, the Southerner's "pocket grew larger and his mind narrower," and "he thought backwards . . . with his feelings for a guide" (*Simms* 40-41). Indeed for Trent the cardinal wrong that the South committed or that a human being could commit was not to think. The slave-owners might have been "humane and honorable men," but they could not be considered "thoughtful men, alive to a sense of duty" (*Simms* 38). It was unthinkably sad to Trent that "the idea that it was wrong to hold a human being in bondage had gained no entrance" into the mind of the antebellum Southerner (*Simms* 173).

It is interesting to note, however, that even though Trent insists upon the humanity of black persons, at the same time he believes that

"Slavery lifted the African vastly in the scale of civilization, and there is no telling what social and economic benefits may in the future flow from it" (*Simms* 38).

Trent proceeds to point out that the effects of slavery upon the master "were almost wholly bad." One of the bad effects for the owner was that paradoxically "he became an aristocrat and yet claimed to be a democrat." Slavery also made the master "fall behind his age," and "his power as a landed and slave proprietor drove out the small yeoman, cowed the tradesman and the mechanic, and deprived the South of that most necessary factor in the development of a nation's greatness, a thrifty middle class." In addition, slavery "afforded constant provocation to the indulgence of lowering passions" (*Simms* 39).

In 1907 Trent believed that "the South still has its great problem to solve," the South which is sometimes said to be "really the most American part of America . . . so far as concerns intermixture of races." Trent finally sees the situation as "the master problem of the entire country [which] seems to be today what it has always been, the problem of securing to every citizen equality of opportunity, that is to say, the problem of establishing a true democracy" (Introduction xxv-xxviii).

One of the most important things to see in Trent's *Simms* is what Southern readers in 1892 did not see, and that is the great sympathy of the author for his subject. The fondness of Trent for Simms the man can be seen in many a statement like the following: "Whether as a literary toiler, working successfully under most harassing conditions; whether as a misguided patriot, striving for what he believed to be his section's good; whether as a defeated, worn-out spirit, laboring to relieve the distress of his children and his friends, the man Simms ceases to be a mere man and assumes proportions that are truly heroic" (*Simms* 332).

Trent recounts some of the specific events of Simms's life that dramatize for the reader the heroism of the man. Death was an almost omnipresent specter for Simms. On the same day in 1858, Simms's two favorite sons died of yellow fever in Charleston, where his family had moved as usual from Woodlands, his low-country plantation, to try to escape malaria (*Simms* 240). In the midst of the War, Simms's second wife died in her forty-seventh year, not quite a year after she had given

birth to her sixth son and thirteenth child (*Simms* 276). At Simms's death in 1870 only six of his fifteen children had been spared him and three of his six grandchildren (*Simms* 314). Trent described "the trials that befell Simms during [the] terrible years" during the War: "His calling gone, his stereotype plates confiscated, his dwelling twice burned down, his books destroyed, friends, two children, and wife taken from him, and his State and section in the dust of humiliation and defeat, who shall say that he was not a sorely tried man? And yet he never proved himself a truer or nobler man than in these days of adversity" (*Simms* 289). In his *Simms* Trent did indict the South for its shortcomings, but he displayed at the same time abundant understanding of and appreciation for his subject, its most important native-born man of letters.

Trent the iconoclast, the Southern liberal, the Hopkins-trained political scientist, the reservedly optimistic disciple of the New South can be easily seen in a passage like the following: "For out of the ashes of the old South, a new and better South has arisen. A disintegrated and primitive people have become united among themselves and with their former foes, and are moving forward upon the path of progress" (*Simms* 289-90).

But Trent the native of the confederate capital, the descendant of a seventeenth-century governor of Virginia, the humanistic scholar with his eye on the Southern past honestly beholding it for what it really was insofar as he could--that person can be seen in another passage:

> Those men of the old South . . . did not and they could not realize that they were fighting, not for the true religion and the higher civilization, but for the perpetuation of a barbarous institution and of anarchy disguised. And yet who that sees their mistakes today would be so rash as to declare that if he had lived in their times and in their environment, he would have acted differently? And who shall deny that they were brave men, pouring out their blood for a cause which to them was true and holy and blessed of God himself? It is idle to deny their bravery, although that, like most of their qualities, was a 'survival,' and it is equally idle to af-

> firm that a whole people can astonish a world by their heroism in defense of a cause in which they do not believe. (*Simms* 274-75)

The key words in that passage are "And yet." Trent knows with his mind what the past of the Old South was. "And yet" he feels in the same way that those people felt who were human participants in that drama that he knows so well. Forty years or so later a poet like Allen Tate would take a similar vision and its attendant feelings and create from them great art like his poem "Ode to the Confederate Dead." William P. Trent created instead significant, important early Southern literary and cultural history and criticism.

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Green Knight, and *King Horn*. Just as quickly these main characters emerge as the heroes of these works. Orfeo, Gawain, and Horn all triumph. But their triumphs are meaningless until one discovers the conditions or qualities of their triumphs. For example what or who are the foes? How do the heroes conquer them? What do the heroes gain?

Other observations of Auerbach's help to answer these questions. For instance he says that the world of romance is a "chivalrous world of magic especially designed for the purpose" (117), and the purpose, he says, is "trial through adventure . . . the real meaning of the knight's ideal existence" (118). He cautions, however, that the idealization of that existence "is very far from the imitation of reality" (119). How then bridge the gulf separating the real from the ideal?

In respect to Sir Gawain, we find that his overt foe is the mysterious and marvelous green knight who challenges Arthur's court to a feat of arms. Yet this foe's challenge becomes only one manifestation of a larger foe. His challenge, we remember, demands of Gawain a promise which takes him on a solitary journey ("fremedly he rydes" 714)[1] through perilous lands and seasons wherein he must encounter the external natural world as well an unknown but fearsome fate. Halfway through his journey he re-enters a social community, the castle of Bercilak. Until this social re-entry his testing has been primarily tests of physical endurance and prowess (his bravery is of course motivated by his vow). Within the castle, however, the testing occurs on a more complex level. While his foe here still demands fortitude from him, Gawain's capitulation to this foe could provide fulfillment of a kind that lesser men would be pleased to earn, and it is necessary to note that all foes appear to Gawain as physical manifestations--bears and trolls, for instance, and a lovely lady and a green knight; but the degrees to which these natural manifestations appear creates subtle distinctions of deeper ethical and moral significance. It is well to recall Auerbach's reference to the hero as being "class determined" (122), thus Gawain becomes subject to the more sophisticated testing of Bercilak's lady.

Within the castle resides Gawain's greatest foe. This foe offers more than elemental destruction; this foe offers ethical and moral destruction as well. The level of Gawain's test has risen; his greatest foe is, in reality, himself, and only through the higher powers of ethical and moral

imagination can he create a self for his salvation. This becomes then Gawain's principal testing because the world the self defines for itself demands the ordering principle of an ethic; and the degree to which he can meet the demands of his own imagination, of that ethic, determines the degree of self-mastery he will achieve. Thus the foe is an internal one who has emanated from the self, and has been "especially designed" by the heroic imagination.

But if the foe is the self and its own imagination, what resources does Gawain have to master the struggle? Here we must remember that the ordering principle of his ethic demands continual testing for its existence; if it is not tested, it remains a mere abstraction and of no practical use to Gawain's existence. Without continual testing, discovery, growth, and creation stop. Consequently, only further acts of the imagination will provide his strength. If Gawain conceives of an ideal, he has, in Auerbach's terms, "especially designed" a world for his purposes. Thus an extension of the ordering principle is necessary; an extension which will allow him to order the natural world around him in terms of the demands of his inner world. That this world includes a "fairy tale atmosphere" wherein trolls and giants exist reflects dramatically and graphically the necessity for a "heroic" self in early medieval literature. Gawain's imagination is the tension spring connecting real and ideal which activates him and his adventure. Further, that same imagination, by generating--thus resolving--action, provides the value for it; indeed, that imagination forms character, and character defines the medieval world of the Gawain poet.

One important way the Gawain poet creates the world is through the ordering powers of ritual. We notice early in the poem, for example, that Arthur's court, i.e., Gawain's world, marks and celebrates a particular season of the year--Christmas and New Year. Special activities of a social and religious nature are designed (37ff) to enhance this season's meaning. For instance games and feasts are held; in preparation for them the participants "waschen" (72) themselves and take special places at the tables. Guinevere, the feminine member of the company, is placed in the center of the group (74-5); and Arthur will not allow himself to be served until those under his care have been served. Here we learn of another important custom; "also another maner meved him

eke" (90); the demand for "sum aventurus thyng . . . / Of sum mayn mervayle . . ." (93-4). This demand for "sum aventurus thyng" is in reality the social order's *demand*, and *need*, for a Gawain. The same need for the imagination's need of ordering or ritualistic behavior appears when Gawain accepts the Green Knight's challenge and they "Refourme we oure forwardes" (378). Similar examples from the rest of the poem are legion: the clothing and the armor of Gawain; the serving of the meal; the journey through the seasonal cycle; the ritual of guest and host; the dressing of the game; and even the ritual of self-defense. Indeed, the latter may be the most important imaginative ritual in Gawain's world as he orders the world of the self to defeat the foe within it. That foe is fear, the product of the same imagination.

If the foe has conversely been his imagination, a creation of his own mind, (this is not however, to suggest such a foe isn't *real*), the same faculty must overcome it. It becomes in fact a matter of character warring with itself. Thus speech, the distinguishing characteristic of the human animal, the supreme invention of man, becomes one of his greatest weapons. Speech not only is the emblem of his existence but the agent of his function as a social creature. Consequently, when Gawain encounters an obstacle such as Bercilak's lady who is "Wyth chynne and cheke ful swete. / Both quit and red in blande, / . . . / Wyth lyppes small saghande" (1204-07), we notice she serves not only as a physical representation of reality to beckon his flesh, but also as the imperfect, flawed representative of the imagination who seeks his "daynte wordes" (1253). She threatens both his body and his imaginative faculty, and to overcome her, he must master not only his own flesh but also his reason and its instrument, speech. Yet he must do so in the way of the medieval world. Courtesy will not allow him to tell her simply to abandon her seduction; he must play out the game with "speches skere" (1261). The bedroom becomes one of his most severe tests because of the multiple levels at which he is tested and because it tests his own conception of life by the very means of that conception. The ritual of speech becomes the manifest realization of ethical value; consequently, he needs the highest articulation of his inner world to master the self.

What then will he finally create and gain from self-mastery? Since heroic actions of the romance have little if any political, social, or economic purpose, Auerbach says the purpose must be absolute; it must be a personal and absolute ideal which will result in "self-realization" (117). Physically he is able to overcome "wormes . . . wolves . . . wodwos . . . bulles and beres, and bores," as well as giants (700-23), a list which includes not only beasts of the natural world but of the imaginative world as well. In addition he has been able to overcome the distracting world as well. He has been able to overcome the distracting influence of Bercilak's lady and finally the distracting influence of his own fear for the loss of his life. That he withholds the belt, and later flinches, reveal him as human, just as his desire to imagine and order his existence asserts his claim to humanity. What he finally gains, then, is humanity; and it is a sophisticated vision of humanity to be sure, for it insists that man is greater than his flesh.[2] Whether the final articulation of his idea says courtesy or charity or both seems unimportant to his larger purpose as a man. That he is able to create an absolute and ideal conception of himself and then to discover the means to test it reveals, perhaps, the Gawain poet's real purpose. In essence the poem illustrates not the discovery of self, or the redemption of self; rather it illustrates the self-creation of self through the powers of the imagination, indeed the creation of an existential self.

Do these observations allow us then to see Gawain as the structural center of the poem? Do he and his world determine the progress of the story? Is he indeed the structure? It is quite evident that everything in the story is concerned with Gawain and his world. No significant action occurs that is not in one way or another connected with his quest for self-creation. We know, too, that his imagination and his conception of the world and how he must deal with it also determine the poem. Nevertheless, if we are to see Gawain as the structural center of the poem, he must be both the poem's thematic center and its main actor. We must also acknowledge him in terms of those conventions which help define the poem's basis as art.

In this respect, it is well to review again, as so many have, the elements of ritual and patterning which comprise the poem's unity. For instance the poem begins and ends with the elements of an epic frame.

Does Gawain in any way constitute this frame? In many ways he does. Not only can he be seen as the inheritor of Brutus's England, but he is also the representative of "Bolde bredden therinne, baret that lofden" (21). He is the English extension "sythen Brutus" (2524) and the ideal embodiment of his progenitors. Within this frame the poem arranges itself into four divisions or fits. In each fit occurs a significant center which in combination with the others comprise a pattern of Beheading, Temptation, Temptation, and Beheading. Each of these centers not only marks the stages of Gawain's adventure, but also the stages of the poem's time and stages of the creation of the noble self. Gawain and his ideal, i.e., his world, determine the action of the poem, its theme, and its time. Not only does his action unify the overt matters of the poem, but his intelligence and imagination form and shape those matters to an ethical invention of self and of that self's medieval world. In this respect Gawain and his character bear a relationship to the formal elements of the poem which is similar to the relationship a keystone has to the other stones of an arch. Without the tension-producing principle of the keystone, the other stones lose all definition and tumble to a disordered heap.

