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Table of Contents

Special Section: Tennessee Williams

Tenn in the '90s: Recent Scholarship on Tennessee Williams 1
Philip C. Kolin

Everything's Coming Up Roses: Rainer Maria Rilke Reads Tennessee Williams and Vice Versa 7
John Gronbeck-Tedesco

Catastrophic Illness on a Hot Tin Roof: Tennessee Williams and the Representation of Disease 13
George W. Crandell

Parodying Fascism: *Suddenly Last Summer* as Political Allegory 19
Marilyn Claire Ford

Essays

Reassessing the Paternity of Surrealism 27
Joanna Ampatzi
Laurilyn J. Harris

Prosodic Performance Directives as Clues to Meaning in Donne's "Canonization" 34
Sara Anderson

Annie Dillard's *The Living* and the Concept of the Historical Novel 40
William G. Chernecky

Poet, Dreamer, Formel: Mediation and Tension in *The Parliament of Fowls* 44
Garth Clayton

New England Sampler: Introduction to Judith Sargent Murray and Her Unpublished Poetry 48
Nancy Ellis

Wharton's Library of Frustration 57
Gene C. Fant

The Haunting Motif in Vietnam Fiction 63
Dabney Gray

Coleridge's Eye and his Sources for the Eye in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" 68
Larry D. Griffin

Calvin as a Gloss on Spenser's Artistic Representations of Evil in Relation to Redcrosse's Armor 75
Larry Isitt

Faulkner: Overcoming Another Problem (Teaching Faulkner to African American Students 82
Teresa Baker Kelly

Teaching the Sonnet: Two Poems by Claude McKay 87
Paul H. Lorenz

"Dual Bodies" of the King: Dryden's Defense of Divine Right in "Threnodia Augustalis" 93
Sandi McBride

'Here's a dish I love not!': Patriarchy, Misogyny, and Men's Sexual Fears in *Much Ado About Nothing* 99
Dale G. Priest

All the World's a Freak Show: Racial Disparity and the Other in "Keela the Outcast Indian Maiden" 104
Angelic Rodgers-Webb

Mantles of Green: Livery in "Robin Hood and Little John" and "A Geste of Robyn Hode" as Marker of Fourteenth-Century Social Crisis 109
Hugh E. L. Rozelle

***Conversation Down South*: Argentina's "Dirty War" from Women's Perspective** 116
Soledad Vara Rust

Psyche, Atalanta, and the Female Hero Story in Classical Mythology 120
Sallye Sheppeard

American Explorers and English Reviews: Sense and Sensibility 126
Patricia Waters

Dialogized Tragic Consciousness in Confucian and Socratic Dialogues 134
Bin Xie

Ezra Pound's Employment of Chinese Images 143
Jianqing Zheng

Poetry

by Jack B. Bedell
The One Thing That Sticks 148
At the Bonehouse 149
Marsh House at Pointe Au Chenes 150

by Theodore Haddin
How Glorious the Sun Here
and **This Bug** 151
Why Do We Watch Them
and **Painting With Pepe** 152

by Rabiul Hasan
To a Dumb Girl in a Bosnia Town 153
Love Poem (for Nowshaba) 154
A Tree of Night 155

by Alan Forrest Hickman
The Feast of Stephen 157
Free Will *and* **Aplomb** 158
Greenland 159

by Clare E. Potter
"He gave me roses" 160

Tenn in the '90s: Recent Scholarship on Tennessee Williams

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The University of Southern Mississippi

I am honored that Professors Anderson and Stamper allowed me to convene and chair a special session of the MPA devoted to Mississippi's (and America's) greatest playwright--Tennessee Williams, or 10 as he signed his letters using numbers. It is propitious that we are meeting in Hattiesburg--the Hub City--to talk about Williams. Hattiesburg is centrally located to many of the key places in the Williams canon. Blanche DuBois lived and taught school in Laurel (Oriel," if you like Marlon's pronunciation) just 40 miles away; and on Saturday nights she would slip outside her house to answer the calls of the soldiers at Camp Shelby--just 15 miles from here--before they were gathered up like daisies for their long trip home. Serafina Delle Rose's dress shop was only 60 miles away, on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and Chance Wayne's fictional St. Cloud, another "Gulf Coast town," is closeby, too, on Williams' gazeteer. A little farther to the north of Hattiesburg lay Jackson, where Big Black worked on the roads, and farther north still was the Mississippi Delta with Archie's gin in Benoit, Big Daddy's plantation, and Miss Alma Winemiller's home in Glorious Hill. Mississippi is both metaphor and roadmap in Williams.

Before surveying Williams scholarship in the 1990s, I must happily acknowledge that one of the most significant earlier critical volumes on Williams--Jac Tharpe's monumental *Tennessee Williams: A Tribute* (1977)--was also Hattiesburg-linked. It was the brainchild of a distinguished USM Hattiesburg professor, stressing again the centrality of Mississippi in Williams' work and extending to the criticism of that work.

Williams scholarship has, within the last few years, produced a rich and varied harvest. When it appears in late 1998, *Tennessee Williams: A Guide to Scholarship and Performance* (Kolin) should provide a detailed assessment of the scope and significance of the critical interpretations and major productions of Williams' plays as well as a survey of scholarship on the fiction, nonfiction prose, and poetry. Suffice it to say that here all I can do is to sketch in a few of the significant scholarly studies and chart a few of the major (theoretical for the most part) trends in Williams scholarship.

No one would deny that 1995 (and its environs) was a banner year for Williams research. Lyle Leverich's long-awaited first volume of the biography appeared--*Tom: The Unknown Tennessee Williams*; vol. 2--*Tenn: The Timeless World of Tennessee Williams*--is expected before 1998 ends. Leverich's biography, as the copiously effusive reviews broadcast, unfolds a meticulous and mellifluous account of Williams' ancestry, boyhood, early manhood, and artistic accomplishments up to and including production of *The Glass Menagerie* in 1945. Assigned the role of biographer by Williams himself in the 1970s, Leverich, a San Francisco director, faced a phalanx of obstacles courtesy of Maria St. Just, the self-appointed literary executor of Williams' estate. The author/compiler of *Five O'Clock Angel* (a collection of letters between Tenn and herself), Maria died in 1994, and the way for Leverich opened. Required reading on the Countess's harmful influence on Williams scholarship is John Lahr's article in *The New Yorker* (December 19,

1994). Another biography appeared in 1995--Ronald Hayman's *Tennessee Williams: Everyone Else Is an Audience*--but it has not fared well. Published two years before Leverich's first volume, Nicholas Pagan's postmodern approach to Williams' life provocatively stands traditional biographical assumptions (e.g., the life unlocks the work) on their head. Pagan cogently argues that the plays do not bear a "filiate" relationship to the life or necessarily to one another. The plays help Williams to perform his life just as much as the other way around.

Though not a biography, Brenda Murphy's superlative *Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan: A Collaboration in the Theatre* questions the belief that Williams wrote some of his greatest plays alone. She campaigns, quite successfully, for a fuller participation by and acknowledgement of Elia Kazan in the Williams canon. Murphy painstakingly documents--through correspondence, promptbooks, interviews, Kazan's extensive papers--the collaborative role that Kazan played in creating *Streetcar*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Baby Doll*, and *Sweet Bird of Youth*. "Gadge" Kazan was far more invested in the Williams canon than as only a director. He cast, revised, rewrote, and drastically altered some of Williams' scripts, thus entering the sphere of coauthor, according to Murphy. Beaumont and Fletcher, Gilbert and Sullivan, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, Gadge and Tenn--winning pairs.

The year 1995 was also significant because of the publication of George Crandell's indispensable descriptive bibliography. A meticulous, scrupulous record, Crandell's bibliography identifies and describes every Williams work (giving information on typography, paper, dust wrappers, printings and editions, and even each time a "substantive revision was made"). Handsomely designed, Crandell's opus also includes facsimiles of title and copyright pages. Crandell has done the seemingly impossible feat by codifying, with great accuracy, Williams' works. Of course, Crandell's net, however fine and strong, could never include every item in Williams prodigious canon. In 1995, for example, after Crandell's work was complete, *Something Coudy, Something Clear*--Williams' last professionally produced play--was published for the first time (New Directions). Though performed in 1981, *Something Coudy* was not released before 1995, because Maria St. Just thought that its aggressive homosexuality would blemish Williams' reputation. *Something Cloudy* is not a play to perpetuate the image of Williams as a reserved Southerner, a lyrical metaphor-symbol weaving poet in the theatre. August (Williams' name in the play) is a gutsy, homoerotic prowler out for prey. No one--producers, sailors, or young Kip, Williams' first male lover--takes advantage of him.

Still other items not available to Crandell will come to light in the 1990s. Allean Hale is preparing an edition of several early (apprentice) Williams plays--from the 1930s--for *New Directions*; and Albert Devlin and Nancy Tischler are sifting through Williams' voluminous correspondence (or at least a major chunk of it) for publication. Who knows what lodestars and lodestones critics will find among 10's letters, or among Rose's, which went for auction in February of 1997.

The most thorough enumerative bibliography of Williams to date remains the second edition of Drewey Wayne Gunn's volume (1994) for Shoestring Press. Gunn includes reviews, articles, books, recordings, and sundry other

bibliographic items.

Critical and cultural theory in the 1990s have found a welcome reception in Williams' plays. Gone is the image of Tennessee Williams, the rebellious Puritan (the title, by the way, of Nancy Tischler's 1961 study, the first book devoted exclusively to Williams). In the 1990s, Williams is often lauded for being egregiously rebellious. Before looking at individual books in which culture, theory, and gender issues predominate, I shall identify a number of collections worth studying for their contribution to theory and Williams. *Confronting Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire: Essays in Critical Pluralism* (Kolin) gathers 15 original essays that look at the play, each "from a different critical theoretical perspective"; essayists in this volume are diversely occupied with myth, Foucault, Lacan, feminism, formalist. En masse they entune with "polyphonic voices." Two special issues of journals also concentrate on theoretical issues in Williams. *Studies in American Drama, 1945-Present*, 9 (1993) offers articles and interviews with directors that focus on Williams. The Fall 1995 issue of *The Mississippi Quarterly* was also devoted to Williams--a dozen articles foregrounded in a variety of critical theories; two interviews (one with Dakin Williams; the other with Luigi Zaninelli, an internationally famous composer, on music in Williams) plus tributes to Williams by Willie Morris, Eudora Welty, and other fellow Mississippians. Finally, George Crandell's *Critical Approaches to Williams* (which reprints over 70 influential essays and reviews) merits praise.

Among the most revolutionary theoretical approaches to Williams in the 1990s are those focusing on sexual identity issues in and through the plays. Beyond doubt, David Savran's *Communists, Cowboys, and Queers* rates careful attention. The subtitle goes a long way toward exploring Savran's thesis: "*Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams.*" Exploring the ways each playwright represented and negotiated with "postwar and anticommunism crusades," Savran engenders a politically savvy, radical Williams whose gay desires and pleasures were articulated through the characters in his plays and in the fiction. The following quotation from Savran aptly serves as a conspectus of the limbic world in which Williams lives for many critics in the 1990s:

> If that most misunderstood of words, revolutionary, is to be applied to Williams's works, they must be prized--that is, read, directed, and acted--less as ends in themselves than as allegories, as figures for the(un)imaginable hopes they articulate so dazzlingly, and for the surrealistic theatre of sexual bliss they announce. There is no question but that they cannot, despite their best attempts, cancel or transcend the hegemonic sexual ideology of Cold War America in which they are inscribed and that has villified women, gay men, and lesbians while constantly privileging the active heterosexual male subject. (173)

Along with Savran, John Clum's *Acting Gay* (1992) elucidates "the erotic signification" found in the plays as Williams comes out of the closet on stage by obfuscating and defiling traditional codes of heterosexuality.

Williams' sexualized script is inseparable from his politicized one in much contemporary criticism. The refrain in much earlier Williams criticism--that Tenn was not a political author, never had been, never will be--has been

happily muted in the 1990s. An excellent introduction to Williams as a political writer is Chapter Three--"Tennessee Williams: The Theatricalizing Self"--of C.W.E. Bigsby's *Modern American Drama, 1945-1990*. The author of the invaluable, three-volume *Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama*--including Vol. 2, *Williams/Miller Albee*--Bigsby maintains that "the social and political seldom disappear entirely from Williams's work" (*Modern Drama* 34). Elaborating on that point, Bigsby identified approaches that have been valiantly pursued, and I am sure will continue to be so in the 1990s.

> His work reveals a consistent distrust of the wealthy and the powerful, a suspicion of materialism . . . his portraits of individuals pressed to the margins of social concern, trapped in diminishing social and psychological space, are not without ideological significance. (37)

It is more than *au courrant* to speak of Williams the ideologue; it is standard practice. From his earliest social protest drama through *Something Cloudy*, Williams privileged a socialist agenda.

While I could cite many studies that investigate Williams' politicizing scripts, I have time and space to just skim the surface. The title of Delma Eugene Presley's exceptional monograph on *The Glass Menagerie: An American Memory* (1992) captures Williams' piqued criticism of bankrupt social agencies and corrupt power depriving the oppressed of their rights to signify. Robert Bray's fine essay on a Marxist reading of *Streetcar* (in Kolin, *Confronting Streetcar*) contemporizes in light of recent political theory many of the staid dichotomies of an aristocratic Blanche and a working-class Stanley. And as Jan Balakian, C.W.E. Bigsby, and others have pointed out, *Camino Real* is Williams' allegory about the tyranny of McCarthyism. Produced the same year as Arthur Miller's *Crucible* (and Beckett's *Godot*), *Camino Real* captures on stage the paronomia and purges of McCarthy's reign of terror, thinly disguised in Williams' surrealistic theatre. Marilyn Ford, in her exploratory essay included in this issue of *POMPA*, records Williams' similar attacks on fascism in *Suddenly Last Summer*. Boss Finely in *Sweet Bird of Youth* and the Nazis in *Night of the Iguana* are further targets of Williams' war against totalitarian agents.

Williams continued his spirited discourse against the brutal world of white patriarchal power in his later plays, too. *Kingdom of Earth* is, I believe, a happily resolved chronicle about the ravages of colonization, and even more precisely, about American imperialism in Viet Nam. This much-neglected play is a plea for new hope for America through interracial union. Additionally, Colby H. Kullman has effectively linked *Red Devil Battery Sign*, a play in which Williams indicts the military industrial complex, with Big Brotherism, Orwellianism, and *Catch 22* in the special Williams issue of *The Mississippi Quarterly*. I think it is instructive, too, that one of Williams' very last works--*A White Chalky Substance*--a one act play with all sorts of Beckettian overtones--deals with a post-nuclear, apocalyptical society (Kolin "Existential"). Williams' poetic images conceal/reveal the incendiary desire of a revolutionary to destroy a cancerous patriarchal power structure and start over.

The 1990s also saw the publication of a number of less-theoretically-based

books surveying, with varying degrees of success, the Williams canon or concentrating on a singole play. Turning to the latter first: I already cited Presley's volume on *Glass Menagerie*. In that same series--Twayne's Masterworks--Thomas P. Adler has written perhaps the most profitable and comprehensive study of Williams' greatest play: *A Streetcar Named Desire: The Moth and the Lantern* (1990). Adler situates the play in its historical context, debunks easy dichotomous readings, and sheds profound, new light on the characters and setting. Adler also supplied a valuable chapter on Williams in his *American Drama, 1940-1960: A Critical History*. Alice Griffin's *Understanding Tennessee Williams* (1995) provides a "guide to Tennessee Williams' major plays for those who read them, those who see them, and those who stage them" and argues that while "some studies regard Williams primarily as a literary figure to others a stage innovation . . . a comprehensive consideration must explore both" (xi).

Williams scholarship in the 1990s is also flourishing on the Internet. As of late January, 1997, I was able to locate more than 120 sites dealing completely or in part with Williams' works and his life, including directors' comments on current productions, reminiscences, and even term papers from some bright high school students in New York.

I would like to close this brief survey commending the above-named scholars of the 1990s and encouraging them and others to greater heights with Tenn's own motto "En avant."

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Everything's Comin' Up Roses: Rainer Maria Rilke Reads Tennessee Williams and Vice Versa

John Gronbeck-Tedesco
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In his anthology, *Tennessee Williams, Eight Plays*, Harold Clurman introduces the *Rose Tattoo* with one of the playwright's own essays, "The Timeless World of the Play". Clurman's choice is fortuitous, I think, for in that essay, there is a citation full of interpretive potential as yet unengaged by critical commentary. "By the time we have arrived at Sardi's . . . we have convinced ourselves once more that life has as little resemblance to the . . . occurrences on the stage as a jingle has to an elegy of Rilke" (p. 302). Rainer Maria Rilke rides so near the edge of the essay that he almost falls out of it. Yet, some of his most passionate poetry and prose are echoed loudly by the imagery, themes, dramatic conflict and comic tone of Williams's play. The playwright felt a keen kinship with Rilke's *fin de la siecle* sensibility, and more especially with his complex regard for sex and desire within the larger compass of a Romantic *zeitgeist*. Hence, the first half of my purpose: a gloss on the *Rose Tattoo* through the lens provided by Rilke. But turnabout is fair play; and so the second half of my purpose is to read the play as a commentary on Rilke--a parody at that, but one which is intensely complex and altogether poignant. As Rilke noted, "Everything is play and yet plays . . ." (Rilke in Mood, ed. and trans., "Poems on Other Difficulties" p. 73)--a notion that is certainly confirmed when Williams and Rilke are put into "play" together.

I

Thomas P. Adler notes that the *Rose Tattoo* "finds [Williams] carried away with an excess of symbolism" (147). Adler is referring to the rose imagery that hangs from the play as though it were a trellis. Rose wallpaper overlooks a rose-colored carpet; characters have roses in their hair; some are doused in rose oil. And, this is not even the half of it. Rose tattoos are fixed on the chests of two men and one casino girl with two more coming and going as temporary apparitions on the chest of Serafina delle Rose whose daughter, Rosa, is named after her father, Rosario, a petty criminal who is killed at the beginning of the play under mysterious circumstances. Finally, there is the altogether exquisite bowl of roses that dominates the family table.

Williams's central image bears a direct relationship to Rilke, whose own enthusiasm for roses seems even more florid than the playwright's and goes far beyond what one might normally expect of a poet from the *fin de la siecle*. His sequence of twenty-seven poems (all in French) entitled "The Roses" (Rilke in Poulin, ed. and trans., p. 1 ff.) make them his most often used image, and Rilke too presents his own "Bowl of Roses" as the title of a poem couched in the same lavish intensity which characterizes so much of Williams's writing in the *Rose Tattoo*: "And this: that one opens like a lid / and lying under there nothing but eyelids, / closed, as if they, tenfold sleeping, / had to muffle an inner power of seeing" (Rilke in Mood, ed. and trans., *Rilke on Love and Other Difficulties*, p. 108). Rilke remained loyal to the rose

throughout his life. In 1925, fifteen months before his death, he wrote his own epitaph which underscores the metaphysical significance of the rose in his writing. "Rose, oh pure contradiction, desire, / To be no one's sleep under so many / Lids" (Rilke in Mood, ed. and trans., *Rilke on Love and Other Difficulties*, p. 103). The "contradiction" embodied by the rose is between the living fullness of its petals and what lies at their center. To remove the petals is to find only absence. For, there is nothing at the center but emptiness. Yet the rose is by no means a sign of some sort of nihilism. In fact, just the opposite. The contradiction insisted upon by the biology of the rose is allegorical. Just as the absence and silence at the center of the rose is what gives its petals their form; so too, it is death that, however mysteriously, is always the bright, form-giving core of life. The rose is living precisely because it is dying. The same is true of human beings. (Mood, ed. and trans., *Rilke on Love and Other Difficulties*, p. 103 ff.)

The comedy in the *Rose Tattoo* comes from shifting the emphasis in Rilke's epitaph from fragrant metaphysics to hot-blooded ontology. In language that sounds like Rilke gone mad, Mangiacavallo says to Serafina: "The rose is the heart of the world like the heart is the--heart of the--body" (II.i.). This passage is not an epitaph that marks an end but a declaration coming at the outset of one of the most inept and longest seductions in American dramatic literature. With three "hearts" and one "rose", the hearts have the advantage, and instead of an image of life with a mysteriously energizing emptiness at its center, Williams provides the parodic opposite. At the center of life, there is a palpable (and palpitating) fullness. In the poetic invention of a man whose name means "Eat-a-Horse", that fullness is the heart of a woman. In fact, fullness and abundance are ongoing motifs in the play. Not only is the stage full of roses but Serafina delle Rose is herself perpetually full: "plump" (I.i.) with expectations early in the play; then full of sorrow, rage, confusion and finally love. Always she is overflowing with emotion that bursts directly into the fictional world creating almost all of its complications. In Serafina, action appears always as the unconstrained overflow of passion. More literally, on two occasions (at the beginning and end of the play), she is filled with child. At the center of her body is the very antithesis of the emptiness that vivifies Rilke's roses.

II

Rilke's involvement in the *Rose Tattoo* goes beyond the play's central image. In the "Letters on Love", he pits the routinized moral obsessions of European Christianity against erotic love. This is precisely the dramatic conflict at the heart of Williams's play.

> . . . [W]hy do we allow it to happen that generation after generation awakens to consciousness beneath the rubble of Christian prejudices and moves like the seemingly dead in the darkness, in a most narrow space between sheer abnegations? (Rilke in Mood, ed. and trans., "Rilke's Letters on Love," p. 27)

What horrified Rilke was that the impulse linking us to the creative force of nature and God became, through Church doctrine, the very source of

separation from both. Christianity turned love into a mixture of "contempt, desire, curiosity, they call 'sensual'" (in Mood, ed. and trans., "Rilke's Letters on Love." p. 25). The way Christian morality had of always putting the human race "in the wrong" (in Mood ed. and trans., "Rilke's Letters on Love," p. 25) constantly bedeviled him. In part, Rilke wanted to reinstate love and desire by allowing them to become once again a mysterious. "We are not to know why / this and that masters us; / real life makes no reply, . . ." (in Mood, ed. and trans., "Poems on Other Difficulties," p. 73).

Williams inscribes the conflict between eros and Judeo-Christian civilization into the major complications of his plot. Every time Serafina implores her statue of the Blessed Virgin for help and guidance--a gesture she repeats at least four times--life becomes more difficult. After her prayer in I.vi., the laughter of her daughter and the sailor, Jack, who is Rosa's first boyfriend, fills the house. In this scene, it is Serafina who becomes the voice of guilt and the force of embarrassment. She makes Jack kneel before the statue of Our Lady and promise to respect Rose's virginity--all of this before allowing her daughter to go with him to a school picnic. In II.i., she prays for a sign, and there is more trouble. A salesman appears with Alvaro Mangiacavallo in hot pursuit. The salesman beats up Mangiacavallo who barges into Serafina's house over her protests, so he can cry without being seen by the neighbors. Later in the same scene, as Mangiacavallo begins his awkward seduction, Serafina prays again but ends up stranded on a chair reaching for a bottle of wine. Mangiacavallo must help her descend. Finally, in III.i. after an explosive conversation with her deceased husband's mistress who confirms the rumors of his infidelity, Serafina, filled with the pain of betrayal, blows out the statue's vigil light:

> You break this little house like the shell of a bird in your hand,
> because you have hate Serafina?--Serafina that *loved* you!--
> No, no, no, you don't speak! I don't believe in you, Lady!
> You're just a poor little doll with the paint peeling off, and
> now I blow out the light and I forget you the way you forget
> Serafina! . . . (III.i.)

Darkness follows but so does the reinstatement of sexual desire and some measure of freedom from the past. Serafina returns Mangiacavallo's ardor, and they arrange to meet later the same night to consummate their desire for one another.

III

Many European modernists used Christianity as an emblem of unnatural social constraints and sex as the emblem of human liberty and revolution. Arthur Schnitzler, Franke Wedekind, Carl Weber and Herbert Marcuse, to name only a few, emphasized the conflict between institutions encrusted with obsessive rules and the individual's *joie de vivre*. Although by no means a deep social thinker, Rilke's version of the conflict was anything but simplistic. He regarded human existence as much more than a Dionysian romp subject only to the sexual spasms of human protoplasm. Rilke grounded the boundaries on erotic desire in an entirely artistic view of life. It was the

individual's dedication to a particular life-work that provided the structure for personal sexuality. The place of sexual desire was to be determined by what one wished to contribute to the world at large. While sex and sexuality were personal in Rilke's zeitgeist ("sex", he writes, must be managed individually, out of one's own "nature" and "experience" [in Mood, ed. and trans., "Letters on Love," p. 33]), it nonetheless had to be integrated into one's master project. Moreover, Rilke condemned the young and the privileged who reduced the complexity of love and sex. "To take love seriously and to bear and to learn it like a task, this it is that young people need. . . . --So whoever loves must try to act as if he had a great work. . . " (Rilke in Mood, ed. and trans., "Letters on Love," p. 30). And, "[t]hey [young people] are beginners, bunglers of life, apprentices in love,--must *learn* love, and that (like *all* learning) wants peace, patience and composure" (in Mood, ed. and trans., "Letters on Love," p. 30)!

In the *Rose Tattoo* moral and religious ambiguity inundate the Rilkean thematics to promote a comic tone. More specifically, Williams's strong dose of ambiguity parodies Rilke's Romantic vision of sexual desire as a force of liberty and social change, and his romance of moderation based on an artistic sense of life's endeavors. Within the world of the play, the Virgin, whose vigil light Serafina extinguishes, is not only a metonomy for the Church but also a symbol of warm-bodied motherhood. Do not forget she is called the Blessed Mother for a reason. Are Serafina's prayers really denied, or have pride, desolation, loneliness and resentment simply blinded her to her Mother's answers? Could Alvaro Mangiacavallo, the man who announces himself as the grandson of a village idiot (IV.i.), actually be a gift from a Blessed Mother with a cunning and complex sense of humor? His first visit comes relatively late in the play. He appears as a combination of the magi, the angel Gabriel and the Holy Ghost. Like them, he brings gifts (candy), announces salvation from the past (it's true, her dead husband was unfaithful) and eventually revivifies Serafina (by impregnating her). In all of these roles he is simultaneously entirely inept and entirely effective. He is a carnavalesque creature that fills the play with interpretive opportunities. And through all his antics, Serafina is appalled, angered but above all enthralled.

Their courtship borders on farce. Mangiacavallo drops an ice cube and wipes it off on his sweaty shirt; Serafina responds by insulting him. He complains of his "three dependents" who "got the parchese habit", the "beer habit" and the "numbers habit too"(II.i.). Whereupon Serafina asks if he is a bachelor even as she "*glances below his belt*" (II.i). And it gets worse. She suggests his ears should have been taped to his head so they wouldn't stick out. Mangiacavallo searches for conversation by confessing he lost his previous fiancee because he gave her a zircon instead of a diamond engagement ring. Of course, Serafina sides with the fiancee. Later in the play, as part of a desperately misguided attempt to right himself in her eyes, Mangiacavallo opens his shirt to reveal a newly installed rose tattoo which is identical to the one her deceased husband wore on his chest. Serafina nearly passes out, which is the excuse Mangiacavallo needs to touch her.

IV

Throughout Rilke's poems and letters, beginnings occupy a sacred place. "The world gets up with you, / and beginning glistens / on all the breaking

places of our failure" (in Mood, ed. and trans., *Poems on Other Difficulties*, p. 83). Setting out upon a new project brings one's priorities into focus and makes a new personal organization possible. As Rilke would have it a beginning is a moment full of the potential for self-transformation, and self-transformation is always the business of life. The ethical imperative proclaimed by Rilke is the ongoing project of self-revision to which those in the upper classes must always be committed. The influence of the upper class guarantees that the efforts they focus on personal transformation will always have social benefit.

In the *Rose Tattoo*, Williams turns Rilke's faith in beginnings on its head. What is always beginning in beat after beat is the end of the relationship between Serafina and Mangiacavallo. But the dissolution of their romance is never quite completed. Instead, they go back continually to a new beginning of the end. The low-point of their courtship is, of course, the high-point of the comedy.

> Scusatemi Baronessa. . . . For me, it is winter, because I don't have in my life the sweet warmth of a lady. I live with my hands in my pockets! [*He stuffs his hands violently into his pants' pockets, then jerks them out again. A small cellophane-wrapped disk falls on the floor, escaping his notice but not Serafina's.*] You don't like the poetry! --How can a man talk to you?

Serafina holds all the cards and she knows it.

> [*ominously*] I like the poetry good. Is that a piece of the poetry that you dropped out of your pocket? [*He looks down.*]--No, no your right foot.

Even Mangiacavallo has the sense to be horrified.

> [*aghast as he realizes what it is that she has seen*]: Oh, that's--that's nothing! [*He kicks it under the sofa.*] (III.i.)

If Rilke had known Serafina and Mangiacavallo, would he have been so quick to condemn the constraints of Christianity? Could he have maintained the faith that human beings could integrate their fleshly desires into life ennobling projects? Or, would he have gone screaming to the clergy for more rules to manage the likes of these two lovers from the Gulf Coast?

But Williams's parody of Rilke is thoroughly poignant because it cannot quite come full circle. In the play, as in Rilke's poetry, love and desire become higher forces with generative power. But in a departure from the "Letters on Love", where Rilke portrays erotic passion as vulnerable to self-indulgence, the *Rose Tattoo* provides a version of sexual devotion that is altogether hardy. Serafina and Mangiacavallo may be the very "beginners", "bunglers" and "apprentices" that Rilke decries. But Tennessee Williams overrules Rilke's intricate system of poetic justice which condemns the joys of sex outside the context of some great life-work. In the end, despite their "untidiness, disorder and confusion", Mangiacavallo and Serafina do become lovers and companions. The final stroke in their relationship is the most

ambiguous and ironically comic. During their love making, Serafina once again sees the rose tattoo appear on her breast just as she did three years earlier when she conceived with her first husband. The sign is clear: "Just now I felt on my breast the burning again of the rose. I know what it means. It means I have conceived (III.iii.)"! But how? In spite of the condom? Or, consistent to the very end, did the grandson of the idiot from Ribera, bungle the action?

So, who or what has the last word? Rilke? Williams? Perhaps it is the Blessed Mother after all. At the end of the play, she is a virgin transformed, for her status in the house of Serafina Delle Rose has been revised and made complex. No longer is she solely a sign of religion. But neither is she a symbol of erotic revolution, for, after all, she is still the Virgin Mary. She has become, instead, some wonderful combination of the two, wherein secular fortune and Christian grace are one. In my own imagined production of the play, a powerful image dominates the stage in the final moment. As the lights dim a single candle still gleams--the one that sits before the Virgin's statue. It was relit by a Serafina who, freed of her fears and illusions about the past and the future, has come to realize more than anyone could ever know.

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Catastrophic Illness on a Hot Tin Roof: Tennessee Williams and the Representation of Disease

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Mental illness is the hallmark of the early plays of Tennessee Williams. The limp that impedes Laura Wingfield is only a symptom of another ailment less physical than psychological. In Laura's self-conscious mind, a minor impediment is magnified to debilitating proportions, precipitating her own self-imposed confinement in an illusory world she calls her glass menagerie. *Summer and Smoke*'s Alma Winemiller likewise suffers from mental anguish. Her antic, sometimes called hysterical, behavior is the outward sign of an inward struggle with a mental doppelgänger, the emblem of her hopelessly divided self. Similar to her unstable counterparts, Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* totters between sanity and insanity, until her rape by Stanley Kowalski, and her sister Stella's disbelief, send her plummeting into an abyss from which no Shep Huntley or any imagined hero can possibly rescue her. Whatever the actual cause (or causes) of their ailments, all three women suffer the pains of isolation, alienated from family and friends who perceive them as different, as deviating from the social or moral norm. To the broad range of behaviors exhibited by Laura, Alma, and Blanche, the conventional world that Tennessee Williams depicts in his drama generally applies the equally broad but convenient label: "mental illness."

In Williams's early plays, illness is most often a sign of social or moral disfunction, its cause mysterious or unknown, its cure dependent upon the patient's resolve to conform to society's rigid standards of behavior. Williams's women characters, for example, are expected to conform to the social norm that women marry, both to provide for their economic security, and to avoid, presumably, lifelong dependence upon their relatives or "upon the kindness of strangers." The penalty for failure to find a mate is stigmatization: Laura Wingfield is labeled crippled, Alma Winemiller, eccentric, and Blanche Du Bois, mentally ill. Even in later plays, such as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* men as well as women are expected to conform to the rules that society prescribes. Big Daddy Pollitt, for instance, demands that his son, Brick, reform his alienating, anti-social behavior, first by recovering his senses, and then by resuming sexual relations with his estranged wife, Maggie, the proof of which will be an heir. Brick's incentive for conformity is the promise of an inheritance and the assurance of future economic security. Failure to conform, Big Daddy warns Brick, will result in disinheritance and privation: "If you ain't careful you're gonna crawl off this plantation and then, by Jesus, you'll have to hustle your drinks along Skid Row!" (Williams 100).

In each of these four plays, Williams employs illness as a metaphor, suggesting an analogous relationship between the individual and society such that, generally, the healthy individual is the one who accepts and practices what society prescribes as socially acceptable behavior. The unhealthy person, on the other hand, is the one who refuses to conform, who willingly violates rules of social or moral conduct. According to the logic of Williams's analogy, illness is a sign that points to a history of unconventional or sinful behavior;

and conversely, anti-social or immoral behavior is a sign or symptom of illness. The sign, representing or standing in the place of what it is not, functions both to reveal and conceal its referent, making visible what otherwise cannot be seen. Disease, then, as represented in the early plays of Tennessee Williams, is not something rooted in biology; it is not something caused by an identifiable bacterium or virus. On the contrary, illness is a sign or label for any set of symptoms (that is, social behaviors) that society judges to be inappropriate. As such, the sign or label may be arbitrarily applied. Society thus exerts its power over the individual by diagnosing ills (judging behavior), prescribing treatment (tolerance or intolerance), and effecting remedies (reform, excommunication, or, in the most extreme cases, execution).

