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Sister Shahrazade: Prototype for Theodore Dreiser's Carrie Meeber

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Sister Carrie originates in Theodore Dreiser's personal or professional experiences, as is widely recognized; we know that Dreiser relied on the resources of autobiography and journalistic research when developing his novels. More specifically, Ellen Moers points out that "in the most literal sense . . . Dreiser wrote as a brother" ("Finesse" 201), incorporating into the lives of his characters memories of his family from early childhood through adulthood. From his earliest novel, *Sister Carrie* (1900), to the widely popular *An American Tragedy* (1925), Dreiser's sisters' experiences influenced his portrayal of female characters; when reading the story of Carrie Meeber, we remember that "one of Dreiser's sisters ran off with a married saloon-manager who stole money to keep her" (201). There is another woman, however, who serves as an important source for the character of Carrie Meeber: Queen Shahrazade, narrator of the Arabian Nights. Shahrazade's story makes up the frame plot of the Arabian Nights: King Shahryar discovers the infidelity of his wife, and after executing her, vows to marry a virgin each night and slay her the following morning to make sure of his honor. Shahrazade, the clever daughter of the king's wazir, formulates a plan to marry the enraged king and stave off her death by telling him 1001 irresistible tales. Within three years' time, Shahrazade bears the king three sons, secures his pardon, and lives with him as his queen.[1] Carrie Meeber resembles Shahrazade in that she enters into various sexual contracts that not only save her from poverty and death, but also assist in her rise to theatrical greatness. Like Shahrazade's tales, which often mirror her own perilous situation but promise a positive outcome, Carrie's theatrical performance as Laura in *Under the Gaslight* becomes "a mirror of her own aspirations and fears" (Riggio 35).

Images of money, fine clothing, and luxurious furniture throughout *Sister Carrie* remind the reader of the fantastic wealth and splendor described in the 1001 tales spun by Shahrazade, which Dreiser read at an early age (Moers, *Two Dreisers* 275). Some of her stories were adapted to the stage at the turn of the century; Dreiser was familiar with *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, which ran in St. Louis in 1893 (Elias 53), as well as with the "'Arabian' cliches that had been the staple of the popular romances" (Moers, TD 271-72). However, William Phillips' suggestion that the *Arabian Nights* imagery pattern of Sister Carrie was "derived from an unconscious imita-

Witemeyer, Hugh. "Gaslight and Magic Lamp in Sister Carrie." *PMLA* 86 (1971): 236-240.

Notes

1 The use of this passage to illustrate Carrie's identification with Laura was suggested by Riggio 35. See also Donald Pizer, *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Study* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1976): 41-2.

Ellen Gilchrist's *The Annunciation* as Feminine Kunstlerroman

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In an article published in the *Southern Quarterly*, Jeanie Thompson and Anita Garner comment that Ellen Gilchrist's The Annunciation, though it describes faithfully many aspects of life in Mississippi and Louisiana, is much more than a regional novel. Indeed, the powerful archetypes evoked by the title promise much more than local color. The idea of a calling is suggested—the call to communicate, to create works of art, to "bring forth" in language ideas and visions.

Freud has asked "how that strange being, the poet, comes by his material. What makes him able to carry us with him in such a way and to arouse in us emotions of which we thought ourselves perhaps not even capable ?" (173). However, he gives us no real answer, suggesting rather feebly that some writers produce cheap fiction from egomaniacal fantasies. He does, however, suggest also that the author in her fiction can replace or alter the existing unsatisfactory or unpleasant world of reality with one closer to her desire.

Thus, a combination of an undesirable environment and a vision of a better way to live seems to provide the seedbed for literary creation. Ellen Gilchrist's introspection and also her study of how other fiction writers develop has resulted in a kunstlerroman, a subtype of the bildungsroman which focuses on the theme of the development of the artist.

In this respect, Gilchrist's *The Annunciation* presents a strong parallel to such a work as Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and in fact, one can readily think of Gilchrists's novel as "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman."

Gilchrist divides her novel into three sections entitled respectively "Cargo," "Exile," and "Annunciation." The title of the first and shortest section, "Cargo," suggests a great burden, a heavy load. The protagonist, Amanda, has grown up on her grandmother's plantation, ironically called Esperanza, in Issaquena County. There is very little in the environment to stimulate a young girl's mental development in a world where crops, hunting and football are the main topics of discussion. Social life is also very limited; Amanda has no girl friends. She is thrown constantly into companionship with her cousin, Guy, the only friend close at hand. Almost inexorably, she falls in love with him and in an almost incestuous relationship, becomes pregnant.

Threatened by imminent disgrace, the family hastily ships the fourteen year old girl off to a home for unwed mothers in New Orleans where the nuns who run the institution cannot help but emphasize the burden of guilt

pressing upon her. Indeed, the pressure on the one hand of a stringent code of behavior in sexual matters, and on the other, the grief and pain of surrendering her baby girl after one brief glimpse of her, leave Amanda crushed. Her cargo is a tremendous burden of guilt and loss. A feeling of horror and alienation possesses the young girl. Thus in her beginnings, the incipient artist shares burdens of pain similar to those experienced by other great novelists. Georges Simenon notes of the amazingly prolific writer, Honore de Balzac, a similar emotional cargo — a crushingly unhappy childhood. He notes:

> From the example of Balzac, I wish to show that a novelists's work is not an occupation like another—it implies renunciation, it is a vocation, if not a curse, or a disease .... The fact is that the need to create other people, the compulsion to draw out of oneself a crowd of different characters could hardly arise in a man who is otherwise happy and harmoniously adjusted to his own little world. Why should he so obstinately attempt to live other people's lives if he himself were secure and without revolt? (Leys, 22)

Balzac's mother has been characterized as cold and frivolous. Indeed, Simenon goes on to show that Balzac also suffered a period of exile from his family when at the age of eight, he was sent to a Spartan boarding school. Paralyzed by loneliness and brutality, he could not respond to his teachers, who

> . . . bombarded him with punishment. Detention meant being locked for hours or even days on end in a tiny cell, and the little boy ended up spending up to four days a week in the solitary gloom of the school prison. To escape from this desolation, mere dreaming was not enough: he had to invent for himself another world, more real than this unbearable environment.(Leys, 23)

James Joyce also carried a similar burden from his youth compounded of guilt and anger which led him to reject entirely both his Catholic background and his native land. J. Mitchell Morse notes in The *Sympathetic Alien* that:

> Joyce, having found himself morally unable to subordinate intellect to faith, as Eliot did, or to seek virtue in degradation, as Baudelaire did, could free himself of the sense of sin as society understood it only by denying the concept of sin as society understood it, and establishing for himself, as a godlike artist, a completely different scale of values. All his work is the record of a struggle to do this, to overcome the persistent influences of his upbringing. It was a lifelong struggle. (22)

Here, perhaps, is the motivation for his refusal to attend his mother's funeral; it may well be an expression of his alienation from both the Mother Church and the mother country.

The second part of Amanda McCamey's odyssey is called "Exile." Married to a wealthy Jewish businessman, she now lives in New Orleans, the land of dreamy dreams, to her an Unreal City. The Chamber of Commerce there will hardly rejoice in her description of New Orleans society. Exiled from Mississippi and from herself, her alienation is complete. She loathes New Orleans with its "Junior League women . . . politically corrupt men, materialism of the rankest sort, 'good' schools, class consciousness, racism and sterility" (Thompson and Garner,107).

Similarly, Joyce depicts Dublin as repulsive, with a sort of gross materialism competing with a hypocritical religiosity, racism and paralysis, in *Dubliners* and with increasing acerbity in his later works. Brandabur notes that an "odor of the decay of moral faculties hangs about Joyce's Dublin, redolent, said Joyce, with the odor of offal and ashpits" (76).

Vainly attempting to be the model young New Orleans matron her husband's family expects her to be, Amanda finds herself entrapped in a society she secretly despises. Like Joyce's Dubliners, she is confined by the nets of this society "to a script devised by some other persons or institutions" (Brandabut, 161). Despairing and lonely, her marriage shriveling, she turns to alcohol, and among other humiliating episodes, appears staggering and incoherent in a fine downtown hotel at a reception for Mrs. Coretta King. In short, she sinks to the depths only an alcoholic can plumb.

> What as I doing here? Amanda thought. What am I doing in a place where people hate each other? No, that's wrong. They hate themselves. That's who they really hate. Oh well, I'll have a drink. I'll call up some people and have a party. (Gilchrist, 69)

At the nadir of her life, Amanda's maid, Lavertis, a supremely sensible and compassionate woman, advises her:

> "First you got to find something else you like to do," Lavertis said. "You got to get you a baby or a job or something so you hadn't got so much time on your hands." (Gilchrist, 86)

So Amanda, like Stephen Daedalus, does not finally surrender to her despair and alienation, but some "instinct . . . stronger than education or piety quickened within him (her) at every approach to that life . . . and armed him (her) against acquiescence" (quoted in Brandabur, 161). Amanda finally awakens to her own capacities and desires. Her love of language is reawakened, and she begins to take courses in French at Tulane University: "She's got the blue flow," her teachers said. "She's got the touch. She's got the thing we can't teach." (Gilchrist, 103).

Her intellectual power awakened at last, Amanda finds the strength to set her own course in life. She observes, "I was almost forty years old before I started to use my talents or gifts or whatever you call them" (Gilchrist,108).

Looking back on her life in New Orleans, Amanda wryly observes:

> I guess I should have worked harder at it when I was young . But I was too busy drinking and running around being wild. I was the wildest girl in Mississippi. All I wanted to do was relive the life of Zelda Fitzgerald. No one ever told me she wasn't happy. Can you believe it? I used to read those books and all I got out of them was that it was exciting. I thought *The Beautiful and the Damned* was about some people having a good time. (Gilchrist, 107)

In James Joyce's play "Exiles," the main character, Richard, sees himself as Joyce did, "the culture hero among culture heroes who creates in the womb of his own superior imagination the very creatures he desires" (Brandabur, 136). So then does Amanda reject the sordid realities of her exile in New Orleans, as she determines to embrace her vocation as a writer, telling herself, "I've got work to do" (Gilchrist, 221). Like a mantra, Amanda chants to herself her list of culture heroes as she strives to join their ranks:

> Hi-Octane, Kundalini rising. The feet of Athena, Diana's girdle, Wonder Woman and Dorothy Parker and Margaret Mead and all the fated gifted blessed crazy driven ones, the darlings of the gods, their playthings. (Gilchrist, 221)

In the third and longest section of the novel, Amanda has joined her friend, Katie Dunbar, a ceramicist, in Fayetteville, Arkansas, "her Paris and her Rome" (Gilchrist, 137) and is attending classes at the University of Arkansas. Her advisor arranges for her to translate the poetry of Helene Renoir, a French poet as unconventional as Amanda herself has now become.

Amanda exults in her new found inner freedom. She tells her young lover the secret of her new-found joy in life:

> loving yourself, not letting your self-esteem be in the hands of other people. Being in touch with the phenomena of yourself, being aware of your place in the phenomenological universe. Your place in a universe of air and water and light, this holy place and time in which you are conscious—, perhaps the only conscious thing in all the universe. (Gilchrist, 230)

Gradually, some of the cargo weighing on her spirits is lifted. Her cousin, Guy, locates their long unknown daughter and assures Amanda that her daughter, Barrett Clare, is fine. Amanda is vastly relieved though

she chooses not to intrude into the young woman's life. She remembers her departure from New Orleans, the sharp break she made with her unauthentic past by selling her meaningless possessions, and her dream of walking around buildings with many books in her arms. In Fayetteville, her dream of order and intellectual integrity begins to be realized.

Again like Joyce, Amanda has achieved love, that caritas which is the central principle of Judaism and Christianity alike. Marilyn French observes:

> Caritas is a much larger and more profound concept than charity: the shrunken meaning of the second word indicates the difficulty of maintaining the first. . . .Caritas is love that is given freely, that is neither a *guid pro quo*, given in hope of gain, nor a disguise for fear. Man's worst fear is of incertitude, and to avoid the sight of that Gorgon's face, man sets up certitudes, false gods. One of these is a belief in the possibility of possession, of property rights, the attempt to own things and people and to impose one's will on them. (42)

Once having broken free of guilt, the false values of a materialist society, and even of her own possessions bought all too often to create a false image and support false values, the moment of Annunciation nears. The image is that of the wonderful moment when the virgin Mary is told by the angel that she is to conceive a son. The miraculous wonder of this birth permeates the third section of the novel, the account of Amanda's rebirth as her true self, a creative being. And this rebirth is soon reflected in a second image, the birth of her son.

Amanda forms a union with young Will Lyons, a guitarist, and experiences with him a completely fulfilling love. Thompson and Garner note that despite her hard line stand against Christianity, the events of Amanda's subsequent pregnancy closely parallel the Nativity narrative. Luke, the masseur who first tells her she is pregnant plays of role of the angel Gabriel. Katie Dunbar stands in for Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, and it is to her that Amanda recites her magnificat. Amanda muses upon the significance of these events and their relation to the first Christmas:

> And Luke Haverty. the med school dropout, the unwashed hippie doctor of the hills with his gorgeous tan. Is he to be the angel of the Annunciation? His hands were folded at his chest. He might have dropped to one knee.... Vision a little fuzzy around the edges but wearing blue and white, the virgin's colors. Blue shorts, white T-shirt. . . .And Will Lyons, is he my Joseph leading the donkey?(Gilchrist, 279)

After such an Annunciation. Amanda's son must be, and is born on Christmas Eve. Exultant, Amanda strengthens her resolve to take charge

> It was now well into June, and the scent of Miss Jenny's transplanted jasmine drifted steadily into the house and surrounded it with constant cumulate waves more grave and simple than a fading resonance of viols. The earlier flowers were gone, and the birds had finished eating the strawberries and now sat about the fig bushes all day, waiting for them to ripen. (224)

The time here is distinguished from the rest of the calendar year by the fragrance of jasmine, the absence of some flowers and strawberries, and the ripening of the figs, stages in a continuously on-going movement of birth, life, decay, and death.

Faulkner utilizes not only the natural flora of the region but also the rhythms of the annual agricultural calendar, making note of time through a description of the labor attached to a particular phase of agriculture. The above excerpt continues: "zinnia and delphinium bloomed without any assistance from Isom who, since Caspey had more or less returned to normalcy. . . and laying-by time was yet a while away, now spent the lazy long days sleeping peacefully with a cane fishing pole on the creek bank" (224). About this same time, young Bayard is "planting things in the ground and watching them grow and tending them" and going to bed each night with grateful muscles and with the sober rhythms of the earth in his body" (229). The novel insists upon that time which signals rhythm and repetition. It is the time of the seasons; it is the time of the agricultural calendar. The reader is almost constantly aware of the time of the year, not because Faulkner has named the month or the season but because he has painted the natural flora and fauna in a particular stage, or because Faulkner has drawn the laborers at work planting, tending, reaping, or processing what the earth has produced. Again writing of *Sartoris*, Millgate describes Faulkner's technique:

> We are constantly made aware of the movement of time and the seasons from the beginning of the novel in the early spring of 1919, as old Bayard drives home past the newly tilled fields; the later stages of the spring are traced as one plant after another comes into bloom; the book then moves into high summer with its heat, into late summer, with its last rose, into the fall, when young Bayard and his bride watch the Negroes making sorghum molasses, and so into the winter, when young Bayard escapes to the simplicities of life with the MacCallums and hunts with Buddy MacCallum in the cold December rain. The final pages of the novel pass quickly through the winter, spring ad early summer of 1920, until the twin accomplishment of young Bayard's death and his son's birth on June 11, and it is notable that despite the brevity with which this period of time is treated the seasonal movement is still precisely insisted upon. (76)

In addition to describing the yearly calendar primarily through natural phenomena or agricultural symbols, Faulkner also notes daily time mostly through the ever-present repetition and renewal of nature, particularly through the movement of the sun or the moon or the nightly activities of the regional fauna. The time of day is almost always related through a description of the angle of the sunlight. For example, old man Falls come to town "though the yet horizontal sunlight of morning' (244), and young Bayard listens to Narcissa while "outside the shadows slanted more and more, peaceful harbingers of evening" (278). When young Bayard initially comes home and confronts his grandfather, their meeting is lit by the moon: "From her silver casement the moon looked down upon the valley dissolving in opaline tranquility into the serene mysterious infinitude of the hills" (46). The nightly sounds of the crickets likewise signal the time of evening: "locust drifted up in sweet gusts upon the air, and the crickets and frogs were clear and monotonous as pipes blown drowsily by an idiot boy" (p. 46). Earlier old Bayard had listened as

> a shrill monotone of crickets rose from the immediate grass, and further away, from among the trees, a fairy-like piping of young frogs like endless silver small bubbles rising, and a thin sourceless odor of locust drifted up intangible as fading tobacco-wraiths. (42)

The specific time is not mentioned, for hourly time is perhaps less real, less valid, than the time marked out by nature and by the natural phenomena of the surrounding Mississippi countryside. The two Bayards' discussion might be a rare, even singular, event, but it is surrounded by the endless pulses of nature and immersed in the constant repetition of the seasons and the accompanying sights and sounds of the plants and animals which appear at their prescribed times of the day or the year. Against this backdrop of the daily and yearly repetitions of the natural and agricultural world, the Sartoris family moves and lives, creating a series of parallel movements with these rhythms through a bizarre set of repeated actions, lives, names, stories, and deaths.

The names of the Sartoris men are the first indication that Faulkner has created a family obsessed with repetition. Miss Jenny, the oldest living character in the novel, had two brothers, Bayard, the eldest, and John, the youngest. John's son is names Bayard, "Old Bayard in the text," and Bayard has a son named John. This John begets a pair of twins, Bayard and John. And, as if the repetition of names were not enough, the majority of these Sartoris men manage, perhaps seek, to get themselves killed in similarly ridiculous ways.

Horace Benbow describes the Sartoris clan as a "Funny family. Always going to wars, and always getting killed" (175). The first to get killed in a war is Bayard, during the Civil War, in his foolhardy return to the Yankee camp in order to get anchovies. John, his brother's great-grandson, repeats

his foolish death-quest when he attempts to fly an obviously inferior airplane too far into enemy territory. As Miss Jenny says of John's death during the first World War, "The war just gave John a good excuse to get himself killed" (32). According to Miss Jenny, Old Bayard only lived so long because he was born between wars and had been denied "opportunities for swashbuckling" (427). And, of course, young Bayard spends the greater part of the novel attempting in one way or another to follow in his brother's and ancestors' footsteps. He finally succeeds in killing himself when he attempts to fly what he certainly knows is an extremely dangerous experimental aircraft.

The Sartoris model that most of the men feel compelled to live up to involves a number of components. A fondness for "hell-raising" and violence is the most obvious characteristic of the "Sartoris personality." Death, also, seems particularly important for the Sartoris men; they seek opportunities both to kill and to be killed, perhaps out of some old-fashioned sense of glory. Contemplating his family's history of meaningless, stupid deaths, old Bayard describes Sartoris heaven as a place where his family "could spend eternity dying deaths of needless and magnificent violence while spectators doomed to immortality looked eternally on" (94).

The spectators are a necessary ingredient in a Sartoris heaven because someone must be present who can relate these "needless and magnificent" deaths to others through stories. While a number of the Sartoris men participate in the repetition of the actions of their ancestors, Miss Jenny and practically everyone else in the community, both within and without the family, repeat the "achievements" of the Sartorises through the almost constant re-telling of their stories, that is, through language. In fact, it seems as if the Sartorises exist for the other members of the community only through language. The community is familiar with all of the dead members of the family because their exploits have been told and told again, even to audiences that know the whole story.

Even characters who lived through some events must participate in the retelling of the stories associated with those events, sometimes as listeners. The novel begins, in fact, with old man Falls telling old Bayard a story about Colonel John—a story which old Bayard knows well because he was present during the original action. Old man Falls was not present, so while he is re-telling the story, he has to ask old Bayard to fill in forgotten details. The importance, however, is not the factual information that old man Falls knows or does not know; of primary importance is the very act of re-telling the stories.

The living Sartoris family is known primarily because of the stories recounted about the dead members of the family. Even those members of the family who are still alive are known largely through stories of their heroics or their foolishness. Narcissa, for instance, has rarely seen the twins, Bayard and John; she knows of them through stories:

> But she had not seen them often. They were either away at school, or if at home they passed their headlong days in the country, coming into town at rare intervals and then on horseback, in stained corduroy and flannel shirts. Yet rumors of their doings came in to her from time to time. (77)

The Sartoris family epitomizes repetition. Family members named after their ancestors live and die in accordance with prescribed patterns which were established by these forbears and are recreated through the constant repetition of stories and anecdotes about their lives and their deaths.

In a sense, there is no present for the Sartorises; they exist only through the stories, of themselves or their ancestors. Their actions are constantly informed or determined by the actions of those who have come before. In order to make sense of the present, the family must constantly refer to the past. Even present actions make little sense until they have become enveloped into a narrative, until they have become one more part of the Sartoris history. What Sartre says of Faulkner's vision of the world can apply especially well to the sense-making apparatus of the Sartoris clan.

> Faulkner's vision of the world can be compared to that of a man sitting in an open car and looking backwards. At every moment, formless shadows, flickerings, faint tremblings and patches of light rise up on either side of him, and only afterwards, when he has a little perspective, do they become trees and men and cars. (81-82)

Only through repeating the past can the Sartoris men live. For them, it seems that life itself makes sense only through a continuous view towards and repetition of the past.

So important is repetition, in fact, that sometimes the reader cannot tell whether Faulkner is describing a definite time and event in the past or actions that are habitual and have occurred any number of times within the past. Faulkner often seems to attempt to blur the distinction. For instance, in order to describe a visit by old man Falls, Faulkner describes all of his visits, switching back and forth throughout the description:

> It was to this room that they would retire on old man Falls' visits, and here they would sit (they were both deaf) and shout at one another for half an hour or so, about John Sartoris and crops. You could hear them plainly from the street and through the wall of the store on either side. Old man Falls' eyes were blue and innocent as a boy's and his first act after he and old Bayard were seated, was to open Bayard's parcel and take from it a plug of chewing tobacco, cut off a chew and put it in his mouth, replace the plug and wrap and tie the parcel neatly again. He never cut the string, but always untied the tedious knot with his stiff, gnarled fingers. (83-84)

Faulkner's description is difficult to place in a definite time. Does the description of "his first act" here refer to a definite act at a definite time, or does it describe his habit, an action that has been repeated over and over again? Perhaps it doesn't matter, for truly meaningful acts here gain meaning only insofar as they repeat earlier ones.

According to Mircea Eliade, the archaic mind distinguishes between two types of time, the sacred and the profane. Eliade argues that religious man "lives in two kinds of time, of which the more important, sacred time, appears under the paradoxical aspect of a circular time, reversible and recoverable, a sort of eternal mythical present that is periodically reintegrated by means of rites" (*Sacred* 70). For members of the Sartoris family, these rites take the form of stories, which attempt to recover a past time and to recreate a past action. According to Eliade, for the religious man, "One becomes truly a man only by conforming to the teaching of the myths, that is, by imitating the gods" (*Sacred* 100).

Religious man imitates the gods in an attempt to recreate the origin, because of a nostalgia for the past and for the original. "Such a nostalgia," argues Eliade, "inevitably leads to the continual repetition of a limited number of gestures and patterns of behavior" (*Myth* 92). For the Sartoris men, the gods whom they attempt to imitate and recreate are their ancestors. John gets himself killed in World War I in an attempt to recreate his origin; he hopes to recapture and create anew the myth of his ancestor's foolish dash into the enemy lines. "What does living mean for a man who belongs to a traditional culture?" asks Eliade. "Above all," he says, "It means living in accordance with extrahuman models, in conformity with archetypes" (*Myth* 95).

The male members of the Sartoris family know about these "extrahuman models" at least in part because of their female relative, Miss Jenny.

> It was she who told them of the manner of Bayard Sartoris' death prior to the second battle of Manassas. She had told the story many times since (at eighty she still told it, on occasions usually inopportune) and as she grew older the tale itself grew richer and richer, taking on a mellow splendor like wine; until what had been a hair-brained prank of two heedless and reckless boys wild with their own youth, was become a gallant and finely tragical focal-point to which the history of the race had been raised from out of the old miasmic swamps of spiritual sloth by two angels valiantly and glamorously fallen and strayed, altering the course of human events and purging the souls of men. (13-14)

The details of the incident are not important, as long as the story becomes mythologized and retold, in order for the generations that follow to have some mythic character to imitate, some mythic origin to attempt to recreate.

Religious man creates myths and attempts to recreate the origin, argues Eliade, in order to purge the community and re-create a new world. The

mythic past is meant to illustrate a creation which can be re-created for constructive, positive ends. "For religious man of the archaic cultures, the world is renewed annually; in other words, with each new year it recovers its original sanctity, the sanctity that it possessed when it came from the Creator's hands" (*Sacred* 75). The importance of myths is that they can be put to use in the present, again to create and build. Eliade further states

> The meaning of this periodical retrogression of the world into a chaotic modality was this: all the 'sins' of the year, everything that time had soiled and worn, was annihilated in the physical sense of the word. By symbolically participating in the annihilation and re-creation of the world, man too was created anew; he was reborn, for he began a new life. (*Sacred* 79)

It is important, however, that the origin that is recreated, the action that is repeated, is a creative one. For the Sartoris family, the time to which they return is never birth or creation but always death and destruction. The imitation of that which has come before and which is sustained through the repetition of the myths results in death, rather than birth, for what is mythologized are only the annihilation and the violent acts, not those events which have the possibility of playing some sort of regenerative role.

Narcissa, perhaps, is the only member of the family who is able to utilize the past in order to create a new present and at least the possibility of a future. By refusing to name her child John, as Miss Jenny expects, Narcissa "breaks the cycle," as it were. Narcissa is choosing the profane over the sacred, in Eliade's terms. Rather than continue the deathly repetition that has constituted the Sartoris legacy for so long in its attempt to recreate an "origin" that was, in essence, the family's invention in the first place, Narcissa "replaces mythic memory with personal memory, to establish the identity of a single solitary self, unlike all others that have ever been or will be" (Kartiganer 25). Narcissa represents, perhaps, the sole "modern" character in the novel, separating herself and her offspring from the "archaic" framework of her new family. According to Eliade,

> the crucial difference between the man of the archaic civilizations and modern, historical man [sic] lies in the increasing value the latter gives to historical events, that is, to the 'novelties' that, for traditional man, represented either meaningless conjunctures or infractions of norms (hence 'faults,' 'sins,' and so on) and that, as such, required to be expelled (abolished) periodically. (*Myth* 154)

Unlike the other members of the Sartoris family, who are trapped by their mythic creations and recreations, Narcissa is able to utilize the past in order to create a present and the possibility of a future, so that, as Kierkegaard says, "the past is rewritten, becoming part of a new narrative expanding into the future" (Kartiganer 29). She, perhaps alone of all the

characters associated with the Sartoris family, seems capable of learning from the past rather than simply repeating it. All of the characters live their lives within and through rhythms of one type or another—the repetitions of the seasons or the day, the reflections of past events in present circumstances—but Narcissa is perhaps the only Sartoris that can conceive of some kind of productive creation through repetition.

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Iago as Villain in *Othello*

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The Oxford English Dictionary defines villain as "originally, a low-born, base-minded rustic; a man of ignoble ideas or instincts; in later use an unprincipled or depraved scoundrel; a man naturally disposed to base or criminal actions." Though qualified as now in rare usage, the term's epistemology is further explained as meaning a person of "low or mean . . . birth or position." In Shakespeare's *Othello*, the author applies the term "villain" to the character Iago.

