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Defiance and Duality: Author, Audience and *The Awakening*

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The relationship between author and audience is both complex and intriguing. Walter Ong deals with this relationship in his *Interfaces of the Word* in an essay entitled "The Audience is Always a Fiction." He discusses as well the complex nature of the audience itself, which he sees as a duality: audience as actual--real people who will buy and read the author's work; and audience as fictive--"the audience that fires the writer's imagination" during the creative process (57). Kate Chopin's brief career as a writer at the turn of the century provides a fascinating example of author/audience relationship, particularly when examined in the context of audience reaction to her controversial novel, *The Awakening*, which was published in 1899. And although there has been a growing critical interest in the concept of reader response, little or nothing has been written about Chopin's audience. This study will consider two aspects of her audience--the fictive and the actual, primarily as they relate to *The Awakening*.

As Ong points out, when a writer is creating his/her audience he/she must first "cast" that audience "in some sort of role." The audience, in turn, must "'fictionalize itself,' with each reader play[ing] the role in which the author has cast him [or her]" (61). Walker Gibson carries the process one step farther. "When we read a book," he says, "we assume . . . that set of attitudes which the . . . [text] asks us to assume; and if we cannot [do so], we throw the book away" (1). There exists, then the very real possibility of a gulf forming between fictive and actual audiences--the kind of possibility that has undoubtedly haunted every author at one time or another in his/her writing career. For Kate Chopin, that vague possibility became a devastating reality, with the publication of *The Awakening*.

What produced the gulf between Chopin's fictive and actual audiences? Why were so many of her reader-critics unwilling to "fictionalize" themselves in the roles she had set up for them? And why had she as author been unable to anticipate the audience reaction to her heroine, Edna Pontellier, whose unorthodox behavior served as a focal point for the violent storm of criticism directed against the novel? There are no definitive answers to these questions, only speculation, but they seem to provide a kind of structure for the study of Chopin's divided audience, and the relationship between the author and her readers.

Obviously Chopin herself was responsible for the gulf that existed between her fictive and actual audiences; she was determined to speak her mind, to write as she chose, but was apparently either unable or unwilling to realize how vastly different her ideas and those of much of her actual audiences really were.

Chopin seems to have created her fictive audience over time--inspired chiefly by European literary models, encouraged by strong female family members and avant garde intellectual friends, and fired by her own overwhelming desire to

write as she choose. Chopin had grown up surrounded by three generations of strong, independent women (Toth 62). Her father died when she was only five, and her mother never remarried. Her maternal great-grandmother, Mme. Victoire Charleville, seems to have exerted a very important influence on the young girl. According to Helen Taylor, Chopin's maternal family had included "free-thinkers" and "rebels against legal, sexual and racial conventions" (141). This kind of background doubtlessly had an impact on Chopin's way of looking at life and may well have helped to shape the kinds of heroines she would later use in her writings.

Another important factor in Chopin's life and writing was the fact that since childhood she had been an avid reader. Because she was fluent in French, and because she was attracted by the French way of looking at life, she turned naturally to French writers, particularly Guy de Maupassant, whose work she greatly admired. Maupassant, says Helen Taylor, "gives [Chopin] permission to be herself, to express the simple truth as she sees it, no matter how shocking, or unorthodox" (157). Taylor sees Chopin acting on Maupassant's influence, going farther than any of the male authors of her day--either French or American--had gone, in creating her "bold," "original" protagonist Edna Pontellier (159). In doing so, however, Chopin learned to her chagrin, that while "St. Louis . . . editors were happy to publish Maupassant and other European writers, [they] found Edna Pontellier too hot to handle" (151). She, after all, like her creator, was an American woman, and American audiences were apparently not ready to accept the fact that one (or two) of their own could look at life in such continental ways as did Chopin and her scandalous heroine.

The Awakening has often been compared to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and Maupassant's "Reveil." Taylor sees correspondence between Chopin's novel and Sand's *Lelia* as well as van Arnim's *Elizabeth and her German Garden* (188). Each of these works apparently attracted Chopin's attention because of their common theme--the same theme which she uses in her own novel, as well as in much of her other writing--the complexities of being a woman in that day.

Chopin was well aware of what Robert White refers to as "the plight of many . . . nineteenth-century women" in the "patriarchal society" of her day, who were locked "in the cage of marriage . . . an inner cell of the prisonhouse of femininity" (98), with no means of escape. She writes often of women entrapped in difficult circumstances, and of some, like Edna in *The Awakening*, who attempt to free themselves. In her brief but poignant tale, "The Story of an Hour," Chopin's heroine Louise, upon receiving the news that her husband has been killed in an accident, is so overjoyed to be her own person, no longer subject to "the powerful will" of another, she can only repeat, over and over, "Free! Body and soul free! (354).

After the death of her husband, Chopin left Louisiana, where she had lived since her marriage, to return to her native St. Louis. There she came under the influence of her physician and long-time friend, Dr. Frederick Kilbenheyer. Seyersted describes the doctor as "a learned man, full of charm and wit and very radical" (22). Taylor also terms him a "radical figure." She feels that he "encouraged Chopin's philosophical skepticism . . . and [her] reading of Darwin,

Huxley, . . . Spencer, . . . Zola, Whitman and Swinburne" (147). She further describes him as an important "male mentor" who encouraged Chopin to become a professional writer and to "defy" the stringent systems of the day (148).[1] Taylor mentions the fact that St. Louis was at that time, a "lively cultural center," and many of Chopin's friends, including Dr. Kolbenheyer, were influential in the intellectual life of the city (146). Chopin's home became a kind of literary salon, a gathering place for intellectuals and writers, as Emily Toth also points out. Chopin, says Toth, "was one of the most popular and sought-after writers in St. Louis's literary colony" (64). Because she lived in this milieu, and was encouraged in her writing career by her liberal, free-thinking associates, it is not surprising that Chopin's fictionalized audience was out of tune with much of the Victorian reading public of her day. Taylor feels that Chopin should have realized that much of the subject matter in her novel was too bold and daring for popular consumption, and that divorce, adultery, and feminine desire--themes which recur in her stories--were unacceptable, especially to the editors and critics of her day (ix). In her insistence on the use of the controversial, Chopin set herself on a collision course with most of her "actual" audience. Bernice Webb believes that Chopin "knew what she was doing," when she chose to write *The Awakening*; it was the culmination of the bold feminist statements she had been making in so many of her earlier works. "The literary route she took, and the shock waves she produced," asserts Webb, "were deliberate" (148). There is no doubt that Chopin's actions were deliberate, and that she intended to go as far as she could in promoting her feminist, naturalistic ideas. I believe that she may have intended, as well, to produce a sense of the uncomfortable in her readers, in an attempt to force them to hear what she was saying. Nevertheless, I doubt that Chopin realized the drastic consequences of "what she was doing," when she published her controversial novel. She must have sensed that her book would indeed create some "shock waves," as Webb puts it, but obviously had no idea of the strength of their negative force.

I see ironic similarity between the fictional Edna Pontellier and the real Kate Chopin. Each had led a fairly conventional existence as wife/mother and was later "awakened" to herself as a person; each in her "awakened" state became progressively more bold, pushing ever more defiantly at the rigid confines of her society. And in the end, they were both brought to a point of no return. Edna, caught up in the complex fabric of Creole culture, was unable to understand the confusing behavior of Robert Le Brun, who while he professed to love her, was unwilling to cross the invisible line of taboo to take her from her husband, a fellow Creole, and claim her for himself. Edna, having come out of a background of conservative Protestantism, perceived reality in very concrete terms, in contrast to the complex, ambiguous manner in which a southern Catholic Creole looked at the nature of things. Robert had "awakened" Edna; she had escaped from the confines of an oppressive situation, and fallen in love with him. She could not comprehend the fact that a public proclamation of their love would result in his disintegration and disgrace in the eyes of his own culture. Chopin, like Edna, was caught in a world of unreality, unable or unwilling to see the inevitable result of her insistence on her freedom to write as she chose, in the

midst of an "alien" society--that of her "actual" audience. Edna, "awakened" only to become frustrated, would finally give herself up to the seductive Gulf waters, in what has variously been interpreted as an act of "ultimate defiance" and an act of weakness.[2] Also Chopin, in a situation strangely akin to that of her heroine, would also be swept away through her own defiance of conventions, though certainly with no conscious desire to destroy herself.

Chopin's "actual" audience was, she discovered, quite different from the fictive/fictional audience which she had created for herself. When the novel was published by Herbert S. Stone of Chicago, on April 12, 1899, critics and reviewers responded almost immediately with what Per Seyersted describes as "shocked outcries". "*The Awakening*," continues Seyersted, "was called a vulgar, morbid, unhealthy book, . . . unwholesome in its influence" (72). Frances Porcher, a reviewer who had admired Chopin's earlier work, expressed the wish that Mrs. Chopin "had not written" the novel at all. "Cui bono?" she asks. Why did she bother?[3] The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* declared that *The Awakening* was "not a healthy book" (*Miscellany* 219). The reviewer could find in it "no particular moral or lesson," although he (she?) admitted that the novel "deal[t] with existent conditions"; the reaction to the book he (she) said, would be "fraught with especial interest" and "surprise"--either negative or positive, depending "largely on the viewpoint of the reader" (Norton 149).

There is no way, of course, for us to know the full scope of Chopin's "actual" reading audience. We do know that besides the negative responses of critics and reviewers, most of whom were men, there were positive responses to the book as well. This aspect of the actual audience was composed of Chopin's friends who had read the novel and reacted to it in glowing terms. R. E. Lee Gibson, a fellow writer, called the work "powerful," "clever," "satisfying." "Never before," he writes Chopin, "has a story affected me so profoundly" (*Miscellany* 131). Louis Ely, member of a prominent St. Louis family, himself an attorney, editor and playwright, referred to the novel as "a moral tale . . . rather than an immoral one," and thanked Chopin "for the pleasure" of her "delicate, artistic" story (132). Sue More, a personal friend, complimented Chopin's novel in a tone of almost breathless exuberance: "My dear, my dear--," she writes, "Your book is great! I . . . am wild to talk to you about it-- . . . I am so proud to know the artist with the courageous soul that dares and defies" (133). The most favorable of early reviews, written by a friend of Chopin's appeared in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 20 May 1899. The reviewer, C. L. Deyo, terms the novel "unique, powerful, well-knit, with 'complete mastery'."

There were also two mysterious letters apparently sent from London, one signed by "Janet Scammon Young," the second "Dunrobin Thomson." Allegedly the two letter-writers were acquaintances who had read *The Awakening* and praised it highly. According to the editors of *The Miscellany*, however, the identities of these individuals remains a mystery. Culley suggests, therefore, the possibility that the letters are not genuine, but that they were written by Chopin's friends, in an effort to encourage her (155). Not all of Chopin's friends were favorably impressed by her novel, however, and it was the reaction by these member of her "negative personal audience" that, according to Thomas Bonner,

hurt her most deeply.[4] "Some of her acquaintances began to shun her," adds Seyersted, "and she was made to feel a social disgrace" (72).

After the publication of *The Awakening*, because of the censure of so much of her "actual" audience, Chopin's career as a writer was greatly diminished. Although, according to Kenneth Eble, "she wrote six stories after 1900, three of which were published . . . she was deeply hurt by the attacks on the novel . . . [and] on her own motives and morals. The stories she wrote thereafter lack distinction" (261). Seyersted grants us a closer look at what he refers to as "Chopin's wound," by quoting from "A Reflection," which she wrote in November 1899. I quote from it here as well:

> Some people are born with a vital and responsive energy . . .
> They do not need to apprehend the significance of things . . .
> Ah! that moving procession that has left me by the roadside!
> Oh! I could weep at being left by the wayside; left with the grass and the clouds and a few dumb animals. True, I feel at home in the society of those symbols of life's immutability. In the procession I should feel the crushing feet, the clashing discords, the ruthless hands and stifling breath. I could not hear the rhythm of the march.
> Slave! Ye dumb hearts. Let us be still and wait by the roadside. (75)

As Seyersted points out, Chopin obviously felt that "'the crushing feet' and 'the stifling breath' of the critics who refused to see 'the significance of things,' had helped to kill her vital creative energy" and to remove her from "the procession of literary life" (75). Seyersted suggests that "when [the] novel was accepted by a publisher in . . . 1898, [she] . . . must have felt she could do anything" 29); of course she was wrong. Eble, quoting from the *Nation*'s description of Chopin's heroine, Edna Pontellier, points up again the ironic similarity between writer and protagonist: in the review, Edna is referred to as "a Southern lady who wanted to do what she wanted to do. From wanting to do, she did, with disastrous consequences" (263), surely an apt description as well of Chopin's own actions.

There remains one further aspect of Chopin's multi-faceted audience to be mentioned. This, too, is complex, because it is both fictive and actual in nature. It is the audience that Chopin must have dreamed of throughout her brief career, throughout the writing of *The Awakening*, the audience that, in Ong's words must have "fire[d] . . . [her] imagination" during the creative process (57). It is the "ultimate audience," (quotes mine), which allows the artist to write as she chooses, about what and whom she chooses, in other words, to have perfect freedom of expression. Existing only in a fictive form in Chopin's day, this audience has become actualized in our time. For although Chopin's work lay buried in obscurity for many years following the censure of her controversial novel, it is now enjoying a flurry of renewed critical interest, especially in the area of feminist criticism. As Toth points out, "until it was reprinted in 1964, *The Awakening* had been out of print for more than half a century" (212). Toth cites 1969 as a year of "epiphany" for Chopin scholarship, and discusses what

Philip Butcher calls the "explosion" in Chopin studies, which, as she points ou "has spread in many directions" (212) and continues to do so.

The gulf that formed between Chopin's fictive and actual audiences as a resul of the publishing of *The Awakening* dealt the author a devastating blow fron which she was never fully able to recover. As with Edna, whose "awakening brings her a measure of satisfaction but will ultimately result in her death Chopin's hoped-for freedom as an artist results in disillusionment and the "death of her creative spirit. Nevertheless, as has been mentioned, there exists fo Chopin's story a kind of positive literary postscript. Like Stendhal, who wrot not for his contemporaries, but rather for "the happy few" who would come afte him, Chopin has amassed in our day an ever-increasing number of devotees, th kind of fictive\actual audience which she, during her lifetime, could only drean of.

Footnotes

[1]Emily Toth, a noted Chopin scholar whose biography of the writer i forthcoming, takes issue with Taylor on this point. In a series of unpublishe comments on this paper, she writes, "There is no evidence that Kolbenheye coaxed Chopin to 'defy' stringent censors: she defied them much more than h did." Toth also objects to Taylor's use of the word "mentor" with regard to th relationship which Kolbenheyer bore to Chopin. There is, she says, "no evidenc to support . . . [such a] claim."

[2]Robert White sees Edna's suicide as a defiant act, but as Suzanne Wolkenfel points out, Daniel Rankin, George Spangler, and Cynthia Wolff, among other view her death as an act of weakness. Wolkenfeld's article is included in th Norton Critical Edition of *The Awakening*, pp. 218-228. It was originally pub lished in *Southern Studies* (see Works Cited).

[3]All of the reviews cited in my paper are reprinted in either the Norton Critica Edition of *The Awakening*, Margaret Culley, editor, or in the *Kate Chopi Miscellany*, Per Seyersted and Emily Toth, editors. Both books have been include in the list of works cited. Hereafter I will refer to the first volume (parenthet cally, within the larger volume in my text) simply as "Norton", the second a *Miscellany*, followed in each case by the appropriate page numbers. The firs review was reprinted in Norton, p. 145.

[4]Bonner, author of the recently-published *Kate Chapin Companion*, and respected Chopin scholar, made this comment in conversation with me at recent conference.

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Belinda's Fall From Triviality: Heroic Impulse in a Mock-Heroic World

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In his "Introduction" to a recent journal issue devoted entirely to the study o Pope's "The Rape of the Lock," Ronald Schleifer signifies the task of its con tributors as attempting "to reread the 'Rape' in the spirit with which we imagin Pope produced his poem almost three hundred years ago: a combination of sense of fun, social critique and overriding good will" (5). Pope's poem was, believe, crafted out of a genuine sense of "good will." But this good will doesn' have to stop at the traditional evaluation of the satiric Pope wanting to merel expose the pettiness of Belinda's, and England's society. This good will is almos a desire to establish a manifesto of good common sense for survival in a worl that functions like Belinda's, and, ultimately, like Pope's. Pope, then, criticize Belinda for failing to function properly in her own world.

Since Belinda's world is based on artifice and triviality, Pope's raising trivialit to a position of importance is not merely satirical. Triviality *is* important i Belinda's world. Triviality is the basis for personal and public conduct. Aban doning the trivial, as Belinda discovers, becomes disastrous.

Pope must function in a world much like that depicted in "The Rape." Whil presumably trying to change that world through his satires, Pope himself wi contribute to the continuation of what he is criticizing. He does this, for exampl through the content of some of his literary correspondences. The feud betwee Pope and John Dennis is one source for some of the more amusing comment showing the level of triviality to which both of these brilliant writers coul descend. After publication of "The Dunciad," in which John Dennis is lambaste Dennis replies with his *Remarks on Mr. Pope's "Rape of the Lock."* Dennis not onl criticizes "The Rape" on literary grounds, but continually calls to mind Pope physical deformity by referring to Pope as "that little man," a "monkey," or "M A. P--E." Pope, of course is just as guilty himself in a number of ways. He, times, uses the very methods he criticizes in order to rise to the top.

Belinda lives in a society based on artifice, on appearance. When she breal the rules of coquetry and artifice to reach true feelings, she is creating disord by not following the norm. The disorder, the rape, is caused by Belinda's gras at what Clarissa, as well as Pope the satirist, would call truth.

Prior to Belinda's "rape" she has been admired as a social success. Pope giv us much proof of this in describing Belinda's traits, traits which John Denn reinforces as being merely artificial in his *Remarks*. "She is represented by th Author perfectly 'beautiful' and 'well-bred, modest' and 'virtuous'" (332). Th sylphs identify Belinda as "Fairest of Mortals," (I. 27) and this picture of Belin is supported throughout by the attentions she receives from the other characte as "ev'ry Eye fix'd on her alone (II.6). Dennis is quick to point out that Belinda beauty is entirely artificial as is evidenced in one example by the Toilette scen

Now awful Beauty puts on all its Arms;
The Fair each moment rises in her Charms,
Repairs her Smiles, awakens ev'ry Grace,
And calls forth all the Wonders of her Face;
Sees by Degrees a purer Blush arise,
And keener Lightnings quicken in her Eyes.
(I.139-144)

Even the lock of hair which is so desirous because of its beauty is described by the narrator as being a product of painstaking artifice:

Was it for this you took such constant Care
The Bodkin, Comb, and Essence to prepare?
For this your Locks in Paper Durance bound
For this with torturing Irons wreath'd around?
For this with Fillets strain'd your tender Head,
And bravely bore the double Loads of Lead?
(IV.97-102)

And as for being well-bred and virtuous, the poem characterizes Belinda as acting:

With graceful Ease and Sweetness, void of Pride.
(II.l5)

Again Dennis points out that Belinda belies both of these traits: good breeding in her ranting about the loss of the lock and in her display of poor sportsmanship during the game of Ombre, and virtue when she laments to the Baron after the rape:

Oh, hadst thou, Cruel, been content to seize
Hairs less in Sight, or any Hairs but these.
(IV.175-76)

But Belinda is able to maintain the appearance of having these character traits. Whether they are real or not is moot. Her preoccupation with physical beauty rather than spiritual, her coquettish behavior, her love of Ombre, her choice of companions, her preoccupation with reputation, the "Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux" (I.138) all show her disarray of values and her concern with maintaining the required appearances.

Belinda fails and is raped because of a lapse in maintaining this life based strictly in artifice. Instead of playing with the Baron's affections, she truly feels affection. The first hint that something unusual is about to happen comes with Ariel's warning to Belinda of some "dread Event" (I.109). Upon awakening

immediately after this warning, Belinda's first thought is of a love letter presumably from the Baron:

> Twas then Belinda! if Report say true,
> Thy Eyes first open'd on a Billet-doux;
> Wounds, Charms, and Ardors, were no sooner read,
> But all the Vision vanish'd from thy Head.
> (I.117-120)

Just as Belinda's faults vanish from our minds when we gaze on her face, Belinda allows the "Wounds, Charms and Ardors" to cloud the insincerity of the content of the letter. She momentarily loses the artificial veneer on her heart and allows herself to feel and hope for genuine affection. The vision of Ariel's warning vanishes, portending the rape that will later occur.

When we see the Baron, on the other hand, getting prepared for the same gathering, there is no love, or any other "noble" emotion, involved in the description. The Baron simply contemplates the acquisition of another testimony to his charms:

> Th' Adventrous Baron the bright Locks admir'd,
> He saw, he wish'd, and to the Prize aspir'd:
> Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
> By Force to ravish, or by Fraud betray;
> For when Success a Lover's Toil attends,
> Few ask, if Fraud or Force attain'd his Ends.
> (II.29-34)

The Baron clearly recognizes the importance of obtaining a goal through any insincere means possible and will eventually use both force and fraud. Instead of reading a particular billet-doux and ignoring any sense of danger in taking its contents seriously, the Baron burns his letters and worships in front of his altar to love. The Baron does not make the mistake, as Belinda does, of allowing any one individual to enter his mind. Belinda had only one letter on her dressing table. The Baron has many items.

When Belinda and the Baron meet at the court, they engage in a game of Ombre, the game of 'man.' Although ultimately winning this match with the Baron, Belinda is briefly frightened toward the end when she thinks she is about to lose her queen of hearts:

> The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily Arts,
> And wins (oh shameful Chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
> (III.87-88)

Belinda's reaction to the Baron's move is quite exaggerated for the possibility of merely losing the hand:

At this, the Blood the Virgin's Cheek forsook,
A livid Paleness spreads o'er all her Look;
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching Ill,
Just in the Jaws of Ruin, and Codille.
(III.89-92)

But the exaggeration makes sense if we apply it to the future consequences of truly losing her heart. The mention of "Virgin," "approaching Ill," and "Jaws of Ruin" could all very well apply to the act of the impending rape.

The moment immediately before the lock of hair is cut, Ariel realizes Belinda has allowed herself to feel true emotion:

Sudden he view's, in spite of all her Art,
An Earthly Lover, lurking at her Heart.
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his Pow'r expir'd,
Resign'd to Fate, and with a Sight Retir'd.
(III.143-46)

In spite of Belinda's familiar talent in hiding true feeling in favor of coquetry, Ariel, with his supernatural powers, discovers affection for the Baron within Belinda's thoughts. This revelation completely upsets the balance of the fictional world. Ariel must simply leave. Now that the supernatural world is in disorder, the mortal world follows. In the couplet following Ariel's loss of power to aid Belinda, the rape occurs.

Once the lock is cut, Belinda seems to show an immediate realization of what has happened, the conditions that allowed the rape to occur, and the impending result of the rape. She quickly works through a range of emotions. We are told that her first reaction is a flash of "living Lightning from her Eyes," (III.155). This is different from the "keener Lightings" (I.144) that Belinda artificially induces during the Toilette scene. As is the case during trauma, Belinda has temporarily redirected her energy to responding to the rape rather than maintaining appearances. Belinda's anger and grief are real.

Umbriel's entire Cave of Spleen experience, generally thought to reflect Belinda's state of mind, also takes place in one "sad moment" (IV.11). So, as the hair is cut, Belinda has that rapid adrenaline fired reaction to a disaster. We see the anger in her eyes, the turmoil of her thoughts through Umbriel's trip, and we see these thoughts surface as Belinda falls into Thalestris' arms.

Once Belinda begins to feel her anger welling up toward the Baron, and with the fanning of "the rising Fire" (IV.94) by Thalestris' sadistic and almost gloating detailing of the indignities awaiting Belinda, she faces the Baron, lamenting her loss of control over her now fled feelings for him:

What mov'd my Mind with youthful Lords to rome?
O had I stay'd, and said my Pray'rs at home!
(IV.159-60)

With this statement, Belinda acknowledges her mistake in allowing the Baron to enter into her mind, and especially her heart, and rebukes the Baron for humiliating her so publicly. Had he raped her in the true sense of the word, Belinda's humiliation would have at least been private and would have preserved appearances.

Pope has been criticized for his choice of punishment for Belinda. While she does step out of the accepted mode of behavior within the context of her world, and according to the definition of "epic" must then face punishment, the rape violently reinforces the primarily phallocentric world of the text. Belinda loves and is violently humiliated by the same man. The rape leaves her vulnerable to both self criticism and society's criticism, and bereft of one of her physical lures.

As a reaction on the whole, the other characters who populate "The Rape," if not condone, they do not take that violence seriously. To them, Belinda seems somehow to deserve her punishment. She has stepped out of her prescribed boundaries by attempting to gain some sort of power of enclosure by engulfing the Baron in her heart. Doing this threatens the entire balance of things. The supernatural characters abandon Belinda, and the other characters reject a move toward sincerity. Should Belinda have been successful in conveying her true emotions to the Baron, and should the Baron have decided to respond with true emotion in kind, both male and female would ascend to some component of equality in truth, and perhaps in genuine regard for each other. This possibility conflicts dramatically with the male's aggressor/conqueror images which the text supports throughout.

Pope, then, reveals Belinda's fatal flaw, a momentary lapse of coquetry, (a flaw that would be regarded a virtue were this not a mock-epic) and, once that flaw is revealed, he guides Belinda, through punishment, back to the path of success in her society. Clarissa, Pope's supposed standard of "right," is the most severe in her condemnation of Belinda, showing no sympathy for her as a victim of male violence.

Clarissa essentially acts twice in the poem: once to give the Baron the weapon by which to commit the rape, and once to chastise the victim of this rape. The content of Clarissa's speech is contrary to the values of the listeners, but has generally been cited as the voice of Pope's criticism of that type of society. She is playing, somewhat, the role of the satirist within that fictive world in trying to correct its ills. Clarissa speaks "truth," but truth is disregarded in this narrative society. Her speech on values directly criticizes Belinda and tends to somewhat justify the rape.

The criticism, though, within the context of that society, should be directed toward Clarissa. She is the one who is consistently outside the norm of her society. Following her advice would not allow successful day to day functioning in her world. Belinda only briefly falls without that norm during her infatuation with the Baron, but is encompassed within it again at the end; Clarissa remains outside. And, as a result, Clarissa, "grave Clarissa" (V.7), is not liked by any of the other characters. She is characterized as spinster-like by words such as "grave" and "Dame," in the respectful silence the audience first grants her prior to her speech, and in the way that she is unsuccessful in the mock coquettish

battle that follows her speech. She is unable to fight in this flirtatious battle and must be rescued by another woman who can:

> When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
> Chloe stept in, and kill'd him with a Frown;
> (V.67-8)

The fact that Clarissa speaks out against the prevailing behavior of that society insinuates that she is not only unwilling but perhaps unable to participate successfully according to those standards. At no time is Clarissa presented in a successful light within the context of the values of her fictional society. She is ineffective within the poem.

Why, after all, does Clarissa provide the scissors, the instrument of rape, to the Baron in the first place. Hasn't she caused the immediate problem herself? It is doubtful that she is ignorant of their intended use:

> But when to Mischief Mortals bend their Will,
> How soon they find fit Instruments of Ill!
> Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting Grace
> A two-edg'd Weapon from her shining Case;
> So Ladies in Romance assist their Knight,
> Present the Spear, and arm him for the Fight.
> He takes the Gift with rev'rence. . . .
> (III.125-31)

Who exactly is bent to mischief? Is Clarissa purposefully "tempting" in the manner in which she produces the scissors? Every indication is that she is actively persuading the Baron to violence. She tempts, "assist[s]," "Present[s]," and "arm[s]" the Baron. The weapon is offered as a "Gift", a "Spear"--as in preparation for a "Fight." But who is involved in this fight?

If we are to look at Clarissa's motivation from the fictional society's point of view, one of male dominance, then the classic reason for Clarissa's participation in the rape is that of jealousy or bitterness. Belinda has been successful, is admired and desired by others in that society. Clarissa has nor is not. Females pitted against each other are divided from common goals which would strengthen their powers as social and individual forces. Taken to extreme, Clarissa's vicarious participation in the rape becomes an act of hatred toward the female gender, and, ultimately, an act of self-hatred. In this instance, then, Clarissa's behavior is, at its core, more vicious and damaging than the killing of reputations through gossip and obsessive concern with feminine appearance, acts which Clarissa criticizes in her speech.

Understanding Clarissa, then, from the point of view of the values contained within "The Rape" reverses the traditional identification of Clarissa as the moral guiding figure, just as it transforms Belinda into a character who tries to reach briefly through the artifice into the "truth" of feelings. Perhaps in this way Clarissa becomes the ultimate hypocritical figure of the poem.

Once Belinda's reasons for failure, and punishment, are clear, Belinda, her hair, and the trivial situation become artifice immortal. Belinda becomes metamorphosed into that part of herself which required the most painstaking artificial means to preserve and to serve as a temptation. The basic premise of the society is reasserted: artifice is not trivial.

Finally the ultimate act of artifice is at the core of the poem in which "The Rape" creates an immortal void. There is no rape, no passion, no sex, no honor, no real action, no epic, no lasting moral, no real "good" advice on how to change any of the faults of the society. When Belinda tries to have the reality of these elements rather than the mere appearance of them, she disrupts the social order and is forced back in step through the rape. There is even no lock left at the end of the poem.

Taking the traditional definition and goals of a satirist as basically remaining a conservative individual trying to correct the ills of society, Belinda's failure to operate within the rules of her fictional society breaks the guidelines of decorum, proper functioning, and sets the entire world of the poem into chaos. Not until Belinda is restored to a symbol of artifice, the key element of that society, is the society able to re-order itself.

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Absalom, Absalom! As a Parable of the Phenomenological Reading Process

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William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* is a classic example of a modern literary text, characterized by its complexity in structure, multiplicity in dimension, and plurality in meaning. The inexhaustibility of meaning in the text of *Absalom* is indeed evident in the different interpretations offered by critics. Ilse Dusoir Lind, for example, claims that the intention of the novel is to create "a grand tragic vision of historic dimension" and to elevate "events of modern history . . . to the status of a new myth" (887). John Pilkington argues that Faulkner's masterpiece deals with "the general theme of the stubbornness of history to relinquish its truths" (165). Other critics have read the novel as "an exposition of the American dream, a modern treatment of the biblical account of David and Absalom, a ghost story in a Gothic setting, or the exposition of a theory of history" (169)[1]. *Absalom* seems to bear out the phenomenological critics' claim that "one text is potentially capable of several different readings, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential" (Iser 380). As Cleanth Brooks points out, *Absalom* "has meant something very powerful and important to all sorts of people"(295). In my recent reading, I find that Faulkner's masterpiece can also be read as a parable of the phenomenological reading process.

The phenomenological reading process is a concern of modern Reader-Response theory. Although criticism that focuses on a reader's response to a text can be traced back to Aristotle's "Poetics," the phenomenological reading theory has developed only since the late 1960s. Simply put, phenomenology "is a philosophical view that posits a continuous field of experience between the perceiver (subject) and the object of experience" (Davis 345). When applied to the reading of a literary text, this view naturally points to a continuing interaction between the reader (the "perceiver") and the text (the "object of experience")[2]. Reading should be an "active and creative" process, and a literary text "must be conceived in such a way that it will engage the reader's imagination in the task of working things out for himself" (Iser 377). The ultimate goal of this dynamic reading process, according to Wolfgang Iser, is for the reader to recreate imaginatively the world presented in the text and to realize eventually "the virtual dimension of the text" (380). "This virtual dimension," explains Iser, "is not the text itself, nor is it the imagination of the reader; it is the coming together of text and imagination" (379-380).

With this brief definition of the phenomenological reading process in mind, let us now go to the novel itself. Structurally, the narrative of *Absalom* has two layers: the legendary story of Thomas Sutpen may be considered the inner layer, which is framed by an outer layer of the several characters' responses to the legend. In other words, the narrative scheme is so constructed that the legend of Sutpen becomes a literary text which activates the faculties of each of the

major characters, who may be called narrator-readers of the text, enabling them to recreate the legendary world the text presents. Before we go any further, let us look at a passage from the novel.

> *Maybe nothing ever happens once and is finished. Maybe happen is never once but like ripples maybe on water after the pebble sinks, the ripples moving on, spreading, the pool attached by a narrow umbilical water-cord to the next pool which the first pool feeds, has fed, did feed, let this second pool contain a different temperature of water, a different molecularity of having seen, felt, remembered, reflected in a different tone the infinite unchanging sky, it does not matter: that pebble's watery echo whose fall it did not even see moves across its surface too at the original ripple-space, to the old ineradicable rhythm . . .* (261)

This passage, printed in italics in the book, is a comment made by the omniscient narrator. It has been often discussed and interpreted in various ways.[3] To me, it is metaphorical description of the phenomenological reading process. Indeed, we may even find allegorical relationships in this text. The pebble that sinks may be viewed as the text of the Sutpen legend. Just as the pebble causes ripples on the water, the text of the Sutpen legend activates the imaginative faculties of the narrator-readers, who are allegorically represented by the pools. On the one hand, the narrator-readers, as a reading circle or community, are all affected by the Sutpen legend and influence each other (through "a narrow umbilical water-cord") in their responses to the text. As individual readers, on the other hand, they have different responses to the text because of their individual background, point of view, and power of imagination. Even though they all realize "the virtual dimension of the text" ("the infinite unchanging sky") each of the narrator-readers has "a different temperature," "a different molecularity," and "a different tone."

Since the "virtual dimension" of a text is "the coming together" of the text itself and the reader's imagination, it is necessary to look first at the text in question. In *Absalom*, the author turns the eventful life of Thomas Sutpen into a legendary story, making it a literary text with potential multiplicity. This text is fragmentary in nature and plural in meaning. For example, none of the narrator-readers --Miss Rosa, or Mr. Compson, or Quentin-Shreve as a reading team--has a complete picture of Sutpen's life. With his artistic manipulation Faulkner allows his narrator-readers to gain access only to fragmentary pieces of information. Without a chronological account of Sutpen's life in the text, the narrator-readers have to piece together whatever information is available to them and conjure up their own image of this mysterious man, the world he lives in, and the meaning of his life. It is, however, exactly the fragmentary nature of the text that compels the narrator-readers to use their imagination and to participate in recreating the meanings of the text. It should also be noted that Faulkner, in writing his parable of reading, carefully selected his narrator-readers. They are all quite capable of artistic imagination. Faulkner seems to be making sure that they will all accomplish the task of constructing their "virtual dimension" of the Sutpen text.

Miss Rosa Coldfield is the first narrator-reader presented in the parable. Living in seclusion, Miss Rosa has a limited experience of life in the world at large. A daughter of a Methodist steward and niece of a strong-willed and protective aunt, Miss Rosa's childhood is much sheltered. The elopement of the aunt with a mule-horse dealer and the death of her father literally leave Miss Rosa an orphan in a house full of Gothic atmosphere. Whatever Miss Rosa may be short of (food or clothes), the frustrated spinster does not lack the romantic vision of a little poetess and the outraged hatred of an insulted lover. Miss Rosa romantically sees the Judith-Bon courtship as ideal love and views Sutpen's forbidding the marriage as an arbitrary act. She has always detested Sutpen. When Sutpen returns from the Civil War, however, she is betrayed by her romanticism and conjures up a heroic image of the colonel. But this positive image of Sutpen is short-lived. Sutpen's proposal of a trial-production before marriage drives her into a permanent seclusion. With her unique background, Miss Rosa reads the Sutpen text with a highly-colored perspective. She calls Sutpen "a walking shadow" and tells Quentin, "He [Sutpen] was the light-blinded bat-like image of his own torment cast by the fierce demonic lantern up from beneath the earth's crust and hence in retrograde, reverse; from abysmal and chaotic dark to eternal and abysmal dark completing his descending . . . ellipsis" (171). Her limited vision and biased opinions of Sutpen naturally affect her "virtual dimension" of the Sutpen text, which pictures Sutpen as the incarnation of a demonic energy that destroys the Sutpen family and its kin.

A gentleman in the Deep South, Mr. Compson has grown out of the Southern tradition of story telling and therefore has inherited a natural capability of artistic imagination. As a man of the world, Mr. Compson has a greater access to information about Sutpen than Miss Rosa and has more fragmentary pieces of the Sutpen text. Basically, he has the tell-tale material from the community, of which he is a member, and the story of Sutpen's early life passed down from General Compson, Sutpen's only friend in Jefferson. With these advantages, Mr. Compson seems a more enlightened and informed reader than Miss Rosa, and his responses to the Sutpen legend also involve a comprehensive judgment and shrewd analysis. But we also gather from his responses that he is a skeptic in religion and a rationalist in his general approach to life. In fact, his skepticism goes beyond the scope of religion, for he seems to have no faith in all human action and veracity. To a certain extent, Mr. Compson sees Sutpen as a heroic figure, but his defeatism soon leads him to the conviction that nothing can escape chance and fatality. As a result of his dark imagination, the "virtual dimension" of the Sutpen text becomes for Mr. Compson a tragedy of fate.

Unlike Miss Rosa and Mr. Compson, Quentin and Shreve work in collaboration as narrator-readers. As the omniscient narrator in Absalom points out, Quentin and Shreve are "both thinking as one" and the differences between them are "not in tone or pitch but of turns of phrase and usage of words" (303). Of all the narrator-readers, the team-readers seem to be most capable of artistic imagination. As a matter of fact, their conjectures and imaginings in a cold dormitory room up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, form more than half of the book. The team-readers' unique advantage seems to be that their imagination appears well

balanced, since Quentin's romantic and emotional tendencies are often counter-checked by the relatively realistic and detached perspective of Shreve, an outsider to the South. Also to their advantage is that Quentin, through his endless listenings, has obtained far more information about the Sutpen legend. But as readers of a fragmentary text, they also have to do the piece-together work through their conjectures and imaginings. The omniscient narrator at one point says the two of them are "creating between them, out of the rag-tag and bob-ends of old tales and talking" (303). The unique aspect of Quentin-Shreve's responses to the Sutpen legend is probably their shift of interest. As we have seen, both Miss Rosa and Mr. Compson are largely concerned with the main text of the Sutpen legend. Quentin-Shreve's focus seems to be more on the Henry-Judith-Bon triangle--which may be called the sub-text of the Sutpen legend--rather than on Sutpen's life itself. In their conjecturing of Sutpen's act to forbid the Judith-Bon marriage, of Henry's quest in New Orleans, of Henry-Bon's experience in the war, and of Henry's killing of Bon at the gate of the Sutpen mansion, Quentin and Shreve often identify themselves with the participants in the legend. With such a unique interest and approach, the team-readers arrive at their version of the "virtual dimension" of the text, i.e., the theme of incest and miscegenation.

Whether personal and subjective as in Miss Rosa's case, or ostensibly detached and rationalistic as Mr. Compson's responses are, or emotional and purely imaginative as Quentin-Shreve's seem to be, these responses are all valid in their own ways, and they show the possible realizations of the Sutpen text. They are not mutually exclusive since, as Iser points out, "the reading process is selective, and the potential text is infinitely richer than any of its individual realizations" (381). Fragmentary and inexhaustible, the Thomas Sutpen text engages the narrator-readers in an active and creative reading process that is typically phenomenological. By reading Faulkner's novel as a parable of the phenomenological reading process, we can not only fully recognize the prominence of the individual narratives of the major characters, but also expose the author's implied belief in the reader's active role in artistic creativity. Without the narrator-readers' active and creative responses, it would have been impossible for the Sutpen legend to have the magnitude, power, and intensity that it does now. Through his ingenious interweaving of the individual narratives and the general structure of the book, Faulkner, as Paul Rosenzweg observes, "seems to be suggesting that the ideal artistic relationship between the artist, his material, and his audience is a symbiotic relationship in which each partakes of and is changed by the others" (145).

Moreover, viewing *Absalom* as a parable of the phenomenological reading process seems to agree with Faulkner's comments on the important role of the reader in the understanding or even the making of fiction. Answering a question on the truth in *Absalom*, Faulkner once said that the reader should work out "his own fourteenth image of that black bird which . . . is the truth" (Gwynn 274). On another occasion, Faulkner made the following remarks:

> . . . probably a writer, whether he intends to or not, or knows it or not, is going to shape what he writes in the terms of who will read it. So maybe when there are fine listeners, there will be find poets again, that maybe the writing that is not too good is not just the writer's fault, it may be because of the environment, a part of which is the general effluvium of the readers, the people who will read it. That does something to the air they all breathe together, that compels the shape of the book. (Gwynn 41-42)

We may infer that a great literary work is not produced by the artist alone but with the collaboration of the "fine poets" among its readers. Here we see Faulkner preceding the phenomenological Reader-Response theorists, since his comments were made in the late 1950s, while the phenomenological reading theory was developed a decade later. Faulkner's consciousness of the reader's role in the production of great literary works is quite understandable. Faulkner's modern literary texts, like those of Joyce, are extremely demanding of the reader. Many of Faulkner's contemporary readers were puzzled by the complexity of *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Sanctuary* (1931), *Light in August* (1932). Publishing *Absalom* in 1936, which I think is his most complex book--both thematically and structurally--as well as his most artistic invention, Faulkner seems to be suggesting to the public that readers of his fiction ought to do with his novels as the narrator-readers in this book do with the text of the Sutpen legend, that is, take an active and creative approach and realize with imagination their own "virtual dimension of the text."

Footnotes

[1]Melvin Blackman, for instance, views the central quest in the novel as "the quest to discover the truth about the rise and fall of the South" (59). Other critics have also discussed Faulkner's concern in the novel with the artistic process and the growth of the artist. While acknowledging that "the central theme of the primary story of Sutpen deals with love, . . . the ability to see and care for another in his own right," and that "in the secondary narrative framework the central theme is the search for . . . the truth of all human motivation," Paul Rosenzweig plausibly argues that "the form of the novel . . . introduces a concern for the imagination and the artistic process" (136, 143). By viewing Quentin as the major protagonist of the novel, Estella Schoenberg believes that "The novel is a portrait of the artist as a young man" and that it "traces the artist's growing disillusion with his inherited tradition, his recognition that its heroes are unheroic, its values false, its demands excessive" (148-49).

[2]In fact, the phenomenological theory of art implies that "the literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic and the aesthetic: the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader" (Iser 376-377).

[3]Professor Pilkington, for example, suggests that the message here is "that the present flows out of the ripples of the past and that each act or event in history may subsequently take on an important or significance unknown or

undreamed when it took place" (170). Rosenzweig, on the other hand, believes that "each pool of water is another version of the Sutpen story varying slightly by personality . . . but all ultimately reflecting . . . 'the infinitely unchanging sky' of Faulkner, the final artist-god" (149).

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Philistines Extraordinaire: A Look at Fitzgerald's Tom Buchanan and Eliot's "Apeneck" Sweeney

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When they were both undergraduates at Princeton, Scott Fitzgerald once said to his friend Edmund Wilson, "I want to be one of the greatest writers who every lived, don't you" (Mizener 36). There was a time, specifically in 1937 when Fitzgerald could not find any of his books in print, when his naive daydream was far from being a reality, but now, following the great reawakening of interest in *The Great Gatsby*, that dream seems to be coming true.

Wilson (who did not do badly for himself either, becoming one of the greatest critics who ever lived) in the meantime turned his attention to the "extraordinary success" (112) of another American writer, T. S. Eliot. To explain that success, Wilson suggests that it is at least partially due to "the essentially dramatic character of [Eliot's] imagination." Wilson also writes that "most of the best of Eliot's poems are based on unexpected dramatic contrasts" (112-13). To substantiate these claims, one needs to look no further than "Apeneck Sweeney" (Eliot 49), the primary member of that motley gang of rough, rootless characters by whom Eliot represents the far extreme of the social scale from Prufrock's milktoast milieu. Fitzgerald creates a similar character in Tom Buchanan, and in these two brutal, insensitive types we have personified the modern philistine.

Economically, of course, Buchanan and Sweeney are at opposite ends of the social spectrum. Spiritually and physically, however, they are virtually twins, or as Eliot would have them call each other, "'mon semblable,--mon frere!'" (55). There is no spiritual vitality in either man, and yet the gross physicality and materialism of their lives define them and are so overwhelming that both of them are rendered animalistically.

Van Wyck Brooks has posited a thesis about *The Great Gatsby* to the effect that "America had produced an idealism so impalpable that it had lost touch with reality (Gatsby) and a materialism so heavy that it was inhuman (Tom Buchanan)" (Raleigh 142). This paradigm also fits Eliot's antithetical characters, Prufrock and Sweeney. Arranging these characters in patterns like this shows how dependent their development is on contrast with their opposites as well as with their contemporary environments and those of previous eras. Both Tom Buchanan and "Apeneck" Sweeney largely come to life when they are placed in such contrasts and function as foils. Particularly, as far as Sweeney is concerned, this is the primary way his character is constructed.

By continually contrasting the coarseness of Sweeney and his vulgar contemporary scene with the values and vitality of the mythic past, Eliot has firmly established the Sweeney prototype as a part of our own modern mythology. However, because of Eliot's technique of creating this dramatic character by way of oblique, comparative allusions, of more mere gesture than forceful action, and of virtually no dialogue to go along with his dull, hulking presence, Sweeney is

not so much an individualized personality as a character type that we know so well because we have all seen him. By handling Sweeney in the highly connotative way that he does, Eliot encourages his readers to project their own conceptions of ultimate vulgarity onto this broad, amorphous fellow.

In "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" we are not even certain that "The silent man in mocha brown" is Sweeney, but, whether he is or not, our picture of Sweeney is enlarged because of the way the man "sprawls" and "gapes" (49-50). These movements match our idea of what the quintessentially crude person would do. Eliot similarly invites us to associate "The silent invertebrate in brown with Sweeney. When we do so, our low-browed character diminishes to a sub-human level as "contracts," amoeba-like, and then "withdraws." In "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Services," Sweeney appears only in the last quatrain as he stays away from church on the sabbath and takes his satirical baptism of a bath. Typically, the only view that Eliot gives us of Sweeney is a coarse, backward one of the man shifting from one buttock to the other in the tub. However, we would all swear that Sweeney has a hairy belly in this scene simply because of Eliot's juxtaposition of the garden-wall bees and their "hairy bellies." We would all be surprised to remember that in "Sweeney Erect," when he is about to shave, "Broadbottomed" Sweeney is actually hairless, "pink from nape to base" (34). With Sweeney, we feel that we know him through and through, but it is not because he is a well developed dramatic character who comes alive on the pages due to either his words or actions. We know him because he is a perfect symbol for the most crass, insensitive, and spiritless of all the creatures who inhabit Eliot's twentieth-century wasteland and because Eliot has involved us in Sweeney's creation by requiring us to imagine this man.

Tom Buchanan is such a prototype too, joining Sweeney in modern mythology. Fitzgerald has fused the big, stupid football player stereotype with our pre-established conception of the corrupt man of wealth, which, in this case, is old, inherited, unearned and undeserved East Egg wealth. Fitzgerald quickly sketches the character of Tom Buchanan with a host of well-chosen, derogatory words as he describes Tom physically:

> Now he was a sturdy straw-haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body--he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing, and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body of enormous leverage--a cruel body. (7)

It is clear that Fitzgerald's narrator, Nick Carraway, who, ironically, prides himself on reserving "all judgments" (1) about people, takes an immediate dislike to this overbearing, contemptuous boor, and this, of course, implies that we should too. Nick's mere mentioning that "there were men at New Haven who

hated his [Tom's] guts" (7) plants a germ in our minds that there must undoubtedly be good reasons for this revulsion.

Superficially, Fitzgerald's development of Tom Buchanan is straightforward with no punches pulled, but the indictment against the callous, destructive materialism and vulgarity which Tom represents goes deeper than the surface, and Tom, like Sweeney, is realized through suggestion, though not to the same degree. Fitzgerald's locating Tom's school at New Haven, i.e., Yale, is an example of the below-the-surface, additional meaning with which Fitzgerald flavored his novel. When Fitzgerald was at Princeton he wrote that

> what started my Princeton sympathy . . . was that they always just lost the foot-ball championship. Yale always seemed to nose them out in the last quarter by superior "stamina" as the newspapers called it . . . . I imagined the Princeton men as slender and keen and romantic, and the Yale men as brawny and brutal and powerful. (Mizener 28)

A decade later, when writing *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald still has this baggage of collegiate football rivalry in the back of his mind, and he makes Tom Buchanan "one of the most powerful ends that every played football at New Haven" (6) with all of the negative connotations that Yale football and losing to Yale had for Fitzgerald.

An even better instance of Fitzgerald's fleshing out Tom's character by way of suggestion is found in Nick's final meeting with Tom. Completely oblivious to all of the "things and creatures" (Fitzgerald 180) that he and Daisy had smashed, Tom guilelessly talks with Nick, manfully shakes hands with him, and then goes into a "jewelry store to buy a pearl necklace--or perhaps only a pair of cuff buttons" (181). As Victor Doyno has suggested, "perhaps Tom has found a replacement for his dead mistress" (162). That would certainly be in keeping with Tom's philandering nature, and Daisy definitely is not in need of any more baubles. The "cuff buttons" link Tom with the offensive Meyer Wolfsheim whose own cuff buttons are the "finest specimens of human molars" (Fitzgerald 73). Various associations like these quickly add up to make Tom Buchanan "the most unpleasant character in the book" (Dyson 113).

Eliot also blackens Sweeney's character by a similar reference to teeth in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." When sleepy, inebriated Sweeney, "the man with the leery eyes / Declines the gambit," the sexual invitation, and "Leaves the room . . . [he] reappears" in the window, "leaning in," smiling a huge "golden grin." Sweeney's teeth are yellow with rot and/or gold. Eliot makes us decide which, just as Fitzgerald lets us color in the specific hues of his philistine. Sweeney blocks the window, guarding "the horned gate" and keeping out the light of past traditions with his bulky body and his decaying, materialistic grin. Tom Buchanan does the same thing, brutalizing the world as he goes along. If the two of them could ever meet, it is certain that their creators would drop enough hints so that we would know that Tom and Sweeney would go to the Waste Land. Once there, it is certain that they would visit the meretricious Mrs.

Porter and her daughter and undoubtedly they would do more with these ladies than simply "wash their feet in soda water" (Eliot 61).

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Ishmael Reed's Post Modernist Text

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> She's up in the hills hunting for meese.
> You mean moose don't you bartender? the Marshall asked.
> No. Marshal, meese. Goose is to geese as moose is to meese. I know we're out in the old frontier but everything can't be in a state of anarchy, I mean how will we communicate?
> (*Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down*, 53)

The question raised by the bartender, "how will we communicate," is an essential question in the discussion of post-modernist writing. Ishmael Reed aggressively attacks this question in his novels, poems, and essays. His immediate solution is to diminish, if not destroy, the traditional forms of narrative, especially the modernist and the social realist. In their place, Reed inserts a non-Western, non-logocentric narrative that demands both a knowledge of Western history and philosophy and a knowledge of Third World oral traditions. In this way, Reed forces the reader away from the master mythic narrative and toward an ex-centric indeterminacy that allows for non-Eurocentric options.

As Linda Hutcheon points out in her book *A Poetics for Postmodernism*, Reed employs the post-modernist technique of ironically contesting the "myth as the master narrative" (50). For example, within the framework of the detective novel Reed gives his readers *Mumbo Jumbo*, the story of PaPa LaBas, the hoodoo detective, on the prowl for the ancient African Lost Text. In *Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down* Reed uses the western to present his hero the Loop Garoo Kid, a hoodoo houngan who has come to free the town from the grips of Drag Gibson. Both of these novels are responses to the traditional narrative, and both are examples of the ex-centric text. Hutcheon defines ex-centric as a conscious move away from a centralized ideological and sociological formula, one that rethinks margins and borders, specifically those margins and borders defined as non-Eurocentric (58).

Thus, one of the primary aspects of the post-modernist novel is that it is self-conscious and self-reflexive. In other words, the novel examines the art of writing as well as fiction. The text itself becomes apart of the thematic structure and the plot. Patricia Waugh notes this redefinition during her discussion of metafictional parody, a device of post-modernism that rethinks the validity of the text and contextual forms:

> It exploits the indeterminacy of the text, forcing the reader to revise his or her rigid preconceptions based on literary or social conventions, by playing off contemporary and earlier paradigms against each other and thus defeating the reader's expectations about both of them. (67)

Thus when Reed writes in *Radio Broke-Down* that a text can be anything the author desires including a "circus," he challenges the whole literary scope of narrative--textual and contextual--within the post-modernist frame. This action therefore conforms with the post-modernist desire to re-locate and re-define the logocentricism that dominates all prior literature. With the earlier literature, a logos centered text was not only accepted as normal but demanded by the Western advocates, such as literary critics, artists, churches, philosophers, and ideological power-brokers. As a philosophical and religious entity, the logos has attached itself to the unconscious and conscious lives of the Western world. From its Grecian and Hebrew roots, the logos has served as a beginning and end for the Western artistic and ideological institutions. As a result, Reed attacks this Grecian and Hebrew concept quite adamantly in *Mumbo Jumbo* when he has PaPa LaBas expound on the powers of Osiris, the pre-Christian Egyptian deity. Post-modernist writing, therefore, serves to re-define the central entity that has been denied to minorities, women, and non-Western concepts. Post Modernism challenges this entity, or as Linda Hutcheon writes, "Postmodernism signals its dependence by its use of the canon, but reveals its rebellion through its ironic abuse of it" (130).

