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## four Dimensions of the Isolation

### Theme in Frost's Poetry

Paula Killingsworth

Robert Frost's manipulation of isolation remains a dominant theme throughout his poetry, and it reflects, in part, one common characteristic of the Yankee tradition in his subject matter. The isolation found in many of Frost's poems may also originate in his independence from the outside world. Frost explored the effects of isolation within his personal life and his poetry.

Isolated Frost characters resemble what R. W. B. Lewis calls the American Adam--an independent, self-reliant, and self-motivated individual who faces with his own resources the conflicts inflicted upon him by the outside world.<sup>1</sup> For Frost and other American writers of his day, the isolation theme incorporated the American Adam as a main character. American writers placed their characters in deserted, unfamiliar situations where they were forced to move ahead toward experience and self-knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Frost locates his speakers in the strange regional world of New England, and they grow to know themselves only as they interact with the world around them.

Presenting man's various reactions to isolation allows the poet great flexibility. Some independent characters playfully examine the barriers which they see around them. Other solitary figures find that they are trapped by their loneliness; as a result, they balance precariously between sanity and insanity. A few of Frost's speakers question whether the choice to remain isolated is a productive experience. Still other individuals use their time alone to seek out the redemptive qualities of the imagination. For many of his characters, pain results from these experiences. Frost implies, however, that the pain or pleasure which occurs does not matter because the man separated from society has the opportunity to understand himself, and consequently better to understand the world in which he lives.

North of Boston provides an intriguing multi-dimensional approach to Frost's treatment of isolation. Even the title of the book suggests the outsider's point-of-view. Frost used the regional New England background and the outside observer to create a contrast between the observer and the observed, the isolated and the integrated self.<sup>3</sup> By closely examining three poems taken from North of Boston, "Mending Wall," "A Servant to Servants," and "The Woodpile," and

another important poem written later in Frost's career, "Directive," one discovers a revealing study of Frost's isolation theme. The speakers in each poem become involved in dramatic conflicts which lead them to varying levels of self-discovery.

"Mending Wall" stands first in North of Boston, and it is one of the poems upon which Frost's reputation as a regional writer depends. In addition to introducing the book's isolation theme, the poem presents a humorous and light study of barriers which separate man from his fellow man. Frost playfully explores the sense of isolation which maintains order. By opposing two local New Englanders, the poem establishes a subtle tension between contrasting philosophies. The observer embodies a neighborly, open-minded, independent philosophy toward life while the conventional Yankee believes in isolation, prejudice, and dependence upon old cliches.<sup>4</sup> This opposition is necessary so that Frost can develop the poem's theme. Because some barriers between men exist by choice, this type of isolation provides a desired solitude which is comfortable. Marion Montgomery argues, "It is because of these barriers that we understand each other, and, far from striving to tear them down, Frost insists on recognizing them."<sup>5</sup> The poet even

intimates in this poem that the New Englander's choice to remain isolated should be respected and the barriers which have been erected to ensure this isolation need not be torn down.

The speaker, however, recognizes the uselessness of the stone wall. His apple orchard will not interfere with the stoic Yankee's pine trees. The laconic Yankee's only response to the speaker's teasing remarks is "Good fences make good neighbors." He cares little about the reasons for destroying the wall because he chooses, for the sake of tradition, to maintain his symbol of order. The poem serves as a kind of parable which warns man against imposing his philosophy toward life on another individual.

The speaker is much more aware of the need to communicate with his neighbors than the traditional farmer. Unlike the old New Englander, the speaker cannot be compared to "an old stone savage who moves in darkness" because he realizes the senseless need for the stonewall. Slowly the reader recognizes the humorous irony of this situation. Even though there may be no necessary reason for building the wall which in turn creates the barrier between neighbors, the old-fashioned Yankee still has the right to make his own decisions. For him good fences do make good

neighbors, and this barrier which isolates him from others will remain no matter how foolish it may appear to others.

Perkins argues that Frost uses this type of irony to protect himself from criticism:

It is a means of speaking without affirming or denying, or at least of avoiding full commitment to whatever his words may imply.... As we read his poems, what baffles is how seriously he means what he says and how much more than he merely says he may mean to imply.<sup>6</sup>

"Mending Wall"'s light-hearted theme takes shape through Frost's implied irony. This same playful ironic treatment of isolation appears in several other poems including "The Mountain," "A Hundred Collars," "Pasture," and "Blueberries."

"A Servant to Servants" portrays a far more serious approach to the effects of isolation. Like "Mending Wall," this poem is a kind of parable which teaches the reader a lesson. Just as the wall was a metaphor for separating one man from another man, the mad uncle's room and the servant's mind become metaphors for emotional entrapment. However, the characterization of the neurotic wife and her monologue create an anxious, repressed, despairing mood throughout the poem which clearly differentiates the poet's implied lesson



and thematic development from the presentation of theme in "Mending Wall."

Carefully through the woman's personal account of her life, the poet describes a rural New England female whose lonely existence has sapped her of strength and pulled her into a deeply depressed mental state. She appears confused, and what is worse, she has lost the ability to feel. Early in the poem she states, "It's got so I don't even know for sure whether I am glad, sorry, or anything." Her emotionally deprived life-style has forced her to sustain a death-like existence even though her rational mind tells her she is "all gone wrong." Her husband and boarders ignore her rights as a human being, and she lives in constant fear that she will be sexually assaulted or, like her uncle, locked away in the attic. Living in bondage enslaved to her husband permits her no escape except to the state asylum. Unfortunately for this despairing woman, "confinement breeds insanity; insanity leads to more confinement."<sup>7</sup>

Frost suggests through the servant's painful monologue that, when an individual becomes emotionally and intellectually isolated from the necessary stimulation, a horrifying experience results. Frank Lentricchia believes that in this situation the "mind becomes an indestructible

prison whose ever-expanding boundaries eventually claim the total house of self."<sup>8</sup>

Irony again emphasizes the poignancy of his theme. The servant initially states that "it does seem more human" to keep troubled relatives at home, but then she realizes that "it's not so: the place is the asylum." Because her mad uncle's raving presence troubled her mother and then greatly disturbed her, it is questionable whether it was more human to keep him home. Caring for the uncle at home benefited no one, not even the patient who certainly was unaware of his surroundings. His presence in the house harmed other individuals. It is impossible to determine to what degree the mad uncle's residence affected the servile wife, but all of these implications add to the ironic impact of the phrase "the place is the asylum." Wherever a mad person lives can be described as an asylum or a prison. Mental illness isolates a man from other people and locks him deeply within his own deranged mind. Frost treated this same theme of broken minds which isolate in three other poems: "Home Burial," "The Witch of Coos," and "The Hill Wife."

One of the closing poems taken from North of Boston, "The Woodpile," presents yet another response to man's seclusion. The speaker is not intentionally separated from

another human being nor has he been emotionally or intellectually imprisoned, but he appears as an explorer or an outsider who seems undecided about whether or not he should continue his journey "far from home." Because the narrator is indecisive and subdued about his exploration into the snow-covered New England countryside, the poem produces a subdued, questioning, and an almost apologetic tone.

Frost's self-conscious narrator in "The Woodpile" reminds the reader of the fearful bird "like one who takes everything said as personal to himself." For the explorer nature exists as a separate entity distanced from him. The trees do not mark his location, and the bird distrusts the explorer's movements by keeping a tree between them when he lights on a limb. The images of the frozen swamp, the hard snow, and nature's unfriendly response surround the outsider. The deserted woods offer him no solace and, in fact, seem to create a barrier between not only man and nature, but also between the man and his purpose for walking in the woods.

Noticing the abandoned woodpile, the explorer speculates about the reasons for leaving valuable wood unused. After several years of exposure to the elements, the wood has begun to gray and warp and serves only to warm

a small area in the frozen swamp. The farmer who cut and stacked the wood forgot his labor and turned to "fresh tasks." With this image, perhaps Frost hints that it is not the use of the cut firewood that is important, but rather the process of cutting the wood. The journey's end is not as notable as the explorer's wondering thoughts as he walked through the desolate woodland. Isolation may not always have to lead one to some personal awareness, but allows for reorganization of ideas and speculative thinking. On the other hand, Frost may again be ironically criticizing the aimless journey of the explorer who seems much like a rat in a maze. Although the speaker does not on the surface appear to be as crazed as a trapped rat, he does seem to be uncertain of where he is going and how he will continue his journey. If interpreted in this way, then Frost may be suggesting that, when man isolates himself from his own sense of purpose in life, then he will remain aimless and unproductive. This type of inward journey is not redemptive and reflects a distinct type of individual who may never reach a meaningful level of self-discovery.

A fourth dimension of the isolation theme appears in "Directive." Many critics describe this poem in much the same way as Frank Lentricchia: "'Directive' is Frost's

summa, his most compelling and encompassing meditation on the possibilities of redemption through imagination."<sup>9</sup> The metaphors in this meditative poem are variations of typical Frost metaphors: a lonely man on a journey, a wooded area, a deserted child's playhouse, and an empty, decaying village. The separation from society experienced by the speaker in this poem, however, produces a far different outcome. The speaker in "Directive" does not make a conscious choice to separate himself from his neighbor like the poem "Mending Wall" depicts. His lonely seclusion does not balance dangerously between sanity and insanity like the speaker in "A Servant to Servants." The inability to commune with nature or discover a purposeful direction in life does not blind him from self-discovery like the speaker in "The Woodpile." Isolation in this last poem becomes an exploration through the imagination where one kind of perception is exchanged for a more desired one.<sup>10</sup>

An opening phrase signals the speaker's need to escape his present surroundings. Journeying back in time releases him from his immediate problems. Along the path winding back through the memory, the speaker meets many obstacles which impede or even thwart his travels. Deliberately these obstacles (a house, farm, and town which exist only in ruins

and provide evidence of man's insignificance in history and the geology of the universe) are intended to eliminate the weak explorers who do not exhibit the strength needed to appreciate the discovery which awaits them. The imagination can begin to breathe its magical powers into man's desolate existence only when this solitary traveler rejects all other human existence and isolates himself completely by erecting the sign "closed to all but me."

The brook is the explorer's destination, rippling closely beside a child's playhouse. Once isolated from the present real world, the traveler recovers the pristine moments of the childhood imagination symbolized by the playhouse. The act of drinking the waters from the brook renews the traveler and transforms the confused adult to a simple child who retains a hopeful, positive, idealistic view of his world.

Irony again functions to develop the theme in much the same way it functioned in the three previous poems. Frost specifically pictures the Grail-like drinking goblet as broken; it is not perfect in form. With this broken, imperfect goblet, Lentricchia explains that the child's play can serve as a lesson for the isolated adult:

The child gives the example to the adult,  
for even as children in play can transmute

the shattered dishes into the fixtures of their magic world, so the adult, with examples of failures and suffering all around him must somehow transform what he sees into a better world: we really have no choice--either we recreate the world better than it is, or we live an unbearable existence.<sup>11</sup>

The mature adult recognizes that this transformed world is partly a projection of his imagination, but chooses to accept this better world over the harsh real world.

Frost weaves this same theme into at least four other poems, including "For Once Then, Something," "Mowing," "Tuft of Flowers," and "All Revelation." The redemptive act in each of these poems involves the isolating imagination which is paralleled by an ironic perception that recognizes the world for what it really is.<sup>12</sup>

In these four dimensions of the isolation theme, Frost investigates the different ways individuals respond to confining barriers which exist in their lives. Whatever the reaction, the poet suggests that isolation becomes an immediate concern in all people's lives at some point. Frost teaches his readers a great deal about life in the lonely New England countryside and the secluded men and women living there by writing thought-provoking poetry about this uniquely American phenomenon. He also builds an extensive network of ideas and images to aid them in coping

With loneliness, seclusion, emotional deprivation, misdirection, disillusionment, and abandonment--all factors which make up the human condition.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago, 1955), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Lewis, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>John C. Kemp, Robert Frost and New England (Princeton, 1979), p. 104.

<sup>4</sup>Kemp, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup>Marion Montgomery, "Robert Frost and His Use of Barriers: Man vs. Nature Toward God," South Atlantic Quarterly, 57(1958), 349.

<sup>6</sup>David Perkins, A History of Modern Poetry: From the 1890's to the High Modernist Mode (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), p. 249.

<sup>7</sup>Kemp, p. 125.

<sup>8</sup>Frank Lentricchia, Robert Frost: Modern Poetics and the Landscape of Self (Durham, North Carolina, 1975), p. 68.

<sup>9</sup>Lentricchia, p. 112.

<sup>10</sup>Lentricchia, p. 114.

<sup>11</sup>Lentricchia, p. 119.

<sup>12</sup>Lentricchia, p. 129.



Hospitality in the Old Testament and  
English Literature: Some Points of Connection

Patrick J. Creevy

. . . and, when night  
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the Sons  
of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.  
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night  
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door  
Expos'd a Matron to avoid worse rape:

(Paradise Lost, Book I, ll. 500-505)

So Milton in the first book of Paradise Lost concludes his account of the destructive activity of those fallen angels who rose again as the "strange gods" of the Old Testament Near East. What happened in Sodom (Genesis 19) and again, with some differences and an even more violent outcome, in Gibeah (Judges 19 and 20), was indeed that the sacred virtue of hospitality was thoroughly violated by worse than aggressive perversion. When Lot saw two men approaching Sodom, he pleaded with them to come under his roof rather than sleep in the streets; and, having finally persuaded them, he humbly washed their feet and cordially

feasted them, not knowing that they were angels of the Lord. This free, unself-conscious hospitableness, as it turned out, was the chief sign of goodness that would save Lot from the Lord's destruction of a damned city. The sure sign, on the other hand, that the rest of the city was irredeemably lost was the male Sodomites' ferociously inhospitable demand that Lots' guests be given over to them to be raped, or in some way to be seriously harmed.<sup>1</sup> And that almost nothing is more important as a measure of virtue in this primitive, odd, powerful narrative than hospitality, or perverse violations of it, is suggested also by the fact that, rather than give up his guests, Lot the host, still proving himself worthy of salvation, would offer to let the Sodomites do what they wanted with his two virgin daughters!

In Judges this grim, odd story gets retold, but with differences which suggest in effect that the only thing worse than Sodom is Sodom translated into Israel, or that the only thing more frightening than the demolition of Sodom is divisive civil war in Israel, which in fact the violation of hospitality in Gibeah brings on for the first time. In Gibeah a Levite priest, who under the prescriptions of Mosaic law is to have no land of his own but who is to be welcomed by everyone, is welcomed by nobody except one old

man. Reacting to the old man's exceptional behavior, and as if to make sure that not even a single sign of virtue remained in Gibeah, the men of the tribe of Benjamin surround the old man's house and demand, wildly against all laws of hospitality, that the priest be handed over to them to be raped, or perhaps killed. The old man offers instead, as his propitiation to "Belial," his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine. The concubine is taken, is raped repeatedly and is finally killed at the old man's door. The Levite then removes the murdered woman to his temporary home in the hills of Ephraim; divides her limb from limb with a knife, cutting her in twelve pieces; and, with a gesture that provokes fierce and bloody war on Benjamin, sends a piece to each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The organic unity of the nation is thus symbolically, and then actually, dismembered. The mad aggressiveness of violently- inhospitable Sodom has come to Israel, and it is the beginning, one can sense, of the nation's end. The new landed, who must hospitably rise above rigid spatial or territorial consciousness to be worthy of their blessed inheritance, and to prevent war, have already begun selfishly to close their gates and perversely to turn in frank opposition to virtue. The sense of spatial limitation

has turned the Promised Land, the promised ground of identity, rather quickly into a strange hotbed of pure selves; and these perversely hate the priest, their opposite, the non-self.

The wayfaring priest, of course ideally, is attached to no one space, possesses no inheritance through time and is dedicated to non-material principle. Nonetheless, even as an opposite, he should never be considered an enemy to selves, but rather both a living reminder to them of the importance of a naturally countering selflessness and a kind challenge to them to relax and to open doors--to be hospitable. Indeed if pure, untempered egotism--aggressive, ungenerous, unwelcoming--grows and becomes "flown" in limited space and time, then hospitality, or the giving of space and the giving of time, is its perfect counter. If also it is an obsession with the measure of life's limited material resources that gives pure egotism its wayward, feverish energy, then the duty to be hospitable, the duty to be most resourceful while measuring out for others, is a perfect spiritual febrifuge and restorative. And especially hospitality will make possible a relaxation of rigidified egotism and a restoration of generosity if in its action it

makes contact with a living force capable of preserving a generous self through gift after gift, or loss after loss.

Unhealthy self-consciousness, as Milton so regularly informs us, is aroused by the visual perception of things, by sight, which engenders in us the notion of limits and which by a strong attractiveness draws us, or deceives us, into identifying with that which perishes. But what hospitality reveals, ideally, is a faith in the invisible, infinite and eternal, a faith which allows one to give away those finite things that the warring, worried, looking self must always possess. And as the Old Testament, practically in its entirety, is a treatment of the problem of how the self or the nation can get built, but without the builders forever warring, worrying, or looking--hospitality is a crucial Old Testament theme. How a space or land should be won and held through time but not gripped in terror is at many levels the question of the Old Testament, and the Old Testament recommendation of something like a hospitable grip is complex and profound. Particularly, too, the recommendation is powerful as in the Old Testament hospitable action almost invariably does involve contact with, and sometimes even discovers, that saving force which makes possible a continual graceful generosity. Or, more

simply, in the Old Testament true hospitality is a key to the right building of the nation and self as it connects man within his boundaries--uneasy, watchful and liable to fall--with the boundless relieving power of God.

No wonder, then, that Milton in his treatment of the terrible divisive influence of the Bible's "strange gods" made his allusions to Sodom and Gibeah and used them for the finale in that cataloguing of tragic collapses. Also his whole effort in the succeeding books of Paradise Lost will be to show how idolatrous self-interest leads to division and alienation, or to show how Adam and Eve, who could play host and hostess to angels at one time, at another time could not.

But of course the most effective allusions do more than make contact simply between single points in different texts. The Sodom and Gibeah episodes gain tremendously in dramatic power from the fact that in the Old Testament, far more often than any of the Ten Commandments, the commandment to treat well the sojourner or wayfarer (sometimes the Levite is specifically mentioned) gets repeated and is cited as a statute that must be observed if the Lord is to continue to hold the nation together. It goes without saying that Milton knew this and that he expected his best readers to

bring an understanding of the full Biblical development of the idea of hospitality to their reading of Paradise Lost. Some awareness of the complex Biblical theme, then, is helpful for a reading of the great Christian epic (especially as one goes through those later books where Adam and Eve do entertain the ambassador Raphael). But also as hospitality is one of the most powerful and most enduring themes both in the Old Testament and in English Literature, and as the Bible justly has won a reputation as the "Great Code" of Western Christian literary art, an awareness might prove more generally useful.