The diseases that Williams finds most suggestive as metaphors--mental illness, alcoholism, and cancer--are alike in having mysterious origins or multiple causes, and for this reason, perhaps, have accumulated a deposit of explanatory myths that Williams resourcefully mines for metaphoric material. Williams's plays thus dramatically illustrate what Susan Sontag so insightfully asserts in her monograph, *Illness as Metaphor:* "diseases thought to be multi-determined (that is, mysterious) . . . have the widest possibilities as metaphors for what is felt to be socially or morally wrong" (61).

In *The Glass Menagerie, Summer and Smoke,* and *A Streetcar Named Desire,* illness is a metaphor that serves primarily to illuminate the personal misfortunes and tragedies of three women. While each of these characters evokes sympathy from the theatre audience, they nevertheless remain--perhaps because of the nature of their illnesses--distant figures, women with whom others cannot easily identify. In *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* Williams discovers more universal metaphors in the life-threatening illnesses alcoholism and cancer, especially since, as Susan Sontag writes, "[f]atal illness has always been viewed as a test of moral character" (41). Williams must have recognized the dramatic possibilities inherent in fatal illness and in the mystery and mythology surrounding it. Appropriating some of the myths that alcoholism and cancer share in common, Williams, in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* broadens his representation of illness to include the sometimes shameful and often stigmatizing consequences of impending and inevitable death.

Not one, but two characters in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* suffer from catastrophic illnesses, Brick Pollitt from alcoholism, and his father, Big Daddy, from cancer. This pairing of illnesses suggests not only a similarity between the two diseases, but also, and, even more importantly, a likeness between father and son. Williams, for example, depicts cancer and alcoholism as alike in stemming from a similar cause, the repression of emotion. To illustrate, Brick is said to repress his true (possibly homosexual) feelings for his friend Skipper, holding them in "memory" or "imagination" like a "festering" sore (Williams 31). Similarly, Big Daddy describes himself as having repressed his true feelings: "All of my life I been like a doubled up fist" (Williams 92). Maggie even suggests that Big Daddy represses sexual feeling, "harbor[ing] a little unconscious 'lech'" for her (Williams 23). Faithfully representing the myth that cancer is a disease "thought to stem from the repression of emotion" (Sontag 48), Williams essentially expresses a romantic view of illness. As Susan Sontag explains:

> With the modern diseases (once TB, now cancer), the romantic idea that

> the disease expresses the character is invariably extended to assert that the character causes the disease--because it has not expressed itself. Passion moves inward, striking and blighting the deepest cellular recesses. (46)

Sontag also notes how shame is generally attached to diseases stemming from repressed emotion (48), another myth that Williams appropriates for use in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.* Brick's disgusted reaction to Maggie's suggestion that Big Daddy lusts after her points to the shame of lust, and also incest. Maggie likewise considers Brick's alcoholism disgraceful. Hoping to shame him, and thus reform him, Maggie threatens Brick with the even more shameful prospect of rehabilitation at Rainbow Hill, the place "famous for treatin' alcoholics an[']dope fiends" (Williams 21).

Because alcoholism and cancer are both considered shameful, family members often try to keep these illnesses a secret, even using deception to conceal knowledge of the disease from all but those who must know the truth. Gooper, Brick's brother, "exercise[s] his influence" to prevent Brick's public display of drunkenness on the high school athletic track from being broadcast, as Maggie says, "over AP or UP or every goddam 'P'" (Williams 22). Similarly, the truth about Big Daddy's cancerous condition is kept secret for as long as possible, even from Big Daddy himself.

The similarities between cancer and alcoholism--repression of feeling, shame, silence, and deception, point to a recurring theme in the work of Tennessee Williams and in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in particular, the difficulty of communicating with others. Writing about cancer patients and their families, Susan Sontag remarks that "[a]ll this lying to and by cancer patients is a measure of how much harder it has become in advanced industrial societies to come to terms with death" (8), but as Williams illustrates on stage, it is not about death alone that people have difficulty talking. The sensitive issue of Brick's relationship with Skipper, for example, and the unspoken subject of homosexuality, are matters that Brick cautions Maggie to be silent about: "Maggie, shut up about Skipper. I mean it, Maggie; you got to shut up about Skipper" (Williams 55). Similarly, Brick finds it equally difficult to be honest with his father. Describing their history of conversations, Brick observes: "we've always--talked around things, we've--just talked around things for some rutten reason. I don't know what, it's always like something was left not spoken, something avoided because neither of us was honest enough with the--other" (Williams 111).

Of course, Williams's characters are not the only ones unable to speak openly about death and human sexuality. In his study of homosexuality on stage, Nicholas de Jongh writes that "[m]id-century playwrights who wished to deal frankly with the subject of homosexuality, and in terms rejecting the idea that such sexuality was commensurate with evil and danger, were deterred by the rigid fact of stage censorship and by conservative producers" (55). In fact, until 1958, three years after the Broadway premier of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* the "depiction of homosexuals on stage was prohibited" (de Jongh 3). In order to circumvent this legal prohibition, however, "dramatists, directors and actors collaborated to fashion a homosexual iconography, a series of signifiers and codes that corroborate what the texts could only imply" (de Jongh 3). Illness is one such code that Williams employs to address conventional attitudes toward homosexuality in the mid-1950s.

Unable to speak honestly and openly about subjects touching the intimate parts of their lives, Williams's characters resort to the vocabulary of illness for discussing what may or cannot be expressed explicitly. The metaphors of illness provide a rich vocabulary for mentioning, in covert, or more socially acceptable terms, what society has said "could not be told" (Williams 59). Maggie, for example, diagnoses Brick's illness using the spatial metaphors of growth typically associated with cancer. According to Maggie, Brick's visible "sore" is the consequence of repressed feeling that threatens to become "malignant" if not expressed or otherwise treated:

> When something is festering in your memory or your imagination, laws of silence don't work, it's just like shutting a door and locking it on a house on fire in hope of forgetting that the house is burning. But not facing a fire doesn't put it out. Silence about a thing just magnifies it. It grows and festers in silence, becomes malignant. (Williams 31)

Maggie's diagnosis implicitly suggests that Brick's alcoholism is merely a mask for another more invisible illness. Her thinking thus reflects the myth, reported by Vernon Johnson, that "alcoholism may be a cover for some more serious emotional disorder" (4). Maggie alludes, of course, to Brick's relationship with Skipper, a relationship that Williams himself shrouds in mystery. In his own defense, Williams writes in a stage direction: "Some mystery should be left in the revelation of character in a play, just as a great deal of mystery is always left in the revelation of character in life, even in one's character to himself" (Williams 114-15). Of course, one implication of Williams's remarks is that Brick is unable to admit to himself "the inadmissible thing that Skipper died to disavow between them" (Williams 114), the homosexual nature of their relationship. The invisible illness that alcoholism masks may well be Brick's unconfessed homosexuality.

Although many contemporary physicians and psychologists dispute the implication that homosexuality is an illness, their view, historically, has not been the majority opinion. Writing as late as 1970, for example, twenty-five years *after* the Broadway premier of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* Thomas S. Szasz argued: "Today it is part of the dogma of American psychiatrically enlightened opinion that homosexuality is an illness--a form of mental illness" (161). Support for Szasz's view comes also from Vern and Bonnie Bullough, who report that it was not until 1974 that "the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the category of pathological illness" (197). Similarly, Nicholas de Jongh, writes that it was not until 1985 that "homosexuality was no longer regarded as illness or disease" (2).

The notion that one illness masks another "invisible illness," the association of images that link homosexuality with shameful diseases stemming from the repression of emotion, especially sexual feeling, and the implication that Brick and Big Daddy suffer from similar illnesses all suggest the possibility that Big Daddy's cancer points to a history of repressed behavior, even homosexuality. Considered in light of these comparisons, other signs as well indicate the ambiguous or ill-defined nature of Big Daddy's sexual identity. Big Daddy once enjoyed close ties with the homosexual couple, Jack Straw and Peter Ochello, from whom he obtained the bulk of his estate. Big Daddy expresses no alarm or visible dismay at the prospect that his son may have had a

homosexual relationship with Skipper. On the one hand, Brick's reaction to Big Daddy's lack of response is shock: "Big Daddy, you shock me, Big Daddy, you, you--*shock* me! Talkin' so— . . . --casually!--about a--thing like that" (Williams 119). On the other hand, Big Daddy calmly advocates tolerance: "One thing you can grow on a big place more important than cotton!--is *tolerance!*--I grown it" (Williams 120). At the same time, Big Daddy doesn't rule out the possibility that his own youthful, sexual experience may have included homosexual encounters. "I knocked around in my time," he confesses (Williams 115). And even though Big Daddy enjoys contemplating "pleasure with *women!*" (Williams 93), Big Daddy may be enamored with the prospect of defying convention: "I let many chances slip by because of scruples about it, scruples, convention--" (Williams 93). Conceivably, Big Daddy longs to defy convention, especially what de Jongh describes as "heterosexual models of commitment and faithfulness" (138). And, finally, the specific location of Big Daddy's cancer, euphemistically described as a "spastic colon," suggests a relationship between sodomy and illness. Just as during the Renaissance, as Sander L. Gilman inform us, anatomists "commented on the diseases of the anus and related them to 'lustful' living," so, too, in the twentieth century, the notion persists that "the anus could be pathologically influenced by 'misuse'" resulting in disease (60).

Considered from a broader perspective, these signs also outline a pattern of homosexual succession extending from Jack Straw and Peter Ochello to Big Daddy, and from Big Daddy to his son, Brick. Embracing one son, Brick, with tolerance, Big Daddy excludes his other son, Gooper, from the line of descent, dismissing his heterosexual offspring as "not my kind" (Williams 110). Ultimately, however, although Williams suggests the possibility that both Brick and Big Daddy may be closet homosexuals (or bi-sexuals), their sexual identities remain clouded in mystery. By raising the issue, however, Williams points to the fragility and instability of conventional and inflexible categories of classification for sexual identity.

As the same time that Williams implies that Brick and Big Daddy are alike in sexual orientation, he also contrasts their differing responses to the stigmatizing consequences of what society defines as illness. On the one hand, Brick vigorously denies any homosexual identification, adopting the homophobic, condemnatory tone characteristic of the conventional morality of his time. As if demonstrating the uncertain or untenable nature of his own conviction, however, Brick behaves as if he were a homosexual, at least in a way conventionally acceptable at the time; he displays the symptoms of disease, one illness masking a more serious emotional conflict. On the other hand, Big Daddy accepts his fate with dignity. Mustering his powers of resistance, he exhorts Brick to "hold onto [his] life" (Williams 84) to go on living despite adverse circumstances. Both characters fight similar stigmatizing illnesses--whether the label be alcoholism, cancer, or homosexuality. Both characters share their disgust with mendacity, but it is Big Daddy who faces the truth of impending death with the courage to vent his "[r]age, rage against the dying of the light!" (Williams 1).

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Parodying Fascism: *Suddenly Last Summer* as Political Allegory

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Tennessee Williams explores the coalescing of culture and violence in our society to create stark political drama.[1] Replete with both civilized and uncivilized ferocity, *Suddenly Last Summer* probes the power exerted by a fascist regime to create a "nebulous utopia."[2] Williams inverts the ideology's male chauvinism to caricature the arrogance of Mussolini and the fanaticism of Hitler through the megalomania of Violet Venable, a wealthy New Orleans widow determined to deify her only child, Sebastian, who was brutally murdered while vacationing in Spain. *Suddenly Last Summer* begins one year after the murder, in the late summer of 1936–coinciding, significantly, with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War–when Violet attempts to suborn a young psychiatrist, Dr. Cukrowicz, into performing a lobotomy on her niece, Catharine Holly, the only witness to her son's grisly demise. Violet holds Catharine responsible for Sebastian's death, so she has had her secretly incarcerated in an insane asylum to prevent her from broadcasting incriminating evidence that would shatter the myth that Violet devises to glorify her son and, through association, herself. Ostensibly the story of a desperate mother's attempt to protect her late son's reputation by stifling his bizarre murder, *Suddenly Last Summer* ultimately depicts an outrageous dictator (Violet Venable) shamelessly exploiting every means of acquiring power to achieve a morally untenable objective. Violet bribes, bullies, and beguiles all within her sphere of influence: the Church (Sister Felicity), the petite bourgeoisie aspiring to aristocracy (Grace and George Holly, Catharine's mother and brother), and science (Dr. Cukrowicz). Williams condemns the "creative nihilism"[3] of fascism as a travesty of civilization by satirizing Violet Venable's quest.

Violet Venable's name encodes a series of paradoxes that expose the ruthless personality lurking behind her mask of gentility: "Violet," the fragile flower of mourning and suffering, pales before "violent" and "volatile," while "venal" clashes with "venerable" to forge "Venable." With her lavender lace dress and tawdry "light orange or pink hair,"[4] Violet embodies the Venus's-flytrap prized by her son–desperately flamboyant, superficially enticing, and ultimately insidious. Sebastian had fruit flies from a Florida genetics laboratory flown in especially for this insectivorous plant each winter. Such indulgence alludes ironically to the fascist passion for genetics while contravening Darwin's "survival of the fittest" theory. The transplanted Venus's-flytrap flourishes in Sebastian's primeval garden only through great expense and with vigilant care–Sebastian's highly contrived jungle languishes, its primeval moorings inherently unstable. Violet confesses to Dr. Cukrowicz that she no longer has the strength to attend to the Venus's-flytrap; therefore, the plant will perish with the onslaught of winter. Before Sebastian's death Violet had refused to age, to relent, to admit her mortality: "It takes character to refuse to grow old, Doctor," she pontificates, "It calls for discipline, abstention" (360). Fascism exalts youth before all things, glorifying vigorous,

spontaneous, direct action;[5] however, the loss of Sebastian afflicts Violet severely as she, weak from extensive illness, must sacrifice much of Sebastian's legacy as she clings desperately to life. Like the Venus's-flytrap, she must be pampered with excessive medication and cloistered within her own hot-house, a Gothic mansion in the exclusive Garden District of New Orleans. Like the Venus's-flytrap, she will endure only a short season; fascism depends totally on a charismatic leader–no method of succession exists–so the regime dissolves with the death of its cult hero.[6]

Unaware that she merely basked in Sebastian's limelight, Violet proclaims, "We were a famous couple. . . . 'Sebastian and Violet, Violet and Sebastian' . . . every time we appeared, attention was centered on *us*! *–everyone else*! *Eclipsed*!" (362). Violet exults over her "emotionally incestuous" relationship with her son[7] as she insists that Sebastian remained celibate throughout his life: "I was actually the only one in his life that satisfied the demands he made of people" (362). She dismisses other people's lives as "trails of debris" (363) while exalting her own Renaissance grandeur: "My son, Sebastian, and I constructed our days, . . . each day of our lives like a piece of sculpture" (363). The art metaphor not only merges the flamboyant despotism of Renaissance princes with the imperial designs of Hitler and Mussolini, but also highlights each dictator's artistic ambitions and implicitly compares their "creativity" with Sebastian's poetic avocation. Mussolini gained fame as a journalist, his talent catapulting him into national prominence as a newspaper editor.[8] After failing to achieve any recognition as a painter, Hitler intuitively entered politics and became a master of rhetoric who manipulated a nation. If "art is an extension of the artist" that grants him, even momentarily, the illusion of transcending the limits of mortality,[9] then Sebastian is not a good poet because his verse has no public dimension, no viable audience save (perhaps) his overindulgent mother. Violet insists that "Sebastian had no public name as a poet, [because] he didn't want one, he refused to have one. He *dreaded*, *abhorred*!– false values that come from being publicly known, from fame, from personal–exploitation." Nevertheless, she resolves to secure his "future recognition," claiming that "he desired artistic renown after his death when it couldn't disturb him" (353). Sebastian found creating poetry difficult; producing only one poem every summer, he recuperated the rest of the year. *If* he shunned a viable audience yet yearned for posthumous prestige, then he sought the power of influence without its attendant responsibilities. Violet's account of Sebastian's ambition lacks credibility: if her son believed that fame debases one's integrity, incites others to "exploitation," then Violet's ambitions violate him more than any possible misconstruing of his verse–a fate which he obviously feared. Fascism decrees that the individual subordinate his own interests to those of the state; therefore, Violet readily exploits her son's death to promote her own ambitions for him–celebrity, influence, and ultimately power. Fascism, a "manic charge of cultural *optimism*,"[10] combats the alleged decadence of modern society "to turn back the tide of mediocrity and loss of vitality and to reinstate the exceptional, the outstanding, the heroic as the driving force of history."[11] Violet's son embodies the "new man" and "new style of culture" that fascists resolved to achieve[12] because "nothing was accidental, everything was planned and designed in Sebastian's life" (351). Violet informs the Doctor that for twenty-five years Sebastian wrote one poem each summer, printing them on an eighteenth-century hand press in his atelier

in the French Quarter. Sebastian's poetry, then, exists partially as a product of the Enlightenment–the intellectual movement that promoted rational thinking, advanced social reform, and questioned traditional religious beliefs. Significantly, fascist ideology derives ultimately from the French Enlightenment.[13]

Violet's confrontation with Catharine hinges largely on the matter of timing: "I've waited months to face her," Violet announces vehemently, thus betraying her impotence. She resolves to break Catharine, even if silencing her becomes a Pyrrhic victory: "I'm not afraid of using every last ounce and inch of my little, leftover strength . . . . I'm devoting all that's left of my life . . . to the defense of a dead poet's reputation" (352). Violet denounces Catharine as a "*vandal*!," "smashing our legend" (363), but predicts confidently, "I won't collapse! She'll collapse! I mean her lies will collapse–not my truth–not the truth" (352).

The vivid title, *Suddenly Last Summer*, correlates the elements of time and surprise, the transpiring of unexpected, untoward events. The painful legacy of the past taints the present and constricts the future, as Violet reveals inadvertently when recounting their pilgrimage to the Encantadas, the Enchanted Isles of the Galapagos. Fascinated by Melville's apocalyptic description of the extinct volcanos, Sebastian insists that he and his mother replicate Melville's experience and charter a schooner to tour the islands, where he discovers that experience transcends the mere written word. The great sea turtles depositing their eggs in the barren ash startle Sebastian because, as Violet smugly points out, "Melville *hadn't* written about" it (355). She readily believes that she and her son travel through life with greater sensitivity, and more perspicacity, than the author of *Moby Dick*. Violet and Sebastian defy time by recreating Melville's voyage, but their expedition to the Enchanted Isles subjects them even more stringently to the passing epochs: they superimpose their twentieth-century interpretation of Melville's nineteenth-century account on this primeval world when they return to witness the hatching of the eggs and the young sea turtles' "desperate flight to the sea" (355). The narrow beach teaming with life, the sky black with rapacious birds–the Enchanted Isles become a primeval Dunkerque. The "*wild, ravenous, harsh cries*" of the predators (356) contrast sharply with the utter silence of the defenseless turtles, merely moments old, struggling instinctively toward the indeterminate safety of the sea. The utterly vulnerable hatchlings become an ideal symbol for the myopic champions of fascist appeasement who insisted that civilized nations no longer wage war. Williams' stage directions indicate that the birds' clamor pulsates "*in rhythmic waves like a savage chant*" (356), mimicking the relentless screeching of war planes. Violet recounts the slaughter with military precision: "the birds hovered and swooped to attack and hovered and–swooped to attack! . . . . diving down on the hatched sea turtles, turning them over to expose their soft undersides, tearing the undersides open and rending and eating their flesh" (356). Although traditionally interpreted as a graphic depiction of cosmic brutality or sexual exploitation,[14] the disemboweling and devouring of the hatchlings more accurately defines the carnage of the battlefield. Violet recalls that "the sky was in motion" (355); during the Spanish Civil War the German Luftwaffe perfected a new art–aerial combat–that included the massive bombing of designated sites. Sebastian, mesmerized by the massacre, estimates that "only

a hundredth of one per cent" (356) of the hatchlings survive–only something as devastating as the annihilation of Gurenica, so poignantly commemorated by Pablo Picasso, warrants this apocalyptic imagery or accounts for Sebastian's subsequent behavior. Ensconced in the crow's nest, Sebastian suffers severe sunstroke and believes that God sanctions such savagery; after recovering from his delirium he desires to renounce the world and cloister himself in a Buddhist monastery in the Himalayas, but Violet prevents him from forsaking her. Sebastian becomes obsessed with evil after Violet thwarts his desire to escape, and asserts that humanity exists only to be doomed irrecoverably. He denies his spirituality through hedonism and satiates himself by exploiting others: "ensconced in his egomania," Sebastian "exult[s] in his own depravity, [thus] creat[ing] God not in man's image but in his own."[15]

The morally decrepit Church collaborates with the fascist regime to secure its wealth and influence amid unmitigated horror. Sister Felicity works at St. Mary's, the private asylum treating Catharine which essentially offers its services to the highest bidder. The singularly misnamed and spiritually impoverished Sister Felicity endures a rigid, antiseptic existence to find comfort in obeying institutional policy; she prefers that others take risks and assume responsibility. She persists–invariably, even mechanically, polite–but seldom allows herself the luxury of compassion, thus negating Williams' definition of spirituality: "God exists in our understanding of each other, and in our acts based upon our understanding."[16] She denies her own humanity, and thus the humanity of others, to serve the state as the ideal fascist incarnate: docile and diligent, practical and self-sacrificing.

Fascism squelches the family as a viable unit of society by distorting loyalties: Violet favored her son over her dying husband and refused to leave Sebastian in a Buddhist monastery in the Himalayas to nurse her husband during his final illness; Mrs. Holly, Catharine's legal guardian, would readily sacrifice her daughter for the right price. The ineffectual Mrs. Holly, "*a fatuous Southern lady*" (376), dares not offend her benefactress and attempts to appease Violet by readily agreeing with any dictate issued by her sister-in-law. George, a peevish college boy with a singular lack of talent and intellect, flaunts the wardrobe he inherited from Sebastian before Violet, unabashed by her obvious contempt. All sense of personal integrity and moral discrimination pale before the prospect of inheriting Sebastian's fortune and circulating among the social elite. George implores his sister to suppress her story of Sebastian's grisly demise–"you can't tell such a story to civilized people in a civilized up-to-date country!" (381)–then condemns Catharine for perversity when she insists otherwise. George remains unflinchingly self-centered, whining desperately: "you know we NEED that money! . . . . I got *ambitions*! And, Cathie, I'm YOUNG–I *want* things, I *need* them, Cathie! So will you please think about ME? Us?" (382). Catharine's mother and brother reinforce her obligation to the family as they diminish her individuality by continually calling her "Sister" rather than referring to her by her given name; however, they fail to reciprocate this sense of family commitment as their rapacity impels Catharine to forsake her personal integrity.

The pivotal figure in Violet's plot to sacrifice Catharine is the "glacially brilliant" (350) psychiatrist Dr. Cukrowicz–"Doctor Sugar" (351)–who represents science, medicine, and the power of modern technology to transcend the limits of man's knowledge and fulfill his most extravagant aspirations. His

"icy charm" (350) and incredibly good looks favor the Nordic youths whom Sebastian found enticing; indeed, the Doctor would have been an ideal candidate for Sebastian's entourage, save that his Slavic heritage disfranchises him in the fascist regime. The Doctor resists being suborned by Violet, but naively misconstrues her motives. His credulity makes him vulnerable to her wiles, but also displays his strength: he sustains his ideals by working purposely to create meaning in this harsh world. He becomes Sebastian's alter ego,[17] a man who refuses to renounce his humanity or despise the world through a false sense of superiority.

Suddenly Last Summer refutes the "perverse mythic logic" of fascism[18] as "a moral fable of our times."[19] Williams ridicules Hitler and Mussolini through Violet Venable's outlandish behavior: she commands all of the blessings of civilization, but persists morally and spiritually as a savage. Her own "Poem of Summer, 1936" perishes, fortuitously stillborn, as Violet exits hysterically from the stage. The incipient civil war in Spain damns fascism with its unprecedented atrocities, belying Violet's revels in a "world of light and shadow" where "the shadow was almost as luminous as the light" (358). On Violet Venable's "withered bosom" (350)–that sterile, depleted cavity that once nurtured Sebastian –shines a diamond starfish pin. This primeval Star of David, this tawdry symbol of Social Darwinism, targets her for persecution and, ultimately, for annihilation.

End Notes

[1] I am indebted to Thomas P. Alder's "Culture, Power, and the (Engendering of Community: Tennessee Williams and Politics," *Mississippi Quarterly* 48 (1995): 649-65 for this insight.

[2] I derived this wonderful phrase from RogerGriffin's *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1991) xiii.

[3] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1991) 47.

[4] Tennessee Williams, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *The Theatre of Tennessee Williams*, vol.3 (New York: New Directions, 1971) 350. All subsequent references will be in the text.

[5] Stanley Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1980) 9-11, 88.

[6] Griffin 42-43.

[7] Judith Thompson, *Tennessee Williams' Plays: Memory, Myth, and Symbol*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1987) 114.

[8] Griffin 60.

[9] Peggy W. Prenshaw, "The Paradoxical Southern World of Tennessee Williams," *Tennessee Williams: A Tribute*, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson, Mississippi: UP of Mississippi, 1977) 24.

[10] Griffin 47.

[11] Griffin 42.

[12] Payne 8; Griffin 32-33, 35.

[13] Stanley 97.

[14] For an extremely sensetive, in-depth analysis refer to Thompson, *Tennessee Williams' Plays* 101-05.

[15] Paul J. Hurley, "*Suddenly Last Summer* as 'Morality Play'," *Modern Drama* 8 (1966): 396.

[16] Williams, "Tennessee Williams" 287.
[17] Thompson, *Tennessee Williams' Plays* 125.
[18] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1991) viii.
[19] Tennessee Williams, "Williams On a Hot Tin Roof," interview with Don Ross, *New York Herald Tribune* 5 January 1958, sec. 4: 1+. Rpt. In *Conversations with Tennessee Williams*, ed. Albert J. Devlin (Jackson: Mississippi: UP of Mississippi, 1986) 52.

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ESSAYS

Reassessing the Paternity of Surrealism

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In 1917, the Ballets Russes presented Jean Cocteau's radical new theatrical ballet, *The Parade*, in Paris. Eric Satie composed the music, Pablo Picasso designed the scenery and costumes, and Lèonide Masine devised the choreography. When G. Appolinaire,[1] the avant-garde poet and critic who provided the program notes, used his newly-minted adjective *surrealist* to characterize this work, few could foresee either the success or the longevity of this particular term, which would eventually be used to define not just a few productions, but an entire literary and dramatic genre throughout the 20th century.

Guillaume Apollinaire was a well-established French poet, critic, and dramatist who "was in the forefront of every important artistic movement in France between 1900 and 1917." [2] Originally, he first used his neologism to describe one of his own works.[3] He gave his play, *The Breasts of Tiresias* (1917), the subtitle "*drame surréaliste*,"[4] inventing the term in order to distance himself from the German Romantic philosophers who had first used a similar term, *surnaturalisme*. He explained his choice in his letter to Paul Dermée, in March 1917:

> All things considered, I think *surrealisme* would be better than surnaturalisme, which I had used originally. *Surrealisme* doesn't yet exist in the dictionaries, and it will be easier to handle than *surnaturalisme*, which is already employed by those gentlemen the philosophers.[5]

However, while the paternity of the term itself was never questioned, the founders of the "official" Surrealist Movement--especially André Breton--were apparently unwilling to credit Apollinaire with *any* significant contributions to that movement other than the invention of a unique neologistic label. However, if one compares Apollinaire's critical statements and literary works (especially *The Breasts of Tiresias*) with those of the early surrealists, it becomes clear that he, not Breton, was philosophically as well as artistically the true "father of surrealism," despite Breton's symbolic usurpation of the title after Apollinaire's death.

The end of World War I marked a new era for European civilization. In the aftermath of a brutal global conflict which had rapidly metamorphosed into a vast terrifying Theatre of the Absurd, almost every traditional value seemed shaken by "the absurd, the accidental and the illogical."[6] In the middle of this state of fluctuation and instability, André Breton[7] published his *First Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), proclaiming the birth of a "new" movement. However, neither surrealism, nor any other artistic, political or philosophical school of this period, can be thus easily detached from past theoretical lodgments: Nietzche, who rejected the "Apollonian" views of scholarship and proposed a revision of all values; Freud, who engendered psychoanalysis;

Einstein, who reformed the Neutonian model; Marx, who propounded his revolutionary theory of political economy. As part of this ideological continuity, Breton and his surrealists not only "continued to employ the shock tactics of futurism and Dada,"[8] but also--consciously or unconsciously--derived creative substance as well as inspiration from Apollinaire.

If one compares Apollinaire's artistic works and critical writings with those of the early surrealists, it seems possible to verify the hypothesis of Apollinaire's paternity of surrealism, even though Apollinaire himself, in the Preface to *The Breasts of Tiresias*, made it clear that he was "in no way undertaking to form a school,"[9] and despite the fact that Breton and his followers seemed only too eager to minimize or to dismiss altogether any substantive link to Apollinaire. For example, Breton "in asserting his originality in the 1924 *Manifeste du Surréalisme* defends his poetic identity against Apollinaire's influence" and "he cites Apollinaire only as the source of the term *surréalisme*."[10]

Apollinaire, Breton maintained, possessed not the spirit, but only "the *letter*, still imperfect, of Surrealism, having shown himself powerless to give a valid theoretical idea of it."[11] Thus, he said, "I believe that there is no point today in dwelling any further on this word and that the meaning we gave it initially has generally prevailed over its Apollinarian sense."[12] He then presented a list of those great poets, artists and intellectuals who, in his opinion, contributed to the Surrealist Movement, and Apollinaire's name is conspicuous by its absence. In addition, in a 1918 essay on Apollinaire republished in *Les Pas Perdus* in 1924, Breton wrote about *The Breasts of Tiresias*:

> *The Breasts of Tiresias* seemed to me like a play of good humor, where I felt like laughing without a second thought . . . . I would also like to say that the play did not reveal, regarding the choice of means, the same infallibility as the masterpiece of Jarry. It did not communicate, nevertheless, the New Spirit from which Apollinaire felt a bit of the Immense Body.[13]

Reading this, one realizes that the main argument of Breton was basically concerned with the way this play was presented to the audience. He did not argue about Apollinaire's *ideas* but about the "means" he chose to convey them. Moreover, even though Breton seemed to think that Apollinaire did not really belong to this "new spirit," he seemed to agree that at least Apollinaire had some connection, however remote, to the "Immense Body" of the movement.

Breton apparently believed it necessary to bolster his position as founding father of surrealism by belittling or ignoring the contributions of Apollinaire. Perhaps, underneath his obviously robust ego, lurked a measure of insecurity. In any case, he apparently could not admit--to himself or to others--that someone else (even a dead someone else) might be able to challenge his claim to the paternity of "his" movement. It was not until Breton had himself become an established poet and the unquestioned leader of the surrealists that he would grant the possibility that Apollinaire had even a minuscule role in the formation of surrealism:

> Picabia, Duchamp. Picasso are still with us. I grasp your hands, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Philippe Soupault, my dear friends forever. Do you remember Guillaume Apollinaire and Pierre Reverdy? Isn't it true that we owe them a little of our strength? [14]

In the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (1930), Breton even magnanimously admitted two of Apollinaire's poetic works (*poèmes conversations* and *Quelconqueries*) to the surrealist canon. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in that same Manifesto, Breton refers to Rimbaud 14 times, Lautréamont 8 times, Tzara 6 times, and Apollinaire only twice. It is quite apparent that Breton regarded Apollinaire as only one of many "seers"[15] and "heralds"[16] of his movement, and that he never really ceased to believe that Apollinaire was closer to the Dadaists than to the Surrealists.

However, the major difference between Dadaism and Surrealism was the fact that surrealism "converted the Dada attack into a larger and more positive aesthetic action."[17] Dadaism as an aesthetic philosophy had very little positivism, because it was a purely nihilistic movement that rejected every established social, political, and artistic value. Even the name of the movement was chosen at random from a dictionary and refers to a little toy horse.[18] Apollinaire, on the contrary, was very much aware of the critical and aesthetic implications inherent in his choice of the neologism *surrealist*.

The surrealists were also very conscious of their actions and their aesthetics, even though they publicly supported the unrestrained use of the unconscious as a creative tool. Definitions of this process ranged from that of Breton:

> Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, whether verbally or in writing, or in any other way, the real process of thought. Thought's dictation, free from any control by the reason, independent of any aesthetic or moral preoccupation.[19]

to that of Aragon:

> The vice named surrealism is the immoderate and impassional use of the stupefacient image, . . . each image on each occasion forces you to revise the entire universe.[20]

and ultimately to Dali's brief but effective: "Le surréalisme, c' est moi."[21]

The surrealists did everything they could to avoid using any banal stereotypes or stale conventions in their artistic endeavors. They would introspectively and incessantly analyze themselves and their work, striving to reach not the aesthetic and the beautiful, but the truthful. In order to succeed, they used, among other techniques, that of automatic writing,[22] a half-dream state that allowed them to reach the unconscious and put their inner imagery into words--words not necessarily connected by logic. The most characteristic qualities of their images were: ambiguity, transparency, liquidity, musicality, dematerialization, eroticism, and the movement from the static to the active.