Footnotes

[1]The edition I use is Moorman's; line numbers reference the quoted matter.

[2]It is of course impossible for me to ignore so much that has contributed to this discussion. G. L. Kittredge, S. Barnet, S. Bercovitch, J. Burrow, G. Englehardt, W. Goldhurst, D. Howard, D. Randall, J. Speirs, C. Moorman, A. C. Cawley and others have all commented most perceptively and learnedly on the poem's schematic structure, its moral vision, its use of ritual, etc., and have been drawn from.

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. . . Just Between Sophia and Me

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When a grownup crosses the invisible line between maturity and youth and enters into what is perceived to be the world of a child--where a spontaneous giggle, a quick tongue, or a bit of devilment seems innocent enough, or may even go unnoticed by other grownups--that adult encounters entrapment. The grownup becomes the child's victim. Oddly enough, the one guilty of such juvenility can remain captive until time forges a change in the relationship, and the child matures into manhood or womanhood.

I watched Sophia Mann Booker relinquish her place as an adult in her relationship with me. The transition did not take place in a single moment, nor was it on any one occasion. It was a gradual move, imperceptible; not planned by me and certainly not by Sophia. What actually happened was that circumstances had me psychologically poised to get the upper hand in an epithetical battle of sorts; and childlike, I took it.

At first, I thought I had an intense dislike for Sophia, but as I look back over that six-year period, I have come to realize that I enjoyed the control I seemed to have over her and the effect I had on her more than I disliked her.

Sophia and her husband, David, lived next door to my family in a new, two-story house. In fact, they had just moved in. About a month earlier, in July, I had turned ten; and Sophia and David, as I overheard in family conversation, were in their mid- and late twenties.

When I saw Sophia for the first time in her backyard that Saturday morning late in August, I spoke and added, "I like your house." To me, this was a compliment. The fresh, white paint and the dark green trim around the windows and doors created a distinct contrast to the faded yellow paint and white trim of our house. Even the picket fence looked whiter and cleaner than ours. Instead of the anticipated "thank you" I thought I would get, came words that made me look first in her yard and then in mind to see if she were addressing someone I had not seen.

Just as I expected, Sophia and I were the only two people around. That meant the response, "People told me you were an imp," was intended for me. Before I could ask "what people?" or "what's an imp?" she had built up the most unusual harangue in a barely audible voice I had ever heard. I stood and watched her, watching more intently than I listened, but I caught snatches of phrases that referred to my imaginary playmates as "folks not there" and the freckles on my face as rat turds. My doll house became a "dog house on stilts" because it stood on four posts that lifted it off the ground. I said I watched more intently than I listened because I observed the woman's constant struggle to control her saliva as she talked. It didn't seem to matter whether she wiped her mouth with the back of her hand or attempted to check the flow with her tongue; the excessive saliva was not to be stopped.

The spectacle of this woman might have been amusing had it not, at that moment, triggered another thought. I remembered a classmate who had come to school every morning for several weeks, the previous year, in the fourth grade, and regurgitated at her desk which was right behind mine. One morning, after her usual matinal heave ho, Miss Bernie, our teacher, made her clean it up. That ended the morning sickness. This girl, like Sophia, tended to salivate and in each instance an odor, not unlike that of sulphur, hung in the air.

"You're Cornelia Mann's sister, aren't you?" I asked. From the look on her face, the question had stunned her. Obviously, she could not imagine why I would ask such a question while she had me under attack. Nor did I stop to explain. As quickly as my feet allowed me to move, I ran into the house and upstairs to the bathroom. There, I washed my face and hands, over and over, again and again, trying to clear away the smell of sulphur I imagined was there.

I did not feel disturbed by Sophia's intended insults, so I saw no need to report the incident to Mama. I knew that, as an adult, Sophia, as we said in Virginia, had stepped out of line, pursuing a level of dialogue with a child that other adults, Mama among them, would consider inappropriate. Because I enjoyed imaginary playmates, my neighbor had suggested that I was crazy. None of the adults I knew ever declared that we children were crazy. They had been known to inquire of any one of us who came up with a hair-brain scheme that all

but killed us, if we had taken leave of our senses, momentarily; but there was never any indication that anyone thought we were ready for Piedmont. Sophia, I suspect, knew, too, that she had gone beyond the point that adults normally go in addressing children. Thus, I had no reason to fear that she would discuss the incident with Mama. Besides, the problem of orificial excess which she and Cornelia seemed unable to contain had not done anything to encourage my respect for her. For me, then, Sophia had become the focus of my ploy. When I found myself within Mama's hearing, Sophia, as proper Virginia manners for a child dictated, became Miss Sophia. As I thought through my plan to aggravate my next door neighbor, I knew I could not do, nor say, anything that could be considered openly flippant. What was left, then, was the employment of those annoying acts that adults sometimes consider innocent, but which the child knows are deliberately, though disguised, fiendish.

A few days later, I happened to be in my backyard at the same time Sophia was starting a flower bed, close to the fence that separated the two yards. She observed that I was playing alone, skipping around the yard in a circle, singing "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush." Without getting off her knees, she stopped putting slips of plants into the earth long enough to let me know that she knew I was there. "Instead of running around the yard with folk that don't exist, you ought to be working in your mother's vegetable or flower bed," she said to me. I continued skipping, happy that she had taken note of my presence. When I was certain that I really had her attention, I let my tongue circle my lips which I wiped occasionally with the back of my hand, as I sang:

This the way I stop my spit
Stop my spit, stop my spit,
This is the way I stop my spit
On a Thursday evening.

At the beginning of every season, there seems to be something astir that makes people respond to that time of year. I recall growing up and looking forward to summer evenings when the Sunbeam Club held lawn parties at our house to raise money for the church. We sold hot dogs

covered with mustard and onions, Mama's lemonade, and McCrum's vanilla, chocolate, and sometimes, strawberry ice cream. McCrum's was Lexington's main drugstore. When fall came, we gathered chestnuts from the land of some farmer in Bushy Hills who had invited us to pick. Then, at the first hint of winter, Mama ushered us to the cellar to move and pile the wood men had delivered, so that it would not be covered with the coal that was to come later. When something in the air proclaimed it spring, we children rushed down the street to a field to pick dandelions to sell at ten cents a quart to a neighborhood prospective winemaker, while our mothers dug in their yards and hung over fences talking about the most recent happenings in town.

Women usually finished what they were going to do in their yards shortly after midday and went indoors to complete whatever chores they had left there. Well, that seemed to be the way it was with most of the women, but not with Sophia. On this particular day--Saturday, it was--she decided to wash windows. No sooner had she climbed the ladder to wash her kitchen window than the latter tipped. At the time, I was sitting in a swing I had made by tying the two ends of a rope to the rafters supporting the floor of our back porch. The swing was diagonally in front of Sophia's kitchen window, to the right. As the ladder moved and Sophia lost her balance, she threw her left leg out and her left arm up as if to grab hold of the air to catch herself. Her right hand reached for the bucket. With no success her right foot moved to steady the ladder. She wore a pair of David's khaki pants, but she had more in the hips than the pants had been made to accommodate. The strain on the old garment became too much, and the seam burst from the crotch to the waistband, or so it seemed. The sight of Sophia lying on her back, her arms and legs threshing, and her brown torso and pink wide-legged drawers showing through the torn britches, sent me into a fit of stifled laughter I felt certain would kill me at any moment.

By the time she rolled to one side to get up off the ground, I had made it to the fence. "I have to believe it when people say you're crazy," she told me. "No one in her right mind would laugh at someone who fell, especially if she didn't know if the person were hurt." Obviously,

she did not know that everything she deemed private had been bared to the whole world. I just happened to be the only one around.

"You know," I stopped laughing long enough to answer her, while I crouched behind the sycamore tree, out of Mama's view, "I think I'd rather be crazy than silly. You know that ladder wobbled because you shook it before you climbed it. And, besides, those pants of Mr. David's are too small for you, anyhow. You'd better go in the house before someone besides me sees you."

Sophia and I continued to toss barbs and quips across the fence at each other for six years. As I grew into my teen years, she worked to undermine my self-confidence with remarks that boys did not like skinny, red-headed, freckled-faced girls who acted smart in school. In return, I sang a ditty that I had composed after her accident. It parodied "Jack and Jill". Sometimes I sang it as I hung clothes on the line, and sophia dillydallied in her backyard. Sometimes I sang it as she worked in her garden and I, in Mama's. The message, however, was always the same:

Jack told Jill to wash the sill
With a pail of water.
Jill fell down
Flat on the ground
And bared more than her garter.

When I completed my tenth-grade studies, I transferred to Christiansburg Institute, a little more than ninety miles southwest of Lexington. At first, I had to overcome the initial period of homesickness that engulfs most of us when we leave home for the first time. When I did manage to survive the malady, I worked on the school newspaper, participated in the dramatics club, and became secretary of the student council. These activities occupied the time that studying and doing required chores, like delivering office messages or waiting on tables in the dining hall, did not. Quite naturally, then, little, or no time at all, was left for me to be what I had come to call myself, Sophia's nemesis. Perhaps, that is not wholly true; that is, that I did not have time to think of Sophia. I found time for tennis, for riding "Old Pacer," the ten-year-

old campus nag; for the school choir; and for Felix Walden. I found time especially for Felix.

At C.I.I., as we called our Alma Mater in our school song, we had study hall from seven to nine o'clock each evening, Monday through Thursday. Every night after we met, Felix and I sat in our separate study halls--he, in the Edgar A. Long Building, and I, in the Administration Building--writing missives, in which we pledged our eternal love to one another. They were missives because we knew that, barring sickness or death, our notes would reach their destinations the same nights they were sent. Both Felix's roommate and mine were student trustees. What this meant was that the two were considered responsible enough to help negotiate student affairs. Of course, no one ever told us that the use Felix and I made of the system was what the administration had in mind. But, who knows? Administrations have been known to have wisdom in these matters, too.

Anyway, Harry Armstrong came over after study hour to buy snacks for the boys from our matron, Mrs. Long, the widow of the man for whom the boys' dormitory was named. Harry gave his list to Sally Nipper, my roommate. Along with the list was Felix's letter to me. When Harry returned to the Edgar A. Long Building, he carried among the potato chips, peanuts, and candy bars, my letter to Felix. For two years, those love letters carried us through the night to our eight-thirty French classes the next morning.

Somewhere between that day in September when I left home to go to Christiansburg Industrial Institute and the day before Christmas Eve when I saw Sophia, again, something happened. On that December morning, I walked out into the backyard to feed Ponto. As I approached the "house on stilts" that had become our terrier's habitat, I saw Sophia in her new addition, the chicken yard, throwing feed to her bantam hens. Without hesitation, I called, "Hi, Miss Sophia." Mama was nowhere around.

Toward a Definition of Revision

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Revision: A Universal Experience

All finished works have the simplicity of order, which reveals itself rather than its origins. For this reason, we are led to underestimate the labor of revision by the appearance of the finished product. Freed of every irrelevance, especially the sweat and litter of the workroom, the labor of revision stands as the simple formula of subjective action; however, the impression that this order gives of unlabored force is not to be trusted. Inherently we understand the challenge and importance of revision, as we engage in this time-consuming process, shaping and directing our thoughts toward a finished product; yet, our understanding of the process itself is frequently idiosyncratic. Because of this, most "definitions" are based on convenient stipulation rather than universal understanding. There is lacking, for all practical purposes, a common knowledge base about the complex nature of revision and, subsequently, a broad and encompassing definition of this term.

If the term means many different things to different people, one reason for attention to revision is practical. Insight into the process of revision can increase the efficiency of almost any developed and active intelligence. Using revision enables us to complete and refine our thoughts more efficiently. Theorizing about revision, on the other hand, allows us to use our knowledge about this predominantly conscious and critical function to improve our writing and inform our teaching. This paper will not only focus on the fundamentals of revision, which are all but inescapable, but will also demonstrate how specific writers have developed revision skills, and finally I will offer a definition that will include all aspects of the revising process.

General Motivations and Specific Objectives for Revising

H. L. Mencken once remarked that only eight percent of the human race is capable of writing something that is instantly understandable. His statistics are arguable, but the point he is making about the necessity of revising is widely accepted. After all, how do writers know what they really want to say except in the vaguest sense until they have worked it out?

> The answer is . . . that [they do] not and cannot. Meanings are worked out and sometimes laboriously. Even when the meaning may seem clear, the way of expressing it may require a lot of pencil work and experimentation (De Mare, *Communicating for Leadership* 9).

Will the possible exception of Shirley Jackson, who made no changes in "The Lottery" from first draft to publication, De Mare's statement seems to be the general rule. All good writers revise, and most revise diligently. Although Abraham Lincoln is reputed to have written "The Gettysburg Address" as he made the train trip from Washington D. C. to Gettysburg, he actually worked on the address for weeks and revised the draft many times. What he did on the train to Gettysburg was nothing more than revising.