If in the Old Testament hospitality is a sign of saving worth and is absolutely necessary for true cooperation among individual parties, it is still easy to understand the numerous breakdowns of hospitable relations in the Old Testament world, which is perfectly the world of tight space. When Moses moved the Israelites up into Edom and begged free passage along the King's Highway, promising to turn neither to right nor left, he was refused passage; and later when he led them up into Moab and Ammon, he made the same request and received the same response. The nationalistic Nehemiah recalls particularly the inhospitality of Moab and Ammon and a law of Moses: "No Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter

into the assembly of God; for they did not meet the children of Israel with bread and water..." (Nehemiah 13:1-2)<sup>2</sup>. But the inhospitable suspiciousness of Edom and Moab and Ammon was only politically sound, and the requests of Moses were for a hospitality that in the bloody Fertile Crescent had seriously to strain the space and time conditioned nerve. Understandably, only the very slightest signs of hospitality are ever shown the Israelites during their obviously

interested advance on Canaan, and these only by interested and nervous parties. For instance in Jericho the prostitute Rahab (Joshua 2: 2-14) gives lodging to Israelite spies; but this is because she has heard that the Israelite army has slaughtered Sihon and Ogg, and she is only "welcoming" on the condition that they do not slaughter her and her family should they in fact tear down the walls of Jericho. Also, from the later and still anxious period of the Judges, the story of Jael and Sisera provides us with a memorable example of the effect that strained relations in tight confines can have on the human potential for hospitableness and self-forgetting. The Canaanite King Sisera was defeated by the Israelites and fled from the field at Megiddo. The Kenite woman Jael greeted the frantic escapee at her tent and offered him refuge and a blanket and milk and told him



not to fear. But while he was sleeping, "Jael, the wife of Heber, took a tent peg . . . and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, till it went down into the ground" (Judges 4:21). For this Jael is celebrated in sacred Hebrew song; although it is somewhat difficult to see how anything other than political prejudice could distinguish the morality of her act completely from that of anti-hospitable rape.

But then even in such debasement, even as spatial and temporal conditions drag down what is our best potential, the tragedy in the Bible is still religious. Such occurrences as mob rape, war, gloating brutal murder, often with special weird power, will still recall the high sacredness of the virtue they violate. And the ancient Near-Eastern political heat, which certainly does not cool for Israel after the period of the Judges, makes fervid the Hebrew religious imagination, the imagination which can always find fragments of the divine message written meaningfully in the terrible movements of political history. But then again in the Old Testament full, saving meaning, if we can take the concluding chapters of Isaiah as indicative of the whole book's ultimate tendency, is only achieved in the most difficult act of full hospitality, that is, beyond

hardened principle, beyond "nation" and the grief of international war.

Also in the Old Testament the anxious self's inevitable fear of hospitableness is not considered only as part of the larger political story, or as simply a force pushing or pulling in great holy land-wars. The difficulties of hospitality frequently are involved with a single soul's final search for purpose, a search which can reveal with a special poignancy, not found in chapters primarily historical, the distance between limited man and infinite God. The voice of the Lamentations cries out in language intensely personal, "Look, O Lord and see . . . Thou didst invite as to the day of an appointed feast my terrors on every side" (Lamentations 2:22). God the host's guests are the prophet's greatest fears, and the differences between what is and what he thinks should be make him wail for exclusive, inhospitable closure, for walls against enemies. The very meaning of his life seems, tragically, to require it. Also over and over again a Psalmist will cry out to be taken in safely to the Lord's House or the Lord's Stronghold or Refuge and that his enemies be absolutely excluded. If the Psalms are cultic and conventionalized, the ritualistic forms work most effectively, nonetheless, as probes into the

particular. The tortured, personal language of plot and plan and scheme haunts the poems throughout, and the Psalms are as remarkable as examples of the mysterious quasi-religious confidence. In the famous Twenty-third, for example, refuge is secured forever in the House of the Lord, but much additional comfort is taken and a sense of meaning derived from the fact that the Lord will prepare a table for the once-lonely guest directly in the face of his closed out enemies.

Of course the need to achieve meaning through the violent exclusion of threatening difference can be seen also as a divine characteristic. God's own inhospitality is voiced immediately and unmistakably in the First Commandment: No strange gods. And throughout the Old Testament God is described as the planner and plotter who will easily out-contrive his planning and plotting enemies. But the First Commandment may not be paranoid, and the difference between small anxious men and omnipotence may be perfectly revealed in the possibility that God's plans and schemes are in their very essence hospitable. The inhospitableness of the divine may in fact be only against inhospitality. The unwelcome "strange gods" are the truly dangerous gods of sight, of limits, of the visible wood and

stone images condemned in the Second Commandment, and the worship of them, as Milton suggests, can lead to inhospitable Sodom and Gibeah. Omnipotent, invisible God, then, may be closing doors essentially against fearful door closing. His jealousy may be essentially against jealousy, and his meaning indeed infinitely more full and viable than that of man--who is certainly not omnipotent. Among men even a Psalmist, to have at least a narrow or quasi-meaning, can make an idol of his comfortable seat in the Lord's House. And if in his violence there is again a weird reminder of what is fuller and wider and holier, even a Psalmist can still pray inhospitably that his enemies be simply cast out and crushed.

The difficulty of hospitality, then, as the Old Testament so powerfully reveals, is inavoidable given the human condition--physical, metaphysical, political, personal. Xenophobia, given our sensual apprehension or construction of space, time and matter is normal. Given our anxious need for meaning--hatred and dread are inevitable. To strange man the inorganic is what is natural, graceful cooperation nearly impossible. But always over against inhospitable fear and the feeling of estrangement abides its opposite: religious assurance and a sense of belonging; and this the

man Job had, and even easily, without dread ecstasy. He quietly possessed his land, and his life apparently had a very full meaning. His eyes were not in any way anxious, and he could show an hospitable grace that, say, the worried Psalmists could not. The saving connection with the supernatural which Lot discovered in his hospitality, Job had discovered also in his--and without any apparent necessity for a background of weird violence. When all the loved ones and possessions of the good Job are taken away, however, and his virtuous life lies in utter ruins, the question of meaning in a sudden monstrous hypertrophy becomes a roaring dragon; and the uncertainties examined in its "Wisdom Literature" often threaten deeply all the comforts the Old Testament offers; personal as well as philisophico-historical.

Job's friend Eliphaz, knowing no dragons, has a simple explanation for everything, or rather he asserts a conventional and historically cherished meaning. He accuses Job of having given no water to the weary and having withheld bread from the hungry and as a traditional, moral etiologist asserts, "Therefore snares are round about you" (Job 22:10). But Job, with a now profoundly troubled sense of justice, defends himself by saying that he has never

failed to observe the so very often repeated commandment to protect the widow, the fatherless and the wayfarer. The "sojourner," he says, "has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the wayfarer" (Job 31:32). And if in any way he has violated the commandment, he says, "then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder and let my arm be broken from its socket" (Job 31:22). If, in other words, the communally, historically cherished moral etiology is valid, then let me be dismembered. The complaint of the man Job has wide significance, or rather it shows how everything human has shrunk. Particular Job is the universal, and with him we all are diminished. If Job is not actually dismembered, such a non-happening may be worse than bloody political division. If the Levite priest's protest aroused a general saeva indignatio and brought on the violence of civil war, Job's grief is the grief of the weary post-exilic nation, wondering seriously if time ever was on its side. Finally, with Job's religious assurance as completely gone as it was once easy, his fear seems only absurd, and to be set over against nothing, and to recall nothing--or to be incapable of generating even a small meaning.

But against all these fears, the fear that, given human spatial ambition, especially in this hot Near East of a

world, hospitality is not virtuous self-effacement but political suicide; the personal as well as political fear that to open doors is to admit a confusion that will annihilate life's meaning; the even more intense fear that life has no meaning in the first place--over against these, the hospitality motif is still set, and consistently developed. And if one of the largest problems with the Old Testament is the characterization of the divine as decidedly ungentle, selective, jealous with a vengeance, then the hospitality theme does obviously have its interesting implications for Biblical theology, for it shows clearly that the divine has another side.

Organic cooperation between parties, necessary for peace in the wide world, is regularly represented ideally in comic drama in a marriage. The Old Testament, certainly not all tragic, has its comic moments, and its good marriages. And as essential hospitableness of mind perhaps best prepares the way for what the poets would call "sweet" cooperation, it is not surprising that in the Old Testament the true worth of a potential spouse is on several occasions signified memorably by his or her hospitality. When Abraham sends his servant to seek a wife for Isaac, the sign that the woman is right will be her willingness to let the

servant drink from her waterjar and also to water his camels. Rebekkah at the well proves herself perfect, and when the servant asks her, "Is there room [certainly one of the most important New Testament questions as well] in your father's house for us to lodge in?" she answers perfectly, "We have both straw and provender enough and room to lodge in" (Genesis 24: 22-26). Also her brother Laban is the ideal host. "Come in," he says, "blessed of the Lord; why do you stand outside, for I have prepared the house and a place for the camels" (Genesis 24:31). The marriage is thus as good as sealed, and the servant thanks God for his hesed, or steadfast love, to Abraham; and in the Old Testament hesed is the best assurance of perdurable meaning. So in the good marriage all that Job was bereft of, is bestowed: graceful cooperation, communal and between individuals, and a meaning larger than the lonely space and timebound self, a meaning which makes cooperation continually possible and makes even the tight world a home for estranged man. But still the chosen Abraham's motives for sending his messenger back to the land of his own kindred were choosy and political and jealous, and home for those settled in this chapter of Genesis is still too narrow. No Canaanite woman is ever to be selected for Isaac under any circumstances. The servant



is to swear to this by the God of heaven and earth (clearly characterized here as having jealous interests himself), and the passage only incompletely gives a picture of peace in the world.

In the Book of Ruth, however, a good marriage transcends not only the elemental reluctance of the human mind to give, but the grosser and even less tractable retarding fears found in national politics as well. We recall that, because the Moabites did not welcome Israel with bread and water, no Moabite is ever to be welcomed into the assembly of the Lord. In view of this, the fact that Ruth is a Moabitess takes on special significance. In Israel she especially would be the alien, and so the thorough and, in some ways, supra-legal welcoming of her by Boaz is remarkable. She has come a widow to Israel to seek succour among the people of her Mother-in-law Naomi, also a widow. She is immediately fortunate in that she decides to begin to make her way by gleaning in the fields of Boaz. By holy law none of the harvest that is accidentally dropped in the gathering is ever to be taken up, but is always to be left for sojourners, wayfarers, widows and aliens, and if Boaz can rise above legalities in his welcoming of a Moabitess, he comes down hard legally and jealously for

generosity. No one, he says, is to interfere with Ruth, widow and alien, in her gleaning. Also he carefully advises her to keep with the maidens in his employ so she will not be molested. The threat of sexual violence, often associated with violations of hospitality, or space-haunted madness, is thus most carefully watched, and the way to the full hospitable welcoming of marriage is already being prepared by this best of hosts. "Why," Ruth asks, "have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?" (Ruth 2:10). Boaz responds that he has heard both of her own widow's troubles and of her courageous good treatment of the widowed Naomi, and he promises that now a full reward will be given her "by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings [she has] come to take refuge" (Ruth 2:12). Boaz then, has risen above himself and the limits of sensual perception and discovered in his hospitableness the capaciousness of the supernatural. His eventual wedding with Ruth the Moabitess involves a crossing of many fearful borders and a relieving of international tensions. It achieves its full meaning beyond any anxious desire to cast away and stands emblematically for complete peace in the wide world. Also Ruth is a progenitor of David, the most powerful of Israel's kings.

Apparently the author of the book of her name, eager perhaps to show a different side of the divine from that which Nehemiah selected for view, thought it worthwhile to recall the connection between his nation's glory, most widely spread in space, and an alien wayfarer.

Here, then, is the Old Testament's gentle strain, the comic and merciful, which sets itself against fierce, static, border-guard justice. But, as has been said, this strain is by no means expressed merely sentimentally. Besides the narrative development of the hospitality theme in a high number of Old Testament books, the absolute command to welcome the sojourner or wayfarer is recalled or reaffirmed apodictically in Exodus twice; in Leviticus twice; in Deuteronomy three times, once (27:19) with a hard vengeance: "cursed be he who perverts the justice due to the sojourner"; in Jeremiah twice, once (22:2-6) with all its larger implications made clear as the Lord promises flatly to abandon the nation and let it disintegrate if this law is violated; in Ezekiel once; in Zechariah once; in Malachi once--and very often with the special reminder that, before she mistreats an alien, Israel should recall her own history of sojourning and wayfaring. "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him," the law reads in Exodus 22: 21,

"for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." And in Leviticus 19: 33-34: "When a stranger sojourns with you . . . you shall do him no wrong. . . .[He] shall be as a native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." The conservative God who remembers Israel and brings her to her own bordered space, also reminds her that one key pre-condition for her spiritual health is a recollection of her landlessness, of the fact that she was all but, and yet still not forgotten. The developed self is commanded to return perpetually to its original nothingness and to recall that in this first non-state it was still remembered, so that mercifully and fearlessly in short time it will be able to distribute things among others.

Misery can be a pre-condition necessary for mercy, as perhaps Job came to know, and violence can even help recall virtue. Even more helpful is the sense of sheer nothingness; this can perhaps lead to something even more complete. The created land, the ground of identity, belongs to no one but the Creator, as Job surely came to know; and knowing this can bring one promptly to the border between thing and process, created and Creator, life and death as we see them and a full faith in immortality, or immortal

meaning. And Jerusalem or Zion can in the Old Testament be an embattled state fortress, a golden image of national triumph, a solid thing; or an emblem of complete ecstasy in which borders are hospitably forgotten and death, the observable end of all bordered things, is laid low.

First Isaiah cries out, "On the day the Lord," as a jealous and hungry foe, "swallows death forever," he will "make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well-refined. And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations" (Isaiah 25: 6-9). The visible covering (mentioned so often by Blake), which distinguishes nations, persons, things, will evaporate as all sit at the supra-national, universal feast, unafraid for their countries or themselves: "And the Lord God will wipe away tears. . . from all the earth." Again, too, the ecstatic followers of Second Isaiah concur and suggest that the fullest meaning is only to be discovered beyond defensiveness, in an unjealous and undistinguishing opening of doors. When you "bring the homeless poor into your house," they say, "Then shall your light break forth like

the dawn. . . . Then shall you call, and the Lord will answer" (Isaiah 58: 6-9).

And these most moving passages, as well as the whole complex Old Testament development of the theme of hospitality, ought certainly to be considered in a reading, or for a best reading, of Milton's allusions to the accounts of Lot's hospitality in Sodom and the grim tragedy in Gibeah--just as, for instance, the full account of the story of the welcomed Moabitess, and the whole context in which it is most clearly comprehended, would be necessary for a best understanding of Keats's Ruth, standing "in tears amid the alien corn."

<sup>1</sup>John Boswell, Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality (Chicago, 1980), argues very effectively that the major issue in both the Sodom and Gibeah episodes is hospitality and not homosexuality. See especially pp. 91-105. Boswell even suggests that homosexuality might not be at issue at all and that it is a mistake to interpret that particular Hebrew verb for "to know" which appears in both chapters as having a sexual meaning.

<sup>2</sup>All scriptural quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

## Feminine Forces in the Major Works of Juan Valera

Carol E. Klein

Juan Valera was a humanist who from his early studies became interested in the classics, but who, nonetheless, would never be completely linked to any particular literary school. He gained reasonable fame in public life as a senator, a cabinet minister, and a diplomat; as a literary person he tried his hand at all genres. He was a man of the world who was addicted to the high life, as he called it, and who always lived and worked comme il faut, to use another of his favorite jocularly elegant foreign phrases. As a diplomat and a politician Valera associated with important figures, from the royalty and prime ministers on down, and as a writer he knew most of the outstanding foreign and Spanish literary people of his day.<sup>1</sup>

Valera experienced a life-long and a sincere personal interest in women.<sup>2</sup> His correspondence is full of references to women he knew, courted, and loved; many were models for the female characters in his writings.<sup>3</sup> A dominant force in Valera's family was his mother, Doña Dolores, who insisted that he be brought up in line with her own aristocratic status.<sup>4</sup> The personage of an



oversolicitous mother, like Valera's own, figures in Las ilusiones del doctor Faustino as the protagonist's mother, in El Comendador Mendoza as Blanca, and as the mother Juana, in Juanita la larga. In 1843 Valera met the Cuban poetess, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, in Madrid. Although she was ten years his senior, he was infatuated with her, dedicated the poem "A Delia," to her, and praised her poetry in his literary criticism. As attaché without pay to Naples in 1847 he worked for the Duque de Rivas and had an affair, which had a lasting impact on him and on his writings, with Lucía Palladi, the Marquesa de Bedmar. A cultured and charming woman of Rumanian descent, somewhat older than Valera, she was in poor health and so pale that the Duque de Rivas nicknamed her "La Muerta." Nevertheless she inspired Valera to delve deeply into classical literature, and her faith in his talent encouraged him during the formative period of his life. She is probably the inspiration for his poems "A Lucía" (two of them) and "A Rojana," and their platonic love relationship, upon which she insisted, is obviously a topic in several of Valera's novels.<sup>5</sup>

Back in Madrid in 1849, Valera had an affair with Malvina, the Duque de Rivas' oldest daughter, whom he

nicknamed "La Culebrosa" (from culebra), and to whom he dedicated his poem "A Malvina." Soon afterwards he was assigned to Lisbon, where although in his letters he often complained of boredom, he led a lively social life. This included an affair with Julia Pacheco, an attractive daughter of a wealthy family from Extremadura, and with whom he first considered, but later rejected marriage.<sup>6</sup> Between 1856 and 1857 as Under-Secretary to the Duque de Osuna in St. Petersburg and other parts of Russia, Valera had a passionate though thwarted love affair with Madeleine Brohan, a coquettish, married, French actress.<sup>7</sup> She, along with Lucia Palladi, was to be the model for Valera's literary heroines who were charming, flirtatious, aloof, and intelligent. Her effect on Valera, as expressed in his correspondence, is of extreme importance in understanding his attitude toward love and its manifestation as a major theme in his writings. Immediately following rejection, Valera wrote to his friend Leopoldo Augusto de Cueto how he felt compelled to unburden his soul by writing a novel about the love affair. Although he said that he could laugh at his emotionalism and soon felt embarrassed about his candidness, the fact that Mariquita of his novel Mariquita y Antonio (1861) displays many physical, emotional, and

intellectual similarities to La Brohan and that Antonio appears much like Valera during his affair with her would suggest her important influence on his life and his literary career. La Brohan renewed Valera's platonic search for the absolute and the innate idea of perfect love and beauty, earlier shown in his poem "Las aventuras de Gide Yahye."

By 1861, Valera had published two volumes of poetry, two incomplete serialized novels, many articles of literary criticism, and his Cartas des de Rusia. Thus, as far as one can now ascertain, Valera was elected to the Real Academia Española de la Lengua in 1861 primarily on his merits as a poet, literary critic, and hombre de letras.

In 1867 he married a very young woman, Dolores Delavat, the daughter of his former boss in Rio de Janeiro. Three children were born to this otherwise unhappy marriage.<sup>8</sup> Throughout his literary and diplomatic career he maintained an interest in women, often without total success. The most tragic of these liaisons occurred during his position as aide to the Ambassador to the United States, which he held between 1884 and 1886. He befriended President Cleveland's Secretary of State, Thomas F. Bayard, whose daughter Katherine fell in love with Valera and committed suicide when she learned of his transfer to Belgium in 1886. A few

months before that, Valera's son Carlos had died from typhus in Madrid; the two tragedies weighed heavily on Valera. Perhaps these personal situations combined with the political climate in Spain after the Revolution of 1868 pushed Valera into writing his first finished novel, Pepita Jiménez, in 1874.<sup>9</sup>

That Valera wrote the majority of his poems before he wrote many of his stories and most of his novels shows that chronologically, at least, he was first a poet, as is not infrequently the case among Spanish novelists (witness Valle-Inclán, Sender, and Cela of the twentieth century). His novels, which came in two waves, with about a fifteen-year interval, though some stories were composed during the interim are: Mariquita y Antonio, long, but unfinished, 1861; Pepita Jiménez, 1874; Las ilusiones del doctor Faustino, 1875; El Comendador Mendoza, 1876; Pasarse de listo, 1877; Doña Luz, 1879; Juanita la larga, 1895; Genio y figura . . ., 1897; and Morsamor, 1899. Although many have judged him a mediocre writer of verse, esthetically, Valera considered himself foremost a poet, in part because he made little or no separation of the narrative literary genres.