One might argue that some of the idiosyncratic features listed above do not precisely mirror Apollinaire's ideas. However, those particular qualities were

for the most part representative of the mature period of surrealism. When the movement first started, it was in an experimental stage, receptive to new ideas--even, apparently, to those of Apollinaire. No one can predict what might have happened had Apollinaire not died of influenza in 1918. He was a man who liked experiments and innovations. Likewise, he was determined to avoid clichés and stereotypes, and he did not consider himself a member of any one specific literary movement. Since many of his artistic friends and fellow intellectuals, such as Pablo Picasso and Max Jacob, later became involved with Breton and his surrealist company, he might well have done so himself, and thus might have contributed directly to the shaping process of surrealist theory. As it is, Apollinaire's undoubted influence on those friends, especially Picasso,[23] probably ensured that his ideas and artistic concepts permeated the movement to *some* extent, despite Breton's indications to the contrary. In any case, if Apollinaire's ideas were so foreign to the essential essence of the surrealist school of thought, why did Breton and his group choose to appropriate his neologism to describe it?

The surrealists, unlike the Dadaists, did not stop at the rejection of society but wanted its renovation as well. That is why their favorite symbol was the Phoenix, a bird that can be reborn from its own ashes. They wanted to surpass the given reality and form a different, more transcendent one. Searching for the truth in the unconscious, the surrealists were intensely interested in the power of archetypes in and on our lives. A concept similar to that of archetypes can also be found in the Preface to *The Breasts of Tiresias*, as Apollinaire explains the conceptual sources and implications of his neologism:

> And in order to attempt, if not a renovation of the theatre, at least an original effort, I thought it necessary to come back to nature itself but without copying it photographically. When a man wanted to imitate walking, he created the wheel, which does not resemble a leg. In the same way he has created surrealism unconsciously.[24]

His reality was like the wheel which represents the leg, which, in turn, was very like the reality of the surrealists.

Both Apollinaire and Breton were influenced by the Marxian premise that "the object of philosophy is not to interpret the world but to transform it."[25] We find this same presupposition in Apollinaire's Prologue to *The Breasts of Tiresias*, where he states that transformation should be the meaning of modern art. In front of a lowered curtain, a character in the play, the Director, talks about a war which has murdered all the stars, "even the constellations."[26] He speaks of the necessity to light up all the stars of the world again. This message implies the necessity for fresh ideas, a "New Spirit" as he terms it. That is why in the same Prologue Apollinaire defends the modern theatre and unfolds its innovative principles. He wanted "joyfulness voluptuousness virtue"[27] instead of "pessimism,"[28] and the entire universe instead of the slice of life that realism had to offer. Within this framework, he described his ideal theatre: "a circular theatre with two stages, one in the middle, the other like a ring around the spectators, permitting the full unfolding of our modern art,"[29] a theatre full of sounds, gestures, colors, cries, poetry, painting, choruses, action and multiple sets, pathos and burlesque, illusions.[30]

One might describe this cartoon-and-circus atmosphere as Disneyesque,

and in fact Disney actually exhibited four cartoon stills from his film *The Three Little Wolves* at the "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism" exhibition in New York in 1936. He was even hailed by the critics as an American surrealist, and when asked to describe his own work, he said:

> I do not make films primarily for children . . . . The worst of us is not without innocence, although deeply buried it may be. In my work, I try to reach and speak to that innocence.

Someone might wonder why Disney's *innocence* had a place next to Tanqui, Fuseli and Max Ernst exhibits, while Apollinaire was not considered worthy of equal recognition.

The early surrealists started their movement by looking for the equivalent of Apollinaire's "New Spirit," a spirit through which they might change the world. Whether or not they consciously admitted it, they used Apollinaire and his works as basic ingredients in their quest to surpass both the reality of their time and the realists who wished to convert the entire world to their own narrow viewpoint. The surrealists had a different agenda for the world, and were determined to communicate their vision to as many people as possible. They were romantic communists and their favorite phrase was Paul Eluard's phrase *donner a voir*, which means *give to see*. That is why the surrealist plays were considered incomplete without the participation of the audience. They welcomed not only reactions of approval but also reactions of downright hostility. They gleefully attacked their audiences because they wanted to prevent them from "corresponding to an art rationally or with conventional emotional empathy."[31] When they could not convince people to come to their performances, they usually lured them to the theatre through ingenious deceptions. They falsely promised potential audiences a "lecture on money management" or an on-stage appearance by Charlie Chaplin. Thus, they had crowds of people who usually were furious by the end of the performance (if not before), and who "walked out indignantly."[32]

The play *The Breasts of Tiresias* seems to have a similar dependence on the audience. For example, in the Prologue, the Director talks to the audience as if giving a speech, and in the last scene of the play, Therese hurls her balloon-breasts at the members of the audience. Moreover, at the première of Apollonaire's play on June 24, 1917, something strange happened just after the end of the second act:

> An English Officer was making a great racket in the orchestra: it had to be Vaché. The scandal of the performance had excited him. He had come into the theatre with a revolver in his hand, and was threatening to fire into the audience.[33]

This incident influenced Breton deeply. Maurice Nadeau states that "we find the echo of this recollection over ten years later, in the *Deuxième Manifeste du Surréalisme*, in which Breton declares that 'the simplest surrealist act consists of going out into the street revolver in hand and firing at random into the crowd as often as possible."[34]

Finally, there is yet another common point between the surrealistic plays and *The Breasts of Tiresias*: in the surrealistic plays the characters, who were

Prosodic Performance Directives as Clues to Meaning in Donne's "Canonization"

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Based on its central position in the seminal works of arguably the two premier critical movements of the twentieth century, "The Canonization" has been labeled an appropriate piece on which to test a theory of poetry (Haskin 18). In 1947, Cleanth Brooks borrowed his title *The Well-Wrought Urn* from line 33 and used the poem to demonstrate New Criticism; in response three and one-half decades later, Jonathan Culler showed how Brooks' method broke down in *On Deconstruction*, published in 1982. Following this lead, I wish to examine the sound structure of "The Canonization" as a means of developing my theory of prosodic performance directives as a key to interpretation.

In Donne studies, the field of prosody was closed to all but a few hearty souls by the work of Arnold Stein, in the form of several articles in the forties and one rather monumental book, *John Donne's Lyrics: The Eloquence of Action*, published in 1962 and reissued in 1980. While I do not plan to focus on traditional prosody, my work follows from Stein's in the sense that both of us attempt to relate the sounds in Donne's lyric poetry to the meanings those sounds signify--something traditional prosody seldom attempts. Furthermore, my project does focus on prosody in its British linguistic sense, in which the word refers to the area of phonology that deals with such speech phenomena as length, rhythm, stress, pitch, intonation, and loudness. This area, which forms the core of my study, is usually termed in American linguistics *suprasegmental phonology*,[1] but I have opted in this literary study to use the less technical word, even though that means explaining this unfamiliar sense to my audience, most of whom will think *metrics* whenever they hear *prosody* until they become accustomed to this broader and more scientific meaning.

My underlying claim is that the essential orality of lyric poetry requires that we attend to performance considerations when deciding among proffered critical interpretations; if we are to accept an interpretation as correct, we are compelled by logic to commit to a prosodically precise performance of that interpretation. Conversely, if a poem contains any clues as to how it is to be performed, these are admissible as interpretive evidence, of what is perhaps a refreshing new type. Poetic sound analysis and prosody have been around for centuries, but they have seldom been connected to the enterprise of interpretation in such a fundamental way.

What performance directives are, then, are characteristics of a poem's phonetic, metrical, or syntactical structure that indicate how the lines are to be vocalized. They vary in strength from a subtle potential for enhancing a certain reading to an insistent syntactical constraint that effectively renders some particular intonational pattern unperformable. In cases where the attitude of the speaking persona is a matter of basic interpretive disagreement, appealing to such phonological evidence to discover the intended manner of delivery can help adjudicate the critical debate. Specifically, an interpretation

expressed or enhanced by intoning a line according to any directives it may contain is--other things being equal--a more desirable interpretation of the poem than an interpretation whose performance is not so indicated by the sound structure.

In the longstanding critical debate over "The Canonization," readings tend to fall into two categories: the fundamentally sincere readings, which view the speaker as straightforwardly proposing a new religion of love, and the fundamentally ironic readings, which view him as using the proposition to poke jibes at either the folly of love, the system of courtly favor, the process of canonization, or various combinations of all three.[2] This ongoing critical conversation has witnessed a proliferation of evidence of diverse types--including structural, etymological, biographical, theological, historical, and neo-historical--and yet the debate continues. Perhaps an appeal to performance directives can provide a new approach to resolving it.

To uncover the performance directives, we will test-perform "The Canonization" according to each of the two basic interpretations. For the sincere reading the speaker will be cast as a solemn, devout fellow who takes himself and his beloved quite seriously, whereas for the ironic reading he will be cast as witty, irreverent, and prone to self-mockery. In seeking to discover which performance is favored by the sounds of the poem, we will try out prosodically precise performances of each basic reading and analyze points of difference to see if either interpretation is more readily and completely expressed using the available words. For an example, in many cases the point of difference will be varying patterns of accent within the lines; what we will be doing in those cases is trying to discover whether the syllables--by virtue of such features as their phonetic structure or their metrical or syntactical position--are more suited to carrying an accentual pattern conveying the speaker's sincerity or one conveying his irony. This is the credo of prosodic performance testing: if the structure of a poem facilitates a performance--with regard to either accent, intonation (melody), or other prosodic features--expressing interpretation A more completely than it facilitates one expressing interpretation B, then that fact is evidence in favor of A as the preferred interpretation of the poem. To borrow from Pope's dictum "The sound must seem an echo to the sense," we will be trying to determine *which* sense the sounds of a line seems better able to echo.

Not surprisingly, "The Canonization" contains possibilities for sound enrichment in nearly every line, but space limitations dictate our focusing on only a few. Since the passages most salient for the interpretive dispute generally occur in the latter half of the poem, we can profitably begin with a look at stanza three. In that stanza, the pronunciation of the opening two lines does not vary significantly with the speaker's seriousness or irony, but that of line 21 does. Prompted by one of the most recently influential ironic readings, Arthur Marotti's coterie-poet thesis, one can picture Donne or one of his peers reading with delight "We'are Tapers too, and at our owne cost die" (21), adding a naughtily comic touch to the fundamental irony by building to a crescendo of sexual innuendo with the final pun. That ironic performance will accent each of the final three words, the last one most of all.

When we test-perform the line in that manner, we see that the phonetic structure of the phrase equips us to effect the crescendo: three heavy monosyllabic words (a long vowel (*owne*), an ending consonant cluster (*cost*),

and a dipthong (*die*), respectively) in succession, the most important one coming last in both a line and a sentence and being set apart by what Stein labels "an unyielding combination of consonants" (1942; 687). What he means is that in the careful enunciation normal for poetic recitation, there is an unnatural pause between *coste* and *die*, which in ordinary connected speech are run together.[3] The heavy weight of each of the three words, combined with this extra pause before the formation of *die*, thus facilitates expedites the added emphasis stemming from the speaker's self-conscious naughtiness; he wants his audience to get the pun and to know he is punning quite pointedly.

The pun can hardly be ignored even for a sincere performance of the line, but the performer will need to keep it in lower profile intonationally, especially since it leads into the sentence regarding the eagle and the dove, which have serious religious associations and would on a sincere reading need to be spoken with appropriate solemnity. At issue in the contrast between the two performances is the strength of the accentual peak on *die*; it carries the most prominent accent on either reading, but on the ironic reading--just examined--that prominence is more pronounced. To convey the respect required by the sincere reading, the crucial phrase must be downplayed by sounding *die* less emphatically, perhaps at a lower pitch. This can easily be accomplished, but to do so is to negate the potential in the words Donne has written, de-emphasizing the sound structure of the line rather than using it to contribute to the expression of meaning. The ironic reading, as we saw above, takes full advantage of the possibilities inherent in that sound structure. There is thus a quite strong enhancement potential in favor of the ironic interpretation.

Stanza three contains at least two other passages with which the performer can convey the ironic stance with prosodic precision but which offer no such possibility for the expression of a sincere reading. Without going into detail, the first of these involves line 24 and presents a situation similar to the one we have just examined. The naughty courtier's delivery of "we two being one, are it" (24) will rise markedly in pitch on the final word, as if to underscore his joy at the absurdity--yet perversely logical soundness--of equating the lovers, on the basis of their sexual talents, with the immortal phoenix. And, had we time to examine it in detail, we would see that both the syntax and the phonetic structure support that pitch jump. To convey a sincere reading, a performer would have to back off the naturally elevated pitch of the word--by making an awkward effort to lower the pitch--to avoid sounding flippant. *Are it* therefore contains, on our scheme, a performance directive which prompts the performer to sound the line ironically.

The final occasion for sound precision in stanza three is also the first in a sequence of three identical metrical-phonetic structures in the poem,[4] in each of the conspicuously shortened final lines of the last three stanzas. The accented second syllable of *Mysterious* (27), like the accented first syllables of *Canoniz'd* (36) and *patterne* (45), begins with the type of consonant known as a voiceless stop, which is notable in several respects for its capacity for forceful pronunciation. Stops, which are also known as plosives, are those consonants the production of which involves complete stoppage of the air flow from the lungs, meaning that if they are released there is a more or less strenuous letting out of pent-up air compared to other types of sounds. Voiceless stops, of which the entire set (/t/, /k/, /p/) is represented in our

sequence, have some further distinctions that contribute to their aggressive potential: they are generally held more tensely and for a longer period of time than are their voiced counterparts (for the record: /d/, /g/, /b/), and, as Reuven Tsur documents (3), they tend to be positively correlated with aggression in the poetry of many languages. Furthermore, and perhaps most significant for our purposes, when voiceless stops occur in certain phonetic environments--including those of *Canoniz'd* and *patterne*--they are aspirated upon release, which means an audible puff of air is emitted before the onset of voicing of the following vowel. The strength of this aspiration can be increased for emphasis and is a useful tool for expressing either sarcasm or anger. Considering the central significance of these key words, whose meanings lie at the core of the poem's linkage of sexuality with religion, it seems clear that in accenting them, a performer can seize upon the stops' forceful potential to convey irony--whether comic, derisive, or bitter--quite effectively.

In the case of a sincere performance of the poem, in which the speaker is seriously proposing either canonization for the lovers or a genuine new religion of love, the plosives not only do not aid the performer's rendition of the lines, but also actually hinder the solemn pronunciation of the words. The difficulty arises when the performer attempts to emphasize the words in order to convey their importance; in accenting the appropriate syllables, he or she must make an effort to buffer the releases--especially the aspirated final two, *Canoniz'd* and *patterne*--to keep them from sounding biting or harsh. Were the words not given much prominence, this would be easy, but there is a certain difficulty in pronouncing an isolated, lexically significant accented syllable beginning with a voiceless stop without releasing the consonant rather bitingly and with somewhat explosive aspiration. In order to give sufficient strength to the syllable, the performer must somehow produce the consonant emphatically but without the sensation of letting out pent-up hostility; possible, but challenging, and failing to actualize as much of the sound's potential to echo the sense as when the stops are used explosively in an ironic performance. Yet that would need to be done for a prosodically precise sincere performance. With regard to these key words, the sincere interpretation is therefore less performable than the ironic interpretation, which, as we have seen, makes use of the voiceless stops to express and enhance its aggressive or comic quality.

Some other possibilities for prosodic precision in stanzas four and five are also important. Perhaps the most notable is found in the final stanza, in the complex double clause that many editors place in parentheses in order to minimize confusion; the sheer excess of both the sentence and this parenthetical clause (lines 42 and 43) forces the performer to rush the words therein, in a desperate effort to indicate to the listeners that this is all one sentence, this clause is parenthetical, and if we can just hurry and get it out of the way the whole thing will make sense. The syntax of the stanza thus rather interestingly controls the performance of certain lines within it. And that aspect of the performance that is so determined--the tempo--in turn limits the performer's expressive possibilities; it would prove all but impossible for a performer to maintain a serious, non-mocking manner while rushing through the successive clauses, trying frantically to avoid losing his or her audience's attention. Lines 42 and 43 are therefore practically unperformable on the sincere interpretation of the poem. The rushing of the words fits perfectly,

however, with the comic-ironic interpretation, allowing the performer to convey vocally what the speaker views as the imagined future lovers' excess, as evidenced by his mimicking their struggle to get as many points of praise as possible into their already exaggerated invocation. Thus we have perhaps the most insistent performance directive of the poem.

When the performer of an ironic reading finally reaches the request portion of the invocation, *patterne* provides the final tool for expressing the speaker's sarcasm. This third instance of the voiceless stop series is even more appropriate in its context than the first two instances are in theirs, since with its extremely strong aspiration potential it is especially suited for expressing the speaker's mocking of the imagined future admirers. (Try it yourself and see: "a PATterne of your love.") As with each performance crux we have examined, the line's sound structure can be used to give precise expression to an ironic interpretation, while it has little to offer toward conveying sincere interpretations. By utilizing these vocal enhancements of meaning, the ironic interpretations render Donne's poem a more complex and sophisticated work of art.

Notes

[1] Phonetic segments are those units of sound corresponding very roughly to the sounds represented by individual vowels and consonants; suprasegmental phenomena are, therefore, those qualities of speech production that are characteristic of larger portions of utterances and thus in graphic representations appear on a level (tier) above that of the segmental representation.

[2] Some examples of straightforward readings include those by Brooks, A. J. Smith, and Earl Miner; ironic readings include those by Marotti, John Clair, and M. Thomas Hester.

[3] In linguist's terms, the similar articulation of the dental stops that end and begin *coste* and *die* means that in the careful speech normal for poetic recitation, their separate formation necessitates an unnatural pause between the release of *coste* and the closure for *die*; in ordinary connected speech there is a single closure and release for both stops.

[4] The metrical situation is that the three lines (27, 36, 45) are specimens of nearly perfect iambic trimeter occurring quite conspicuously at the ends of stanzas otherwise consisting of more or less irregular tetrameter and pentameter lines. The accentual peak of each line is the syllable beginning with the voiceless stop, which in each case is the second syllable of the line; the regular iambic beat of the emphatically shortened lines thus falls on these stressed syllables.

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Annie Dillard's *The Living* and the Concept of the Historical Novel

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Historical novels of what readers would consider "epic" in scope and assignment are customarily public histories that revolve around the massive subject of man's efforts to impose "civilization." Epic histories are inherently political because they sponsor ideology and justify the ways of fathers to sons, whereby the treks across continents or oceans validate the forcible tearing and sundering from the old ways of life. These texts sing of order--out of necessity as much as delight--for epics are profoundly aware of the forces that destroy, and of the disease and savage loneliness within man that renders so much of his human effort futile. But while epics sponsor the promises of redemption from teeming New York to the uncluttered West or from flaming Troy to the new Rome, they illuminate man's need and incapacity to completely control the demonic and destructive forces around and within him. Great epics all applaud all what man can make, and the text itself provides the chief images of that power. But historical novels also spotlight man's efforts to subdue and contain the same potent forces he has tapped.

Annie Dillard's *The Living* retains much of the mixing and mingling of traditional contextual issues that are benchmarks of historical epics--the creative and destructive, growth and decay, imposed order and monstrosity. But instead of formulating her history of the white settlement of Puget Sound in the flattened time-order continuum of the traditional epic, with its directed energy of ideologically sponsored characters, Dillard utilizes the "contemporary modernist" style of writing she details in her *Living by Fiction*. *The Living* is a narrative collage that involves abrupt narrative shifts, disjunctive splicings and enjambments of time and space. Characters are not sentimentalized or provided with powerful ideological bases for their transcontinental journeys to the Washington territory.

Unlike traditional historical novels, *The Living* has its own self-reflective structure. Characters' roles are formal and structural and do not share the common ideological bases to interpret their journeys or their processes of settling in an alien environment. The figures that populate *The Living* are less parts of a seamless historical process or even human simulacra than focal points for action. The fragmented style with its disparate episodes of the modern picaresque reflect that the story of the settlement of Washington is less a great historical event to be "experienced" than an object of speculation. The abrupt narrative turns, the narrator's choice of parceling out kaleidoscopic but short episodic spurts of story, that do not always link cause and effect, remind readers that the story itself is a conscious and willed artifice. Dillard's "contemporary modernist" style makes her epic less a traditional historical novel involving forcefulness of dramatic conflict, vivid spectacle and heart-pounding suspense, and more a collage of individual characters with separate senses of consciousness. The self-reflexive style treats history less as a series of ideological concepts in a linear time continuum and more like a Cubist painting, with its intersecting lines of private concerns and conflicting drives.

Dillard's self-reflexive style serves to sponsor and elucidate her theme that history is ultimately unknowable apart from the consciousness of its individual spectators and players.

Perhaps nothing is more "typical" of contemporary modernist fiction than its destruction of the narrative time line. Just as the Cubist can take an entire room full of furniture and iron it into a 10 x 10 square canvas, so fiction can amalgate fifty years of life, dice it into bits and place these bits together within the limits of temporal form. Historical novels are very fastidious about the progression of time. They attempt to clearly delineate the relative positions of before, the then, and the now. Creating and spotlighting benchmarks of time change are part and parcel of creating history. With Dillard's *The Living*, readers encounter narrative leaps and fast cuttings, clenched juxtapositions, interpenetrations between various families in the novel, and temporal enjambments. But while these techniques are standard practice now in communication, this has not been the case for the historical novel. No extent of quick-action splicing could unsettle an audience raised on sixty second television commercials. In fact, many viewers would be bored without rapid-fire splicings. But for early readers of say William Faulkner, Virginia Woolf, or James Joyce, the surface fragmentation of their work must have seemed like complete havoc. This is perhaps also the case for readers of *The Living*. Readers are not accustomed to narrative fragments with the epic-novel, where the linear narrative involving legacies and events is disrupted and perhaps distorted.

The narrative collage and its shifting viewpoints seem to proffer the philosophy that there is a general equality of all relative positions by assuming them to be of equal value. The rapid narrative shifts in *The Living*, which usually involve the examination of a mundane event or daily routines in the Washington Territory, suggests that Dillard is not interested in bringing readers to the mountain with the historical patriarchs and leaders to look down--but she involves her audience in history from the base-up and not the top-down.

Theoretically, it would seem that the narrative collage would be incompatible with the aims of historical-epic novels. One extreme result of applying the narrative collage to the epic novel would be the possibility of creating art/fiction without a center--a world of undirected energy. But *The Living*'s rather rapid, kaleidoscopic narrative collage suggests that no single, monolithic historical record exists and that the settlement of Washington is rather an infinite series of random possibilities. But this confuses the traditional approach of the historical novel and seems to suggest that the world's coherence is not derived from any universal order but from many individual stances. Hence, for *The Living*, the individual perspectives of the Puget Sound mariners, the woodsmen, and the women who harvest shellfish and work the fields are ultimately valid looks at the settlement of Washington. As Annie Dillard writes in *Living by Fiction*: "Relativism is particularly suited to artists and writers, who, as a class, have often been dedicated to private visions of the world as a storehouse of manipulable ideas and things" (23).

The epic-history narrative from the *Iliad*, the *Aneid*, to *Paradise Lost*, to Cooper and even James Michener generally involves the collision of monolithic forces--where one inevitably displaces the other and the victor is customarily aided by God, "destiny," virtue, or technology. Annie Dillard's

The Living offers no single ideological force that passes across continental America. Family leaders leave the East Coast or the Middle West for as many viable reasons as there are families in the novel. But Dillard's shifting narrative techniques seem to sponsor some philosophies about history. Through the narrative collage, readers see the isolation of individual consciousness rather than the collective consciousness that is so vital to the traditional historical epic. On the one hand, while Dillard's abrupt narrative shifts present a medley of characters' insights into the world around them, her style obliquely demonstrates the limited stance of any individual consciousness, and stresses the bias and partiality of anyone's knowledge. By moving fiction's arena from the material world to consciousness itself, Dillard stresses the teleological import of individual self-consciousness. In *Living by Fiction*, Dillard explains how the narrative collage suggests that the world of traditional epic history, with its total immersion in events, is no longer possible,

> In the contemporary modernist view, the work of art is above all a chunk in the hand. It is a self-lighted opacity, not a window and not a mirror. It is a painted sphere, not a crystal ball. The reader, then, must not wholly enter such a work of fiction; if he enters it emotionally, he will be lost, and miss the work's surface, where the framework of its meaning as art is spread. So the contemporary modernist fiction writer deliberately flattens the depth elements of his art. He replaces emotional strengths with intellectual ones. He makes the characters into interesting objects. He flattens narrative space-time by breaking it into bits; he flattens his story by fragmenting its parts and juxtaposing disparate elements on the page. He writes in sections; he interrupts himself by a hundred devices. In doing so, he keeps his readers fully conscious at his work's surface. (47-48)

Some of the best elements of good storytelling--what papers call good storytelling--have been abducted by films and popular fiction. We think of a blockbusting good story with a little death in it, and perhaps scenes with some elemental forces like fire, hurricanes, the sea, perhaps some bloody battle scenes, crossed romances, exotic/unusual settings, switched babies, murders of course, fortune or found or rediscovered treasure, international intrigue, escapes, missing but sought-after letters, vows broken or hazardously upheld, or even disguises. All this sort of drama that could appear in the epic film appeals to virtually everyone. The very popular genres must depend on them, but literary novels now avoid these alluring scenes. If, despite all your precautions, your novel is epic in scale, if it entails such quaint narrative virtues as enlargement and diversity of action, forcefulness of dramatic conflict, vivid spectacle, and heart-pounding suspense, no doubt more than one critic will accuse you of writing for a film sale.

It seems that even among the serious writers of traditional fiction, dramatic storytelling was waning with World War I when characters in novels quit galloping all over countryside and started brooding from chairs. So much of the action became interiorized and psychological. External conflict was transmogrified into internal tension. As Annie Dillard claims in *Living by Fiction* that, "We swallowed the arena and can no longer watch the show. Internal battles lack color. You may search the novels of Virginia Woolf in

vain for so much as a single horse" (46).

One devastating idea that affects those in the plastic arts and fortunately has not arrived at the doorstep of fiction writers is the notion that a "work of art" is produced only at some cutting edge of history. This is what Wyndham Lewis called "the demon of progress." According to this logic, the history of art is a fragile, capricious line which will usually either intersect an artist's studio, or more likely, bypass it altogether. Those artists who touch the cutting edge by luck or genius or fortuitous marketing have created objects that do not have artistic worth in themselves, nor in relation to enduring artistic values, but only in relation to the cutting edge line.

But it would seem that the interests and intentions of the historical epic novel exclude what Dillard calls the "contemporary modern" technique. Instead of the purposefully fractured focus of the narrative collage--where readers glean an understanding of the settlement of Washington in terms of the daily experience of many characters--she offers a great study into subjective history.

While Dillard includes actual historical figures among her characters--she is less interested in the objective history of historical epics. She is less interested in specific dates, political events, and more devoted to conveying the day-to-day lives-the subjective lives of her characters. Readers follow her characters in the primeval forests as they fell trees in the manner taught them by the Indians; characters learn how to grow hops, cultivate vines, build houses, dig wells without being overcome by methane gas. Dillard is more concerned with the new cultural-environmental milieu her characters encounter in the Pacific Northwest, not an historical schematic she is to populate with characters and life.

Ultimately, the author of historical novels has really only two general methods of conveying life in the world. The writer can bring life forth by creating a new historical order, and so perhaps add to the sum of the universe's actual orders, or discern it with our minds and senses and art, discovering bits of the puzzle now here, now there. The art object, in this view, is a cognitive instrument which presents to us, in a stilled and enduring context, a model of previously unarticulated or unavailable relationships among ideas and materials. Insofar as we attend to these art objects, these epistemologically absurd and mysterious hot-air balloons, we deepen our understanding. The order which the artists devises for his/her fabrications is a chip off the universal order, and partakes of its being.

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Poet, Dreamer, Formel: Mediation and Tension in *The Parliament of Fowls*

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Chaucer emphasizes problems of mediation because he lives in a "medial" social position. As a member of the bourgeoisie, he seeks personal advancement, yet his official duties are mainly financial stewardship for the aristocracy. Apart from bureaucratic obligations, he is a poet, and therefore feels the tension between simultaneous obligations of entertainment and instruction. Furthermore, his poetic honesty must be tempered with diplomacy--aristocratic egos are always a concern. In *The Parliament of Fowls*, Chaucer conveys the tensions that arise from his "middle" position through the confused perceptions of the narrator and the suspended situation of the formel.

By relating his doubts and hesitations, the narrator expresses the confusion a poet must sort through. Repeating Cicero's pattern in "Somnium Scipionis," he precipitates a vision by reading, then dreams he is en route to the Temple of Venus. But hesitating in the gate to the garden, alternately feeling fear and boldness, "hette" and "colde," he explains that such powerful, opposing forces render him helpless:

> Right as betwixen adamauntes two
> Of evene myght, a pece of yren set
> Ne hath no myght to meve to ne fro--
> For what that oon may hale, that other let--
> Ferde I . . . (lines 148-52) [1]

He is paralyzed by the attraction and repulsion of the inscriptions on the gates until an outside agency, "Affrycan, my gide," forces him to enter. In fact, as he describes the scene, only an outside force could resolve his state of suspension and paralysis: his readers know how, when one magnet attracts a piece of iron along one vector, and another of precisely equal force attracts it on an opposite vector, the iron cannot easily move, not even in a direction different from these two vectors. Thus the forces that place the narrator in a medial position are exemplified in a mediating image, and that image is powerful because it operates on both the visual and tactile senses.

The simile thus makes it clear that without Affrycan's intervention the narrator would not progress, and without progressing he could learn nothing from his vision. Fortunately, his dream guide, the mental counterpart to his reading, stimulates both the vision, as the catalyst for a dream, and the symbolic action within that dream, as the motive force propelling him into the garden. In this mediated fashion--a simile that calls up multiple sensations along with common experience--Chaucer illustrates the roles of reading as stimulant and motivator, but inhibitor, too, in the process of poetic composition.

Even after the narrator enters the garden, he has trouble representing the content of his dream, for he is subjected to competing impressions. As he

encounters aspects of love mediated within his dream--the personifications along his path--he tries to relate a description, but the result is puzzling. His comment seems to reflect the elusive quality of dream:

> And by himself, under an ok, I gesse,
> Saw I Delyt, that stod with Gentilesse (223-24)

Curiously, the narrator's qualification "I gesse" is not simple irony (though it is difficult to forget that a few lines before (176-82) he had no trouble distinguishing the "ok" from the other trees in the garden). Perhaps he does not regard the distinction as particularly important. On the other hand, perhaps the literally overarching structure of the tree, under which the figure or figures stand, is too large, and thus too indefinite, to take in at one glance. If so, then it may be too large for him to recount with precision.

The latter reading is more likely because the details of the scene shift from rather hazy to self-contradictory: when he attempts to establish his focus on Delyt, this figure is first "by himself," but the next moment "with Gentilesse." The rapid alternation of conflicting visual images in these lines reemphasizes the idea that the sights occur within a dream. In addition, these images reveal the narrator's confusion about the nature of the place (overshadowed by the vaguely identified tree) and the nature of its "character(s)," Delyt, Delyt-Gentilesse, or Delyt and Gentilesse.

The competing perceptions of the tree under which one character stands, or of a tree shading two figures together, may indicate that the narrator has trouble integrating ideas that his society perceives as coherent. If so, it would be difficult for him to conceive of the overriding structure, the undefined tree governing his perspective, and a challenge to harmonize the concepts "Delyt" and "Gentilesse" within this structure. In this sense the narrator may be confessing that he cannot "compose" the matter Affrycan has given him. [2]

To work through this impasse, he re-mediates the problem by recasting it. Rejecting the Temple of Venus, and proceeding through the dream garden seeking a new, more stable focus, he discovers Nature's orderly convocation of birds, with the formel clearly at the center. In this new frame the narrator reanalyzes the normal semantic association of trees and birds, so that the birds are arrayed on a field in order of their rank, with Nature as their focal point. This description of the macrocosm indicates the narrator's awareness of mythologies that associate Middle Earth, the human position in the cosmos, with the branches of the *axis mundi*, or with Yggdrasil, the "World-Tree." In addition, this pattern of associations explains another tension that influences the English poet, for there seems to be a hint that the continental customs (such as *fin amour*) precipitating the vision are competing with oral, less explicit English lore that the narrator feels on a deeper level.[3] This tension, in turn, influences the narrator's rearrangement of his scene so that Nature, the personification of the world, can replace the tree-as-world, and can thus dominate the birds-as-humanity.

If the shifts in these mediating images take place to help the narrator understand issues of love and society that he could not assimilate before, it is no surprise that the formel appearing at the center of the new scene is besieged by contrary tensions. In fact she is just the extreme case the narrator must see to comprehend his own position. She is literally held by Nature, and Nature,

as "the vicaire of the almyghty Lord," rules from a position of mediation. For though her position is powerful, that power recognizes social facts:

> Ye know wel how, Seynt Valentynes day,
> *By my statut and thorgh my governaunce*,
> Ye come for to chese--and fle youre way--
> Youre makes, as I prike yow with plesaunce;
> *But natheles, my ryghtful ordenaunce*
> *May I nat lete for al this world to wynne*,
> That he that most is worthi shal begynne (386-92; my emphases)

In the following arguments the narrator, removed from the center of controversy he usually inhabits, may observe the psychomachia as competing forces make their demands. As he has seen time and again, despite the "prike" of "plesaunce" common to all the birds, the law of talion tempers natural "statut"--those who fight come first: "the foules of ravyne/ weere hyest set." Since Nature and society accord, the formel must hear arguments from the self-minded tercels before anything else can happen. Unfortunately, their positions are all absolute and immitigable. And as is their wont, their intractability generates enough tension to precipitate war, as the falcon tercelet notes:

> I can not se that argumentes avayle:
> Thanne semeth it there moste be batayle (538-39)

The idea of settling conflict openly and directly meets with immediate approval from the eagles. However, the falcon reminds them that there are constraints on their actions: "to the juges dom ye moten stonde." From this exchange the narrator may see that within the social context of the parliament, even the aristocracy--like Nature, another of God's vicars--is not permitted to act single-mindedly, but must await their mediator's "dom."