Most modern critics interpret Iago's villainy in the ethical sense, choosing to ignore the class meaning of the word, a meaning commonly understood in Shakespeare's day. Certainly Iago is a villain in the ethical sense—his actions speak for themselves—but, an important, informing facet of the play is missed when the class sense of the word is unknown or ignored. C.S. Lewis feels that the term is never without "some implication of ignoble birth, coarse manners, and ignorance" (122). This paper will interpret Shakespeare's application of villain to Iago by examining the blood changes the author makes in adapting the source of *Othello*, *The Hecatommithi* by Giovanni Baptista Geraldo Cinthio. As David Shelley Berkeley argues, Shakespeare always intensifies "whatever class-consciousness may exist in their primary sources" (7), and Othello is no exception; what is suggested by these changes in blood matters is that Iago is a villain in the class sense as well as the ethical sense.

Several factors support and develop this interpretation: Iago has no understanding of social graces; his language is gross and unattractive, unfitting for a gentleman; he is put down repetitively in a class sense; he fails to stand up for himself when various members of the play directly attribute him with being of base origin, slurs no gentleman could endure; there is a lack of family solidarity—he and Emilia are not one spirit intertwined; like Shakespearean villains in general, he is without issue; he is passed over for the lieutenancy, a commission which would have bestowed to him the rank of gentleman; Iago will not issue an open challenge; he is totally selfish, espousing a philosophy of egotism; and lastly, even when his evil deeds are out in the open, Iago never repents.

Most critics choose to ignore the class-based division Shakespeare used in his plays, applying instead their own modern theories of interpretation. A few contemporary critics do cite Iago's mean birth. Robert B. Heilman

notes that Iago has many base traits, including his vocabulary, but feels these attributes apply as metaphors for Iago's baseness of spirit (111). Marvin Rosenberg cites Iago's lower social class and the unmistakable identification of the Folio cast list (170). In *Preface to Othello*, Harley Granville-Barker, after identifying that Shakespeare molded a more heroic Othello out of Cinthio's Moor, says that he also set up Iago "in total contrast to him; a commonfellow, foulminded and coarse-tongued" (99). The critic whose sensibilities and arguments are closest to the focus of this essay is John Draper who, in *The Othello of Shakespeare's Audience*, writes that Iago is a "low-born non-commissioned officer" (19). Draper bases much of his study on the "Elizabethan psychology expressed in the old theory of the humors derived from Galen" (16), but with a brief exception does not concern himself with the changes Shakespeare made from Cinthio's novel.

That which is lacking among critics is also lacking in stage and screen productions of *Othello*. It is difficult to assess stage productions of the plays through the years. In more recent years, columns of drama critics have provided us with some assessment. In earlier centuries such printed treatment was not easily assessable. The George Odell volumes titled *Shakespeare: From Betterton to Irving*, originally published by Scribners in 1920, reprinted by Benjamin Bloom in 1963, contain one of the most thorough treatments of Shakespeare's productions before the latter part of the twentieth century. However, of the various actors Odell comments about on playing the role of Iago, there is no discussion of one playing the role as a cockney or as villain in the class sense. A 1964 book titled *Shakespeare on the English Stage:*

> 1900-1964 does include a 1956 production of Othello employing a lower class type for the role of Iago. Emlyn Williams' Iago was that of "stocky, black bearded devil, with enunciation like the print of a branding iron and the face of a Judas." (Trewin 237)

In viewing screen productions, a similar situation exists, even though a number of screen productions of *Othello* have been made in the latter part of the twentieth century. The earliest sound version is the Orson Welles' 1952 b/w film. This was followed by the 1965 filming of John Dexter's National Theatre Productions, starring Laurence Olivier, Maggie Smith, and Frank Finlay. Lesser known productions include:

1. A 1979 New York Shakespeare Festival video production starring Raul Julia and Richard Dreyfus;
2. A 1982 BBC production, part of the BBC Shakespeare Series, starring Anthony Hopkins and Bob Hoskins.
3. A 1985 Bard Production, starring William Marshall, Jenny Agutter, and Ron Moody.

4. A 1987 production starring South African John Kani.

Of these only two present Iago as a villain in the class sense. The 1965 British film starring Frank Finlay, reviewed in *Shakespeare on Screen*, is one. The reviewer's comment about Finlay is that his "Iago is a sinister, leering, foul-minded lower class East London type." Jonathan Miller directs the 1982 Shakespeare Series, including the *Othello* starring Bob Hoskins as Iago. The *Shakespeare on Screen* reviewer states that "Mr. Hoskins, complete with a cockney accent, turns Iago into a hysterically giggling, cackling psychopath." The other screen versions depict Iago as a gentlemen with sophisticated English usage and sounds, the characterization seen in Cinthio, not in Shakespeare.

Giovanni Baptista Geraldo Cinthio published *The Hecatommithi* in 1565, a book divided into ten decades, each decade devoted to a particular subject with ten corresponding stories; *Othello* is based on the seventh story in the third decade, its assigned subject, "The Unfaithfulness of Husbands and of Wives" (Cinthio 376). There is no controversy over the validity of Cinthio's novel being the source of Othello as there are in some other plays of the canon, such as *The Taming of the Shrew*, nor is there any complication of multiple sources as there is in *The Comedy of Errors* and most of the Histories. In Cinthio's novel the Ensign is characterized as

> . . . a man of handsome figure, but of the most depraved nature in the world. This man was in great favour with the Moor, who had not the slightest idea of his wickedness; for, despite the malice lurking in his heart, he cloaked with proud and valorous speech and with a specious presence the villainy of his soul with such art that he was to all outward show another Hector or Achilles. (378)

This "valorous speech" and the comparison to noble soldiers of the Trojan wars implies an understanding of social graces, as well as typifying the quality of his speech. In the source the Ensign has no dialogue with Disdemona, but in *Othello* Shakespeare allows the audience to hear Iago's indelicate aside when Cassio and Desdemona speak intimately together.

> He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said,
> whisper. With as little a web as this will I ensnare
> as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I
> will give thee in thine own courtship. You say true;
> 'tis so, indeed. If such tricks as these strip you
> out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had
> not kiss'd your three fingers so oft, which now again
> you are most apt to play the sir in. Very good; well
> kiss'd! An excellent courtesy! 'Tis so, indeed. Yet
> again your fingers to your lips? Would they were

clyster-pipes for your sake! (II.i. 166-175)

Iago thinks the kissing of a lady's hand a sexual pass, his vulgar mind perverting this gentle custom. It is quite possible that as a common soldier Iago is ignorant of this type of social intercourse and its implicit innocence—intercourse that is identified as proper in Count Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, translated into English by Sir T. Hoby in 1561. Written in dialogue form, Castiglione describes such exchanges as "intercourse most free and honourable; for everyone was permitted to talk, sit, jest and laugh" (11). As Gerald M. Pincess and Roger Lockyer write of *The Courtier*, "Castiglione's speakers are concerned with social deportment. For them good and bad are matters of grace and style" (155). Iago does not realize that Cassio is only showing Desdemona the proper respect in his address and kiss.

The lack of understanding of social decorum also manifests itself in Iago's speech, for his language is gross; he constantly likens humans to animals, again, usually mirroring his salacious mind. Though identified as being "that wickedest of all bad men" (387), the Ensign of Cinthio's prose work hides this depravity in "valorous speech." When he insinuates Disdemona's disloyalty to the Moor, the Ensign's dialogue exhibits a mannered style:

> I can't deny it pains me to the soul to be thus
> forced to say what needs must be more hard to hear
> than any other grief; but since you will it so, and
> that the regard I owe your honour compels me to
> confess the truth, I will no longer refuse to
> satisfy your questions and my duty. Know, then
> that for no other reason is your lady vexed to see
> the Captain in disfavour then the pleasure that
> she has in his company whenever he comes to your
> house, and all the more since she has taken an
> aversion to your blackness. (381)

In contrast, Shakespeare presents Iago's speech as rough and vulgar, as when he shouts up to Brabantio's terraced position: "You'll have your daughter cover'd with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have coursers for cousins and gennets for germans" (I.i. 111-114). Iago's pattern of equating humans to animals continues throughout the play, too numerous to mention them all—in this case he is directing these base allusions as racial slurs toward the possible grandchildren of Brabantio that could issue from Othello and Desdemona's miscegenation.

Shakespeare often discolors his base with this quality of speech, but in *Othello* it carries important implications to the plot. Ifor Evans sees this emphasis as "maintained with an almost intolerable insistence ... supported by a continuing reference to the mind and its emotions in terms of disease,

or infection, or plagues of toads and flies" (151). Heilman explains that "in his barnyard view of life, Iago instinctively dehumanizes the human being, especially by treating love as a mechanical animality" (105). Draper writes that Shakespeare mirrors situation and character in his use of meter, Iago's being rough in contrast to Cassio's smooth-flowing lines (21). Iago is always laying seeds of directed half-truths in his guttural speech, and to a modern reader this might be an argument for the power of suggestion, but the play suggests Shakespeare means it in a physical sense as well, a change registered in the blood. All things register in the blood, including thoughts and actions, "rendering this element the cause and talisman of what may be expected of human beings" (Berkeley 14). Iago's base mutterings to Roderigo are a prelude to the poison he injects Othello with, directing the crime against gentle Desdemona. Though Othello is unaware of his lieutenant's deceit, his blood is affected because "even involuntary participation in crime caused gentle blood to become somewhat gross" (Berkeley 48). Iago makes reference to this change himself when he states,

> The Moor already changes with my poison.
> Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
> Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
> But with a little act upon the blood
> Burn like the mines of sulphur. (III.iii. 330-334)

Most modern critics do not interpret the change in the Moor as physical, but Shakespeare leaves us the implication that this is true. Though not seen, Iago's base mutterings cause a physiological change upon Othello's blood. The only apparent change is in the Moor's behavior and his acceptance of Iago's vile accusations, but given Othello's noble blood this would not occur unless his blood had physically degenerated. This is backed up by Renaissance texts such as Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, published in 1621. Burton writes, "So on the other side, the mine most effectually workes upon the Body, producing by his passions and perturbations, miraculous alterations" (82).

Thoughout the play Iago is put down in a class sense by various members of the cast. In Cinthio's version the Ensign is never directly confronted with any insinuations that he is of base blood. Even when the Moor is informed by the Ensign of the possibility of Disdemona's infidelity, the Captain, in his rage, makes no such claims on the man's social status, instead only issuing a threat to his officer: "By heavens, I scarce can hold this hand from plucking out that tongue of thine, so bold which dares to speak such slander of my wife" (Cinthio 381). During the exchange of dialogue between Iago, Desdemona, and Cassio in Act II of *Othello*, Desdemona replies to Iago's banter, "These are old fond paradoxes to make fools / laugh i'th' alehouse" (II.i. 137-138). As Blood Will Tell relates, ale is associated with the base born (54) and the implication here is that Desdemona considers Iago base. This is further reinforced when Desdemona

comments, "How say you, Cassio? Is he not a most profane and / liberal counselor" (II.i. 162-163), to which Cassio replies, "he speaks home, madam" (II.i. 164). Bevington glosses home as, "without reserve" (1136) and Desdemona's use of profane and liberal point to the base trait of openness. Berkeley observes: "The epithet 'honest' as applied to a man . . . may be a pejorative expressive of upper-class disapproval of plebeian openness" (29), and this certainly is the case here, as well as when Iago is constantly referred to as "honest Iago" by Othello (50).

When Brabantio retorts to Iago's accusations in Act I he calls him a "profane wretch" (I.i. 115). Iago answers typically, using the aforementioned animal imagery, with his comment of "The beast with two backs" (I.i. 117). Note that Iago makes reference to sex openly and in this vulgar manner, but as importantly is his non-denial of being a profane wretch, which signals that Iago is base. Even when Brabantio directly calls him a villain, Iago never denies it—an insult a gentleman would not suffer.

Iago never stands up for himself when confronted with these class slurs. Emilia, who does not know as yet of whom she speaks, ironically identifies the cause of Othello's change in temperament towards Desdemona with her tirade of "some eternal villain / some busy and insinuating rogue, / Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office, / Have not devis'd this slander," (IV.ii. 132-135). She follows with, "The Moor's abused'd by some most villainous knave, / Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow" (IV.ii. 141-142). Iago again does not deny it, but instead cautions her with, "Speak within door" (IV.ii. 146) meaning not so loud. Iago does not care for his reputation. This is in direct contrast to Cassio, who laments the loss of his commission: "I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial," (II.iii. 257-259). Iago replies, "Reputation is an idle and most false imposition" (II.ii. 262). That Iago can make such a statement is telling in regards to the thesis of this argument. In 1622, Henry Peacham wrote in *The Compleat Gentleman*, "There is no thing that setteth a fairer stampe upon Nobilitie the evenesse of carriage and care of our Reputation" (185); to be without reputation is to be "dead long before we are buried" (186).

When Emilia unknowingly hits close to the mark with her accusations that some villain is abusing Othello, Iago tells her to keep quiet. She does not comply, but continues in complete disregard to her husband's command; this defiance signals another aspect of Iago's plebeian rank—that being the lack of any family solidarity—Iago and Emilia are not one spirit intertwined. John Draper notes that Emilia is of a lower social status than her counterpart in Cinthio's novel; in Shakespeare's source the Ensign's wife is found to be "a young, and fair, and virtuous lady" (Cinthio 378) on equal footing with Disdemona instead of her servant. The Ensign's wife also "knew the whole truth" about her husband's plans against her friend and the Moor, and though she does not condone such treachery she does not "disclose a single circumstance" (Cinthio 384). Compare this maintained confidence with Emilia's outraged reaction at the end of the play. After finding out that Iago was the villain poisoning Othello's humor, she

calls her husband a liar. Iago again, as before, commands her to be quiet and "charm your tongue" (V.ii. 190). Emilia does not heed Iago, shouting:

> Villainy, Villainy, Villainy!
> I think upon 't—I think I smell it! O Villainy!
> I thought so then—I'll kill myself for grief—
> O villainy, villainy! (V.ii. 197-200)

This defiance of husband would have been understood to be in keeping with Emilia and Iago's social status. Renaissance texts devised exacting prescriptions for marriage. In their study of English Renaissance texts Pincess and Lockyer discuss an official sermon by the Church of England concerning marriage: "This homily sets forth the received notion of the ideal relationship between husband and wife in marriage. Its position . . . is particularly significant: husband's [sic] command and wives must obey" (40).

In another matter that informs one to Iago's plebian status is Othello's passing him over for a commission in favor of Cassio. This element is also missing from the source of the play as a hint of impetus for the Ensign's treachery. In its stead is the complication of the Ensign's falling in love with Disdemona:

> Now the wicked Ensign, regardless of the faith that he had pledged his wife, no less than of the friendship, fidelity, and obligation which he owed the Moor, fell passionately in love with Disdemona, and bent all his thoughts to achieve his conquest. (Cinthio 379)

Shakespeare could not have this part of Cinthio's narrative applied to Iago. It is unthinkable for a base man in Shakespeare to aspire to love a gentlewoman. Certainly it would have meant Shakespeare's imbuing Iago with the virtuous emotion of love, something that as a base he would have dubious claim to. This is one of the reasons Shakespeare invents Roderigo—to act as the spurned lover, but he also invents the part of the play dealing with Iago's being passed over for the commissioned status, which would have honored him with the rank of gentleman. Giovanni Nenna writes of this custom in a *A Treatise of Nobility*: "Others make themselves and their posterity noble, in following the war, applying the same with all their indeavor, albeit . . . they doe descend but of base parentage" (69). This professional rebuff gives Iago motivation in performing his evil deeds, an important point missed by many modern critics.

Besides lacking courage Iago is totally selfish, espousing a philosophy of egotism presented mostly in his soliloquies and dialogue with Roderigo. The source, since it presents little of the Ensign's speech, does not supply us with a direct comparison, so why does Shakespeare give Iago this quality of character? Theodore Spencer may hit closest to the mark when he

"Traveling into Purity and Extremity": A Jungian Reading of John Hawkes's *Travesty*

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Since the novel's publication, critics of John Hawkes's *Travesty* have questioned the actual existence of the book's silent characters—Henri, Chantal, Monique, and Honorine—and have debated whether the experience narrated in the novel actually takes place, or if it is merely a dream or a fantasy of Papa, the narrator, or of Honorine, his wife. In most of these studies of the novel, Henri, the poet, is seen as a projection of the narrator or as a fantasy figure. However, a Jungian reading of *Travesty* reveals that Henri is, quite possibly, the only existing character in the novel; or more accurately, each character in *Travesty* makes up part of the consciousness of Henri. If the action in the novel takes place in a dream, then it is Henri's dream; and the experience, though seemingly destructive, proves to be productive for Henri's creative consciousness.

Donald Greiner, in both his *Understanding John Hawkes* (1985), and his *Comic Terror* (1978), strongly suggests that the non-speaking characters in *Travesty* are creations of the narrator's imagination. Greiner says, "The reader may wonder whether they [Henri, Chantal, etc.] are projections of Papa's imagination," and "The reader should consider the possibility that Papa creates Henri. . . . Chantal and Honorine may also be illusory" (*Understanding* 129, 132-33). For Greiner, the novel celebrates the ability of the narrator "to create an imaginary world even while destroying himself in the real one" (*Comic Terror* 274). Greiner suggests that "the entire experience takes place in [Papa's] mind" (274), but he does not explore the significance of this possibility.

Other critics seem to agree with Greiner. Patrick O'Donnell has stated that "Papa's world is peopled with projections of his own psyche" (*John Hawkes* 140), and Christine Laniel has suggested that "Chantal and Henri might not exist outside of the narrator's discourse. Nothing in the fiction proves that they have an autonomous existence. The whole story might be the speaker's fantasy" (178). But like Greiner, these critics have not thoroughly examined this aspect of the novel.

Paul Emmett, in one of the earliest studies of *Travesty*, considers that the events in the novel may be "elements of Honorine's dream to which car and passengers are mysteriously drawn" (175) or that the characters in the novel may be "projection[s]" of the narrator, Papa. Emmett approaches *Travesty*

as a dream or a fantasy and examines the novel's mythic elements. He concludes that Papa's monologue is

> a metaphor for his journey through a maze of conscious impediments toward his unconscious inner self and the rediscovery of paradisiac innocence; at the same time, it is a metaphor for his ultimate destination—the realm of the unconscious. (186)

While Emmett does draw on Jungian theory in his analysis, he fails to consider Jung's concepts of the shadow and the process of individuation—considerations, which would show that the events dreamed or imagined in *Travesty* take place, not in Papa's "memory and imagination" (178), but in Henri's psyche.

According to Jungian theory the human psyche is composed of a number of conscious and unconscious elements. The psyche is "self-regulating" and "moves toward the wholeness of the person by uniting all aspects of the conscious and unconscious minds" (Wehr 38). Jung calls this tendency of the psyche "individuation," a process which involves the integration of all parts of the self. An unindividuated, or unintegrated, aspect of the psyche, if ignored by the conscious self, the ego, can at times develop into an "autonomous complex . . . a split-off portion of the psyche, which leads a life of its own outside of the hierarchy of the conscious" (Jung, "Analytical Psychology" 313). Often this situation develops in a person who has constructed a persona, "a kind of [social] mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression on others, and on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual" (Jung, *Aspects* 81), and who identifies the ego with this persona. Such a person, according to Jung, "is blind to the inner realities" (88); yet, as Jung also explains

> Under no circumstances will the unconscious tolerate this shifting of the center of gravity . . . . An opposite forces its way up from inside . . . . A man cannot rid himself in favor of an artificial personality without punishment. (82-83)

The ignored unconscious mind makes itself known either through neuroses or as images in dreams.

When these images of the unconscious appear in dreams, they often serve a "compensatory role" (Hall 103) helping the ego toward individuation, as Clifton Snider has explained, "If the unconscious is functioning too one-sidedly . . . the unconscious will function in a compensatory manner, trying to balance the misplaced emphasis. It does this by producing archetypal images in dreams and in fantasies" (22). The two most common dream images of the unconscious are the anima-animus, the unconscious contrasexual side of the personality, and the shadow, which Jungian analyst James A. Hall describes as, "an unconscious part of the personality characterized by traits and attitudes . . . which the conscious ego, tends to reject

or ignore. It is personified in dreams by persons of the same sex as the dreamer" (121). A confrontation with the shadow often marks the first step toward individuation:

> The encounter with the shadow is the first major stage in the process of individuation. . . . [The shadow] is the dark opposite side of ourselves that we usually prefer to hide from others and even from ourselves. The shadow is always personified as a member of one's own sex. . . . An individual . . . [must] come to terms with his shadow and . . . not feel threatened by it. (Snider 25)

Often in the unconscious dream realm, the dreamer's shadow, his or her "personal unconscious" manifested as the "opposite or wicked self" (Pratt 101), leads the dreamer, or more precisely the ego, through an archetypal journey "down into the collective unconscious" (102) to undergo a symbolic death and then return "a reborn psyche, to everyday life" (102). As Jung explains, "The shadow invites the dreamer to the theater so that he may see all that the shadow sees, the scenery of the unconscious" (*Dream Analysis* 55). Through this symbolic process the psyche undergoes individuation as the ego gains awareness of, and becomes integrated with, the unconscious self.

John Hawkes's *Travesty* can be read as an illustration of this process of individuation. While critics have suggested that the action of the novel takes place in the mind or dream of Papa or Honorine, a Jungian analysis, drawing specifically on Jung's theories of dreams, shows the dreamer to be Henri, the poet, and the other characters to be parts of Henri's psyche. Specifically Papa, the narrator, can be seen as Henri's shadow. Several critics have identified Papa and Henri as the same person. Donald Greiner has proposed that "Henri is another side of the narrator's personality" (*Comic Terror* 266), and Patrick O'Donnell argues that "Papa sees himself . . . as a mirror-image of Henri, as his double" (*John Hawkes* 139). John Hawkes himself has said that Papa and Henri "are deliberately and obviously a single character" (qtd. in O'Donnell, "Interview" 180).

Paul Emmett has also questioned Henri's existence:

> Henri is nothing more than the narrator's projection of himself. The form of the book, Henri's failure to act, the tone of the narrator, as well as slips he appears to make . . . all seem to support such a contention. (175)

However, Emmett considers the questions of Henri's existence to be unanswerable and irrelevant:

> It would seem that the question of Henri's 'reality' takes the reader through challenging mental exercises along the byways of the

theory of fiction, but not only is the question unsolvable, it does not assist interpretation of *Travesty*. (175)

If Henri is seen as the only character in the book who exists in "reality," if *Travesty* is his dream, then the novel takes on a different meaning. The story becomes the poet's dream, and Papa, identified as the shadow of Henri, becomes the poet's guide through the realm of the unconscious; he leads the reluctant, frightened ego on a journey into the self.

As *Travesty* begins, Papa asserts his control of the car, "Hands off the wheel," and plunges the vehicle's passengers into "the darkest quarter of the night" (11). Henri's "opposite" has "forced its way up" (Jung, *Aspects* 82) and has taken control of the psyche, forcing a descent into the unconscious. Early in the novel, Papa explains the purpose of the journey:

> You and Chantal and I are simply traveling into purity and extremity down that road the rest of the world attempts to hide from us by heaping up whole forests of the most confusing road signs, detours, barricades.
> (Hawkes 14)

The shadow self, Papa, wants to lead Henri beyond the "confusing road signs" of conscious experience into the "purity" of the collective unconscious. The journey will end in the violent destruction, yet at the same time the paradoxical union, of the ego, Henri; the shadow, Papa; and Chantal, who represents Henri's anima, his unconscious feminine self.

As Henri's shadow, Papa stands in opposition to the poet. Papa emphasizes his antithetical nature, stating "I am no poet" and criticizing Henri, "you are the most banal and predictable of poets" (14). Yet, as Stephen Weisenberger has shown, Papa speaks with the voice of the poet:

> Among all the 'poetic' effects of which Papa is capable—alliteration, consonance, oxymoron, even chiasmas—the most alarming are his comparative tropes. My census of *Travesty* totaled up 136 of them in a remarkably short novel of just under 31,000 words. Of these tropes, 29 are comparatives introduced with 'as if'; 45 are similes, and 62 of them are proper metaphors. (159)

As the novel progresses, Papa's language reveals that he is an artist, and he himself eventually admits that he possesses "those faint sinister qualities of the artistic mind" (Hawkes 100). Papa, as the dark side of Henri's creative psyche, drives the ego through a transformative journey. In a seminar on dream analysis, C. G. Jung describes the appearance of the driver in one of his patient's dream: "The driver is what one would designate as a typical shadow figure. He is everything the dreamer is not" (*Dream Analysis* 663). The driver and the passenger are opposites, yet they are the same.

Berryman, in his study of *Travesty*, also sees Henri and Papa as doubles:

> The friend of the narrator . . . can easily be viewed as his double. The friend has been released from a hospital for the insane where the narrator no doubt belongs. The friend is a bad poet, and the narrator is an artist of suicide and murder. . . . The men even share the same astrological sign. (648)

They are both Leos, as Berryman points out; however, Papa admits to having a "Scorpio influence" (Hawkes 99):

> the reason we make such a perfect pair, such an agreeable match, is that you are a full-fledged Leo, while through the marshes of my own stalwart Leo there flows a little rivulet of Scorpio. (99)

As Jung has shown, Leo, the lion, symbolizes the sun, a creative power like the poet's imagination, but the scorpion symbolizes "the fatal sacrifice of the sun. . . . The sun commits suicide. . . . There is a legend that when the scorpion is surrounded by fire it kills itself" (*Dream Analysis* 408-409). Astrologically, Scorpio kills itself, only to be reborn as the seasons progress, and like the death and rebirth of the scorpion, Papa's suicidal journey will result in a rebirth, a transformation, of Henri's psyche. The dark aspect of Henri's psyche, his scorpion-like shadow, will destroy the persona that Henri has adopted as his identity. The narrator recognizes "this persona" (Hawkes 42) as it is manifested in Henri's "cruel detachment" (43) and his social demeanor:

> It is always the same: you are like a man who spends his life in intense sunlight becoming all the while not pinker, darker, but only whiter, as if your existence is a matter of calculated survival, which accounts for your curious corpse-like expression, which in turn is so appealing to women. You are plain, you smoke cigarettes, you appear to be a friend of at least half of all those professional toreros now working with the majestic bulls, as some people think them. (42)

Henri has created an attractive persona. However, he has ignored his unconscious self, and his creative powers have suffered, as the narrator comments: "the lack of knowledge and imagination are yours not mine" (21). Henri has neglected his inner self, which according to Jung, endangers the psyche:

> The persona may be a very attractive thing; if anyone chances to possess an attractive persona, he is sure to identify with it and believe he is it, and then he becomes a victim of it. . . . If people are identical with the crust [the persona], they can do nothing but live

their biography, and there is nothing immortal about them; they become neurotic and the devil gets at them. (*Dream Analysis* 74)

Henri's "devil," his shadow, has gotten him and has brought together Henri's conscious self and his anima, embodied in Chantal. At times, the anima, the "feminine component" of the psyche (Pratt 102), can appear as a young girl (Jung, *Dream Analysis* 152); at other times, she is a seductress (Hall 120). Chantal as the "porno brat" (Hawkes 21) is both. As the anima, she is "the necessary third person" (39) in the individuation process; she remains primarily in the background of the novel, fulfilling her role as "always something behind the scene" (Jung, *Dream Analysis* 258). Paul Emmett has argued that Honorine serves as the anima figure in the novel (183), but she appears to be more similar to the archetypal Great Mother, Jung's "enveloping, embracing, and devouring" Archetypal Feminine (Jung, "Aion" 151). She is presented as the Earth Mother with her "tattoo of smoky grapes that move when she breathes" (Hawkes 52) and as the mythic "sleeping princess" and "the lady of the dark chateau" (121). As the Great Mother she symbolizes the "collective unconscious, the source of the water of life" (Jung, "Individual Dream Symbolism" 344). She represents the "foundations of consciousness" and the origin of creation (Jung, *Modern Man* 24), and it is toward her that Papa carries Henri and Chantal: "And to think that it is she, this sleeping Honorine, who awaits our passing" (Hawkes 52).