One of the constants in Valera's poetry and his novels is his sharing of his personal feelings with his readers. (Writing was not for Valera the heart-wrenching experience that haunted certain contemporary writers like Baudelaire, or, later Mallarmé.) Valera said that in order to write about love logically he never composed poetry until after his passions had subsided. His poems and novels are generally written in a tone of restraint, as if the poet or narrator is passively remembering past events. DeCoster recognized Genio y figura . . . , for example, as perhaps more of a memoir than a conventional novel. Because the yo of his poems represents Valera, and some of his novelistic characters obviously speak for Valera himself, the author's specific esthetic ideas are easily traced. Many of his novels treat quite profound themes, most notably, though not solely, as follows: Mariquita y Antonio, the adolescent's problem of love without object and his desire to achieve knowledge and fame; Pepita Jiménez and Doña Luz, the conflict between physical love and religious vocation; Las ilusiones del doctor Faustino and Pasarse de listo, ambition unattained because of ennui and abulia; and El Comendador Mendoza, the attempt to overcome feelings of guilt with religious fanaticism as well as the need to return money to

its rightful owner; Juanita la Larga, the struggle to achieve public esteem, linked with guilt and the traditional Spanish idea of honor together with the moral and psychological implications of the situation of an older man falling in love with a young girl (as also in Pepita Jiménez), though it seems to be merely a pleasant, simple love story. Both Genia y figura . . . and Morsamor deal with the protagonist's unsuccessful attempts to achieve the ideal. Genio y figura . . . is the story of Rafaela, who, of low-class and illegitimate birth, attempts to perfect herself and each one of her lovers, first in her profession as a prostitute, later as a demimondaine, and even finally and ironically as a wife (to the cuckolded but rich old man whom she marries in Brazil). She is constantly working against the proverbial attitude implied by the title: "Genio y figura . . . (hasta la sepultura)." Morsamor, in part a pseudo-historical novel in which humorous anachronisms abound, treats the themes of frustrated ambition, the fleeting of time, the concept of life as a dream, and the philosophical lesson of renunciation of past deeds and attitudes.

Valera's poetry and many of his novels are marked by the desire of the poet or the character to achieve the ideal.

Valera's esthetic theories, based mainly on platonic thought, conceived of beauty as being synonymous with the absolute and, hence, rarely if ever, attainable for the human being. The major thread of development in his literary works is for the character (usually a male) to attempt to define ideal beauty, and on finding a woman who seemingly personified that beauty, to dream of living in a utopia with her.

Each lover goes through a spiritual crisis in which the opposing poles--carnal and platonic love--vie for precedence. In Pepita Jiménez, Don Luis de Vargas went through an erotic-spiritual crisis; the subsequent self-analysis rightfully led him to believe that he could best serve God, not as a priest as he had originally planned, but as Pepita's husband. Faustino passed up several unsuitable would-be wives and finally married his inmortal amiga, the mysterious María. In his case, however, the end was tragic, because while married to the only woman who truly loved him, he began an affair with the vain Constanza. María died, and Faustino committed suicide. Doña Blanca, the adulterous mistress of the Comendador de Mendoza years before the time of the novel, had been seeking ever since salvation for her soul through religion, practiced with fanatical zeal. Just

before Doña Blanca's death, their illegitimate daughter, Clara, was finally allowed to marry her young friend Carlos, and the Comendador married the cousin, Lucia; the search for happiness was fulfilled, at least for them. In Pasarse de listo, Beatriz, bored by her colorless husband, felt flattered by what she thought were amorous advances by the Conde de Alhedín; her husband Braulio became so depressed upon supposing his wife unfaithful that he committed suicide. Doña Luz and the priest Enrique are other examples of lovers seeking perfect love. Rafaela of Genio y figura . . . summarized her personal tragedy, which is also the basic problem in most of Valera's poetry and novels: "La causa de mi mal es mi ambición trascendente; mi empeño de ir en busca de un ideal para mí inasequible."<sup>10</sup>

Valera used traditional amatory and mystical imagery such as words like "flames" and "fire" of love, in both his poetry and novels (especially Pepita Jiménez), to designate passions. The spiritual imagery having to do with light and vision (meaning pure love and beauty) and darkness (carnal desire and sin) which is often found in the Bible, Dante, and the Spanish mystics, was used by Valera in his poetry and in his novels to point out man's desire for pure love and his entrapment by worldly desires.



The women in Valera's novels are a composite of the many women to whom he wrote poetry, as he used much the same imagery to describe the women in both genres. One of the major differences between Valera's treatment of women in his verse and in his prose is that most of his poems, except the narrative ones, are written to a woman; the point of view expressed is that of the male lover. In the novels, the women characters are more often the focal points of interest, if not actually the main characters. Valera's physical descriptions of women made them appear to be Greek statues, not dormant, but on the move. Doña Luz, for example, danced like a sylph, rode like an Amazon woman, and walked like a huntress of Delos. Rosita, in Las ilusiones del doctor Faustino, was likened to Diana. Pepita was concerned that Luis was in love with the divinely inspired idea of women in general and not with her specifically. Passion stirred up in the poet is likened to a storm which finally subsides, leaving disappointment. When the poet looks into the eyes of the beloved, he feels that he has fallen into a prison of love.

Women in Valera's earlier novels generally suffered from a vague sadness, because their obsession with religious ideals led them to experience doubt and to appear

non-spontaneous and without freedom.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, the later novels, Juanita la larga, Genio y figura . . ., and Morasamor, depict women in a less rigid and even in a humorous manner. They are rid of the seriousness and tightness which kept them from acting; they are more natural and simple, and have fewer metaphysical and intellectual problems.

Although many of Valera's novelistic heroines are painted with traditional classical physical features, he was less interested in external physical appearances than in psychological descriptions, for he believed that the true divine ideal lives within the soul of woman, and cannot be seen. Valera preferred simple and natural women--innocent virgins who were beautiful and alluring without having to resort to fancy clothes and jewelry, but who, when the occasion presented itself, could take the initiative. Mariquita was just that sort of a beautiful, intelligent, immaculately clean, and generally shy, but astute young woman. Both Pepita Jiménez and Doña Luz were women of cultivated intelligence and of a subtle and refined spirit little known in rural Andalusia. Pepita maintained a feigned naturalness in appearing to use no artificial beauty aids; when meeting Luis de Vargas alone she assumed an air

of simplicity in speaking in a manner uncommon to nineteenth-century ladies and more like Chloe talking to Daphnis.<sup>12</sup>

Juanita la larga stands apart as a genuinely natural and spontaneous woman, for somewhat as her nickname, la larga, indicates, she was something of the Amazon type. Juanita was different from the majority of Valera's heroines because she logically determined what she wanted in life and got it by deliberately setting out to win the right people to her side. Unlike Pepita Jiménez; María, the immortal amiga; Inesita of Pasarse de listo; or Doña Blanca (as a youth) in El Comendador Mendoza, Juanita was too calculating to give herself impetuously to the man she loved without weighing the consequences.

Women were generally deceiving. On one hand, Faustino realized that if he wanted to represent poetically or artistically a goddess, a nymph, a religion, or a philosophy, he would have to do so in the form of a woman. Several types of women figured in Las ilusiones del doctor Faustino: the seemingly innocent and idealized María; the generally unimpressive Ramoncita; the aggressive and coarse Rosita; and the coquettish, selfish, and anything but constant Constanza, who by the end of the novel had managed

to combine the innocence of her Andalusian upbringing and the high style of Madrid. Pepita was physically very beautiful; although she had remained a virgin during her marriage to Don Gumersindo, she had not been altogether altruistic in marrying him. On one occasion her dress was likened to that of an Amazon woman, meaning that Valera was attempting to show that Luis de Vargas was afraid of her aggressiveness. In El Comendador Mendoza, Clara is seen as the innocent young victim of Blanca's fanaticism. Blanca had been for the Comendador the epitome of perfection during their youthful affair. Before, Doña Blanca had been different. A similar hardness of character and inflexibility which later were to make Doña Blanca a fanatic penitent had made her more vehemently passionate in her only real love affair.

The enchantment and seductiveness of women is an important part of Valera's novels. Pepita Jiménez was an enchantress who was also expert at flirtation. Luis de Vargas explained that he had been overcome by "hechizos soberanos y casi irresistibles de las más peligrosas de las tentaciones: de la que llaman los moralistas tentación virgínea." When Faustino was next to Constanza, he, too, was unable to resist her charms. Manolita tried to convince Doña Luz to

dar flechazo, to the rich cacique, Don Jaime. In Pasarse de listo, Beatriz taught Inés the art of flirting.

Linked with a woman's attitude that suffering elevates one is a basic pride. The question is whether her circumspection, loneliness, and aloofness stem from purest simplicity and from a contrite heart which renounces all worldly vanity, or if she is setting herself apart because of a basic aristocratic sense of superiority. Doña Luz was publicly considered proud, but not vain (although her vanity is very evident in the novel); she believed herself especially chosen by God to achieve perfection, and therefore she felt that she had more obligations to fulfill than other people. Rafaela la generosa is the supreme example of the proud and flirtatious woman.

Most of Valera's women were ardent defenders of their honor. Many are of illegitimate birth and are bent on improving their reputation, as was the case with Luis de Vargas; Maria, the inmortal amiga; Clara; Doña Luz; Juanita la larga; and Rafaela.

In Pasarse de listo, Valera attempted to protect himself from critics who considered his novels immoral because they treated women's illicit love affairs. Valera considered Clara and Lucia in El Comendador Mendoza and Doña

Ana, Faustino's mother in Las ilusiones del doctor Faustino, as genuinely good women. He admitted that Doña Blanca's penitence for her sins was worse than her original mistake, that Pepita was too coquettish and more passionate than reasonable, and that once those two heroines fell in love they were unable to restrain themselves. In Las ilusiones del doctor Faustino, María ceded to passion as if she had no free will and as if she had been compelled by an irresistible force; Constanza was selfish, calculating, and capricious; and Rosita knew no law other than her own fancy. All of these women, said Valera, were so motivated by a yearning for infinite love, that they took upon themselves the role of savior or redemptress to give their lovers well-being. In so acting they brought condemnation upon themselves, and they motivated the reader to pardon them. In Genio y figura Rafaela was named la generosa because she gave herself in order to please her men.

Valera summarized his attitude toward women by making the harmonization of the spiritual and the sensual in the form of ideal beauty as the basic theme of Pepita Jiménez (although not without irony).

To conclude, the study of Valera as a writer from his earliest and simplest poems to a classically beautiful girl

through his last novel, Morsamor, reveals a cyclical development of his esthetic ideas. It is unfair to consider Valera limited and superficial as a writer, for one must realize that his polished form was the only way in which he could maintain a harmonious balance among the many elements which were part of his eclectic spirit. The importance of Valera lies in that graceful equilibrium and the variety of his literary style, which he purposely cultivated in order to delight and entertain his readers. The feminine forces in his works are representative of a composite of rich personal experiences<sup>13</sup> and carefully expressed esthetic ideas culminating<sup>14</sup> in his attempt to create art and maintain classical decorum.

<sup>1</sup>For a general description of the aristocratic and cosmopolitan personality of Valera the diplomat, see Wenceslao Ramírez Villa-Urrutia, "Don Juan Valera, diplomático y hombre de mundo," Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia, 86 (1925), 453-467.

<sup>2</sup>See Cyrus C. DeCoster, Juan Valera (New York, 1974), pp. 15-30 for a synopsis of Valera's life.

<sup>3</sup>Valera's worship of women was not confined to his ideas as a writer. As a man, he candidly admitted that he was not immune to the pleasures of the flesh. In a letter to his father from Madrid, of May 3, 1850, he remarked "Esta afición mía a las faldas es terrible." Obas Completas, ed. Luis Araujo Costa (Madrid, 1958-1961), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup>Robert E. Lott's introduction to his edition of Pepita Jiménez (Oxford, 1974). On the important role of Doña Dolores, see pp. 1-2. Valera's educational background made him an anomaly in rural Andalusia. See Giménez Caballero, "Conmemoración de don Juan Valera," Revista de Occidente, 6 (1924), 142, who emphasizes the contrast between the classical education of the young Valera and the lower class mores which he learned from his Andalusian "street friends" of pre-adolescent age.

<sup>5</sup>There have been several studies of Valera's experiences in Naples. See Edith Fishtine, Don Juan Valera, the Critic (Bryn Mawr, 1933), pp. 7-10. Manuel Azaña's book first published as Valera en Italia: Amores, política y literatura (Madrid, 1929), and later reproduced in Ensayos sobre Valera, ed. Juan Marichal (Madrid, 1971), pp. 14-156, which discusses his intellectual as well as his sentimental development in Italy.

<sup>6</sup>See Fishtine, pp. 11-13.

<sup>7</sup>Valera described this love experience in detail in a letter to Cueto from St. Petersburg of April 13, 1857 (O. C., 3:162-69). This experience inspired the poem "Saudades de Elisena" (1857), in part the novel Mariquita y Antonio (1861), and two stories (1897) "El último pecado" and "El San Vicente Ferrer, de talla (Palinodia)". On the stories see Lott, "Una cita de amor y dos cuentos de Juan Valera," Hispanófila, No. 29 (1967), 13-20.



<sup>8</sup>It was on his return trip to Spain from Frankfurt that Valera visited his sister Sofia in France and renewed his acquaintance with the Delavat family. Biographers agree that Valera's marriage was not a happy one, not so much because of the great age difference between the couple, but because neither was able to live within his financial means. Valera and his wife felt it necessary to maintain separate households, each in keeping with the high life. See DeCoster, Juan Valera, p. 22; Carmen Bravo-Villasante, Biografia de don Juan Valera (Barcelona, 1959), pp. 187-192; and Lott, Introduction to Pepita Jiménez, p. 18, n. 12.

<sup>9</sup>After the death of Carlos, Valera wrote of his sense of urgency to work hard in a letter to Menedez y Pelayo from Washington, of July 8, 1885 (Epistolario, pp. 214-15).

<sup>10</sup>Genio y figura, O. C., 1:696.

<sup>11</sup>See Luis Gonzalez Lopez, Las Mujeres de don Juan Valera (Madrid, n.d.), p. 210.

<sup>12</sup>Pepita Jiminéz, O.C., 1:173.

<sup>13</sup>Emilia Pardo Bazan's well-known criticism in "Don Juan Valera," La Lectura 6:3 (1906), 288, asserts that Valera's novelistic characters, even the women, are Valera himself. (She likens Valera to Stendhal in that context.)

<sup>14</sup>Montesinos reiterates the importance of Valera himself in labeling his literary works "una encarnacion de su mayor inquietud en el momento de ponerse a escribir; que lo primario es el 'problema,' y no la anecdotia; que los personajes se subliman hasta parecer categorias: el hombre, la mujer, antagonistas apasionados." See Valera, o la ficcion libre, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1969), p. 84.

"Exalted in this Romantic Place": Narrative Voice  
and the Structure of Walker Percy's The Moviegoer

Christina Murphy

Defining the nature of the quest undertaken by Binx Bolling, the narrator in The Moviegoer, has proven more problematic for critics than the simple assertion that the quest motif is an aspect of the novel's design. Compounding the difficulty, The Moviegoer, ostensibly a simple narrative of self-discovery and personal commitment, possesses a rather complex structure. The axiological direction, the narrative voice, and the style of The Moviegoer all change within the novel's formulation--literally as if the novel splits in two: one voice, one style, one theme for the initial sections of the novel and an entirely different set of configurations for the concluding sections. Predictably, critics have been led to assert that The Moviegoer is a flawed novel, one which exhibits passages of brilliance but which fails ultimately to achieve structural cohesiveness.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the task to rescue the novel from charges of diminished achievement is the development of a perspective from which the theme and the structure of The Moviegoer can be seen as interrelated.

One aspect of The Moviegoer to receive scant consideration is that of narrative voice, a surprising development in view of the emphasis in The Message in the Bottle that Walker Percy places upon language as "an eneluctible bond of intentional identity."<sup>2</sup> In The Message in the Bottle, Percy identifies language with intersubjectivity and draws upon the view of philosopher Gabriel Marcel that intersubjectivity is "a metaphysic of we are as opposed to a metaphysic of I think."<sup>3</sup> In the essay, "Symbol, Consciousness, and Intersubjectivity," Percy quotes Marcel's statement that "without doubt the intersubjective nexus cannot in any way be asserted; it can only be acknowledged . . . the affirmation should possess a special character, that of being the root of every expressible affirmation."<sup>4</sup> With Marcel, Percy shares the view that affirmation is the mysterious root of language<sup>5</sup>--the desire of the mind to affirm and name its reality, to shape an identity via language as the intersubjective nexus between object world and subject perceiver.

Bill Oliver has noted the presence in Walker Percy's fiction of the two most frequent narrative styles of contemporary writing, the equivocal and the univocal, yet traces no organic synthesis for the uses of these styles in

The Moviegoer. The equivocal voice, Oliver states, "denotes an imagination which revels in details and resists controlling ideas. Through its pervasive irony and eclectic language, it suggests the inadequacy of any particular viewpoint. Instead of offering conclusions about reality, it poses various hypotheses and refers the reader to his own experience for verification." The univocal voice, by contrast, "bespeaks an imagination which subsumes details under a controlling idea. Through its confidential tone and self-referring vocabulary and figures of speech, it promotes a particular view of reality and encourages the reader to share that view."<sup>6</sup> A distinction similar to Oliver's has been made by Lionel Trilling in describing the narrative modes of authenticity and sincerity. In the authentic narrative voice, which Trilling sees as the predominant mode of contemporary fiction, the focus is upon specificity of objective detail, or "a degree of rough concreteness,"<sup>7</sup> while in the sincere narrative mode or voice, the sincerity of the narrator is "a consequence between avowal and actual feeling."<sup>8</sup> As Trilling states: "Doubtless, when we think about sincerity, we first conceive of it as a quality of the personal and private life, as bearing upon the individual's relation to himself and to others as individuals."<sup>9</sup>

The distinctions made by Oliver and Trilling with regard to narrative styles when applied to The Moviegoer, in concert with Percy's views of language, shed light upon a major emphasis of the novel---that of alienation, described by critic Tony Tanner as "a state of mind resulting from an inability to participate in the available patterns of experience, and an uncertainty as to whether the single self can generate its own."<sup>10</sup> If the simplest progression in The Moviegoer can be seen as a movement from alienation toward a sense of community, clearly, the narrative patterns of The Moviegoer must alter to reflect the shifts in consciousness Binx Bolling undergoes as he seeks to overcome the "malaise" of "everydayness" and reconcile the search for a transcendent vision of life with the particulars of everyday existence. In essence, the thematic and structural pattern of The Moviegoer is a progression from the equivocal or authentic voice, with its emphasis upon irony and detachment, to the univocal or sincere voice, which "promotes a particular view of reality and encourages the reader to share that view."<sup>11</sup> The narrative styles of The Moviegoer indicate that the novel focuses upon the movement from alienation to commitment and that, thus, the primary theme of the novel is not philosophical alienation

and existential despair but what Barbara Filippidis has aptly labeled "the journey to selfhood."<sup>12</sup>

The initial sections of The Moviegoer introduce the reader to Binx Bolling in his present state of alienated despair. The sketch Binx provides of his present existence reveals a man living an ordinary life on the surface, but one deeply alienated from any sense of purpose and one deeply conscious of that alienation. Binx is consciously pursuing what he ironically calls his Little Way, intent on getting through his life with deliberately reduced expectations. For the past four years, he has been living "uneventfully" in "peaceful" Gentilly, deriving his livelihood from managing a branch office of his uncle's brokerage firm. Assuming the external forms and behavior of the most ordinary suburbanite, he occupies himself with such diversions as making money and courting his secretaries, though the practice seems more of a diversion than a series of grand love affairs. His existence, then, may seem everyday, but it is really just empty. To counter the mundaneness of his existence, Binx has developed a passionate obsession with the movies:

Binx's obsession betrays his own inadequacy; for all the truly memorable moments of Binx's life seem to have come from movies he watched. In his portrayal of a man who finds movies more real

than his own life, Percy has found the perfect metaphor for the alienated man in our culture; for anyone who feels his own life circumscribed may find it expanded by vicarious participation in the glamour and grandeur of a movie plot, but must also feel that moment of psychic uncertainty and disappointment at the end of a film when he returns to his humdrum self like a rubberband snapping back from the screen.<sup>13</sup>

At the novel's opening, Binx is summoned by his Aunt Emily for one of her "serious talks" about what Binx should do with his life. Though well-intentioned and sincere, Aunt Emily represents to Binx the inauthenticity, in an existential sense, that he seeks to avoid. What Aunt Emily would impose upon Binx is a ready made role to enact, that of Southern stoicism and Southern gentility.<sup>14</sup> With simple ease, Binx could accept the values Aunt Emily admires and enact the life of duty, social responsibility, and achievement she envisions; but, in existential terms, Binx would be guilty of bad faith--of living a life conforming to a role and set of values not of one's choosing. In essence, Binx would forfeit selfhood for acquiescence, and though at times such an easy solution to his dilemma of "malaise" and "everydayness" seems tempting, ultimately such a choice would prove unfulfilling.