Ishmael Reed furthermore destroys the concept of linear time in favor of a temporal paradigm. Thus characters appear from other time periods without any interruption in the flow of the plot. For example, in *Radio Broke-Down* Reed has Field Marshal Theda Blackwell talk about Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine to his masseur:

> Tom's [Jefferson] all right, Theda said, but he's such a rake, nothing but a dirt farmer and anarchist. hangs out with Jacobins like that Paine fellow. I've even seen him out with women from time to time. And he doesn't know how to keep his britches on at all. Some man in Conn. is suing him for adultery right now and he reads French books and plays electric fiddle with some rock group called the Green Mountain Boys. (141)

In addition, the plot is exorcised from the logos by the altering of the protagonist and antagonists. What has previously been accepted and expected as natural such as moral attitudes, personal goals, and ethical issues, are now reversed contorted, or rearranged. The metaphor that best illustrates this manipulation of plot and character is the hoodoo metaphor. Immediately, one recognizes a drastic change in the scope of the text when the protagonist appears not as a Christian bound by Western morality, but as a hoodoo houngan aligned to an ancient religion with its roots in pre-Christian Africa.

Furthermore, Reed expands this post-modernist technique to include the self-reflexive Afro-American literary tradition. This, as Henry Louis Gates notes has its roots in the slave narratives as well as the post-modernist desire to alter the physical text and thus undermine the role of the author as an agent of the Western logocentricism:

> Reed's work seems to be a magnificently conceived play on the tradition. . . . Reed himself has defined [the speakerly texts] as "an oral book, a talking book," a figure that occurs, . . . in four of the first five narratives in the black tradition in the eighteenth century. (249)

> A close reading of Reed's corpus of works suggests strongly that he seems to be concerned with the received form of the novel, with the precise rhetorical shape of the Afro-American literary tradition, and with the relation that the Afro-American tradition bears to the Western tradition. (250)

Thus, the sentence fragments, short paragraphs (some of a single sentence or two), the gaps between the paragraphs, and the use of typographical symbols that remind one of ancient marking all greatly contribute to the new narrative. In other words, Reed does not depend upon the plot or traditional literary imagery to carry his story through to its thematic conclusion. Outside of Reed's African-American heritage, artistic as well as historical, there exists within Reed's works the definite attempt to work for an ex-centric position that can compete against the logocentric tradition. Not only does this ex-centric position represent an artistic move, but it also demands recognition for the continually changing sociological structures present today in the West.

The use of a paradigmatic time order brings to mind the fantasy or science fiction works that have previously employed time travel as a plotline. Reed, however, is not writing in either of these genres. He tries for the satirical more than the fantastic. From his ex-centric position, satire and parody serve to undermine the myths and traditions of both the detective and Western novels. In fact, Reed even goes beyond these genres in such works as *The Free-Lance Pallbearers*, *Flight to Canada*, *The Terrible Twos*, and *Reckless Eyeballing*. In these narratives Reed displays his desire to parody the protest novels, the slave narratives, and the Victorian novels. In each case, there is a direct attack against the traditional narrative as both a structure and a purveyor of myth. However, of all his works, *Mumbo Jumbo* best illustrates the artistic genius that Reed uses to undermine an ideological and historical power structure.

For example, Reed extends his temporal paradigm in *Mumbo Jumbo* from the character references in *Radio Broke-Down* to the use of seemingly irrelevant photographs. Not until the reader recognizes the historical significance of the photographs does Reed's deconstructive writing technique become apparent. By deconstructive writing technique I mean that Ishmael Reed continually seeks to re-locate and re-define the thematic structure, symbolic and metaphoric referents, and, basically, bring the Derridean Other into focus, if not, in fact, to an altogether newly recognized center. As the written text does not depend upon a single time period, neither do the photographs. Thus, the novel's setting is Harlem during the Harding administration, but the photographic referents come from the nineteenth century through the Nixon administration.

The photography enhances the "talking book" image that Reed struggles to convey. The written word now works with visual images that jointly attack the

reader's concept of tradition--literary and ideological. Also, from a metafictional position, the photography and bibliography that follows the text, further serve to undermine the Western idea of logos. In so doing, the importance of non-Western thought, especially spiritual and mythological, surfaces as a viable literary device. Reed illustrates quite colorfully that the novel is not dead, but in fact alive and growing. He warmly welcomes the multi-media, multi-disciplinary elements to his text. A confirmed plurality exists within this metafictional structure, a plurality that serves as the basis of post-modernism.

It is in fact this plurality that brings even more significance to the question the bartender poses, "How are we to communicate? Post-modernist literature has altered communication because the single and binary modes of literary tradition have been ousted from their endowed chairs. Today, with the help of Reed and other post-modernists, the necessity of plurality leaps to the forefront of the literary and ideological revolutions the world over. In order to communicate effectively with the non-European population, the post-modernist advocates a series of questions that do not necessarily lead to an archetype, but instead to options that accept the non-Eurocentric tradition as a valid counterpart. For example, Ishmael Reed demands that white America acknowledge the African-American as a person with an ideology and history as complex as the Anglo-European. With this stance, he demands equal time for the Afrocentric approach to literature, mythology, and ideology.

Within the incantations of the Loop Garoo Kid, Reed makes this same request:

> O Black Hawk American Indian houngan of Hoo-Doo please do open up some of these prissy orthodox minds so that they will no longer call Black People's American experience "corrupt" "perverse" and "decadent". . . . Teach them that anywhere people go they have experience and that all experience and that all is art. (64)

From this one excerpt, the reader denotes the importance of a plurality that has been previously denied. Reed begins with a cry from the Native American Black Hawk then directs his request specifically for African-Americans, and concludes with the necessity to recognize all people and all experience. In this way, Reed methodically adheres to Hutcheon's definition of ex-centricity. There is no centralized canon or ideological body that commands all people, but instead there is a plurality, a communal attitude, that stirs images from the past, present, and future while concurrently accepting a spatially cultural paradigm. Once the traditional concepts of literary and ideological structures give way to the plural and communal structures, the reader is better equipped to question previously unquestionable concepts, such as history and authority.

If Ishmael Reed's writing does anything at all, it confirms the post-modernist need to question traditional authority. No one can read one of his novels without asking some questions, often times perhaps beginning with the perplexing question: "What is this about?" With that question, one begins a move from the logocentric past to the ex-centric future. As Swift and Twain struggled to bring social questions to their audiences, Reed also does the same. His satire and

parody complement the non-traditional narrative structure to such an extent that one must either heave the text out the window or begin a long journey into the sociological and psychological significance of the hoodoo hero/anti-hero. No matter what the outcome is for the reader, there is sure to be some reaction, and for the post-modernist, this is of the utmost importance. Questions and reactions must be acknowledged. So, as Reed writes in his poem "Black power poem":

may the best church win. shake hands now and come out conjuring.

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from Section 5, Chapter 4, *PROTEUS RISING:*

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Gordon In Hell

Gordon crossed Fifth Avenue at a frightened run. He thought of Betty and the abdominal agony returned. It was not exactly a pain in his stomach; it was the awful sensation of leakage. His abdominal spirits were draining at a frightening rate. In desperation he hastened toward the New York Hilton. Perhaps Newton would be there. Newton? What? Virgin, chosen of God? There was something Gordon wanted to ask him: can you save me?

Newton was not at the Hilton. Gordon moved through the various lounges as inconspicuously as possible. In the lounge called Mirage, he spotted Harvey Grosskirk and a crowd of his friends. He averted his eyes, but too late.

Grosskirk waved. Gordon summoned a smile and shook hands with everyone. He hoped they would recognize no suspicious changes in his demeanor.

"Gallantry always wins out," Grosskirk announced to the others as he shook Gordon's hand. "Here is a truly gallant human being, Gordon Streng. Gordon, this is Felicia Smith, our new Poet in Residence in the Green Mountain Consortium. Probably you know the others? Happy and Geraldine Jackson? Mark Hereford?"

Felicia Smith wore startling makeup. She looked a little like a European countess except that she wore a peasant blouse and skirt, pleasingly embroidered with little figures he couldn't quite make out. Her hair was red and long and tucked behind an ear on one side of her head. She smiled hugely.

"He praised your gallantry for my benefit," Felicia Smith said. "I have a reputation for eating gallant men alive, or so he pretends."

"Oh?" Gordon smiled, donning his party manners. "Putting me on the menu, so to speak?"

"Never fear," Grosskirk chuckled. "You'll enjoy the experience, I promise. She's a professional."

"Harvey!" She slapped Grosskirk on the knee. "You'll scare him away if you talk like that, before I get a chance to see any of his gallantry."

"You'll get no gallantry from me," Gordon said gallantly. "Have you tried Mark? I happen to know he wrote an article on Byron once."

"Did he indeed?" Felicia laughed.

"Indeed he did."

An extraordinarily pleasant-looking waitress appeared. Gordon's murderous spirits softened. He asked her for a gin and tonic and pulled up a chair to the table. He felt his eyes water with relief at the chance to be beguiled by wit and flirtation, the opportunity not to be alone. He wondered how hard it would be to maintain his imposture in Harvey Grosskirk's presence. Harvey knew him very well.

"There is something Gogolian and Russian about university faculties," Mark Hereford said to Geraldine Jackson at the far end of the table. "The first thing that reminds you is the celebration of gaucherie and boorishness as marks of genius."

"One has to be extremely circumspect about these matters of faculty governance," Geraldine said.

"Unfortunately we get very little cooperation from the Administration," her husband nodded.

Felicia Smith smiled brightly at her audience. "The cunning of the female is appalling to measure," she said, returning to her conversation. "There is a kind of cunning so old and so deep we have forgotten the etymology of the word. The depth and monstrousness of it is in itself a measure of the tyranny of male power. It was born out of covert female conspiracies older than history. Early on, women became proficient at handling things men have always quailed at. Cleaning up spilled milk, urine, puke, blood. . . ."

"Typically, faculty senates are more organs of sublimation than anything else," Geraldine insisted, at her end of the table.

"The unrestricted-unceremonious light-laughter of the Ukrainian seminarian," Mark argued, "compares point for point with the Rabelaisian version if you perform a careful analysis. Especially Friar John."

"How's your wife and family?" Grosskirk asked jovially, taking Gordon by the elbow.

"Fine, fine, all of them well and happy," Gordon lied. He fished some money out of his wallet for the gin and tonic the waitress handed him.

"Notice the remorseless gigglery with which they cajole and coerce," Felicia said to Mark and to Gordon at the same time.

"Yes," Mark said. "Very similar to the oral light-literature of the facetiae, minor verbal travesties, anedotes, and the parodies of male gender-speak throughout the Ukraine."

"The tact with which they divert bigotry and priggishness," Felicia insisted.

"Exactly," Mark pointed out. "Gogolian laughter is pure popular-festival laughter, totally ambivalent and primordial-materialistic."

"Cunning, cunning, cunning," Felicia repeated, smacking her lips. "Who can doubt the true etymology of the work? Cunt-language, cunt-knowledge. The intelligence of the cunt--no more, no less. Forgive me. I shall not criticize it, for it is altogether admirable: as inescapable as the aroma of fear that inflames lionesses; the stench of old milk that drives whores to the homicide of infants; the aroma of a stew which separated Esau from his birthright; the incense of the church; the perfume that traduced Mark Anthony into the lap of Cleopatra ."

Felicia's mouth was shaped something like a fox's, Gordon noticed. Perhaps a possum's. Probably it was a very efficient mouth. He admired her red hair, her complexion: freckled, outdoorsy, flushed with good health.

"Check the various reactions to Chichikov's proposal," Mark Hereford suggested. "Their carnivalistic derision."

Gordon flinched. Grosskirk was looking mournfully at him.

"Sally has left me," Grosskirk confided. "You remember her, don't you? The rather overly-devoted youngster I introduced you to at MMLA last year in Chicago? One academic joke too many, I guess. I just got up one morning after a long evening with Felicia here and others of her ilk from Elkhart, and she was gone. Short note, of the sort you'd expect: stiflement, lack of growth, that sort of thing. We phone, now and then."

"Awfully sorry to hear that," Gordon said. "Betty and I liked her a lot."

Gordon sipped his gin and tonic and found it to be excellent, a fitting accompaniment to his sense of doom. He ordered another, so he wouldn't run out.

"Women have always been in charge of three things," Felicia volunteered. "Childraising, marriage, and maintenance. Men just cannot grasp the enormity of this fact. When the true history of the world is written--."

"Not to mention the carnival diableries," Mark suggested, at his end of the table. "Oaths and imprecations. Badmouthing, banter and abuse."

"It's not so bad," Grosskirk whispered. "I get a good deal more writing done these days."

"Hoaxes, parodies, debunkings," Mark insisted.

Felicia smiled brilliantly. "Many a writer has imagined that the aroma of his pipe charmed his personal muse, never doubting that she, some essential female spirit, could free his native intuitions--and never learning that she never shared her cunning except to her own advantage. Who exercises more cunning than the mother of a marriageable daughter? Who exacts more penance than the muse of a successful writer?"

Gordon detected a rising paranoia among his many spirits. He wondered if he should be frightened of Felicia Smith. He scanned the room for Newton, or a sign of him. Or Cynthia. There was none.

"Be careful of the mother, the cook, the nurse," Felicia said triumphantly. "Power is one thing, but its application is another. What good is the bow without its aim? The kingship without its policy? The son without his mother? The phallus without its seductive and nourishing bourn?"

Grosskirk said, "At least there are no more filmy, damp, nylon things hanging around all over the bathroom."

Gordon searched the lobby for Newton. There was no sign. The waitress came around again. In her cute little outfit, she reminded him of one of his students. Which one? Ellen Smithyman? Linda Brindizi? He caught her by the hem of her apron. "You never know what will happen," he whispered in great sorrow as he waved away the change from his five-dollar bill. "Now, even now, my wife Betty is meeting her true Prince."

"Thank you, sir," the waitress said, and danced away.

Byron's Upas

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In his poetry, Lord Byron only once directly mentions the upas, a rare poison-tree still found in modern Indonesia. However, the upas and both its actual and mythical properties are alluded to several times in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*. For Byron, the upas is a complex symbol whose meaning is better understood by examining the probable source of the image in Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden*. When that passage from Darwin is compared with Byron's treatment of the upas in *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*, what emerges is possibly the starkest symbol of Byron's uncompromisingly bleak vision of the human condition.

Bernard Blackstone, in *Byron: A Survey*, imagines what form a possible frontispiece for Byron's *Hours of Idleness* might assume. Blackstone places a Gothic abbey at the center of his visual aid, and to the left of the abbey "an enormous upas spreads its shade over abbey, school, lake, and wandering lovers." This compact imaginary scene includes important elements from Byron's youth, but readers may question the significance of the sinister tree and its hostile shade. To Blackstone the tree represents the influence of Byron's passionate and erratic mother (10-11). Whatever its significance, Blackstone borrowed the upas in his frontispiece, not from *Hours of Idleness*, but from *Childe Harold*, IV, 126:

> Our life is a false nature: 'tis not in
> The harmony of things,--this hard degree,
> This uneradicable taint of sin,
> This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,
> Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
> The skies which rain their plagues on man like dew--
> Disease, death, bondage--all the woes we see,
> And worse, the woes we see not--which throb through
> The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.[1]

Leslie Marchand cites stanzas 121-27 of *Childe Harold*, IV, as "the most poignantly personal stanzas of *CH*" (II, 702). Among these seven stanzas is the only direct reference to the upas image, an image that is according to M. K. Joseph, "more than a rhetorical flourish" (211).

As mentioned earlier, a probable source of Byron's upas is Darwin's *Botanic Garden*. Darwin (1731-1802), grandfather of Charles, was a famous medical doctor, as well as inventor, botanist, and, for a time, immensely popular poet. He was born at Elston, fourteen miles west of Newstead Abbey (King-Hele 21) over a half a century before Byron inherited the estate and became the sixth Baron Byron. Byron's own youthful assessment of Darwin as poet in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* is a scathing censure:

Let these, or such as these, with just applause,
Restore the muse's violated laws;
But not in flimsy Darwin's pompous chime,
That mighty master of unmeaning rhyme,
Whose gilded cymbals, more adorn'd than clear,
The eye delighted, but fatigued the ear. . . .
(ll. 891-96)

Byron strikes yet another blow at the declining reputation of the physician-poet in his note to those *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* lines: "The neglect of the 'Botanic Garden' is some proof of returning taste" (868). Thus, although we have no direct statement that Byron read the *Botanic Garden*, the implication is clearly that he read it and was appalled. Byron's awareness of the *Botanic Garden* should not be surprising. According to Chester Chapin, the *Botanic Garden* was the "greatest popular success" of the late eighteenth century (82).

The *Botanic Garden* actually consists of two long poems: Part I, the *Economy of Vegetation* (1791), and Part II, the *Loves of the Plants* (1789). The description of the upas tree is in the *Loves of the Plants*, along with a lengthy excerpt from the 1783 *London Magazine* article that served as Darwin's source of information for the upas. This article was purportedly written by a man named Foersch, a Dutch surgeon who had worked ten years earlier at Samarang, a city on Java's northern coast. Foersch wrote that while serving in Java, he kept hearing stories of a poison-tree and was given permission to visit the interior to determine whether such a tree did exist. He then relates only "simple unadorned facts."

Foersch tells of his visit to a Malayan priest who lived fifteen or sixteen miles from the upas. The tree stood at the center of an area completely barren for ten to twelve miles, except for four or five upas saplings growing near the parent tree. If a bird flew too close to the tree, the bird would fall to the ground, dead because the upas gave off a gaseous "effluvia" that killed anything within that ten-to-twelve-mile range. The tree's gum was also toxic and served as a poisonous coating for the tips of weapons. Curiously, the poison tree gave life to a few. The Sultan allowed any Javanese criminal about to be executed the choice of accepting his execution or of bringing back some of the poisonous upas gum. If the criminal chose the latter and survived, he was freed. All who tried wore long leather masks and leather gloves. They were to approach the tree going with the wind so that the tree's deadly effluvia would be blown away from them. The Malayan priest recorded the names of 700 criminals who had tried but only one out of ten survived, leaving the sandy ground near the tree "covered with bodies."

Even though Foersch refers to these as "simple unadorned facts," few of them are true except that the natives did use the poison to treat their arrows. Darwin, however, accepted the *London Magazine* account and used it as "evidence" in the *Botanic Garden* (167-73).

Darwin devotes forty lines of the *Loves of the Plants* to the upas myth. Of those forty, the following are the most dramatic:

Fierce in dread silence on the blasted heath
Fell upas sits, the Hydra-Tree of death.
Lo! from one root, the envenom'd soil below,
A thousand vegetative serpents grow;
O'er ten square leagues his far diverging heads;
Or in one trunk entwists his tangled form,
Looks o'er the clouds, and hisses in the storm.[2]
(106-7)

A reversed Edenic association is unavoidable. What should be lush is barren. What should be life-giving is deadly. What was paradisiacal has become hellish. The tree has become one with the snake and reigns in glorious malevolence over the poisoned earth.

In the *London Magazine* excerpt given in the *Botanic Garden*, Foersch tells the old Malayan priest's version of the upas' origin. At an earlier time the people living in the area around the tree had been "addicted to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah." Mahomet hated their actions and "applied to God to punish them: upon which God caused this tree to grow out of the earth." Foersch ends by observing that "the Malayans considered this tree as an holy instrument . . . to punish the sins of mankind."

Byron's upas passage in *Childe Harold*, IV, 126, is about "this hard decree," this punishment of mankind. There is a complete hopelessness in Byron's stanza as evidenced by the "uneradicable taint of sin," the "all-blasting tree," "Disease, death, bondage," and man's "immedicable soul." Darwin's tree sits at the center of an "irremeable bourn" on "the blasted heath." Both passages present irreversible situations. The pattern is set. Darwin sees where "Chain'd at his root two infant Daemons dwell." Both Byron and Darwin see the future as only a continuation of the present, without hope for anything better.

The opening lines of *Childe Harold*, III, 34, also suggest the upas: "There is a very life in our despair, / Vitality of poison,--a quick root / Which feeds these deadly branches. . . ." Byron proposes a quite active evil existing within man, an evil that ironically provides man with the energy to live.

In *Childe Harold*, IV, 120, Byron describes "Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies, / And trees whose gums are poisons. . . ." Again Byron's lines suggest the Darwinian upas whose "thousand tongues" hiss the killing effluvia.

In *Don Juan*, IV, 55 Byron again mentions the poison-tree, though he does not use the word "upas":

But there, too, many a poison tree has root,
And midnight listens to the lion's roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel's foot,
Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan;
And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

Darwin's upas is rooted in "envenom'd soil," a poison-tree in poison-soil. In this *Don Juan* stanza, Byron's poison-tree is rooted in a soil that is like the heart of man, a fiery desert. For Byron, Darwin's scaly-monster tree has become man himself, man so bound to earthly appetites, to his own sin, that he will forever know that part of him which is dust and never known his own deity.

In *Don Juan*, IV, 70, the narrator describes the dead Haidee and her unborn child lying together in the grave: "In vain the dews of Heaven descend above / The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of love." Again Byron's words are reminiscent of Darwin who describes the land of the upas where "showers prolific bless the soil,--in vain!"

These five passages, three from *Childe Harold* and two from *Don Juan*, contain nowhere an exact duplication of Darwin's wording, and yet his influence is there. In both Darwin and Byron, the upas is an overwhelmingly negative symbol that expresses graphically man's dilemma. Man's pain lies in knowing that his dilemma is irrevocable, immedicable, that he has been placed in this "irremeable bourn," caught up in an endless cycle of birth-sin-death on an earth whose soil is as poisoned as the heart of man. Though Byron writes that it is "sad to hack into the root of things," he does attempt that hacking and finds the stark image of the upas.

Byron's upas serves as a strikingly modern emblem of the human condition. Peter Thorslev considers Byron's "alienated universe which takes no reckoning of man or his hopes and infirmities" as one "in which we can . . . feel comfortably at home" (123). Darwin and Byron share a common view of humanity's "existential predicament." Donald Hassler believes the two "have no illusions whatsoever" (11). In his disillusionment, Byron wrestles with man's "false nature," his "fiery desert" of a heart. Jerome McGann considers the whole of *Childe Harold*, IV, to be concerned with Byron's search "for a solution to the problem of human evil" (48).

Ernest Lovell records that on August 10, 1823, less than a year before his death, Byron talked about this concern with his friend Dr. James Kennedy:

> He said one of the greatest difficulties he had met with, and which he could not overcome, was the existence of so much pure and unmixed evil in the world, as he had witnessed; and which he could not reconcile to the idea of a benevolent Creator. (Lovell 408)

The upas emerges as an apt symbol of that "pure and unmixed evil." From the myths of a Herculean labor, a Javanese plant and the Garden of Eden comes the labyrinthine image of tree as snake, as evil, and as death. That image is made more comprehensible by a comparison with Darwin's *Botanic Garden*. Though the "flimsy Darwin" may have offended the good taste of Byron, the elder poet provided a rich source of misinformation and poetic diction from which the younger drew his virulent emblem of romantic despair.

Footnotes

[1]All references to *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, Childe Harold,* and *Don Juan* are taken from the Byron text listed in Works Cited.

[2]All references to the *Botanic Garden* are taken from the Darwin text listed in Works Cited.

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The Last Opera: Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein–*The Mother of Us All* and American Discrimination

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The recent death of Virgil Thomson ends a prolific artistic era. Musicians may best remember him as being the only composer whose movie score garnered a Pulitzer Prize. Thomson, however, also significantly influenced other types of artistic endeavors, particularly through his work with American expatriate author Gertrude Stein. Their first collaboration, *Four Saints in Three Acts*, created an unprecedented original and abstract American opera. Their final opus, *The Mother of Us All*, was equally unprecedented. In this work, they created one of the first socially significant American operas. Through the character of Susan B. Anthony, the work gave impetus to the fledgling feminist cause and illustrates various other forms of discrimination in America.

The Mother of Us All[1] began as an open commission. In 1945, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University asked Thomson to compose an opera on the topic of his choice. For Thomson, nineteenth-century America was "a time rare in history, when great issues were debated in great language," and naturally worthy, therefore, of a "musico-drama spectacle."[2] Stein agreed, and after studying the history and oratory of the period, she chose the subject of Susan B. Anthony and the feminist cause. Using excerpts from many of Anthony's own writings, Stein completed the libretto in March, 1946, and titled it *The Mother of Us All*. It was her last completed work; on July 23, she died.

The finished opera premiered May 7, 1947, at the Brander Matthews Theatre of Columbia University.[3] Although critics lavished praise on singers, set, score, and direction, few commented on the opera's social significance except to say that the opera represents Stein's philosophy concerning the social issues of her time. Richard Bridgeman, however, expands that assessment by contending that "Stein asserts the overall superiority of women," via "undisguised . . . disgust at heterosexual coupling."[4] These assessments overlook other significant aspects of the opera; a closer inspection reveals that the work presents more than a forum for sexual politics. Stein's libretto stages an American pageant which depicts discrimination and prejudice found throughout American life. She achieves this spectacle by telescoping time: this technique not only allows interaction of characters from various time periods, but also balances historically significant characters with those who struggle on an individual level. Act I of the opera richly bears this conclusion.

The most obvious anachronistic meetings occur as Stein's friends encounter such historical figures as Susan B. Anthony, Daniel Webster, Andrew Johnson, John Adams, Ulysses Grant, Anthony Comstock, and Thaddeus Stevens, each of whom participated in national struggles for economic and political justice. Webster leads the politicians with "pity the poor persecutor because the persecutor always ends by being persecuted," (I.ii. pp. 31-32) a jingle which once

won Webster a law case, but which serves here as an ironic foreshadowing. Fictional characters representing the general public served by the politicians join the assembly.

As the two groups converge, the ensemble resorts to physical rather than verbal assaults. Only after Susan B. Anthony calls for silence does order resume, and she and Webster then debate, using excerpts from the actual speeches and writings of each. Anthony speaks for all those who had fought for equality under the law; Webster, as Anthony's rival, speaks for all those who oppose such equality. As Webster refers to a "mariner" who, after being "tossed for many days in thick weather and in an unknown sea, avails himself of the first pause in the storm," Anthony counters that more than comfort in safe ports, one should "always fight"--even though "some may be martyrs"--because "patience is never more than patience." Webster mentions events in South Carolina, a "canal in Ohio," and a "great harvest of neutrality," to prove that the interests of the individual states are directly related to the well-being of an entire nation. This acknowledgement explains why the "copious fountain of national, social and personal happiness exists." Contrarily, Anthony retorts that Webster "undertakes to overthrow [her] undertaking"; while the statesmen may be interested in the well-being of individual states, Anthony questions "what interest they have in [her]"(I.ii. pp. 51-54). Ironically, the statesmen do not grasp that the relationship of the individual person to the entire state is but a microcosm of the relationship of the individual state to the entire nation. Ironically, although their respective supporters congratulate the speakers, neither side has effectively communicated to the other. As is often the case when opposing political ideas collide, the result is a stalemate.

The debate motif moves from that of a public forum to personal introspection in the next scene. Instead of national politics, the emphasis shifts to the roles of position, wealth and race in the issue of discrimination. Meditating on her troubled mission in life, Anthony daydreams that a Negro couple approach. When she asks the husband if he would exercise his right to vote even if his wife were denied that right, he replies, "You bet" (I.iv. p. 67). Anthony realizes that, although she has helped the Negro man attain civil liberties, he is unwilling to reciprocate the favor and fight for women's rights.

A chorus of V. I. P.s enter and announce, "It is not necessary to have any meaning" if one is considered an "important person" who has "special rights" (I.iv. p. 67). Jo the Loiterer and Chris the Citizen interrupt her thought and ask her to explain the difference between the rich and the poor. In the light of her meditation, she responds, "the rich hear but do not listen"; "the poor listen but do not comprehend" (I.iv. p. 77). Her statement seems elliptical to Jo and Chris, but its relationship to the scene seems clear. Position and wealth are instruments of discrimination; those without either are immediately dependent upon the whims of those who have. Furthermore, those who do receive position and wealth--from whatever source--are comfortable and often ignore pleas for assistance from those who still lack. The poor, those who lack and know that they lack, have no insight into the means of acquisition. From here, the question of

discrimination moves to an even narrower field. The final scene of Act I addresses those disputes that occur between individuals.

At the wedding of Jo the Loiterer and Indiana Elliot, Anthony considers the plight of women who, even in marriage, must go through life alone. She defends the institution itself--both religious and civil--against those who would downgrade it. Indiana's brother forbids the marriage because he finds the pairing controversial. To elevate Jo as a potential brother-in-law, he measures Jo by such labels as "bigamist," "grandfather," "uncle," and "refugee"--terms which indicate discrimination based on previous marriage, age, political rights activities, and nationality (I.v. pp. 89-90). Indiana denounces her brother, and the wedding concludes despite outside interference. Anthony predicts that the children of this marriage will produce "women as well as men" who "will have the vote" (I.v. p. 98). The predicaments Jo and Indiana faced were based upon the experiences of Stein's friend, Joe Barry. Barry, a Protestant, married an Irish Catholic, and the marriage proved highly controversial to both denominations.[5]

As a brief examination of Act I of *The Mother of Us All* illustrates, Stein's libretto extends beyond the obvious topic of women's rights and the lesbian diatribe usually ascribed to it.

By having historical and nationally significant figures interact with characters whose individual struggles encompass a smaller scope, and by giving these characters representative social, racial and economic backgrounds, Stein creates a tableau depicting various types of discrimination. Although protagonist Susan B. Anthony is remembered primarily for her fight for women's rights, and most recently for lending her likeness to the ill-fated American dollar coin, *The Mother of Us All* represents her as a woman concerned about the equal rights of all persons, all minorities. Thus, for the first time, an American opera commented on existing American political and social systems, and included excerpts from historical documents. Although *The Mother of Us All* is not as notoriously innovative as its Stein-Thomson predecessor, it is worthy, nevertheless, of attention as the work which transformed operatic literature from mere entertainment to a vehicle which raised social consciousness.

Footnotes

[1]Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson, *The Mother of Us All.* New York: Schirmer, 1957. All references to this work are cited in context.

[2]Virgil Thomson, quoted in Kathleen Hoover and John Cage. *Virgil Thomson: His Life and Music.* Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries P, 1970, p. 105.

[3]Virgil Thomson, *Virgil Thomson*, New York: Knopf,1967. p. 383-384. Maurice Grosser created the scenario from which John Faras designed the choreography. Set designs and costumes were the work of Paul du Pont. Jack Beeson was the stage director, and Otto Luening was the musical director.

[4]Richard Bridgeman. *Gertrude Stein in Pieces.* New York: Oxford UP, 1970. 341.

[5]Carl Van Vechten, "How Many Acts Are There In It?" in *Gertrude Stein, Last Operas and Plays* (New York: Rinehart, 1949), x-xi.

The Unpardonable Triad in "Rappaccini's Daughter"

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"Rappaccini's Daughter" is perhaps the most layered and ambiguous of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories. The symbolism of the inverted Garden of Eden, a corrupt Adam and Eve, and characters that beg comparison to the classic works of Dante, Goethe, and Milton set the stage for a tale based upon the obvious moral issue of good versus evil; but it is here that the obvious stops, for, as the story progresses, any superficial attempt at interpretation becomes deeply buried beneath a jumble of Hawthornian irony and moral questions raised by the actions and ulterior motives of the characters themselves. As Newton Arvin asserts, Hawthorne was not interested in social and worldly affairs (xiv-xv). His writing is more directly related to the spiritual plane and the fundamental struggle within each of us between good and bad, flesh and soul, pure desire and true need. Thus, in "Rappaccini's Daughter," Hawthorne paints a picture of pure innocence created, nurtured, tortured, and ultimately destroyed at the hands of three men whose actions and attitudes, when combined, are the essence of unpardonable sin.

Hawthorne's concept of unpardonable sin is consistent in his work. He describes this sin in his *American Notebooks*:

> The unpardonable sin might consist in a want of and reverence for the human soul; in consequence of which the investigator pried into its depths, not with the hopes of making it better, but from a cold philosophical curiosity--content that it should be wicked and only desiring to study it out. Would not this be the separation of intellect from the heart? (Simpson 251)

Arvin reinforces the definition of unpardonable sin by referring to Hawthorne as "the elegiac poet of guilt," that guilt attaching itself, not to the more palpable sins of incontinence, violence, or fraud, but to the fundamental basis of these sins--the quintessential evil of selfishness and pride (xv).

The concept of unpardonable sin is largely ignored in published critical analyses of "Rappaccini's Daughter," most critics opting to relegate the sin and its properties to "Ethan Brand" where they see its implications most obviously. Consequently, the possibility of the three antagonists of "Rappaccini's Daughter" joining to create a singular force of unpardonable sin remains unexplored. Hawthorne allows us a glimpse into the feasibility of the unpardonable triad by coupling each of the three men with a classical literary figure suggesting varying levels of association with the satanic powers. Thus Giovanni becomes a Dantean wanderer, Rappaccini becomes a Faustian contractor, and Baglioni takes on the persona of a Miltonian deluder.

Hawthorne's use of classical allusion is first seen in his reference to Dante at the beginning of the story. Upon entering his new abode, Giovanni is immediately associated with the man who wandered through hell in search of his Beatrice:

> The young stranger, who was not unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of this family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his Inferno. (Hawthorne 179)

Although J. C. Matthews proposes that, indeed, there was but one Paduan mentioned in Dante's *Inferno*, and that this same Paduan is irrevocably the person referred to by Hawthorne (160), the phrase ". . . and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion" suggests Hawthorne's intention of launching Giovanni into his own Dantean experience. Katherine Snipes agrees with the sense of impending moral confrontation brought about by Hawthorne's "infernal" allusion. The deliberate mention of Dante at the beginning, the viewpoint of Giovanni from his balcony looking down "as into a pit," the poisonous vapors presumably rising from it, all suggest the overlooking of hell where Dante and Virgil discussed the different degrees of sin beginning with lust and ending with malice and betrayal (1900), the same three sins that eventually lead to Giovanni's undoing.

But, in spite of the strong evidence that Hawthorne consciously cast Giovanni in a Dantean role, we need not expect a rigid correspondence with Dante's work (Male 61), though it is clear that Giovanni is being instructed and tested--that he, like Dante, has a chance of winning a high and holy faith through Beatrice.

Hawthorne's second classic literary allusion concerns Doctor Rappaccini and the Faustian contract. In *Hawthorne's Faust*, William Stein cites "Rappaccini's Daughter" as one of Hawthorne's five Faustian tales, but maintains that the contract used by his characters is not always traditional (81). Hawthorne modifies the romantic proposition that a Faust will sell his soul only for ultimate knowledge into a concept encompassing the whole human experience.

Dr. Rappaccini sells his soul in the guise of his daughter, Beatrice. In his quest for God-like power and knowledge, he sacrifices her to the inverse deity of science. Rappaccini is the epitome of moral insensibility. "His patients are interesting to him only as subjects for new experiments" (Hawthorne 185). Rappaccini perceives that science will advance more rapidly than morals will, and will therefore create an ethical reality all its own (Stein 93). This reality, for Rappaccini, has taken the physical form of his perverted garden of poison, the satanic "payoff" for his Faustian contract. But Hawthorne won't let the reader come to a complete opinion of Rappaccini's evil. Although the Doctor does create a garden of artificial, poisonous plants, and, although he does inoculate his own offspring with the evil of his science, Rappaccini still expresses a sort of twisted love for Beatrice. When Beatrice asks,"Father, wherefore didst thou inflict this miserable doom upon thy child?" Rappaccini replies incredulously:

> Miserable! What mean you foolish girl? Dost thou deem it misery to be endowed with marvelous gifts against which no power nor strength could avail an enemy... misery to be as terrible as thou art beautiful. (Hawthorne 209)

The perverted love exhibited by his offering of power and physical invincibility exposes Rappaccini as the heartless observer who can offer only what his true spiritless love has provided for him; and he attempts to share the tangible fruits of his science with Beatrice who desires only what her father cannot offer: "I would have fain been loved," she sobs.

The Faustian contract plays a decisive role in "Rappaccini's Daughter." If Beatrice was the soul that Rappaccini sold to the satanic forces, she is also the body of his neglect (Stein 148). As in Goethe's Faust, a woman stands at the crossroads of Rappaccini's destiny. Beatrice could have pointed the way to the self-knowledge to reconcile the contradictory impulses in her father's heart (148). But instead of heeding her innocence and his chance for salvation, the scientist sold his own redemption for the love of a heartless science. Obviously, Hawthorne uses Rappaccini's Faustian error to illustrate the price of playing God. In losing Beatrice, both of his possible worlds disappear; for Beatrice is both child of his heart and the product of his perverted intellect.

The third classical reference in "Rappaccini's Daughter" is to Milton's Garden of Eden in *Paradise Lost*. Critically, Rappaccini's toxic garden is universally equated with an inverted Eden. This theory suggests the roles of a corrupt Adam and Eve in the persons of Giovanni and Beatrice, and an inverse God figure in the character of Rappaccini. Hawthorne brings the Eden allusion to full force in his description of the poisonous garden:

> . . . there was a ruin of a marble fountain in the centre, sculptured with beautiful art, but so woefully shattered that it was impossible to trace its original design from the chaos of remaining fragments. The water, however continued to gush and sparkle into the sunbeams as cheerfully as ever. . . . one shrub in particular bore a profusion of purple blossoms, each of which had the lustre of a gem. (181)

The ruinous condition of the fountain, the inorganic gem-like quality of the poisonous shrub's blossoms, and the chaos of the once organized art work on the fountain itself are a negative reflection of Milton's description of Eden in *Paradise Lost*:

> Where Tigris at the foot of Paradise
> Into a gulf shot underground til
> Part rose up a fountain
> By the Tree of Life.
> (Book IX 70-74)

The inverse qualities of Rappaccini's Eden reinforce the Dantean role given to Giovanni while providing a vehicle for Baglioni, the last member of the unpardonable triad.

It is Baglioni's express purpose to play the tempter in Paradise. It is he who advises Giovanni in the matter of Beatrice; it is he who offers Giovanni the elixir of "all things good"--the forbidden fruit in a garden of all things corrupt. Although William Shurr, in his book *Rappaccini's Children*, claims that since the poisonous garden represents a fallen Eden, there is no longer a need for a serpent (1), we must consider the fact that there is still a source of evil and temptation in the story; and, if Shurr's theory of a fallen Eden is adhered to faithfully, the serpent's presence is all the more likely, in view of a satanic victory over innocence. Ironically, Shurr sees Baglioni as a Christ figure to Rappaccini's satanic identity and Beatrice's role as a sinful woman (2). But this view is not based so much upon Shurr's opinion of Baglioni as it is founded upon his sexist interpretation of Beatrice as a source of moral evil when, in reality, she is depicted as the epitome of innocence entrapped in a physically corrupt shell. Her flesh is evil, but her heart is pure; Beatrice is not a sinful woman.

Viewing Baglioni as a tempter is more in line with the Miltonian principle of Satan as engineer of the Fall. Robert Fossum supports Baglioni's role of deluder by observing that Giovanni is tricked by Baglioni into believing that Beatrice is not a Dantean spirit of love, but merely an earthly creature whose beauty should be known here and now (82). The forbidden fruit he waves before Giovanni, the inverse Adam, is a tangible, physically useful Beatrice, a woman of impeccable moral innocence unable to survive in a world as morally corrupt as her garden home is physically offensive.

Hawthorne uses the Miltonian allusion to represent Baglioni as the earthly tempter, the puritanical embodiment of the old deluder. In offering Giovanni a chance at the strictly earthly pleasures of Beatrice, Baglioni is seen in direct relation to Milton's fatally attractive serpent:

> Beware . . . lest by some faire appearing good surprised And misinforme the will To do what God hath expressly forbid.
> (*Paradise Lost*, IX 1. 353-56)

Having established each man's role in the story through classical allusion, it is now possible to explore each of the trio's unique contributions to the completeness of the unpardonable sin they, as a group, represent. In his book, *Man's Accidents and God's Purposes*, J. K. Folsom asserts that the main problem in interpreting "Rappaccini's Daughter" has always been to discover just who the villain is (126). But the real question lies in establishing who the victim is. If Rappaccini, Giovanni, and Baglioni all work together to commit Hawthorne's unpardonable sin, there is but one character left to feel its repercussions--Beatrice. It is she who must pay the price for each of the unpardonable trio's selfish goals: Rappaccini's prideful bid for superior intellect, Giovanni's fatal attempt to achieve earthly desires, and Baglioni's need for revenge through malice and betrayal.

The first contributor to the unpardonable sin is Rappaccini himself. His selfish pride leads him into intellectual life remote from human sympathy. Born into a fallen world created by Rappaccini's original sin of pride, Beatrice must exist wholly in the world created by her father. She is a living symbol of his Faustian separation of intellect and soul; and, as Fossom avers, Beatrice is pure soul, "a symbol of her father's immortal spirit released from nature" (80), and incarcerated in an artificial environment for safe keeping. Although 20th-century criticism attempts to represent Beatrice as the archetypal female temptress, insisting that Hawthorne intended her physical position to symbolize moral poison (Hollisy 215), it is essential to note that her intrinsic venom was foisted upon her by a proud ambitious man who, like Adam, sought the tree of knowledge and found the nearest thing to it that a man can achieve: a corrupt version of his desires created and sustained through intellect alone.

Rappaccini is the first of the unpardonable triad to abuse the innocence that was Beatrice. His was the sin of intellectual pride; but, as Male observes, he is not totally evil, for though his physical frame is corrupt, he still exudes a spiritual love of science (57). It is his spiritual imbalance that destroys the physical acceptability of Beatrice.

Second to Rappaccini in creating the unpardonable sin is Giovanni. His merely superficial desire for Beatrice separates him from fully loving her; and his pride prevents him from making the sacrifice that love demands. It is Giovanni's superficial physical love for Beatrice that destroys her spiritual strength to the point of suicide. Margaret Hollisy tends to see Giovanni as a sort of Freudian backslider, a flawed hero unable to accept Beatrice because of his innate fear of female sexuality (235). But a strict sexual approach to the story threatens to neglect the deeper moral tone intended by Hawthorne. It is much more rewarding to see the tale in the spiritual light cast by Male's assertion that Beatrice is "the very embodiment of the central Christian paradox: angelic, but corrupt; beautiful, but damned" (59).

Beatrice, in some paradoxical way suggests both a pure and a corrupt Eve. Her name suggests Dante's ideal woman, while her nature suggests poison. Thus, for Giovanni, the garden becomes an inferno with visions of heaven. Rather than adhering to Hollisy's psycho/sexual interpretation, the reader needs to realize that Giovanni is undergoing the crucial experience of his Christian life; and rather than seeing "Rappaccini's Daughter" as "an exploration of the paradoxes of human sexualities" (Hollisy 231), it is essential to comprehend the moral paradox Giovanni discovers in the poisonous garden. Giovanni's very salvation, and Beatrice's life, depends on his ability to attain and hold a religious faith or a heavenly love against the challenge of the materialistic skepticism of Baglioni. Male puts Giovanni's plight in succinct perspective: In order to find heaven--to develop true potential--man must accept either the woman, or the dual promise she represents: tragic involvement with sin, but also the consequent possibility of redemption (55).

But Giovanni can accept neither the sin symbolized by Beatrice's poison, nor the possibility of redemption through her selfless love. Her original innocent

love falls prey to the more earthly desires of the world outside the walls of Rappaccini's garden:

> . . . now his spirit was incapable of sustaining itself at the height to which the early enthusiasm of passion had exalted it; he fell down grovelling among earthly doubts, and defiled therewith the pure whiteness of Beatrice's image. (Hawthorne 203)

Upon discovering his own growing toxicity Giovanni descends even deeper into the Inferno and attacks the very essence of his quest with the three most grievous sins in Dante's circle: malice, incontinence, and betrayal. Malice is born from the doubt of Beatrice's love and innocence:

> "Accursed one!" cried he in venomous scorn. "And finding thy solitude wearisome, thou hast severed me likewise from all the warmth of life and enticed me into thy region of unspeakable horror. (206)

Incontinence is found in his passionate desire to possess the beauty of Beatrice on a superficial level:

> Gausconti had not a deep heart, but he had a quick fancy . . . she (Beatrice) had at least instilled a fierce subtle poison into his system. It was not love. . . . (190)

Betrayal kills Beatrice. As Giovanni's love for her grows into a genuine emotion, so too does the venom in his system became stronger. When he realizes the consequence of his nearness to Beatrice, what he must sacrifice of his past life, he is repulsed and rebels. The malice he exhibits toward the pure spirit of the innocent girl damages her soul irreparably:

> Oh, weak, and selfish and unworthy spirit, that could dream of an earthly union and earthly happiness as possible, after such a deep love had been so bitterly wronged as was Beatrice's love by Giovanni's blighting words. (208)

And poisoned less by her father's flowers than by the envenomed love of her suitor, Beatrice elects death to point out the necessity of love in all pursuits (Stein 149).

Last in creating the unpardonable sin is Baglioni. His pride leads him to crush Beatrice and, through her, Rappaccini. Baglioni's pride brooks no equal, no competitor. It leads him not only into separation, but into betrayal--the last act of malice. Death comes in the form of Baglioni's potent "cure" which contains "all things good." His share of the unpardonable sin is his pride's creation of spiritual indifference and revenge. From the beginning of the story, Hawthorne allows certain vague allusions to Baglioni's desire for revenge against Rappaccini.

They appear to be rivals in the "art of science." Early on Baglioni exposes a sort of irrational envy of Rappaccini:

> . . . he [Rappaccini] should receive little credit for instances of success--they probably are the work of chance--but he should be held strictly accountable for his failures, which may justly be considered his own work. (186)

Hawthorne avows, later, that there was, indeed, a "long continuance of professional warfare" between the two doctors. Another unquestionable evidence of Baglioni's desire for revenge is seen in the utterance:

> This daughter of his! It shall be looked to. Perchance, most learned Rappaccini, I may foil you where you little dream of it. (192)

Given the Miltonian association of Baglioni with the deluder and Rappaccini as an inverse creator of the twisted Garden of Eden, Baglioni can easily be seen as an inverted avenging angel who wins the holy battle of Milton's Eden by depriving the creator of his creation. Though Hawthorne never exposes the reason for Baglioni's hatred of Rappaccini, the scientist's position of isolation suggests a certain envy of both Rappaccini and Giovanni in their unique relation to Beatrice. Although this relationship is flawed, there is a unison nonetheless; there is a love. It is Baglioni's indifference to any form of spiritual fulfillment that allows him to seek his revenge. Not having the capacity to love, he destroys the object of love of both Giovanni and Rappaccini by using Giovanni's contribution to the collective aspect of the unpardonable sin, desire to possess without being possessed, and Rappaccini's unpardonable vehicle, the art of science and pure intellect. Thus Beatrice is destroyed by the same forces that brought her into her defiled world: science and desire; for Giovanni, like Rappaccini, failed to attain high faith as a result of his reliance upon his senses as the ultimate criterion of truth (Male 62). Beatrice's last words ultimately illustrate the true level of paradox in her relationship with the "socially acceptable" Giovanni and the world in which he and his unpardonable cohorts exist. After ingesting Baglioni's cure, she cries:

> Farewell Giovanni . . . was there not, from the first, more venom in thy nature than in mine? (210)

Fossum's question concerning the identity of the true villain in "Rappaccini's Daughter" is answered in the story's final scene. It is here that the unpardonable triad gathers as one to witness the final result of their combined pride, selfishness, and revenge. Fossum's villain is a perverted trinity gathered around the disembodied soul of humanity in a factitious Eden. Rappaccini, the Father of intellectual pride; Giovanni, the misbegotten Son of desire; and Baglioni, the un-Holy Ghost of revenge form a corrupt Sign of the Cross. When they come together their unpardonable sin douses the Faustian soul, the Miltonian innocence, the Dantean light, of Beatrice.

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Requiem for a Nun and the Art of Listening

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Since the publication of Noel Polk's *Faulkner's "Requiem for a Nun"; A Critical Study*, readers have placed less emphasis upon Gavin Stevens as the voice of Faulkner himself; yet despite this more rounded view of Stevens, critics are still reluctant to examine the import of Temple's monologues within the dramatic sections of the novel. Described as "damned lucky" by Polk in summarizing critical response to her in the 1950's, Temple was thought to have had her marriage saved by Nancy Mannigoe and her soul saved by Gavin Stevens; but Temple's words in *Requiem* have nothing to do with chance or accident. Hugh M. Ruppersburg describes the long character speeches delivered by both Gavin and Temple in scenes 1 and 3 in "The Golden Dome" as "self-conscious and carefully plotted out" and suggests that these speeches "are meant to explain clearly the nature of Temple's dilemma, its causes, and possible consequences." He insists that such speeches are unrealistic rituals set forth to "inform the reader of how Gavin perceives and tries to solve her problem" (145). Indeed, Ruppersburg offers a valid assessment of these speeches, but does this assessment still slight Temple's opportunity to be recognized as a free-speaking character? Temple's ideas on the business of listening are more than simple rhetoric and justifiably signal to the reading audience that perhaps Temple, not Gavin Stevens, should have the last word in this story. In *Requiem for a Nun* it is Temple Drake who delivers a speech that is worth listening to and thereby asserts a dimension of her humanity.

To begin with, Faulkner's decision to revive Temple after *Sanctuary* was not without purpose. When questioned on the subject Faulkner once said:

> I began to think what would be the future of that girl? and then I thought, what could a marriage come to which was founded on the vanity of a weak man? What would be the outcome of that? And suddenly that seemed to me dramatic and worthwhile . . . (Gwynn, 96)

If we are to believe that Temple's story is remarkable, as Faulkner must have, then we must also be willing to listen to what she has to say. In *Requiem for a Nun*, Faulkner uses the stage not for acting, but rather as an arena for voices. By its very nature. Faulkner's story demands that we sit silently and listen. Moreover, the role that listening (or non-listening) plays in each of the characters' lives may be the closest thing to "truth" that can be extracted from the work. *Requiem for a Nun* tells us as much about the art of listening as it does about justice.

The significance of listening is rooted in Temple's speech to the governor, which begins with an explanation of the relationship between herself and Nancy. Temple, in pleading for Nancy's life, must first clarify her initial association with

the murderess. We learn that Temple (former Memphis brothel dweller) hires Nancy (former Jefferson prostitute) not for her expertise as a housekeeper but rather for her qualifications as a listener, "somebody paid by the week just to listen" (Faulkner, 159). Temple describes herself and Nancy as the two sisters in sin swapping secrets over Coca-Colas. For Temple, "proper" listening fulfills needs and provides cures. It is a very specific kind of listening and Temple spares no words in communicating its special nature to the governor: "not to converse with you nor even agree with you, but just keep quiet and listen" (158, 159). She continues her idea by taking it beyond herself and says that listening is: "all that people really want, really need; I mean to behave themselves, keep out of one another's hair . . ." (159).

The reader can infer that Temple has been able to *keep out* of Jefferson's *hair* by holding confession with Nancy in the kitchen. In this way, both Jefferson and Temple can be considered lucky, but it is a luxury that is short-lived. When Nancy violates her position as listener and assumes the responsibility of saving Temple's marriage, her action sends Temple's existence as Mrs. Gowan Stevens crashing to the floor with as much clatter as the spilled money and jewels. Nancy's next move, murdering the Stevens' infant daughter, is the first consequence of listener-speaker betrayal within the drama.

The betrayal continues with Nancy and Gavin Stevens. With Temple safely out of the picture and in California, Stevens steps into the role of listener when he becomes Nancy's attorney. Nancy, between hymn-singing sessions in her jail cell, again violates Temple's secrecy by revealing to Stevens the details of that ruinous night. Here Stevens proves himself to be no better as a listener for Nancy than she was for Temple. Unable to keep quiet about what he has heard, Stevens telegraphs Temple in California with a stirring message to come home and save the murderess. Deciding that his nephew must also know what Nancy has told him and that Temple must confess to save her soul, Stevens takes Temple to the governor's office so that the governor can listen. Steven's action sets the stage for even more betrayal and invalidates Nancy's murder of the infant, however inane her logic may have been. Nancy's crime, in turn, provides the vehicle which railroads Temple into the governor's confessional. Once there, Steven's planting of his nephew within the room parodies what Temple has been earlier explaining to the governor about listening and keeping quiet. It is in the governor's office that Temple's sensible ideas about listening provide an almost comic backdrop for the bungling interpretations Nancy and Stevens have made in defining their roles as confidants. Temple's frustration, that she has confided in someone who is incapable of playing by what she considers a simple set of rules, sustains her as she continues her speech on listening.

She tells the governor: "the maladjustments which they tell us breed the arsonists and rapists and murderers and thieves and the rest of the anti-social enemies, are not really maladjustments, but simply because the embryonic murderers and thieves didn't have anybody to listen to them . . ." (159). Taken out of context, Temple's speech could be dismissed as an oversimplified explanation of murder and thievery, but a closer look reveals that Temple is trying to communicate several ideas. Her words express a common sense approach to the

inescapable pain of living and the unavoidable mistakes of learning. As suffering humans, the best we can offer one another is the gift of listening, to allow others to tell their own stories without interference on the part of the listener, which is something Temple must struggle with even in the governor's office as Stevens repeatedly interrupts her. Also, her speech is intended to rationalize to the governor Nancy's inexcusable behavior as well as her own. If Temple had climbed down the drainpipe in Memphis, had not become involved with Red or Pete, then she would not have needed Nancy as her confessor.