John Hawkes has summarized the action of *Travesty*, saying "Papa, the poet, drives the car, and his sensitive, less imaginative poet-self, the passenger, learns what it is to imagine" (qtd. in O'Donnell, "Interview" 117). Henri, living only for his persona, has ignored his unconscious self and, subsequently, has become a "banal and predictable" artist (Hawkes 14). He is therefore, forced by his unconscious shadow to descend into the self, toward the realm of the Great Mother, the "unconscious depths" from which "the creative work arises" (Jung, *Modern Man* 170). As a product of the unconscious, Papa knows the importance of the imagination; he says, "I would rather see two shadows flickering inside the head than all your flaming sunrises set end to end" (Hawkes 57).

Papa attempts to annihilate Henri's persona and force onto the poet an awareness of the importance of the inner self. Papa drives Henri through memories and dreams toward their "private apocalypse" (47). One memory involves Pascal, the child of Papa and Honorine. Papa describes Pascal as "a child god" (85). Although Paul Emmett sees Pascal as "the Paschal Lamb associated with the Exodus, Christ, and vegetation" (184), the child seems to more closely resemble the Jungian "Puer Aeternus," the archetypal child who "is simply the personification of the infantile side of our character, repressed because it is infantile" (Jung, *Dream Analysis* 175). Pascal may represent Henri's repressed imagination, which may have been more prevalent in Henri's youth. The image of the dead boy may serve the same

function as a similar image in one of Jung's patient's dreams; Jung, in his analysis of the image says:

> I have observed in dreams and in clinical experience a certain tendency in man to personify his ages. . . . So the allusion to the dead boy is an allusion to the patient's own dead youth. (*Dream Analysis* 28)

Papa suggests that Pascal, the Puer Aeternus, or the youthful imagination he embodies, still exists in Henri's psyche: "But perhaps I am the man little Pascal might have become had he lived. Perhaps it is he who inhabits me now in his death" (Hawkes 90). Henri can regain that imaginative power if he will only accept Papa's vision, if he will embrace his unconscious self; Papa argues:

> But if you cannot find the riff in your self-confidence or admit to the pale white roots of your cowardice where it thrives in your own dry well, then you will never ride the dolphin, or behave with the tenderness of the true sensualist. (81)

Only through dissolving his persona and through integration of the unconscious aspects of his psyche can Henri resuscitate his imagination.

Toward the end of the novel, Henri and his shadow begin to merge into one. Papa recalls his childhood "fear of no response" (Hawkes 84), which sounds strikingly similar to the condition of Henri, the person who has identified the ego with the social mask:

> If the world did not respond to me totally, immediately, in leaf, street sign, the expression of strangers, then I did not exist- or existed only in the misery of youthful loneliness. But to be recognized in any way was to be given your selfhood on a plate and to be loved, loved, which is what I most demanded." (85)

Papa says that he has overcome his childhood neuroses, and he offers Henri, not the "relief" of social acceptance, but the "purity" of the fully individuated psyche (85).

Before Henri's psyche can be fully individuated the poet must recognize and dissolve his persona. Papa, as Henri's unconscious shadow, knows Henri's insecurities; he attempts to shatter the poet's social mask with harsh criticism:

> Of course it is true that you are not a very good poet. I have always made my opinion plain. And it is true that all your disclaimers . . . were always to me offensive. (106)

Papa continues attacking Henri's persona by suggesting that the poet's social mask originated in his "days as a mental patient" (41); Papa says:

> I am well aware that in that short time they so sutured the lobes of your brain with designs of fear and hopelessness that the threads themselves emerged from within your skull to travel in terrible variety down the very flesh of your face . . . you took such dreadful pleasure in the line that cracked your eye, cleft your upper lip, stitched the unwholesome map of your brain to the mask of your face. (120-21)

Papa attempts to undo the damage done by the mental institution. He carries the ego into the deepest parts of the unconscious, where the Great Mother, Honorine, becomes "more 'real' to you, to me than she has ever been" (124). Papa goes beyond even the realm of the Archetypal Feminine: "We have passed Tara" (128). He will drive the ego into the uroboric depths of the self, where there is no differentiation between the conscious and unconscious minds (Jung, *Aspects* 95): "There shall be no survivors" (Hawkes 128). Before the journey ends, Henri appears to dissolve his persona and embrace his shadow. He accepts his unconscious self:

> What's that? What's that you say? Can I have heard you correctly? Imagined life is more exhilarating than remembered life . . . Is that what you said? . . . But then you agree, you understand, you have submitted after all, Henri! (127)

For his willingness to accept his unconscious he is rewarded with poetry inspired by the Great Mother:

> Somewhere there still must be
> Her face not seen, her voice not heard. (127)

Henri's shadow approves of poetry that originates in the "imagined life": "I may say it now, Henri, I am extremely fond of these two lines. I might even have written them myself" (127). Through his descent into the self, guided by his shadow, the poet reconnects with his unconscious, and subsequently, his imagination.

On a literal level, *Travesty* is, in Thomas LeClair's words, "a 128-page suicide note" (45). Donald Greiner has argued that annihilation of the self is very much a part" of this novel (*Comic Terror* 270), and Paul Emmett believes that Hawkes in this novel presents "death as the consequence of the ultimate plunge into the self" (180). However, a reading of the novel, guided by Jungian dream analysis, reveals that the poet-passenger of the seemingly destructive car ride actually undergoes "the profound archetypal process of transformation" (Hall 27). His death will be symbolic, joining his conscious ego with the unconscious elements of his psyche—the shadow

and the anima—and the poet will reemerge from his journey revitalized and whole.

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Political and Social Dis-ease: Narrative Repercussions in Ellen Douglas's *The Rock Cried Out*

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At Mississippi Governor's School in the summer of 1991, I introduced a class studying narrative techniques in Southern fiction to writer Ellen Douglas and several of her works. In fact, through a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council, Miss Douglas participated in a scholars-and-author panel and spent a day on campus with the enthusiastic students.

When Governor's School was over and I was cleaning my classroom, I gathered some abandoned art work students had done along the way to illustrate class materials. Since the students used only crayons and felt-tip pens, most of them laughingly reverted to comfortable, childish drawings. Among those I kept was a literalist's interpretation of the title of *The Rock Cried Out.*

The drawing featured a couple of flowers and sprigs of grass beside a big rock that looked like an open-mouthed Pac-Man spewing forth a cartoonish bubble that vibrated with the word" out."

Every time I think about that drawing I smile. I smile because the student was having fun by being literal with the words and because, whether he knew it then or not, his literalness captured the lesson of the novel—that no matter how hard or fixed or impenetrable something looks, it may open up at any time and spew forth what's concealed within.

That's what happens in *The Rock Cried Out.* What breaks open is the surface of Alan McLaurin's life and what spews out is the past and truths about his own character. These revelations set up vibrations and repercussions that cry out beyond him to us.

Three lines from an old spiritual serve as the novel's epigraph:

> I went to the rock to hide my face
> The rock cried out, "No hiding place,"
> No hiding place down there.

The familiar lines reveal the source for the title, but also underscore a truth central to the novel: the desire to hide our faces, to avoid responsibility or unpleasantness or reality, is instinctive, but successfully doing so is impossible; inevitability, as individuals and as a society, we have to face what we don't want to see.

Through a multi-layered narrative structure resonant with various voices and with political and social realities, Douglas shows there is "no hiding place." She exposes the games we play, the little deceptions and silences we practice, as well as the deliberate lies we tell. Along with Alan McLaurin we learn that neither the truths nor the process of facing them is pleasant.

The Rock Cried Out, originally published in 1979 and reissued in 1994 by LSU Press, is the fifth of eight volumes of fiction written by Ellen Douglas. With the exception of *The Magic Carpet*, which is a retelling of fairy tales, Douglas's works share three major concerns that spring from her strong sense of family and community. These concerns are a keen awareness of time and place, a quest for identity and truth, and the resulting realization of one's moral responsibility.

In the "Afterward" written for the reissuing of *Black Cloud, White Cloud*, Douglas explains why time and place are vivid and vital in that work, and her explanation seems applicable to *The Rock Cried Out* as well. Douglas writes:

> I knew these people, heard them speak, recognized as my own the predicaments they grappled with, and cobbled up stories to make them live. One story and then another and another. For how could I, living in this time and place, fail to write about these lives—about the corrosive hatreds, the crippled loves, the confusions, the flashes of nobility and heroism, the ways of making do, making room? (230)

Then with a memorable image Douglas narrows in on the South of the 1960s, the world she as a young writer knew well. She recalls:

> The separate black and white societies of the South and the country were grinding against each other with the agonized crunch of continental plates, preparing the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions of the sixties. (230)

It is this period of the 60s, with its inherited burdens and uncertain future, that inspired *The Rock Cried Out*. During an interview Douglas stated that she remembers her first intentions behind the novel as a desire "to do a book about . . . the sixties and early seventies," a period both interesting and accessible to her since that was when she reared her three sons in the Mississippi Delta and around Natchez. Then she added that she modeled the narrator's voice on that of her youngest son.

The narrator of *The Rock Cried Out* is Alan McLaurin, Douglas's first male narrator (the only one she's used to date), and with him she departs from her previous, more conventional narrative approaches to move to a "self" conscious narrator actively pursuing truth, a narrative approach she continues to explore and develop in subsequent works.

The shocking truths that Alan discovers are far from the romantic expectations that he holds when he, the would-be poet, returns to rural Mississippi on his Whitman-esque journey to invite his soul (13). Coming to grips with those truths and their implications takes Alan seven years, and it is finally accepting responsibility for what he has learned that compels him to share his experiences. Early in the novel Alan tells us: "I have a story to tell, to make my peace with"(13).

Indeed Alan's story is a confession. But what he reveals about himself and the community he grew up in is actually more than just his confession. It becomes a multi-layered, multi-voiced confessional that is like an archeological dig, with unearthed layer after unearthed layer revealing broken fragments that beg to be pieced together. From the narrative present of 1978, the layers descend by seven-year intervals to 1971 and 1964. These layers, when examined, offer shards from the Depression and post-Civil War eras as well. The years 1971 and 1964 are pivotal in Alan's life, and the seven-year intervals between them symbolize the physical and spiritual renewal emphasized in the novel.

From his narrative perspective of 1978, Alan begins to orient us by cataloging some of the political and social headlines that his younger self seemed oblivious to in 1971:

> Somewhere far away, Charles Manson and his "family" were being tried for murder of Sharon Tate. The My Lai courtmartials were still going on. Jerry Rubin was being paid fifteen hundred a throw for telling huge crowds of college students to "do it." Angela Davis was being extradited to California.
> Exactly ten years had elapsed since the first American military dead were logged in Vietnam. (52-53)

The narrator then demonstrates the human tendency to romanticize personal reflections with this one describing his generation's attitudes:

> We thought of ourselves . . . as more grown-up than most American generations had been at their majority. We had taken part . . . in the so-called sexual revolution . . . . We'd won the battle for parietal rights . . . . We'd taken part in the anti-war movement and, some of us (not me, except in the most marginal way), in the civil rights movement. About most things we knew we were right. (12)

Such illusions of purity and self-righteousness are exactly the kinds of surfaces that Douglas is breaking open and calling into question.

The opening of the novel takes us, without introduction, into the first excavated layer of the story, the winter of 1971, and presents the twenty-two-year-old Alan and his contemporaries in their home community. In an Agrarian-like gesture, he has left Boston and returned to "Mississippi, to Chickasaw Ridge, to the deep woods"(7), to seek a reprieve from his

sugar-refinery job and his live-in girlfriend. With his hippie-like long hair and beard, he's both visible in the rural community and potentially suspect, particularly since it is remembered that he had avoided serving in Vietnam by claiming conscientious objector status and serving a two-year alternative work assignment at Whitfield, the state mental hospital. The older Alan is able to look back and acknowledge he had managed the CO status because of education, good lawyers, and influential references (advantages closely tied to race and money), but he recalls his days at Whitfield as miserable ones full of free love, dope, and half-hearted war protests.

The twenty-two-year-old's attachment to Chickasaw Ridge, the land his family has owned for generations, is strong; and, because he knows his way around, he is careful not to offend anyone, black or white. In fact, when his girlfriend Miriam comes to visit, Alan invites his liberal, long-divorced Aunt Leila to chaperon them a token effort to preserve appearances and feelings.

Less careful of the community is Lindsay Lee Boykin, an old acquaintance who also has recently returned to the area. Wielding a Leica camera, Lee is a photo-journalist on a self-appointed mission to record for some publication such as *The New York Times* or *The Speckled Bird* the injustices experienced by rural blacks and whites alike, specifically the exploitation of pulp wood cutters by large corporations like International Paper and Georgia Pacific. From his long hair, beaded headband, and beard, to flower-gusseted bell-bottoms, Lee's appearance shouts "hippie," and his liberal ideas—particularly his interest in labor unions and exaggerated politeness to blacks—convince locals that he's a "nigger-loving, communist troublemaker," reminding them of the freedom riders of the early 60s.

Alan and Lindsay Lee are not Douglas's only representatives of their generation. Lee's older brother Dallas provides the contrast for their liberalism. Already a husband and father, Dallas is a hard-working, self-employed pulp wooder and a church-going citizen who objects to sinful living such as sleeping around and smoking marijuana. More importantly, Dallas is a Vietnam veteran who speaks of enduring and, at times, of thriving on the violence and killing of war. Nevertheless he struggles with his past, and its demons drive him to a brutally honest confession which unravels Alan's most cherished illusion—the illusion of his own purity, anchored in his conviction that he could never kill another human.

The confessions prior to Dallas's that Alan hears at this 1971 layer unearth pieces of other political and social issues such as problems of interracial love and miscegenation, questions of land ownership and broken promises, and the activities of the Ku Klux Klan and labor unions.

One of the first confessions comes from Alan's Aunt Leila who shocks him with details of her earlier secret love affair with Sam Daniels, the black manager of the family's farm, and of their acts of personal revenge. In the glow of a warm fire and whiskey, Leila tells Alan that when Sam rejected her pleas to run away with her to New York or Paris she leased to the Navy the grazing land Sam and his family had used for years but never owned. Then she explains, with seeming regret, that in retaliation Sam destroyed

the space surveillance station that the Navy had built on the land and that he had paid for the act not only with years in jail but also with a crippled hip and a blinded eye.

A second confession, Calhoun Levitt's, exposes Alan to details of the fragile, double-edged world of miscegenation as well as to the dangers and violence of labor movements and the Ku Klux Klan. Granting an interview to Alan, Lee, and Miriam, Calhoun explains that as a black man his critical advantage through the years has been owning land, land carefully and defiantly deeded to his mother and her sister by their white father. Though he went North and earned a university degree, the land drew him back and the struggle to pay his property taxes consumed him during the Depression.

Calhoun's story moves beyond the scope of general oral history to the realm of confession when he divulges a secret involving Lee and Dallas's family. The secret begins in the 1930s with a radical, socialist preacher and his uninvestigated murder, moves through a long and silent friendship in the 1940s and 50s, and finally exposes the KKK's involvement with church burnings and bombings in the 60s. Calhoun reveals that the radical preacher was Dallas and Lee's maternal grandfather and that the preacher was murdered for spreading his racially-blind version of the gospel and for his interest in organizing labor unions among the pulp wood cutters (a movement still struggling along as radical even in the 60s). Calhoun's bombshell is that thirty years later, in the summer of 1964, this preacher's daughter (Lee and Dallas's mother) secretly informed the FBI about the terrorist activities of the local Klan to which her husband belonged.

Alan learns more about KKK activities through the confessions of Sam Daniels and his father Noah. When Alan asks Sam how he had avoided trouble with the Klan, Sam tells a story to show how he takes care of himself. Sam recalls the time he found two white crosses painted on his gateposts (the Klan's sign warning him to "do right or else") and called the white county supervisor. After showing the crosses to him, Sam quietly issued a warning of his own: "Ain't it lucky . . . they didn't come in the gate onto my land and put their mark on my house? I mean, considering what a good shot I am and all" (11).

Old Noah teaches the twenty-two-year-old Alan still more. Slipping into his preacher-mode delivery during many casual visits, Noah eloquently mythologizes his portion of the past, telling stories of slavery and freedom, of promised land and oil wells, and of broken promises and ways of "making do."

The novel's narrator shares Noah's stories with us, expanding our social and political perspective, and then moves carefully to excavate a second layer of his past, an even deeper and more fragile layer—that of the violent summer of 1964. The "self" conscious narrator explains:

> All that I want to think about, to write about, began for me when I was 15—the summer of 1964. By then I was already used to living in a world where terrible things happened every day: I recall the

> mornings of my childhood, my father at the breakfast table opening the morning paper; the very air, the coffee-and-bacon fragrant air, had the smell of violence in it. He opened the paper to see what terrible thing had happened yesterday, not in Hungary or Russia, or even in Dallas or Birmingham, but down the road, in Greenwood maybe, or Itta Bena, or Chickasaw Ridge. That was the way things were. (10)

As *The Rock Cries Out* records, the violence in Mississippi during that summer included the death of civil rights activists, the bombing of homes of civil rights leaders and lawyers, and the burning of twenty-seven Negro churches active in voter registration drives. The narrator recalls that he was almost calloused to these public tragedies. He spent his summer days reverencing his cousin Phoebe, roaming the beloved countryside in a near-constant state of lust, and circling the local drive-in and racing down the fire lanes on the family's tree farm. The older Alan reflects:

> [a]t that time in that place there were all kinds of thrills to be had in cars, . . . driving in the wrong ways to the wrong places, or maybe with the wrong bumper stickers. Car were weapons, political posters, social statements. There were parts of the state where it was dangerous to drive a car if you had a New York or a California license, where even a Tennessee license was suspect. If you were black, it was dangerous to drive any half-way decent-looking car with an out-of-state license. It was dangerous to have an LBJ or a Kennedy sticker on your bumper. Favored bumper stickers read: "Put your [heart] in Mississippi or get your [ass] out." (254)

The teenager (who liked driving his Aunt Leila's GTO with its Tennessee tag) had no way of knowing that his personal tragedy—the death of seventeen-year-old Phoebe in a car accident that also killed Sam's wife Timmie—was intricately tied to public upheaval such as the burning of Mercy Seat, a near-by Negro church. All the teen knew was that his taste of violent death convinced him he would never, ever kill.

Douglas brings the private and public tragedies together for the twenty-two-year-old Alan, as well as for Lindsay Lee and Dallas and for us, through the remaining confessions heard in 1971. What is heard reveals the truth behind the fatal car accident and not one, but two church burnings. These truths are what the narrator has been working his way through.

The fatal accident that has haunted Alan occurred at Chickasaw Ridge, right below Mercy Seat Church. Sam and his wife Timmie and Alan's cousin Phoebe (who locals said had no business in the car with Sam or at Mercy Seat) were headed to a voters' meeting. All Sam remembered at the time was that his windshield exploded just before he lost control of the car. Phoebe, her throat cut, was thrown from the car, and Timmie burned to

death inside. Alan was at the scene almost immediately, witnessing the deaths. One week later, Mercy Seat Church burned to the ground.

Alan learns part of the truth behind the exploding windshield when old Noah baits him with the fact that the Klan had been at the Ridge that day spying on and recording the licenses of those attending the meeting. When Alan protests that Noah should have done something with that information, Noah says he told Phoebe's dad Lester, but neither he nor Lester acted on the knowledge because they knew no local authorities would tackle the Klan and both feared that if Sam learned the truth he'd "go running around the country killing Ku Kluxers and getting himself killed" (298).

But Alan learns that Sam eventually eventually did know, the same way Noah knew (by simply walking around in the woods). The surprise Sam springs is that like in the earlier land incident he made his own revenge and justice. He reminds Alan that shortly after Mercy Seat burned, another church burned—this one the white Pentecostal church that many KKK'ers attended (299).

Noah's and Sam's confessions shock the twenty-two-year-old, but they don't unnerve him as does the rest of the truth about the accident that he hears from Dallas. Dallas, tormented and struggling for his soul and his sanity, in a type of "before the church" confession of sin, reveals he is responsible for the wreck. He does this publicly over his CB radio while driving recklessly through the countryside, bent on self-destruction. He confesses that he and Lindsay Lee had been positioned on the bluff by their daddy and other KKK'ers to spy on Mercy Seat and that while standing there, looking through the scope of his gun, he unconsciously pulled the trigger in blind jealous rage when he sighted Phoebe riding in the front seat of a car with a black man. Living with his responsibility in those deaths drove Dallas first to hide in the violence of Vietnam and finally to this point of confession and suicide.

Though it has taken seven years, truth from 1964 (and earlier) is crying out, and Alan—the "pure" young man, the conscientious objector fully convinced he could never kill—is so enraged that he races to kill Dallas, and almost manages to strangle Dallas with his bare hands. With the surface of the past ripped open, Alan is forced to recognize not only the evil within his community but also, perhaps more importantly, the potential for evil long secreted within himself.

Now, following another seven-year interval, the older Alan, our narrator, through the telling and retelling of these stories, seeks to make peace with himself. But Ellen Douglas makes the telling more than a simple act; she transforms it, into the realization of moral and communal responsibility. Alan is finally accepting a invitation Calhoun Levitt voiced to him and Miriam and Lindsay Lee during their interview. Calhoun challenged them:

> "Let's open [the past] up. Keeping it shut in the closet all these years hasn't been any use to anybody" (223).

And opening up the past—in an effort to make it useful to us—is what Ellen Douglas is doing in *The Rock Cried Out*. Through Alan McLaurin she is re-voicing Calhoun Levitt's personal and communal challenge. And thus it is that we find ourselves listening, and understanding, and waiting, along with Alan, to see what happens when

> [o]ne day in the telling . . . some new thing [will] be revealed and we [too will] gaze at each other, amazed, brothers reunited or enemies revealed. (20-21)

"¿Qué Pasó, Hombre?": *The Long Night of White Chickens* and *Dracula*

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The Long Night of White Chickens, critically acclaimed as "highly accomplished" and "powerful" (Walton 28), "remarkable" (Kerrigan 21), and "ambitious" (Seaman 1660), is the first novel of a young Guatemalan-American writer, Francisco Goldman, who began his literary career in 1981 with a series of short stories in *Esquire* and *Playboy*. Over the next five years, a period that he calls "the defining experience of his life" (Shawn 91), Goldman wrote highly acclaimed journalism about the horrors occurring in Central America. In 1986, he returned to fiction and *The Long Night of White Chickens* is the result.

Set mainly in Guatemala in the 1980s, at the height of the military regime's tyranny, the novel is the story of Roger Graetz, the American-born son of an aristocratic Guatemalan mother, and his relationship with a beautiful young Guatemalan orphan, Flor de Mayo Puac. Just eight years older than Roger, she is sent to Boston to live with his family as their maid and takes on the role of part mother and part sister to him. As he grows older, he develops a worshipful love for her, a love which becomes obsessive (Casey 20).

When Flor is brutally murdered in Guatemala City, Roger, who lived there briefly as a child, returns to uncover the truth of her death. There he is reunited with his boyhood friend, Guatemalan-born Luis Moya Martinez, a journalist, who, like Flor, has been irresistibly lured back to Guatemala. Moya and Roger band together to find the solution to the murder but soon realize that they are looking for other answers to other questions—principally, what is the allure of this nightmarish little country. Indeed, the characters are so obsessed with Guatemala that the country itself takes on the force of a character—arguably, the main character.

At midpoint of the novel, Roger tells the reader that he read or purchased just about everything on Guatemala that he could lay his hands on in an effort to come to terms with his Guatemalan heritage (185). These ponderous tomes catch the attention of Moya on one of his visits to the U.S. With a "bemused eye," Moya tells Roger that "*Dracula* was the best book on Guatemala ever written" (186).

Moya's statement puzzles both Roger and the reader. What does the Dracula of the nineteenth century have to do with modern Guatemala? The modern reader is simply not willing to take Goldman's reference to *Dracula* seriously. After all, Dracula doesn't exist. However, the very fact that Dracula is a fictionalized, nonexistent character is significant, because, according to Goldman, "The Guatemala that forms the backdrop of a

portion of this novel is a fictionalized country—nonexistent" (copyright page).

Moya's puzzling remark and Goldman's surprising statement make considerable sense if examined in view of those five years Goldman spent in Guatemala. His reaction to that experience is expressed in the concluding lines to a French thriller story that Moya loves to tell: "Guatemala doesn't exist, and I know, because I have been there" (21). While Goldman was there, as a contributing editor of *Harper's Magazine*, he came to the realization that "no one is interested in a foreigner who goes down to the tropics and broods on nothing but the injustice everyone's suffering" (Shawn 93). In the novel, Moya makes this point when he tells Flor: "Every time I look at *Time* magazine or the *New York Times*, I find myself skipping over the articles on, for example, Ethiopia. Out of guilt I make myself go back and read them, imagining how uninteresting the same kinds of articles on Guatemala must seem to the average citizen of the world" (150). "The point is," Goldman explained to Wallace Shawn of *The Village Voice*, "a novelist should not denounce the absence of freedom; that isn't news! Instead, he should exemplify freedom by using his imagination" (93).

But how to appeal to that imagination? How to make "the average citizen of the world" care about more than his "little corner of the earth" (Shawn 93)? I suggest that Goldman took Moya's advice and turned to the classic tale of unrepentant evil and repression—*Dracula*. In search of a way to appeal to the reader's imagination and in an effort to make the horrors of Guatemala exist, Goldman wrote *The Long Night of White Chickens* as a conscious attempt at a modern retelling of Stoker's story.

If Stoker could create a fictional character, Dracula, who becomes more "real," more a part of people's consciousness than the actual man, Vlad Tepes, on whom the Dracula legend is based, why couldn't Goldman create a fictional country, "Guatemala," that becomes more real, more a part of people's consciousness than the actual country? And, further, why couldn't he create this country by following much the same rules that Stoker used to create his protagonist, who has become, according to Leonard Wolf, "an overwhelming symbol of the crimes and temptations of the twentieth century" (xxiii).

Stoker's rules, concerning the character Dracula, are established in the novel by various sources but chiefly by the character of Professor Van Helsing (253-54). Just as Stoker's protagonist is subject to prescribed rules of behavior, so is Goldman's. But, in order to accommodate his modern tale, Goldman subsumes Stoker's rules into two principal ones that he can credibly apply to the vampire of his novel—that vampire being Guatemala.

Rule number one governs Dracula's invulnerability. He is secure in his own country of Transylvania, where his power is absolute. He describes himself to Jonathan Harker as a natural element of his warlike country, very like a seed that has grown from the soil itself. He takes for granted that the peasants are there to serve him and his race (30-31). This despotic condition has existed so long that the peasants accept it as a part of their lives, just as

they accept mountains and trees, wind and rain. Rebellion is unthinkable to a people who see the power of Dracula as inescapable, like the force of gravity.

Rule number one applies equally to the Guatemalan rich. As long as they remain in their country and do not bring attention to themselves, they are, like Dracula, unassailable. Roger explains in the novel, "Nothing could harm them outside the magic ring of their tight-knit family clans, nothing else really existed" (25). Insulated by geography and wealth, the aristocrats of Guatemala have no fear of the peasants, who will not rebel because, like the peasants in Transylvania, tyranny has become as much a part of their existence as the inescapable forces of nature.