What is of key interest to note in the introductory sections of the novel is the tone or narrative voice of

ironic detachment throughout as Binx describes his existence of lowered expectations and psychological drift. Binx is a moviegoer and an observer at a distance spiritually from his surroundings. The equivocal tone of the introductory sections alters only slightly in response to Binx's feelings about his cousin Kate, Aunt Emily's stepdaughter. While Kate is presented in the opening stages of the novel as an indecisive and neurotic personality, prone to melodrama and hysteria, she is at least aware of the fact that her existence in Gentilly and her endeavor to live up to Aunt Emily's values are not fulfilling. Like Binx, she, too, is a wanderer, a wayfarer in search of a more authentic means of defining her identity. For Binx, Kate functions in the most significant fashion of the novel: she is the one character with whom Binx is honest and the one character with whom Binx begins the process of abandoning pretenses and self-deceptions in an effort to attain the truth of authentic selfhood.

Much is written about Binx's marriage to Kate at the novel's end and, theoretically, as the novel's philosophical conclusion. Several critics do not find Binx's marriage to Kate a satisfactory answer to Aunt Emily's question of what Binx intends to do with his life. They question, further,



whether Kate has enough self-awareness of her own to assist Binx in any search for authenticity--legitimate concerns, given the nearly elliptical manner in which the novel draws to a close and leaves many such philosophical issues largely hinted at and seemingly unresolved. Once again, however, narrative style provides an insight into the mechanics of the novel and reveals both a convergence and a consistency of structure and theme. The concluding portions of the novel are narrated in the univocal or sincere style essentially as a result of Binx's interaction with Kate, an interaction predicated upon intersubjectivity and the revelation of one's authentic self through love.

Binx's and Kate's train trip to Chicago is the key incident in Binx's transformation from guises, poses, and self-deception to the honesty of open communication and the authenticity of selfhood. Throughout his Gentilly days, Binx had prided himself upon possessing the grand gestures of courting and seduction styles, modeling himself upon such movie heroes as Rory Calhoun, William Holden, and Clark Gable. In his relationship with Kate, however, Binx learns, to his dismay, that he cannot keep an ironic distance behind the role of movie stars as he has done in past involvements. On the train trip to Chicago, Binx is caught in a situation

in which he would like to display for Kate the sexual prowess of Clark Gable in his role as Rhett Butler. Instead, his failure is dismal; as he mulls over their sexual encounter, Binx regrets that he achieved neither the heroic chastity of Rory Calhoun nor the passion of Rhett for Scarlet. Instead, he confesses, "We did very badly and almost did not do at all."<sup>15</sup> But the central reaction in this scene is Kate's:

But Kate, rather than fault him for his impotence, his failure to live up to his impersonation, accepts him in his reduced humanity and takes care of him. . . . Kate demonstrates her faith in him as he is, and as a consequence Binx is serene in his own identity for once in his life.<sup>16</sup>

What Binx learns from Kate is a capacity to be real, to abandon poses, and to risk vulnerability and commitment. The vision frees Binx to make choices. Prior to his involvement with Kate, Binx's lifestyle was one of "savoring the moment while withholding any real involvement of himself in determining to change his life."<sup>17</sup> After Kate, he makes a commitment to a lifestyle based upon intersubjectivity and repudiates the alienation of inauthenticity upon which he had previously predicated his existence. As Lewis Lawson comments, "Perhaps the only change we may observe will lie not in Binx's behavior . . . but in his narration,"<sup>18</sup> for

the ironic, equivocal voice of the first half of The Moviegoer has been replaced by the narrative style of sincerity--a personal avowal of feeling and a commitment to a perspective upon reality which the narrator invites the reader to experience. Thus, the thematic and structural patterns of The Moviegoer are seen to be cohesive; the theme of The Moviegoer as the journey from alienation to selfhood is a progression manifested through changes in narrative style as the key indicator of spiritual growth and awareness within the novel's main character.

If The Moviegoer leaves us with a sense of uneasiness at the end--or, in literary critical terms, a lack of a sense of closure--it is because we are not used to novels, as Robert Massie says, in which "nothing is stated, everything is implied."<sup>19</sup> Nor are we used to novels in which narrative styles alter between the equivocal and the univocal--novels in which narrative style is the only genuine indicator of substantial changes within the emotional or perceptual development of a character. If we search for analogs to The Moviegoer, perhaps Huckleberry Finn serves as the best model, for it is a novel in which a character's changing perceptions of the nature of reality are communicated through alterations in narrative styles.

Like The Moviegoer, Huckleberry Finn, too, has been criticized as structurally incohesive, flawed in vision, theme, and perspective. Perhaps Huckleberry Finn and The Moviegoer, while not readily apparent models of classical principles of structural unity, are unified in a different sense by the perceptions of their narrators, who are, after all, the "world-perceivers"<sup>20</sup> of the novels--the central, pivotal figure through whom theme and structure cohere. If characters at the center of a novel's vision are to undergo changes in their perspectives upon reality, it seems only appropriate that the voices in which they narrate these perceptual shifts should change, too, in response to the demands of thematic unity and for the sake of the sincerity Lionel Trilling so highly praises as a virtue of convincing and engaging fictions and fictive universes. In essence, shifts in narrative styles which both coordinate and assist the formulation of theme and structure generate a type of dynamic unity which consists of an invitation to the reader to participate in the process of structuring and experiencing a perceptual reality--an invitation, in Percy's terms, for the reader to enter into a fictive universe by participating with the narrator in the metaphysics of "we are."<sup>21</sup> The request is for a bond of intentional unity,

much like the intersubjectivity Percy envisions as requisite  
to all acts of meaningful communication.

<sup>1</sup>For considerations of the structure of The Moviegoer, see especially Michael Blouin, "The Novels of Walker Percy: An Attempt at Synthesis," Xavier University Studies, 6, No. 1 (1967), 29-42; and Jared W. Bradley, "Walker Percy and the Search for Wisdom," Louisiana Studies, 12 (1973), pp. 579-90.

<sup>2</sup>Charles P. Bigger, "Walker Percy and the Resonance of the Word," in Walker Percy: Art and Ethics, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson, 1980), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup>Martin Luschei, The Sovereign Wayfarer: Walker Percy's Diagnosis of the Malaise (Baton Rouge, 1972), p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>Walker Percy, "Symbol, Consciousness, and Intersubjectivity," Journal of Philosophy, 55 (1958), 637.

<sup>5</sup>Percy, p. 637.

<sup>6</sup>Bill Oliver, "A Manner of Speaking: Percy's Lancelot," Southern Literary Journal, 15, No. 2 (1983), p. 8.

<sup>7</sup>Lionel Trilling, Sincerity and Authenticity (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), p. 94.

<sup>8</sup>Trilling, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Trilling, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup>Tony Tanner, City of Words (New York, 1971), p. 421.

<sup>11</sup>Oliver, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup>Barbara Filippidis, "Vision and the Journey to Selfhood in Walker Percy's The Moviegoer," Renascence, 33, No. 1 (1980), pp. 10-23.

<sup>13</sup>Max Webb, "Binx Bolling's New Orleans: Moviegoing, Southern Writing, and Father Abraham," in The Art of Walker Percy: Stratagems for Being, ed. Panthea Reid Broughton (Baton Rouge, 1979), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>Lewis A. Lawson, "Walker Percy's Southern Stoic," Southern Literary Journal, 3 (1970), 5-31; and Jim Van

Cleave, "Versions of Percy," Southern Review, NS 6 (1970), 990-1010.

<sup>15</sup>Walker Percy, The Moviegoer (New York, 1961), p. 200.

<sup>16</sup>Lewis A. Lawson, "Moviegoing in The Moviegoer," in Tharpe, p. 38.

<sup>17</sup>Lawson, "Moviegoing," p. 37.

<sup>18</sup>Lawson, "Moviegoing," p. 36.

<sup>19</sup>Robert Massie, rev. of The Moviegoer, by Walker Percy, New York Times, 28 May 1961, p. 30.

<sup>20</sup>James R. Pinnels, "Theme and the Novel: A Homological Approach," Dalhousie Review, 62, No. 4 (1982-83), p. 586.

<sup>21</sup>Quoted in Luschei, p. 55.

That history and the epic were related was long recognized by Renaissance literary theorists, but the nature of their relationship was differently explained and the kinship often seemed confused. Yet, the general tendency of sixteenth-century English and continental critics and poets to equate the epic and history and to prefer a subject rooted in historical fact waxed even stronger during the seventeenth century, and culminated in Milton's decision to repudiate Arthurian legend as a possible epic theme.<sup>1</sup> That he turned to the Bible as an alternative is not surprising, given its special position in the intellectual life of Milton's time. The Bible was widely considered--and was certainly considered by Milton--to be the one true source of unimpeachable fact and thus the fountainhead of historical veracity. Consequently Milton's decision to turn to the Bible as the basis of his epic confirms rather than confutes the historical nature of his poem.<sup>2</sup>

One way of dealing with the relation of Renaissance historiography to Paradise Lost is to see that relation itself in an historical context, by examining how history



was characteristically conceived and practiced in Milton's age and in the ages preceding it. Knowledge of the historical context may help us to understand--not in any severely deterministic fashion, but rather by way of analogy--the tendencies, emphases, and nuances of Milton's concept of history as it is expressed in his major epic.

Perhaps the most striking feature of many medieval and Renaissance histories is their ambitious temporal expansiveness. Often stretching from before the Creation to the present and (by implication) beyond, the universal chronicles produced by many medieval historians were epic in range if not in actual intent. For medieval Christians, events in time meant little outside the context of eternity; history was a record not only of human action and behavior, but of God's dealings with man, and to understand God's purposes clearly, an event could not be isolated and examined apart from the total historical record. By 1100, sixty universal chronicles existed, and if during the Renaissance this historiographical tradition was beginning to deteriorate, its influence was still potent enough to affect the greatest historian of Elizabethan England. Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World was clearly patterned on the ancient model, and Milton's familiarity with and

appreciation of Raleigh seems certain.<sup>3</sup> But we need hardly appeal to historical evidence to show that Paradise Lost manifests this characteristic historical expansiveness; we need only look to the poem itself. Its famous first few lines encompass man's fall, his restoration, and (by implication) everything in between. Even these lines, however, do not indicate the full range of the work, since they make no mention at all of the events described that take place before the Fall. But what they do indicate--or at least suggest--is another trait that Milton's poem shares with many of the histories produced during his own age and the age preceding it. This is an emphasis upon individuals and individual action and responsibility. The story of Paradise Lost is not so much the story of vast impersonal historical forces, their contentions and effects, as it is the story of a number of sharply defined and differently motivated personalities. It is the story of Adam and Eve, of Satan and Christ, of Abdiel and Nimrod. For Milton as for many other historians of his time, the chief historical interest lay in the motives and decisions of private beings, not in the machinations of empires or in the abstract designs of states. So pervasive is this concern with men and motives in Samuel Daniel's Civil Wars, for instance,

that E.M.W. Tillyard was moved to remark that "the only way to read Daniel aright is to agree with the spirit of Ben Jonson's pronouncement that there is not a battle in the book, and to expect the high places not in the acts themselves but in the preparation for them."<sup>4</sup> It would not be exaggerating much to say something similar about Paradise Lost. Certainly the central event of the poem, the eating of the apple, seems almost uneventful: it happens so fast that it is over before we know it ("So saying, her rash hand in evil hour / Forth reaching to the Fruit, she plucked, she eat" [IX, 780-81]). For Milton and his readers the fateful bite was itself relatively unimportant; what was important were the motives and mental processes that made the eating possible, and on these Milton lavishes great attention. Events in Paradise Lost tend to be insignificant in themselves, except insofar as they disclose the purposes and commitments of the agents involved. Thus, the War in Heaven is less meaningful as a military engagement than as an opportunity for the angelic host to demonstrate their fidelity to God, just as Raphael later explains to Adam that God often dispatches the angels "upon his high behests / For state, as Sovran King, and to enure / Our prompt obedience" (VIII, 238-40).

Milton's emphasis upon personality would be absurd if he did not also take for granted the freedom and consequent responsibility of individuals. In assuming the existence of such freedom, Milton was again consistent with another tendency of Renaissance historians. "A view of the importance and reality of freedom of action of the individual," Myrom Gilmore has written, "was at the very center of their understanding of the historical world."<sup>5</sup> If that world had been conceded to be totally determined by forces above and beyond the control of the individual, it would have been difficult to hold individuals responsible for their actions. Thus, Milton and the historians of his era wanted to stress that the conditions under which an act took place did not absolve the individual of responsibility for his acts; in the metaphor used by Herbert Butterfield in a larger context, history was "a human drama, a drama of personalities, taking place as it were, on the stage of nature, and amid its imposing scenery."<sup>6</sup> The Producer of this drama had final say over what went on, and occasionally--during the Flood, for instance--he might choose to bring down the curtain. But the concept of Providence need not make history strictly deterministic.

Satan, in his franker moments, is willing to concede his essential independence and thus also his responsibility for what befalls him. But more often than not he recoils from the consequences of this admission and prefers instead "necessity, / The Tyrant's plea;" he feels himself compelled "To do what else though damn'd I should abhor" (IV, 392-94). Satan's argument is one that Milton, his God, and the historians of his time would have immediately recognized, but immediately dismissed. This is not to say that they would have ignored the influence and effects of secondary causes, but they would have assigned those causes a subordinate place in the total picture of things. Eve's noontime hunger may influence her decision to eat the proffered apple, but her action is by no means determined by her hunger; it is a conscious and willful choice, and one whose consequences she must rightly suffer. By rejecting a strict historical determinism, then, Milton and the historians of his day were able to take into account the leverage exercised by secondary causes without contradicting the assumption of individual free will. And so it is that God dispatches the Angel Raphael--variously called by Adam "Divine instructor" (V, 546) and "Divine / Historian" (VIII,

6-7)--to teach Adam the measure of his freedom and his concomitant responsibility.

Raphael's dual appellation suggests another point of contact between Milton's epic and certain characteristics of Renaissance historiography. The purpose of history, as it was conceived by many in Milton's day and by even more in the age preceding his, was instruction of one sort or another.<sup>7</sup> Epic and history, however, were alike not only because their radical purpose was to teach, but also because they taught in much the same way--by example. History shared with epic the advantage of dealing in the specific and concrete; while a philosopher might abstractly pontificate about hypothetical situation, the historian and poet were able to present a problem, paint a scene, and populate it with real or realistic characters. For Milton and his predecessors, history was not the study of unique events, nor did they believe that history should be studied for its own sake. And although Renaissance historians were characteristically concerned with individual motives and behavior, they were all too aware of the typical and recurrent. They studied the past not because of idle curiosity, but because they thought it possible to profit from the examples and precedents it contained.

History as it is conceived and practiced by Raphael in Paradise Lost bears a conspicuous resemblance to the standard notions just described. Raphael's whole purpose in relating the War in Heaven is to teach Adam by negative example how not to behave in his relations with his Creator. Significantly, Satan is presented early in the poem as incapable of learning his moral lesson from historical example; he is "by success [outcome] untaught" (II, 9). But this is not to say that Satan is unmindful of history or indifferent to its appeal; in one sense, indeed, his interest is almost obsessive. He is obsessed with historical fame.

The appetite for fame is part of a larger human hunger for transcendent historicity, or "any historical ideal beyond the present reality, which serves to give purpose to life . . . because it offers a symbolic form of perpetuating our identity and presence."<sup>8</sup> Epics in the classical tradition emphasized this hunger as central to the hero's motives and identity.<sup>9</sup> It is found as well in Paradise Lost, but there the emphasis is inverted. In Milton's epic, Satan is the "hero" who seeks historical fame and historical transcendence. About to set out on his journey through Chaos, he is frankly eager for the "high" reputè / Which he

through hazard huge must earn" (II, 472-73). Then, seven books later and moments before his successful temptation of Eve, he gloats in anticipation:

To mee shall be the glory sole among  
Th' infernal Powers, in one day to have marr'd  
What he Almighty styl'd, six Nights and Days  
Continu'd making, and who knows how long  
Before had been contriving. . . .(IX, 135-38)

Satan's deception of Eve may hardly seem consonant with our standard idea of a glorious deed, but it is clear by this point in the poem that the Temptation is indistinguishable in kind and quality from his earlier and seemingly more "heroic" behavior. Milton's poem breaks from classical epic precedent by insisting that, although true transcendence may be worked out in history, it can never be merely historical since its object is God. An event or deed, no matter how apparently heroic or illustrious, is empty or evil if done through ignorance of disobedience to God's purposes and commands. Paradise Lost, it can be argued, adheres to the standard Renaissance notion that a history should deal with heroic actions, but it also offers a radical critique of conventional heroism.<sup>10</sup> For Milton true heroes can be those beings who do, apparently, very little that is obviously "heroic": Abdiel deserts Satan's camp, Enoch stands fast, Christ suffers patiently on the cross. A truly heroic deed



for Milton need not be public or spectacular; it might consist of simple resistance to temptation or of the private fact of obedience and fidelity. History should indeed celebrate heroism and perpetuate its memory, but this should not mean that the subject of history need necessarily be the deeds of war.<sup>11</sup> To Satan, his cohorts, and descendents, this distinction does not occur. Thus, Satan speaks of the War in Heaven as a "great event" (I, 118), and attributes his defeat to his own weakness and to God's superior strength. But from Raphael's account of the same contest we realize that its military features are the least important, and are possibly parodic. The War exists not as a trial of military might but as a test of spiritual fidelity, and in the last analysis it is decided not by superior strength but by superior virtue. In their attempt to win historic renown through heroic deeds, Satan and his followers lose the only glory that really matters--the love and benevolence of God.