While Lincoln's revisions were intentional and consciously shaped, they were no doubt made for specific reasons. All writers revise for aesthetic, political, historical, or socio-economic reasons, as well as to adjust to the medium or to the intended audience. Further, out of these more general motivations to revise emerge even more specific objectives, including: to improve the line by line texture; to change the pace; to tighten up the piece; or communicate more clearly; to change a character, to emphasize or de-emphasize an early element because of a later development, or to alter a philosophical position (Madden, *Writers' Revisions* 14-15). Revising, then, is an act which writers engage in for many reasons and grapple with in all genres of writing.

Revising: A Subsuming Term for Three Levels of Change

To revise means "to look over with care . . . in order to correct or improve" (*Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* 1552), and involves any changes made in the original text. Such corrections can be anything from making minor changes to recasting the whole work. Revising is a general term and subsumes three other terms that are often confused with it or entirely used in its place: re-working, re-writing, and editing. Three methods of changing a work can take place with or without feedback from others and can occur before, during, or after the drafting has been completed. The difference between each of these terms which comprise revision is the level at which the change is made.

Reworking

Re-working refers to changes made at the level of the sentence or paragraph, and is the act which is most often thought of when one thinks of revision. It involves making changes such as rearranging the position of words within sentences; adding and excising major parts of sentences; moving sentences to different places within the paragraph; adding new sentences to a paragraph; or changing the position of paragraphs in the whole paper.

Re-working can be used by writers to achieve a particular aim in a specific work. All of Conrad's revisions of *The Secret Agent*, for example, were toward precision, toward more direct rendering through the implication of sensory detail. To achieve this he had to improve the verbal phrasing and elements in his prose fiction (Davis, "Conrad's Revisions" 244-54). In *Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain aimed for coherence and continuity. His method required reordering details and longer sections by deleting or modifying passages (Dickinson, "Mark Twain's Revisions" 139-57).

Re-working can also be the primary method of writers for changing text in a corpus of works. The working methods of Charles Dickens have been described through examination of his number plans for the installments of his novels. He revised the notes for numbers after making changes in the actual writing. This was to have a corrected

reference as he moved on to compose additional installments. The different shades of ink which he used in the number plans reveal that his habit was to correct as he wrote, sentence by sentence (Butt and Tillotson, *Dickens at Work*). Voltaire also primarily re-worked at the sentence level. He frequently spent an entire night laboring over a single sentence. For Flaubert writing was just slow, taking him two days to reach the end of two lines (Barthes, *A Barthes Reader* 276).

Rewriting

Rewriting, on the other hand means "to write again," (*Webster's* 1553) and refers to major structural changes. It involves a total rethinking of the topic, making a fresh start, and writing the page, section or entire work again. All that distinguishes a re-written work from an entirely new one is that the topic is the same and many of the same ideas are retained. D. H. Lawrence was forced by prudish publishers to alter *The Rainbow*. In the same way, "he undertook a full scale re-writing of *Women in Love* when he knew its outspokenness had made it unpublishable: (Branda, "Textual Changes in *The Rainbow*" 306-21). Interestingly, in an attempt to control his inclination to editorialize, Lawrence evolved habits of re-writing that often improved his work (Ross, *The Composition of "Women in Love"*). Hemingway's rationale for re-writing was more basic. He believed that prose was architecture, not interior decoration and that the Baroque was over. This prompted him to do away with stylishly ornate language. It is not surprising that he re-wrote the final page of *A Farewell to Arms* thirty nine times before he was satisfied that he had gotten the words right (Brooks, Van Wyck, *Writers at Work* 222).

Editing

The last of the three terms which falls under the umbrella of revision is editing, a process that takes place at the word level. Editing is "to prepare for publication" (*Webster's* 576) or "to refine for others to read" (Barnet, *Practical Guide* 539). The editor corrects a work by tending to matters of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and usage. Many of

the revisions made by Virginia Woolf in *Mrs. Dolloway* were of this kind. They involved polishing style, correcting the punctuation, and eliminating inconsistencies (Shields, American Edition of *Mrs. Dolloway* 157-75). D. H. Lawrence made grammatical changes and changes to more effective synonyms in *Kangaroo* (Jarvis, "A Textual Comparison" 400-24), and Conrad made over fifty changes in diction in editing "Amy Foster" to correct for accuracy, to increase the visual character of the prose, and to correct for usage. He also altered the names of two characters (Gross, "Conrad's Revision of 'Amy Foster'" 144-46).

Distinguishing General Aims from Types of Revision

In addition to understanding the different levels of change, it is necessary to arrive at a working vocabulary which makes the distinction between those terms that are used to describe the general aim or purpose of revisions and those that are used to illuminate types of revisions. Reviewing the terminology used by literary critics, it can be seen that with fair consistency, the term revision is used in the same way. The terms critics use most often to describe the general aim of revisions are to change, alter, adjust, modify, and adapt; to correct, modify, and emend; to prune and redact; and to burnish, polish, and perfect. Though these terms are often used instead of revision, like the terms reworking, rewriting, and editing, they are only describing the general aim or purpose of the revisions. They are action words with the verb in the infinitive and, although they give a sense of what needs to be done, they do not express exactly how to do it. In addition to the terms already mentioned, others include: to simplify, to complicate, to clarify, to emphasize, to stress, or to improve. The use of these terms varies, of course, depending on the type of writing and the particular writer's intentions.

The terms used by the critics to describe types of revision are nouns which describe how the revisions are made by the writer. They fall into six broad categories: additions, expansions, deletions, substitutions, reorderings, and combinations (*Writers' Revisions* 15). Writers may use only one of these types of revision or may use any number of them in combination. Aldous Huxley's writing, for example, was characterized

by additions more than any other type of revision (Wilson, "Versions of *Brave New World*" 28-41). James Joyce's method was mainly expansion. Yet, in the "Ithica" episode of *Ulysses*, forty-two percent of his changes were additions--some were even additions to additions. He also made three hundred and forty-eight word changes, including substitutions and deletions (Madtes, "Joyce and the Building of Ithica" 443-59). Oscar Wilde added five chapters to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* which introduced many new characters (Lawler, "Oscar Wilde's First Manuscript" 125-35), and Samuel Richardson added over two hundred pages to *Clarissa* to develop the psychology of her character more fully and completely (Kinkhead-Weekes, "*Clarissa* Restored? 156-71). In *The American*, Henry James deleted numerous sentences, an occasional paragraph, and in three instances almost an entire page (Traschen, "Henry James: The Art of Revision" 623-24). Tennyson added no new material, but only excised faulty passages in revising six major poems for his 1842 publication of *Poems* (Fuller, "Tennyson's Revisions" 1562A-63A). In *Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain excised redundancies, made additions, and reordered details and longer sections (Dickinson 39), and Thomas Hardy's revisions of *The Woodlanders* were all made on proof sheets and consisted of deletions, substitutions, and emendations designed to promote consistency in his characters (Kramer, "Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*" 135-50).

Authorial Versus Editorial Revisions

Another important point to clarify is exactly who executes the revisions, because long after professional writers have made their last changes, editors and publishers make corrections and commit errors. Basically, and changes made by anyone other than the writer are not revisions, but conscious or unconscious errors. That is to say, they are not changes made by the writer's own hand; they are part of the editorial process. Still, writers and editors (peer or professional) both use reworking, rewriting, and editing to change the work. Therefore, to clarify who is making the changes, the term revision needs to be modified by designating whether the revisions are authorial or editorial. It is also important to understand that editing refers to changes at the

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Tennessee Williams' Use of Music

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Tennessee Williams was, without a doubt, one of America's greatest dramatists. His many awards, prizes, and grants attest to his critical success, and his popular success reflects in the conversion of so many of his plays into films. Williams enjoyed "the longest and the most public and most highly compensated career in the history of American theatre . . ." (Spoto, 399-400), a career built on an astounding canon of "more than twenty-five full-length plays, more than forty short plays, a dozen produced (and unproduced) screenplays, . . . an opera libretto[,] . . . two novels, a novella, more than one hundred poems, an autobiography, a published volume of letters, introductions to plays and books by others, and occasional pieces and reviews" (Spoto, xv). His literary legacy has provided scholars an abundant source for study, spawning ". . . more than 2500 articles . . . , over fifty theses and dissertations, [at least] four hundred critical articles and books, eighty interviews and thirty-three volumes of collected reviews of Williams' work" (Spoto, xv).

Critics and scholars are attracted to Williams possibly because he was a complete dramatist, a playwright who left no detail to chance. He employed innovations in such areas as lighting and music to strengthen thematic structures in his plays and to give added dimension to his characters. While much scholarly ink has been spilled on the subject of Williams' use of experimental devices, an area sadly neglected is his use of music.[1]

That music plays an important role in Williams' work comes as no surprise, considering the autobiographical nature of the bulk of his plays and the role music played in his life. Tennessee Williams was very much exposed to music during his childhood. His grandmother, Rose Dakin, supplemented the family income by giving piano lessons (Spoto, 6). His mother, Edwina Dakin Williams, was known in her youth for her fine singing voice and had "'a secret ambition, to become an actress, a musical comedy star'" (Spoto, 7); she appeased her ambition by singing

hymns to her children (Spoto, 11). Another musical influence came to the Williams children in the form of a black servant, Ozzie, who entertained them with ". . . spirituals, hymns and African lullabies . . ." (Spoto, 12).

Perhaps the most memorable musical occasion in Tennessee Williams' life was one which concerned his sister, Rose. In the early 1920s, when Rose's mental problems began to escalate, Edwina arranged for her to have violin lessons, hoping that musical study would soothe the girl's troubled psyche. In December of 1922, Rose was slated to perform Papini's "Romance" during recital. The performance ". . . turned out to be a musical and emotional disaster. She froze in terror, repeated several passages, and finally stopped abruptly in the middle of playing. Her family took her away shaking and in tears" (Spoto, 21-22). This episode later became the basis for Williams' short story "The Resemblance Between a Violin Case and a Coffin" and may have influenced one way he used music as a thematic device in several of his plays. Williams sometimes indicated simply that "music" should be used, while at other times he stated specifically what music should be used, whether it be a pre-existing popular or classical piece or one of his own imagination. He very effectively used specific music to complement mood in scenes of madness and to build to climax in such plays as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Suddenly Last Summer*. In *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, when Big Mama is told the truth about Big Daddy's condition, a scene of great emotion and temporary hysteria on the part of Big Mama is undercut by Brick's brief singing of "By the Light of the Silvery Moon" (III, 104). A similar episode follows when, in the midst of a heated exchange principally between Gooper, Mae, and Maggie, Brick softly sings, "Show me the way to go home . . ." (III, 114-115). The technique is repeated when Brick again sings "By the Light of the Silvery Moon" as Doctor Baugh speaks to Big Mama of Big Daddy's condition (III, 136). These scenes always occur in the third, and last, act of the play, the act of most intense emotion. In each instance, the songs are employed as Brick's attempts to block out what he is least willing and/or least capable of dealing with, that is, Big Daddy's imminent death. In the midst of border-line madness, he sings in a bid to maintain a thread of sanity.

Music is used somewhat similarly in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. On the evening of Blanche's birthday, during preparations for a birthday supper to which Mitch has been invited, as Stanley tells Stella the truth about Blanche's past, Blanche, oblivious to their conversation, happily sings, "It's Only a Paper Moon" (vii, 98-105). Bert Cardullos notes the significance of Williams' choice of song:

> Blanche is singing on one level of her hope that Mitch will believe in her, that he will love and marry her. . . . Blanche thus hopes to celebrate the day of her birth as the day of her rebirth through union with Mitch. . . . Stanley has made sure Mitch won't be coming over for supper, and Stanley will soon give Blanche her only birthday present: a bus ticket back to the real world, in Laurel, she has been trying to deny since arriving in New Orleans. . . . Without Mitch's love, Blanche's world will become "make-believe" and "phoney" in another scene: she will lose her mind, and think that the doctor who has come to get her is Shep Huntleigh and that she will be embarking with him shortly for a Caribbean cruise. (ll-12)

In Blanche's scenes of recollection of her ill-fated early marriage, polka music (which Williams designates as the "Varsouviana" after Blanche says, "We danced the Varsouviana!" [vi,96]) fades in and out. In scene six, the Varsouviana begins in a minor key, stops, then ends in a major key (96), thus signifying the frailty of Blanche's mental state. Later, in scene eleven, the music "is filtered into a weird distortion, accompanied by the cries and noises of the jungle" (139), illustrating Blanche's complete loss of sanity.

This association of specific music with past events leading to madness also appears in *Suddenly Last Summer*. Throughout scene one, during Mrs. Venable's recollections of her last summer with Sebastian (which, not incidentally, show signs of being somewhat less than completely sane), music, sometimes referred to as "The Encantadas music" (19), fades in and out. But the most effective use of music linked to madness

occurs in scene four, when Catherine explains exactly what happened to Sebastian:

> The, the the!--band of children began to --serenade us. . . .
> . . .
> Play for us! On instruments! Make music!--if you could call it music. . . .
> . . .
> All during lunch they stayed at a--fairly *close--distance*. . . .
>
> **Doctor**: Go on with the vision, Miss Catharine.
> **Catharine** (striding about the table): *Oh, I'm going on, nothing could stop it now!!*
> **Doctor**: Your Cousin Sebastian was *entertained* by this--*concert*?
> **Catharine**: I think he was *terrified* of it!