When Temple first introduces the subject of her relationship with Nancy, she appropriately uses a sports metaphor since it all began with a baseball game eight years ago. The metaphor is Temple's way of fusing her own life with Nancy's as well as substantiating Nancy's deprived past. Temple says, "You know: the big-time ball player, the idol on the pedestal, the worshipped, and the worshipper, the acolyte, the one that never had and never would, no matter how willing or how hard she tried, get out of the sandlots, the bush league" (157). No one has ever listened to Nancy; she has been a paid listener, an assignment for which she was understandably ill-equipped. According to Temple, Nancy, one of the "embryonic murderers and thieves" she refers to, has been doomed and damned from the start. At the same time that Temple is establishing Nancy's past, she is also trying to acknowledge their mutual needs. In desperation, Temple reaches for Nancy's protection using the same plea as her own -- we all need somebody to listen to us. For a character whom everybody else is trying to save, Temple seems to know a great deal about pity and compassion.

It is Temple's hope that the governor as a disinterested party will listen, but even he later violates Temple's code when under Stevens's direction he leaves his desk and allows Gowan to occupy his chair. Faulkner's use of this trick, Stevens's switching of priests in the middle of confession, runs counter to Temple's rationale and makes her speech about listening even more poignant. Not yet knowing what Stevens has in mind for her, she is already making allowances. She strengthens her defense of listening by providing proof when she says that listening is:

> an idea the Catholic Church discovered two thousand years ago only it just didn't carry it far enough or maybe it was too busy being the church to have time to bother with man, or maybe it wasn't the church's fault at all but simply because it had to deal with human beings and maybe if the world was just populated with a kind of creature half of which were dumb, couldn't do anything but listen, couldn't even escape from having to listen to the other half, there wouldn't even be any war. (159)

Temple's ideas on the power of listening seem solid to her. After all, the support she uses for her argument is two thousand years old. But the key word in her speech is *maybe*. Her repetition of *maybe* indicates that Temple is aware that man in his zealousness to do what he thinks is right will ultimately speak and act when he should just listen. Unfortunately for Temple, neither Nancy nor Stevens can keep quiet.

Indeed, images of sensuous delight abound -- images appealing to taste, touch sound. In *Wild to the Heart*, Bass observes:

> The older you get the more time you have. You have learned, mostly, what to waste your time on: what will bring you the most pleasure (129-30).

He continues:

> The western part of the United States: (rocks no one has ever picked up) the colors are better out there, in the fall. I am not talking about the oak and aspen (box elder, cottonwood), aspen, aspen -- I mean the skies, rocks, grass, cattle, fields, roads (130).

Occasionally a single image is lingered over, savored, and becomes a sort o imagistic poem in its own right:

> . . . the fat pregnant purple heat-spawned thunderclouds build up all day long and then sprinkle down just enough to make the crops grow (15).

Or consider this visionary spot in Alabama:

> Suddenly we are in a canyon. I am beside myself with joy. Slick rock walls, sheer faces, wet with leaking springs; tall cliffs like out West! There are dogwoods everywhere: the blossoms hang motionless over the canyon, and our boots fall silently on the thick carpet of fern and moss (55).

Animals come alive in these pages, full of personality, icons of the author a times. There are turtles, alligators, grizzlies, birds, cats, dogs--all minutel observed and characterized. Bass writes:

> Just last night I saw a beautiful luna moth on my door, a great pale velvety luminous-looking creature with long sweeping wings and huge feathered antennae; I was too afraid to try to shoo it away so I could go inside, too unsure of how to pick it up and move it--like a bachelor holding a crying baby . . . so instead I . . . sat down and watched it for forty-five minutes . . . a big toad hopped up under the porch light and jumped up and snapped at it before I could do anything. The toad missed, jumped up again, and like a great crippled Boeing jet the moth wheeled clumsily around and flapped off into the woods, uninjured, and, seemingly, unfrightened (21).

Later, in *Oil Notes*, Bass reveals that his father called him "Animal" when he wa a child. Clearly, he identifies with the moth making his escape into th wilderness and with a tiny mouse whose busy career reminds him of his own:

> I saw this little field mouse go scampering across the black Trace in front of me, and he gathered himself for a tremendous leap and made it into the weeds safely. . . The mouse reminded me of a geologist's life, that busy, busy scampering and then a leap (3-4).

The sharp, focussed images of the wilderness as Bass finds it today are contrasted with images of the past--recent or prehistoric--also hidden in the wild places:

> It is an 1800's sort of wilderness: it is probably as close as is possible to being identical to what the country's first settlers encountered when they ventured into the southeastern hardwood bottoms two hundred years ago when there were only brief, short-lived, and thinly populated little fishing camps, little trading posts, and little settlements scattered throughout the South: Rabun Gap, Georgia; Smoke Holler, Alabama; Janice Landing, Mississippi (*Wild to the Heart* 45).

He rejoices to find a pristine scene like the one described below, evidence along with other discoveries, of the age of earth:

> A huge tree, requiring seven pairs of hands to circle it, fossil sea creatures in the mountains of Utah, the instincts of the grizzly all recall the past, the vast age of earth counterpointing our own transient existence (45)

A small bottle of oil recalls "a world so different from the one we are in now it is frightening (*Oil Notes* 109). The sense of the mutability of all things, and of man especially, is underlined in other passages:

> Nothing lasts. Old seas are buried. A species of dinosaur may go extinct after only six million years. We will live to be eighty with health failing after sixty: a fact (42).

Another evocation of mutability springs from observation of the carbon cycle:

> Corn, oak trees, sea kelp, bryozoans, rotifers, algae, rabbits, two by fours . . . the carbon goes around the earth, the hydrogen does too, temporary everywhere it goes. Maybe they're one thing for only a few years, a few hundred million years. Sometimes the two link up, the hydrogens to a carbon, and sit down low in the earth and hide as oil
> But again: only for a while (15).

The sense of mystery evoked by the age of earth culminates in theological musings; these thoughts occur in *Oil Notes*:

> What amazes me about the earth's discovered age is not that it is so old but that it is so young.

> And for those who would frown and think this statement somehow demeans the work of a God, their God, again I would be surprised. By the assumption that with Their Grand Entrance the creation is, quite naturally, over. Who knows where it is going: Why should today be the stopping point, the reference point for history? Are we at the end, the beginning, or the middle? (141-42)

Bass's profound enjoyment of the wilderness, of nature, of food and wine, lead to moments that seem to approach ecstasy--even mystical experience:

> . . . it was as if Everything was waiting for Something (*Wild to the Heart* 117).

For Bass, reading the earth's secrets, finding the hidden pool of oil, becomes an experience of liberation, a sort of apotheosis:

> You feel as if it is you and not the oil or gas that is trapped down there, being pressured down. You want to find it, and have it come rushing up toward the surface. Like a diver, deep below, looking up at the bright sky: rising (*Oil Notes* 45).

But finally, perhaps, as for Wordsworth, the earth itself is the revelation:

> The earth lies there, still, and obeys certain rules. I have faith that I am not going to let myself believe something that is not true . . . . Perhaps that is why geologists become so fervent about a particular prospect. Not holy men, but still there is that aspect to it--as in athletics, and religions (165).

As with Wordsworth also, Bass has the feeling of cosmic unity one finds in the works of so many Romantics. Bass's epigraph to *Oil Notes*, a quotation from Peter Matthiessen's *The Snow Leopard*, illustrates his acceptance of a complex of ideas including the Bible, modern theories of creation, a quasi-pantheism, perhaps, and a profound physical and mystical sense of man's unity with the universe in its totality. The epigraph reads:

> In the Book of Job, the Lord demands, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding! Who laid the cornerstones thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?
> "I was *there!*" -- surely that is the answer to God's question. For no matter how the universe came into being, most of the atoms in these fleeting assemblies we think of as our bodies have been in existence since the beginning (iii).

Plato in his *Laws* has observed that we cannot know anything without knowing its opposite. This notion is rephrased in Jacques Derrida's theory of *presence* and *absence*. The image of the wilderness inevitably calls to mind its opposite--the city. Wordsworth would very probably never have written as he did of wild nature without his experience of life in London, nor would Kerouac without the experience of Lowell, Massachusetts, the nation's first industrial city, nor McGuane without his experience of life in a small town in the Midwest. But Bass was born in rural Texas, and his first book, *The Deer Pasture*, published in 1985, grew out of his experience of farm and wilderness areas in his childhood and young manhood. This nostalgic work opens with a shame-faced confession. He no longer lives in the deer pasture.

Bass writes:

> I went to work in Mississippi where there isn't any granite and where there aren't any ringtails. These people were the first to offer me a job . . . . It's sort of an administrative job with, well, I'm sort of ashamed to admit it, but with a desk, and a big phone, . . .and there's even a secretary (*Deer Pasture* ix)

Despite the fact that the Pearl River brings the wild almost into the heart of Jackson, and he can go fishing there on his lunch hour, Bass admits, "I grouse." He recounts bouts of gigantic laughter in the deep woods, "laughs the likes of which Jackson, Mississipi, has never heard (*Wild to the Heart* 82). Of his city bred co-workers, he writes, "They just make up these horrible stories, and rumors (82). After a canoeing trip, he complains that he must "drive the damn road back into Jackson, another year older (99), and after another canoeing expedition, running the rapids in the mountains of Georgia and South Carolina, he notes that "if it's not found in Jackson, it's probably special" (118). Pizzas cooked over a campfire are awaited with pleasure -- "much nicer than waiting back in Jackson for a pizza there (122)."

Thus these references to Jackson, few in number though they be, provide the dark backdrop against which the natural world of the wilderness gleams. Nevertheless, in a very brief exercise in the Wordsworthian egotistical sublime, Bass addresses the reader directly:

> If it's wild to your own heart protect it. Preserve it. Love it. and fight for it and dedicate yourself to it, whether it's a mountain range, your wife, your husband or even (heaven forbid) your job. . . . if it makes your heart sing then focus on it. Because for sure it's wild, and if it's wild, it'll mean you're still free. No matter where you are (127).

Bass's collection of short stories, *The Watch*, has attracted national attention. He has been compared to Richard Ford for his interest in the wild areas of the South and West, and to Thoreau and Dillard for his skillful combination of story telling with the personal journal (Hood-Adams 3). Dillard, Matthiessen, McGuane, Ford and Bass are creators in a genre which grows in influence as the

baneful effects of our advanced technological society become daily more evident. They celebrate simpler, and evidently sounder ways of life which have survived best in rural and wilderness areas, ways of life fostering at once the health of the planet, and the emotional satisfaction of those who savor them. It is in his non-fiction works that Bass best achieves the vision of a whole earth with man in harmonious relation to creation.

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An Analysis of the Thematic Introductions in the First Chapter of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*

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It is generally recognized by most if not all critics that Thomas Mann is a master of organization and structure in the development of his novels. In spite of their great length and wealth of details, there is hardly anything included which is without structural significance. Critical in the development of his novels is the first chapter, which Mann designates as "Kapital-Kapital,"[1] indicating through a pun that the first chapter is the one in which he invests his principal stock. In his study of Mann's novels *Die Entwicklung des 'Intellektualen Romans'* Helmut Koopman, agrees with this assessment of the first chapter, stating that it "prefigures . . . by symbolic means the coming events and thereby gives the reader the possibility to recognize an inner order behind the often random seeming sequence of individual events. What happens in the entire novel happens already here in this sense. . . ."[2]

In Mann's second major novel, *The Magic Mountain*, published in 1924, one finds that the traditions begun in his first novel, *Buddenbrooks*, have been maintained and heightened further in the manner in which he introduces and develops his themes in the first chapter. Abandoning the role as family chronicler, Mann turns now to a genre for which German writers are famous, namely the *Bildungsroman*, the novel of education. In his study of *The Magic Mountain*, Hermann Weigand notes that

> the "Zauberberg" reveals its affiliation with that artistic and exclusive group among the novels of self-development which constitutes Germany's most distinctive contribution to the world's fiction . . . the *Bildungsroman*. Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," Keller's "Gruner Heinrich," Stifter's "Nachsommer," Thomas Mann's "Zauberbert"--these most outstanding representatives of this type all focus upon a quest of *Bildung* that transcends any specific practical aims.[3]

It is this "quest of *Bildung*" which serves as the principal theme in the symphonic development of this novel, which traces "Hans Castorp's transformation from a 'mediocre' youth to a 'deep young man.'"[4] In this "transformation" one is very much aware of Mann's dualistic view of the world, for Hans follows the traditional development of such a hero, who "characteristically undergoes both emotional and intellectual adventures, neither [of which] need be stressed at the expense of the other."[5] Accordingly, Hans is subjected to the emotional adventures of love, friendship, and death in his relationships to Clavdia, Joachim, and Peeperkorn and to the intellectual stimulation of Naphta and Settembrini. The conflict lies not just between the emotional and the intellectual, but within these respective forces as well. J. G. Brennan notes that "During his stay at the

sanatorium, Hans runs a gauntlet of opposing forces . . . [and] in his 'egoistic craving for experience' [Clavdia's words] he learns much from each, takes from each warring force its measure of stimulus to the never quite achieved goal of his spiritual Odyssey."[6]

One is prepared for the *Bildungsmotiv* by a number of factors in the first chapter, which reflect the flavor of the traditional *Bildungsroman*. Like Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Hans is seen in the opening pages leaving the familiar surroundings of home and travelling to a place of "unusual living conditions" (4)[7], which in their peculiarity prompt him to realize that they will demand his full attention. Such attention is achieved both consciously as indicated by his thoughts and also physically as a result of Hans' elevated temperature and heart beat, which result from the effects of the altitude and which lead to a heightening of the senses. While dining the first evening in the restaurant, the two cousins discuss the shy young woman who has lived in sanatoriums since she was a girl. During their discussion Hans suggests that by comparison to the woman Joachim is a mere "novice" (4). The use of the word "novice" brings to mind the sequence of steps through the character traditionally goes in a *Bildungsroman*: novice/apprentice, journeyman, and master. And it is through these steps that we observe Hans progress as he spends his seven years at the Berghof until he is considered one of the "'settled,' established" (706) patients of the institution. The dominant theme of the novel under which all others are subsumed and which clearly designates the novel as a *Bildungsroman* is expressed in the first chapter by Joachim in reference to the influence that the Berghof has on a person's life: "One's ideas get changed" (7). Uttering the understatement of the book, little does Joachim realize how prophetic this statement is, for from the very first Hans undergoes growth, change, and expansion of his ideas. In keeping with Mann's dualistic stance, we see that while Hans does experience growth in his ideas, Joachim does not, which is also thematically introduced in the first chapter by Joachim when he declares that "Down below, one goes through so many changes and makes so much progress, in a single year of life. And I have to stagnate up here" (15). And in truth, Joachim does stagnate; he does not grow intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually, and thus reflects the response of the majority of the people to the Berghof environment.

Having sounded the dominant theme of changing ideas, Mann moves on to introduce in the first chapter many of the major themes which flow through the novel and which serve as the curriculum for Hans' education. Reflecting the length of the novel, the number of courses is large, ranging far beyond the quadrivium and trivium of classical education. Among the major topics for analysis are Time, Life, Death, Illness, and Intellect; a host of other themes, too numerous to mention, also meld in this symphonic study of the growth of an individual.

Let us first turn our attention to the subject of Time, which as a major theme is variously analyzed and interpreted, reflecting the many facets of this phenomenon. In each variation the reader can see its application to Hans' view of Time, which is either enhanced or changed thereby.

The most pervasive aspect of this theme found in the first and subsequent chapters of the novel is based on the contrasting views of time at the Berghof and "below." Regarded in the traditional manner, "below" time is valuable and not to be wasted, which is an attitude implied by Hans when he exclaims to Joachim: "You've been up here half a year already! Who's got so much time to spend--" (7). By contrast, time "above" has been reduced to something insignificant, or to "nothing at all . . ." (6). One encounters this attitude very early in Chapter 1 when Joachim remarks: "Three weeks are nothing at all to us up here . . . " (6). Having been at the Berghof for five months, he has succumbed to the prevailing attitudes toward time, which are fostered by the staff and patients alike. Hofrat Behrens, as director of the staff, encourages, of course, this general disregard of time in such comments as: "There's a doggedness for you! Won't give us a measly half-a-year!" (46). Time is forever being reduced to a quantity less than it is. Again Behrens recites the prevailing attitude: "You're stopping only eight weeks, I hear? Ah, three? That nothing but a week-end!" (106). In a matter of months we find that Hans also begins to reckon time in the same manner of the other patients. Reflecting on the passage of the weeks and months since arriving, he concludes: "What was one day . . . . It was, to be sure, four-and-twenty hours--but equally it was the simple sum of nothings" (288).

As Hans travels to Davos, he plans when he returns to Hamburg "to take up his life at the point where, for the moment, he had had to lay it down" (8). With this statement is introduced the concept of suspended animation: Life and its activities can be suspended while time passes on. This idea is contemplated in Chapter 1 by Joachim when, in exasperation, he declares: "It doesn't go at all . . . You can't call it time--and you can't call it living . . . " (14). The people in the Berghof go through many activities while Hans is there, yet the narrator's evaluation is that the years are "very eventful yet 'the sum of nothing'" (502). That Hans continues to ascribe to this idea is suggested when the concept of suspended animation is expressed metaphorically by him in his discussion of the practice of conservation of foods: "The magic part of it lies in the fact that the stuff that is conserved is withdrawn from the effects of time, it is hermetically sealed from time, time passes it by, it stands there on its shelf shut away from time" (511). Hans makes these observations to Naptha without either of them connecting the concept with the situation in the Berghof. The reader, of course, takes pleasure in this analogy and readily makes the intended associations. In one aspect the analogy is particularly appropriate in regard to most of the people sealed away and sitting on the Magic Mountain. However, such is not the case in regard to Hans. He may be "withdrawn from the effects" of the world below, but he does not remain unchanged. Although he awakens to the thunderclap of war in a state of ignorance to the outside world, having "neglected to read the papers" (709), internally he has grown immensely under the heightening effects of his hermetic experience. He leaves the mountain and returns "below" where he takes "up his life" not at the point where "he had had to lay it down" (4) but at the new point to which both he and the world have moved.

In light of these diverse, yet also related, aspects of time, we find the theme reduced to its basic problem by the narrator as he relates Hans' thoughts about

the passage of his first three weeks: "Ah, time is a riddling thing, and hard it is to expound its essence!" (141). As has been shown, this statement can be seen as the keynote for this particular theme, for the subject is debated, analyzed, and pondered throughout the novel, yet without ever arriving at a consensus.

Surrounded as Hans is by death and the dying at the Berghof, he is schooled thoroughly in his seven years in the many aspects of and attitudes toward death. R. H. Thomas in his study of Mann notes that the author himself suggests that "It could be the theme of a Bildungsroman . . . 'to show that the experience of death is in the final analysis an experience of life. . . .'"[8] Accordingly, in Hans' *Bildung* for life death plays a significant role. Even before his arrival at the Berghof, we learn in the second chapter that Hans has already been well introduced to death in his childhood during which time he experiences the demise of his mother, father, and grandfather. Thus his experience at the Berghof is actually one of Goethean *Steigerung*, or intensification, of knowledge that is already in his possession.

Reflecting Mann's dualistic view of life (or death), the author treats the subject in a variety of ways, with the greatest emphasis on humor and cynicism, attitudes which soon become a part of Hans' *Weltanschauung*. We first encounter these attitudes when Joachim tells Hans in the first chapter that the bodies from the Schatzalp sanatorium are brought "down on bob-sleds in the winter, because the roads are blocked" (9). This information is received with "a violent, irrepressible laugh" (9) by Hans, who chides his cousin for having become "cynical in these five months" (9). This cynicism is complemented by the matter-of-fact manner in which Joachim later tells Hans that an American woman had died in Hans' bed the "day before yesterday . . ." (11). Joachim's casual attitude is matched by that of his cousin, who with no apprehension or timidity falls asleep upon this "common death-bed" (17). All of these impressions are united, true to Freudian form, in Hans' dream at the end of the first chapter, in which he sees Joachim and the Austrian gentleman astride a bob-sled while Frau Iltis sits beside the run with her "steriletto" (18), which is Frau Stohr's malapropism for stiletto. The dream "made Hans Castorp go from tears to laughing; and thus he was tossed back and forth among varying emotions . . ." (18). With such an introduction to the theme of death the reader is prepared for the serious and humorous treatment which Mann lends to this subject.

Another facet of illness which intrigues Hans is the conflict that exists between appearance and reality. From the moment of their first meeting, Hans is struck by the healthy exterior that covers his cousin's diseased condition. His first reaction is that Joachim looks "more robust than ever in his life before" (5), "a picture of youthful vigour, and made for a uniform" (6). These observations combined with the knowledge of his illness establish a pattern which is repeated often in regards to Joachim and also in regards to other patients as well. With each seemingly attractive patient Hans learns not to trust his senses. For example, Hofrat Behrens jokes with the two young men about the women found at the Berghof: "we have the most charming females. At least, some of them are very picturesque outside" (46). One of these females is Marusja, who has attracted the attention of Joachim and whose "case is by no means light" (72)

Reinforcing the theme, Hans replies to Joachim's diagnosis: "Who would have thought it? . . . . She looks so very fit" (72). The narrator provides yet more thematic reinforcement when he notes Marusja's "full bosom, which was yet so ailing within . . ." (115). The discrepancy between the inward and outward condition can be detected in all the patients until they become one of the unmentionable *moribundi*, the terminally ill. The "tanned," "robust," "picturesque" appearance and frivolous behavior belie the seriousness of their physical condition.

Providing a balance for the indulgence in emotional and physical matters is the tremendous growth that Hans experiences intellectually. The source of this growth is the stimulation that he receives from a number of people, but most noticeably from Settembrini and Naphta, who exert their influence individually and together through their endless debates reflecting their respective *Weltanschauungen*. Under the heightening effect of his illness Hans also takes responsibility for his own education, utilizing the wealth of free time for study of a myriad of topics, ranging from the sciences to philosophy to music. Aside from the grand controlling statement from Joachim that "one's ideas get changed" (7), Mann drops a couple of other hints in the first chapter, which prepare the reader for this particular course of events. Describing with scientific detail his condition, Joachim tells Hans that "in the left lobe, where there were rales, it only sounds harsh now . . . but lower down it is very harsh, and there are rhonchi in the second intercostal space" (7). This bit of erudition prompts Hans to respond, "How learned you've got" (7). Such is merely a foretaste of Hans' knowledge gained from his study of anatomy, which he takes far beyond the "second intercostal space" to include all of the human anatomy, a study, it might be noted, that is prompted by his interest in Clavdia. Later in the first chapter Joachim "expressed his joy at having somebody here with whom one could have a little rational conversation" (14). Again this statement acts as a prelude to the many conversations that Hans has not only with Joachim but also with Settembrini, Naphta, Behrens, Clavdia, and Peeperkorn, all of whom broaden Hans' intellectual horizons.

Thus under the controlling theme of the novel, namely that of changing ideas, Mann successfully introduces through the first chapter the major themes which play a part in Hans's education. Working individually and in concert, they all blend together and lead to the transformation of the "mediocre" (41) youth into the "deep young man" (706).

Footnotes

[1]Thomas Mann, *Altes and Neues* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, 1953), p. 491.

[2]Helmut Koopmann, *Die Entwicklung des "Intellektualen Romans" bei Thomas Mann* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1971), p. 83. This passage from Koopman is my own translation from the German text.

the first Adam), a singular term with a plural meaning. The term "Adam" is first a reference to collective people. In Genesis 1-3, all references to Adam are collective in intent, and the term is rendered with a feminine spelling in Genesis 2 (Holladay 4). It was not until the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah that "Adam" came to be used mostly in a singular sense (xvii-xix). From the first, then, in scripture, Adam was gendered male, but he was plural: his plurality was not the figurehead for all men ever to be born, i.e., Adam is not collective for masculine gender, but for people. The only undisputed rendering of Adam as the name of an individual, male person occurs in Genesis 4:25; 5:1a, 3, and 5 (4).

A part of the problem in interpreting Adam as both male and female from inception is in the fact that Hebrew has no neuter gender, and so gender is always determined by its form in the singular (see Goldberg xi-xii). Adam was androgynous. The problem in American society with seeing Adam as such is that, unhappily, the dominant religious forces (Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist), tend to interpret "androgynous"--emotionally, if not mentally--as "homosexual." Adam erased (by choosing to silence it) his feminine self foregrounding the male. Disregarding the "softness" (some say "woman" means "soft man"), of his femininity, he celebrated the flesh, the brawn, the brain.

Adam, in his role as gardener, handyman, and livestock keeper, was big on naming and ordering, to the exclusion of any recognition of feminine qualities of awe and wonder which God's image had also seeded in him. Coming to the garden to worship with Adam, God found lacking in him the spirit of worship there was a fervor for service, duty, work (ritual, legalism, self-aggrandizement Adam was a good Patriarch, a good Pope, a good Southern Baptist Preacher Deacon type), but there was not found in Adam an abandoned joy to sit still and see the wonder of it all: no thirst for the inexplicable; the unnameable. God come to visit for worship, took a look at that refusal of Adam to see the other side of his own nature, saw it as lack, and said, "This is not good" (Genesis 2:18) It was this "not goodness" of Adam that represents the FIRST sin of Eden. (Note To my knowledge, this concept of what was the first sin in Eden is original with me. But for a reading of the Patriarchal view of Adam, woman, and sin in Eden relative to Exile, see the Bernard Och text in the works cited; for an understanding of Roman Catholic adoption of the Patriarchal view, see the "Vatican Declaration on Women's Ordination, 1976," as cited in the Conway/Siegelman text; for Southern Baptist adoption of that view, see the front page of The [Nashville Tennessean, 15 June 1984). It is to that which lies behind such rejection that Coover's fiction--and this paper--speak.

The most visible arm of Fundamentalism is the Southern Baptist Convention Estimates in recent years claim 32-40 million people are members of that denomination. I am one of them. Most preachers and programs involved in the electronic church are also a part of, or have been at some time attached in some way to, the Southern Baptist Church. Even Oral Roberts spent some years claiming to be Southern Baptist. James Robison, too. And then there is Jerry Falwell, the front man of The Moral Majority. Quotes from some of these names are as radical and fanatical as something they would expect from an irate Muslim (See, for example, Martin Amis' essays and the Conway/Siegelman text listed i

my works cited). However, there is a sane side to this denomination: there are those who are not being swept away into its "mad ideology" as Coover calls it; into its "dogmatizing of doctrine" as I call it; or into its "Bibliolatry" (a worship of the Bible rather than of the Lord) as R. G. Puckett, Ex-director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State and a Southern Baptist preacher calls it [see Conway/Siegelman]). The Book is only the more recent icon which the more visible side of this denomination has come to worship: of longer duration has been its worship of its buildings, in which it practices the institutionalization of dogma as the true doctrine: those buildings all proclaim--in soaring steeples and pointed windows--the real icon of the denomination, the penis.

To be simplistic, fanatic Fundamentalism sees itself as out to do two things: protect the American family and save America from Communism and/or internal self-destruction. They relate the first to their doctrine of origins, i.e., Edenic myth; they relate the second to their doctrine of destiny, i.e., Apocalypse and the end of the age. What does Fundamentalism want to protect the American family from? Primarily, woman's liberation and gay rights, both of which they see as major causes of the death of the American home, which leads of course to the death of America from within. On the side of holiness, myself, I find it a worthy aim to save the American home; however, the mad methods being employed to achieve this make the movement too frightening by half: its become a black-armband effort inside its own walls and for as far as the electronic church and billions of dollars can take it--and, unlike the Christ of Scripture whose name they've blazoned on their crusade banners, there is no love or mercy in the movement. The root problem of their efforts, and what really has their ire up, is woman's having come to see self as a subject in her own right, rather than as the mere object of man.

For Fundamentalists--from patriarchs to Southern Baptist preachers of the radical right--woman is only and always the object of man. Which, of course, ties their aims to the doctrine of origins, i.e., of who Adam was, what Eve was, when sin entered Eden, and why the two were exiled from the garden. What do they see as their role in saving America from Communism and/or self-destruction? Primarily, they see it as educating membership in general--and youth in particular--about the Communist threat and about the God-ordained plan of male domination in the home and the church. These are aims tied to their doctrine of end times--the doctrine of apocalypse. Again, I find most worthy the aim to save America from self-imposed holocaust; however, the methods being used to achieve this aim--from established Fundamentalist educational institutions which censor learning and clone novitiates, to church programs which twist scripture in ways that would do justice to early communist programs for the purpose of cultural brainwashing, to its significant role on television, and its direct involvement in local and national politics--appear more to achieve the continuation of male domination through the denomination, with its increased accent from the pulpit on the objectified position of woman to man, than to achieve either a halt to communism or the preservation of the home and the prevention of an increasingly large homosexual side to American society. In

short, clear-headed people have to say, "It ain't working, guys!" And since scripture is a picture of how God intervenes to wipe-out whole societies only when God's people in that society become iconoclastic and thereby fail in that society to live redemptive love, as opposed to condemning judgment, then I have to believe these of my own denomination will be a major force which, unless it sees itself as it has become, will ignite the end of the age.

I come at all this Fundamentalist madness from inside; Coover comes at it from outside. My object is the deconstruction of dogma crescendoing from its pulpits. Fundamentalism is, of course, about sex. It's confusion about male/female relationships is the root cause of its misinterpretation of Edenic myth. It is sex in that sense which is the sin problem that has plagued the masculine dominated religions of Judaism, Roman Catholicism, and Southern Baptists since whoever wrote Genesis picked up a pen. The reason they have problems with this is because they have closed their minds to the true doctrine of scripture, thus perpetuating a myth that has led us to this inevitable place outside Eden where America exists today.

What is Coover's view of Fundamentalism and how does he approach it in his fictions? Coover, in interview with Larry McCaffrey (1983), laments the dogma that accompanied the threat of nuclear apocalypse during the cold war. McCaffrey picks up on that and associates Coover's work with his characters' desire for stability and order [which causes them to] lose sight of [the reason why they desire it] and [therefore they] begin to insert . . . fictions into the world as dogma; [which] winds up entrapping or even destroying them (68-69). Coover agrees that such is a fair reading of his work, and McCaffrey wants to know why he continues to return to that theme. Coover says it is because he is burdened "with a vast number of metaphoric possibilities, all of which were touched by this sense of dogma invading the world and turning it to stone" (69). In a 1987 interview with David Applefield, Coover ties the stoning of society directly to "mad ideology" and mad ideology directly to Fundamental Christianity (7-8). In addressing Fundamentalism as the motivation behind much of his writing, Coover says,

> perhaps what most disturbs and irritates me [about the mad ideology of fundamental Christianity], though they are part of the comedy, of course, are the brutalizing consequences of what you might call the serious views of life--the mad visions of those persons who do see life as having a profound meaning and their own individual lives as having some eternal role and who wish to impose all that on other people. This is what causes about 90% of our unnecessary pain. Lots of pain comes, we don't need to invent more! (Applefield 7-9)

and he associates it with dogma's invading the world and turning it to stone in the McCaffrey interview (69). One way Coover deconstructs Fundamentalism in his fictions is by showing, as a film might show--with neither judgment nor mercy nor grace--the sexual objectification of woman by man and how that objectification makes man sexually impotent and practically incapable of achiev-

ing climax. For example, Martina Sciolino, a Cooverian scholar, has said that Coover's male characters, for all the explicit sexual content of his work, never achieve climax: the only exception's being in *The Public Burning* when Richard Nixon and Uncle Sam achieve it in a homosexual act. I find that a telling psychological view of Fundamentalist male sexuality in Coover's work!

"The Marker," from *Pricksongs and Descants*, is a major Cooverian text illustrating how women are turned to stone--always by men, but it is far from the only place this dogma comes out in Coover's fiction, and most often he sets the situation in a place closely resembling "mythic" Eden. For all that, to my notion, the first, clearest, and most sweeping view of Coover's deconstruction of Fundamentalism in all its aspects is in *The Origin of the Brunists* ("Brunists"), his first published novel and the 1966 winner of the William Faulkner award. In it, he captures in Abner Baxter the stereotypical Fundamentalist-preacher. Baxter intimidates his wife and then mentally demeans her because that intimidation renders her incapable of leadership when he wishes she could run the women's group in his church and thus solidify his hold over every aspect of the congregation. Baxter terrorizes his children and finds erotic pleasure in spanking his most amenable daughter. His "good" wife doesn't interfere, and indeed, the daughter seems to invite his abuse. In this, as in Fundamentalist homes across America, the family is functioning as it is preached by fanatical Fundamentalists they should function: under the authority of the male.

Psychological studies indicate that many of the troubled youth in our society today come from such homes as the Baxters (daily newspapers and my own personal, professional knowledge supply this fact). More fully, Brunists is a parody of fanaticism's gathering of its cult for apocalypse where, at the mount of redemption, Abner Baxter, the story's strongest Fundamentalist symbol, kills the symbol of the Holy Spirit, Marcella Bruno, the silent sister of the backward mystic (symbol of Christ) for whom the book's main character, Justin Miller (an outsider of the movement), names the cult (as "Christian" was a name given by outsiders of the first century movement).

In this book, [and it is properly a "book" and not merely a "text," for Coover says Brunists was written to "pay his dues" to modern--as opposed to postmodern--literary mores], Coover also uses epigraphs from the Christian book of Revelation. Christians attack him for this, calling such use profane. But, in retrospect, Coover's fiction reveals that it is not he who mocks holy things; rather, it is those whom he depicts in his fiction. Of those whose lives provide the insight for Coover's parody, the Book they worship says: although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man . . . . (Romans 1:21-23b1 RSV) Which is to say, Scripture does not condemn sinners, but it does condemn hypocrites. Thus this scriptural condemnation of male-dominated Fundamentalism is far stronger and, of course, more threatening to us all than is Coover in his condemnation of the behavior of Fundamentalists. Indeed, he does not condemn, merely parodies. For example, Leo J. Hertzer thinks Coover, in his texts, is even saying that "Christians,

perhaps mankind in general, have simply misunderstood" (Interview). To support this contention, Hertzel cites a Cooverian character, "I don't know if there's a record keeper up there or not, . . . But even if there weren't, I think we'd have to play the game as if there were" (22).

There is something respectable in honest doubt that is not present in credos. And, unfortunately, Fundamentalism hasn't as much grace for sinners, for doubters, as does Coover's quoted character. They'd do well to hear Coover's comment on the failure of church and synagogue. He says, I think there's been a kind of breakdown in people's confidence in standard, institutionalized religious answers to problems such as the obliteration of the race and writers trying to express what is our reality today find in reality a kind of nightmare quality . . . . the acting out of old rituals [doesn't] seem to have any meaning for us (26).

In all this, Coover sees writing as "a kind of priestly vocation: [writers are] set apart . . . [they are] in fact, . . . kind of seers" (Hertzel. "What's Wrong With the Christians?" 22). Of himself as novelist, Coover says he is "something of an Iconoclast," i.e., unlike the Fundamentalist idolaters of Book and building, Coover rejects the worship of icons. And of his own relationship to Christ, Coover says Samuel Beckett became his guide when, Christ and Tennessee Williams "failed" him. He calls himself "the son of Beckett." Rather than failing Christianity, Coover, then, like many other bright young men and women in-and-of the 1960s, has been failed by the most visible professors of the current Christian movement. It is the Fundamentalists, loudest claiming to be the voice of Christ to America, loudest claiming to speak directly from and for the second Adam, who have corrupted Christ's pure doctrine into the sort of "mad ideology" that sends the Coover's elsewhere to find answers to live by. And in failing such as he, Fundamentalists fail all, for they have become legalists stepped-aside from humankind. In that side-step, they fail the Christ they think they serve. They have lost touch with the reason for their existence. Conversely, in content and theory, Coover is seeking to enunciate and to locate meaning in life. He is not on a vengeful mission, but a mission to meet needs. He does it with the tools he has: writing. He does not move in society as a missionary or a preacher, but as a writer. But, when much of what he feels compelled to write about is Fundamentalism, the truth can only be revealed in parody: to sell it straight would be too terrible and, in the absurdities of a world Fundamentalism has shut out of its circle, parody is all postmodernism understands.

Of course, Coover's fiction is condemned by the church crowd, one of whom called Brunists "a vicious and dirty piece of writing . . . . an attack on Christianity . . . . the product of an overheated brain . . . the doings [of the Brunists] are insane" (19). All the while, what that crowd sees and condemns in Coover's work is an unveiling of their own corrupted doctrine. Much of it is a parody of how Fundamentalists see women as mere objects of men: this arbitrary objectification of woman--first by patriarchs, then by Roman Catholics, and now by Fundamentalists--has been (and is) the major force behind the confusion which plagues postmodern society. Given that, if America's logocentric ideology is to be exiled, it will not be Derrida's work, and it will not

be Coover's work, but it will be the work of fanatical Fundamentalism. And, as it was in the beginning, it will be in the end, as they experience the same self-inflicted exile experienced in Eden when earth's first closed-minded male rejected the notion of femininity within the flesh of self.

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Poems

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IT'S EARLIER THAN YOU THINK

The rats and other rodents not having
Smelled the dawn yet,
And in the absence of any lamps
Or songs from the plumbing,
There's a quiet scurry but no more
Than usual. We could say
The Wires are tired of humming
And stringing through the itchy dark.
But there's just enough quiet scurries,

From the basement, not the dawn,
For a slight tingle to the fingers,
A slight impatience of the dark
Behind anybody's eyelids.
You move slowly in that impatient,
Negative light, in the slight,
Almost tingling; you always move
More slowly in extreme light,
Flashes of perspiration at your joints.

The porcelain is lit
Till it's translucent,
The tile sharp white,
Almost yellow in its glare.
Maybe this is a place,
Or a basement, or nothing
But the expectation
Of several wires
Stringing and humming.

THE MALL AND LUCY AUD'S

They put a fountain
there among the tiles,
indoors, and made a place
I want to wrap my arms around.
It surges from whatever pump
with whatever force it's set,
splashing out just a bit,
a little trained mess over the edge.
The mall is gentle today,
florescent angles in my coffee;
an old man has a broom

and walkie-talkie. How
can the fields ever compare,
even in morning as they lie
a heap of dusty skins?

At Lucy Aud's Curve
two roads meet, hills
curving west to the
Hardshell Baptist graveyard.
The dust doesn't forgive
doesn't know the fashion.
It only rises quicker
to the straining nostrils
of the screaming man
hugging his knees
as he's crushed.

I like trees in tin pots,
the grating radiating out
like a transfigured sun;
I like the children playing with plastic spiders.

This I want to go on.
I wish my body could swallow
another and another cup
of black coffee, could
drain again and again the flashing
red neon angles and write
and write again the sun in the splashes.

SOME THINGS I CAN DO

If you were as fine as the pine needles,
the figure on the fine plates, the yellow
on good French toast . . . but let's float
instead, tiny waves rising with a tinkle,

occasionally, generated, somewhere. We'll
rouse, just slightly, but not enough
to think of the Jaccuzi: Soft and
vacant like moonlight on a screen door.

If you'd take my extenuated word, slightly
out of round, like a chili bowl, and tip
it ever so slightly, you could clank off
some afternoon with only a shadow of onion.

If you'd trust me that I've learned something:
that little motion, from the table to the lips,
of the water glass I've gotten down over the
years. Perfect. The only drips are condensation.

If you'd believe all of them are alike,
except for height, and two skip, hand
in hand, ahead of the other, nearly into
traffic, the third holding a boy's hand.

If you'd accept what I can puck up,
with the alacrity of a goat's lips
flicking fast around the fence links
snapping in the leaves and crumbs.

The Baron and the Priest

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Once upon a time in a pristine valley tucked up among the Julian Alps, there was a beautiful lake with water clean and pure as a baby's smile. The pines reflected in it were tall and the fish that shimmered in it were as large as dogs. The village at its end had rich terraces of grain and vegetables behind it, and cattle scrambled over the green slopes rising to the sky. For as long as anyone could remember--and the church records dated back to the times of the Romans --the village had been prosperous. It was never truly wealthy and never threatened to become a city because the valley was too narrow and isolated. Invaders usually marched through the lowlands to the south and messengers would be sent to announce that the valley had been transferred from one kingdom or empire to another, but afterwards the tax collectors tended to forget about the valley, or simply thought the climb up the tortuous cart path was too much effort for the money.

Other than the usual troubles of village life--loud-mouthed gossips, rats in the cheese, and outbreaks of pox--there was only one vexation to living in the valley: its lord, the Baron of Slapica. Slapica (which meant "little waterfall") referred to the cascade which fed the lake, and perched upon a crag that dropped straight to the top of the waterfall was the Baron's castle. It was a seedy place, overgrown with slimy mosses. It smelled of mildew and the oak beams, with mushrooms sprouting on top, were soft as creamcakes. The roof tiles were ancient, of a type no one knew, and the cracks and gaping holes had gone unrepaired for generations. Not even the church records could say how the stones had been raised to such an awkward perch, but if an army had ever attacked the castle at Slapica they would have suffered terrible losses just trying to climb up. In any generation in the village there were only three or four people who had ever successfully climbed to the castle and returned. Everyone could remember the funeral of one boy or another who had slipped and fallen to his death on a dare that he could place his girlfriend's scarf on one of the parapets. For centuries mothers tried to scare their children with stories of the Baron. "When he blinks maggots fall from his eyes and his fingernails are claws as long and sharp as a sickle." "His breath smells like a kitten six days dead and blowflies nest in his ears." It was not only to keep their children off the rocks that they said these things, and these things were not necessarily exaggerations, for the Baron was not only quite repulsively dead, but he was quite repulsively undead.

Now it may surprise you that a pleasant people like the Slovenians, let alone the lucky villagers of Slapica, would have a vampire among them, but everyone --good, bad, foolish, and wise--has vampires, whether they believe it or not, whether they know it or not. The villagers, to their credit, faced up to the situation, and over the centuries adjusted to this bloodthirsty creature who on

moonlit nights would swoop down and through the hillside pines on his leathery wings. If you were silly enough to drink too much and fall asleep in your boat, well, your wife would find you next morning, bloodless as a cabbage and dry as a ham. If your love were such that there was no moral bed for you to share and you met your lover on the soft earth of a hillside grove, it might be months before anyone discovered that you two had not run away to America, but had been lying withered as a pair of raisins while the leaves gently settled on you. Strangers and gypsy traders had a tendency to disappear or be killed, along with chicken thieves, wandering musicians, bawds, Protestant evangelists, and other unwanted rowdies. If the Baron got you, according to the village viewpoint, you deserved it and it was no more terrible than if you died of the pox or slipped from your boat while fishing. The Baron was a part of life, like vinegared wine, rotten potatoes, and broken legs. "Heaven is for the heavenly," the old women would say, "but the earth is for us." And everyone would sigh wistfully remembering the proverb from when they first heard it on a grandparent's knee.

Then Tomaz was born, and, as his name implies, he grew up doubting everything in the valley. His father was a proud man who told Tomaz, "You are destined for great things." By this he meant a heard of fifteen, possibly twenty cows, two bulls, and a wife broad in the hips and strong as the bulls. Tomaz was not impressed with these possibilities. He listened carefully to the priest as he grew up. He brooded and he spent many hours alone reading whatever books and newspapers were found when strangers disappeared. By age fourteen he was unbearable. If anyone praised the valley, he told them about California. If his father complimented their neighbor for her strawberry tortes, Tomaz babbled about the legendary cakes of Vienna. One afternoon Janez the Hunter climbed down from the mountains with a beautiful hart upon his massive shoulders, intending to sell one haunch of it to Tomaz's family. Janez and Tomaz's father were concluding the deal over plum brandy when Tomaz began to describe the eland and the elk. Janez was insulted and raised his voice, so Tomaz defiantly produced a magazine with an etching of a record moose shot near Hudson's Bay. Ultimately Janez hefted his animal over his shoulders, swearing he would sell both haunches to the man who had once courted Tomaz's mother.

Tomaz's father was furious. He flailed at Tomaz with a wooden spoon, a broom, an ale pitcher--anything that came to hand. "Leave my house!" he said "You cannot insult my friends! The roast that would have made! Get a little taste of begging! See how big the deer in Slapica seem when you are starving!"

By dusk, however, his brandy had worn off and he sent his wife to find out where his son had gone. She hurried, arriving at the priest's house just as the sun dropped behind the castle. Tomaz sat in the kitchen, moping and chewing on a hunk of buckwheat bread. "Everything I said was right," Tomaz protested "Everything. Does the truth mean nothing?"

The priest led Tomaz's mother by the arm into his tiny parlor and set her on the divan, the only seat in the room large enough for her. Tears dribbled down her round cheeks. "Whatever shall we do, Father?" she wailed, air whistling through the gap where her front tooth was missing. "Whatever shall we do?"

"I have thought of this for some time," said the priest, tugging at his ridiculously large earlobe. "Tomaz is not like other boys. He is very studious. An education is what he needs. With your permission I would like to send him to the seminary in Bologna."

"A priest? You would make him a priest?" Her great round face twitched oddly. Part of her was delighted. Priests were special people and giving up children seemed not much of a sacrifice. Having babies was nothing special, as she had proved eleven times. On the other hand, Tomaz's father would rage. To pass up another set of grandchildren! She could see the veins popping on her husband's forehead as the priest spoke.

"A taste of the real world for a few years," intoned the priest, "and Tomaz will know the beauty and serenity of this valley. Then he will come back. Would you not like him to succeed me here?

After spending the night with the housekeeper, Tomaz's mother was determined enough to face her husband, and he, who had dreamed at least twice that he would find his wife and son lying dead and dry as husks when morning came, wrapped his arms around her and promised her anything if she would swear never to let him sleep alone again.

Thus grinds the stone of destiny. Tomaz was gone. It was startling after a year or two to get letters from him. They seemed to come from beyond death. He was remembered as if he were one of the foolish people who had gone out at night and disappeared. Once reminded, however, that he was indeed alive, the villagers would gather on the lawn enclosed by the church walls as the priest would read the long letters in Tomaz's agitated, cramped hand. Tomaz graduated. Tomaz was sent to China, then the East Indies and up the Orinoco. Tomaz described peculiar political events that interested no one in Slapica, and continued glorifying the world at the expense of his home. Finally, there was a five-year span in which he did not write and no one knew Father Tomaz's address. The weather was beneficent in those years and the Baron killed only eight foolish villagers, seventeen cows, and ninety-two chickens. Slapica continued its sleepy ways and everyone grew plump as turnips though they worked as hard as ever.

One winter the fluffy snow piled on the thatch roofs and drifted against the church walls. Tomaz's father and Janez the Hunter were dozing with their crusty feet toward the fireplace while Tomaz's mother was searching for a jar of cauliflower pickles in the cellar. The door creaked, then was shoved open (no one locked their doors in Slapica), and the feathery snow swirled in. A scrawny man with an icy beard stepped across the high threshold, closed the door, and dropped his woolly buffalo coat to the floor. He was wearing a cassock underneath. Janez blinked and whacked his companion on the arm. "By God! Don't you recognize your own son?"

Actually, Tomaz's father did not recognize him. It did not seem that anyone of his blood could be so bony. "Papa?" said Tomaz and the old man lurched out of his chair to embrace him. Even though it was the middle of winter a feast was held next day in the barn, and as the villagers bloated and dizzy on roast ox and brandy piled up heaps of straw to serve as their beds for the night, Tomaz sat behind a small candle and through the long winter night told them of the

strange and wonderful things he had seen in the world, of delicious foods and exotic customs, of great wealth and supernatural wonders, of courage and the mighty arm of righteousness. His parents, the priest, and the older villagers scoffed at much of what he said and winked at each other to say, "Same old Tomaz?" But the youngsters were wide-eyed. They gaped at each other and ooh-ed. Tomaz had seen these things, after all, and a priest does not lie.

Everyone seemed exhilarated by Tomaz's return, especially the old priest, who would tug at his enormous earlobe and say, "Did I not say he would return? No one can leave Slapica?" He contemplated the slight shake in his hands and the silver hair on his comb and considered how he could get the villagers to build him a small retirement cottage near the water. Tomaz patched the church walls, found the small leak behind the confessional, and whitewashed the entire church with the help of three boys who had been notorious for disobeying their parents. When the widow who lived at the upper end of the valley grew ill, Tomaz persuaded each of a dozen villagers go give up one day of his own work to take care of her farm and she recovered very quickly. Thomaz's father turned the phrase "my son the priest" into a single word and never used Tomaz's name. Tomaz's mother beamed like a full moon and took so many cakes to Tomaz that he would sneak most of them to his brothers and sisters, assuaging their jealousy.

This is not to say they were no grumbles. People are the same everywhere and when their ankles are sore or their behinds itch they will find things to criticize. They noticed that their children were often sleepy-headed and older boys frequently sat up all night listening to Tomaz's stories of the world beyond the mountains. They reminded their children of what happened to people who ventured out at night and were shocked to hear that Tomaz had been telling them that they would someday remove the evil Baron from his perch. The older people laughed at first. For a millennium, or more, the Baron had ruled. Successive empires had recognized him. The Baron was as inevitable as sunset, winter, and old age. There were some things you could not change.

"But other people do not have Barons," said Tomaz. "In France they told their king to go, and when he did not, they chopped off his head and administered the country themselves."

"And look what a mess France is!" said the old priest.

This merely stoked the fire in Tomaz's eyes. "Yes, but in America there is no king or baron or anything of the sort and never has been! The people govern themselves!"

"But America is a wilderness," said Janez the Hunter, "where the antelope you have said, walk up begging to have their throats slit and apples grow wild in great forests. With all that land and free food, who needs a baron, laws--who even needs a church? The villagers laughed, though the old priest tugged at his earlobe and puckered his lips.

Tomaz argued on, about human rights, which were meaningless to the older people, and then about their moral obligation to resist Satan in all his forms which the elders said they constantly did: to the extent which was humanly possible. "Same old Tomaz!" They winked to one another. Even Tomaz's father did not take any of his son's talk seriously though he otherwise bragged of his

"sonthepriest" as if Tomaz were the Bishop of Rome. The only times the elders did not find Tomaz's ideas amusing were when they came from within their own families.

"But why should we not be free to look up at the stars? To walk on warm nights in the moonlight?" a daughter might ask, thinking as much of the cooper's son as of astronomy.

"And maybe you'd like to swim in the winter? Or have babies out of your ears?" the mother would roar, batting the girl with a bread shovel. "Next you'll be wanting to wear pants!"

Time, however is on the side of the young. The elders got used to hearing these things and grew too weary to resist them--arguments are bad for the digestion, which is more important than a cartload of silly ideas. Nothing would change. How could it? In a few years, however, Tomaz was the village priest, youngsters had families of their own, and no one was shocked when someone spit at the mention of the Baron of Slapica. Threshing, mowing, butchering, and weaving all seemed twice as difficult after they had seen Tomaz's magazines, in which sweatless farmers harvested from the seats of muscular red tractors and women happily sucked the dirt from their carpets rather than lugging them outside and beating them. For centuries the villagers had clustered around their hearths at dusk, content to watch the fire flicker just beyond their feet until they were sleepy enough for bed. Now, in more and more households, people kept on their boots, paced nervously, and peeked out through their shutters cursing the foul being who would kill them if they took a midnight stroll. The concept of freedom had taken root in their minds and flourished like a weed. Ultimately in was strong enough that some men of the new generation defied the Baron's scavenging the countryside and walked proudly into the night, puffing heavily on their ornate pipes as if to make certain that everyone saw their fire.

People had begun to say that the Baron no longer existed, that he had never existed, that the castle had been empty since the time of the Turks. More people took to walking, trysting, and playing pranks at night, and then, inevitably, bodies were found. A handsome boy and the cobbler's wife were laced in each other's arms behind a barn. On the lakeshore a dog drew attention to what was left of the village idiot they called Mog. The bones of all three rattled in their dried skins like seeds in a gourd. "There!" said the very old. "We told you! It wouldn't have happened if they had behaved!"

"No!" said Father Tomaz. "It is God's place to judge, not the Baron's. The abomination must be ended!"

"The abomination must be ended!" most of the villagers agreed (the sentence sounded much more resonant in their own tongue) and they gathered up pitchforks, sickles, and boar spears. Father Tomaz put on a large gold cross, hefted the Staff of the Shepherd, and led his flock toward the waterfall. The rocks were slippery as ever, and two of the villagers twisted their ankles even before the serious climbing had begun. Fortified with plum brandy, the villagers might have sustained more casualties if Father Tomaz had not been as resolutely calm in leading them over the slimy boulders. Occasionally they found traces of an old pathway that headed to the castle, but most of the time they clambered

According to Linda Bayer-Berenbaus, "Gothicism is the art of the incredible" (14). A distinct feature of the Gothic novel is it stock use of extended reality--the numinous, the supernatural, the incredible--elements which encompass both the extravagant psychological terror of villains and of the unknown and the dramatic potency of unusual events and "weird" characters. ("Weird" is the term Hardy uses himself in some of his letters in reference to some of his own writings [Purdy and Millgate 173]). In *The Return of the Native* the mysterious Reddleman and the quasi-satanic, highly emotional Eustacia contribute to the intense undercurrents marking classic Gothic fantasy. Embellished by Hardy's rhetorical excess they are the supernatural appearances which made Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) the precursor of Gothic fiction in England.

The everpresent Reddleman is the preternatural ghost figure in *The Return of the Native*. Diggory Venn is one of the nocturnal creatures of the heath who manages to become Egdon's ally; he knows all its secrets, appears omnipotent for the human intrigues fostered in the heath, and remains omnipresent. He knows when Eustacia is to meet secretly with DAmon Wildeve on the Rainbarrow or at her home with Clym Yeobright and that Wildeve gambles away Thomasin's money. Colored "lurid red" from his profession, he is thought a devil or ghost and is the subject of horrid dreams.