This pattern established by Satan and his crew is repeated over and over in subsequent human history. In Books XI and XII, the angel Michael has much to tell of men "in acts of prowess eminent / And great exploits, but of true virtue void" (XI, 789-90)--men like Nimrod and his followers, who are concerned to "get themselves a name, lest

far disperst / In foreign Lands thir memory be lost, /  
Regardless whether good or evil fame" (XII, 45-47). As  
Michael's tale proceeds and example is piled upon example,  
the reader becomes increasingly aware of a pattern of  
opposed behavioral archetypes, replicated and confirmed  
throughout the course of time. Satan resembles Cain who  
resembles the sons of Seth who resemble the race of giants  
who resemble the men of Noah's time who resemble Nimrod who  
resembles Ham who resembles Pharoah who resembles the sinful  
Israelites who resemble the slayers of Christ who resemble  
the tyrants of the Catholic Church who resemble all tyrants  
and sinners down to Milton's day and beyond. An equivalent  
list could be compiled of others--like Abdiel, Noah, and  
Enoch--who resist the Satanic influence and remain faithful  
to God. The fact that such lists can be compiled indicates  
that, although Miltonic history is best understood as the  
stories of individual men, those stories are never  
completely unique or inimitable. If they were, they could  
not function as examples to later men or as instances in  
broader historical generalizations. Such generalizations  
are possible not because men are denied the freedom of  
individual choice, but because in Milton's moral universe a  
choice can only be either right or wrong. It can only be a

choice, ultimately, to disobey or be loyal. If in broad perspective the history of mankind seems to reveal the existence of apparently rigid behavioral types and historical patterns, this fact still cannot be taken as evidence of an inexorable historical determinism. To men of the Renaissance, "the future was unpredictable, and if the past had in retrospect the air of inevitability to the eye of the observer who was analyzing it, yet this was a product of forces not only beyond man's ken but also of the wisdom and follies, the virtues and vices of the individuals who made decisions."<sup>12</sup> A man was free to act as he chose, and although his choice would conform to one pattern or another, it would not be determined by them. History was valuable as the record of past human choices and their consequences, and from the many specimens of behavior it assembled, broad historical laws might be deduced.

The habit of generalizing from historical instances was not uncommon. Nevertheless, in two letters to Henry de Brass, Milton seems to contradict the notion that an historian should instead be content to relate events as they happened, without comment. But Milton's own practice in his History of Britain is by no means as rigid as these comments might suggest.<sup>13</sup> In fact the spirit of didacticism--of

generalizing from historical example--pervades his whole History, and this is even more the case in Paradise Lost. There Milton is seldom satisfied merely to display an event without some indication of how it should be interpreted or of how it fits into the larger picture. Whether he is lamenting in a long speech strife among men (II, 496-505) or in two lines likening Satan to church hirelings (IV, 192-93), all Milton's generalizations share a sense that history is not simply the record of past events, but a meaningful story with implications for the present and future. The object of historical understanding is not so much simply a knowledge of the past as it is an expanded perspective on the present. This is obviously the case in Michael's treatment of post-lapsarian history in Books XI and XII. Even though Adam, presented with the long and dismal story of his Race, momentarily wishes that he had "Liv'd ignorant of future, [and] so had borne / My part of evil only, each day's lot / Enough to bear" (XI, 764-66), by the poem's conclusion Michael's narrative has had not only an educative but also a consolatory effect. Adam has learned not only patience and hope; he has learned to apply the knowledge gained through historical example and generalization to his own life and time. To paraphrase

Butterfield, history has been brought home with him in an intimate way, knit into one fabric continuous with his own inner experience.<sup>14</sup>

Surely the effect of Paradise Lost on Milton's audience is, and was intended to be, the same. Milton as poet stands in the same relation to his reader as Raphael and Michael stand in relation to Adam, and just as Adam is expected to profit from the instruction and examples contained in their historical narratives, so should the reader ideally learn from Milton's epic with its additional example of Adamic behavior. Paradise Lost is more than the product of a great poet's imagination and genius; it is intrinsically an historical narrative, a "true story," with a frankly didactic purpose. It exists not simply to tell a tale or to recount great deeds, but to order and make sense of historical events and to indicate their contemporary relevance. And although it is most obviously related to classical epic precedent and tradition, it can also be profitably studied from an historicist point of view.

Milton's poem shares with other histories of his age an explicitly educative purpose, an emphasis upon the exemplary nature of history, and a concomitant tendency to generalize from historical example. Historical narrative is focussed

more upon the individual than upon great collectivities or impersonal forces, a trait that follows from and depends upon the assumption that men have free will and thus responsibility for their actions, which may be influenced but are not determined by secondary causes. The history of the past is considered to be continuous with and relevant to the present and the future, and one of the effects of historical analysis is to reveal the existence of types and patterns of behavior that continue to exist to the presentday. But the persistence of such types does not mean that they are providentially ordained or that the movement of history is necessarily cyclical, and if it seems so in hindsight this is only because throughout the course of time men have acted from similar motives and have either suffered or enjoyed similar consequences. In fact, the motives behind the events more than the events themselves are the chief topics of historical knowledge and analysis; historical agents are evaluated morally, according to their loyalty or disobedience to God. "Great" historical events, like the War in Heaven, have little intrinsic importance; they are significant as proving grounds for faithfulness or infidelity. For Milton, then, a "great" historical event might be something completely private and apparently

uneventful; he condemns explicitly and by implication the notion that history is the record of deeds of valor and strength, pausing always to ask whether those deeds are also morally good. History may indeed be a refuge from devouring time, but not in the conventional sense. Men should not act from a desire for historical fame, but should seek to transcend time and history altogether by acting as God commands. Those who are motivated by fame will be ultimately rewarded with ignominy and neglect.

These, briefly, are the chief characteristics of Milton's historical practice in Paradise Lost. Taken together, they constitute in large part the "myth," the organizing principles and central assumptions of his poem. Whether we find them today philosophically appealing or intellectually untenable, we can scarcely deny their importance to Milton's epic or their contribution to its formal unity and aesthetic success.

<sup>1</sup>On Renaissance epic, Renaissance historiography, and the connections between them, see for instance H.T. Swedenberg, Jr., The Theory of the Epic in England 1650-1800 [Univ. of California Publications in English, Vol. XV] (Berkeley, 1944); E.M.W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (New York, 1954); F.J. Levy, Tudor Historical Thought (San Marino, 1967); F. Smith Fussner, The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought: 1580-1640 (London, 1962); Homer Nearing, Jr., English Historical Poetry 1599-1641 (Philadelphia, 1945). An overview of the relations between history and the epic is given by G. Giovannini in his article, "History and Poetry," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, enlarged ed., ed. Alex Preminger, et al. (Princeton, 1974), pp. 348-52.

For Milton's comments on Arthur see his History of Britain in The Works of John Milton (New York, 1931-38), X, p. 128. All subsequent references to Milton's prose are to this edition, and are cited by title, volume, and page number only. The History of Britain is cited simply as History.

<sup>2</sup>On the Renaissance attitude towards the Bible as a supremely truthful record of events, see Herschel Baker, The Race of Time: Three Lectures on Renaissance Historiography (Toronto, 1967), p. 35. Milton's use of Biblical history in this manner in Paradise Lost is perhaps too well-known to need much demonstration; see, for instance, Book IX, 439-44. All references to Milton's poetry are from John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis, 1957). Subsequent references are cited within the text by Book and line numbers.

<sup>3</sup>In his tract Eikonoklastes, Milton argued that "the Bible, if we mean not to run into errors, vanities, and uncertainties, must be our only Historie" (Eikonoklastes, V, p. 229). Similarly, the opening pages of his History declare that the origins and early history of nations are "either wholly unknown, or obscur'd and blemisht with Fables," but Milton is careful to except those nations "of whom sacred Books have spok'n" (History, X, p. 1).

<sup>4</sup>Tillyard, p. 332. Myron P. Gilmore argues that "The concern of Renaissance historians with describing the



actions and reflecting upon the moral responsibilities of individuals was no doubt in part a result of their following the historiographic tradition of antiquity." See Humanists and Jurists: Six Studies in the Renaissance (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), p. 59.

<sup>5</sup>Gilmore, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup>The characteristics and development of medieval historiography are traced by C.A. Patrides in his book The Grand Design of God: The Literary Form of the Christian View of History (Toronto, 1972). The details of Milton's familiarity with Raleigh are discussed by Sir Charles Firth in "Sir Walter Raleigh's 'History of the World,'" one of his Essays Historical and Literary (Oxford, 1938), pp. 51-52. The same volume includes the essay "Milton as an Historian."

<sup>7</sup>Baker, p. 48. Milton's own avowed purpose in his History was "to relate well and orderly things worth noting, so as may best instruct and benefit them that read" (History, X, p. 3).

<sup>8</sup>John T. Marcus, Heaven, Hell, and History: A Survey of Man's Faith in History from Antiquity to the Present (New York, 1967), p. xxiii.

<sup>9</sup>Marcus, pp. 8-10.

<sup>10</sup>Peter Burke writes in his book The Renaissance Sense of the Past (New York, 1969) that in the Renaissance it was believed that a history should "deal with heroic action; anything less was beneath the 'dignity of history,' a phrase which was much used at the Renaissance. The dignity of history, for the Renaissance writer as for Tacitus . . . excluded 'low' people, things, or words" (p. 105). In his own explicitly historical writing, Milton too seems to have a conception of the dignity of history, but for him "low" people and acts seem to be defined more in moral than in social terms. Indeed, some historians "have forbore to write the Acts of their own daies, while they beheld with a just loathing and disdain, not only how unworthy, how pervers, how corrupt, but often how ignoble, how petty, how below all History the persons and their actions were" (History, X, pp. 1-2).

<sup>11</sup>Gilmore points out that, in the Renaissance, war was considered "the principle subject of historical analysis" (p. 45). In his own History, Milton devotes much of his discussion to the preparation, conduct, and outcome of many battles, but his emphasis seems always implicitly moral and exemplary. He seems plainly uninterested in military might as a subject in its own right; see, for instance, History, X, pp. 179, 325.

<sup>12</sup>Gilmore, p. 59.

<sup>13</sup>For the comments to de Brass, see Familiar Letters, XII, pp. 95, 101-03. For instances of Milton's own historical generalizations, see History, X, pp. 20; 28; 114; 140; 198; 280; 316; 317; 324.

<sup>14</sup>Butterfield, p. 107. One of the characteristics that helps distinguish Renaissance from medieval historiography is its emphasis upon faithfulness to the actual historical sources, but as Gilmore has observed (p. 18), "For most of the characteristic thinkers of the Renaissance the cry for the return to sources was accompanied by the conviction that the sources when recovered would be relevant to present concerns."

## Bram Stoker and the Ambiguity of Identity

Daryl R. Coats

Confronted at 347 Piccadilly by the vampire hunters, Dracula snarls: "Your girls that you love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine--my creatures to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed."<sup>1</sup> Are their girls really Dracula's? Most of the novel involves resolving that question. Confusion and doubt as to "true identity" is again a major element in The Jewel of Seven Stars. Early in the novel, "there was a chagrin that she [Margaret] knew so little of her father" (my emphasis).<sup>2</sup> Later Malcolm Ross confesses, "I was beginning to doubt Margaret! . . . Margaret was changing! At times during the past few days I had hardly known her as the same girl" (JSS, p. 211). The question arises, is she really Margaret, or is she someone else? Ross is determined to find out, though he is frightened as to what the answer might be (e.g., JSS, p. 215). A large portion of The Lady of the Shroud concerns Rupert's uncertainty as to the true identity of Teuta and to his search for the answer:

It was not possible to doubt that the phantom figure which had been so close to me during the dark hours of the night was actual flesh and blood. Yet she was so cold, so cold! Altogether I could not fix my mind to either proposition: that it was a living woman who had held my hand, or a dead

body reanimated for the time or the occasion in some strange manner.

The difficulty was too great for me to make up my mind upon it . . . .<sup>3</sup>

As suggested from just these three instances, a major concern in the horror novels of Bram Stoker is the uncertainty--the ambiguity--of identity. That ambiguity I will seek to examine.

The entire business of ambiguous identity in Bram Stoker's horror novels is part of a larger theme found in each of his works, namely, the theme of reality versus illusion. In the horror novels, the question arises as to what is real and what is not. In The Lady of the Shroud, for instance, Teuta gives every indication of being a vampire (e.g., LoS, pp. 76, 93-94), but her "vampire nature" is actually an illusion. In searching for the "truth" about identity, Stoker calls into question several Victorian conventions. One is that of race. What does it mean to be of a certain race? Is one race better than another, or are all races alike? One of the chief characters in Lair of the White Worm is the African chief Oolanga. Oolanga, apparently, sees no difference between the races and desire to "lub" (marry) the white (!) Lady Arabella.<sup>4</sup> Edgar Caswell and Adam Salton believe differently, however: to Caswell, Negroes are a bothersome lot, and he would be

relieved if they were simply disposed of (LWW, p. 1205); and Adam Salton supposedly is disappointed that Lady Arabella does not "show any repugnance" when she first meets Oolanga (LWW, p. 28). Attention is drawn to Lilla's and Mimi Watford's different races: "Strange how different they are! Lilla all fair, like the old Saxon stock she is sprung from; Mimi almost as dark as the darkest of her mother's [Burmese] race" (LWW, p. 33). Though different, they are both Watorfs, they both have the same grandfather, and they both live in the same house. Though different, they certainly have more common than they have with some members of their own races. Though "sprung" from "old Saxon stock," Lilla has nothing in common with Lady Arabella, who is a "girl of the Caucasian type, beautiful, Saxon-blond<sup>a</sup>e . . ." (LWW, p. 28). The white Saxon race is certainly an illusion here because Lady Arabella, a snake, is not even of the human race. Like Oolanga, she apparently sees no difference between her "race" and the human race since she has had one human husband and seeks another.

Another convention called into question is that of the "real" roles of men and women, and the horror novels often probe "What is a man?" and "What is a woman?" Privately, Lady Arabella is confident that she can have her way with

Caswell because "he was only a man" (LWW, p. 86); in public she assumes a different attitude, telling Caswell that he can have his way with Lilla because "she is, after all, only a woman" (LWW, p. 92). She further advises him not to show weakness, because weakness is unmanly. "Real" men and "real" women act toward members of the opposite sex according to certain prescribed rules (e.g., D, p. 248; JSS, pp. 44-45, 108, 239-246; LoS, pp. 67-69; and LWW, p. 86).

When these rules are not followed, confusion results. Queen Tera acted so much like a man that, thousands of years after her death, the Egyptians cannot remember if she was a man or a woman (JSS, p. 121). The official records of her reign depict her in male attire (JSS, pp. 138, 140). For some reason, all of Stoker's monsters, excepting Dracula, are women. Indeed, the monster hunters in Lair of the White Worm describe their mission: "our strong game will be to play our masculine against her feminine" (LWW, p. 140).

A "real" man and a "real" woman apparently do not become physically involved with each other. When Rupert and Teuta finally embrace, it is not as man and woman, but as mother and child (LoS, p. 125). When Malcolm Ross and Margaret unite, it is not as man and woman, but as boy and girl (JSS, p. 93). As Malcolm explains, a woman can "unman"

a man if he becomes too physically attached to her (JSS, p. 169). Nevertheless, the horror novels contain much bedroom activity between men and women. In Dracula, bedrooms are the center of activity for both the destruction and salvation of Dracula's female victims. In The Jewel of Seven Stars, Malcolm Ross is in bed when he is first called to Margaret's aid. Early, he and Margaret spend much time together "on guard" in Mr. Trelawny's bedroom. All of Queen Tera's attacks on Trelawny occur in his bedroom. In The Lady of the Shroud, Teuta's first three appearances to Rupert are in his bedroom, and twice she demonstrates "a disdain of convention" by spending the night with him. And in Lair of the White Worm, Lady Arabella breaks through "a defence of convention" to appear to Edgar Caswell in his bedroom (LWW, p. 86).

One aspect of the ambiguity of identity that Stoker repeats is that of man as animal, a concept seemingly at odds with the concept of Britain as "the crowning race." Man as animal became a major concern of the Victorians, for whom the theories expressed in The Origin of Species (1859) and The Descent of Man (1871) "raised more explicitly the haunting question of man's identification with the animal kingdom."<sup>5</sup> The impact of the evolution theory on Victorian

society is discussed and examined in great detail by other writers, including William Irvine and Gertrude Himmelfarb, and rather than repeat what they and others have already said, I wish to note only that, with the rise of Darwinism, man seemed to be losing part of his "human" identity. As the zoo-keeper remarks in Dracula, ". . . there's a deal of the same nature in us as in them their animiles" (D, p. 128).

The notion of man as animal is repeatedly suggested in Stoker's horror novels. Dracula is at times very non-human. Mina is once tempted to pity the count until she recalls: "this thing is not human---not even beast" (D, p. 204). When Dracula crawls down the wall of his Transylvanian castle, he does so like a lizard with wings (D, p. 37). Asleep in his box of dirt after a full meal, Dracula is a "tiger" (D, p. 282) who moves like a panther and has a "cold stare of lion-like disdain" (D, p. 270). Dracula often appears in the novel as a bat or a wolf, and he is quite able to command wolves to do his bidding (D, pp. 16-17, 129, 131-132, 183, etc.).

The female vampires in Dracula are also animal-like, and Dracula treats them (D, p. 41) much the same way he treats wolves (D, pp. 16-17). ("But then, you can't trust



wolves no more nor [than] women"--D, p. 129.) When the blonde vampire prepares to bite Jonathan, she "licked her lips like an animal" (D, p. 41). When Lucy encounters Van Helsing and his vampire hunters in the cemetery, she snarls like "a cat . . . taken unawares" (D, p. 189). She tries to "protect" her child victim from the vampire hunters, "growling over [the child] as a dog growls over a bone" (D, p. 190). And when Dracula "marries" Mina, "the attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child [Dracula] forcing a kitten's [Mina's] nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink" (D, p. 249).

In The Jewel of Seven Stars, Malcolm Ross dismisses the idea that Margaret might be an animal:

Her hair was black also . . . . Generally black hair is a type of animal strength . . . , but in this case there could be no such thought . . . . any sense of power there was, was rather spiritual than animal. (p. 31)

Despite Ross's high opinion of her, Margaret is equated with cats. Her double, Queen Tera, is also a double of two seven-clawed cats, and she herself is several times said to be the mother of the cat Sylvio (e.g., JSS, pp. 34, 35, 37). When Teuta first appears in The Lady of the Shroud, she is described as an animal (LoS, p. 64). In Lair of the White

Worm, Mimi is once likened to an angered bird, while her cousin Lilla is likened to a dove (LWW, p. 33).

The most obvious instance of Stoker's man-as-animal is Lady Arabella in Lair of the White Worm. Snakes are drawn to her, as are wolverines, the deadly enemies of snakes (LWW, pp. 25, 52). She has an "excessively thin . . . sinuous figure," a "peculiar" voice, and a "sibilant" speech, and she walks with a "strange waving motion" (LWW, pp. 25-26). Her "blazing green eyes" (LWW, p. 119)--the "eyes of a snake" (LWW, p. 137)--can see in the dark (LWW, pp. 116, 118). When angry, she displays a "venomous fury" (LWW, p. 119), doubtless because of her "snake's nature" (LWW, pp. 137, 153) and "instincts of a primeval serpent" (LWW, p. 192). In short, she is a snake (LWW, p. 143)--the white worm. Since she is also a woman ("under the instincts of a primeval serpent, [she] carried the ever-varying indestructible wishes and customs of womanhood"--LWW, p. 192), Lady Arabella is doubly dangerous as a monster:

This [antideluvian monster] is a woman, with all a woman's wisdom and wit, combined with the heartlessness of a cocotte and the want of principle of a suffragette. She has the reserved strength and impregnability of a diplodocus. We may be sure that in the fight that is before us there will be no semblance of fair-play . . . . we have to protect ourselves against feminine nature. (LWW, p. 140)

Another aspect of the ambiguity of identity that Stoker uses is that of the double-identity, or the dual existence. In Dracula, the vampire count assumes the identity of "Count de Ville" in order to operate freely in England (D, p. 241). Earlier, in Transylvania, he prowled for victims in Harker's clothes so as to give the impression that Harker was the vampire (D, p. 46; cf. p. 47). One might say that Lucy assumes a second identity when she becomes a vampire or that the lunatic Renfield assumes a different identity during his sane moments. And Mina assumes several new identities. Though still single, she once signs a letter to Lucy as "Mina Harker" (D, p. 105). After her marriage, Mina also becomes "unclean"--"Mrs. Dracula" in the eyes of the count (D, p. 255). She also becomes a mother to the vampire hunters (cf. D, p. 332) and possibly their wife as well.