Rule number two governs Dracula's vulnerability. As Professor Van Helsing tells us, the power of Dracula ceases "as does that of all evil things, at the coming of the day" (253). Literally, exposure to sunlight reduces him to a state that will allow his destruction. Dracula's fatal error is not that he leaves Transylvania to come to London; for, in effect, he brings his country with him in the fifty crates of "friendly soil" (22) which he has deposited in houses at Piccadilly, Bermondsey, Mile End, and Carfax. But his greed undoes him, and once discovered by Van Helsing and his band of technocrats, he becomes a problem to be solved. Unlike the peasants, who see an apple fall and are satisfied to eat it, the technological world sees the apple fall and proceeds to overcome gravity. When the Londoners are convinced that there is such a creature as Dracula, they relish the challenge of subsuming him to their power.

This second rule applies similarly to Guatemala. If Dracula is destroyed by being found out by the civilized world, then the evil of Guatemala can be overcome if it is "found out" by the outside world. Since Guatemala cannot travel as Dracula can, Goldman has the outside world come to Guatemala. By having Flor, Americanized and thus an outsider, lured back by her native country and seduced by Celso Batres, who personifies aristocratic Guatemala, Goldman devises a means by which she becomes a victim like the feminine victims of Stoker's novel, Lucy Westenra and Mina (Murray) Harker. Preying on an outsider brings the scrutiny of the outside world in the persons of Roger, born in the United States, and Moya, educated there, with his connections to the U.S. Senate and Amnesty International.

That *The Long Night of White Chickens* operates according to these rules, and, further, that the novel is patterned after *Dracula* in terms of plot, setting, characters, conflict, narrative technique, and theme is substantiated by the text. Evidence of this patterning begins with the opening scene of the novel, set in the La Verbena morgue, which, like Dracula's forbidding castle, establishes a feeling of dread. Flor's body lies stretched out on a slab beside two bodies that show signs of torture. One's lower lip looks "torn off," and the other has "a clean-looking slice where his penis had been" (39). Flor's body shows no evidence of torture, but her throat has been slashed with a carving knife.

Goldman intriguingly extends the Stoker pattern of setting by imitating what could be called the civilized-world/primitive-world connection. Just as Stoker has his characters move back and forth between London and Transylvania, Goldman has his move back and forth between Boston and Guatemala. Specifically, Jonathan Harker is sent on a mission from London to Transylvania to expedite Dracula's move to England. Moya travels from Boston to Guatemala to write about the oppression of the Indian peasants by the aristocracy. Van Helsing journeys to London to help Lucy; Roger travels to Guatemala to help Flor. All of Stoker's major characters travel to Transylvania and then return to their homes, with the exception of Quincey; all of Goldman's characters end up in Guatemala and then attempt their escape, with the exception of Flor.

In terms of characterization, Goldman's narrator, Roger Graetz, is patterned after Professor Van Helsing. "A philosopher and a metaphysician, and one of the most advanced scientists of his day," Van Helsing functions as a kind of missing link between the old world of primitivism and the new world of science (119). He is as comfortable with putting garlic around Lucy's neck as he is engineering a blood transfusion for her. Summoned to investigate the mysterious malady afflicting Lucy, he begins to suspect, as few modern men of science would, that the problem is one of a supernatural nature. However, he has considerable difficulty persuading his friends, Dr. Seward, Jonathan Harker, Arthur Holmwood, and the American Quincey Morris, that Dracula exists. Even after they have seen proof after proof of his existence, it is not until Mina presents each of them with a narrative, based on all the letters, phonograph transcriptions, notes, journals, newspaper clippings, memos, and legal transactions concerning Count Dracula, that they are convinced. Once they believe, this crew, representing the enlightened world, pursues Dracula and destroys him.

Roger is Goldman's missing link character. His dual heritage makes him a part of both worlds, the primitive world of Guatemala and the civilized world of the United States. He is summoned from Boston to Guatemala City to make arrangements to return Flor's body to the States for burial and decides to investigate the mysterious circumstances surrounding her death. In an effort to reconstruct what happened, Roger, with the help of Moya, questions all the people who knew Flor, from the workers at the orphanage, which Flor directed, to the politically powerful and dangerous Celso Batres. Then, by using Flor's writings, including a 160-page notebook and some thirteen letters and postcards, all written from the time of her return to Guatemala until the time of her death, as well as newspaper articles and a G-2 memo from the Ministry of Defense (300), Roger reconstructs the circumstances leading up to her murder.

In getting to this point, the plot "loops and turns and doubles back on itself" (Seaman 1660), "Because," as Roger explains, "told in order, it wouldn't make sense. I didn't understand things in the order they happened, I didn't foresee what they would mean later" (342). By using Flor's journal, letters, and postcards, the G-2 memo and newspaper items, Gold-

man achieves a multiplicity of narrative viewpoints, and his plot "flashes back, forward, sideways," much like Stoker's (Shawn 90). Further, the bits and pieces do not construct a convincing whole until the end, just as the "whole," the truth about Dracula, is not fully evident until Mina puts together her narrative.

Of all the Draculean parallels that lace Goldman's novel, this imitation of Stoker's narrative technique, while not immediately obvious, is the most effective in achieving his purpose. Having different people tell basically the same story over and over—even if the individual stories are a little shaky—lends credibility and corroboration. The end result is that people finally come to believe, as Van Helsing says, "in things you cannot" (202).

While the imitation of Stoker's narrative technique is not immediately obvious to the reader, Goldman's modeling of his character Moya on Stoker's Jonathan Harker is. Moya's hair, which is turning white prematurely, began changing color after he played the role of Dracula in a production put on by a little theater group in Guatemala. The metaphorical implications of this performance were unappreciated by the government, causing a wave of death threats, which, Roger speculates, caused Moya "a batch, maybe even his very first batch, of barely discernible white hairs" (22). Any reader of Dracula well remembers that Harker's hair begins to turn white after his first encounter with Count Dracula. The physiological change in Harker is caused by his reaction to the evil that Dracula personifies, just as the change in Moya is produced by what his Cambridge doctor calls a "physiological reaction to the constant anxiety and fear" present in Guatemala (13).

In a particularly creative bit of patterning, Goldman merges Stoker's major female characters, Mina and Lucy, into his major female character, Flor. The parallels are striking.

Just as readers are shocked to witness the idealistic Mina's seduction by the Count, readers of Goldman's book are surprised to find that the idealistic Flor is susceptible to corruption. She falls obsessively in love with Celso Batres, son of aristocratic Don Ruben Batres, who is rumored to have been plotting his son's rise to political power since the day of Celso's birth (407). The Batres name is synonymous with Guatemala. In her spiral notebook, Flor writes about breaking up with a lover whom she had compared "to a suffocating, cloying, and polluting small country" (183). When Moya questions her about the identity of the man, whom he incorrectly suspects is himself, she explains that it's not about him or anybody, "it's about Guatemala and the United States" (183). Metaphorically it is, but, literally, the reader comes to see that she is writing about her troubled affair with Batres, who leaves her when she becomes a political liability. The "suffocating" quality Flor assigns her lover is evocative of the account Mina gives Harker of her seduction by Dracula. She tells him that she felt her strength fading away, and a sense of suffocation when he held her mouth to the bleeding wound in his chest (304).

While Flor is most noticeably like Mina, in the ways that she differs from Mina, she is like Lucy. For example, Flor had lovers; Mina did not. Lucy, however, has had her share of suitors. Dr. Seward, Quincey, and Arthur all propose to her on one day. In a letter to Mina, she asks, "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?" (62). In one sense, she does marry all three when they, including Van Helsing, give her blood transfusions, thus becoming, according to lore, her husbands (Wicke 481). Dracula's seduction eroticizes her, liberating her sexual energy in a way that puts her on a level with the sexually liberated woman of today.

Another difference is that Flor dies while Mina is spared. Like Lucy, who must suffer decapitation because she has been corrupted by Dracula, Flor suffers a kind of decapitation because she has been corrupted by Guatemala. Her idealism has slowly yielded to the insidious corruption of the country.

Goldman's technique of overlapping characters extends to the men as well. Roger and Moya take on the roles of Harker, Dr. Seward, Van Helsing, Holmwood, and Morris. Just as the camaraderie of Stoker's characters intensifies when they rally in friendship and join forces as a war party to pursue Dracula, so does the relationship between Roger and Moya deepen as they renew their childhood friendship and join forces to search out Flor's murderer.

Capping off all of these stunning Draculean parallels is that of theme, and Goldman's title, deciphered, clarifies his purpose. The "long night" of the title refers to the time when Moya and Flor, lingering in a Chinese restaurant until the early hours of morning, see "the next day's chickens being delivered by hand, alive and struggling, dangling two by two, upside down" (Casey 20), prompting Flor to observe, "Everything gets done here in some stupid, slow and inevitably cruel way" (314). Goldman clearly wants to change the way of life in this "sick and evil place" (323). If the theme of Dracula is that evil can be destroyed by exposure to the light (truth), then it can be argued, by analogy, that the theme of Goldman's book is that the evil of Guatemala can be destroyed by exposure to the light; in other words, it can be destroyed by being made a part of the consciousness of the civilized world, namely, the United States.

As Goldman's novel ends, Moya and Roger have narrowly escaped a death squad and are making their separate ways from Guatemala. The murder of Flor has not been solved. Unlike the total resolution—the destruction of Dracula—achieved by Stoker, Goldman leaves his novel unresolved. Important for his purpose is that there is no resolution, for Goldman wants to leave the reader asking questions. Significantly, the last line of the novel is a question, asked by a bus driver who recognizes Roger from an earlier trip: "Hombre, all these weeks with the mermaid and still with a sad face? Qué pasó?" (45).

Van Helsing tells the reader, "My thesis is this: I want you to believ . . . To believe in things that you cannot" (202). Just how well Goldman's

fictional plan would work, just how well *The Long Night of White Chickens* would make its readers "believe," he could not know. To "Qué pasó?"—what happened—he has no answer.

Constance Casey, in an article written for *The New York Times Book Review*, asks the question, "How does a Guatemalan writer like Moya, or Francisco Goldman, communicate what it's like to live a life distorted by paranoia?" The answer, she says, is "By writing a good novel" (20). The critical acceptance of *The Long Night of White Chickens* indicates that Goldman has written the "good" novel. Just how successful he has been in exposing the horrors of Guatemala to the light remains to be seen. What is clear, in either case, is that to the degree he has succeeded—and may yet succeed—Francisco Goldman owes no small debt to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

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Spare Parts

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As you may or may not know, there are no more Studebaker parts in Oklahoma. Hardly any parts anywhere. They quit making them; just like they quit making Studebakers. Except at my place. I bought out the whole Studebaker dealership in Joplin, Missouri, when it went out of business in 1965. I have thousands and thousands of Studebaker car parts, still in their little cardboard boxes, some red, some blue, and some green. Unfortunately, I don't own any Studebakers, any complete Studebakers. Any that will run, that is. On cement blocks out in the front yard, I do have a 1958 Champion without a transmission and a 1962 Lark that lacks only a serviceable rearend.

I work as a stocker at the Wal-Mart in town, and when I can't stand handling all those little boxes of disposable stuff, I go home, go out into the storage shed, and pick through my car parts. I am always amazed at how old the parts are and yet how they still look new.

People who don't know Studebakers just wouldn't understand me. Girls I go out with have to be both rich and own their own cars. When I ask a girl out, I also always try to find out right away if she knows what a Studebaker is. And most don't. Which is probably why I have only been married three times. One girl who was rich and owned her own car, although a Chevy, tried to pretend she knew what a Studebaker was. Such girls are disgusting, and dishonesty I will not tolerate. Especially when some girl is trying to get next to me. I get so angry when I think about this out in the shed that I start throwing car parts around. Crash! Bang! Bong! they go as they hit the corrugated tin sides of the shed.

The girl who pretended to know about Studebakers asked me to marry her. She is also the one who told me about the Studebaker house going out of business up in Joplin. I know she meant well, but I began to get suspicious when I caught her sitting on my couch one time studying an old Chilton parts catalogue. All she had was an intellectual understanding of Studebakers. Not good enough. She also said that a relationship was like a Studebaker, all the parts working and fitting together just right. Yes, she said that. Fitting together and working just right. And then she went out and bought one of those coffee table books all about Studebakers. I know because I saw it once tucked under the front seat of her Chevy.

Sometimes when she slept over I would bring a few of the old, new parts in from the shed and spread them around on the bed. After making love she would open the boxes and perhaps lay a solenoid on my navel. Her

name was Brenda, a six letter name that, unfortunately, contained only four of the same letters that the name Studebaker contained. However, her kisses were wet and warm like a radiator hose just pulled off a hot car. When she kissed you it was like standing among the pit crew at the Indianapolis 500 on a hot race day, and the crowd screams and applauds because you have made a minor repair in record time. O how I loved her.

There is all this pink paint peeling off my house. And when Brenda came to see me sometimes outside she would run her soft hand over the paint and it would peel off in large flakes with the sweep of her hand. As the paint flakes fluttered to the ground, I would think of making love to her. Then I would think of painting the house. Already had the paint. Nine gallons from a Sears special four years ago. The reason the house wasn't painted was because I was going to do it myself, and I just hadn't had time yet. She was nice, and sweet, and good. But I began to suspect that she was a pretender.

Once she brought her daddy to meet me. Her daddy was in cattle. He took one look at that old Crosley refrigerator I had on my front porch and he said, "Why do you have an icebox on your front porch?" He actually said "ice-box." I didn't tell him that it was so the neighbors would know that I got a new refrigerator, three years ago, and this was a way of showing off to the neighbors. Instead, I answered, "I keep my better Studebaker parts in there." Which was also true, but not the main reason. He said that he couldn't help but notice the two Studebakers in the front yard. And I thought at first we were on our way to a great friendship. But then he said, "I always preferred Nashes." So I changed the subject to cattle. He said: "Raising cattle's not hard. Just feed, water, vaccinate. Drive around in the pickup and watch them fatten up." A Dodge, probably, I thought. "All the ranchers just do pretty much the same thing." He considered himself a rancher rather than a farmer. That song about the farmer and the cowman being friends kept going over and over in my head.

He also said, "Studebaker made and sold wagons in the last century." What a put down! He was kind of in the last century himself. But he had lots of money. And he voted Republican. And he hated taxes. But he liked spending money on Brenda and Brenda's brother, who was his ugly son, he told me.

And his son was ugly. His name was Wayne. When he was a kid he would tie frogs he caught to the blade of an electric fan and then turn on the fan. He delighted in telling how the centripetal force pulled the frog inside out. And ugh! that long slimy, celedon-colored frog tongue flapping against the side of the fan. Thwap! Thwap! Thwap! I had never met him, but Brenda showed me a picture of him, and she told me all about him. What a bastard! He was the kind of guy who would borrow his best friend's car, and then just go out and wreck it on purpose. He was as ugly and mean as Brenda was cute and sweet. He would call handicapped people on the

phone and let it ring and ring and ring until they finally picked it up. Then he'd just laugh into the receiver and hang up the phone.

And he grew marijuana. He smoked it too. He would sell some of his dope to people, and then he'd call the police and anonymously tip them off. That the person possessed marijuana. He had never met me, but Brenda had told him about me. Since Brenda was convinced that I loved her, then I was OK by him, she said. Oklahoma is OK too, and it once said as much on all the license plates. She told me this one evening when we were sitting on the front porch steps just before the lightning bugs came out. Off and on they blinked. Brenda got up and tried to catch some, but she was too slow. Or they were too fast. Otherwise, she was wonderful. We would be sitting out there together on the front step, and I would know that she thought I was wonderful too. I was sort of like the lightning bugs. Off and on. Off and on.

Brenda could make you laugh, when she chased those lightning bugs. When she came back and sat down beside me on the steps she took my arm and she told me that Wayne owned a 1957 Studebaker Golden Hawk. I immediately loved her better. And Wayne too. She sat there in the darkness and the word Studebaker just rolled sibilantly across her beautiful lips. But this was all hearing. I couldn't see a thing. I couldn't see then, that she'd made up the whole thing just to make me like her more. Just to make me like that despicable Wayne. But when I think of her that day standing on the banks of the Illinois River near Tahlequah, my mind zooms down the Highway 10 of memory, and I still love her. Then I don't care that Wayne really, in fact, drove a late model Honda. I'd like to tell her now, "The Japanese car manufacturers helped destroy Studebaker."

I'm pretty despicable myself sometimes. I smoke. Cigarettes. Not pot. I don't listen very well. I talk too much. I talk too much about myself. Perhaps too much about Brenda. But never, never enough about Studebakers.

Brenda and her brother once wanted to keep a cow at my place. It's in Salina, Oklahoma, not very good cattle grazing country. And I only have one large lot. What with my shed out there, there's not much room. And it's only half-fenced, but with a strong chain-link fence. But they got this idea to keep this special cow at my place. He was a bull. A high-powered bull. They had gotten him from their daddy. He was registered. A Hereford or an Angus? It makes no difference to me. They were going to put him at stud at my place. After they bred the bull out a few times, Brenda and Wayne were going to sell the bull, and with that money and the stud fees, go to Malibu, California. They wanted me to go with them, she said, and live on the beach. Like anybody from Oklahoma, they thought I would go to California at the drop of a hat. No Depression. No real reason. Just live on the beach, nap, fish, drink, and be happy all day. Their daddy decided not to give them the bull because he probably knew that Wayne

would just sell it. Brenda was going to use some of the money, she said, to buy herself her own Studebaker. I was going to go to automobile repair school part-time. I wanted to know how to get my two cars back in running order. I hadn't figured out how I was going to get the cars or all those parts clear out to California. But, and I hate to admit it, I enjoyed dreaming about leaving Oklahoma.

"I know this bull could make us rich," Wayne would say to Brenda. And she would tell me about it. Once when I wasn't home he came by while Brenda was there to check out the lot. Wayne said, "This would work fine." No doubt, he drove over in his Honda. I don't know how he planned to haul the bull to my place. You can't pull a trailer with a Honda! Brenda said Wayne walked around all over the yard, and then he walked around and around the shed. It was locked, of course, so he couldn't get in. "What's in here?" he asked Brenda.

"Car parts," she answered.

"Too bad," he said, "it would be perfect place to keep feed and shelter the bull."

When Brenda told me about it, all I said was, "No way, Jose!"

Oklahoma summers are like this: so humid that you walk around in an ocean of your own perspiration. They're that sticky. You can go out early in the morning anywhere along the Garber Sand Fault and gather roserocks—barite crystals—by the fistfuls, by the bucketfuls. Then you can bring them home before it gets too hot and line them up in front of the refrigerator on your front porch and make little lines of them along the side edges of your front steps. They are the same red color of that soil all around Oklahoma City and Norman. I always put a few roserocks on the kitchen table to study and play with while I'm examining Studebaker parts over coffee in the morning.

I like the idea that roserocks are the Oklahoma State Rock. The state bird is the scissortail flycatcher. The state tree is the redbud. The state reptile is the mountain boomer lizard. And the state insect is the ladybug. Legislators years ago down in Oklahoma City passed a law against the state reptile eating the state insect. Yes, they do pay those guys too much.

And at night the tree frogs, little moss-green critters, the same color as the lichen that grows on the blackjacks, sing out in great chorus a beautiful and huge surge of communal throb. This is the background for everything at night. Even making love to Brenda. I know that our Oklahoma tree frogs sing the best. It's their nasal Okie twang that makes their song so distinctive. Their sound is strictly country and western, just like me, and it's no surprise to anyone how many country and western singers hail from Oklahoma. Oklahoma is the greatest place. Some nights I just sit out on the porch and try to remember what it was like for my great-great-grandfathers back in Scotland and Ireland.

The Western Auto Store in Pryorcreek is just a few minutes away. Sometimes on Saturdays I take Brenda over there early in the evening. The Wal-Mart where I work in Salina doesn't have a parts department. We stay looking at all the car parts that Jim, he's the parts manager, has time to show us. But because there are no Studebaker parts there to look at, I soon become bored and we leave. After dark on the way home we stop at Bill's Super-T Drive In and buy burgers and cokes and onion rings. On Highway 20 back to Salina, I drive carefully so I can watch the moon when it's full. It always rises right out over the highway. I like to think that they built this road as the moon's highway too.

The next morning I always count my blessings while I count my rose-rocks and wonder just how many boxes of Studebaker gear shift knobs I really do have out there in the shed. It's the little things in life that count. The moon. Good car parts. Lots of both of them. Happiness is only a matter of getting your priorities straight. Not wanting too much of anything, just enough. Like car parts and girls and their brothers. I love the State of Oklahoma. When it gets too hot, too humid, though, we just load my camping gear into Brenda's Chevy and go to the Colorado Rockies until August is over.

Water moccasins! Water moccasins! We have water moccasins. I have encountered them when swimming in the lakes. The oldtimers say they won't bite you in the water. They say a snake cannot open his mouth underwater. Now I can open my mouth under water, so I don't see why a snake can't. I always swim the other way. Very fast.

And copperheads! Once when Brenda and I were out walking around the place, behind the shed curled up was a mean old copperhead. I got a forked-stick down on his head and reached down and grabbed him behind where he would've had ears, if he'd had ears. Brenda didn't like that one bit. I told her not to be afraid, that it was only just an old bull-snake. I held the snake between my index finger and the thumb of my right hand and went into the shed where I found an empty Studebaker steering wheel box. And I put the snake inside. Then I taped it shut with duct tape. Give me a roll of duct tape and a can of WD-40 and I can fix anything. Now all I had to do was convince Brenda to let the thing go in Wayne's Honda.

The house I own is only about three miles from the edge of town. I like living on the edge, not really out in the country, not really in town. Like living in Oklahoma, you can run out to the mailbox in your undershorts if you like, or you can walk to work if you can't get your car started. If you have a car. You know what I mean. I can walk out to the shed anytime of the night or the day, and everything will be just as I left it. Because I keep that shed locked and there's nobody around to mess with my car parts. I'm the only one who has the key. Sometimes in the bright blue day when the sky is the same color as the blue on the Oklahoma State Flag, I can walk out to the shed and smell the ozone of nearby thunderstorms, and I think how

dry and safe all my Studebaker car parts are in the shed I built especially for them.

Possums. We have possums. At night I see their eyes reflected from the headlights of Brenda's Chevy when she brings me home. Sometimes I have Brenda stop the car, and I look them straight in the eyes. They smile that dinosaur smile at me. And me? I just smile right back at them.

That last night I did that was the day that Brenda let that copperhead loose in Wayne's car. I thought it would be fun to know what happened, but as far as Brenda knew nothing had happened yet. A few days later, and still no news. I'd begun to think that Wayne had left his car door open and the snake had crawled out. About a week later Brenda told me that she had gotten worried about the snake. Was afraid it would get hungry or thirsty. So she'd put some bread and small bowl of water on the back floorboard of Wayne's Honda.

Listen, Oklahoma is oil, too: there are oil wells everywhere. And I love oil wells because oil is made into gasoline, and gasoline fuels automobiles, and Studebakers are automobiles. There's an oil well across the road from my house. The pumpjack works up and down and squeaks at each stroke. Don't know why an oil well would squeak. They ought to oil those oil wells.

For some folks a snake is just like a Studebaker. They don't like them. Brenda, I knew, didn't like them, but she pretended concern for the one in Wayne's Honda. That's why she said she put the bread and water there. The same victuals you get in prison. And Brenda claimed she liked Studebakers too, but she was just pretending there also. About a month later, I thought about that poor snake myself doing hard time and eating prison food in Wayne's Honda. I decided to myself that McAlester would be a good name for Wayne's Honda.

"Happiness is a warm Studebaker," I whispered into Brenda's ear one night after making love with her. I guess my timing was wrong. She jumped out of bed, started throwing some of the car parts that I had on the high-boy at me, got dressed, and stormed out of the bedroom. I hated to see her leave because I didn't know how I would get to work the next day.

But before she left, Brenda ran back in the bedroom and said: "You sonofabitch, I hate Studebakers. And I hate snakes. And I hate you."

Jesus, she was really angry. The only time I had seen her close to being this angry was when she wanted to go to a tractor pull and I wanted to go to the stock car races. I imagined the chain link fence around the yard zinging with the vibrations of her voice. I just wanted to go to sleep. I guess I just thought that she was too old to get that angry. I thought fits like that were something you outgrew, but I'm learning. She was like that: Always doing nice things for me, picking me up and taking me to work, then

picking me up at work and bringing me home. And I guess I'm just not a good listener: I took her voice for granted, didn't really pay attention, so that now I can hardly remember what she did sound like, sweet or angry.

I thought it better then to just listen, and I did, and then she said, "And I didn't put that snake in Wayne's car either." With that she stomped out through the living room and slammed the front door behind her.

Outside I heard the starter of her Chevy whir. I thought, "Maybe, now I can get some peace."

Then I started to nod off to the gentle rhythm of the squeaking pumpjack and the ever-present background drone of the tree frogs, when I opened my eyes wide: "Then what did she do with that snake?" I did say this out loud.

We go way back, these Studebakers and I.

Once I worked at the gas station in town. Not there anymore. A real service station where I pumped gas. Not one of those 7-11's. A man pulled up in one of those sea-foam green, mouse-nosed 1952 Studebakers. The color of the car reminded me of spring wheat in the field, because there are lots of wheat fields in Oklahoma, too. The man asked me to check the oil. I can still see the sun shining off the hood ornament. I know now that it was a moment of perfect satisfaction for me.

You can buy cigarettes over at the Indian Smoke Shop. They're real cheap, and you don't have to pay any state taxes. They have sign in there with the Oklahoma State Treasurer's address on it that says you can send him your taxes on the cigarettes you buy. I've been in there lots of times, and I've never seen anyone copy down that address.

With every puff of every Camel I take, I always feel a bit guilty though. I just love this state and I hate to see anybody cheat it out of anything. Even me. Just like hunting licenses. I never hunt, but if I did, I'd buy a license, because if it weren't for the State of Oklahoma there wouldn't be any turkeys or deer here. My grandfather told me they killed them all out in the territorial days. Back in the 1890s. I think its kind of spiritual that the state has replenished all that once-disappeared game.

And Tulsa. The Paris of Oklahoma. True, not the Studebaker City, but once the Packard City. It's full of all kinds of religious nuts. Televangelism's a big thing today, but when I was a kid growing up watching Channel 2, Channel 6, and Channel 8, I saw Billy James Hargis, Kathryn Kuhlman, and Oral Roberts doing all sorts of strange healing things. Sometimes at night when I'm out in the shed working with my car parts, the sound of one cardboard part box rubbing against another as I pull it from the shelf sounds like. . . sounds like . . . sounds like God talking to me.

Fiddle with my car parts; think about working on the Studebakers; smoke cigarettes, careful to put it out if I'm in the shed so I won't burn up all my parts; watch lightning bugs in the evening; listen for turkeys; dust off and rearrange my roserock collection, both on the porch and on the kitchen table; get drunk sometimes and stumble outside and listen to the mistletoe growing in the blackjacks. Mistletoe is not a flower. It's a parasite. But mistletoe is the Oklahoma State Flower. Oh, yes, I love Oklahoma! Passionately. As much as I love Studebakers? Almost.

My daddy once took me to Kansas City to watch the A's play the New York Yankees in that great baseball season just after the homerun contest between Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris, and he took me in that same gun-metal grey Champion that's out on cement blocks there in the front yard, and I, because of that, I've loved baseball ever since. I had rooted for Mantle, not because of any love of his that I knew of for Studebakers, but simply because he was from Oklahoma. Shoot, Mickey was born just north of here at Spavinaw.

So here I am again out in the shed. I am going through and opening each of the several dozen steering wheel boxes. I take out of each box and hold the different colored steering wheels in my hands imagining that I am driving some wonderful complementary-colored Studebaker down old Route 66. One box seems a bit light. I shake it and something slides around inside. Brenda had gotten mad and gone away, and if she were here now I'd probably ask her to marry me. She went to Colorado or California, and she probably has a new boyfriend who doesn't like Studebakers either. She could come back here to me. I'd take her back. But it's too late. I jump back when I open the box. It's the copperhead. But it's OK. It's dead.