> A child's first sight of a reddle-man was a epoch in his life. That blood-coloured figure was a sublimation of all the horrid dreams which had afflicted the juvenile spirit since the imagination began. (62-3)

Hardy intentionally emphasizes Venn's mythic qualities, implying that his redness is that of a sinister devil or ghost. Venn appears to have capacities beyond those of ordinary humans, "in direct communication with regions unknown to man." Venn is a remnant from the Dorset past and an imaginative element that Hardy does not want to lose to posterity.[4] Venn's portrayal also fits Hardy's particular brand of Victorian morality since Diggory aims to "right" the wrongs done to his beloved Thomasin. Morality does not maintain a pretty face and as a moral ally to the heath despite his ugliness, Venn embodies Victorian values of rightmindedness, a moral force with which the forces of evil and supernaturalism contend. Next to the verities of the heath, the dark, and the folk customs, Venn becomes the unbelievable "meddle man" character of both goodness and supernatural awe.

Because of Hardy's extreme rhetoric, for her intense emotionalism and sexuality, Eustacia Vye, however, is the character supreme who most dramatically brings shades of Gothic romance to Hardy's pen. She is a demon, a conjuror over Wildeve, beckoning him to her as a moth to a light. Except for her girlish fantasies and hopes of escape from the hellish Egdon Heath, she reminds us of Ann Radcliffe's wicked abbess in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) or Lewis's lovely but wicked Matilda in *The Monk* (1795). Throughout the novel, Eustacia is associated with darkness, fire, and hell. First seen as a "strange phenomenon," Eustacia is the "queen of Solitude" on the ageless heath. Strange in her ways she is thought by the local folk to be a witch, a term she uses to refer to herself

("the Witch of Endor") when she summons Wildeve to her one night. The belief in her powers of black magic are so strong that Susan Nonesuch resorts to voodoo by melting down a wax figurine representing Eustacia. The beautiful girl is a mystery to the townsfolk and becomes a Gothic presence in the narrative of a sensual woman with feminine powers and sexual allure to draw men like Wildeve and Clym and stable boys to her. Her appetite for love and romance take her beyond the mundane milieu of Weatherbury. Her appetites for love and life overwhelm.

Most of the rumors regarding Eustacia stem from her strange nocturnal behaviors and isolation from the rest of the village. She habitually "vanished at the approach of strangers" (42). Her creator goes out of his way to make her, like Venn, a supernatural presence on the pagan heath, with powers beyond the norm.

> Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity. She had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries . . . she might have been believed capable of sleeping would closing them up. Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the color of Eustacia's soul to be flamelike. (53)

Deemed a demon by the locals, she becomes one of the numinous spectres of Gothic romance,[5] reminding readers of the mythic past. With her intense yearnings and sexual allure, she showcases the psychological depth of unsettled emotions and sexual desire found in standard Gothic fare (Day 4).

Eustacia is problematic; she is not pure Gothic villainess, but she possesses emotional needs that exceed normalcy and Victorian probity when she desires to escape her homeland with her lover. Such amoral desires are horrors to Victorian decorum but inherent in the literary Gothic tradition. She is simultaneously goddess, pitiable humanity, and supernatural witch. Hardy's language offers such ambiguity in her character. Rhetorically, Hardy treats her as a goddess, comparing her directly to Artemis, Athena, and Hera. She is imperious and regal in her manner with all other characters--Wildeve, Mrs. Yeobright, and even Clym her husband. However, though Queen of the Night, Eustacia is merely a nineteen-year-old girl who daydreams of love. Eggenschwiler believes she is self-deluded and that the novel demands conflicting attitudes toward the young "courtly pretender" (444-45). Moreover, this goddess can be seen as a dignified witch. "Egdon was her Hades, and since coming there she had imbibed much of what was dark in its tone. . ." (54) . In this vein, Hardy exploits her beauty and powers, presenting her as a supernatural creature, but also a social one who gets her due for extended self-will and sexuality. Eustacia remains in the reader's imagination as someone more than life. Using the dark gloom of Egdon Heath, readers can view her as a staple of Gothic fiction. Her creator understood this, presenting her as a regal supernatural being. Hardy has taunted readers with her supernatural powers and meted out her fate, albeit a thoroughly harsh one for a mere nineteen-year-old. Nevertheless, whether a regal queen of the nighttime or a mock-heroine, Eustacia's preternatural perfume permeates the

heath and the story with strong Gothic overtones. She is a seductive essence on the heath. She is Hardy's pre-eminent Victorian witch.

Seen in this light, *The Return of the Native* reconstructed is a Gothic tale told by a man bred in the lore of the supernatural and born in the heyday of the Gothic romance and its various offshoots (Varma 173-205). With its moralistic tone, the novel follows through with the traditional Victorian ghost story as a cry for justice (Bleiler 395). Moreover, Egdon Heath, Diggory Venn, and Eustacia Vye in all their splendor and pain testify most strongly that Thomas Hardy was steeped quite fully in Gothic literature and affected most poignantly, as were many other Victorian writers, by the mysterious pull of this fascinating genre.

Footnotes

[1]It is generally accepted that *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1885), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude, the Obscure* (1895) comprise Hardy's "major" novels.

[2]For a sampling of source materials for the trappings of the Gothic, see Day 15-149; Summers; and Varma 1-22.

[3]For detailed commentary of *Return* as classical tragedy, see Eggenschwiler 444-54; Patterson 214-22; Dramer 48-68; and King 97-107.

[4]Hardy worried that modern audiences were losing their ability to imagine, giving way only to realism. One reason he wrote his particular brand of fiction was in an attempt to sustain the quickly dying village traditions of his youth in the west country of England. In April 1891 in *The New Review* he wrote an essay "The Science of Fiction" in which he states, "Creativeness. . . is apparently ceasing to satisfy a world which no longer believes in the abnormal. . . ." In 1902 he wrote to Rider Haggard that the "vast mass of unwritten folk-lore, local chronicle, local topography, and nomenclature--is absolutely sinking, has already sunk, into eternal oblivion" (Orel 134-38).

[5]For further exploration of the supernatural element (the numinous) in Gothic literature, see Varma 51, 206-8; Wilt 12-24; and S. L. Varnado's essay "The Idea of the Numinous in Gothic Literature" in *The Gothic Imagination, Essays in Dark Romanticism.*

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Nature Imagery in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

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In her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston tells the story of a woman's search for happiness and fulfillment through love-in-marriage.[1] One of the striking elements in the novel is the way the author uses imagery in portraying the plight of the heroine, Janie Woods. That imagery taken from nature acts as the touchstone to the tortured, inner world of her heroine. Janie actually thinks her way through her first two marriages in imagery taken from nature and the skillful use of that imagery is one of the triumphs of *Their Eyes Were Watching God.*

We are familiar with the imagery studies carried out by G. Wilson Knight, Caroline Sprugeon and Robert Heilleman, among others, who offer us valuable insight into the Shakespeare canon. For example, in *King Lear*, the words "natural" and "unnatural" dominate the imagery pattern, and from the study of that pattern we gain insight into the themes of gratitude and ingratitude as they define the relationship between parent and children. Reader's of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* are surely struck by the many images of nature, particularly in the first two sections of the novel. Two opposing ways of looking at the world clash as Janie embarks on her first and second marriages: her husbands' inflexible protectionism and Janie's ruminating romanticism. Both forces are brought out through the skillful use of imagery taken from nature. In *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, images of nature dominate, and from a study of the image pattern we can gain insight into the themes of torment and escape as they define the relationship between husband and wife.

Janie's love-garden is fraught with weeds of despair because of the way the older generation has nurtured their ante-bellum view of marriage, a vista diametrically opposed to her view. Janie's first husband Logan Killicks and her grandmother Nanny cultivate a world whose fruits are an organ in the parlor and sixty acres of unproductive land, symbols of their sterile world impelled by so-called respectability, by imitation, by pretension and by protection, a world, however, long since gleaned of love-in-marriage. In describing the grandmother Hurston uses a simile taken from nature which stresses the elderly lady's triumph over time: the old woman's "head and face looked like the standing roots of some old tree that had been torn away by storm" (p. 14). In Nanny's microcosm, love is that which denigrates the woman, rendering her the sumpter, the beast of burden, the mule. But to Janie's way of thinking, love should be like the harrow it should smooth the way. For Janie the spring's pollinating ritual among the insects and flowers nurtures a romantic portrait of love:

> She saw a dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in every bloom and frothing with

delight. So this was a marriage! She had been summoned to behold a revelation. (p. 13)

Janie's romanticism causes her to misread the pollinating and mating taking place. To her pollen-laden eyes a "love game" is taking place, for she believes that nature's copulating insects are acting out love-in-marriage. As the outdoor mating scene flaunts its sensuous images of nature's prolific sexuality, she identifies with it, presuming that the insects and flowers are *in love*, that their performance naturally encompasses the emotion, and concluding that the sexual act itself makes marriage. After Nanny witnesses Janie kissing the ne'er-do-well Johnny Taylor, she insists that Janie marry immediately.[2] She chooses for Janie the elderly Logan Killicks, but angry, dissatisfied and perplexed, Janie seeks her answers in nature: "She was back and forth at the pear tree continuously wondering and thinking," for in contrast to the young, vibrant beauty there, "the vision of Logan Killicks [was] desecrating the pear tree" (p. 21). Here she instinctively takes in a dissidence between the love act and marriage, but she cannot fully appreciate the inconsistency, for she is now caught up in the web of adolescent dreams.

Overwhelmed by the beauty and copiousness of nature's flowers and insects, Janie assumes that her marriage to Killicks will be replete with kindred romanticism. For instance, at Killicks' farm, like a delicate flower about to be pollinated, Janie waits "for love to begin" (p. 20). But she quickly learns her way of looking at marriage is erroneous. As Killicks' physical threats increase, Janie lets nature set the tone of her life at the farm in images that define her utter isolation.

Killicks' farm itself becomes a "lonesome place like a stump in the middle of the woods" (p. 22). She identifies with the winged spores tumbling from the trees: "She often spoke to falling seeds and said, 'Ah hope you fall on soft ground,' because she heard the seeds say that to each other as they passed" (p. 24). Where once Janie believed that "husbands and wives always loved each other, and that was what marriage meant," she now concludes that marriage to Killicks will be a lacerating experience, that it will not be "sweet . . . lak when you sit under a pear tree and think" (p. 24).

Nature acts as a mirror into which Janie looks at herself and defines her place in her marriage. She sees a striking contrast to the pretty world of "love-making" among the insects and flowers, and where in the beginning Janie reacted as if she were a child who suddenly discovered that flowers faded, as nature sets her course, allowing her to escape from the woes of dealing with Killicks, she accepts her first marriage as a failure, concluding "that marriage did not make love" (p. 25).[3]

Images of nature define Janie even more as she sets out to live with her second husband Jody Starks. Their marriage begins in a village with the ironically auspicious name of Green Cove Springs. But Jody almost instantly uproots her dreams and buries Janie's natural impulses in a barrage of offensive language. One telling episode just after their marriage illustrates his attitude toward their union. During the dedication of Jody's store, proud of their newly elected mayor (Jody) and his wife (Janie), the townspeople prompt Janie to make a speech.

Jody absolutely refuses, telling the crowd that Janie's knowledge about speech-making is scarce, that her oratorical ability is not why he married her, and that her proper place is domestic not political (p. 39). Having given no thought to making a speech before Jody's reached out to stifle her, Janie surmises that the stems of their fluorescent marriage have been snapped by Jody's male chauvinism.[4] For justification and illumination she turns to nature: "It must have been the way Joe spoke out without giving her a chance to say anything one way or another that took the bloom off of things" (p. 39).[5]

Nature begins to intercede in her life because Janie needs a refuge against Jody's cruelty. He virtually enslaves Janie. He permits her no friendly, natural conversation inside the store; he prohibits her from mingling with her neighbors, in effect divorcing her from cultural contact: "She was there in the store for him to look at, not those others" (p. 48). At one point he even strikes Janie, this action going beyond her first husband's mere threats. In the end, he prevents her from even going outside the store to enjoy her beloved nature.

Faced with such persecution, Janie again turns to nature which offers her solace, sealing her behind its pollinated veil. Images taken from nature now define her mental break with her husband Jody. In the beginning of her second marriage Janie looked to nature for reassurance, "From now on until death she was going to have flower dust and spring time sprinkled over everything, a bee for her bloom" (p. 30). Now she realizes that Jody is beyond the veil, someone she grabbed up merely to drape her dreams over, rather than "the figure of her dreams" (p. 63). Retreating from her husband's autocracy, Janie lets nature set the tone of her isolation:

> The bed was no longer a daisy-field for her and Joe to play in. It was a place where she went and laid down when she was sleepy and tired. . . . She wasn't petally-open anymore with him. . . . She had no more blossomy openings dusting pollen over her man, neither any glistening young fruit where the petals used to be. (pp. 62-63)

Oblivious to the outside world, Janie lives inside herself, in the only way she knows how to live, through nature. The natural images are her sanctuary. They keep her sane, as it were. Living behind her veil of nature, Janie concludes that love-in-marriage with Jody is a barren experience. Irrevocably, she divorces her physical self from her spiritual self.[6] Ignoring the real world, Janie seeks solace from an inner world where nature figures prominently:

> Then one day she sat and watched the shadow of herself going about tending store and prostrating herself before Jody, while all the time she herself sat under a shady tree with the wind blowing through her hair and clothes. Somebody near about [almost] making summertime out of loneliness. (p. 66)

In her natural sanctuary, like "patience on a monument," for the remaining thirteen years of their marriage, Janie perseveres, keeping before the public's eye

the appearance of an ideal marriage.[7] While making no overt complaint to the outside world, on the inside she identifies with nature to such an extent that even at Jody's death of kidney failure, she does not involve herself with the external world, with the things of death: "She did not reach outside for anything, nor did the things of death reach inside to disturb her calm. She sent her face to Joe's funeral, and herself went rollicking with the springtime across the world" (p. 76).

Marriage to Killicks had meant a woman should be protected but work like a mule, while marriage to Jody had meant a woman should be protected but be handled like a mule; although in Janie's case even the mule Jody bought got better treatment.[8] Yet the mule incidence is indicative of Jody's way of dealing with the world as ruled by him. He buys the mule and turns it out to graze, to live behind a fence of luxury before its death. In a sense, this is how he deals with Janie. In the public's eye, Janie's life is facile, one of ease and indulgence. In Janie's eye, she is fenced like a mule inside Jody's invisible barricade. Unlike the real mule dying by degrees, however, Janie lives by turning inward, by seeking in nature the abundant images of her youthful garden, images which act to keep her sound and beautiful in spirit.

As the man Tea Cake, who will become Janie's third husband, enters her life, Janie awakens like a long-buried seed being called up by spring. Tea Cake lives in a world that differs remarkably from that of her former husbands, and in order for her to embrace his world, she must turn aside the veil. As she accepts Tea Cake's world, her need to seek solace in an inner world of nature recedes. Although Tea Cake awakens in Janie images suggestive of nature itself, she now interprets the images quite differently. For example, one evening after Tea Cake's departure, standing on the porch letting the "amber fluid" moon quench "the thirst of the day," Janie seems wrapped in the pollinated days of her "former blindness" (p. 84). Nature's images of pear tree blossoms haunt her, however, with a difference. She sees Tea Cake not in the light of certainty but of possibility: "He *could* be a bee to a blossom--a pear tree blossom in the spring: (emphasis mine, p. 90). Her mature yet skeptical outlook is obvious and refreshing.

Tea Cake, very much the natural man, brings nature to serve Janie in a different way.[9] He virtually takes Janie from behind her inner world of the garden veil. Tea Cake invites her to share life with him.[10] Whereas Jody had forced Janie to tie up her hair under a head-rag, Tea Cake combs out her long hair, symbolic of her new freedom to grow, to bloom (p. 87). And even more importantly, Tea Cake invites her to share life outdoors in nature with him. He woos her into the sunshine, into a world of checker-playing, of fishing, of picnicking, of baseball. As he rouses the little "girl self" Janie stored away, and as he rejuvenates her interest in external nature as an active force in her life, Janie sees in Tea Cake something of the natural, for he seems to her like the environment itself, "as if she had known him all her life" (p. 84). Beyond the one episode mentioned here, no further images of the pear tree blossoms, the bees and the pollinated air recur in the novel.

Nature acts upon her in a new way. Shattering the veil, she steps from the world of *natura naturata* and joins Tea Cake, seeing him as *natura naturans*: "He

seemed to be crushing scent out of the world with his footsteps. Crushing aromatic herbs with every step he took. Spices hung about him. He was a glance from God" (p. 90).

Being her guide, nature helps Janie to act more natural beyond her former pollinated veil. For instance, in the Everglades, when Tea Cake and another woman, Nunkie, are getting too chummy in the bean patch, Janie picks up her cue from nature: "A little seed of fear was growing into a tree" (p. 113). Instead of sulking and retreating as in her former marriages, now Janie expresses jealousy by slapping Tea Cake "up-side-the-head."

Nature even figures prominently in the death of Tea Cake in the novel. Because the lovers fail to heed the blooming of the saw-grass, nature's caveat conveyed by the Indians, the rabid infested dog swimming in the flood waters of Lake Ochechobe, brings death between them.[11] As Tea Cake attempts to rescue Janie from the mad dog, it bites him on the cheek. In a few days, Tea Cake, rabid infested and beyond all hope of recovering, forces Janie to shoot him. This emotionally charged act spells the ironic climax of their love, that after searching and finding love-in-marriage, she herself must destroy its object.

But Tea Cake's death points to an even greater triumph of love-in-marriage through nature. Such love-in-marriage as Janie and Tea Cake shared goes beyond death, as demonstrated near the story's end, when Tea Cake, dying by degrees, invokes Janie not to retreat into her former world. In asking Janie to remember the flowers occasionally, Tea Cake appropriately evokes Janie's first love, nature.[12] Tea Cake admonishes Janie to stay beyond the pollinated veil, to express the mutual, organic love they share: "Everytime Ah see uh patch uh roses uh somethin' over sportin' they selves makin' out they pretty, Ah tell 'em 'Ah want yuh to see mah Janie sometime.' You must let de flowers see yuh some times, heah, Janie" (p. 149).

I think that in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Hurston, through Tea Cake, "the son of Evening Sun" (p. 156), means for us to see that Janie flourishes in the real world of love-in-marriage with him, that as she encloses herself in the natural world with Tea Cake who wears "the sun for a shawl" (p. 159), she casts off the pollinated veil from which she has hidden so long. Their relationship is a natural outgrown of love, and nature itself seems to sanction it.

Footnotes

[1]Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1969), p. 21. All references to this work appear in the text.

[2]Robert Bone, *The Negro Novel in America*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 128.

[3]S. J. Walker, "Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*: Black Novel in Sexism," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 20 (1974-75), 523. Walker sums up Janie's first marriage: "For whereas Killicks can give her safety and respectability and a modicum of comfort, he cannot give her love."

[4]Roger Rosenblatt, *Black Fiction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 87. Rosenblatt concludes that "Jody may be a leader of an

all-black community, but his vision for the town, and of himself is white, and this is the vision which Janie must shake."

[5]Walker, p. 520. Walker accurately assesses Janie's marriage in terms of "the struggle of a woman to be regarded as a person in a male-dominated society." The same point is made, *Change*, II (1979), 65.

[6]Rosenblatt, p. 161. He points out that "Janie . . . is a true heroine in the Charlotte Bronte mold because she endures well, holds on to her decency and sense in spite of the fakery about her, and triumphs over apparent defeat." Walker, p. 256, points out that Hurston's heroine is part of "the romantic tradition of reciprocal passion, a tradition as old as Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot."

[7]Robert G. O'Meally, "The Cosmic Zora," *Book World*, 30 (December 1979), p. 12. O'Meally makes this observation: Hurston's heroines generally persevered, refusing to make the grim truce with reality usually affected by the museum-piece of most American writing."

[8]Hurston, p. 49-54: Jody's purchase of a mule to set it free is an ironic comment on the sheltered life he imposes on Janie, for when the animal dies, he refuses to let her even attend the funeral, its funeral.

[9]Bone, p. 30. He sees Tea Cake as "an incarnation of the folk culture."

[10]Adam David Miller, "Some Observations on a Black Aesthetic," *The Black Aesthetic*, ed. Addison Gayle, Jr. (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1972), p. 377. Miller makes the point that "what Miss Hurston was doing was presenting at eye level two lovers who dared to be happy in a society where happiness was sinful, where work was a duty not a pleasure, and pleasure something other."

[11]The local Seminole Indians warn the couple that the blooming of the saw-grass spells danger, a hurricane coming.

[12]Tea Cake's real name is Vergible Woods, but he is usually called by his sobriquet Tea Cake: at their first meeting he tells Janie, "Dey calls me Tea Cake for short" (p. 83). And what better name could Hurston have given Tea Cake than Vergible Woods? It suggests nature, at the verge of the woods; it brings to mind such terms as verdure (greenness), veridical (truthfulness) and verge (on the border), all combined, all suggesting the shattering of Janie's pollinated veil.

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a passionate antiquarian, notes Dos Passos with obvious irony. In fact, says Dos Passos, Ford at his inn in Massachusetts

> had the new highway where the newmodel cars roared and slithered and hissed oilily past (*the new noise of the automobile*) moved away from the door, put back the old bad road, so that everything might be the way it used to be, in the days of horses and buggies. (76-77)

Thus, Dos Passos powerfully indicates the technological "progress" that Henry Ford himself eventually rejected totally (but only after becoming rich, of course).

The threat to the health of human beings represented by technology is symbolized by the events Dos Passos chooses to describe in the biography of Isadora Duncan. In this brief section, Dos Passos describes the death of Isadora's two children when their chauffeur leaves the family car in gear while he get out to crank it. The car starts, knocks down the chauffeur, and plunges off a bridge into the Seine River (173-74). Only a page or so later, Dos Passos describes Isadora's death when her scarf becomes entangled in an automobile wheel, winds tight, and breaks her neck (175-76). Also, side from the aforementioned symbolism of Charley Anderson's death being due partly to starter failure, it is obviously symbolic, with implications reaching even to the present, that Charley's death is partly due to his recklessness while drinking and driving (378). Nor is technology's harm to humans limited to fatal accidents in Dos Passos' symbolic presentation, either, as there are references to the distress caused by accidents narrowly avoided (217, 436), as well as to the potentially harmful noise from automobiles (71, 168, 301), and even to foul automobile odors, such as when Vag stands and waits "at the edge of the hissing speeding string of cars where the reek of ether and lead and gas melts into the silent grassy smell of the earth" (554). There is also symbolic presentation of the frustrations involved with technology failures, such as when Charley Anderson cannot get his car to start during a New York winter, which also again suggests Charley's failings as an inventor of starters (218). Dos Passos also symbolically conveys the modern frustration of simply functioning in a technology-infested world, exemplified by Charley Anderson's driving in New York. Notes Dos Passos of Charley, "The traffic was heavy and he was tired and peevish before he got out to the plant" (215). Clearly, then, to Dos Passos the automobile, as technology symbol represents a considerable threat to human safety and satisfaction.

The automobile is also used as symbol in Dos Passos' depiction of the perversion of human values brought about by the abundance of technological possessions. In fact, in *The Big Money*, the more personally corrupt Charley Anderson and other characters become, the larger and more expensive their automobiles. Most obviously of all, Charley Anderson returns from World War I a hero and buys a secondhand car while beginning his engineering career (215). Then, as his Wall Street speculating makes him corrupt and wealthy, he "discovered he had credit for a new car, for suits at Brooks Brothers, for meals at speakeasies. The car was a Packard sports phaeton with a long low custom body upholstered in red leather" (236). Next, after he deserts his war-time friend

Joe Askew, by selling himself to a rival engineering firm and moving to Detroit, Charley buys another car, a "new Buick sedan" (305) while keeping the Packard sports car, too (322). Then, after rejecting Anne Bledsoe, a relatively poor mechanic's daughter whom Charley really "cottoned to . . . first thing" (306) in favor of wealthy Gladys Wheatley, whose father is "a power . . . in the Security Trust Company" (312), Charley takes the next step and buys a Lincoln towncar. He also begins to hate the Lincoln, and symbolically the corrupt choices he has made that have produced little happiness and an alcohol addiction. It becomes "that damn Lincoln" (329), as his wife sues for divorce because of Charley's adultery and as his stock market gambling luck turns bad. Soon after, Charley is fatally injured in this car while drinking because his now totally corrupt life has fallen apart.

The same corruption of values is symbolized by the cars of other characters, too. For example, Margo Dowling, a struggling but sympathetically presented entertainer whom Charley meets and befriends, inherits the Buick sedan upon Charley's death and immediately hires a chauffeur and begins to change into a cold, calculating, money-crazed socialite (389). She begins to mistreat her derelict husband, forcing him to "wear the old chauffeur's uniform" (402) when he's with her after she moves to Hollywood to become an actress. Then, her total corruption later is symbolically foreshadowed when she buys a used Rolls-Royce. Before long, she enters into an affair with a movie mogul to further her career. Then, her husband is killed, and she quickly marries Mr. Harris, the mogul, but soon after that engages in sexual acts before the camera with another man in order to make her husband, and herself, more wealthy and famous. Her dissipation is complete, and the new automobile of Margo and her husband, "a white Pierce Arrow custombuilt towncar" (408) effectively symbolizes that fact. The same corruption is symbolized by the automobile of the fat senator whom Charley meets in Washington and who helps to get favorable legislation passed for industry (for a price, of course). Dos Passos states that the senator drives "a great black Lincoln" (229) and that "the senator's house was a continuation of his car, big and dark and faintly gleaming and soundless. They [Charley Anderson and the senator] sprawled in big backleather chairs and an old whitehaired mulatto brought around manhattans on an engraved silver tray" (229). Such are the fruits of corruption, corruption effectively symbolized by the senator's automobile. Similarly, the corruption of Judge Cassidy, who works with Charley Anderson in Florida to garner more wealth through land speculation, is symbolized by "his Pierce Arrow touringcar [which] stood shiny and glittery in the hot noon sunlight" (390).

Only once in *The Big Money* is technology presented in its proper relation to humans, as a tool used to help others in need. In this instance, an old pickup truck, symbolizing technology in general, is used by a young man named Eddy to carry milk to the starving children of striking coal miners in Eastern Pennsylvania. Says Eddy, "The motor heats up so much in that old pile of junk it keeps me warm in the coldest weather . . . . After the next trip we got to put a new clutch in her and that'll take more jack than we kin spare from the milk" (533). Here, the machine is humanized, as "her," not the human mechanized as by

Richard Savage's metaphor, and the need to repair the machine is seen as secondary to the need to deliver the milk--secondary to human needs. Only in this instance is the automobile, and symbolically all technology, presented as the positive force that it can be if humans can withstand the temptation to corruption that it affords.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Dos Passos presents the danger of technology as a cause of alienation and isolation among humans. He does this symbolically through the automobile again, as Vag stands beside the road in the final section of *The Big Money*. Vag cannot get a ride despite his continued efforts, and Dos Passos emphasizes that his isolation and alienation are at least partly because of technology. As a car goes "hissing past" (555), Vag's "eyes seek the driver's eyes" (555) but do not find them. Implicit here is the fact that automotive speed and seclusion isolate Vag from the motorists. He cannot interact with them because they pass too quickly and are too protected. He is excluded from their world, and alienated from it therefore. While others progress and go "a hundred miles down the road" (556), he is left standing alone, and he "waits with swimming head, need knots the belly, idle hands numb, beside the speeding traffic" (556). Vag is a prescient picture of the isolated and alienated underclass of today created by a technological society that speeds frantically along on the upper levels but leaves far too many people standing beside the road. Also, even today the automobiles driven by the underclass often symbolize alienation and isolation.

Conclusively, then, *The Big Money* illustrates that, as Barbara Foley argues, John dos Passos was a talented artist who carefully structured his novels, an artist who used traditional symbolic, as well as more innovative, means to convey his satiric message about twentieth century technological "progress." Harry Levin has commented that "as a congenital nay-sayer, who 'suffered from a constitutional inability to say yes,' [Thorstein] Veblen has his place with Hawthorne and Melville among the iconoclasts of American culture" (413). However, given John Dos Passos' symbolic art which indeed says "no in thunder," Dos Passos, not Veblen, is the author worthy of being mentioned in the same sentence with Hawthorne and Melville.

Footnotes

[1]See, for example, Milton Rugoff's "Dos Passos: Novelist of Our Time," in *Sewanee Review* 49 (October/December 1941): 453-68; W. N. Frohock's "John Dos Passos: Of Time and Frustration," in *Southwest Review* 33 (Winter 1948): 71-80; David Sander's "The Anarchism of John Dos Passos," in *South Atlantic Quaterly* 60 (Winter 1961): 44-55; Dan Wakefield's "Dos, Which Side Are You On?" in *Esquire* 59 (April 1963): 112-14; and Richard Horchler's "Prophet Without Hope," in *Commonweal* 29 September 1961: 13-16.

[2]Illustrative of this focus are Towsend Ludington's "The Ordering of the Camera Eye in *U.S.A.*," in *American Literature* 49 (November 1977): 443-46; Charles Marz's "*U.S.A.*: Chronicle and Performance," in *Modern Fiction Studies* 26

(Autumn 1980): 398-415; and Michael Clark's "The Structure of Dos Passos' *U.S.A.* Trilogy," in *Arizona Quarterly* 38 (Autumn 1982): 229-234.

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Richard Wright's Wrighting: The Autobiographical Comedy of *Black Boy*

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Richard Wright's *Black Boy* is the result of a difficult combination of naturalistic fiction and autobiography. It is filled with consuming rage and heart-wrenching reflections on the inevitability of human suffering but ends happily. Richard, the black boy, alone escapes the determinacy of his environment that the naturalistic vision indifferently renders. As readers we must account for this paradoxical development. This paper will contrast the comic destiny of Richard with the tragic nature of the black community in the Jim Crow South. In order to better define the issue at stake here, I will also contrast the comic character of Richard with the tragic figure of Bigger Thomas in *Native Son*. While the vicious cycling of fear, flight, and fate encloses the black community in *Black Boy* in much the same way that it encircles the life of Bigger, the comic line of autobiography breaks this circle. Wright is empowered by the creative autobiographical act to free his persona, Richard, from the immanence of the black community's environment. Wright is able to organize his experience in words and, most importantly, claim new identity in the first person singular pronoun "I." By inscribing himself as "I," Wright appropriates an entire language that he can use to affirm his selfhood. It is this self-affirming quality of autobiography which makes it utterly resistant to tragedy. Therefore, autobiography as a genre is never tragic, allowing Wright to "Wright" his life experiences as a comedy that progresses in the very midst of an American tragedy.

In *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle* Stephen Jay Gould qualifies the use of dichotomies.[1] All dichotomies are in a sense misleading because they oversimplify a given situation; however, some dichotomies are more useful than others because they do emphasize great trends of thought in a way vivid enough to be fully and readily understood. While it can be demonstrated that the employment of Richard's life has affinity with the Aristotelian conventions of drama, this is not to say that comedy as a dramatic form adheres to a linear conception of time. We shall see that Greek drama is actually antihistorical. Furthermore, to contrast the vector of progress Richard's life follows with the inescapability of the naturalistic setting is not to imply that naturalism is rooted in cyclical archetypes of time. The distinction that Zola makes between determinism and fatalism" (p. 653)[2] indicates that naturalism is in fact closely allied to the modern conception of history as a series of events, the events having meaning in themselves without recourse to any transhistorical belief systems. The cycle of fear, flight, and fate in *Black Boy* and *Native Son* is not the same as the cycle of the seasons. The former is based on a modern, historical model, and the latter on a traditional, antihistorical model. Nevertheless, both cycles have the effect of closing off the future for the individual, thus constricting human freedom until the human endeavor becomes unimportant. Herein the dichotomy

between the comic and progressive destiny of Richard and the tragic and immanent fate of the black community and Bigger is useful.

Richard's painful struggle to claim his identity as a unique individual is the driving force of *Black Boy*. The title contains no hint of individuality; it speaks only of the third person, "boy." Richard's emergency from type--the black boy of the dead-end black community--to individual--the nascent artist freeing himself from the oppressive South--follows a comic line. Wright traces Richard's decline of self-esteem until the point that he declares himself a "non-man"[3] and then describes a reversal which culminates in the full attainment of his selfhood. Richard heads North with the "notion that life could be lived with dignity."[4] This may be a hazy notion, but it is a complete recovery from his non-man status, a remarkable personal triumph that defies the self-effacing conditioning of the hostile, white, Jim Crow South.

The difference between the complication of the action (everything that takes place from the beginning of the text until the reversal) and the unraveling of the action (everything that takes place from the reversal to the end) is no less than the polarity between self-denial and self-affirmation. Until his reversal, Richard is subject to environment, which teaches him to deny himself. This process of systematic self-denial is his miseducation. The institutions of family, school, church, and state all collaborate in Richard's miseducation. Richard is constantly being forced to "live in a world in which one's mind and perceptions meant nothing and authority and tradition meant everything."[5] This leads to his complete alienation from the human race, to his downfall as the non-man. Just as Richard's downfall is due to his miseducation, his recovery and comic rise are due to his self-education. In answer to his question, "What was it that made me conscious of my possibilities?"[6] Richard responds, "books." By educating himself, Richard affirms himself. The ultimate act of self-assertion will become writing, and the words that were once Richard's "sentence of death"[7] will become the creation of his new life.

The movement from the complication of the action to its unraveling has its roots in Aristotle's *Poetics*. But Aristotle says that "comedy aims at representing men as worse"[8] than they are in actual life, and so we cannot call *Black Boy* comedy merely because it ends happily. it is truly comic because it breaks away from the Hellenic circular, closed-conception of time in much the same way that Richard escapes the black community of the South. In *The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearean Drama*, Tom Driver says that Hellenic drama is concerned most of all with universal occurrences, with the forms and structures of reality that are accepted as natural law. For the Greeks "time inevitably takes on a negative character"[9] because there is no novelty to human actions. The future is closed. The autobiographical act starts from the premise that the future is open. The autobiographer proceeds from the belief that the past is not decisive and determinative; how could it be when the autobiographer is only now inscribing past experience in a form that will simultaneously interpret and await the future?

In describing what he calls the "terror of history," Mircea Eliade says that "modern man can be creative only insofar as he is historical; in other words, all

creation is forbidden him except that which has its source in his own freedom and, consequently, everything is denied him except the freedom to make histor by making himself."[10] The autobiographer is the unique position to mak himself. This is a terrifying position because he attempts to make himself agains the historical background that would *make him* out of "the blind play o economic, social, or political forces."[11] Yet it is a liberating position because i enables the autobiographer to oppose those external forces. If *Black Boy* ha been written as a novel, the truth of Richard's life would be the resignation h expresses shortly after he calls himself a non-man: "The truth was that I had. . grown to accept the value of himself that my old environment had created in me and I had thought that no other kind of environment was possible."[12] Since *Blac Boy* is autobiography, Richard can reverse the manipulation of his environmen and declare, "It had never occurred to me that I was in any way an inferio being."[13] Autobiography affords him the language to authorize himself.

As I pointed out previously, it is the autobiographical discourse which allow Wright to replace the type that is the black boy with "I" who is Richard. I *American Hunger*, the sequel to *Black Boy*, Wright confirms that it is the word that "build a bridge"[14] between Richard and the outside world, "that world tha was so distant and elusive that it seemed unreal." Wright's words make h reality, and not the other way around. The autobiographical discourse is literall a whole new language and therefore engenders a whole new selfhood.

Richard's selfhood emerges from his reaction to his environment. The enviro ment of the black community in the Jim Crow South turns out to be very simila to Bigger Thomas's environment. Robert Stepto points out that the language *Native Son* recalls the language Wright uses in his most controversial ar damning indictment of the black community in *Black Boy*.[15] The former text divided into three sections, respectively named "Fear," "Flight," and "Fate." Whe Bigger kills Mary, we are told that "Frenzy dominated him."[16] In *Black B* Richard tells us that the emotional strength of the black community really on amounts to "negative confusions, or flights, our fears, our frenzy under pre sure."[17] The connection between Richard's world and Bigger's world is evider It is the same world, the same immanent, deterministic environment that tra Richard's peers and leads to the destruction of Bigger. But where Richard creat a new life for himself, Bigger fails. "The wheel of blood continues to turn"[18] *Native Son*. This makes for the essential difference between Richard and Bigg

Joyce Anne Joyce characterizes Bigger as "the tragic hero." His "strong sen of pride and courageous spirit distinguish him . . . from the typical naturalis character,"[19] and he gains new knowledge of his self through his sufferin However, the crucial fact of Bigger's existence is his impending death: "Over a over again he had tried to create a new world to live in, and over and over had failed."[20] This is why Bigger is a tragic figure, as opposed to the comic figu of Richard, who creates a new world for himself through the enabling act autobiography. Bigger's world, like the world of Hellenic drama, is closed- from the future. Ironically, it is not an antihistorical perspective (as is the ca with Greek drama) but the very historicity of naturalism that closes off Bigge future. Bigger is trapped in the terror of history, "caught up in a vast but delic

machine whose wheels would whir no matter what was pitted against them."[21] As a naturalistic novel, *Native Son* shows the economic, social, and political phenomena that impinge on Bigger's life and the particular circumstances that are the nearest cause of his tragic outcome.

Autobiography is tragedy-proof. Even when the autobiographical life takes place within the midst of a sterile, self-annihilating environment, that life progresses. *Black Boy* is an example of what I am calling a comic autobiography. There is not room in this paper for a full exploration of the comic mode of autobiography. The examination of *Black Boy* as an autobiography in the comic mode should be sufficient to show that the very practice of autobiography is premised upon the autobiographer's ability to organize experience in a new way that is not limited by the historical events themselves. This freedom from history allows the autobiographer to conceive of a new self apart from his historical identity but related to him through the uniqueness of the autobiographical discourse. This self-creation is not only the recognition of new knowledge of the self, but it is the very transcendence of the fate that is the tragic price of new knowledge. It may be argued that this evasion of tragic fate is merely suicide, to use Henry Adams's euphemism for autobiography.[22] Hence, the creator sacrificially becomes the created. But the created, the self of autobiography, no longer remains subject to conditions of historical truth and thus escapes all denial and gains the promise of affirmation. At the very least, if autobiography is not a comedy it is a romance, in Northrop Frye's sense of the term. The romance autobiography would lead to the *anagnorisis* or discovery, "the recognition of the hero"[23] that defies the recognition of that which must be.

Richard Wright's *Black Boy* is a significant autobiography not only because it is a major expression of Afro-American identity, but because it possesses the qualities of great autobiography. Most importantly, *Black Boy* challenges the integrity of the autobiographical discourse by forcing it to account for the development of the self within the naturalistic setting. The resultant comic ascendancy of Wright's autobiographical persona, Richard, reveals the anti-tragical nature of all autobiography. The black boy becomes the Wright man for posterity.

Footnotes

[1]Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1987).

[2]Emile Zola, *The Experimental Novel*, trans. B. M. Sherman (1893).

[3]Richard Wright, *Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 213.

[4]Wright, p. 285.

[5]Wright, p. 182.

[6]Wright, p. 282.

[7]Wright, p. 220.

[8]Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. S. H. Butcher, in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 49.

[9]Tom F. Driver, *The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Columbia UP, 1960), p. 28.

[10]Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series XLVI (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), p. 156.

[11]Eliade, p. 151.

[12]Wright, p. 240.

[13]Wright, p. 283.

14Richard Wright, *American Hunger* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 135.

[15]Robert B. Stepto, "Literacy and Ascent: *Black Boy*," in *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative* (U of Illinois P, 1979).

[16]Richard Wright, *Native Son* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1940), p. 73.

[17]Wright, p. 45.

[18]Wright, *Native Son*, p. 331.

[19]Joyce Anne Joyce, "The Tragic Hero," from *Modern Critical Interpretations: Richard Wright's Native Son*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1988), p. 68.

[20]Wright, *Native Son*, p. 292.

[21]Wright, *Native Son*, p. 313.

[22]Henry Adams, "Letter to Henry James, May 6, 1908" in *The Education of Henry Adams*, ed. Ernest Samuels (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1973). In *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Eliade poses as traditional man and makes this criticism of modern man: "Modern man's boasted freedom to make history is illusory for nearly the whole of the human race. At most, man is left free to choose between two positions: (1) to oppose the history that is being made by the very small minority (and, in this case, he is free to choose between suicide and deportation); (2) to take refuge in a subhuman existence or in flight" (p. 156). Wright chooses suicide in *Black Boy* and flight in *Native Son*.

[23]Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1973), p. 187). Arnold Krupat, in *For Those Who Come After: A Study of Native American Autobiography* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1985), applies Frye's stages of the romance to the Indian autobiography *Black Elk Speaks*.

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Even Though My Grading Had Nothing To Do With Your Presence In My Class

It is difficult for me
to keep my desk uncluttered,
not to enter my class early,
and not to grope for words
in the middle of a departmental meeting.

"I like you better than your poetry," you said.
Or is it "I like your poetry better than you?"
Either way I do not understand your metaphors.
"He looks like Roderick Usher."
I overheard you among the students.
I followed your words in the mirror: it does not lie.
I read Poe time and again now.

I wear ripped jeans, cracked sneakers,
and holed socks. I have long hair.
I presume you do not disdain my mien
in all this makeup; but you laughed
at me once in a seminar because
I mispronounced your Norwegian name
I dodged your laughs and hurried through my notes.

You are doing good in my class.

Love Poem

When you are gone, and gone with the day,
My house lights do not burn, and the barn lights go off,
As though I am on a ship that has just sunk in the Black Sea.

Returning Poem

When I return home, I return to my cradle,
And to the haystacks, and to the honeysuckles,
And to the sentient watercresses dancing in the moonlight.

Who's Afraid of A Streetcar Named Desire? The influence of Tennessee Williams on Edward Albee.

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Tennessee Williams once called Edward Albee "the only great playwright we've had in America," and then tried to disclaim the statement. Edward Albee has spoken very generally about people who have been influential to his work. He prefers to call influence a process of "osmosis"; an inconspicuous element that is only recognized when the damage has already been done and is irreversible. Yet William Flanagan, Edward Albee's roommate for nine years, claimed that the playwright showed an "unyielding" and "thoroughly unfashionable admiration for the work of Tennessee Williams" (Amacher 18). Influence can and often does create anxiety in a writer because of the fear of repetition and the fear that "no proper work remains for him to perform" (Bloom 16). However, influence does not necessarily mean that a work is unoriginal, nor does it mean that the work has improved on its predecessor. The works remain separate entities, just as the two writers remain separate, despite the influential nature of the relationship. Each writer is affected by a variety of influences and affiliations. S/he is influenced by external circumstances of a personal nature, wider cultural circumstances, and literary education. His/her interpretation of all these experiences makes his/her work unique. His/her contemporaries may have experienced the same cultural climate, hence a group of writers can be classified as a genre because of similar things that have triggered of the imaginative process.

One thread that holds the post-World War Two American playwrights together is the idea of something ephemeral that their characters hold on to. Blanche has dreams of her Southern past in *A Streetcar Named Desire*; Martha and George have their imaginary son in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; Willy Loman has the rags to riches success story of his brother Ben in *Death of a Salesman*; Eugene O'Neill gives his drunken characters "pipe dreams" in *The Iceman Cometh*; and Amanda Wingfield has her seventeen gentlemen callers in *The Glass Menagerie.* In all of these cases, the harshness and brutality of the postwar world has made the characters look inward to find some salvation, something to help them face or evade reality.

Although Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee are cagey about influences on their work and their mutual literary relationship, there is evidence of such influences and relationships in the various texts of the two playwrights. Albee seems to have found a good deal of inspiration for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* from *A Streetcar Named Desire.* The masculine character, present in spirit, if not in body could be Amanda Wingfield's husband; the telephone man who "fell in love with long distance." He is ever present in the photograph and the memories that pervade the household. Amanda's fear that her son will turn out to be just like him creates a tension in the house. Mr. Wingfield watches over them as a

constant reminder of their failed fortune. The waltz music in Blanche's head is a reminder of her young husband whom she drove to suicide. Her behavior has been dictated by this tragedy and the guilt that she carries. Martha's father and the couple's imaginary son can be strongly felt in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Both masculine characters are used in the fierce banter between Martha and George, as each tries to achieve supremacy. Daddy serves to remind George of his failings and Martha's disappointment in her marriage.

Martha is also similar to Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.* Both are desperate females, overtly sexual and craving motherhood. They each create a child. Maggie does so in order to conceive of her husband. Martha does so because she cannot conceive of George. Maggie's imaginary child is a means to an end, whereas Martha's child is an end in itself. Both women are trying to hold their fragile marriages together with this ploy. In his play, Albee quotes directly from *A Streetcar Named Desire*: "Flores para los muertos..."(Streetcar 74; Woolf 115). If Albee did not want to admit that he was influenced by Tennessee Williams, why would he lift a line directly from *Streetcar*? The Mexican woman sells her flowers at a point when Blanche's hopes for a secure future with Mitch have drifted away. Mitch sees her in a more realistic light and does not like what he sees. All the illusions about her gentility and good Southern morals have been stripped away, and Blanche stands naked. The flower woman is also an ominous anticipatory symbol of Blanche's own death. Williams inspires pathos for Blanche in using the Mexican flower seller, because the audience is aware of her frustrated hopes and exposed desires that she has tried to hide from herself as well as others.

In *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, George thrusts a bunch of snapdragons through an open doorway before he enters to deliver Williams' line. It seems to be almost a parody of Williams' intentions in the beginning as the effect is quite heavy-handed and comical when George starts throwing the flowers at Martha and Nick, shouting "Snap!" However, the undertones are far from humorous. The presentation of flowers precede George's decision to kill off their imaginary son, and so signal the beginning of the end. The audience and George are aware of this fact, but Martha is oblivious to the blow that is about to be struck. At least Blanche knows that her last desperate attempt at happiness has been thwarted, and so she is aware of the significance of the flower vendor. Albee's use of "flowers for the dead" is menacing because it is just another game that George and Martha will play through to the bitter end. It is a game that Martha will almost certainly lose because she does not read the messages that George puts out prior to the game. The audience is aware that Martha is very fond of her son, but as yet are unaware that it is imaginary. It seems to be a very cruel joke to play, even on Martha. George deliberately creates the image of flowers for the dead, for himself and for the audience. Williams uses a coincidental situation to create an image for Blanche. George also uses the flowers to challenge Martha and Nick regarding his wife's so-called infidelity. Nick is either a house-boy or a stud, depending on his success with Martha. In Martha's eyes, it is not such a clear-cut situation; it cannot be categorized as truth or illusion.

But Martha has fused truth and illusion in the figure of her son. George, by throwing the snapdragons at her, is trying to snap Martha back into reality:

> MARTHA: "Truth and illusion, George; you don't know the difference."
> GEORGE: "No; but we must carry on as though we did" (119).

However, he goads her into believing that he cares for neither truth nor illusion, and hence, their marriage. The snapping that goes along with the throwing of the snapdragons is also the snapping of their marriage. Throwing flowers is a weapon of attack against Nick, whom George detests as a "smug son of a bitch" (Woolf 73) but, more importantly, against Martha as a prelude to the death of their son.

Another striking similarity in both Williams and Albee is that there are spoiled birthday parties. Blanche is stood up by Mitch. She is the only one present who is unaware of the reason for his absence. Her birthday present is a one-way Greyhound bus ticket back to Laurel, Mississippi. Her sordid past has caught up with her, and she is forced to confront it. The candles on her birthday cake provide no promise for her own healthy future. She seems intuitively aware that her candles are about to be blown out. She passes the legacy of the birthday candles on to her unborn niece/nephew. He has a future; she has not:

> "His Auntie knows candles aren't safe, that candles burn out in little boys' and girls' eyes, or wind blows them out and after that happens, electric light bulbs go on and you see too plainly...." (66)

Traditionally a celebration of life, the birthday party has turned into a wake for Blanche. Williams uses this image to inspire sympathy for Blanche, who has not been told of the reasoning behind the somber atmosphere. Her words about the birthday candles do suggest, however, that she has some indication of impending doom. Also, Stella's behavior towards her sister makes Blanche suspicious. "Oh, keep your hands off me, Stella. What is the matter with you? Why do you look at me with that pitying look?" (*Streetcar* 67). The bus ticket that Stanley gives is further evidence of his cruelty. His violent nature is also displayed in his attitude towards Stella in this scene. He throws his plate to the floor because Stella tells him to wash up before he comes to the table. This is a step in the series of events that prepare for Stanley's rape of Blanche. At the end of the birthday party scene, Stella goes into labor. Just as Blanche's candles have been blown out and death approaches, new life is about to enter into the lives of Stella and Stanley. It is the new baby in their family that causes Stanley to triumph.

The birthday party in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is imaginary because the son is imaginary. The birthday is spoiled by George saying that their son cannot come home for his birthday because he has been killed in an automobile accident. Like Blanche, Martha is forced to face reality by receiving a very harsh jolt. The audience can feel real sympathy for Martha as she goes into incredible detail when she talks about the life of her son:

"It was an easy birth, once it had been accepted, and I was young...and he was a healthy child, a red, bawling child, with slippery firm limbs...and a full head of black, fine, fine hair which, oh, later, later, became blond as the sun, our son...and I had wanted a child...oh, I had wanted a child..." (127)

The audience may realize the desperation behind such an elaborated lie. The tension is heightened by George quoting the requiem mass in the background. Unaware of what the story is leading to, Martha is walking into the lion's den blindfolded. Her pain when George gives her the news is genuine, and is far more moving than Blanche's downfall. When Martha howls "Noooooo," it is heart-wrenching as it is expressive of all of her agony. At least Blanche cocoons herself in a fantasy world to avoid facing the reality that she no longer has anywhere to go or anyone to take care of her. Her imagination takes over and she clings to the idea of Shep Huntleigh--her saviour figure--who is going to rescue her. Martha has nothing to fall back on, only George. The reality of the two of them alone together is a frightening prospect, "Just...us?" (140) Martha hesitantly asks. George is seen as the 'bully' of the scene as he goads her into telling the story of her son. He is callous in his methods of generating her anger, accusing Martha of molesting their son when he was sixteen years old, and cruel in his joke that he ate the telegram that Crazy Billy delivered. However, both Martha and George know the truth about their son, and so they are aware that each is playing a role in a game. However, the game has become serious, and the boundary between fiction and reality has been crossed by Martha when she mentions their son to Honey. She breaks the golden rule of the game, "Bringing up Baby".

Both Williams and Albee use the image of the spoiled occasion to show characters being exposed or stripped of illusion. However, Williams allows Blanche some salvation and dignity in that she becomes sick when she opens her birthday present, and passes the light of life to the next generation. In her final moments when she is waiting to be transported to a mental home, Williams saves Blanche the agony of realization, and lets her mind wander away from the situation. There are also allusions to Blanche being a Virgin Mary figure. She is dressed in Della Robbia blue, "...the blue of the robe in the old Madonna pictures..." (84). This allusion comes from Blanche herself. Albee is not so kind to Martha. George stands in her way and forces her to face reality. He will not let her regress into fantasy. From being an eloquent and verbal woman, she is reduced to unfinished sentences, and monosyllabic words. She has been totally defeated, and the way forward for Martha and George is uncertain. It is as uncertain for them as it is for the audience. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, we are given the satisfaction of knowing what is going to happen to Blanche. Blanche herself knows what the reality is but chooses to ignore it. Both Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee use the birthday party for the same purpose, but arouse different attitudes towards the principal characters. Albee strips away the sentimentality that Williams allows for Blanche, and provides a harsher more realistic vision of life after the spoiled occasion.

Sexuality is a contested matter in both of the plays. Blanche presents herse to the world as the stereotypical Southern belle, who is morally upright an would never do more than kiss a gentleman caller before they were married. Sh plays this role very well with Mitch:

> "Honey, it wasn't the kiss I objected to. I liked the kiss very much. It was the other little - familiarity - that I - felt obliged to - discourage. . . I didn't resent it! Not a bit in the world! In fact, I was somewhat flattered that you - desired me! But, honey, you know as well as I do that a single girl, a girl alone in the world, has got to keep a firm hold on her emotions or she'll be lost!" (51)

In a style that displays her coyness, Blanche hesitates in mentioning sexu matters, and when she does, she uses language to disguise the passions of suc encounters. She talks as though she is a virginal sixteen-year-old who is naiv in the ways of the world. But she is quite different underneath the facade sh has created for herself. She was driven out of Laurel for her night-time behavi with the soldiers, at the cheap hotel she lived in, and ultimately, for seducin one of the students that she was teaching. This is re-created for us in the figu of the newspaper boy,

> "...I want to kiss you - just once - softly and sweetly on your mouth...Run along now! It would be nice to keep you, but I've got to be good and keep my hands off children...." (*Streetcar* 49)

The reason for her promiscuous lifestyle is the death of her young husband, wh committed suicide. Blanche discovered that he was homosexual, and her disgu at this discovery caused him to kill himself. Sex has now become a way deadening the pain that accompanies the guilt and responsibility she fee towards the death of her husband. She is also searching for him in others. H was sensitive, gentle and fond of the delicate things in life, just as she is. H wrote her poetry, poetry which is debased in the hands of Stanley Kowalski. the modern world, the only sensitive types are young boys and girls (th Newspaper Boy, Blanche's husband, and Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*). Th have a wide-eyed innocence about them, and they remind Blanche of her ov youthful days in the Old South. With all this as an explanation for her behavi the audience feels pity rather than disgust. She is a lost and lonely soul rath than a whore.