The double identity also appears in The Jewel of Seven Stars. Mr. Trelawny makes much of Queen Tera's "astral body," which can easily take over the physical body of another person and give the Queen a second identity (JSS, pp. 188-187). Margaret is a person whom the queen possesses, and her fiancée Malcolm Ross is dismayed when she begins to develop a "dual existence" (JSS, p. 224):

The dual existence! . . . her whole being could be changed without anyone noticing the doings of it.

. . . the thought was too awful for words. I ground my teeth with futile rage, as the ideas of horrible possibilities swept through me. (JSS, p. 216)

Indeed, one of the "horrors" of the novel is that Margaret, who previously had been simply a double of the queen, is in danger of becoming another identity of the queen (see JSS, pp. 94, 172, 174, 189-192, 193, 199, 208, 211-212, 213-214, and 243): "In such a case Margaret would not be an individual at all but simply a phase of Queen Tera . . .!" (JSS, p. 214).

The double identity is very much central to the nature of the title characters in The Lady of the Shroud and The Lair of the White Worm. In the latter, Lady Arabella is a prehistoric monster--"the white worm"--that has taken on a human identity for reasons and purposes of her own. And in The Lady of the Shroud, Teuta assumes a second identity in order to save her life (LoS, pp. 150-156): the identity of a vampire. She seems to be dead (LoS, p. 65); she sleeps in a tomb (LoS, pp. 93-94); her nocturnal appearances and morning disappearances are characteristic of a vampire (LoS, p. 76). Rupert, of course, is concerned with the question, "Is she really a vampire?" (LoS, pp. 132-133). But his inability to answer the question satisfactorily does not stand in the way of his love for her (just as a similar

uncertainty on Malcolm Ross's part does not put an end to his love for Margaret in The Jewel of Seven Stars): he has determined to love Tueta, no matter what she really is (LoS, p. 115).

A third aspect of the ambiguity of identity is the Doppelganger, or the double. The use of the double in literature is extensive, but it is not my purpose here to postulate reasons underlying that use (especially since other critics have done so).<sup>6</sup> Suffice it to say that the Doppelganger was a major figure in nineteenth-century Gothic novels (especially Frankenstein, Wuthering Heights, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and The Picture of Dorian Gray) and that Bram Stoker was continuing a "tradition" by including the figure in his own horror novels.

"Doubling over" is more extensive in Dracula and The Jewel of Seven Stars than it is in The Lady of the Shroud or The Lair of the White Worm; Lady Arabella is presented as a double (of sorts) of Edgar Caswell and Mimi Salton née Watford (LWW, p. 192). Earlier, she is presented as a double of the goddess Diana (cf. LWW, pp. 20 and 30), even to the point of being worshipped (LWW, p. 28). And one instance of doubling over in Lady of the Shroud occurs during Rupert's and Teuta's second meeting, at which time

they literally exchange roles. During that meeting, Rupert becomes the stranger on the balcony, desiring to enter the castle, and Teuta becomes the sole occupant of the bedroom and the one who must invite the "vampire" in before he can cross over the threshold (LoS, p. 85).

The most obvious pair of doubles in The Jewel of Seven Stars is Margaret and Queen Tera. Margaret's birth occurred at the exact moment that the mummy of Queen Tera was re-discovered (JSS, pp. 147, 172, 213). Margaret has a jagged birthmark on her wrist that resembles the scar on Queen Tera's wrist (JSS, pp. 139, 145, 172). Like the queen, Margaret is tall (JSS, pp. 32, 70; cf. pp. 100, 243), young (JSS, p. 139), a woman (JSS, pp. 190, 123-124), a queen (JSS, pp. 70, 176, cf. p. 121), and an "Egyptian" (JSS, p. 70). Margaret "is unlike her mother; but in both feature and color she has a marvelous resemblance to. . . Queen Tera" (JSS, p. 148; cf. p. 214). This resemblance is so great that the unwrapped mummy "is the image of Margaret" (JSS, p. 246). (No wonder, then, that Margaret is so anxious to clothe the "nude" mummy--JSS, pp. 239-241, 245!) The queen hoped to be a new woman (JSS, p. 183); according to Malcolm Ross, Margaret is already a "new woman" (JSS, pp. 191, 211-212, 216). And when Margaret marries Malcolm Ross,

"she wore the mummy robe and zone and the jewels which Queen Tera had worn in her hair. On her breast . . . she wore the strange Jewel of Seven Stars" (JSS, p. 254).

Margaret is also a double of her mother ("Now mother's daughter does as her mother would have done herself!"--JSS, p. 176) and of Ross ("Margaret and I were one"--JSS, p. 211). Queen Tera is also a double of Sylvio and of the mummy cat because all three have seven fingers/claws (JSS, pp. 124, 238, 34-35).<sup>7</sup> In addition, Tera and the mummy cat are both mummies and both are unwrapped. Queen Tera is also a double of Mr. Trelawny, whose hand is nearly severed as was hers (JSS, p. 44).

The most bizarre doubling over in the novel (perhaps in Gothic literature) involves Queen Tera's severed, seven-digit hand, which has a life of its own (JSS, p. 145). Having seven digits and leaving seven marks on its victims (JSS, pp. 124, 145) make the hand a double of both Sylvio's paw and the paw of the mummy cat (which also leave seven-digit marks on victims--JSS, pp. 36, 238). It also mirrors Mr. Trelawny's nearly-severed hand (JSS, pp. 16, 44). Most important, it is a double of Margaret's hand. Before he knows anything at all about Queen Tera or her hand, Malcolm Ross notes that when he first met Margaret, her hand

"seemed to move from the wrist as though it had a sentience of its own" (JSS, p. 32). While reading in a book about the queen's hand, Ross is startled to see that "there lay a hand across the book! . . . I knew the hand that I saw on the book . . . was Margaret Trelawny's hand . . . and yet at that moment, coming after other marvellous things, it had a strangely moving effect on me" (JSS, p. 129, pun on "moving"?). Only by taking her hand in his and counting her fingers does he know for certain that it is her hand and not the queen's (JSS, p. 130). As this last action would indicate, Ross's holding Margaret's hand parallels Nicholas van Huyn of Hoorn's holding the mummy hand (JSS, pp. 13, 130, and 124); and Ross's desiring Margaret's hand (!) parallels the Bedouins desiring the mummy's hand (JSS, pp. 126, 165). Just as the wrist of the queen's hand has "a scar like a jagged red line, from which seemed to depend drops of blood" (JSS, p. 145), so the wrist of Margaret's hand has "a thin red jagged line, from which seemed to hang red stains like drops of blood!" (JSS, p. 172; cf. p. 175). And just as much attention is given to the queen's hand, so much attention is given to Margaret's hand (JSS, pp. 13, 169).



Doubling in Dracula and the female vampires serve as alter-egos of almost every non-vampiric character in the novel. Dracula is a double of Jonathan Harker. In Transylvania Dracula wears Harker's clothing (D, p. 46) and Harker admits to "feeling" like Dracula (D, p. 47). Both characters travel from Transylvania to England and then back to Transylvania. In England Harker's physical appearance is similar to that of Dracula in Transylvania (D, p. 267). And both characters are married (or least claim to be married) to Mina Harker (D, p. 255).

Dracula is also a double of Renfield. Like Dracula, Renfield obtains life by eating "others" (D, p. 71). Renfield's "peaks of insanity" match Dracula's peaks of power. And on one occasion Renfield drinks human blood (Seward's--D, p. 133). Seward, too, is a blood-sucker--sometime in the past, he had to suck Van Helsing's blood in order to prevent gangrene poisoning (D, p. 110)--and double of Dracula. Dracula is also a double of Lucy: he had three lovers in Transylvania and she has three suitors in England.<sup>8</sup> And, of course, both are vampires, as well as victims of Van Helsing and his troupe of vampire hunters.

Another double of Dracula is Van Helsing (D, pp. 118, 121, 127, and others): "Dracula hypnotizes; Van Helsing

hypnotizes. Dracula sucks blood; Van Helsing transfuses blood."<sup>9</sup> Both characters are foreigners, both are father figures, and both attack "sleeping" victims.<sup>10</sup> Dracula is also a double of Mina. He smells like her (D, p. 247). Both have a "red scar . . . on the forehead" (D, pp. 270, 272, and others). Under hypnosis, Mina becomes Dracula (i.e., his senses are hers). Dracula also claims that Mina is "flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood; kin of my kin" (D, p. 255).

Other doubles appear. Mina and Lucy are both called "little girl" by Morris (D, p. 206, and others); both become "the woman" of Morris, Seward, and Godalming; both are Dracula's victims, and several aspects of their attacks are similar; and Mina's "death-bed" speech echoes Lucy's (D, pp. 292, 148). Mina is also a double of the three vampire women, who address her as "sister" (D, p. 322), and are, in a sense, kin of her kin (D, p. 255). Quincey Morris is a double of the Harker baby. Morris, Seward, and Godalming are also doubles; all are Lucy's suitors; all give blood; all join Van Helsing's troupe; and all are somewhat vague as characters.

Ultimately, the ambiguities of identity are resolved and cleared up. The monsters are properly identified and

destroyed; the non-monsters are properly identified and saved; and the lovers are properly identified and married. Some traces of duality remain, however. One double still exists on the last page of Dracula, and the memories of Queen Tera, Teuta in her vampire disguise, and Lady Arabella are still on the last pages of the novels in which those characters appear. But such is to be expected. As long as lovers love with a selfish love (JSS, p. 171, and others), as long as danger exists (LoS, pp. 150-156), and as long as monsters remain at least a vague possibility (LoS, p. 72), there will exist traces of ambiguous identity.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Bram Stoker, Dracula, in The Annotated Dracula, ed. Leonard Wolf (New York, 1975), p. 27. Future references to Dracula will be cited in the text and identified by "D."

<sup>2</sup>Bram Stoker, The Jewel of Seven Stars (London, 1966), p. 72. Future references to this novel will be cited in the body of the paper and identified by "JSS."

<sup>3</sup>Bram Stoker, The Lady of the Shroud (London, 1966), p. 72. Future references to this novel will be cited in the body of the paper and identified by "LoS."

<sup>4</sup>Bram Stoker, The Garden of Evil [The Lair of the White Worm] (New York, 1966), p. 112. Future references to this novel will be cited in the body of the text and identified by "LWW."

<sup>5</sup>George Ford, "The Victorian Age (1832-1901)," in Vol. 2 of The Norton Anthology of English Literature, ed. M. H. Abrams et al. (New York, 1979), pp. 934-935.

<sup>6</sup>See Otto Rank, The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study, trans. and ed. Harry Tucker, Jr. (Chapel Hill, 1971); Robert Rogers, A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature (Detroit, 1970); and Ralph Tymma, Doubles in Literary Psychology (Cambridge, 1959).

<sup>7</sup>Of course, this would make Sylvio a double of the mummy cat (cf. JSS, pp. 36 and 238).

<sup>8</sup>Mark Hennely, Jr., "Dracula: The Gnostic Quest and Victorian Wasteland," English Literature in Transition, 20 (1977), 350.

<sup>9</sup>Hennely, p. 350.

<sup>10</sup>Royce MacGillivray, "Dracula: Bram Stoker's Spoiled Masterpiece," Queen's Quarterly, 29 (1972), 522; Carol A. Senf, "Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror," Journal of Narrative Technique, 9 (1979), 165, 167.

Garden Spiders and Summer Rains  
For William Carlos Williams  
Darrell Bourque

Spanning poles and trees, power lines and summers,

The argiope aurantia return to do their work.

They insure for another year my part in the tale

About the man who grows spiders at his house;

Keep the mosquito hordes in check; always ready

When thunderheads come across the southwest prairie

To hang head-down in the rain, the six front legs

Loose, the two back one clipped on their webs

Swinging like heavy jewels from gypsies' ears.

Egrets at Bean Cutting Time  
Darrell Bourque

Unlike their finer cousins whose plumes  
Were sought to set off epaulets  
Or nestle in some artful head,  
These plain birds rise noisily in full billow  
From the beanfields bare and brown. Fine  
Belgian lace beating in from the window's  
Golden autumn air. They fly together long  
Enough to approximate pattern then break;  
Here swirling, there cutting back and down  
Again, and farther on, straight ahead,  
Those not knowing or not caring for movement,  
Or pattern, or even for flying alone. Over  
These fields my bird self meets his kin,  
Sometimes leaving, sometimes wheeling.  
Then falling, finally falling earthward.  
A paraclete rain against the color of coins.  
Ancient. Newly uncovered. Smelling sweet.

Sonnet to Aenemone  
Thomas Meade Harwell

Aenemone, I was told you were floating there  
in the purple waters, combing your purple hair,  
stretching your arms toward the freshening air.  
I was told the sun was at its ultimate stair,  
and sea was reprieved, beneath, from shark's nightmare.  
I was told, I was told-- I do not doubt; I declare  
that a fathom of palm was above you, turning in air,  
its stalk in the visible waters.

I was told: and I heard a piano chord in the sea,  
sensed in your way a union of octave and key,  
when you, up to knee, rising easily,  
acknowledged the sound. There are epiphanies--  
a fathom of palm was above you, turning in air,  
while you moved in the visible waters.

Aenemone, I should add that my union with me  
was not sealed. I awoke from your touch and nativity,  
re-entered my restless waters.

Tread of the Sun  
Larry Wilson

Blades of johnson-grass wedge their shadows  
into the splits and checks of a cypress door  
left on the ground. Quick days  
draw both ways across the cuts  
until they fan out like a river mouth.

When it rains at this threshold,

run-off from the cypress

carves the rooted clumps into islands.

If the lash of days scores the softest quickest,  
the hardest bears it most.

The door will open, the grass enter

maybe as much from jostling

under this quick world. Maybe the ground's body  
feels hemmed-in and the only elbowing is up.

But the sun has designs on all barrens

however they're blessed, so at the sun's passing  
the grasses go where pushed.



Phaethon  
Larry Wilson

Wind slides across the lake; leaflets of water  
string hot sunlight into the cover  
on the far bank. There, stricken  
from ash limbs, shades outrun the dead  
who again make for the dark to turn  
and look at me with the night eyes of cats.

Is this land where the curious live on?  
Or does this water welcome me  
to a firmament of bottomless desire--the dead  
and their deathless way an endless reach  
for my racing? But these branches. They sting  
and drive me to the sedge. The leaves snap  
free and pursue, sailing true to attitudes  
fixed by the ashes. They blow by me  
for the shining that plays along the surface  
and comes burning to my eyes.

Marlowe's Edward II: A Study in Kingship

Mark J. Lidman

While numerous attempts have been made to define Edward II's relationship to the rest of the Marlowe canon, few have met with real success. Some see the play as an extension of the problems raised in Tamburlaine, while Ribner calls it and Doctor Faustus "plays of terrible pessimism."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, scholarly opinion remains divided over the play's meaning. Mills sees it as a "friendship" play, while Berdan suggests a more important aspect of its theme: "the presentation of a king, surrounded by turbulent nobles, who is only too faithful to his friends."<sup>2</sup> Berdan suggests here that the principal issue in Edward II is political, and this political aspect of the Elizabethan history plays, the so-called "kingship aspect," is too often overlooked by scholars. The kingship aspect of Edward II is important, and Marlowe uses both the play's structure and its language to show us what a king should not be, as well as, implicitly, what he should be.

Many readers have noticed the "criss-cross" rising-falling pattern which makes Edward II unique among Marlowe's

plays, for in this play we have two equally formidable antagonists who contribute to the notion of what a good king should be. As Edward's star falls, young Mortimer's rises; and as the noble's power reaches its zenith, the king's reaches its lowest point. In the end both are dead; neither has been the proper ruler. What the play tells us about kingship is determined by the actions of Mortimer as well as Edward. Ribner says Mortimer offers us a "tragic view" of life, and in this he also affords us a negative example of kingship. Neither he nor Edward could be successful kings:

For as he (Mortimer) achieves success his character steadily degenerates. His initial concern for England soon becomes a concern only for his own aggrandizement, and there is no baseness to which he will not resort for his own advancement.<sup>3</sup>

But if we view Edward II as a kingship play, we would do well to focus our attention on the first part, when Edward still has control of the realm, more or less. The king suffers from a fundamental weakness that enables Gaveston and then the Spencers to dominate him, and while Bakeless has called the weakness somewhat indeterminate, the play itself affords its readers a good idea of what makes Edward inadequate.<sup>4</sup>

Mills points out that Edward has certain virtues and serious faults, his chief virtue being his loyalty to those he chooses as "friends."<sup>5</sup> But this virtue is also a vice, for by caring so much for his friends, notably Gaveston, he ignores duties of state. As he tells the nobles early in the play:

Meet you for this, proud overbearing peers?  
Ere my sweet Gaveston shall part from me,  
This isle shall fleet upon the ocean  
And wander to the unfrequented Inde . . . .  
If this content you not,  
Make several kingdoms of this monarchy,

And share it equally amongst you all,  
So I may have some nook or corner left,  
To frolic with my dearest Gaveston.

(I. iv. 47-50, 69-73)

Thus, early in the play, Edward's priorities are clear. Elizabethans knew the danger of a divided kingdom, and we who have read Gorbuduc and King Lear are likewise painfully aware of such consequences. Edward would sell his crown to have his minion recalled (I. iv. 306-310).

Ribner comments at length on the first of Edward's several blunders:

He places his personal pleasures above the interests of his government, and perhaps worst of all, he has no real desire to rule. He will see England quartered and reduced to chaos rather than forgo his homosexual attachment to his minion . . . . In coupling a division of his kingdom with an abandonment of his rule, Marlowe in these lines

[I. iv. 70-73] makes Edward guilty of two of the greatest sins in the Renaissance catalogue of political crimes. If a Renaissance absolute monarch required anything to maintain himself in power it was a paramount desire to rule a united kingdom and a concern above all else with the maintenance of his power in spite of all opposition.<sup>6</sup>

What seems clear here is that Edward's brand of kingship was the last thing a troubled England needed. He regards his reign as a frolic, "his kingship serving only to supply wealth and honors to bestow upon him, and power to defend him against enemies."<sup>7</sup>

In the second act, Edward's fury is like that of the lover scorned, as he prepares to assert his power against those who would harm Gaveston:

Edward, unfold thy paws,  
And let their lives' blood slake thy fury's hunger.  
If I be cruel and grow tyrannous,  
Now let let them thank themselves and rue too late.  
(II.ii. 202-05)

The headstrong barons shall not limit me;  
He that I list to favor shall be great.  
(II.ii. 260-61)

But a verbal exchange with the Queen just before these outbursts indicates that he fears to use his power against the barons. He will not confine Mortimer to the Tower, "for the people love him well" (II.ii. 233). If Edward seems to be a raging puppet king in the manner of the retainer-less

Lear, the reasons would be similar: each is relatively powerless, having allowed others to usurp the "real power." Each, however, retains the crown, the symbol of power, and hence the illusion. As the nobles in each play grow progressively more influential, each king turns to wrathful anger, but is actually incapable of exercising power. Even when Edward gains a victory over the rebellious nobles, he cannot crush them (III.iii), but must contend eventually with the escaped Mortimer. Edward clearly fails to take advantage of the temporary victory. He further fails to realize the importance of affairs of state; when told Normandy is lost to Valois, he can only reply, "Tush, Sib, if this be all,/ Valois and I will soon be friends again" (III.ii.66-67), and reveals that his real fear is not for the loss of his lands but for Gaveston.