I'm thinking of looking up Wayne. We will talk about the bull and all the money we might've made. We will smoke cigarettes from the Indian Smoke Shop. I might even look under the hood of McAlester, just to see what's there. Wayne is probably still ugly, but I don't care. I don't even consider changing the lock on the shed. I still love Brenda. I'd give all the Studebaker parts in Oklahoma to get her back.

Poems

Theodore Haddin
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THE LOST CHILDREN

Anger resentment and guilt
they live in the house now
mother and father have gone
to pay their rents and mortgages
elsewhere the cat in the window
senses lost familiarity
the garden has gone down in weeds
grass has sprouted in long leaves
and the washer and dryer are silent
like two clocks without hands
something still cracks in the air
though, something waiting to announce
lawyers judges the aftermath
of these new monsters that dwell
in the shadows of the hallways
in the curve of the steps going upstairs
and the spot over the kitchen floor
where she moved to make us breakfast
and serve birds from the kitchen door

THESE ARE THE SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

Some nights she stayed up late
playing the piano over and over
the old songs prelude of Brahms
beautiful dreamer liebestraum
they woke in my boy's mind
riffling snow of the late winter
midnight they turned winds of autumn
to violins in the oaks and pines
and spring was my time
to rise from bed to go down
where the early evening breeze
brought first honeysuckle then

lilac then eglantine too much
for a boy's heart of love
he would have to save for later
years he had no idea were coming
when just the touch of air from the garden
where she picked and talked with roses
would steal upon his life in a moment
and he would write words as if
her fingers again played upon the keys

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH ME

It's like a road I'm on coming to a rise
wherever I look out is something I don't like or something I can't answer inside
so I write it down keep it near
for the day it will rise in my mind
when I hear what went before
coming again the thousand mornings
at the green camp when sunlight
opened my eyes to the cries of birds
moving from shadows to try the day
and the smell of the green waters
stirring at the bank's edge
where I would lay my heart
into the boat's oars
and head for a distant point
over the morning waters
saying hawk saying wren
crab bass sunfish brim

AS OF THE RIVER

(For Sarah Coprich Johnson)
This man in me who listens as he goes
down the hallway in an office building
hears the trickling musical flowing
of water-like sounds and I listen
for the pull of the long bend
where water will slow to deep silence
turning through years of my own life
but I know it is fingers of the professor
typing at the computer running like water

and I turn to listen shall I stop to tell
her I have heard an old sound in her fingers
that only I can remember wanting to return
as I round the office doors making distance
even greater between me who I am and the
river

CONFESSIO

(For Melissa Springer)

God I've been in love
with you so long
when she turns to me
I see you how you
are shaped in a woman's
face I try her eyes
in my sleep tears come
they find me everywhere
was she lost like me
your special finder
was it she and why
is her lens so much
like your eye does she
tremble like me feeling
all you are that we can see
I know you have given me
something in her she looked
so lovingly one night
these are my questions
that heave my whole heart
toward knowing

WITH THE CHILDREN AT AMISTAD MISSION

Up the hill at Amistad
we have to see the dead man
on the cross concrete steps
we made these to climb
to him Melissa's picture
she took it we are learning
to say prayers who can we
belong to I don't understand
why it's him he looks so sad

my sister feeds a sparrow
under her sweater they say
one day we will cross
over to another land
where nobody is bad
and everybody has a mother
and he will help us over

AMONG THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF AMISTAD MISSION

(For Melissa Springer)

Among the photographs of Amistad
the one caught my eye
an old woman who lives
in a straw house
just rocks and mud
and prairie grass
and she beside it
toothless and laughing
wrinkles in her face pulling
for the picture her fingers
all knuckles warp and woof
of hot winds and scrabbling dirt
she says to me I am here
and here I am and you may
think I am poor
but I don't retreat

DEALING WITH THE ENEMY

(For Ed Ochester)

You know how that book
of the psalms runs full
of violence against my enemy
and prayers for keeping him
back forever now Ed Ochester
has a poem about the Latin American
Solidarity fundraiser picnic
the picnic is too long to get in here
how they put off the poet

till there was no poetry
I have wondered about those
enemies of David's but could
never find them now I think
they went deeper than politics
or who was king I think
they just wanted to kill poetry

DRIVING UP THE EXPRESSWAY

Driving up the expressway
heavy the truck harsh the gearshift
diesel drift in wafts of black
my ventilators can't hold back
I speed up to get around
defying the choking air
till hitting the rise at Oxmoor
I suddenly feel the sweep
of burgeoning honeysuckle
the sour smell of bridlewreath
in bloom and all the whitening things
April's last moves before May
before heat, before the petal-fall
and summer's scorch starts again
so riding I go over the hill
of sweet blooms heaving my sigh
of an unknown gear I change for joy
that never looks back

The Captivity Narrative in Popular American Culture: the Theme of Captivity in *The Breakfast Club*

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The Breakfast Club, a movie written and directed by John Hughes starring Emilio Estevez, Paul Gleason, Anthony Michael Hall, John Kapelos, Judd Nelson, Molly Ringwald, and Ally Sheedy, enjoyed a huge success upon its release in 1984. *The Breakfast Club* is the story of five very different high school students brought together in Saturday detention. Its success is based, in part, on the plot's adherence to an American myth—that of the captivity narrative.

Tales of captivity were told from the beginnings of European contact with America. Though Native Americans were the ones first taken captive in this encounter, their stories were not recorded in writing. Only when the Indians began to retaliate by capturing Europeans were the stories written. Thus, "'captivity narrative' came to mean an account, usually autobiographical, of forced participation in Indian life" (Vaughan and Clark, 2). The first Indian captivity narratives usually appeared in works of a larger scale such as the accounts of Cabeza de Vaca, Juan Ortiz, and Captain John Smith. Only in the latter part of the seventeenth century, through the writing of the Puritans, did captivity narratives become a genre in their own right (Vaughan and Clark, 2-3).

The first bestsellers of the New World, captivity narratives gained instant popularity "because—like any successful literature—they served readers a hearty fare of literary and psychological satisfaction peculiar to their time and place" (Vaughan and Clark, 3). Drawing on literary traditions of spiritual autobiography, sermon and jeremiad, captivity narratives were more personal accounts than existing histories or stories of war and helped to fill a void "in a society without fiction or plays" (Vaughan and Clark, 3).

A narrative of captivity can be seen as a "rite of passage, or more specifically, an initiation process by which a person moves from one set of perceptions to another" (Vaughan and Clark, 11). In this rite of passage there are three stages.

First, captives began to gain new knowledge about their own culture and American Indian culture when they were separated from their natal environment—in Puritan narratives, an New England town or frontier settlement. They then entered a "margin" (or "liminal") phase where they lost the security they had enjoyed as English subjects and usually suffered

servitude in a culture they considered grossly inferior to their own. With their world in psychological as well as physical disarray, the captives initially saw their new social relationships and consequent obligations as punishment and humiliation; unfamiliarity with Indian language kept them from understanding even nonthreatening remarks. Later they became more flexible and began to comprehend perhaps even to appreciate, their captor's beliefs and manner of living. Finally, in the third stage, they were redeemed and reintegrated ("reaggregated") into their own culture (Vaughan and Clark, 11-12).

The liminal stage forms the majority of most early captivity narratives. During this phase a captive "was relatively free from the social strictures and cultural values of his previous life" (Vaughan and Clark, 12). Victor Turner says that "meaning arises when we try to put what culture and language have crystallized from the past together with what we feel, wish, and think about our present point in life . . ." (Burnham, 68). At this point, when present meets past, captives are forced to redefine themselves both in contrast to who they were and in relationship with the Indians. Slotkin says of captivity narratives, "All are myths of self-transcendence, or initiation into a new state of being" (101).

The experience of captivity is heightened by a sense of separation on the part of the captive. Speaking of Mary Rowlandson, the first Puritan to publish a captivity narrative, Slotkin says, "The breaking of family ties continues and is progressively intensified throughout the narrative, leaving Mrs. Rowlandson increasingly isolated" (107). Even the feeling of being in the same time as those she left behind is denied the captive; " . . . [for Rowlandson] time is marked not in temporal days but in 'Removes,' spatial and spiritual away from civilized light into Indian darkness." Slotking envisions "captivity as an all-environing experience, a world in a microcosm, complete even to having its own peculiar time-space relationships" (109).

Though captives felt disconnected from the world they had left they often were not entirely alone among the natives. Often there were other English captives, and these captives bonded together to help one another survive the experience of captivity. Vaughan and Clark note that "When captives shared such a crisis, a small community of sufferers emerged. Turner calls the resulting esprit de corps 'communitas'—the group identity created by those in the same liminal experience" (13).

Shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century, writers of literature appropriated the theme of captivity as they began to develop an American myth.

The later myth-literature of the Colonial and early national periods was intended as a kind of consummatory mythmaking: an attempt by artful moderns to recapture the unsophisticated, believing spirit of the primitive "natural" man. In so doing, these later writers (Cooper, Longfellow, Melville, and others) reached back to the only sources of truly primary American myth—the myths of the Indian aborigines and the personal

narratives of the unsophisticated, almost primitive colonials (and their slicker, sensationalistic successors of the popular press) who fabricated a mythology out of their real and imagined experiences with the Indians (Slotkin, 17).

Though the captivity narrative as such did not survive the nineteenth century, it lives as part of the American myth.

Placing *The Breakfast Club* within the context of the American myth of captivity, of victim as hero, is not difficult. It is easy to construe detention as a captivity. Though these captives are held in a high school library and not the wilderness, they are taken out of their normal social contexts—being in the school library in a Saturday with people you've never met before is definitely out of the norm.

John Hughes sets the movie firmly within a time and place with which his audience could identify when the movie was released in 1984. Clothing and coke cans that today appear artifacts were the height of modernity then. But these things do more than establish the movie's spatial and temporal location, they define the characters.

Unlike Puritans who were taken captive by the Native Americans in New England, the captives in the Shermer High School library are far from being a homogenous group. While Puritans, by-in-large, dressed in the same fashions and held similar world views and beliefs, each of the students is quite different from his or her four companions. Each student, at least in the beginning of the movie, is not so much an individual as a representative of a type, or of a recognizable group of students within high school society. In the words of one of the students, the group of captives is comprised of "a brain, an athlete, a basket case, a princess, and a criminal." Hughes uses not only clothing but also the students' reasons for being in detention and even the food each of them eats for lunch to characterize each of them. For example, Clare, the princess/prom queen, played by Molly Ringwald, wears a leather bomber jacket over a top and skirt. Her leather boots match her jacket. As she steps out of her father's BMW when he delivers her to her captivity she whines that she shouldn't be in detention just for skipping class to go shopping. For lunch, Clare eats sushi. The basket case, Allison, played by Ally Sheedy, is dressed in black. Nothing, from her shoes to her coat (with the exception of her white socks) is any other color, and a large ring of black eyeliner surrounds each of her eyes. Her lunch is no less freakish as she tosses the meat from her sandwich onto the statue in the library and proceeds to remake the sandwich of corn chips and sugar from pixie sticks. Late in the movie she reveals that she is in detention because she has nothing else to do. She is a voluntary captive. Judd Nelson plays the part of the criminal, Bender. He spends almost every Saturday in detention. This time he is there for pulling a fire alarm. Dressed in clothes that make him look like a member from a Seattle grunge band almost a decade before such existed, Bender has no lunch.

Thus, each of the characters is presented as a type, but these types are undermined as individuality begins to assert itself in each of the captives.

As the captives enter a liminal state outside of their normal social contexts, they are forced to reevaluate themselves in response to new conditions. Though Vernon is the captor in this narrative, Bender is the Indian, for it is in his world that the other captives find themselves (in at least two ways) and it is in opposition to Bender that the other captives define themselves. This is accomplished as Bender begins antagonizing Clare. Andy, the athlete, played by Emilio Estevez, jumps in to defend Clare, and the nerd, Brian, played by Anthony Michael Hall, tries to help. All three fall under Bender's fire as he satirizes their groups within the school. In defending their groups, they must define themselves. To their comments Allison replies in monosyllabic sounds, if at all.

As the captives begin to talk, language breaks down. When Bender tells Andy that all it takes to be a wrestler is a "lobotomy and some tights." Brian looks at Andy; "You wear tights?" To which Andy responds, "I wear the required uniform." In another instance Andy tells Bender to speak for himself. Bender responds "Do you think I speak for you? I don't even know the language." These captives discover, as did the Puritans in a more extreme sense, that they don't speak the same language—in the beginning their perceptions are so different that they can't connect.

But shared experiences give the captives a level on which to connect. They first come together when they unite against Vernon, the captor. Any time Bender finds himself in trouble, even in the very beginning when they hate him, the other captives defend him. By near the end of their time together the captives have shared enough experiences and enough of themselves to feel like a unit. Following lunch they sit in a circle on the floor talking. They talk about their reasons for being in detention, all of the reasons for being in detention have something to do with parents. Hoping to impress his father, Andy, the athlete, tapes another wrestler's "buns" together. Brian, the nerd, finds himself in detention after a flare gun explodes in his locker. The flare gun was supposed to enable Brian to commit suicide to escape from his parents' pressure on him to excel in school. Allison willingly commits herself to detention hoping to gain the attention of parents who ignore her. The captives realize that the ways in which their parents raised them, in many ways, determine into which group each falls in school.

In a strange juxtaposition of terms captivity is a freeing experience. Not unlike the Puritans, the captives in the library are "relatively free from the social strictures and cultural values of [their] previous life." They are free within the space of the library to pursue friendships they would never have made outside of captivity. Both the captives and the viewers of the movie wonder if these friendships will survive back in the larger world of the high school on Monday morning. Will the athlete acknowledge the brain in the hall? Would the criminal be caught dead walking to class with the prom queen? No definitive answer t this is given—two say no, two say yes, and one doesn't really say anything. Actions later such as all of the captives dancing together could indicate that they are cementing their friendship or

it could just be that they are enjoying the chance to break down barriers and be together while they can. To read the narrative that Vernon assigned each of the students to write at the beginning of the captivity, it would appear that these friendships are lasting. The students have come together enough that one narrative can be written for all of them. In it, Brian, the nerd, says that they've all discovered, in each of them, each of the types that they represented at the beginning of the day. Brian signs the letter, the narrative, "the breakfast club," implying that the group is now a unit, but he doesn't make predictions about Monday. Each of the students is changed within, but for how long and to what degree will this be visible to the outside world? Answers to this are not given, as this captivity narrative, like most of the early American captivity narratives, focuses on the liminal experience of captivity and not on the return to a larger society.

In early captivity narratives it is not unusual for the narrative to begin with a dehumanized captor that is viewed as more human by the end of the narrative. Such is the case with one of the narratives in *The Breakfast Club*. In the beginning of the film Vernon, the vice-principal, is as much a type as the students. He is a member of lower administration in the school system and aspires to be more. He takes out his frustration on his captives every Saturday. While the students do not see him as more human, viewers of the movie are allowed a glimpse of him drinking beer with the janitor while he (the vice principal) talks of his disillusionment with teaching. The larger narrative of the movie humanizes the captor while the narrative of the students does not. The students do, however, recognize the humanity of the Indian, Bender while Vernon still views him as one who will be in jail within the next five years.

Are we so determined by our backgrounds that we can't break from them? Vernon thinks so in the case of Bender, but *The Breakfast Club* is ambivalent on this question and others. To what degree will captivity inform a captive once the captivity is over? Early American captivity narratives differ on this issue. Some people were delighted to return to their natal culture—while changed by captivity, they were not so greatly altered that they could not easily return to society. some were and had great difficulty returning—their liminal experience was greater upon their return home than it had been with the Indians. Some chose to remain among the Indians, so greatly were they (the captives) changed. Does one's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his or her background determine whether or not he or she is willing to continue in the different way of thinking imposed by captivity or new experiences? By appropriating the model of the captivity narrative, John Hughes poses these questions to those of us in the latter twentieth century.

On the Inability to Speak in Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*

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And I water'd it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.
(Blake ll. 5-8)

The issue of censorship, whether of the obvious, overt variety practiced by governments or of the subtle, covert variety practiced by those who would proscribe the discussion of difficult inter-racial issues, the "airing of dirty laundry" in literature, is never too far beneath the surface in the writing of Nadine Gordimer. While overt government censorship is a serious issue, far more dangerous to Gordimer is the quiet submission of intelligent people to the subtle pressures which tend to stifle discussion for the purposes of political or moral expediency. In 1982, a year after the publication of *July's People*, Gordimer explained that the premise under which she wrote, and the premise under which her segment of South African society lived was one best expressed by South African poet Mongane Wally Serote who argued: "Blacks must learn to talk; whites must learn to listen" ("Interregnum" 267). Yet, as a white South African, Gordimer was also aware of the subtle forces which shaped the listening of that part of the middle class which wanted to escape the white ego of official South African consciousness. She knew that the middle class's unexamined assumption of the moral correctness of their position, its belief in its own moral salvation, was an egoistic assumption which, in itself, expressed a belief in cultural superiority and an alienation from the problems which divide racial and ethnic groups in South Africa ("Interregnum" 263). *July's People* is a novel which attempts to burst the bubble of cultural superiority, to expose the smug moral contentment of proper thoughts and "checkbook" social activism.

July's People is a novel produced during a time of official censorship conducted by a regime which had taken to heart the censorship program of Plato's ideal republic. Plato believed that art has the ability to shape souls and societies and that it is the duty of those in power to suppress those forms of expression which tend to undermine the power of the state (Booth 27; Mphahlele 199-209). As Margaret Atwood has argued, many regimes, as well as many fundamentalist groups who would like to rule, see the

suppression of human dialogue, the suppression of the voice of dissent and discussion, as fundamental to the consolidation of power (47). Every Friday in South Africa in the 1980's, the Government Gazette published its current list of the banned, a list which included not only organizations such as the African National Congress, but tee shirts and novels (including *Sophie's Choice, Rabbit is Rich,* and Gordimer's own *The Late Bourgeois World*) and any other form of expression which the Publications Control Board found objectionable ("Conversation" 23-24). For today's South Africa, overt censorship is not a dead issue. Even as late as the summer of 1993, The *New York Times* reported that although South African familiarity with censorship had bred contempt for the state, it had not bred a tolerance for the free expression of dissenting views. Both the National Peace Committee, a multiparty forum working to end inter-ethnic violence, and the African National Congress were seeking legislation to ban speech with a "direct potential" to incite violence. As playwright Pieter-Dirk Uys speculates, censorship in South Africa is still so widely accepted as normal that no matter who is in power "the fist will close" (Keller).

Though as a writer, Nadine Gordimer attempts to extract "a private order out of the chaos of life" ("Conversation" 27), she, of course, wishes to share her insights with others. In preparing July's People for publication, she was forced to deal with two potentially hostile audiences, the government censors who would not hesitate to ban a novel which challenged the authority of the state and a middle class audience whose complacent pieties she wished to challenge. While overt censorship may appear to render the dissident artist's job impossible—indeed that is the hope of the censors — one of the ironies of censorship is that overt censorship creates highly sophisticated audiences simply "because the act of censorship renders the text parabolic" (Holquist 14). As Michael Holquist explains:

> The patent aspect of a censored text is only part of a totality that readers must fill in with their interpretations of what was excluded. The ineluctably dual structure of the censored text, the simultaneity of a manifest and a suppressed level of meaning, highlights the fatedness of interpretation, the shaping power of the interpreter's situation. Censorship, in other words, is a particular kind of context, and it foregrounds the always present tension between text and context. To paraphrase an old proverb, censorship is like the house of the undertaker, in which one never speaks of death. (14)

Thus, the creation of socially significant art under conditions of censorship, and getting that art before an audience, requires a thorough grasp of the entire realm of discourse. In Gordimer's own words, it is necessary, as an artist "to use all the means at your disposal: the inner narrative, the outer, the reflection of an individual from other people, even the different possibilities of language, the syntax itself, which take hold of different parts of reality" ("Interview" 267-268). Or, as Mexican novelist Octavio Paz has

argued, "Social criticism begins with grammar and the re-establishing of meanings" (Paz 48; Gordimer "Gesture" 295). As readers interpreting a work of social criticism produced under threat of censorship, we must delve into the grammar of the unspoken and the unspeakable.

The story of *July's People* takes place in one of the future South Africas it was possible to envision in 1981. A violent revolution has begun and it appears that the forces of the Azanian Liberation Front are on their way to being victorious over the recalcitrant white regime. Bam and Maureen Smales, a liberal white architect and his suburban wife, along with their children, have been forced to flee Johannesburg under the protection of their house servant whom they call July. As the story is told, even basic facts are left unspoken, though some are eventually revealed. (e.g. It is only on page 111 of the 160 page novel that we are told that the Smales come from Johannesburg and on page 120 that it is revealed that July's name is actually Mwawate.) To escape the violence, July takes his middle class white family to his compound in the bush to live under the protection of his extended family. This causes the Smales and himself to be thrust into an unfamiliar topsy-turvy world in which all of the power relationships and living arrangements have shifted in ways which none of the characters in the novel is prepared to discuss.

Gordimer makes it clear that the inability to engage in meaningful human dialogue is a central concern in *July's People*. One of the first things Victor, one of Maureen and Bam's sons, asks his mother is to tell the black children of July's compound not to touch his toys. Maureen responds, "—I tell them? They don't understand our language.—" (14) Victor shows his unhappiness, not by speaking, but by violence, by abusing the property of others, by kicking the bath which July had loaned to the Smales for their use. Characteristically, Gordimer does not moralize or point to analogous realities in the South African political mindscape. This is followed by July's inability to explain to his wife the reasons why he brought the Smales to their compound and his total inability to communicate the realities of his life in the city (e.g. his private room, indoor plumbing, his "town wife") to his "bush" wife (16-20, 84). The entire story is dominated by the unspoken "admonition not to speak" about the political events happening in the country, about July's appropriation of the Smales' car (50-51), about the Smales' dependence on July's family for food and protection (27), about the children's quick assimilation into the world of the black children in July's compound (41-43, 68), about Maureen and Bam's inability to be intimate with each other (79), about July's continuing desire to be paid as the servant of the Smales (58, 69). Arlene Elder has observed that language frequently fails to communicate in the novel and that, in conversation, formulas take the place of any true exchange of feeling (106). These are the overt silences in the novel; the are part of the everyday life of Maureen and Bam and July. As one of Gordimer's "inner narratives" puts it, "The subtlety of it was nothing new. People in the relation they had been in are used to having to interpret what is never said, between them" (69).

Some human communication occurs in the novel, but in the cultural translation "between them" is always the possibility of mistranslation (see 44, 115). This fact is made most overtly when, after retranslating a communication from July, Maureen realizes that even the special consideration she had shown to July, a consideration generated by her own liberal middle class belief that July had a right to dignified treatment because he was a human being, was, in itself, a special humiliation because, by definition, July was a servant, inferior to his master, not even worthy of being addressed by his proper name. An angry July had chided "What you can tell? . . . That I'm work for you fifteen years. That you satisfy with me" which Maureen translates as "Fifteen years / your boy / you satisfy" and left it dangling (98). Michael Neill has opened up this translation by speaking the unspeakable:

> the reductive syntax appears to cut away everything but the absolute statement of a crude economic translation. But the meaning cannot be held there; the absence of a full stop emphasizes the incapacity of even this rudimentary speech to any longer restrict its own meanings. The verb "satisfy" is left suspended in a lexical no man's land, inviting interpretations which it can neither confirm nor exclude: it is open, for example to either active or a passive construction; the satisfaction may be madam's or the boy's, or both. Even more unsettling is its hint of sexual innuendo. Not that the novel ever suggests a current of attraction between July and Maureen. Quite the contrary [though Maureen does sometimes position herself as one of July's women (91-92) my addition.]. But the possibility of such transgressive sexuality is so inscribed on relations between black men and white women in South Africa, that it shadows each one the encounters between Maureen and her "frog prince" (9). (80)

Neill's interpretation of this scene is right in keeping with an understanding the grammar of artistic communications carried on under the imminent threat of censorship.

Gordimer intends that we, as readers, bring our entire knowledge of the social context of South Africa with us if we are to follow the story where it leads. We have to do the work for, in the words of Ben Okri, "a story is not a car, . . .it is a road" (266). We, as readers, have to do the driving. In the very first chapter, we are presented with an unspoken, undigested portrayal of two unknown worlds co-existing in close proximity to each other. One world is the world of Maureen's middle class existence: a world of black servants smelling of Lifebuoy soap serving morning tea in master bedrooms, the world of the private bedroom of Maureen's youth with its knickknacks of the shelves, its cut-glass decanters with silver stoppers, its comforting pet rabbits, and its ever attentive servant "Our Jim" (Our Nig?) ready with her cleaned shoes waiting for the next school day. The other world is the world of July's compound: a world of shared crude mud huts

with dung floors and old grain sacks serving for doors, of old iron beds with rusty springs and thick mud walls encrusted with the nests of wasps or bats. Instead of the lavender which scented the room of her youth, there is the smell of old stiff rolled up cowhide and instead of the cleanliness and privacy she enjoyed at home, she must now share this hut with assorted farm implements, her husband, their children, July's chickens, and unknown numbers of mice, rats, and flies (1-4). Gordimer merely presents these two worlds which coexist unknown to each other in South Africa, but she does not comment on the obvious contrasts. The worlds are presented merely as fact, as setting for a story which is about to unfold, but the intimate co-existence of these two worlds in contrast, is, in fact, the story itself. Unless these worlds come together, there is no possibility of achieving one of Gordimer's political goals, the realization of a non-racial state with black majority rule in South Africa ("Conversation" 15).

The contrast between these worlds, the great gaps which need to be bridged in the emerging nation of black ruled South Africa, is evident throughout the novel in similar silent outbursts of the unspeakable. Perhaps the most taboo of the topics presented, but left undiscussed, is that personal hygiene. In Maureen's middle class world, July and the other servants smell of Lifeboy soap; they have adopted white middle class standards of cleanliness. While we seldom speak of the emotive power of the sense of smell, there is much to indicate that smell is an unconscious, but primary factor in the establishment of our basic prejudices towards the world. Some smells (e.g. coffee in the morning or cookies baking) attract us; others (e.g. Limburger cheese or kimchi [Korean pickled/fermented cabbage, onions, & fish]) repel us before we take the time to get to know what or who it is we are running from. In *July's People*, as the Smales adjust to living in July's compound, the standards of personal hygiene change. Living in the compound, only a few days removed from the luxury of indoor plumbing, Maureen realizes, for the first time in her life, that she smells "bad between her legs" and disgustedly scrubs away at her body to remove the smell (9). Her children begin to clean themselves with stones instead of toilet paper (35) and at one point, Maureen goes outside to shower her clothes and her body clean in the warm night rain (48). Smell is also an impediment in Maureen's marriage. It is when her husband Bam inability to bathe leaves him with the sour, smokey, musky smell formerly associated with blacks that their intimate relations go into hiatus (79). More is being criticized here than the middle class social convention that milk out of a bottle is somehow cleaner than milk out of a goat (10) or that medicine out of a pharmacy is more efficacious than homeopathic medicines (60), what isn't stated is that the smells that repel Maureen are the natural smells associated with living in a world without running water or the wealth required to maintain a middle class household. The idea that Maureen is resisting, the truth she eventually learns, is that there is no fundamental difference in the way that July's family lives in the bush and the way her family lived in the city that cannot be explained by economics (65). July's

wife also wants a nice clean house with indoor plumbing and July misses the luxuries he enjoyed in the city (20-23). Those aspects of the black lifestyle that most repel Maureen are directly related to its poverty; what attracts July to the Smales' middle class world is directly related to its wealth. The unspeakable stink of poverty is clearly an impediment to the establishment of a truly non-racial society in South Africa, but to honestly and openly discuss the social cost of correcting the inequities which exist in the distribution of wealth in South Africa is to openly challenge every value of the censors, those guardians of entrenched power, those guardians of the status quo. For them, like July's chief, the consequences of true social revolution are too shocking and too terrifying to be readily understood (116-117).