This dialogue effectively builds to the climax of the musicians' cannibalistic attack on Sebastian.[2] A mood of almost maniacal frenzy is created through Catharine's retelling the horrible event, and the narration is almost even more horrific by the accompanying musical sound effects.

Another way in which Williams used music as a thematic device can be seen in such plays as *Sweet Bird of Youth* and *The Rose Tattoo*. In *Sweet Bird of Youth*, Williams' production notes read: "There is nearly always a wind among these very tall palm trees, sometimes loud, sometimes just a whisper, and sometimes it blends into a thematic music which will be identified, when it occurs, as 'The Lament'"(15). Where "The Lament" does occur is toward the end of I,1, toward the end of II.2, and at the end of the play, each time marking major divisions of the play. Likewise, in *The Rose Tattoo*, Williams' production notes indicate the function of the music: "As the curtain rises we hear a Sicilian folk singer with a guitar. He is singing. At each major division of the play this song is resumed as it is completed at the final curtain" (139).

A third function of music is especially well illustrated in *The Glass Menagerie*, when it appears almost as a separate character. Williams' production notes again indicate his intentions:

> A single recurring tune, "The Glass Menagerie," is used to give emotional emphasis to suitable passages. . . . It serves as a thread of connection and allusion between the narrator with his separate point in time and space and the subject of his story. Between each episode it returns as reference to the emotion, nostalgia, which is the first condition of the play. It is primarily Laura's music and therefore comes out most clearly when the play focuses upon her and the lovely fragility of glass which is her image. (1026-1027)

By using the tune as "a thread of connection," Williams created a sort of subconscious character--it may not always be noticed, but it is always there and would surely be missed if it were not there. Williams compared it to "circus music":

> . . . not when you are on the grounds or in the immediate vicinity of the parade, but when you are at some distance and very likely thinking of something else. It seems under those circumstances to continue almost interminably and it weaves in and out of your preoccupied consciousness; then it is the lightest, most delicate music in the world and perhaps the saddest. It expresses the surface vivacity of life with the underlying strain of immutable and inexpressible sorrow. (1026)

In addition to treating music as a separate character, Williams used music to indicate character in such plays as *Night of the Iguana*, *Orpheus Descending*, and *Summer and Smoke*. In *Night of the Iguana*, Miss Fellowes is referred to as a ". . . butch vocal teacher who organizes little community sings in the bus. . ."(16), and Charlotte is characterized as a "canary" who ". . . opens her mouth and out flies Carrie Jacobs Bond or Ethelbert Nevins" (16). Shannon describes his problems with the musical duo:

> Last night--no, night before last, the bus burned out its brake linings in Chilpancingo. This town has a hotel . . . this hotel has a piano, which hasn't been tuned since they shot Maximilian. This Texas songbird opens her mouth and out flies "I Love You Truly," and it flies straight at me, with gestures, all right at me, till her chaperone, this Diesel-driven vocal instructor of hers, slams the piano lid down and hauls her out of the mess hall. But as she's hauled out Miss Bird-Girl opens her mouth and out flies, "Larry, Larry, I love you, I love you truly!" (16)

These musical characterizations indicate an interesting and ironic paradox: that Miss Fellowes has feelings for Charlotte in more than just a teacher-student respect is implied, yet the threat to Miss Fellowes (i.e., Charlotte's "love" for Shannon) manifests itself in the very talent which Miss Fellowes has nurtured in Charlotte. Thus, the musical aspects of the two characters create a bond between them while at the same time producing a rift in their relationship.

In *Orpheus Descending*, Val, a down-and-out musician, expresses his love of music by describing his guitar: "My life's companion! It washes me clean like water when anything unclean has touched me. . . "(50). His guitar is covered with autographs of famous musicians, whom he venerates as immortal (50-51). Val is connected with his guitar, with his music, so that the two are almost one, a fact recognized by others, like Carol: "--I'd love to hold something the way you hold your guitar, that's how I'd love to hold something, with such--*tender protection!* I'd love to hold *you* that way, with that same--*tender protection!*" (74). When Val plans to leave, Lady stops him by seizing his guitar (134-135). By the end of the play, Lady and Val have become so interconnected that they share the same music; as Lady dies and Val's death becomes unavoidable, "Music rises to cover whatever sound Death makes in the confectionery" (142).

Likewise, in *Summer and Smoke*, music surrounds the main character, Alma Winemiller. In scene one, Alma appears as ". . . The Nightingale of the Delta, singing . . . 'La Golondrina'" (21). She is a minister's

daughter and a music teacher, and while her "voice is not particularly strong, . . . it has great purity and emotion" (21). She sings even though the public appearance causes her great anxiety. After her performance she learns from John Buchanan the truth about what people think of her, that she appears to be ". . . just a little bit--affected!" (37). John's candor proves to be very attractive to Alma, and through the development of her love for him she comes to learn her own true nature. Ironically, though, she loses John to Nellie Ewell, to whom she refers as, "One of my adorable little vocal pupils, the youngest and prettiest one with the least gift for music" (34). In the beginning of the play, when Alma appears emotionally repressed and spiritual, she is very much associated with music; at the end of the play, when she has come to terms with her emotional yearnings and survived rejection, music is relegated to the background, as ". . . the grave mood of the play is reinstated with a phrase of music" (127). Thus, in contrast to Val's development culminating in a musical "covering," Alma's transformation results in a musical "reinstatement."

Clearly, Tennessee Williams drew upon his own musical background to develop a personal dramatic technique. He employed music to indicate and create character, to strengthen and support dramatic structure, and to evoke and complement mood, particularly in scenes of madness. Perhaps he summarized his intentions best when he wrote in "Person-to-Person": "Personal lyricism is the outcry of prisoner to prisoner from the cell in solitary where each is confined for the duration of his life" (vii).

Notes

[1]With the exception of one dissertation, "Music in Selected Works of Tennessee Williams" by William Joseph McMurry, Jr. (Ed. D., East Texas State University, 1982), and Cardullo's short article, I have found no scholarly writings on this subject.

[2]While this scene is quite effective as written, it is even more chillingly so in the 1959 film version starring Katharine Hepburn, Elizabeth Taylor, and Montgomery Clift.

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The Narrator of *Tom Jones*: Traditional and Modern Readers

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Traditional readers of *Tom Jones* do not question the intrusions of the narrator. For example, they accept at face value this statement:

> "Peradventure, there may be no Parts in this prodigious Work which will give the Reader less Pleasure in the perusing, than those which have given the Author the greatest Pains in composing. Among these probably may be reckoned those initial Essays which we have prefixed to the historical Matter contained in every Book; and which we have determined to be essentially necessary to this kind of Writing, of which we have set ourselves at the Head" ([209]).

The author explains to the reader why he has chosen to write these introductory chapters and factiously proclaims his authority to make the rules since he is one of the initiators of this form of writing. Yet, recently non-traditional readers have called the authority of the narrator into question.

Readers, as much as writers, are products of their age and in their interpretations reflect the concerns of their milieu. This historical bias for one's own age is clearly evident in discussions of the authority of the narrator of *Tom Jones*. The following overview of four important critical works reveals much about the current critical climate, and how this climate reflects current ideological tensions.

The first important critical work on Henry Fielding in this century was the monumental *The History of Henry Fielding* by Wilbur Cross, published in 1918. Cross takes a biographical approach to the works, and presents the character of the narrator as the embodiment of the author. He treats Fielding as a specific individual who uses the novel as a forum to address the world. For Cross, "Fielding is never a detached

spectator merely interested in the solution of his problem; he thrusts himself in with remarks, anecdotes, and disquisitions, becoming a sort of ubiquitous character whose appearance anywhere on the scene is conditioned by neither time nor place. Consequently the action is often suspended in order that the author may speak *in propria persona*, and pass sentence, as a Bow Street justice ought, on the conduct of his character." Cross defends this position as necessary for the legitimation of the literary tradition Fielding helped establish. Cross points out that Fielding's intrusions were not innovative but were adopted from "the parabasis of ancient comedy, where the chorus, between the acts as it were, turned to the audience and addressed it directly" (220).

Cross's reading emphasizes that the introductory chapters and authorial intrusions that run throughout the novel reflect the exact character of Henry Fielding as he engages the problem of writing one of the first modern novels. Cross argues that these intrusions are necessary because "The novel of real life was then in its infancy. No one before Fielding had ever written a novel comparable with his in its reliance upon contemporary manners and the facts of human nature. He accordingly felt it necessary to state in clear words his general design, his moral code, and his methods of procedure with plot and characters" (221). From Cross's traditional critical perspective, Fielding is a unique individual engaged in a specific action at a specific time and place. Although Cross has no trouble accepting the authority of the narrator, he admits some readers might object to Fielding's adjudication of the novels characters and moral/ethical perspectives. For these readers, Cross advises: "According to his temper, one will like or dislike this kind of novel which '*Tom Jones*' established in English fiction. If we wish to do our own moralizing, we must shun Harry Fielding..."(220). For Cross and for traditional readers the persona of the narrator and that of the author, Henry Fielding, are one.

The traditional reading of the narrator/Fielding identification was questioned in 1961 when Wayne Booth discussed the role of the narrator as a literary device in his work *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Booth analyzes how intrusions by the narrator into the text affect the reader's reception and categorizes the intruding narrator as a fictional strategy which leads the reader to believe he has a personal intimacy with the

author. However, this is not a psychological, empathetic identification, but a rhetorical device used by the author to persuade the reader to accept a specific reading of the text. The prototypical example for Booth is *Tom Jones* in which "the implied author's character dominates our reaction to the whole" (215).

Booth employs the critical fictions of the implied author and the implied reader in the establishment of his critical frame of reference. The implied author, not to be confused with the actual author, is the disembodied voice that tells the story. The implied reader is the reader the author had in mind while writing the story. These idealizations, or imaginative constructs, function to distance the actual author from the actual reader, creating a space that allows the rhetoric of fiction to operate. In this instance the narrative voice that guides the reader through *Tom Jones* is not Fielding but a character created by Fielding for that purpose. This authorial persona allows Booth to displace the authority of the actual author to one of his characters. The creation of the implied author deflects the authority function to a character in the text. This deflection gives the reader an illusion of more interpretative freedom than Cross's approach allows. Yet, in final analysis, the interpretative freedom is limited.

Booth treats the narrator as a character in the work. This character has several functions in *Tom Jones*, but the most significant one "relates to nothing but the reader and himself" (216). The narrator's activities have little to do with the narrative proper but provides a sub-plot, the central point of which is "a running account of growing intimacy between the narrator and the reader, a account with a kind of plot of its own and a separate denouement" (216).

The problem with the implied author's separate story line is that "In *Tom Jones*, the 'plot' of our relationship with Fielding-as-narrator has no similarity to the story of Tom" (216). This disparity creates a split focus because "much of what we admire or enjoy in the narrator is in most respects quite different from what we like or enjoy in his hero" (217). The purpose of the sub-plot is to establish the implied author's authority in our reading of the text. Booth states that although readers might question the narrator's moral/ethical status as adjudicator of Tom's and, by extension, their own perception, the importance of the

narrator is to establish a focus to the text. "It is from the narrator's norms that Tom departs when he gets himself into trouble, yet Tom is always in harmony with his most important norms" (217). The narrator then assumes authoritative status in the interpretation of the work. Booth states that the reader's "growing intimacy with Fielding's dramatic version of himself produces a kind of comic analogue of the true believer's reliance on a benign providence in real life' (217).

Booth, unlike Cross, stresses the necessity of submitting to the authority of the implied author. Failure to do so denies Fielding full creative range because Fielding "is not trying to write for any other world, but for this one he strikes the precise medium between too much and too little piety, benevolence, learning, and worldly wisdom" (218). Only by submission to the textual authority of the implied author can the reader avoid the expressionistic fallacy of maintaining that the work means what he wishes it to mean. For Booth, unlike Cross, the implied author, or narrator, of *Tom Jones* is an integral part of the full novel experience, and in order to fully understand the work the reader must accept the authority of the implied author. The significant difference between the positions of Booth and Cross lies in the perception of the narrator. For Cross the narrator and Henry Fielding are identical; for Booth the narrator is a fiction created by Fielding, an abstraction of a man who has lived "a life enriched by a vast knowledge of literary culture and of a mind of great creative power" (217).

Booth's position is modified significantly in the 1971 work by Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader*. Iser's implied reader, however, functions somewhat differently than Booth's does. Iser has the actual reader in mind, and implied in his use of the word should be read in the sense of 'implicated.' Iser gives the reader equal status with the narrator in deriving the meaning of the text. The reader comes to the text with established historical and social norms in place; however, the knowledge the reader brings to the text functions to call into existence its opposite. For Iser this fundamental of structuralist thinking charges the reading experience and "impels the reader to seek a positive counterbalance elsewhere than in the world immediately familiar to him" (xii). Readers must engage the text and "are then forced to take an active part in the

composition of the novel's meaning, which revolves around a basic divergence from the familiar" (xii).