To this point, then, Marlowe has given us a picture of Edward as weak king and unjust ruler. To further emphasize this point, he invented the incident where he refuses to ransom Mortimer senior, a detail not mentioned in the chronicles (II.ii). This scene also enables Marlowe to depict Mortimer's abundance of public virtue, or duty to the state, as well as Edward's lack of judgment regarding priorities of state. Mortimer tells the king:

The idle triumphs, masks, lascivious shows  
And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston,  
Have drawn thy treasure dry and made thee weak,  
The murmuring commons overstretched hath.  
(II.ii. 155-58)

Thy court is naked, being bereft of those  
That makes a king seem glorious to the world;  
I mean the peers, whom thou shouldst dearly love.  
Libels are cast against thee in the street,  
Ballads and rhymes made of thy overthrow.  
(II.ii. 172-76)

Here Mortimer is warning Edward about the condition of the realm, but, as we know, the king refuses to listen. Throughout the action of the play, Marlowe is showing us that a good king must choose his counsellors wisely, be strong, be able to control his nobles, and cut off those who oppose him--something Edward cannot do, as Mortimer's escape and eventual triumph illustrate. His first mistake, however, was alienating his nobles in the first place,<sup>8</sup> a condition brought about his reckless devotion to his minion Gaveston.

By Act IV, Edward's power has waned. At this time, though, he seems to assert his kingship, with less regard for his friends than he had before:

What, was I born to fly and run away,  
And leave the Mortimers conquerors behind?  
Give me my horse, and let's r'enforce our troops,  
And in this bed of honor die with fame.  
(IV.v. 4-7)

His regard for kingship, however, is still personal. Edward wants to maintain sovereignty, but for the sake of keeping himself in power, not because of any sense of duty to his country. Although he has been gradually gaining our sympathy, he is basically the same king who would let "this isle fleet upon the ocean to the unfrequented Inde." On the other hand, in this speech he sounds like a king, even if he does not think like one. But he soon comes to realize that the kingdom can function without him--that the state, and not the individual king, is what matters. Though he is deposed, England remains. This new awareness is quite a revelation to him, and the arrogance of the earlier scenes has almost disappeared:

O hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart,  
Pierced deeply with sins of my distress,  
Could not but take compassion of my state.  
Stately and proud, in riches and in train,  
Whilom I was powerful and full of pomp;  
But what is he whom rule and empery  
Have not in life or death made miserable?

(IV.vi. 9-15)

He goes on to say that he would prefer the contemplative life of monks, but his station in life is that of a king, though he has been a poor one. This attitude of resignation characterizes him even in death, and impresses us, arousing our sympathy.



In Act V, Edward assesses his fallen state and concludes that "The griefs of private men are soon allayed, / But not of kings" (V.i. 8-9). Here Edward begins at last to acknowledge the demands of statecraft and realizes that he is a man of obligations and duties and must conduct himself apart from the mass of ordinary men. He seems to wish once again he were someone else, and if the play has a "recognition scene," it would seem to be this long speech (V.i. 5-37). Later in the same speech, he laments his position, and seems to be fully aware of what his mismanagement of affairs has wrought:

But when I call to mind I am a king,  
Methinks I should revenge me of the wrongs  
That Mortimer and Isabel have done.  
But what are kings when regiment is gone,  
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?  
My nobles rule, I bear the name of king:  
I wear the crown, but am controlled by them,  
By Mortimer and my unconstant queen. . . .  
(V.i.23-20)

He lacks the rage of the mad Lear, but seems to share his perception after recognition comes. Edward is king in name alone. He wears the crown, but the nobles make the decisions. He gives up the crown, knowing that "Two kings in England cannot reign at once" (V.i.58), but he wishes to keep the crown, the symbol of authority, for a little while longer, a tendency that at this juncture seems almost

masochistic. The crown reminds him of what he is supposed to be, but is not--of what he could have been had he better understood statecraft. Giving up the crown, then, is largely symbolic on his part, and the loss of power is a poignant point. However, there is no suggestion of woe falling on the land following his abdication.<sup>9</sup> England will live on, though Edward will not.

If we learn through Edward's example something about what a king should not be, the initial actions of the young prince, now Edward III, tell us something about what a king should be. He quickly attends to the affairs of state at hand, namely the punishing of those who treacherously slew his father. In his tone he is firm and unrelenting, even toward his mother:

If you be guilty, though I be your son,  
Think not to find me slack or pitiful.  
(V.vi.81-82)

Edward III's response to the affairs at hand provides a good contrast to his father's rule in the early days of his administration. Whereas Edward II began his reign by indulging in personal delights, his son begins his by attacking the most vital problems of state.<sup>10</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the figure of Mortimer junior also serves to instruct us in the principles of kingship,

largely through negative example. Edward II must be a Machiavellian superman to survive, something he cannot be. Mortimer's tragedy is that he is what Edward is not. To be incapable of exercising power is to be destroyed; to exercise it fully, as Mortimer does, leads to the same result.<sup>11</sup> We have seen that Edward II is Marlowe's only play featuring two strong protagonists. The reasons for this are clear in the dramatic structure itself. Ribner asserts:

Marlowe incorporates into Edward II the ancient de casibus theme of rise and fall, which Shakespeare had used before him in the Henry VI plays. The play becomes a series of successive waves, with Mortimer rising as Edward II falls, and the young Edward III rising again as Mortimer declines . . . Mortimer is an embodiment of Machiavellian self-sufficiency, strength and aspiring will, but he nevertheless degenerates and is destroyed, and it is because of his lack of private virtue that he does so. Marlowe fashioned Edward and Mortimer as parallel characters, each serving as foil to the other. All of Edward's lack of public virtue is mirrored in Mortimer's supreme possession of it, and similarly what private virtue Edward possesses is mirrored in Mortimer's lack of it. Just as a deficiency of public virtue destroys Edward, a deficiency of the private destroys Mortimer.<sup>12</sup>

This surplus of "public virtue" is clear at several points in the play. When asked what to do with Edward, Mortimer trusts his fate to the state institutions:

My lord of Kent, what needs these questions?  
'Tis not in her controlment, nor in ours,

But as the realm and parliament shall please,  
So shall your brother be disposed of.

(IV.v.43-46)

Moments later, he tells the Queen: "Your king hath wronged your country and himself, / And we must seek to right it as we may" (IV.v.76-77). Earlier in the play, he seems to stand behind the institution of the king, but we later see that this is but a mask to his own ambitious pride:

For howsoever we have borne it out,  
'Tis treason to be up against the king.  
So shall we have the people on our side,  
Which for his father's sake lean to the king,  
But cannot brook a night-grown mushrump,  
Such a one as my lord of Cornwall is,  
Should bear us down of the nobility.  
And when the commons and the nobles join,  
'Tis not the king can buckler Gaveston.

(I.iv.281-298)

But his Machiavellian lack of private virtue is evidenced as he tells Gurney he "makes Fortune's wheel turn as he please" (V.ii.53), and in the ambiguous Latin letter of V.iv, his plot is brought to fruition. He knows Edward must die so that he may rule and plans the affair cunningly. Once he feels he actually commands the realm, he assesses what his power has brought him:

The prince I rule, the queen I do command,  
And with a lowly congé to the ground,  
The proudest lords salute me as I pass;  
I seal, I cancel, I do what I will.  
Feared am I more than loved; let me be feared,  
And when I frown, make all the court look pale.  
. . . . .the Queen and Mortimer

Shall rule the realm, the king, and none rule us.  
Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance,  
And what I list command who dare control?  
Major sum quam cui possit fortuna nocere.  
(V.iv.48-53, 65-69)

Mortimer's rise, then, parallels Edward's fall, and his degeneration increases our sympathy for the deposed king. And this parallel is representative of the means of characterization Marlowe uses throughout. By showing us quite explicitly the aspects of kingship in the characters of Edward II and Mortimer, and to a lesser extent in young Edward III, Marlowe is able to present his notion of kingship and, more particularly, why kings sometimes fail.

Such a notion is consistent with Marlowe's view of history and men. He sees history as the actions of men who bring about their triumph or destruction by their own ability to cope with events, without reference to the vices and virtues of their ancestors.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, it is in this perspective that we must view Edward II as a kingship play, for the questions raised and answers given regarding kingship are those of the relationship between private and public virtues. The private virtue Edward displays toward his friends disturbs the ideal balance the good ruler should have; hence, his public virtue is lacking. For Mortimer, an abundance of patriotic zeal leads to an excess of public

virtue, with private virtue lacking; in essence, he is a Tamburlaine without destiny on his side. Both men are deficient in an aspect of virtue, so neither is fit to rule; and the play ends with young Edward III attending to the affairs of state immediately, with the hope on our part that he has learned something about kingship from his father's lamentable reign.

In these respects, then, Edward II may be seen as a kingship play whose lessons are taught by the dual failings of the parallel protagonists, and we can see that a hypothetical fusion of virtues between them would bring stability. But in this world, where public virtue abounds, private virtue suffers; the reverse also holds true. What Marlowe teaches us about kingship is nothing new, but his manner of presentation, especially through the parallel protagonists, makes Edward II remarkable among Marlowe's plays and Elizabethan history plays in general.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Irving Ribner, ed., The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe (New York, 1963), p. xxxvi. All subsequent references to Edward II are taken from this edition.

<sup>2</sup>L. J. Mills, "The Meaning of Edward II," Modern Philology, 32 (1934), 11-31; John M. Berdan, "Marlowe's Edward II," Philological Quarterly, 3 (1924), 197-207.

<sup>3</sup>Irving Ribner, "Marlowe's Edward II and the Tudor History Play," ELH, 22 (1965), 247.

<sup>4</sup>John E. Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe: The Man in His Time (New York, 1937), p. 191.

<sup>5</sup>Mills, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup>Ribner, "Marlowe's Edward II," pp. 250-251.

<sup>7</sup>Mills, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup>Ribner, "Marlowe's Edward II," p. 250.

<sup>9</sup>Clifford Leech, "Marlowe's Edward II: Power and Suffering," Critical Quarterly, 1 (1959), 193.

<sup>10</sup>Mills, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup>Ribner, Complete Plays, p. xxxvi.

<sup>12</sup>Ribner, "Marlowe's Edward II," pp. 247-248.

<sup>13</sup>Ribner, "Marlowe's Edward II," p. 248.

T. S. Eliot's Tiresias:

A Unifying Force in The Waste Land

Michael P. Dean

Any reader who undertakes the compelling, fascinating journey through The Waste Land confronts at its very center the arresting figure of Tiresias "throbbing between two lives," an "old man with wrinkled female breasts. . . ."1 That Eliot meant this encounter to be a major element in the total impact of the poem upon the reader becomes evident when the full force of Tiresias' role is measured. First, Tiresias is introduced by name at line 218, the exact middle point of the poem. In addition, his function at this point is to observe the liaison of the "young man carbuncular" (l. 231) and the typist, the scene of the poem that is probably most often remembered by its readers. Finally, to drive home the full importance of the appearance of Tiresias, Eliot discusses his purpose in the poem in a rather lengthy note in "Notes on The Waste Land." As we might well expect, Eliot meant Tiresias to act as a unifying force amid the fragmented world of The Waste Land.

The process of understanding Tiresias' role in the poem starts with Eliot's note, to determine the function the poet assigns to this figure:

Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a "character," is yet the most



important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem. (p. 52)

Eliot then quotes a significant passage of some nineteen lines from Ovid's Metamorphoses:

Tiresias came across two snakes copulating in a forest. He hit them with his staff and was turned into a woman. Seven years later he saw the same two snakes and hit them again. As he had hoped, he was turned back into a man. On account of Tiresias's male and female experience, Jove called him in as an expert witness to settle a quarrel with his wife Juno. Jove was arguing that in love the woman enjoys the greater pleasure; Juno argued it was the other way round. Tiresias supported Jove. Out of spite Juno blinded him. To make up for this, Jove gave him the power of prophecy, and long life.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Eliot draws mainly on Tiresias's bi-sexual experiences, as well as on his attendant gift of divination.

As Hugh Kenner points out, though, there are two other legends concerning Tiresias not mentioned in Eliot's note but still appropriate to any consideration of the figure of Tiresias.<sup>3</sup> And, in fact, Eliot puts these other legends before readers (ll. 243-246):

(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all  
Enacted on this same divan or bed;  
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall  
And walked among the lowest of the dead.)

These lines, spoken after the assault of the "small house agent's clerk" (l. 232), recall the Tiresias of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, who knew the answer to Oedipus' perplexing problem, as well as the Tiresias who, encountered by Odysseus among the dead, provided the voyager with a prediction concerning the future. When we remember all three of these tales about Tiresias, we can form a more accurate picture of the ancient figure and can recall that, in addition to his dual sexual experiences, Tiresias though blind physically was yet able to "see" mentally far better than other men. Moreover, Tiresias sometimes withheld or disguised what he foresaw.

We who follow the chain of associations and connections started by the introduction of Tiresias may still be wondering at this point just what to make of him and what his function in the poem is. Eliot's note is an aid, of course, but it helps more readily when seen in the light of further comment by the poet. In his 1923 essay "Ulysses, Order and Myth," Eliot discusses the "great importance" of James Joyce's "parallel use of the Odyssey" in Ulysses. The use of this method, claims Eliot, "has the importance of a scientific discovery. No one else has built a novel upon

such a foundation before: it has never before been necessary."<sup>4</sup> In concluding, Eliot makes a statement quite important to unravelling the mystery of Tiresias:

In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. They will not be imitators, any more than the scientist who uses the discoveries of an Einstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. . . . It is a method for which the horoscope is auspicious. Psychology (such as it is, and whether our reaction to it be serious), ethnology, and The Golden Bough have concurred to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago. Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe, a step toward making the modern world possible for art, toward that order and form which Mr. Aldington so earnestly desires. And only those who have won their own discipline in secret and without aid, in a world which offers very little assistance to that end, can be of any use in furthering this advance.<sup>5</sup>

With this notion of "a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity" in mind, readers can once again return to the poem and examine Tiresias' role in the challenge "of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance" to the modern world Eliot depicts in The Waste Land. And the return to Tiresias, if made through Eliot's note, begins to shed illumination on the whole poem. For "the two sexes meet in Tiresias" (p. 52). He is a center point, the calm middle of a whirlpool; fragments,

bits and pieces, "the immense panorama or futility and anarchy"--this mélange called the modern world, both male and female in its aspects, whirls about him, the still center of the maelstrom. Eliot's interest in Tiresias' role seems to be akin to the later fascination of Eliot with the timeless in time. Tiresias is at once with the reader in the modern world and apart from the reader, still in the midst of the spinning vortex. Tiresias, in his "in" and "out" aspect, represents Eliot's achievement of the merging, the funnelling down into one spot, one figure, of both the contemporaneous and the ancient.

F. R. Leavis makes the following point about the role of Tiresias in The Waste Land, a point that can do much to explain the puzzle of the appearance of the ancient seer:

If Mr. Eliot's readers have a right to a grievance, is it [sic] that he has not given this note [on Tiresias] more salience; for it provides the clue to The Waste Land. It indicates plainly enough what the poem is: an effort to focus an inclusive human consciousness. The effort . . . is characteristic of the age; and in an age of psycho-analysis, an age that has produced the last section of Ulysses, Tiresias . . . presents himself as the appropriate impersonation. A cultivated modern is (or feels himself to be) intimately aware of the experience of the opposite sex.<sup>6</sup>

If to this observation the reader adds I. A. Richards's comment that Eliot's "persistent concern" is with "sex, the

problem of our generation, as religion was the problem of the last," then he is ready to puzzle out "the central position of Tiresias in the poem" and to follow through on the clues in Eliot's note, a note Richards considers "a way of underlining the fact that the poem is concerned with many aspects of the one fact of sex. . . ."7 That is, the reader can now see how Eliot is "manipulating" his "myth" in order to bring illumination as well as order to the modern world.

Tiresias becomes a link, a connector between the apparently meaningless present and the meaningful past. He is a perfect figure to represent the "inclusive human consciousness" Leavis sees in the poem. For Tiresias has lived life in both sexes ("foresuffered all" l. 243); he has matched wits with surly kings and "walked among the lowest of the dead" (l. 246). And in his ironic state of physical blindness and mental foresight, he represents both the plight of the "Waste Landers," able to "connect / Nothing with nothing" (ll. 301-302) and Eliot's earlier concern for "The word within a word unable to speak a word. . . ."8 That is, Tiresias is often forced to struggle with the dilemma of possessing knowledge and finding himself either unable or unwilling to impart it to the one who most needs it.

In The Invisible Poet, Hugh Kenner discusses Eliot's employment of Tiresias in a passage that seems particularly pertinent to the line of inquiry developed here:

It is an inescapable shared guilt that makes us so intimate with the contents of this strange deathly poem; it is also, in an age that has eaten of the tree of the knowledge of psychology and anthropology . . . an inescapable morbid sympathy with everyone else, very destructive to the coherent personality, that (like Tiresias' year as a woman) enables us to join with him in "foresuffering all." These sciences afford us an illusion of understanding other people, on which we build sympathies that in an ideal era would have gone out with a less pathological generosity, and that are as likely as not projections of our self-pity and self-absorption, vices for which Freud and Frazer afford dangerous nourishment. Tiresias is he who has lost the sense of other people as inviolably other, and who is capable neither of pity nor terror but only of a fascination, spuriously related to compassion, which is merely the twentieth century's special mutation of indifference.<sup>9</sup>

Once again, readers pondering Tiresias' function see in Kenner's statement the same point stressed in the statements of Leavis and Richards: Tiresias is the appropriate figure to give at least some continuity to the fragmented world of The Waste Land.

Readers who ferret out a meaning for the introduction of Tiresias into the poem can achieve an understanding that might have been otherwise denied. In Eliot's "mythical method" in The Waste Land, Tiresias occupies a central position as both a medium of revelation and a connector of

disparate fragments. Tiresias "sees," and what he sees--the  
hopeless, fruitless connection of people who are only  
beasts<sup>10</sup>--spreads out in all directions from the center of  
The Waste Land until it encompasses the whole of the sterile  
desert that is Eliot's poem.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land, in The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950 (New York, 1952), p. 43. All further references to this work appear in the text.

<sup>2</sup>B.C. Southam, A Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot (New York, 1968, 1969).

<sup>3</sup>Hugh Kenner, The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot (New York, 1959), p. 167.

<sup>4</sup>T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth," rev. of Ulysses by James Joyce, The Dial, 75 (1923), 482.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 483.

<sup>6</sup>F. R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1923, 1960), p. 95.

<sup>7</sup>I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (New York, n.d. [1926]), p. 292.

<sup>8</sup>T. S. Eliot, "Gerontion," in The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup>Kenner, pp. 167-168.

<sup>10</sup>Cleanth Brooks, Modern Poetry and the Tradition (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1967 [1939]), p. 154.