The narrator might also notice that that "dom" is hardly conclusive or precise, for though Nature renders judgement, she also defers it so that the formel "hireself shal han hir eleccioun/ of hwom hire lest." Moreover, Nature undercuts her declaration that her sole motive force is physical attraction ("to non estat I have non other yë") when she advises her charge:

> But as for counseyl for to chese a make,
> If I were Resoun, thanne wolde I
> Conseyle yow the royal tercel take (631-33)

At this moment the social position of the poet, the metaphorical position of his narrator, and the dream position of the formel integrate: The poet has accumulated the tensions of time, social exigency, diplomacy, and mission, and the narrator, nearing the time when he must know Love in deed, has recorded these tensions in his narrative. Now the narrator focuses on the formel, whose dilemma is his own, and whose answer will be his answer. She is given opportunity to make a choice, supported by Nature, but petitioned by Reason, and harangued by power and cupidity. Her response captures and recapitulates the narrator's overwhelmed "God save swich a lord!" reaction to Love:

My rightful lady, goddesse of Nature!
Soth is that I am evere under youre yerde,
As is everich other creature,
And mot be youres whil my lyf may dure (639-42)

The formel refuses to say either yes or no to her suitors, defining her position only negatively: "I wol nat serve Venus ne Cupide." Even this is tentative, for adding "forsothe as yit" (652-53), she implies that the day will come when she will submit to the either-or logic she has staved off for a year.

It appears, from these indeterminacies left indeterminate, that the narrator begins and ends his dream at the same point. But he does resume his reading in the hope of dreaming "som thyng for to fare/ the bet" (697-99), and it is possible that he has seen, in the uncomfortable position of the formel, an equation of the feminine and the poetic, both at the mercy of myriad forces. Whether or not the narrator identifies with the formel, Chaucer presents the ambiguous position of the poet through him. In a mediated form, the dream vision, he repeats poetic situations of ambivalence and paradox: the dreamer sees Delyt standing alone, but not alone, shaded by an indefinite tree. Nature, arbiter of divine law, accepts the influence of society before she acts, and even then conflates her decision with the words of Reason. The formel, like Chaucer and like his narrator, demonstrates to all parties the nature of this vision: it is hard to hold the middle ground.

Notes

[1] Quotations of Chaucer are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston, 1988).

[2] The difficulties involved in "reading" the poem are also apparent in the MSS: David Lorenzo Boyd notes that in the versions in MSS Bodley 638, Laud Misc. 416, and Digby 181, compilers included the text in milieux that vary from political to secular to religious ("Compilation as Commentary: Controlling Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 91 (1992): 945-64.

[3] Although this poem owes much to the Valentine's Day *cour amoureuse*, as D. S. Brewer has noted (*Parlement of Foulys*, [1960; reprint, New York, 1972], p.4), I believe it is worthwhile to remember the more general English custom of the *Þing*, the meeting with a goal of settling dispute. This more democratic custom seems a reasonable explanation of the great volume of uninvited commentaries from the other fowls.

New England Sampler: Introduction to Judith Sargent Murray and Her Unpublished Poetry

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In 1986 the Mississippi Department of Archives and History acquired a noteworthy collection of manuscript letters, essays, poetry, and other materials from the pen of Judith Sargent Stevens Murray (1751-1820), who is considered by some to be America's first feminist writer (Hennen 1). This designation is based most specifically on her advocacy "regarding merits of women's education during the early Republic" (1). The Judith Sargent Murray papers, containing manuscript copies dated as early as 1765 and as late as 1818, document the personal and public life of a woman whose writings are gaining the attention of scholars in many areas. Sharon M. Harris, editor of *Selected Writings of Judith Sargent Murray*, asserts: "Perhaps no American woman writer until Margaret Fuller equaled Murray in intellectual powers, in the breadth of genres in which she wrote, or in public recognition" (xv).

Born in Gloucester, Massachusetts, on May 1, 1751, Judith Sargent was the eldest of eight children of a wealthy ship owner and merchant. Although she received an education through tutorage superior to that of most females and many males, much of that education came largely along with her younger brother Winthrop's preparations for Harvard, and she always felt that her education was severely lacking because she was female. Her sense of this injustice lies at the heart of her best known writings.

In 1769 she entered a seemingly loveless marriage with John Stevens (1741-1786), who like her father was a well-to-do Gloucester ship owner. Throughout the marriage she kept up extensive correspondence, was involved with her family in efforts to establish the Universalist church "as a faith complementary to human liberty and empowerment" (Harris xxii), published "a catechism outlining her Universalist beliefs" in 1782 (xix), wrote occasional poetry, and began writing essays to fulfill her "ardent desire to become a writer" (xviii). Copies from these writings are among the Archive's materials, for Judith made it a practice to recopy her work to improve it in content and penmanship (Hennen 3).

After the Revolutionary War, her husband's business failed and he fled to the West Indies to avoid debtors' prison. He died there in 1786, leaving Judith a childless widow after seventeen years of marriage. Judith continued her interest in the Universalist movement, maintaining correspondence and friendship with John Murray (1741-1815), the leading Universalist minister in this country, who for a while had been a boarder in the Stevenses' home and whose ministry the Sargent family supported (Harris xx, xlii). That friendship blossomed into love and in 1788 resulted in an "egalitarian marriage . . . in which John encouraged Judith's literary ambitions and in which she became an active supporter of his efforts to establish Universalism in the new nation" (xxi).

In 1789, after their first child, a son, was stillborn, she renewed her writing efforts, perhaps to assuage the grief, and began contributing poetry to *Massachusetts Magazine*. A 105-line poem about the death of an infant was

the first of hers published there (Harris xxiii).

The following year, Judith accompanied her husband on preaching tours and continued to write, publishing more poetry and her most famous essay "On Equality of the Sexes," which she had written in 1779 (Harris xxiv). Her travels enriched her already voluminous correspondence with a growing wealth of detail about people, places, and public issues. The Murrays' only daughter Julia Maria was born in 1791.

Between 1792 and 1794 Judith regularly contributed essays to *The Massachusetts Magazine*, making her one of the first American women to have an ongoing column (Harris xxv). These essays--in separate series titled "The Gleaner" and "The Repository" published under the pen names The Gleaner and Constantia--argued a variety of issues, including religion, politics, and education. Most often she argued the "natural equality of the sexes and the need for changes in education and in attitudes towards girls' and women's intellectual and emotional strengths" (xxv). With "Sketch of the Present Situation in American, 1794," she also entered debates such as those over the extent of America's involvement in the French Revolution (xxxv). Harris states that "no other American woman of her time, even under cover of anonymity, spoke so openly about contemporary political controversies" (xxxvi).

In 1793 the Murrays moved to Boston for his ministry. With the Boston theaters newly reopened, Judith turned her hand to writing for the stage, believing that a "virtuous theatre" could be "highly influential in regulating the opinions, manners, and morals of the populace" (*The Gleaner* 186). Two comedies, *Virtue Triumphant* and *The Traveller Returned*, were actually performed in Boston theaters, though for only one- and two- night runs in 1795 and 1796. (A third *The African*, referred to in her letters, has not been found.) Amelia Howe Kritzer has analyzed these plays, along with Suzanna Rowson's dramas, as "fashion[ing] a collective definition of American womanhood that contests women's exclusion from or subordination within the dominant formulations of American identity" (152).

Judith's next major literary efforts came in 1798 when, as a way to supplement the family's income and to bolster her own literary career, she negotiated with Thomas and Andrews of Boston for the publication of *The Gleaner*, a three-volume compilation of essays, verses, and plays to be sold by subscription, at $1.00 and $1.50 a volume (Hennen 10). The previously printed essays covered politics, religion, education, manners, and morals; and contained serially within essays in the first volume is *The Story of Margaretta*, which Harris says is "one of the most fascinating and important early novels in American literature" (xxvi). Under the pen name Constantia, Judith dedicated *The Gleaner* to President John Adams and had more than 750 subscribers for over 800 sets, this success indicating that her "identify was well-known" and that "she was recognized as a significant author" (xxxix). At least for the moment, the "ruling passion" she acknowledged in her "Preface to the Reader" seemed achievable:

> My desires are, I am free to own, aspiring--perhaps presumptuously so. I would be distinguished and respected by my contemporaries; I would be continued in grateful remembrance when I make my exit; and I would descend with celebrity to posterity. (*The Gleaner* 13)

Till error lost amid the blaze of day,
Bright Rectitude resumes unclouded sway:
Then, on seraphich pinions may he soar,
And the rich treasures of thy grace explore.

* Samples published with permission of Mississippi Department of Archives and History

from **"Lines written in a memorandum book while on the road to Boston to which place I was summoned to attend my father then ill with smallpox. He had taken the disorder by innoculation"** (p. 79)

. . .
Witness attendant spirits, aerial pow'rs,
Ye angels, guardians of our peaceful hours;
Recording seraphs witness to my truth,
More I revere the guardians of my youth,
Than if a proud, a long descending line,
Of boastful names and ruthless pomp were mine.
Their rich humanity I'd rather share,
Than be to hoarded wealth apparent heir.
. . .

from **"On the ill fated Penobscot expedition"** (p. 191)

. . .
Hark! from yon prison ship deep groans of death,
For love of freedom millions yield their breath;
No more unmatch'd Calcutta's barbarous deed,
Yon floating dungeon thus their black hole exceeds!
Thousands immur'd in her pestiferous hold,
The enanguish'd tale a thousand tongues hath told;
Compress'd in heaps the crowded victims lie,
And as they sink inevitably die!
Defeated hosts with hearts appall'd retreat,
In wilder'd wilds their trembling commrades meet;
Hope o'er Penobscot brightest visions rear'd,
But indecision--want of skill appear'd.
Columbia's sons in dread disorder fly,
And Partiot bosoms swell the bursting sigh:
The spectre fear stalks o'er the sanguine plain,
And pity mourns her many warriors slain;
We shudder at the evils which await,
And deprecate our tottering Country's fate.

"Morning of the 7th of September 1778" (p. 172)

See the concomitants of baleful war,
Famine, and pestilence, and wild uproar!
Mark how they hover o'er Columbia's head,
Mingling her heroes with the mighty dead!
Portentous omens with terrific glare!
Stamp on the breast the horrors of despair!
War, desolating war, stalks o'er the land,
And in his ranks appear a murd'rous band;
They shake the leaden spear and death pervades,
At whose dire touch undaunted valour fades!
The hostile grounds by slaughter covered o'er,
Mountains and vallies reek with human gore!
While agonized shrieks and groans of death,
Torture the air and swell the ling'ring breath.
Dire is the scene with various woes replete,
When rage and malice thus insatiate meet.
Look down great God, our wandering steps explore,
The golden hours of harmony restore,

Give dark suspicion, baleful bird of night,
Far from our plains to wing its distant flight,
To climes congenial, some chaotic shore,
Where it can vex this younger world no more
And when each hour shall be with concord crown'd,
When laughing confidence looks gaily round,
Contentment will advance her fair domain,
And peace unrival'd o'er our borders reign.

"Lines on the sudden death of an amiable child--related to me in the same paragraph of a letter which announced the confinement of a young man--the son of an aged widow--under sentence of death for an atrocious crime" (p. 4)

How throbs the Mother's breast to What sorrow swell!--
The anguish of her soul, what tongue can tell!
When sudden snatched from her fond embrace
Shrouded in death--she views that angel face
Where countless loves, and dimpling graces play'd,
And innocence enwreath'd by beauty stray'd.
See how her streaming eyes and pallid cheek,
The anguish of her pierced bosom speak!
Fix'd like some stature, near the breathless clay,
In heart affecting strains, she seems to say--
"Is this the Cherub form--whose infant charms,
Lull'd on my breast and cradled in my arms,
Promis'd to be the solace of my days,
Source of my joys and subject of my praise,
Whose budding virtues, most conspicuous grew,
Unfolding with each moment to my view,
Hope, radiant vision, cheer'd my gladden'd sight;
As fancy rich, as life's gay morning bright
No [sik'ning] void my glowing heart oppres'd
Each hour new int'rest and new bliss possess'd
But ah! how chang'd!--the icy hand of death,
Blasts my sweet flow'r--fled is the rosy breath--
Cropt in the fragrance of her young career,
No more her tender greetings bless my ear!
Alas! alas! how cold in death she lies,
While with her ev'ry cherish'd prospect dies!"
Yet though so deeply piere'd her heart appears
Hers is the balm, the luxury of tears;
And mellowing time with soft assuasive hand,
To future joys her bosom may expand.
But that o'er whelmed suff'er's sad! forlorn!
Her *only* prop, from her embraces torn,
Nor this the worst--an ignominious death!
Awaits to seize the wretched culprit's breath!
Tears!--abhorence!--shiver at her heart!
Transfix'd by infamy's empoison'd dart!
Train'd from the dawning of her earliest youth,
In paths of rectitude, in paths of truth;
Conscious of worth innnate--by honour blest,
Each virtue imag'd in her glowing breast;
Indignant--trembling--terrified--amaz'd!
Her guiltless hands in speechless anguish rais'd
With dark despair she marks her blasted name
By guilt consign'd to long enduring shame!
Conflicting passions struggle in her soul,
Love, hatred, pity, grief, by turns controul,
Now floods of tenderness imperious swell,
And in their progress every thought impel,
She claps her Ingrate in a fond embrace,

And then detests the spoiler of his race.
Reason affrighted, yields her fair domain,
The long worn triumphs of her happy reign.
    Now turn--poor Miscreant--thy haggard eyes,
And see where whelm'd in woe a Mother lies!
Her venerable form by frenzy torn,
What heart but must the stricken Maniac mourn!
Tremendous was the ruthless passions wage,
Thou couldst have cherish'd her declining age!
How blest a parent's downhill path to slope,
To plant in death the phoenix bird of hope,
Tell me, lost youth, for surely thou canst tell--
In vice indulg'd, what magic pleasures dwell?

Of guilt how piercing the corroding fang,
Remunerated by ten thousand pangs?
The lorn transgressor bends beneath a load,
While crimes of scarlet hue his bosom goad!
Such, Rectitude--such are the joys they find--
Who leave thy peaceful shades and (lustrous) paths behind.

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Wharton's Library of Frustration

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Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* reveals several semi-autobiographical elements, including references to education and frustration. With an account of Mrs. Wharton's early life, education, and social background, one may see clearly the influences of these elements in the work.

Edith Newbold Jones was born in New York City, on January 24, 1862, to a wealthy, ultra-blue blood family: George Frederick, a land owner who made a fortune in industrial properties in the New York area, and Lucretia Stevens Rhinelander, a prominent socialite with an "old New York" ancestry. Edith's maternal and paternal lineages could be traced back nearly three hundred years (*Backwards Glance* 9). Her family was part of the pseudo-aristocracy that whirled serenely above, and independent of, the New York of the common man. The Joneses spent many of Edith's earliest years wandering across Europe, allowing Edith to explore ancient fields and to spend time in a myriad of hotels and "watering holes" for the American travelers (Auchincloss 22).

In the United States, events changed America's face, both at home and abroad. Later in her life Edith recalled the 1870s as an "age of innocence," sandwiched between the Civil War and the tumult of social and industrial revolutions of the 1880s and 1890s. Inventions and mass production changed marketplaces as well as social structures. America had entered the world market full-force. The Joneses' "old" New York was growing old and failing. Chicago had grown, within a few decades, from an Indian village to the second largest city in America. The future centered upon railroads, the Great Plains, and commodities; even New Yorkers had to admit that this future belonged to Chicago (Ziff 3). In 1873, railroads connected Chicago and New York, opening the floodgates for the dreaded *nouveau riches* to return to New York for culture. Not until the *parvenus* from Chicago and Pittsburgh arrived with their vulgarities and excesses did the "new" New York and America finally strike home to the Joneses (Brooks 294). During the 1880s, the Joneses' once exclusive social circle found broad gaps and the new faces invading parties and balls, and maintaining appearances became the primary objective of the "good families," thus creating a "veneer of stability" (Linton 274).

In 1871, the Joneses returned to the States. The post-civil-war depression eased, increasing the values of George's holdings. By this time Edith had been tutored in French, German, and Italian, and her reading skills allowed her to read portions of Europe's masterworks (Lawson 2). Edith's love of poetry and imagination had already been sparked; as Wharton herself wrote in *A Backward Glance*: "Though I was already an ardent reader of poetry I felt no desire to write it. But all that was soon to be changed; for the next year we were to go home to New York, and I was to enter into the kingdom of my father's library" (43). Indeed that neglected room became *her* sanctuary for a number of years; as she grew older, it grew more important.

The house on West Twenty-third Street had an impressive library of classics:

> It was a small room on the ground floor, with green damask curtains and a massive oak mantelpiece supported by two visored knights (the influence of Sir Walter Scott lay heavy on New York upper-class culture), four more of whom served as legs for the huge writing table. . . . She spent hours squatting on the 'Turkey rug' in the library, pulling out book after book and glancing inside it. . . . [The] collection included the chief historians from Plutarch to Parkman and the most illustrious poets from Homer to Dante, Milton and Pope and the English Romantics. There were English and French dramatists, the great diarists, and assorted works of philosophy and art history. Of classical fiction there was little: the works of Scott and Irving stood in lonely dignity on the shelves, there to be joined by Thackeray. (Lewis 28-29)

Wharton claims that most of the books were unread. Her father, she supposed, bought most of the books out of social necessity. Though she rarely read a book in its entirety, Edith browsed widely; in *A Backward Glance* she spends almost four pages recalling authors whom she had read (65-68). The origin of Edith's thirst for literature is not known, for her mother and father read little, other than travel books and popular novels, the latter of which Edith was strictly forbidden to read (Lawson 4). Her main interests lay in history and poetry, which she devoured, if only partially, in great quantities. Friends of the family heard of Edith's avid reading, and soon she began her own little library with the books she was given. Her mother, however, became increasingly wary of this direction, for if Edith continued to hide in the library, she would never become "adept at the social game that was the proper destiny of young ladies of her family and social background" (Lawson 2) As her mother became more upset with Edith's love for literature, the natural desire Edith felt for literature and art was rapidly creating a young lady of frightening erudition, quite the opposite of her parents' plans for their only daughter.

Beyond this clash, the library loomed as the birthplace of Edith Wharton's second life, her literary life, as "the spot where [Edith Wharton's] secondary life first pushed up its tiny sprout above the soil in which she was planted" (Kellogg 5). The "kingdom" of the library was indeed pivotal to her; R. W. B. Lewis, in his biography of Wharton, notes:

> Those afternoons in the library provided her, in her own phrase, with "a secret ecstasy of communion." It was secret almost of necessity. The elders who surrounded her, she was becoming aware, had "an awe-struck dread of . . . intellectual effort," and were distinctly ill at ease in the presence of anyone who openly enjoyed serious reading, even more so of a recognized person of letters. Not that New York in the 1870's had many of the latter. (29)

Edith Wharton's education was by no means formal; she never attended a single day of school. Girls in her social level were provided with tutors and governesses in more of a socialization process than an educational endeavor, the goal being training in proper social graces. Though the aim of the education was not necessarily intellectual, the results proved quite astounding.

By nine years of age, Edith had learned some French, German, and Italian, and she constantly searched through the bulk of her father's library. Edith

studied under an endless series of governesses, but none seemed able to tame her curiosity to Lucretia's satisfaction. In 1872 Anna Bahlmann became Edith's governess and teacher. She stayed with the Joneses for almost nine years, even accompanying them on their last trip to Europe as a family in 1880, the year following Edith's debut. Anna continued to be Edith's secretary, literary associate, and lifelong friend. Anna and another friend, Emelyn Washburn, aided in Edith's first publication, at age thirteen, a translation of German poetry (Lawson 4). At sixteen she had a three-volume set of poetry published privately (a not uncommon occurrence for a shy wealthy girl). Longfellow received one of her poems, through a mutual friend, and he had it published in *Atlantic Monthly* (Brooks 110). In her teens Edith began to read religious literature passionately, particularly sermons, regardless of doctrinal persuasion (Lewis 25). Generally this education and cultivation was used for dinner parties and such, but not in Edith's case (Auchincloss 21). Edith received, mainly through her own endeavors, a respectable though informal education.

With such a strong literary background and sizeable support elsewhere for her writing gift, one would expect Edith to write and pursue such a career. Her mother, though, discouraged her. At eleven or twelve, depending on the source, Edith wrote her first novella and asked her mother to read it. Her mother's icy criticism of the work discouraged Edith; by nineteen she stopped writing for eleven years (Lawson 3-4). Edith began to feel the adolescent pangs of semi-adulthood and summed up her teen years thus:

> I was contented enough with swimming and writing, with my dogs, and my reading and dreaming, but I longed to travel and see New places, and, short of that, was by no means averse to seeing New people, and especially to being regarded as "grown up. I had not long to wait, for when I was seventeen my parents decided that I spent too much time in reading, and that I was to come out a year before the accepted age. (77)

Edith married in 1885, and her adult life left her frustrated and unhappy until she began writing again in 1891.

Let us now stop briefly and take stock of the woman at hand. Edith was wealthy and very shy as she grew up. She showed definite signs of promise as a writer. She loved reading, and she was very well educated. She called her father's library her sanctuary, her "secret communion." She rarely read the entirety of a work, preferring instead the romance of the ideas and the texts themselves. Binding all this together and limiting it was society, usually represented by her mother. Society frustrated her, stifled her, and forced her into a marriage in which she never was comfortable (she and Teddy Wharton divorced in 1913). Society and its circumstances prevented her from being further educated. Writing, she said, soothed her and gave her an outlet for all the frustrations she felt and the injustices she saw.

Ethan Frome was begun in December, 1910. Edith, living in France, was taking further lessons in French when her tutor asked her to practice by writing a brief story; *Ethan Frome* sprang from this exercise. Something sparked her to develop further the French *Ethan Frome*. The tale of Ethan, Zeena, and Mattie is set in the sparse, bleak New England hills. Its tone is dark, its texture dismal; both nature and man are weakened. Blake Nevius notes:

about Vietnam: (1) an obvious sense of personal integrity and dignity for the major characters, and (2) what Louis Rubin has called "community identity" (85), an appreciation for history and tradition, a sense of place that often perceives an area both as geographic locale and as historical icon.

As Owen Gilman points out in his study, *Vietnam and the Southern Imagination*, Southern writers unashamedly seek and find inspiration, guidance, and codes of behavior imbedded in the past, in the ghosts, of their region. Gilman's analysis works well for Webb's *Fields of Fire*. In this novel, the protagonist, both bolstered by and struggling under the dual burden of a Southern heritage and having been named Robert E. Lee Hodges, finds himself haunted by family ghosts. The haunting comes in the form of an inherited imperative to test oneself in battle and to be true to the warrior code of courage and integrity.

In his mind, young Hodges repeatedly hears the voices his own dead father, grandfather, various uncles, and cousins who have all been tested and usually died "on the fields of fire." There is no great mystery about these ghosts or their implications for Hodges. He is "guided," as it were, by these spirits to fulfill his own martial destiny, to be tested and ultimately sacrificed to the gods of war and tradition.

Before leaving for Vietnam, Hodges comes into the closest contact with those ghosts whenever he visits his grandmother, his father's mother, long the repository and conduit of family memory and tradition and medium for the ancestral warrior "ghosts" who haunt the young lieutenant's thoughts as mute examiners of the latest generation of warriors.

The night before Hodges is to ship out for Vietnam he experiences a final historical reckoning when he visits his grandmother for one last meal together. There Hodges again visits his ancestral past, mentally reviewing the catalog of history she has taught him over the years about his family's warrior heritage and the constant equation of valor with glory. The catalogue stretches far back: his early Celtic ancestors resisting the Romans, later generations in the New World participating in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, men of his blood sacrificed in the Civil War, his grandfather's service during World War I, and his father's death in World War II, culminating with his own leaving for Vietnam. And always there was the equation of courage, honor, and duty with glory. For Hodges "it was a continuum, a litany. Pride. Courage. Fear. An inherited right to violence . . . "(31).

Guided by his ancestral voices Hodges eventually dies in Vietnam, as does Snake, in an attempt to rescue a patrol that Senator has unwittingly lead into an ambush. In the firefight Senator is gravely wounded, losing a leg and suffering nerve damage in one arm. He leaves Vietnam a maimed, confused, but wiser man, a man who now has ghosts of his own.

In the novel's final chapter, Webb explores the effects of the Vietnam experience on Senator. When Senator returns to Harvard as a student, he has changed, passed through his experiential baptism of fire and emotional dark night of the soul to come out the other side an isolato, no longer able to fit in to his old life, tainted by his dual exposure to two vastly different sensibilities: first seduced by the nurturing impotence of Harvard internationalism and then pulled screaming through Vietnam's warp of horror into a new vision of reality.

Only after Senator attempts re-entry into his upper-middle class, ivy-league

society, does he consciously start to assimilate the experience of Vietnam and to appreciate the unspoken code of personal honor and the commitment to personal integrity and comrades in arms, exemplified by Hodges, Snake, and the other grunts. Back home, exposed to the attitudes and ethics of the academic, intellectual resistance to the war, Senator begins to internalize those warrior virtues and values he tried so hard to repudiate during his tour in Vietnam. Once Senator has something against which to measure the warrior values, he begins to at last understand and appreciate those dictates and modes of behavior.

It takes the seemingly ignorant callousness of the war's resisters, however, to convince Senator that the verities of the bush were more real and of greater value than the impotent posturing of campus liberals. Something of an oddity at Harvard, he is asked by anti-war protesters to make a statement at a protest rally. As he hobbles to the podium, Senator finds that he too, like Hodges earlier, now has his own ghosts to whom he must be faithful. He imagines the ghosts of his dead comrades "peer[ing] down from uneasy, wasted rest and call[ing] upon the Senator to Set The Bastards Straight" (409).

Senator attempts to "set the bastards straight," and Webb's novel trails off to a bitter-sweet ending that validates the isolated sacrifices and beleaguered warrior code of all the individuals who have held to that code after having been touched by the horror, violence, and suffering of the Vietnam War.

Larry Heinemann's *Paco's Story* is decidedly not Southern either in content or sentiment. It delivers a bleak, post-modern hopelessness, the antithesis of much Southern fiction. Unlike Hodges or even Senator, Heinemann's Paco has no history, no family, no home, no obligations, no expectations, and no hope. Paco Sullivan writhes in an existential agony of ineffectual memory/dream/nightmare reality from which there seems no escape, because unlike his Southern counterparts, Heinemann gives his character no cultural underpinnings, no history or code onto which he might fall back for support.

Ghosts in *Paco's Story* function as the narrative voice to tell of their friend who has survived the war, but who is having a difficult time re-orienting himself to civilian life.

We learn from these ghost narrators that Paco is the only survivor of a night action at doomed Firebase Harriet which was first overrun by enemy Viet Cong forces and then decimated by American artillery and air power or what is know in military jargon as sardonically "friendly fire." Of the ninety-three marines at Firebase Harriet, only Paco remained alive, and after spending two days and nights lying wounded and semiconscious, Paco was rescued and evacuated, eventually being shipped back to the states to be discharged with a cane; a limp; constant, tormenting pain; a mosaic of scars across his body; and a mangled psyche. Now a physically and emotionally scared drifter, he seeks, but never finds, solace from his pervasive multi-level pain. Paco, like some disfigured Natty Bumppo or crippled Huck Finn, moves from place to place, forever westward.

And like Bumppo or Finn, John Wayne or Clint Eastwood, Paco exists on the edge of civilization, but never assimilating to it. Paco searches for a lasting psychic peace, what Heinemann calls "a livable peace" (174), that might free him from the memory-present horrors of his war experiences. He tries unsuccessfully to escape both the debilitating effects of his extensive physical injuries and his emotional mutilation. Paco stands as the

quintessential representative of the Vietnam veteran--sent to an unjust war, mangled by the same war machine that sent him there in the first place, and then sent home with only "the thanks of a grateful nation." Because of his unique, horrific experiences, he has become an isolato, a companionless wanderer, an outcast in his own land, a man without a home, a man with no future who can only find meaning in a dead past and in the dead friends he left behind in Vietnam.

The novel opens with Paco's entry by cross-country bus into Boone, a small town somewhere in middle America. After walking through most of the small town's business section, Paco happens upon The Texas Lunch, a local cafe run by Ernest, a former Marine who saw action in World War II. Sympathizing with Paco's plight of being an out of work, former Marine, Ernest hires Paco as a dishwasher.

The physical setting of the novel is limited to The Texas Lunch and the boarding house across the street where Paco has a room. As Paco goes about his daily routine of cleaning tables, washing dishes, returning to his room late each evening to lust after the young college coed who occupies the room across the hall from his, and douse his pain with handfuls of pills and cheap booze, the narrative ghosts voices recount Paco's sometimes boring, sometimes horrific experiences in Vietnam.

Through these haunting voices and because throughout the novel Paco's character develops almost none at all, Heinemann seems to suggest that Paco's life is in the past, trapped within the memories his dead comrades. Paco moves over the earth, but is not part of it, like a restless spirit left behind when the rest of his company has gone on to the nether world. He exists a man out of time.

Yet the ghosts of his friends never desert Paco. In jive-laced diction, the voices recount for us, and for Paco in his nightmares, Paco's penchant for laying booby traps, his deft work with a fillet knife when he kills a enemy soldier, and the feelings they all shared after first torturing, then gang raping, and finally executing a young captured Vietnamese girl. The ghosts recount how they would manipulate Paco's thoughts as he washes dishes, alone, after even Ernest has left the Texas Lunch for the evening:

> "So Paco is made to dream and remember, and we make it happen . . . ."
> It is at those moments that he is least wary, most receptive and dreamy.
> So we bestir and descend. We hover around him like an aura . . . . (137)

But Paco's ghosts, unlike Hodges' ancestors, do not bring stability and meaning to his seemingly meaningless suffering. Instead, they bring only torment. When Paco finally slips off his dishwater-wet clothes and collapses into bed at night,

> It is at that moment we would slither and sneak, shouldering our way up behind the headboard, emerging like a newborn--head turned and chin tucked, covered head to toe with a slick gray ointment, powdery and moist, like the yolk of a hard boiled egg, and smelling of petroleum. We come to stand behind him against the wall--we ghosts--as flat and pale as a night-light, easy on the eyes. We reach out as one man and begin to massage the top of his head; his scalp cringes and tingles. We work our

> way down the warm curve of his neck--soothing and slack--and apply ourselves most deeply to the solid meat back of his shoulders. And Paco always obliges us; he uncoils and stretches out even more, and eases into our massage bit by bit . . . And when Paco is most beguiled, most rested and trusting, at that moment of most luxurious rest, when Paco is all but asleep, *that* is the moment we whisper in his ear, and give him something to think about--a dream or a reverie. (138)

But Paco's ghosts do not bring reverie; they bring nightmares, or as the ghosts themselves tell us, escape dreams, waiting room dreams, or execution dreams, dreams without solace, dreams of the damned.

What makes Heinemann's Paco so pathetic, unlike characters of Southern heritage, is that he is bereft of any historical context. His friends are all dead, ghosts, who offer no lasting values against which he might measure his sacrifice. Ultimately doomed in a chaotic, existential Hell, Paco must limp through life to eventually end his existence end "not with a bang, but with a whimper."

James Webb, on the other hand, like many Southern writers, seems to reject the defeat of traditional values and fragmentation of sensibilities that are taken for granted by so many post-modern writers such as Heinemann. As a Southerner and a post-modern writer himself, Webb seems to answer nihilistic interpretations of contemporary life such as *Paco's Story* with works that do, as Alfred Kazin suggests, find the world to still be moral, historical, and meaningful. Writers such as Webb appear to validate the Southern experience by offering a resilient interpretation of life that finds value in the legacy of the past, credits man with personal dignity, and endows the world with value because of the individual's struggles in it.

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> Indeed, the resemblance between experiments in the camera obscura, and the manner in which the vision is performed in the eye, was too striking to escape the observation of a less ingenious person. . . . It was Kepler, who in 1604, first observed that the retina is a tablet, on which the images of external objects are depicted. (38)

If Coleridge read Priestley's *Opticks*, then, he was well aware of the similarities between the eye and the camera obscura. Coleridge may have discussed Priestley's book with Thomas Wedgwood. Wedgwood had known Priestley through his father, Josiah Wedgwood. Josiah Wedgwood and Joseph Priestly were both members of the Lunar Society, and the meeting place for the group was Josiah Wedgwood's home in Etruria. Perhaps at one of these meetings, Thomas Wedgwood learned of the chemical effect of light on silver nitrate from Priestley (Eder 135). If Coleridge did not read the book, he could have learned its subject matter from Thomas Wedgwood, who knew Priestley and had read his *Opticks*. I construe that Thomas Wedgwood read Priestley's *Opticks* because the publishers list Josiah Wedgwood among the subscribers to Priestley's book. Coleridge may have read Wedgwood's own volume of *Opticks*.

With the idea of the Wedgwood camera obscura in mind, I reconsider these lines:

> Day after day, day after day,
> We struck, nor breath nor motion;
> As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean. (115-118)

Coleridge's stanza provides a fixed, still picture, quite photographic in nature. Other stanzas in the poem, besides those mentioned above, provide the same effect of still-photography.