By filling in the gap between known and proposed realities the reader is led to discovery. Iser says, "The reader discovers the meaning of the text, . . . he discovers a new reality through a fiction which, at least in part, is different from the world he himself is used to; and he discovers the deficiencies inherent in prevalent norms and in his own restricted behavior" (xiii). The reader and the writer cooperate in the generation of meaning, which indicates that the reader and the implied author share responsibility and authority for the text's meaning.

The emphasis upon shared responsibility highlights Iser's objection to Booth's rhetorical approach. Rather than a passive entity waiting to be transformed into what the author wishes, Iser conceives of the reader as an active agent. He argues that "this transformation of the reader into the image created by the author does not take place through rhetoric alone. The reader has to be stimulated into certain activities, which may be guided by rhetorical signposts, but which lead to a process that is not merely rhetorical. Rhetoric, if it is to be successful, needs a clearly formulated purpose, but the 'new providence of writing' that Fielding is trying to open up to his readers is in the nature of a promise, and it can only rouse the expectations necessary for its efficacy if it is not set out in words. The reader must be made to feel for himself the new meaning of the novel. To do this he must actively participate in bringing out the meaning and this participation is an essential precondition for communication between the author and the reader. Rhetoric, then, may be a guiding influence to help the reader produce the meaning of the text, but his participation is something that goes far beyond the scope of this influence" (30).

The narrator in *Tom Jones* functions for Iser as a mediator between the reader and the text establishing both the fictional boundaries and the social realities necessary for meaning. This establishment limits the knowledge that the reader might produce. The reader, although free to produce meaning, depends on the implied author to initiate the process. Iser points out the reader's awareness of this dependence by stating that "the need for discernment stimulates a process of learning in the course of which one's own sense of judgment may come under

scrutiny" (31). It is this gap that cannot be expressed in the text that becomes the focus of critical inquiry.

By focusing on this gap the reader is led to "see himself as he really is, and so the role that he is to play in uncovering the hidden reality of the text will lead ultimately to his uncovering and correcting the hidden reality of himself" (36). The reader must acknowledge the narrator's authority. In the production of meaning, both textual and personal, the narrator, by the use of rhetorical strategy steers the reader to an acceptable reading of the text. Consequently, the narrator remains the final authority even though the reader has actively rather than passively aided in the uncovering of meaning.

Iser reveals the traditional bias of his modern sounding methodology by saying, "Since it is the reader who produces the configurative meaning of the novel, certain controls are essential to prevent his subjectivity from playing too dominant a part. This is the function of the author-reader dialogue..." (46). This dialogue functions to establish the norm for the novel, or as Iser says it gives the reader "a framework for his realization of the text..." (47). The narrator gains control of the reader by specifying the pairs that establish the contrast the reader will use to generate meaning. This control of the primary object of contemplation ensures "that the text will be understood in the way the author intended it to be" (48).

In Iser's presentation of the relationship between the narrator and the reader of *Tom Jones*, the reader has freedom to generate meaning; however, this freedom is limited by what the narrator allows the reader to contemplate and by repeated calls to discernment. In this interaction, the reader acknowledges a standard other than his own even though he provides the social, economic, political, historical, aesthetic and other materials necessary to imaginatively charge the novel; it is finally the narrator's standards which check and limit interpretation. For Iser as for Booth the implied author dictates the moral/ethical norm in the work and establishes the validity of the reader's response.

Compared with Cross and Booth, Iser offers the reader a greater freedom in his relationship with the narrator yet not complete freedom. Iser sees the meaning of the text resulting from an interaction of intelligences, yet, in order to avoid critical chaos, he allows the narrator

dominance in the relationship. This dominance and how it is achieved is the subject of Eric Rothstein's "Virtues of Authority in *Tom Jones*" which came out in 1987.

Rothstein claims that Fielding consciously takes all of the authority in the text to himself. Rothstein sees within *Tom Jones* a conscious plan by which Fielding undercuts the authority of his patron in the dedication, then usurps the authority of Allworthy in the text, the authority of other generic forms, and finally the authority of the reader to evaluate the work.

In the first instance, Rothstein sees the dedication as a clever ploy on Fielding's part to enhance himself, by "complementing his patron Lyttelton . . . Fielding . . . compliments himself, for whom but the worthy would a patrician of high moral quality and aesthetic judgment egg on, support and praise" (100)? Rothstein continues that "the manner of giving provides both Lyttelton and Fielding with not only each other's praise but also the guise of not needing anybody's praise (because each is inherently a man of merit, as the praise from the other man confirms)" (101). As a result "Fielding admits his patron's superiority and yet emerges his patron's essential equal, thus raising his own authority" (101).

Fielding employs the same strategy in the presentation of Allworthy. He "allowed Lyttelton superiority in a way that in fact makes him Lyllelton's equal, he implies Allworthy's equality in a way that in fact makes Allworthy his inferior" (102). Fielding's method of deflation is to present Allworthy as a man filled with good intentions but who "repeatedly violates the law and its principles" (103). Most readers recognize Allworthy's blindness to the true circumstance of every decision he makes, but Rothstein presents a strong case that Allworthy totally fails as an authority figure in the private as well as the social sphere. "If Allworthy's gullibility compromises others, his parental function is compromised by his repeated difficulty in understanding the rules and logic of evidence, reasonable doubt, presumption of innocence and legal procedures when acting officially as a magistrate. Before the climatic exile of Blifil, he makes negative judgments every single time for the wrong reasons, solemnly put forth and socially justified" (105). But according to Rothstein's reading, this has "less to do with

Allworthy's merits than with his relation to Fielding as a figure of benign authority" (105). The narrator, by never criticizing the benevolent center of the work "establishes his own benevolence by going the benevolent man one better" (106).

Rothstein argues that in displacing textual authority and replacing it with the authority of his narrator, Fielding is on tenuous moral ground. He asks, "What is one to say . . . about the freedom of the reader in a book that trains us to employ certain modes of reading--irony and analogy--which are designed to lead us into error as well as knowledge." Rothstein presents Fielding as a manipulator who shares only certain knowledge with the reader while withholding pertinent facts; who gives the reader privileged status and allows the reader to believe he knows the world as well as the narrator only to reveal that the reader is not so clever or so knowledgeable as Fielding is. "Fielding thus secretly exploits the interpretative smugness he prompts in us as first-time readers" (110).

Not only does this technique work on first-time readers, it works equally well on more sophisticated readers who have more knowledge of human nature, but who do not share with Fielding the laws and knowledge of the novel. Rothstein argues that such "readers . . . end up . . . misled when they try to share in the authority that the laws of the novel--the regularities that underline analogy, irony, and tone--make them think they can share" (111). Such readers are fooled, Fielding always remains in control. "*Tom Jones* gives the reader less actual freedom of interpretation and moral stance than any other major eighteenth-century novel because of its narrator's power of grouping and exclusion is the most compelling of any" (112). By undercutting other ideas, the moral imperative of prudence, the authority of the genres, Fielding becomes the only authority (power) in the world of *Tom Jones*.

Fielding, according to Rothstein's reading, is a power monger cleverly extorting the reader's adoration and subservience. The question Rothstein does not answer is why? An answer is suggested not so much in literature and critical theory as in the current ideological climate that informs post-modern thinking.

Rothstein's article is very persuasive, yet it seems to suffer, finally, from a post-modern bias that questions and rejects all forms of authority, even that of the author over his text. Rothstein's concern is the reader, but not just any reader. He is writing for the modern reader who shares his ideological perspective. This perspective differs substantially from that of traditional readers, but as David Kolb has pointed out the central ideological tension in contemporary society is between authority and freedom. Cross, Booth, and Iser finally reveal themselves to be traditionalist. Rothstein's reader is a seeker after freedom, one who shuns all substantive traditional values. This reader is presented as a "distanced self formally defined in terms of its power to choose" (xii). This modern reader has shed "the substantive limitations imposed by traditional values and ways of life" (xii). Submission to authority, either textual or traditional, is a lessening of self "that limit one's access to a wider field of possibilities" (xii). The question of the authority to be given the narrator to adjudicate for the world of *Tom Jones* becomes for the modern reader a choice between traditional limitations, which both Booth and Iser finally accept, or the loss of individual freedom. Unlike readings suggested by Cross, Booth and Iser, for Rothstein's reader, the act of reading is not a goal oriented activity but an a process by which he "makes decisions in a pragmatic way to maximize self-chosen values" (11). Yet, such a position denies the modern reader a view of the whole, no way to grasp the work; Rothstein's reader is left to repeat the process in a never ending dialectic of personal whim and sensory response that takes as a given the unknowability of the text. The dangers of total subjectivity that Booth and Iser carefully guard against in their theoretical constructs are fully realized in Rothstein's usurpation of Fielding's authority.

These four examples of critical reading suggest that the critical enterprise has come full circle: the authority of the author has been displaced by the authority of the reader/critic. But, possibly the problem is not what Rothstein and other modernist readers would suggest. The central critical issue might not be a matter of authority versus freedom but in developing in each reader the capabilities for finding and developing a multiplicity of responses that will accept the author's authority as well as the reader's right to freely accept or reject that authority

depending upon individual needs. In this respect, perhaps Fielding has the final comment:

> "Now in Reality, the World have paid too great a Compliment to Critics, and have imagined them Men of much greater Profundity than they really are. From this Complaisance, the Critics have emboldened to assume a Dictatorial Power, and have so far succeeded that they are now become the Masters, and have the Assurance to give Laws to those Authors, from whose Predecessors they originally received them.
>
> The Critic, rightly considered, is no more than the Clerk, whose Office it is to transcribe the Rules and Laws laid down by those great Judges, whose vast Strength of Genius hath placed them in the Light of Legislators in the several Sciences over which they presided. This Office was all which the Critics of old aspired to, nor did they ever dare to advance a Sentence, without supporting it by the Authority of the Judge from whence it was borrowed" (210-11).

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The Rape of the Lock as Aesthetic Satire

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Clarissa's role in *The Rape of the Lock* continues to puzzle the readers of the poem. Her moralizing speech in Canto V is too pat, and as a moralist she is too compromised by her aid of the Baron in Canto III. If her speech is indeed the "moral" of the poem, as many have assumed the Pope/Warburton note indicates, why is it put in the mouth of such an unacceptable speaker? How can a character like Clarissa, so rightly identified by John Trimble as a prude (677), pass judgment on Belinda, a coquette whom she can by no means be superior to? And why should the true seer, the moralist, disappear from the poem while the benighted offender triumphs in the eternal heavens as her lock becomes a star?

Part of the problem with Clarissa and her moral has been a too ready acceptance of the virtue of the woman and the rightness of her speech. Trimble's recent article has corrected the former, but the latter has remained unassailed. Who, after all, could believe that Pope does not believe in good sense and good humor? Thus G. S. Rousseau can write that Clarissa's speech contains "the fixed norm of the poem" and "is, within its limits, unanswerable" (10).

But the speech is indeed "answerable." And though Pope certainly does value good humor and good sense, he very much disbelieves that "sense" has validity in the context Clarissa gives it. The only sense in which the speech of this discredited moralist, this prude, clarifies the moral of *The Rape of the Lock* is in its providing a failure at the other extreme from Belinda's, a failure perhaps worse than Belinda's because it is the product of conscious guile rather than unconscious want, of commission rather than omission. Clarissa's speech is just as wrong as Belinda's actions.

To understand the failure of Clarissa's moral, the reader must understand *The Rape of the Lock* for the kind of satire it is. Certainly Pope makes fun of the *beau monde* and all its false values, but the poem is not principally social satire. The poem focuses not on society but on Belinda. And Belinda's chief quality is her beauty: her name itself

combines the French "belle" and the Spanish "linda," both, of course, meaning "beautiful," and Pope brings home the point by referring to her as a "Belle" twice within the first ten lines of the poem. As it focuses on Belinda, then, and follows her actions, the poem is chiefly aesthetic satire, dealing with a failure of beauty. Thus, it is that Tillotson cites "human beauty" as one of the chief interests of the poem (86).

Understood as aesthetic satire, *The Rape of the Lock* is best read in the context of Pope's other aesthetic statements, most notably *An Essay on Criticism* and the *Moral Essays*, Epistles III and IV. Tillotson, of course, treats both *The Rape of the Lock* and "To Burlington" in his chapter on aesthetics, but he does not suggest what light *An Essay on Criticism*, "To Bathurst," and "To Burlington" shed on *The Rape*. That light is considerable.

An Essay on Criticism and "To Burlington" lay out a unified aesthetic principle central to understanding *The Rape of the Lock* as a whole and Clarissa's speech in particular. That principle is that "beauty" and "sense" exist not separately but as a totality, both in art of the highest sort and in the wholeness of nature. Error exists in separating the whole to exalt either "beauty" or "sense" without the other. Pope is most explicit about this point in *An Essay on Criticism*. The second part of the poem is most entirely given to the error of exalting beauty without reference to sense. The error arises when "Pride . . . fills up the mighty Void of Sense" (Butt 209-210). Thus it is that poets and critics alike can confuse the parts with the whole, confining their taste to conceits alone or language alone or numbers alone. Such confinement is, Pope writes, like preferring jewels to "naked Nature," and he counters with the assertion that art should be founded on sense, that it express "What oft was Thought," that it be the "Fruit of Sense," that it stand as "the Dress of thought." Pope insists that beauty cannot exist apart from sense.