Martha does not make any attempt to hide her sexuality from anyone, in fa she brazenly flaunts it. She dresses in a provocative manner for the benefit Nick; they dance together in a very sexual manner, under the gaze of both Hon and George; her language is certainly not refined, and she is unafraid to p sexual connotations into her sentences:

> ". . . Biology's even better. It's . . . right at the meat of things. . . . You're right at the meat of things, baby . . ." (44)

is Martha's response when she finds out that Nick is a biologist rather than a mathematician. George refers to her outlandish behavior when she is drunk. He says that she dances with her skirt over her head. It seems that there is no limit to Martha's sensuality. She hides an interior that faces the disappointment of being without children. Martha has created a fictional life style that includes many infidelities because of the hate she bears her husband. However, she admits that the infidelities were only "would-be" because no one could put their potential into something more concrete

> "You're all flops. I am the Earth Mother, and you're all flops...." (111)

There have been countless attempts to be unfaithful to her husband, but finally, George is the only one who can satisfy her and make her happy. George is not uncomfortable with sexual matters; he is quite matter-of-fact about them. He uses sexual allusions in his speeches, but these references are more detached than Martha's, who are usually directed at someone. Martha seems to be Blanche's alter ego. Both exist at opposite ends of the spectrum; both have created an illusion for themselves but have gone into separate corners. Blanche hides an overt sexuality that she cannot come to terms with; Martha hides a mutual love that has created her marriage, but she is afraid that it cannot be sustained because of the lack of children:

> ". . . whom I will not forgive for having come to rest; for having seen me and having said: yes; this will do; who has made the hideous, the hurting, the insulting mistake of loving me and must be punished for it. George and Martha: sad, sad, sad." (113)

Martha not only wants to punish George; she wants to punish herself, too. Her sexuality is a smokescreen for her real feelings towards George. She is giving him a reason to detest her, and possibly leave her; his loyalty is more than she can bear.

Honey is another polar opposite to Martha. Sexuality offends her sensibilities, just as crude language does. Honey is a social climber, pristine and child-like, similar to a Southern belle. She is afraid of childbirth, and so led Nick to believe she had an hysterical pregnancy, when really she got rid of her problem in another way. Honey is not using a false character as a front to hide something else deep within her psyche. She is what she displays to the world--the daughter of a preacher, who has probably led a very sheltered life, who managed to con a jock into marrying her.

Further evidence of Williams's influence on Albee regarding the two plays comes in the image of The Poker Night--one of the original names for *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Albee gives this title to Martha in a soliloquoy, perhaps as an image of a male dominated environment that suggests hostility towards women. In both plays there are Western Union telegrams. For Blanche, it further shelters her from reality; for Martha, it exposes her to the truth. In terms of setting,

Williams uses a realistic place, New Orleans, for a picturesque and impressioni tic play. Albee re-creates an historical place to portray realism.

I feel it is clear that there is a definite pattern of influence between the tw playwrights, and the two plays. It is more substantial than merely that these a two of the greatest plays of post World War Two American theatre.

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Margaret Walker: *For My People*--**A Folk Analysis**

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Margaret Walker has written her poetry in the shadow of the academy. Both of her advanced degrees from the University of Iowa--the M. A. degree in 1940 and the Ph. D. in 1966--were granted because of her achievements in creative writing. *For My People* (1942), her first volume of poems, won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award. *Jubilee* fulfilled the central requirement for the doctorate.

Miss Walker spent all of her days in academia; she was never, as a writer, held captive by it. An analysis of her poetry reveals that in subject, tone, and aesthetic texture, it is remarkably free of intellectual pretense and stylized posturing. One finds instead the roots of Black experience in language--simple, passionate, and direct. If one asks how Margaret Walker, as a writer, remained in the academy but not of it, the answers appears in the circumstances governing her family life and background.

Margaret Walker was the daughter of a preacher man, Sigimond Walker, who was a native of Jamaica, West Indies. Miss Walker grew up in a household ruled by the power of the Word. At the age of seventeen, she transferred from New Orleans' Gilbert Academy to Northwestern University where she took her well honed verbal skills with her.

Not only was there a preaching father in the Walker household, but a musician mother, Marian Dozier. There was also a talking maternal grandmother--a grandmother full of tales. So there were stories to be listened to and placed in the vault of memory. And there was also New Orleans with its rich background of folk mythology, its music, its red beans and rice and jambalaya, and its assortment of racial experiences to be remembered and recalled through the power of the word.

Then, Margaret Walker, as a poet and as a writer, was not dependent on the academy for her subject matter, nor for her authorial posture. Indeed, the rhetorical power of her poem, "For My People"--the verbal arpeggios, the cascading adjectives, the rhythmic repetitions--has its roots in the "Preacher-man" rhetoric of the Black South.

The poet would also be the first to admit that her "down-home" grounding in the principles of the Judeo-Christian religion, black style, protected her against the frivolous intellectualism of the academy. She has no need to join movements, to bow to trends, and identify with esoteric cults. Margaret Walker kept her home-grown faith through it all, calling not for violent revolution, but for "a new earth" that would "hold all the people, all the faces, all the adams and eves." "For My People," the little poem of Miss Walker's first book, is itself a singular and unique literary achievement. First, it is magnificently wrought oral poetry. It must be read aloud, and, in reading it aloud, one must be able to breathe the pause, pause and breathe preacher O style. One must be able to hear the words sing, when the poem spins off paralleled cluster like

> . . . the gone years and the now years and the maybe years, washing ironing cooking scrubbing sewing mending hoeing plowing digging planting pruning patching dragging along.

This is the kind of verbal music found in a well-delivered downhome folk sermo and, as such, the poem achieves what James Weldon Johnson attempted to d in *God's Trombones*: fuse the written word with the spoken word. In this sens the reader is imaginatively set free to explore what Percy B. Shelley calls th beautifully "unheard melody" of a genuine poetic experience. The passage is als significant in its emphasis on repetitive "Work" words describing the age-ol labors of Black people. The activities are as old as slavery--slavery in the "bi house" or slavery in the fields. Adding "ing" to these monosyllabic work-verb suggests the dreary monotony of Black labor in slave times and in free time Without the "ing" they remain command words--enforcing words, backed up b a White enforcing power structure. And behind the command has always lurke the whip or the gun or the overseer or the Captain or the boss of Mr. Charlie Miss Ann. Indeed, Black laborers, long held captive by Western Capitalism, we forced to work without Zeal or Zest--just "Dragging along." Somehow the remain outside the system of profit and gain; no profits accrued to them for the labor; thus, they dragged along, "never gaining, never reaping, never knowin and never understanding." In just these few lines, Margaret Walker performs premiere poetic function. She presents a historical summary of how the Blac man slipped into an economic and social quagmire when, first as a slave an then as a quasi-free man, he was forced to cope with the monster of Europea capitalistic enterprise.

Not only does "For My People" have word power, but it is a poem filled wi subtle juxtapositions of thought and idea. When the scene shifts from the rur South to the Urban North--to "thronging 47th Street, in Chicago and Leono Avenue in New York"--the poet describes her people as "lost, disinherite dispossessed and happy people. At another point, they are depicted as "walkin blindly spreading joy." This *Donnesque* yoking of linking happiness with dispo session and blind purposelessness with joy reveals the depth of Margaret Walke understanding of the complexities of the Black experience. In fact, the poet he is writing about the source of the Black people's blues, for out of their troubl past and turbulent present came the Black people' song--a music and a song th guarantee that happiness and joy will somehow always be found lurking behi the squalor of the ghetto or behind the misery of the quarters or in son sharecropper's windowless cabin in the flood-drenched lowlands. For whenev there is trouble, a Bessie Smith or a Ma Rainey or a B. B. King or someone wi gift of song will step forward to sing it away. In fact, the song gets better wh one is real lowdown and disinherited and even suicidal. So, although mise and woe are ever-present in the Black community, suicides remained low. things go too bad, there is always tomorrow; so one sang, "Hurry sundown, s what tomorrow bring, May bring rain, May bring ol' thing." As the poet indicat joy and misery are always juxtaposed in the Black experience.

Margaret Walker also states that Blacks die too soon, the victims of consumption and anemia and lynching. Each word in this triad of death has its own history in the Black experience.

Consumption (or the more clinical but less poetical word tuberculosis) became a famous word in the white experience when it became "the white death" that ravaged the industrial nations during and after the Industrial Revolution. No capitalistic society was spared; and, since it was highly contagious, it quickly spread from white mill hands and miners to all levels of the Western capitalistic society. Famous poets and artists--Dunbar, Dumas, Keats, "Camile," Mimi--died of consumption. Indeed, for some the dying cough became a very romantic way to depart this troubled earth. For those, however, who lived on the fringes of the capitalistic nations--Indians, Blacks, Eskimos, Polynesians--consumption was devastatingly genocidal. Unprotected by medical strategies of any kind, the dark-skinned minorities died like butterflies in a mid-winter blizzard. On the otherhand, anemia was different. It was and is the Blacks' disease of the blood, the result of their centuries-long battle against malaria in their African homeland. In building up an immunity against one dreaded disease, Black people ironically inherited a capacity for incurring another dreaded disease. So anemia had deep roots in the Black peoples' past--like their love of yams or their love of chanting tribal drums.

On the other hand, lynching, the final word in the poet's triad of death, was different from the other two causes. Lynching has no deep roots in the history of the Black person's past; it was not transported from Africa, but rather was a uniquely "American" practice that blended well with a brutally exploitative economic system. Essentially, the lynching of Black males was the Southern white male's response to the Black man's inferred sexual superiority; for, usually, the lynched Black was castrated before he was burned or hanged, even if he had not been accused of a sexual crime. In this way the guilt-stricken white South expressed its fear of the Black man's imputed sexual vigor.

To date Margaret Walker has not published a poem elaborating on this particular topic of racial sexual experience in the South, but in a recent interview, she comments on the matter in a interesting fashion. In her opinion "Sexual warfare" exists because "there's a mirror image of racism in the South." The poet explains:

> What white men see in black man, black men see in white men. . . . The Worst thing in the world (for the white man) was a black man with a white woman. . . . The worst thing in the world (for a black man) was a black woman with a white man.

The bloody tide of lynchings that swept the South from the years following the Civil War into the mid-twentieth century indicates that Blacks, powerless and politically helpless, lost the battle for sexual equality. And the poet is right. Only blacks die of lynching, history does not record a single instance of a white man being lynched because he raped a Black woman.

Two additional comments about "For My People" should be made. First, according to the poet's own recollection, she needed just fifteen minutes to compose it on her typewriter. The poem is thus comparable in composition time to Langston Hughes' "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," which Mr. Hughes states that he wrote while crossing the Mississippi River enroute on a long train ride to visit his father in Toluca, Mexico. Second the poem is comparable to Mr. McKay's sonnet, "If We Must Die," in its breath of universal appeal. It struck a cord of vibrant response in pre-World War II America, and it became the rallying cry twenty-five years later during the strife-torn 1960s. If the test of a great poem is the universality of statement, then "For My People" is a great poem.

Our Lady of the Streetcar: Postmodernism, Chaos, and a New Role for Blanche DuBois

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When Blanche DuBois leaves the Kowalski household on the arm of a kind stranger, she is stepping from one script into another. The serene Blanche on the arm of the gentleman contrasts with an earlier image in the play, that of an upside-down statuette of Mae West on the arm of Mitch. The statuette is an analog for Blanche's identity which has transformed from displaced Lady to fallen woman to Madonna. The part she steps into is one she has put together for herself from bits and pieces of what she has found in the Quarter. In creating her role Blanche is acting in the necessity of historical context recognized by Karl Marx: "Men make their own history, but not as they please. They do not choose the circumstances for themselves, but have to work upon circumstances as they find them" (23).

Blanche would not have chosen the Quarter as a setting, but she works upon its stage trappings as she finds them and transforms them into support for her own script. The street noise of the quarter, the bells of the streetcar, (and in the Kazan and Erman film versions, the noise of the bowling alley) will be exchanged for the cathedral chimes that underscore Blanche's new identity.

Although it may seem as though Blanche loses to Stanley in their struggle for dominance, a struggle which Anca Vlasopolos calls, "the narrative authority of history-makers and story-tellers versus the dramatic representation of the victims of that authority" (322), Blanche may have the real victory. She is launched for a more solid run than Stanley whose victory is shaky. For although Stanley, fortified by Napoleonic Code, seems firmly placed as preserver of patriarchy, it is a tainted and weakened patriarchy which already shows signs of crumbling. And Stanley's own self-appointed role is threatened.

The patriarchal world to which Stanley is heir has been challenged in much the same way Postmodernism has challenged the patriarchal cultural base of Western Civilization in recent years. Just as critical inquiries call into question the tradition claims of cultural authority, examination of the texts of Belle Reve reveals an already tainted history to which will be added Stanley's own act of defilement, his act of rape and his misrepresentation of it. The Belle Reve fathers and uncles lost the estate, Blanche tells Stanley, in exchange for "their epic fornications" (23). As she puts it, "The four-letter word deprived us of our plantation" (43). She also tells him, "I think it's wonderfully fitting that Belle Reve should finally be this bunch of old papers in your big capable hands!" (43) When she relinquishes the papers to Stanley, she is giving him a tarnished script; the one she will adopt for herself will be one that transcends the tarnished landscape. An unwashed grape from the quarter that will become the vehicle that "[transports] her soul to heaven" (136). The grape, as the source of wine, contrasts with the earlier scripts present in the play, the whiskey Blanche

consumes from the time of her arrival, the beer the poker players drink. Unlike the whiskey that "buzzes right through [her]" (21). The grape will work a profound effect.

Such a reading is empowered by critical strategies growing out of the postmodernist movement and informed by Chaos Theory, both of which challenge traditional ways of establishing authenticity. Postmodernism views the past as inaccessible to us in any way but through texts. Belle Reve exists for Blanche and Stanley as a text, one that represents the past for Blanche and the future for Stanley. But a text that worked in the past might not work in the future.

Madan Sarup describes Postmodernism as a series of critiques of existing systems of thought, critiques which challenge "the status of science itself," and offer possibilities for the exploration of "the changing nature of knowledge in computerized societies" (1-5). He further states, "Postmodernism . . . involves a critique of metaphysics, of the concepts of causality, of identity, of the subject and of truth" (4).

This postmodernist challenge to the status of science comes at the same time that some in the scientific community offer similar challenges to traditional methods of scientific knowledge formation. Proponents of Chaos Theory, in their questioning of the methods of traditional physics offer analogs for what has been happening in the community of literary criticism with Postmodernist theories such as Deconstruction. Just as literary theorists seek to recover texts that have been silenced by the privileging of master texts, Chaos theorists follow patterns of neglected bits of data that have been ignored as noise.

Going beyond science historian Thomas Kuhn's deflation of the idea of science as "an orderly process of asking questions and finding their answers" (in Gleick 36), Chaos theorists posit a universe more complicated than previously recognized. They observe that "as the universe ebbs toward its final equilibrium in the featureless heat bath of maximum entropy, it manages to create interesting structures" (Gleick 308). For Chaos theorists, it is these structures that offer most rewarding study, and the challenge lies in "deciding which of the many . . . forces . . . are important and which can safely be ignored" (308).

Together these two movements offer new ways of seeing the self-created nature of any human endeavor. Chaos reveals us as hungry for meaning which we get by applying grids that enable us to see patterns of order in the world. The various grids work by selecting data that fits the pattern and rejecting data that does not. Each of us writes our own life story by selecting and rejecting data that fits or doesn't fit our patterns. This way we each form scripts for parts we are willing to play out as our life stories.

In order to continue her life with Stanley, Stella will have to ignore, to edit out of her script, Blanche's claims that Stanley raped her. Chaos argues against the notion that "very small influences can be neglected [because such small differences] "fade away or cancel each other out before they could change important, large [systems]" (Gleick 15). At the end of the stage production of *Streetcar*, Stanley holds Stella in an intimate gesture. This action implies they will stay together. However, the audience has to deal with the disturbing bit o

data that Stanley has committed rape and incest and that the other players at least suspect the truth of Blanche's claims. June Schlueter points out that "The Kazan film, under pressure from the censors, altered the ending dramatically, so that Stanley is both responsible for Blanche's condition and accountable for it" (145). However, the modified ending only acts out explicitly what is present in the stage play as suppressed subtext, what will happen on the next turn of the wheel.

There is a saying among Chaos theorists that "a butterfly stirring the air in Peking today can transform storm patterns in New York months from now" (Gleick 8). The stirring in the back of Stella's mind is all too likely to transform into storm patterns at some time in the future. And the audience must know that.

By calling into question the privileged position of science over art as a system of certain knowledge, Chaos theory makes a space for the poet to perform as visionary, creating metaphorically what scientists may be able to find once a pattern of possibility has been envisioned. Thinking of such possibility recalls William Blake's words, "What is now proved was once only imagin'd" (xviii).

As a lyrical playwright, Williams is working in that tradition of poets who challenged the worship of reason that is associated with overreaching attempts to systematize human experience. Blake's credo, "All that lives is holy" is reaffirmed time and again by Williams's characters who, though not displaying what Arthur Ganz calls "the morality of most men," still manage to "demonstrate a consistent ethic" (278). As Ganz puts it, "in Williams's moral system the rejection of life is the greatest crime" (282). Williams's affirmation of the sensual in life echoes Blake's sentiment that "Those who restrain Desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained" (Blake 248).

Blanche DuBois and other Williams characters seek to affirm their lives by reading patterns of meaning that will explain through the suppression of bits of data that don't conform to the patterns they are trying to create. Blanche moves from Southern Aristocratic Lady to her role of the Ultimate Lady, the Madonna, by trying on and discarding or failing to win various roles.

Blanche is more successful in this endeavor than either Maxine Faulk or Amanda Wingfield, partly because she is able to enlist a supporting cast, to find a vehicle in which they all will take a willing part. The physician who comes to take her away from the Kowalski household acts the part of the gentleman. He rescues her from the matron and offers her his arm in a courtly gesture.

Amanda, in *The Glass Menagerie*, is unable to succeed in casting her supporting players. In her attempt to place her son in the role of father/protector for his sister Laura she tells him, "You're my right-hand bower" (48). Amanda admits her failure when she says to Tom, "My devotion has made me a witch and so I make myself hateful to my children!" (48).

She is equally unsuccessful in getting her daughter to play the part of Southern Belle. Amanda gives her the cue, "It's almost time for our gentlemen callers to start arriving . . . . How many do you suppose we're going to entertain this afternoon?" (28). But Laura does not respond to her cue as her mother wants. Instead, she tells her, "I don't believe we're going to receive any, Mother" and

later, "I'm just not popular like you were in Blue Mountain" (28). And the play ends without the promise of future security represented by the longed for gentleman callers.

As Amanda tries to push her children, Maxine Faulk tries to coach Shannon into a role of her design. She wants to put him in her late husband's place, and she tries to wardrobe him for the part. "Fred's estate included one good pair of shoes and your feet look about his size" (22), she tells him. But Shannon resists, "I loved ole Fred but I don't want to fill his shoes" (22).

C. W. E. Bigsby points out that Williams as a writer moved toward greater concern about the nature of reality, and that Williams came to believe that "the process of human relationships and the assertion of identity were . . . in some sense essentially theatrical," and to ask,

> since that social world which he had earlier perceived as an indistinct sense of menace was itself simply a series of socially endorsed fictions, in what sense were the individual fiction-making skills aberrant? (131-32).

This awareness of the theatricality of identity can be seen even in a play as early as *Streetcar*, when Blanche enters the stage like an actress reporting for casting call. She uncertainly reads her scripted stage directions. She is dressed wrong for the part. The stage directions say, "Her expression is one of shocked disbelief. Her appearance is incongruous to this setting" (15). She has just lost her role as Aristocratic Southern Lady when that show folded, and it seems unlikely that there are parts for Southern Belles in this production. Bigsby recognizes that "[Williams's] characters turned their worlds into theatrical sets, consciously subverting a reality, the substantiality of which they conceded by their very defensiveness" (131).

Blanche sets out immediately to turn the Kowalski home into her set rather than Stanley's and to enlist the players in a script of her design. Stanley resists. On her arrival she tries to place Stella back in her Little Southern Girl role by addressing her with the old nickname "Stella for Star!" And she directs Stella to "open your pretty mouth" (19). Blanche also sets quickly about directing her own staging and lighting. She tries to control her entrance and lighting: "But don't you look at me, Stella, no, no, no, not till later, not till I've bathed and rested," she tells her. "And turn that over-light off! Turn that off! I won't be looked at in this merciless glare!" (19).

She is also swift to consider some of the roles that might be offered her and rejects them. She will not, for instance accept the role of Drunkard. "Don't worry," she tells Stella, "Your sister hasn't turned into a drunkard. She's just all shaken up and tired and dirty" (20). Nor will she be content to play the visiting relative. She makes this disclaimer, "Will Stanley like me, or will I be just a visiting in-law, Stella? I couldn't stand that" (23).

Before Stanley enters, Blanche studies his picture, like a director might study a casting portfolio. She is already trying to type him, "A Master Sergeant in the Engineers Corps. Those decorations!" (24). But Stella refuses to let Stanley be cast superficially to fit Blanche's scenario. She has found him, and she, like an

agent, will guard his appropriate casting. She tells Blanche, "I assure you I wasn't just blinded by all the brass" (24).

When Stanley enters he announces to Blanche that he is used to challenging others' ideas about characterization. He tells her, "I once went out with a doll who said to me, 'I am the glamorous type, I am the glamorous type!' I said, 'so what?'" (39). By telling this anecdote, he is announcing to Blanche that he will not accept her definition of her own role, but will do his own interpretation. He even interprets himself for her, thereby blocking her chance to do so. Like a director, he tells her how she will react to him, "I'm afraid I'll strike you as the unrefined type" (31). He underscores the difference in their native settings, "Laurel, that's right. Not in my territory" (30). But this statement also serves as a reminder that Blanche is now in his territory. He controls the set in the current production.

Early in the play, Stanley begins to invade Blanche's stage props and costumes, undermining her choice of roles. He proposes the role of usurper for her when he calls the contents of her trunk "the treasure chest of a pirate" (36). On the night of the rape, Stanley again disparages Blanche's props when he comes in and finds her in costume and playing out a scene from a trip with Shep Huntleigh. "Take a look at yourself," he tells her, "in that worn-out Mardi Gras outfit, rented for fifty cents from some ragpicker! And with that crazy crown on! What Queen do you think you are?" (127). He continues his destruction of her scenario, "You come in here and . . . cover the light bulb with a paper lantern, and lo and behold the place has turned into Egypt and you are the Queen of the Nile" (127-28). He recalls his earlier anecdote in which he put the glamorous woman in her place, when he says, "I say--Ha!--Ha! Do you hear me? Ha--ha--ha!" (128).

But Blanche succeeds in planting the idea of Stanley's brutality. When Blanche tries to type Stanley with the name "brute," she is attempting to incorporate him and his story into her script. She tells Stella, "Don't hang back with the brutes!" (72). She tries to fix another animal name on him, "Capricorn--the Goat!" (76). But in the same scene, she more accurately names herself, "Oh, my birthday's next month, the fifteenth of September; that's under Virgo." And when Stanley asks, "What's Virgo?" she tells him, "Virgo is the Virgin" (77). Although at this time in the play Blanche stands revealed as far from virginal, before the play's end she will cover herself with virgin imagery.

Blanche is aware she is an actress searching for a part. She accesses herself realistically when she reveals that she knows it is time to give up ingenue parts and go for character roles. She shows self-awareness when she says,

> I never was hard or self-sufficient enough. When people are soft--soft people have got to shimmer and glow--they've--got to put on soft colors, the colors of butterfly wings, and put a paper lantern over the light. . . . It isn't enough to be soft. You've got to be soft and attractive; and I . . . I'm fading now! I don't know how much longer I can turn the trick. (79)

And Blanche glances back wistfully one last time at the young lead when the boy comes from the *Evening Star*. She casts him in an exotic role when she asks him,

"Has anyone every told you that you look like a young Prince out of the Arabian Nights?" (84). But she acknowledges that she knows such a youthful liaison is no longer open to her when she says, "I've got to be good--and keep my hands off children" (84).

Next she tries to write Mitch into the part of "My Rosenkavalier" and directs him in presenting her with flowers as she tells him, "bow to me. Now present them? Ahhh--Merciii!" (84). She also tries to cast him as a strong man when she tells him, "Samson! Go on, lift me" (90). Mitch is a willing player, but he is not a Samson or a Rosenkavalier, although he is willing to try. "Just give me a slap," he tells her, "whenever I step out of bounds" (91). But he is miscast, as he has revealed to Blanche by confiding about himself in earthy, mundane terms. "I am ashamed of the way I perspire. My shirt is sticking to me" (88). Blanche tries to salvage the performance by calling his heavy build "an imposing physique." She finally settles on two suitable roles for them, Girl With Old Fashioned Ideas for her and Natural Gentleman for him (91).

But Stanley has billed Blanche in his own production. He calls her "Dame Blanche" and describes her as the dispossessed occupant of a room in the seedy Flamingo Hotel (99). He cites her fading ability to maintain her former role, "She couldn't put on her act anymore in Laurel," and suggests a new role for her, another kind of outcast, a "town character" who is "regarded as not just different but downright loco--nuts" (100). This casting is one that finally sticks, but Blanche makes it into something radically different from what Stanley intends. She plays it as a victory and uses it to enter into a new self-definition, that of the Madonna who has transcended the earthy concerns of the French Quarter by means of its own fruit, an unwashed grape, which Blanche transforms by her language into allegory rich in Biblical allusion. The grape suggests vineyards, and the wine of the Eucharist. The fruit which, in Blanche's vision, enters her body to transport her is an analog with the fruit of the Madonna's body which enters the world to transport God's presence to earth. Blanche becomes identified with Christ when she takes in the "unwashed" fruit from the Quarter, as Christ took on the sins of the world. And Blanche dies symbolically from contact with the unwashed condition of the Quarter just as Christ died for the sinful condition of man. The grape is at once the synonym for the fruit of the womb and the fruit of sin. And Blanche as the receptacle is both Madonna and Christ.

An important symbol suggesting Blanche as Madonna is the plaster statuette of Mae West that Mitch holds, upside-down, when he and Blanche return from their date. Although it isn't used in the film version, it is nevertheless a key image placed by Williams in his stage directions (85). The inverted image of a woman who stood for sensuality can be read as an analog for Blanche in her role of fallen woman. The fact that he holds it upside-down suggests many things, among them that Mitch doesn't really know how to hold such a woman. He has been unable to hold Blanche in sensual embrace, and he will be unsuccessful in his attempt to hold her later in a forced one. The plaster doll also suggests plaster images of saints, including Madonna, with which Blanche associates herself when she points out that her dress is Della Robia blue, "the blue of the robe in the old Madonna pictures." The Della Robia blue dress is Blanche's final costume

in the play. The inverted position of the statuette might also suggest a turning point for Blanche and point to the falseness of the sensual image for Blanche's ultimate expression.

In the Erman version "When the film ends with camera focused on the steeple and the three resonating chimes, Blanche's yearning seems fulfilled" (Schlueter 146). The cathedral is visible as she drives away and offers a different but equally compelling support for the Madonna image.

Throughout the play Blanche has been building to this moment, taking baths that allude to ritual cleansing and baptism. She comments about it, "A hot bath and a long, cold drink always give me a brand new outlook on life!" (105). The hot water baptism Eunice offers to the poker players yields eventually to the water into which Blanche envisions her body being submerged as her soul is transported to heaven, "I'll be buried at sea sewn up in a clean white sack and dropped overboard--at noon--in the blaze of summer--and into an ocean as blue as [Chimes again] my first lover's eyes!' (136).

In a counter movement, Stanley lays claim to the role of lord of the manor, "Remember what Huey Long said--Every man is a King!" (107). And he wants some lighting directions of his own carried out. He wants to "get those colored lights going" (109). He reminds Stella how she liked being part of his production. "I pulled you down off them columns and how you loved it, having them colored lights going. And wasn't we happy together, wasn't it all okay till she showed here?" (102).

Unlike Blanche, Stella is uncertain in her role. She tells Eunice, "I don't know if I did the right thing" (133). Eunice rationalizes what we must suspect is a compromise, "Life has got to go on. No matter what happens, you've got to keep going" (133).

Stanley has been given signs of mutiny. Mitch calls out, "You . . . brag . . . bull" (131). When one of the players, Pablo says in Spanish "Maldita sea tu suerte!" It echoes with the phrase "Flores para los meurtos" which is uttered by the Mexican woman, Blanches harbinger of death, "Flores para los muertos." Pablo translates his words as, "I am cursing your rutting luck" (131). These lines, with their rhyming similarity to the Mexican woman's lines for Blanche, suggest that the wheel is turning for Stanley as it did for Blanche and places him in a similar position of insecurity. A further turn of the wheel is hinted at when someone other than Stanley (Steve) has the last words in the play, names the next game to be played, "This game is seven card stud" (142).

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Ties of Blood: The Woman's Curse in Sam Shepard's Family Trilogy

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Sam Shepard's trilogy of domestic plays, *Buried Child*, *Curse of the Starving Class*, and *True West*, emphatically illustrate the demise of the American Dream through the inherited curse that passes from father to son--an inherited poison sifting down from all the generations that have gone before and passing on to all the generations to come. It is a curse that "is beyond genetics, beyond original sin, and, finally, perhaps beyond explanation" (Mottran 135). Vince might try to flee; Wesley might try to change; Austin might try to go Hollywood, but all ultimately accept their father's heritage. They twist and struggle, finding no escape from the curse--but there should be. Traditionally, women have provided a strong nurturing force that preserved and perpetuated the culture through the children regardless of and often in spite of the men. Our culture has myths of the wives of soldiers caring for the homes while their men fought bitter, futile wars, of pioneer women giving up physical comfort and security to carry their culture west, of widows and wives who raised their sons alone and taught them to be men within the context of that dream. But, these types of women do not exist in Shepard's work, and he seems to be showing that even though the curse that destroys the American dream is passed through the men, it is the failure of the female nurturing force that prevents any possibility of redemption and imbues these plays with an aura of bleak hopelessness.

The hopelessness pervades Shepard's trilogy the way the incessant, amniotic rain soaks the Illinois soil in *Buried Child* as each woman subverts in some manner the nurturing role she might be expected to play in a viable society. Mothers are a vital force in the American dream--along with apple pie and the flag--they are, therefore, expected to exhibit certain traditional behaviors. One such tradition is that the mother keeps up the home, not, of course, in the sense of house cleaning, but culturally, in the sense of being the heart of the family, that center to which family members perpetually return for sustenance and warmth. The mother exists as a duality, a place as well as a female--she is at once physical and spiritual, a source of cultural rejuvenation. Yet, Halie, Ella, and Mom act as home to no one, not even themselves. Like other Shepard women who, "Following their own, often financial interests, leave home, husband, or lover at will" (Erben 30), these mothers pursue their "self"-centered dreams and leave the home without a center. Halie treasures Ansel's memories (which the audience suspects are greatly exaggerated) and goes to an alcoholic lunch accompanied by the ineffectual Father Dewis; Ella suddenly goes to a business lunch with the salesman Taylor and doesn't return for days, and Mom gets Austin to take care of her house while she journeys to Alaska. All three women absent themselves physically from houses already rendered spiritually empty by the absence of a nurturing center. It is easy to say that these women are bitter and

disillusioned because their fathers/husbands/lovers have treated them cruelly or unfairly, and that are merely escaping; but one stereotype that we have inherited through tradition, through religion, through social custom says that men deal with women unfairly--a fact, regardless of cause. Women, however, supposedly inherit from their female ancestors an innate nurturing center that is out of reach of any physical or mental mistreatment, a force which gives vitality and direction to her children, a force which provides hope that mankind will survive with some type of dignity, perhaps even endure as Faulkner's Dilsey does, and thereby prevail.

In *Curse of the Starving Class*, Ella represents a sterile, non-nurturing female (as do Halie and Mom). She has given birth and raised children, but she offers neither depth nor warmth. Faced with a daughter entering womanhood, Ella refuses to give the girl guidance and direction. Shepard makes her one piece of advice, ". . . you should never go swimming when that happens. It can cause you to bleed to death. The water draws it out of you" (139), sheer nonsense, the silliest kind of superstition. Ella does warn Emma about vending machine sanitary napkins. Certainly, more personal, prescriptive information should come from a mother. She tells Emma, "You don't want to live in ignorance do you?" (139). But when the daughter asks for specific information about the napkins, "Stick up in where?" (140), Ella changes the subject, not even correcting the misunderstanding. She is willing to deal in generalities and superstitions, but she turns away from that direct question, thereby avoiding her obligations to initiate the girl into the mystery and ritual of womanhood. Instead, she models her own cynical sterility, making it certain that Emma will continue the role of the female who reproduces with cold passion and leaves a legacy of more cursed men and more emotionally-sterile women.

Emma, the daughter, articulates the role of the woman in Shepard's family plays when she learns that her mother has cooked the chicken she planned to use in a 4-H Club demonstration. She screams:

> That was my chicken and you fucking boiled it! YOU BOILED MY CHICKEN! I RAISED THAT CHICKEN FROM THE INCUBATOR TO THE GRAVE AND YOU BOILED IT LIKE IT WAS ANY OLD FROZEN HUNK OF FLESH! YOU USED IT WITH NO CONSIDERATION FOR THE LABOR INVOLVED! I HAD TO FEED THAT CHICKEN CRUSHED CORN EVERY MORNING FOR A YEAR! I HAD TO CHANGE ITS WATER! I HAD TO KILL IT WITH AN AX! I HAD TO SPILL ITS GUTS OUT! I HAD TO PLUCK EVERY FEATHER ON ITS BODY! I HAD TO DO ALL THAT WORK SO THAT YOU COULD TAKE IT AND BOIL IT! (140-41)

As a child-woman, Emma has played at her future role the way little girls pla with dolls, but she doesn't nurture her infant and give it life.. She gives nourishment so that she can kill it and gut it, the way Ella gives her childre food out of an empty refrigerator while she plans to sell their birthright. Lackin guidance, Emma can only copy what she has seen acted out by the primar

feminine figure in her life, a utilitarian example based on what she, as a woman, can take from rather than give to her offspring.

Emma meets the onset of menses, the beginning of her child bearing years, with anticipation. She has been practicing, role playing, using the chicken as her child, but the role she is copying is one of sterility rather than of fertility and procreation. She tries desperately to deal with her situation--even attempts to ride the stallion that is forbidden to her as a surrogate for her sexual initiation. He drags her through the mud literally as her mother has been metaphorically dirtied by various men, including the father. When Emma returns to the house, defeated and dirty, she tells Ella, "Suddenly everything changed. I wasn't the same person any more. I was a hunk of meat tied to a big animal. Being pulled" (148). She has become a hunk of meat just as the chicken had, and she leaves what she has of innocence to be pulled through life's experience by animals and ultimately opts for a life of prostitution, a career of servicing animal needs. Here, Shepard presents a female devoid of hope for future renewal, and in doing so, denies the possibility of renewal for the family and the society.

In *Buried Child*, Shelley comes to meet Vince's family with a number of preconceived notions of people like those in Norman Rockwell's paintings. Sexually experienced, she is nonetheless psychologically immature, innocent, and like Emma, she wants to go through those rites of passage that will induct her into the community of women and family. She says

> . . . For every name, I had an image. Every time he'd tell me a name, I'd see the person. In fact, each of you was so clear in my mind that I actually believed it was you. I really believed that when I walked through that door that the people who lived here would turn out to be the same people in my imagination. (121)

Childlike, she has accepted her imaginings as fact, and she wants to take her place in that ideal family. But, she gets no welcome from Halie.

Gerald Weales calls Halie a "corruption of Midwestern propriety" (571), a thought that seems appropriate as she descends the stairs, dressed in black, black veil hiding her face as she pulls black gloves on her hands. Her black garb and pure white hair give her that Rockwell look of the kindly country lady that Shelly expects to find, but she offers neither comfort nor community to the girl. Her remedy for every type of suffering is a pill. She has told Dodge, "I, personally, can't see anything wrong with it. Pain is pain. Pure and simple. Suffering is a different matter. That's entirely different. A pill seems as good an answer as any" (65). The viewer wonders exactly what constitutes suffering in Halie's mind. Pain and suffering are usually linked, but Halie sees them as separate entities and offers a cure for only one. Her personal prescription for herself is lunch with Father Dewis from which ". . . she returns the next day slightly drunk, her arms full of roses, clearly a sexual implication" (Mottram 38). She has also changed her clothing and now wears bright yellow, befitting her sexually active role at this point in the play. She is, however, unwilling to share any part

of her life's experience with Shelley. She says, "You can't leave this house for a second without the Devil blowing in through the front door!" (ll4).

Halie equates Shelly's desire to know family and feminine community with an attempt to usurp her own matriarchal role:

Halie: (to Shelly) What're you doing with my cup and saucer?
Shelly: (looking at cup, back at Halie) I made some bouillon for Dodge.
Halie: For Dodge?
Shelly: Yeah.
Halie: Well, did he drink it?
Shelly: No.
Halie: Did you drink it?
Shelly: Yes. (115-16)

Obviously, to Halie, her husband and this young girl sharing the cup of broth (with its conventional connotation), is a danger to her. She sees as a very real threat what Shelly has offered to Dodge out of a desire to fill a maternal role. Shelly plays at being a granddaughter the way Emma played at being a grandmother. But, after being symbolically raped by each of the men in the house, and after being refused feminine knowledge by Halie, she leaves, emptier than when she arrived.

Mom in *True West* keeps a neater house than Halie or Ella. According to Lee, she didn't ". . . like even a single tea leaf in the sink . . ." (5). And Austin is staying there to keep her plants watered while he attempts to market his writing. The spotless house, however, is as sterile as her trip to Alaska which she aborts to rush back to see Picasso. Her reaction to seeing the plants she supposedly values is, "Oh, they're all dead aren't they . . . oh well, one less thing to take care of I guess" (54). Just as Emma raised the chicken only to kill it, she cared for the plants only to dismiss their death casually. "This spacey response, apparently characteristic of her relationship with her sons, is topped by her insistence that they must all rush to the museum to see Picasso . . . . Not even Austin's telling her that Picasso is dead can turn her from this idea" (Mottram 149). She exhibits more emotion over the seeming opportunity to see an artist in a museum than she does over the lethal physical battle between her sons. In the same matter-of-fact way that she noted the mess in the house, she tells Lee, "He won't kill you. He's your brother" (58), as Austin draws a cord tighter around Lee's throat, and she leaves the brothers in violent conflict, unconcerned with the possible outcome. Her indifference is in keeping with the sterile, non-nurturing roles of Halie and Ella, and she offers no spiritual relief to her sons.

Weales sees mother figures in Shepard plays as carrying heavy thematic meaning, but remaining peripheral (603). Rudolf Erben adds that ". . . they defy the traditional gender roles attributed to them" (30). Such critical statements are certainly true of Halie, Ella, and Mom in that they are empty vessels, without any viable sense of home or family. Their families receive neither sustenance nor vitalization from these women as they pursue selfish materialistic and sexual needs that have replaced the traditional feminine drive to sustain

social culture. Indeed, Shepard's mothers seem indifferent, and that lack of interest represents the demise of the American Dream just as surely as does the inherited curse of the men. And, since the next generation of women sees and repeats these models, it is obvious that the traditional dream is doomed because the redemption, the alleviation of the curse, that should come from the woman doesn't exist, and the audience is left wondering if it ever did.

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The Southern Belle on the Move: The Changing Image of the Southern Woman in Literature

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In *Southern Ladies and Gentlemen*, an extended analysis of Southern life, liberties, and pursuits, journalist Florence King comments that the Southern woman has been the heroine of so many more novels than her Northern sister, primarily because novelists prefer complex women for their protagonists, and the female born and raised in the American South is nothing if not complex:

> The cult of Southern womanhood has endowed her with at least five totally different images and asked her to be good enough to adopt all of them. She is required to be frigid, passionate, sweet, bitchy, and scatterbrained--all at the same time. Her problems spring from the fact that she succeeds. (37)

The mystique of the Southern woman has been explored in literature, in history, and in the arts, from Scarlett O'Hara to television's *Designing Women* and at all points in between. People from all regions of the country are curious about Southerners, and the Southern woman in particular is an object of both fascination and amazement--even among native Southerners. *Gone With the Wind* is probably the most-watched-and-discussed motion picture of all time, and Scarlett O'Hara almost qualifies as a cult figure. More recently, Beth Henley's *Crimes of the Heart*, as both stage play and motion picture, has delighted and disturbed the American viewing public, and theatre-goers over the past three years have flocked to see *Steel Magnolias*, while the motion picture based on Robert Harling's dramas center around small-town Southern women, and there are traces of Scarlett and the *Gone With the Wind* regulars throughout both works.

For many readers, especially those from regions other than the South, the image of the Southern woman is largely one shaped for eternity by *Gone With the Wind*. Novelist Pat Conroy comments that in the decade after the publication of the novel and the subsequent release of the motion picture, Scarlett O'Hara was "the colorist and sculptress who united the hues and shapes of a certain garden variety of Southern woman who came to ripeness under her imprint. Because of her, it is still one of the strangenesses of Southern life that our women are far more interesting than our men, yet spend their entire lives trying to hide and deny that fact" (125).

In *Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South*, a study of Southern womanhood, Shirley Abbott tells of her lifelong love affair with that novel, which she has read "more times than a Baptist preacher reads the Ten Commandments, and with the same flinty faith," and says that what draws her to it again and again is the power and clarity of the female characters, whom she describes as *vivid* and *tough*. "Nowhere before in American fiction had there been women of this calibre

Plucky heroines, maybe. Brave or independent. Strong-minded, like Jo March. But not tough" (80). Robert Harling echoes this when he explains the title of his sensitive drama: "Steel magnolia is a colloquialism I've heard all my life. Southern women are frequently depicted as frail, wispy creatures. By combining the delicate magnolia with the strength of steel, one has an image of something perceived as fragile but in actuality made of much stronger stuff" (93).

Traditionally, the Southern woman in fiction and drama has been portrayed as either a lady, a belle, or a tramp--and in all cases, slightly insane. Abbott commented that growing up female in the South "is to inherit a set of directives that warp one for life, if they do not actually induce psychosis" (3). King felt that basically all Southerners were insane, and that most especially were Southern women insane, but defends this by adding that "losing one's mine is the most important prerequisite for fitting in with Southerners. Sanity has never held any charms for us; in fact, we're against it. We long ago realized that madness was the only weapon we had; if you're crazy enough, people will leave you alone" (24). A touch of insanity seems to be an integral part of Southern character, along with the ambivalence exhibited by many Southern writers and the characters they create; writer Rosemary Daniell concludes that "a tolerance for ambiguity may be a hallmark of the Southern mind" (92).

The Southern woman as a character type still exists, and is far more than a myth perpetuated by romantic fiction and the media. However, she exists in altered form; in the decades preceding the onset of the twenty-first century she has evolved in both life and literature to find her place in the contemporary world without losing those qualities which make her distinctly Southern. She has discovered that there is room for the feminist, the belle, and the lady to coexist, and has found that it is even possible for some women to be all three, either consecutively or concurrently. And whatever became of the tramp? With the onset of the sexual revolution, she has all but disappeared as a type, since it is now universally recognized that nice girls do, and perhaps with more than one partner in a lifetime, although flaunting it is still frowned upon in parts of the Bible Belt. Discretion is the operative word here, not to be confused with hypocrisy. The tramp we can dismiss since she has merged successfully with the other types. But how are we to define and identify the lady, the belle, and the feminist?

In *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics* (1970), Ann Firor Scott posits that the notion of the "lady" in the South was the invention of a slaveholding society which, far from pampering its upper-class white women, demanded a great deal from them. She feels that ante-bellum Southern women had been the victims of an image of woman which was at odds with the reality of their lives, an image which was weakened but not destroyed by the experiences of the War and Reconstruction--an image which continued to shape the behavior of Southern women for many years and which has never entirely disappeared (Preface).

Abbott says that the difference between a lady and a belle is that the former has a multitude of responsibilities, while the belle thinks only of herself. "Some women become ladies without ever having been belles; some remain belles all

their lives, though not always successfully. A belle, unlike a lady, however, can operate part time" (104). Florence King says that any woman who gets mad becomes a Southern belle in the minds of male witnesses. The woman who is constantly flouncing in and out of rooms in a furious temper, throwing things and slamming doors, is so dear to the Southern heart that it matters not at all that she is also hard on Southern nerves" (128). According to King, the really unfailing sign of a belle is that she *exhausts* people.

Kathryn Lee Seidel characterizes Scarlett O'Hara as the quintessential Southern belle, and other writers and critics over the years have tended to agree with her. Not so, says Abbott, who feels that the hallmark of the true belle is her ability to dissimulate, with her goal the complete control over some man--or men--since of all the skills a Southern woman is supposed to master, managing men is the most important. The successful belle never forgets that she is engaged in a covert activity, and that her victim(s) must remain totally unaware of what she is up to. Scarlett was not a very successful practitioner of the art of belle-ing, and Margaret Mitchell never intended her to be, telling us from the start of the novel that Scarlett was incapable of keeping her feelings under wraps, and insisted on being herself, since it was useless for her to attempt to conceal her true nature. Abbott concludes that Scarlett is simply "too terrifying to be a belle" (107). Too terrifying, too transparent--and too tough.

Abbott agrees with Seidel that the belle's role, like the lady's, received a particularly thick coat of lacquer in the last part of the nineteenth century, and that as a period creation, the belle logically should have died out by now, "and yet the Southern belle has survived; not because Southern society is unchanging, but because the managerial techniques devised by the belle have proved sound" (105). Still, Seidel argues that in the last hundred years there has been a transition of the literary belle from a representative of the virtues of Southern society to an embodiment of its vices. "Her fate and that of the South continue to be themes in literature, but the modern reader is no longer surprised when the belle is less than a lady" (165). Does this bring us back to the tramp? Never mind.

Strangely enough, the Southern belle and the radical feminist have much in common--they might almost be said to be "sisters under the skin." This will no doubt come as a rather unpleasant shock to the feminist, but is not likely to bother the belle, since she is relatively unconcerned with definitions or issues; in any case, it won't affect her much, because she's not going to think about it till tomorrow, anyway. Both the belle and the radical feminist believe strongly in the doctrine of female supremacy; in both cases, man is The Enemy. The two differ only in approach and methodology. Some distinction should be made here between the radical feminist and her more reasonable sisters. In *Contemporary Feminist Thought*, Hester Eisenstein points out that by the mid-1970s, radical feminist writers were referring to the concept of a woman-centered analysis or perspective, the view that female experience ought to be the major focus of study and the source of dominant values for the culture as a whole (47). Eisenstein is openly critical of the radical feminists, and comments that while they were intent on proving that women were as good as men, and as capable of functioning in

positions of power, the fact "that men could be as good women did not, in this context, appear to be an important consideration" (63). Abbott says that what the belle is after is not love but power (106) and Eisenstein cite this same desire for the ultimate power over men as the goal of the radical feminists (63).

Many Southern women--even educated, accomplished ones--get nervous when they are called feminists, although their goals may be identical to those of the moderate feminists. Their reluctance to be identified in this way is brought about in part by the problems involved in defining feminism, which often has unpleasant connotations for traditional thinkers; in part by a heritage which has conditioned them to be afraid of being labelled "masculine," "pushy," or "extreme"; and in part by the militancy of the radical feminists. And some of them think that women have now gained true equality, thus eliminating the need for any kind of special name or movement.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, women's studies director at Emory University in Atlanta, says that the young women of the late 80s deplore terms such as "women's lib" and "feminist," choosing to believe that their mothers' generation has already won the battle for equal rights and professional opportunity, in the South as elsewhere. "We've hidden prejudice so well on campus that young women are not confronted with it here as we were. They find it simply too scary to think about and can live with a high level of denial, both of the social pressures and biological imperatives involved in being a woman" (O'Shea 70).

Much more aware and far more outspoken than these young women, Dr. Laurie Lee Humphries, a highly respected child psychiatrist from Lexington, Kentucky, says that Southern women have been trained for generations to make men feel omnipotent. "Our accomplishments are not recognized like those of our male colleagues. And the sad thing is that women participate in this conspiracy of silence; women are not comfortable with women who are perceived to 'beat' men. Southern women remain acculturated to pleasing men . . . appearances are very, very important to Southern women. Most of us have always existed for others' opinions" (O'Shea 43).

Robert Harling's six "steel magnolias" hail from the Deep South of Natchitoches, Louisiana, and--call them what you will--are feminists rather than belles--or ladies. They are quick-witted, independent, and compassionate, and demonstrate the kind of female bonding that Southern women are known for, at least among themselves. Abbott tells us that "sometime in the late 1960s feminists brought forth the notion of sisterhood--of women bonded to women . . . but sisterhood was nothing new to me. It has been a zealously-guarded secret among Southern women for years" (167). Each of these women is liberated in her own way, and they are neither conniving nor clinging. The colorful MaGarth sisters in *Crimes of the Heart* are eccentric, to be sure, but none of the three fits the pattern of the typical Southern belle--or lady. Viewed objectively, Babe may well deserve a medal for attempting to kill her overbearing, abusive husband, and as her equally unorthodox but courageous sister Meg tells her, "You're not crazy, Babe--why, you're as sane as anyone walking the streets of Hazlehurst, Mississippi!" These characters may be complex and contradictory, but a foolish consistency, in addition to being the hobgoblin of little minds, is also con-

spicuously absent from the makeup of most Southerners, both fictional and real. Like that slight touch of insanity, ambivalence may be considered a part of their charm.

Linda Bloodworth-Thompson, a Missouri native who was educated at the University of Arkansas, and who is a co-producer as well as the principal writer for the television series *Designing Women*, knows the woman of the new South, and portrays four women who are not belles, but who understand and "dance around" the concept very well. Julia Sugarbaker, sometimes referred to as "The Terminator," who drove her Lincoln Continental through a newsstand pornography display and challenged a famous New York journalist for writing that Southerners regularly eat dirt, is the plainspoken leader of the group. Clustered around her as partners in the design firm which serves as the background and catalyst for the show's activities are her younger sister Suzanne, who has had husbands and beauty titles galore and seems to think of nothing except her own needs until a crisis comes and she proves to be as strong as Julia; Charlene, the firm's accountant, a long-legged beauty from Missouri who consults regularly with her astrologer (Tovah of Biloxi), reads The *National Enquirer* regularly, yet withdraws her membership from the Southern Baptist denomination because they will not ordain women; and Mary Jo, diminutive, pretty, seemingly flighty, who proves her mettle over and over again in episodes such as the ones where she leads the fight to provide condoms and birth control information in the public schools, goes out on a dinner-date with a black lawyer whose son is dating her daughter, and masters the art of self-defense after being threatened by a mugger. These are pretty, well-educated, accomplished career women, yet they never display the hard edge sometimes ascribed to feminists from other regions of the country, and they have in common with many Southern women the fact that they like men. Really like them. They feel comfortable dealing with men as equals, and they never descend to the level of the belle, who is famous for her manipulation of the opposite sex. And although they are polished in manner and refined in demeanor, they never descend to the level of the belle, they lack the meekness and subservience necessary to qualify as Southern "ladies" of the old school. Female bonding is strongly in evidence among the four, and as for insanity--during an episode in which they are asked to testify on behalf of an elderly friend who by her admission suffers from what she calls a "slight arterial flow problem" Julia tells an unsympathetic (Yankee) relative that "in the South, we don't hide our crazy people in the attic--we're proud of them--we bring them right down into the living room and show them off . . . no one in the South asks if you have crazy people in your family--they just ask which side they're on" (November 6, 1989).

Bloodworth-Thompson's "designing women" resembling Scarlett O'Hara (the real one) more than they do Blanche DuBois or that real-life Southern belle, Zelda Fitzgerald. Like Mitchell's female characters--like the steel magnolias--like the crazy MaGarth sisters--these women are *tough*.

Bel Tracy of John Pendelton Kennedy's *Swallow Barn* (1832) may have been the first real belle in Southern literature, just as Carol Honeywell may have been the last. Carol, the protagonist of Willie Morris's *The Last of the Southern Girls*

(1983), uses charm and beauty as her chief weapons in games of political intrigue and power in the nation's capitol--with emphasis on the power. However, she loses the game and everything that goes with it, which is one of the hazards of belle-dom. Abbott has commented that "the literature of the South is piled high with the battered corpses of belles, for their strategic and evasive game has tragic potential" (107).

While each woman must address her choices as best she can, most agree that the social systems influencing those choices are changing. In an earlier time, any individual born in the South was locked into a rigid pattern, and certain modes of behavior were expected of him. Today the region is changing rapidly, and the Southern way of life has become much more complex. In the midst of this the image of the Southern woman has undergone a more gradual evolution, but there has been a change. Writers are always part of a literary and historical milieu, responding to a set of traditions and influences, and the woman of the modern South is of necessity depicted as being different from her literary ancestresses, because the times are different. The most perceptive of modern Southern writers have learned to revere what is good of the past and create a present that is different but not disconnected from its roots. The Southern woman in contemporary literature manages to avoid being neatly categorized as she struggles to maintain her identity and remain sane in a culture that in the past has required its women to possess a duality of character virtually unknown elsewhere in the western world.

There remains a distinct timelessness to Southern life, and although a certain amount of change has been inevitable, the South still casts its spell--and the mystique of the Southern woman still fascinates.