Priestly also mentions in his *Opticks* that the camera obscura was also used to view the sun. The camera obscura fixes the sun's images on its wall; Coleridge in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" reverses the image and has the sun fix the ship to the ocean: "The Sun, right up above the mast, / Had fixed her to the ocean . . . " (383-384).

The human eye interests Coleridge. Its glittering and fixed origins are a part of the tradition of the literature of Greece, Rome, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the 18th century. Coleridge draws from all these sources. Particularly, he uses the ideas of the fixed and glittering eye from the legend of the Wandering Jew and from the science of Mesmerism. Fixations of the eye as compared with fixations of pictures by the eye-like camera obscura also have their implications for Coleridge because of Priestley and Wedgwood. That Thomas Wedgwood, with his own interest in fixed images, visited Coleridge at time so close to the writing of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" must have had an effect on Coleridge's uses of fixations of the eye in his poem.

Calvin as a Gloss on Spenser's Artistic Representations of Evil in Relation to Redcrosse's Armor

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When we consider the action of Spenser's plot in his *Legend of Holiness*, we may well ask why it is that the Redcrosse Knight so often struggles and suffers against his series of evil foes, especially since, as the allegorical representative of the Christian common man, he is dressed in the armor of Ephesians 6 as set forth by the Apostle Paul. One would expect that Spenser would reserve his greatest subject, holiness, for his greatest knight, who should be Britomart, to judge by the ease with which she dispatches her foes. But he does not. Redcrosse seems a bumbler throughout his adventures, though, it must be granted, he is a gallant one. He cannot stay out of trouble because his pride and haste set him immediately against his foes before he has taken their full measure and before realizing that he may be short of a few spiritual credentials to do the best battle. But the questions remain: should a holy knight suffer? should he fail?

Much of the work that has been done connecting Spenser to Calvin was accomplished by Frederick Morgan Padelford before and after World War I. Others since Padelford have noted Spenser's Calvinism but have generally not returned to the Reformer as the explicator of Spenser's intentions in Book 1, with the notable exception is Paul Siegel. Writing in 1944, Siegel asserts that Spenser, "far from merely accepting intellectually Calvin's theology" had his entire world view "determined by his religion" (201). I wish to assert in this essay that Reformation theology, as epitomized in John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, provides a reasonable and satisfactory vindication of Spenser's artistry and theological handling of the problem of evil in the Christian life as represented especially in Redcrosse's battles with the Giant Orgoglio and Despaire.[1] Spenser's handling of these elements shows both his mastery of the New Testament and his allegiance to the doctrines of Calvinistic Reformation Protestantism.[2]

The key to understanding *The Legend of Holinesse* is that in it Spenser depicts a *system or network of evil* which is opposed to Christians and controlled by Satan. Thus, Redcrosse's battles with Error, Archimago, Orgoglio, Duessa, Despaire, and finally the Dragon, are not isolated episodes haphazardly thrown together just to trouble a knightly hero, but are instead interlinked symbols of the continual battle with sin that encompass an ordinary Christian throughout life. Spenser took his inspiration for such a complex of evil from the depiction of the Dragon in the Book of Revelation.

Protestant interpreters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries commonly glossed the symbology of the Dragon in Revelation in chapters 12, 13, and 17, as representing Satan and political evil, especially that coming from Rome.[3]

> And there appeared another wonder in heaven: and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his

> heads . . . And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. (12:3,9)

Chapter 13 presents two beasts arising from the sea. Specifically, the first beast is said, like the vision of the Dragon in the previous chapter, to have "seven heads and ten horns" (13:1), thus linking them together. And the second beast "spake as a dragon" (13:11) and works on behalf of the first beast (13:12). Chapter 17 introduces a woman dressed in scarlet, "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17:6). She rides the beast with seven heads and ten horns which is said to represent "seven mountains on which the woman sitteth" (13:9) and also "seven kings" (13:10). The interlinking symbols of the Dragon, the Beasts, and the Woman represent a complex of evil extending downwards from Satan himself to the political realms of the world.

Redcrosse is Spenser's lone knight, dressed in battle armor, in keeping, as he said to Raleigh, with the depiction of the armored Christian of Ephesians 6. The Christian, dressed in armor to defeat the wiles of the devil, has been part of Christian symbology ever since. Other verses of the New Testament reflect the concern of Protestant Reformers who believed that all forms of evil besetting the Christian throughout life have their ultimate source in Satan, thus denominating them as Satan's representatives in the world. Calvin, in commenting on John 8:44, "Ye are of your father, the devil," Jesus's denunciation of the Pharisees, divides humanity into two classes: those who serve Christ and those who serve Satan. The Pharisees "are said to be of their father the devil; for as believers are recognized as the children of God because they bear his image, so are those rightly recognized to be the children of Satan from his image, into which they have degenerated." Calvin cites 1 John 3:8,10: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (8). "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (10) (*Institutes*178; Bk. I.14.18). Spenser has followed this pattern in his presentation of Redcrosse and Una, as the children of God, opposed to Satan's children. Redcrosse undergoes various trials because evil is continuous and so is the battle to oppose it. The Christian undergoes testing because, as Calvin notes,

> whomever the Lord has adopted and deemed worthy of his fellowship ought to prepare themselves for a hard, toilsome, and unquiet life, crammed with very many and various kinds of evil. It is the Heavenly Father's will thus to exercise them so as to put his own children to a definite test. (702; Bk. III, 8.1)

Calvin's "various kinds of evil" are Spenser's characters, Error, Archimago, Duessa, Orgoglio, Despaire, and the Dragon. These present themselves before the Christian in various guises: Error confuses the Christian by means of misconceptions of doctrine; Archimago's changeability and Duessa's beauty show the varied forms of evil attacking the Christian through deception; Orgoglio and Despaire respectively, the psychological afflictions stemming, on the one hand from pride, and, on the other, from fear. All cause the Christian to forget his true relationship to God. This forgetfulness is what

Una alludes to in her exhortation to Redcrosse when he is at Despaire's mercy. She recalls him to consciousness of his true family relationship:

> Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight,
> Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly hart,
> Ne divelish thoughts dismay thy constant spright.
> In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part? (I.ix.53.1-4)

Una's encouragement to the floundering Redcrosse, like the encouragement sixteenth-century Protestants gave to each other, stems from the general belief in Protestantism that Satan, working through his agents, the "unclean spirits," in this world, works to cause Christians to fail in their devotion to God. Una recognizes the devil as the source of Redcrosse's gloomy and suicidal thoughts and seeks to direct him back to his true relationship to God. Calvin insists, in view several Scriptural warnings,[4] that Christians realize "the fact that the devil is everywhere called God's adversary and ours also." This fact "ought to fire us to an unceasing struggle against him." Christians can win their battles against the devil who "continually lays traps to destroy" their salvation (174; Bk. I.14.15) because God

> so governs [the] activity [of the unclean spirits] that they exercise believers in combat, ambush them, invade their peace, beset them in combat, and also often weary them, rout them, terrify them, and sometimes wound them; yet they never vanquish or crush them. (176; Bk. I.14.18)

Ephesians 6 is the classical passage Spenser draws upon in creating Redcrosse as his allegorical representation of the common Christian. The Christian, says Paul, is to "be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power," putting on "the full armor of God" so as to "take [his] stand against the devil's schemes" (Eph. 6:10-11). Thus, while armed fully in God's armor and bearing Christ's Cross and following God's truth (Una), Redcrosse can triumph by faith over error, pride, and despair.[5] And yet the puzzle of Book 1 is how does Redcrosse stumble? Isn't he in his armor (except when he meets Orgoglio)? Doesn't he have Una with him? Has he not exchanged vows of loyalty with Arthur (Heavenly Grace) before parting from him after the dungeon episode? In other words, isn't Redcrosse in a spiritually fortified state as indicated by his wearing of the armor througout Book 1? And yet at the most critical point of his adventures he is completely outdone by Despair's devious logic urging him to suicide.

In view of Redcrosse's continual losses, we may at first suppose Spenser to have lost control of his narrative, and to have forgotten the power of the spiritual armor to do battle with Satan as set forth in Ephesians 6. But he has not. Spenser has placed Redcrosse in a series of ever-increasing dangers to illustrate the constant spiritual battle Christians face wherein they daily need all of the supernatural weapons God provides in order to be victorious. The metaphor of spiritual armor Paul depicts consists of "the belt of truth," "the breastplate of righteousness," "feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace," "the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one," "the helmet of salvation," and "the sword of

the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:14-17). Some critics, however, have not realized that a Christian can and does have many episodes of spiritual failure. They imagine that Spenser has failed because Redcrosse continues to fail throughout the story even though he has on his armor. The source of their confusion is that they conflate the spiritual meaning of the allegory with the vehicle for telling it--knights dressed in armor. Chivalric tales demanding knights in armor must be kept in a separate compartment of our minds from the Christian symbolism of the armor in Spenser's allegory. The two come together briefly only in the Orgoglio episode where Redcrosse has lain his armor aside; all other episodes should be thought of as Redcrosse's failures wherein he is vulnerable because he has not fully armed himself *spiritually* to face the evil confronting him, just as any Christian is left vulnerable for such oversight.

In both Spenser and Calvin, the godly Christian undergoes testing and humbling because self-centered pride has caused him to depend upon the flesh rather than upon God. A sad truth of the Christian life is that no one is ever perfected in obedience. Calvin insists that sins of our nature incline us away from holiness. We are pitifully weak "in this earthly prison of the body" and do not possess "sufficient strength to press on with due eagerness" toward a life of dedication to God. Our "weakness so weighs down the greater number that, with wavering and limping and even creeping along the ground, they move at a feeble rate" (689; Bk. III, vi, 5). Several things in Redcrosse bring out this truth. He triumphs in the House of Pride but falls to Orgoglio, the one a representation of pride's outward lineaments which may more easily be discerned than in the other, the pride within oneself to which Redcrosse is blind. But Una, who can see "the decayed plight, / And shrunken synewes of her chosen knight" (I, ix, 20.4-5), is not so blind. Truth may behold us while we remain dulled to her warnings. Also, Redcrosse does not consult Truth when he meets Trevisan; instead, he immediately begins to give the frightened knight his own assurances of safety rather than God's (stanza 26).

When we keep in mind the Reformation Protestant perspective in evaluating Spenser, we must answer the questions we began this paper with--can a holy knight suffer? Can he fail?--in the affirmative. We have seen in this essay that though Redcrosse has on his armor, as indeed a knight must in a chivalric tale, we should clearly understand that Spenser does not intend that we should take Redcrosse at every episode in Book 1 as the spiritually armed Christian typified by the metaphor of spiritual armor in Epesians 6. Spiritual armor is thus *not* always on the Christian but is instead *put on continuously*, from day to day, as an act of will so as to be ready for evil attacks.[6] John Upton (1758) asserts that "Those old dints [in Redcrosse's armor, Canto 1] have been made by the fiery darts of the wicked: and this panoply has been worn by every Christian man in every age" (qtd. in Hamilton, *Faerie Queene* 29). Spenser has Redcrosse bearing the Cross of Christ on his armor because, according to Calvin, the Christian life is such that "we must pass our lives under a continual cross" (703; Bk. III, viii, 2). But despite his failures, Redcrosse moves continually upward towards glorious victory because that is the destiny of all Christians as Calvin asserts: "we share Christ's sufferings in order that as he has passed from a labyrinth of all evils into heavenly glory, we may in like manner be led through various tribulations to the same glory" (702; Bk. III,viii,1). When we come to appreciate Spenser's Reformation

standpoint, we will also appreciate that his depictions of Redcrosse's spiritual failures are both artistically satisfying and theologically sound.

Endnotes

[1] Maurice Evans is correct to say that "the unique quality of book 1 springs from the extraordinary psychological detail in which Spenser examines the processes of Christian hope and despair" (108). But Evans does not follow out his lead along Christian lines; instead he diverts the Christian flow of Spenser's thought into a wider channel of "heroism."

[2] Kenneth Gross has objected to this scheme:

> I should say here that I do not want to align Spenser with any particular religious or political camp; nor am I comfortable with the work of recent critics who have tried to make English Renaissance literature into a predominantly Protestant or Calvinist phenomena (20).

Gross's caution is apt if he means to prevent an overzealous application of this effort, but it misses entirely if by it he means that such a view is now out of date. Thomas Warton's advice in 1762 is still apt:

> In reading the works of a poet who lived in a remote age, it is necessary that we should look back upon the customs and manners which prevailed in that age. We should endeavor to place ourselves in the writer's situation and circumstances. Hence we shall become better enabled to discover, howe his turn of thinking, and manner of composing, were influenced by familiar appearances and established objects, which are utterly different from those with which we are at present surrounded. (2.87)

[3] Geneva Bible. Rev. 12:3: "The devil, & all his power which burneth with furie and is red with the blood of the faithful." Calvinist preachers devoted much effort to explicating the apocalyptic Beasts and the Dragon. Puritan Cotton Mather identified the beast with the seven heads as representative of Rome and of Satan, the Antichrist (Stout 48). The neoplatonist Henry More of Cambridge: "The Dragon, that is, the *Roman* Empire *Pagan* known by its seven Heads, which allude to the seven Hills...but *Pagan* in that it is in the shape of a *Dragon*, as being under the dominion not of *Christ* but *Satan*" (115).

[4] For example, the Apostle Peter warns Christians: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

[5] Some criticism labors under the dense terminology of modern critical theory to express that which is much more simply understood in Christian terms. Jonathan Goldberg, for instance, presents a poststructuralist sign and signifier picture of Redcrosse who, he says, is nothing in himself but a sign (7). Ake Bergvall, while essentially agreeing with Goldberg, adds this qualifier:

> I would argue, however, that [Redcrosse] is not simply 'a sign of

> someone else,' but that the young man and the 'mightie armes' together form the two halves of the sign 'Redcrosse.' I also would suggest that it is Una, as 'Truth,' that holds the sign together, vouching for its epistemological validity. It is she who unites the 'clownish younge man,' an untried and therefore empty signifier, with the armor, an exacting signified. (31)

Goldberg and Bergvall mistrust or misunderstand Spenser's "Christianism" here. Nothing in their approach serves to clarify or elucidate the underlying Christian references in Spenser, but much is done to submerge them in a foggy rhetoric.

[6] The verb tense in Paul is present, "put on," connoting a continuous act of will. The parts of the armor expressed in Ephesians 6 are not things one can put on instantly and in full strength, despite the metaphor of armor. As the soldier gets ready for battle, so the Christian ought to ready himself for spiritual warfare:

> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God. (Eph. 6: 12-13)

But such readiness comes with time and maturation. Truth, righteousness, faith, the word of God, are all elements of Christianity that take time to understand fully.

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Faulkner: Overcoming Another Problem (Teaching Faulkner to African American Students)

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William Faulkner! For readers the name evokes responses that range from blank nonrecognition in some to resigned indignation in others. Those readers who have stuck with Faulkner long enough to become comfortable with him and who know what he is about are rewarded for their efforts. But all too often the potential reader of Faulkner is thrown unprepared into the Faulkner thicket.

Admittedly Faulkner is far from one of the easier authors available. In fact he is usually found to be an exasperating author. His unique style presents a problem for even some of the best readers.

Aside from the more obvious problems of style, technique, and structural difficulties which every reader must overcome in the quest for the understanding and enjoyment of Faulkner, some sensitive readers must also overcome the feelings of animosity which arise out of seeing the word "nigger" and reading what at first may seem a very negative portrayal of the black race. The African American reader in particular can become instantly averse to Faulkner upon the first encounter of this seemingly blatantly derogatory word.

Even before some of the personal responses of Faulkner are discussed, the reader should be made aware that Faulkner often contradicted himself in many areas, often lied about various matters (he contended that all writers were liars--they had to be to be writers). It is also important to note the time in which Faulkner wrote. His outspoken views in favor of the equality of the black race made him quite unpopular in his native state. Most people around him, including members of his own family, saw the black man as inferior and as having his "place." Faulkner went against the traditional Southern ideas in viewing the black man as having no more of a "place" than anyone else.

In a paper presented at 1986 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, Noel Polk stated that "we must also remember that Faulkner made public statements at a time when it was very dangerous to do so, and did so even though it cost him the contumely of his family and of his community and of the entire state. What more could be expected of a citizen?" (146)

To ensure that a potential reader does not turn away, the teacher must prepare that reader to be receptive to the reading of Faulkner. This preparation is best presented in three stages: First, the knowledge of Faulkner's personal response to the issue of race relations; secondly, the knowledge of the opinions and discussions on Faulkner by prominent African American persons, and finally, the analysis of the treatment of race in Faulkner's fictional world. Only after this careful preparation will a sensitive reader be open minded to the words of Faulkner. In first preparing the sensitive reader to overcome the animosities and resentment he is almost certain to feel, the first step is to provide background information of Faulkner's actions and some of these public statements concerning the subject of race. These responses should be carefully considered in the historical context which provoked them. Among the first of these instances which placed Faulkner as

being more liberal than his Southern contemporaries was his action following the death of his black childhood nurse. In 1940 Faulkner brought the body of this beloved black woman into his own home. She rested in her casket in his parlor while he delivered a funeral service for her. Two years later he memorialized her in his dedication to her of *Go Down, Moses*. This was not a time in which white people brought black bodies into their homes to eulogize them nor did white authors dedicate their books to a black person.

As early as 1950, five years before the landmark Brown vs Board of Education, Faulkner made his first public protest against the legal injustices against the black race. His letter appeared in the *Commercial Appeal*, a Memphis newspaper, in protest of the sentence handed down by a jury upon three white men for the murder of three black children. His letter evoked negative responses and resentment from white Mississippians.

Also in 1950, after having received the Nobel prize, Faulkner gave a portion of his prize money for establishing a scholarship fund for blacks who otherwise could not afford to continue their educational pursuits. One black in particular, James McGlowan, benefitted from Faulkner's interest in the furtherance of education of deserving young black students. Faulkner had followed the accomplishments of this young man for many years and viewed him as a leader of his people. Approximately $3,000 went toward the educational advancement of this principal of the black high school at Hernando for his schooling at Hampton College and the University of Michigan (Blotner 535).

In an essay which appeared in the April 1954 issue of *Holiday*, Faulkner wrote that he

> hated the intolerance and injustice: the lynching of negroes not for the crimes they committed but because their skins were black . . . the inequality; the poor schools they had when they had any, the hovels they had to live in unless they wanted to live outdoors: who could worship the white man's God but not in the man's church; pay taxes in the white man's courthouse but couldn't vote in it or for it; working by the white man's clock but having to take his pay by the white man's counting . . . . (Meriwether *Essays* 37)

With the Supreme Court ruling on integration of the public schools Faulkner again wrote concerning the racial strife. He tried to reason with fellow Mississippians that the "separate but equal" school system was both unconstitutional and ineffectual. He thought it foolish that Mississippians would "raise additional taxes to establish another system at best only equal to that one which is already not good enough . . ." (Meriwether Essays 216) which would result in the state's having "two identical systems neither of which are good enough for anybody" (Peavy 58). Faulkner's letters were answered in the *Commercial Appeal*. Many of these replies personally attacked him for his stand on race issues. As a result, Faulkner received threatening mail and angry telephone calls (Peters 215). The townspeople of Oxford not only objected to the exposure in his fiction of the injustice done to the black race, but they also objected to Faulkner's personal stand on the question of racial equality. According to his niece, Dean Faulkner Wells, he was referred to as a "nigger lover" by some of the townspeople (Panel

Discussion, Faulkner Conference, Oxford, Mississippi, August 1977).

This adverse reaction by his fellow Mississippians did not deter him from his continued public support for racial equality. In an interview with Russell Warren Howe, a correspondent for the London *Sunday Times*, Faulkner made many memorable comments--some of which contributed to controversy. His Go Slow Policy was introduced, and it explained that the Southerner should have to see himself. Faulkner advised "Let him see that people laugh at him. Just let him see how silly and foolish he looks . . . . (Utley 256-7). His Go Slow Policy was further explained in his "Letter to the Leaders in the Negro Race" published in *Ebony* magazine in September 1956. In his letter he echoes the sentiments of Martin Luther King, Jr., in his advocation of the ways of Gandhi and in the statement "if violence and unreason come, it must not be from us" (Utley 273).

A sentence that seemingly points to Faulkner's ambivalence or even one that points toward his being a bigot can always be found, but to isolate a passage for the purpose of determining Faulkner's true feeling about racial issues would be unfair to Faulkner as well as to his potential reader. A great deal of information must be assimilated if a true picture of Faulkner's views are to be formed. If a reader forms the opinion that Faulkner is a bigot, he needs to keep reading.

An attempt to bring together practically everything Faulkner has had to say on the race issue can be found in the book by Charles D. Peavy, *Go Slow Now: Faulkner and the Race Question*. It is a good, concise source to which a teacher can turn for background material in teaching Faulkner's racial views. The book directs the reader toward an understanding of Faulkner's statements and the historical significance of these statements in a attempt to examine his actual statements and his meaning behind them. One other book concerning both Faulkner's views and analysis of Faulkner's fiction as it deals with race is *Faulkner and Race* edited by Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie. This volume contains the papers that were presented at the Faulkner and Yonapatawpha Conference held at the University of Mississippi in 1989.

A number of African American authors have in articles, letters and books offered their opinions on Faulkner and his work. In praise of Faulkner's works, Ralph Ellison, author of *Invisible Man*, has said that Faulkner "is the greatest artist the South has produced" and that "we must turn to him for that continuity of moral purpose which made for the greatest of our classics" (Utley 275-276). Ellison later stated, "If you would find the imaginative equivalents of certain civil rights figures in American writing, Rosa Parks and James Meredith, say, you don't go to most fiction by Negroes, but to Faulkner" (Ellison 302).

However in a more negative vein, James Baldwin took issue not only with Faulkner's Go Slow Policy but also with an untimely and ill-thought-out remark Faulkner made during the previously mentioned Howe interview. Baldwin chose to focus on the one statement that did not place Faulkner in a good light rather than the many statements in the same interview that affirmed Faulkner's position to be one of wholehearted belief in equality in every area for the black race.

While Baldwin did not choose to praise Faulkner's magnanimity of vision, another black writer does. Margaret Walker Alexander, author of *Jubilee* and *Daemonic Genius*, says that "Faulkner should be read as one reads the Bible--

not literally but figuratively" (108). She also maintains that Faulkner is not to be read fragmentally but instead "one must read a large body of Faulkner's fiction from the beginning to the end in order to understand even slightly his strange code of honor, his attitude about race...[and] yet this morality, or moral concern about race, is stamped on every major work . . ." (105).

Many contemporary African Americans have discovered Faulkner's special significance to their race. J. L. Chestnut, author of *Black in Selma* and a practicing attorney in Selma, Alabama, commented in his weekly newspaper column on the existing racial situation in his city. Of this situation, he says that someday "someone will write a book on Southern myths and explain how they have been used to exploit and reduce an entire region of people to second class status. William Faulkner and a few others hinted at the situation but were too Southern to really drive the ugly point home" (A4). Obviously Mr. Chestnut was wise enough to continue reading beyond some of the words used by Faulkner to see the meaning behind them. The more of Faulkner one reads, the closer home this point is driven.

Once the sensitive reader accepts Faulkner as an author who is an advocate of racial equality; and one who, through his writing, has exposed many follies on the part of whites, he can then experience Faulkner as a great novelist. Finally the reader will find that the works are testimony to Faulkner's beliefs. When that reader has gone beyond the initial shock of some of the words and situations, he can see Faulkner has cleverly placed his reader in a position to see in the mirror the reflections of a society that was wrong in its beliefs. Faulkner thought that the society with the wrong inflicted upon the black race should be remembered and portrayed in his works because "the world which for some reason [he] believed[d] should not pass utterly out of the memory of man . . . " (Blotner 122). However wrong a society may have been, he felt it important to capture that particular society. In an interview with Jean Stein, he expressed his capturing of it on paper as "to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that 100 years later when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life" (Meriwether *Lion* 253). Even the short story, "Two Soldiers," arrests a particular attitude of some Southerners during the time of World War II. The story, which can be taught effectively as early as the seventh grade, makes plain that the nine year old has not the slightest amount of animosity in his attitude when he speaks of the "nigger." He simply calls him by the term he has grown up hearing. That name for a black person meant no more to him than speaking of yesterday as "yestiddy." Except for the term, race plays no part in the story. In other stories and novels, especially Faulkner's black trilogy which consists of *Light in August*, *Go Down Moses* and *Intruder in the Dust*, race is a major concern. The primary focus in *Light in August* is the search for and struggle with identity by a near-white mulatto. Faulkner makes the reader feel the injustice done to this character by society. *Go Down, Moses* deals more closely with the relationship between the races. One of Faulkner's most memorable black characters, Lucas Beauchamp, of *Intruder in the Dust*, is accused of a crime he did not commit. Throughout the novel Lucas refuses to occupy his "place" the white man has set for him. His innocence is proved by a young boy and an old woman--both white. An overall air of spiritual brotherhood between the races exists in the final chapters of both *Go Down, Moses* and of *Intruder in the Dust*. There is a promise of salvation through the two races working together for a common

good. In Margaret Walker Alexander's words, "Perhaps we will produce together all that is needed for one race on the face of the earth, the human race. Surely William Faulkner has made a great beginning" (121).

With the beginning of an understanding of Faulkner, the reader will not feel the desire to place Faulkner on the shelf because of a situation or a misunderstanding of a term used. The reader will be free to experience the entire range of Faulkner of which race is only a part.

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Teaching the Sonnet: Two Poems by Claude McKay

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Perhaps we, as teachers, have done too good a job of teaching Wordsworth's precept that "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," that "it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility" (460). I say that because Wordsworth's definition of poetry, when reduced to an aphorism, appears to transport poetry totally into the realm of the personal, to limit its subject to the expression and sharing of emotional experience, and, at least in students' minds, to deny that objective critical standards exist to evaluate the quality of a poem. Such beliefs certainly make poetry an accessible art form for the beginning practitioner, but they also inhibit those students who are comfortable with the objective criteria used in the sciences. For them, poetry is difficult, even more so than fiction, where the verisimilitude of character, of setting, and of plot provide readily accessible opportunities for students to evaluate artistic quality. The standards used to judge poetry often appear to be esoteric and so highly subjective that they reflect merely the unsupported personal opinion of the teacher. Although quality, by its very nature, is never quantifiable, as Coleridge observed: "The spirit of poetry, like all other living powers, must of necessity circumscribe itself by rules, were it only to unite power with beauty. It must embody in order to reveal itself; but a living body is of necessity an organized one--and what is organization but the connection of parts to a whole, so that each part is at once end and means!" (285). And it is from this organization of the parts that objective standards for the evaluation of poetry spring.

The sonnet, because it is short and clearly a poetic form circumscribed by rules, provides an excellent vehicle for introducing the idea that objective standards do play a role in the evaluation of poetry. The English sonnet, as we all know and every introduction to literature text will inform our students, is normally fourteen lines of rhymed iambic pentameter. The specification that the basic metric foot be iambic is usually not very significant as the basic speech rhythm of English is iambic, but the constricted space of the sonnet sometimes introduces problems. Three basic rhyme patterns for sonnets are generally identified: the Petrarchan whose lines end with rhymes of "abba abba" followed by either "cde cde" or "cdc cdc"; the Spenserian with end rhymes of "abab bcbc cdcd ee"; and the Shakespearean which rhymes "abab cdcd efef gg". Thus, the rules of the sonnet limit the poet's "little song" to 140 syllables and further prescribe that every tenth syllable end with a certain sound. These physical constraints on the form of the sonnet are easy to demonstrate to students, but there are far more interesting constraints than these minimal requirements which enter into our evaluation of a sonnet's quality.

A good sonnet is dynamic and multifaceted. The first eight lines, called the "octave," are used by the poet to define a situation, establish an attitude, present a particular point of view, pose a question, or explain the nature of a problem which is in need of resolution. In a good sonnet, the poet uses the next four to six lines, the "sestet," to present an equally true, but contrasting

situation, attitude, or point of view to the one presented in the octave, or provides an answer or solution to the question or problem presented in the octave. If the sonnet ends in a couplet, it is used by the narrative voice of the poem to present a synthesis of the ideas presented in the octave and those presented in lines nine through twelve. Thus a good sonnet is a highly constrained "thinking" poem in which the narrator invites the reader to follow a pattern of reasoning with the poet.

In addition to the constraints already mentioned, the quality of a sonnet is also judged according to the same standards applied to other rhymed verse. Normally, it should be possible to read a well-written line of verse so that the stress falls naturally on the root syllables of content words such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and not on the normally unstressed syllables of words or on unimportant function words such as articles. Alexander Pope's admonition in his *Essay on Criticism* that "The *Sound* must seem an *Eccho* to the *Sense*" (l. 365) applies not only to the proper placement of stress, but also to creating lines whose very sound evokes the emotions being discussed. It is tempting in a form as constricting as the sonnet to use a lot of one syllable words, to put ten short words in a line, but the effect of doing so is often a slow and ponderous line which may be inappropriate if the sonnet is about a joyful or light-hearted subject. Also, and this is often a shock to students, words that rhyme stick in the mind; they too must echo the sense of the poem or they are inappropriate.

Let me demonstrate these objective criteria very quickly using a well-known sonnet of Shakespeare's: "My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun." In the octave, Shakespeare does an excellent job of manipulating the placement of stressed syllables to force the reader to adopt an ironic tone which echoes the sense the narrator wants to convey:

> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun,
> Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
> If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
> If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
> I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
> But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
> And in some perfumes is there more delight
> Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

Although in the octave, the narrator seems to be overtly criticizing the physical features of his mistress, the ironic tone induced by the poem's metrical pattern undermines some of the harshness of that criticism. The surface of the poem is further undermined by Shakespeare's playful use of rhyme. In the first stanza "sun" is rhymed with "dun" suggesting that the sun, not his mistress's eyes, suffers from the comparison, and "red" is rhymed with "head" suggesting that his mistress does not have black hair as line four seems to assert. In the second stanza, "white" is rhymed with "delight" and "cheeks" with "reeks." The "white/delight" appellation certainly undermines the assertion of the first stanza that the mistress's breasts are "dun." And, while the word "reeks" has many negative connotations, one meaning of "reek" current in Shakespeare's time was associated with hot, damp places which produced steam suggesting perhaps that a hot tear is burning on his mistress's

cheek, a white (that is, clear) tear which pollutes her cheek but delights the narrator in that it demonstates that the mistress is sensitive to the narrator's opinion of her.

Notice now, in the sestet, how the narrator's tone shifts to a very human, earthly praise of his mistress's physical existence:

> I love to hear her speak; yet well I know
> That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
> I grant I never saw a goddess go;
> My mistress, when she walks, walks on the ground.

The rhymes here "know/go" and "sound/ground" suggest the narrator's confidence that he is approaching his mistress on solid ground. The closing couplet contains the narrator's synthesis of the octave and the sestet:

> And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
> As any she belied with false compare.

That is, the narrator loves the actual woman he calls his mistress and not some fantasy woman, some imaginary goddess. Shakespeare manipulates the stress pattern in the last line to make reference to his own use of false comparisons as he praises her ability to see through flattery. Notice also how the couplet shifts the entire focus of the poem from the qualities of the mistress to the "rare" quality of the narrator's love--thus turning the poem into an argument for choosing the narrator over any other lover as he asks his mistress to use common sense and ignore flattery when choosing a lover. The rhymes "rare/compare" apply as much to the strategy of the poem as to the narrator's appreciation of his mistress and the intelligence evidenced in her ability to see through lies.

As I mentioned earlier, one problem with the Wordsworthian association of poetry with the expression of emotion is that it is often necessary to demonstrate that it is possible to objectively criticize the quality of a poem without personally attacking the emotional experience of the poet. To demonstrate that it is possible to criticize the organizational choices the poet makes as the parts are chosen which will make up the whole poem, producing a work of art where each part is, in Coleridge's words, "at once end and means," I like to present my students with two poems by the same poet for their evaluation. The two poems are Claude McKay's "If We Must Die" and "The Harlem Dancer." I ask my students to tell me, based on the criteria set forth above and not on vague feelings of personal preference, which of the poems is the better sonnet. An informed answer requires an understanding of how sonnets are structured combined with a close reading of each of the poems. The sonnet has developed into something more than a little song and its highly circumscribed complex form makes it better suited to some rhetorical purposes than it is to others.

"If We Must Die" is probably Claude McKay's most famous poem. It was composed in 1919 in response to the race riots that were taking place in Harlem and published in *The Liberator*, a socialist magazine of art and literature. Because of its power and the fact that it is evocative of the speeches of encouragement used to rally the loyalty and determination of the followers

of Byrhtnoth after the fall of their leader to Viking raiders in the Old English poem "The Battle of Maldon," Winston Churchill incorporated this poem into one of his wartime speeches before the English House of Commons. While the sonnet is overtly a work of deliberative discourse designed to persuade its audience to take action--a suitable topic for a sonnet--its emphasis on virtue and nobility and its refusal to seriously consider other courses of action than the one advocated moves the discourse toward the realm of the ceremonial--an area less suitable for the dynamic interaction of a good sonnet. The language of the poem, like its message, is simple and direct. McKay uses the octave to set forth his thesis that nobility, even in defeat, is honorable:

If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

It should be noted that McKay's rhythm strays from the iambic of ordinary speech as one would expect in an emotion-laden discourse. The second line may cause problems for readers in that it appears to have eleven syllables and the series of weak syllables "in an in-" which appears in the center of the line is easy to stumble over. The rhymes of the first four lines, "hogs/dogs, spot/lot" clearly reinforce the poems thesis by denigrating the opposition and suggesting that even dogs and pigs will fight back if they are backed into a corner. The rhymes of lines four through eight "die/defy, shed/dead" similarly reinforce McKay's thesis that a courageous defiance will eliminate any shame associated with losing the battle.