Pope's figures of speech are telling in this section. He repeatedly compares beauty without sense to gaudy dress and ornament without substantial human beings beneath. Poets who create such so-called "art," he writes, are like unskilled painters who "With Gold and Jewels cover ev'ry Part, / And hide with Ornaments their Want of Art" (295-296). Their work is "like a clown in regal Purple drest" (321), and those who admire and such absurdities are like those who "value books, as Women

Men, for Dress" (306). These figures of speech are strikingly like those used in *The Rape of the Lock*, where they apply to Belinda and get at her kind of failure. The language is most explicit in Ariel's early description of the coquette without sense (i.e., with a "vacant Brain"). It is "garters, stars and coronets" that attract the maid, and it is Wig with Wig and Swordknot with Swordknot that strive for her attention. Belinda's concern for her own exterior is well known, from her great toilet scene to her ironic wish that "Hairs less in sight," apparently no matter where they might be, had been the object of the Baron's desire.

Belinda of the vacant Brain has attempted to be beautiful without being sensible, and so she fails. She fails when she does not listen to her warning, when she exaggerates her triumph at Ombre, when she overacts to the loss of the lock. Her failure is surely the failure of the greatest part of her world; it is the failure of the statesmen who doom the fall of tyrants and nymphs in a single breath, the failure of queens who mix tea and counsel, the failure of the Baron who prizes the lock more highly than the nymph, the failure of all of those who confuse Bibles and *billet-doux* and equate husbands and lap dogs.

"To Burlington" concerns the same failure. The aesthetic principle remains the same: beauty and sense must be one, for "Splendor borrows all her rays from Sense" (180). Timon's Villa tries for splendor without sense, and Timon's results are little better than Belinda's. Exaggeration and ironic juxtaposition are once more the hallmarks:

> Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught
> As brings all Brobdingnag before your thought.
> To compass this, his building is a town,
> His pond an Ocean, his parterre a Down:
> Who but must laugh, the Master when he sees,
> A puny insect, shiv'ring in the breeze!
> Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around!
> The whole, a labour'd Quarry above ground. (103-110)

This particular aesthetic failure, reaching for a kind of beauty empty of sense, gets the greatest part of Pope's attention. Certainly the whole of "To Burlington" is given to it, as is the preponderance of *The Rape of*

the Lock and at least half of *An Essay on Criticism*. But this is not the only aesthetic failure that concerns Pope, and it certainly is not the only way to violate the unity of beauty and sense Pope considers so important. If it is possible to separate the two in the attempt to exalt beauty, it is just as possible to separate them in order to exalt sense, and such false promotion of sense devoid of beauty is as great a violation of Pope's principle as its opposite. It is precisely this failure that Pope deals with in the first part of *An Essay on Criticism* and in "To Bathurst," and it is this same failure that permeates Clarissa's problematic speech.

In the first part of *An Essay on Criticism* (to l. 200), when Pope considers the relation of Nature, the Ancients, and the Rules to literary criticism, his chief point is that the art of the Ancients, to which Nature contributed and from which the Rules are drawn, was an aesthetic whole, and that ancient criticism maintained that whole:

> The gen'rous Critick fann's the Poet's Fire,
> And taught the World, with Reason to Admire. (99-100)

Admiration with reason suggests Pope's principle of unity, admiration responding to a work's beauty, reason to its sense. All the failures Pope points to in this section result from too much "learning," an exaltation of the rules separated from beauty. Out of context, separated from the beauty that arouses admiration, learning bears no more relation to real sense than does the grandeur of Timon's Villa to beauty. Critics who cannot work with the whole, Pope writes, "leave the sense, their Learning to display" (116) and therefore deface real sense with their "false Learning" (25).

"To Bathurst" repeats the lesson: what is needed is a whole, "The Sense to value Riches, with the Art / T'enjoy them" (219-220). What a Miser like Old Cotta has is "Sense to value Riches" separated from the whole. The result is a life as dull as pedants' work and a house as poor and dark as Timon's Villa is grandiose:

> Like some lone Chartreux stands the good old Hall,
> Silence without, and Fasts within the wall;
> No rafter'd roofs with dance and tabor sound,

No noon-tide bell invites the country round;
Tenants with sighs the smoakless tow'rs survey,
And turn th'unwilling steeds another way:
Benighted wanderers, the forest o'er,
Curse the sav'd candle, and unop'ning door;
While the gaunt mastiff growling at the gate,
Affrights the beggar whom he longs to eat. (189-198)

Clarissa's notion of good sense, it must follow, is no more in itself the moral of *The Rape of the Lock* than is Cotta's good old Hall the corrective to Timon's Villa. Clarissa falls short because she makes the same mistake that rule-bound critics and old Cotta make, seeing "sense" as something set apart from beauty and somehow superior to it. The focal point of her argument is that since "frail Beauty must decay" it therefore must be rejected in favor of "Merit." Yet Pope's aesthetic suggests that the beauty/sense whole is anything but "frail" and transient, that it is precisely what *does* endure. It is because they maintain this whole, for instance, that the ancients still make their impact, according to *An Essay on Criticism*. If Belinda has been wrong unwittingly to separate her beauty from the sense that ought to pervade it, how much more wrong is Clarissa wittingly to insist on that same separation to win the esteem due sense or, as Trimble writes, to seek ascendancy "through her reputation for rectitude and formidable gravity of manner" (680).

This is not to say that Clarissa does not put a good face on it. As she begins her speech, she almost suggests the necessary unity:

How vain are all these Glories, all our Pains,
Unless good Sense preserve what Beauty gains:
That men may say, when we the Front-box grace:
Behold the first in virtue, as in Face! (15-18)

But even here is the notion of separation, the very notion that Beauty can exist apart from sense, the mistaken notion of the *beau monde* that the poem has already exposed. Pope's explicit aesthetic statements in *An Essay on Criticism* and the *Moral Essays* do not admit true beauty to

be a property of a face without virtue, or Beauty to be an agent that can "gain" a prize it later must resign to "Sense." Even here, then, Clarissa's grave moral is merely capitalizing on her world's weakness. Instead of having Clarissa state the principle elsewhere insisted on, Pope has her deliver a speech that is not just an aesthetic failure but an aesthetic falsehood. The speech is able "to open more clearly the Moral of the Poem," in the words of the Pope/Warburton footnote, because it completes the satire, embodying the most cunning version of the unnatural division of sense and beauty.

It is not remarkable that a poet, especially Pope, should see life in aesthetic terms. That an individual's life ought to have the unity and proportion of a work of art is a notion even non-artists easily understand. It is a little remarkable that, when division occurs, Pope seems to prefer the tinseled charm of Belinda. *An Essay on Criticism* provides a possible explanation. If Belinda's charms are unfixed and exist apart from sense, at least they are proportioned to the world she inhabits. Her faults fit its faults. Perhaps as he considered Belinda's charm, Pope thought of the lines he had written only a few years before:

> Some Figures monstrous and mis-shap'd appear,
> Consider'd singly, or beheld too near,
> Which, but proportion'd to their Light, or Place,
> Due Distance reconcile to Form and Grace. (1971-1974)

If *The Rape of the Lock* is applying an aesthetic principle to life, if the aesthetic principle is that of *An Essay on Criticism* and the *Moral Essays*, and if violation of this aesthetic principle on either extreme is unacceptable, then Clarissa's speech is not the moral of the poem. Instead, it completes its satire.

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"Something Drastic": Industrial Fiction and the Prosperity of Dickens' *Household Words*

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In 1850 Charles Dickens, in mid-career and searching for additional public outlets for his boundless energy, founded the weekly periodical *Household Words* and named himself editor. Initially a highly successful venture, the magazine began to fail several years after its inception, and Dickens' efforts to save it constitute a chapter in Victorian literary history that compels scrutiny. The most nagging question emerging from this episode is whether or not it supports the contention of many critics that Dickens was more concerned with pleasing his public than with waging moral war. Is it true, as Stanley Cooperman insists, that Dickens' crusade against social ills--of which *Household Words* was a noteworthy part--presented "no challenge to middle class sensibility," but merely reflected popular feeling, "serialized, or at so many shillings per volume" (156)? I suggest that this view exaggerates Dickens' opportunism; in my paper I will attempt to demonstrate that his handling of the crisis of *Household Words* required a stretching of his inner resources to the breaking point--moral indignation tugging against diplomacy, control struggling with permissiveness, idealism contending with expediency--without ever seriously impugning his moral integrity.

As conceived by Dickens, *Household Words* would be, in Edgar Johnson's words, "entertaining, and at the same time the instrument of serious social purpose . . . . [I]t should range over past and present, and over every nation, with an eye sharp for what was wrong and a heart warm for what was right. It should fight for tolerance and the progress of human welfare . . ." (II 703). Yet, even though the aims of the periodical were essentially those of radical reform, it would not offer only polemics; rather, it would (according to Dickens' statement in the opening number) "cherish that light of fancy which is inherent in the

human breast." It would, in short, follow the time-honored formula of social reform made palatable by "the graces of imagination" (II 703).

Before publication began, Dickens gathered facts for a series of articles on such topics of sanitary reform as garbage disposal, water supply, and lack of good air in the slums. In addition, before the first number appeared, he invited several authors to submit a kind of fiction which would call attention to social abuses. Among these prospective contributors was Elizabeth Gaskell, whose work Dickens considered "a feminine and domesticated version of his own" (Kaplan 266). He wrote to Gaskell on 31 January 1850: "I do honestly know that there is no living English writer whose aid I would desire to enlist in preference to the authoress of *Mary Barton* (a book that most profoundly affected and impressed me). I venture to ask you whether you can give me any hope that you will write a short tale, or any number of tales, for the projected pages [of *Household Words*]" (*Letters*, ed. Dickens and Hogarth I 250).

Gaskell responded to Dickens' invitation by submitting a story, "Lizzie Leigh," which was serialized in three parts, beginning with the first number of *Household Words*, March 30, 1850 (Kaplan 265). In the same number were, among other items by various hands, a parable in verse urging religious tolerance and an article supporting a society to aid emigration of the poor to Australia. Afterwards "Hardly a week goes by in which [*Household Words*] is not attacking some abuse" in articles so original and powerful as to be "epoch-making." The most characteristic feature of the periodical--"its treatment of current problems"--was thus immediately established, and Gaskell was enlisted as a charter contributor (Johnson II 704-05, 714).

Success for the magazine was immediate: the first number sold a hundred thousand copies (Johnson II 706). And Dickens kept close tabs, striving to sustain the initial circulation, using his abilities as "an avid, even merciless editor of other people's prose" (Kaplan 267) to forestall any decline in readers' interest. Sensing trouble ahead, he warns sub-editor William Henry Wills that certain numbers "lapse too much into a dreary, arithmetical . . . dustiness that is powerfully depressing," and calls upon Wills to "Brighten it, brighten it, brighten it!" (Johnson II 712). Owing primarily to the assiduous watchfulness and boundless

energy of its editor, *Household Words* "had a huge and steadily growing audience"; and all the while the periodical maintained its initial editorial policy: "an uncompromising humanitarian social radicalism in almost every field . . . social, political, and economic" (Johnson II 717).

But in the fourth year an alarming decline in circulation began: "It was slipping badly," Johnson says; and, if *Household Words* was to be rescued, "something drastic would have to be done" (II 792). That drastic something would be the inclusion in the periodical of two works of so-called "industrial fiction," published back to back: one by Dickens himself and one by Elizabeth Gaskell. Both of the novels--Dickens' *Hard Times* and Gaskell's *North and South*--were inspired by and to varying degrees based on the recent strike in the textile-manufacturing town of Preston. Both were industrial novels in that they highlighted current labor-management problems in the factories and suggested solutions. Both accorded well with the magazine's editorial policy of advocating reform while providing entertainment; and, based on the records of the two writers, the novels should have provided the necessary shot in the arm for the ailing publication. But the attempt was only partially successful: the genius of Dickens as author gave the magazine a new lease on life, as the serialization of *Hard Times* boosted its circulation dramatically; but the lesser genius of Gaskell, abetted by her inexperience in writing for serial publication, headed the periodical into an irreversible relapse. And, even though *Household Words* did not immediately fail under the weight of her novel (in fact it lasted several more years), its popularity suffered a severe decline. A closer examination of these events, and of Dickens' struggle to manipulate them to the advantage of his periodical, brings out both his editorial strategies and his moral integrity.

The first movement of his rescue campaign--the serial publication of *Hard Times*--was even more effective than anticipated. The appearance of Dickens' most outstanding contribution to industrial fiction had this result: in the first ten weeks after the novel began to come out in April, 1854, the circulation of *Household Words* doubled; before the end of its run, sales had increased more than fourfold, perhaps by as many as five times. Some of the more conservative readers of the periodical were troubled by the perceived radicalism of the social

reforms advocated in the novel; yet Dickens insisted--and posterity agrees--that the story did not produce discord but, rather, led toward a better understanding between workers and management (Johnson II 797). Judging from sales, readers seem to have been far more pleased than offended, and *Household Words* was once again on track.