Self, Overmind, and the Evolution of Consciousness:

Jung, Myth, and Arthur C. Clare's Childhood's End

Kenneth L. Golden

Critics agree that Arthur C. Clarke's Childhood's End is a science-fiction classic.<sup>1</sup> First published in 1953, in 1980 it went into its forty-second printing. One reason the novel has been so popular is that in a symbolic, mythic manner it treats some of the most engaging topics and pressing anxieties of our times. Though critics note a number of mythic parallels, they tend to emphasize the scientific and speculative aspects of the theme of the evolution of humanity into Overmind. However, one point of view has been too much neglected: seeing the novel as symbolic in C. G. Jung's sense of the term, symbolic<sup>2</sup> of the process of individuation in the individual psyche, also an evolution.

Jung called the symbol of aliens arriving from another world a living myth.<sup>3</sup> Such an unprecedented event early in Childhood's End takes modern man's attention away from the cold war and the space race. The "Overlords" provide man with something like technological perfection, minus the tension concomitant with the lack of the inner power and self control needed in the face of such productions of

technology as the atomic bomb.<sup>4</sup> Ironically, these aliens from the heavens who save man from his warring instincts, his greed, and his violence are in the form of the Medieval Christian Devil, a major mythic image of what Jung calls the shadow, archetype of the dark, non-utilized portion of the psyche.

The Overlords bring Paradise, a technological, modernized version of the Golden Age of Myth parallel to the Biblical eschaton in which conflict is at an end and "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb" (Isaiah, 11:6). Then comes apotheosis, the end of humanity as we know it and its transformation, redemption, through unification with the overmind, a mysterious transcendent entity of pure spirit. The transformation, the unification with the Overmind of the last generation of children into pure spirit after they spontaneously develop paranormal psychic powers, is parallel to the Christian myth of the apocalypse of redemption coming at the end of the world and ending all conflicts such as those between good and evil, God and the devil. Indeed, frequently in myth the child is symbolic of renewal and unification. Jung points out that the combination of the size of the child with the motif of invincibility--as is the case by the end of this novel--"is bound up in Hindu

speculation with the nature of the atman which corresponds to the 'smaller than small yet bigger than big' motif. As an individual phenomenon, the self," the non-egoic center of the psyche symbolized by the atman, is "'smaller than small'; as the equivalent of the cosmos, it is 'bigger than big.'"<sup>5</sup> Further, the Hindu atman is a symbol parallel to Clarke's Overmind. Clarke's choice of the children as the bearers of the evolutionary leap is appropriate as is the image of the Starchild at the end of 2001: A Space Odyssey, another story whose opening is set in a world split by conflicts based on egotism, greed, and power.

In the brief "Prologue"--set in the late seventies, according to Eric S. Rabkin<sup>6</sup>--Clarke sketches a picture which is just as true today as it was to the fifties--the cold war, the space race, technological and political rivalry. Although in no way employing the psychology of the archetypes, Eugene Tanzy notes that the spiritual environment of the opening of the novel is the same as that described by Jung five years later in Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky--a world dominated by modern man's "tension-distraught, fragment-torn psyche."<sup>7</sup> Jung speaks of the way our schizoid world is divided between West and East, obsessed with political ideas, ideals, "isms"

which have taken the place of deep spiritual experience. He emphasizes that all such external tensions and conflicts along with the ideological issues that fuel them are emblematic of an excessive "rationalism" and the narrowly compartmentalized and dissociated state of the modern "civilized" psyche.<sup>8</sup> Clarke portrays man on the verge of space travel, perhaps soon to be powered by the energy of the atom, symbol of the apocalyptic nature of the age, reminder that man's technological abilities seem now, in the second half of the twentieth century, to have disastrously exceeded his self-knowledge and comprehensive morality.

The prologue centers on the two scientists who head the American and Russian space programs, Reinhold Hoffmann and Konrad Schneider, respectively. These fellow Germans last saw each other in 1945 when, after the fall of Hitler, "Konrad chose the road to Moscow."<sup>9</sup> "The Russians are nearly level with us," a Colonel tells Reinhold as the American spaceship is being readied for launch, "They've some kind of atomic drive--it may even be more efficient than ours, and they're building a ship on the shores of Lake Baikal"(9). Shortly, the Colonel remarks that "We'll show them that Democracy can get to the moon first" (9). This antipathy--which one critic calls a "rather clichéd

rivalry"<sup>10</sup>--is a dangerously petty stance, actually a sort of superceded provincialism, a nationalistic attitude of such a narrow and chaotic consciousness as to prevent one from seeing or truly valuing the totality, the Mother Earth which is being threatened by the squabbling superpowers with their weapons set up to defend "to the death," to remember an appropriate cliché, "our way of life."

Indeed, the precariousness of mankind's situation previous to the arrival of the Overlords is clarified at more than one point later in the novel. Jan Rodricks, the adventurous would-be space explorer who stows away in the model whale on the Overlords' ship, admits the probability "that we would have destroyed ourselves with cobalt bombs and the other global weapons the twentieth century was developing" (123).<sup>11</sup> Further, Karellen, the master overlord, tells the B.B.C. that, "When we arrived, you were on the point of destroying yourselves with the powers that science had rashly given you. Without our intervention, the Earth today would be a radioactive wilderness" (136). Such an effect would have been caused by man's inability to take the long view, the holistic view which looks at much more than questions of national "security," which values the

individual and the species and sees them against the backdrop of a universe of divine mystery.

The symbolic arrival of the aliens involves, potentially, a realization of man's unity as a species and with the planet, the Whole Earth reality, as seen against the perspective of the voids and distances of the universe. Presumably, only the few, like Rikki Storgren, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, are flexible-minded and cosmopolitan enough in spirit to have experienced such a realization on the coming of the alien ships. Some of man's negative propensities still have to be controlled by the force of the Overlords' technical power. Through Stormgren, Karellen--at the only time he ever seems to be angry--delivers the threat, "You may kill one another, if you wish, and that is a matter between you and your own laws. But if you slay, except for food or self-defense, the beasts that share your world with you--then you may be answerable to me" (44). The threat is carried out at the next bullfight in Madrid, where the first wounding of a bull is felt, for one telling moment, by every spectator, every human participant present. Bullfighting becomes, on man's own initiative, at this point, as antiquated as the atomic bombs the overlords took away from him. The overlords cause

the cessation of political oppression of the white minority in South Africa by showing how effectively the sun can be extinguished at noon in that land (19-20).

Shortsighted opposition to the Overlords in the form of the Freedom League, however, demands "Freedom to control our own lives, under God's guidance," and offers such loaded clichés as "Man does not live by bread alone"(16). These ideologues have the narrow egotisms of limited consciousness at heart, as can be deduced from the statement of their leader, Wainwright: "Many of our leaders are blind; they have been corrupted by the Overlords. When they realize the danger, it may be too late. Humanity will have lost its initiative and become a subject race"(16). The word "American" or perhaps even "White America" or "the Capitalist West" could be substituted for "humanity" to show the sentiment's formal similarity to the petty nationalisms of the cold war portrayed in miniature in the novel's first pages and even the race hatred acted out in the America of the 60's. In The Undiscovered Self: Past and Present, in which he treats the psychological climate of the cold war years, Jung points out that "all division and all antagonism are due to the splitting of opposites in the psyche."<sup>12</sup> He says, however, that "We can recognize our prejudices and

illusions only when, from a broader psychological knowledge of ourselves and others, we are prepared to doubt the absolute rightness of our assumptions and compare them carefully and conscientiously with the objective facts."<sup>13</sup> In this novel, the latter conditions are symbolized by the entrance of the cosmic perspective via the Overlords and man's evolution toward Overmind. The Overlords force the seeds of humility and honesty on mankind.

Ruled by fear and suspicion, the opponents of the Overlords project their own negative sides--what Jung calls the shadow--onto the Overlords, who rule man, as it were, by remote control, not showing their physical appearance. The petty, shortsighted attitudes of the Freedom League are epitomized by a newspaper report they inspire. The headline reads, "IS MAN RULED BY MONSTERS": "The explanation for the Overlords behavior is quite simple. Their physical form is so alien and so repulsive that they dare not show themselves to humanity"(29). The Overlords continue to hide their appearance for at least fifty years, twice what God, in the Hebrew myth, decreed through Moses that the children of Israel must wait before entering the Promised Land (54). Yet, that policy is not so absolute as to be without exception. Like the mythical hero Moses, who could not



enter into the Promised Land, Stormgren receives a substitute boon. Karellen permits Stormgren to glimpse his form from behind as though by accident--just as Jehovah let Moses see his "hinderparts" (Exodus, 33:23)<sup>14</sup>: "Yes, Karellen had trusted him, and had not wished him to go down the long evening of his life haunted by a mystery he could never solve"(64).

Indeed, the mass of men are not ready to confront the Overlords. Their views are still too narrow; the individual is still too much ruled by the fear that causes him to look at anyone who is different, somehow unknown, or more subtle than the norm as a likely source of all the evil that actually exists within his own heart. When the Overlords finally do show themselves, man has changed enough that only a few people in the crowd faint when the longlived Karellen steps down out of his ship, revealing his appearance to be that of Satan. In an ironic sense, the suspicious members of the Freedom league were right: the Overlords did hide themselves because of their appearances, because to men of limited consciousness they would be repulsive, their form signalling evil, the ancient fear of the unknown, that which is not understood:

There was no mistake. The leathery wings, the little horns, the barbed tail--all were there. The most terrible of all legends had come to life, out of the unknown past. Yet now it stood smiling, in ebon majesty, with the sunlight gleaming upon its tremendous body, and with a human child resting trustfully on either arm. (68)

In Jungian terms, the time has arrived when man can face without overwhelming fear the darkness within experience and within his own soul without shrinking. The individual's coming to terms with the shadow, with his unknown face, is a very important step toward his evolution toward maturity, psychic wholeness, individuation--in the same way that the Overlords are here the midwives of the birth of Man's transcendence of his limited evolutionary stage reached in the cul de sac of the twentieth century.

Karellen, as fatherly devil holding two innocent children as he stands outside the ship, is a symbol with deep mythological connotations concerning the relationships between opposites. One is reminded of the coming to rapport of the wolf and the lamb in the eschatological writings of the Hebrew prophets. Another somewhat parallel image involving the theme of apparent conflict harmonized is the image of the Hindu Black Goddess Kali as described by Joseph Campbell:

She brandishes the sword of death, i.e., spiritual discipline. The blood-dripping human head tells the devotee that he that loseth his life for her sake shall find it. The gestures of "fear not" and "bestowing boons" teach that she protects her children, that the pairs of opposites of the universal agony are not what they seem, and that for one centered in eternity the phantasmagoria of temporal "goods" and "evils" is but a reflex of the mind--as the goddess herself, though apparently trampling down the god, is actually his blissful dream.<sup>15</sup>

Campbell's description implies the mystical doctrine of the one mind-stuff, the consciousness of the Universe. The Overlords represent the imminence of man's translation to Overmind. That event symbolically parallels to the mystic's movement from finite ego-consciousness to Super-consciousness and the individual's movement--in what Jung calls the process of individuation--from the state of limited consciousness bound by the ego to consciousness of the self, which unifies all pairs of opposites.

Humans and Overlords live in peace and harmony, though man continues to speculate on various mysteries the Overlords still see fit to conceal. Men assume that medieval representations of "the devil" were based on memories of some time in the distant past when the Overlords visited the earth with unpleasant and fearful results. But near the end of the novel, the Overlord Rasheverak tells Jan Rodericks that this theory was on the right track but in the

wrong direction. He says that "premonition," not "memory," is the correct word, that the minds of artists and men of religion had gone beyond time and space and picked up an image of the dark, the unknown, the fear-inspiring, or what was to appear, "not at the dawn of history, but at its very end" (207).

Jung terms such events occurrences of "synchronicity," made possible by an aspect of certain levels of consciousness that stand outside of time and space. He sees instances of synchronicity as being involved frequently in aspects of psychic growth, transformation, the process of individuation. In many important respects, Clarke's story of the transformation of man to Overmind is parallel to the process by which ordinary, limited consciousness in the individual is transformed into psychic wholeness, in which the various levels of consciousness are unified and the individual can experience with a broad perspective.

Humanity's final approach to the apotheosis of transformation into Overmind begins at a party with the future mother of the first two children to experience what the Overlords call Total Breakthrough (175). Some of the guests meet the Overlord Rasheverak, who is studying Rupert Boyce's collection of books on parapsychology (81). **George**

Greggson is surprised that a presumably technical-minded Overlord should be interested in such matters. Rupert Boyce replies that "Nonsense or not, they're interested in human psychology" (86). In the hands of Greggson and Jean Morrell, a "ouiji board" gives several nominally correct but not particularly impressive answers to yes-no questions. Yet to the question, "Who are you?" the board answers with "I AM ALL" (98). It answers the question as to the home of the Overlords with the correct identification number of their star system--an event which informs the Overlords how Jean Morrell is an important link in the imminent evolution of the human species.

Indeed, a few years later, the son born to Jean and George begins to show "psychic" powers--precognition and the ability, as monitored by Karellen and Rasheverak, to explore places light years away in dreams. Soon, Jeff's sister, Poppet, develops amazing powers of telekinesis. When Greggson goes to Rasheverak to discuss the children's "problem," he is told about "Total Breakthrough," and that even back at the "ouiji board" party before their marriage, Jeff, though not yet born, was communicating through the mind of his mother-to-be. Rasheverak comments that "Time is very

much stranger than you think" (175)--a sentiment parallel to Jung's ideas on "synchronicity."

Rasheverak says that all human attempts at explanation of the psychic transcendence of time and space have been "rubbish" except for those using the "suggestive and helpful" (175) analogy, which "sees every man's mind as an island surrounded by ocean. Each seems isolated, but in reality all are linked by the bedrock from which they sprang" (176). Aldous Huxley calls this view the perennial philosophy and finds it woven throughout human history. In The Doors of Perception, Huxley presents Broad's support of Bergson's theory concerning the eliminative function of the brain and nervous system:

According to such a theory, each one of us is potentially Mind at Large. . . . To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funneled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a measly trickle of the kind of consciousness which will help us to stay alive on the surface of this particular planet.<sup>16</sup>

The transformation that occurs in Childhood's End, considered on one level, involves a transmutation in which the "reducing valve" is in effect abolished and the Mind of the human race, through the children, is opened to the Universal Mind, to what the Overlords call Overmind. Humanity is unified with, or is able to realize his oneness

with, a force symbolic of the reality the perennial philosophy calls such names as the One, the Oversoul, the whole intelligent being of the universe itself.

Clarke's Overmind can be seen, then, as the condition involving the evolution of humanity from the cul de sac of the petty egotism and short-sightedness of the cold-war period to a state beyond humanity as we know it in which such problems are not an issue because such conflicts based on the limited consciousness of the ego have--by the widening of consciousness--been abolished. Thus, another way to see these events is as being parallel to the evolution of the individual psyche from the childhood or perhaps adolescence of egotism to selfhood, the broader state of consciousness toward which the process of individuation leads. According to Jung, the self is an entity beyond the ego which unifies such opposites as conscious and unconscious in a totality: "According to this definition the self is a quantity that is supraordinate to the conscious ego."<sup>17</sup> Individuation is parallel to the religious concepts of redemption, spiritual renewal, reformation in which "the original state of oneness with the God-image is restored. It brings about an integration, a bridging of the split in the personality caused by the

instincts striving apart in different and mutually contradictory directions."<sup>18</sup>

Jung's self is to be associated with Clarke's concept of Overmind, as are God- or Totality- concepts generally, East and West. The ancient Hebrew phrase for God--"I am that I am"--is parallel to the "I AM ALL" the Overmind communicates through Jean Morrell. The same applies to the Hindu concept of the Atman-Brahman, as to Emerson's Oversoul and the contemporary physicists' view of the combination of "matter" and "energy" we call the "universe" as being more like a gigantic thought than like an object.<sup>19</sup>

After the rest of the adult human species has perished, Jan Rodericks, the last man, witnesses the apocalypse, man's apotheosis, his unification with, absorption into Overmind. Aspects of the final scene parallel the mystical experience discussed by the proponents of the perennial philosophy. Jan watches the earth's atmosphere disappear and its mass become transparent as the children leave matter behind and integrate the energies of the planet into their being. Light is a central aspect of Jan's experience, light which is a perennial symbol of both Godhead and consciousness, as well as a principle modern physics holds to be a kind of



absolute. Jan is engulfed by a feeling which is neither joy nor sorrow, but a sense of fulfillment:

Everything we ever achieved has gone up there into the stars. Perhaps that's what the old religions were trying to say. But they got it all wrong: they thought mankind was so important, yet we're only one race in--do you know how many? (217)

Indeed, the aspect of "the old religions" Jan faults is the element which could not go beyond egotism, whether egotism regarding the separate individual, the nation, the social group, or the species.

Like any symbolic work, Childhood's End is rich enough to be capable of being read on more than one level. As speculative fiction, it concerns the idea of an unprecedented evolutionary leap. As psychological and symbolic novel, it re-presents the individuation process as individual consciousness evolves beyond egoistic limitations. Further, Clarke's novel tells an intriguing story concerning human emotions and conflicts. He humanizes the aliens, especially in the character of Karellen and in the sorrow expressed by Rasheverak for George Greggson, the first man to know of the arrival of "childhood's end" in his son. Despite some tendencies toward some of the usual inadequacies of the science-fiction genre, the novel is very

meaningful on the psychological, mythic or meta-historical, and literary levels and deserves its classic status.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>John Huntington, "From Man to Overmind: Arthur Clarke's Myth of Progress," Writers of the Twentieth-Century: Arthur C. Clarke, ed. Olander & Greenberg (New York, 1977), p. 211. Also: David N. Samuelson, "Childhood's End: A Median Stage of Adolescence?" p. 196.

<sup>2</sup>Jung saw the symbol as a multidimensional expression having much in common with myth and pointing to archetypal realities residing in the collective unconscious.

<sup>3</sup>C. G. Jung, Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky, The Collected Works, Vol. 10: Civilization in Transition, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, 1978), I. "UFO's as Rumours," pp. 314-329.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Jung, The Undiscovered Self: Past and Present, Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 298.

<sup>5</sup>Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," Essays on a Science of Mythology by Jung and C. Kerényi, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York, 1949), p. 136.

<sup>6</sup>Eric S. Rabkin, Arthur C. Clarke: Starmont Reader's Guide 1, series ed., Roger C. Schlobin (Mercer, Washington, 1980), p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>Eugene Tanzy, "Contrasting Views of Man and the Evolutionary Process: Back to Methuseleh and Childhood's End," Writers: Clarke, p. 185.

<sup>8</sup>Jung, The Undiscovered Self, Collected Works, Vol. 10: Civilization, pp. 259, 262, 278.

<sup>9</sup>Arthur C. Clarke, Childhood's End (New York, 1980), p. 8. Subsequent references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.

10 Alan B. Howes, "Expectation and Surprise in Childhood's End," Writers: Clarke, p. 151.

11 Jan is speaking at a time at least fifty years after the arrival of the overlords.

12 Jung, Undiscovered Self, p. 113.

13 Jung, p. 115.

14 Cf. Rabkin, "Genre Criticism and the Fantastic," Science Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Mark Rose (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1976), p. 100.

15 Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (New York, 1970), p. 170n.

16 Aldous Huxley, The Doors of Perception (New York, 1970), pp. 22-23.

17 Jung, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," Collected Works, Vol. 7: Two Essays in Analytical Psychology, p. 177.

18 Jung, "Christ, a Symbol of the Self," from Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self from Vol. 9, Part II of Collected Works, Psyche and Symbol, ed. Violet S. de Laszlo (Garden City, New York, 1958), p. 38.

19 Michael Talbot, Mysticism and the New Physics (New York, 1981), pp. 175-177; also: Sir James Jeans as quoted by Arthur Koestler in The Roots of Coincidence (New York, 1972), p. 58.