The sestet moves from a statement of the situation to a call for action. In terms of the dynamics of a sonnet, however, this idea is not new: it has already been presented in line five's "O let us nobly die."

O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

The rhymes of the sestet "foe/deathblow, brave/grave" and "pack/back" repeat the ideas presented in the lines themselves and suggest, as the lines do, that a possibility of winning exists in brave defiance of the foe. The poem is powerful. The language is simple and direct and as discourse designed to instill courage in the face of overwhelming odds, it is very effective. As a *sonnet*, however, it is in no way as interesting or as well-written as McKay's "The Harlem Dancer."

Notice how the octave of "The Harlem Dancer" in both its content and its rhythms evokes images of jazz music and modern dance, of Sundays in the

park and family picnics:

> Applauding youths laughed with young prostitutes
> And watched her perfect, half-clothed body sway;
> Her voice was like the sound of blended flutes
> Blown by black players upon a picnic day.
> She sang and danced on gracefully and calm,
> The light gauze hanging loose about her form;
> To me she seemed a proudly-swaying palm
> Grown lovelier for passing through a storm.

True, the word "prostitutes" in the first line is a little jarring, but the title informs us that we are in Harlem, in an urban environment where the prostitutes are as young as the "applauding youths" and everyone deserves a day off to forget the realities of daily life. This image healthful of re-creation is reinforced in lines seven and eight where the dancer is compared to a palm tree after a hurricane has cleansed it of all of its dead fronds and we are left a graceful gently swaying green palm.

The image presented in the first four lines of the sestet, however presents a sharply contrasting perception of the same events:

> Upon her swarthy neck black shiny curls
> Luxuriant fell; and tossing coins in praise,
> The wine-flushed, bold-eyed boys, and even the girls,
> Devoured her shape with eager, passionate gaze;

Here the cleanliness of the dancer's body and hair is called into question by the word "swarthy," a word most often used to characterize the sooty glass chimneys of oil lamps in need of cleaning. The "tossing coins" shifts our image of the dance from high art to the titillation of the nudie bar. The boys are drunk and full of lust as are the girls whose lesbian inclinations offer further proof that this performance is something other than an innocent cultural event meant for family consumption on "a picnic day." The closing couplet synthesizes these two contrasting perceptions of the dance with a flash of insight which pulls the poem together and turns it into a striking work of art which questions the values which motivate our culture:

> But looking at her falsely-smiling face,
> I knew her self was not in that strange place.

Yes, it is a sexual performance, a form of prostitution: she is "a dancer for money," but this is a job she has taken out of economic necessity. Her soul is not there, "in that strange place" where our society has forced her to live; rather, we are led to believe, her soul is in the world of the octave, in the world of family picnics in the park, the world of jazz concerts and modern dance.

McKay's use of rhyme in this poem is extremely skillful as he uses it to inextricably bind these two images of the dancer together so that hey may not be simplistically separated from each other. The rhyme of the couplet, "face/place," defines the reality the dancer has had to accept just as it challenges the reader look at the reality of the woman's life in Harlem. The

rhymes of the sestet, "girls/curls, praise/gaze," reinforce the innocent vision of the octave as they take us back to the innocent community pleasures of the picnic day. The rhymes of the octave are quite shocking as they make the vision of prostitution in the sestet explicitly visible. In the first four lines, "prostitutes" and "flutes" "sway" the "day." When we consider that in American slang the word "flute" has long been associated with fellatio, the rhymes of lines five through eight, "calm/palm, form/storm" must also make reference to another service commonly performed by prostitutes.

I have no doubt that Claude McKay's "The Harlem Dancer" is a poem which "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility," but it is also a superb example of how a knowledge of the structure of the sonnet can open up the poem to discussion and interpretation. It is a highly constrained poem in which the narrator invites the reader follow a pattern of reasoning along with the poet and share the poet's response, intellectually and emotionally, to the events portrayed in the sonnet. Whether we use Wordsworth's criteria to judge the quality of the poem, or the more objective criteria I presented in my introduction--and I suggest that the poem is most easily accessed if we use both--the quality of "The Harlem Dancer," and the quality of McKay's poetic craftsmanship is evidence that objective standards do exist to judge the quality of poetry and that the application of them as we teach the poem does not necessarily diminish the possibility of enjoying the poem aesthetically, but rather offers us the opportunity to enhance the experience for our students.

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"Dual Bodies" of the King: Dryden's Defense of Divine Right in "Threnodia Augustalis"

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As poet laureate of England and member of the Restoration court, John Dryden was called on to write a poem commemorating the death of Charles and the enthronement of James. When King Charles II died with no legitimate offspring, his brother, James, inherited the throne. James ascension to the English throne was a hard won triumph. Dryden's poem, "Threnodia Augustalis," is, at first glance, a reflection on Charles's just ended reign and death and on James's upcoming rule. Why does Dryden in a funeral poem about Charles devote so much space to James? I shall argue that Dryden used the occasion of Charles's death to write a poem that is actually a spirited defense of the duality of kingship and the Stuart monarchy's divine right to the throne.

By the time of Charles' death in 1685, the monarchy had survived numerous attacks and crises during his reign. The most significant of these were the two Exclusion bills introduced into Parliament that attempted to circumvent the English constitution and give Parliament the right to control the succession to the throne. These Exclusion Bills were the result of a 1678 fake plot dubbed the "Popish Plot" which induced hysteria within the nation. Revealed by Titus Oates and Israel Tonge as a plot by the Catholics to murder Charles and place his Catholic brother, James, on the throne, the plot precipitated what became known as the Exclusion Bill crisis. The Exclusion bills were an endeavor to usurp Charles's and his heir's divine right to govern by conferring control to Parliament over the succession to the throne.

The Earl of Shaftesbury, who had served Cromwell as well as Charles, opposed the political principles of Charles's chief minister, the Earl of Danby. Shaftesbury saw Danby's administration as an inauguration of absolutism of the French form, and he assembled what became the first political party in English history to destroy Danby and crush the basis of Charles's divine right to rule.

The target of the Exclusion bills was Charles's heir apparent, his brother, James, a Catholic. Shaftesbury and his "Whigs" wanted Parliament to have the right to choose a Protestant successor to the English throne. The Whig candidates included William of Orange (James's son-in-law), who was approached during this time, and the Duke of Monmouth, Charles's illegitimate son by Lucy Waters. Rumors abounded that King Charles had been secretly married to Waters, rumors which, if proven, could legitimize the Duke and indeed make him the heir. The Whig party split over the issue of who would succeed and this disunity contributed to the eventual defeat of the Exclusion bills.

The Exclusion bills were actually doomed from the start because Shaftesbury underestimated the King. He failed to comprehend that Charles would not concede his divine right as King and that Charles held the upper hand. Charles, as King, enjoyed the right to call and dismiss Parliament at his will and this he did to great effect. He also controlled a majority in the House

of Lords who voted down the bills time and again. Charles pursued a policy that offered concessions which conciliated many worried politicians and convinced them there was no need for Exclusion. With an iron nerve, pragmatism, and easy-going goodwill towards everyone, Charles won the day and secured for himself and his heirs a "nation governed by and for those who believed in the divine right of kings, the divine right of the Church of England, and the divine right of the localities to run their own affairs" (Morgan 382-4; Young 103; Winn 333).

Four years after the defeat of the final Exclusion Bill, Charles died suddenly after a short illness. Upon Charles's death, Dryden, then poet laureate, composed "Threnodia Augustalis," a funerary poem which accomplished the delicate task of balancing between mourning King Charles and celebrating King James. I believe Dryden achieved this balance by focusing on the divinity of the monarchy. As poet laureate and Tory propagandist, Dryden would have felt it his duty to defend James and mourn Charles; however, his personal knowledge of and acquaintance with both Charles and James gave added impetus to his composition. Dryden had been a staunch Royalist for much of his life and he found it his duty and privilege to defend the divine right of kings. While critics have, for the most part, focused on Dryden's "Astraea Redux," "To His Sacred Majesty," and his play, *Absolam and Achitophel*, as media for the defense of divine right, "Threnodia" has been overlooked by all but a few. Steven Zwicker, in his book Dryden's Political Poetry, notes the presence of "considerably more emphasis on the divinity of the king" in "Threnodia" than in Dryden's earlier Restoration poetry (109). That emphasis on divinity is apparent throughout the poem for the critical reader.

The divine right of kings was a crucial topic throughout the Restoration era but especially during the Exclusion crisis and at Charles's death. Dryden's defense of divine right is based on the ancient belief in the two bodies of the king, the natural body and the political body. A 1660 publication entitled *The Title of Kings Proved to Be Jure Devino* . . . quotes from an earlier (13th century) treatise that states in part, "the King hath aperpetual succession, and never dies . . . and hath two capacities, . . . a natural body . . . and a body Politck, . . . yet both bodies make but one individual body" (Prynne 4). This belief in two bodies is a primary theme in "Threnodia Augustalis." The natural body of Charles died and the natural body of James ascended the English throne, but the political body, which was the English nation, endured.

In "Threnodia," Dryden describes the course of Charles's death and portrays the nobility, the majesty, and the spirituality inherent in the King. Those attributes are part of the royal persona, a part which cannot be hidden or disguised. Harold Weber, in his book *Paper Bullets: Print and Kingship under Charles II*, describes these traits as part of " . . . the king's divinity: as God's anointed, Charles possesses a magical presence, an inherent majesty that inevitably marks his superiority to all other people. The royal identity depends on a spiritual authority and power that invests the mortal body of the individual king . . . " (43). Part of Dryden's description of this inherent majesty is found in section VI of "Threnodia" in the depiction of how Charles faced his imminent death.

The same Majestick mildness held its place;

Nor lost the Monarch in his dying face.
Intrepid, pious, merciful, and brave,
He lookt as when he conquer'd and forgave
(lines 204-7).

Dryden leaves no doubt that Charles never lost his inherent royal characteristics even in the face of a torturous death and that he died nobly in spite of agonizing pain and medical treatment.

Prescribing such intolerable pain,
As none but Caesar [Charles] cou'd sustain:
Undaunted Caesar underwent
The malice of their [physicians'] Art . . .
In five such days he suffer'd more
Then any suffer'd in his reign before . . . (ll. 174-7,179-80).

These same traits, these divine characteristics of Charles can also be found in Dryden's portrait of James. In section XI of "Threnodia," Dryden describes James in this manner, "The Vertues of a Royal Mind, Forgiving, bounteous, humble, just and kind" (ll. 335-6). This echoes the description of Charles as "intrepid, pious, merciful, brave" (l. 208). I believe that Dryden wants us to see that James not only has the body politic, but also, as Charles's brother, has similar, shared attributes in the natural body. Though Charles and James were more dissimilar than alike in temperament, they shared much and Dryden takes great care in drawing those parallels. Dryden reminds us that they had both suffered the humiliation and deprivation of exile, Charles's exile during the Interregnum and James's two: during the Interregnum and during the Exclusion crisis. Dryden refers to these exiles in several different places within "Threnodia." The first to be mentioned is James's exile to Scotland which Charles had ordered during the Exclusion crisis, ". . . nor Exile with his duty weigh'd" (l. 36). Later in the poem, Dryden alluded to the Interregnum, "And, to his Infant Arms oppose, His Father's Rebels, and his Brother's Foes" (ll.459-60). Charles's exile is found mentioned during the death scene in section VIII; "For an hard Exile, kindly meant, When his ungrateful Country sent . . . " (ll. 265-6) and in the narrative found in section XIV enumerating the years of Charles's exile and his reign; "For Twelve long years of Exile, born" (l. 421). By promoting the similarities between the brothers, Dryden has tried to abolish any lingering doubts about James as king.

I found in my research that Dryden used similar descriptions, metaphors, and words to describe both Charles and James. In addition to the similar character descriptions mentioned above, there are several passages which use like terminology in discussing the brothers. Dryden cleverly used these cognates to stress the continuity of the king. He described James as having a "manly heart" (l. 130) and Charles as having a "manly mind" (l. 323). By use of the term "manly," Dryden added to his portraiture of the brothers all the connotations of that term: strength, vigor, virility--all qualities preferable in a sovereign ruler. In the "sword" metaphors, it is my opinion that Dryden had two images in mind. In his description of Charles as a sword he said, "Like a well-temper'd Sword, it bent at will: But kept the Native toughness of the Steel" (ll. 325-6). The lines refer to Charles's "manly mind" (l. 323) and how

of figurative castration as the preeminent "masculine anxiety" in Messina (186). The men's persistent joking about cuckoldry "suggests an underlying that is present when the play opens and that has not been dispelled by the resolution of the plot's various complications" (187).

Early in his discussions with Claudio and Don Pedro, Benedick reveals the ultimate reason he refuses to marry. To Don Pedro's insistence that all men must eventually "bear the yoke" (1.1.261), Benedick replies,

> The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible
> Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set
> them in my forehead . . . . (1.1.262-64)

The imagery of the horns and the wounds inflicted by their removal clearly suggests Benedick's fear of losing his masculinity. Furthermore, if Benedick's "horn" were removed, his emasculation would be clear to all in the "displaced phallus" displayed on his forehead (Cook 187). In earlier lines, Benedick connects love with loss of blood when he says, "Prove that ever I lose more / blood with love than I will get again with drinking, /pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen . . ." (1.1.250-52). The jest suggests his fear of "a loss of virility and vitality" through "the bleeding wound of castration" (188).

The Elizabethan husband with the "bleeding wound" and the bull's horns is an object of public derision. "To be betrayed by a woman," argues Coppelia Kahn, "threatens a man's very masculinity--his identity as a man." And when so "humiliated" and "dishonored," men must bolster themselves psychologically and shift the blame from themselves by insisting that their women are ungovernable "whores" (132). Underlying the male fear of castration, then, is the deeper fear of female sexuality and the feminine power it implies. In the scene just discussed, Benedick sets the tone for male fear and distrust of women, stating boldly that he will never marry. He has "the right to trust none" and therefore will "live a bachelor" (1.1.244-46). An Elizabethan woman's power to make her husband a cuckold is "the only power women retain in their subordinate state" (Williamson 27), and the men must protect themselves against it. Benedick seeks protection through bachelorhood, but Claudio, once entering the realm of male/female relationships, must devise other means of psychological protection.

For Claudio, difficulties arise almost immediately in his love quest. In Act II, he suffers a crushing blow to his ego when he thinks "The Prince woos for himself" (2.1.174) and that he has lost Hero to Don Pedro. Because of the sexual double-standard of "the Men's Club," as Harry Berger, Jr., refers to Messina (312), and the psychological need to protect his ego, Claudio never considers that Don Pedro might be at fault and places sole blame on Hero:

> for beauty is a witch
> Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
> This is an accident of hourly proof,
> Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore Hero!
> (2.1.179-82)

Here, Cook suggests that "Hero is subsumed into an archetype of destructive female power--of the sorceress who deprives men of their wills and dissolves

the solidarity of masculine bonds..."(193). Hero's beauty and sexuality give her the power to diminish and betray, and thus represent a serious threat to Claudio's self-esteem. To ward off this threat to his ego, Claudio must publicly paint Hero a whore, as he does in the marriage scene:

> Would you not swear,
> All you that see her, that she were a maid,
> By these exterior shows? But she is none:
> She knows the heat of a luxurious bed.
> Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty. (4.1.38-42)

As Claudio goes on to argue that Hero is "more intemperate" than "those pampered animals / That rage in savage sensuality" (4.1.59-61), we begin to understand not only Claudio's psychological defenses, but also his deeply-held fear of his own sexuality. For just as the fear of women's power underlies the male fear of cuckoldry and castration, so is the male's fear of women's sexuality underscored by his own sexual anxieties.

In "Those 'soft and delicate desires': *Much Ado* and the Distrust of Women," Janice Hays argues the case for Claudio's "deep lack of self-esteem" and his attendant fear of his own sexuality. Hays sees Claudio--like all the play's principal young men--as "comrades . . . whose emotions are attached to the male world of soldiering and hell-raising," men whose aspirations for "glory and honor" are but a mask, a compensation, for their feelings of personal inadequacy (80-81).

As Hero catches Claudio's interest upon his return from war, Claudio is uncertain and tentative about his new interest. In an exchange with Don Pedro, Claudio makes it clear that he is uncomfortable with these thoughts of love that have replaced his accustomed attention to the duties of war:

> Oh my lord,
> When you went onward on this ended action,
> I looked upon her with a soldier's eye,
> That liked, but had a rougher task in hand
> Than to drive liking to the name of love.
> But now I am returned and that war thoughts
> Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
> Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
> All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
> Saying I liked her ere I went to wars. (1.1.296-305)

Hays reads Claudio's discomfort with his new "soft and delicate desires" as his fear of embracing a woman, a fear that was previously displaced by thoughts of war: "Claudio is a young man whose energy has been channeled into male pursuits but who now finds himself physically attracted to a gorgeous young woman and is afraid of being overwhelmed by his feelings" (82). To defend himself against this "sudden surge of sexuality" (83), Claudio seeks counsel from his father-figure, Don Pedro. However, when Don Pedro picks up the chase for Hero with such abandon and assures Claudio that he will, in Claudio's stead, take Hero "prisoner" with his "amorous tale" (1.1.324-25), Claudio's fears are not relieved, but compounded. Now the "adolescent"

Claudio is overcome by the unconscious fear that he and Don Pedro, the "father," have entered into an "Oedipal competition" for Hero's affections (Hays 85). And how is Claudio--the young innocent--ever to compete with the worldly Don Pedro? This fear, tied to Claudio's lack of self-esteem, accounts for Claudio's willingness to believe that Don Pedro has betrayed him and wooed Hero for himself.

Claudio's fear of his own "soft and delicate desires," coupled with his sense of inadequacy, lead him to an "abhorrence of carnality" when faced with the possibility of Hero's unfaithfulness (Cook 194). Unable to accept his own sexual urges and fearing humiliation in the love relationship, Claudio protects his ego in the altar scene (4.1) by lashing out at Hero's "sinful" nature, accusing her of carnal acts and "intemperance" of which we know she is decidedly innocent. But because of the male code of Messina and Claudio's own sexual fears, it becomes clear that Claudio will never be able to accept Hero as his wife until she is cleansed of carnal taint. Before she can be seen as a suitable wife, somehow she must be made virginal and non-threatening again.

To fend off his own anxieties, Claudio must rid himself of the threat of his own sexuality. In the marriage scene, when Leonato accuses Claudio of having "made defeat" of Hero's virginity (4.1.47), Claudio denies his own sexuality:

> No, Leonato,
> I never tempted her with word too large,
> But, as a brother to a sister, showed
> Bashful sincerity and comely love. (4.1.51-4)

These words are Claudio's emotional self-defense against his own disquieting carnal desires. In painting himself as a brother rather than a lover, Claudio unburdens himself of his own sexual fears.

As we see in the last act, Claudio accepts Hero as his wife only after she has been cleansed by her symbolic death and resurrection. Only after he is assured of the "angel whiteness" that the friar had seen in her (4.1.161) can he take her in marriage. When Leonato's "niece" unmasks at the second wedding, revealing the new Hero to her husband, she tells Claudio,

> One Hero died defil'd, but I do live,
> And surely as I live, I am a maid. (5.4.63-4)

Only in her restored virginity can Hero be seen as sufficiently powerless to Claudio.

Finally, although order is returned to Messina at the end of the play--symbolized by the marriages of Hero/Claudio and Beatrice/Benedick--the men revert to the same verbal aggression and defensive cuckold jokes that opened the play. To Cook, "That the jokes retain their original force indicates that Messina's masculine ethos survives unchanged" (200). We might consider further here that the male fears of cuckoldry and sexual inadequacy, rather than being allayed by marriage, are rather redoubled by it. For now Benedick and Claudio will have to face their fears--and their wives' power--head on. Either Benedick and Claudio will fulfill their new conjugal duties well--and

thus hope to control their wives' sexuality--or they will not--and risk the humiliation of cuckoldry.

The men's sexual fears extend beyound cuckoldry, however. Returning to Benedick's closing words to Don Pedro--"Prince, thou art sad. Get thee a wife, get thee a wife. / There is no staff more revered than one tipped with horn" (5.4.122-24)--we sense an additional anxiety about the breakup of "the Men's Club." Marriage, for Benedick and Claudio, means the death of their most precious experience: their companionship with male comrades. Now left to their fears "about their own ability to be good husbands" and delivered to a "domesticity" that "presages helplessness and death" (Berger 312), the two men are eager to enjoy the last comforts of male companionship and eager for their comrade, Don Pedro, to join them in their precarious, new status.

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All the World's a Freak Show: Racial Disparity and the Other in "Keela the Outcast Indian Maiden"

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Eudora Welty's first collection of short stories, *A Curtain of Green*, not only provides us with a glimpse at her range as a writer but also takes bits and pieces of southern culture and encapsulates them for the reader. We move from Lily Daw's near committal, to scenes in beauty parlors, to a voyeuristic journey down a worn path with Phoenix Jackson. Long before people called on Eudora Welty to do something about the problems of Southern culture, she took on stories that covered a diverse array of issues such as race and gender. In "Keela, the Outcast Indian Maiden," she deals with both of these issues; however, the story primarily focuses on the way the races interact with one another. Through careful structuring of the story, Welty shows the reader the similarities between the treatment of African-Americans and the treatment of freaks in a freak show, and through her presentation of Little Lee Roy and the other characters, she creates a world in which, despite efforts to correct the inequalities between the races, both races often only reinforce stereotypical roles.

"Keela, the Outcast Indian Maiden" tells the story of Steve, a young white man who comes to Little Lee Roy, an older black man, to apologize and to atone for the part he played in the exploitation of Little Lee Roy as Keela. When the two men worked for the circus, they worked as barker and star attraction, and Steve now feels guilty for his part in keeping Little Lee Roy captive. Traditionally, the story has been read as focusing on Steve and his search for forgiveness. In 1944, Robert Penn Warren, in his article "Love and Separateness in Eudora Welty" compared Welty's "Keela the Outcast Indian Maiden" to Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*,[1] saying both are stories "of a man who, having committed a crime, must try to re-establish his connection with humanity" (199); just as the Ancient Mariner tells his tale to a stranger, Steve drags a local bar owner named Max out with him to Little Lee Roy's to tell him his story. This idea that Steve is the central character appears in Alfred Appel Jr.'s *A Season of Dreams*, where he sums the story up as a tale of white man's guilt over slavery,[2] and again in Ruth Vande Kieft's *Eudora Welty*, where "Keela" is seen as a tale of confession and not much more.[3] If the focus is Steve, we must ask why the title is not "Steve the Unemployed, Repentant Circus Barker." By comparing the scene that takes place in the story with Steve's tale of Keela, we find that the story focuses on Little Lee Roy and the fact that his life really hasn't changed completely since he left the circus.

The setting of the story establishes the physical similarity between the episode with Steve and the performances that Keela used to give. Much has been made of the triangle formation of the three men: "The little man at the head of the steps where the chickens sat, one on each step, and the two men facing each other below made a pyramid" ("Keela" 78), and most critics agree that this shows Little Lee Roy in the position of power, above the two white men. However, this set up is also disturbingly reminiscent of what Michel

Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish* as "the spectacle of the scaffold."[4] Instead of the gallows or a stage, Little Lee Roy sits on his porch, but he is still on display.

Steve doesn't manage an apology at all; by bringing Max to Little Lee Roy's house in his effort to make amends, he instead places Little Lee Roy on display. As they approach Little Lee Roy's porch, Steve serves as tour guide. Just as he announced and introduced Keela when they worked for the freak show, he now introduces Lee Roy to Max: "It was the young man who was doing all the talking . . . . [he] kept straight on talking, in an explanatory voice . . . . He talked constantly, making only one gesture--raising his hand stiffly and then moving it a little to one side" ("Keela" 74-5). A. R. Coulthard asserts that "the callow, egocentric Steve is attempting to seize the lead role in a drama in which he played only an unwitting bit part" ("Keela" 36); I agree to an extent. Steve is still playing the role of show announcer because he knows no other part; after losing his star attraction, he wandered around searching for Little Lee Roy for two years. Now that he has found him, he reverts to his old role.

As he and Max stand before Little Lee Roy, Steve actually recreates the show through descriptions of what Little Lee Roy did for the audience when he performed as Keela: "They'd throw it this chicken, and it would reach out an' grab it. Would sort of rub over the chicken's neck with its thumb an' press on it good, an' then it would bite its head off" ("Keela" 77). Steve cannot deal with the fact that the show is over; just as he brought customers in and encouraged them to look at Keela, he now makes it his duty to drag other white men out to the country to look at "the only little club-footed nigger man was ever around Cane Springs" ("Keela" 75). Steve's act remains the same, from script to arm movements, as when he worked with the circus; he weaves stories around Keela/Little Lee Roy that make his audience want to look.

Just as the setting and description help recreate the physical similarities, the language used by the exhibitor, as represented by Steve, and the audience (Max) also contributes to the show like atmosphere and reinforce the idea that Little Lee Roy is an object on display. The way they talk of Keela/Little Lee Roy establishes him as other. Steve speaks of Keela as "it" over eighty times. Vande Kieft interprets this as a result of Little Lee Roy's inability to comprehend what happened to him in the past; thus she says that Steve "scarcely addresses the little man, whose present attitude makes him irrelevant to Steve's whole problem" ("Keela" 78). I will demonstrate momentarily why I disagree with her assessment of Little Lee Roy's capability to understand the situation. The fact remains that Steve never even greets Little Lee Roy or apologizes to him; he never establishes any reasons for not addressing him. Steve addresses Little Lee Roy as "it" both when speaking of him as Keela and of him as Lee Roy because as Charles May asserts, "he would really like to insist that the geek was not human at all" ("Keela" 562); his refusal to address Little Lee Roy as anything but it shows his unwillingness to consider a black man as human as well. Max also buys into the language of objectification, but his language makes the racial tension clearer. Max uses works like "nigger" ("Keela" 75, 76) and "boy" ("Keela" 77, 78) to describe and address Little Lee Roy; he also directly points out the difference between Little Lee Roy and Steve: "Say, boy, is this white man here crazy?" ("Keela" 78). The constant use of the words "nigger" and "white men" make the racial differences evident

him that

> 'There's no one shall wrong thee, friend,
> be not afraid;
> These bowmen upon me do wait;
> There's threescore and ten; if thou
> wilt be mine,
> Though shalt have my livery straight. (Dobson 169)

Robin Hood offers to provide livery and a life under his independent regime. He has a standing army of bowmen, and will provide money and clothes. The possibility of trading the yoke of feudalism for subservience to a more primal governing body appeals to John Little.

Robin Hood demonstrates the possibility of upward mobility and a realignment of control for those below the magnate; for accepting his livery John Little can have "every thing at [his] command" (Dobson 169). Instead of laboring for the baron, John Little can serve Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest. The subsequent blurring of class lines and subversion of rule undermines the feudalistic system; Robin Hood provides an alternative governmental construct as he erodes these lines with his growing band, and his proffer of livery functions as a means to indoctrinate and support his standing army of bowmen.

Robin Hood creates a new governing body that deviates from that of a corrupt feudalistic hierarchy. This struggle caters to the concerns and desires of a villein and yeoman class audience that could envision reform through the possibilities of an outlaw-hero. The first step of reform, as pertinent to this ballad, is the presence of a power hierarchy disconnected from, but not unrelated to, the feudalistic structure already in place. Robin Hood uses the trappings of this structure, in this case livery, to subvert that structure and gain power. These trappings provide a Lincoln green reflection of the magnate's ranks while attempting to improve upon an antiquated system of cloth and fee.

Clothes and livery during this period markedly defined one's rank; the government restricted visible signs of upward mobility by dictating the price and variety of cloth worn by those of a definite class. For example, the 1363 statute on clothing states that "carters, ploughmen, oxherds . . . dyers, and other agricultural workers, and anyone with less than 40 shillings . . . [were] allowed to wear only blanket and russet wool of 12 pence" (Sponsler 275). Sponsler explains that

> The problem for the dominant social groups, given that status had become relatively fluid and based on acquirable signs, was how to limit the acquisition of these signs in such a way that they reproduced and made visible a social order favorable to the holders of power. (Sponsler 266)

How does Robin Hood subvert this social order preoccupied with clothing as sign? He fills the wood with signs of revolt by clothing his outlaws in livery, violating the dominant social construct with signs of transgression.

An interesting example of this insurgency of signs can be found in the eighth fytte of "A Geste of Robyn Hode." After the King and his men obtain Robin Hood's livery, they ride through Nottingham

All the people of Notyngham
They stode and behelde,
They sawe nothing but mantels of grene
That covered all the felde. ("A Geste" 110)

One would think that the people would be pleased to see the insurgency of Robin Hood and his men, but

Full hasty they began to fle,
Both yemen and Knaves,
And olde wyves that myght evyll doo,
They hypped on theyr staves. ("A Geste" 110)

Only when they see the King do the townspeople "loughe full fast" (110). Small towns like Nottingham were sometimes assaulted by bands of roving bands in livery, so Robin Hood's insurgency appears to the townspeople to be an assault by retainers of a corrupt magnate.

Robin's proffer of livery is significant to the idea of social control in part because he isn't a magnate. J.W. Walker, purveyor of one of many "true" histories of Robin Hood, frames him within the fourteenth-century and describes him as a forester or woodman who wore "a short tunic of Lincoln green cloth with a small scarlet cape flung over the shoulders" (Walker 26); Maurice Keen, writer of "Robin Hood--Peasant or Gentleman?", explains that the Robin Hood of the ballads was a yeoman, and that "Lincoln Green became simply the livery of Robin Hood's . . . company" (Keen 137). From these two passages a paradox emerges; how can a forester or yeoman give livery?

Foresters and yeomen worked in positions of power directly below the gentry in this hierarchy, not having their own livery, badges, or insignias. Proffer of livery was subsequently restricted to Lords or gentry; when Robin Hood assumes Lincoln green as his livery he assumes a position presumably out of reach for a person of his class. Robin Hood transgresses the barriers between yeoman and gentry in a system "where distinctions were somewhat blurred, where there was a debate over the meaning and validity of gentility, and where a 'yeman arraieth hym as a squuyer'" (Coss 75). He also provides his men a counter-court, free from the misuses of the magnates.

However, Robin Hood's counter-court does not offer unlimited freedom from a feudalistic power hierarchy. The impositions of court are replaced by a structured control system that poses similar restrictions on the vassal. Robin Hood explains to Little John that "thou wilt be mine" (169); as Robin Hood's property Little John will be trained to use the bow and share the rewards of killing "the fat fallow deer" (169). John Little must become economically viable in the Hoodian community while prostrating himself to this source of authority. Unless ordered on a mission, Robin Hood's vassals stand ready and abide in Robin Hood's forest lands.

Instead of allowing the merry men to clothe themselves, Robin Hood indoctrinates them in a disrobing and clothing ritual using age-old military reconditioning techniques. Successful military indoctrination includes stripping recruits of clothes and replacing them with standard issue garb and weaponry. Robin uses this procedure in the ballad "Robin Hood and Little John" as his band usurps John Little.

Richard and Robin Hood trade buffets and garments for control "under . . . [the] . . . trystyll tre" (A Geste" 109). Instead of robbing or mocking the King as one might expect Robin the subversive to do, Robin Hood accepts the King's offer to become a member of the court. Hilton suggests in "The Origins of Robin Hood" that

> the medieval audience did not see the King as one of the landlords, protecting landlord power and privilege. They thought of him as the fount of justice, and justice in their minds meant protection against those who oppressed them. (Hilton 42)

Because of the tension between the magnates and the King as well as the crown's ongoing agenda to keep magnates in check, Hilton suggests that the villein and yeoman class audiences of the earliest ballads saw the King as an ally. Robin Hood goes to the court for his King, expressing the sentiment that the King differs in some way from the Sheriff, rich earl, or abbot. Robin accepts him as liege when the King buffets him to the ground; this act of violence relates him to the visceral lower class yeomanry as opposed to the gentrified Sheriff who begs to return to the comforts of indoor life.

The King asks, "Hast thou ony grene cloth . . . That thou wylte sell nowe to me" ("A Geste" 109). In this interesting example of power politics in "A Geste," the King takes on Robin Hood's outward signs of protest and insurgency as he simultaneously expropriates Robin's control.

> The kynge kest of his cole then,
> A grene garment he dyde on,
> And every knyght had so I wys.
> Another had full sone. ("A Geste" 109)

When the King and his men "were clothed in Lyncolne / grene, / They keste away theyr graye" ("A Geste" 109); this exchange of gray, antiquated garb for the outlaw's sign of transgression, even protest, solidifies the relationship between the King and the yeoman as it depicts a King who understands the concerns and desires of the lower classes.

Being an outlaw, living outside of a law, calls for a reconfiguration of normative codes. Thievery, merriment, cohesion and community in Robin Hood's regime replace the lawful, gray, hierarchical rigidity of courtly power. Robin Hood subverts the crown and the system that it imposes by providing an alternative power configuration in the forest while using trappings of the feudalistic system, like livery, to add men to his ranks. The Medieval, middling class audience of "Robin Hood and Little John" must have imagined an alternative power structure beyond the fraudulent system in place, and for this reason made this outlaw a hero.

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Conversation Down South: Argentina's "Dirty War" from Women's Perspective

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Conversation Down South [1] (1981), the subject of this paper, *In Any Place*, [2] (1983) and *Endless House*[3] (1988) constitute a trilogy depicting, from women's perspective, the experiences of the "Dirty War" in Argentina and Uruguay. *Conversation* deals with the revolutionary period itself. The other two works deal with the aftermath of the crushing of the revolution. *In Any Place* concerns the life the guerrillas lead in exile in a northern European country and *Endless House* with their lives as virtual exiles in their own country.