In a similar fashion, by pointing out the truth in an offhand way and then not commenting on it, Gordimer explores other aspects of the South African experience in *July's People* including differing concepts of land ownership (87) and the effect of economic reality and the pass laws on black families (16, 30). The problems are defined, but Gordimer lets her readers probe for the answers. What is shocking for Gordimer's middle class readers to realize—so shocking that it must be left unsaid in order to be communicated—is that Gordimer's discussion of the future of South Africa presupposes a homogeneity of human experience based on the biological presupposition that all human beings are descended from a common ancestor while her would-be censors, as well as her liberal middle class audience, live in a world which presupposes a homogeneity of human experience based on the world as it then existed in apartheid South Africa. The revolution Gordimer is advocating is a revolution of understanding, a revolution of consciousness. In writing through the censorship, in creating a grammar in which unspeakable issues can be raised, Gordimer, to paraphrase Wilson Harris, creates a dialogue between the hardened conventions of the South African world and the perception of eclipsed or half-eclipsed otherness possible within the South African liberal middle class to demonstrate the possibility of moving into a more flexible future, one flexible enough to survive (xviii). Gordimer is arguing that only through an awakening of the psyche will it be possible for the future to escape the nightmare program which the established order of South African society seemed, in 1981, designed to actualize: the violent revolution which sits, unspeakably, in the background of *July's People*. Maureen's final race to the "chuddering" helicopter full of Azanian freedom fighters at the end of the novel is unexplained, but it is not inexplicable (160). Though it seems foolish to run into the hands of the "enemy", Azania is South Africa's future: Maureen's only chance for survival is in joining the future of her nation, at whatever the unspeakable personal cost.

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Hester Prynne as the Artist of the Beautiful

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Few writers have written as often or as well about the artist's dilemma as Nathaniel Hawthorne. In one of his best known short stories, "The Artist of the Beautiful," Hawthorne described the ideal artist: "It is requisite for the ideal artist to possess a force of character that seems hardly compatible with its delicacy; he must keep his faith in himself, while the incredulous world assails him with its utter disbelief; he must stand up against mankind and be his own sole disciple." Owen Warland, one of Hawthorne's most memorable characters, vacillates wildly between devotion to art and obeisance to conformity, finally managing to maintain an uneasy coalition between sensitivity and strength long enough to achieve the Beautiful. Owen's dilemma, of course, appears in various forms and with various resolutions in Hawthorne's short fiction, but it also surfaces in *The Scarlet Letter*, which can be seen as yet another allegorical expression of the artist's struggle.

Hawthorne achieves an allegorical effect by presenting two of the main characters, Arthur Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth, as the seemingly incompatible emotional poles between which the ideal artist vibrates, and a third main character, Hester Prynne, as the synthesis of these emotions. Arthur Dimmesdale is all delicacy, groping throughout the novel for the strength that for so long eludes Owen Warland. The demonic Roger Chillingworth, who resembles so many of Hawthorne's merciless misanthropes, embodies force of character. In Hester Prynne the two meet. Only she combines delicacy of feeling with force of character as she suffers exile and vilification for seven long years in order to remain near the man she loves.

Reading the scarlet "A" for art is hardly a new idea, but I wish to emphasize here that Hester's scarlet letter, like the novel itself, consists of an outline embellished. The narrator, given the facts of Hester's story, makes of it a symbolic novel that resonates with multiple meanings. Hester Prynne, given the simple graphic shape that is the letter A, makes of it a symbol that also resonates with multiple meanings. The "A" does not "stand for" art; it is art, and as such it clearly labels Hester an artist. Like many forms or styles of art, the letter passes through a period of public scandal before it is co-opted and eventually institutionalized. But Hawthorne emphasizes his equation of the letter with art—specifically, literary art—in another

striking way. The Puritans, as mentioned above, intend the scarlet letter to be a mark of shame which can be interpreted in only one way, a literal, objective device that means "adulteress" and only "adulteress," a label that will make of Hester a living sermon. (Historical Puritans would more likely have used "AD," the initials of Arthur Dimmesdale, as a sign of adultery.) When Hester first appears, a woman in the crowd offers "a rag of [her] own rheumatic flannel to make a fitter" (1:54) label, thereby voicing her preference for unadorned language and reminding us of the Puritan plain style. Typical of Hawthorne's Puritans, such a naively utilitarian use of language, which presupposes a classical correspondence between words and nature rather than a Lockean relation, inevitably fails because language, even in its smallest units, is inherently multisense. Millicent Bell, suggesting that Hawthorne's novel "is as much as any work of fiction can be, an essay in semiology" with its theme "the obliquity or indeterminacy of signs," points out that the scarlet "A," stands for "no more than a speech sound," but it actually signifies several different speech sounds because vowels in English receive different pronunciations according to context. Even this simplest representation seems indeterminate, a warning that the signs in the novel will soon increase their complexity.

Far more than a simple shape, the letter acquires new resonances throughout the story, beginning the moment Hester, locked away offstage before the novel opens, begins to embroider it. We may well wonder why she chooses to draw attention to this badge of shame. She is not, we soon realize, the "brazen hussy" a woman in the crowd believes her to be, nor is she a repentant sinner revelling in her sackcloth and ashes. Her judges consider the letter a punishment, but Hester herself cannot accept a wholly orthodox view of her own fall, and so must add to the plain cloth of her sentence the irrepressible embel lishments of the creative artist. Her embellishments point out a clear linguistic conflict between herself and her judges. One-dimensional fictional avatars of the narrator's ancestors—and judges—Hawthorne's magistrates, heirs to the Puritan plain style, force Hester to wear what they perceive as a simple emblem, but Hester assigns the letter a second meaning. As a Puritan herself, she has no reason to take pride in her adultery, yet she advances proudly toward the scaffold. She takes pride instead in her devotion to the weak and now understandably nervous Arthur, who as he awaits her appearance may well be wondering if he will be priest or prisoner at day's end. His beautifully embellished initial publicly—yet privately—affirms her love. Perhaps unwittingly, Hester embraces her role as an artist by choosing symbol over emblem, multiplicity over singularity, the figurative over the literal.

The letter and Pearl are the keys to the allegory. The letter begins as a simple label, but in embracing both her guilt and her role, Hester skillfully decorates that label. For Hester, art serves as therapy, "a pleasure . . . expressing, and therefore soothing, the passion of her life" (1:83-84). "A specimen of her delicate and imaginative skill" (1:81), the letter serves as advertising for Hester's work. Banished to a life on the fringes of society,

Hester ekes out a living through her art as her needle earns her a marginal place. Even in the somber New England of Hawthorne's tale, artists were needed to help glorify men of state and to help mark life's milestones. Hester becomes an occasional artist, the unofficial seamstress laureate of the young colony as all three estates—the civil, the military, and the religious—become consumers of her art. Birth is celebrated and death lamented at least in part through Hester's needle.

The evolution of the letter continues throughout the novel. The narrator mistakes it for an "ornamental article of dress" (1:31). The less refined among the Puritans see it as "red-hot with infernal fire" (1:87). Governor Bellingham's servant mistakes the "glittering symbol" as a sign that "she [is] a great lady in the land" (1:104), and the breastplate of Governor Bellingham's armor exaggerates the letter's proportions, transforming it into "the most prominent feature of [Hester's] appearance" (1:106). But the settlement as a whole comes to know the letter, through Hester's nursing, "as the taper of the sick-chamber . . . the symbol of [Hester's] calling" as a "self-ordained . . . Sister of Mercy" (1:161), and even the authorities begin to regard the letter with benevolence. The townspeople soon consider the letter as "the token, not of that one sin, for which she had borne so long and dreary a penance, but of her many good deeds since" (1:162), and some believe it a sort of talisman, protecting Hester from danger.

To Hester, the work of art that is the letter becomes a passport into the realm of free thinking, a realm which none of Hawthorne's Elect would have been allowed to enter. But as Michael Davitt Bell points out, her sentence forces Hester into a duplicitous relation with the Puritan colony. In public she passively accepts her role as a "living sermon against sin" (1:63), but in private she remains a free thinker, led by the letter into a silent rebellion. When Hester and Pearl leave the colony, the letter assumes legendary proportions, and when Hester returns to take it up again, "the scarlet letter [ceases] to be a stigma which [attracts] the world's scorn and bitterness, and [becomes] a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, yet with reverence too" (1:263). And at the very end of the novel, the letter takes the form of a heraldic shield: "On a field, sable, the letter A, gules" (1:264). The evolution of the letter as a literary symbol is complete: it has passed from a simple mark of shame to a sign of hope and love to a symbol of rank. The shield on the tombstone represents the institutionalization of the scarlet letter.

If the scarlet letter is a work of art, so is Pearl, Hester's inspired creation, the "unpremeditated offshoot of a passionate moment" (1:101). The visible mark of her mother's shame, Pearl is of course closely linked with the letter from birth as "the scarlet letter in another form; the scarlet letter endowed with life" (1:102). Pearl's growth parallels the evolution of the letter and of art itself. Like marginalized art and like the scarlet letter, the child faces vilification at first, but is later co-opted by society and eventually institutionalized. Her growth in the novel and her gradual acceptance by the Puritans follows a pattern often repeated in the strained relations between art and

the public. Like the scarlet letter and like art, Pearl eludes not only the control of her society but also the control of the artist. At governor Bellingham's house she refuses to answer pastor Wilson's questions, and she strongly resists integration into the social scheme of the Puritan colony, ignoring the Puritan children and refusing a passive role as scapegoat. Pearl rejects all the uses the Puritans try to make of her; as a representation of art in the allegory of *The Scarlet Letter*, Pearl cannot be made to fit the Puritans' Procrustean bed.

Throughout the novel Pearl rejects her mother's discipline, and her behavior is so erratic that poor Hester, who has heard "the talk of the neighboring townspeople . . . that poor little Pearl was a demon offspring" (1:99), cannot herself be certain of the child's origins or her meaning. Her uncertainty recalls both Owen Warland's vacillation and Rudolph Von Abele's assertion that art was to Hawthorne sometimes a blessing and sometimes a curse. Like Drowne's wooden image, and like the scarlet letter, Pearl is clearly the result of an act of love, an act which Hester insists "had a consecration of its own" (1:195). Also like Drowne's wooden image and the letter, Pearl is perceived by her society as the result of demonic possession. Like all ideal art, Pearl reveals the truth. (In contrast, Dimmesdale's rhetorical art conceals the truth.) When, during his midnight vigil, the minister impulsively invites Hester and Pearl to join him on the scaffold, he fails to reckon with the child's piercing innocence. "Wilt thou stand here with mother and me, tomorrow noontide?" (1:153) Pearl asks. Dimmesdale demurs, and Pearl pulls away; neither art nor truth will be had without sacrifice.

As Pearl grows, the Puritan authorities come to accept both her existence and her role. Governor Bellingham and pastor Wilson are content to leave Pearl with her mother rather than placing her in a more respectable home because Dimmesdale has convinced them that Pearl is God's gift to Hester, "meant for a blessing; for the one blessing of her life! It was meant, doubtless . . . as a retribution too; a torture . . . to keep the mother's soul alive" (1:114), an instrument through which Hester might be saved. Hawthorne's prose—if we consider Pearl the allegorical representation of art—recalls the blessing/curse duality of the artist's gift, and the event itself signals the co-opting of art into Puritan society. The Puritans cannot control Pearl and cannot bend her to their own uses, but in much the same way that they came to view the scarlet letter with benevolence, they arrive at a new, more tolerant view of Pearl. In the end, Pearl becomes acceptable to the very center of Puritan society. Roger Chillingworth, her late father's persecutor, leaves her property on both sides of the Atlantic, which bequest "wrought a very material change in the public estimation . . . [so that] had the mother and child remained here, little Pearl, at a marriageable period of life, might have mingled her wild blood with the lineage of the devoutest Puritan among them all" (1:261). Cash—the acceptance or patronage of the rich—renders Pearl acceptable even as it renders formerly unacceptable art acceptable. Pearl eventually marries into a high social position, as evi-

denced by the letters "with armorial seals upon them" (1:262) that arrive at Hester's cottage after her return to Boston. Like the scarlet letter as it later appears on her mother's tombstone, Pearl has been institutionalized; from revilement to provisional acceptance to co-optation to institutionalization, she has followed the paradigm of art.

Both the scarlet letter and Pearl, the living embodiment of the scarlet letter whose development so closely parallels the evolution of the letter, are works of art. As works of art they identify Hester Prynne as an artist. Though the letter is entirely Hester's creation, Pearl is a collaborative effort on the part of Hester and Dimmesdale. If Pearl serves to identify her mother as an artist, then she must also identify her father as an artist. Hawthorne leaves no doubt that Pearl serves as the link between the declared artist, Hester Prynne, and the closet artist, Arthur Dimmesdale. Standing between her mother and father during the midnight scene on the scaffold, Pearl becomes "a symbol . . . the connecting link" (1:154) between Hester and Dimmesdale, "the tie that united them" and "the living hieroglyphic in which was revealed" (1:206) their dark secret. But Pearl's multiple symbolic meanings render her a mystery to the Puritans because they perceive her as emblematic. As both the physical manifestation of her parents' sin and the symbol of the love that binds them, Pearl has the same resonance as the scarlet letter—and the same allegorical meanings.

Dimmesdale's role in the creation of Pearl labels him as an artist as surely as the scarlet letter so labels Hester. According to Hawthorne, Dimmesdale's sin—with all its metaphorical implications as a form of creative expression—improves his effectiveness as a preacher. It also helps him toward an understanding of literary art. Michael Davitt Bell points out that Dimmesdale is a "master of doublespeak," but his duplicity arises from his weakness rather than from evil intent. Dimmesdale loves truth, yet discovers that he can tell a lie and the truth at the same time. His first words to Hester (the exhortation on the scaffold in Chapter III) seem truthful and direct, yet they contain an earnest plea to Hester to keep silent. His confessions from his pulpit also seem truthful and direct, but he knows that his Puritan audience will interpret them as further proof of his piety. His creative urge, which drew him into his fateful liaison with Hester Prynne, remains hidden behind a curtain of rhetoric. He can never reveal the truth, never share his discovery that sin and love are sometimes indistinguishable, because like Owen Warland, whose need for approval and fear of failure frequently keep him from his work, Arthur Dimmesdale lacks the courage to stand up and be his own disciple.

The impotent Roger Chillingworth, the third main character in the allegory, will of course never be an artist, but he helps to illustrate the character of Hawthorne's ideal artist because he does possess what Dimmesdale lacks—force of character, singleness of purpose, determination, call it what you will—but he also lacks what Dimmesdale possesses: delicacy of feeling. He shares with Rappaccini and Aylmer the cold disregard for humanity that allows one to transform his beautiful daughter into a poison-

ous bloom in order to make her invulnerable and the other to risk the life of his devoted wife in pursuit of perfect beauty. With these and with Ethan Brand, Young Goodman Brown and the Man of Adamant—not to mention Hawthorne's fictional divines, including Arthur Dimmesdale—Chillingworth shares also a nearly complete unwillingness to compromise with human imperfection, the very quality that for Hawthorne defines humanity. Force of character without delicacy allows him to undertake a devil's office long enough to transform himself into a devil.

In the end, Arthur Dimmesdale does manage to unite delicacy and strength long enough to make his dying confession from the scaffold. That confession, however, is no clearer than his earlier ones except for his revelation of the mark on his chest, which all save his friends affirm as the "semblance" of the scarlet letter worn by Hester Prynne. The revelation stamps his confession as genuine. (Whether we believe the mark is actually there is irrelevant; Dimmesdale believes it is there, and attempts to reveal it.) This theatrical death scene is the only occasion in the novel when Dimmesdale's public rhetoric expresses the truth, the only occasion when he does not intend it to deceive, and the only occasion when delicacy and strength unite.

Only Hester Prynne, however, can maintain the synthesis of delicacy and force that Hawthorne requires of the ideal artist. Delicacy draws her to the chambers of the sick and the doorsteps of the destitute, who often revile her even as she nurses or feeds them. Force of character enables her to endure that revilement throughout the novel while she waits for Arthur. But her real work during the seven years of the story's action is the refinement of Pearl, her own beautiful butterfly, who will soon leave her hand.

Country Matters

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Jack rabbit's a good name for it. Sometimes you can decide to call a thing whatever you want, it just doesn't matter much, depends on what you're driving at. According to the new system, there's really no problem I suppose, in confusing jack rabbits with people. Not when all you're gonna to do is kill it anyway. So that's what let's call it, a tall jack rabbit, standing just off the perimeter, erect and wooden. Every evening you could count on several showin' up. Easy to hit. I remember one in particular standing maybe a hundred yards off, iconic and contemplative—a dead-sure hit. Something like that doesn't take much thought, not at least in the ordinary way that thinking's understood. The only requirements are a smooth suspiration of easy breath and all your senses drawn down to a tight eloquent point like the deft stroke you take on a cue ball, no english, just solid and straight off the tip of the stick.

One fellow from Oklahoma in particular—but almost all the marksmen were from Oklahoma where I was stationed—he moved like smooth glass, with that overconfidence of too- ise country people. He spent his entire watch up in the tower peering indolently across the line that separated us, out beyond our embattled compound. He ate lunch quietly up in his tower, a sandwich and a jug of tea, or what looked like tea, everyday. Slow and studied chewing followed by a careful pause, then a drink of tea. And then he'd chew tobacco, great brown clots of it like mats of oily hair.

We'd controlled the ground long enough by then to build fences and high towers. That in itself is something, to get that done even in the face of a great deal of political turmoil and uncertainty, or perhaps that's why it happened so easily. It's hard to tell about politics. But we'd gotten it up in the interests of seeing that a sort of democratic justice was possible. It was a double curtain of chain link separated by a narrow gravel walkway with the towers—high, white, wooden, slow-tapering solid pyramids—they interdicted the otherwise smooth run of the path every three or four hundred yards. The fences were laced together at the top with concertina wire.

He never listened to radio like the others. There was nothing but him and his relaxed steady eyes as they went searching out beyond the perimeter, playing out in wide arcs like silent, conning beacons. He knew their travel patterns. He always was the first to pick them up when they moved within range and he tracked them within an imaginary, interlocking,

coordinate gridwork—the way a chess board must be watched, not as the mere accumulation of discrete locations, additive and single, but as an organic pattern, every piece in constant shifting definition against all the others— ange, declination, abscissa, ordinate.

He'd wait all day to pick the right one up in the cross- airs and wait for me to come sit out below where he was picketed. His movements would assume a slow, deliberate melodrama, particularly when I'd bring a new guy with me so he could see the practical side of things, the way business was conducted out there on what had come to be called Country Club Rd. After we'd get seated (he never looked back, never formally recognized us until he'd finished), he'd open the breach and snick a shell into the chamber (they had to be hollow-point and soft-jacketed because of the way they would break open and tear out a chunk of ragged meat when they hit and he had to have brought them in himself; ever since Geneva only full-metal jackets were allowed.). After you watched him on several occasions you learned to see part of what he saw. With a pair of field glasses you learned how to pick them out against the greenery or the dry dirt or long shadows.

And you'd watch while he got ready. It took him a while not because they were scarce and you had to wait for one to show up, but because of time itself, the very nature of the time all our lives had intersected. There seemed to be a superabundance of it, because you'd come here to die anyway and it seemed essential to move with studied indifference. Time grows entirely superfluous in those circumstances. And at the end of that road on the advance guard of a war zone the way we were, everything was fortuitous time and circumstance—the unforeseen and unnoticed collocation of hours and actions at the end of a dirt road. We knew clearly that with rabbits as well as men, sometimes you'd just roll over dead and one or two would be left to puke last unction over your entrails or you'd wake up alone to a sound sometimes just for a moment just before your destiny slid into your belly in the form of a hot steel knife.

But the main reason for his waiting was not so much to eat up time in raw unthinking consumption, but rather to effect an entirely elegant kill, like an aesthete sets down a quick, single strophe of end-stopped rhyme, sure and haughty. The important part was that it be an act of free choice, or seeming free choice. Just so long as it had as much as possible the appearance of being an act of indifferent will. Choice mattered most to us then. In his case it was always when the sun was low and red and the substance of the sparse scorched brush had been doubled by the long sad shadows. When it was as quiet as it was going to get during daylight. When the wind had stopped and the very light of day seemed to be bleeding back out of the soil, running back to the sun along the horizon.

And even if you were tracking along with him (along where the barrel pointed) the chances were good you'd lose the mark after he was hit. But you could hear the crying if you were quiet enough and the wind had stopped (but it was only the pain of a dying animal, so we didn't often

bother to listen it was so faint). Sometimes when you were too quiet and just empty enough, you couldn't be sure if it was you or a rabbit that hurt the most. Empty enough so that it didn't matter. In the beginning when everybody'd picked him up, locked onto him, he'd be sitting out there like a death-still, silent, oriental master of time and light, still as the shadows—half light, half shade—a line cutting straight down the axis of his belly.

And then he'd lean down when it was time, like a strong lover along the stock and steel rail of the barrel, his cheek intimate and soft against the walnut, dark with palm oil. Then he'd suspend a smoky vibrating aerial image of his eye dead center in the scope's glass and rest there waiting like cold still white death for the precise moment—for all of light and sound and everything of touch and mind to fall together like three twos and a wild card. Just the way someone does when they know for sure they've won even before all the cards have hit the table good. They slap them down saying all in one motion "Goddam" snapping them on the table to both draw fire one way, with the eyes, while letting go an explosion with the other. When he pulled that steel-tongued solenoid it cracked out like a short, sharp apocalypse driving everything back again to unconstituted, elemental bone and dust and stone.

It was broken up into acts. It seemed after a few weeks we'd designed it together. Me the producer. Him the director. Set, blocking, lines, all of it controlled, finely controlled, especially after reefer. He performed it. I, the impresario, provided an audience. All institutions have opening spectacles, initiation rites, orientations and briefings to call you to order, make you situate, demonstrate who, without recourse, you are in context. Ours was shooting in the sunset. He did the killing. I watched. Me and a new guy usually, so he'd know what it was like doing business out in the country.

It was regular and very orderly. Right after mess, I'd walk out into the yard, me and the right guy who'd come in that day from Pennsylvania or Vermont or Arkansas, or from just moving around cross-country from compound to compound. We'd walk out there to where the tower was. I'd start off like it was an aimless stroll, just rolling up a smoke for sunset, the two of us walking as if there were no bounds to time, breathing the soft blue smoke. But I'd be watching for him without appearing to. He seemed to know precisely when we would come around the brick corner out of the compound and enter the broad field circumscribed by the double-fenced perimeter. When he saw us he'd turn away or just glide his eyes a few degrees back out toward where they'd be comin' in. He knew precisely how long it would take for us to get seated and smoked up and find in the glasses what he was already locked onto looking down the blue-steel spine of his rifle.

I'd lift my field glasses and look for a while then hand them to the new guy. "Take a look." And I'd wait for a few seconds. I'd say, "You see it?" Then a pause. "Right where the barrels pointing. Dead off the end of it." He'd look up to the tower then and get a line of sight and then go back to

the glasses. Then he'd see. "Jesus Christ! look at that bastard. I can't believe he's sitting there. Why doesn't he move?" I'd say, "Thinks he's invisible I guess. Watch." "Is he gonna move?" I'd say, "Nope . . . just before he does . . . well, watch . . . he'll move soon."

Then there was the snick sound when he loaded in the hollow-point, but only me and him would hear that and know what it was. I'd say, "Hear that?" We would be whispering by then, no louder than the slow indraw of breath, his under the field glasses, mine into the crotch of my palms cupped steady beneath my chin. "What was that?" "Copper-jacket . . . hollow-point. But it's coming back out," I'd say.

And it would rush out like a thin rod of time converted to straight hard light and run square and hard into the center of whatever it might find. It would come rattling out of the hard rifled bore but before you heard it he (the rabbit out there) was running as if on cue, running in a tight circle, kicking up dust and sand, trying, God knows why, to stay alive just a while longer. His leg, or really just ragged meat, trailing bloody and useless, him spinning in a circle, the other good one working at least twice as fast as it ordinarily would, making up for the dead other one. The new guy would more than likely start to drop his glasses by then. "What the hell's he doing?" Just watch."

And he'd spin out there for a while but not long because then another shot would rive his skull open, not having anything at all to do with mercy, but just to blow it up like a balloon with its impact and then watch it explode, like that Eugene Smith photo of a Spanish Nationalist, and then out the other side with its repercussed gore. He'd fall over dead then. You kept watching for a while longer until you knew he had to be looking down at you and you'd look up at the tower and there he was smiling, the side of his mouth blown out the size of a hickory nut. He'd then just very slightly nod his head back out across the fence, just feint that way with dry Oklahoma humor and say, after jetting a long, brown stream of venom at your feet, and say, "You know, if one or the other of ya was to get across there," then he'd nod down towards the gravel dog-run between the fences, "If one of yousta git out," and then nod back to that still shivering lump of death bleeding its last breath in the dirt, where it had spun around until it stopped, "If you wasta somehow get across there, I'd get a carton of Camels if I could bring you down like I did that jackass rabbit out there. That's a local ordinance. Bet you didn't know that, city boy." He'd grin and spit again and start nodding his head slowly and say, "And I'd get it sho'." And say that in three or four different ways using "sho'" every time and grinning.

And he was at least part right in the way he saw things from his tower, because in one way you look at it, depending on the country you find yourself in, there's not a whole lot of difference between men and rabbits and part of it at least has to do with both of them being born blind and naked. The other part has to do with being locked in a federal penitentiary for not wanting to kill South Asians. There's just no reason to expect better.

You somehow had to learn where you'd gone wrong. Those were killing times, no matter what country you found yourself in. Everybody learned it finally. The first rule was shoot to maim. Then when you got tired of seeing it struggle, you were to bring it down. Let somebody else clean up. It was a custom of the country observed always in the breach.

Poem

Ted Olson
University of Mississippi

So I Hope

By planting this flower
I'll get some hummingbird
to summer in my yard—
or so I hope,
though I know the nectar
will fuel its escape
from here
when the first frost
kills all these petals off...

History and Tragedy: A Reading of Simms's King Saul Poems

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At times William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870) made important distinctions among literary genres, but more often he mixed genres both in theory and in practice. For example, in the well-known Preface to *The Yemassee*, he took pains to separate the novel from the romance, concluding that the romance was the modern day equivalent of the epic poem. Simms's most significant pronouncements about history and art were made in two very long essays, "History, as Suited to the Purposes of Art in Fiction," and "Benedict Arnold as a Subject for Fictitious Story," both published in 1845.[1] In these he indiscriminately used narrative and lyric poetry as illustrations, referring prominently to examples from the Greeks and Romans, Shakespeare, Scott, Hume, Gibbon, and Bulwer-Lytton. When he published his own "fictitious story" on Arnold in 1863, however, it appeared in blank verse and certainly had enough heroism and villainy to constitute a tragedy. Calling upon parallels to *Macbeth* in the essay, Simms fully recognized the tragic potential of *Benedict Arnold*, yet he did not call his play a tragedy, subtitling it instead *A Drama in an Essay*.[2]

In general, for Simms and his generation, the problem with creating "American" literature was that the writers were too close to the living memory of it: "When it is objected that America is too young for the production of a national literature, it is chiefly [because] genius dare not take liberties with a history so well known."[3] Instead, Simms opined, "A certain degree of obscurity . . . must hang over the realm of the romancer" (History, as Suited to . . . Art," p. 34). The historians job, therefore, is "to be sure of the possessions of the past, and to transmit, with the most happy confidence in fame, his own possessions to the future" (History, as Suited to . . . Art," P. 36). The artist, on the other hand, must "be free to conceive and to invent—to create and to endow:—without any dread of crossing the confines of ordinary truth, and of such history as may be found in undisputed records" (History, as Suited to . . . Art," p. 56-57).