But such prosperity was not to last. Dickens, as we have seen, owned himself "profoundly affected and impressed" by Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), arguably the best industrial novel of the Victorian age. In this work, which had been published in volume form rather than serially, the author presents with admirable insight and sympathy the historical clash between masters and laborers in her city of residence, Manchester, and the atrocious living and working conditions of these laborers and their families. Thus, Gaskell's credentials commended her to Dickens as he sought to sustain the prosperity of *Household Words* while maintaining his editorial policy of social reform.

Accepting Dickens' invitation, Gaskell corresponded with him regularly about the proposed new novel. She had been moved and disturbed by the strike at Preston and was already contemplating a work based on the incident. Dickens, excited by the possibilities of running a theme-and-variations in his magazine, avidly encouraged her. He allayed her expressed fears of duplication: as she is writing her novel--entitled at Dickens' suggestion *North and South*--and at the same time reading *Hard Times* as it appears serially, it occurs to her that both novels will depict, in perhaps overlapping detail, the workmen's strike. Dickens responds: "I have no intention of striking [depicting a strike]. The monstrous claims at domination made by a certain class of manufactures, and the extent to which the way is made easy for working men to slide down into discontent under such hands, are within my scheme; but I am not going to strike, so don't be afraid of me" (*Letters*, ed. Dickens and Hogarth I 415). In other letters regarding *North and South*, Dickens expresses absolute confidence in her ability to please him and the public, assuring her on one occasion that her truth and earnestness guarantee that her writing can never "go wrong" (Kaplan 266-67).

But, in spite of the editor's assurances, *North and South* does begin to go wrong. Dickens, who had encouraged Gaskell not to trouble

herself with dividing the story into parts since he would decide where to place the breaks, now has second thoughts about this arrangement. To sub-editor Wills he writes that if he had known how much "needless trouble and bewilderment" Gaskell's novel would cause, "I could not, in my senses, have accepted the story." During the run of the novel, he writes to Wills that something lively is needed to offset it, because "Mrs. Gaskell is conceited and heavy" (Johnson II 823). In letters to the author herself he has difficulty containing his vexation: regarding one segment, he writes, "This is the place where we agreed there should be a great condensation and a considerable compression." But the proof she has returned is "*unaltered by you*" (italics Dickens'). He concludes his admonition acidly: "What I would recommend--and did recommend--is to make the scene . . . as short as you can find it in your heart to make it" (*Letters*, ed. Paroissien 323).

Gaskell's frustration with the demands of serialization was evident from the beginning, but for a time she agreed to editorial revisions. In a letter to Dickens (17 December 1854), anticipating his objections to the enclosed pages, she writes: "I have tried to shorten & compress it, both because it was a dull piece, & to get it into reasonable length, but there were [sic] a whole catalogue of events to be got over. . . ." But she concludes by giving Dickens leave to "shorten it as you think best for H W" (Gaskell, *Letters*, 323).

Eventually Gaskell grew resistant to editorial changes, finally stipulating that not even Dickens was to alter her proofs (Kaplan 335). Without the unerring eye and merciless hand of the editor, segments of *North and South* dragged woodenly or sprawled beyond the confines of weekly numbers. And *Household Words* suffered: long before Gaskell's novel ended its run, the readers gained by Dickens' *Hard Times* had been lost (Johnson II 823). Dickens himself said, in a letter to Wills, "I am sorry to hear of the Sale dropping, but I am not surprised. Mrs. Gaskell's story, so divided, is wearisome in the last degree" (II 823). Division for serial publication had become second nature to Dickens, so accustomed was he by this time to serialization; naturally, he was disappointed at Gaskell's failure in this regard--and, as we have seen, he soon made her aware of his opinion. Her preface to the subsequent two-

volume integral edition of the novel reads as a somewhat petulant *apologia*, directed not only to her readers but to Dickens as well:

> On its first appearance in *Household Words*, this tale was obliged to conform to the conditions imposed by the requirements of a weekly publication, and likewise to confine itself within certain advertised limits, in order that faith might be kept with the public. Although these conditions were made as light as they well could be, the author found it impossible to develop the story in the manner originally intended, and, more especially, was compelled to hurry on events with an improbable reality towards the close. In some degree to remedy this obvious Defect, various short passages have been inserted and several new chapters added (*North and South*, xxvii).

Coming at a later date, these insertions serve only to highlight the unsuitability of the novel to its initial serial publication. On several latter occasions, Gaskell was invited by other magazine editors to submit pieces, but each time she declined in words such as these (to an unknown correspondent): ". . . half a dozen papers in H. W. are all I ever wrote for any periodical as I dislike and disapprove of such writing for myself as a general thing . . . ." (*Letters* 699).

Yet Dickens had faith that Gaskell's novel would attract and hold the readers of *Household Words* that his own *Hard Times* had regained. His enthusiasm for the social ideas of *North and South*--so like those of his own *Hard Times*, as Geoffrey Carnall points out, with Gaskell perhaps superior in realism and maturity (Carnall 47-48)--led him to overlook the potential dangers of her inexperience in serialized fiction. Her sensitive, thoughtful depiction of the victims of laissez-faire economics would distinctly advance the editorial policy of *Household Words*--and this, it seems, was sufficient cause. The decision to accept *North and South* for publication was made on principle: the choice had a moral foundation. Dickens chose to ignore or at least play down the significance of expertise in handling magazine serialization; he accepted Gaskell's novel on the grounds of the rightness of her known sociopoliti-

cal ideas. Only later, when the problems of shape and pacing emerged, affecting circulation and threatening financial ruin, did the expedient side of Dickens question his judgment. Practically speaking, perhaps it would have been better to make what the modern corporate executive calls the "hard decision": that is, the one that sacrifices principle for the sake of financial exigency.

The essentially formal and technical criticisms addressed to Wills and to Gaskell herself, such as those cited above, are all the evidence we have that Dickens regretted his decision to publish *North and South* in his weekly periodical. We do know that, even though he accepted several more of her shorter pieces, never again did he publish one of her novels.

None of all this, I submit, calls into question the depth of Dickens' commitment to the cause of social reform. What it displays, I believe, is a dedicated, professional author and editor caught on the horns of a dilemma: to Gaskell's fictional responses to the "condition of England question," he was entirely sympathetic; but as practical, responsible man of business, he was understandably vexed with Gaskell's performance. His letter to her at the conclusion of the novel's run reflects his mixed feelings; it seems as much a sigh of relief as a note of felicitation: "Let me congratulate you on the conclusion of your story; not because it is the end of a task to which you had conceived a dislike. . . , but because it is the vigorous and powerful accomplishment of an anxious labor" (*Letters*, ed. Dickens and Hogarth I 446-47).

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thus, the poet is unable to maintain the objective stance implicit in his having adopted the pastoral mode. His lament becomes one for himself and for all those who "tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade" and leads him to question the validity of the poetic practice itself. The resolution of these questions through his re-interpreting the function of poetry and, therefore, the demands of his own poetic vocation constitutes the essential subject of his song. Therefore, Milton appropriately concludes his poem not with Lycidas but with the elegiac speaker himself, who, having successfully resolved his doubts, is not ready for "fresh woods and pastures new." Indeed, the poet's ultimate consolation amidst the reality of Lycidas' death is inseparable from his renewed faith in poetry's ability to triumph over alien, time-bound existence.

The basic movement of the poem dramatizes, therefore, a conflict between the objective, impersonal stance of the elegiac poet, derived from a relatively fixed aesthetic mode, and the deep-felt inadequacies of such response before the very real and disruptive intrusions of the actual world. Ironically, his increased awareness of the corruption and indifference of the world implicit in Lycidas' death will be revealed through his demonstrating the ineffectiveness of the very conventions--and of the pagan ethos they embody--through which he has attempted to defend himself against such hostile reality. That Milton's use of pastoral conventions is anything but ineffective, however, indicates that his elegiac speaker does not repudiate such conventions, per se; rather, in the process of maturing, the elegist employs these conventions to prefigure a moral vision which incorporates both them and the world of actual experience with which they have been opposed.

Thus, my discussion will deal with two basic questions. First, how does Milton reveal the ineffectiveness of the purely pastoral mode, given its apparently naturalistic ethos, to cope with reality, to offer genuine consolation in the face of death? Second, how does he reinterpret such conventions so as to suggest his ultimate moral vision? In considering these issues, I will confine myself, primarily, to the opening movement of the poem.

The structure of "Lycidas" describes, it seems, not so much a steady development as a spiraling motion which, though its general direction

is upwards towards peace and renewed motivation, is characterized by periodic descents into uncertainty and doubt, as represented by returns to the pastoral mode. Hence, the opening movement, climaxing with Phoebus' speech, serves as a microcosm of the whole, the subsequent movements tending to re-enact the swain's transition from innocence to enlightened wisdom.

The poet begins with a conventional reference to the plants symbolic of pastoral poetry and with an apology for his plucking their "berries harsh and crude," that is, for his pre-mature and as yet unripened embarking upon a poetic task. Yet, one already detects a dissatisfaction with the conventional mode, a realization that impersonalized aesthetic response may eventually collapse before the insistent demands of reality. His reference to the "forc'd fingers rude" with which he must "shatter" the poetic "leaves" implies a fear that poetry's ideal, inviolable purity ("never sear") may yet be defiled by his very effort to preserve it; further, it anticipates the very real forces of corruption what will increasingly intrude upon his meditation. Moreover, his reference to "the mellowing year" and to "season due" implies an ideal, which, though unrealized in his present unripened state, suggests the possibility of ripeness, of perfected wisdom. The swain's thoughts will dramatize his attaining a maturity of poetic response that will enable him to reconcile the timeless purity of poetry ("never sear") with the "bitter constraint and sad occasion dear" which inevitably "disturb" one's "season due." Indeed, the opening words, "Yet once more," imply both that this is not the first time he has attempted an immature response and also that it hopefully will be his last, that, in consequence of this effort, ripeness will have been attained. Finally, the "melodious tear," the tear of impersonalized poetic lament, anticipates the "sounding seas" which, by forcibly imposing upon the elegist the reality of death, demonstrates the consequent ineffectiveness of that "tear" and hence leads to his ripened vision.[2]

Beginning his pastoral lament, the elegiac speaker first invokes the "Sisters of the sacred well," the Muses of Greek mythology:

> Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well,
> That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
> Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string. (ll. 15-17)

Since the death of Lycidas is felt primarily as a "loss to shepherd's ear," the resulting silence is associated with death, with a disruption of divine harmony and natural song; thus, by invoking the "Sisters," the speaker expresses a hope that the song of the Muses uplifted from the "sacred well" will "spring" forth in restorative music, in healing sound. Inherent in this pastoral convention is the hope that the act of commemoration will itself atone for the death, will restore, however partially, that harmony between man and nature which is implicit in all pastoral song.

Yet, in the initial movement of his poem, the elegiac speaker questions the ethos inherent in the conventions of the pastoral mode and, therefore, the validity of his aesthetic response. The disparity felt between the memory of his former world and the loss, the silence of the present (though both are depicted in the conventional imagery of pastoral verse) leads him to seek an explanation for Lycidas' death from the Nymphs. Perhaps he hopes such questioning will illuminate a moral structure or divine order in nature which might vindicate his own attempt to transmute Lycidas' death into the corresponding order of aesthetic response. Though the appeal to the Nymphs is itself conventional, the sincerity of his feelings disrupts the facade of convention--the pastoral attitude--and leads to the central question of the poem: Of what value is the poetic craft?

Why meditate upon the harmony, the happiness of former days if poetry can provide no assurance of their ultimate restoration? It is of some lost golden age that the elegist evokes his former fellowship with Lycidas and through him with nature at large:

> For we were nurst upon the self-same hill,
> Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.
> Together both, ere the high Lawns appeared
> Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
> We drove afield . . .
> Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
> Oft till the star that rose at Evening, bright
> Toward Heav'n's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
> (ll. 23-31)

The image of the "wheel" suggests the circular completeness and self-contained fulfillment inherent in nature's rhythms which is implicit throughout the passage. The poet recalls the innocence, the delight of some primal state of lost harmony, that oneness of being once experienced through communal brotherhood and sensed intimacy with nature's life. As this vision of lost happiness, of a common tie wedding man to nature is so central to pastoral verse, the elegist recalls further that to the "glad sound" of the "oaten flute" "rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel"--woodland beings who, because they are part human, part animal, signify the shared life that binds together all natural things.