Conversation Down South is the last work published during Traba's lifetime. In an interview, she stated that this work was: "an enormous task of organizing it into a symmetrical composition, conceived almost like a musical score, an atrocious theme expressed through the lives of two women . . . I also wanted to show that women are the real heroines of this drama though they didn't seem so at all." [4]

The novel's historical context encompasses the revolutions and counter-revolutions that took place during the 70's and 80's in the Southern Cone (Uruguay, Argentina and Chile.) Traba doesn't state so specifically, but it becomes evident through various episodes as when Dolores muses to herself: "Santiago was a party. We all met there, coming from the most diverse places, and although we already carried an enormous list of dead, imprisoned and disappeared, nothing could diminish that encounter's optimism" (62). It is also evident that Irene, who lives in the constant tension of not knowing her son's fate, is thinking about the aftermath of Allende's overthrow when she expresses: "or simply they take them to the Stadium, where it's said that there are hundreds, thousands, that is what it is said" (54). On another occasion the omniscient author relates: "seated on the floor with her arms clutching her knees and chin resting upon them, the woman was hearing what during those two weeks, since the news of the Palace's bombing she had rejected and had been trying to ignore" (164). Various critics, among whom is Gale Chevigny, point out that in this novel Traba does not recapitulate the representational realism of the thirties and forties but rather enters the reality of political violence in the Southern Cone in the most radical way, by assuming not only the first person voice of those who produce it, but also of those who "consume" it.

The action of the novel centers in the conversation between two friends, Irene, a middle-age artist and Dolores, a young guerrilla, who meet after a five year interval. [5] Dolores has always been attracted to Irene. In her eyes, Irene is the embodiment of a frivolous and sophisticated world that she, as a revolutionary, rejects, but which, in spite herself, attracts her. The young woman is conscious that her life as a guerrilla is similar to having been dealt "the worst hand in the world" and is also aware that Irene does not concur with her opinion: "A young gal with a great future. I am the first to say what you are thinking. No, seriously. I have already told you that I don't have a future

but neither do I want to have a past. I couldn't go on living. Can't you see?" (81). During those five years after her release from prison, where she was brutally tortured, Dolores consciously tried to erase all her memories: her conversation with Irene has had the effect of bringing her back to an emotional life.

Dolores joined the guerrillas simply to follow her husband: this is a historical characteristic of Latin American women revolutionaries. Contrary to the pattern of women belonging to the group only as long as their partners are part of it, she remains actively involved in the movement even after Enrique's death. By that time her conversion to the revolutionary cause is complete: "habit of not talking without the leader's permission, it has become part of oneself and there is no way to change it" (102). It is interesting to note that she never carried, as did most of her comrades, a vial filled with poison to be drunk in case of an unavoidable entrapment. Her reason for not doing so was that: "one has to act so as to be able to breathe. Can't you see? If you don't take a moment to breathe you will also die. The most important matter is not that you die but that you give them, as a gift, another corpse" (92). Dolores' twin decisions: to remain in the group and to not carry the vial with poison, illustrate her independence not only as a woman but also as a guerrilla. The other members, mostly males, by carrying the vial, acknowledge that they do not possess complete certainty of not breaking under torture or of denouncing their comrades. By her action, Dolores shows her certitude of not doing so.

Her role is crucial to her group's survival during the darkest moments of the counter-revolution in Uruguay. She is their link to the better organized groups in Buenos Aires and is their conduit for arms and funds. Her awareness of the hopelessness of their cause doesn't deter her from continuing her work as a guerrilla: "The dead are not seen in this war . . . Except for Andrés'. Where are the other bodies? Was it Enrique's body that they placed underground and Luisa marked with a stone? Or a street dog? Oh God! there is no limit, there is no rest for the despairing imagination!" (157).

Dolores and Victoria belong to a young generation of women with a wider world outlook who, although raised in a traditional environment, were exposed at the university to new ideas and challenged to question the bases of their society's beliefs. This led some to an active participation in the political life of their country and others to join revolutionary movements set in overthrowing the existing order.

Victoria, a member of the upper classes, joins the guerrillas after careful study and reflexion about Argentina's social and political situation. She gives, on numerous occasions, irrefutable proof of her commitment to the cause and of her organizational capabilities. After Andrés' death, she becomes the group's leader. Once she tells Dolores: "You know how the upper classes' prosperity is achieved, with what misery and exploitation is accumulated" (121). Victoria is convinced that her being a product of that environment gives her an advantage in her fight against them. In spite of witnessing the Junta's brutality toward her comrades, their killings, tortures and maimings, Victoria still believed that they were: "fighting a battle in the country portrayed in school, only at the end she begun to say, with a certain scepticism, that it was possible that they all would be killed like dogs" (102). Victoria leads the group during the most traumatic moments of the counter

revolution and, as a true leader, she does not make her comrades participants of her doubts about the outcome: she had chosen her path and not even the prospect of death will induce her to deviate from it.

Irene's artistic sensibility plays a central role in her identification with the young revolutionaries and enables her to empathize with their ideals. When she becomes aware of the social injustices around her, the attitude of those in power also become repugnant to her. Irene participates, tangentially, in the revolutionary struggle and her doing so is her way of expressing human solidarity: "The day that I resign myself to the disappearance of death as a scandal and become used to the fact that they are not only hundreds, that it is not longer known who is dead and who is alive, that it is all the same, nothing would be left of me, only an skeleton, an empty shell" (33). Her revolutionary involvement is, in a final instance, a way to affirm her own humanity. She goes with Elena to the meeting of the "The Mad Women of Mayo Plaza" and afterwards tells Dolores: "I don't even want to remember that disfigured face, the open mouth shouting and especially the skin, that delicate skin spotted and bruised. She didn't raise up Victoria's photo but held it tightly with both hands against her chest, doubling up, like an old woman accossed by death" (90).

Luisa, another artist and Irene's contemporary, becomes involved under the wrong impression that her intimate relationship with some members in high positions in the political and law enforcement arenas will enable her to protect her young friends. A deeper cause is her awareness that a life really lived is the one which is used in concrete things, in the present case, in trying to create another country and not the "merde in which they lived" (115). When the government start their persecutions against the guerrillas, it is Luisa, taking advantage of her friendships, the one able to take out of jail various members of the group, and also the one who hires lawyers for their defense. After two years, she watches her efforts being reduced to helping the young people claim the bodies of their comrades killed by the government. Shortly after, Luisa leaves for France because she was already "marked" by the authorities and her own life was in danger.

Irene, Luisa and Elena exhibit various characteristics in common. Among them, they are the product of the patriarchal ideology of their society. That influence expresses itself, among other instances, in their attitude toward the relationship between the sexes. Irene, in spite of never having been in love with Antonio marries him: "in order to have a good support" (61). She does so in spite of her being a famous artist. It is evident that Irene lacks the confidence required to live independently. Luisa surrounds herself with a court of admirers because, by having them, she reinforces the sense of her own worth. Elena is the most conventional of the three because her luxurious life comes from her husband's earnings; she is the decoration that Abel exhibits as proof of his professional success.

In spite of these facts, these women make decisions that run counter to their upbringing and their "historical mentalities" [6].

The majority of the women in the Southern Cone, those that were involved in the revolutionary struggle, and the ones that were not, were permanently affected in the innermost aspect of their personal lives: the one that involved their children's fate. During the persecutions, Dolores suffers not only the lost of her husband, but also of the child she was carrying: "For years she had refused to think about Enrique or the baby (a little girl, the nurse told her) that

they made her miscarry by kicking her" (96).

When Victoria asks Andrés to let her join their group, she also requests his help in finding an abortionist. This last point is briefly touched upon and there is no explanation of her reasons for wanting to do so, although her action is reminiscent of the attitude of the revolutionary groups in Europe during the 30's when members of the Communist party were urged by their leaders not to have children.

Irene, Elena and the "Mad Women of Mayo Plaza" have the most heart-wrenching experiences of losing the children they had raised to adulthood. Elena joins "The Mad Women of Mayo Plaza" after Victoria's disappearance. This group of older women expressed its despair over the disappearance of their loved ones not in cries or lamentations but in manifestations against the regime. When the Argentinean population was cowed by the military, it was the mothers, in their weekly manifestation in Mayo Plaza, who became the conscience of the nation and silent but powerful witnesses for the rest of the world of the atrocities taking place in the Southern Cone.

Notes

[1] Traba, Marta. *Conversación al Sur*. México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1981. 62. The translations of quotations, in this and other works, are mine.

[2] Ibid. *En cualquier lugar*. México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores. 1984.

[3] Ibid. *Casa sin fin*. Uruguay: Copygraft S.R.L., 1986.

[4] Picón Garfield, Evelyn. *Women's Voices from Latin America*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985. 140.

[5] Ibid. She points out that women's friendships are a relatively unexplored area for investigation since women have been shown primarily in their relationship to men. Referring to this novel, she writes: "the sensitive development of a sympathetic and symbiotic relationship between two female characters makes it a unique contribution to latin American literature" (122).

[6] J. A. Maraval. In "La historia de las mentalidades como historia social" *Actas de las II Jornadas de Metodología y Didáctica de la Historia*. Cáceres: Universidad de Extremadure, España, 1985. 400-410, states that "mentality" makes reference to a spontaneous, but not unconscious, attitude and he continues: "only that, 'conscious' cannot beken here as being equivalent to phenomenons critically contained or reflexively elaborated, of the conscience, but also entail contents received and assimilated, which constitute the foundation from which emerge the options, the volitions, the ideas, the ways of acting that individuals assume not consciously but with complete responsibility about the meaning they give them. To this last conscious sedimentation that remains behind critical reflexion and personally leans upon, is what I call 'mentality'" (404).

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Psyche, Atalanta, and the Female Hero Story in Classical Mythology

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Sometime during the second century A.D., Lucius Apuleius composed his *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass*, a Latin romance which is our only source for the story of *Cupid and Psyche*, now commonly regarded as the prototypical fairytale. Indeed, *Cupid and Psyche* contains many of the "popular universal motifs common to mythology in general and folk tale, fairytale, and romance in particular," such as "the mysterious bridegroom, the taboo of identification, the hostile mother figure, the jealous sisters, the heroine's forgetfulness, . . . and the triumph of romantic love" (Morford and Lenardon 136-37; see also Bell 387).

But *Cupid and Psyche* also incorporates a curiously episodic plot, the theme of one major episode being the "imposition of impossible labors accomplished with divine assistance, among them descent into the very realm of Hades" (Morford and Lenardon 136-37), as well as other elements that link Apuleius' narrative to earlier hero tales. Mention of hero tales in the classical tradition customarily evokes images of men such as Perseus, Theseus, Heracles, and Jason, to name a few. Although the specific details of such stories differ from one hero to the next, they share common features and patterns that have been categorized and discussed by numerous scholars since the last decades of the nineteenth century. In *Hero With a Thousand Faces*, for example, Joseph Campbell identifies the broad, common formulaic pattern of *separation-initiation-return* found in the hero's rites of passage in all cultures. According to Campbell, "*A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man*" (30). Elaborating at length upon the pattern's component stages, Campbell notes that "If one or another of the basic elements of the archetypal pattern is omitted from a given fairy tale, legend, ritual, or myth, it is bound to be somehow or other implied--and the omission itself can speak volumes for the history and pathology of the example . . ." (38). Apuleius' treatment of Psyche in *Cupid and Psyche* seems a particularly good example of Campbell's point.

Like her counterparts in the male hero tradition, Psyche is the child of a royal parent, although her father remains curiously nameless in a tradition otherwise careful to identify its patrilineal forebears. Also like her male counterparts, through no fault of her own Psyche incurs the wrath of a powerful deity who seeks to destroy her. In Psyche's case the deity is Venus, said to be motivated by great jealousy of psyche's beauty. That the great Roman goddess Venus would be jealous of the beauty of a mortal woman makes no sense whatever unless we entertain the possibility that the Psyche story originally spoke of a deity in a pre-patriarchal culture, as are all the goddesses in the Hellenic canon as we know it. So beautiful is Psyche, according to Apuleius, that men come from all over the world to pay homage

to her (instead of Venus) *as though she were a goddess* rather than a mere mortal.

Apuleius' story contains other hints that Psyche may have originated in a pre-Hellenic goddess-centered culture. Unlike her less beautiful sisters, Psyche attracts worshipers of her beauty but no suitors, and she has no inclination to marry. Such details also suggest Psyche may have enjoyed continued sacral associations with certain pre-Hellenic goddesses adapted into the classical hierarchy--as a priestess to the Greek Artemis and, much later, to the Roman Diana. Chaste beauty and disparagement of marriage are primary traits of men and women dedicated to the service of the Great Mother, and remain the primary traits of Marcissus, Adonis, Daphne, and Arethusa, among other dedicated followers of Artemis and Diana in the classical tradition. But in Apuleius' late Roman tale, Psyche's beauty and preferred chastity are cause for paternal distress, and at the advice of Apollo and Cupid, Psyche's father abandons her on a rocky hilltop and leaves her to die.

From there, Zephyr transports her to a lavish mansion of gold, silver, and precious stones situated in a beautiful floral meadow beside a bright river, where she dwells with a mysterious lover, whom we know to be Cupid but whom she accepts without question or identity. He warns her that seeking his identity or revealing herself to her sisters, who have begun to search for her, will bring destruction upon herself and upon him. In time, these things come to pass: her sisters convince her to gaze upon her lover as he sleeps, and he, suddenly awakening, flees. Still unaware that her lover is the goddesses' son, Psyche seeks help from Venus who, in turn, denigrates Psyche, telling her she is too plain, ugly, and ill-favored to get a lover except through completion of diligent, difficult work. Thus Venus initiates the *imposition of impossible tasks* theme central to all male-centered hero stories in the classical tradition. Always intended to destroy the hero figure, these tasks become the tests of the hero's mettle. Typically, he receives help from the supernatural forces of his culture--advice from the oracles about what to do and, failing any success from those sources, often seeks help from those known to have "magic" powers, setting them aside when he completes the task at hand. Jason, for example, asks for and receives aid from "sky culture" deities in order to overpower obstacles in his way; but when he is out of his territory--in the land of Colchis, for example, he seeks out help from those who know "magic," that is, who can bring Nature to his assistance. To Jason, Medea is such a person--a priestess of the natural world or, in mythological terms, a descendent of the early Earth Goddess cultures. He courts her, turns her against her father and people, uses her to get what he wants (the golden fleece), and discards her when she is no longer useful to him. In other words, classical male heroes regard Nature (not supernatural forces per se) as a means toward their ends and typically plead, cajole, or manipulate Nature until it is brought into the service of their quest.

Psyche's tasks recall the tests of male heroes in tradition. Psyche's first three tasks include separating and sorting tiny wheat, poppy, and mullet seeds into three stacks in only one day's time; fetching the fleece of golden sheep from a thicket impossible to enter; and filling a flask with water from a high, inaccessible waterfall of the river Styx. The cultural value of an attainment lies not in what is accomplished but in how it is accomplished. Like her male counterparts, of course, Psyche successfully completes her tasks with the help of Nature. In her first three "test" adventures, aid comes from ants, a river

reed, and an eagle, hardly supernatural beings in patriarchal classical literature (mythology) but very much so in pre-patriarchal cultures in which the goddess personifies "the unity of all things in nature" (Eisler 19) or, as Peg Streep says, in which the goddess is "no mere fertility totem" but "a presiding deity over all the cycles of life, human, animal, and plant" (Streep 45-46). That Psyche does not need to manipulate Nature in order to overcome difficulties, that the elements of Nature--the ants, the river reed, and the eagle--volunteer their help suggests her pre-patriarchal mythic origin.

Infuriated with Psyche's success, Venus imposes a fourth, more dangerous test in which Psyche must descend into the underworld, fill a box with Proserpine's beauty and return with it to Venus. Psyche makes the descent, fills the box, and returns to the land of mortals. At this point, however, the story takes a decidedly different turn, for the narrator creates a Psyche motivated by shallow vanity and submissiveness to the will of others. Her former determination to find her lost lover becomes a desire to be more beautiful in case she finds him, never mind that Venus hates her precisely because she is the most beautiful mortal woman. Solely to enhance her own beauty, then, she opens the box and immediately falls into a dangerously deep sleep from which Cupid himself, who by now has broken free of his mother's bondage, awakens her, scolds her lightly for her curiosity, and tells her to take the box to Venus. In short, from the moment she returns from the underworld, Psyche, unlike her counterparts in the male hero tradition, is no longer in charge of her destiny and the destiny of others.

In Apuleius's tale, Cupid goes to Jupiter who, in turn, calls an assembly of the gods, announces the official marriage of Cupid and Psyche, and bestows immortality upon Psyche. Thus she is admitted to the Roman canon by the power and authority of Jupiter and only through union or "marriage" with Cupid. In this way, Apuleius has converted the ancient mythological *heiro gamos* or sacred union of the earth and sky into the prototypical "happy ending" of the traditional fairy tale. What is easy to overlook, however, is that Psyche has already proved worthy of immortality by virtue of her successful descent to the underworld *and return to the world of the living*. Psyche belongs to the tradition of much earlier tales of heroes who make similar successful descents and returns. The hero may or may not achieve longevity as a deity, but in the symbolic language of myth, such descent and return denotes the coming forth of a potential deity. Demeter, Dionysus, Orpheus, and Perserpone are among such mortals who actually become deities before meeting interesting sacred fates in the classical canon. Demeter, originally worshiped as the Great Mother, remains the goddess of grain and the harvest, her daughter Perserphone becomes the Queen of Hades and spends half a year among the dead and half a year among the living. Orpheus and Dionysus make strong inroads into early Greek religions, Dionysus being worshiped along with Demeter at Eluesus and his followers later being credited with the ultimate violent demise of Orpheus. Redacted by Apuleius into a framework tale narrated by "an old woman who is trying to amuse a girl captured by robbers" (Howatson 471-72), the pre-Hellenic, goddess-based Psyche disappears into the great ether of Roman immortality with Cupid and of Cupid--the perfect "object lesson" for women in the author's patriarchal world.

In his biographical dictionary, *Women of Classical Mythology*, Robert Bell

correctly observes that the story of Psyche "tells us something of ancient attitudes about the nature of woman," many of which prevail. Among the negative traits, Bell includes woman's "insatiable curiosity, willingness to gossip and believe the worst, and stubborn insistence on spoiling an enviable situation." Among the alleged positive traits are her willingness "to admit a mistake and undergo the most humiliating tasks of atonement" and her determination "to suffer a descent to hell to keep the affection of the man she loved" (Bell 387). Although Bell notes that "fairy tales ever since have owed a debt" (Bell 387) to the story of Psyche, he does not mention its thematic or diagrammatic parallels with male hero tales. Accepting an allegorical interpretation of Psyche as "the embodiment of the triumphant emergence of the soul after its journey through the dark trials of the world . . . . Her symbol [being] a butterfly, itself an example of a glorious metamorphosis" (Bell 387), Bell nevertheless finds it "curious that in all classical literature this story is the only reference to the butterfly, which is prominent everywhere in the Mediterranean" (Bell 387). As Riane Eisler comments in another context, and certainly more to the present point, throughout the Mediterranean world the butterfly was and continues to be a prominent symbol "of the transformative powers of the Goddess" of pre-patriarchal cultures (18).

Inevitably succumbing to a mythological fate similar to that of Psyche, Atalanta survives as the only woman in Greek mythology specifically identified as an early Greek hero prior to the Trojan War (Hamilton 245-51). Although major portions of it no longer exist, Atalanta's "biography" bears clear relationship to the pattern established for her male hero counterparts. Despised by her father because she was not born male, Atalanta was exposed to death "on the Parthenian Hill near Calydon, where she was suckled by a bear which Artemis sent to her aid" (Graves I.80.c, p. 264). Found and reared to womanhood by hunters, she "remained a virgin, and always carried arms" (Graves I.80.c, p. 264). Thus she retains close association with the cult of Artemis, early Mother Goddess of the hunt, a priestess referred to as "the chaste, swift-footed Atalanta" (Graves I.80.c, p. 264).

According to Robert Graves, "Atalanta of Calydon, the virgin huntress" was among the heroes who sailed with Jason on the *Argo* (II.148.I, p. 217) to obtain the famed golden fleece. Some early scholars of classical tradition dismiss as impossible Atalanta's participation in such an historic voyage (Hamilton 247), but drawing upon the testimony of Apollodorus and Diodorus Siculus, Graves and Robert Bell include her in the list of Argonauts who flee to the *Argo* with Jason upon retrieving the fleece (Graves II.152.I, p. 239; Bell 82).

Although she maintains a central place in the story of the Calydonian boar hunt and its subsequent race, that Atalanta "disappears" from the Jason and the Argonauts "exploit" stories may be no mere accident of history. Since later prominent Greeks traced their patrilineal descent from the heroes on the *Argo*, similar to the way white Americans trace their ancestors to the *Mayflower*, they apparently practiced considerable pushing and shoving of one another's ancestors on and off that ship over the centuries in order to retain familial/political status. From the story of the Calydonian boar hunt, we know Atalanta to have been a woman of unsurpassed skill in the use of the weapons of the hunt. We know, too, that she was not welcomed by everyone involved in that event. Just before the hunt began, Atalanta found it necessary to kill

two Centaurs, Hulaeus and Rhaecus, because they tried to rape her, and two of the other men, Ancaeus and Cepheus, "at first refused to hunt in company with a woman" (Graves I.80.d, p. 264). Similarly, even though all the other heroes--Nestor, Telemon, Peleus, Theseus, and Jason--have shot and missed the boar before Atalanta shoots, Meleager's "uncles were deeply offended" when he awarded Atalanta the boar pelt for drawing first blood (Graves I.80.h, p. 265).

Ironically, Atalanta's father, who had despised the infant girl, here acknowledges her because of her accomplishments. In the same breath, however, the "delighted" father insists that Atalanta marry--a condition hateful to her because "the Delphic Oracle had warned her against marriage" (Graves I.80.j, p. 266). One cannot help considering this prophecy a late patriarchal emendation of the pre-patriarchal account, intended to isolate Atalanta even further from her origin. That she has keen intelligence and quick mental reflexes becomes apparent in her counterproposal that " 'Any suitor for my hand must either beat me in a foot race, or else let me kill him' " (Graves I.80.j, p. 266), a condition that costs many suitors their lives. Only from a patriarchal perspective would the idea that personal vanity and greed could easily sway a devoted follower of Artemis from his or her chaste service, and it is strongly patriarchal writers like Apollonius and Ovid who insist that Atalanta pauses to pick up golden apples thrown in front of her by Melanion (at the advice of a jealous Aphrodite), loses the race, and so must marry him.

In this way a priestess of Artemis is said to have been brought low by Aphrodite's trickery. According to these later writers, after his marriage to her, Melanion coaxes Atalanta to lie with him on Zeus' altar, for which they are changed into lions and "prevented from ever again enjoying one another" (Graves I.80.l, p.266). That Melanion would encourage his young wife to do such a thing really serves little purpose in the classical tradition except as a warning about dishonoring Zeus. More likely this episode in the Atalantis material disguises an earlier tradition of the celebration of Artemis in the precinct of Zeus, a story from an earlier pre-patriarchal mythological tradition in which the sacred rites of *hieros gamos* (Baring and Cashford xv; Neumann 99; Lerner 126) honoring the Great Goddess continue to be observed in the realm of an increasingly dominant sky god. But, as the mortals-into-lions metamorphosis suggests, the rites of *hieros gamos* lose their regenerative powers, for according to classical belief "lions do not mate with lions, but only with leopards" (Graves I.80.l, p. 266), and the sacred marriage of earth and sky becomes trivialized and preserved as an unspeakable desecration of the temple of a new and powerful deity. Even though it bears clear evidence of its early cultural origins and content, the story of Atalantis as it has been handed down to us, like the story of Psyche, has been gradually--and, one suspects rather intentionally--isolated from its own tradition, reshaped to reflect the very different values of later cultures essentially hostile to it, and finally drummed out of the heroic tradition.

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American Explorers and English Reviews: Sense and Sensibility

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a fine morning we commenced wrighting & c.
Friday 25th of Septr. 1806
(the last Journal entry)

I think however, from what I have heard, that
the mere journal will be out in a few weeks . . . .
Thos. Jefferson to Alex. von Humboldt
Dec. 6 1813

1807 was the year things were supposed to happen. The captains sent word to Jefferson of their safe return to St. Louis in September 1806 but there were accounts to settle, dinners and balls and soirees to attend, family to contact and letters to write, and not least a mass of expedition artifacts to ship East to Jefferson via New Orleans. And there were Indian delegations to oversee. The captains didn't reach Washington until late winter 1807, where more social and personal obligations befell them (Coues I, xxxvi-xxxvii).

The accounts were settled; the dinners and the lionizing began to subside. Clark resigned his commission in the regular army and was appointed Brigadier General in the Louisiana territorial militia; he was courting Julia Hancock of Fincastle, Virginia. Lewis resigned his commission and was made governor of Louisiana. Both men received land grants.

But the hunger for Lewis and Clark news was great and in March of 1807 a prospectus for subscribers was printed in Pittsburgh for the publication of Sergeant Patrick Gass' Journal. One of several expedition men who had kept journals, Gass was first into print and he was authentic. In his prospectus the publisher and editor, David M'Keehan, attested to Gass' authenticity: "at the different resting places during the expedition, the several journals were brought together, compared, corrected, and the blanks, which had been unavoidably left, filled up" (Letters II, 390).

Lewis contracted the brothers Conrad, a Philadelphia printing firm, whose April 1 prospectus for reader-subscribers announced a work in three volumes. First is a narrative account, with the best itinerary for "future voyagers;" second, a geographic overview of the region's commercial potential, showing how to extend the fur trade to the East Indies via a continental route, and ethnographic materials, "a view of the Indian nations" one would likely encounter along this route, with an appended weather diary. And lastly there are the natural history materials, which would be lavishly illustrated, accompanied by the scientific data, including the Indian vocabularies (Letters II, 396). The Lewis and Clark map, the grand map that at last would fill in the blank spaces, put the Rockies and its watershed in a true relation to the Pacific and the Atlantic, join the continent along a single path--the great map that is the point of it all--would be published separately.

It might be worthwhile at this point to place an incident recorded by Gass in juxtaposition, without analysis or comment, to an entry recorded by Lewis

on the same day. On April 21, 1806 Gass records this passage.

> Monday 21st. This was another pleasant morning with some white frost. We found the horse, which had broke away last night, and made preparations to start, an Indian stole some iron articles from among the men's hands; which so irritated Captain Lewis, that he struck him; which was the first act of the kind that had happened during the expedition. The Indians however did not resent it, otherwise it is probably we would have had a skirmish with them. This morning we disposed of two canoes and used another for firewood. (244)

He goes on to recount the day, the rendez-vous with Clark at the "great falls of the Columbia," and the hard work in moving so many men and so much stuff, ending in this wise:

> We went on till dark; and then run our small canoes among some willows, and laid down to sleep. We did not make any fire for fear the savages, who are very numerous along this part of the river, might come and rob us. (244)

Here follows Lewis' version from his journal.

> Notwithstanding all the precautions I had taken with respect to the horses one of them had broken his cord of 5 strands of Elk-skin and had gone off spanseled. I sent several men in surch of the horse with orders to return at 10A.M. with or without the horse being determined to remain no long with these villains. they stole another tomahawk from us this morning I surched many of them but could not find it. I ordered all the spare poles, paddles and the balance of our canoe put on the fire as the morning was cold and also that not a particle should be left for the benefit of the indians. I detected a fellow in stealing an iron socket of a canoe pole and gave him several blows and mad the men kick him out of camp. I now informed them that I would shott the first of them that attempted to steal an article from us. that we were not afraid to fight them, that I had it in my power at that moment to kill them all and set fire to their houses, but it was not my wish to treat them with severity provided they would let my property alone. that I would take them horses if I could find out the persons who had stolen the tomahawks, but that I had reather loose the property altogether than take the hose of an inosent person. the chiefs were present hung their heads. (Moulton 7, 151-2)

Then Lewis' entry proceeds with the day's events: leaving, travelling, resting, going on till stopping for the night.

The publisher, presumably M'Keehan, in his preface to *A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery* posits the value of travel and exploration narratives in terms of utility and pleasure. The common source of this utility and pleasure is the realistic recounting of an actual event, which reflects the American taste for a realism grounded in foundational beliefs in common sense and empiricism.

> Of the various publications which unite amusement and information, few can justly be held in higher estimation than the Journals and Narratives of Travellers and Voyagers: and in our own highly favoured country, the diffusion of general knowledge, the enterprising spirit of the people, their commercial pursuits and habits of emigration, render such works particularly valuable & interesting; while the vigorous and unrestrained mind of the free American, by amplifying & embellishing the scenes presented to its view enjoys the choicest luxuries of the entertainment they are calculated to afford.

The book was an immediate success and this success was evidence of the desire for information about the expedition. It was published in London in 1808, in Paris 1810, and in Weimar 1814. For the world Gass was the only source of information by a member of the Corps until the Biddle narrative of 1814. An anonymous reviewer in *The Quarterly Review* of May 1809 writes that "we had looked forward to the discoveries of this corps with considerable expectation" and reveals some disappointment in not "sitting down to a magnificent quarto, with maps, and plates . . . but . . . a shabby octavo, the production of a mere underling, and without one chart to guide the eye, or assist the memory" (294). This valuation of the book's contents in terms of its format is extended to the status of the author, "a mere underling" (at one point the reviewer even refers to Gass as "Mr. G"). This relegation of the Gass Journal to a status commensurate to the class of its writer is based on the assumption that the product of one who was led rather than one who was a leader must of necessity be an inferior one. The reviewer not too subtly distinguishes the intrinsic value of the subject from the degraded spectacle of its relating. "Led on, however, by the subject, we began the perusal of this journal, and, what we believe few can say who have seen the book, actually *finished* it" (294-5). The intrepid reviewer continues:

> It is curious to observe how ingeniously Mr. Gass has avoided whatever could interest or amuse. All he says, we have no doubt, is strictly true: at least, if intolerable dulness be a symptom of truth in narration, he has amply vindicated his veracity. There are so many facts we care not to know, and so little detail on those we do; and the two kinds are jumbled in so heterogeneous a compound, that we have seldom undergone a severer trial of patience than in attempting to separate them. (295)

The review goes on to give three examples of Gass' "scantling of information" (302) about areas of interest to the review's readers and uses a metaphor of sifting wheat from chaff to point out Gass' salient points (297). Yet the reviewer offers this caveat: that one shouldn't complain because Gass' daily entries, "taken on the spot amidst toils and privations, does him credit in his subordinate situation and to whom alone, of all that were engaged in the expedition, the public, as far as we can hear, are yet under any obligation" (296). The reviewer blames the meagerness of data on both the expedition's "projectors," those who scanted the expedition's scientific resources, and its leaders "who have not done their duty to their employers." Whether he refers to the delay in publishing or to lack of scientific exactitude, the reviewer does not say. (296) In other words it is not Gass' fault if he were neither well led

nor well-equipped.

A sense of Gass as an exemplum of the man of humble origins can be found in a review of *The Philosophy of Nature*; or, *The Influence of Scenery on the Mind and Heart* in the London *Eclectic Review* of June 1814. The anonymous reviewer notes a qualitative difference between those who have the capacity for a spiritualised access to nature and those who are exempted from this access.

> This captivation by nature is felt by extremely few but highly cultivated minds . . . . But it is notorious that the generality of men are exempt. Savages are quite insensible to the beautiful or the awful aspects of the scenes in which they are pursuing their occupations of hunting, fishing, and war. They would stand without emotion . . . [and] look down on the cataract of the Niagra . . . . We remember the perfect sobriety of prose with which an American man of the woods, who was even capable of writing a book, Patrick Gass, has described or mentioned the great falls of the Missouri. The same want of what may be called poetical feeling, regarding the sublimities of scenery, is apparent in all the uncultivated and slightly cultivated nations, from the savage up to the confines of the civilized state . . . . (458)

This assertion that sensibility is commensurate with one's degree of civilisation is an assumption that runs through the English reviewers, whose comparison of Gass, though he is surprisingly capable of writing a book, to Lewis and Clark is odious. Here is the introductory paragraph of *The Eclectic Review's* February 1816 review of the Biddle version.

> A brief journal of this great enterprise, was given to the world several years since by Patrick Gass, a sergeant in the expedition. Nothing bearing such plain marks of truth, could be less satisfactory than that dry, meagre narration, which, nevertheless, as the official journal was to be so long delayed, the sergeant's friends were perfectly right in persuading him to publish. It has served at once to excite expectation, and to keep it within sober limits. The readers of Gass could not know exactly what, and how much, Lewis and Clarke would have to tell. They would especially perceive, what indeed they might beforehand have apprehended, from the very nature of the undertaking, that, with very many curious and interesting matters, there must nevertheless be great uniformity of narrative and description. (105)

Is the implication here that no matter how fantastic, how varied, how beyond expectation the West and its phenomena are, the mental stratum (re: social stratum?) from which the writers are drawn would necessarily preclude them not only from being able to express this uniqueness but apprehending it? Or is the expectation/limitation qualifier applied to Gass also applicable in a lesser degree to Lewis and Clark in that they are men of action, not philosophers or poets, and that the tedium of exploring, the day to day slog, would be the narrative's golden mean? There is some ambiguity about the source of that great uniformity. Is it a condition of democracy, perhaps? Or does it accrue from the material of the expedition, the landscape and its

traverse, or from the personnel, those who write the expedition?