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The Sketch Book and the Paradox of Fiction

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Despite the fact that it was composed in piecemeal fashion and contains writings on widely disparate subjects, *The Sketch Book* of Washington Irving has an insistent--if elusive--organic unity. Numerous critics have identified recurrent themes in Irving's text, but none has as yet isolated what I take to be the central unifying theme: the power of imagination over memory, of fiction over history.[1]

Throughout *The Sketch Book*, Irving uses a variety of devices, some obvious and some ingenious, to preserve the work's formal realism. Though the narrative contains events that are logically inexplicable, such as talking books and twenty-year naps, none of the sketches can safely be contradicted because Irving protects the credibility of his narrative persona, Geoffrey Crayon, through dream sequences, "found" papers, and surrogate narrators. The aim of Irving's technique is the erasure of any comfortable dividing line between "factual" and "fictional" narratives. No matter how outlandish a talking book may seem, a daydream about a talking book is perfectly credible. No matter how fantastic a twenty-year nap might be, "finding" a manuscript in which someone claims to have heard a story about a twenty-year nap only mildly strains plausibility. And no matter how many holes we might find in the Captain's narrative of a shipwreck, Crayon's claim to have heard the story on shipboard is unassailable. By insisting on this formal realism, Irving appears to distance Geoffrey Crayon from the more outlandish narratives in *The Sketch Book*, and to suggest the possibility that certain of the sketches are "factual" and others are "fictional." But Irving obliterates these convenient labels, daring us throughout the text to differentiate between imagination and memory, fiction and history.

Irving suggests his thematic intentions in the beginning. The view of the ships in the epigraph to "The Voyage" sets the pattern for *The Sketch Book*:

> One goes abroad for merchandize and trading,
> Another stays to keep his country from invading,
> A third is coming home with rich and wealthy lading.
> Halloo my fancie, whither wilt thou go?[2]

With a subtle misdirection characteristic of Irving's technique throughout *The Sketch Book*, these verses, while they seem to focus attention on real ships and real voyages, suggest that the book's real concern is the travels of the imagination. And in "The Author's Account of Himself," Geoffrey Crayon explains that in sailing to England he seeks not the natural beauty that abounds in America, but "the charms of storied and poetical association" which Europe alone offered (9). Fiction and poetry lure Crayon away from natural realities. The epigraph to this first sketch suggests the fate of such a traveller: "I am of this mind with Homer, that as the snaile that crept out of her shel was turned eftsoones into a

Toad, and thereby was forced to make a stoole to sit on; so the traveller that stragleth from his owne country is in a short time transformed into so monstrous a shape, that he is faine to alter his mansion with his manners, and to live where he can, not where he would" (8). Haskell Springer writes that "for Irving . . . imaginative experience existed on the borderline between two states of mind," and Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky adds that for Rip Van Winkle, faced with an inexplicable experience, the story he tells serves as a palliative, simultaneously mitigating Rip's loss of his familiar community and creating a place for him as a storyteller in the new community--and perhaps for Washington Irving in the new nation.[3] Taken out of the "shell" of the imagination, dreamers like Rip--and Geoffrey Crayon and Washington Irving--must alter their surroundings, building new mansions from the bricks of reality and the mortar of imagination. Rubin-Dorsky concludes that Irving "did find a measure of aesthetic satisfaction and that he did glimpse the meaning and value of storytelling."[4]

But Irving may have had more than a glimpse. Though *The Sketch Book* has traditionally been read as a collection of sketches, i.e. sentimentalized "factual" narratives, which includes three short stories, it actually consists of fictional narratives alone.[5] Irving assigns the more obvious fictions, the short stories ("Rip Van Winkle," "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," and "The Specter Bridegroom") to surrogate narrators, the comic Diedrich Knickerbocker and the roguish Swiss traveler, characters from whom we might expect nonsense or tricks. But Geoffrey Crayon's "factual" narratives, filtered through his dreamy Romanticism, also strain credibility. In "The Voyage," he can neither gaze at the sky without seeing "fairy realms" nor peer into the sea without imagining "the shapeless monsters that lurk among the very foundations of the earth, [or] those wild phantasms that swell the tales of fishermen and sailors" (12). And "The Wife," which Irving allows Crayon to present without benefit of distancing devices, rests on an understanding of female psychology as narrow as the opposite view underlying the characterization of Dame Van Winkle. So too does "The Pride of the Village." And, lest we ascribe these faults to the sexist thinking of Irving's age, "Roscoe," "A Royal Poet," and "Philip of Pokanoket" assert similarly narrow views of male characters.

Given Crayon's sentimental way of perceiving the world, this idealistic narrowness is hardly surprising. But other narrators in *The Sketch Book* color their narratives as well. In "The Voyage," the captain of Crayon's ship relates a heartrending tale of a tragedy at sea that demonstrates the conjoining of imagination and memory not in a dreamy aesthete like Crayon, but in a man whose success in a rough trade suggests his practicality. In the presumably real collision of a merchant vessel with a much smaller fishing smack, the captain sees the tragedy and terror of sudden death on a dark sea. But his narrative reveals that he, too, has recast history in a fictional mode. The captain tells his listeners--including one perhaps too credulous landlubber, Geoffrey Crayon--that "at night the weather was so thick that we could not distinguish any object at twice the length of the ship" (13). A moderately large windjammer of the day would have been perhaps one hundred twenty feet long; twice that is eight yards. Spotting an unlit object that far away at sea on a clear night would requir

an extraordinary pair of eyes, and even the thinnest fog would make such a feat impossible. The captain claims further that "the wind was blowing a smacking breeze" (13), yet this breeze did not dissipate the fog. His ship was "going at a great rate through the water" (13) though even the rawest, greenest seaman aboard would have had sense enough to take in sail on a foggy night. The crew of the fishing schooner "were all asleep, and had neglected to hoist a light" (13). Even fishing boats keep a night watch, and no sailor would forget to put up lights in a fog. But the captain's most flagrant distortion is still to come: "As the crashing wreck was sinking beneath us I had a glimpse of two or three halfnaked wretches, rushing from her cabin--they just started from their beds to be swallowed shrieking by the waves. I heard their drowning cry mingling with the wind" (13). On a night so dark and foggy he could not see a fishing boat, he claims that he could see men on her decks clearly enough to determine how they were dressed.

Because the captain's story breaks down so readily under analysis, the sketch suggests that it is not only dreamers like Crayon who ameliorate experience by means of the imagination. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" features numerous characters who confuse memory and imagination. The guests at the Van Tassels' party include Revolutionary War heroes such as "Doffue Martling . . . who had nearly taken a British frigate with an old iron nine-pounder from a mud breastwork, only that his gun had burst at the sixth discharge" (288). The narrator points out that such stories contain "a little becoming fiction," but given that frigates of the time often carried a hundred guns firing not nine-pound projectiles, but cannonballs weighing twenty-four or thirty-six pounds, and that naval gunnery was so inexact that six shots might be needed just to find one's range, the story becomes outlandish. And another guest claims to have parried with his sword a weapon he could not possibly have seen: a musket ball. The tellers of these and other tales are "persuaded that [they] had a considerable hand in bringing the war to a happy termination" (289). For these characters, who can no longer distinguish between imagination and memory and who have so begun to tell stories to themselves, fiction has superceded history and granted them a place at Sleepy Hollow's parties not unlike Rip Van Winkle's new position in his home village.

The most prominent of these "storytellers" is, of course, Ichabod Crane, the sadistic pseudo-intellectual who lives in the dream world of his own imagination. Prompted by his studies of Cotton Mather, Ichabod continually reifies the supernatural from the ordinary sounds of nature, fooling himself into a fright as other "storytellers" at the Van Tassels' party fool themselves into self-respect. Rubin-Dorsky, emphasizing the difference between the tales and the sketches, further differentiates between "Rip," which he terms "a form of realism," and "Sleepy Hollow," which he terms "make-believe."[6] But Rip's experience cannot be explained logically, and Ichabod Crane's can. Rubin-Dorsky also claims that the fact that Ichabod Crane's materialistic Yankee yearnings after the Van Tassel wealth "generate no anxiety in the people of tale or in the reader attests to the basic legendary quality of the fiction."[7] But the people of Sleepy Hollow cannot know Ichabod's heart, and if readers are not discomfited by his rapacious

fantasies, their complacency is probably due to Ichabod's obviously comic role, not the story's genre. And, trying to establish Sleepy Hollow itself as a mythic setting, Rubin-Dorsky offers that setting as an explanation for readers' responses to the story: "Sleepy Hollow is a safe place. When the supernatural, so often discussed and debated, finally appears, we are not frightened; when the potentially dangerous, but more, the inexplicable occurs, we are not troubled or disrupted."[8] Speaking only for myself, I am not frightened because the "supernatural" never appears except in Ichabod Crane's imagination, a world in which, though Irving grants me a glimpse of it, I do not live. Ichabod Crane's imagination, manipulated by Brom Bones, has the power to send him screaming away from both job and prospects. Brom's victory over Ichabod is neither the victory of the bumpkin over the intellectual nor of "common sense and hardheaded practicality over imaginative indulgence,"9 but of storyteller over audience. Brom Bones has perhaps grasped the truth toward which Irving seems to be groping: that "truth" and "reality" are in part constructed by the imagination.

The presence of all these "storytellers" in Irving's narrative suggests the role storytelling plays in the lives of ordinary men and women. In "The Boar's Head Tavern, East Cheap," the thematic heart of *The Sketch Book*, Irving brings the techniques of fiction to bear on the subject of literary criticism. What purports to be a critical essay--Irving gives the piece the ironic subtitle "A Shakespearian Research"--is actually a fiction about fiction. The progress of Irving's "essay" reifies the imaginary so subtly and so skillfully that the reader can all too easily forget that fictional characters and events are purely imaginary and have no physical existence beyond the page on which they are printed. Rather than argue for the power of the imagination, Irving here presents a virtuoso demonstration of that power.

Irving begins his demonstration by reminding us of what seems to be a clear distinction between the real and the imaginary. "So vividly and naturally are [the revels of Falstaff and his cronies] depicted and with such force and consistency are the characters sustained that they become mingled up in the mind with the facts and personages of real life. To few readers does it occur that these are all ideal creations of a poet's brain and that, in sober truth, no such knot of merry roisters ever enlivened the dull neighborhood of Eastcheap" (92). But it *has* occurred to Geoffrey Crayon, who throughout the ironic narrative that follows, remains aware of the distinction between fact and fiction even as he tries to erase it during his search for the Boar's Head.

Crayon's trail is difficult to follow. At some point in the narrative he crosses the boundary between the real and the imaginary, but exactly when and where--and how often--he does so cannot easily be determined. The city of London is real, the neighborhood called Eastcheap is real, and so are many of the landmarks Crayon describes. The "arch rebel, Jack Cade" (92) died in 1450, and "old Stowe" (John Stow, London antiquary), whose accounts of old London Crayon recalls during his walk through the city, passed on in 1605. Thus far Crayon retains contact with the real world.

But what of the Boar's Head itself? Crayon claims to find the old tavern's sign, "a boar's head carved in relief in stone . . . built into the parting line of two

houses" (93). With this claim he seems to assert his own belief in the reality of a tavern that appears on none of the various maps of Shakespeare's London prepared for critical editions of the Bard's works. (Stow's *Survay* mentions two Boar's Head taverns, but neither is in Eastcheap.) Crayon's visit to the tallow chandler's widow across the street from the sign of the Boar's Head shows that both the widow, who in Crayon's view "possessed the simplicity of true wisdom" (93) *and* the unnamed person or people who refer Crayon to her, share a belief in the tavern. From the tallow chandler's widow Crayon slides neatly across the borderline, which he intends to erase, between the fictional and the real. According to Crayon the widow knows nothing of the tavern during the time between Mistress Quickly's marriage to Pistol and the Great Fire of London. The wedding takes place in a realm beyond the imaginary: not only are the two principals fictional, but the ceremony itself, because it occurs offstage between the final scene of *Henry IV Part II* and the opening of *Henry V*, in which it appears as a *fait accompli*, exists only as an allusion; the wedding never appears either in print or on the stage. The juxtaposition of this imaginary wedding with the real tragedy of a conflagration that in 1666 destroyed nearly an entire city binds the fictional and the real tightly together, asserting realistic parity between the imaginary celebration and the real tragedy. Crayon's next rhetorical trick slips past in the verbal shuffle: he insists that this tavern that probably never existed, the home of newlyweds who certainly never existed, somehow burned down in a real fire, was rebuilt and later bequeathed to a real church.

As he binds the fictional event to a real event Crayon binds a fictional building to a real one. He then renews belief in the tavern's existence by pursuing a picture of it that the widow claims is preserved in the church. The picture could be of a real Boar's Head or it could be an artist's version of a tavern that existed only in the imagination of William Shakespeare. In either case, because it was made long before the invention of the camera, the picture need have no connection with reality: if the tavern was real, then the picture could at best constitute only an artist's perception of a physical artifact; if the tavern was imaginary, then the picture would be an artist's perception of a textual artifact. In no case could the picture prove the existence of the tavern. And in any case, the picture cannot be found in the church.

Disappointed in his search for the picture, Crayon soon finds greater treasures as the sexton leads him to the parish clubroom in a nearby tavern. Here he finds not only the picture, but also an antique goblet, the gift of a perhaps real, perhaps fictional, knight named Francis Wythers. Puzzled at first by the importance that the sexton and the hostess attach to the cup, Crayon suddenly realizes that the goblet is the grail of the Shakespearean researcher, "the identical 'parcel-gilt goblet' on which Falstaff made his loving but faithless vow to Dame Quickly" (98). Falstaff's vow, which appears only as an allusion by Mistress Quickly in *Henry IV Part II*, exists on the same imaginary plane as Pistol's wedding. Yet the hostess explains to Crayon how the cup has been passed through the generations from Falstaff's hand to his, and Crayon sees that she and the other residents of Eastcheap believe that Falstaff and his merry crew had actually lived there. Their illusion is pervasive and complete.

Rubin-Dorsky asserts that Crayon's journey, which culminates in the discovery of the goblet, results in "comic futility, rather than the hoped-for poetic reverie,"[10] but the ironic tone of the sketch suggests that Crayon, intent on satirizing researchers who argue faults into beauties and on drawing readers into the illusion, only pretends to believe that he has in his hands Falstaff's cup. Crayon quickly disengages himself from the illusion, reining the reader in short as he separates himself from the deluded locals. His sudden detachment is a surprising reminder that he, who after all sought out the Boar's Head, the picture of the Boar's Head, and the relics from the old tavern, does not share the illusion he has so carefully created in the "essay." Returning "The Boar's Head Tavern, East Cheap" to the context of the real world provides a factual basis for the lie that demonstrates Irving's thematic truth that fiction has greater power than fact.

"The Boar's Head Tavern, East Cheap" is a clever joke on Irving's readers. So skilfully does the author draw the reader along the narrator's path to the Shakespearean grail that Crayon's sudden disbelief in Falstaff and the Eastcheap revelers might strike us as a shock; if we have relaxed our guard for a moment we are still marvelling at the 'parcel-gilt goblet' when Irving lifts Geoffrey Crayon out of the illusion, having used him to cross and re-cross the borderline between the real and the imaginary so often that we no longer know on which side of it he stands. The residents of Eastcheap have lost track of it altogether: regulars at a nearby pub regale themselves with Falstaff's exploits, and a local barber tells jokes of Falstaff's "that were not laid down in the books" (99). That borderline itself is imaginary; Irving proves it so with *The Sketch Book*. And he reminds us that we are all storytellers.

Footnotes

[1]Mary Weatherspoon Bowden, for example, after pointing out that "Irving was not a short-story writer, but a composer of books," discusses five recurrent themes in *The Sketch Book*: "imprisonment, shipwreck, sterility, fanancial loss, and the role of the storyteller." *Washington Irving* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981), 9, 57.

[2]Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, ed. Haskell Springer (Boston: Twayne, 1978), 11. Further references to this edition are cited in the text.

[3]Springer, "Creative Contradictions in Irving, in *Washington Irving Reconsidered: A Symposium*, ed. Ralph M. Aderman. Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1969, 15. Rubin-Dorsky, "The Value of Storytelling: 'Rip Van Winkle' and 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' in the Context of *The Sketch Book*." *Modern Philology* 82 (May 85), 400.

[4]"The Value of Storytelling," 405-6.

[5]Rubin-Dorsky-s discussion of "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" insists that because "Irving . . . has gone to considerble lengths to make it explicit that Crayon is not passing off these stories as his own or claiming to have seen or witnessed in any way the events related within them . . . they are of a quite different order from the sketches and essays that form the rest of the collection." ("The Value of Storytelling" 393). And William Hedges has termed

the inclusion of tales from Knickerbocker in *The Sketch Book* "a technical inconsistency." "Irving, Hawthorne, and the Image of the Wife," in Aderman.

[6]"The Value of Storytelling," 398, note 10.

[7]Ibid., 403.

[8]Ibid., 404.

[9]Haskell Springer, "Creative Contradictions in Irving," in Aderman, ed., 17.

[10]"The Value of Story-Telling," 397.

Ernest Gaines' *A Gathering of Old Men* as a Modern Morality Play

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At first glance Ernest Gaines' *A Gathering of Old Men* seems a simple enough novel. The action proceeds chronologically over a six-hour period to an action-filled climax, followed by a conventional denouement where justice is dispensed and lovers reconciled. The story is told predominantly by uneducated country people in their simple vernacular. The characters seem highly stereotypical and predictable, from the overweight, redneck sheriff with his bungling deputy to the long-suffering, passive Negro farmers. Gaines boldly communicates the message that racial hatred is destructive and unjust and offers us hope that the South of the late seventies is changing for the better. In fact, he presents all so clearly that he runs the risk of coming across as overly simplistic, even banal and bathetic. But this straightforward simplicity can be misleading, for beneath these broadly drawn, clear lines lies a moral framework which gives the novel unusual power. I think that what Ernest Gaines is doing in *A Gathering of Old Men* is presenting us with a morality play for our time. The characterization, plotting, and didactic purpose of this novel all reflect the pattern of the medieval morality play, and this pattern explains the compelling force of the book.

To think of a morality play is to think of allegorical types. Of course, here we do not see characters named Everyman or Good Deeds or Pride, but Gaines obviously means us to see his characters as types. Lou Dimes describes Charlie as "the quintessence of what you would picture as the super, big buck nigger" (186). Sully points out that Sheriff Mapes is "one of those great big guys, exactly what the people up North and in Hollywood thought a small-town Southern sheriff would look like" (118). The LSU literature professor, with his pipe in hand, is "sallow and thoughtful-looking" (155), and Tee Jack conforms completely to the type of the redneck bartender careful to please his regular customers.

The most exaggerated of the stereotypes is Luke Will. We know his kind from the introduction to him as a "big, rough-looking fellow" wearing "of of those Hawaiian shirts with all the red and blue and yellow flowers on it" (135-36). Sully describes Luke Will and his friend Sharp as "big men, big country rednecks, the kind Bull Connor used as his deputies back there in the '60s" (150). They appropriately speed away from Fix's in their pickup, complete with a gun rack, two guns, and a CB. The scene in Tee Jack's bar shows us these men have no redeeming features, and, indeed, Gaines makes no attempt to individualize them. They are good ole boys who in the past have exercised brute force to maintain power. That their time is over, the shoot-out at Mathu's aptly demonstrates.

Beau and Fix Boutan, prototypical Cajuns, represent the outmoded vigilante movement. As Beau lies dead and each old man asserts the "I kill'd him," that "him" takes on a much larger significance than the man Beau Boutan. The Boutan family is probably credited with more crimes than they were individually

responsible for. Gable admits that Beau had nothing directly to do with his son's execution but asserts. "No, he wasn't born yet, but the same blood run in all their vein" (102). Fix is equated with "riding" and the old women know that "his seeds is still around" (108). That seed is certainly still there in Luke Will.

Gil Boutan represents the new generation. On the football field, he and Cal (Salt and Pepper) demonstrate how black and white can work and play together. The significance of their relationship is repeatedly emphasized. Sully tells us that what Gil wanted most while attending LSU

> to be All-American along with Cal. It would be the first time this had ever happened, black and white in the same backfield--and in the Deep South, besides. LSU was fully aware of this, the black and white communities in Baton Rouge were aware of this, and so was the rest of the country. (112)

Gill represents a shift from values associated with so-called family honor that led to the "rides" twenty or thirty years before, to a larger system of social values. Fix calls Gill "a regular Christ--a regular Christ in our midst. . . . Feels sorry for the entire world" (145). He is being sarcastic and reacting to the hurt of his son's defection, but the Christ image is appropriate. Gil does represent social salvation in his rejection of the old values. As the deputy Russ points out to him, "You want to do something for your dead brother? Do something for his son's future--play in that game tomorrow. Whether you win against Old Miss or not, you'll beat Luke Will. Because if you don't he'll win tomorrow, and if he does, he may just keep on winning" (151). Russ clearly doesn't mean Luke Will the individual, but Luke Will the type. And Gil's actions have broad social repercussions that outweigh family concerns.

The most clearly symbolic figure in the novel is Charlie Biggs. He enters less than thirty pages from the end, but he looms large physically and figuratively. Lou Dimes describes him:

> He was about six seven, he weighed around two hundred and seventy-five pounds, he was jet black, with a round cannonball head and his hair cut to the skin; the whites of his eyes were too brown, his lips looked like pieces of liver. His arms bulged inside the sleeves of his denim shirt, and his torso was as round as a barrel. . . . He was the quintessence of what you would picture as the super, big buck nigger. (186)

Charlie's power attains a Christian and moral element through the pulpit imagery in this comment:

> He took a quarter of the space with him whether he went toward the door, or the window. . . . I saw his round black sweaty face twitching, then trembling, and he stopped pacing the floor and raised those two big tree limbs up over his head, and, like some overcome preacher behind the pulpit, he cried out: "But they comes a day! They comes a day when a man must be a man. They comes a day!" The two big tree limbs with the big

fists like cannonballs shook toward the ceiling, and we watched in awe, in fear, in case he decided to whirl around, or fall. (189)

Later Lou again describes Charlie's appearance in religious terms: "... there was something in his face that you see in faces of people who have just found religion. It was a look of having been freed of this world" (193). In a way Charlie is also a Christ figure. He is the scapegoat that signals the new dispensation. With his newfound power, his courage is boundless. That the battle comes down to Luke and Charlie is one of the clearest examples of allegory in the novel. Charlie, who represents the obsequious, downtrodden, and abused black man of the past, asserts himself against the old repressive vigilante forces, and dies beatified. Dirty Red reports at his death, "I leaned over and touched him, hoping that some of that stuff he had found back there in the swamps might rub off on me. After I touched him, the rest of the men did the same. Then the women, even Candy. Then Glo told her grandchildren they must touch him, too" (220). Charlie is a pure representative of the old black experience. He works hard, cows before authority, stands repeated abuse but has never asserted himself. His experience represents the lot of generations of blacks before him. A "boy" until he turns fifty, as he tells the sheriff, "they comes a day when a man got to stand" (191).

Charlie's stand provides the opportunity for all the old men to stand. They all claim his action--an action of assertion. The old men collectively represent the way of life that has disappeared. Despite their varied backgrounds, complexions, and stories, they merge into one voice which chronicles the crimes and experiences of generations. Rufe sums up why they are at Mathu's when he says, "We had all done the same thing sometime or another, we had all seen our brother, sister, mama, daddy insulted once and didn't do a thing about it" (97). Mathu is the only one who does not fit the description--it is apt that they gather around him to make their stand, to finally do something about the injustices of the past. He functions as the standard against which the others are measured; he gives his stamp of approval to the other old men when they have stood up bravely to the sheriff. And Candy is right when she sees Mathu as embodying the "spirit" of the plantation. Once Mathu and the others are gone, there will be no more Quarters. Those days are past. Her patriarchal possessiveness towards "her people" ends when she is excluded from the conference in Mathu's house. These men are now autonomous and independent people.

Gaines takes these modern and sometimes distinctly regional types and constructs his allegory. The types contribute to the basic didactic and moral purpose of the novel. Just like the morality play, Gaines' novel strives to teach lessons to its audience. As Sylvia Feldman points out, the intention of the morality play was "to lead members of the audience to eschew vice, repent their sins, and embrace virtue so they may achieve the salvation of their souls" (43). Gaines' intention is not salvation of the individual in a strictly Christian sense; his is a more communal or social salvation. He means for the reader to perceive the error of social injustice and to move toward eliminating it. The lines are clearly drawn in his battle of vice and virtue. As the old men gather in the first half of the novel and tell their stories, the evils are unequivocal. In the first half

of the novel the old men gather, and each tells his story: Clatoo's sister defended herself when Forest Boutan attempted to rape her and wound up insane in prison; Mat's son bled to death in the hospital for lack of treatment because he was black; Jacob's sister was killed by white men who wanted her to keep away from black lovers; Uncle Billy's son was beaten so badly by whites that he went crazy and had to be institutionalized; Tucker's brother Silas was attacked and killed after showing he and his mule team could beat a white man and his tractor; Gables' sixteen-year-old son was electrocuted for "raping" a girl that "had messed around with every man, black or white on that river" (101). Coot was forbidden to wear his World War I uniform and medals in public. He says, "The first white man I met, the very first one, one of them no-English-speaking things off that river, told me I better not ever wear that uniform or that medal again no matter how long I lived. He told me I was back home now, and they didn't cotton to no nigger wearing medals for killing white folks" (104). The many examples of abuse over the years explain why these men are here to take a stand. There is no question as to who is right and who is wrong in the final confrontation.

In this novel, this single event takes on a representational, allegorical quality. This novel takes man in error--these men have never stood up to injustice and evil, and they are not fully men until they do. That is not just a personal or racial issue; it is a moral issue. The book is about coming to manhood, but it is also allegorical in the sense that to be a "man," a human being, a person must face injustice and evil head on. Just as in the classic battle between Virtues and Vices in the morality play, so this novel has a literal confrontation between the evil forces of Luke Will and his cronies and the good forces of the old men gathered at Matu's, with Candy, Lou, Miss Merle, the sheriff and others peripherally aligned with them. Luke Will has to show up for the action of the novel to be resolved, for good to overcome evil. In moral terms the plot can be summarized this way: Mankind (represented by the characters in the novel seeking autonomy or "manhood") must directly confront the evils or vices of this world (particularly injustice and cruelty), demonstrate the virtue of courage, and attain salvation. When the deputy Russ tells Luke Will, "You and your kind, your time has passed," and Luke Will answers, "I'll be round when you and your kind are long gone" (150), the statement makes sense in a larger context where we know that vice remains a constant to be battled continuously. Evil will always be there in some form. Human beings must be willing to confront and oppose it.

The clearly typed characters and the allegorical plotting of A *Gathering of Old Men* demonstrate its kinship with the morality play. Other minor elements of the novel reinforce this moral interpretation. Note that Snookum, who opens the narrative, is in reality "George Eliot, Jr.", a suggestive hint of a moral purpose. In fact, all the narrators, with no exception, go by some name other than their formal or "real" name, either a nickname such as Chimley or Coot or a shortened form like Mat or Sully. Lou Dimes as a journalist obviously uses a pseudonym, his real name being Louis Alfred Dimoulin. Charlie insists on being addressed as Mr. Biggs by the sheriff after his confession. This emphasis on identity supports the manhood theme so important in the novel. *A Gathering of Old Men* is about the search for identity, and it is about race and the South. These themes

are consistent with the moral emphasis of a novel which demonstrates how people must act to achieve a just social order.

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William Malone Baskervill: First-Generation Critic of Southern Literature

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On September 6, 1899, four years before John Crowe Ransom first entered Nashville's Vanderbilt University as a student, William Malone Baskervill, a professor of English, who more than fifty years later would be called "the first competent student of the literature of the New South" (Hubbell 909), died. Only forty-nine years old, Baskervill, a native Tennessean and the son of a Methodist minister, died at the height of a very promising career.

Baskervill had studied at what is today DePauw University in Indiana and at Randolph-Macon College in Virginia and in 1874 went to the University in Leipzig, Germany, from which he was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1880, his dissertation studying the Anglo-Saxon text of Alexander's "Epistle to Aristotle." Baskervill taught at Wofford College in South Carolina and in 1881 was called to "the chair of English" at Vanderbilt (Patterson 16).

Like William P. Trent, Charles Alphonso Smith, and several others of the early historians and critics of Southern literature, Baskervill had his formal training and his "main scholarly interests" in separate areas, "indeed in remote areas," as Arlin Turner called them (112). But Baskervill "became an eager reader and a penetrating, appreciative critic of the literature of the New South" (Paine xcix). His second wife, Janie, the daughter of Methodist Bishop H. N. McTyeire, one of the founders of Vanderbilt University, said concerning her husband's newfound interests, "'How well I remember . . . the advent of the new school of Southern writers. With what zest he read and reread, feeling a kind of personal pride in each new discovery! His heart and soul were in that work'" (Baskervill, *Southern Writers* 2: 15).

In 1892, Baskervill published in one of the early volumes of *Publications of the Modern Language Association* an essay entitled "Southern Literature," which is "probably the earliest article on the subject to find a place in a scholarly journal" (Hubbell 884).

For the purposes of this paper, the chief interest in Baskervill's *PMLA* essay is its indictment of Southern society, particularly the institution of slavery and the connection Baskervill makes between it and the quality of antebellum literature in the region. He says that the "keystone" to the "almost perfect arch of obstacles to the production of a literature" in the South was slavery (93). In an interesting metaphor he speaks of the harmful effects of slavery upon writing in the South: "Slavery spread her sable winds over the whole South, darkened men's minds and destroyed all possibilities of art culture. Art is not only a jealous mistress, but in literary matters her very existence is based on freedom of thought and expression. Where everything lies under the domination of one undisputed will, a deadly blight falls upon literary genius, and talent follows only those ways which lie open" (94).

Those words sound very much like the ones of William P. Trent published the same year in his biography of William Gilmore Simms. Interestingly enough, Baskervill quotes Simms himself on the effect of slavery upon the production of literature in the South: "'No sir, there never will be a literature worth the name in the Southern States, so long as their aristocracy remains based on so many head of negroes and so many bales of cotton.'" Baskervill, however, notes that it was especially dangerous after 1835 "to approach the 'peculiar institution,' and when it was attacked there was a prodigious waste of intellectual power in defense or vindication or apology" (94).

Baskervill explains that the writer in the Old South could not portray his society "naturally"--his word for "as it really was":

> "Home material was tabooed. To have used the abundant art material all around him; to have drawn a picture of life as it really was, would have seemed to the Southern artist an attack on all that he held dearest and loved most. Hence he sought themes elsewhere, shut his eyes to the present and lived in the past." (96)

In the last paragraph of his *PMLA* essay, Baskervill is forthright and candid in his estimate of Southern literature as he viewed it in 1892. He says, "The names of our two hundred writers belonging to the Old South have been preserved, yet with the exception of two or three, over their entire writings, as has been aptly said, is 'the trail of the amateur, the note of the province, the odor of the wax flower.'" He seems, though, to realize that something much greater could and should be made of the Southern experience when he closes his essay by saying, "but the Southern part of the Nation has something better to offer" (100).

At his death Baskervill had formulated plans for what he described as a "pioneer attempt to survey the entire field of this unique post-bellum literature, to indicate its inherent unity, and to work out some of the details characteristic of its production and of the product itself" (*Southern Writers* 1: v). In a time important to the establishment of the canon of Southern literature, Baskervill planned short papers dealing with fifteen post-Civil War writers largely of the local color school, among them five women--Mary N. Murfree, Margaret Junkin Preston, Sherwood Bonner, Mrs. Burton Harrison, and Grace Elizabeth King. Baskervill completed essays on six of the fifteen writers--Irwin Russell, Joel Chandler Harris, Maurice Thompson, Sidney Lanier, George W. Cable, and Mary N. Murfee. Those pieces were published in 1897 by the Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as Volume 1 of *Southern Writers: Biographical and Critical Studies*. Louis D. Rubin Jr. has called this collection of essays "by far the most impressive" of the "writings about southern literature produced during the period 1865 to 1900" (Fifteen 406). The remaining essays which Baskervill was destined not to produce were written by his associates and some of his former students and were published in 1903 as Volume 2 of *Southern Writers*.

For the purposes of this paper, the essays on Joel Chandler Harris and George Washington Cable are of special significance. In his evaluation of the achieve

ment of the former, Baskervill contends that one "can get little idea of the revelation which Mr. Harris has made of Negro life and character without comparing his conception and delineation with the ideal Negro of 'My Old Kentucky Home,' 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and 'Mars [sic] Chan' and 'Meh Lady' and the impossible negro of the minstrel show" (1: 63). Those works "breathe with infinite pathos the homely affection, the sorrows and hopes of every day life," but, Baskervill interestingly asserts, "as these have been developed and conceived by the white race." He asks, "... who ever heard that ["My Old Kentucky Home"] was a favorite song or [*Uncle Tom's Cabin*] a favorite book in any community of Negroes?" In a piece like "Marse Chan," "the devotion, the dog-like fidelity, and the unselfishness of the Negro are used to intensify the pathos of the white man's situation." And in both instances, according to Baskervill, the focus is not upon the Negro and his plight per se, but he "is a mere accessory, used to heighten the effect" (I: 65).

By way of comparison, Baskervill sees in Harris' Uncle Remus stories the identification of the Negro with Brer Rabbit, the hero. In those tales "the prevailing interest is centered in Brer Rabbit's skill in outwitting Brer Fox and the other animals, which is managed with such cleverness and good nature that we cannot but sympathize with the hero..." (1: 70).

The story "Free Joe and the Rest of the World" Baskervill views as representing another important phase of Harris' art. The story was a "heart tragedy brought about by the inhumanity of man and the pitiless forces of circumstances." Baskervill asserts that in no other place has the "helpless wretchedness of the dark side of slavery been more clearly recognized or more powerfully depicted." Baskervill was aware of the risk involved in a Southern writer's presenting the "complete picture" as it is exposed by Harris in "Free Joe," but "Truth demands that the complete picture shall be given, though silly scribbler or narrow bigot may accuse the author of trying to cater to Northern sentiment" (1: 74-75).

As an example of a Southerner who had in such manner raised the ire of the South with his work, Baskervill pointedly cites William P. Trent and his biography of William Gilmore Simms, which seemed "to produce a mild form of rabies in certain quarters" (1: 75). It was Baskervill's desire that "[u]nder the new order Southern life and manners [be] for the first time open to a full and free report and criticism" (1:3).

In tone and substance, the difference between Baskervill's essay on Harris and the one on George Washington Cable could hardly be more marked. Of Cable's laying cold hands on the Old South and its "peculiar institution" in his fiction--which, ironically, we have seen Baskervill himself doing in his critical judgments --Baskervill scathingly disapproves. He objects to much of Cable's work because he mixes art and polemics; indeed, that contention becomes the theme of the essay. Baskervill sees Cable's heinous habit as beginning in *The Grandissimes*, and he asserts that it "has vitiated the most exquisite literary and artistic gifts that any American writer of fiction, with possibly one exception, has been endowed with since Hawthorne" (1: 319). In some of his strongest statements, Baskervill calls Cable's novel *John March, Southerner* (1894) "one of the most dismal failures ever made by a man of genius" (1: 352). In the book, which is

"a witch's cauldron" (1: 353), "[t]here is hardly a true note" (1: 352). Baskervill simply dismisses the novel with the comment that "[t]he South can forgive Mr. Cable anything but literary failure" (1:353).

But, we ask, what about Professor Baskervill's own personal willingness to forgive his sometime friend? For, the truth to tell, behind the harsh critical judgments of the essay lies an interesting story of failed New South-liberal nerve.

In 1885, Cable left the South and moved to Northampton, Massachusetts, and for the next ten years was primarily interested in helping to make the case for civil rights for black people. At that point, Baskervill had read and admired Cable's fiction and had taught it to his students. Through Baskervill's auspices, Cable was invited to make the literary commencement address at Vanderbilt University on June 14, 1887, in which he "praised the material progress being made in some part of the South" (Rubin, *Cable* 196-97, 200). His reception was such that he conceived, in correspondence with Baskervill, an Open Letter Club "in which leading Southerners would set forth their views, criticize each other's ideas, and publish the results as symposia." So with Baskervill as secretary, a distinguished group of Southerners was put together. The black writer Charles W. Chesnutt, a friend of Cable, was among the group (Rubin, *Cable* 201).

In connection with activities of the Open Letter Club, Cable visited Nashville again in November 1889, to talk with Baskervill and to speak at Fisk University. On December 6 the Nashville *American* published an editorial attacking Cable for spending an evening visiting with "'our colored elite,' entertained by J. C. Napier, colored" (Rubin, *Cable* 201).

Baskervill, as Cable's Nashville contact, became the brunt of blistering attacks and the result was that Baskervill resigned as secretary of the Open Letter Club and shipped his files to Cable in Northampton. He wrote Cable that "as a question of expediency I think you made a mistake in 'breaking bread' with the Napiers. The bugbear used to frighten the southerner is social equality, and this act came near enough to suit the purposes of our young editors and all who think like them" (Rubin, *Cable* 202-03).

Cable replied that he regretted the inconvenience he had caused Baskervill but that he was glad his own enemies knew where he stood.

According to Rubin, "Baskervill, like many another Southern liberal who had spoken out on civil rights and then had been subjected to continuing hostility and misrepresentation, had been weakening in his zeal, and the Napier incident was key point in a retreat from the high ground he had earlier assumed" (*Cable* 203). By the time Baskervill published his essay on Cable eight years later, as a literary critic he severely attacked Cable the artist for his failure to understand the South's treatment of black persons, when it was really Cable the social critic who had caused Baskervill considerable problems with the white establishment in Nashville.

In Baskervill's estimation of Sidney Lanier, he especially liked the fact that Lanier did "not hesitate to inculcate a moral purpose nor lose sight of the higher fact that a man's words and deeds should be harmony" (I, 55). In Baskervill's own words and deeds as a first-generation critic of Southern literature during the crucial era when the fortress of Jim Crow was being thrown up around the

Southern region, not to be battered down for more than a half-century, we see a sad reflection in academia of what was transpiring in southern society as a whole.

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Kingship, Language and Dismemberment in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts One and Two*

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> Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off . . . and if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee (Matt. 18:8-9)
>
> Tamburlaine. "I speak it, and my words are oracles." (III.iii.102)

In several essays in *Power/Knowledge*, Michel Foucault discusses the ritual magic inherent in the King's body and the relation of its "corporal integrity" to the power of the state (55). Significantly, he contrasts this idea to the "Republic, 'one and indivisible'" explaining that the earlier concept of sovereignty involved a more subtle discourse of power by "segregation" of a social body not "constituted by [a] universality of wills," but by polymorphism (55). As a result, therefore, his theory suggests that the concept of a homogenous sovereign unity must dissolve into something more polymorphous. A metaphorical dismemberment occurs as the sovereign figuratively provides powerful and appropriate portions of himself --head, hand, heart, blood--to those subjects who require them. The kingly dismemberment is *voluntary*, verbal, and is an inescapable part of the godlike capacity the king must assume to rule.

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* offers a fertile field for examination because of the play's preoccupation with both literal and figurative dismemberment. Stephen Greenblatt sees Tamburlaine as a self-defining hero who asserts himself through language, and whose rhetoric attempts to claim supremacy through calculated boasts: "All the violent action in Tamburlaine--the stabbing, chaining, lancing, hanging--seems to be directed toward what we may call a theatrical proof of the body's existence" (210). Marlowe's hero's main conception of himself as a ruler appears to involve a tension between his own use of a language of personal dismemberment and his desire to rend and tear his enemies in an opposite--and destructive--type of vivisection. Both types of dismemberment assert his kingship, one which builds up by playing on the royal body as a composite of magical and apparently self-rejuvenating parts, and the other which conquers by showing that the others cannot themselves survive the process which is the basis of his power.

At his first appearance Tamburlaine enters "leading Zenocrate" with other conquered minions "laden with treasure" (I.ii.). Though Tamburlaine is almost excessively polite in his "courtship" of his future queen, he exerts power over her body by subtly equating her with the economic spoils of war. He promises: "The jewels and treasure we have ta'en / Shall be reserved, and you in better state / Than if you were arrived in Syria" (I.ii.2-4). Zenocrate *is* the treasure--she will be the mangled province as Tamburlaine begins the figurative dismemberment

of her conquered body. Her "fair face" and "heavenly hue" must "grace his bed," he declares before casting aside his shepherd's clothing and stating that a "curtle-ax" is a more seemly "adjunct" to his body (I.ii.43). An adjunct, "something attached to another thing, but in a dependent or subordinate position" (*OED*) describes Zenocrate also. She is his new "member" by virtue of his powerful capacity for appropriation.

In a similar annexation of the noble Theridamas to his "side," Theridamas' metonymies and Tamburlaine's metaphors clearly illustrate the close association of dismemberment with kingly power. Theridamas says that it is the powerful separate parts of his conqueror which have overcome him, the "words" and "looks." Tamburlaine continues the metonymic device as he offers his "heart" and "hand." However, it is Theridamas' use of the word *partaker*, literally meaning "to have a share" or "to be given part or portion" (*OED*) which most clearly evidences divine dismemberment. There is also a suggestion of recombination after the dismemberment when Tamburlaine promises that their two hearts shall merge. The implication is that, as with Zenocrate, Tamburlaine's joining of himself to Theridamas will strengthen and ennoble his subject until the subordinate is worthy of the king's attention. In Act II, Cosroe and Ortygius desire the merger that Tamburlaine urged on Zenocrate and Theridamas. Cosroe imagines personal invincibility when their "powers in points of swords are joined" (II.i.40). Ortygius exults at their inevitable victory when they "join with the man ordained by heaven," and he describes Tamburlaine and "brave Theridamas all conjoined" to do battle with Mycetes (II.i.52,64). They are all becoming members of Tamburlaine's body politic, but fail to realize that the hero can amputate, with no hurt to himself, those members which have completed their service.

As an example of this amputation, in an almost comic scene, Tamburlaine gains Mycetes' crown by trickery, but then gives it back while saying to the Persian king, "I lend it thee / Till I my see thee hemmed with armed men. / Then shalt thou see me pull it from thy head" (II.v.37-9). No less than a figural decapitation will suit for the appropriation of the power associated with the crown. Foolish Mycetes does not understand this, which is evidence of his unsuitability to reign. Later in the scene, when Cosroe, temporarily possessing the crown, enters wounded, Tamburlaine takes the crown and sets it upon his head just as Cosroe dies. Here the hero is brutally practicing appropriative dismemberment--his favorite method for increasing his power.

The significant gesture is very much a part of Tamburlaine's dismembering metonymic language. In Act III, Zenoxrate is defending to Agydas Tamburlaine's "offensive rape." She longs either for death or a complete merger with Tamburlaine as she urges her own "life and soul" to "unite" with his "life and soul" in a metaphorical execution of self (III.ii.21-3). After their conversation, the stage direction describes Tamburlaine: "[He] goes to her, and takes her away lovingly by the hand, looking wrathfully on Agydas, and says nothing" (III.ii). After the consciously physical seizure, Agydas is left alone to bewail his defeat and his astonishment over the hero's unexpected, but powerful, silence. In a speech which mirrors earlier ones praising Tamburlaine's invincibility, Agydas explains what he has read of his enemy's choleric "soul" and "heart" in his "brows," "eyes,"

and "cheeks" (III.ii.69-75). After Agydas has "divined" his future from Tamburlaine's face, Techelles tauntingly relays Tamburlaine's order that Agydas also "prophesy" what the dagger he carries "imports" (III.ii.89). The weapon, sent by Tamburlaine, is a partial embodiment of his own power--a part of himself that call kill from afar. The personification of the dagger by Agydas--he says it tells him "thou shalt surely die" (III.ii.95)--is a further indication that, rhetorically, the knife is Tamburlaine's member, a part of the sovereign body. Agydas literally hears and obeys as he stabs himself after understanding that the royal dagger is giving him an opportunity to die a quick and honorable death instead of a slow torturous one. Just as he could read Tamburlaine's facial expression and gesture, Agydas has also been able to interpret a more lethal part, the empowered dagger. Tamburlaine did not have to speak a word, a strong suggestion that his power does not lie completely in language, but in every part of his royal person.

In Act IV, the king of Arabia reveals an equally clear understanding of Tamburlaine's power. He boasts: "I long to break my spear upon his crest / And prove the weight of his victorious arm. / For Fame, I fear, hath been too prodigal / In sounding through the world his *partial* praise" (IV.iv.45-9). (This and all further italics are mine.) The language is strangely contradictory here. The Arabian king understands that Tamburlaine's power is incorporated in a body whose parts, like the "arm," are lethal. Though the king wants to "prove" or *try* the strength of this arm, he refers to it as "victorious," a revealing slip. In an attempt to say that Tamburlaine's reputation is undeserved, that Fame has been "prodigal," or wasteful in the hero's praise, the king says parenthetically, "I *fear*," a telling choice of words. Does he fear that Tamburlaine *deserves* his reputation, or fear that he does not? Finally, the word *partial* tempts a double or triple reading: "partial" praise as *biased* praise; as praise of *parts*, or as *incomplete* praise. At any rate, this king's language both prophesies his defeat and betrays his lack of confidence in his own boasts.

In Act V of Part I we see a dramatic hero who has reached the very height of his power after gaining steadily during the play. The initial actions takes on a pageantry reminiscent of the Elizabethan procession which defined royal superiority. The "masque" ends with Tamburlaine's mention and description of the allegorical figure Death who "sits" on the point of his sword. The underlings who lead four nameless "Virgins" away to slaughter them--to "show them Death"--are a further example of the play of power begun with the "speaking dagger" with which Agydas killed himself. Tamburlaine, as with Agydas, murders the virgins by proxy.

Tamburlaine does not appear until scene four in Act I of Part II after several scenes with various enemies and allies discussing his seemingly unconquerable power. When Tamburlaine enters, he is accompanied by Zenocrate and their three sons, all apparent adjuncts to the kingly body. With the expected attitude of a king toward his male heirs, he sees them as the means for extending and continuing his rule. "Every one commander of a world," he predicts of the three boys (I.iv.7). His rhetoric emphasizes the magical and constantly renewable body of the king. In his long and successful career, one important way Tambur

laine has survived is through the figurative amputation or dismemberment of any subordinate member which displeased him, or which had lost his usefulness. This early scene with the weakling Calyphas rejecting warlike enterprise sets up his necessary (for the power of the king) murder later in the play. Calyphas says of the Turkish viceroy: "If any man will hold him, I will strike / And cleave him to the channel" (I.iv.102-3). And to this pathetic attempt, Tamburlaine angrily replies, "Hold him, and cleave him too, or I'll cleave thee" (I.iv.104). Tamburlaine's double use of *cleave* to his son's single mention foreshadows the son's death. Calyphas will be sliced from the kingly body as neatly as a rotten spot from an apple, and with as little harm to the whole.

Midway in Act II, Zenocrate lies upon her deathbed surrounded by Tamburlaine and their sons. An understanding of this scene is crucial to the understanding of what finally happens to undermine Tamburlaine's power. Until this scene, Tamburlaine as supreme ruler has added or subtracted from his polymorphous body at will and has been in complete control of both his language *and* his body. He has created, invented, his royal self by the incorporation of bodily aspects which could increase his power. Zenocrate is the first of these incorporations to be removed without the express wish of the king. His lament at her deathbed explains Tamburlaine's weakened state. "Zenocrate," he says, "that gave [me] light and life" is now being taken from him by jealous heaven (II.iv.9). This the first indication that a powerful outside force might be capable of the division of Tamburlaine's royal person. Tamburlaine says a few lines later to Zenocrate that in her "being" he "repose[s]" his "life" (II.iv.48). The king is powerless in the face of this death, though when he realizes that she is indeed gone, with his customary rhetoric of dismemberment he cries "Techelles, draw thy sword / And wound the earth, that it may cleave in twain" (II.iv.97). Later in the scene Theridamas gamely echoes this attempt: "If words might serve, our voice hath *rent* the air," but for the first time, he says to his king that words *cannot* do what Tamburlaine asks (II.iv.121). "Nothing prevails, for she is dead," he states (II.iv.121).

Tamburlaine's decline begins here, though he will actually continue his war-like motions for three more acts. He has been dealt a mortal wound, as he says to Theridamas, "Thy words do pierce my soul" (II.iv.125). His last lines in this act explain his resolve to keep Zenocrate's body with him until *he* dies also. He thus refuses to acknowledge the separation necessitated by death.

Later in the play, when he tells Calyphas and his brothers to

> View me, thy father. . .
> Quite void of scars and clear from any wound,
> That by the wars lost not a dram of blood,
> And see him lance his flesh to teach you all.
> (III.ii.110-14)

his speech is supremely ironic. After pointing out that he, the invincible soldier, has never been wounded in battle, and is unmarked by the lasting signs of pain and suffering, he damages that unblemished body *himself* in order to show what

a real "soldier" looks like. He does not yet seem to recognize that his godlike ability to remain unscathed in battle has been evidence of his fitness to rule. Once the king's blood flows--once it has become obvious that he is mortal--his power is lessened. But the first blood-letting blow felt by Tamburlaine has to be struck by him; no one else around him possesses the power to mark his body. He must lessen his own sovereign nature before illness and death can overtake him.

The murder of Calyphas by his father in the following act is only a variation on the note struck at Tamburlaine's self-wounding. This time, however, it is not his arm he marks with his knife, but his unworthy son "Whose matter is the flesh of Tamburlaine" (Iv.ii.38). He is amputating that part of himself which contains "folly, sloth, and damned idleness" as well as "effeminacy" (IV.ii.51,87). Although the removal of Calyphas is meant to be a gesture to sustain the kingly power, as was the self-wounding, it is more damaging, perhaps, than Tamburlaine realizes.

By the midpoint of Act V Tamburlaine is suffering from the illness which will kill him. His "vital parts," in his own words, are failing him (V.iii.100). Soon he is an awe-inspiring participant in his death scene, and the final exchange between him and his sons concisely exemplifies the rhetoric of divine or kingly dismemberment. Amyras says mournfully to his father: "Your soul gives essence to our wretched subjects, / Whose matter is *incorporate* in your *flesh*" (V.iii.164-5). His statement essentially describes the evidence of Tamburlaine's fitness to be a king--a king whose body has given life in an ever renewable and multiplying state. He has been the transubstantiated wafer in a communion with his subjects which required no intermediary bread and wine. Now, dying, he restates his superiority over death in a particularly god-like way:

> [My spirit] must part, imparting his impressions
> By equal portions into both your breasts.
> My flesh, divided in your precious shapes,
> Shall still retain my spirit, though I die,
> And live in all your seeds immortally.
> (V.iii.170-4)

His last verbal dismemberment of the royal body is occurring, but now there will be no more powerful renewal. Though he parcels out his portions equally to his sons, his power is being diffused and cut off from its source. The immortality he claimed at the height of his power was an illusion of language, a throne of words.

After a final warning to Amyras (not to be drawn "piecemeal" by the conquered kings), Tamburlaine dies, and the new king says prophetically: "Let the earth and heaven his timeless death deplore, / For both their worths will equal him no more" (V.iii.252-3). It is worth noting that, according to Frank Fieler, a large portion of Marlowe's audience would have been aware that historically, Amyras was destined to lose his kingdom to Bajazeth's sons (11). The thing that Tamburlaine desires will not happen: his "divided flesh" will not be sufficient to elevate his son to the level of the father, and Amyras knows it. Tamburlaine

polymorphous sovereign of a rearranged world "*must* die" taking with him most of the corporal power invested in that most unstable of entities--the body of the king.

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Children's Story or Feminist Tract?: Evelyn Sharp's *The Making of a Schoolgirl*

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In 1897, years before she began her activities as a suffragette and her work as a journalist, Evelyn Sharp contributed her first novel in the often ignored sub-genres of the school story and the story for girls. When compared to better-known nineteenth-century novels that address education, *The Making of a Schoolgirl* is different precisely because it emphasizes to young readers the benefits of attending a well-run school, rather than pointing out to adults the dangers of poorly governed institutions, and because it is about a girls' school rather than a boys' school. Sharp's novel is not a strongly feminist tract, but it does contradict several of the stereotypes about girls and girls' schools. To a large extent, Sharp promotes her views through the emphasis she puts on honor, achievement, and independent thought. At this point it may be useful to put the Sharp novel and the status of women's education in context. Probably the best known school story is Thomas Hughes' 1857 novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, about adventures at Rugby in the 1830's. The earliest comparable school for girls of the same class was the Cheltenham Ladies' College founded in 1854 (Martin 75). But as Isabel Quigly points out in *The Heirs of Tom Brown*, the best-known writer of school stories for girls is Angela Brazil, who published her first story in 1906 (214). Until near the turn of the century, most schools, especially girls' schools, appear in novels for adults, and the school itself is generally a minor part of the novel.

The Lowood school portion of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, for example, contains little mention of lessons. The most memorable features of the school are the inadequate food and clothing, and, of course, the typhus epidemic. Here, the bullying that occurs among students is not merely to exercise power, but to take much-needed food and places near the fire from the smaller and weaker students. The closely regimented school day and Jane's limited activities with two friends are virtually all we see of schoolgirl society. There is a mixed assortment of authority figures. Although Lowood's history teacher is harsh and unsympathetic, the superintendent, Miss Temple is genuinely concerned for her charges and tries to do the best possible for them while working for the stingy Mr. Brocklehurst.

Moving up the scale of unsatisfactory schooling, we come to the sort of problems found in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*. Tom Tulliver first is subjected to Jacobs' Academy, where he gains experience in "blacking the family's shoes and getting up the potatoes" and in games and fighting with his school-fellows, as well as some acquaintance with more traditional curriculum (11). Next, he is force-fed the Eton grammar and Euclid by The Reverend Mr. Stelling who refuses to "enfeeble and emasculate his pupil's mind by simplifying and explaining" (141). Meanwhile, Stelling ignores Mr. Tulliver's request that he

provide practical instruction in "mapping" and "summing" (138). Maggie Tulliver attends Miss Firniss' boarding school and receives what she later understands to be "shreds and patches of feeble literature and false history" (288). In Maggie's case, we do not even see her at school but are only told the consequences of her experience.

Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays* is the earliest popular novel in which the school itself is central. We are shown Tom's background, his arrival, and the course of his school career. He tolerates Greek and Latin while he relishes extracurricular schoolboy life. Rivalries of one house against another, fagging, alliances against various masters, sports, bird nesting, friendships, and miscellaneous mischief in individual studies consume much of his attention.

Like *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, *The Making of a Schoolgirl* is written for youthful readers, although in this case it is limited to a new student's expectations of school and her first term. Becky is eager to begin her adventures at school because of such benefits as dining "where distinctions of age and sex did not exist and all elderly tyranny, except the mysterious domination of the headmistress, would cease to exist" (25). From her first hours at school, Becky discovers that some of her preconceptions are wrong. She explains in a letter:

> Miss Strangways is not a bit like a headmistress, and she has n't got horrid patronizing ways, and she does n't laugh when you say things that are not funny. The girls all talk without stopping, and they kiss one another for nothing at all, even when they have n't had a present given them. . . . [But] none of them scream or giggle, or anything like that. . . . (36)

Many of Becky's ideas about school come from envisioning herself in scenes from novels, but most of her notions are based on the comments of her brother Jack, who attends a public school. Even this late in the century, public opinion on formal schooling for girls was very mixed, and Jack brings up a common objection when he says, "girls are never any more good . . . when they've once been to school; it makes them so independent" (41). As might be expected, Becky is astonished in the changes she sees in herself after only one term.

Although there is not the strong emphasis on faculty as adversaries to be defeated which we find in boys' stories such as Kipling's *Stalky & Company*, Becky discovers that a "kindly tolerance" for authority is the maximum allowed by the schoolgirl code. In lessons, the teachers are patient with students and willing to explain when necessary and to praise when appropriate. Allowable student reaction to this helpfulness may go so far as the purchase of a bunch of violets for the teacher. In contrast, both explanations and praise are rare in the boys' school novel. Miss Strangways resembles Miss Temple in intellectual ability, interests, and genuine concern for students, but this is no charity school and there is no shortage of food or other necessities. Despite Becky's pronounced admiration for the headmistress, the other girls refer to her as "Strangles" and persist in claiming that she is very hard on them. Likewise they complain about the food, the amount of work required, and the length of time until the holidays. In this case, however, the newest pupil makes it clear that these claims are made

according to the unwritten rules for student behavior and are not a reaction to genuine abuses.

There is no serious rivalry between forms or houses, as is common in boys' school novels, but there is some competition among the classes and within each class as students are sent up or down based on performance. The social hierarchy is only loosely related to scholarship, however. There is a definite priority code; not sixth-formers, but the head girl and her companions rank at the top, and the new students are clearly at the bottom.

Certainly *The Making of a Schoolgirl* meets some of the purposes of the traditional school story--to entertain young readers, to give them an introduction to school life, and to encourage them to hard work and honorable behavior. However, *The Making of a Schoolgirl* surpasses these goals to assert the benefits of a solid education and to show girls coping with the concepts of honor, achievement, and independent thought.

Honor, an idea much emphasized in the traditional school story for boys, is just as important in *The Making of a Schoolgirl*. As early as Becky's first night at school, there is an animated discussion among older students about the fine distinction between breaking "rules" when there is a strong probability of being caught and violating an honor code about such things as talking after lights out with virtually no chance of being caught. Throughout the novel, much of the students' complaining and many of their punishments concern highly breakable rules about whistling aloud, swinging the arms while walking, and similar unladylike conduct.

Honor is also illustrated by the commitment Becky and her friend Madge have to the literary paper the *Decagon*. Begun with great enthusiasm, the fledgling student publication is soon abandoned by most of its supporters under pressure from upcoming examinations, but Becky and Madge are determined to fulfill their promise to publish. Initially, their final product seems quite insignificant compared to the larger, typeset school paper Jack sends from his school. However, his paper is uncut (thus unread) and "dull" looking (70). In fact, little of the paper is actually written by the boys; a master's essay on Christopher Columbus, articles taken from other papers, and lengthy lists about football matches comprise the bulk of the publication.

Student achievements also compare favorably with those at Jack's school. Although there is no Greek or Latin, the curriculum does not consist merely of ladylike accomplishments but includes French, German, history, arithmetic, literature, and gymnasium (complete with Indian clubs). Academic achievement is rewarded by positive reinforcement from the teachers and with prizes at the end of the term.

Sharp also supports the value of independent thought throughout the novel. Becky debates vigorously with Jack and even defends her views against new schoolmates, although she knows they will disagree. In an innovative experiment, the school employs an enthusiastic composition teacher who demands "Say what you mean. . . . Try to forget what other people think, and find out what you think yourselves" (48). The girls are startled and inspired by the first lecture, but when time comes to read the students' papers aloud, there is less

originality to praise than Miss Ashwood had hoped. After her initial experiment with the class, her "expression had saddened considerably" (52). Nevertheless, Sharp shows students being encouraged to think for themselves and the difficulty of achieving this objective.

Student rebellion is subdued compared to episodes in some of the novels of boys' schools, but there are examples of resistance. Some take subtle forms. For example, Madge counters a claim that girls are sickly by explaining, "the girls at school are always pretending they've got colds. . . . But that's only because they want to get out of going for walks and things. *You'd* pretend to be ill if you had to go out two and two, and walk like a snail" (91).

Despite the non-traditional emphasis of the novel, we are never allowed to forget that this is a girls' school. There are no individual studies, and all work is a basically a communal activity. Also, the students do not have the freedom to move about outside the school building that is a major source of adventures in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and Kipling's *Stalky & Company*. Instead, the students play indoor games and sew clothes for the poor. Becky writes, "It must be so awful to wear hideous scarlet petticoats just because you are the poor . . ." (55). In his next letter, Jack replies "Just fancy making scarlet petticoats for the poor; Wilkins minor says *his* sister is always making things for the poor now she goes to school, and the poor don't want them a bit, he says . . . " (56). Even in this relatively progressive institution, we see a joining of the womanly art of sewing and a traditional concept of good works.

Sharp shows her readers the social and educational benefits of attending a well-run school and does so in a comparatively realistic fashion. At the same time, she contradicts common misconceptions about the inability of girls to comprehend the value of an honor system, to handle subject matter that goes beyond the trivial, and to think independently. In *The Making of a Schoolgirl*, she presents quietly to the younger generation some of the ideas she will later state much more forcefully to adults.

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Women and Dandy Little Girls: The Many Loves of MacDonald'sTravis McGee

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John D. MacDonald's series of twenty-one detective novels centering upon the character Travis McGee is "one of the most popular and successful in American publishing history" (Geherin 45). Beginning in 1964 with the simultaneous publication of The *Deep Blue Good-By* and *Nightmare in Pink* (Woeller and Cassiday 143), the series continued, with the appearance of about one book a year, until 1985, when the publication of *The Lonely Silver Rain* concluded the adventures of McGee. MacDonald died in 1986, having written some seventy novels and novelettes (Hirshberg 106) and about 600 magazine stories (Geherin 4).

For many years after he began writing fiction, MacDonald resisted publishers' suggestions that he undertake a series centering on a recurring character; such a series, he felt, would both limit him artistically and make it impossible for him to sell something not featuring his hero (Geherin 43). But his editor at Fawcett was insistent, the publisher having just lost its detective-writer-in-residence Richard Prather, creator of the popular Shell Scott series. In a magazine article of 1964, MacDonald explains how through trial and error he overcame his reluctance toward a recurrent protagonist: in two manuscripts which he shelved, he created two detective-heroes, one of whom was too somber and dark, the other too much of a "jolly, smirking jackass," too full of "smartass comments." The third attempt, which steered a middle course, met with his approval; and in this novel, *The Deep Blue Good-By*, Travis McGee was born ("How to Live with a Hero" 14, quoted in Geherin 44). MacDonald originally called him Dallas McGee, acknowledging the kinship of his protagonist with the heroes of the Western genre, but changed his name when, before the novel was published, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in that Texas city (Woeller and Cassiday 143). Writer MacKinlay Cantor advised MacDonald, "Hell, name him after an Air Force Base. They have good names. Like Travis in California." Macdonald wisely accepted Cantor's suggestion (Tolley 13, quoted in Geherin 44). Needing some way to help readers keep track of the novels in the series--because, in the author's words, "a reader who buys the same book twice is a very angry reader"--MacDonald rejected numbers because they would suggest that reading in a certain order was required; after considering other options such as animals and months of the year, he settled upon colors (Geherin 44).

Travis McGee would be a detective in the "hard-boiled" tradition of Hammett's Sam Spade, Chandler's Philip Marlowe, and Spillane's Mike Hammer: the "p.i." of the sort pop-culture critic John Cawelti calls the Enforcer, working often outside the law, following his own moral code, accountable only to himself, acting at times not only as detective but also as judge, jury, and executioner (Cawelti 67-76). Yet there would be a difference: McGee would not really be a

detective at all. A detective has to worry about such things as probable cause, search-warrants, and licenses; he is expected to have an office with a name on the door; he must operate, if not within, at least reasonably close to the law and keep police in the jurisdiction apprised of what he is doing. Not Travis McGee: his card reads "Salvage Consultant" and his home and office is "the *Busted Flush*, a 52-foot barge-type houseboat, tied up at Slip F-18, Bahia Mar," Fort Lauderdale, Florida (*The Deep Blue Good-By* 221).

Both his self-styled profession and his place of residence have figurative significance; they suggest both his place within the hard-boiled tradition and the extent of his departure from it. "Salvage Consultant": this title links him closely with the heroes of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler in that it indicates McGee's sense of social mission. He might play by his own rules, but the point of the game is to make the world a more livable place for everybody. In *The Literature of Crime and Detection*, Woeller and Cassiday pay tribute to Hammett and Chandler for their obdurate insistence upon "condemning cruelty and inhumanity" in an often brutal American society and grant these authors unqualified status among American literary realists (135-7). John D. MacDonald clearly belongs with Hammett and Chandler in this tradition of the crime novelist as merciless but ultimately positive social critic: his hero and spokesman McGee, the detective as salvage consultant, believes that "people hurting people is the original sin" (*Nightmare in Pink* 35); he is sure that, however prevalent this sin is in modern America, certain elements of our society are redeemable and worthy of redemption. Hence his standing arrangement with all prospective clients, reiterated in every one of the twenty-one novels: if you have lost something of value that is legitimately yours and have exhausted every legal means of recovering it, McGee will get it back for you; he will give you half and keep half as his "consulting fee." As he explains, half of anything is better than nothing at all. But more often than not, he does not even bother to collect his fee: what he salvages and restores in the way of a wrongly accused man's reputation, a despairing young woman's hope, or a dying penitent's scrap of dignity--this is the true grail of McGee's quest, the guerdon for this knight in tomato-can armor with tinfoil sword.

His houseboat, like his title, has a figurative function: the *Busted Flush*, won by a bluff in a poker game, serves as floating sanctuary for McGee and helps him maintain a degree of objectivity. Although not as detached as the heroes of Hammett and Chandler, McGee establishes an initial position as impartial observer as clients come to him while he is sanding a spot of dry rot from a gunwale of the *Flush*, or relaxing on deck with a tumbler of Boodles gin on-the-rocks. The privacy of his houseboat is protected by an ingenious, nearly foolproof electronic security system. Only his intimate friend, the internationally renowned economist and beach bum Meyer, has free access to the *Flush*. All this seems to indicate that one way of escaping the evils rife on American soil is to move onto American water and pull up the gangway. But, more importantly, the houseboat affords McGee an unobstructed view of the opposition; and, once he has committed himself, it provides a stable platform on which to sort things out and plan the next move when confusion ashore approaches hopelessness.

This function of the *Busted Flush* remains consistent from the first to the twenty-first novel of the series.

And so salvage consultant McGee, operating from the nearly unapproachable sanctuary of his houseboat, lets business find him--meanwhile meditating upon and offering pronouncements on the Signs of the Times. McGee has a shrewd eye for these indicators and keeps abreast of current issues. This is in no way to suggest that MacDonald is merely following the fashion in becoming an advocate for particular causes; on the contrary, the author is profoundly concerned with these problems and speaks out through other media as well as his novels.

One of his favorite causes is ecology, for he fears that our greed is destroying our planet. Not only in works of the Travis McGee series (such as *Bright Orange for the Shroud*) but also in other novels (*Condominium*, for instance, and *Barrier Island*, which concerns land-grabbing shenanigans off the Mississippi coast), and in several journal articles (such as "Last Chance to Save the Everglades," *Life*, September 1969), Macdonald indicts such wrongs as shoddy construction, filling-in of bays, conversions of estuaries into golf courses, wastage of timber and other natural resources--in short, ecological insensitivity in general. Wherever McGee goes, he is followed by "petrochemical stinkings, a perpetual farting of the great god Progress" (*The Empty Copper Sea* 32), and finds the air choked with "smodge, fugg, and schlutch" (*The Dreadful Lemon Sky* 27). MacDonald repeatedly dramatizes the ineradicable, devastating effect of these ecological crimes upon the dwindling natural environment and the American character as well.

Another persistent concern in the Travis McGee series is the feminist issue; yet in dealing with it, MacDonald seems equivocal. The reader senses a hesitation, an incomplete intellectual and emotional commitment to the feminist cause. The close reader of the novels perceives this ambiguity: on the one hand, McGee--and MacDonald, one may surmise--grows increasingly receptive in the course of the series to the emergent freedom and independence of the American woman (one should keep in mind that the years of the series, 1964-1985, saw significant triumphs in the American feminist movement) and pays tribute to this figure in major women characters of the novels; but on the other hand, the hero keeps a compartment of his mind reserved for a category of females he labels "dandy little girls," shallow figures who bear little resemblance to the "women." Their existence undoubtedly qualifies the validity of MacDonald's vision of the female sex.

From the outset of the series, women play a significant role--as they do in the detective fiction of the classic masters of the genre. As treated by MacDonald however, they have more importance as characters in their own right than in the crime novels of his predecessors. Not simply plot devices or mattress fodder, the women of the McGee novels are usually complex, fully humanized individuals. Moreover, as the series progresses from the mid-60's through the 70's and into the 80's, the major women figures of the novels become increasingly independent, to such an extent that (as will be developed presently) the tables are turned on McGee: whereas in the early works he frequently helps women back to psychic health through his own brand of sex therapy, near the end of the series

he becomes the one in need of such assistance, and an emotionally and mentally healthy woman is on hand to provide it. The salvage consultant salvaged--by a woman, no less.

Let us first trace the progress of the "women"--as opposed to the "dandy little girls"--through a few representative novels taken from early, middle, and late phases of the series. The major female characters of *The Deep Blue Good-By* (McGee #1, 1964) could be called women-as-victims. Both Cathy Kerr, who comes to McGee for help, and her friend Lois Atkinson have been abused by Junior Allen, one of the most bestial, most totally evil of MacDonald's villains. Lois, explaining her relationship with Allen, says to McGee: "We're victims, maybe. The Junior Allens are so sure of themselves and so sure of us. They know how to use us .... And they seem to know by instinct exactly how to trade upon our concealed desire to accept that kind of domination" (259). Learning of Allen's sadistic sexual debasement of Lois, which left her in a state of self-loathing--and recalling the villian's less sordid but nevertheless humiliating treatment of Cathy--McGee sets out to find and punish Junior Allen. By doing so, he will restore a measure of dignity and self-confidence to both women, each of whom has been depicted as sympathetic and intelligent. But McGee is only half successful: he bids a "deep blue good-by" to Allen by throwing him overboard (and inadvertently impaling him on the flukes of a Danforth anchor), through which exercise of justice he restores the peace of mind and self-respect of Cathy; but unfortunately it is too late for Lois: voluntarily acting as bait in a trap for Allen, she loses her life. Dejected over his lack of complete success, McGee seeks out Cathy, and the two engage in a mutually restorative, noncommital tumble in bed as the novel ends.

The Long Lavender Look (McGee #12, 1970) is significant in an analysis of MacDonald's treatment of women, for in this work McGee's usually dependable capacity for assessing female character in simple black and white terms fails him; he recognizes his failure of perception and, by implication, acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of individual women. The character in question, Betsy Kapp, is initially seen by McGee in Hollywood cliches: she sets up a cinematic "meet-cute" episode with the hero but "Doris-Days" in sexual coyness; she is "the distillation of several hundred motion pictures" as she forms her mouth into a mirror-rehearsed smile of yearning for "tremulous, yearning love" (94, 107). Annoyed by her shallow romanticizing, McGee deliberately shatters her illusions by revealing the truth about her boyfriend; and, as she tries valiantly to recover, he realizes that he has been mistaken: she is a woman of great complexity--vulnerable, troubled, uncertain, touching in her attempts to beautify her drab life. Later he forgets his revised judgment and, when she fails to appear for a meeting, assumes she is following "a new script patterned on the late movies" (147)--when she has in fact been killed. A similar misconception nearly costs McGee his life when fails to see that the deputy sheriff he trusts is the murderer he has been seeking; only a lucky shot saves him from death. McGee's world is becoming less clear, but a positive result is his recognition of the inadequacy of simplistic appraisals of feminine character.

Among the novels that conclude the series, none is more illustrative of MacDonald's deepening insights regarding women than *The Empty Copper Sea* (McGee #17, 1979). McGee's lapse from certainty in his judgments has become serious; his self-confidence has declined alarmingly. His struggles, he thinks, have all been for "small, lost, unimportant causes" and he is that "most gross and ludicrous" creature, the "ancient beach bum." He wishes he were anyone else but Travis McGee (50). In the jargon of the day, he is undergoing mid-life crisis and is sadly in need of the kind of emotional therapy he once administered. And in the nick of time Gretel Howard enters--arguably the most appealing, complex, powerful, and independent of all MacDonald's women: "She glowed with strength and health and vitality" (122). At their first meeting, as she looks steadily at him, trying to read his thoughts and wondering whether to trust him, McGee feels "a sudden impact. I wanted to be more than I was, for her. I wanted to stop being tiresome . . . and predictable. I wanted to be . . . bright and reliable, sincere and impressive--all for her" (124). He soon realizes that he is in love with Gretel, and their relationship sets him on the path to regeneration. Only a single kiss passes between them in the novel: their attraction for each other goes beyond the physical. But as the novel concludes, Gretel refuses McGee's startling proposal of marriage. "I can't be somebody's remedy," she explains, "somebody's medicine for the soul. . . . I have to be my own person. I have to take complete charge of my life. I did the hard-scrabble years for somebody else . . . . I have to be complete within myself and stand by myself in order to really become a person" (254-5). McGee responds, "You come up with some pretty strange stuff, lady"; the two embrace as rain begins to fall; and the novel ends as Gretel's face is illumined by a flash of lightning--foreshadowing her death in the next novel, *The Green Ripper* (McGee #18, 1980). In Gretel Howard, MacDonald presents us with a woman of substance, on equal footing with the best of men. McGee has finally put behind him his patronizing notion that women can readily be categorized.

Or has he? For in most of the novels of the series, there come bouncing down the Florida Atlantic strand, or twisting to the music of a stereo system, a group of young females McGee calls "dandy little girls" or "beach bunnies" or "crumpets" or another of a dozen or so unflattering, stereotypical epithets he reserves for the decorative but shallow young females who thrive in Fort Lauderdale, Cuernavaca, Las Vegas, Pago-Pago, or wherever else McGee appears. On more than one occasion he goes to bed with such a girl, but post-coital guilt and self-criticism inevitably follow.

From the first novel to the last, the concept is the same. In *The Deep Blue Good-By* McGee cuts a beach girl named Corry out of the pack (for informational not sexual purposes), takes her, "dazed with sun and beer," to her sleazy apartment--a "little loser in the bunny derby" who dreams of key clubs and thinks she could be a centerfold in anybody's book. "When the youngness is gone," McGee says, as he leaves her sleeping, "there isn't much left" (330-1). In *A Deadly Shade of Gold* (Mcgee #5, 1965), the hero is approached by a "nameless sun bunny," one of the many "little blonde cupcakes" he encounters in a Mexican town; she has a "bland, sensual little pug-face" and, when she comes closer, she

"show[s] teeth that look brushed after every meal" (245- 7). And in the final novel of the series, *The Lonely Silver Rain* (McGee #21, 1985), McGee speaks of "laughing, clean-limbed lovely young girls" who are "as bright, functional, and vapid as cereal boxes" (172).

The contradiction involved in these two radically different views of the female sex seems inconsistent with the integrity of vision many readers find in MacDonald. But perhaps this contradiction becomes less damaging when one considers the author's manner of representing the "dandy little girls": in contrast to the complex, completely realized "women," they are are without exception stereotypes, flat and unconvincing. MacDonald seems not to have his heart in their characterization, not really to believe in them. It could be argued that in these cardboard figures he is paying lip service to a convention of detective fiction to which he does not honestly subscribe. MacDonald unquestionably has an enlightened view of women; nonetheless, he cannot altogether escape the outdated, insensitive concept of females implicit in the hard-boiled detective tradition. Women, to tough private eyes like Spillane's Mike Hammer, are hardly more than sex objects. To MacDonald's Travis McGee, many women are equal or even superior to men, himself included; but he seems bound by his membership in the time-honored fraternity of hard-boiled fictional detectives to pay the obligatory homage to "sun bunnies," "dandy little girls," and other young females of easy virtue.

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The Spirit of Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera*: "To Madness Near Allied"

N. Tyson

Great visionaries who do not die young or fade, like Wordsworth, may well, like Ruskin, go mad. The world is an inhospitable place for the romantic prophet. No wonder he breaks, seeing that humanity is no better off for all his efforts because it has not listened and will not listen. In *Fors Clavigera*, Ruskin links his frustration as a failed reformer with the onset of his own insanity:

> The doctors said I went mad, this time two years ago, from overwork. . . . I went mad because nothing came of my work . . . because after I got [my writings] published, nobody believed a word of them. (Works 29: 382)

In February 1878, the period referred to in this passage, Ruskin suffered the first debilitating attack of an hereditary mental illness that had threatened him since youth. Alternating euphoria and despondency gave way to delirium, in a pattern repeated at intervals during the last twenty-two years of his life. Critics who found him dogmatic were reacting in part to what biographers have termed "manic self-confidence" or, in its extreme form, "megalomania." Nowhere in his voluminous works is this tendency more evident than in the eight volumes of *Fors Clavigera*, Ruskin's rambling indictment of capitalism, issued in open letters to the workingmen of England, in the troubled period between 1871 and 1884.

Recent biographer Tim Hilton agrees surprisingly with Ruskin's own estimate, that *Fors Clavigera* is the author's best work (ix). The grounds for Hilton's view must depend on the forthcoming sequel to *John Ruskin: The Early Years* (Yale UP, 1985). I would argue, meanwhile, that though Ruskin began with a clear mission and a sure concept of audience, he continued to insist on his purpose long after he had ceased to effect it. *Fors* is a production of erratic genius to which complex webs of metaphor, symbol, image and allusion lend great richness and depth; what unity it has is not structural but derives from these recurring figures. Indeed, as Brian Maidment suggests, Ruskin may have preferred the serial form at this point in his career because it could accommodate the sporadic volatility of his powers (197). The best passages have been justly cited by Maidment, Rosenberg, and others praising the work, but such excellences aside, *Fors* is full of half starts, reversals, mental tics and odd pointless digressions that suggest the onset of unreason, even prior to his first sustained breakdown midway through its publication. In the later years, the author totters on the very edge, his condition worsened by moral and aesthetic assaults from the burgeoning modern world.

The first monthly installment of *Fors Clavigera* (January 1871) opened with understated intent:

> I must clear myself from all sense of responsibility for the material distress around me, by explaining to you, once for all, in the shortest English I can, what I know of its causes; by pointing out to you some of the methods by

> which it might be relieved; and by setting aside regularly some small percentage of my income, to assist, as one of yourselves, in what one and all we shall have to do. (*Works* 27: 13-14)

As the months and years passed, however, Ruskin's reformist scheme became more patently impractical, and his attitude less calm. In the May issue, he urged his readers to pledge a yearly tithe for the establishment of a non-mechanized community built on principles of simplicity and beauty. Subsequent issues, outlining an ideology for the new society, became increasingly obsessive:

> You fancy, doubtless, that I write--as most other political writers do--my "opinions"; and that one man's opinion is as good as another's. You are much mistaken. When I only opine things, I hold my tongue; and work till I more than opine--until I know them. . . . If the things prove knowable, as soon as I know them, I am ready to write about them. . . . That is what people call my "arrogance." (*Works* 27: 99).

Two and a half years later, in December 1873, the project, by now christened "St. George's Company" or "St. George's Guild," had eighteen subscribers and less than 300 *l* pledged. By June 1877, with 657 *l* in the bank, Ruskin had assumed "Royal Mastership . . . in this sacred war." Carlyle wrote of the scheme in 1878 as "utterly absurd," adding, "I thought it a joke at first" (Ruskin, *Works* 36: xcvii).

Ruskin was undaunted. In 1881, he predicted that the Guild would one day "extend its operations over the Continent of Europe and number its members ultimately by myriads" (*Master's Report of the Guild of St. George*, qtd. in Wilenski 109-10). *Fors Clavigera* itself he considered the culmination of his literary career. But its message was clearer to Ruskin than to his readers, who were offended by his egotism or puzzled by his eccentric manner of seizing on whatever unrelated topics took his fancy. Many believed him mad, as Ruskin's allusions to their correspondence reveal. He admitted that his precarious mental state required "a very steady effort on my own part to keep myself . . . out of . . . that . . . Hospital which makes the name of Christ's native village dreadful in the ear of London" (*Works* 28: 203). On occasion, he assumed a Hamlet-like pose: "You think I jest, still, do you? Anything but that; only if I took off the Harlequin's mask for a moment, you would say I was simply mad" (*Works* 28: 513). Repeatedly Ruskin claimed a method in his rambling, a unity in his approach, however oblique, to the central vision of a life that was simple and virtuous.

At the same time, there are passages that suggest his awareness of lost control. As early as August, 1871, a brief illness that was "half chill and half mania" resulted in so deep a depression that "a sick longing had overcome him 'to lie down in Coniston water'" (Evans 327). He points to the illness of 1871 as "putting me into a humour in which I could only write incoherently. . . . So I must now patch the torn web as best I can" (*Works* 27: 382). In October, 1872, he felt compelled to impose order on all he had previously said, categorizing under six headings by way of review. *Fors Clavigera* was written ostensibly to instruct working classes. Its pedagogical intent provides a slender continuity, but never

the "one consistent purpose, and perfectly conceived system" (*Works* 29: 383) Ruskin claims to have perceived. It is an intensely personal, chaotic record of Ruskin's own mental breakdown, with a tenuous, stream-of-consciousness coherence of symbol and image. Yet in style, tone, form and content, *Fors* became increasingly obscure as Ruskin's condition grew worse and his periods of insanity more frequent.

The first few letters differ markedly from those that follow. They are calm, purposeful, designed for intelligibility without condescension. Sentence structure is short, vocabulary deliberately unembellished. Ruskin's tone is of a painstaking teacher explaining his subject as simply as he can. Letter Three opens with an unmistakable sense of the classroom: "We are to read--with your leave--some history today." It goes on to present the life of Richard Lion-heart, and closes with an assignment: "We will pursue our historical studies, if you please, in ... [April] of the present year. But I wish, in the meantime, you would observe, and meditate on, the quite Anglican character of Richard, to his death" (*Works* 27: 45, 49). Ruskin emphasizes and singles out specific points he intends to return to later. He is careful to explain his allusions in these early letters and to translate foreign phrases. The distinctions he makes are simplistic, almost childlike: good versus bad, true versus false.

After the spring of 1871, Ruskin adopts an increasingly difficult and idiosyncratic mode. More and more, his tone is that of angry prophet or petulant egotist. He insults and chastises and seems to forget that his readers are mere workmen, not captains of industry:

> There was a rocky valley between Buxton and Bakewell, once upon a time, divine as the Vale of Tempe; you might have seen the Gods there morning and evening.... You Enterprised a railroad through the valley--you blasted its rocks away, heaped thousands of tons of shale into its lovely stream. The valley is gone, and the Gods with it; and now, every fool in Buxton can be at Bakewell in half-an-hour, and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton; which you think a lucrative process of exchange--you Fools Everywhere. (*Works* 27: 309)

By the end of the second year, there were signs of a deep-rooted psychological alienation. Ruskin was turning his attention inward, isolating himself more and more from his readers. At the same time in his private life, reeling from rejection by Rose La Touche, he was losing contact with personal friends. He begins the December letter of 1872:

> MY FRIENDS,--I shall not call you so any more, after this Christmas; first, because things have chanced to me of late, which have made me too sulky to be friends with anybody; secondly, because in the two years during which I have been writing these letters, not one of you has sent me a friendly word of answer; lastly, because, even if you *were* my friends, it would be waste print to call you so once a month. Nor shall I sign myself

"faithfully yours" any more; being very far from faithfully my own. . . . (*Works* 27: 417)

In the early issues, Ruskin's letters become more introspective, more frenzied, disconnected and obscure. Letter Eight (August, 1871), written just before his illness of that date, opens with the description of "storm-cloud" and "plague-wind" later excerpted in *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century* (1884). The same letter goes on to treat the French economy, the evils of financiering, a concert in the Queen's honor, the need for openness in financial affairs, the uselessness of lawyers, and the future of St. George's Company. Closing with five verses from Isaiah on righteousness, Ruskin finds righteousness synonymous with justice, and promises to "examine into the nature of this justice" (*Works* 27: 145). Linking these diverse subjects are none but the most ephemeral of transitions.

Joan Evans has remarked that a "strange mystical intensity" begins to permeate the letters by 1874 (360). It is a peculiar blend of Christian fervor with Ruskin's unique symbolic vision, as a passage from June, 1876, illustrates:

> When everybody steals, cheats, and goes to church, complacently, and the light of their whole body is darkness, how great is that darkness! . . . the physical result of that mental vileness is a total carelessness of the beauty of sky, or the cleanness of streams, or the life of animals and flowers; and I believe that the powers of Nature are depressed or perverted, together with the Spirit of Man; and therefore that conditions of storm and of physical darkness, such as never were before in Christian times, are developing themselves, in connection also with forms of loathsome insanity, multiplying through the whole genesis of modern brains. (*Works* 28: 615)

The storm-cloud and plague-wind obsession of Ruskin's late years is everywhere in the pages of *Fors Clavigera*. It appears to have had some basis in fact. John Rosenberg notes that in January 1884, "the sun shone for an average of less than an hour a day" (454n). Yet Ruskin exaggerated the observable natural phenomena until they became inseparable from his own darkness of spirit and his vision of the iniquity of modern life.

To similar, but less predominant symptoms in *Fors* of Ruskin's mental irritation are his references to sunspots and his abhorrence for noise. Sunspots seem to have had a cosmic significance for him, as a portent of impending disaster. As early as April 1871 he wrote: "When I was a boy I used to like seeing the sun rise. I didn't know, then, there were any spots on the sun; now I do, and am always frightened lest any more should come" (*Works* 27: 62). Noise, particularly that of machinery, affected him in much the same way as the darkening of the sky, and figures strongly in a number of letters from July 1872 to December 1874, the letter of which date includes the following remark: "I remain resigned to the consciousness of any quality of surrounding vice, distress and disease, provided

only the sun shine in at my window over Corpus Garden, and there are no whistles from the luggage trains passing the Waterworks" (*Works* 28: 202).

Frederick Harrison writes of *Fors Clavigera* that "Nothing so utterly inconsequent, so rambling, so heterogeneous exists in print. And yet, the connotations of ideas are so fantastic, and the transitions so original, that the effect of the whole is charming as well as exciting" (184). John Rosenberg calls it "the inspired metamorphosis of chance into design" ("Ruskin's Benediction" 133). Reading it, we are conscious of that flurry of insistent ideas Ruskin likened to "sea-birds for which there are no sands to settle upon" (*FC*, *Works* 28: 460), and Cardinal Manning compared to the "'beating of one's heart in a nightmare'" (qtd. in Quennell 24). Ruskin's haphazard thoughts and impressions, for all their disjunction, form a deep and intricate synthesis of mood and meaning that passes mere rationality. Himself a lover of paradox, Ruskin created in *Fors Clavigera* a formidable enigma of which the worst that has been said, and the best, are equally true.

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Adrienne Kennedy's Search for Identity: Mythmaking from Cultural Miscegenation

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In Adrienne Kennedy's plays, her young women tragically try to define an identity that itself recoils from the miscegenous act that created it. This "octoroon" motif has been used throughout American literature to isolate and denounce racism, such as in Dion Boucicault's *The Octoroon* and Langston Hughes's *Mulatto*, or to explore the consequences of naturalistic/determinism, as in Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. In Kennedy's plays, however, the young woman of mixed blood symbolizes the problem of defining individual identity in the wake of cultural miscegenation.

In 1970, Professor George Houston Bass and a number of graduate and undergraduate students at Brown University formed a group called Rites and Reason "as a theatre of myth and history committed to the creation of original ritual dramas" (61). Development of new communal rites depended upon an understandingof the origins and functions of myth. Bass and his associates came to see myth as "the lens of perception through which reality is seen and defined" (62). Furthermore, they observed: It might also be viewed as the thought patterns of life from which the garments of reality are fashioned--including the emperor's new clothes--and the form and content of cultural truths that embody the spirit and enunciate the meaning of a people's shared experience and individuals' common aspirations. (62) Despite the diversity of the American people, there are deep, shared beliefs that hold them together, a sort of "mythic consciousness" which is "grounded in a profound commitment to the sacred rights of the individual" (61). Through black citizens, all Americans have become "heirs to a dual mythic consciousness that joins an African world view of collective responsibility with traditional Euro-American views of individualism" (61). The contradictions inherent in this dual mythic consciousness lead to fragmentation of the individual.

The objective of Rites and Reason was the creation of a new drama that would "interpret reality in ways that link present, past, and future," so that "unified perceptions of common origins and shared destinies would emerge to provide a new sense of connectedness and belonging for Afro-American people in particular, and to offer new images of cultural identity to all Americans" (61).

Eight years before this mandate, Adrienne Kennedy was experimenting with new dramatic forms, creating new images to define individual identity in terms of mythic symbols handed down through two divergent cultures. Almost without exception, critics seriously discussing Kennedy's plays make the same two assertions: "She is one of America's most talented black playwrights," and "Her work unfortunately has been overlooked." What critics often fail to see, however, is that the neglect noted in this second observation is attributable to the

categorization made in the first. Kennedy's plays were first produced in the early sixties, an era which saw the emergence of the realistic propaganda and protest plays of such black artists as Bullins and Baraka. This Black Theatre movement developed guidelines to promote social reform and pride in blackness. Kennedy's plays, intensely private and psychological, did not fit into this mode and were often at odds with the ideology of the movement. As Herbert Blau has noted:

> [Kennedy's] search for authenticity was more private than that of the more militant and existential blacks. Nor is she entirely sure, as she rehearses the guilt, fantasies, and phobias of her secretly divided world, where sterility seems black, that she wouldn't rather be white (531).

Kennedy's background placed her outside the experiences of most black people of her generation. Born in 1931, she grew up in a middle-class neighborhood in Cleveland, Ohio, where blacks, Italians, Jews, Poles, and other ethnic groups lived harmoniously, enjoying the social activities characteristic of middle-class life. It was not until she attended Ohio State University that she ran into the overt racism and discrimination that plagued the majority of black people in the early fifties. Her cultural experiences up until that time were more aligned with white society than black (Wilkerson 164).

Her work has also been influenced by the white world. Her first play, *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, which won her an Obie in 1964, was completed in a workshop conducted by Edward Albee. He and director Michael Kahn were primarily responsible for getting her plays produced and recognized. Although she developed her own unique style, she never dismissed the debt she owed to her literary white fathers. In her 1988 article, "Becoming a Playwright," Kennedy pays homage to her models in literature:

> People now started to refer to me as a playwright. Even after years of attending playwriting workshops I still wondered how that could be. Shakespeare was a playwright; Miller, Williams, Langston Hughes, Ionesco. A playwright was Sartre standing in a raincoat in a street in Paris. (27)

Surprisingly enough, the only black person she includes in the list of "great ones" is Langston Hughes.

Critics admiring Kennedy's plays frequently point out her ability to combine the poetic with the grotesque. Philip Kolin has said, "Her plays assimilate the grotesqueries of a John Webster with the painful lyricism of a Sylvia Plath" (102), while Blau notes that her works "fuse the sensuous helplessness of Williams, the theatre poetry of Lorca" (531). Kennedy, speaking of her work, comments, "My plays are meant to be states of mind" (qtd. in Diamond 293). The plays are autobiographical, drawing from her own experiences, acquaintances, impressions, and dreams; the reality they project is subjective rather than objective. Employing techniques of both expressionism and surrealism, her plays resemble

the workings of the unconsciousness mind in which associative ideas replace the linear logic of cause and effect.

There is no simple one-to-one correspondence between the symbols she uses and what they represent. In short, episodic scenes, fragmented portions of an individual psyche become different characters and then merge again into a sameness of experience. The monologues and dialogues are ritualistic chants, repeated with little variation by each one of the selves, in tautological nightmares that seemingly never end. In *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, all reality is subjective.

The information gradually released through repetitive speeches indicate that the time of the play is collapsed in the moment of Negro Sarah's suicide. Sarah first appears on stage with a noose dangling from her neck. She is the offspring of a nearly white mother who has been raped by her black husband. This violent act leads to the mother's madness, a condition characterized by the loss of hair, and to her eventual death. In the moment of Sarah's suicide, the schizophrenic selves created by her dual cultural legacy, speak of her longing for her mother's white world and her reflection of her father's black one. Sarah's conflicting cultural values are reflected in the distinct identity of each of her mythic selves: Queen Victoria, the Duchess of Hapsburg, Patrice Lumumba, and Jesus. The Duchess and Victoria are associated with Sarah's white mother, the colonizing influence of European culture, and Sarah's own desire to be white. Patrice Lumumba, the martyred black nationalist, is both her inherited black consciousness and her black father. Jesus is the influence of Christianity. These figures are distorted, however, in Sarah's funnyhouse world by her inability to reconcile her simultaneous desire and loathing of the ideals they represent. Sarah, addressing the audience, says, "I clung loyally to the lie of relationships, again and again seeking to establish a connection between my characters. Jesus is Victoria's son. Mother loved my father before her hair fell out. A loving relationship exists between myself and Queen Victoria, a love between myself and Jesus but they are lies" (7).

Since Sarah's selves are out of harmony with one another, the symbols emerge corrupted. In stage directions, Kennedy describes Victoria and the Duchess:

> Both Women are dressed in royal gowns of white . . . the material cheap satin. . . . From beneath their headpieces springs a headful of wild kinky hair. . . . It is an alabaster face, the skin drawn tightly over the high cheekbones, great dark eyes that seem gouged out of the head, a high forehead, a full red mouth and a head of frizzy hair. If the characters do not wear a mask then the face must be highly powdered and possess a hard expressionless quality and a stillness as in the face of death. (3)

Just as Sarah's mother has been raped by Sarah's black father, so has her white heritage been raped and diseased by her black beginnings. The white Christian deity is also tainted in the hands of the black race. Jesus is described as "a hunchback, yellow-skinned dwarf, dressed in white rags and sandals" (7). Even the figure of Patrice Lumumba is distorted. Physically he is the blackest character on stage. "His head appears to be split in two with blood and tissue in eyes. He

carries an ebony mask" (7). Throughout the play he speaks for Sarah and for her black father, the father who raped her white mother, who went to Africa as a Christian missionary, who committed suicide, yet who still keeps "returning forever, coming back ever and keeps coming back forever" (4). Although the father never actually appears on the stage, his presence is indicated by a repeated knocking on Sarah's door.

Victoria listening to the knocking, says, "It is my father.... He comes through the jungle to find me. He never tires of his journey" (3). For protection, Sarah surrounds herself with white friends,

> I need them as an embankment to keep me from reflecting too much upon the fact that I am a Negro. For, like all educated Negroes--out of life and death essential--I find it necessary to maintain a stark fortress against recognition of myself. (6)

Sarah is unsuccessful in her attempted escape from blackness. Victoria realizes, "I am tired to the black Negro.... Before I was born he haunted my conception, diseased my birth" (4). Through her mother, Sarah is rejected by the white world. "When I spoke to her she saw I was a black man's child and she preferred speaking to owls" (15).

The final image of the play is that of Sarah hanging herself in her room, which has now become overgrown by the jungle. In *The Owl Answers*, Kennedy examines the same problems of identity in a setting which combines places of the protagonist Clara's experience. "The scene is a New York subway is the Tower of London is a Harlem hotel room is St. Peter's" (26). The multiple layering and confusing of identities is created as "the characters change slowly back and forth into and out of themselves, leaving some garment from their previous selves upon them" (25).

The central character is SHE who is CLARA PASSMORE who is the VIRGIN MARY who is the BASTARD who is the OWL. The mother figure in the play is a jumbled combination of the BASTARD'S BLACK MOTHER (her natural mother) and the REVEREND'S WIFE (her adopted mother) and ANNE BOLEYN (her white cultural mother). The father figure is the GODDAM FATHER who is the RICHEST WHITE MAN IN THE TOWN who is the DEAD WHITE FATHER (all images of her natural father) and the REVEREND PASSMORE (her adopted father).

Throughout the play Clara is attracted to, rejected by, and finally imprisoned by a collective THEY, who are represented by SHAKESPEARE, CHAUCER, and WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR. The chief props of the play are "beards, wigs, and faces" which are used to signal identity changes as one character assumes the guise of another. Locked in the Tower, Clara is denied access to her DEAD WHITE FATHER'S funeral. At one point she admits, "I met my father once when my mother took me to visit him and we had to go into the back door of his house" (36). Nevertheless, Clara has been shaped by her white father's culture. Her visions are romanticized fantasies which link her to her English heritage. She explains

eighteen-thirties wages dropped, thousands were subsisting on relief, and less than one in ten was employed (34).

The parallels to Faulkner's South are evident. The two societies even pinned their economic hopes upon the same product--cotton, which was grown in the South and processed in English textile mills. As in Mid-Victorian England, prices in the 1930s South tumbled due to overproduction and farmers who had lost their land roamed from town to town seeking work. Dickens blasts the instabilities of the English labor market in *Hard Times*, and Faulkner hints at the forced rootlessness of his society in *Light in August*, where many characters are on the move, and Joe Christmas follows "the street which ran for thirty years."[3] In *The Mind of the South*, W. J. Cash estimates that the population of the South increased by twenty-five percent from 1920-30 (267-68). Census Bureau figures show an urban population in Mississippi which trebled from 1900-1930. Movement in both societies was from a stable, rural environment to an impersonal society in which the individual became less and less important.

The eighteen-fifties and nineteen-thirties were dangerous times to be born in England and Mississippi, respectively. For every ten English children born in 1850, one would die before his first birthday (Mitchell). In Mississippi, in 1930, one in fifteen babies died (Linder). Faulkner's blacks and poor whites correspond to Dickens' working class. Thomas Jordan's recent study of Victorian childhood cites studies of England in 1837-43 showing that "mortality risk doubled and tripled as the social level of fathers dropped" (84). Ruby Lamar's sickly infant in Sanctuary accurately reflects its time and place, as do Dick, Oliver Twist's dying friend from the orphanage, and the dead baby of Jenny, the bricklayer's wife, in *Bleak House*.

Complicating the dilemma of the poor was the belief in Victorian England and the Depression-era South that misfortune was linked to sin. Young attributes the high regard Victorians had for respectability to their discovery that "the virtues of a Christian after the Evangelical model were easily exchangeable with the virtues of a successful merchant or a rising manufacturer" (2). To break the accepted Christian laws was also to expose oneself as a lower-class person. Cash describes Southerners in similar terms: "these men were waxing always more ostentatiously religious because of the perception that it paid" (236). Dickens gives us Mrs. Pardiggle, who never tires of visiting the poor to read them inspirational literature, and the Reverend Mr. Chadband, who enjoys pontificating to ill-fed beggar children. There is something of this confusion of morality with respectability in Cora Tull's attempt to convert Addie Burden, and Joanna Burden's offers of education to Joe Christmas. Cash, in describing the South's reaction to the financial ruin of the depression, points out that clergymen in "sordid chorus" saw the social disorder as the result of the people's sin (371). Faulkner, similarly, has characters such as Doc Hines who see unfortunate occurrences as manifestations of God's curse.

Though Thomas Carlyle called in 1843 upon benevolent "Captains of Industry" to act as fathers to their employees, his voice was in the minority. Josiah Bounderby, who thought his underpaid mill "Hands" wanted turtle soup from a gold spoon, was Dickens' critique of mill owner ethics. Faulkner gives us Jason

Compson, who allows the motherly, compassionate Dilsey to remain as a servant in old age so she can eat up the scraps. Cash tells of four labor strikes in the South in 1929 (two in mills owned by absentee Northern landlords) which were quickly quelled due to public outrage. As Cash puts it, "it was widely felt in all classes that the strikes constituted a sort of defiance of the will of Heaven" (359). In other words, if God had put man in a certain social station, it was not man's place to try to jump into a higher one.

Moral pronouncements helped men rationalize class and racial differences, but did nothing to solve the problems arising from them. Yet there was an almost universal belief in Progress in both nineteenth-century England and early twentieth-century America, a belief which Dickens and Faulkner found simplistic. Was someone hungry or homeless? The instinctive response in both societies was to pass a law to correct the situation. The Victorian Age was as riddled with legislation aimed at righting social ills as Roosevelt's New Deal. The nineteen-thirties saw the implementation of social security, insured bank deposits, farm subsidies, and federally financed emergency relief. The early Victorians enacted poor laws, extended the vote, and tried to legislate humane treatment of working children.

But ironically, laws to help the poor became necessary because men refused to help their neighbors. Economic instability and population growth uprooted communities and thrust among strangers those who had to leave their homes. Institutionalized laws further isolated people and enabled individuals to evade responsibility for one another, at the same time justifying the rejection of those who strayed beyond the pale of the strictures of class and race. Caddy Compson and Lena Grove are unmarried and pregnant, Addie Burden requests burial apart from her family, Joe Christmas and Charles Bon are rumored to have a drop of black blood. Because of the many ways in which society may reject individuals while pretending to care for them under an elaborate system, the concept of individual responsibility was very important in both Dickens and Faulkner. Good characters who sometimes would prefer to mind their own business feel compelled to offer assistance to those in need who have been failed by society.

Examples of individuals who either shun or take up personal responsibility for others abound in Dickens and Faulkner, but perhaps the clearest for purposes of comparison are to be found in Dickens' *Bleak House* (1853) and Faulkner's *Light in August* (1932), originally titled Dark House." These two novels appeared in the middle of each writer's career, and each is considered among the finest of their creators' productions.[4]

Both novels contain characters who are victims of society, the recipients of the sour fruits of society's systems. Joe Christmas is a man who falls through the cracks of society's institutions. For parental love, he has an orphanage and a hurriedly selected foster home. For sexual love he has the favors of a prostitute, and of a woman bent on making him respectable. Joanna's injunction that Joe pray with her parallels Mrs. Pardiggle's visitations of poor families in *Bleak House*, armed with pamphlets. The man of one house growls at her:

"I wants a end of these liberties took with my place. . . . we've had five dirty and onwholesome children as is all dead infants, and so much the better for them, and for us besides. Have I read the little book wot you left? No, I an't read the little book wot you left. . . . If you was to leave me a doll, I shouldn't nuss it."[5]

Joe Christmas has a namesake in *Bleak House*, Jo, the orphaned street sweeper. Joe's restlessness and dissatisfaction keep him on the move. Jo is always being ordered by constables to "move along," as though the only objectionable feature of his poverty is its display in front others. At one point he cries out in despair, "I'm always a-moving on, sir. . . . I've always been a-moving and a-moving on, ever since I was born. Where can I possibly move to, sir, more nor I do move!" (319). Joe is uncertain as to his racial heritage. Jo has no last name. Both lack identity because no one has connected to either of them closely enough to identify them.

Dickens and Faulkner portray the neglect or mistreatment of another human being as a shameful monument which will always stand in damnation of a society. For those who watch the brutal murder of Joe Christmas, "the man seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever" (440). The death by starvation of Captain Hawdon, Esther Sommerson's father, Lady Dedlock's lost love, and the one man who is kind to Jo, is recorded in one of the most bitterly satirical chapters in literature, ironically titled, "Our Dear Brother." His death and casual burial in a pauper's grave is "a shameful testimony to future ages, how civilization and barbarism walked this boastful island together" (202).

The remaining characters in *Bleak House* and *Light in August* have the power to help society's victims. Some of these run away from responsibility, some assume it selfishly or in a misguided fashion, and a few offer personal, compassionate assistance.

Lucas Burch, who can hardly control his facial muscles long enough to make good his escape from Lena Grove, the woman he has impregnated, belongs to the first category. So does Harold Skimpole, who is described as a "child," and who claims to have no idea of time or money, but is shrewd enough to borrow funds from all his friends whenever his debts get him into difficulties. "You can't make him responsible," exclaims the kindly Mr. Jarndyce as he opens his purse to his friend. "The idea of Harold Skimpole with designs or plans, or knowledge of consequences!" (130). Skimpole is amusing, but Dickens indicates that those who refuse to help will do harm instead. Although trained as a doctor, Skimpole refuses to treat Jo when he is discovered by Esther to have smallpox, and he advises that the boy be turned away. When Mr. Jarndyce takes Jo in, Skimpole delivers him into the hands of the scheming lawyer, Mr. Tulkinghorn.

Many of the characters in *Bleak House* and *Light in August* depend upon society's systems to do the good that needs to be done. Richard Carstone loves and marries Ada Clare, but his growing obsession with the potential fortune he has tied up in an endless chancery suit alienates him from his loving guardian, Mr. Jarndyce, ruins his health, and renders Ada poverty-stricken and unhappy. His situation is similar to that of Gail Hightower, who neglects his wife and

church because of his obsession with the glory of the past. Mrs. Jellyby practices "telescopic philanthropy" on Africa, dictating benevolence letters to her eldest daughter while her children scramble about the dirty Jellyby house, one son's head wedged between the stair railings. Mr. Chadband, a minister, turns Jo into a captive audience for one of his sermons. However, the more he talks, the farther away from Jo he stands. Lady Dedlock believes it best for her husband's sake that she not acknowledge Esther publicly as her daughter. Doc Hines casts Joe Christmas off because of racial prejudice and a perverted interpretation of religion. McEachern is no father to Joe, substituting for love a harsh code of moral behavior. Mr. Gridley, a minor character in *Bleak House*, one of many whose lives are ruined by the courts, expressed a frustration that Joe Christmas might have voiced had he been more reflective and articulate. "The system!" he blurts out. "I am told, on all hands, it's the system. I mustn't look to individuals" (268).

A final group of characters help others, however reluctantly. Byron Bunch is drawn into Lena's problems, although he had believed himself removed from life's moral issues, "he had believed that . . . at the mill alone on Saturday afternoon he would be where the chance to do hurt or harm could not have found him" (50). Gail Hightower has set himself up in isolation from society as a sort of amateur philosopher, with Byron as a pupil. He often interprets events for Byron, as when he says of Joe Christmas, "Is it certain, proved, that he has negro blood? Think, Byron; what it will mean when the people--if they catch . . . Poor man. Poor mankind." But it is Byron who teaches Hightower when he gradually pulls him back into the human circle. Hightower is as unable to stop Joe's death as Esther is to reverse the effects of chancery court, but his assistance at the birth of Lena's baby and sacrificial attempt to protect Joe from Percy Grimm free him to see his own past clearly for the first time. He is rewarded just before his death with a redemptive vision of the unity of all mankind, himself included. He is described as seeing a vision of a "halo" of faces which "all look a little alike, composite of all the faces which he has ever seen. But he can distinguish them one from another." They are his own face, that of Byron of Lena, Christmas and Percy Grimm.

Esther Summerson struggles throughout *Bleak House* to help the other characters. Her unity with others is underlined by her physical links with both lofty and lowly figures. She is discovered to be the illegitimate daughter of a great lady, but contracts smallpox from a street sweeper. During Esther's illness, she has a vision remarkably reminiscent of Hightower's, in which she sees herself as one of the beads in "a flaming necklace, or ring, or starry circle." She prays in her dream "to be taken off from the rest [because] is was such inexplicable agony and misery to be a part of the dreadful thing (544).[6] Personal involvement in the world's miseries isn't easy for such characters, but again and again Dickens and Faulkner reinforce the need for it amidst the ineffectual and impersonal workings of codified systems. In similar eras of change and societal insecurity, the only values to be trusted are those of compassion and sacrifice, transmitted by one individual to another.

Dickens differs from Faulkner in that he consciously chose to attack one aspect of Victorian society in each of his books--Chancery Court in *Bleak House*, Utilitarianism in *Hard Times*, boarding schools in *Nicholas Nickleby*, and so on. Faulkner, temperamentally less a social critic than was Dickens, asserted that he told the same story again and again. There is a sense in Dickens that good men would be happy if only society were better. In Faulkner, man is sometimes unhappy-or evil--because he is human. But Dickens was more to Faulkner than a handy storehouse of characters and themes. Surely a major attraction lay in the way Dickens' London was echoed by Faulkner's South, an echo I've only begun to suggest here. In examinations of the relationship of Faulkner to Dickens, there is still, as Madame Defarge might say, much knitting to be done.

Footnotes

[1]For Faulkner's library, see Blotner's *Catalogue*. Concerning Faulkner's comments on Dickens, Richard Adams has surveyed interviews given by Faulkner from 1931-62 and found mention of Dickens eleven times.