Both the historian and the fictionist, according to Simms, are "possessed of clear minds, calm, deliberate judgments, a lively fancy, a vigorous imagination, and a just sense of propriety and duty." They differ, not in the contrast between conjecture, which the historian employs, and creation, which the romancer uses, but "only in degree." The difference, Simms said, is that the historian supplies "the motive for human action where the interests of a State, or a nation, are concerned," but the literary man looks "into the recesses of the individual heart" (History, as Suited to . . . Art," pp. 43-44). Simms cited, among other examples, the uselessness of knowing

"the simple fragmentary fact, that Troy—a city we no longer find upon the maps—fell, after a siege of years" (History, as Suited to ... Art," p. 35). From the shaped histories of Livy (deriving from tradition), came the poems of Homer, and from the various chroniclers arose the plays of Shakespeare and romances of Scott. In all cases, however, "Dates and names, which, with the mere chonologist are every thing, with us nothing. . . .The dull seeker after bald and isolated facts is no philosopher. . . .He is digger merely" (History, as Suited to . . . Art," pp. 36-37).

Simms's pronouncements on history as a moral force, on the role of the historian, and on the relationship between history and art suggest that Biblical history was actually more suited to meet his theories than were episodes from the American past, to which he usually alluded. The Biblical account of the progression of history, most would agree, tells a story for the purpose of transmitting to the future the coherent interpretation of the past as sacred. As such, it meets Simms's requirements for history. Though Simms never really acted as critic of the Bible or of Biblical stories, many of the principles he stated concerning the relationship between history and art seem applicable to the Bible, whose history is recorded and retold by means of the biographies of heroic men and women. Similarly, the earliest tellings of American history, notably in such well known works as Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation,* Winthrop's *Journal,* and Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana,* are accomplished through the biographies of the colonies' spiritual heroes. However, the main thrust in these works is not to understand the human beings as heroes, but to understand the movement of the Kingdom of God through secular history by means of the examples of sacred heroism. Readers often accept the Old Testament and these American stories as containing at least some verifiable facts which as Simms said, had their source in tradition and their record in poetry ("History, as Suited to . . . Art," p. 42).

A story adapted from the Bible would be the ideal topic, then, on which the romancer or poet might elaborate. The skeleton history is sufficiently removed from the present so that the "certain degree of obscurity" obtains necessary to keep the writer's genius from "crossing the confines. . . of such history as may be found in undisputed records" (History, as Suited to. . .Art," pp. 56-57). And Simms would be free to plumb the "inner recesses" of the individual, unfettered by the requirement of the historian to promote the interests of the State.

In 1849 Simms did an unusual thing; he turned to the Bible for literary grist. He brought out a Christmas book entitled *Sabbath Lyrics; or, Songs from Scripture.*[4] Most of these poems were paraphrases from the Old Testament, particularly from the books of Isaiah, Soloman, and the Psalms. Many had previously been published in 1848-1849 in the periodical press, especially in *Godey's Lady's Book* under Simms's own name. Using his own "nom de guerre," in Simms's own oft-used words, is unusual in this case both because Simms was not especially noted as a religious person and because he used literally hundreds of pseudonyms for a wide variety of his works, most

especially for poetry. In addition to these poetic paraphrases, Simms published in both *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Sabbath Lyrics* three long narrative poems based on episodes in the books of *I* and *II Samuel*. Comparison of the two Simms poems, "Saul at Endor"[5] and "Saul's Last Battle,"[6] with the account in *I* and *II Samuel* reveals a significant distortion in the emphasis of the original story materials.

By 1849, Simms had also long been fascinated with tragic figures. He had already written several essays on Shakespearean heroes such as his four articles in *The Orion* on Hamlet (1842), at least two tragedies, for actor Edwin Forrest, and a long article on the tragic possibilities in Benedict Arnold's history; further, he had published and edition of the Shakespeare Apocrapha (1847), and he had been working intermittently for nearly 20 years on a play about Arnold, whom he depicted as insane when he finally published the verse drama in 1863. With Saul, however, Simms's desire to transform him from the unsettled, irrational, vindictive (and even insane) figure portrayed in the book of *I Samuel*, into a tragic figure controls the poetic interpretation.

Therefore, in Simms's retelling of the last events of King Saul's life, Saul himself is the central focus. The main elaborations which Simms uses in "Saul at Endor are three. First, Simms's opening stanza (45 lines) sweeps in the background from throughout the book of *I Samuel*—apprising the reader that the prophet Samuel is dead (ch. 25), that God had withdrawn himself from the Israelites (ch. 15), that Saul could find no prophecy to comfort him (ch. 28), and that the battle of Gilboa is set (ch. 28).

Second, Simms elaborates Saul's fears:

> In terror, then,
> The monarch—of his fears, as of their own,
> Now fully conscious,

seeks out a witch to bring forth Samuel. A probable fraud, the woman of Endor fails to recognize the disguised king, but she does remind her unknown client that sorcerers have been banished by Saul. Apparently surprised when she raises Samuel, however, she realizes the king's identity and pleads for her life.

Simms's third expansion occurs in Saul's contrition at the rebuke of Samuel: he was "sore distress[ed] of heart," seeking succor, and if not his own salvation then "the way of safety for my people, . . . counsel in this peril." However, Simms's Samuel calls the king God's enemy and repeats "the proper oracles of God," drawn from many chapters, but recapitulated in only 3 verses at Endor. Because of his disobedience in not destroying the Amalekites, Samuel proclaims that Saul will lose the kingdom to the son of Jesse, the Israelites will be annihilated in the next day's battle, and Saul himself with his sons will be killed. The story of Saul and the witch of Endor, as recorded in *I Samuel* 28, occupies 17 1/2 verses; the similar story in Simms's hand is 173 lines of blank verse. In this interpretation nothing is indicated

of Saul's madness which in the Bible has been previously revealed in numerous relationships with the youthful musician, David); rather Saul's debasement and Samuel's references to "the precepts of the living God" and Saul's "outraging . . . /The fixed decrees of Heaven," set the stage for the tragic events of "Saul's last Battle."

Saul's Last Battle fills *I Samuel* 31: 1-13, but in Simms's version it is 264 lines. This poem takes greater liberties with the Biblical "history" than does "Saul at Endor," and both the liberties taken and the selection of Biblical passages for paraphrase are calculated to make Saul a tragic figure. As a consequence, both mythologizing the Hebrew nation and emphasizing the collateral genealogy of the Christ practically disappear from the poem. Instead, Simms plumbs the "inner recesses" of Saul, the "heroic soul still struggl[ing] against fate."

In the first Stanza Saul prays that the Israelites will be saved, though he himself is "Prepared for death, / And hopeless for himself." On the eve of battle "with a sense of peace,/ He yielded satisfied to the doom"; still his "natural courage" and "firm resolve" caused him to look to the coming battle "As the heroic finish . . . / That lacks but noble ending." (39). Counseling his son Melchishua to go among the people so that they,

> warm'd with proper fire,
> May seek the battle with that noble rage
> Alone that brings success. If we must fall,

Saul tells Melchishua, it should be like the fall of Sampson:

> Our mighty foes crush'd with us—in our fate
> Proving Philistia's too.

The middle half of the poem, nearly all invented by Simms, recalls Saul's more youthful victory at Jabesh-Gilead and describes his gallant and fearful fight in his last battle at Gilboa. As sons Jonathan, then Melchishua, and finally Abinadab are mortally wounded (comprising *I Samuel* 31: 2), and the Israelites are defeated, Saul seeks his own death at the hand of his armor-bearer:

> Take thy sword
> And thrust me through!—for the Philistines come;
> And they must never, with their barborous rage,
> Degrade this conscious form!"

But when the servant (as in *I Samuel*) shrinks from killing the "heaven-anointed head!", Saul falls on his own sword and the servant kills himself.

Simms immediately turns to the singer David, the "monarch minstrel" whose chants of Saul occur in *II Samuel* 1: 17-27: "How are the mighty fallen!" The lamentation for Jonathan is a eulogy for one whose "love to me

/ Wonderful precious, and surpassing still / The love of woman." David lauds the joining of father and son in death and admonishes, "Weep for your king, / Daughters of Israel." Simms's poem concludes with the Biblical David's refrain "How are the mighty fallen!" and the question: "weapons of war, / How perish'd, and what glorious state o'erthrown?"

In this interpretation Simms ignores the decapitation and dismemberment of Saul's body and the Israelites' reclaiming the bones for burial in Jabesh. Likewise he omits the story of the Amalekite who, apparently believing David would be pleased, brings him Saul's bracelet and crown, claiming to have killed the king. The ire the Biblical David expresses in slaying the Amalekite shows how little he coveted the kingship for himself and how much he revered the Lord's anointed. And though Simms twice refers to the Biblical statement of Saul's having slain his thousands, he ignores the contrasting Israelite chant, given first in *I Samuel 18*: 7-8, and repeated in chapters 21 and 29, that Saul has slain his thousands but David has slain his ten thousands.

But the most specific omission is the providential saving of David from the battle of Gilboa. David and six hundred families had fled from Saul's irrational jealousy into Philistia, where they had been faithful servants and David was rewarded with the city of Ziklag. These refugees intended to go to battle against Saul, but some Philistine lords did not fully trust these Israelites. Two full chapters (29 and 30) intervene between the conclusion of Samuel's appearance at Endor and the battle at Gilboa; in these, the Biblical David and his men are sent back home by the Philistines who then move to meet Saul's fated army. Discovering that Ziklag has been pillaged and burned by the Amalekites, David's men obey the priest who tells them they can overtake the pillagers and retrieve their goods, reclaim their wives and daughters, and destroy the enemy. While David and four hundred strong men execute this successful mission, the Philistines defeat the Israelites in the distant battle of Gilboa. Thus, Having returned and distributed the recovered spoils of battle among the four hundred strong and the two hundred weak soldiers, David is in Ziklag when news arrives of Saul's defeat. All this is ignored in Simms's poems.

In short, then, in focusing on Saul as tragic figure, Simms must suppress the "history" of the Jewish people. He omitted repeated parallel language in which the Hebrews drew a contrast between Saul's and David's prowess in battle; the witch's nourishment of Saul after the apparition's visitation, the desecration of the bodies of Saul and his sons, and David's institutionalizing Jewish communal welfare after the battle of Ziklag. All these Biblical details tend to exalt the designated king, David, to the diminishment of the incumbent king, Saul. Moreover, Simms excluded important episodes relating to David's ascension, most significantly the physical separation of David from Saul's death when the Philistines forced his retreat from Gilboa, David's annihilation of Saul's nemesis the Amalekites, and his curse on the youth who falsely claimed to have killed Saul: "Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's

anointed" (*II Samuel* 1:16). These apparently deliberate exclusions allow Simms to focus on the "recesses of the individual heart," the purview of the literary man, rather than on the "interests of the state," the charge of the historian whose job was to mythologize David and the continuity of Jewish providential history, so obvious at the opening of *II Samuel*.

Notes

[1]*Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction*. NY: Wiley and Putnam, 1845. Rpt with an Introduction and annotations by C. Hugh Holman, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1962.

[2]*Benedict Arnold: the Traitor. A Drama, in an Essay. Magnolia Weekly*, May-August, 1863.

[3]"History, as suited to . . . Art. 57

[4]Charleston: Walker and James, 1849.

[5]*Godey's Lady's Book*, 39 (november, 1849), 311-312.

[6]*Godey's Lady's Book*, 38 (February, 1849), 83-84.

Evil Incarnate in *Blood Meridian*: Cormac McCarthy's Seductive Judge

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In his fifth novel, *Blood Meridian*, Cormac McCarthy chose once again, as in *Outer Dark*, to depict evil incarnate, this time in the character of Judge Holden, a totally hairless, Faustian, Herculean, genius giant. This incredibly fascinating character is a being of forceful personality and of myriad accomplishments: he's a nudist, a dancer, fiddler, magician, world-traveler, linguist, legal expert, natural scientist, chemist, anthropologist, philosopher, and a supreme warrior. In several respects this Titan is more the novel's focal point than is the kid who is its supposed protagonist. McCarthy takes some pains to associate *Blood Meridian*'s judge with evil by endowing him with satanic characteristics. But the judge is an ambiguous, sophisticated symbol of evil, who like Milton's Satan, possesses a seductively attractive vitality. McCarthy deliberately and effectively demonstrates the seductiveness of evil by allowing Judge Holden to "steal the show," to usurp center stage in the novel in the same way that he takes over Rev. Green's tent revival meeting in the novel's opening chapter. Thus, in one sense, the main character of *Blood Meridian*, the most fully developed and attractive character, is Evil—that is, evil personified. Despite Judge Holden's clearly repulsive diabolical attributes, however, McCarthy is somehow able to maintain an image of him as a surprisingly charming character. Edwin Arnold rightly describes him as "endlessly fascinating and seductive . . . for all his abhorrent vileness" (44). The judge thus effectively illustrates the human psychology of evil; through him McCarthy seduces the reader and explores the particular appeal that evil holds for the human race.

McCarthy powerfully illustrates man's paradoxical attraction to and repulsion from evil by simultaneously characterizing the judge as an amazing superman as well as a devil. The judge is described as a gigantic man of enormous strength, which implies how powerful a force evil is. He stands "close on to seven feet in height" (6) and weighs "twenty-four stone [That's 336 lbs.]" (128). McCarthy emphasizes his physical prowess by having him perform several feats of Herculean strength, including heaving an "enormous iron meteorite" over ten feet (240) and holding a cannon under one arm to ward off attacking Yuma Indians (275). In stature and power, the judge is heroic, larger than life, and in his other talents he also exceeds the realm of the natural: he is ubiquitous, prescient, and seems to have a Mammon-like control over money.

The judge is more blatantly indicated to be the devil by other characters with whom he comes in contact. In the first scene in which the judge is presented to readers, in the novel's first chapter, Rev. Green responds to the judge's charges that he is a fraud guilty of violating an eleven-year-old girl and of sexual "congress with a goat" by saying, "This is him. The devil. Here he stands" (7). And indeed this first chapter does establish some of the judge's significant satanic traits. His "practical joke" reveals him to be a master liar and serves as the first indication of his supreme hypocrisy when he boldly and unashamedly admits moments later in the bar that he has "never even heard" of Rev. Green before. McCarthy hints at supernatural powers for Judge Holden when he narrates that amazingly the judge somehow beat everyone else to the bar. Furthermore, the author depicts the judge fulfilling a devil's office, for he destroys the reputation of a presumably righteous minister and interrupts the progress of a religious revival meeting. But perhaps the most important point that the judge's first appearance establishes is how powerfully seductive he is.

Viewed as allegory, McCarthy's narrative asserts how easily and completely people are seduced by evil (the judge) despite the presence of religion and the church (represented by Rev. Green). This incident counters the belief that organized religion can successfully oppose the influence of evil. Despite Rev. Green's protests, this stranger's outrageous, totally unfounded accusations are believed immediately by the preacher's congregation, some members of which are so incensed that they try to shoot the minister. McCarthy's point about the weakness of the church in opposing the power of evil is further reinforced throughout the novel by numerous references to decayed or destroyed church buildings (26, 50, 60, 224). Ironically, this great dissembler's charge that Rev. Green is a hypocrite is partly what so infuriates the congregation, yet when the judge unshrinkingly, unapologetically confesses to his own deceit, the men in the bar, far from being angered, think that the judge has pulled off an excellent jest: "There was a strange silence in the room. The men looked like mud effigies. Finally someone began to laugh. Then another. Soon they were all laughing together. Someone bought the judge a drink" (8). The judge has just made fools of all these men, made a shambles of their revival, and been the cause of many injuries—but they seem compelled to appreciate and even admire him. He has been so daring and bold in his plan, so smooth and expert in his execution of it; then to show them that he's a fine fellow, just one of the boys, he buys everyone a drink and lets them in on the joke. He's so companionable, so supremely self-assured, so suave. Sure he made fools of them, but he did it so damnably well.

It's the ex-priest Tobin, one of the gang members, that perhaps most effectively presents the ambiguity of the judge's character, for his feelings are intensely ambivalent. He seems to both fear the judge and yet grudgingly admire him. Though from the start he recognizes the judge's evil, he continues to follow him. The fact that Tobin has abandoned the priesthood and now practices instead the religion of war implies that even those with

the strongest religious convictions can be won over by the allure of evil. Early on, Tobin praises the judge at length in his description to the kid:

> That great hairless thing. You wouldn't think to look at him that he could outdance the devil himself now would ye? God the man is a dancer, you'll not take that away from him. And fiddle. He's the greatest fiddler I ever heard and that's an end on it. The greatest. He can cut a trail, shoot a rifle, ride a horse, track a deer. He's been all over the world. (123)

Tobin's qualified admiration may best be summed up by his comment on how the judge saved the gang the first time they met. After Tobin describes the desperate predicament they had been in, he concedes, "The judge. Give the devil his due" (125). As Tobin continues to relate the story of how the judge led them while Indians closed in on them, he says, "I thought the judge had been sent among us for a curse. And yet he proved me wrong. At the time he did. I'm of two minds again now" (131). It's not until much later in the novel, in chapter twenty's showdown in the desert when the judge is trying to kill Tobin and the kid, that the ex-priest clearly makes up his mind. Tobin comes out of hiding "holding aloft a cross" he has made from animal bones and apparently reciting some Latin from the mass (289-90). Tobin's action signifies that he finally has decided the judge to be a devil, not a man, since he feels more protected from this entity with the words and symbols of religion than by staying hidden from his gun-sights. The fact that the judge unhesitatingly shoots Tobin through the neck signifies the pathetic weakness of his religion. Besides, it's too late for Tobin to switch religions now.

Man's embracement of evil is symbolized most clearly *in Blood Meridian* by a parody of the Eucharist—a diabolical communion scene. During this vulgar mock-communion the participants symbolically are initiated into the religion of malevolent destruction and lawlessness. After collecting bat guano (from creatures of underworld darkness) and brimstone (often associated with fiery hell), the judge creates a mixture in the process of making gunpowder. Tobin narrates the next step:

> I didn't know but what we'd be required to bleed into it like freemasons but it was not so. He worked it up dry with his hands and all the while the savages down there on the plain drawin nigh to us and when I turned back the judge was standin, the great hairless oaf, and he'd took out his pizzle and he was pissin into the mixture, pissin with a great vengeance and one hand aloft and he cried out for us to do likewise.
>
> We were half mad anyways. All lined up. Delawares and all. Every man save Glanton and he was a study. We hauled forth our members and at it we went and the judge on his knees kneadin the mass with his naked arms and the piss was splashin about and he

> was cryin out to us to piss, man, piss for your very souls for cant you see the redskins yonder, and laughin the while and workin up this great mass in a foul black dough, a devil's batter by the stink of it. (132)

Soon afterwards, Tobin says, "the judge . . . called us all about to fill our horns and flasks and we did, one by one circlin past him like communicants" (134). In this devilish sacrament, not bread but gunpowder is shared. As the judge later explains, "What joins men together . . . is not the sharing of bread but the sharing of enemies" (307). What McCarthy has described here is an outrageous scene of male bonding. Each man, his manhood on display, symbolically indicates his membership in the violent brotherhood headed by the judge. In effect, each scalp hunter has signed his soul away, not as folklore would have it in blood, but rather in urine.

The prominent display of male genitals in this Eucharistic parody seems to reinforce another symbolic implication of the judge's complex character, for the judge himself appears to be a phallic symbol. The judge is repeatedly described as totally hairless, a bizarre fact which is often observed since he so frequently goes naked. When he first appears in the novel, we are told, "He was bald as a stone and he had no trace of beard and he had no brows to his eyes nor lashes to them" (6). A Freudian interpretation is perhaps further encouraged when McCarthy depicts him as "smoking a cigar" (6). Thus, in the character of the judge McCarthy combines symbolism of evil and symbolism of male sexuality, and the result is psychological insight into the nature and attraction of evil. The phallus is of course an ambiguous symbol because of its positive associations with potency and creation and because of its negative associations with male aggression. But *Blood Meridian* emphasizes the negative view wherein the phallus is viewed as more of a weapon, a reminder of men's violent natures. In the diabolical communion scene, it is significant that the men actually use their penises to help make the gunpowder which will soon afterwards enable them to slaughter their pursuers.

One passage makes the implied intermingling of sexuality, violence, and evil especially clear.

> [Glanton's gang] rode on and the sun in the east flushed pale streaks of light and then a deeper run of color like blood seeping up in sudden reaches flaring planewise and where the earth drained up into the sky at the edge of creation the top of the sun rose out of nothing like the head of a great red phallus until it cleared the unseen rim and sat squat and pulsing and malevolent behind them. (44-45)

McCarthy depicts the judge, like the sun in this passage, as a symbol of great power, great violence, and great malevolence. *Blood Meridian* suggests that men's drive to violence is akin to their sex drive, both rooted in the male's

need to assert dominance. During one of countless massacres at an Indian village, this intermingling of drives is obvious: "Men were wading about in the red waters hacking aimlessly at the dead and some lay coupled to the bludgeoned bodies of young women dead or dying" (157). McCarthy, then, employs Freudian imagery to reinforce the insight that he also implies through his plots: men, at least some men, are drawn to violence as naturally and as strongly as they are attracted to sex; evil and violence are as pervasive among men as is the sex drive.

The judge retains his ambiguity until the very end of the novel. As one of his last acts, he claims the now grown-up kid's life and probably his soul as well. The kid meets his fate as he enters a public outhouse:

> The judge was seated upon the closet. He was naked and he rose up smiling and gathered him in his arms against his immense and terrible flesh and shot the wooden barlatch home behind him. (333)

As in some Alfred Hitchcock movies, the horror of exactly what happens next is left up to the reader's imagination. At least two McCarthy scholars imagine that the judge rapes the kid before killing him (Arnold 46, Shaviro 120), while Peter Josyph imagines that the judge eats him alive. But back in the combination bar and whorehouse, only moments later, the judge has returned to being his convivial self—and this is our final image of him:

> Towering over them all is the judge and he is naked dancing, his small feet lively and quick and now in doubletime and bowing to the ladies, huge and pale and hairless.... He never sleeps. He says that he will never die. He dances in light and in shadow and he is a great favorite. He never sleeps, the judge. He is dancing, dancing. He says that he will never die. (335)

Thus the many-faceted, multilevel, richly symbolic character of the judge effectively embodies the seductiveness of evil, the allure of violence. Despite the extremeness of his character, and sometimes because of it, McCarthy succeeds in making the judge a fascinating, attractive character while simultaneously revealing his evil nature. By actually depicting evil in its extremest form, by embodying it in characters in two of his novels, McCarthy is able to suggest its power and pervasiveness—and with the character of the judge, McCarthy is additionally able to explore its peculiar appeal.

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A Jungian Reading of Othello's Fictive Self

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Stephen Greenblatt has suggested that Iago, in addition to repressing unacceptable passions, actually embodies Shakespeare's own recognition of the fictionality of others' lives, his understanding that "an identity that has been fashioned as a story can be unfashioned, refashioned, inscribed anew in a different narrative" (238). His investigation of the play's fictionality reminds readers of what E. E. Stoll had earlier pointed to: the play's theatricality. (Stoll sees Iago in relation to the theatrical "convention of the slanderer believed" [94].) The play is self-consciously theatrical. At the same time, the play is all the more psychological. In other words, it compels readers and viewers not because it is a textbook of theatrical conventions and post-modern theory, using them in its structure and in its action alike, nor because it is a convincing casebook on sexual repressions. It compels them precisely because it gives psychological depth to the theatre, the fiction that sometimes seems to dominate human lives, suggesting the psychological source, the power, and some of the ends of the pageants human beings create for themselves and others. One of the most productive ways into the psychological depth of *Othello*'s theatricality is by way of C. G. Jung's analysis of the psyche—its conscious ego, the unconscious anima/animus and shadow, and the unconscious Self made up of all three parts. Though H. R. Coursen has started readers on a Jungian understanding of *Othello*, it remains to be seen how Jung relates the play's fictionality—its theatrical pageantry—to the critical contradictions surrounding the play, explaining and sometimes resolving them. The most important of these critical contradictions is over the character of Othello himself.

In the scene before the Venetian Senate, one of the senators makes a key assessment of the report of a Turkish move toward Rhodes. The move is, he says, "a pageant / To keep us in false gaze" (1.3.18-19). It is, in other words, theatrical, a fiction, to use our critical terminology. Awareness of the pageants that human beings create to keep themselves and others in false gaze is, in fact, a marker of the balanced psyche that Jung describes. In an unbalanced psyche, the conscious ego denies anima/animus and shadow, keeping them unconscious and insisting that the ego alone is the entire Self. That stand itself, of course, is pretence, keeping the ego in a constant state of what Greenblatt might call play-writing, and that stand also requires

anima/animus to approach ego under cover, in disguise, in "pageantry," while the ego responds by projecting dimly perceived anima/animus and shadow onto others ("It is not I who is like this; it is they"). Thus the ego conceives of others in terms of roles not their own but actually pertaining to the denied psychic "partners" of the ego. While the unbalanced, unindividuated ego thus plays roles itself and forces them onto others in a pageantry of denial, it remains determinedly both unconscious of its pageantry and subject to the pageants of others. On the other hand, a grasp of theatre and of underlying reality are typical of the individuated ego conscious of anima/animus and of shadow and guided by Self: Marie-Louise von Franz, a colleague of Jung and co-editor with him of *Man and His Symbols*, writes that such a "conscious ego" has the power "to detect . . . delusive projections" and find "correct interpretations" (221).

Much of criticism's contradiction over the character of Othello stems from readers' wrestling with the pageants Othello's repressive ego creates to keep Othello himself and others in false gaze. The A. C. Bradley/F. R. Leavis debate over Othello's nobility/savagery is a prime example. E. A. J. Honigmann is on the mark when he insists that "the noble and the savage Moor are much more intimately one than either Bradley or Leavis are willing to allow" (69). Indeed, when the Leavis party writes of Othello's "self-dramatising pride" (Battenhouse 82), of the "Othello persona" as "Othello's ego-ideal" (Stewart 109), they are recognizing the power of the repressive ego to script itself as the sufficient version of the full Self. Only a repressive ego denying shadow can claim as Othello does before the Senate that "My parts, my title, and my perfect soul / Shall manifest me rightly (1.2.31-32). Othello's "parts" and his "title" may indeed be "perfect," but they are part of Othello's, of anyone's exterior—parts of himself that Othello is willing to be conscious of and for others to know of—precisely what the ego is until and unless it allows anima/animus and shadow to become conscious and the Self to emerge. The exterior, the ego, may well seem perfect to itself and to present itself as perfect to the world.

But the "soul" is another matter. It is the interior psyche, what von Franz calls both the "inner center" and "the Self . . . the totality of the whole psyche" (161). As such, it can seem "perfect" only if a person refuses to become conscious of its reality, especially of what Jung calls its shadow constituents, particularly the "evil within oneself" (von Franz 165). Othello's claims to perfection reveal his unwillingness to rid himself of "purposive and wishful aims" embodied in exterior perfections and thus "get to a deeper, more basic form of existence" (von Franz 162-63), which always requires humans to begin "swallowing all sorts of bitter truths" about their own imperfections (von Franz 167). Yet it is precisely "bitter truths" that Othello explicitly resists, claiming "'tis better to be much abus'd / Than but to know't a little" (3.3.336-7), insisting again and again that to "not know't," to have "nothing known" (3.3.343,347) is far superior to bitter truth. Othello thinks his soul is perfect because he prefers to know nothing about it. That "nothing" will come to haunt him.