A consensus that Gass serves to corroborate the Lewis and Clark Journals and is a lesser production all round is supported by a footnote in the preface by editor Thomas Rees to Longman's 1814 London edition of Biddle. Rees states that Gass' version is "a plain statement of transactions of each day . . . sensible & judicious . . . [and] serves to authenticate . . . its details" (xiv).

Yet Gass stood alone as representative of the Expedition for seven years and as the only published source became the authority against which the Biddle version was first measured. An anonymous reviewer in the January 1815 London *Quarterly Review* cites Gass no fewer than seven times in his review of the Biddle account. In the first citation he refers to the controversy concerning Welsh Indians and its resolution by exploring the upper Missouri.

> The best authenticated accounts informed us that we were to pass through a country possessed by numerous powerful and warlike nations of savages, of gigantic stature, fierce, treacherous and cruel, and particularly hostile to white men; and fame had united with tradition in opposing mountains to our course, which human enterprize and exertion would attempt in vain to pass. (320)

But the human enterprise and exertion so successfully exercised on the expedition seemed to have failed Lewis in civilian life. Lewis' assumption of the Louisiana governorship, with its trail of political woes, most likely contributed to his untimely death in 1809, thus negating his plans for publication. The Journal materials, in Lewis' possession when he died in Tennessee, reverted to Clark (see Letters II, 472). Clark, busy as Superintendent of Indian Affairs and feeling "too diffident of his abilities" to meet the literary demands of publication, looked for "some person of talents" to write the narrative and turned the ethnographic and scientific materials over to qualified members of the American Philosophical Society (Letters II,493).

That person of talents was Nicholas Biddle, whose historic fame rests primarily on his presidency of the United States Bank and ensuing Bank controversies with Andrew Jackson. Biddle met with Clark, asking questions, taking notes, familiarizing himself with the materials over a three week period at Fincastle in 1810, and continued his researches by correspondence. He brought the Journals to Philadelphia, where he worked on them until his official duties in the Pennsylvania legislature and growing involvement in national affairs forced him to turn over the work to Paul Allen, a member of the *Port Folio* staff. Allen was the nominal editor on the title page.

In May 1810, Conrads, the printer, published a subscribers' prospectus for the Biddle version which announced a work in two parts. "A gentleman of this city" would prepare the journey narrative "comprizing minute descriptions of every interesting object relative to the country through which the travellers passed, or the different nations whom they visited" (Letters II, 547). The first part would also include an itinerary for those who would follow the expedition's route and suggestions for improving the fur trade. The second part, the scientific, is openly assigned to Dr. Benjamin Barton of the American Philosophical Society.

In its general description of the Corps' achievements, the prospectus makes

a direct connection between geographic knowledge, the goal and result of exploration, and the creation of "a line of intercourse" between the two oceans. That line is to become "the future path of civilization." And in a conjunction that sounds not only incongruent but deaf to the potential clash of interests, the incoming population of civilisers and already present populations of natives are placed side by side with no thought as to what will be the result when these two very different groups meet on the same path.

> Vast regions are now opened, to reward the spirit of commercial adventure, and to receive, hereafter, the overflowing tide of our own population. Entire nations, varying at once from ourselves and from each other, have been revealed to the curiosity of the civilised world, while science is enriched by new and valuable acquisitions. (Letters II, 547)

This sense of excitement about regions opened, nations revealed, and science enriched--all the grand promise of the expedition as event, as aggrandisement, as written account--was dissipated by economic pressures and historic events. The scope of the Expedition's achievement, the sheer mass of data accumulated, and the complexity of the daily experience could not be appreciated without complete publication. The Conrad brothers announced bankruptcy, Barton died not having completed the scientific account, the Indian vocabularies were lost, Frederick Prucha, the artist, took the botanical specimens to England, and the War of 1812 intervened before Bradford and Inskeep of Philadelphia brought out the compressed narrative that is the Biddle account in 1814 (Cutright,62).

The English reviewers, as a whole, were critical of the product while admiring of the event. The *Quarterly Review* devoted some 51 pages to the *Travels*, the *Eclectic Review* 27 pages, and the *Edinburgh Review* 26 pages. The majority of these pages are devoted to what one might call a plot summary of the narrative. And it is the Longman's edition of Biddle that is being reviewed. As Thomas Rees, its English editor, wrote in the preface:

> The work which is here given to the public, contains the official Journal of this extraordinary and interesting Journey; the importance of which, to geographical science will readily be estimated by those who are acquainted with the glaring imperfections of the best maps hitherto published of the countries that are here described . . . . it were superfluous to say anything in this place as to the admirable address, the discretion, perserverance, and intrepidity, which were on all occasions evinced by the commanding officers, during which they proved themselves eminently qualified for the important trust which had been committed to them in charge. (xiii-xiv)

But this, of course, is an advertisement. The *Quarterly Review* of January 1815 opens hostilities by resurrecting Jonathan Carver as one who first pointed the way and who is therefore deserving of some "commendation which he anticipated and desired" (318). Then one is told how the expedition would have been conducted if the British government had had the conducting of it: a trained map-maker and naturalist would have been sent and the resultant

publication would be as grand as that of Cook's Voyages (which was written by a professional writer). The reason this didn't happen in America the reviewer says is due to "an illiberal and parsimonious government". (318)

The reviewer, however, quickly gets on with the narrative and from his chosen subject matter it is very clear he is fascinated by the ethnography, taking care to relate several native myths of origin as well as funerary practices. As regards what he calls the Medicine dance, wherein "unmarried women dance naked in open daylight, and prostitute themselves publicly in the intervals of the dance!", the reviewer concludes with an interesting remark that manages to implicate not only the natives but also the journal writers who witnessed the event. Here is the passage in full.

> The writer cannot be charged with offending decency in describing abomination,--he has related another not less abominable, in Latin, from respect to decorum, but in both instances it is evident that he and his companion were not men who felt any pain at beholding the degradation of human nature. Thanks, however to these travellers, and to such as these, we shall no longer be pestered with rhapsodies in praise of savage life; it is now known, what never ought to have been doubted, that in that state the greater part of our virtues are never developed, and all vices of brute man are called into full action. (328)

The reviewer in the *Edinburgh Review* also sees the Lewis and Clark account as a corrective to other, less accurate, readings of the native character, but without impugning the sensibilities of the explorers. The reviewer notes that since the purpose of the expedition is "to reconcile the Indians to the change that had taken place in the government or *usurpation* of the Whites, and to induce them to live in peace" . . . the Indians were always met "with great civility and kindness." (417) Peaceful encounters as part of a public mission permit more intimate access to the native way of life and more frequent intercourse between native and interloper. The reviewer concludes that

> he who has studied the character of savages, in the romantic tales where their eloquence and magnanimity are so much celebrated, will be greatly disappointed by the plain statements of a correct narrative. (417)

In fact, that in such lengthy reviews this native dance and other incidents are recurrently brought to notice creates a kind of commonplace for the reader. Each review notes and elaborates the following incidents or topics: the Medicine or Buffalo dance; a native origin myth; the topic of male sovereignty over women; the Falls of the Missouri as sublime spectacle; describing, encountering, and hunting bear; and the recognition scene between Sacajewea and the Shoshone. While each review spends most of its pages getting to the Pacific and stints on the return trip because space does not permit, the recurrence of topic and incident bespeaks a kind of cultural marker, a site of recognition, wherein a portrayal, incomplete, time and place bound, rife with assumption and clear-eyed bias, becomes however tenuously a place where two differences cross. A topic is a cultural site, a cultural marker of a particular behavior, and it is instanced for remembering. The reciprocity of encounter does not survive into reciprocity of memory when cultures have

different means of memory storage, writing as opposed to the spoken word. That a topic is appropriated unbeknownst to itself, is transported to realms of strangeness of which it has no conceiving, where that appropriation is multiplied and made anonymous is of a wholly different order from the appearance of this Corps in native midst, sudden to come, sudden to leave, the appearance itself to be assimilated into aural woof and weave of native memory, the oral bank where stories are stored.

Dialogized Tragic Consciousness in Confucian and Socratic Dialogues

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The tragic consciousness in Confucius' and Socrates' dialogues, different from that of tragic heroes in ancient mythology and literature, is basically represented in a conflict between a strong passion for a moral idealism associated with their social contexts and an experience of political frustration and personal unfulfilment. The critical studies, however, have virtually overlooked the tragic aspect in Confucian and Socratic discourse. In the East, students of Confucius concentrate on either exegetical studies or the philosophical, educational and religious elements of his discourse. Few scholars have ever made a comprehensive rhetorical survey of Confucian discourse, not to mention a detailed analysis of the emotional structure of his texts and his *Youhuan yishi*--the sense of anxiety and worry as a major characteristic of his verbal activities.[1] Lin Yutang presented Confucius as a generally "gay" and "cheerful" "real man",[2] but made no comments on his spiritual frustration and occasional pessimistic discourse. One of the most recent comparative studies of Greek civilization and early civilization in China is made by David N. Keightley,[3] who draws the conclusion that early Chinese philosophy differs from that of Greece in its "epistemological optimism." Keightley observes that "Confucian optimism about the human condition was maintained even in the face of Confucius' own failure to obtain the political successes that he needed to justify his mission," and that Confucius and Qu Yuan[4] are two examples proving the "subversive thought that the best intentions might lead to chaos and regret." Keightley fails to discern that Confucius' personal experience and his discourses do produce a sense of tragedy, that of a most controversial Chinese thinker being misinterpreted, fragmented, or condemned in his own time and also in our contemporary cultural situation.

In the West, Socrates is viewed in a way similar to Confucius. Nietzsche describes Socrates as a theoretical optimist though he turns to being a pessimist in the practical world.[5] Ever since Nietzsche, interpreters like Walter Benjamin have repeated the idea that Socrates represents the tradition of the sage as "untragic hero," and that Plato the poet destroyed his tragedies in order to become Plato the philosopher.[6] The Nietzsche-Benjamin critique of the "untragic hero" has become so ingrained that critics have so far offered no practical criticism on the tragic character of Socrates. Socrates is, however, not a type of tragic hero in Aristotle's sense.[7] Sticking to Aristotle's criteria, we experience little tragic emotion in Socrates' dramatized dialogues, for Socrates makes no explicit appeal for pity in his defense speech[8] and his personal tragedy is not terror-striking at all.

Bakhtin's dialogism[9] may contribute to our interpretation of Socrates' and Confucius' tragic consciousness. A dialogic reading of discourse aims to describe the relations of voices resonant in a given context. One of the primary tonal relations is between self and other, and between the speaker's

or the author's voice and the response from historical and cultural implications of his time. Confucius' dialogized tragic consciousness is often explicitly expressed in two particular words: *You* and *Huan*.[10] These two words are employed by Confucius to reflect his pessimistic attitude toward social reality. This Confucian consciousness of *Youhuan* has developed into a cultural tradition, which is most prominantly expressed in the motto of Fan Zhongyan (989--1052), a scholar of the Southern Song dynasty: To be the first one to endure sufferings for your country and your people; to be the last one to seek happiness and pleasure for yourself.[11] Fan's response to Confucius further elucidates the consciousness of *You* (worries, sufferings) as contradictory to *Le* (happiness), and helps distinguish the nature of *You* as being tragic, voluntary, lofty and other-oriented.

With his disappointment at the social chaos of the "disuse of Way," "the ruin of rites" and "the collapse of music" in his time, Confucius' tragic consciousness can often be read in its tonal relation with tradition and the past, especially with the tradition of the Western Zhou (1100--771 B.C.). Confucius once exclaimed that "The Zhou[12] is resplendent in culture, having before it the example of the two previous dynasties (the Xia and the Yin). I am for the Zhou" (Ch.3.14). Confucius attempts to confront the social and moral disorder of his time with the ritual system of the Zhou. His belief in the rites encourages him to go on with his social reform in a vulnerable and difficult situation. In addition, to listen to the ancient music and to teach the songs and poems of the past dynasties together constitute a voice of dissatisfaction with and resentment toward the society in which he survives. Especially when he realizes his failure in a political career, he continues his editing of the books on poems, history, rites, and music in accordance with the rites of the Zhou.[13] Therefore, the recourse to a historical tradition becomes a dynamic part of Confucius' tragic consciousness.

Confucius' tragic consciousness is also represented in his dialogic relations with Heaven, the imaginative vision of both an omniscient existence and his alienated self. His tonal relation with Heaven tells of the loneliness and depression of a philosopher, and also of a rich imaginative world where the speaker distinguishes himself from the contending voices for diverse interpretations of the Self. Simultaneously, the constant dialogic activities also enable the Self to address its otherness in this dimension, and provide a context in which the Self is allowed to realize its catharsis of emotions: fear, pity, anger, despair . . . Confucius' dialogic relation with Heaven, culminated when he was singing in tears seven days before his death: "Ah! The Taishan (Mountain) is crumbling down!/The pillar is falling down!/The philosopher is passing out!"[14] Although in a tragic and desperate tone, Confucius never fails to glorify his mission which he compares to the Taishan Mountain, the symbol of the Chinese cultural heritage, and his personality which is compared to the straight pillars of a palace. And he seldom hesitates, especially in his old age, to eulogize his wisdom as a philosopher, which produces a great voice of self-evaluation of his life-long philosophical pursuit.

Silence, as a rhetorical behavior, also works in Confucius' dialogized tragic consciousness. The orientation of his silence to "an other" is obvious and persistent. It is never passive, and can be regarded as a silenced voice, and it is an active response to the heteroglossia of voices striving to represent the phenomena of social disorders. As a teacher who first established a private

school on a large scale in early China, Confucius took conversation as a major form of his pedagogy, but sometimes he might remain silent to maintain a particular communication with his disciples, the rulers and his society. Once he told his disciples that "I am thinking of giving up speech." Zigong asked, "If you did not speak, what would there be for us, your disciples, to transmit?" Confucius said, "What does Heaven ever say? Yet there are the four seasons going round and there are the hundred things coming into being. What does Heaven ever say?" (Ch.17.19) To be certain, Confucius' silence is pessimistic by nature, and it originates from his conclusion that no one really understands him. Being a moral philosopher aiming at a rationalized social order, Confucius is fully aware of the moral degradation in his time: "I have never seen people attracted by virtuous scholars as they are by beautiful women" (Ch. 9.18). He seemed to realize that a philosopher had to shut up his mouth if people around him turned their eye and ear to the issues of power, money and women only. It is often the case that Confucius would leave a state silently after making sure that the ruler there had no interest in Way,[15] because his silence itself sent out a message that "There is no point in people taking counsel together who follow different ways" (Ch.15.40).

Confucius' tragic consciousness is reflected in his rhetorical contact with Taoist hermits too. And the dialogic relation between them presents a tragic image of Confucius as an estranged social reformer who was not only kept away from the mainstream of society, the powerful and the rich, but also distanced by the groups of Taoist hermits. After leaving Yin, Confucius returned to the state of Cai. By a field they met two secluded Taoist philosophers who made sarcastic comments on Confucius' mission to his disciple, Zilu, and persuaded him to stop his journey with Confucius. Aware of the fact that the hermit addressed him indirectly, Confucius attempted first to resist the temptation while clarifying his stance as an influential social reformer with human society as his object. What strikes us contemporary readers is not only Confucius' dialogic perspective in its denial of the dominance claimed by "an other", the hermit, but also its insistence on a "double-voiced" (Self and Other) dialogue at two levels. While refusing to change his place with the hermit, Confucius, at one level, makes available the self to be defined by the social context, which requires an active participation in public life; and at another level, to be further defined by the hermit's voice. The result of this continuous interaction seems to suggest fresh dialogues rather than ending them, although the hermits often denied a direct conversation with Confucius. However, in such a difficult social context, Confucius, more than once expressed his preference for seclusion. It may be true that this kind of expressions are no more than a temporary complaint or self-sarcasm when his political ambitions are frustrated. But they are undercurrents that occasionally surface along with Confucius' spiritual journey with the destination of being a Superior Man. These voices from his alienated self, enhance his understanding of his life as a failure and a tragedy, especially in the later part of his life. Simultaneously, they moderate or temperate his tone in a dialogic relation with a voice from the hermits, or the voice from the social reality from which he distinguishes his own. Later scholars are able to outline a particular cultural tradition in Chinese history, Confucianism's exterior and Taoism's interior, to represent a painful and an unusual spiritual journey of a large number of Chinese intellectuals.[16] This construction of

character, however, may well be traced back to the dialogic composition of Confucius' own personality, vividly reflected in his rhetorical activities.

Now, let us focus on the tragic consciousness expressed in Socratic dialogues. It is Bakhtin who first observed Socrates' "new artistic-prose model for the novel" and "scientific thinking" expressed in dialogized tonal relations with his interlocutors and with his own rhetorical contexts. Once we turn our eye to such a particular rhetorical emphasis, Socrates' tragic consciousness becomes more readable and explicable.

Socrates' tragic consciousness is basically represented in a sense of failure and frustration engendered from his verbal encounters throughout his life. In fact, Socrates can hardly persuade his interlocutors, friends or foes, academic opponents or philosophical disciples, unfamiliar jurors or life-long associates, of his definitions of virtue (e.g., in *Euthyphro*, and *The Republic*), true rhetoric (e.g., in *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*), epistemological identification (e.g., in *Apology*), or political beliefs (e.g., in *Crito* and *Phaedo*). He is forever a lonely traveller "on the journey to the place" where he claims to "be happy both in life and death."[17] Almost every one of the Socratic dialogues helps to conjure up an image of a fatigueless speaker, who is often aware of his own failure, embarrassment, disappointment and ill-treatment, but who never stops his pursuit of justice and virtue.

Gorgias represents Socrates' major efforts to launch a severe attack on the Sophistic rhetoric and to give an account of what rhetoric should be. Concerning the description of Gorgias' concession to debate in the dialectical mode, the contemporary scholar Enos feels justified to write, "It is difficult to imagine that the real Gorgias, noted for his elegant prose, would have agreed to such a format. It is also ironic that as the dialogue develops it is Socrates who elaborates his statements in details and Gorgias is reduced to virtually passive silence."[18] However, even in such a favorable rhetorical situation, Socrates still fails to convince Callicles of his argument that Sophistic rhetoric is wrong in its most vigorous and dangerous form. The readers are led to believing that Socrates could hardly finish his lengthy and passionate final speech without generosity on the part of Callicles.

If Socrates' unsuccessful confrontation with Meletus in the *Apology* is understandable because the later symbolizes an overwhelmingly powerful anti-Socrates' force, Socrates' dialogic relation with his life-long friend Criton in prison produces more bewilderment among the readers, and even greater pains in both of the participants. Neither of the speakers can persuade the other, due to his identification with a different value system. The dialogue arrives at such a deadlock that Socrates, for the first time in his verbal activities, hints at ending their conversing. Their tonal voices in the *Crito*, though distinct in being heard to each other, are eager to emphasize in their interaction a different space and time orientation. The topic about a possible escape from the prison remains at the center of their communication, because it is the argument between the participants that keeps their exchange on. However, within this routine channel, Socrates never stops his communication in his imaginative domain with the Laws in the house of Hades that empower him with a sense of justice/injustice and lawfulness/unlawfulness, and induce him to value the spiritual life in the next world in an infinite future. Similarly, Criton, the representative of all Socrates' friends, establishes his persuasion on the personal freedom of Socrates in this world, the standards of value of his

time for friendship, family relations, and earthly life, chiefly through his tonal relations with his friends, the followers of the Socratic doctrine. Thus, Socrates often indulges himself in a dialogue with the next world in space, and directs his attention to the future time. By contrast, Criton always sticks to the moral and personal concerns of this world and seeks a response from the present time. In such a heated but friendly verbal encounter, their arguments develop in the same way as two trains driving in opposite directions along two parallel tracks. The further they communicate, the farther they get separated from each other. What can still link them is friendship. For Socrates, the tragedy lies in despair that his greatest friend should try to persuade him to violate the laws that he has obeyed all his life. For Criton, the tragedy becomes inevitable that they will forever lose Socrates. This dialogic reading of the *Crito* helps to sharpen a sensitivity on the part of the audience to a tragic conflict activated by Socrates and Criton across time and space in the domains of philosophy and rhetoric.

Presumably, it is the *Apology* that demonstrates most fully the inseparability of Socrates' tragic consciousness from his dialogic imagination. Here, I just want to point out two of Socrates' dialogic relations implicitly maintained with a wider audience absent from the court, and also with his innerself. In fact, Socratic scholars have long been studying the motive of the Socratic type of defense. As R.E. Allen says, "Socrates' aim was to gain neither conviction nor acquital, but to tell the whole truth in accordance with justice."[19] This conclusion does tell part of the story, but it goes too as to deny the fact that one of Socrates' motives is to be acquitted with the force of his oral discourse, which is only secondary to his purpose of defending his philosophical life. What has been overlooked is that Socratic passion in producing his ideas also comes from his imaginary dialogic relations with his family, friends, disciples and all the Athenians, and more important, his innerself. My argument is based on the following observations: first, Socrates is well aware of the possibility that this might be the last chance for him to speak to his audience in public; second, Socrates' mentioning of his refusal to haul his wife and sons into the court reveals both his reluctance to appeal for pity in usual form[20] and his desire for understanding from his family; third, Socrates is confident of the human potentiality for reaching absolute truth and of enjoying a reputation among those who understand his philosophical pursuit; finally, the dialogic relations portray Socrates as a new type of tragic hero who walks to the end of his life with love but without hatred, with passion but without indignation, with a sense of sacrifice but without anxiety over the peacefulness of his soul.

Socrates' consciousness as a tragic hero culminates in his talk with Crito, Phaedo and other followers gathered in the cell on the day of his death in the *Phado*:

> You will make your several journeys at some future time, but for myself, e'en now as a tragic hero might say, 'destiny doth summon me': and it's just about time I made for the bath. It really seems better to take a bath before drinking the poison, and not to give the women the trouble of washing a dead body.

Socrates' talk about "destiny" forms a contrast with his "divine god". His

rhetorical activities and philosophical pursuit are consistent with "divine god", but are in odd relations with "destiny", because to interpret human life in terms of destiny is to emphasize some unexpected or unfavorable aspect in the course of life. Destiny is often irresistible and inevitable, so, when destiny "summons", Socrates has to answer it. That Socrates hears the destiny's summons also enhances his consciousness of the transiency of human life--life is short and is determined by trans-human existence. To admit the transient nature of life is to reflect a tragic understanding of life in this world, although an individual may take death as a natural separation of soul from body. As a hero, Socrates faces death calmly and bravely, and he regards "drinking the poison" and "washing the dead body" as indispensable tasks given by destiny. He purportedly estranges himself from the present with a possible intention to calm his intellectual passion permeating his whole life, and also to extinguish gradually his desire for and this earthly world. Socrates' future-oriented speech is also addressed to his fellow-philosophers concerning their "several journeys at some future time" so that all those who "have purified themselves sufficiently by philosophy live thereafter together without bodies", and owing to the immortality of soul they will be able to follow Socrates in the next world. Thus, Socrates opens a new space of imagination for himself to continue a dialogue with his fellow philosophers. Besides, Socrates' death as a tragic event is also characterized by its projection on the vision and hearing of the Others--his friends and the prison officer at his last moments.

Now I attempt to make possible an intercultural dialogue between Confucius and Socrates so as to account for how such a mutually-illuminating encounter helps to describe the structure of a dialogized tragic consciousness at the birth of Eastern as well as Western civilizations.

To begin with, as moral philosophers, both Confucius and Socrates have to meet the dilemma in their own rhetorical situation: they take it as their life-long mission to advocate and defend their ideals, but their thoughts are often misinterpreted or misrepresented either by those in power (in Confucius' case) or by the majority (in Socrates' case). Moreover, their voices are threatened with being silenced by death. The tragic experience of the two philosophers in the East and the West indicates that the ancient philosophers may often endanger their lives in order to get their ideal heard. What impresses the audience of their time and still of the present-day is Confucius' and Socrates' attitude toward the issue of death. To Confucius, the truth he seeks from the Way is more significant than life, so "I would not live in vain if I should die the day I'm told about the Way." (Ch.4.8) This kind of tragic heroism is apparent in Socrates' defense in the *Apology*, too. Socrates is determined not to give up his divine mission of "conferring in private the greatest benefit on each citizen" even if he "is to die many times over." (*Apology*, 36c) Confucius and Socrates, though in a similar vulnerable position, have both gained the power for their philosophical inquiry, for they are among the first thinkers who get their tone rationalized and defined in their continuous encounter with other voices, sympathetic or hostile, in a cultural situation where human society is taking pains to seek a "self-knowledge" (Socrates) or the knowledge of "cultivating self" (Confucius).

The tragic consciousness is also reflected in their hesitation and perplexity when Confucius and Socrates were compelled to respond to their unfavorable situation and disastrous destiny. Different from tragic heroes in ancient

ouse at Pointe Au Chenes

rows out of the marsh,
rey and splitting
ne reeds.
wns down into cattails
l of mud.
adows of kitchen cabinets
define themselves;
round a white enamel sink.
st with time and concentration.
kes shape. The rhythmic, thumping marsh
to the scene. A breeze lights
my face and passes through
low screen, flaring open
nough to reveal a girl
white plisse' nightgown.
step-ball-change, she skips
and bends into it.
d her, the red sun
room and flows out
to hold me away, staring.

she turns from the box
ward me at the window,
l through wet gown,
her body pushing.
mething for me
that I can't quite make out.
d rip away the screen.

widen; light spills out.
er dark hair comes the scream
n. She lifts her feet, flies
the trees, shrieking.

Theodore Haddin
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

How Glorious the Sun Here

How glorious the sun here
this morning comes
lighting my room from the south
spilling light over lilies
I've kept here waking
the colors in my labyrinthine rug
picking up the fireplace
where it left off in the night
so much I wondered about
yesterday whether I would ever
feel this light again
how it surprises us
in the place of our living
light through the windows
this is the sustaining grace

This Bug

This bug that looks like
a pine bark beetle
swept into the fire
yesterday
has crawled out
a little scared a little charred
and he is resting now
just above the firepit
testing his feelers
after flame and black death
a black dot
against the morning's cold brick
and he must be singing
a slight tune
how he survived
that we cannot hear
from the other side
of the living room

Why Do We Watch Them

Why do we watch them
I'd like to know
he is legs running
the ten across the five
a long way to the corner
he makes it you know
next a wall of meat
tramples a quarterback
what was he up to
he wants to know
his face is mud
then they gather again
for the kick-off and end up
three men standing around
a failed return
hurry up and wait
they said in the army
but here there's no expectation
of food or clothes or the enemy
just a ball oblong
on a green field
plastic or grass
somewhere in the yardmarkers
will it move I say
saturdays forever

Painting With Pepe

This morning Pepe Romero
plays flamenco deep guitars
a snare rapper on edge
castanets clash torrid hot
passion of the soul's release
I put a paintbrush
to dry wood in windows
trying to steady myself
on a ladder
but the rhythm of this beat
driven by guitars flaming
makes me start to throw paint
all around the room
and I dance down the ladder
electrified by an old military drum
assisting his burning fingers
I am throwing white paint
and Pepe this is my flame
and the room will never be done

Rabiul Hasan
Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge

To A Dumb Girl In A Bosnia Town

1.

How soul-deep one can get!

2.

If we are to meet again,
let it be like this:
by a bend in the Ohio River,
in the midst of the harvest,
in the afterglow of the cicadas burning all night,
or at the outskirts of a small town in Mississippi.

3.

You have a story to tell.
What will you tel me about?
About yourself. You wil tell me about it.
I will tell you about me.
I will tell you about America,
about Mars and Jupiter,
about cherry-blossoms and redwings,
about country roads and long valleys.

4.

For now we stand at a crossroad,
an unwholesome world between us;
but seasons do change and change they must,
and I pray your tongue
awakens beneath your skin,
stirs and unfurls,
and, in one miracle sweep,
spells out and breaks into music.

Love Poem
(For Nowshaba)

Even water has its own eyes,
language that needs little explaining.
And your hair,
nocturnal and unidiomatic,
shadows the alphabets I weave in my class.
You are my alphabets from A to Z.
You sit in the back alone
with your gazelle eyes;
they embolden between blinks
and glaze with fresh metaphors,
and I believe they hanker after
my impertinence inwardly.
If I were to leap forward,
I would soak in darkness miles long,
and your hair,
once more the culprit,
I lose my poise in,
but I will not say pardon
lest you forbid my advance,
my inching ahead,
my gaining ground,
and slam-shut yourself on me.
Let each day bring forth what yesterday disavowed,
bent or broke,
in one piece,
for us,
for you and me,
to live as one:
a season, a river, a beginning.

A Tree of Night

JENNY COLD, JENNY DARKNESS,
They are coming back again.
—James Wright

Brenda sweetness, Brenda light,
My steadfast incantation,
I am glad we have met
As the last leaf fell from the corner tree.
All over the Mississippi Delta
That gawk, that boor of a nigger,
Will come looking for me,
But you look so gentle, serene
As the Mississippi beside me
I am about to touch your water,
And make you an appointment in my conservatory.

I stifle myself and what is left
Of me, culpable and odious,
The blooming of a secret in the dark.
And you have this secret
I carry into the jerkwater chamber
Of my life where we are even with each other

I have my heart full
Of seasons, returning angels,
And one cathedral of love, still warm.
I knew little of you.
I believe you were near him, with him.
You were walking down the roads less travelled,
Your visions blurred,
And your clenched fists holding nothing,
The demeaning, self-defeating nothing,
The only nothing the nothing
Of this dolor.

I knew a girl full as the sea level.
She said she understood me, and died so young
I was incomplete when I kissed her lowered eyelids.
I wept over her grave
As she took her blackness and goodness with her.
But I am delighted you lived for me,
And came in from nowhere,
And we gathered together where she left off.
We bloomed, a root of her love,
Becoming mortal to each other again.

Brenda, my one acorn of good luck come,
We know where we are, and I almost see you, my shadow.
I cannot see you. I chance to see you.
The good luck of your color that is my strength.
Those napthalene men with dirty navels are no good,
Those dross and charcoal and soot and salt of the sidewalk.

But where are you now?
Where are you going,
Brenda sweetness, Brenda light?
Have we been together? Are we together?

Say something, say something aloud and clear,
And hear that song inside you,
Inside me, inside us,
Inside the earth, inside the clams.

Now I have nothing more, nothing less.

Brenda sweetness, Brenda light,
My quiet incense
Of dark America,
I have no name
For you
Yet.

Alan Forrest Hickman
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

The Feast of Stephen

Mid-age is not a good time
To be dining out
When the meat's tough
And the wine tastes of cork
You may need a mirror
To pick your teeth

The diners look so clubby
With their salad forks
And coffee spoons
What right have you
To foul the summer air
With wintry farts?

Yond waiter has a hungry look
As if on orders bent
To chew your food
With knife-edged tooth
And smile with lips that blow
A Judas kiss

Much better to remain at home
Where the wine jugs
And the bread loafs
Fish-eying the microwave
In your fuzzy shoes
With your belt undone.

Free Will

And God so loved the world
That he gave his only Son
To be cursed and spat upon
Beaten and clubbed--
And god knows what
All they get up to
In those filthy Mideast jails

My student (on the other hand)
So loved his woman
That he vaulted her to heights
Of dizzy solecism
Planting her feet-first
On a "petal stool"
In place of worship

Small wonder
Where I pledge my tithes!

Aplomb

In classrooms where the windows have noglass
And the air moves through on moans and roars
Teachers are upraised by motives more enabling
Than those impelled by paychecks or degrees

In Thailand it is said
The word for teacher
--khroo
Derives from ancient Sanskrit
--guru
And carries with it much
The same respecting-weight

A cynosure you stand
Not of a class but of a culture
Whose watchful eyes you drop
Into the pockets of your person
As a nurse might gather
Needles in her smock

Or a saint might transmute arrows.

Greenland

From the cockpit of my Daddy's jet,
Our lawn was just a green patch on the block;
But Daddy wasn't looking down those days--
He'd flown to Thule, in a plane that swam
And broke the ice. I'd seen the photographs:
The island of his features tipped in fur.

That year we lived in town--when things went 'wry
My Grandpa sent a man to put them right.
On lazy days, when honeybees patrolled
The yard, and horned toads bivouacked on the grass,
Old Cotton rolled the pushmow' up and down
The outpost lawn; I sprang in step behind.

My child's face twisted in a squint, I scanned
The skies for flocks of birds that flew
In tight formations to the sun; the Black
Man wore a 'kerchief on his head which hung
In knots, and batted midges with his eyes--
The sweat fell in a river down his back.

My mother kept a tumbler by the sink--
A jelly glass that only Cotton used;
On cloudy days it sat in quarantine
Upon the sill. On days when Cotton mowed,
My job it was to fetch the glass ("No ice!")
And fill it from the tap behind the house.

At bedtime, with the globelight on, I crouched
Before a shelf, chock-full of untouched things:
Three figurines--one each--for Gary, Sue,
And me, . . . the china mug from Germany,
Inscribed with Daddy's name: "From all the troops
In Ultima--The Knights of the Blue Nose."

Clare E. Potter
The University of Southern Mississippi

He gave me roses
I hate roses,
They mock my imperfections.
Desirable always;
the ability to recreate.
Rose gave the word ruby life. Ruby red, red rubies
My blood is not as red as that
insipid bleeder that
I am.
The words clotting on my pale skin,
whittling away into what's missing
sickening scent, alluring attempt
to draw me near in admiration,
thrusting thorns into my thoughts,
"Stay away from this kind of beauty, you couldn't handle it."
I hate the rose, proud bitch that she is.
Yet
I love her incestuously, craving the rain drops that sit there,
sucking kisses as she throws back her head
and laughs.