[2]Works focusing on the parallels between Dickensian and Faulknerian characters include: Thomas H. Adamowski, *Dombey and Son* and Sutpen and Son," *Studies in the Novel* 4 (1972): 378-89; Louis C. Berrone, "Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Dickens: A Study of Time and Change Correspondences," *DAI* 34 (1973): 5158A (Fordham U); Louis Berrone, "A Dickensian Echo in Faulkner," *Dickensian* 71: 100-101; Calvin S. Brown, "Dilsey: From Faulkner to Homer," in *William Faulkner: Prevailing Verities and World Literature*, ed. W. T. Zyla and W. M. Aycock (Lubbock: Texas Tech P, 1973) 57-75; C. H. Edwards, Jr., "Three Literary Parallels to Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily,'" *Notes on Mississippi Writers* 7 (1974); 21-25; Linda Kauffman, "The Madam and the Midwife: Reba Rivers and Sairey Gamp," *Mississippi Quarterly* 30 (1982); 301-04; Merritt Moseley, "Faulkner's Dickensian Humor in *The Sound and the Fury*," *Notes on Mississippi Writers* 13 (1980): 7-13; and James T. Stewart, "Miss Havisham and Miss Grierson," *Furman Studies* 6 (1958): 21-23.

[3]William Faulkner, *Light in August*, Vintage Books Edition (1932; New York: Random House, 1972) 321. Subsequent references to *Light in August* will be from this edition.

[4]Other novels by Dickens and Faulkner have long been paired off by critics, but little has been said about the relationship of *Bleak House* to *Light in August*. A notable exception occurs in Thomas H. Adamowski's doctoral dissertation, "The Dickens World and Yoknapatawpha County: A Study of Character and Society in Dickens and Faulkner," Indiana, 1969. Adamowski devotes Part III, almost a hundred pages, to a discussion of *Bleak House* and *Light in August*. His thesis is that the characters in both novels are paralyzed by the past, an assertion which is much more persuasively argued for Faulkner's novel than for Dickens'.

[5]Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (1853); New York: Penguin Books, (1971) 158. Subsequent references to *Bleak House* will be from this edition.

[6]Pip has a similar vision during his serious illness near the end of *Great Expectations*. He has discovered that Magwitch, not Miss Havisham, is his

benefactor, and has had to overcome his aversion to the convict and try, futilely, to help him escape the authorities. In Chapter 57, Pip describes his experience in this way: "I confounded impossible existence with my own identity; that I was a brick in the house wall, and yet entreating to be released from the giddy place where the builders had set me; that I was a steel beam of a vast engine, clashing and whirling over a gulf, and yet that I implored in my own person to have the engine stopped, and my part in it hammered off."

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The Bundrens on the Road to Armageddon: Faulkner's Use of St. John's Revelation in *As I Lay Dying*

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That William Faulkner makes free use of the Christian tradition in his description of the human situation is unarguable; however, what he means to say to us in the midst of this profuse religious imagery and symbolism proves a constant source of debate. Just as the interpretation of scripture has resulted in widely disparate doctrines, Faulkner's use of Biblical material has resulted in a multeity of interpretation. In spite of much effort, not much progress has been made in determining Faulkner's ambiguous personal theology. He has been labeled orthodox, neo-orthodox, heterodox, a theist, a deist, and a humanist. The confusion is evident in a comment by Hyatt Waggoner: "The body of his fiction is built of Christian thought and feeling, shaped by Christian images and symbols and deepened and enriched by constant Christian and Biblical allusions; but within all this is a core of what we may call religious humanism, or old-fashioned Protestant modernism--or simply deism tinctured with romantic nature mysticism" (248). The confusion is justified, for in Faulkner's writing, Christian tradition is usually inverted. His Christ-figures include the murderer Joe Christmas, the idiot Benjy Compson and an inanimate log. In the obvious Biblical parallels of the allegorical *A Fable*, the Old General is both God and Satan.

Limited explanations say that Faulkner's use of Biblical allusion unifies deepens or enriches his fiction. Coleridge's definition of the secondary imagination provides what may be the key to explaining further Faulkner's Biblical inversions: "It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events, it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead" (167). Faulkner breaks up conventional Christian tradition, and by re-creating a similar, yet inverted myth brings life to what has become "essentially fixed and dead" through familiarity. By forcing on us a new vision of old symbols he restores their meaning.

Faulkner's use of Biblical inversion is evident in *As I Lay Dying*, a novel full of religious references. The apocalyptic imagery provides the background for the Bundrens' journey, and the action seems to hover at the beginning or the end of time where the world is in chaos. The flood and fire become more than two great catastrophes the family must suffer, for Genesis describes the world's destruction by flood, and Revelation prophecies the earth's ultimate destruction at the end of time by fire. In *As I Lay Dying* the very atmosphere and landscape even before the journey begins, are ominous and apocalyptic. The characters keep mentioning the impending rain, and Darl describes the sun as "a blood egg upon a crest of thunderhead; the light has turned copper: in the eye portentous, in the nose sulphurous, smelling of lightning" (39). The rain will bring the first catastrophe, the flood, although Darl's image seems an allusion t

the opening of the seals of judgment at the end of time in Revelation 6, verse 12: "And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." The word *sulphurous* conjures up the lake of fire, the second death, that is a part of the last judgment, and it is used five other times in the novel (39, 42 [twice], 43, 72).

After the rain that begins as the air smells sulphurous, the Bundrens confront a flood, and the landscape is a scene of apocalyptic destruction and disorder, where "a fellow couldn't tell where was the river and where the land" (118). Darl describes it as "a scene of immense yet circumscribed desolation filled with the voice of the waste and mournful water" (135). To him they have reached "the place where the motion of the wasted world accelerates just before the final precipice" (139). When Darl sets fire to Gillespie's barn, the family faces a second apocalyptic scene, like that in Revelation 8:7 when God sends fire down from heaven: "There followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." Vardaman watches the fire and sees the stars move backward, as in Revelation 6:14 when "the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." Darl connects the two catastrophes the family has faced by comparing the sound of the fire to the sound of the river.

Darl sets the fire to burn his mother's body, but Jewel, who "seems to materialize out of darkness," sees Darl "without even turning his head or his eyes in which the glare swims like two small torches" (208) and rescues his mother as he did from the flood. As Jewel carries the coffin from the flaming barn, sparks fall on him "so that he appears to be enclosed in a thin nimbus of fire" (212). Prophecies of Christ's second coming proclaim, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Revelation 3:3). Jewel's description is like that of the returning, conquering Christ in Revelation 19:12, whose "eyes were as a flame of fire," clothed in radiant light, and he fulfills his mother's prophecy: "He is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save me from the water and from the fire" (160). She is then the martyr and Jewel her deliverer.

Jewel's very name connects him with the Christ of Revelation 4:3, who "was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." His disposition makes him a suitable one to sit upon a throne of judgment from which proceed "lightnings and thunderings and voices" (Revelation 4:5). In Revelation 6 Christ sits upon a horse as the martyrs cry out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth. And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season" (Revelation 6:10-11). Jewel rides his horse alongside his martyred mother's body, which is clothed in a white wedding dress, to ensure that the promise and the prophecy are fulfilled, and that Addie will find her place of rest. He then avenges her by helping to send Darl to the asylum, though he is also betraying his brother.

Throughout the novel there is an antagonism between Jewel and Darl, and therefore it is possible to look upon Darl as the figure of the anti-Christ or false

prophet in Revelation. Darl seems as intent to destroy Addie's body as Jewel is to save it, and he does have a degree of prophetic vision. Andre Bleikasten describes that vision: "Almost every time Darl starts speaking, reality is transmuted: space begins to waver, the scenery takes on a disturbing life of its own, and everything stands out against an indistinct and shifting background with the strange clear-cut quality and fierce colors of a bad dream" (61). Although he is near the porch, Darl describes Jewel and the horse behind the barn, and he is able to see the scene of his mother's death when he is miles away. His second sight is hinted at in Dewey Dell's descriptions of "his eyes gone further than the food and the lamp, full of the land dug out of his skull and the holes filled with distance beyond the land" (25-26). Even Tull comments on Darl's "queer" eyes that make people talk: "I always say it ain't never been what he done so much or said or anything so much as how he looks at you. It's like he had got into the inside of you, someway. Like somehow you was looking at yourself and your doings outen his eyes" (119). Darl has sensed that Jewel is Addie's favorite son and that Jewel has a different father: "Jewel, whose son are you? . . . Your mother was a horse, but who was your father, Jewel?" (202). In Revelation 19:19 the anti-Christ makes war against "him that sat on the horse." Both the anti-Christ "and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him" (verse 20) are captured and cast into a lake of fire where they "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10). Jewel is the instrument of Darl's banishment to what appears an eternal damnation.

Of course, there is certainly nothing Christ-like in Jewel's throwing his brother to the ground saying "Kill him. Kill the son of a bitch" (227), but neither Jewel nor Addie are spiritual in the sense of Christian martyrs or Christ-like virtues. Jewel declares his theology in his first section of the novel: "If there is a God what the hell is He for" (15). In Cora Tull's words, Addie "had closed her heart to God and set that selfish mortal boy in His place" (160), looking to Jewel for expiation and salvation. Rather than the white robes of righteousness worn by the saints in Revelation, Addie pictures herself and the minister who is her partner in adultery "as dressed in sin" (166). But Addie does have enough spiritual insight to realize that religion can become fixed and dead, "because people to whom sin is just a matter of words, to them salvation is just words too" (168). Throughout the novel God is invoked and scripture is quoted, often incorrectly. For instance, Anse refers to himself as "the chosen of the Lord, for who He loveth, so doeth He chastiseth" (105). As Bleikasten states: "For all these Baptists and Methodists, the God of the Bible and all the mythological and ideological background of Christianity are an indispensable framework of reference, and they have recourse to it whenever they attempt to translate their experience of life into consciousness and give it a meaning" (25). Ironically, the characters most vocal in their religious vocabulary--especially Anse, Cora, and Whitfield--are the greatest hypocrites. Their religion seems false and their words become meaningless memorized formulas, the letter that killeth without the spirit that giveth life.

After the Genesis flood, the earth is replenished, just as after the Revelation fire there is a new heaven and a new earth. In *As I Lay Dying* no such affirmation

follows the destruction. Psalm 66:12 states, "We went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." Faulkner brings the Bundrens through the fire and water, but they reach no wealthy place. Addie does finally reach her place of rest, but Darl has been sent to an asylum for the rest of his life. Dewey Dell has not managed to get the abortion she sought. Vardaman gets no electric train, Cash no "graphophone," and Jewel no longer has his beloved horse. The only one whose desires are fulfilled is Anse. Throughout the novel he is described in bird imagery: "a tall bird" (162), "a dipped rooster" (43), with an "owl-like quality... awry-feathered" (48). Parasitic and predatory, like the buzzards who feast on the carrion after Armageddon in Revelation 19, Anse feeds off his children and ends up with his new teeth and a new wife. The others merely fulfill Tull's vision, having passed through fire and flood "all just to eat a sack of bananas" (133).

In *As I Lay Dying* the Christian myth is inverted, much like Addie's body within her coffin. The world of the Bundrens is as chaotic and unresolved as the Biblical world is directly and divinely ordered. Yet Faulkner's inversion of Christian symbols is neither sacrilege, heresy, nor an attack upon the Christian tradition. Whatever his personal theology, he is concerned with moral essentials and uses Biblical material to write about and to remind us of profound moral truths. Since the meaning of Biblical symbolism may disappear behind a screen of familiarity, Faulkner (by the power of what Coleridge calls the secondary imagination) dissolves the fixed, dead framework and rearranges it to provide a vital, new vision of "the old verities."

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William Dunlap's Transformations of the Gothic in *Andre*

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The dynamics in many American Plays spring from Gothic origins. Although literary histories perennially acknowledge Charles Brockden Brown as the progenitor of American literary Gothicism, it might be helpful to record a corrective here: Gothic plays by William Dunlap, the "Father of American Drama," appeared several years earlier than the novels of his friend Brown. For information purposes, we might also take into account a persistence of Gothic features in American drama up to the present time. James Nelson Barker's *Superstition* (1824) is generally designated the crown jewel in American dramatic art during the early national period, that is, to about 1835. There, Barker splendidly adapted the supernaturalism that infuses typical explanations for fear of the unknown--the stuff and substance in Gothic romance--to witchcraft and Indian scares in New England. He is not without companion-workers in the terrific vein, however, as plays by S. B. H. Judas, Isaac Harby, John Daly Burk, and William B. Maxwell, to name just a few, bear witness. Skipping over a wearisome host of luridly melodramatic productions from the later nineteenth century, we might pause over several works by Theodore Dreiser. Many will register surprise at learning that he even attempted playwriting. His collection, *Plays of the Natural and the Supernatural* (1916), reveals that this naturalist not only turned out plays, but also that in general he featured some decidedly curious--if, in usual Dreiserian fashion, "Elephantine"--otherworldly beings and the kinds of eerie situations found in earlier Gothicism, adapted in some fashion to realistic planes. *The Girl in the Coffin, Laughing Gas* (with its weird "Shadow" character), and *In the Dark* most obviously depend upon supernatural or seemingly supernatural fare for their impact, but several others among Dreiser's plays might also be classified under Gothic headings. Moreover such a piece as Elizabeth A. Lay's "When Witches Ride: A Play of Folk-Superstition" [performed 1919, published 1922, to be found in *Carolina Folk-Plays*, ed. Frederick H. Koch (1922)], indicates another strong current of supernaturalism within the American dramatic impulse. Eugene O'Neill, in these same years, also kept yielding to the Gothic spell. *The Great God Brown* (1926), especially, stands out in these context, although the "hauntings" in *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931) and *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1956) are not without their Gothic hallmarks. We might just as reasonably cite other O'Neill plays that display like characteristics. For recent theater, we find that Mary Beth Inverso's *The Gothic Impulse in Contemporary Drama* (1989) keeps us abreast of the horrific as it comes from Peter Barnes, Stephen Poliakoff, and David Halliwell.

When William Dunlap produced *Andre* in March of 1798, he was most obviously aiming at audiences attuned to American patriotic fevor in the post-Revolution era, at the adulation accorded to George Washington, and at capitalizing on the popular interest in the story of Major John Andre, who had

assisted Benedict Arnold. By this time Dunlap had also produced on the American stage his three wholly Gothic creations, *Leicester, Fountainville Abbey,* and *Ribbemont, or the Feudal Baron.* With sufficient luridness to grip theatergoers who wished, above all else, to have their spines tingled, these works surpass many other contemporaneous terror plays by dent of Dunlap's poetic textures, which considerably enhance character portaiture.[1] Metaphors of claustrophobic, life-denying darkness and passion, which yield ultimately to those of freedom from mental and physical restraints fostered by the liberating light of reason, enrich the texture in all. These dramas are modeled upon observable European sources, to be sure, but Dunlap's experimentation imparts an unusually sophisticated art to the entertainment aspects that were expected in Gothic stagecraft. In *Andre* Dunlap, the many-sided dramatist, departed from clear-cut initations of European Gothic plays (and novels), whatever advances he made within those frameworks. In taking his new direction, he brought about a notable Americanization and development in literary Gothicism.

Dunlap's was not the first Andre play to come to the American stage, but it has continued to enjoy a reputation as the finest. Richard Moody imputes such excellence to the author's "selection of incidents and his desregard for historical accuracy" (p. 140). A second bolstering to the play's fame has come from anthologists. Both Arthur Hobson Quinn and Montrose J. Moses, those doughty champions and anthologists of American drama (and--especially in Quinn's case--of our earliest dramatic efforst), reprinted and unswervingly praise *Andre* above Dunlap's other works, although he deserves to be remembered for more than this play and its patriotic themes alone. Quinn's warhorse collection, *Representative American Plays from 1767 to the Present Day,* the seventh and latest edition of which appeared in 1953 and brought its selections up to 1949, always included this play and acclaimed Dunlap's use of American themes and characters, as did Quinn's *History of American Drama.* Most other anthologist of American plays, Richard Moody excepted, have continued to include *Andre* as their Dunlap selection. We might note that, ironically, *Andre* sustained no long-time activity on the boards, doubtless in consequence of nationalistic prejudices prevalent at the time it appeared. Perhaps its contemporaneity, which could have won it wide popularity, worked ironically but effectively against its success in the theaters. Dunlap's plan backfired on several grounds. As originally performed, for instance, Act III, scene i showed Bland, in a typical fit of irrationality, tearing his black cockade--emblem of the Federalist party at the time--from his hat and stamping on it when Washington refused his appeal for Andre's life. Dunlap altered this incident before the second performance, but his change apparently had no effect on the public.

A long-lasting hostility to Andre may also have retarded the appeal of *Andre.* To illustrate these antipathies, I cite opinions from James Kirke Paulding, who otherwise applauded Dunlap's achievements. In the *New Mirror for Travellers* (1828), Paulding expressed reservations about Dunlap's making Andre the hero of a play, although he suggested that the story nevertheless held out rich potential for American writers. Maybe the "romantic interest" surrounding Andre, acknowledged by Paulding several times in his own comments on that man's story,

was appealing to Dunlap as it was to many others, who were not mentioned by Paulding. Elsewhere, in the oft-cited essay "American Drama," Paulding praised Dunlap and James Nelson Barker for their excellences among American dramatists in that they produced plays free from displays of the too typical, and nonsensical, horrors found in theater fare during the early nineteenth century. In his observations about Dunlap, Paulding alludes specifically only to *The Father of an Only Child*, possibly because he found the comedy there to his personal taste. Ironically, Paulding's own treatment of the capture of Andre proved to be one of the weakest sections in his later novel, The *Old Continental: or, The Price of Liberty* (1846). Conversely, another influential contemporary, William Cullen Bryant, did name *Andre* among Dunlap's best works. Bryant observed, too, that Dunlap the dramatist had never received due praise, a thought echoed by another critic, writing several years afterward, in the *Spirit of the Times*.[2] Hopefully, in light of these long-past observations, my remarks below may go some way toward redressing that neglect.

Acclaim has repeatedly gone to *Andre* for its patriotic sentiments, construction, and characterization. The extant, and inextensive, criticism is in the main unilluminating.[3] As I see it, this play marks a transitional stage between Dunlap's former Gothic works on the one hand and his later, non-horrific works, as well as other subsequent American Gothic literature on the other. True, he had attempted comedy a decade earlier in his first play to be staged, *The Father, or American Shandyism* (1789), a piece modelled on a combination of Sterne, Sheridan, and Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*. Dunlap, however, stated in the preface to *Leicester* in his *Dramatic Works* (1806) that recognition given to that play, a tragedy (and, as we know, a Gothic one), first performed in 1794, had concretized his wish to become a professional dramatist. In *Andre* he once again turned to the tragic mode after experimenting with tragi-comedy in *Fountainville Abbey* and *Ribbemont*. Dunlap thereafter turned his hand to varied experimentations in original and adaptive plays. The story of Andre was, of course, well-known, and so, like a folk balladeer, Dunlap necessarily had to make familiar events come alive in new ways for expectant audiences. To accomplish that feat, he needed to determine what of the known and what of the original he could incorporate into his play. He also drew upon reserves from Gothic tradition that were still vital to him. Instead of treating Dunlap's Gothic propensities in Andre as if they were defects, we might analyze them as positive, strengthening factors in the artistry.

Andre opens after the manner of many more recognizably Gothic novels and plays. Captain Melville's soliloquy, simultaneously nationalistic but nonetheless Gothic in import, leans substantially toward the latter trait: "The solemn hour . . / Mysterious time, to superstition dear, / And superstition's guides, not passe by; / Deathlike in solitude" (Quinn, *Plays*, p. 87).[4] In effect, these lines function as a transplantation of Gray's "Elegy in a country Churchyard" or one of Mrs Radcliffe's fictions to American environs. They also recall Dunlap's own *Fontainville Abbey*, where the opening soliloquy directs attention to gloomy, anxiety arousing surroundings. The solitary, uneasy mediator and the time associated with the sway of evil forces are commonplaces as used by Gothicists. Th

remainder of Melville's meditation deepens the theme of personal uneasiness stemming from military conflict and unrest. Remarking that the sentinel's cry of "All's well" errs, he continues: "Alas, all is not well; / Else, why stand I, a man, the friend of man, / At Midnight's depth, deck'd in this murderous guise, / The habiliments of death" (p. 87). If I may so term it, Melville's words are excellent remodelings of the vocabulary familiar in terror tales for purposes of establishing mood of fearfulness and foreboding. Dunlap also neatly transforms the garb usually worn in Gothic tales and plays by corpses, ghosts, or those who simulate otherworldly visitants into the American soldier's ordinary uniform. Since Melville refers to his dress as a "guise," we may wonder whether Dunlap was holding out a joke at the expense of Gothic convention. Melville's next words intensify the soberer connotations in this scene, however; war causes "folly, guilt, and madness; / And man, the murderer, marshals out in hosts / In all the gaiety of festive pomp, / To spread around him death and desolation." These grotesque lines may readily remind us of language and scenic effects in the writings of Edgar Allan Poe, for example, "The Masque of the Red Death," "Shadow: A Parable," or some of the apocalyptic dialogues. They also recall more gruesome portions of *Titus Andronicus*. Hearing someone approach, Melville concludes: "My mood may work me woe," a weighted speech, as what transpires will demonstrate. Throughout, Dunlap imparts to the American forest all of the mystery and eeriness to be found in an Old-World haunted castle, and so Melville becomes kindred to the pensive gloomster in Gothicism, whose mind runs to images of woe, death, and supernaturalism--and thus gives us a foretaste of the morbid psyche of the young Huck Finn. The language is equally appropriate, though, for the tension aroused by proximity to death in war and suggesting the political upheaval in America as proper background for the near-violence and emotional turmoil that ensue. An adumbration (low-keyed, but artful) of Andre's death is thus effected in this scene; such foreshadowing gains point in that the scene occurs at "the *dead* hour of night" (italics mine).

Melville soon encounters young Bland, another soldier, whose entrance calls up as much of familiar Gothic types and situations as of American nationalism. Bland has stepped out of "yon sequestered cot, / Whose lonely taper through the crannied wall / Sheds its faint beams and twinkles midst the trees." Good Gothic pictorialism this, but, more significantly, it serves to characterize Bland himself. A strongly opinionated individual, he is perforce one in whom the lights of calm and reason burn indeed with lonely gleams. He soon manifests all of the potentially passionate, irrational traits of a recognizable Gothic villain, although they are intermingled with those of a Gothic good guy and a loyal but too intemperate American patriot. This characterization constitutes a Dunlap innovation, an anticipation of the Byronic school's blending of the heroic with the villainous within a single personality. As Bland had journeyed with dispatches for General Washington, reports reached his ears about Arnold's treachery and the capture of a British spy who would have aided the traitor. The air of secrecy and foreboding established in the speeches already quoted contributes credibility to the discussion of betrayal of the country--that "tender plant which we have striven to rear"--and thus makes this scene much like the opening of *Macbeth*,

another play in which war furnishes background for psychological conflicts within individuals (and a play that is progenitor to many Gothic works). Blanc intensifies Melville's metaphor, imploring heaven to make fall "All those, who or by open force, or dark /And secret machinations, seek to shake / The Tree o Liberty, or stop its growth" (p. 88). Learning that his friend Andre is the condemned prisoner, Bland laments. To Andre he owes his life from a time when aboard a British ship, he lay prisoner himself, terribly ill and near death. Bland's memories are rife with terror-tale diction: "Confin'd, soon had I sunk, victim o death, / A death of aggravated miseries, / But [Andre] / Sought out the pi obscene of foul disease . . . And, like an angel seeking good for man, / Restor'd us light and partial liberty" (p. 89). The theme of premature burial, which quickly became a Gothic cliche and which Dunlap had employed in *Ribbemont* is deft here, as is the unobtrusive analogy of Andre with Satan (both are quondam angels who fell from grace). The implicit oppositions between darkness and the underhanded plots of military enemies contrasted to the growth-light-freedom motifs attached to causes of liberty, reveal Dunlap's subtle creativity. Such darkness as is uppermost in many scenes in *Andre* might occur with little change in European Gothic works or in those by Dunlap's friend, Charles Brockden Brown. That these expressions issue from Bland's lips is fitting, given allusions made above to his connection with such contrasts. Washington, of course is bracketed with the sun. Images of sunlight and organic growth that symbolize the new nations's proffered freedoms and expansion place Dunlap as a forerunner of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman. Andre's own former ties to light, freedom and life are made explicit in Bland's pleas that Washington pardon the prisoner Bland repeats his litany of terrors, asking his superior to imagine "the blessing of his [Andre's] deeds, / While thro' the fever-heated, loathsome holds / O floating hulks, dungeons, obscene, where ne'er / The dewy breeze or morn, o evening's coolness, / Breath'd on our parching skins, he passed along" (p. 96) The General's comeback is equally Gothic in conception if, characteristically much more pithy than Bland's overheated, rambling discourse. To pardon Andre would in all likelihood prolong and compound such evils from the British a Bland himself has outlined, says Washington: "Oft their scouts, /The very refus of the English arms, / Unquestion'd, have our countrymen consign'd / To death when captur'd, mocking their agonies" (p. 96). He conjures up, in miniature, by means of his terse description, a veritable demonic villainy rampant in the wilderness--that American Gothic equivalent to the crumbling castle high on some southern European mountain.

We next encounter Washington conferring with his staff; immediate mention of the British as enslavers of the free makes them not merely political opponents but very much like the customary machinators of Gothic proportions as well who would without a shift of humaneness deprive innocent victims of liberty and, if they deemed it necessary, life. We learn quickly that faithful M'Donald serves so intently and ably as he does because he has a home to protect and because his son had been "butcher'd." The more moderate Seward responds that soldiers should have higher motives than "love of property and thirst of vengeance" (p. 90)--which speech may be intended as a sideswipe at the British a

much as it is a check to M'Donald. Again the impulses are what we might more readily expect in Brown, Lewis, or Radcliffe. The Washington group falls to discussing European mercenaries who shamelessly "sell themselves for pelf / To aid the cause of darkness; murder man-- / Without inquiry." In these exchanges we detect the inevitable formulaic underpinnings in Gothicism: vicious pursuit of innocence for purposes of lust, power, or wealth. These principles were established in the first (English) Gothics, and they have persisted in some manner or another into the latest Gothic found on shopping-center shelves. How many banditti from European Gothicism do not serve these same ends? To how many more unquestioning villains of a secondary rank, say, in latter-day roles as stooge(s), do such figures serve as harbingers? Think, for example, of Devil-bug, in George Lippard's *The Quaker City*, of many characters in Hawthorne, Melville, or James or, much later, the numerous roles as evil second-in-command played by Clayton Moore, Ernie Adams, George Chesbro, and Roy Barcroft in American "B" films of the 1930s and 40s. M'Donald, by implication, lumps Andre with such undesirables as these: he is "sunk by misdeed, not fortune . . . runs the wild career of blind ambition, / Plunges in vice, takes falsehood for his buoy, / And when he feels the waves of ruin o'er him, /Curses, 'in good set terms,' poor Lady Fortune." Washington closes this interchange with another comment of Gothic tone: Man "is frail; / His tide of passion struggling with Reason's Fair and favorable gale, and adverse / Driving his unstable bark upon the / Rocks of error." The reason-passion battle (frequently cast into the very same motifs of storms or oceanic treacheries) is one that filled many pages in Gothic literature, just as the necessity for American independence is foremost in these men's minds and in *Andre* overall. Thus, Dunlap's Washington could without difficulty step into or out of a Gothic romance.

Andre himself, for whose appearance we have been skillfully prepped, resembles another stock Gothic character, the doomed wretch, reviewing the causes for his present incarceration, which at this point in the prisoner's vicissitudes approximates another premature burial. The misery, grief, shame, and ruin; the dead parents who will not suffer torments because of their child's bad intents; the once-beloved, but now, presumably, far-away, Honora: all add Gothic dimensions to Andre's plight. Bland's glimpse of his imprisoned friend, before the other notices him, limns the condemned man as if he were a languishing unfortunate from the Radcliffe-Lewis school: "O, how changed! Alas! / Where is that martial fire, that generous warmth, / Which glow'd his manly countenance throughout, / And gave to every look, to every act, / The tone of high chivalrous animation?" The prisoner's acknowledgement that ambition has brought about his downfall and his urging that Bland may bring about change in the execution--to the firing squad from hanging, "[l]ike the base ruffian, or the midnight thief" (two more recurrent Gothic character-types)--add dramatic intensity to the dialogue. Like many another tragic protagonist, Andre is willing to die so long as his is, finally, a dignified death. The light-dark contrasts also gain forcibleness. As the scene shifts to Seward and M'Donald, the former, in telling language, depicts nobles' victimization of the suffering poor in Europe juxtaposed to Americans' potential for benefits. He furnishes a welter

of urban Gothic imagery that numbers among its horrors overworked paupers, lust and seduction, madness, and child-molestation. M'Donald's rejoinder--"Hold! Shroud thy raven imagination. / Torture not me with images so curst" (p. 94), with an additional comment about the eventual "Illuming" of America--suitable carries along the poetics of a rural, simplistic, democratic nation growing away from the strangleholds of tyrannical, dark, and negative European ideas and practices. The dark bird of ill omen and devil lore moves as convincingly via this symbolism into psychological Gothic realms as Poe's more renowned raven was to do at a later date.

As if to enlarge upon one of these themes so pressed upon us by Seward, the next scene brings on Bland's mother, who is also the wife of a now-captured American with his life threatened, should Andre's execution proceed. Her outcry to her younger children-- "O curst contrivance! Madness relieve me! / Burst, burst, my brain" (p. 95)!--foreshadows the actual madness that eventually overwhelms Honora. A wailing mother lamenting the inevitability of oncoming ill fortune for herself and her family is, of course, another stock Gothic figure (and one that would gain vast popularity in later melodrama). Mrs. Bland's rapidly working mind--quick to perceive that Andre is as yet not dead and that if she saves his life she will preserve her husband's--prompts her to speed to Washington for succor. A note from Bland senior, however, instructs the General to preserve America's best interests, no matter what fate may befall him (Bland) at cruel British hands. Dramatic vitality thus increases, to be heightened when young Bland returns to tell Andre, that, "By vehemence of passion hurried on"(p. 99), he had pleaded in vain for Andre's life, without requesting that if Andre had to die he might be given a soldier's execution. In Act IV, M'Donald upbraids Bland for this trait: "How passion / Mars thee!" (p. 100). Shortly thereafter, awaiting Andre in his prison, Bland appropriately dubs himself "The weather-cock of passion! fool inebriate! (p. 102)! He contrasts his overwrought state with Andre's collected frame of mind, much to his own disadvantage. Hot-tempered Bland nevertheless blunders on to commit an even greater outrage in angrily challenging M'Donald to a duel (and so further possibilities for violence and death are placed before us to arouse suspense and anxieties).

As if to cap all others' attempts, Honora now appears, determined to save Andre. False rumors spread by her father had separated these lovers in Europe, but she has braved hardships to join him again (these are additional customary Gothic circumstances, descended in part from Renaissance drama). Their interchanges, rife with false hopes for the prisoner's salvation, rise to high peaks of emotion. These psychological super-chargings make for good theater, but they also evince Dunlap's refinements of high-pitched Gothicism. Another turn of the screw now occurs in Andre's change of heart: he suddenly decides to live for the sake of what he envisions as incomparable love. He vents his pent-up feelings plausibly, but in another snatch of terror-tale rhetoric: "What!--and *must* I die? / Die !--and leave her *thus*--suffering--unprotected" (p. 104)! Many another such hero, slated for live burial or a comparable gruesome death, while facing prospects of a fate worse than death that may well await his beloved, cries out thus as his emotions overwhelm him.

Act V opens as young Bland bemoans the "wasting conflict of my 'widering passions'" with the greater war in progress, and then begs M'Donald's pardon for insulting and challenging him. M'Donald urges Bland to forego remorse, a "vice . . . of influence debasing," and, rather, to follow judgment tempered by reason, by turning his "fiery soul" to serve "as a beacon in the storms / Thy passions yet may raise" (p. 105). This is reversal of the traits in a customary Gothic villain--whom Bland so much resembles--in that hope looms ahead of him because his aggression seems likely to become subsumed in positive causes. In many other Gothic works, such remorse would no doubt have been worked for all it was worth in deepening an emotionally charged atmosphere of impending desolation and doom. Avoidance of the duel also diminishes an aspect of potential grisliness and thereby lessens tendencies toward easy, but frequently needless and implausible, thriller texture. We discern a yielding of (baser impulses in) revolution to evolution within an American context of building an idealistic, progressive nation. Transforming from a state of "wildering" to that of "beacon" may also hint at an evolution from animal primitivism in the forest into a civilized plane of life, which will leave behind a Gothic wasteland riven by combat (of multiple implications). Dunlap, after all, was never behindhand at inculcating morality by whatever means were at his disposal while he fashioned his plays.[6] Bland, moreover, numbers among what have come to be viewed as typical American literary protagonists, that is, characters who journey but whose travels assume higher significance in emotional depths than in solely geographical terms. We must keep in mind that William Dunlap, and not a more readily recognized artist in these fields, such as Henry James or William Faulkner, is the author of *Andre*. Therefore we must credit Dunlap with character delineations that embody astonishingly sophisticated psychological depths for the year 1798.

The play reaches a crescendo as Honora sues for a pardon from Washington, news arrives that the British have summarily mocked and hanged an American (recalling a description in Act III, p. 96), and the General's resolve not to pardon Andre is solidified. Bland, silent--meaningfully so--for once, returns with the bad news to Andre, who calmly accepts his fate, asking only that Honora be protected. The girl actually does go mad from grief, although Mrs. Bland says that she will care for her. Madness, a feature soon to become a triteness in the hands of hack Gothicists, may in this instance convey more verisimilitude than theatrics. Honora's physical and mental hardships could without question end in such a collapse.[7] Andre's execution occurs offstage, with a cannon sounding the end, and a chastened Bland appears with M'Donald, whose speech closes the play with another contrasting of dictates of the "heart," or passion, with those of the "head," or reason. The latter are essentials for the growth and development of an independent, dynamically progressing American nation, one freed from Europe's death-dealing taints. The growth metaphors that have been contrasted with the aura of death hovering over Andre are here--in terms of an old, tormented generation's giving way to the renewal of life in present-day children--reiterated once more, and thus they impart artistic resolution to the play.

Although the features in these concluding scenes may be likened to those in many other, and lesser, Gothic works, Dunlap adroitly manipulates them to dramatize plausible characters integrated with comprehensible settings. As the play runs its course, the kind of lurid sensationalism expressed in stilted and strained language that we encounter too frequently in inartistic Gothicism is transmuted into credible horrors that artistically (if in freely interpreted fashion) link Revolutionary-War occurrences to those emanating from warring minds. If, on the one hand, Dunlap "satisfied a craving for Gothic thrills and oriental magnificence," as George C. D. Odell wrote, he was also alert to greater possibilities.[8] *Andre*, the, gains strength by means of Dunlap's domesticating Gothic elements into native tragedy. As if to distance this play from the more commonplace European-Gothic enlivenments in several of its predecessors, Dunlap demonstrates how a cluster of very immediate American realities can call forth horrors that match, but artistically surpass, any of those from the remote words that add sensationalism to much other horror literature. In *Andre*, after the opening, Graveyard-school, scene, the Gothic surfaces grow more symbolically functional, as haunted minds move to the foreground to supplant the recurrent haunted castles and "sublime," awe-inspiring natural scenery found in the works of many other Gothicists. In other words, elements of the unknown and the anxieties they arouse become far more imposing than the exterior features that often are handled with no firm artistic hand. The unities in place and time achieve additional substance in Dunlap's play; we find none of the awkward shifts that can be so easily cited as flaws in many defective Gothic romances. Dunlap's success in *Andre*, however, rather resembles Keats's practices in "The Eve of St. Agnes." Both works hold our attention because they hint at potentially explosive violence and possible death. Both drama and poem conclude, though, without giving us any such cheap thrills. Upset interior states are advantageously substituted to promote satisfaction in audiences, be they theater-goers or readers. Since Dunlap stated that he had worked nine years at *Andre*,[9] he must have given careful thought to the construction of this play. In this respect, *Andre* takes a position as a transition piece because it employed and developed Gothic elements that had travelled from England and Germany to America. We may come away, ultimately, revaluating *Andre* as indeed a Gothic "drama" instead of a "mere" Gothic "play." In that distinction lies the reason for its being excellent art.

Footnotes

[1]On Dunlap as the Adam to subsequent American Gothicists, see Oral S. Coad *William Dunlap: A Study of His Life and Works and of His Place in Contemporary Culture* (New York: Dunlap Society, 1917; rpt, New York: Russell & Russell 1962), p. 153. See also my "William Dunlap, American Gothic Dramatist *TSJSWN*, 17 (1988), 67-90, for critiques of Dunlap's techniques. For assistance with the present study, I thank Professor Edmund M. Hayes, Worcester Polytechnic Institute; Harry M. Bayne, Jeffrey Waldrop, and Julia A. Fisher, University of Mississippi.

[2]I cite the reprinting in *A Book of Vagaries*, ed. William I Paulding (New York: Scribner, 1868), p. 114. "American Drama" appears in *American Quarterly Review*, 1 (1827), 331-357. Bryant's comments (he also cites the three altogether Gothic plays as among Dunlap's signal achievements) come from "William Dunlap" [unsigned, but identified by Dunlap in his diary], *New-York Mirror*, 23 February 1833, pp. 265-266. Cf. "Colley Cibber," "American Actors and Dramatic Authors," *Spirit of the Times*, 7 March 1840, p. 12 [who comments, interestingly, that Dunlap's plays were "superior to those of the present day," although scarcely noticed in his own day].

[3]Quinn, in *A History of American Drama from the Beginnings to the Civil War*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: F. S. Crofts, 1943), pp. 86-88, emphasizes the patriotism and offers several interesting remarks regarding character structure; Gerald Argetsinger's suggestively-titled "Dunlap's *Andre*: Beginnings of American Tragedy," *Players Magazine*, 49 (1974), 62-63, offers little in the way of critical substance. Richard Moody, in *America Takes the Stage: Romanticism in America Drama and Theatre, 1750-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955; rpt. Millwood, NY: Kraus, 1977), pp. 140-43; and Walter J. Meserve, *An Emerging Entertainment: The Drama of the American People to 1828* (Bloomington, London: Indiana UP, 1977), pp. 107-110; and Jack Vaughn, *Early American Dramatists: From the Beginnings to 1900* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1981), pp. 43-48, do give us perceptive critiques.

[4]The only mention of Gothicism in this play, and that brief and unenthusiastic, is Norman Philbrick's, in "The Spy as Hero: An Examination of *Andre* by William Dunlap," *Studies in Theatre and Drama: Essays in Honor of Hubert C. Heffner*, ed. Oscar G. Brockett (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1972), pp. 97, 102. CF the sections on Dunlap and on American Gothic drama in my *The Gothic's Gothic: Study Aids to the Tradition of the Tale of Terror* (New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1988), respectively pp. 43-44, 366-368.

[5]References to and quotations from *Andre* draw on the text in Arthur Hobson Quinn, ed. *Representative American Plays from 1767 to the Present Day*. 7th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953, 1966), pp. 87-108--hereinafter cited parenthetically within the text.

[6]Dunlap, "Preface," *The Dramatic Works of William Dunlap* (Philadelphia: T. & G. Palmer, 1806), 1:iii; Bryant, p. 266; Meserve, *An Emerging Entertainment*:, pp. 105, 106.

[7]Meserve's idea that the women are "simply pawns of the dramatist"(p. 109), must be supplemented by these possibilities.

[8]George C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (New York: Columbia UP, 1927-49), 2: 133.

[9]Dunlap's remark to this effect occurs in the preface to *Andre*, published in 1798 by T. & J. Swords,in New York, p. iii. See also Robert H. Canary, *William Dunlap* (New York: Twayne, 1970), pp. 91-92. Dunlap himself, however, refers to his working on this play only several months before it was performed, 30 March 1798, at New York's Park Theatre (Quinn, *Representative American Plays*, p. 82). Cf. *Diary of William Dunlap*, ed. Dorothy C. Barck (New York: New York Historical Society, 1930; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), pp. 174ff., where

late November of 1797 seems to be the time when he began active work. The records of one who had close acquaintance with Dunlap, moreover, give no confirmable evidence that *Andre* was a play long in the making; we find there only that it was "nearly finished" as of early January 1798--*The Diary of Elihu Hubbard Smith* (1771-1798), ed. James E. Cronin (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973) pp. 417-419ff. Interestingly, in a letter to Mason Fitch Cogswell, dated 12 March 1795 (in the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Yale University), Smith praises *Foutainville Abbey* and notes Dunlap's work on another tragedy that he thought would win greater acclaim. Whether this unnamed play was *The Mysterious Monk* (1796) [published in 1803 as *Ribbemont, or the Feudal Baron*], the next of Dunlap's original plays to be performed, or *Andre*, in not made explicit, nor does Smith's diary provide an identification. In light of Smith's admiration for Gothic works--an admiration that did not hinder his criticizing any weaknesses he discerned in them (cf., e.g., p. 336)--he would be countering general critical estimates in awarding great praise to *Ribbemont*. On the other hand, if *Andre* was being composed at the time he communicated with Cogswell, Smith's potential awareness of the play plus his own vigorous advocacy of a genuinely American literature might have brought forth such a praiseworthy comment. The full text of Smith's communication appears in my "A Letter Concerning William Dunlap's Plays," forthcoming in *ARLR*, 4 (1990). See also Odell, 1: 351, 382-383, 426.

Moliere and the Dialog of Neoclassicm

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We'd like to think that the lives of the great figures of the past, particularly those of Neoclassicism, were all of a piece.[1] Whatever our expectations, the life of Moliere (1622-1673)[2], among others of these figures, shows many ironies both personal and professional. He was born into the court of the Bourbons: his father had been *tapissier ordinaire du roi*, a minor if intimate official in charge of the king's "rugs," that is, he made his bed and looked after his household furnishings when on campaign, etc. Moliere as oldest son stood in line--almost all positions at court were hereditary--for this post. Instead he decided, after finishing law school at Orleans and fulfilling the family function during one campaign for Louis XIII in 1637, to throw it all over and become an actor. He tried to escape the court. For the next thirteen years (1645-1658) he and his troupe scraped together a living as wandering players in the provinces; but when they returned to Paris, they were almost immediately successful at the very court--now the court of Louis XIV--which Moliere had renounced some two decades before.

Moliere became so successful that for the ten years 1662-1672, the most dynamic and creative of Louis' long reign, he became, by supervising and directing some hundred productions of all kinds, virtually the court's spokesman in the dialog of the new cultural synthesis which Louis was carrying through. A vital component of this dialog, which at times resembled a quarrel or even a squabble more than any reasoned exchange of viewpoints, was Neoclassicism, what the French call *Classicisme*. Although the characters of native farce and the performance of the commedia dell'arte played a great role in his work, the focus of the controversy which Moliere soon became embroiled in was the practice of Neoclassicism.

Leon Batista Alberti in the 15th century gave as good a summary characterization of Classicism as can be found: "the harmony and accord of all the parts achieved by following well-founded rules [based on the study of ancient works] and resulting in unity that nothing could be added or taken away or changed except for the worse." Alberti's description was intended to apply to architecture; but if one keeps in mind the role of the conception and execution of Versailles, one will understand that the nature of Classicism is architectonic, that is, it involves the ordering, the super- and subordination of elements. Louis' barons, bourgeois and the other obstrepherous "elements" of his society understood this only too well. Louis wanted to restructure the traditional hierarchy of king, barons and everybody else in terms of the Neoclassical--and in many ways Neoplatonic--vision of a harmony of society, almost literally a musical harmony in which the theater and festivals directed by Moliere played a leading role. After all, Moliere was in effect master of ceremonies. Since the English and American understanding of classicisme, our Neoclassicism, tends more to morality than musicality, we have some difficulty in appreciating--in every sense of the

word--the ways, means and ends of this undertaking. We identify Neoclassicism with a conservative rather than an innovative mindset.

As a case in point, we have the performance which took place in October of 1663, one of the oddest, if not the most odd, performance in the history of French theater. Almost a year before in December of 1662 Moliere had written, staged and starred in his first great success *L'Ecole des Femmes* and become a central figure of the court. To the modern mind that an artist could hold such a position in the creation and execution of such a project seems a contradiction. We immediately assume an antagonism between the artist and the statesman/politician. Even Bakhtin in his *Rabelais and his World* feels obligated to explain the involvement of Rabelais with the French court of his day by noting that the court represented the "progressive" element.

This assessment, however, tends to greatly underestimate the pivotal role that art has played in the articulation of societies, the art in this case conformed to Neoclassical ideals. A "war of actors," the *querre comique*, followed the debut of *L'Ecole des femmes* and lasted for almost a year. At issue was the shifting standpoint or viewpoint of the court and thereby the society. Moliere was during this period virtually the surrogate if not the representative of the king. Everyone who resented his success or the initiatives of the king began to intrigue against him or his work or both.

Although the details of the "war" are not of interest here, it must be noted that those behind it were concerned with questions of theater. Their attacks, however, had to be represented as attacks on the putative shortcomings of the work in the light of the neo-classical unities--time, place, and action--and of *bienseance*, a sort of catch-all principle for everything that does, or doesn't, "sit well." The first criticisms were simply well taken by those who made them. The second sort had more justification given that the play is a re-working of the hoary plot involving an older man who wants to marry an unknowing young girl and is foiled by fate--or providence--in the form of an equally unknowing young man. There are some off-color jokes. To note a further irony in Moliere's life, his and his young wife's, Armande, ages matched the characters exactly.

Be that as it may, Moliere saw fit to ignore his detractors for some months; but when he finally answered them on the first of June, it was in a form which was peculiarly appropriate: a short play called *La Critique de "L'Ecole des femmes."* After all, he did not claim to be an *auteur* and wanted to be known only as *chef de troupe*. The interesting point is that, finding himself driven to elaborate and justify what he was doing, he used an analogy which goes back to a dictum of Horace, a dictum which was to become the battle cry of Neoclassicism. The dictum has to do with the question of perspective or the proper standpoint: *ut pictora poesis*, the poem--or play--is like a picture:

> Toutes les peintures ridicules qu'on expose sur les theatres doivent etre regardees san chagrin de tout le monde. Ce sont miroirs publics, ou if ne faut jamais temorgner qu'on se voit . . . .

[All the ridiculous paintings that one puts out on the stage should be looked at without annoying anyone. They are public mirrors, in which one should never admit seeing one's self . . . .] (VI 101-5)

Moliere has shifted the standpoint or perspective of the mirror from the personal to the public. The then recent development of the technology of mirror construction made the use of the modern silver-backed mirror which replaced the usual beaten and polished metal mirror, to cover large public wall surfaces, possible. The analogy of painting is strengthened and interpreted by that of the public mirrors. But, although the analogy occupies only a small space in the play, Moliere's detractors recognized its centrality and gave him the nickname *le peintre*. The next step in the controversy took the form of their counter-presentation of *le Portrait du peintre*, which Moliere answered at the command of Louis with another short play *L'Impromptu de Versailles*.

But here an important question arises and that is why the analogy painter/poet seemed so appropriate to all involved. Horace himself first introduces it at the beginning of *De Arte Poetica* when he begins his discussion of playwriting, an "art" which, ironically, was non-existent in the Rome in which he wrote. He notes that a painter who tried to put together parts from various animals, the head of a human, the neck of a horse, feathers, etc., would be laughed at. This description makes one wonder what kind of painting he's talking about, for what he rejects is an accurate description of the "Asiatic" style in painting, a style displaced in Rome by the "Attic" around the second half of the first century BC. This seems to be an early instance of what later came to be known as the "classic" instance that art "mirror" what it depicts.

Horace says further (9-10) "pictoribus atque poetis quidlibit audendi semper fuit aequa potestas." [Painters and poets have always had an equal right in daring anything.] This "right", however, does not include the miscombinations above, although the equation stands and is developed somewhat later (361-2):

Ut pictura poesis: erit quae, si propius stes,
te capiat magis, et quedam, si longius abstes.

[A poem is like a picture. One takes you in better if you stand close, and another if you stand far away.]

Horace goes on to say that one picture loves shadows, another light and does not fear the "judicis argutum acumen," the bright insight of the judge. He is saying, it seems, that every picture--and in our context by analogy self-presentation of a society--has an optimum viewing distance, a perspective, and optimum viewing conditions, focus. In sum, you must see the work as the painter--or the king--intended it to be seen if it is to be effective.

In illusionist perspective light and dark are often a question of focus, and the painter, if he or she is competent, must control the perspective and focus--must be the playwright. The analogy itself is effective because it carries within itself an inductive argument. If one argues from what is known--the proper attitude

toward a painting--to what is unknown--the proper attitude toward a play--one would conclude on the basis or similarities, the analogy, that one should accept the playwright's--or, again, the king's--control of perspective and focus.

Since we know little if anything about the plays, the Pisos, to whom the letter was addressed, we can only conclude that they felt they knew more about painting than they did about playwriting. On the other hand, we have detailed information about the staging of Moliere's time, and we know that it was of two kinds. The first from a historical standpoint was the *spectacle* also known as the *piece a machines* which was totally illusionistic and depended on the fixed viewpoint such as provided by the Palais Cardinal built by Richelieu in 1641. The second was more what we think of as a play, the comedy or tragedy, performed in what were indoor handball or tennis courts, again a space with a definite or controlled perspective and focus. Why the analogy painter/playwright would be effective is clear.

Horace makes a further determination which makes the matter even clearer:

> Aut agitur res in scaenis aut acta refertur.
> segnius irritant animus demissa per aurem
> quam quae sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus et quae
> ipse sibi tradit spectator . . .
>
> [The playwright works, Either by doing the thing on the stage or telling what was done./Those matters caught by the ear move the soul/mind more slowly than what is subjected to the faithful eyes and which / he who sees understands for himself.]

The point of this passage is to explain why violent actions are committed only offstage and then reported. What one sees moves the mind more quickly than what one hears. It would seem, then, that the trustworthy eyes are more deceptive than the ears because they allow themselves to be controlled much more easily, all the while misleading the onlooker in the belief that "seeing is believing." The question of perspective and focus becomes central again.

One of the characters of *L'Impromptu de Versailles* puts the matter neatly (I.125)

> C'etait un affaire toute trouvee it qui venait fort bien a la Chose d'autant mieux, quy'ayant entrepris de vous peindre, ils vous ouvrait l'occasion de les peindre aussi, et que cela aurait pu s'appeler leur portrait, a bien plus de just trite que tout ce qu'ils ont fait ne peut etre appele le votre.
>
> [It was a wonderful idea and it was really what we needed, all the more so because, having undertaken to paint you, they had opened a chance for you to paint them too, and you would be able to do that to their portrait with more right than anything they had done could be called yours.]

The "wonderful idea" that will allow Moliere to reverse the perspective is a play which is to be called the comedy of comedians in which he will respresent the people who have represented him. The reason his representation will be better is that, as a comedian, any shortcoming in his representation is that of his characters, whereas any shortcoming in the representation of a tragedian must be that of the actor, the tragic hero being ex hypothesis free from all flaws except the tragic. But this is just one of a plethora of reversed perspectives.

The text we have purports to represent an impromptu, i.e., a performance for which there is not a text, a performance which in turn represents a rehearsal for that impromptu. The actors play themselves rehearsing the characters for the impromptu while waiting for the arrival of the king who is watching the performance. Moliere's dominance of the perspective and focus parallels that of the king who himself dominates the social perspective by including and excluding at will, to the point of excluding himself. The banishing or self-absenting of Louis who consents to be considered not there so that he can watch the rehearsal of the play being presented to him makes the openess of the "rehearsal" possible. If he were there, the rehearsal would become the "performance" which he has commanded but which will not take place because of the arrival of a note from him informing the actors that he will not be able to come, a note which ends the rehearsal/performance.

The analogy which underlies the dictum of Horace and provides the framework within which the play of perspectives both at the theatrical and social levels takes place holds in this case. Just as the frame of a picture creates an inside and outside, a foreground and background, the play creates an onstage and offstage, and upstage and downstage, in short, an order of inclusion and exclusion which in itself permits multiple orderings, reversals. Ultimately, the order depends on the compliance and acceptance of the participants, even those who are reputed to be as absolute as kings. The analogy is prescriptive as well as descriptive, even proscriptive.

Take, for example, Moliere the actor playing Moliere director giving the following instructions to himself and his actors playing themselves playing the characters of the play (I.255):

> Tachez donc de bien prendre, tous, le charactere de vos roles, et de vous figurer que vos etes ce que vous representer.
>
> [Try to take on, all of you, the character of your roles and to imagine that you are what you represent.]

The explanatory principle, the inductive argument of the analogy, ends in a paradox in which the actors represent and do not represent what they are, that is, themselves. The paradox spills over into the surrounding space and even the king does and does not represent what he is along with the society itself which is subsumed in the play of the perspectives of the play. But then, a final irony of the dialog of Neoclassicim as conducted by Moliere: a sick man pretending to be a well man, he died on stage so that he could pretend to be a well man

pretending to be a sick man. The play was *le Malade imaginare* (1673) and that was the final irony.

Footnotes

[1]The texts cited are: *Moliere: la Crituque de "l'Ecole des femmes" & l'Impromptu de Versailles* Librairie Larousse, Paris, 1974. Horace *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*. Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass., 1947 (The translations are my own.)

[2]The focus of this essay is the relationship between the creativity of Moliere and the creativity of Louis XIV in the early 17th century formulation of French culture. The voluminous literatue on either of the two does not consider this question which is the subject of my unpublished thesis *Allegory and Representation in Society: Justess and Justice in the Memoires of Louis XIV*.