A Jungian analysis thus explains what critics from Stoll to Greenblatt and on to James Calderwood essentially see as Othello's theatricality, the way Othello "imposes his image of himself on others" (Calderwood, "Speech" 294). Jung extends readers' understanding of this theatricality to its psychological source—the immaturity of Othello's psyche, his ego's refusal to become conscious of its psychic counterparts, to get acquainted with his own "imperfect" Self. And Othello's theatrical posing is constant. He portrays himself brilliantly before the Senate, an audience large enough to stimulate this actor. He later portrays his military career glitteringly in his farewell to arms, making war not scenes of struggle and death, victory and defeat, but rather a scene of pageantry:

> . . . the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
> The spirit-stirring drum, th'ear-piercing fife,
> The royal banner, and all quality,
> Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
> (3.3.351-354)

Even in his final scene, Othello creates a narrative, scripts a scene for the assembled audience, plays it out, and assures himself that both narrative and drama will be replayed before the Senate: "Speak of me . . . Then must you speak . . . And say besides . . ." (5.2.342, 343, 352). He has loved the drama indeed, not for its own sake but because ego needs pageantry to keep all gazes false.

A Jungian analysis helps the Bradley party, however, as well as the Leavis party and may even reconcile their differences. A Jungian analysis must take into account Jung's understanding that the psyche is not static—not always as "noble" as the Bradley party would have Othello, as we have seen, but not always "obtuse and brutal" either, not always repressive of its own unconscious elements and thus of others, not always merely a theatrical poseur. Even in the fullest and most well balanced human beings, individuation is "a slow, imperceptible process of psychic growth" (von Franz 161). Although Othello has delayed that process, he could well have moved through it with terrible speed during the crisis created by Iago and thus could well reach the tragic self-recognition that his defenders see. Von Franz offers that possibility when she writes that the "process of individuation—the conscious coming-to-terms with one's own inner center (psychic nucleus) or Self—generally begins with a wounding of the personality and the suffering that accompanies it" (166). Othello's wound and his suffering, by his own account, are extreme, beyond the afflictions of Job "with sores and shames" on his bare head, beyond living with constant scorn:

> But there, where I have garnered up my heart,
> Where either I must live or bear no life;
> The fountain from the which my current runs

Or else dries up: to be discarded thence! (4.2.57-60)

His account, in fact, suggests a wound penetrating the pageant of ego, a wound of the psychic center, the "fountain" of the whole Self. Such a wound could certainly be the "shock" that von Franz says sometimes "amounts to a sort of 'call'" (166).

If Jung tells readers what to look for, the play itself supports readers who find at least the nobility of self-discovery in the final Othello, despite his continuing theatricality. The text suggests Othello's discovery of Self in the Jungian sense through its return in Othello's final speech to one of the play's important verbal motifs—the "ego sum," the "I am" motif that echoes through the text from its opening scene. When Iago initiates the motif with his "I am not what I am" (1.1.65), he gives the words distinctly Jungian implications, for the repetition of the "I am," the one canceling the other, suggests the battle between repressive ego and full Self in the unbalanced, unindividuated psyche. The ego claims to be the individual's full psyche, the individual's "I am," the individual's full being. It denies the true "I am," the Self that includes anima/animus and shadow, unconsciously projecting them upon others and at the same time making the ego susceptible to domination by the repressed constituents. In the scenes preceding Othello's final speech, the motif suggests psychic denial is indeed part of Othello's domination by the shadowy Iago. As Iago rouses Othello from his trance and moves him toward murder, he sneers that

> 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
> To lip a wanton in a secure couch,
> And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know,
> And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.
> (4.1.70-73)

Iago is encouraging Jungian projection. The wanton, the fallen woman, is both anima and shadow. The "I am" is the separate ego, repressing consciousness of both. The ultimate act of projection, of course, is to kill the scapegoat upon whom the ego projects its constituents: ". . . strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated" (4.1.207-208). "What I am" is the repressive, theatrical ego.

After the shocks of the murder and of Emilia's revelation, however, Othello's "I am" changes radically. His "I am" becomes naked—"naked as I am" (5.2.258), he calls, having stripped himself of theatrical pretense, of his ego-driven identification of his being with his perfect parts; his "I am" is not even "valiant" (5.2.243), he has admitted. Then Othello begins speaking of himself in the third person, as if recognizing two Othellos—the former one and the present one, the "I am" of ego and the full "I am" of Self. When he gets to the third "I am" of his final scene, his very words seem to compel such a reading: "That's he that was Othello; here I am" (5.2.284). When he reaches his fourth "I am" in his final speech, he insists that the theatrical

representation he asks for, the narrative he finally creates, dwell not on ego's pretence of perfect parts and perfect soul but on the full, complex, imperfect inner being his shocks have led him to discover: "Speak of me as I am, nothing extenuate, / Nor set down aught in malice" (5.2.342-343). Readers might even see in the "nothing" both the psychic realities Othello resisted knowing and the final ruins of his former pageant. In Othello's two "I am's" readers can see what Ruth Nevo says Othello undergoes—a "loss of self" (199)—but they can also see a new self arising. Othello looks at both selves with false gaze removed, and he wishes it removed for others. Something comes from nothing.

If a Jungian reading supports alike the Leavis party's denigration of Othello's character and the Bradley party's admiration of it, explaining in psychological terms a basis for both, it also explains Othello's suicide in terms of tragic self-discovery rather than mere loss. Most readers accept Harold Goddard's reading that in associating himself with the "Turk," Othello slays the Turk "within himself that enabled . . . Iago to beat and traduce him" (467), Othello himself seeming to agree with Leavis that "the essential traitor is within the gates" (141). But stopping there would imply that Othello still denies the shadow side that he has just recognized, as if the new "I am" were still the repressive ego determined to rid itself of shadow once and for all. Going a step further with Jung, however, would suggest that the new "I am," the full Othello of Self, recognizes that the former "I am," the narrow Othello of repressive ego, had so denied shadow (Turk) that the denied shadow came to dominate in the psyche. Indeed, Jungian analysis expects denied and repressed sides of the unconscious to "possess" individuals, even to the point that "the ego identifies with them" (von Franz 193). If Othello were still ego/shadow-dominated, his final drama would deny culpability, claiming the murder to have been the act of another man, an "I am" divorced from the new "I am" he would be claiming to be. Instead, the new "I am" accepts responsibility for the acts of the ego/shadow-dominated man, the Self acknowledging that ego/shadow had acted in its stead and that the full being is responsible. His psychic growth is so full that Othello can see himself at once as felon and as judge pronouncing sentence, rather like the St. Paul who can call himself at once the chief of sinners and an apostle chosen by God. He gazes not on a pageant of perfection but on a complex being whose life has become tragic. In von Franz's terms, "only after the possession has fallen away does one realize with horror that one has said and done things dramatically opposed to one's real thoughts and feelings" (193). A Jungian analysis, then, argues against Calderwood's view that Othello's final "I am" is simply a final theatrical fiction rather than revelation of a "core-self discoverable at the center of his being" (Properties 103); it supports Irving Ribner's claim that the Othello of the final scene, the new "I am," has achieved "new self-knowledge and self-understanding" (115), that he "has merited salvation" (113).

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The Twelve Steps of Dave Robicheaux: James Lee Burke's Detective as Recovering Alcoholic

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Ever since the fictional detective first appeared on the scene, he (or she) has had problems with drugs or alcohol: since Dr. Watson described Sherlock Holmes as "alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature" ("A Scandal in Bohemia" 3-4), the routine drug use or heavy drinking of the fictional sleuth has become an obligatory element of the genre. Recent examples include the desperately hard-drinking cops of Joseph Wambaugh's novels and the recovering-alcoholic protagonists of the television series *Cagney and Lacey* and *NYPD Blue*. For whatever reason—the need for a respite from the violence of the profession, an affinity between the substance-abusive personality and detective work, etc.—using drugs or drinking alcohol, chiefly the latter, is standard practice for the fictional detective.

To a greater degree than any other contemporary writer of crime fiction, James Lee Burke works alcoholism and recovery into the fabric of his novels. His detective figure, the Cajun bait-shop and boat-rental operator Dave Robicheaux, struggles with alcoholism throughout the series (of seven novels thus far). In these works Robicheaux not only makes an ongoing attempt at recovery through the *Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous* but also incorporates various phases of this program into his perpetually vexed attempt not simply to bring individual criminals to justice but, while doing so, to understand the nature of evil and the scope of his responsibilities toward ending it. Many of the decisions he makes in pursuit of justice are based on his understanding of a particular step or concept of AA as articulated in the so-called Big Book—the bible of Alcoholics Anonymous—or one of its several interpretive manuals. From time to time he utters one or another of the bumper-sticker aphorisms of AA: "One day at a time" or "Easy does it"—always with a wry awareness that these "Keep it simple" slogans are merely mnemonic devices to call up the whole committed way of life mandatory for recovery. Occasionally he speaks of having taken a particular step of the recovery program when in fact he has not done so—a typical shortcoming of the recovering alcoholic—and the result is a compounding of a problem through the denial that gives a false sense of progress. For all these reasons, an appreciation of the AA recovery program seems essential to a full understanding of the novels; for example, when

read in light of this program, what one reviewer pejoratively calls Robicheaux's "old, self-indulgent habit of . . . examining his conscience for existential guilt" makes more sense, psychologically and aesthetically, when understood simply as the Fourth Step of recovery mandated by the Big Book: "[We] made a searching moral inventory of ourselves" (*The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous* 28).

In this paper I intend to demonstrate that Burke's novels featuring Dave Robicheaux are powerfully illuminated by the recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous and that the Big Book of AA serves as the most useful critical gloss on the series. After establishing the pattern of alcoholism in the series, I will focus on the novel to which an AA analysis can most usefully be applied, *Heaven's Prisoners* (the second of the Robicheaux series) and demonstrate specifically the operation of the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous in that work.

Robicheaux locates the beginning of his alcoholism in the summer of his sophomore year of college, when he was twenty. As detailed in *A Morning for Flamingos*, he falls in love with the beautiful Bootsie Mouton and for reasons he still cannot understand immediately suffers deep emotional turbulence: "I began to experience bone-grinding periods of depression and guilt that seemed to have no cause or origin. When they came upon me it was as though the sun had suddenly become a black cinder, and had gone over the rim of the earth for the last time" (77). As a result, on the same night he ends his relationship with Bootsie, gets into a fistfight and an auto accident, and is handcuffed to the Breaux Bridge water tower overnight; and at this moment (he says in retrospect), "As I looked up at the white sun, smelled the hot weeds around me, and swallowed the bile in my throat, I didn't realize that I had just made the initial departure on a long alcoholic odyssey" (78).

The self-loathing manifested here—as he expresses it, "the feeling that I was intrinsically bad, that anyone who could love me didn't know who I really was, and that eventually I would make that person bad, too" (78)—has long been recognized as one of the identifying characteristics of the alcoholic personality; ways to overcome it are articulated in Step Four of the AA recovery program, which deals with the need for the ongoing and honest self-appraisal that denies one the luxury of guilt: according to the Hazelden Foundation's interpretive manual, "Feeling guilty can become an important part of our lifestyle, always there to give us another excuse for our feeling miserable and behaving irresponsibly"—in other words, for resuming drinking (*The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous* 52). But of course at this early stage Robicheaux is unaware that he is a latent alcoholic.

The feelings of unworthiness and guilt that recur throughout the series seem at times to be welcomed by Robicheaux: "All alcoholics feel guilt," he tells his psychologist in *Black Cherry Blues* (52); and when the therapist urges him to cut loose from the burden of guilt that is obviously at the root of his problems—guilt that irrationally stems from his remaining alive when

others dear to him have died—he replies, "I can't. I don't want to" (52). At this the psychologist throws up his hands in futility.

Often Robicheaux expresses a clear awareness of the alcoholic origins of his guilt and frustration, which come to him in the form of dreams—sleeping and waking—of snakes and tigers. Sometimes he sees the tiger as William Blake's; "but I knew that he was not the poet's creation; he was conceived and fed by my own self-destructive alcoholic energies and fears, chiefly my fear of mortality and my inability to affect the destiny of those whom I could not afford to lose" (*A Stained White Radiance* 75).

If an alcoholic was at this point, the Big Book would urge him to take the Third Step—namely, to "ma[k]e a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him," to acknowledge the limits of our control over events and to leave them in the hands of a power beyond our own" (*The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous* 22). But Robicheaux is never able to commit himself fully to this step—and that is why his struggle with alcohol continues unabated throughout the series; in fact one might argue that this defect of character is the principal device by which the series is perpetuated.

This Third Step, which Robicheaux is unwilling to take, can be seen as a major structural principle of Burke's second novel of the series (and the one most susceptible to an AA analysis), *Heaven's Prisoners*. The detective's failure to take this step even when it is desperately urged upon him by his wife draws him into a complex and tragic pattern of events and thus produces the novel's complication; and his belated decision to complete Step Three furnishes the denouement of the work. Other principles of Alcoholics Anonymous are also significant in *Heaven's Prisoners*.

As the novel opens, Robicheaux, now retired from police work and operating a boat-rental and bait business south of New Iberia, Louisiana, and his wife Annie witness the crash of a small aircraft and save a small girl from drowning in the wreckage. The child, a Salvadoran refugee, is given the name Alafair, cared for, and later adopted by Robicheaux; but, fearing for the welfare of Alafair and not approving of the way the authorities are handling the case (which involves protecting minor drug dealers as witnesses against larger ones), he begins his own unauthorized investigation. Refusing to "turn it over" and accept a practical compromise, he pursues a justice that will meet his own rigid standards. Though presently sober, he receives warning signals: "[A] thin tremolo was starting to vibrate inside me, the kind that used to leave me in after-hours bars with the rain streaking down the neon-lit window" (12-13).

Annie recognizes in him the alcoholic's urge for control, his inability to turn things over. In reply to his argument "You have to confront problems, Annie. When you don't they follow you around like pariah dogs," she responds, "You always tell me that one of the main axioms in AA is 'Easy does it.'" Robicheaux replies, "It doesn't mean you should avoid your responsibilities" (80). When he is beaten up because of his persistent interference in the case, he goes to an AA meeting; but "The air conditioner

was broken and the room was hot and smoky. My mind wandered constantly" (120).

Returning from this ineffectual meeting, he has one of his now-frequent "dry drunk" dreams, which he recognizes as falling into the pattern described by AA literature as symptoms of the recovering alcoholic who, having attained non-drinking status but not having achieved the state of mind necessary for true sobriety, is still a drunk, only waiting for the opportunity to take that first drink. Waking, he takes a midnight walk to clear his head and sees too late the two gunmen wielding shotguns who have come to take him off the case permanently. Before he can reach the house, Annie is dead from several blasts of buckshot fired into the bed.

Not surprisingly, Robicheaux's initial response is to buy a bottle of Jim Beam and a six-pack of Jax beer and retreat into himself: precisely the kind of anti-communal behavior that Alcoholics Anonymous works against. "The bad thing is when you make yourself alone," says his friend and assistant Batist at this point; "Don't never do that, Dave" (137). Robicheaux explains his behavior thus: "Annie was dead because I couldn't leave things alone. . . . I got high on my knowledge of man's iniquity . . . my strange alcoholic metabolism loved the adrenaline rush of danger and my feeling of power over an evil world . . . " (139).

Feeling that his soul is descending into a dark well, he nevertheless presses on with the case, attending AA meetings and confessing his "need and dependency and . . . inability to impose order on [his] life" (186) but continuing to drink, buying and consuming vodka in fifths, establishing a pattern of maintenance drinking that enables him to move gradually towards a solution of the case.

In the end, release comes: he is brought to his senses by a friend's brutal admonition, "Why don't you show some respect for your wife and stop using her? If you want to get drunk, go do it. . . . But at least have the courage to do it on your own, without all this remorse bullshit" (246). In response, he ritually buries the rags used to wash his wife's blood off the wall of his cabin and with it the gnawing guilt that has pursued him. And he makes the decision to take the Third Step, to "turn it over": he abandons his scheme of imposing his brand of justice upon the murderers of his wife and instead allows the police to do it their way. Coming to this decision, Robicheaux promises himself, "I wouldn't try to control everything that swam into my ken; and I would humbly try to accept my Higher Power's plan for my life." And at this moment, "As always when I surrendered a problem or a self-serving mechanism inside myself to my Higher Power, I felt as though an albatross had been cut from my neck" (262).

And so *Heaven's Prisoners* ends: for the time being at least, Dave Robicheaux has achieved true sobriety; God has granted him the serenity to accept the things he cannot change, the courage to change the things he can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

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Cups, Saucers, and Civilization

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At last count, Lily had china cups and saucers out of forty-three different patterns. But she had visited china departments since the last count.

Lily set two of the cups and saucers on the table and admired their translucence in the morning hour when the autumn sun fell gently through the wall of glass in the breakfast nook. Then she turned into the kitchen to perk coffee. As the sun inched up, its movement measured by ticks from wind-up clocks, the coffee's aroma drifted through the nook. The sun sliced through at a higher angle; the cups became more radiant. Lily debated which satisfied her more—the fragile blues, greens, and corals of the pattern called Sweet Violets or the bas-relief of blacks, cinnamons, and purple-blues against the thick rich gold of Silk Winds. Sitting on white damask, the china could perhaps move the hearts of the street gangs that prowled Lily's Dallas neighborhood and had become so bold as to skulk among the mansions of nearby Tara Oaks where Myrtle lived.

As the fragrance of coffee signaled the peak of perking, the knocker sounded on Lily's front door.

"That will be Myrtle." Lily snapped off the heat under the percolator and hurried to respond to the knock. She unbolted and opened the steel door.

Myrtle stood on the stoop, her blue straw hat with its veil slightly askew from her efforts to reach Lily's for the morning visit.

"Come in, my dear. The coffee is just settling." Lily's glance, her first of the day out her front door, swept the cul-de-sac. Plastic cups and hamburger sacks blew in circles across sidewalks. A screen hung lopsided from Mr. Green's front window, perhaps no so much a sign of forced entry as a sign of bullying. On the asphalt street, glowing in neon-orange, spray paint spelled the word HELTER-SKELTER.

Myrtle stepped in and Lily shut and bolted the door. Relieved that such disorder could be kept outside, Lily led Myrtle back to the breakfast nook.

The sun did its best work at this time. The colors, so pure on bone china, caused Myrtle to say, "Civilization still exists."

With both hands, Myrtle lifted her hat off her head.

"Let me take your things," Lily reached for the hat and Myrtle's shawl.

Three rooms, one passing into the other, formed the back rectangle of Lily's home. All three rooms had great arched windows facing the east and

looking into Lily's beloved garden. Paralleling the three back rooms were three front rooms that were as dark as the back three were bright. Dark velvet drapes covered the narrow windows that faced the cul-de-sac. The front rooms served as a buffer.

Lily walked through the nook, the sitting room, and into her bedroom to lay Myrtle's hat and shawl on the chenille bedspread.

When Lily returned, Myrtle stood before the high, wide window and gazed into the garden kept inviolate by tall brick walls. A Betty Prior rose bloomed. Its fragile beginnings had been brought to Texas four generations ago. The pink, deepened by the autumn cool, unfurled as it spread its delicate self to the sun.

Lily took the pot, still jiggling and gurgling, to the table and set it on a crocheted sunflower. As the rumbling lessened, Lily put warm strawberry muffins on Leedsware plates and set them alongside damask napkins and sterling forks.

"Come on. Sit," she gestured to Myrtle's place.

Lily and Myrtle had coffee every morning at ten o'clock, but Lily especially anticipated this morning's coffee. She had witnessed a fracas on her trip downtown yesterday. She had been mulling the disorder. Now she wanted to present her thoughts to Myrtle. The two had had such discussions since they were girls living on ranches, ranches that had gradually diminished then disappeared as the girls had disappeared and eighty-year-old women appeared.

"Well," Lily began, "I went to the Neiman Marcus china department yesterday."

Myrtle held her cup to the instreaming light. "Yes, a new pattern, I see." She moved the cup upward to read the name on the bottom. "Oh, Noritake. Silk Winds." She lowered the cup and examined the purple-blues outlined in gold. "Beautiful."

"I like it too, but what I want to talk about is what I saw and heard on the downtown sidewalks."

"What did you see?"

"I saw young men wearing swastikas."

"Oh?"

"They were in an ugly mood. I saw one Neiman Marcus window shattered by a bullet."

Myrtle said, "Ha! Neo-Nazis. We never really killed Hitler, did we?"

Lily's face assumed an expression of mock intellectuality as she picked up Myrtle's sarcastic tone. "Maybe he was never the real villain. Maybe he was the errand boy. The egomaniac duped by the German-Austrian thought of the times. The murderous enactor of Nietzsche, of Weber, of Freud. None of us, not one of us, is responsible for what we do. Malleable, volitionless hunks of clay, we are formed by the philosophical pressures exerted by our fathomless time."

Smiling cynically, Myrtle continued the mockery. "Ah, but Lily, let's conform to the thought of these rational, relativistic times. Let's trill equal-

ity without responsibility. Let's allow each dunderhead unbounded license because there are no moral boundaries. When no moral boundaries exist, how can a society establish legal boundaries? Let's carry democracy to its extreme—to disintegration." Myrtle raised her hand as she had seen Hitler do in old film clips.

The two women laughed at their performances, but the laughter held rue. Lily filled their cups again as the sun left the tabletop.

"Myrtle, your age and your erudition are showing. Neither is acceptable nowadays."

After moments of thought, Myrtle spoke, her voice quieter. "Pathetic humans. We are silly creatures who know nothing, value nothing except our own flesh that moves to death even as we pamper it."

The two were quiet as they watched the sun in the garden. Then Myrtle asked, "Why do you continue to go downtown?"

"Bullies are not stopping me from trading with a store that has treated me fairly, has brought me an opportunity to see the beauty of porcelain, of fine cloth. I need beauty."

"Why are those Nazis after Stanley Marcus's store?"

"I don't think the hoods even know Stanley or anyone else associated with the store. I think they want to smash china, to destroy for the sake of destruction."

Myrtle sat moodily staring out in the garden. Then she broke the silence with the question, "Did I tell you that the young man who helped me with gardening put out a poison to kill dandelions and ended up killing my oaks?"

"No! When did it happen?"

"Just this spring. When I bearded him, he laughed and said he could buy others at a discount nursery. Those old, old oaks. I like to think that the Kiowas camped under them. I've found flint during my diggings to plant bulbs."

"I'm sorry, Myrtle. You told me old Sam had died, but I didn't know you had to bring a stranger into your garden."

Myrtle shook her head and looked at the dregs in her cup. "There's nothing to build trust on." She looked full at Lily. "Do you remember the spring the horse fell on your dad? Do you remember that my dad and old Sam Stein, Orvie Davis, Tom Henry, and the Dawdys who had just moved into the rock house on the hill—they all tended his stock, along with theirs that spring?"

Lily's thoughts slid back to her dad mending in the spring of '26. Unable to move from his bed, he had used her as his go-between.

"Yes, I remember. More coffee?"

Myrtle nodded, and Lily filled her cup.

"My point is," Myrtle continued, "my point is that people have to follow unwritten laws. Laws that come from here." Myrtle hit her chest with her right fist. "Nowadays a man would have disability insurance. He'd fill out forms. An insurance investigator would check. Maybe the insurance

would pay off. Maybe it wouldn't. The man would hire a lawyer. The lawyer would meet with the insurance company's lawyer. On and on. Whether the man got the money or not, he'd feel low down. He'd cuss his lawyer for charging too much, or he'd swear the insurance company misled him. I tell you, Lily, it's trust we're missing."

Lily was quiet, her thoughts in the past. She knew more about the neighbors' helping her dad than Myrtle knew. Those men who had tended her dad's stock that spring had also gathered enough money among them to send her to Mary Hardin Baylor College for the summer term. After the summer study, she had taken the state exam and had qualified to teach in a country school. She had taught thirty-eight years. Each summer she attended college until she completed a master's degree in English. Each fall she was back in the teacher's chair. She could not count the times when she was so filled with the joy of teaching that she bowed her head and asked blessings on the men who, wrestling with ornery cows and ornerier weather, had helped one little lackluster girl.

Teaching had been spoiled for her only after one student failed to graduate because Lily had refused to give credit in English. The boy had intimidated his weaker classmates into helping him cheat. He could not write a sentence in his native English. He had not read a single piece of literature the entire year and bragged about his ignorance.

His parents, after hearing from a perspiring principal that Billy had failed senior English, came to Lily. Sweet as pie, they had offered her the use of their mountain cabin for the summer. She refused.

Next, they went to the school board and insisted that Lily was senile, knew nothing of the psychological bolstering youngsters needed more than they needed stories written by people who lived long ago. The school board, five of whom had been Lily's students in days of yore, supported Lily's judgement.

But the matter did not end. Late-night phone calls penetrated Lily's sleep. Tire tracks crisscrossed her front yard, one set coming so close to the front stoop that a rose bush had been crushed. A note that read, "Shet on you," had been fastened to her mailbox with the clothespin she used to hold outgoing mail.

"Lily? Are you listening?"

Lily pulled herself out of the past and back to Myrtle by saying, "I think you're right, Myrtle. Every endeavor depends on trust, and trust cannot be legislated nor adjudicated. When a thug rips a person's screen off in the night, neither of them—the bully nor the bullied—can trust again."

The two sat silently and looked into the sunlit garden that would go as the ranches had gone, as men like their dads had gone.

Lily thought of her father after he recovered from the broken hip. Forever after, he walked with the hurt leg shorter than the other. She could hear the sound across the linoleum-covered floor, thud-step, thud-step as though the leg was dead and could serve only as a fulcrum around which his good leg could swing and move him forward. But he could still plant

that foot in the stirrup and the leg could hoist him up, a strained, painful motion made with tight lips. Ransom Henry rode again out across the pastures. He cussed the encroachment of mesquite the way Myrtle cussed the spread of television. And when Sam Stein died, Henry did for his widow as Sam had done for him. And when Orvie Davis had to go back to Kentucky to bury his dad, the ranchers had tended his stock. On and on the stories went, stories that told of trust.

"Well," Myrtle said to break the quiet, "well, we can't wrestle the wind. Maybe we can keep the godless out beyond our perimeters, but I doubt it."

"Did you fire the man who killed your oaks?"

"Yes. Then the sniveling fool threatened breach of contract. Said I had okayed him to work the entire summer. Thought I was soft-headed."

"What did you do?"

"I turned, walked into the house, and bolted the door."

"Did he leave?"

Myrtle chuckled. "Yeah, after he took a hoe to the narcissus bed. Fitting to chop up the blooming narcissus I thought since he swaggered around in tight Levis that hugged him like a codpiece."

Both women giggled. Myrtle swigged the last of her coffee as the mantle clock chimed eleven.

"I must go," she said as she used her arms to lift herself out of the chair. "Thanks for the respite, Lily."

Lily hurried to get Myrtle's belongings, for the taxi would be at the curb. As Myrtle put on her hat and adjusted the shawl around her shoulders, Lily looked through the peer hole.

"The taxi just pulled up." She glanced to see if Myrtle was ready. Then she unbolted the door, opened it, and Myrtle slipped out. She hastened into the taxi as Lily closed and rebolted the door.

Lily walked to the breakfast nook. The sun had risen high, and the cups no longer radiated light.