But the disruptions of this idyllic paradise through death, through the stilling of Lycidas' "oaten flute" leads the elegist to doubt the validity of the pastoral vision.[3] Indeed, do the conventions of the pastoral mode imply any spiritual dimension which can assimilate the reality of death and promise an ultimate restoration of paradise lost? In search of such consolation the swain addresses the Nymphs:

> Where were ye Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
> Closed oe'r the head of your loved Lycidas? . . .
> Aye me, I fondly dream!
> Had ye been thee--for what could that have done?
> What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore, . . .
> (ll. 50-58)

J. E. Hardy points out that the Nymphs are not merely deities of field and stream; rather, as the phrase "your old Bards" suggests in reference to the Druids, these Nymphs have poets under their care and "thus are associated with the Muses."[4] Moreover, because the pastoral is a "poetry of wild innocence, close to nature, a part of the music of nature," [5] the Nymphs are its natural guardians and muses.[6] The remembrance of Orpheus's fate, revealing even the impotence of the Muse Calliope, only accentuates the speaker's despair.[7] As Hardy contends, "The point is that all the divine guardians of the classical tradition--from the highest and most remote, the Muse herself, to the lowest and most intimate, the nymphs--appear to be ineffectual" [8]. The speaker realizes that to

believe in their redemptive action is but foolishly or "fondly" to dream; and if wholly impotent, then from a moral perspective such divine agencies are in effect non-existent. The Nymphs do not answer his questions and now nature itself appears stripped of all animating force or divine principle:

> But O! the heavy charge, now thou art gone,
> Now thou art gone, and never must return!
> Thee, Shepherd, thee the Woods and desert Caves,
> With wild Thyme and the gadding Vine o'ergrown,
> And all their echoes mourn.
> The Willows and the Hazel Copses green,
> Shall now no more be seen,
> Fanning their joyous Leaves to thy soft lays.
> As killing as the Canker to the Rose,
> Or Taint-worm to the weanling Herds that graze, . . .
> Such, Lycidas, thy loss to Shepherd's ear. (ll. 37-49)

Though illustrating the conventional lament of Nature for the lost poet-shepherd, the poet qualifies the convention--or deflates it--by implying a loss of the divine harmony or order, even of the heightened life, which perhaps, after all, had only been falsely bestowed upon nature through the poet's song. The "high lawns" have become "woods and desert caves"; there is a suggestion of disharmony implicit in the "wild thyme" and the straying vine; one detects no personifications of nature --the fauns and satyrs have vanished. Further, nature does not actively mourn; instead, as lines 42-44 imply, activity and response have ceased. The "heavy change," though reflected in nature, is perhaps not inherent in nature itself; rather it is a "loss to shepherd's ear," an absence, as D. M. Freedman has suggested, of a "musical sound which once gave order, dancelike pattern to the natural world" [9].

Also, in describing the effect of Lycidas' death upon nature, the poet uses simile rather than metaphor: the loss of the poet's song does not actually kill the "rose" as does the "canker," nor does it kill the "weanling herds" as does the "taint-worm"; but such is its effect upon man's perception of and response to his natural environs. Because his sen-

sitivity to nature is numbed by the loss of poetic song, man feels alienated from nature's life. With Lycidas' voice stilled, nature mourns him but its "echoes" can now "only reverberate silence" [10]. The failure of the Nymphs to respond further suggests a natural world which apparently cannot compensate for the poet's death through songs of its own; this vision of a de-spiritualized universe leads the elegiac speaker to doubt the validity of his own pastoral song.

If the Muses are silent, unable to vindicate Lycidas' death, what good is his own "melodious tear," which, itself, is drawn from the Muses' "sacred well"? If pastoral poetry, given its naturalistic ethos, cannot offer genuine consolation, cannot assimilate death and human frailty within some transcendent spiritual vision, then is not the poet-shepherd's verse no better than that which is "raised from the heat of youth, or the vapors of wine," than that "which flows from the pen of some vulgar amorist."[11] The swain wonders if the moral perspective implicit in pastoral verse is any more ennobling that the "carpe diem":

> Were it not better done as others use,
> To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
> Or with the tangles of Naera's hair? (ll. 67-69)

Further, as "the blind Fury" alone seems to govern nature's actions and man's affairs, is not the very attempt to instill one's poetry with some redeeming moral vision, to "strictly meditate the thankless Muse," only a pretense that results in no special recognition or reward? "The blind Fury" comes to all, even to Lycidas, and with "th' abhorred shears / . . . slits the thin-spun life"; hence, "the blind Fury" presents the poet, as has the naturalistic ethos of his pagan pastoral verse, with a world circumscribed by death, deprived of any transcendent spiritual function.

It is Phoebus who introduces a moral perspective thus far lacking in the speaker's pastoral song and, in attempting to respond to the shepherd-poet's doubt as to the function and validity of his poetic craft, anticipates the more broadened conception of poetry which the speaker will himself ultimately embrace. Phoebus reveals that the moral relevance of poetry is perceived only in the light of eternity, only in the light of God's redeeming grace:

Phoebus repli'd, . . .
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil . . .
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces on each deed,
Of so much fame in Heaven expect thy meed." (ll. 77-83)

Through Phoebus' response, the swain first gains insight into a transcendent dimension of being, an encompassing moral realm which renders the judgments of this world, renders even death itself, irrelevant in the final bestowing of true fame.

Since the poem seems to dramatize the unfolding of the swain's consciousness, one may best see Phoebus' speech (as later that of St. Peter) as an integral part of the swain's own meditative song; as M. H. Abrams has suggested, one may approach such figures as "representing the speaker's own thoughts, objectified for dramatic purposes as standard personae of the pastoral ritual." [12] Yet, as the speaker implies by referring to Phoebus' speech as being of a "higher mood," the knowledge imparted by Phoebus conflicts with the time-bound, sense-bound perspective imposed upon the speaker through his adoption of the pastoral mode. Without rejecting Phoebus' revelation, the speaker chooses for the moment to overlook its potentially Christian implications, chooses to withdraw from a conception of poetry the discovery and acceptance of which alone can resolve his song.[13] Hence, he returns to the pastoral mode.

That the poet does not immediately accept or grasp Phoebus' insight arises perhaps from its disquieting implication that the fame to which all poetry ought to aspire depends not merely upon scorning delights and living "laborious days" but, as the plant image employed by Phoebus suggests, depends also upon an influx of divine grace. For, if fame grows not on "mortal soil," how is mortal man--without aid--to attain it? That the plant of fame, since it flowers "aloft," does suggest the workings of grace has been supported by W. G. Riggs' argument that the plant image is based upon the "conception of being ingrafted in Christ" to which Milton frequently refers, the doctrine that only insofar

as we "are planted in Christ" can we, through God's grace, bring forth fruit worthy of eternal reward.[14]

Yet, the speaker's retreat to the pastoral mode reveals his unreadiness to acknowledge that his previous attempts to objectify, to formalize painful experience through artifice and convention alone are doomed inevitably to fail. That art, to be effective, must embody a moral imperative which, to some degree, transcends the art object itself is implicit in Milton's later statement in "The Reason of Church Government":

> Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not . . . to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. [15]

It is this insight that the elegiac speaker in "Lycidas" finally attains, thus eliciting from him a prayer to Michael, one of the seraphim, to "look homeward, Angel," in effect to aid him in his song. In response, he immediately experiences that grace available to man through Christ, which grace discloses to him Lycidas' ultimate deification.

Yet, such grace, such fame as is implied in Phoebus' speech can be experienced by the speaker only when he realizes the true nature of his "pastoral" vocation, as it will be redefined for him by St. Peter,[16] and with that realization, the inadequacy of a purely naturalistic ethos in reconciling man unto his finite, human limitations. Hence, for the time, Phoebus' speech is ignored; the swain reverts to his pastoral strain.

However, given this interpretation, one may consider Phoebus' reference to the tree of fame a foreshadowing of the ultimate resolution of the poem. Lycidas is not dead, for the fame he has attained through the "dear might of Him that walked the waves" is not subject unto death, has not grown on "mortal soil" but rather "lives and spreads aloft." As

the poet's ultimate vision will reveal to him, Christ is the living "plant" through whom alone the fruit or labor of the "faithful herdsman's art" can blossom forth "aloft" in "other groves." Only by accepting the inadequacy of his own imaginative efforts alone to "interpose a little ease," only by his realizing that Lycidas--and the human frailty implicit in his death--has been "denied" to our "moist vows," is, hence, inaccessible to or unaffected by our "melodious tear" can the poet confront the implications of Phoebus' speech. Such admission, based on his discovery of the "false surmise" implicit in the naturalistic ethos to which his pagan pastoral stance has inevitably confined him, results then in that prayer for divine guidance, that plea for divine grace which functions as the climactic moment of the poem. The response he receives, as previously anticipated in Phoebus' revelation, is a vision of Lycidas' being "transplanted" through Christ unto eternal life; in consequence of this vision, the poet, himself, given his "fresh comprehension of spiritual things,"[17] is renewed in his faith that poetry can indeed embody a moral vision in which death gives way to life.

Footnotes

[1]I Have approached classic pastoral poetry as possessing a naturalistic ethos in that, while pagan deities might indeed abound in pastoral verse, for Milton, of course, they are not objective embodiments of a transcendent spiritual realm; rather, such deities are mythic constructs whose poetic validity lies in their foreshadowing the One Truth, contained in Christian revelation.

[2]Donald Friedman has succinctly pointed out what seems a key technique in Milton's presenting the thoughts of his elegiac speaker and which would account for the omniscient narrative perspective with which the poem concludes: "The dramatic events we witness and hear described are rendered in a language that simultaneously suggests a reinterpretation of those events; the meanings the swain attaches to them are subsumed in larger and truer meanings that reveal themselves to him only as he submits to the apparently random course of his experience.

"Another way to make much the same point is to observe that the voice we hear in the ottava rima coda, the voice that guides us to look back at the swain and to consider what he has said and learned during the recitation of "Lycidas" is in control of the poem's diction from the beginning. He allows us . . . to see more than the swain does, at the same time that we listen to the swain's speech." Friedman, "'Lycidas': The Swain's Paideia," *Milton Studies*, III (1971), p. 8.

[3]Though the paradise of innocent delight and joyful sound lived amidst a responsive nature has been forfeited through the intrusion of death, it yet anticipates that far better paradise unto which Lycidas will be ultimately reborn, as the speaker discovers upon his acknowledging a spiritual dimension beyond both time and sense. The "rural ditties," though not "mute," have become the "unexpressive nuptial song"; the "rough satyrs" and fauns, who danced to the "glad sound" of the "oaten flute," have been succeeded by "all the Saints above / . . . that sing, and singing in their glory move"; and though Lycidas and the elegist no longer are together "by fountain, shade, and rill," yet Lycidas now, through Christ, dwells amidst "other groves, and other streams along."

[4]John Edward Hardy, "Lycidas," *Milton's Lycidas: The Tradition and the Poem*, ed. C. A. Patrides (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1961), p. 140).

[5]Hardy, p. 141.

[6]Hardy states further, in the above essay (p. 140): "If there is any doubt on this point, it is resolved by the very excuse which the speaker supplies for the nymphs they are not to be blamed for failing to protect Lycidas since the 'Muse herself that Orpheus bore' could not protect her son."

[7]Orpheus' fate at the hands of the Bacchic "rout" only further undermines the swain's faith in the poetic craft as it seems to suggest the indifference of man, perhaps even of the gods, at the destruction of the poet. Moreover, his failure to rescue Eurydice, which--though not referred to in the passage--would yet be suggested by the myth itself, might be felt to signify the impotence of the poet-priest in that he was frustrated in his attempt to lead a human soul, through his art, out of the depths of hell. On the other hand, the fact that Orpheus' head reappears among the Lesbians--an aspect of the myth which is suggested

in the Orpheus passage--thereby endowing them with the gift of poetic song, might be seen as pre-figuring Lycidas' own rebirth through Christ, the vision of which constitutes the climactic moment in the poem. For an extended discussion of the Orpheus passage, see Caroline Mayerson, "The Orpheus Image in 'Lycidas,'" *PMLA*, 64 (1949), pp. 189-207.

[8]Hardy, p. 141.

[9]Friedman, p. 10.

[10]Friedman, p. 10.

[11]John Milton, "The Reason of Church Government," in *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957), p. 671.

[12]M. H. Abrams, "Five Types of 'Lycidas,'" in Milton's "Lycidas": *The Tradition and The Poem*, ed. C. A. Patrides (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), p. 222.

[13]Assuming, as this essay does, that the poem constitutes the poet's search for a moral vision, for a conception of poetry which can administer to human frailty and truly console, reference should here be made to Friedman's remark in the above essay (p. 13) that the change of tense in Phoebus' reply breaks the time sequence thus far implicit in the poem and thus "suggests a metal past in which this examination has been carried on previously." This would imply that the poem itself is a reenactment of that emotional struggle, that growth of understanding by means of which the poet embraces finally a conception of poetry transcending the naturalistic ethos of the pagan pastoral mode.

[14]William G. Riggs, "The Plant of Fame in 'Lycidas,'" *Milton Studies*, IV (1972), pp. 151-161.

[15]Milton, "The Reason of Church Government," p. 671.

[16]In Peter's speech the pastoral poet becomes the poet-pastor, who feeds his flock through administering to man's spiritual needs and aspirations. In contrast are the corrupt clergy, "blind mouths," who only feed upon their flock and whose "lean and flashy songs," unlike true poetry, only corrupt and degrade their listeners. Milton (pp. 669-670 in Hughes) has expressed his conviction of the poet's divine function, of his pastoral responsibility most clearly in his "Reason of Church Government":

> These abilities, wheresoever they are found, are the inspired gift of God . . . and are of power beside the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church, to sing the victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ.

[17]This phrase, mentioned by Riggs on p. 154 of the above essay, is quoted from Milton, *The Christian Doctrine* as contained in *The Columbia Edition of Milton's Complete Works*, ed. Frank Patterson, et. al. (New York, 1931-38), XVI, 5.

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